Medieval discourses of masculinity and male sexuality were closely linked to the idea and representation of work as a male responsibility. Isabel Davis identifies a discourse of masculine selfhood which is preoccupied with the ethics of labour and domestic living. She analyses how five major London writers of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries constructed the male self: William Langland, Thomas Usk, John Gower, Geoffrey Chaucer and Thomas Hoccleve. These literary texts, while they have often been considered for what they say about the feminine role and identity, have rarely been thought of as evidence for masculinity; this study seeks to redress that imbalance. Looking again at the texts themselves, and their cultural contexts, Davis presents a genuinely fresh perspective on ideas about gender, labour and domestic life in medieval Britain.

**Isabel Davis** is Lecturer in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature at Birkbeck College, University of London.
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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Frontispiece. Misericord from St Nicholas’s church, King’s Lynn, c. 1419. © V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum.
WRITING MASCULINITY IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

ISABEL DAVIS
For my supervisors:
Felicity Riddy and Jeremy Goldberg
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**Abbreviations**

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANQ</td>
<td>American Notes and Queries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EETS, ES</td>
<td>Early English Text Society, extra series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EETS, OS</td>
<td>Early English Text Society, original series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EETS, SS</td>
<td>Early English Text Society, special series</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELH</td>
<td>English Literary History</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELN</td>
<td>English Language Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCC</td>
<td>‘The Long Charter of Christ’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MED</td>
<td>Middle English Dictionary, H. Kurath et al. (ed.) (Ann Arbor, 1956–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N&amp;Q</td>
<td>Notes and Queries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Patrologia Latina, J.-P. Migne (ed.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMLA</td>
<td>Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America</td>
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Chaucer:  

- **T&C**: Troilus and Criseyde  
- **CkP**: The Cook’s Prologue  
- **CkT**: The Cook’s Tale  
- **CYP**: The Canon’s Yeoman’s Prologue  
- **CYT**: The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale  
- **FranP**: The Franklin’s Prologue  
- **GP**: General Prologue  
- **MerT**: The Merchant’s Tale  
- **MilP**: The Miller’s Prologue  
- **MilT**: The Miller’s Tale  
- **PardP**: The Pardoner’s Prologue  
- **PardT**: The Pardoner’s Tale  
- **PThop**: The Prologue to the Tale of Thopas  
- **ParsT**: The Parson’s Tale  
- **ShipT**: The Shipman’s Tale
List of abbreviations

WBP  The Wife of Bath’s Prologue

Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from the works of Chaucer will be from the *Riverside Chaucer*, L. Benson *et al.* (eds.), 3rd edn (Oxford, 1989).

Gower:

CA  *Confessio Amantis*
MO  *Mirror de l’omme*
PP  ‘In Praise of Peace’

Hoccleve:

J’sW  ‘The Tale of Jereslaus’s Wife’
LaMR  ‘La male regle’
RP  *The Regiment of Princes*

All quotations from the Bible are from Jerome’s vulgate (http://www.drbo.org/lvb/); English translations are taken from the Douay–Rheims version (http://www.drbo.org).

Short references have been used in the notes to the text; for the full bibliographic information please refer to the bibliography.