

each killed the other, as you have heard, and did not possess the treasure.

Thus does our Lord God repay traitors: they went seeking death, and found it in such manner as they deserved. The wise man fled from it wisely. The gold remained free as before.

THOMAS OF CANTIMPRÉ

From *Liber de Apibust*†

Exemplum 103

In the city of Louvain, within the boundaries of Brabant we saw a noble and worthy citizen who, rising to go to matins on the holy night of Good Friday, passed in front of a tavern in which dissolute young men were sitting, playing at dice and vying with one another in blasphemies and oaths. Continuing on his way, this citizen found men in the street near the tavern who were making loud lamentation over a certain stranger who was badly wounded and bleeding. When he asked the men who had inflicted these wounds they answered: "Those young men who are playing dice." Entering the tavern, the citizen upbraided the young men for playing on that night and asked them sternly why they had so cruelly beaten the stranger who had been with them. Much astonished, the young men denied that anyone had come in since they had sat down, and protested that they had wounded no one either by word or blow. Going forth quickly with the citizen, they sought for the bleeding stranger but could not find him. Having now recovered their senses, each of them realized that by their terrible oaths they had again insulted the Lord Christ and by their taunts had crucified him afresh.

† Trans. Carleton Brown, *The Pardoner's Tale*, by Geoffrey Chaucer (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1935), pp. xvii–xviii. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press. Thomas Cantimpré (or Chantimpré) was born in Brabant ca. 1200 and died ca. 1270; the story here translated was written sometime before 1263. As an exemplum, it is less a tale in its own right than a narrative abstract that a preacher could use to illustrate and make vivid his theme and that he would characteristically expand in the telling through further dialogue and detail to the level of his ability and the needs of his sermon audience.

The Prioress's Prologue and Tale

Stories of the miracles performed by the Virgin Mary constitute one of the most familiar genres in medieval literature, and there are many analogues, in a variety of languages, to the *Prioress's Tale*. The richest and in many ways the closest to Chaucer is a fifteenth-century Latin version, here translated into English for the first time by A. G. Rigg. We also include a verse analogue from the Vernon manuscript, an important fourteenth-century collection of English religious and didactic literature. The song sung by Chaucer's "litel clergeoun," the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*, is printed both in Latin and in Cardinal Newman's English translation. Finally, the historical context of the tale's anti-Semitism is illustrated by a thirteenth-century papal bull concerned with claims of Jewish murder of Christian children, such as the one described by the Prioress in her story.

The Story of the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*†

The Mother of Grace never forgets those who remember her, and so the memory of her should be continually brought to mind; praise should be lavished upon her, and we should preach her mighty works as often as possible. Although the treasure-chest of all goodness has no need of our good offices, nevertheless it is beneficial and salutary for us to heap praises on her goodness. I have, therefore, decided to take care to entrust the following chapter to writing, so that the story may come to the notice of future generations, and so that those who hear it may be inspired all the more deeply and firmly to remember the Virgin.

There was once a certain boy born and bred in the city of Toledo; by the diligence of his mother he was sent to be instructed at school; he learned to dot his "i"s and to make the forms of letters; he learned the

† Translated and annotated for this volume by A. G. Rigg. The original Latin is printed in *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, ed. W. F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1941), pp. 480–85, from the unique MS Trinity College, Cambridge 0.9.38. The MS was compiled ca. 1450, mainly from material written much earlier; on the other hand, several stylistic features of this story resemble those of another Latin narrative in the MS, and both of them may have been "retouched" by the scribe with his own rhetorical embellishments (such as frequent biblical quotation for purely literary effect, not always aptly). There is, however, no a priori reason for saying that Chaucer could not have known the story in a version very close to this. The punctuation in SA is frequently deficient, and the following corrections should be made: 480/28 for *precanere* read *precauere*; 481/n.3 MS reads *diffitetur*; 481/22 delete *animis*; 482/41 *cunque* read *scilicet*; 483/22 *quanto* read *quanta*; 483/32 *suo* read *sue*; 484/20 *monumentum* read *monimentum*. Several unnecessary emendations of typical MS spellings are made in SA. The following emendations are necessary: 480/11 for *figura* read *figuram*; 481/6–7 *doctam* read *docta*; 483/22 *que* read *qui*; 484/9 *excitato* read *excitatus*.

alphabet, and how to marry letter to letters and figure to figures properly. When he had learned how to join letters, he gladly passed on to music, in order that the understanding of the voice might be open to him as well as knowledge acquired by words.

Every day he dutifully made his reading, according to what the authority of his teacher required of him. Each day, when he had fulfilled his educational duty, the hour of mealtime followed, and this little boy then used to go to the house of a canon of Mother Church; by the help of this canon the boy relieved his hunger and cheated the demands of that most importunate of debt-collectors, his stomach. He went there in hope of satisfying his hunger with the rich man's crumbs; every day he was given a measure of the crumbs which fell from the table of his masters and of the fragments left over by those who had eaten. He carefully collected everything that was given him, not in a shepherd's bag but in a little pocket at his breast; for his own use he kept the smallest and most worthless scraps, setting aside the bigger and better portions for his mother. O Lord, you who look into and know our hearts—you know what lies within man!

One day the boy was assigned as his daily schoolwork that sweet and delightful antiphon in praise of the Virgin Mother, whose opening line is "Alma Redemptoris Mater."¹ The boy was anxious not to suffer the terrifying taunts of his schoolmaster, and so he carefully learned the antiphon by heart, and meditated on it, both because it was difficult to learn and because it is a delightful song to sing. In my opinion, however, he learned and sang the antiphon so often not so much because of the sweetness of the song as because of the memory and love of the Virgin Mother. For more worthy than the string of the harp is the heart of the player who prays out of love.² The judge who judges the hearts of men is more affected by the love from the heart than by the loudness of the harp, more by the prayer than by the voice which makes the prayer: when one learns to pray in faith one also learns to speak with beauty. Why is this? Because the voice never sounds pleasant unless the spirit leads the voice and prayer in the singing.

One day, when the hour of breakfast had arrived, the boy, who had earned rest by his hard work, was released from school; he practiced with effect what he had learned from usage, like the calf of Ephraim who was taught to love treading.³ He proceeded in the direction of the house of the canon by whose mercy he used to relieve his own misfortune. By chance he happened to go into the courtyards of Jewry where that stiffnecked race lives, that detestable family—the race which objects to the fruitfulness of the Virgin Mary and denies that the Son of God was made incarnate in her womb. A great number of the sons of the synagogue had gathered together in a house there,

1. The hymn was probably composed in the eleventh century; for text and translation, see p. 448.
2. *Sources and Analogues* notes the presence of a rhyme on which this conceit is based in another MS, but in fact a later hand has added it in this text also; the rhyme puns on *amor*, *clamor*, *vox*, *votum*, etc.
3. Hosea 10:11 (all quotations are from the Vulgate): the line is not clarified by the biblical passage.

strengthening by their number that brotherhood of iniquity, that oppressive branch of sin. The boy arrived close by the house, singing the antiphon we have mentioned above, the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*. His intention was to pass through the area, but he did not get through unharmed. Among the Jews was a certain young Hebrew boy who had been taught a little Latin and understood the Latin idiom. They heard the song, and wondered what it was; Satan came among them, and one of them asked the Hebrew who knew Latin what the Christian boy was singing. The Hebrew replied that the boy was singing an antiphon composed in praise of the Virgin Mary; its delightful sweetness was intended to inspire the minds of the listeners to the memory of Mary. At the mention of the name of the Virgin, the Jew cried out; Satan put it into his heart to betray and kill the innocent boy.

He therefore treacherously asked his colleague to bring the boy in: if he couldn't do what was required simply by asking, he was to offer the boy a bribe. So the innocent boy was summoned and brought in, introduced—or, rather, traduced. They took firm hold of him; "their rejoicing was as that of him who eats the poor in secret."⁴ Without delay they made themselves ready for the murder, and prepared to condemn the innocent boy to death. The lamb was seized by the wolves; one of them set a knife to his throat, and his tongue was cruelly cut out; his stomach was opened and his heart and liver taken out. They imagined that they were offering a double sacrifice, firstly by cutting the throat from which emerged the voice of praise, and secondly by tearing out the heart which incessantly meditated on the memory of the Virgin. They thought they were obeying God, but in fact they were making a sacrifice not to God but to the devils of hell. It is usual for malice to cease after death, but although they had killed the boy, their malice did not come to an end: they threw his corpse into a place of the coarsest filth, where nature purges itself in secret.

Immediately the blessed mother of the Redeemer arrived by his side; her gracious mercy was present; she appeared to place a pebble (which looked very like a stone) on and within the mouth of the dead boy. When the pebble had been put in place, the boy's heart and throat opened up; his voice and power of speech returned, and he began to sing the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*.

In the meantime the boy's mother was anxious at his delay: he was her only son. She was alarmed at his unusually long delay, and suddenly began to be afraid and frightened at his daylong absence. For a mother does not easily forget the child of her womb and the joy that a man is born into the world. Thus, scarcely in control of herself, she set aside her domestic task, and went out into the courtyards and walked through the streets of the town; everywhere she looked at the passersby, and carefully scrutinized everyone she met. But nowhere did she see the face of her son. She walked on and on, into the Jewish quarter, scarcely able to support herself for her grief: her soul slept for weariness when she pictured as dead the child whom she had loved in

4. Habakkuk 3:14.

life. She was now close to the house where the progeny of vipers had committed the crime. Suddenly she heard her son singing the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*: that is, she heard his voice, but she saw no one. She stopped in amazement, but just as a sheep recognizes its lamb by its bleat alone, so this mother recognized her own son by the uniqueness of his singing voice: she was in labour close to death when she bore him, and so now she was in labour again, shouting and not sparing her voice. She could not put a guard on her mouth; however hoarse her throat became through her shouting, she incessantly cried out at the doors of her bloody enemies, "Give me back my son! Give me back my son!" As she repeated the words again and again, her grief was opened up. Time and again, as she stood outside the house she begged the Jews for her son, but the cruel and treacherous Jews would not give her any satisfaction; on stumbling feet she went to the house of the canon, and told him the whole sequence of events. In great grief and sorrow for the boy, the canon came to the house and demanded back the body from the murderers, but the perfidious Jews still refused to satisfy his demand in any way. Nevertheless he also heard and recognized the voice of the innocent child sweetly singing the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*.

Together they ran to the Archbishop of the city of Toledo and told him the sequence of events. He gathered a huge company of men and quickly went to investigate. He entered the guilty and treacherous house, breaking down the doors in his way, and roughly ordered the killer to produce the remains of the murdered innocent as quickly as possible—for he was sure that the boy was dead, in view of the great secrecy with which the malicious Jews had hidden him. All of them had conspired in the murder, but the main culprit in the murder, fearing the majesty of the Archbishop, confessed the truth of all his wickedness—how, out of envy at the mother of the Redeemer, he had extinguished the life of an innocent child, just because he had sung such a sweet song in honour of the Virgin Mother. After his confession of the crime—or rather his conviction—he put himself under the judgment of the Archbishop, and asked him for his mercy rather than his condemnation. He led the Archbishop by the hand, for all was darkness and gloom where the boy lay dead in the depths. The singing voice was their leader and guide, and at last they arrived where the dead boy miraculously continued to sing the *Alma Redemptoris Mater* without ceasing—for when the dead boy's voice had finished the end of the antiphon, it would begin the same song over again throughout the whole day.

The boy was lifted out, like a second Joseph out of the pit;⁵ with speed and rejoicing he was taken to the church. The song to the Virgin did not leave his lips; continually he sang the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*. The people were summoned, and the clergy sat down in complete devotion. The Archbishop began to celebrate the divine office in honour of the blessed Virgin. The moment came when the congregation was ordered to be silent; the preacher began to speak, bringing a

5. Genesis 37:28.

message of salvation through the gospel. At this moment the boy also became quiet, and placed "a door of circumstance"⁶ on his lips, so that the words of the gospel would not be misheard or misunderstood because of the sound of his voice.

The congregation listened with faith and devotion to the reading, and when the message of salvation was over, once again the boy miraculously began to sing the antiphon. How great then was the pious devotion of the clergy's prayers! How great was the effusion of tears among the congregation in its place, when the dead boy began again what he had just stopped, going through in his song what he had just passed over in silence! The health-giving Host was offered devoutly on the altar and the memory of the Lord's Passion worshipped, and all this time the boy's voice continued to sing of the purity of Mary. When the mysteries of our Redemption had been performed, the Archbishop turned to the congregation and delivered a sermon in praise of the innocence of the Virgin—though while he reverently called to memory the mother, of course he did not neglect to honour Christ as well. At the end of the sermon he wept and encouraged the clergy and people altogether to beseech the Virgin's son with the aroma of devotion and the sweet scent of pious prayer, and to pray by the merits of his mother and the prayers of the precious Virgin that Christ should deign to restore the boy to life, and breathe the breath of life into the dead corpse.

The clergy and the people poured out their souls within themselves, giving out their hearts like water in the sight of the Lord, letting their tears flow in a willing shower in the evening, a shower of tears, for their tears "were on their cheeks."⁷ They prayed in supplication; in faith they beseeched; they were not beset by a cloud of mistrust about the efficacy of their prayer, for it went straight up to the Trinity: their faith swiftly penetrated to heaven, and their blessed trust was faithfully and joyfully repaid. In reply to their public and private prayers, the Virgin Mother (as I imagine) looked into the face of Christ and beseeched him in what I picture as a familiar fashion; and immediately the boy's cut throat was allowed to breathe again, his previously torn flesh was restored fully, and his tongue, which sang divine praise, was given back to him; his heart and liver which had been removed were put back again, or were created anew by divine aid. His soul was summoned back again into its vessel and vehicle, and the boy became whole again; the immortal spirit was again married to the dead flesh. He who was dead came to life again and returned; the boy awoke, aroused, as it were, from a deep sleep. Even now he did not cease his praise of Mary, and his sweet voice continued to sing the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*. Truly blessed are you, Mother of the Redeemer, for coming to the help of the dead boy who lacked the power to rise again: she who, to the amazement of Nature,⁸ gave birth to her own creator,

6. Psalms 140:3.

7. Lamentations 1:2; cf. Joel 2:23.

8. The phrase *Natura mirante*, "to Nature's amazement," is taken from the antiphon *Alma Redemptoris Mater*.

again astonished Nature by pouring back the vital spirit into the dead child through the intercession of her prayer.

At the sight of this amazing miracle, the congregation of the faithful rejoiced, and at the sight they dissolved into tears: they still wondered if it was an illusion. When they looked at the revived boy's face, they discovered the pebble which Mary had placed in his mouth; they removed it, and immediately he stopped his singing of the antiphon. He lost the impelling power of speech which before had not allowed him to be silent. The pebble was placed as a sign in the cathedral church, to act as a monument of the event and as evidence of the miracle, to be kept there for ever.

The Archbishop now asked the boy to tell him the whole sequence and order of the affair, and he answered the pontiff to his satisfaction, giving him a full and true account of the whole series of events—the crime of the Jews, his own martyrdom and the assistance of the Virgin Mary. He attributed everything to the Mother of God: whatever had happened to him was done by the Mother of Grace, who had thus aided his wretchedness from the abundance of her mercy. As he told his story, he pointed with his finger at the murderer, but this boy, who had been raised from death, prayed humbly but insistently that his murderer should not be condemned to die for the crime. At last the boy rose, and gave thanks fully to his saviour, the Virgin, and, now made whole in every particular, lived long after in the city of Toledo.

The Jew was more sure of his punishment than hopeful for mercy, but after seeing the miracle he confessed himself guilty and worthy of execution; nevertheless, he asked first to be bathed by the saving water of baptism. The Archbishop was more eager for the saving of a soul than for the punishment of the crime; he baptized the Jew and entrusted him to the church; having marked him with the sign of our faith, he remitted the penalty and pardoned the crime. Afterward the Jew, who had before been the most impious persecutor of the name of the Virgin, became her most pious devotee. There was also an infidel who witnessed the miracle and who became a member of the Christian faith. Thus, in the faith of Christ, the two walls of the cornerstone, from both circumcised and uncircumsised,⁹ were joined together. The second man, now a believer instead of an infidel, was prosperous and very rich: he built a church in honour of the Virgin Mother, where her memory is memorably celebrated. Thus the kindly Mother of the Redeemer helps everyone with success; by her deserts may she commend to God those of us who are mindful of her, and help them by her good actions. AMEN.

9. The image of the two walls meeting at the cornerstone comes from Ephesians 2:11–22 and Psalms 117:22, the antiphon for the Magnificat on December 22. The passage was interpreted in this way, as the union of circumcised and uncircumcised, by Gregory: see *The Christ of Cynewulf*, ed. A. S. Cook (1900; Hamden: Archon Books, 1964), p. 75.

A Miracle of Our Lady†

"How the Jewes, in despit^o of Ure Lady, threwe
a chyld in a gonge"^o scorn
privy

Wose^o loveth wel Ure Ladi, Whoever
Heo^o wol quiten his wille wel whi,¹ She
Othur^o in his lyf or at his ende,
The ladi is so freo^o and hende.^o Eiher
generous / gracious
5 Hit fel sumtyme^o in Parys,^o It happened once / Paris
As witnesseth in Holy Writ storys,
In the cite bifel this cas:^o case, adventure
there was / income
A pore child was^o of porchas,^o
That with the beggeri that he con wynne²
10 He fond^o sumdel what of^o his kinne— supported / certain of
His fader, his moder, and eke himself.
He begged in cite bi^o everi half.^o in every section
skills / knew
The child non othur craftus^o couthe^o
But winne hys lyfode^o with his mouthe. livelihood
15 The childe vois was swete and cler;
Men lusted^o his song with riht good cher. listened to
With his song that was ful swete
He gat mete^o from strete to strete. obtained food
Men herked^o his song ful likyngly^o listened to / pleasurably
20 Hit was an antinne^o of Ure Lady;
He song that antinne everiwher,
I-called Alma Redemptoris Mater,
That is forthrightly^o to mene^o plainly, simply / mean
God's / chaste
25 Hevene gate and sterre of se,^o star of the sea
Save thi peple from synne and we."^o woe
That song was holden deyntheous;^o
The child song hit from hous to hous. considered precious
For^o he song hit so lykynglye,^o Because / pleasingly
30 The Jewes hedde^o alle to hym envye. had
Til hit fel on a Setersday^o Saturday
The childe wey thorw the Jewerie^o lay; the Jewish quarter
The Jewes hedden that song in hayn,^o hate
Therefore thei schope^o the child be slayn. made plans that
35 So lykyngly the child song ther,
So lustily song he never er.^o before
On^o of the Jewes malicious One

† Text based on *The Minor Poems of the Vernon MS*, ed. Carl Horstmann and F. J. Furnivall, EETS o.s. 98, 117 (London, 1892, 1901), I. 141–45. Reprinted with permission of the Council of the Early English Text Society. The MS was made in the late fourteenth century, sometime after 1382, and is a vast miscellany of religious or didactic pieces written in Middle English and Anglo-Norman. It once included a comprehensive collection of Miracles of the Virgin—the index lists forty-two—but most of that part of the MS was destroyed long ago. Only eight Miracles, of which this is the second, survive in full; a ninth is fragmentary.

1. She will for that (reason) repay well his determination.
2. Who with the money that he earned by begging.

With worschepe thei ladden that holi liche.°	body
In to the munstre° whon thei kem,°	minster, church / came
Bigonne the masse of requiem,°	Requiem Mass
As for the dede men is wont.°	customary
140 But thus sone thei weren i-stunt:°	astounded
The cors aros in heore° presens,	their
Bigon then "Salve sancta parens."°	"Hail, holy parent" (antiphon)
Men mihte wel witen° the sothe° therbi:	know / truth
The child hedde i-seryet Ur Swete Ladi,	
145 That worschepe° him so on erthe her°	honored / here
And broughte his soule to blisse al cler.	
Therefore I rede° that everi mon	advise
Serve that ladi wel as he con,	
And love hire in his beste wyse.°	way
150 Heo wol wel quite° him his servise.	repay
Now, Marie, for thi muchele° miht,	great
Help us to hevене that is so briht!	

Alma Redemptoris Mater†

*Alma Redemptoris Mater quae pervia coeli
Porta manes, et stella maris, succurre cadenti,
Surgere qui curat, populo; tu quae genuisti,
Natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem,
Virgo prius ac posterius, Gabrielis ab ore,
Sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere.*

Kindly Mother of the Redeemer, who art ever of heaven
The open gate, and the star of the sea, aid a fallen people,
Which is trying to rise again; thou who didst give birth,
While Nature marveled how, to thy Holy Creator,
Virgin both before and after, from Gabriel's mouth
Accepting the All hail, be merciful toward sinners.

(trans. John Henry Newman)

† This is one of four antiphons of the Blessed Virgin Mary used to conclude Compline, the final hour of the canonical day. Each is assigned to a different portion of the church year, the present antiphon being sung from Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent through February 1. Cardinal Newman's translation is printed from *Tracts for the Times* 75 (3.23 in the bound editions of 1840–42, rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1969).

POPE GREGORY X

[On Christian Mistreatment of Jews]†

Gregory, bishop, servant of the servants of God, extends greetings and the apostolic benediction to the beloved sons in Christ, the faithful Christians, to those here now and to those in the future. Even as it is not allowed to the Jews in their assemblies presumptuously to undertake for themselves more than that which is permitted them by law, even so they ought not to suffer any disadvantage in those [privileges] which have been granted them. Although they prefer to persist in their stubbornness rather than to recognize the words of their prophets and the mysteries of the Scriptures, and thus to arrive at a knowledge of Christian faith and salvation; nevertheless, inasmuch as they have made an appeal for our protection and help, we therefore admit their petition and offer them the shield of our protection through the clemency of Christian piety. In so doing we follow in the footsteps of our predecessors of blessed memory, the popes of Rome—Calixtus, Eugene, Alexander, Clement, Celestine, Innocent, and Honorius.

We decree moreover that no Christian shall compel them or any one of their group to come to baptism unwillingly. But if any one of them shall take refuge of his own accord with Christians, because of conviction, then, after his intention will have been manifest, he shall be made a Christian without any intrigue. For, indeed, that person who is known to have come to Christian baptism not freely, but unwillingly, is not believed to possess the Christian faith.

Moreover no Christian shall presume to seize, imprison, wound, torture, mutilate, kill, or inflict violence on them; furthermore no one shall presume, except by judicial action of the authorities of the country, to change the good customs in the land where they live for the purpose of taking their money or goods from them or from others.

In addition, no one shall disturb them in any way during the celebration of their festivals, whether by day or by night, with clubs or stones or anything else. Also no one shall exact any compulsory service of them unless it be that which they have been accustomed to render in previous times.

Inasmuch as the Jews are not able to bear witness against the Christians, we decree furthermore that the testimony of Christians against Jews shall not be valid unless there is among these Christians some Jew who is there for the purpose of offering testimony.

Since it happens occasionally that some Christians lose their Christian children, the Jews are accused by their enemies of secretly

† From Jacob Rader Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World. A Source Book: 317–1791*, rev. ed., intro. Marc Saperstein (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College P, 1999), pp. 170–72. Reprinted with the permission of Hebrew Union College Press. We have omitted Marcus's historical commentary. Gregory's bull is dated 7 October 1272. The first four paragraphs repeat language from earlier papal bulls that attempted to protect Jews. For the historical context of this letter and an edition of the Latin text, see Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century*, vol. II, ed. Kenneth R. Stow (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1989), pp. 1–45, 116–20.

carrying off and killing these same Christian children and of making sacrifices of the heart and blood of these very children. It happens, too, that the parents of these children or some other Christian enemies of these Jews secretly hide these very children in order that they may be able to injure these Jews, and in order that they may be able to extort from them a certain amount of money by redeeming them from their straits. And most falsely do these Christians claim that the Jews have secretly and furtively carried away these children and killed them, and that the Jews offer sacrifice from the heart and the blood of these children, since their law in this matter precisely and expressly forbids Jews to sacrifice, eat, or drink the blood, or to eat the flesh of animals having claws. This has been demonstrated many times at our court by Jews converted to the Christian faith: nevertheless very many Jews are often seized and detained unjustly because of this.¹

We decree, therefore, that Christians need not be obeyed against Jews in a case or situation of this type, and we order that Jews seized under such a silly pretext be freed from imprisonment, and that they shall not be arrested henceforth on such a miserable pretext, unless—which we do not believe—they be caught in the commission of the crime. We decree that no Christian shall stir up anything new against them, but that they should be maintained in that status and position in which they were in the time of our predecessors, from antiquity till now.

We decree, in order to stop the wickedness and avarice of bad men, that no one shall dare to devastate or to destroy a cemetery of the Jews or to dig up human bodies for the sake of getting money. Moreover, if any one, after having known the content of this decree, should—which we hope will not happen—attempt audaciously to act contrary to it, then let him suffer punishment in his rank and position, or let him be punished by the penalty of excommunication, unless he makes amends for his boldness by proper recompense. Moreover, we wish that only those Jews who have not attempted to contrive anything toward the destruction of the Christian faith be fortified by the support of such protection. . . .

1. On the child-murder libel, see Gavin I. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1990), chaps. 9–11, and esp. chap. 12; also *The Blood Libel Legend: A Casebook in Anti-Semitic Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1991). It should be noted that this papal bull, like others before it, had little effect overall on Christian attitudes toward Jews in the Middle Ages.

The Prologue and Tale of Sir Thopas

Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas* is a parody of popular Middle English romances, particularly those written in tail-rhyme stanzas (rhyming couplets bound together by shorter lines ending in a single repeated rhyme). Almost every feature of *Thopas*—its metrics, its conventional diction, its scenes of the hero's questing, arming, encountering a giant, and falling in love—can be found in one or another of the many romances that it sports with. As an example of this genre, we print a very small portion of a very long poem, *Guy of Warwick*, alluded to in line 899 of Chaucer's tale. Guy's military and amorous successes represent the typical exploits of romance heroes and thus suggest a norm against which to consider how Thopas conducts himself in battle and in love.

From *Guy of Warwick*†

God graunt hem heven blis to mede°	heaven's bliss as a reward
That herken to mi romaunce rede,°	Who listen to my tale readily
Al of a gentil° knight.	noble
The best bodi° he was at nede°	person / in (times of) need
5 That ever might bistriden stede,°	sit on a horse
And freest° founde in fight.	most valorous
The word of him ful wide it ran.	
Over al this warld the priis he wan°	he took the prize
As man most° of might.	greatest
10 Balder bern° was non in bi.°	A bolder man / in any place (lit., in town)
His name was hoten sir Gii°	called Sir Guy
Of Warwick, wise and wight.°	valiant
Wight he was, for sothe to say,°	to tell the truth
And holden for priis° in everi play°	considered worthy / i.e., activity
15 As knight of gret bounte.°	goodness
Out of this lond he went his way	

† Text adapted from *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, ed. Julius Zupitza, EETS e.s. 49 (London, 1887; rpt. 1966), pp. 384–88, 394–96. Reprinted with permission of the Council of the Early English Text Society. There are various Middle English versions of this thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman historical romance. We print a passage from the tail-rhyme portion of the version in the Auchinleck manuscript, written in the 1330s in London and conceivably read by Chaucer. This passage occurs in the second half of the poem; Guy is returning to England after many displays of heroism in adventures overseas, thus proving his worthiness to marry the woman he loves, Felice, daughter of the Earl of Warwick.