The 2004 announcement that Chaucer’s scribe had been discovered resulted in a paradigm shift in medieval studies. Adam Pynkhurst dominated the classroom, became a fictional character, and led to suggestions that this identification should prompt the abandonment of our understanding of the development of London English and acceptance that the clerks of the Guildhall were promoting vernacular literature as part of a concerted political program. In this meticulously researched study, Lawrence Warner challenges the narratives and conclusions of recent scholarship. In place of the accepted story, Warner provides a fresh, more nuanced one in which many more scribes, anonymous ones, worked in conditions we are only beginning to understand. Bringing to light new information – not least, hundreds of documents in the hand of one of the most important fifteenth-century scribes of Chaucer and Langland – this book represents an important intervention in the field of Middle English studies.

Lawrence Warner is Reader in Medieval English at King’s College London. His previous publications include The Myth of “Piers Plowman” (Cambridge University Press, 2014), which won the English Association’s 2016 Beatrice White Prize for outstanding scholarly work in the field of English Literature before 1590, and The Lost History of “Piers Plowman” (2011), which received an Honorable Mention for the Society for Textual Scholarship’s 2013 Richard J. Finneran Award.
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CHAUCER’S SCRIBES

London Textual Production, 1384–1432

LAWRENCE WARNER
King’s College London
For Sebastian and Eloise with love
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Abbreviations

BL      London, British Library
ChauR   Chaucer Review
EETS    Early English Text Society
JEBS    Journal of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printed History
LMA     London Metropolitan Archives
MÆ      Medium Ævum
NM      Neuphilologische Mitteilungen
ODNB    Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
OED     Oxford English Dictionary
PMLA    Publications of the Modern Language Association
RES     Review of English Studies
SAC     Studies in the Age of Chaucer
SB      Studies in Bibliography
TLS     Times Literary Supplement
YLS     Yearbook of Langland Studies