

## **The Play of a Miracle of the Body of Christ**

The Italian text of this play is published with an introduction and textual apparatus in Nerida Newbigin, “Dieci sacre rappresentazioni del Quattro e Cinquecento,” *Letteratura italiana antica* 10 (2009): 21–397 (introduction and apparatus, pp. 27–31; text, pp. 74–97).

There are two reasons why this play has had no modern edition until now. The virulence of its vilification of the Jews is disconcerting to modern readers; and the text itself is frequently garbled, to the point where meaning is obscure and conjectured readings are very problematic. The gambling scene presented particular difficulties. I am grateful to Antonio Lanza for his extensive assistance in decoding the argot of the two rogues who cheat at dice, and for revising the entire text.

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## Characters

AN ANGEL

AN AMBASSADOR *who goes to the Pope*

POPE URBAN

A CARDINAL

A SERVANT *of Pope Urban*

FRIAR THOMAS AQUINAS

FRIAR BONAVENTURE

CHRIST CRUCIFIED *who speaks from the Cross*

GUGLIELMO GIAMBELCARI, *gambler and tippler*

THE INNKEEPER, *called GRAFFIGNA*

TWO ROGUES, *of whom one is called GRUFFA*

IACALLO, *a Jew*

ABRAHAM, *his cashier, who does not speak*

THE WIFE *of Guglielmo*

MANUEL, *a Jew*

THE PRIEST

TWO YOUNG MEN *who come to Manuel's pawnshop*

THE KING OF FRANCE

THE PAGE *of the King of France*

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

THE CONSTABLE

GUARDS

THE BISHOP *of Paris*

JUDGES *of the Captain's court*

A PRIEST

THE EXECUTIONER

BARONS *of the King of France*

TWO ANGELS *who appear with St Thomas Aquinas*

THE HANGMAN

ABRAHAM, DAVID, JACOB AND SOLOMON, SABA, ISAAC, JACOB AND ABRAMINO,  
SAMUEL, JOSEPH THE GLUTTON, NATALE, JOB, LITTLE MANUEL, JOSEPH SQUAREBALLS,  
AMICCA, ACADDE, RACHEL AND JACALLA, *Jewish men and women who are beaten*

**Places**

THE COURT OF POPE URBAN *in Rome*  
THE CELL OF FRIAR THOMAS AQUINAS, *with the Crucifix*  
THE CELL OF FRIAR BONAVENTURE  
AN INN *with gambling tables*  
THE PAWNSHOP *of Manuel the Jew*  
THE HOUSE OF GUGLIELMO GIAMBELCARI  
THE CHURCH  
THE COURT OF THE KING OF FRANCE  
THE PALACE OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD *in Paris*  
THE COURT OF THE BISHOP OF PARIS  
THE BONFIRE *where Manuel is burnt*  
A SCAFFOLD *where the Woman is to be hanged*

**Properties**

A HOST *that is suspended in the air*

## **The Representation of a Miracle of the Body of Christ**

*And first AN ANGEL announces the play and says:*

1. In the name of Jesus, eternal God,  
who suffered and died for us on the cross,  
to free us with his wounds,  
we will here present the play  
of a beautiful miracle that happened in Paris.  
Say and listen with great devotion.  
You'll see something, if you pay close attention,  
and you'll all go away happy.
2. A woman gave the Body of the Lord  
to a Jew who fried it and treated it with great contempt.  
He was seized and burnt and fiercely put to death,  
but the woman was spared from the noose,  
because, since it pleased our Redeemers,  
her foolish sin was acknowledged  
and she built the temple that for this ancient story  
is still called "The Boiling Saviour."

*Now AN AMBASSADOR goes to the Pope and says:*

3. Urban, most blessed Father in Christ,  
we have come to inform you of a miracle  
which every good and faithful Christian  
should love and revere with righteous fear.  
A priest, who was holding the Sacrament in his hand  
and about to break the consecrated host,  
doubted that it was Christ,  
and a wonderful miracle was seen by many people.
4. When he broke the holy Host,  
it began to pour forth great quantities of blood,  
and it was so abundant  
that it stained the corporal  
and the towel all over,  
and this was in Bolsena, on the altar.  
This was seen by the Bishop of Orvieto,  
and he sends us to report it to you, discrete Father.

*THE POPE replies to the Ambassador:*

5. This is a wondrous miracle  
and it shows here that our Saviour  
doe not want to conceal from his faithful  
his great charity and his great love.

O Creator of Heaven, just and merciful,  
who to save us from eternal sorrow  
chose to die on the holy tree  
to give the eternal kingdom to those who desire it.

6. And you, my beloved brothers and sons,  
see whether you think as I do,  
that a day should be added to the festive calendar  
Let everyone honour it and let it be observed,  
not deviating from divine precepts,  
and we must celebrate a new office.  
Find somebody to compose the office  
such as will please the faithful and God.

A CARDINAL *says*:

7. Father, on behalf of all these people  
I will speak as they have commanded me.  
This college and the entire Consistory  
have agreed, Father, with your advice,  
and without hesitation and without any delay  
let some enlightened doctor be found  
who will compose this office  
to complement this venerable sacrament.

THE POPE *replies*:

8. Have Friar Tomas Aquinas come here,  
and, from the Friars Minor, Friar Bonaventure,  
since both of them are divinely inspired  
and learned in the Holy Scripture.  
They have great and exceptional intellect,  
eagle eyes, pure and resplendent,  
such that they will satisfy our desires  
in this great mystery.

A SERVANT *goes to fetch St Thomas and says*:

9. The holy pontiff, Pope Urban,  
has sent me to tell you to come to him.

ST THOMAS *replies*:

Go, faithful servant, and say that we are coming,  
and we will not disobey his command.

*And he turns to Friar Bonaventure:*

Get up, brother, and we'll go together.

FRIAR BONAVENTURE *replies*:

And I will obey most willingly.

*When they reach the Pope, ST THOMAS says:*

What do you command of us, supreme Pontiff?

THE POPE:

I want you to be participants in a great good.

10. I command you to obey me  
and attend with all diligence  
to the holy Sacrament of the Lord,  
and make a worthy office for love of him.

ST THOMAS *replies*:

No Christian should disobey your orders  
since you are the shepherd of the world.  
Therefore, holy Father, we will do  
what is in our power to obey your command.

ST THOMAS *leaves and in front of the Crucifix he says:*

11. O crucified Christ, o blessed Jesus,  
God, Son of God, Word made flesh,  
if I have committed any sin in this,  
I beg you to forgive me.

CHRIST *replies from the cross*:

Thomas, listen, my beloved son.  
Praise me, for I have enlightened you.  
You did well to be obedient,  
and what you have said of me is the truth.

12. Ask whatever grace you wish, because  
in my mercy I will grant your request.

ST THOMAS:

I ask for nothing but you, o Redeemer,  
and that I may never be separated from you.  
With hope, and with holy and righteous fear,  
and with desire for you may I always be united.  
Make me keep your holy commandments.

THE CRUCIFIX:

Go now, for you are inscribed among the elect.

ST THOMAS *goes to the Pope carrying a book in his hand and says:*

13. O holy Pontiff, here is the office  
you ordered me to write,  
but on account of my ignorance and wickedness  
I have not been able to do it all satisfactorily.  
A task as honourable and great as this  
should have been given to a wiser man.  
All errors in it, father, are mine  
and may God be praised in all things.

THE POPE *replies to him:*

14. Thomas, we believe firmly  
that almighty God, who is infinite love,  
has infused you with his wisdom  
and deserves great praise and great honour.  
May God in heaven, who is supreme power,  
grant you your reward, worthy doctor.  
You were given to us to be our joy and great delight,  
and may you be blessed forever by God and by me.

*When he has said this, they sit down, and then A GAMBLER called  
GUGLIELMO comes, and he goes to the Inn and says to the Innkeeper:*

15. Have you finished all the *bruschetto*  
you gave us the day before yesterday with those fish?

THE INNKEEPER *replies:*

Of course, there's a little left for friends.

GUGLIELMO *to the Innkeeper:*

Well then, bring a jug and don't spill it.  
I'm so thirsty today, I promise you,  
you'll have to water it down, Graffigna.  
Fill up the water-jug with water for me.

THE INNKEEPER:

Here you are, you're spinning like a top.

*Now he tastes the wine and then he says to the Innkeeper:*

16. This isn't the one you gave us,  
Innkeeper, I'm sure, or else I've gone soft in the head.

THE INNKEEPER *replies*:

That's the very one you drank.

GUGLIELMO *to the Innkeeper*:

Haven't you got a couple of chestnuts and some fennel?

*And he says to himself, or rather to the wine, since he has his glass in his hand:*

You cheeky little wine, you gave me a nip!  
This time at least give me a nice French kiss.  
What? You're biting? Well, down the hatch.

*He turns to the Innkeeper:*

17. Innkeeper, how much more of this wine do you have?  
As usual, it's good company.

*Now two Rogues play at dice and ONE OF THEM says to Guglielmo:*

Shouldn't we have one last throw of dice  
now that you've wet your whistle?

GUGLIELMO *replies*:

Let me have my drink in peace,  
if you will, and then we'll do what you want.

*And ONE OF THE ROGUES says:*

Come on, hurry up, what are you waiting for?  
Innkeeper, in the meantime, bring a pair of dice.

*As they play, THE ROGUE who has won the pot, says:*

18. What are you wagering? Aren't we going to play?  
Put more in! I don't want to bet on so little?

GUGLIELMO *replies*:

I have to be really careful here...  
Every time you throw,  
you really get the dice to slide, Gruffa.  
Between a cheat and a crook, I'll have to keep my eyes open.  
Shoot: nine! Don't try to cheat me,  
you've deserved the noose for ten years now.

GUGLIELMO, *having lost, says:*

19. A curse on the man who baptised me!  
Look, eight has come out against me.  
You play now, and I'll stand and watch.  
How can Heaven make me so unlucky.  
I've been playing every day for a month now,  
and I've never taken the pot.  
A man can swear or get angry,  
or he can do his cursing in his prayers.

*And he goes to the Moneylender to pawn the cloak that he is wearing and he says to the Jew:*

20. You know full well what always happens to me.  
What will you say about that treacherous eight,  
that's turned against me a thousand times.  
Look at this now, you greedy bastard. You can get hanged.

THE JEW *looks at the cloak and replies to Guglielmo:*

This cloak would be good beaver,  
and it would know how to keep its head down.  
You've had it turned upside down.

GUGLIELMO *says angrily:*

Go jump in the lake, and anybody who listens to you!

THE JEW:

This would be worth four *lire*  
but we'll give you a few groats more.

GUGLIELMO:

Jacal, you're trying to make me angry!  
I've already redeemed it for more than seven.  
Come on, hurry up, I want to get out of here.  
I've got the dice and the ace stuck in my brain  
because I'm so unlucky.

THE JEW *to his cashier:*

Very well, give him a whole ducat.

*The Scoundrels see Guglielmo come back, and one of them, THE SECOND SCOUNDREL, says to the Innkeeper:*

22. Innkeeper, bring us a jug of that new wine:

we could deal with it very well today.

THE FIRST *replies to his companion:*

See how I kept the crooked dice hidden:

he would recognise a concrete block.  
It wants to get out, and shoot around.  
Let's eat, because Calcagno is coming.  
He has no head for the game while Jacallo's around.  
Roll up your sleeves, mate: we're going to thump him.

GUGLIELMO *comes back to the game and says:*

23. I want to know whether I've betrayed God  
or if I've handed him over to Caiaphas,  
or whether my number will ever come up.  
Shoot: seven! four! two! ace!  
I called, and look! I knew it!  
Six, five and three! I'd better take a walk.  
I'm going to get unbaptised  
or go without gambling for a year at least.

*Now that he's lost, he leaves and goes home to get his Wife's overdress so that he can pawn it, and as he leaves THE INNKEEPER says to his servant, aside:*

24. As far as I can make out, my servants,  
we don't make much profit on the wine.  
Mon and Calcagno, when you are selling  
you have to use all the culinary skill of Maestro Martino.  
For greedy pigs, just get  
the rough red from Loro and San Lorino;  
and for the skinny gluttons, get the Peretola wine  
that's so old it's almost moldy.<sup>1</sup>

*When Guglielmo gets home he takes his Wife's dress and [she] says:*

25. Where do you think you're taking that dress?

THE HUSBAND *replies:*

Get into the kitchen, and a plague on you.  
For the love of God, don't break my balls  
or I might just knock the nonsense out of you.

THE WOMAN *to her husband:*

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<sup>1</sup> Maestro Martino is the famous Martino de' Rossi, author of the *Libro de arte coquinaria*. Wine from Loro Ciuffenna in the Upper Valdarno, from Leolino del Conte (Lorino, also called Monti) in the Val di Sieve, and from Peretola, north-west of Florence, was reputed to be of lesser quality.

How do you expect me to keep the high days and holy days?  
A thousand curses on  
the man who married me to you, or ever promised me.  
You lazy good-for-nothing, go and hang yourself by the neck.

GUGLIELMO *goes to the pawnshop with the dress and says to the Jew:*

Now lend me three owls' eyes,<sup>2</sup>  
and don't make a fuss about it, Jacal.  
The florin you lent me before went  
in one clean go. You can see, he really knows how to take them.

THE JEW *looks at the dress and says:*

This dress was made very tight  
and it's all worn out on the shoulders,  
but I no we can't lose with you.  
Lend him whatever he wants, Abraham.

Now THE WOMAN *says to herself:*

27. Dear me, poor me, we're getting very close  
to the most holy and solemn feast of Easter  
and my wretched husband, to spite me all the more,  
has pawned my dress that was part of my dowry.  
So I've decided to go without delay  
to Manuel's pawnshop, very discretely,  
to ask him if I can have it back to wear for three days,  
and to offer him what I've got and what I can.

*She leaves and goes to the Jew and says:*

28. God save you, Manuel. We're getting close  
to Easter. I would like to ask a big favour:  
that, on payment of the interest, you give me back  
my grey homespun overdress.  
My husband, I can't take him any more!  
He gambles everything he has, and he's always picking a fight.  
After the holidays, I'll bring it back  
and I'll give you money or something in exchange.

THE JEW *draws the woman aside and says:*

29. Listen closely, lady, to what I tell you  
and good for you if you believe me.  
I'll return your pledge for free,  
and I'll give you a lot more money as well,

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<sup>2</sup> Gold ducats.

if you'll bring me here the Body of your God.  
Lady, when you go to take communion,  
pretend to take it and hold it in your hand  
and then bring it straight to me.

THE WOMAN *replies to the Jew*:

30. Alas, what are you proposing to me?  
You've quite scrambled my brain!

THE JEW *says*:

Don't think you're committing any sin.  
I tell you, one of my sons is very ill  
and I have been told how to save him;  
and if I free him from death with this,  
I want to be baptised along with him.  
Now go, be wise, and don't talk about it.

*The Woman goes, and THE JEW says to himself:*

31. I think I've tricked a wretched little woman  
because they blow like a leaf in every wind,  
and she's promised me that for money  
she'll bring me the sacrament of Christ.  
If she does bring it, I won't just stop  
at stabbing it with this knife,  
I'll burn it with my own hands,  
to spite the world and Christians.

THE WOMAN *reaches the church and says to the Priest*:

32. O father in Christ, give comfort  
to my weary soul, I'm at my wits' end.

THE PRIEST:

What do you want? Ask!

THE WOMAN:

I would like to confess  
and then take communion.

THE PRIEST:

Sister, it is my duty to make every effort  
to lead souls to good intentions,  
so kneel down here with a humble heart  
and tell me your sins, dear sister.

*Then THE WOMAN, as she takes communion, puts the Host into her hand in such a way that the Priest does not notice, and she goes back to the Jew with the Body of Christ and says:*

33. I've brought you what you asked,  
but make sure you don't trick me,  
because you'd be burnt along with me  
even if you were baptised a thousand times over.  
Make sure you keep your promise to me,  
so that God doesn't come out with some miracle.  
Give me my pledge as you said you would,  
and put my money here in this purse.

*The Jew takes the Host in his hand and the Woman leaves. THE JEW says to the Host, as he puts it in a frying pan and then fries it.*

34. If you are Christ, the one the world worships,  
you were crucified on Mount Calvary,  
which every Christian believes and reveres,  
and you descended down into the blind abyss.  
Now save yourself from me, if you can,  
as you're stabbed with my knife.  
Call on Joseph and Martha and Mary,  
to help you, the way you called on Elijah from the cross.

*Having wounded the Host with his knife, he sees blood stream forth and says:*

35. O Christ, o Christ of the Christians, o Christ,  
now defend yourself if you can. I've got you.  
O wretched patriarch of all the wretches,  
save yourself from this blow that I've struck.  
I can see that the steel is stronger than you are,  
it's stabbed you and killed you.  
Now call for help from the heavenly choir,  
but they don't know that you're not God.

*Then two people come to pawn something to the moneylenders, and one of them, that is THE FIRST says to the Jew:*

36. Come on, lend us four ducats on these,  
quickly, because someone's waiting for me. I'm talking to you!  
"Yes indeed, I lent him money on the other clothes before..."  
They don't want to see them, you blackguard.  
I think you've jinxed them for me.  
Don't look at this very old cloth.  
"If I did today what I did then..."  
He's making money and still he grumbles.

HIS COMPANION, *that is*, THE SECOND MAN, *sees the blood and says to him:*

37. What that blood that I can see in that corner?  
If an ox had been slaughtered there  
it certainly wouldn't have bled more everywhere.  
This scoundrel has murdered something,  
but I suspect he's going to be sorry.

THE FIRST MAN *says to his Companion:*

Look, the entire courtyard is flooded.  
Keep quiet, pretend you haven't noticed.  
Let's go and tell the King at once.

ONE OF THEM, *that is*, THE FIRST MAN, *says to the King:*

38. Most Serene King, famous and worthy,  
we have seen in the house of Manuel  
where we went just now to pawn something,  
a great deal of blood, and we don't really know  
what it is, but it looks like a sign of something bad,  
and we have our doubts about this petty crook.  
We have come to inform your Highness,  
without telling anyone else first.

THE KING *says to a Page, or rather Servant:*

39. Come here, Page. Go on my behalf  
to the Captain of the Guard, and tell him to have him seized at once  
and find out what is going on  
with this blood that he has produced;  
and if he has committed a crime – and that's their nature –  
tell him to hang him or to roast him,  
or to crucify him as they did Christ,  
the villains, all enemies of Christ.

THE PAGE *goes to the Captain of the Guard and says:*

40. On behalf of his holy Majesty,  
Captain, you are commanded to send at once  
to find out the truth  
of a certain matter that does not appear honourable.  
A large quantity of blood has been found  
in the house of Manuel. You are to find out  
what it is, and if it is some terrible crime,  
burn him or hang him or put him on the cross.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD *says to his Constable:*

41. Come on, Constable, go at once,  
go to the house of the Jew he has told us of.  
Bind him tightly as you seize him  
so that he can't grab his sack first,  
then search his house thoroughly and find out  
what that blood really means.  
What fun we'll have if you find evidence of his guilt:  
in the fire or on the cross, on the third day at dawn.

*THE CONSTABLE says a few words to the Captain of the Guard, and then turns to his men:*

42. It will be done. Each of you, take up your arms,  
because I know that by good fortune  
you are well equipped, companions and men.  
Look at them lazing around when they should be ready!  
If I get my talons into your backs  
it will be the worst pain you've ever felt.  
Move, forward, and show your mettle,  
so that I can tell the Rector about your prowess.

*When they get there and see the blood, THE CONSTABLE continues:*

43. O supreme Redeemer, what does this mean?  
Such a miracle was never before seen.  
This is your blood! I will take vengeance in every way  
on the man who did this to you: he's here, the wretch!  
Pay attention, my servants, to the lynchpin.  
Everybody keep a lookout at his post.  
If he doesn't escape, he'll be caught in our net  
and pay the penalty for all his sins.

*Now they seize the Jew and THE CONSTABLE continues:*

44. Now, traitor, you're in my hands.  
What man will defend you now?  
Slave dog, faithful dog of other dogs.

*THE JEW says sorrowfully:*

O Constable, have mercy on me.

*THE CONSTABLE:*

Bind him tight. Your words are in vain.  
Think of your end: you have to submit.

*THE JEW says, weeping:*

Ah, woe is me, and wretched is the man who sinks so low

that everybody then abandons him.

*When he is led in chains before the Captain of the Guard, THE CONSTABLE says:*

45. This gulligut was frying in a pan  
the Body of your God. He has treated it with spite,  
stabbed it all over, and with a knife,  
and lots of blood poured forth from its heart.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD *says to the Jew:*

Ah, wicked, abominable, evil people,  
treacherous dog, what is this I hear?  
Where did you get this Sacrament?  
Woe is me! I'll never find peace again!

THE JEW *replies:*

46. I can't conceal what Heaven wants  
to reveal. All counsel is in vain,  
and now, all too late, I'm sorry for what I have done,  
and I have sinned, and I have shed righteous blood  
that darkened the moon and obscured the sun on the cross.  
I know that for this I deserve to be burnt.  
The Sacrament was given to me for money  
by the wife of Guglielmo Giambelcari.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD *says to the Constable:*

47. Go and seize that woman at once.  
Bundle her along here like a torch.  
Tie her hands with a noose,  
because I want to know if he is telling the truth.  
The King will have to be told all about it  
so that he can see if this is a mystery to be honoured.  
Almighty, holy, immense, eternal God,  
how true and just you are, I think.

THE CONSTABLE *says to the guards:*

48. Come here at once, my valiant men. Come on!  
Let's go and seize this wicked sinner.

A GUARD *replies:*

We are all ready and armed.

THE CONSTABLE:

Come on, today's my day for happiness.  
Look at them go: they look like a collection of old crocks.  
You're the laziest lot I ever saw.

A GUARD:

You're wrong dishonour us, by God.

THE CONSTABLE:

I'm wrong not to hang you, you porcine scum.

*When they come to the Woman, they seize her and [THE WOMAN] says to the Constable:*

49. What is the meaning of this? Oh, you're making a mistake.  
Don't seize me in error for somebody else,  
as if I were some bandit thief.  
I'll give as good as I get for this!  
And if my husband were here now,  
he'd send you packing quick smart.  
What have I done? You're hurting my arm!.

THE CONSTABLE:

Come to court and you'll find out.

*When they come to the Captain of the Guard, [HE] says to the Woman:*

50. How did you give your Lord God  
into the hands of his enemies for such a wretched price?  
Did you sell him like Judas,  
the one who freed all Christian people  
and shed his precious and holy blood  
on the cross, and became human for us?  
How could you ever commit such a sin?  
My heart breaks just thinking about it.

THE WOMAN *replies sorrowfully:*

51. O woe is me, it was a trick!  
He told me that he had a son  
who was in great peril and great danger,  
and he had been advised that this was the only way  
that he would be freed from all his suffering,  
and if he can save this son of his  
then he will be baptised along with the son,  
confess their sins and become true Christians.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD *says to her:*

52. Yes, I hear that you are so pure  
that often you even wash your petticoat.<sup>3</sup>  
Did you take good care of the money?  
Penance must follow after sin.  
There has never been such a dark day on earth  
since Adam was banished.  
We're going to the King, because the case is clear.  
Put these two away somewhere safe.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD *goes to the King and says:*

53. I cannot imagine, your holy Majesty,  
how the earth can forbear to  
open up and tremble all over  
on account of what that usurious dog has done to us.  
Alas, my heart is breaking within me  
just thinking about it: I sent the Constable,  
as your Majesty ordered, to that  
villainous, wretched assassin, Manuel.

54. He has been so crafty and so devious  
that a silly woman gave him, for money,  
the consecrated and holy Body of Jesus,  
and he pretended it was medicine.  
He mistreated it and fried it, and Heaven  
brought forth such a miracle that my soul sorrows within.  
I have them in prison, nobody can speak to them.  
Your Majesty, I inform you alone of this.

THE KING, *in amazement, looks up to Heaven and says:*

55. O holy Father, o supreme Redeemer,  
it is not sufficient that you died on the cross  
to free us down here from the eternal fire,  
but now you are given to a cruel and wicked man.  
I don't know what Judas, what devil from hell,  
could have committed such a cruel sin.  
Now your just and holy Body languishes:  
it sheds its precious blood again.

*And he turns to his Page and says:*

57. Go and tell the Monsignor to come  
here to me at once with all the Consistory,  
in their robes, as solemnly as possible,  
and tell him to bring a rich gold vessel,  
where the Body of almighty Christ

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<sup>3</sup> *mettere il fodero in bucato*: to grow mad (Baretti, 1828)

can be placed. Do not delay.  
Say that he'll be told the reason later.  
Go at once, so that he can get ready.

THE PAGE *says to the Bishop:*

58. Reverend Father in Christ,  
the King sends me to your grace with the command  
that you should get your choir together  
and come to his Majesty's court at once,  
and dressed in other robes than those for the cloister,  
and he commands you should bring a gold vessel  
where the Body of Christ is to be placed:  
he says that he will tell you why when you get there.

THE BISHOP *replies:*

59. It will be done, and God bless you.  
Let all the clergy get ready,  
because I will go and visit him – this is my decision –  
with all my court in full regalia.

A PRIEST *says to the Bishop:*

Reverend Monsignor, indeed,  
you will be commended for such honour.  
Everybody is here with joy and delight.

THE BISHOP:

Then let us go in God's name.

60. May that true God, who rules earth and heaven,  
exalts the righteous, and willingly forgives  
sinners who believe in the Gospel,  
preserve your holy Majesty in happiness.  
I come with great zeal in obedience  
to your Majesty of good and righteous soul.  
We are arrayed as commanded  
by the messenger you sent to me before.

THE KING *says to the Bishop:*

61. Kind reverend Father,  
I certainly have not sent for your lordship  
without good cause, as I will explain.  
There is a Jewish dog in our city,  
and who burnt the holy Body of Jesus today,  
and it is still bleeding and giving signs of a great mystery.  
I want to go and fetch that worthy Host

and I want your Lordship to come there with me.

*As they leave, THE BISHOP, who has heard the reasons and is amazed, says:*

62. What does this mean, o God my hope and strength?  
Such a matter is truly a great mystery.  
This is miraculous beyond all other miracles.  
Ah, don't deprive us of your kingdom!  
Who was ever so worthy that they could touch you,  
in holy, let alone wretched, desire,  
without trembling, mercy on us.  
Why have you appeared among us against the Jews?<sup>4</sup>

*They leave together, and when they come to the Host, THE BISHOP kneels and says:*

63. O Jesus of Nazareth, crucified,  
is this the holy blood that you shed  
for us then on the cross from your holy breast,  
when you gave light to Longinus with it?  
Have you been seized again and covered with wounds  
by your enemies whom you pardoned?  
You granted them such grace,  
and they have not yet had enough of tormenting you.

*THE KING kneels and says to the Host:*

64. True God, who rules over Christendom,  
forgive those who are innocent of this  
and who have taken baptism at our font.  
We will never find happiness and contentment  
unless you yourself give us some sign  
that you forgive us, and in your mercy consent  
to rise spotless and pure from this blood.  
My heart breaks to see you so dark and sad..

*Now the Host, by itself, rises up from the ground and goes to the hand of the Bishop, and THE KING, seeing this, says devoutly:*

65. Praise be to you forever, eternal Father,  
who has mercifully consoled us.  
Praise be to the Saints and to your Mother.

*And he turns to the Captain of the Guard:*

Those two villains you have imprisoned,  
have them cruelly put to death  
for their wicked, horrendous and thieving deeds.

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<sup>4</sup> I have reconsidered v. 62.8 and propose that it should read: Perché contra ' Giudei tra noi (ti) mostri?

*And he turns to the Bishop:*

And you, take Jesus to your tabernacle  
praising his most worth miracle.

*Now the Bishop takes the Body of Christ to the church, and as they go the priests sing the hymn of Corpus Christi, that is, “Pange, lingua, gloriosi [corporis mysterium].”<sup>5</sup> Then each one returns to his place, and THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD says to his judges:*

66. Beloved doctors, you have seen  
the iniquity of this sinner,  
of this wretched and unmindful woman  
who sold her Lord for money.  
Each of you brave jurists must advise me  
so that such a sin does not go unpunished,  
because however grave the sin was, I want  
their penance to be, if possible, more cruel still.

*ONE JUDGE to the Captain of the Guard:*

67. No judgement could be given  
that did not deserve to be a hundred times worse.

*ANOTHER JUDGE says to the Captain of the Guard:*

I can't advise you, my lord, either.  
Such a sin does not deserve torture.  
He tormented the Body of Christ;  
she sold it to him. Alas, what sorrow  
I feel! Oh, can a servant do worse  
than to hand his Lord over to his enemies?

*THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD says to the Constable:*

68. Constable, have that glutton Manuel  
brought here, and that woman too.  
Get the brush and the coal ready  
and set fire to it at once.  
Let her be hanged, as is right,  
because her sin is not so outrageous.  
Pay no attention to their prayers and entreaties:  
execute them without mercy.

*THE JEW, bound to be led to his execution, laments and says:*

69. O accursed and false intention,

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<sup>5</sup> “Sing, my tongue, the mystery of the glorious body”; for full text, translation and a short history of this hymn by Thomas Aquinas, see <http://www.preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/Hymni/Pange.html>.

o accursed, blind, deceiving woman,  
o accursed woman, you alone are the cause  
and the very root of this, my end.

THE CONSTABLE *to him*:

Be quiet now, you dog, you dirty glutton!  
Haven't you heard the proverb that says,  
Repentance at the end is worthless.

THE JEW *replies*:

A curse on the day I was born.

*As they go to the place of execution, A PRIEST goes to meet them and says to the Jew:*

70. You who are blind beyond belief  
and damned to the second death,  
recognise yourself and be content  
to have your contrite heart filled with light  
by confessing your sin and saying: "I repent,  
Jesus, for a thousand times I have sinned,  
especially against your holy faith,  
that lives for ever and rules now and ever will!"

71. And say: "I know that in order to redeem us  
you came down to earth to take our flesh  
by the Holy Ghost, and you did not refuse to die  
where you came to save the world.  
Three days later, having risen again, you had to go  
to Limbo to redeem the Patriarchs.  
Why did I believe in my false faith,  
and why didn't I want to believe in Jesus?"

72. If you do that, I shall bless you  
with the water of Holy Baptism.

THE JEW *answers back*:

Don't waste my time, you ignorant brute,  
because what I have been I will always be the same.  
Think on your own sin before you think on mine  
and you will see that Christianity is false.

THE PRIEST *replies contemptuously as he leaves*:

Since you want nothing from God, I curse you  
and leave you to damnation.

THE JEW *to the Constable:*

73. Constable, listen to my words  
and pay attention to my death.  
Because I am leaving this wicked world,  
I ask you to be patient a moment.

THE CONSTABLE *says:*

Go in there, o enemy of God,  
who had no qualms in sinning.

THE EXECUTIONER *to the Jew:*

You've heard, Manuel, how he's hurrying me along.  
Come on it, and there's be time for a pint.

*When the Jew has been burnt, then they bring the Woman; and when she gets there THE WOMAN commends herself to God and says:*

74. Merciful God, I have offended you wrongly.  
I have sinned and I will make no excuse,  
and this body deserves to die.  
I commend to you my wretched, miserable,  
confused soul, that it may find safe haven  
if you have not closed mercy's door,  
which I hope will never be closed for me:  
if Judas had hoped in you, he would have been saved.

THE KING *says to his barons:*

75. All of you go home if you wish to rest  
because it is hot and time to sleep.  
I don't what to trouble you any more now.  
Page, go and open my bedchamber.  
When it is time, I'll have you summoned.  
I might want to go riding.  
It's so muggy today  
that I can't keep my eyes open.

*The King lies down to sleep and ST THOMAS AQUINAS appears in between two Angels and says to the King:*

76. I have been sent from Heaven, and I come to tell you.  
on behalf of the Lord whom the Heavens adore,  
to send orders to free that woman  
whom the executioner is about to hang.  
Christ has freed her and wants to forgive her,  
so you must pardon her too.  
She will do penance for her sin

and great good will come of her wrongdoing.

THE KING *wakes up and calls his Barons and says:*

77. Come, Barons, before me here.  
I was asleep a moment ago.  
As I slept, blessed St Thomas  
ordered me, on behalf on the Lord,  
to save that woman. Where is my page?  
He says that Christ has pardoned her in Heaven  
and that much good is yet to come of it.  
I wish to obey: don't let her die.

THE PAGE *goes to the Constable:*

78. The King commands you to free  
the woman and not to bar her way. Let her go.  
Constable, quickly, off you go. Have her released.  
The Captain of the Guard will be very pleased.  
St Thomas came to order  
that she be freed without punishment.

THE CONSTABLE *says to the Hangman:*

Well, Hangman, untie her hands at once.  
Bring her down, and put the noose away.

THE HANGMAN:

79. The tasty morsel gets snatched from my mouth every time.  
Let this one go too. I want to be paid  
for my labours, then it's everyone for himself.

THE CONSTABLE *says to him:*

Get moving, you evil varmint rogue,  
or you'll be feeling the snap of the noose yourself.  
Didn't you hear what that saint said?

THE HANGMAN:

A saint's a saint, and I'm a hangman:  
I'm not going to accept a penny less than I'm due.

*Now the Woman is untied and led along, and when they come before* THE KING, *he says to her:*

80. We are ready to do what is pleasing to God.  
He wants you to be spared, because our pillar,  
St Thomas Aquinas, came to tell me

while I was in bed and just dropping off to sleep.  
Acknowledge your guilt and weep for your sin,  
and from here on you will be a better woman.  
I forgive you because he forgives you.  
Go, be devout, righteous and good always.

THE WOMAN *replies to the King and thanks him:*

81. Dear God who rules over nature,  
look not on my great wickedness.  
I shall always be your servant, honest and pure,  
and with the money I received for another person's wickedness  
I want your master architects, your Majesty,  
to build a temple on the spot where I committed this sin.  
Let it be called: "The Boiling Saviour."

*When she has finished speaking, THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD says to the Constable and the Guards:*

82. Call everybody, and take sticks and beat  
these Jews and that heretical dog:  
Abraham, David, Jacob and Solomon,  
Saba, Isaac, Jacob and Abramino,  
Samuel, Joseph the glutton,  
Natale and Job, and little Manuel,  
and that other Joseph Squareballs,  
and Amicca, Acadde and Rachel and Jacalla.

*Now the Constable goes to find the Jews, and they beat them as much as they can until they all take flight.*

*Then THE ANGEL bids farewell to the people saying:*

83. May that true God who is just, holy and triune  
give you all salvation, joy, and life,  
where they sing Hosanna in eternity  
in praise of his great mercy which is infinite,  
and may he spare you all from the dark pit of Hell.  
Go in peace: the play is over.  
Hold the Sacrament in reverence,  
for every sin will have penance at the end.

*The end of the Play of a Miracle of Corpus Christi.*

*Thanks be to God*