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How to Rebel via Jokes and Laughter. Two Examples of Rebellious Emotions in the Early Middle Ages

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ABSTRACT

During the last decade historians' attention has been more and more attracted to emotions. Together with a lot of other scientific disciplines, the history of emotions, the way they are expressed, the typical contexts in which they occur, has been intensively discussed in connection with many other questions. In that context this chapter presents two examples, one of rebellious laughter and one of backfiring jokes that failed to hit the ritual target. In both cases the representation of an emotional reaction marks a turning point of the situation: rude jokes told by an underdog during a feast leads to his sudden death. For the victor of the conflict it was impossible to accept that kind of rebellious behaviour even though there was an obligation to allow jokes during this kind of feasts. And the audience laughing, watching Rollo rebel against king Charles the Simple by not kneeling down to kiss his foot but bringing the king's foot up to his mouth, thereby causing the king to fall backwards, was an indication that the king would not continue to be king for very long.

Das Lachen hat in den letzten Jahren vermehrt die Aufmerksamkeit verschiedener Disziplinen der Mediaevistik auf sich gezogen. Insbesondere die Historiker haben sich auch jenseits der Grenzen des Mittelalters immer wieder auf unterschiedliche Art und Weise der Frage genähert, was es mit Emotionen, Gefühlsäußerungen und zur Schau gestellten Affekten in den unterschiedlichen Epochen und Kontexten auf sich hatte. Die hier vorgestellten beiden Fallbeispiele versuchen, sich dem Thema unter einem neuen Aspekt zu nähern. Thema des Bandes, in dem diese kurze Skizze erscheint, sind Widerstand und Rebellion, also das mehr oder weniger gewaltsame Aufbegehren gegen eine Macht, von der sich die Aufbegehrenden unterdrückt bzw. eingeschränkt fühlen. In den beiden Beispielen aus dem 6. und 10. Jahrhundert, kommt es zwar auch zu Gewaltanwendungen, im Zentrum des Interesses sollen aber ein gezielt provoziertes Lachen und andererseits das Fehlen von scheinbar obligatorischen Scherzen stehen.

Im Rahmen der Feierlichkeiten zur Beilegung des Bürgerkriegs von Tours (6. Jh.) wird ein Feßgelage abgehalten. Die durchaus üblichen Zeichen ritueller Versöhnung finden sich in den Quellen: gemeinsames Speisen, die gegenseitige Anerkennung der jeweiligen Leistungen etc. Wie in anderen Quellen auch zu lesen, gehört es ebenfalls zu den obligatorischen Verhaltensweisen, durch Scherze eine heiter-gelöste Stimmung zu erzeugen. Diese Scherze demonstrieren für alle sichtbar, dass die vormaligen Gegner von nun an friedlich und in Verbundheit miteinander auskommen wollen, den Frieden also ernst meinen. Dieses Schwerzen gibt darüber hinaus aber dem Unterlegenen im vorangegangenen Konflikt die Möglichkeit, die erlittene Niederlage zu relativieren. Dies tut dieser im vorliegenden Fall all zu dreist und reizt den Sieger damit zum Äußersten, was ihn das Leben kostet. Das Fehlende Lachen markiert hier deutlich einen Bruch des Rituals. Nur konsequent erscheint es dann, dass das Versöhnungsmahl in einem Blutbad endet.

Ganz anders verhält es sich im Fall des Begebenheiten im Umfeld des Vertragsschlusses of Saint Clair-sur-Epte (911) zwischen Karl dem Einfältigen und Rollo, dem Führer der Wikinger. Mit dem Vertrag sollte das Reich Karls vor weiterer Eroberung durch die Wikinger geschützt werden. Anlässlich der Leihenshuldigung durch Rollo, dem von Karl ganz Neustrien übertragen wurde, weigert sich dieser den öffentlich zu zeigenden Fußkuss zu spenden. Trotz Mahnung des Bischofs schickt Rollo einen Vertreter. Auch dieser möchte aber sein Knie nicht vor dem besiegten König beugen und reißt stattdessen den Fuß Karls zu seinem Mund nach oben. In der Folge verliert Karl das Gleichgewicht und stürzt über seinen Thron nach hinten. Das völlige Scheitern des eigentlich die Unterwerfung unter Karl inszenierenden Rituals wird durch das schallende Gelächter der Umstehenden markiert. Die Rebellion der Wikinger gegen eine als unzumutbar empfundene Unterwerfung wird damit deutlich.

LAUGHTER IN THE MIDDLE AGES?

In Umberto Eco's novel *Il nome della rosa*, William of Baskerville, while investigating a series of mysterious deaths at an abbey, discovers in its library the only remaining copy of Aristotle's *Second Book of Poetics* on comedy. However, the venerable Jorge, the most ancient denizen of the abbey, has poisoned the pages so that anyone who turns them will die and thus be unable to spread the book's dangerous ideas. The traditionalist Jorge asserts that jocularity is a blasphemous sin leading to rebellion against God and starts a fire, which destroys the whole library along with the *Second Book of Poetics*.

When talking about the expression of emotionality, we have to distinguish between the expression of feelings in individuals and general concepts of emotions, between reality external to the text and its reflection in the text, between actual and performed emotions¹. From the broad range of emotions that are a part of human emotionality, a case of 'laughter'² better labelled as 'non-laughter' will be examined, followed by an example of a backfiring joke. In each case, the joking or laughter makes the situations unique and

marks a significant turning point. A first view contrary to the title, the subject of this chapter will not be happy laughter or merry joking. But even in the dark Middle Ages there was space for jokes and laughter, and like today the expression of humour was used in very different contexts, even in the contexts of resistance and rebellion.

The trigger of laughter is not constant nor can it be explained mono-causally. The sense of humour varies in time and place, from one society to another³. The sense of humour as a condition of presentation and reception is subject to historical differences. Jokes have laughter as an aim: without laughter jokes do not serve their purpose. The success of a joke depends on several different aspects: culture, situation, audience, composition, etc. They are defined by the reaction of the audience, the (return-) laughter of the addressee(s)⁴, so jokes nobody hears are not jokes. We cannot however base our analysis on the 'success' of the joke or the humour. Instead, we must examine the situations in which joking occurs and its purposes. This is as true for the Middle Ages as it is today, even if the sense of humour has changed.

The nature of the sources means that we only have evidence of public displays of emotionality available to us. Furthermore because most of our sources concern the nobility – especially for the Early Middle Ages – the nature of humour among the lower classes of medieval society cannot be analysed. Even in the later court society, the showing of emotions was regulated by the principle of moderation, *maze*. However, that the same paradigms for laughing and causing laughter are found in such a wide range of source materials from the Middle Ages (theological, monastic, historiographical, biographical, philosophical, literary, and artistic) shows their widespread acceptance⁵. The context of the sources becomes central to an analysis⁶ of laughing, which, placed against the background of social and clerical conventions, is particularly informative.

Umberto Eco did that in a literal way. Two contrasting positions meet in his novel: the medieval, educated monk, represented by the conservative Jorge of Burgos, and the progressive man of science, William of Baskerville, who anticipates the Renaissance. They stand for two different attitudes toward laughter, which go back to antiquity and which competed during the Middle Ages⁷. What Eco did in a literal way, the historian can explore not only via monastic or religious ideals, but also in courtly attitudes toward laughter⁸.

JOKING RULES?

We know that Frederick I Barbarossa († 1190) visited the Pope Alexander III († 1181) in his private rooms one morning at the solemnities, celebrating the peace between Venice and the Pope⁹. The new closeness between them, which the two long-standing deadly enemies showed and confirmed by jokes, did not threaten their mutual respect because the jokes were *ioci moderati* [moderate jokes]¹⁰. However, anecdotes of jokes backfiring are found in the sources. The ideal of permanent joy, by which the

court society of the 12th century onwards defined itself, can in fact be seen as early as the 10th century, during which time *iocunditas* and *hilaritas* are expressions of the *magnanimitas* of noblemen in the early medieval period¹¹. Otto I († 973) for example was said even at the hour of his death to sit down at the table joyfully and cheerfully¹². However, as the teachings of the Church infiltrated the courts of the nobility so too did the disdain for laughter¹³. The noble courts became bound by contradictions as it was recognised that unbridled joy was sinful. At the courts, *hilaritas* forms a contrast to the limiting ideal of *temperantia* to which a nobleman should aspire. In line with Aristotle's *mesotes* a nobleman should not simply submit himself to his emotions, but must assess and react appropriately to the occasion, not only in terms of joy and laughter but also in the control of mourning and pain. An example in Wipo's *Gesta Chuonradi* demonstrates how important the control of emotions was, when the older Conrad said to the younger Conrad at the time of the election for king: *Rebus prosperis condignum gaudium nec gravitatis modum excedit* [In prosperity, joy that does not exceed the degree of dignity]¹⁴. Both men and women were required to retain their dignity (*gravitas*)¹⁵.

However, if joy is absent then insufficient *clementia* is attributed to the ruler. The serious nature of Henry I of Bavaria († 955) led the chronicler Widukind († later than 973) to observe that due to his serious character those who did not know him well thought that he would be less generous and joyful (*morum gravitate pollebat et ob id ab ignotis minus clemens iocundusque predicabatur*)¹⁶. However, this was two-way traffic as the highest ranks of the Church were typically dominated by persons of noble background. For example, Ruotger reports how Archbishop Brun († 965) fulfilled official duties with affable cheerfulness and courtly dignity¹⁷. He not only showed suitable joy, he often shed tears over his weaknesses¹⁸. A Christian ruler had to align his behaviour with Christian values and norms¹⁹. As these ideals became progressively institutionalised within courtly society, the restrictions on behaviour increased²⁰. An exemplary ruler had to fulfill the specifications of *temperantia*. For example, Louis the Pious († 840):

*Numquam in risum exlatavit vocem suam, nec quando in summis festivitibus ad laetitiam populi procedebant themilici, scurri et mimi cum coraulis et citharsis ad mensam coram eo, tunc ad mensuram ridebat populus coram eo, ille numquam nec dentes candidos suos in risu ostendit*²¹. [He never raised his voice to loud laughter. Even on high holidays when actors, buffoons, pipers and zither players performed at table to entertain the people, who in his presence laughed only moderately, he did not expose his teeth for laughter, in spite of the fact they were very white].

Although the 12th and 13th centuries with their travelling entertainers, minstrels, musicians and fools, are known for their courtly culture, this atmosphere of celebration already prevailed in earlier centuries²². There were many early instructions from the Church to put an end to jesting and to rude laughter about lewd jokes²³. The Church frequently issued interdicts against the courtly culture of joy, though the frequency of

the interdicts demonstrates they were probably largely unsuccessful and that lay folk were resistant to clerical norms²⁴. Wild feasts, unrestrained celebrations, and the excessive consumption of alcohol were condemned. When Emperor Henry III († 1056) in 1043 without payment expelled the minstrels who came to his court for his wedding, he was attempting to set a Christian example for his people²⁵.

Historical sources as well as literary sources are subject to the interests and intentions of their writers. To achieve their intention, however, writers need to offer a credible representation²⁶. The veracity of the events and actions as described in the sources is not important for our discussion. What is essential is the social conditioning, specifically the regulation of emotions, emerging from these writings²⁷. At every demonstration of emotion the appropriateness of laughter was always to be taken into account. During both Antiquity and the Middle Ages the showing of joy and awkward, stupid laughter were differentiated. Malicious joy was frowned upon, but a certain cheerfulness was one of the ideals of the nobility and of clerics.

IF JOKES TURN OUT TO BE A FAILURE

In his ten books of histories, Gregory of Tours (6th century) tells us amongst other things about the civil war in Tours. He describes the incident in great detail, including the peace treaties and the rituals and numerous gestures of friendship that accompanied the peace. But in a last devastating scene, Gregory reports:

The feud between the citizens of Tours, which I above described as ended, broke out afresh with renewed fury. After the murder of the kinsfolk of Chramnesind, Sichar formed a great friendship with him; so fond of one another did they grow that often they shared each other's meals and slept in the same bed. One evening Chramnesind made ready a supper, and invited Sichar. His friend came, and they sat down together to the feast. But Sichar, letting the wine go to his head, kept making boastful remarks against Chramnesind, and is reported at last to have said: "Sweet brother, thou owest me great thanks for the slaying of thy relations; for the [compensation] made to thee for their death hath caused gold and s[il]ver to abound in thy house. But for this cause, which established thee not a little, thou wert this day poor and destitute". Chramnesind heard these words with bitterness of heart, and said within himself: "If I avenge not the death of my kinsmen, I deserve to lose the name of man, and to be called weak woman". And straightway he put out the lights and cleft the head of Sichar with his dagger. The man fell and died, uttering but a faint sound as the last breath left him²⁸.

In many cases our sources tell us about feasts celebrated to settle a difference. The feast is part of the rituals to show the new established friendship between former enemies. And in Gregory's version of the events there are several typical elements of ritual friendship preceding his description of the feast: the shared table and the shared bed. In addition, both parties assured one another of their mutual affection several times²⁹.

Everything seems perfect: the two rival parties meet in an adequate place celebrating a feast to express their new friendship in multiple ritual ways, and Sichar is designated

a “friend”, the end of a feud is celebrated [Chramnesind and Sichar “formed a great friendship”; “they shared each other’s meals and slept in the same bed”; “One evening Chramnesind made ready a supper, and invited Sichar. His friend”]. But then the friendship-meal leads directly to murder. And Gregory of Tours clearly attributes that to the crude joke, which Sichar takes the liberty to tell. Sure, jokes are an essential part of banquets and a cheerful atmosphere was vital even at the kings’ courts as described above. In a society without a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force by state, it was necessary to find ways of controlling aggression. In a time when behaviour was carefully calibrated to keep conflict from escalating out of control, if one saw no friendly face and heard no jolly gibes, he knew that the atmosphere was hostile.

In Gregory’s story Sichar got over the habit of joking during the feast. As the underdog of the conflict he was more or less bound to frolic. By joking he was able to show publicly that he was satisfied with the new established peace and willing to forget the former hostilities. But in this special case Sichar fails to offset through jokes the disgrace of having had to pay high compensations. We do not read about any laughter. And Chramnesind, not amused and with his dignity wounded [“Chramnesind heard these words with bitterness of heart: [...] ‘If I avenge not the death of my kinsmen, I deserve to lose the name of man, and to be called weak woman’”], splits Sichar’s head. Sichar’s joke backfires in a very bad way. It seems that it was necessary to use jokes in homeopathic doses³⁰. Rebelling by bantering about someone is a dangerous game. Especially when the joker is the underdog.

The attempted resistance against a painful peace – Sichar was the loser – using the obligation to joke failed completely. The apparent compliance with the ritual and the sudden disaster clearly marks this part of the story as extremely important, they mark it as a turning point. If we presume – beside all speculations on the question “is this story true and did it happen exactly the way it was written?” – that the author knew that he had to explain why Sichar’s house is to be seen as the true loser, he constructed a perfect situation. In this situation of ritual friendship and conciliation the true nature of Sichar became visible and his rebellious attitude was displayed.

PROVOKING A MOCKING LAUGHTER

As already said, laughter plays an important part at the king’s court. Another example of rebellious emotions is presented by Dudo of Saint-Quentin in his *Gesta Normannorum* (written 1015-1030). In his intensively discussed report of the occurrences around the so-called Treaty of Saint Clair-sur-Epte (911) between Charles the Simple and Rollo, the leader of the Vikings, for the purpose of settling the Normans in Neustria and protecting Charles’ kingdom from any more invasions of the Vikings, Dudo tells us:

[...] So they came at the established time to the prescribed place, which is called St. Clair. However, Rollo’s army settled down on this side of the river Epte, but the army of the king and Robert on the other side. Immediately Rollo sent the archbishop to say the following words to

the king of the Franks: “Rollo cannot make peace with you, for the land which you wish to give him is untilled by the ploughshare, entirely stripped of flocks of sheep and cattle, and deprived of the presence of men. There is nothing in it whereby he might live except by rapine and booty-taking. Give him some realm where he might collect food and clothing for himself, until the land you are giving him is filled with a mass of wealth and imparts the timely fruits of victuals, men and animals. Furthermore, he will not be reconciled to you unless you have sworn by the land you are about to give, with an oath of the Christian religion, you and the archbishops and bishops, the counts and abbots of the whole realm, that he himself and his successors may occupy the land from the river Epte to the sea as their estate and as their heritable estate for eternity”. Then Robert, duke of the Franks, and the counts and bishops and abbots who were there, said to the king: “You will not keep this duke, so honourable!, unless you give him what he covets. If you do not surrender what he repeatedly demands from you for the sake of service, then at least give it to him for the sake of the worship of the Christian religion, so that so great a populace, caught in a net by diabolical deception, might be obtained for Christ. And let not the pillar of your whole realm and of the church, whose most constant advocate and king you ought to be, discharging advocating patronage in Christ’s stead, be annihilated by the assault of an inimical army.” Then the king wished to give him the Flemish land to live from but he was unwilling to accept it due to the hindrance of its extreme marshiness. And so the king pledges to give him Brittany, which bordered the land already promised.

At once, Robert and bishop Franco have reported all this to Rollo and, having given hostages on the integrity of their Christian faith, they have brought him to king Charles. Truly the Franks, admiring Rollo, attacker of all Francia, have said to one another: “That is the duke, so powerful! so valorous! so resolute and discreet! so hard-working! who has prosecuted such great battles against the counts of this realm”. Immediately, constrained by the words of the Franks, he has placed his hands in the king’s hands, something which neither his father nor his grandfather nor his great-grandfather had ever done for anyone. And so the king has given him his daughter, Gisla by name, as his wife, as well as the prescribed land from the river Epte to the sea, as a heritable estate and as an estate, and all of Brittany to live from. The bishops have said to Rollo, who is unwilling to kiss the king’s foot: “Whoever receives such a gift, ought to kiss the king’s foot”. And he: “I will never kneel before the knees of another, nor will I kiss anyone’s foot”. Thus, urged by the prayers of the Franks, he has ordered a certain warrior to kiss the king’s foot. The warrior, at once laying hold of the king’s foot, has brought it to his own mouth and has planted a kiss on it while standing upright, and has caused the king to topple backwards. And so great laughter and great uproar is occasioned among the people.

For the rest, king Charles and duke Robert and the counts and chief prelates and abbots have sworn to pacific Rollo, with an oath of the catholic faith on their life and limbs and the honour of the entire realm, that he would have and hold the designated land, and bequeath it to his heirs, and that the succession of his descendants from generation to generation would have and tend it throughout the course of all time. That completed just as was said, king Charles returned home. Robert and Franco remained with Rollo³¹.

In his book, based on oral tradition and written more than 100 years later, Dudo tells us a constructed story about the self-assured Viking Rollo. It is Dudo’s interest to show the founder of Normandy as a powerful man not subordinate to King Charles.

So we read about the formation of Normandy as an act of rebellion: after having “placed his hands in the king’s hands”, this describes the first part of a feudal ceremony, the act of *homagium*, Rollo became the vassal of the King and received Charles’ (illegitimate) daughter Giselle. A large part of the King’s land was assigned to Rollo, from now on known as Duchy of Normandy. But Rollo refused to complete the ceremony by kneeling in front of the King and kissing his foot³². Even the well-meaning words of the bishops present were not able to persuade him to do that. In Dudo’s construction the self-confident Rollo sent a simple follower to kiss the King’s foot. But even he did not kneel down. No, this man took the king’s foot so high that King Charles lost his balance and fell on his back.

This caused a “great laughter and great uproar [...] among the people”. The “accident” of King Charles must be interpreted as a well-intended offence against King Charles. In this way Rollo achieved a simultaneous demonstration of Norman assertiveness. That the public mocked King Charles by laughing shows that everybody understood what had happened.

In this example we see another conversion of a ritual. Again the things proceed as expected until the underdog – or in this case his delegate – turn the ritual upside down. Through this behaviour he clearly and unmistakably expressed the Normans’ unwillingness to accept King Charles as a ruler superior to them. That this publicly staged ritual and its conversion were understood by the audience is expressed by their mocking laughter.

Two very different examples of public emotions have been presented. On the one hand Sichar failed to fulfill his ritual obligation by using a too rude joke. His attempt to rebel against his conqueror backfired and led – without any laughter at his bad joke – to his own death. On the other hand, the laughter of the audience attending the declaration of the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte on the misfortune of King Charles and the Normans’ effrontery clearly demonstrates that everybody understood Rollo’s resistance against being subordinated.

The conversion or rather disruption of a ritual was a possible way to express a more or less hidden dissatisfaction. By first playing the correct role in the ritual and then breaking it off a very dramatic scene was produced. How dangerous this behaviour could be was obvious. In our examples both of the authors constructed these episodes quite cleverly. What in one case is marked by missing laughter, is in the other case expressed by loud and public laughter. We can be definitely sure that they would not have written an implausible story. So we have to assume that these events may have happened in the described way. Or at least, that the stories would have seemed plausible for the foreseen readers of these texts.

NOTES

- ¹ M. Becher, "Cum lacrimis et gemitu": *Vom Weinen der Sieger und der Besiegten im frühen und hohen Mittelalter*, in G. Althoff (ed.), *Formen und Funktionen öffentlicher Kommunikation im Mittelalter*, Vorträge und Forschungen, 51, Stuttgart 2001, pp. 25-52, at pp. 27, 40-41; D. Rieger, "E trait sos meillors omes ab un consel", *Emotionen, Inszenierung und feudales "consilium" im "Girart de Roussillon"*, in G. Althoff (ed.), *Formen und Funktionen öffentlicher Kommunikation im Mittelalter*, Stuttgart 2001, pp. 227-246, at p. 230. For discussion of the problems of scientific research in emotions see K.-J. Kuschel, *Über die destruktive und befreiende Kraft des Lachens, Anthropologische und theologische Aspekte*, in "Concilium", 2000, 36, pp. 4-23; R. Müller-Freienfels addresses humour and jokes especially: *Das Lachen und das Lächeln, Komik und Humor als wissenschaftliche Probleme*, Bonn 1948.
- ² Laughter in this chapter is of special interest as a physical display of emotion. Laughter as a bodily reaction may be spontaneous or willed but once begun it becomes difficult to control and progresses automatically through the body from clonic spasms of the diaphragm, short, intense breaths increasing to dyspnoea and spontaneous contractions of the muscular system of the face. At the same time other muscles, especially in the shoulders, relax and so become involved in the bodily tremor. The whole body becomes a resonating chamber of the voice. The lower jaw trembles and the head is thrown back with heavy laughter; the upper part of the body stretches and bends backwards a little, until exhaustion and pain in the diaphragm and the muscles of the stomach cause the body to bend forwards. The whole artery system is extended, so that the face and neck blush, compare: G.M. Martin, *Zur Idee einer Theologie des Lachens*, in "Una Sancta", 1997, 52, pp. 266-274, at p. 267.
- ³ See, for a survey of the research, J. Verberckmoes, *What about Medieval Humour? Some Historiography*, in H. Braet, G. Latré, W. Verbeke (eds.), *Risus mediaevalis, Laughter in Medieval Literature and Art*, Leuven 2003, pp. 1-9. See also, for example, S. Hartmann, *Ein empirischer Beitrag zur Geschichte des Lachens im Mittelalter, Lachen beim Stricker*, in "Mediaevistik", 1990, 3, pp. 107-129, at p. 107. For discussion of medieval humour see John S.P. Tatlock, *Mediaeval Laughter*, "Speculum", 1946, 21, pp. 289-294; H. Adolf, *On Medieval Laughter*, "Speculum", 1947, 22, pp. 251-253. On the problems of terminology and the translation of modern concepts of 'humour' and 'joke' to the Middle Ages, see M. Schubert, *Zur Theorie des Gebarens im Mittelalter, Analyse von nichtsprachlichen Äußerungen in mittelhochdeutscher Epik, Rolandlied, Eneasroman, Tristan*, Kölner Germanistische Studien, 31, Cologne 1991, p. 91.
- ⁴ For an explanation of how jokes work, see K. Fallend, *Witz und Psychoanalyse, Internationale Sichtweisen - Sigmund Freud revisited*, Innsbruck 2006.
- ⁵ Rieger, "E trait sos meillors omes ab un consel" cit., pp. 227-228. Also compare: J. Bumke, *Höfische Kultur, Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter*, Munich 1994, pp. 22-25; Becher, 'Cum lacrimis et gemitu' cit., p. 29. There is a lot of research on emotions in literature, for example: A. Bader (ed.), *Sprachspiel und Lachkultur, Beiträge zur Literatur- und Sprachgeschichte*, Stuttgart 1994; M. Bayless, *Parody in the middle ages, The Latin tradition*, Ann Arbor 1997; J.-D. Müller, *Lachen – Spiel – Fiktion, Zum Verhältnis von literarischem Diskurs und historischer Realität im 'Frauendienst' Ulrichs von Lichtenstein*, in Ute von Bloh (ed.), *Minnesang und Literaturtheorie*, Tübingen 2001, pp. 1-38; U. Müller, *Zur Lachkultur in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters: Neidhart und Neithart Fuchs*, in S. Jäkel, A. Timonen (eds.), *Laughter down the centuries*, I, Turku 1994, pp. 161-181.
- ⁶ G. Althoff, *Demonstration und Inszenierung, Spielregeln der Kommunikation in mittelalterlicher Öffentlichkeit*, in "Frühmittelalterliche Studien", 1993, 27, p. 31; M. Innes, *He never even allowed his white teeth to be bared in laughter: the politics of humour in the Carolingian renaissance*, in G. Halsall (ed.), *Humour, history and politics in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2002, pp. 131-156.
- ⁷ Referring to antiquity and religions other than Christianity: I.S. Gilhus, *Laughing gods, weeping virgins, Laughter in the History of Religion*, London - New York 1997.

- ⁸ As we can see, the foundation for the medieval understanding of laughter lies not only in the writings of the Church Fathers and in biblical exegesis, but also in the works of the philosophers of antiquity. By examining all of these sources it becomes evident that, with the progression of the Middle Ages, the cloisters as institutions of an ideology of emotions were gradually replaced by the noble courts, which developed their own ideals of proper emotionality. The Biblical interpretation done by the Church Fathers is based on ancient ideas. G. Schmitz, *Ein Narr, der da lacht... Überlegungen zu einer mittelalterlichen Verhaltensnorm*, in T. Vogel (ed.), *Vom Lachen. Einem Phänomen auf der Spur*, Tübingen 1992, pp. 129-153, at pp. 129-130; R. Helmstetter, *Vom Lachen der Tiere, der Kinder, der Götter, der Menschen und der Engel*, in "Merkur", 2002, 56, 2, pp. 766-768. That this course of action seems necessary, cf. R. Garland, *Post Risus – Notes on the Symposia of Laughter down the Centuries in 1993, 1994 and 1996. Suggestions following the First Conference on the Phenomenon of Laughter*, in S. Jäkel, A. Timonen (eds.), *Laughter down the centuries*, 3, Turku 1997, pp. 265-275. Also cf. S. Hüttinger, *Die Kunst des Lachens – das Lachen der Kunst, Ein Stottern des Körpers*, Frankfurt am Main 1996, pp. 73-104.
- ⁹ For the behaviour of Friedrich Barbarossa cf. G. Althoff, *Friedrich Barbarossa als Schauspieler? Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Friedens von Venedig*, in *Chevaliers errants, demoiselles et l'Autre, Höfische und nachhöfische Literatur im europäischen Mittelalter*, ed. T. Ehlert, Göttingen 1998, pp. 3-20.
- ¹⁰ Kardinal Boso, *Le vies des papes, (Gesta pontificum Romanorum)*, in L. Duchesne (ed.), *Le liber pontificalis*, Paris 1955, p. 440. Also cf. Verberckmoes, *What about medieval humour?* cit., p. 4.
- ¹¹ H. Kallfelz, *Das Standesethos des Adels im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert*, unpublished thesis, University of Würzburg, 1960, pp. 67-80; Schmitz, *Ein Narr, der da lacht* cit., p. 140. Le Goff argued that the word 'smile' did not exist in Latin, and that *subridere* might rather be understood as laughing to oneself. Le Goff therefore speculates that 'smiling' might be invented in the Middle Ages (pp. 52-53). While he sees an evolution of laughter throughout the Middle Ages, his argument is based on Bakhtin's problematic thesis. For Bakhtin's critics see: A. Gurjewitsch, *Bachtin und der Karneval. Zu Dietz-Rüdiger Moser: 'Lachkultur des Mittelalters? Michael Bachtin und die Folgen seiner Theorie'*, in "Euphorion", 1991, 85, pp. 423-429; Id., *Bachtin und seine Theorie des Karnevals*, *Kulturgeschichte des Humors, von der Antike bis heute*, ed. J. Bremmer, H. Roodenburg, Darmstadt WBG 1999, pp. 57-63; D.-R. Moser, *Lachkultur des Mittelalters, Michael Bachtin und die Folgen seiner Theorie*, in "Euphorion", 1990, 84, pp. 89-111; D. Schümer, *Lachen mit Bachtin – ein geisteshistorisches Trauerspiel*, in "Merkur", 2002, 56, pp. 847-853.
- ¹² *Cum autem hora esset, processit, laetus et hilaris ad mensam resedit*. Widukind of Corvey, *Rerum gestarum Saxoniarum libri III*, in P. Hirsch, H.-E. Lohmann (eds.), *MGH, SSrG i.u.s. 60*, Hannover 1935.
- ¹³ G. Kranz, *Das göttliche Lachen*, Würzburg 1970. Also see H. Ragotzky, H. Wenzel, *Höfische Repräsentation, Das Zeremoniell und die Zeichen*, Tübingen 1990; J. Bumke, *Kultur und Gesellschaft, höfische*, in *LexMa*, V, Munich 2002, col. 1565-1568; C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness*, Philadelphia 1985.
- ¹⁴ Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi II. imperatoris* cit., in H. Bresslau (ed.), *MGH, SSrG i.u.s. 61*, cap. II.
- ¹⁵ See also Kallfelz, *Das Standesethos* cit., pp. 69-70.
- ¹⁶ Widukind, *Rerum gestarum* cit., liber 2, cap. XXXVI.
- ¹⁷ Ruotger, *Vita Brunonis*, in I. Schmale-Ott (ed.), *MGH, SSrG n.s. 10*, cap. 8, *Nulla autem hoc egit supercilio, set cum domestico lepore, tum urbana gravitate* (This he did with with no arrogance, but with courtly grace and urbane gravity).
- ¹⁸ Ruotger, *Vita Brunonis* cit., cap. 29: *Unde si quando suis coactus quodammodo reddidit, quod non debuit, excessum nunc modium fletu plerumque largiore detersit* [If from time to time he was forced to make concessions in some measure, which he should not have done, he wiped out this little slip by weeping more and more]. Archbishop Adalbert acted quite differently: *Itaque tam in bono, si misertus est, quam in malo, si iratus est, in utroque mensuram excedit* [So he regularly exceeded the right degree, in a good

- way when he took care of others, in a bad way when his anger grew], von Bremen, *Gesta hammaburgensis ecclesiae Pontificum* cit., in B. Schmeidler (ed.), *MGH, SSrG 2*, cap. XXXVII.
- ¹⁹ See H. Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit*, Bonn 1968; S. Mähl, *Quadruga virtutum, Die Kardinaltugenden in der Geistesgeschichte der Karolingerzeit*, in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte Beihefte [AKG]*, 9, Cologne 1969.
- ²⁰ G. Althoff, *Der König weint, Rituelle Tränen in öffentlicher Kommunikation*, in J.-D. Müller (ed.), *Auf-führung' und 'Schrift' in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, Germanistische Symposien der DFG, Berichtsbände 17, Weimar 1996, p. 242; Bumke, *Höfische Kultur* cit., pp. 481-483.
- ²¹ Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici Imperatoris*, in E. Tremp (ed.), *MGH, SSrG i.u.s. 64*, cap. 12, 19. Cf. Innes, *He never even allowed his white teeth to be bared in laughter*' cit., pp. 131-156.
- ²² Cf. W. Mezger, *Hofnarren im Mittelalter, Vom tiefen Sinn eines seltsamen Amts*, Konstanz 1981; M. Richter, *The Oral Tradition in the Early Middle Ages, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental*, 71, Turnhout 1994, pp. 41-42, 72-73; H.R. Velten, *Komische Körper: Zur Funktion von Hofnarren und zur Dramaturgie des Lachens im Spätmittelalter*, in *Zeitschrift für Germanistik*, 2001, 11, pp. 292-317; Garland, *Post Risus* cit., pp. 265-266.
- ²³ Alpert of Metz, *De diversitate temporum libri II*, in G.H. Pertz (ed.), *MGH SS 4*, p. 719. Hincmar of Reims, *Capitula synodica*, in R. Pokorny, M. Stratmann (eds.), *MGH, Capitula episcoporum II*, cap. 14.
- ²⁴ Schmitz, *Ein Narr, der da lacht* cit., p. 136. Any demonstration of joy during the liturgy was also condemned: G. Kranz, *Das göttliche Lachen*, Würzburg 1970, p. 308.
- ²⁵ Frutolf of Michelsberg, *Chronik*, in F.-J. Schmale, I. Schmale-Ott (eds.), *FSGA 15, XXX, 64: [...] unde infinitam histrionum et ioculatorum multitudinem non solum muneribus, sed etiam cibo potuque vacuam et merentem abire permisit*.
- ²⁶ G. Althoff, *Spielen die Dichter mit den Spielregeln der Gesellschaft?*, in N. F. Palmer, H.-J. Schiewer (eds.), *Mittelalterliche Literatur und Kunst im Spannungsfeld von Hof und Kloster*, 9-11 October 1997, Tübingen 1999, pp. 53-71, at pp. 55-56. See also O. Neudeck, *Das Spiel mit den Spielregeln. Zur literarischen Emanzipation von Formen körperhaft-ritualisierter Kommunikation im Mittelalter*, in "Euphorion", 2001, 95, 3, p. 290.
- ²⁷ This idea is explained in detail by H. Kamp, *Die Macht der Zeichen und Gesten, öffentliches Verhalten bei Dudo von Saint-Quentin*, in G. Althoff (ed.), *Formen und Funktionen öffentlicher Kommunikation im Mittelalter*, Stuttgart 2001, pp. 125-155. See also, Neudeck, *Das Spiel mit den Spielregeln* cit., p. 302; Althoff, *Der König weint* cit., pp. 239-252.
- ²⁸ Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, trans. O.M. Dalton, 2 vols., Oxford 1927, II, p. 387, in R. Brentano (ed.), *The Early Middle Ages: 500-1000: Sources in Western Civilization*, ch. 8, *Gregory of Tours: His Faith and the World Around Him*, Berkeley 1964, pp. 123-127; http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/medmil/pages/non-mma-pages/text_links/bretano_franks.html, accessed on 6 June 2009 (para. 5 of 5).
- ²⁹ Compare K. van Eickels, *Vom inszenierten Konsens zum systematisierten Konflikt. Die englisch-französischen Beziehungen und ihre Wahrnehmung an der Wende vom Hoch- zum Spätmittelalter*, Stuttgart 2002, pp. 341-347.
- ³⁰ Compare Kallfelz, *Das Standesethos* cit., pp. 67-78. When alcohol had done its work often such faux-pas happened as shown by G. Althoff, *Verwandte, Freunde und Getreue. Zum politischen Stellenwert der Gruppenbindungen im früheren Mittelalter*, Darmstadt 1990, p. 109.
- ³¹ Dudo of Saint-Quentin, *Gesta Normannorum*, liber II, cap. XXI, trans. F. Lifshitz, http://www.the-orb.net/orb_done/dudo/dudindex.html, accessed on 15 February 2008.
- ³² For a detailed discussion of these rituals: K. van Eickels, *Vom inszenierten Konsens zum systematischen Konflikt. Die englisch-französischen Beziehungen und ihre Wahrnehmung an der Wende vom Hoch- zum Spätmittelalter*, Stuttgart 2002, pp. 290-311.

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