THE LANGUAGE OF LITERATURE

General Editor: N. F. Blake

Professor of English Language and Linguistics

University of Sheffield

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THE LANGUAGE OF OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH POETRY

G. A. LESTER

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Acknowledgements

A small book on so large a subject as the language of Old and Middle English poetry may seem an ambitious and even foolhardy undertaking. However, as I explain in the Introduction, there is something to be gained from this broad approach. It is inevitable that I have had to draw heavily on the work and ideas of others, particularly authors, former teachers, colleagues and students. Had I not experienced their scholarship, interest and enthusiasm, over a number of years, I could not have written a book such as this, which, in view of the breadth of its subject matter and the narrowness of its page limit, is inevitably a synthesis of my own ideas and what I consider valuable in what I have read and heard. Where I have used specific published material I have acknowledged the debt, but generally I have tried to keep references to a minimum, at the same time providing sufficient information to suggest approaches to more detailed study for the non-specialists and general readers for whom this book is principally intended. Without doubt there will be errors, omissions and over-simplifications, for which I take absolute responsibility, as is customary, while hoping that the rest of the material will be enough to stimulate insights and new trains of thought into medieval English poetry.

SHEFFIELD

G. A. LESTER