

PRAYING BEFORE THE IMAGE OF MARY: CHAUCER'S *PRIORESS'S TALE*, VII 502–12

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The focus of this essay is praying before images, specifically those of Mary before which the little clergeon is said to pray in the *Prioress's Tale* (VII 502–12).¹ By contextualizing the clergeon's devotion to Mary's image among historical medieval religious images, it becomes possible to add the perspective of religious art to the scholarship addressing Marian allusions that have been incorporated into the narrative.² The visual perspective enlarges our sense of this miracle of the Virgin as popular literature; images, not Latin Scripture, were intended as an aid to the piety of the *lewd*. Consideration of the use of religious images by the laity and of ecclesiastical thinking about their veneration sheds light, moreover, on the question of how appropriate is this telling by a prioress of a tale about childhood piety.³

C. David Benson has called the *Prioress's Tale* “a work of celebration and prayer.”⁴ The prayerful prologue uses the word *laude* twice (VII 455, 460) within the first eight lines of a 35-line invocation addressed partly to the Lord (14 lines) but mostly to the Virgin Mary (21 lines). The miracle of the Virgin, one of those “tales of wonder attributed to Mary's intercession” that the Prioress goes on to recount, turns out to be a narrative with exactly the right register.⁵ It belongs to a popular genre perfect for “laude precious” coming from “the mouth of children” (VII 455, 457), to whom the nun likens herself. Early in the *Prioress's Tale*, the nun tells us that a little clergeon attending a Christian school somewhere in Asia has at seven years of age learned from his mother to kneel and pray the *Hail Mary* whenever he passes an image of the Virgin:

Among thise children was a wydwes sone,
A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,
And eek also, where as he saugh th'ymage
Of Cristes mooder, hadde he in usage,

As hym was taughte, to knele adoun and seye
His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath thys wydwe hir litel sone ytaught
Oure blisful Lady, Cristes mooder deere,
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
For sely child wol alday soone leere.

(VII 502–12)

On his way to the “litel scole of Cristen folk” that “stood / Doun at the ferther ende” (VII 495–96) of the Jewish community existing amidst “Cristene folk” (VII 489) “in Asye, in a greet citee” (VII 488), the little schoolboy evidently encountered images of the Virgin Mary, perhaps painted, perhaps sculpted (we are not told which). It is also unclear whether there might be religious shrines or churches in the Jewish part of the city belonging to Christians, like the little clergeon’s school located at the far end of the “Jewerye” (VII 489), or if such places where the Virgin’s image might be found are along a street that the schoolboy walks through *before* he comes to the Jewish quarter. There was an *abbay* (VII 624), also referred to as a *covent* (VII 677), and a marble tomb (VII 681) where the martyred boy was laid to rest. Somewhere the Virgin’s image is certainly found in this great, unnamed eastern city.

When Chaucer identifies the location of the area that had both a Jewish quarter and a Christian settlement, he uses the word *Asye* in the extended sense of ‘Asia Minor,’ which it had in late Roman times.⁶ The locale is what we now call Turkey and the Islamic countries Syria, Iran, and Iraq. Sheila Delany suggests that since Chaucer’s Asian setting is unique among the thirty-three extant versions of the tale, it is a “deliberate authorial choice.”⁷ I agree, but for reasons that concern the clergeon’s devotion to Mary and, specifically, his worship of her image. Chaucer has set the *Prioress’s Tale* in an area significant for the production of icons, theories about their veneration, and debate about (indeed, civil war waged over) their worship. The famous iconoclastic controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries within the Eastern Church helped shape medieval thinking about religious imagery in ways that lasted until Chaucer’s time and beyond. There were, as the following discussion will indicate, numerous Marian icons in the East from the sixth century onwards, some of which were transported to Europe in the course of the Middle Ages and imitated by western artists, making it highly likely that a traveler such as Chaucer would have been familiar with them. There were also native English paintings and statues of Mary that the poet certainly knew.

What kind of images of Mary would the clergeon have worshipped in the East? What, if anything, could Chaucer know about them? How did

they compare to European and English images of Mary? If the great, unnamed Asian city in which the *Prioress's Tale* is set were Constantinople (the site of most miracles of the Virgin containing images), the clergeon could have encountered icons of Mary in as many as 139 churches and monasteries, that is, if we imagine a time frame in the eleventh or twelfth centuries.⁸ But Chaucer is specific neither about the time nor the place in *Asye*. As early as the sixth century, the imperial family had a painting of the Virgin reputed to have been painted by the Apostle Luke and sent to Constantinople from Jerusalem (the oldest Marian icon the clergeon might have known).⁹ Another icon of Mary, called the Roman Virgin, survived Byzantine Iconoclasm by—according to legend—traveling miraculously to Rome, from whence it returned safely to Constantinople to a church dedicated to the Virgin, near Hagia Sophia. So well traveled a man as Chaucer would have been aware of the thousands of pilgrims who traveled to Constantinople, the New Jerusalem, to see the relics of Christ's passion in Hagia Sophia and to pray to icons like the Roman Virgin, believed to be endowed with miraculous powers.¹⁰ Chaucer could also have known of and even encountered eastern icons in the West; historically, many venerated images of the Virgin Mary found in European churches and shrines, especially those in Italy, were brought from the East. The Consolata of Turin, for example, the most important and renowned sanctuary of the Piedmont region, is dedicated to the veneration of a Byzantine icon of the Virgin which came from Palestine in 440 A.D.¹¹ At the time of the invasion of the Saracens in the eleventh century, this icon disappeared and was forgotten until April 20, 1104, when a blind man, who is said to have arrived from France, found it and thereby miraculously regained his sight. If George Parks is correct about the route that Chaucer took to Genoa in his Italian travels of 1372–73, the poet proceeded from Basel to Turin, and then on to Genoa, in which case Chaucer could actually have seen the Byzantine icon of the Consolata of Turin.¹² Other eastern icons were important for being housed in pilgrimage destinations or for being themselves pilgrimage destinations, and might therefore have been heard about if not seen at firsthand, like one of the Marian icons that was placed in the Sanctuary of the Basilica of Saint Mark (along with many others images and relics).¹³ The frame of this painting is studded with gems and is said to contain a piece of the spear cast into Christ's side. Early in the thirteenth century, after the Fourth Crusade in which Venetians and French fought at Constantinople, this painting of the Virgin, carried by the Emperor with him on the battlefield, was sent to Venice by Enrico Dandolo, captain of the Venetian fleet. Likewise, the Madonna of Saint Luke is the treasure of a large sanctuary on the Monte della Guardia in Bologna; it had been kept in the Basilica of Saint Sophia in Constantinople until 1150, when it was taken to Bologna by the hermit, Teoclys Kmnia, and placed in a church

dedicated to Saint Luke.¹⁴ Two nuns from a nearby cloister are said to have spent their lives caring for it, and many miracles are attributed to the icon. In 1253 their community received an endowment from the city for their veneration of the icon.¹⁵ Many other iconic images of the Virgin Mary were not brought from the East but rather show the influence of Byzantine art on Italian painting, such as the *Virgin and Child* by a Pisan Master of the thirteenth century (Fig. 1).¹⁶ Owing to its trade connections in the East, Pisa was in close connection with Constantinople through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and its painters had learned to imitate the style of eastern icon painting.

Images of Mary appear in numerous medieval English churches as well, but these are ruder paintings by native hands, like the mural painting of the *Virgin and Child* found in the thirteenth-century Bishop's Palace in Chichester (Fig. 2), in which the Virgin holds a conventional lily while on either side an angel swings a censer.¹⁷ The Annunciation was a particularly popular subject in medieval English churches; a list of buildings, prepared by C. E. Keyser for Her Majesty's Stationery Office (in 1883), cited forty-six churches having records of paintings of the Annunciation.¹⁸ The Visitation, or Salutation, the occasion when Mary goes to meet Elizabeth, is found in twenty-one medieval English churches. A church in East Harling, for instance, contains a Salutation in which Mary is pictured holding a scroll bearing the opening words of the *Magnificat*.¹⁹ As for sculpture, Chaucer, who frequently traveled between London and Oxford, may well have been familiar with a fourteenth-century statue of Mary with the infant Christ that stood in a canopied niche on the face of the south buttress of the west front of St. Mary's Church, Oxford.²⁰ And he certainly would have been aware of the statues of the Virgin that were the focus of pilgrimages to Walsingham and Ipswich (the Chaucer family's hometown). Margaret Aston observes of these sites, "Uppermost in the minds of believers who journeyed to Walsingham or Ipswich were the images of the Virgin to be found at those places. The statues' miraculous powers were the focus of pilgrim devotions . . . pilgrims expected to be able to feast their eyes and bestow their alms on objects of human proportion."²¹ Their popularity with worshipers made Marian statues proliferate at numerous sites; besides St. Mary at Walsingham and St. Mary at Ipswich, there were also St. Mary at Lincoln and St. Mary at Newark, among others. Part of what made the statues so appealing seems to be that the fourteenth-century English viewer found them realistic. Archbishop Richard Fitzralph of Armagh complained that all of the statues were addressed as if they were the Mother of God.²² Believers, however, did not require famous statues of the Virgin; "they were," Aston notes, "as ready to kneel and pray before a holy icon in street or chamber as in church."²³



Fig. 1. Madonna and Child, tempera on panel, by Master of the Saints Cosmos and Damian Madonna (1265–85), Italy. Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Friends of the Fogg Art Museum Fund.



Fig. 2. Mural painting of the Virgin and Child, Bishop's Palace, Chichester, 13th cent. Photo courtesy of the photographer, Tim Bastow.

Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale* is not unique among miracles of the Virgin in containing a reference to images of Mary. A German medievalist, Adolf Mussafia, who was considered *the* authority on miracles of the Virgin through the first half of the twentieth century, observed of these narratives that many of them, especially those dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, contain references to paintings and statues of the Virgin Mary.²⁴ In the earlier compilations he found references to images to be rarer and more likely to be to paintings than to sculptures. Most of these miracles mentioned Constantinople: among them are the story of the icon whose curtain rises miraculously to reveal it every week; the stories about the merchant from Constantinople who left an image with a Jew as security on a loan; the various versions of the tale of a Jew who threw the image of Mary into a gutter in Constantinople; and the account of a Saracen from an eastern city—Constantinople is not specifically named—who owned an image of the Virgin but was incredulous of the virgin birth until the image sprouted breasts and began to produce oil.²⁵ While the mutilation of images of the Virgin had a long association with Jews, the link to Constantinople in the miracle-working images connotes that they are icons, religious images of Christian personages inspiring veneration associated with the Byzantine Christian tradition. The miracle of the Virgin concerning the conversion of the Saracen is told in Gautier de Coincy's *Miracles of the Virgin* and may derive from a real icon: the icon of Sardnaya (or Sardenai, located near Damascus), from whose breasts the Knights Templars collected oil by special arrangement.²⁶ This icon was an object of veneration by both Christians and Arabs. One of the oldest miracle stories containing an image of Mary, about Theophilus's oath to the devil, is traceable to sixth-century Byzantine sources and circulated in many collections of miracles of the Virgin, including Johannes Herolt's *The Pupil's Storehouse of Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (*Promptuarium Discipuli de Miraculis Beate Marie Virginis*). In the miracle, after Theophilus repents renouncing the Mother of God and signing a contract with the devil, he prays to the Virgin's image, and what follows in the account gives Mary nearly as much sway as her son:

It happened that one day Theophilus, stung with remorse, began to weep, and, as he wept, to prostrate himself before the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, calling on the Blessed Virgin earnestly. But the Blessed Virgin was ever pitiful, and in her kindly pity for him she pardoned what he had done. And when Theophilus, prostrate before the altar, was weeping bitterly and praying to the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the image of God, as if in anger, would not listen to him and turned his face away.

Seeing this the Blessed Virgin placed her son's image on the altar and with Theophilus went to the devil. Thus was he brought back

to the grace of God, and the devil ordered by her to return the indenture of renunciation which Theophilus had given to him, and thus Theophilus was converted and at last entered into the joys of heaven.²⁷

This sixth-century Byzantine miracle, collected by Herolt, derives from Latin Marian miracles gathered in the early twelfth century by Anselm, abbot of Bury St. Edmunds and nephew of Anselm of Canterbury. The earliest miracles written in Middle English are found in the compilation of hagiographical and liturgical writings known as the *South English Legendary*, the oldest manuscript of which (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud 108, ca. 1280–90) contains just one miracle of the Virgin, “Theophilus” (fols. 127b–130a).²⁸ “Theophilus” also appears in the second oldest manuscript of the *South English Legendary* (London, British Library MS Harley 2277, ca. 1300; fols. 58a–64b), where it is followed by many other miracles of the Virgin.

When the Council of Nicea in 787 defended images against eastern iconoclasts, the distinction it made between *latria*—the worship belonging to God alone—and *dulia*—lesser forms of worship expressed in kneeling or bowing before icons and venerable individuals—became fundamental to all later discussions of the worship of images. The terms were echoed in *Dives and Pauper*, the long prose treatise on the Ten Commandments written in Middle English sometime between 1405 and 1410 as a dialogue between Dives, a rich layman, and Pauper, a mendicant preacher: “Wurshepe is a large woord and comoun to deuyne wurshepe and seruyse þat is clepyd *latria* and to wurshepe and seruyse þat is clepid *dulia*.”²⁹ Some two hundred years earlier, Thomas Aquinas (1225?–1274) added a new term, *hyperdulia*, to the two older ones (*latria* and *dulia*). *Hyperdulia* referred to the worship of those “who have special relationship to God, such as the Blessed Virgin, inasmuch as she is the mother of God.”³⁰ The emphasis on defining different types of worship underscores the importance of Hans Belting’s observation, “It was, after all, not the icon as such but its veneration that brought about the long conflict of iconoclasm and divided Eastern society.”³¹ John of Damascus (ca. 680–749), whom Belting calls “the first theologian of images,” had much to say on the usefulness of religious images as aids to piety.³²

John of Damascus defended the veneration of icons, often themselves thought to be sacred by those who venerated them in the Eastern Church, against their opponents, the eighth-century Iconoclasts. Though John’s fullest defense appears in the *Apologetic Discourses*, I refer instead to his discussion in *The Orthodox Faith*, because a Latin translation of that work was made available in England by Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln (1235–1253). In Book Four, chapter 16, “On images,” he stresses

that when the unlettered worship the image, what is honored is the original that the image imitates:

Since not all know letters nor do all have leisure to read, the Fathers deemed it fit that these events [in the life of Christ] should be depicted as a sort of memorial and terse reminder. It certainly happens frequently that at times when we do not have the Lord's Passion in mind we may see the image of His crucifixion and, being thus reminded of His saving Passion, fall down and adore, but that which is represented. . . . It is the same with the Mother of God, too, for the honor paid her is referred to Him who was incarnate of her.³³

His thinking about the difference between the image and what is represented is reflected in *Dives and Pauper*. In Chapter 2 of the First Precept, Dives begins, "How shulde I rede in þe book of peynture and of ymagerye?" (83), to which Pauper replies with an explication of the symbolism of a painting of the Crucifixion:

"Take heid be þe ymage how his hed was crownyd wyt þe gailond of thornys tyl þey wentyn into þe brayn and the blod brast out on euery side, for to dystroy ze þe heye synne of pryde, þat shewyt hym most in mannys hed and wommannys." (83)

He continues on in this vein for each of the wounds and concludes, "So þat þou knele if þou wylt before þe ymage, nat to þe ymage" (85). The warning is especially important because, as Pauper says of paintings (in chapter 1 of the first Precept), "þey been ordeynyd to been a tokene and a book to þe lewyd peple, þat þey moun redyn in ymagerye and peynture þat clerkys redyn in boke" (82). Such favorable discussion of the worship of images in this early fifteenth-century English work is unsurprising. Only shortly before, in the late fourteenth century, the Lollards, followers of John Wycliffe, had stirred up a controversy over images that raised issues of idolatry similar to those debated during the Iconoclastic controversy in Byzantium, and they were treated as heretics. Michael Camille cites a case of four men from Nottingham who were suspected of being Lollards in 1395 and who managed to save themselves from fiery execution by agreeing to say: "From this day forward I shall worship images, with praying and offering unto them in the worship of saints that they be made after."³⁴ In late medieval England—as in Europe, generally—images remained "books of the laity," while Latin Scripture was the special preserve of the clergy; Wycliffe and his followers, believers in the equality of man as well as in the supreme importance of God's Word, had translated the Bible from the Latin Vulgate into English to make Scripture available to all.

As soon as the Prioress finishes her description of how the little cleric has learned from his mother to venerate Mary, she briefly recalls the childhood piety of Saint Nicholas, whose devotion is to Christ, Mary's son:

But ay, whan I remembre on this mateere,
 Seint Nicholas stant evere in my presence,
 For he so yong to Crist dide reverence.

(VII 513–15)

It is, as Derek Pearsall remarks, “a brief digression during the tale, which comes unbidden, almost as if she were overwhelmed by the sweetness of the recollection.”³⁵ Additionally, it may be observed that the idea of a child praying to an image itself evokes an image in the nun's mind, a “presence,” as she says, suggesting that Madame Eglantyne is especially susceptible to being affected by images. Does she, perhaps, in her mind's eye visualize the young Saint Nicholas praying to an image of Christ, typically portrayed in the late Middle Ages as a partially nude, dead man, the fully grown God incarnate who was born of Mary? Madame Eglantyne does not say, but the digression suggests that the nun's emotional involvement with one tableau of childhood piety is strong enough to trigger the visualization of another. By the time the Prioress's story of the cleric murdered by Jews for singing a Marian hymn is finished, she is so affected by her own narrative that she is moved to prayer—not this time to Mary, as in her *Prologue*, but to the child martyr, Hugh of Lincoln, like the cleric, believed to have been murdered by Jews. Such emotional “free associating” is not altogether a surprise, coming as it does from a pilgrim nun whom the narrator of the *General Prologue* describes as speaking French with an English accent, being sentimental about her lap dogs, having a possible confusion about what kind of *Amor* it is that *vincit omnia*, and feeling, by her own account in the prologue to her tale, intellectually unequal to the task of storytelling she sets for herself. It is clear, moreover, that the Prioress reads in images what “clerkys redyn in boke” (*Dives and Pauper*, 82), a skill whereby Chaucer places Madame Eglantyne squarely with the *lewd* who have no Latin (much as Chauntecleer's purposeful mistranslation of the Latin “*Mulier est hominis confusio*” for Pertelote as “Womman is mannes joye and al his blis” [VII 3164, 3166] signals the Nun's Priest's needling of the Prioress for her poor language skills). Chaucer the clerk (like the erudite Nun's Priest) is critical of the Prioress's learning, and her attraction to the visual in the tale she tells enlarges our sense of her miracle of the Virgin as a “popular” narrative form.

The Prioress announces in her prologue that her intention is to tell a story of praise in honor of Christ and his mother, the Blessed Virgin:

in laude, as I best kan or may,
 Of thee and of the white lylve flour
 Which that the bar, and is a mayde alway,
 To telle a storie I wol do my labour.

(VII 460–63)

Her task is so daunting that she describes it with an inexpressibility topos—“Lady, thy bountee, thy magnificence, / Thy vertu and thy grete humylitee / Ther may no tonge expresse in no science” (VII 474–76). She says more than she knows: Chaucer’s point is that *science*, ‘learning,’ is not what is called for. Madame Eglantyne’s voice works precisely because her “konnyng is so wayk” (VII 481). The miracle of the Virgin is a narrative in a popular form like the images worshipped by the little clergeon with “litel book lernynge” (VII 516). And the Prioress’s analogical habit of mind is a feature found in other popular medieval religious poetry, as in this familiar thirteenth-century lyric:

Now goth sonne under wode,
 Me reweth, Marie, thy faire rode.
 Now goth sonne under tree,—
 Me reweth, Marie, thy sone and thee.³⁶

In this simple quatrain, a particular moment at nightfall, as the sun sinks behind a wood, brings to mind the sunset of Good Friday and the setting of the greater Son that it reflects. Any tree—this tree—can become the tree of the cross. A *presence*—like the pious child Saint Nicholas, recollected while the Prioress is thinking of the little clergeon at prayer.

Besides praying to Mary on the way to school every day, and at other times as well, when he saw her image, as his mother taught him, the little clergeon also prays to her in song in the Latin words of the *Alma redemptoris* that he learns by rote. Devotion to praising Mary in song is what leads to the martyrdom of the child. The “miracle” of this miracle narrative is that even after the child’s throat is cut by Jews to whom the hymn gives offense, he keeps singing the hymn to the Virgin, that is, until an abbot of a nearby monastery takes a grain from the little clergeon’s tongue. This action, it seems to me, suggests the taking of the Eucharist from a priest except that here a priest receives the “greyn” (VII 671) from a child—

noght oonly thy laude precious
 Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
 But by the mouth of children thy bountee
 Parfourned is.

(VII 455–58)³⁷

Who better to offer the body and blood of the Eucharist than the innocent, pious child whose martyrdom is a type of Christ's passion? The child's spirit is released and, doubtless, as the Virgin promised, taken by her to be united with Christ. The miraculous events leave the abbot face down, prostrate on the ground along with his fellow monks—precisely their position on the day of their ordination as priests. More than that, they are falling down in adoration as John of Damascus said we should when images of the Crucifixion remind us of the Passion. At the tale's conclusion, the monks are worshipping the *corpus infans* as if it were the *corpus dominus*.³⁸ This image of the Crucifixion is real—as real as a literary event in an imaginative work can be—not an image made of paint, wood, or sculpture. Just as the idea of the clergeon's prayer to the Virgin's image elicits the digression about Saint Nicholas, the account of the martyrdom of the little schoolboy in the Jewish quarter, leads to a digression—the concluding prayer of the tale—in which the Prioress invokes “yonge Hugh of Lyncoln, slayn also” to “Preye eek for us” (VII 684, 687). The images of art and the words of song (even when not fully comprehended) may be means of affective piety for those without learning. And a miracle of the Virgin told by a courteous nun presumably can motivate listeners to greater piety as well.

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1. All references to Chaucer's work refer to *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn. (Boston, 1987).

2. Carolyn Collette has recently studied the tale against “the traditions, the motifs, and the symbolism of Marian veneration” in liturgical and secular literature (“Chaucer's Discourse of Mariology: Gaining the Right to Speak,” in *Art and Context in Late Medieval England: Essays in Honor of Robert Worth Frank, Jr.*, ed. Robert R. Edwards [Cambridge, Eng., 1994], 127–47, at 127–28). Among earlier scholars, Sister M. Madeleva, C.S.C., discusses Marian echoes in the Prioress's prologue from the Divine Office of the Blessed Virgin and from the Little Office, as well as from antiphons used at Matins and Lauds (*A Lost Language and Other Essays on Chaucer* [New York, 1951], 52–53).

3. Florence H. Ridley summarizes critical attitudes to the Prioress in *The Prioress and the Critics* (Berkeley, Calif., 1965), and Beverly Boyd divides the critics into the “sympathetic” and “unsympathetic” in her edition, *The Prioress's Tale. A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, Vol. 2, *The Canterbury Tales*, part 20 (Norman, Okla., 1987), 33–50. A strong defender is Hardy Long Frank, “Chaucer's Prioress and the Blessed Virgin,” *Chaucer Review* 13 (1979): 346–62; and detractor, Louise Fradenburg, “Criticism, Anti-Semitism, and the Prioress's Tale,” *Exemplaria* 1 (1989): 69–116.

4. C. David Benson, *Chaucer's Drama of Style* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1986), 138. Earlier important readings of the tale as religious literature include Sherman Hawkins, “Chaucer's Prioress and the Sacrifice of Praise,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 63 (1964): 599–624, and Beverly Boyd, *Chaucer and the Liturgy* (Philadelphia, 1967), 67–73.

5. Beverly Boyd, ed., *The Middle English Miracles of the Virgin* (San Marino, Calif., 1964), 3.

6. Francis P. Magoun, “Chaucer's Ancient and Biblical World,” *Medieval Studies* 15 (1953): 107–36, at 110.

7. Sheila Delany, "Chaucer's Prioress, the Jews and the Muslims," *Medieval Encounters* 5 (1999): 199–213, at 199.
8. See Raymond Janin, *Le Géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1953), 156.
9. Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, 1994), 145.
10. Belting cites a sermon which credited the icon with producing holy water and sacred oil (*Likeness*, 190).
11. *Sanctuaries of Italy*, National Tourist Industries [E.N.I.T.] (Milan, n.d.), 5.
12. George Parks, *The English Traveller to Italy, I: The Middle Ages* (Stanford, Calif., 1954), 512.
13. *Sanctuaries*, 23.
14. Dorothee Klein, *St. Lukas als Maler der Maria: Ikonographie der Lukas-Madonna* (Berlin, 1933). See also *Sanctuaries*, 27.
15. Documents relevant to the icon's provenance and deposited in archives are now thought to be forged and to contain a faked date (May 8, 1160). See Belting, *Likeness*, 345.
16. The painting is reproduced courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University. It is described by Bruce Bernard, *The Queen of Heaven: A Selection of Paintings of the Virgin Mary from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1987), 22.
17. Frank Kendon cites this in *Mural Paintings in English Churches during the Middle Ages: An Introductory Essay on the Folk Influence in Religious Art* (London, 1923), 31. The photograph is courtesy of Tim Bastow, Rotary Club of Chichester.
18. Kendon, *Mural Paintings*, 40.
19. Kendon, *Mural Paintings*, 47–48.
20. Cecil Headlam, *Oxford and Neighboring Churches* (London, 1925), 65–66. On Chaucer's travels between London and Oxford, see J. A. W. Bennett, *Chaucer at Oxford and at Cambridge* (Oxford, 1974).
21. Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts I: Laws Against Images* (Oxford, 1988), 21.
22. Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge, Eng., 1989), 225.
23. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 22.
24. Adolf Mussafia, "Studien zu den mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden," *Sitzungsberichte der phil-historischen Klasse der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Vienna) 113 (1886): 917–94; 115 (1887): 5–93; 119 (1889): 1–66.
25. Mussafia, "Studien," 113:942, 944, 963, 971; 115:32, 88.
26. "Citez de Jherusalem," *Palestine Pilgrims Text Society* 6 (London, 1894), 47–48. See also A. Schinz, "L'Art dans les contes dévots de Gautier de Coincy," *PMLA* 22 (1907): 465–520, at 470.
27. Johannes Herolt, *Miracles of the Blessed Virgin*, trans. C. C. Swinton Bland (London, 1928), miracle 42.
28. Boyd, ed., *Middle English Miracles*, 8.
29. Priscilla Heath Barnum, ed., *Dives and Pauper*, EETS OS 275 (London, 1976), 107. All further references to *Dives and Pauper* refer to this text.
30. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, ed. P. Carmello (Turin, 1952–62), III, q. 25, art. 3.
31. Belting, *Likeness*, 144.
32. Belting, *Likeness*, 145.
33. John of Damascus, *The Orthodox Faith in Writings*, trans. Frederic H. Chase, Jr. (New York, 1958), 371–72. I did not have access to Robert Grosseteste's translation into Latin, but the text he "corrected" is the Latin translation by Burgundio, which was the "classical" text of the Middle Ages. In the Burgundian version the passage is: "Quia vero non omnes noscunt litteras, neque lectioni vacant, patres ex cogitaverunt velut quosdam triumphos in imaginibus haec scribere, ad velocem memoriam. Quapropter multoties non secundum mentem habentes Domini passionem, imaginem Christi crucifixionis videntes et salutaris passionis in rememorationem venientes, procidentem adoramus; non materiam, sed imaginatum. . . . Similiter et Dei genitricis imaginis non materiam, sed figuram adoramus. Honor enim qui est ad ipsam, ad eum qui ex ipsa incarnatus est reducitur." See John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa: Versions of Burgundio and Cerbamis*, cap. 89 ("De Sanctis Imaginibus"), 333. John of Damascus had particular devotion to Mary, as may be seen in three homilies he delivered at the Virgin's tomb in Jerusalem on the feast of her Dormition (preface to Chase's edn., xv).

34. Camille, *Gothic Idol*, 220.

35. Derek Pearsall, *The Canterbury Tales* (London, 1985), 247.

36. Robert D. Stevick, ed., *One Hundred Middle English Lyrics* (New York, 1964), 5.

37. The "greyn" is usually interpreted as either a grain (of wheat, etc.) or a pearl, but many other suggested explanations are listed in the *Riverside Chaucer*, 916 (notes by Florence H. Ridley). See especially Sister Nicholas Maltman, O.P., "The Divine Granary, or the End of the Prioress's 'Greyn,'" *Chaucer Review* 17 (1982): 163–70.

38. Ironically, Chaucer's comic transition-by-contrast to the opening invocation of the Prioress's prologue is the Host's oath taken on God's body ("Wel seyð, by *corpus dominus*" [VII 435]), which is Harry's response to the Shipman's concluding prayer (albeit a mock prayer, "God us sende / Taillynge ynough unto oure lyves ende. Amen." [VII 433–34]) for the fabliau that precedes *PrT*.