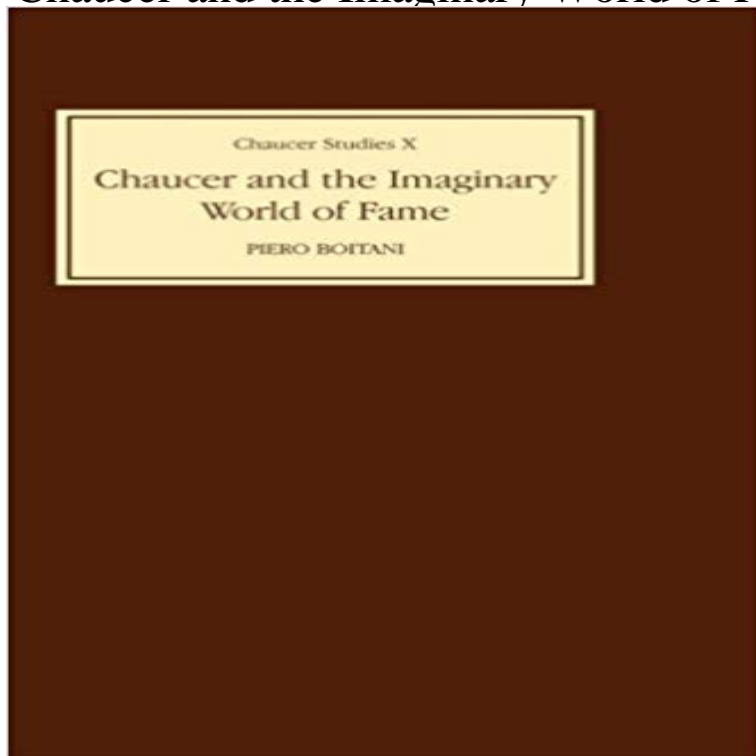


Chaucer and the Imaginary World of Fame (Chaucer Studies)



The House of Fame is one of Chaucers most intellectually challenging poems, drawing on diverse traditions such as dream poetry and mythology, but unified by the central concept of Fame. It is this concept, and the `imaginary world which surrounds it, which Professor Boitani explores in this volume in the Chaucer Studies series. He begins with a brief outline and discussion of the poem, showing what problems it poses, and then turns to explore the `history and meaning of the idea of Fame, such as Chaucer might have received from tradition, a quest which leads him into Biblical, classical and Anglo-Saxon literature, into philosophy and into romance. He then examines the view of Fame in Chaucers Italian, French and English contemporaries, and shows that it is a central theme not only in Dantes Divine Comedy but also in the work of Boccaccio and Petrarch. The second half of the book returns to Chaucers poem and examines the imaginary world which he constructs around Fame. Professor Boitani demonstrates that The House of Fame is in a sense Chaucers creative manifesto, centred on Fame as the goddess of language, myth and poetry, with poets as her prophets. In this poem, he defines many of the themes - Love and Nature, order and disorder, fortune and chance, reality and appearance - which occupied him in his other works. Here he deals with them directly rather than obliquely, revealing the formative influences behind his own imaginary world and mythology.

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