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Chaucer and Italian Textuality (Oxford English Monographs)

K. P. Clarke

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When Chaucer came into contact with Italian literary culture in the second half of the fourteenth century he was engaging with a productive, lively and highly varied tradition. *Chaucer and Italian Textuality* provides a new perspective on Chaucer and Italy by highlighting the materiality of his sources, reconstructing his textual, codicological horizon of expectation. It provides new ways of thinking about Chaucer's access to, and use of, these Italian sources, stimulating, in turn, new ways of reading his work. Manuscripts of the major works of Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch circulated in a variety of formats, and often the margins of their texts were loci for extensive commentary and glossing. These traditions of glossing and commentary represent one of the most striking features of fourteenth-century Italian literary culture. These authors were in turn deeply indebted to figures like Ovid and Statius, who were themselves heavily glossed and commented upon. The margins provided a space for a wide variety of responses to be inscribed on the page. This is eloquently demonstrated in the example of Francesco d'Amaretto Mannelli's glosses in *Decameron*, copied by him in 1384. This material dimension of Chaucer's sources has not received sufficient attention; this book aims to address just such a material textuality. This attention to the materiality of Chaucer's sources is further explored and developed by reading the Prologue to the *Wife of Bath's Tale* and the *Clerk's Tale* through their early fourteenth-century manuscripts, taking account not just of the text but also of the numerous marginal glosses. Within this context, then, the question of Chaucer's authorship of some of these glosses is considered.

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