# CHAUCER AND MONTSERRAT

We should like to begin our paper with the following words of L. D. Benson (1991: 795) which, to our knowledge, have not yet been refuted:[1]

> The discovery that Chaucer visited Spain has led to speculation about his knowledge of Spanish literature.

We cite them to establish the possibility of taking them backwards, that is, from text to historical circumstances. A record can lead to a comparative literary analysis and a literary analysis can lead to the research of a historical record. A profound analysis of Chaucer's *The House of Fame* reveals that this autobiographical work has its historical basis on a visit to Montserrat.

The aim of this paper is to present research, in progress, based upon the hypothesis of Chaucer's visit to Montserrat, with *The House of Fame* as the main source to support this hypothesis. We propose to show, by means of a close textual analysis, some cross references which are hidden in Chaucer's text and that allude to historical events of the mid fourteenth century. The finding of some important historical data in Montserrat which may not only be the connexion but also the support of some literary references in Chaucer's text, justifies our search. Actually, this research has led one of the authors to think about *The House of Fame*, from a geographical point of view, in a totally different way from what has been imagined in the past; thus, (León Sendra, 1994: 96):

[1] We take advantage of this occasion to announce the first exception to this quotation as a doctoral thesis dissertation has been completed [1995], bringing into evidence the Spanish literary influence in Chaucer's poetry: *Didactismo y moralismo en Geoffey Chaucer y Don Juan Manuel: Un Estudio Comparativo Textual* by Jesús Luis Serrano Reyes. (Supervised by Antonio R. León Sendra).

> Al principio del libro el narrador afirma su intención de describir la morada de la fama situándola geográficamente, la referencia a España es una mera hipérbole figurativa que indica más un matiz de lejanía y de dificultad que una localización concreta. (Versos 1114-18)

Our research work aims at a novel interpretation of this difficult work of art. We agree with Davenport (1988: 74) when he suggests that Chaucer insists on contrastive human knowledge through reading and self-experience. We claim that this self-experience (that is, his trip to Catalonia in 1365) is his real source of inspiration. Chaucer himself indicates it, as if he were remembering, when he says:

> And yif, devyne vertu, thow
> Wilt helpe me to shewe now
> That in myn hed ymarked ys- (1101-1103).[1]

This important poem does not have all the characteristics to be considered as a dream vision, as Brian Stone (1983: 11) states:

> When the dream begins the poet is often led on by a guide, perhaps into a paradisal park or Garden of Love, where an action or debate about love, most often with allegorical characters and interpretation, takes place. The end comes with the poet-dreamer waking, and bringing from his dream a truth about love as about a sacred mystery.

The poem "begins in an orthodox style", according to the tenets of dream visions, but from the end of Book I the author's concern with love and other new elements breaks the concept of dream vision.

We shall attempt to contribute to resolving the difficulty of the interpretation of this poem, as Paul G. Ruggiers (1959: 295) confirms:

> The views of many writers who have dealt with the poem have tended to leave its meaning unresolved, and the steady accumulation of theories, while not obscuring the intention of the work, has

[1] All quotations from Chaucer are from *The Riverside Chaucer* (L. D. Benson 1991).

> unfortunately not clarified into an unified whole a poem in which Chaucer's rapidily developing powers are revealed at every turn.

We shall follow the structure of a journey in our analysis. If Professor Boitani (1988: 52) states that the Poem is a splendid journey through tradition, mythology, literature and poetry, we shall add Chaucer's self-experience, that is, his journey to Montserrat. Edwards (1989: 111-2) refers to the "hous and site" as an imaginative space of abstract language and poetry. For us, it is a real and historical place.

*The House of Fame* is a book of unknown factors. And it is quite difficult to find texts where the readers possibly know more things about the contents than the author-narrator himself. We give two examples: the first, when the narrator says "Ne where I am, ne in what contree (475), and there is no explicit answer to this question, as if it were a pragmatic or a rethorical question. There is a description of the place from which we can deduce the answer. The second example is the identification of the "man of gret auctorite" (2158) at the end of this unfinished poem. No good evidence has yet been found and it remains undiscovered. Dieter Mehl (1968: 63) says about it:

> And just as illusionary, it seems to me, is the conviction of some critics that the 'man of gret auctorite' who appears in the closing lines of the poem would have settled the matter satisfactoryly by providing some few words of wisdom.

We hope to clear up most of these enigmas, giving a cohesive support to our hypothesis.

In any case our study has nothing to do with the message of the Poem. We agree with Jordan (1987: 46) in defining the Poem as:

> a brilliant mosaic, a literary entertainment, sanctioned by its classical --and in book 2 its 'scientific'-- erudition and rendered ceaselessly engaging by the narrative skills of its presentation.

We also agree with Lisa Kisser (1991: 40) when she comments:

> So, by candidly refusing to assert any authority or truth and by demonstrating the inevitable personal slant in all human visionary discourse, *The House of Fame* subtly reveals the dubiousness

> (and pretentiousness) of other poet's claims that they are recording revelatory or historical reality objectively.

Our contribution only aims at establishing the possibility that Chaucer used his trip to Catalonia as a source of inspiration for his *House of Fame*.

Chaucer's division in three books corresponds to the phases of any journey, any pilgrimage: Book I is the departure, Book II is the journey, and Book III is the arrival and stay in *The House of Fame*. We defend the existence of Chaucer's stay in Montserrat sustaining this hypothesis on the different details offered by Chaucer's work which fit two aspects: first, the historical events related to the English intervention in Spain between 1365-1366; secondly, the description of the House of Fame which matches not only Montserrat's physical features but also many of its characteristics, such as the choir school tradition, the inn, the orology configuration, the pilgrimage, and other local cultural elements.

*"Of December the tenthe day"*, (lines 63 and 111), a date repeated twice at the beginning of the first book is the date of the dream; that is, the date of the departure.[1] We focus our interest on the historical background concerning the Great White Companies, as Baugh (1968: 59) defines them:

> These were large organized bands of fighting men, whose leaders entered into agreements with any one who needed their services and was willing to pay their price. Their ranks included Germans, Dutch, Spanish, Bretons, and others, with a high percentage of Gascons and English.

This is a key definition for our work as we will cite some important references to these Free Companies of mercenaries. In 1365 everybody (the

[1] Antonio León (1994:94) has already commented this in his article «Chaucer y la fama»: "La historia propiamente dicha del libro primero empieza en el verso 111: *Of Decembre the tenthe day* con una alusión temporal, ya recogida al final del proemio, línea 63: *The tenthe day now of Decembre,* que cuando menos nos produce una cierta sonrisa irónica si no un signo de extrañeza. El 10 de diciembre no parece la fecha más idónea para este tipo de sueños que evoca un mes caluroso, por lo menos de abril o mayo, donde la parafernalia climática nos encuadraría mejor ese sueño activo del que habla en el Poema. Posiblemente Chaucer está induciendo al oyente/lector a interpretar su mensaje en la justa medida entre imaginación y realismo."

French king, Enrique de Trastámara, the kingdom of Aragon and the Church) was interested in getting rid of them out of France.[1]

Spain and England had concluded a political and military alliance in 1362 and King Pedro I sent his adviser Martin López de Córdoba by November 1365 to ask for aid under this agreement, complaining of the participation of the English and the Gascon knights in the Great White Companies which were allied to Enrique de Trastámara. Baugh includes in his article how:

> On December 6 Edward despatched under the Great Seal a letter to these soldiers of fortune.[2]

He reproduces part of this letter, showing the proposal of Edward III to forbid the English knights and soldiers to attack Castile.

Baugh (1968: 67) gives more information about the letter:

> By the time this letter would have arrived, the Companies were already at Perpignan and some of them in Aragon. Calveley, one of those to whom the letter is addressed, had arrived at Barcelona by November 4. We are trying to cover a gap, the period of time called "the empty years" (1360-1366) in the biography of Chaucer. Reading *Chaucer Life-Records*[3] we see that most of Chaucer's missions abroad were diplomatic missions. Chaucer, at that time, may have been in the Black Prince's service in Aquitaine.

Chaucer's mission was probably to deliver Edward III's letter or, perhaps, as Garbaty[4] titles his article concerning Chaucer's stay in Spain in 1366 with the safe-conduct by Carlos II, he was an agent of the Crown. The secrecy of the mission can be better understood by reading Baugh's words (1968: 61) when, referring to the payment of large sums of money to the Great White Companies, he comments:

> The discussions had to be carried on with great secrecy, at least in the earlier stages, in order not to give Pedro the Cruel warning of

[1] See R. Delachenal 1909-33: P. E. Russell 1955; Albert C. Baugh 1968.
[2] In a note he cites the source: *Foedera* (Record ed., III, ii, p. 779).
[3] Martin M. Crow & Clair C. Olson, *Chaucer Life-Records*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).
[4] Thomas J. Garbaty 1967.

> his impeding danger. How secret they were can be judged by the fact that when Pedro IV laid the plan for a joint invasion of Castile before the courts or Catalan parliament at Barcelona in the middle of 1365, the members were first sworn not to reveal anything that was said. Perhaps it was also in the interest of secrecy that the real purpose of the invasion was concealed under the cloak of crusade against the Moors in the south, although this may have been, as has been suggested, only a pretext to secure the collaboration of the Pope and the financial support of the Church.

Within this context what Honoré-Duvergé[1] suggested may be significant, that is, that Chaucer may have joined the forces of Trastámara. And it is also significant that Chaucer's view of Spain was that of a country in which to go on "a crusade against Moors". Thus Anthony Goodman (1987: 74) says:

> Alfonso XI's campaigns against the Moors reinforced the English view, formed in the thirteenth century, that Castilian kings and nobles had a special role, a divinely ordained task, in defending and extending the boundaries of Cristendom. But the succession struggles between Pedro I and Enrique of Trastamara had a shattering effect on this ideal view… English knights were once more seeking to go on crusade in large numbers. But Pedro's policies discouraged them from going against Granada. Bertrand du Guesclin's justification for invading Castile in 1366 in support of Enrique -with leading English knights in his comp any- was a means of re-opening the way to Granada.

We can also take the Spanish geographical references in *The Canterbury Tales*:[2] "Jubaltare and Septe" (945), "Strayte of Marrok" (464-65), "Gernade" (404), "Algezir, Belmarye" (405) to support this idea. Goodman (1992: 137) again but from a different source comments on Gaunt's view of Spain as follows:

> Was Gaunt aware that his great-great-grandfather, Fernando III was a saint and a hero of the Reconquiesta? The memory of Castile as the great crusading power had long persisted in English noble

[1] Suzanne Honoré-Duvergé 1955.
[2] See Antonio R. León Sendra & Jesús L. Serrano Reyes 1992

> circles: The House of Lancaster associated itself with the revival of his reputation by Alfonso XI in the 1340s.

Chaucer was, without any doubt, very close to these "English noble circles".

We think that Chaucer could have visited Barcelona with the Great White Companies in 1365 and, perhaps, agreeing with Honoré-Duvergé he may have joined the forces of Trastámara under "the cloak of a crusade against the Moors", or he may have been on that side as a spy of the English Crown. This last hypothesis finds support in Chaucer's *The House of Fame*, when the narrator, that is, Chaucer, manifests the reason of his stay:

> "But what doost thou here than?" quod he.
> Quod y, "that wye y tellen the,
> The cause why y stonde here:
> Somme newe tydynges for to lere
> Somme new thinges, y not what
> Tydynges, other this or that,
> Of Love or suche thynges glade.
> For certeynly, he that me made
> To comen hyder, seyde me,
> Y shoulde bothe here and se
> In this place wonder thynges. (1883-1893)

We consider that this is the key to the answer:

> For certeynly, he that me made/ to come hyder

He was obliged to be there. So he was sent there, but what for?

> Somme new thinges, y not waht/ for to lere

These two factors borne out by the quotation above and the term "spy" which appears several times (lines 704, 706, 944, 1128, 1320, 1475, 1689) lead us to, think that he may have been an agent of the Crown.

There are two possible reasons to explain Chaucer's mission to Spain between 1365-1366; firstly, to deliver a letter (it is significant that the eagle is Jove's messenger in the text as Chaucer himself is Edward's messenger), and

secondly, to spy and reconnoitre the whole situation in Spain. We may never know the exact nature of his mission, but we believe that Chaucer's departure "the tenthe day of Decembre" of 1365 was not a dream but an autobiographical detail. His destination was Barcelona where, as Baugh (1968: 63) says: "On January 1, 1366 Pedro IV feasted all the leaders of the Companies." An ironical (close and far away connotations at the same time) reference to a pilgrimage happens to be just few lines after this date:

> As he that wery was forgo
> On pilgrimage myles two
> The corseynt Leonard. (115-117)

It is important to notice that for the reference to the taking of Troy in Book I, the narrator has his source from some words in a "table of bras" (142), but, basically, the main source is a painting on the wall (line 211). We find the following quotation from Albareda's *Historia de Montserrat*:[1]*:* "Entre las telas era notable la que figuraba la toma de Troya, con figuras pequeñísimas". It is also significant how the "hous and site" where the dreamer is in Book I is called: "temple ymad of glas" (120) and "chirche" (473). And the narrator says about this church:

> But not wot I whoo did hem wirche,
> Ne where I am, ne in what contree,
> But now wol I goo out and see,
> Ryght at the wiket, yf y kan
> See where any styring man
> That may me telle where I am. (474-79)

It is clear he was in an unknown country, and the only clue is that,

> For al the feld nas but of sond
> As smal as man may seyet ly
> In the desert of Lybye. (486-88)

Anselm M. Albareda (1974: 142) includes the words of a preacher from the XIV century:

[1] Anselm M. Albareda 1974.

> Vuestros ojos- decía un predicador del siglo XIV- pueden ver y contemplar cómo esta devota cámara de Nuestra Señora María está situada y puesta en un lugar muy desierto y alto.

At the end of Book I he sees the eagle which will carry him to The House of Fame. The flight takes the whole of Book II. The eagle, the vehicle for the narrator to Montserrat, with "wordes to comforte" (572) him, says twice: "Seynte Marye" (573). Albareda (1974: 31) includes the extract of a document of 1285, where it is said: "aquel lugar es llamado Santa María de Montserrat". Immediately after these comforting words, the eagle shows him and us the aim of the journey:

> And ther caas that betyd the is,
> Is for thy lore and for thy prow (578-79)

In this quotation the key term is the aim of learning as when the narrator is asked for the reason of his stay there (lines 1884-1894). The eagle gives him and us new information in the following words:

> And noght oonly fro fer contree
> That ther no tydynge cometh to thee,
> But of thy verray neyghebores,
> That duellen almost at thy dores,
> Thou herist neyther that ne this (647-651)

Certainly, Aquitania was in the neighbourhood of Catalonia. And there is an anticipation of the place in the eagle's confession of its own objective:

> And therfore Joves, thorgh hys grace,
> Wol that I bere the to a place
> Which that hight the Hous of Fame (662-663)

In the whole work we observe the highlighting of several themes that interconnect, overlap and somehow relate the text to Montserrat. One of them is height, a high place, a mountain summit, which is applied many times with reference both to the House of Fame and to the eagle. Nevertheless, the eagle, although he can fly very high, will not land at the House of Fame. The

narrator will have to climb the high mountain. This is a very interesting and important idea to back up our hypothesis as we will explain further on.

It is necessary to point out the importance of this reiterative idea. The narrator emphasizes the idea of the height of the House of Fame not only with the repetition of the word "high", but with other literary resources such as litotes as in line 1117: *Hier stant ther non in Spayne,* or using a metaphor as in the following passage:

> Hir paleys stant, as I shal seye,
> Ryght even in myddes of the weye
> Betwixen hevene and erthe and see. (713-715)

Montserrat is in that middle path, between the earth, the sky and the sea. Any visitor knows the possibility of a beautiful view, from the top of the mountain, not only of part of Aragon and Valence, but of the Balearic Islands too.

And this allusion is brilliantly developed at the end of Book II, when the narrator "adoun gan loken thoo" (896) and describes what he sees. So realistic is the narration that when they are arriving at the venue, the eagle tells Geoffrey:

> Now up the hed, for al ys wel;
> Seynt Julyan, loo, boon hostel!
> Se here the Hous of Fame, lo! (1021-1023)

And here we find another important hint. It is well known that "Seynt Julyan" is the patron of hospitality. Pilgrimages to Montserrat were very famous as from the 12th century. The wish of the eagle ("boon hostel!") is perfectly justified. Albareda (1974: 146) encourages this justification:

> Hasta nuestros predicadores del siglo XIV exhortaban a los fieles a la paciencia y a no preocuparse demasiado por la falta de habitaciones, naturalmente insuficientes para el número de peregrinos que pernoctaban en Montserrat.

And Montserrat is quite near, so that they can hear the murmur of the pilgrims:

> "What?", quod I, "the grete soun,"
> Quod he, "that rumbleth up and doun
> In fames Hous, full of tydynges,
> Bothe of fier speche and chydynges,
> And of fals and soth compouned (1025-29)

They come near the House of Fame:

> And with this words both he and y
> As nygh the place arryved were
> As men may casten with a spere.
> I nyste how, but in a strete
> He sette me fair on my fete,
> And seyde, "walke aventure or cas
> That thou shalt fynde in Fames place? (1046-1053)

Here again we find a very important quotation. Why did the eagle not set him down in the same House of Fame, instead of "in a strete", from where he had to go "on his fete", if the eagle could fly so high? We have found a reasonable answer to this apparent paradox, following the argumentation of our hypothesis. We consider that Chaucer did what Pedro IV did on arriving at Montserrat on 29th April, 1344. Here are the king's own words, included in Albareda's book (1974: 290-91):

> partimos de aquí cabalgando, fuimos al trote hasta el pie de la cuesta de Montserrat donde descabalgamos y ordenamos que las bestias fuesen por el llano de Monistrol y alli nos esperasen. Y nos, con nuestros compañeros subimos dicha cuesta a pie.

Chaucer arrived at Montserrat borne by an eagle following his literary text, but we think that he actually arrived on a horse and then he had to continue on foot in order to climb up the "cuesta". After being set "in a strete" he could see the House of Fame ("I wol yow al the shap devyse", 1113), but it was very high and far away:

> In al that hous that yonder ys (1064)
> Loo, to the Hous of Fame yonder (1070)

The horses waited for Pedro IV and the eagle, parallely, for Chaucer too:

> And here I wol abyden the (1086), the eagle said.

At the end of Book II our author is "in a strete" (1049), walking up to Montserrat, and at the beginning of Book III the narrator takes up the plot again relating how he approaches Montserrat and how difficult it was to climb the mountain:

> I wol yow al the shap devyse
> Of hous and site, and al al the wyse
> How I gan to thys place aproche
> *That stood upon so hygh a roche,*
> *Hier stant ther non in Spayne.*
> *But up I clomb with alle payne,*
> *And though to clymbe it greved me.* (1113-1119)

He was right when he comments that there is no such high place with "hous and site" in Spain. Chaucer is quite explicit on referring to the location of the place: "so high a roche,/ hier stant ther non in Spayne" and "it greved me".

A preacher's words in the XIV century, included in Albareda's (1974: 142) *Historia de Montserrat*, confirms Chaucer's difficulty in climbing up:

> esta devota Cámara de Nuestra Señora Santa María está situada y puesta en un lugar desierto y alto y tiene sus entradas muy ásperas y peligrosas, de donde los peregrinos que aquí vienen pasan afanes, peligros, trabajos y grandes aflicciones.

The impressive appearance of this "high a roche" leads the narrator to wonder about the rock composition: "For hyt lyk alum de glass" (1124). We read in "The Textual Notes of *The Riverside Chaucer* (n. 1124, p. 1141): "potash alum in its crystalline form". It is well known that the stones in Montserrat have this same silver or greyish appearance. The crystalline form was perceived because of the ice as it was winter. At first sight it seemed to be of steel:

> But at laste aspied,
> And found that hit was every del
> A roche of yse, and not of stel (1128-30)

When the narrator sees the house for the first time he comments:

> Al was of ston of beryle,
> Bothe the castel and the tour (1184-85)

Beryl is a mineral of different colours: yellow, green white, blue. We find an exact parallel in the Encyclopaedia *Espasa y Calpe* (1942: 778) when describing the mountain:

> Por su aspecto petrográfico y caracter paleontológico, el macizo del Montserrat puede dividirse en tres zonas bien distintas: inferior, media y superior.

The first includes "calizas verdosas y margas amarillentas […], arcillas y margas verdosas, rojizas"; the second "arenisca gris azulada […], una banda de arcilla rojiza, alternando con otra de caliza amarillenta arenosa"; the third "capas arcillosas y areniscas arcillosas rojizas". The same encyclopaedia (792) gives us the following important information: "Todo el edificio está construido con sillares de piedra de la misma montaña".

Although Napoleon's invasion of Spain caused the destruction of many documents and important works of art we should like to point out the importance of the Romanic church and the cloisters which are highlighted by Albareda (1974: 94) as being the most important elements of the history of Montserrat. The main entry and the facade is full of "babewynes, pynacles, ymageries, tabernacles, compasses, kervynges, corbetz " following the lines 1187-1200 and 1301-1304.

Following our simile of a pilgrim we figure that Chaucer was standing at the entrance, still outside the church, when he hears and watches a real military parade, with musicians and dancers:

> Ther herde I pleyen on an harpe, (1201)
> **…… …… …**
> Tho saugh I stonden hem behynde,

After fro hem, al be hemselve,
Many thousand tymes twelve,
That maden lowde mynstralcies
In cornemuse and shalemyes,
And many other maner pipe,
That craftely begunne to pipe,
Bothe in doucet and in rede,
That ben at festes with the brede;
And many flwte and liltyng horn,
And pipes made of grene corn,
As han thise lytel herde-gromes
That kepen bestis in the bromes.

Is Baugh's (1968: 63) information of any significance here?: "On January 1, 1366 Pedro IV feasted all the leaders of the Companies". The words "doucet" and "festes" underline the obvious answer to our question. Among these people, the quotation "Pipes of the Duche tonge" (1234) reveals to us the presence of the Dutch in the Great White Companies. And among the dances, "Reyes" (1236), which is a Spanish word and not a word translated from Dutch as is suggested in the "Explanatory Notes" of *The Riverside Chaucer* (n. 1235-26, p. 986), gives us another backing for our hypothesis: we consider that "Reyes" is, certainly, a round dance, the Catalonian "sardana", which is danced by a circle of dancers with their hands raised and joined, forming the shape of a King's crown.

On the other hand, there is a direct allusion to Catalonia:

And alle that used clarion
In Cataloigne and Aragon,
That in her tyme famous were
To lerne, saugh I trumpe there. (1247-250)

We think that the verb "to lerne" shows an implicit reference to the old famous choir of Montserrat. Chaucer continues describing the feast showing that there were wizards, sleight-of-hand artists, conjurors, witches, enchantresses, etc. Also when Chaucer says:

I gan romen til I fond
The castel-yate on my ryght hond

Which that sowel carven was
That never such another nas (1293-96),

apart from the strong indication implied in the same term 'romen' as a pilgrimage lexical item we think that he is referring to Jaime de Viver's craftsmanship, following the information given by Albareda (1974: 54):

> Frente a la que después fue cámara abacial, levantó un esplendido portal, conocido con el nombre de la Reja.

Then, following our pilgrimage simile, he enters (*"But in I wente"*, 1307) and *Ther mette I crynge many oon,*

"A larges, larges, hold up wel!
God save the lady of thys pel (1308-1310)

The pilgrims singing the famous "Salve" and wearing their typical clothes are described when they come out of Viver's hall in the following lines:

And faste comen out of halle
And shoken nobles and sterlynges.
And somme corouned were as kynges,
With corounes wroght ful of losenges (1314-1317)

But these pilgrims, kings at arms, are not only the soldiers prepared to invade Castile, but also:

That pursevantes and heraudes
That crien ryche folkes laudes (1321-22)

These "ryche folkes laudes" were famous in Montserrat. And a few lines below we find another reference to the Great White Companies:

Of famous folk that han ybeen
In Auffrike, Europe, and Asye, (1338-39)

Most of the leaders were famous for their military campaign in these places. When Chaucer continues describing the hall we again find new parallels:

Ne of the halle eke waht nede is
To tellen yow that every wal
Of it, and flor, and roof, and al
Was plated half a foote thikke
Of gold, and that nas nothyng wikke,
But for to prove in alle wyse,
As fyn as ducat in Venyce,
If which to lite al in my pouche is?
And they were set as thik of nouchis
Ful of the fynest stones faire
That men rede in the Lapidaire,
As grasses growen in a mede.
But hit were al to longe to rede
the names, and therfore I pace. (1342-1355)

Albareda (1974: 151) writes:

> De los siglos XII y XIII, no tenemos referencia alguna del tesoro montserratino. En el siglo XIV, en cambio, son frecuentes las alusiones a las joyas de Montserrat. Se decía a los peregrinos: "Si queréis mirar el altar y la sacristía y las paredes de esta devota capilla de Nuestra Señora Santa María, allí veréis el testimonio y recuerdo de todas estas cosas. Allí hay muchos relicarios de oro y de plata, muchos cálices y palios y muy ricas vestiduras y otros riquísimos ornamentos; muchas lámparas de plata y otros objetos ricos y devotos."

Following Albareda's words we find that "las joyas de más valor eran guardadas en el monasterio, y no se mostraban a todos los visitantes". Chaucer, who may have been one of these "visitantes", expresses the same idea:

But in this lusty and ryche place
That Fames halle called was,
Ful moche prees of folk ther nas,
Ne crodyng for to mochil prees. (1356-59)

When he sees and describes the goddess Fame, the parallelism with Santa María de Montserrat is surprisingly close. The most attractive aspect for him is the place where she is:

> But al on hye, above a dees,
> Sitte in a see imperiall,
> That mad was of a rubee all
> Which that carbuncle ys ycalled,
> Y saugh, perpetually ynstalled,
> A femynyne creature. (1360-65)

All these details, the high dais, the chair, and the "perpetually ystalled femynyne creature" can be applied to Santa María de Montserrat.

And at first sight ("For alther-first", 1368), he sees a little statue, because it is "al on hye" and he says:

> Me thoughte that she was so lyte
> That the leghte of a cubite
> Was lengere than she seemed be (1369-71)

Following *Espasa y Calpe* (1942: 791) we informed that "El conjunto mide 95 cm. de alto por 35 de ancho." Really "She was so lyte"…

Although the divine image has suffered many changes, and we cannot find "hir fet she erthe reighte" (1374), but on her right hand, nor "weren on the bestes foure/ that Goddis trone gunne honoure/ As Hohn writ in th'Apocalips" (1383-85), we can deduce from the main front of the old Church of Santa María that the beasts represent the four Evangelists.

Today we can identify the "burned gold hyt shoon to see" (1387). Apart from "the perry and the richesse" he says:

> And lord, the herenyssh melodye
> Of songes ful or armonye
> I herde aboute her trone y songe. (1395-97)

Albareda (1974: 163) is our source once again to support our hypothesis to demonstrate how this musical practice was an important and particularly characteristic element of Montserrat:

> La presencia constante de un coro de voces blancas, de un grupo de jóvenes instruidos en el arte musical, permitió a Montserrat incorporar, sin restricciones, los adelantos de todas las épocas a las solemnidades del culto.

When Chaucer says he saw "Fro the dees, many a peler" (1421), we think that he might be referring to elaborate rich candles. A stained glass window of Josephus, who is cited "upon a piler stonde on high" (1430) can be seen by present day visitors.

When Chaucer was about to leave the church, he saw different groups of pilgrims "that ther come entryng into the halle" (1527) from "sondry regiouns" (1529), and of "alleskynnes condiciouns" (1530). These nine groups of pilgrims or companies who asked for the favours of the goddess Fame entered in an orderly fashion as the groups of pilgrims usually did. Albareda (1974: 141) reiterates this idea: "Cerca del monasterio se ordenaban procesionalmente".

So great was the number of pilgrims that

> Been al the dores opened wide,
> And be nyght echon unshette (1952-53)

This same idea is included in Albareda's work (1974: 30) when he states:

> La afluencia de peregrinos era inintermitente; las puertas de la iglesia no se cerraban de noche ni de día.

At the end of book III, lines 2145-2154:

> For I saugh rennynge every wight
> As faste as that they hadden myght,
> And everych cried, "What thing is that?"
> And somme sayde, "I not never what."
> And whan they were alle on an hepe
> Tho behynde begunne up lepe,
> And clamben up on other faste,
> And up the nose and yën kaste,
> And troden fast on others heles,
> And starnpen, as men doon aftir eles.

This seems to have a close relation with a local habit in Catalonia: to form human towers by standing on the shoulders of one below as a proof of ability and risk taking.

Finally, following the development of our hypothesis of Chaucer's historical inspiration for his *House of Fame* we claim that the "man of gret auctorite" (2158) was Pedro IV, who had gone up to Montserrat according to Albareda (1974: 290):

> en 1343, antes de emprender la campaña contra Jaime III de Mallorca, subió a la Montaña Santa y, al besar la mano de la Virgen, se puso en el dedo uno de los anillos que llevaba a la imagen, como prenda de protección.

At that time, 1366, the campaign was against Pedro I, el Cruel.

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Universidad de Córdoba

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