



Chaucer and the Early Writings of Boccaccio (Chaucer Studies)

David Wallace

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David Wallace's examination of the aims and literary affiliations of Boccaccio's early writings provides an indispensable preface to and context for an informed appraisal of Chaucer's usage of Boccaccio. Previous studies of the relationship between the work of the two poets have tended to consider Chaucer's borrowings without making a thorough study of the traditions which shaped the Italian writer's work. Wallace argues that Boccaccio was not primarily concerned with winning recognition at the Angevin court, but was chiefly concerned with fashioning an identity for himself as an illustrious vernacular author. Chaucer recognised that both the *Filostrato* and *Teseida* derived their basic narrative capabilities from popular tradition analogous to that of the English tail-rhyme romance. Following a detailed analysis of Chaucer's translation practice in *Troilus and Criseyde*, Wallace concludes that it was Boccaccio's attempt to develop a narrative art occupying the middle ground between popular and illustrious, domestic and European traditions that Chaucer found so uniquely congenial and instructive.

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