



The Myths of Love: Classical Lovers in Medieval Literature

Katherine Heinrichs

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This study seeks to define the medieval literary conventions governing allusions to certain Ovidian and Virgilian tales of love in the works of Boccaccio, Machaut, Froissart, and Chaucer. Using evidence from the Latin mythographers, it addresses several much-debated critical issues in medieval scholarship: questions of narrative voice, thematic unity, and purpose. Its principal contribution is to the discussion and evaluation of the French and Italian poems of love to which Chaucer was most heavily indebted. The author suggests that the love poems of Boccaccio, Machaut, and Froissart, rather than being ponderous didactic productions designed to instruct medieval audiences in the art of love, are true progeny of the Roman de la Rose, complex jeux d'esprit much closer in spirit and intention to the works of Chaucer than has been supposed.

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