

Glossary

alchemy A pseudoscience concerned with the transmutation of base metals into gold ([Canon's Yeoman](#)).

Alma redemptoris mater An anthem ("Gracious Mother of the Redeemer") used especially during Advent and Christmas season liturgy ([Prioress 518, 554, 612, 641, 655](#)).

Almagest An astronomical treatise by [Ptolemy](#) ([Miller 3208](#); [Wife Prol 183, 325](#)).

Amor vincit omnia "Love conquers all" ([General Prol 162](#)).

Angelus ad virginem A hymn on the Annunciation ([Miller 3216](#)).

Apollo Greek god of light, music, archery, and prophecy ([Squire 671](#); [Franklin 1031](#)). Also called [Phoebus](#).

Apostle, The Saint Paul ([Wife Prol 49, 79, 160, 341](#); [Pardoner 529](#); [Melibee 990, 1130, 1295, 1410, 1440, 1510, 1635, 1840](#)).

Argus A hundred-eyed giant in Greek mythology ([Knight 1390](#); [Wife Prol 358](#); [Merchant 2111](#)).

Austin See [Saint Augustine](#).

Bacchus The Greek god of wine ([Merchant 1722](#); [Physician 57](#); [Manciple Prol 99](#)).

bachelor A young knight or aspirant to knighthood ([General Prol 80](#); [Knight 3085](#); [Wife 883](#); [Squire 24](#)); an unmarried man ([Merchant 1274](#)).

Bath An English city nearby which was the parish of Saint Michael, a cloth-producing center ([General Prol 445](#)).

Bayard A name for a horse ([Reeve 4115](#); [Canon's Yeoman 1413](#)).

bel ami "Fine friend" ([Pardoner Intro 318](#)).

belle chose "Beautiful thing" ([Wife Prol 447, 510](#)).

benedicite "Bless you" ([Knight 1785, 2115](#); [Miller 3768](#); [Lawyer Epilogue 1170](#); [Wife Prol 280, Wife 1087](#); [Friar 1456, 1584](#); [Summoner 2170](#); [Merchant 1337](#); [Canon's Y Prol 628](#)).

benefice Payment for performing the duties of an ecclesiastical office ([General Prol 291, 507](#); [Nun's Priest 3316](#)).

blissful martyr Saint Thomas à Becket (1118?-1170), the murdered Archbishop of Canterbury, enshrined at Canterbury Cathedral (*General Prol* [17](#), [770](#)).

Boethius A Roman statesman and philosopher (c. 475-c. 525), author of a treatise on music, and whose major work *The Consolation of Philosophy* was translated from Latin by Chaucer (*Wife* [1168](#); *Nun's Priest* [3242](#), [3294](#); *Retraction* [1090](#)).

Boughton under Blean The town of Boughton in the Blean forest, five miles from Canterbury (*Canon's Y Prol* [556](#)).

Breton A native or inhabitant of Brittany on the coast of France (*Franklin Prol* [709](#), *Franklin* [1179](#)).

Bruges See [Flanders](#).

canon A priest who either lived in a community of priests (canons regular) or had institutional permission to live alone (canons secular) (*Canon's Y Prologue*, *Canon's Yeoman*).

Canterbury A city, about 55 miles southeast of London, where the shrine of Saint Thomas à Becket in Canterbury Cathedral was an object of pilgrimage (*General Prol* [16-27](#), [769](#), [793](#); *Manciple Prol* [3](#)).

Cassiodorus A Roman statesman and writer (c. 485-c. 585) (*Melibee* [1200](#), [1440](#), [1530](#), [1565](#), [1645](#)).

Cato Dionysius Cato (third century A.D.), author of a collection of moral apothegms (*Miller* [3228](#); *Merchant* [1377](#); *Nun's Priest* [2940](#), [2971](#); *Melibee* [1185](#), [1220](#), [1310](#), [1490](#), [1595](#), [1605](#); *Canon's Y Prol* [688](#)).

Chaucer The English poet (1340?-1400) portrays himself in the *Tales* as a corpulent pilgrim disparaged for his "wretched rhyming" (specifically *Sir Topaz*, a parody of metrical romances) (*General Prol* [19-27](#); *Lawyer Intro* [46-50](#); *Topaz Prol* [691-711](#); *Melibee Prol* [919-940](#); *Retraction*).

Cheapside A main shopping section of medieval London (*General Prol* [754](#); *Cook* [4377](#); *Pardoner* [564](#), [569](#); *Manciple Prol* [24](#)).

Chichevache "Lean cow," being a fabled cow who fed only on patient wives (*Envoy* [1188](#)).

chough A bird believed to be a tattler (*Wife Prol* [232](#)).

Christopher A medal representing Saint Christopher, patron saint of travelers and foresters (*General Prol* [115](#)).

Cicero Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.), Roman orator and philosopher (*Franklin Prol* [722](#)).

clerk A clergyman (*Miller* [3312](#); *Lawyer* [480](#); *Wife Prol* [694](#), [706](#); *Pardoner Prol* [391](#)); a student, being ostensibly an aspirant to the clergy (*Miller* [3219](#); *Reeve* [4060](#); *Wife Prol* [44C](#),

[527](#)); *Pardoner Prol* [339](#); any man of learning (*General Prol* [480](#); *Wife* [1184](#); *Merchant* [2021](#)); *Melibee* [1110](#); *Nun's Pr Prol* [2800](#); *Canon's Y Prol* [646](#)).

colors Figures of speech (*Student Prol* [16](#); *Squire* [39](#); *Franklin Prol* [723](#)).

Cor meum eructavit "My heart has uttered" (from Psalm 45) (*Summoner* [1934](#)).

corpus bones "God's bones" (*Pardoner Intro* [314](#); *Monk Prol* [1906](#)).

corpus dominus Properly corpus domini, "the Lord's body" (*Merry Words* [435](#)).

corpus Madrian "Body of Madrian" (an unidentified saint) (*Monk Prol* [1892](#)).

Cytherea Aphrodite, Greek goddess of love (Roman Venus), born near the island of Cythera (*Knight* [1936](#), [2223](#)).

depardieux "In the name of God" (*Lawyer Intro* [39](#); *Friar* [1395](#)).

Deus hic "God be here" (*Summoner* [1770](#)).

Diana Roman goddess of the forest and of childbirth (*Knight* [1682](#), [1913](#), [2051](#), [2296](#), [2346](#); *Franklin* [1390](#)).

Dun is in the mire A game involving the moving of a heavy log (*Manciple Prol* [5](#)).

Dunmow bacon A side of bacon traditionally awarded to any couple who had gone for a year without quarreling (*Wife Prol* [217](#)).

Ecclesiasticus See [Jesus the son of Sirach](#).

Euclid Greek mathematician (fl. 300 B.C.) and author of the long-studied geometry treatise the *Elements* (*Summoner* [2289](#)).

Flanders A leading medieval cloth-producing country (now part of Belgium and France), including the cities of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres (*General Prol* [86](#), [448](#); *Pardoner* [463](#); *Skipper* [55](#), [199](#), [300](#); *Topaz* [719](#), [733](#)).

Fleming A person from Flanders (*Cook Prol* [4357](#); *Nun's Priest* [3396](#); *Manciple* [349](#)).

florin A gold coin (*Pardoner* [770](#)).

franklin A landowner of free but not noble birth (*General Prol* [216](#); [331](#); *Words of Franklin* [673-708](#)).

friar A member of a mendicant order (Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Augustinians) (*General Prol* [208](#); *Miller* [3656](#); *Words between* [829-855](#); *Friar Prol* [1265-1300](#), *Friar* [1330](#); *Summoner Prol* [passim](#); *Student Prol* [12](#)).

Fury An avenging Greek goddess (*Knight* [2684](#); *Franklin* [950](#)).

Gawain A knight of the Round Table who was King Arthur's nephew, and hero of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (14th century, author unknown) (*Squire* [95](#)).

Geoffrey Geoffrey de Vinsauf, author of a treatise on the writing of poetry that included a lament for the death of Richard the Lion-Hearted (*Nun's Priest* [3347](#)).

Ghent See [Flanders](#).

Great Sea The Mediterranean (*General Prol* [59](#)).

Hugh of Lincoln A child allegedly murdered by Jews in 1255 (*Prioress* [684](#)).

humors Four bodily fluids (blood, phlegm, red or yellow bile, and black bile) believed to produce the sanguinary, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic temperaments (*General Prol* [421](#); *Knight* [1375](#); *Squire* [352](#); *Franklin* [782](#); *Nun's Priest* [2924](#), [2957](#); *Parson* [830](#), [915](#)).

Ignotum per ignocius "Explaining the unknown by the unknown" (*Canon's Yeoman* [1457](#)).

In manus tuas "Into thy hands (I commend my spirit)" (from Luke 23:46) (*Reeve* [4287](#)).

In principio "In the beginning" (opening words of the Gospel of John in Latin) (*General Prol* [254](#); *Nun's Priest* [3163](#)).

incubus An evil spirit that impregnates sleeping women (*Wife* [880](#)).

Inn of Court A law school (*General Prol* [567](#)).

Irascimini et nolite peccare "Be angry and do not sin" (Psalm 4:5 in the Latin Vulgate) (*Parson* [540](#)).

Jack of Dover Probably a pie or fish (*Cook Prol* [4347](#)).

jane A Genoese coin worth half a penny (*Student* [999](#); *Topaz* [735](#)).

Janus The two-headed Roman god of beginnings, after whom the month of January is named (*Franklin* [1252](#)).

Jay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour "I have wasted all my time and effort" (*Parson* [250](#)).

Je vous dis sans doute "Truly I say to you" (*Summoner* [1832](#), [1838](#)).

Jephthah A judge of ancient Israel who had to slay his daughter in order to keep a promise made to God (Judges 11:30-40) (*Physician* [240](#)).

Jesus the son of Sirach The Jewish scribe (second century B.C.) who wrote Ecclesiasticus (*Wife Prol* [651](#)), properly the Book of Sirach, in the Catholic Bible (*Merchant* [2250](#); *Melibee* [995](#), [1045](#), [1060](#), [1145](#)).

Juno The wife of Jupiter (*Knight* [1329](#), [1555](#)).

Jupiter The supreme Roman god (*Knight* [2442](#), [2786](#), [2792](#), [3035](#), [3069](#); *Merchant* [2224](#); *Monk* [2744](#); *Second Nun* [366](#); *Canon's Yeoman* [828](#)).

Knight of the Shire A member of Parliament (*General Prol* [356](#)).

limiter A friar begging in an assigned area or limit (*General Prol* [209](#); *Wife* [866-877](#); *Friar Prol* [1265](#)).

lists An arena for tournaments (*Knight* [1852](#), [1881-1892](#), [2368](#), [2575](#); *Squire* [668](#)).

Lollard A follower of John Wycliffe (1320?-1384), who led a heretical movement called Lollardry (*Lawyer Epilogue* [1173](#), [1177](#)).

Lucina The Roman goddess of childbirth (*Knight* [2085](#)).

Malkin A wanton woman (*Lawyer Intro* [30](#); *Nun's Priest* [3384](#)).

manciple The purchasing agent of a college, monastery, etc. (*General Prol* [567](#); *Reeve* [3993](#); *Manciple Prol* [25-104](#)).

Mars The Roman god of war (*Knight* [975](#), [1559](#), [1682](#), [1708](#), [1747](#), [1907](#), [1969-2050](#), [2159](#), [2248](#), [2368-2482](#), [2581](#), [2669](#), [2815](#); *Lawyer* [301](#); *Wife Prol* [610-620](#); *Squire* [50](#), *Canon's Yeoman* [827](#)).

marshal The master of ceremonies at a feast (*General Prol* [752](#); *Merchant* [1930](#)).

Mercury The Roman god of commerce and messenger of the gods (*Knight* [1385](#); *Wife Prol* [697](#); *Merchant* [1734](#); *Squire* [672](#); *Canon's Yeoman* [827](#)).

Mulier est hominis confusio "Woman is man's ruin" (*Nun's Priest* [3164](#)).

multiplication Transmutation of base metals (*Canon's Y Prol* [669](#), *Canon's Yeoman* [849](#), [1400](#), [1479](#)). See [alchemy](#).

Newgate A London prison (*Cook* [4402](#)).

Ovid A Roman poet (43 B.C.-A.D. 18) noted for his love poetry and the *Metamorphoses*, a collection of myths and legends (*Lawyer Intro* [54](#); *Wife Prol* [680](#), *Wife* [952](#); *Merchant* [2125](#); *Melibee* [980](#), [1325](#), [1415](#)).

Pallas In Greek mythology, one of the Titans and the god of wisdom (*Physician* [49](#)).

palmers Pilgrims who returned from the Holy Land with palm branches as emblems (*General Prol* [13](#)).

pardie "By God" (passim).

pardoner A seller of indulgences, which relieved those who bought them of penances imposed for sin (*General Prol* [669](#); *Wife Prol* [163-168](#); *Pardoner Intro* [318-328](#), *Pardoner Prol* [329-462](#), *Pardoner* [904-968](#)).

Paternoster The Lord's Prayer (from the opening words Pater noster) or one of various formulaic prayers (such as the White Paternoster) used as charms (*Miller* [3485](#), [3638](#); *Parson* [510](#), [1040](#)).

Petrarch Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), the Italian poet whose translation into Latin of the story of Griselda from Boccaccio's *Decameron* was Chaucer's source for *The Student's Tale* (*Student Prol* [31](#), *Student* [1147](#)).

Philology A mortal maiden who became the bride of [Mercury](#) and custodian of the Seven Liberal Arts, as told in *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology* (*De Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae*) by Martianus Capella (5th century A.D.) (*Merchant* [1734](#)).

philosopher/philosophy An alchemist/alchemy (in addition to the terms' regular meanings) (*General Prol* [297](#); *Franklin* [1561](#); *Canon's Yeoman* [837](#), [862](#), [1058](#), [1139](#), [1427](#), [1433](#), [1464](#), [1472-1475](#)).

Phoebus [Apollo](#) (*Knight* [1493](#); *Lawyer Intro* [11](#); *Merchant* [2220](#); *Squire* ([48](#), [263](#); *Franklin* [1036](#), [1055](#), [1245](#); *Physician* [38](#); *Monk* [2745](#); *Manciple* [passim](#)).

Placebo "I will please" (from Psalm 114:9 in the Vulgate) (*Summoner* [2075](#); *Parson* [620](#)).

Pluto Greek god of the underworld (*Knight* [2082](#), [2299](#), [2684](#); *Franklin* [1075](#)); depicted also in *The Merchant's Tale* as the king of Fairyland (*Merchant* [2038](#), [2227](#)).

prioress A nun equivalent in rank to the prior of a monastery (*General Prol* [118](#), [839](#); *Merry Words* [447-454](#)).

psaltery A stringed instrument similar to the harp (*General Prol* [296](#); *Miller* [3213](#), [3305](#)).

Ptolemy Alexandrian astronomer (second century A.D.) whose earth-centered system was the cosmology of the Middle Ages (*Wife Prol* [182](#), [324](#); *Summoner* [2289](#)). See also [Almagest](#).

Questio quid juris "The question is, what point of law?" (*General Prol* [646](#)).

Qui cum patre "Who with the Father" (*Summoner* [1734](#); *Retraction* [1090](#)).

Radix malorum est Cupiditas "Cupidity (greed) is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10) (*Pardoner Prol* [334](#), [426](#)).

Ram The sign of Aries in the zodiac (*General Prol* [8](#); *Squire* [386](#)).

reeve The manager or foreman of a manor (*General Prol* [587](#); *Miller Prol* [3144](#), [3183](#); *Reeve Prol* [3860-3920](#)).

Rouncivalle A hospital at Charing Cross (near London) that was a cell of the Spanish convent of Our Lady of Rouncivalle (*General Prol* [670](#)).

Saint Augustine Christian philosopher (354-430 A.D.) quoted often in *The Parson's Tale* (see also *Melibee* [1620](#), [1645](#); *Nun's Priest* [3241](#)); also referred to as Austin (*General Prol* [187](#);

Skipper [259](#); *Merry Words* [441](#)) and the Doctor (*Physician* [117](#)).

Saint Denis A French town near Paris (*Skipper* [1](#)).

Saint Julian Julian the Hospitaller, a patron saint of innkeepers and travelers (*General Prol* [340](#)).

Saint Loy Saint Eligius of France, a patron saint of carters (*General Prol* [120](#); *Friar* [1564](#)).

Saint Paul's porch The portico of Saint Paul's Cathedral, where clients would consult with lawyers (*General Prol* [310](#)).

Saint Ronyan Perhaps a corruption of Ronan (a Scottish saint), a pun on the French word rognon (kidney), or both (*Pardoner Intro* [310](#), [320](#)).

Saturn Roman god of agriculture and the father of Jupiter (*Knight* [2443](#), [2668](#), [2686](#); *Canon's Yeoman* [828](#)).

Seneca Roman philosopher and dramatist (3 B.C.-A.D. 65), known particularly for his moral philosophy (quoted 17 times in *Melibee*, e.g. [985](#); *Lawyer Intro* [25](#); *Wife* [1168](#) and [1184](#); *Summoner* [2018](#); *Merchant* [1376](#), [1524](#), [1567](#); *Pardoner* [492](#); *Monk* [2503](#); *Manciple* [345](#); *Parson* [145](#), [470](#), [760](#)).

Sergeant of the Law A member of an elite order of lawyers (*General Prol* [309](#); *Lawyer Intro* [33-45](#)).

Southwark A London borough (*General Prol* [20](#), [718](#); *Miller Prol* [3140](#)).

squire A knight's attendant (*General Prol* [79](#); *Knight* [1410](#), [1440](#), [1498](#), [1554](#), [1730](#), [2502](#); *Merchant* [1772](#); *Franklin* [926](#)).

Straw, Jack A leader of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 (*Nun's Priest* [3394](#)).

summoner An official who served summonses for an ecclesiastical court (*General Prol* [623](#); *Words between* [832-849](#); *Friar Prol* [1265-1285](#), *Friar* [1641-1644](#), [1663-1664](#)).

Tabard An inn, its sign shaped like a tabard or smock (*General Prol* [20](#), [719](#))

Te Deum laudamus A hymn ("We praise thee, O God") sung often at matins (*Summoner* [1866](#)).

trental An office of thirty masses sung for a soul in purgatory (*Summoner* [1717](#)).

Tullius Cicero (quoted 17 times in *Melibee*, e.g. [1165](#)).

vavator A landholder ranking below a baron (*General Prol* [360](#)).

Venus Roman goddess of love (*Knight* [1102](#), [1332](#), [1536](#), [1904](#), [1918-1966](#), [2221-2270](#), [2385](#), [2440](#), [2487](#), [2663](#); *Wife Prol* [464](#), [604](#), [609](#), [618](#), [697](#), [707](#); *Merchant* [1723](#), [1876](#); *Squire* [273](#); *Franklin* [937](#), [1304](#); *Physician* [59](#); *Monk Prol* [1961](#); *Nun's Priest* [3342](#); *Canon's Yeoman* [829](#)).

veronica A medal representing Saint Veronica's veil, which according to tradition bore a miraculous image of Christ (*General Prol* [685](#)).

yeoman A freeman (*Reeve* [3949](#)); an assistant or subordinate (*Friar* [1380](#); *Canon's Y Prol* [587](#)); an attendant in a noble household (*General Prol* [102](#); *Knight* [2509](#), [2728](#)).

Ypres See [Flanders](#).

Zephyrus Greek god of the west wind (*General Prol* [5](#)).

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