

LANGUAGE PLAY AND FRANCISCAN PROPRIETY IN THE
CHRONICLE OF SALIMBENE DE ADAM

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The *Chronicle* of the thirteenth-century Franciscan Salimbene de Adam (or Salimbene da Parma, 1221-1289) is as baggy a monster of medieval narrative as anyone would wish to encounter, and all the more fascinating for that fact.¹ Its digressive nature, however, should not, in Salimbene's view at least, trouble the reader overmuch—as the author himself suggests, quoting John 3:8, a meandering, variegated narrative is excusable because the Holy Spirit “blows where it wishes” (“Spiritus ubi vult spirat”). Salimbene's narrative wanderings allow for, among much else, the inclusion of many miniature stories, often centered on humorous situations or the use of humorous language, which can surprise the reader with their pithiness and pungency. No less a critic than Erich Auerbach, who offhandedly describes Salimbene as an “extremely gifted author,” comments on the “sensory force” and “graphic wit” of the *Chronicle's* anecdotes.² Joseph Baird and Giuseppe Baglivi, analyzing the role of the witty rejoinder in some of Salimbene's stories, extend Auerbach's observation, remarking on the “self-contradictory feeling that he has toward such ready verbal wit and ability.”³ I propose to broaden these and other analyses of Salimbene's wit and wordplay by considering not just his chronicle's humor, but somewhat more directly, the *purpose and representation* of humorous scenes, language, and speech acts in his text. In doing so, I hope to challenge the implicit dichotomy of historical chronicle and humorous digression that continues to underlie some of the commentary on Salimbene, by suggesting how humor, specifically humorous language, is integral to his historiographical project. The question here is relatively straightforward: beyond a certain degree of entertainment value, what does the incorporation of humor into the *Chronicle* allow Salimbene to accomplish as an often contentious historiographer of medieval Italy? My answer, somewhat broadly stated, is that Salimbene often uses humorous language as a kind of spectacle by means of which his chronicle can *contain*, in two senses of the word,

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religious, moral, and linguistic deviance. Ultimately, I would argue, we see Salimbene using humor in this way with an eye toward protecting some of the fundamental themes and metaphors of the Franciscan tradition of which he is a part.⁴

We can begin to see how such containment works in practice by considering Salimbene's stories about Master Boncompagno da Signa, the thirteenth-century Florentine rhetorician and author of several treatises on the *ars dictaminis*. He was, in Salimbene's estimation, the "notorious trickster" ("trufator maximus") who appeared during the spiritual movement known as the Great Halleluia.⁵ While ostensibly no fan of such a charlatan, Salimbene uses the figure of Boncompagno to attack the Dominican preacher Brother John of Vicenza, who was "a man with little learning but with a great ambition for working miracles" ("parve litterature erat et intromittebat se de miraculis faciendis"; *Chronicle* 54; Scalia 1:102). For example, Boncompagno, we are told, "wrote a poem deriding Brother John." Even as he himself disparages the poem in question, insisting he did not really make the effort to memorize it because he "really didn't care for it," Salimbene gives us a part of the poem he does recall: "Et Iohannes iohanniçat / et saltando choreizat. / Modo salta, modo salta, / qui celorum petis alta! / Saltat iste, saltat ille, / resaltant cohortes mille, / saltat chorus dominarum, / saltat dux Venetiarum, et cet."⁶ The poem represents the spectacle of the dancing Brother John within the larger spectacle of cavorting crowds and a dancing *dux Venetiarum*, and the verses themselves become a kind of linguistic spectacle for Salimbene's reader, both by punning on John's name in the first line and by being included in such an overtly self-conscious and decidedly backhanded manner.⁷ Salimbene, that is, implicitly invites his reader to stare at both the poem's contents and its very presence. What we see is the actual writing of Boncompagno, self-styled successor of Cicero, treated at once as barely worth remembering and as biting effective.⁸ This textual spectacle then metamorphoses into a more literal one, as Salimbene narrates how Boncompagno mocked John in actions as well as words: "And since Brother John was known as a worker of miracles, Master Boncompagno sought to ape his behavior, and so he predicted to the Bolognese that, before their very eyes, he would fly high into the air" ("Item iste magister Boncompagnus, videns quod

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frater Iohannes intromittebat se de miraculis faciendis, voluit et ipse se intromittere et predixit Bononiensibus quod, videntibus eis, volare volebat"; *Chronicle* 55; Scalia 1:109). As in the poem, a crowd gathers, but whereas the crowd in the verse was made of dancing participants, now it is one of onlookers hoping to witness the spectacle of a miraculous flight by Boncompagno, who had made wings for himself, from the top of a mountain. After Boncompagno and the crowd "had been gazing at each other for a long period of time," he shouts to the people, "Ite cum benedictione divina, et sufficiat vobis vidisse faciem Boncompagni," and the crowd departs, its members finally having realized they have been mocked.⁹ The Bolognese public, in other words, through Boncompagno's mocking benediction, suddenly recognize that they themselves are the spectacle here. Finally, having invited us to marvel for ourselves at the spectacle of Boncompagno's audacious deeds and language, Salimbene concludes his narrative use of this humorous character. He quickly contains this trickster for his audience by noting his failed attempt to gain a position at the Papal court, his eventual impoverishment, and his ultimate demise within the closed walls of a poor house: "[Y]ears later he returned to Florence so poor that he was constrained to end his days in an institution" ("in quodam hospitali vitam finire"; *Chronicle* 55; Scalia 1:110).

On the heels of this "putting away" of Boncompagno, however, we are not allowed to forget the more important, or more direct target of Salimbene's mockery—the Dominican Brother John, who because of his foolishness ("fatuitas") "believed himself capable of working miracles without the help of God" ("crederet etiam sine Deo se veraciter miracula posse facere")—"And this," Salimbene says, "was the worst kind of stupidity" (*Chronicle* 55; Scalia 1:110). Brother John even goes so far as to answer the criticisms of his own fellow Dominicans by threatening to devalue Saint Dominic himself and turn his brothers' shortcomings into a kind of spectacle: "I will destroy your saint for you, and publish your own affairs to all the world" ("vilificabo sanctum vestrum et facta vestra publicabo"; *Chronicle* 55; Scalia 1:110). It is the Franciscans, however, whom Salimbene slyly introduces as the examples of clear-sightedness, through their commonsensical apathy toward John's arrogance. "Once," we are

told, “when John had just had his beard shaved in a convent of the Friars Minor, he felt it a great slight that the friars did not gather his hair to preserve as relics” (*Chronicle* 55). Thus, the Franciscan Salimbene is able not only to acknowledge, through humorous belittling, the spectacle John made of himself in his life, but also to dismiss him by incorporating into his narrative the indifference of his fellow Franciscans. John in fact becomes a posthumous spectacle, but not in the reliquary he seems to have wanted, and the *legenda* he presumably would have desired instead has been transformed into derisive anecdote.

Of course, some fools are Franciscans, even in Salimbene’s *Chronicle*. Brother Detesalve of the Friars Minor is introduced immediately after the Dominican Brother John. A Florentine—thirteenth-century Florence in Salimbene’s estimation fairly teems with pranksters—Detesalve appears, like Boncompagno, as “a great trickster” (“magnus trufator”) in an oft-discussed passage where, among other things, the character continues the mockery of John of Vicenza. Detesalve has lunch with some Dominicans only after they agree to “give him a piece of Brother John’s tunic as a relic” (*Chronicle* 56). Detesalve uses the cloth to wipe himself after relieving his bowels, and then throws it into the privy. Loudly (and of course insincerely) lamenting his loss of this “relic,” the Franciscan stirs the excrement in the privy vigorously while the Dominicans bend over in search of it, until they finally get wind, as it were, that they have been duped. Salimbene then follows this narrative with the story of how Detesalve managed to avoid being sent to a convent in Penne by hiding himself in bed among the feathers (*pennis*) he has taken out of a pillow. Upon being discovered, Detesalve states that he has already adhered to the command, and, precisely as a result of this joke (“ideo occasione istius truffe”), he did not have to go to Penne (Scalia 1:111). The final narrative about Detesalve recounts how the Franciscan, having slipped and fallen on some ice while walking through Florence, is surrounded and mocked by a crowd of Florentines. One of them asks whether Detesalve would like something under him to make him more comfortable, and the friar quickly says yes, he would like the wife of the man asking. The famously sly Florentines thereupon commend the friar, saying that he “is one of us” (“de nostris est”) after all (Scalia

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1.111; Auerbach discusses this scene, as do Baird and Baglivi in somewhat greater detail.).

The sequence of miniature narratives is interesting here. The first story works by bringing a private scene into public view, with Detesalve using his body, or more accurately his bodily functions, rather than witty language as a means to pull a prank on his hosts. The friar's body is obviously the centerpiece of the second story, as he uses it to dramatize a pun on "Penne." The linguistic play that the "*pennis*" pun introduces, however, leads neatly into more linguistic play, namely the moment of humorous direct discourse where, his body still at issue but, unlike in the other stories, no longer under his control, Detesalve can verbally gain the upper hand once again. In the first and second stories, in other words, Detesalve intentionally makes a spectacle of himself in private spaces, while in the third, he overcomes his status as unintentional spectacle in the public space of Florence by means of his verbal wit. Interestingly, the Florentines' approving reaction to Detesalve's witticism prompts Salimbene to offer a kind of rhetorical analysis of the appropriateness of linguistic humor, outlining eight reasons why "shameful speech" ("*inhonesta locutio*") ought to be avoided, followed by three reasons why Detesalve ought to have been excused. As Martha Bayless rightly points out, "One suspects that Salimbene is merely attempting to rationalize his own admiration for wit," and she notes the chronicler's apparently contradictory attitude toward such verbal play.¹⁰ Moreover, it is worth noting that Salimbene devotes much more space to analyzing and ultimately excusing Detesalve's speech than he does actually to narrating the friar's actions. The emphasis in the text, then, is finally again on language and containment: ironically, it is precisely the occasional propriety of humorous language that necessitates its policing. Surely Salimbene admires verbal wit, and Detesalve offers Salimbene an opportunity to put such wit on display. Further still, however, Salimbene's fellow Franciscan allows the chronicler to incorporate into his chronicle and address, however indirectly, the problem of a foolish Franciscan, a jesting member of an order conceived by its founder as populated by "the Lord's jongleurs" ("*ioculatores Domini*").¹¹

A very different, but particularly clear, manifestation of this strategy of at once interjecting and containing humorous language in a

way that relates to Franciscan tradition can be found much later in the *Chronicle*, in Salimbene's story of England's King Henry III and his encounter with a witty jongleur. One day, while the king was "sitting at table with his knights," the jongleur cried out, "Our king is like our Lord Jesus Christ himself." Henry is quite pleased, and he asks the jongleur, in effect, to explain the simile by detailing exactly how he is Christ-like (*Chronicle* 305).¹² The jongleur replies, "It is written of the Lord Jesus Christ that he was just as wise at the instant of his conception as he was at the age of thirty. So is it with our king, who is just as wise now as when he was a little boy" ("De Domino Iesu Christo dicitur quod ita sapiens fuit in instanti conceptionis sue, sicut quando fuit XXX annorum. Simili modo res noster ita sapiens est modo, sicut quando puerulus erat"; *Chronicle* 305; Scalia 2:445). The King, enraged (*turbatus*), orders the jongleur to be hanged, but the king's attendants ("famuli regis") only take the jongleur out of the king's presence and toy with him a bit, pretending to hang him but finally advising him to leave the country until Henry calms down. These trickster members of the king's retinue return to their lord and report to him "that his command had been [properly] fulfilled" ("quod preceptum eius bene impleverant"; *Chronicle* 305; Scalia 2:445). One might observe several dimensions to the interplay of humorous language and spectacle here. First, the protagonist is a jongleur, and what is at issue is not at all whether the King is a good Christian but rather the way in which he is specifically "Christ-like." Consequently, the story is informed by comparisons or metaphors central to Franciscan ideology. The Friars Minor, of course, conceived of themselves, as did their founder, as both God's minstrels and as imitators of Christ, and the joke here resides in part in the necessity of the minstrel's mock-exegesis.

Humor, language, and the policing of Franciscan metaphors become most intricately at issue in Salimbene's stories about Gerard Segarello, leader of the Order of the Apostles, a group (as Salimbene has it) "of rascally and swinish men," "those fools and base creatures who [merely] say they are Apostles" (*Chronicle* 249).¹³ Salimbene absolutely detests Segarello, who apparently had tried to join the Franciscans but was refused, turning Segarello into a kind of mock-Franciscan in his desire to imitate Francis. Unlike John of Vicenza,

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however, who simply aspires to work miracles, or King Henry, merely compared to Christ by someone else and rather witlessly flattered by what he at first considers a viable comparison, Segarello actually wishes to be like the Son of God and emulates Christ in what are, as Salimbene recognizes all too well, ridiculous, not to say blasphemous, ways. In his desire to live *in imitatione Christi*, Segarello will go so far as to lie “in a cradle, wrapped in swaddling clothes...suck[ing] milk from the breasts of a certain young woman” (*Chronicle* 251). Moreover, like Salimbene, Segarello is from Parma, and the members of the order he starts (there is some question about whether he ever in point of fact intended to found an order) actually sought “to live at ease without labor on the alms of those whom the Minorites and the Preachers had taught for a long time with great labor and example” (*Chronicle* 250-51). We are even told, very much later in the *Chronicle*, that Segarello eventually “became so demented that he took up the dress of a minstrel and became a jongleur . . . and went throughout the streets and squares like a fool” (*Chronicle* 627). The Apostles and their founder, in other words, are in direct competition with the mendicants on the intertwined levels of economics, authority, and self-defining metaphor. Stemming from the threat to Franciscan metaphorical identification, as well as from the great emphasis placed in early Franciscan practice on popular preaching, the language usage of Segarello and his followers is very much at issue for the chronicler: it is crucial for Salimbene, in other words, to show Segarello as less than capable with language.¹⁴ Salimbene, for instance, tells us how Segarello frequently repeated, in an attempt to imitate “the word of the Lord” (“verbum Domini”), the command “Penitencágite!” and thus ridiculously showed himself (Salimbene is quick to point out) too ignorant to articulate the correct words, “Penitentiam agite” (Scalia 2:372). Segarello’s answer to any invitation to be a guest “at lunch or dinner” (“ad prandium vel ad cenam”) is a seemingly imperious “I will either come or I will not come” (“Aut veniam aut non veniam”), and Salimbene castigates him for this intentional ambiguity by citing scriptural authorities against it.¹⁵ Segarello’s linguistic duplicity eventually leads him to be the butt of a linguistic joke when a doorkeeper at a Franciscan convent, in response to Gerard’s question about whether another brother happened to be inside, responds with a

derisive jest (“trufatorie et derisive”), saying, “He is either home or he is not” (“Aut est in domo aut non est”; Scalia 2:372). For Salimbene, of course, the possibilities of ambiguity and linguistic play inherent in Segarello’s own manner of speech are the unstable foundation of the very Order Segarello leads; he is, after all, “the first of those who ‘say they are [Apostles] and are not’” (“primus istorum qui se dicunt Apostolos esse et non sunt”; *Chronicle* 259; Scalia 2:382). Their very name, in fact, is the twelfth and final example Salimbene includes in a characteristically detailed and systematic listing of the Order’s various kinds of foolishness. According to our chronicler, they “chose too high and noble a name for themselves” (“nimis altum nomen et nobile imposuerunt sibi”; *Chronicle* 289; Scalia 2:422).¹⁶ We might compare other instances wherein Salimbene’s attitudes toward language and, specifically, Latinity figure into his historiographical practice. A revealing anecdote, for example, is found late in the *Chronicle*, when Salimbene peppers his history with several narratives about the linguistic trickery of demons. In one story, two peasants bring a third, possessed by a demon, to a Franciscan convent. The lector tells the man that he would believe him to be a real demon if he should speak in Latin, which the demon does. He speaks such poor Latin, however, that the lector mocks him, “saying that he would make a poor grammarian.” The demon’s reply: “I can speak as good a Latin as you, but this peasant’s tongue is so thick and awkward for speaking that I can hardly make it work at all” (*Chronicle* 575). Correct Latin is very much a moral matter for Salimbene, grammatical and/or semantic imprecision being a mark of severe failure of character.

Segarello is, in Salimbene’s estimation, not only a great fool, but someone whose very manipulation and misuse of language and metaphor threaten to undermine the purpose, mode of life, and foundational metaphors of Salimbene’s own religious order. Thus it is not surprising that Salimbene, through humor and ridicule, will take particular pains to contain this false *ioculator Domini*. Segarello, we are told, begins wearing clothes that make him “look more like a jongleur than a religious man,” and, despite the fact that his words are “scurrilous, shameful, empty [and] dishonorable” (“scurrilia, turpia, vana et inhonesta”), they, unlike those of Detesalve, are fundamentally impotent, “evok[ing] a smile more for their foolishness than for their

malice” (*Chronicle* 260; Scalia 2:383). This implicit impotence becomes explicit, humorous spectacle at the table of the Bishop of Parma, Obizzo, who first imprisons Segarello but then effectively turns him into an unwitting court entertainer. Segarello insists on drinking the bishop’s fine wine, but only succeeds in making a drunken (and quasi-figural) display of himself, “babbl[ing] foolishly, in fulfillment of the words of Isaiah, 32 [.5-6]: ‘The fool shall no more be called prince...’” (*Chronicle* 260). Salimbene uses the authoritative figure of Obizzo himself to close off the absurd scene of a besotted Segarello’s gibberish: “But since [Segarello] was a very funny, foolish man, the bishop of Parma merely laughed at him because he considered him more a silly entertainer (“iocularorem fatuum et insensatum”) than a religious man” (*Chronicle* 260).

About a third of the way through his *Chronicle*, Salimbene pauses briefly to reflect on the nature and purpose of his own historiographical practice. In a revealing passage, one better suited (Salimbene’s rubric admits) to the *Chronicle*’s prologue but nonetheless striking in its abrupt but salient interjection into the history, Salimbene explains his circuitous style.¹⁷

The various digressions that we have indulged in throughout this chronicle may be excused for three reasons. First of all, such things came to mind despite ourselves and at times when, in good conscience, we could not avoid them, because ‘the Spirit breatheth where he will,’ and it is not ‘in man’s power to stop the spirit’.... Second, such digressions have enabled us to say many good and useful things which can best be reported in such a history. Third, we always return to the original subject and never leave out any of the facts of the history on account of the digressions. (*Chronicle* 176).

This threefold *apologia* establishes a profound bond between what might be called Salimbene’s “self-fashioning” and his claims for the truth and integrity of his historiographical project. Robert Brentano has written of Salimbene’s text, “The whole *Chronicle* is a personal affair. It blossoms at Salimbene’s birth. It is an extension of Salimbene’s self.”¹⁸ More than just an extension, one might add, the *Chronicle*

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functions as a construction of Salimbene's distinctively Franciscan self, one that, in the passage quoted above, is characterized by a divinely sanctioned rambling. Digressions are claimed, in effect, to be integral, even indispensable, and consequently Salimbene's sense of humor and delight in wit, so often present in these "digressions," are indispensable for him as well—precisely because they are one means by which he is able both to indulge and to keep in check the play inherent in Franciscan themes and language.¹⁹

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Notes

¹ Salimbene joined the Franciscans in 1238 and composed his *Chronicle* late in life, probably between 1283 and 1287.

² Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953) 214-16.

³ "Salimbene and *il bel motto*," *American Benedictine Review* 28 (June 1977): 209.

⁴ A closely related subject for consideration is Salimbene's use of *exempla*, discussed by Michele Brossard-Dandre, "Le Statut de l'*Exemplum* dans la *Chronique* de Fra Salimbene de Adam," *Les Exempla médiévaux: nouvelles perspectives*, ed. Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Paris: Champion, 1998) 83-104.

⁵ Quotations from Salimbene in Latin are from Giuseppe Scalia's edition, *Salimbene de Adam: Cronica*, 2 vols. (Bari: Laterza, 1966). Quoted translations are from *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam*, ed. Joseph L. Baird, Giuseppe Baglivi, and John Robert Kane, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, vol. 40 (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1986). Other brief translations are my own. The kind of spiritual renewal evidenced during the "Great Halleluia," beginning in 1233, is described by Salimbene as "a time of happiness and joy, ...praise and jubilation, of quiet and peace, with all weapons laid aside. During this time, the people of the city and the country, ...even the knights and soldiers sang songs and divine hymns. And this spirit of devotion was abroad in all the cities of Italy.... And the crowds of people made stops in the churches and in the squares, lifting up their hands to God in praise and blessing forever and ever; truly they could not cease from divine praise because they were so inebriated with divine love" (*Chronicle* 47-48). The hyperbole of Salimbene's description notwithstanding, one might suppose that just such a climate of spiritual enthusiasm could be an ideal one for someone as slippery as Boncompagno.

⁶ Baird translates the poem as follows: Old John John enhances / As he leaps and as he dances. / All of you who seek the sky / Must dance, and dance, and fly! / This one leaps and that one dances, / Every

boy and maiden prances, / The young men dance with all the girls, / Even the duke of Venice whirls" (*Chronicle* 54-55; cf. 655-66).

⁷ In the glossary to his edition, Scalia's gloss for *iohanniçare* reads, "giovanneggiare (formazione scherzosa da Iohannes; per folleggiare?)."

⁸ For a brief consideration of Boncompagno's rather overstated place in the *ars dictaminis* tradition, with some references, see James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1974) 253-55. Richard Williams Guidotti analyzes the degree to which Salimbene's picture of Boncompagno has unfairly colored history's perception of him. See Guidotti, "Deceivers, Credulous Skeptics, and Believers: Historical, Fictional and Hermetic Identity Development of Authors and Characters in Boncompagno da Signa, Salimbene da Param, Dante and Boccaccio," diss., U of California-Berkeley, 1995.

⁹ "Go, with God's blessing, and let it suffice that you have looked upon the face of Boncompagno" (*Chronicle* 55; Scalia 1:109).

¹⁰ Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996) 207.

¹¹ Such a designation for the Franciscans is recorded, for instance, in the *Speculum Perfectionis* (1318). See John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968) 267 and 285-86.

¹² Interestingly, Salimbene calls even greater attention to this language play *qua* language by noting that "Both the king and the jongleur were speaking in French and their words sounded beautiful in the vulgar tongue." Salimbene, of course, recounts the exchange only in Latin.

¹³ As Baird notes (681), Pope Honorius IV condemned the order in 1284. Segarello was burned in 1301, and the order wiped out for good in 1307. Salimbene, however, seems to regard the earlier ban on new orders by the Second Council of Lyons as having eliminated the order.

¹⁴ For comments on thirteenth-century Franciscan preaching, see Moorman. As Moorman comments, "The real danger, which the friar had to beware of, was to sacrifice the solemn duty of the messenger of God to the popularity and fame of the showman" (277). Salimbene's thesis about Segarello is, partly, that the latter blurs precisely such a

distinction. On Salimbene, preaching, and Franciscans, see also Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, "Cronache, morale, predicazione: Salimbene da Parma e Jacopo Varagine," *Studi Medievali* 30.2 (1989): 749-88.

¹⁵ Specifically, in the Vulgate, Matthew 5:37 ("Sit autem sermo vester: est, est, non, non...") ["But let your speech be yea, yea: no, no..."] and James 1:8 ("Vir duplex animo inconstans est in omnibus viis suis" ["A double minded man is inconstant in all his ways"]). The English is from the Rheims version of the New Testament.

¹⁶ This criticism resonates provocatively with Salimbene's much earlier narrative of how he came to have the name "Salimbene" when he joined the Franciscans. After being called "Ognibene" for the first year in the Order, a "certain noble friar," who was "the last brother whom St. Francis himself received into the Order," gives him the new name of "Salimbene" because he has "made a good leap by entering a good religious order" (*Chronicle* 13). Salimbene notes that, pleased though he was by this suggestion, he still did not get the name he most wanted, "Dionysius," on whose feast day (October 9) he was born.

¹⁷ Salimbene's prologue to his book does not survive.

¹⁸ Robert Brentano, *Two Churches: England and Italy in the Thirteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) 335. Brentano also notes, while generalizing about the distinctive qualities of thirteenth-century historians, that they "are more interested in man as an intricately political and social animal than are 'twelfth-century' historians" (327). Salimbene obviously fits this mold, and for him, these intricacies are negotiated often by means of humor and wit.

¹⁹ My profound thanks are due to Joseph L. Baird, who would likely find much with which to disagree in this essay—spiritedly and good-naturedly, of course. His inspired inclusion of anecdotes from Salimbene in his lectures at Kent State University sparked this *quondam* undergraduate's interest in Salimbene and medieval studies many years ago.