

MIDDLE ENGLISH MOUTHS

The mouth, responsible for both physical and spiritual functions – eating, drinking, breathing, praying and confessing – was of immediate importance to medieval thinking about the nature of the human being. Where scholars have traditionally focused on the mouth's grotesque excesses, Katie L. Walter argues for the recuperation of its material 'everyday' aspect. Walter's original study draws on two rich archives: one comprising Middle English theology (Langland, Julian of Norwich, Lydgate, Chaucer) and pastoral writings; the other broadly medical and surgical, including learned encyclopaedias and vernacular translations and treatises. Challenging several critical orthodoxies about the centrality of sight, the hierarchy of the senses and the separation of religious from medical discourses, the book reveals the centrality of the mouth, taste and touch to human modes of knowing and to Christian identity.

DR KATIE L. WALTER is Senior Lecturer in Medieval English Literature at the University of Sussex. She is the editor of *Reading Skin in Medieval Literature and Culture* (2013), *The Culture of Inquisition in Medieval England* (with Mary Flannery, 2013) and a special issue of *Textual Practice* on 'Prosthesis in Medieval and Early Modern Culture' (with Chloe Porter and Margaret Healy, 2016). Dr Walter has published essays on the body, skin, flesh and the senses, as well as on medieval literary theories and reading practices.

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*Late Medieval Medical, Religious
and Literary Traditions*

KATIE L. WALTER

University of Sussex



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For my family

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Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------|---|
| EETS | Early English Text Society |
| <i>MED</i> | <i>Middle English Dictionary</i> |
| <i>NML</i> | <i>New Medieval Literatures</i> |
| <i>N&Q</i> | <i>Notes & Queries</i> |
| PL | Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina, [gen. ed.] J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844–64) |
| <i>YLS</i> | <i>Yearbook of Langland Studies</i> |

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