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Jean Bodel's *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*: A Call for Non-Violent Crusade¹

On August 20, 1191, Richard the Lionhearted, the remaining leader of the Third Crusade, ordered that 3000 Muslim men, women and children prisoners of war be taken outside the city walls of Acre and executed.² Saladin's army tried to halt the slaughter, but despite repeated assaults, the carnage continued. Richard had ostensibly ordered the massacre because Saladin had not sent enough money to ransom the prisoners. But logistically, it was time for Richard's armies to move, and taking that many civilian prisoners with them would have been virtually impossible.³ Christian sources indicated that the killings might have been reprisals for the huge losses suffered by the Crusaders at the Battle of Acre.⁴ Perhaps the massacre galvanized the Muslim army. Saladin and his men held firm until Richard was forced to return to England to deal with domestic matters, including the usurpation of royal power by his brother, John. The Third Crusade ended with an incredible loss of life on both sides of the conflict, and the ultimate goal of regaining Jerusalem by the Christians was not met. To add insult to injury, Richard was captured by Leopold of Austria in 1192 on his way back to England, then seized by the emperor Henry VI and eventually redeemed with a huge ransom.⁵ The goal of this article is to reinsert the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* into its cultural context of crusade debate. In doing so, it will challenge the univocal reading of the *Jeu* as exhortation to crusade, showing that moments of tension within the play indicate anything but a party-line call to crusade.

The *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* is a vernacular mystery play written by Jean Bodel and believed to have been performed in Arras around 1200, less than 10 years after the disastrous Third Crusade. The play tells the story of a Muslim king whose lands are invaded by Christians. His men rout the Christians, killing all except for a bourgeois "prudhom" who

is found praying to a statue of Saint Nicholas. The Prudhomme tells the king of Saint Nicholas' reputation for guarding wealth, so the king decides to test the statue and the Prudhomme. The Prudhomme may live if the statue safeguards the king's treasury. Word of the test spreads to a tavern, where thieves are drinking and gambling; they soon make off with the treasury. Saint Nicholas appears to the robbers, who return the wealth in fear. A general conversion of Muslims to Christianity ensues, and the Prudhomme is released.

The play has been generally received as an exhortation to Christians to participate in the Fourth Crusade. While the centrality of the crusade has not been questioned, critics tend to disagree as to the nature of the crusade Bodel advocates. H. Rey-Flaud and Patrick Vincent have described the play as a representation of crusading zeal. In viewing the play, the audience would have been moved to join the Fourth Crusade. For Vincent, the character *uns crestiens, nouviaus chevaliers*⁶ is the classic epic hero.⁷ This "new Christian knight" embodies the willingness to die for a just cause, and his fervor might be one shared by potential new crusaders in the audience. Other critics have noted that Jean Bodel was writing in Arras, a bourgeois town that had an unusually strong economy for the period. Jean Claude Aubailly postulates that the crusade is an internal one, with the tavern scene central to encouraging man to turn away from the pursuit of profit.⁸ Bodel would be admonishing his audience not to follow the incorrect path of the thieves. Also recognizing the importance of the tavern scene, Carolyn Dinshaw reads the entire play as an allegory of crusade through a gaming motif.⁹ Dinshaw's reading thus combines the economic and the epic for a reading that would epitomize medieval Arras. Critics sharply diverge in their discussion of whether the epic element is more important than the presence of the tavern crowd. Insisting upon the importance of the fighters over the concerns of the bourgeois, Jean Dufournet finds the conversion of the Saracens ultimately due to the martyrdom of the knights.¹⁰ Without crusaders, there would be no spreading of Christianity. In contrast, Tony Hunt, who sees the audience as strictly bourgeois, opines that the play was written as a call to the bourgeois of Arras to donate money instead of joining the Fourth crusade.¹¹ Hunt finds the crusader's actions to be admirable but not meant for imitation,¹² and he gives a moral value to each segment of society represented in the play, writing: "In the social hierarchy of the play the

crusaders are placed at the top, to be venerated not imitated, the pagan court and the bourgeois audience occupy the central position, and a stylized proletariat comes at the bottom."¹³ Siding with Dufournet, F. W. Marshall finds the *Jeu* to be, "a biting criticism of sacrilegious and materially-minded elements of Arras society, it is as well an urgent plea to follow the example of the crusaders."¹⁴

Despite their various approaches, all of these readings share the idea that the crusade must be the essential element of the play, and agree that crusade is portrayed as a generally positive concept. The crusade was indeed a central element of life in thirteenth-century Arras, but views on the crusade were anything but unanimous. Following Palmer A. Throop's monograph on voices of dissent against crusade after 1274,¹⁵ Elizabeth Siberry compiled a study of criticism of crusading from 1095 to 1274,¹⁶ the time period of the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*. The work of these two historians shows that public opinion about the crusades varied widely. Throop goes so far as to link the failure of thirteenth-century crusade to lack of public support. Siberry and Throop both extensively examine clerical writings. While clerics themselves did not often speak against the crusade spirit, they frequently went on record to counter voices of dissent against crusade. Humbert of Romans reports and rejects arguments such as "love of women as a hindrance" and "evidence of terror of the sea as a hindrance."¹⁷ Throop and Siberry also acknowledge the considerable body of literary criticism of crusade. Many objections to crusade were raised by the troubadours, who in the genre of the crusade song evidenced disillusionment with the outcome of crusades against the infidel.¹⁸ Gaucelm Faidit writes poignantly about the defeat of the Crusaders and the death of Richard the Lionhearted soon after the Third Crusade:

Mas Dieus o vol; que s'el non o volgues,
E vos, seigner, visquessetz, ses faillir,
De Suria los avengr' a fugir. ("Fortz chausa es que tot lo major dan" 43-45)

[But God wills it; for if he had not wanted this,
And if you, Lord [Richard I], had lived, without fail,
They would have had to flee Syria.]¹⁹

According to Faidit, the defeat of the crusaders conformed to God's will. Faidit and his compatriots show that crusade was not always

viewed in a positive light, particularly following the Third Crusade when the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* was written.

Bodel's version of the play is clearly derived from a long tradition of Latin mysteries that ascribe to Saint Nicholas the power to guard wealth.²⁰ The Latin plays are comprised of the following four stories, all of them connected in some way with material possessions. In the first (*Tres Filiae*), a nobleman unable to provide a dowry for his daughters is provided one by Saint Nicholas. *Tres Clerici* tells of three traveling scholars killed for their money and resuscitated by the Saint, who brings their killers to justice. In *Filius Getronis* a couple whose son is kidnapped gives their wealth to the poor and performs community service, and Saint Nicholas returns their son to them. In the story from which the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* is derived (*Iconia Sancti Nicholai*), a Jew uses a stolen icon of Saint Nicholas to guard his wealth, and, when he is robbed, Saint Nicholas appears to the thieves and convinces them to return the money.²¹ The real interest of the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* lies not in the moments where it follows the Latin *Iconia* plays, but in its divagation along the way to a similar end. Critical interest has centered on several moments in the play that seem inconsistent with earlier legend, namely the prologue, the tavern scene, and the conversion of the Emir d'Outre l'Arbre Sec. While past criticism has sought to explain these difficult interpretive moments through examination of the internal structure of the play, looking at each of these instances in light of the crusading climate in Arras at the dawn of the thirteenth century leads to an alternative reading of Bodel's politics.

From the outset, Bodel's play presents the audience with the conundrum of a prologue that summarizes the story incorrectly. A preacher comes before the audience to explain the gist of the play in a prologue totaling 114 lines. However, his summary does not mention the tavern, and in the play fully one third of the action takes place as the thieves gamble and quarrel as they imbibe. The prologue also indicates that the Muslims attack the Christians, whereas within the action of the main part of the play it is the opposite, and it is the Christians who attack the Muslims. The prologue describes the invasion as follows:

Chascun jour ert entr'eus la guerre.
 Un jour fist li paiens requerre
 Les crestiens en itel point

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Que il ne se gaitoient point;
Decheü furent est souspris,
Mout en i ot et mors et pris. (11–16)

[Every day there was war between them. One day the pagans attacked the Christians in such a way that they were not expecting it a bit; they were tricked and surprised. Many there were dead and captured.]²²

As the play progresses, however, the prologue is contradicted. Christians are, in fact, the aggressors. Within the main part of the play, the initiative of the Christians is made clear:

Li rois au senescal
Sont dont crestien en ma terre?
Ont il esmeüe la guerre?
Sont il si hardi ne si os? (123–25)

[*The king, speaking to the seneschal*: Are there Christians in my lands? Have they started the war? Are they that bold and presumptuous?]

Because of the differences between the prologue and the actual play, many critics have postulated that the prologue may have been added at a later date, perhaps to prepare the audience for the coming slaughter of Christians.²³ Tony Hunt argues for the authenticity of the prologue, but he admits that it is impossible to know one way or another.²⁴ I would suggest that the prologue is authentic, and the omissions and revisions are deliberate, not to prepare the audience, but to intentionally put the audience off-guard. The Arrageois audience was already quite familiar with the Saint Nicholas stories, as external evidence shows.²⁵ Cathedral art from the period shows Saint Nicholas performing miracles,²⁶ and there is a rich tradition of Latin manuscripts with plays about his miracles. Internal to the *Jeu* itself, the Prudhomme makes oblique reference to the *Tres Filiae* and *Tres Clerici* stories (lines 1424–25). Bodel is quite aware of his rewriting of the expected story of the Saint Nicholas icon. He begins the play with a brief summary that would follow expected lines, but at the same time he warns the audience that he will change the predictable plot:

Pour che n'aiés pas grant merveille
Se vous veés aucun affaire;

Car canques vous nous verrés faire
sera essamples sans douter
Del miracle representer
Ensi con je devisé l'ai. (106–111)

[Don't be surprised if you should see any mishap; for what you shall see us do will be without a doubt an attempt to represent the miracle just as I have arranged it.]

To what does Bodel refer, with this “affaire” that the audience may see? Clearly, the audience would not be surprised to see a play, or even a fight between Christians and Saracens. And with their familiarity with Saint Nicholas, “grant merveille” could only result from the deviation that Bodel will soon make from both the *Iconia* legend and the prologue that he himself has set out. The “affaire” to which Bodel refers is his reconception of the legend, situating the action in contemporary Arras, with its taverns and preoccupation with crusade. The audience *will* be surprised; for Bodel has not only changed the anticipated story, he has also ironically denied his duplicity even before he has begun.

As Bodel's play takes us into an Arrageois tavern, we encounter the drinking and gambling underworld that the thieves inhabit. In a seeming digression, Bodel's characters spend almost a third of the play discussing wine and playing dice games. But this action is no digression, as the men inside the tavern mirror the epic conflict taking place between Christians and Saracens outside the tavern.²⁷ The parallel begins as the town crier, Connart, makes a call to war to those outside the tavern:

Oiiés! Oiiés! Oiés, signeur!
Oiés vo preu et vo honneur!
Je faç le ban le roy d'Aufrike:
Que tout i viegnent, povre et riche. (225–28)

[Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye, men! Listen concerning your station and honor! I send forth the call of the king of Africa: all should come, poor and rich.]

Then, using the same rhetoric, Connart calls to the men inside the tavern as he tells that the king has left his treasure unattended to test the power of the saint's icon:

Oiiés, oiiés, segneur trestout!
Venés avant, faites me escout!
De par le roi vous fai savoir

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C'a son tresor n'a son avoir
N'ara jamais ne clef ne serre. (576–80)

[Hear ye! Hear ye, all men! Come forth and listen to me! I let you know on the part of the king that his treasure and goods will no longer be under lock and key.]

By mirroring the calls to the two parties, the warriors and the thieves, Bodel equates the work of the robbers to those fighting for their faith.

Immediately following Connart's notification of unguarded gold, the first conflict, or battle, at the tavern takes place. Trouble arises when a tavern regular, Raoulet, goes out to cry the news of a new wine in the tavern. Connart claims that Raoulet is encroaching on his turf, and the two come to blows. The tavern owner intervenes:

Ho, ho! segneur, che n'a mestier!
Sié cois, Raoul, et tu, Connart,
Si vous metés en mon esgart,
Vous i gaengnerés andoi. (623–26)

[Whoa! Gentlemen, this is doing no good! Calm down, Raoul, and you Connart, if you put yourselves in my hands, you will both win.]

The tavern owner then proceeds to split up the duties, with Connart being assigned to do all calling involving official news, and Raoulet being left to call tavern news. The tavern owner's authority to adjudicate the matter is not called into question. His judgment divides the city, as it were, much as the Holy Land was divided up between Christian and Muslim forces.

Before long, another tavern brawl ensues, this time between the gambling thieves, fighting over gambling proceeds:

Qu'est che, Cliquet? Est che bataille?
Laisse le tost, et tu lais lui!
Si vous alés seoir andui,
Bien ara chascuns se raison. (923–25)

[What's this, Cliquet? Is it a battle? Let go of him immediately, and you let go of him! Go and sit down, you two, and each will have a chance to make his case.]

Caignet is made judge, and he settles the affair using arbitration, "Jel voeil que soiés acordé, / Puisqu'il est en men jugement" (947–48) [I wish

that you two would come to an agreement, because it is my matter to judge]. Yet a third fight breaks out, this time over the ill-gotten treasure, and the tavern owner again steps in as judge to settle the conflict:

Que c'est? Pinedé, iés tu faus?
Lai le tost, et tu lui, Rasoir,
Si vous alés andoi seoir!
Bien sai dont li affaires vient:
Metre seur mi vous en couvient,
Ne voeil pas vers vous entreprendre. (1163–68)

[What is this? Pinedé, are you crazy? Let him alone right now, and you him, Rasoir. Both of you go and sit down! I know very well where this matter came from; it is fitting that you two put this matter in my hands; I do not wish to take advantage of you.]

The affair is settled peaceably. Just as the tavern was equated to the battlefield with its “call to arms,” physical fights ensued over conflicting claims to wealth and position. Bodel shows repeatedly that the proper response to warfare is not continued fighting, but judicious arbitration. Conflicts can and should be resolved through reason and words, not through force.

The tavern brawls are not the only place where Bodel indicates that peaceable methods should triumph over force. The crusading parts of the play, like the fights in the tavern, are reduced in scope. In fact, the battle itself is limited to a few cries of admiration and fear on the part of the Christians and the dramatically understated rubric, “Or tuent li sarrasin tous les crestiens” (rubric after 453) [Then the Saracens kill all the Christians]. The effect of the violence might have been quite unsettling for the audience, for the prologue had warned that many were killed or taken prisoner, which is in fact far from the total annihilation that ensued. The only Christian left is the non-fighting Prudhomme. The Prudhomme exhibits none of the false bravado of the *crestiens nouveiaus chevaliers*, that “epic hero” who promises to defeat the Saracens or die trying. And yet it is the Prudhomme who actually brings about the conversion of the king of Africa, through his unwavering prayers to Saint Nicholas. The Angel, who had comforted the doomed knights, comes to the Prudhomme to tell him of his special role:

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Le roy convertiras et ses barons metras
Fors de leur fole loy, et si tenront le foy
Que tienent crestien . . . (554–56)

[You will convert the king and put his men out of their crazy law, and they will hold the faith that the Christians hold.]

It will be through the miracle of the saint, and not through the battle, that the king is Christianized.

Bodel makes a general call for peace and reflection when the Prudhomme is almost tortured and killed. The robbers have made off with the treasury, and the king gives the order to the sadistic Durant to have his sport with the Prudhomme before dispatching him. The Prudhomme begs for a twenty-four-hour respite in order to give the saint a chance to come to his rescue, “Un jour de respit cent mars vaut, / Mainte guerre en est mise a pais” (1231–32). [A day of respite is worth 100 marks, many a war has been brought to peace by it.] The proverb-like statement acts as a lesson to the audience. Its rhetorical form implies universality, and the sententia is uttered from the mouth of the only Christian left standing and, in fact, the one Christian who manages to effect any change at all.

As if to underscore his point that conversion must be accomplished by non-violent means, Bodel repeats the lesson in the final conversion scene. The mass conversion resulting from Saint Nicholas' restoration of the king's treasury contains an unsettling moment where a pagan emir boldly states that he is converting only by force, and that his true devotion lies with Muhammad. Bodel gives the last word on the conversions to this Emir d'Outre l'Arbre Sec:²⁸

Sains Nicolais, c'est maugré mien
Que je vous aoure, et par forche.
De moi n'arés vous fors l'escorche:
Par parole devienng vostre hom,
Mais li creanche est en Mahom. (1507–11)

[Saint Nicholas, it is despite myself that I worship you, and by force. Of me you shall have nothing but the skin/bark: in word I become your man, but my faith is in Muhammad.]

Michel Zink claims that the emir d'Outre l'Arbre Sec would seem not without grandeur to the modern audience, but that his action would seem ridiculous and scandalous to spectators of the period.²⁹ Zink's point is well made; the medieval audience would not have seen the emir as a courageous, principled role model. Instead, he offers a cautionary tale to the Christian audience. Like the emir, Muslims who are converted by force are unlikely to be true believers. Christians who do not heed Bodel's message will create Christians of the "escorche," or bark, as the *Émir d'Outre l'Arbre Sec* so rightly termed himself. The *émir d'Outre l'Arbre Sec*'s role is not simply one of loyalty to his cause; he is the exemplum and justification for Bodel's conception of the new, non-violent crusade.

That Jean Bodel would be courageous or far-seeing enough to criticize the crusading spirit of the year 1200 should come as no surprise. Jean Bodel consistently amazed his audiences with his unusual and creative spirit. The *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* deviates from the norm at the outset, as France's first vernacular mystery play, but this is far from his only noteworthy work. Many have seen Bodel's *Chanson des Saisnes* as a new take on the traditional epic. In this epic, Bodel focuses on the defeat of Charlemagne and seems to poke fun at him throughout the piece, perhaps even using him as a disguised figure of the contemporary French king Philippe Auguste.³⁰ Bodel lets slip his ironic condemnation of crusade, as the wives of the crusaders take up with other men while their husbands are off fighting. Far more daring than either of these projects, however, Bodel wrote the first known fabliaux. The fabliaux addressed scandalous topics with outrageous use of language in each instance. Bodel took on the religious establishment in at least two fabliaux, *Le Vilain de Bailleul* and *De Gombert et des deux clercs*. In summing up the work of Jean Bodel, Luciano Rossi focuses on the anti-establishment ethos of his oeuvre:

Il ne faudra pas oublier cependant que le but le plus important du trouvère aragois est de mettre ce patrimoine culturel à la portée des auditeurs laïques, du public vulgaire des villes picardes, sans jamais renoncer à la satire du pouvoir.³¹

Thus it is all the more surprising that critics have tended to read the *Jeu* as a crusade cheerleading piece. Within the *Jeu* several confusing or opaque instances alert both the reader and the contemporary audi-

ence that the play should not be seen as a straightforward remaking of the Saint Nicholas *Iconia* tradition. Each of these moments, the prologue, the tavern scene, and the troublesome conversion of the emir mark Bodel's *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* as a profound reconception of earlier legend. With the crusade preaching that permeated the culture of 1200, Bodel takes an ironic view of the vernacular preaching of crusades. Like the preachers, he addresses his audience in the vernacular, whereas drama had previously been in Latin. Using their very words in the calls of the criers in the text, he addresses the characters on stage and makes the link between Christian and Muslim, knight and city-dweller. With a completely new genre, that of vernacular theater, Bodel makes visual his own take on the future of Christian society. Seeing Christians and Muslims together on stage, the focus would be on shared responsibility, thereby minimizing cultural differences. Bodel does not question Christian faith entirely; his play ends with a chorus of "te deum laudamus." But the path Bodel advocates for spreading Christianity and resolving disputes in general is clear. Bodel calls for the end of the *judicium dei* and heralds the dawning age of dispute resolution through dialogue. For the modern reader, the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* will doubtless continue to surprise us, as it did its contemporary audience, with the unique worldview of its unusual author, Jean Bodel.

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Notes

¹This paper has its origins in a talk I gave at the Southeastern Medieval Conference in 2001. I wish to express my appreciation to those present whose questions and comments gave new direction to my research. Particular thanks are due to Sahar Amer, whose careful reading improved this paper greatly, to Peggy McCracken for her encouragement, and to the outside reviewers for their useful comments.

²P. H. Newby, *Saladin in his Time* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1983) 158.

³Merton Jerome Hubert Ambrose and John L. La Monte, *The Crusade of Richard Lion-Heart*, Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies, vol. 34 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) 228.

⁴Sidney Painter, "The Third Crusader: Richard the Lionhearted and Philip Augustus," in *A History of the Crusades: The Later Crusades, 1189-1311*, ed. R. L. Wolff and H. W. Hazard (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969) 45-85.

⁵Ibid.

⁶The name of this character (and all other characters) is given by the rubricator in the single extant manuscript of the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*.

⁷Patrick R. Vincent, *The Jeu de saint Nicolas of Jean Bodel of Arras; A Literary Analysis*, The Johns Hopkins Studies in Romance Literatures and Languages, vol. 49 (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1954) 63.

⁸“La croisade est à effectuer chez soi parce que l’on se connaît mal et qu’en s’enfonçant dans l’erreur (la recherche du profit: l’argent est en effet l’acteur principal, mais muet, du Jeu) on s’est engagé sur la voie de la damnation (Arras-la taverne est ville sarrasine),” Jean Claude Aubailly, “Réflexions sur *Le Jeu de saint Nicolas*: Pour une ‘dramatologie,’” *Le Moyen Age: Revue d’Histoire et de Philologie* 95, no. 3–4 (1989): 431. Sahar Amer has also suggested that this tavern might be Saracen, rather than Christian (private communication). This is an intriguing possibility, for the play never gives a location for the tavern, and the Saracen messenger has easy access to this locale. I would suggest that the tavern serves as an in-between locale, both figuratively, as a world that mirrors the external one consumed with conflict, and literally, as a nexus between Christian and Saracen worlds.

⁹“There is, however, another kind of game represented throughout the play. The Crusade theme and the conversion of the heathens that results from the miracle are manifestations of the general struggle between Christians and unbelievers and, ultimately, of the battle between God and Satan,” Carolyn L. Dinshaw, “Dice Games and Other Games in *Le Jeu de saint Nicolas*,” *PMLA* 95 (1980): 809.

¹⁰“Mais tout est lié; la conversion des Sarrasins n’est sans doute possible que parce que les chevaliers se sont sacrifiés,” Jean Dufournet, “Du double à l’unité: Les Sarrasins dans *Le Jeu de saint Nicolas*,” *Studies in Honor of Hans Erich Keller: Medieval French and Occitan Literature and Romance Linguistics*, ed. T. Pickens Rupert (Kalamazoo: Medieval Inst. Pubs., Western Michigan University Press, 193) 273.

¹¹“The *Jeu de Saint Nicolas* is quite simply an appeal for investment by the citizens of Arras in the work of the Church militant,” Tony Hunt, “A Note on the Ideology of Bodel’s *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*,” *Studi Francesi* 58 (1976): 72.

¹²Ibid., 68.

¹³Ibid., 72.

¹⁴F. W. Marshall, “The Staging of the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*: An Analysis of Movement,” *Australian Journal of French Studies* (1965): 29.

¹⁵Palmer Allan Throop, *Criticism of the Crusade: A Study of Public Opinion and Crusade Propaganda* (Amsterdam: N. V. Swets & Zeitlinger, 1940).

¹⁶Elizabeth Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading: 1095–1274* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

¹⁷Throop, 152–54.

¹⁸Ibid., 179.

¹⁹Margaret Louise Switten and Robert Eisenstein, *Teaching Medieval Lyric: A Project Supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities & Mount Holyoke College* (Mount Holyoke College, 2001).

²⁰Otto E. Albrecht dates the plays to the twelfth century or earlier, Otto Edwin Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays of St. Nicholas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935) 3.

²¹Ibid., 17–19.

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²²The edition used throughout is Albert Henry's second edition *Le Jeu de saint Nicolas de Jehan Bodel* (Bruxelles: Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 1965). Translations of *Le Jeu de Saint Nicolas* into English are my own.

²³Those arguing against Bodel as author of the prologue include A. Henry, who edited the play, Bethany A. Schroeder, "The Function of the Prologue in *Le Jeu de Saint Nicolas*," *Romance Notes* 10 (1968), and Luciano Rossi, "L'Oeuvre de Jean Bodel et le renouveau des littératures romanes," *Romania* 112, no. 3–4 (191): 318. Vincent finds the prologue unnecessary for preparing the audience for the slaughter, Vincent, *The Jeu de saint Nicolas of Jean Bodel of Arras; A Literary Analysis*. A good summary of criticism on both sides of the argument can be found in Marshall, "The Staging of the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*: An Analysis of Movement."

²⁴Tony Hunt, "The Authenticity of the Prologue of Bodel's *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*," *Romania* 97 (1976).

²⁵Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays of St. Nicholas*, 9–16.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 71.

²⁷Horton sees the thieves as a mirror for the emirs, an analogy that does not work for numerous reasons. First of all there are three thieves and four emirs, which makes her one-for-one analogy hard to sustain. Also, most of the emirs are converted, but the thieves remain unregenerate; Christine Horton, "The Role of the Emir d'Outre l'Arbre Sec in Jean Bodel's *Jeu de saint Nicolas*," *Australian Journal of French Studies* 14 (1977).

²⁸Christine Horton sees Outre l'Arbre Sec as facilitating conversion in that [somehow] he changes the king from being an idol worshipper (St. Nicolas) to actually worshipping God, *Ibid.*

²⁹Michel Zink, "*Le Jeu de saint Nicolas* de Jean Bodel, drame spirituel," *Romania* 9 (1978): 44n.

³⁰Rossi, "L'Oeuvre de Jean Bodel et le renouveau des littératures romanes," 321.

³¹*Ibid.*, 324.

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