

The Devil's Naked Tongue as an Iconographical Motif*

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The bare tongue has for a contemporary, as it seems, only one association: Children put out their tongue when they want to tease each other; it is a gesture of a child or, if an adult has stuck out his tongue, it is an infantile, foolish gesture, the imitation of children's teasing.¹ However, the European iconography from the eleventh to the seventeenth century discovers in the bareness of the tongue much more complicated and in any case completely different meaning. There, the stuck out tongue turns to be a constant attribute and a specific gesture of a demon, it leads a researcher *volens nolens* into an actual semantic journey, and it is not the journey into the world of innocent children's games, but to the land where the evil and its companions, such as fear, sin, and delusion are in power (fig. 1). While analyzing possible meanings of the tongue's bareness, we will turn to each of those three (which are not the only ones, of course) hypostases of evil.

The motif of the bare tongue is not a unique feature of the European iconographical system. One also finds it in the art of Etruscans, Indians, and North American Indians.² The gesture is described in the Old Testament, in the Book of Isaiah.³ In some cases, one can even trace the connection with demonic figures of non-Christian pantheons, such as, for example, Etruscan depictions of Gorgon with the stuck out tongue, or Hindu statues of goddess Cali, where the

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¹ This is how the famous photograph of Albert Einstein with the stuck out tongue is seen: The old man behaves like a child, in the spirit of the topos *puer senex* described by Ernst R. Curtius. See Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, tr. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, 1973), 98-101.

² The masks of shamans and the rattles of Tlinkits kept in the 'Kunstkammer'-collection (St. Petersburg), repeatedly render the motif of the stuck out tongue.

³ „But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore. Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood. Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?” (Isaiah 57:3-5). My special thanks to O. L. Dovgii, who pointed out for me this passage which has principal importance for my arguments.

tongue coloured by blood of her victims hangs down from her open mouth. In both cases the motif of the bare tongue is related to mythical murderers, embodiments of “hostility towards life” and, in this manner, correlates with the devil of Christianity, the enemy of every being, “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44).



Fig. 1: The Scourging of Christ, detail of a cabinet (Germany, 17th c.).
St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum

However, only in Christian iconography the motif of the stuck out tongue corresponds consistently and logically to the image of the devil; the bareness of the tongue becomes a symbol included into the conceptual and pictorial system of Christian demonology. Being one of the demonic characteristics approximately since the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the stuck out tongue retains this status until the decline of “scholastic demonology” in the fourteenth century.⁴ Later the connection of the motif with the demonic sphere becomes looser. Today, the stuck out tongue does not form part of the standard set of demonic attributes, such as horns, hooves, clouds of smoke and so forth. The motif obvi-

⁴ Let me mention the appearance of this motif in Russian iconography on the icon “Descent into Hell” (School of Dionysius, beginning of the 16th century, Russian State Museum): Satan, throttled by an archangel, sticks out his tongue.

ously shifted from the infernal sphere to the infantile one, it has become a sign of childish or puerile behaviour.⁵ Nevertheless, it does not vanish completely from the area of infernal ideas and images. Thus, the devil and analogous demonic figures are often depicted with the stuck out tongue in the Russian popular prints from the eighteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century.⁶ Devil's masks with bare tongue (the transformation of Gothic chimeras?) appear in architectural decoration of eighteenth-century Russian country estates.⁷ Pushkin's famous drawing (1829) in the album of Elena Ushakova, where a demon sticks out his tongue at the poet in monastic headgear,⁸ derived from the same medieval demonic symbol of the stuck out tongue. The same is true for the verses about Vasilii Zhukovskii from A. F. Voeikov's satire "Lunatic Asylum" (1814-1817):⁹

Here Zhukovskii, while in shroud
covered, hands nicely crossed,
legs neatly stretched out,
teases the devil with his tongue.

⁵ For example: "Natasha, flushed and eager, seeing her mother in prayer, suddenly checked her rush, half sat down, and unconsciously put out her tongue as if chiding herself." Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, Book 6, chapter 13.

⁶ The devil sticks out his tongue on the drawing "Nakazanie Liudvigu landgrafu za grekhy stiazhania" (The Punishment of Margrave Louis for the Sins of Greed) and on many others. See *Russkii risovannyi lubok kontsa XVIII – nachala XX veka iz sobrania Gosudarstvennogo Istoricheskogo muzeia* (Russian Popular Prints from the Late 18th-Early 20th Centuries), ed. Elena I. Itkina (Moscow, 1992), 83 sqq. Baba Iaga ("hedge witch") and Death are also depicted with bare tongues. See *Lubok: Russkie narodnye kartinki XVII-XVIII vekov* (Russian Popular Pictures 17th-18th Centuries), ed. Iurii Ovsianikov (Moscow, 1968), 22-23.

⁷ As in the country house (before 1730) in Glinka's country estate, close to the town of Losino-Petrovskii near Moscow: The demons with stuck out tongues decorate the lock stones of windows on the ground floor. The estate belonged to Iakov Brius, the friend of Peter the Great.

⁸ R. G. Zhuikova, *Portretnye risunki Pushkina* (Portrait Drawings by Pushkin) (St. Petersburg, 1996), 61. One can also consider as a slight reminiscence of the demonological motif the monologue of Prince Valkovsky (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Insulted and Injured*, 1861): "... and one of the enjoyments I relish most has always been... making much of some ever-young Schiller, and egging him on, and then, suddenly, all at once, crushing him at one blow, suddenly taking off my mask before him, and suddenly distorting my ecstatic countenance into a grimace, putting out my tongue at him when he is least of all expecting such a surprise" (Part 3, Book 1). The prince certainly has some demonic features. The power over the material world (in this sense he is literally "the prince of this world") and the contempt of all spiritual, as well as the ability to imitate "noble feelings," rhetorical skills together with absolute cynicism and mendacity, – all these qualities remind of many biblical and medieval definitions of the devil (a liar, *mendax*; a forger, *interpolator*; a cunning enemy, *callidus hostis*; the most treacherous ruler of the world, *dominator terrae fallacissimus*; etc.). In this context, Valkovsky's confession of his desire to put out his tongue at somebody can be seen as a variation of demonic "sticking out the tongue."

⁹ A. F. Voeikov, "Dom sumasshedshikh" (Lunatic Asylum), in *Arzamas 2* (Moscow, 1994), 171.

In medieval culture visual images and textual descriptions of the bare tongue coexist with theological interpretations of the symbolic meaning of the tongue as part of the human body. In the present article, I intend to draw the connection between visual and textual elements and to outline the area of meanings associated with the naked tongue.

The motif of the tongue appeared in Christian demonological texts long before a specific iconography of the devil emerged. Already St. Augustine used this motif when depicting the devil: “He spreads around murders, sets traps, sharpens his manifold deceitful tongues (*exacuat multiplices et dolosas linguas suas*): discharge from your hearts all his poisons, beseeching the name of Saviour.”¹⁰

The expression “deceitful tongue” (*lingua dolosa*), by which enemies are frequently characterised in the psalms of David,¹¹ and which was transformed by Augustine into the characteristic of the devil, became later such a commonplace in demonology that it began even metonymically signify the devil himself. This is the situation in the twelfth-century treatise by an anonymous author “The Dialogue about the Fight between the Love of God and the Deceitful Tongue.”¹² The allegorical figures, the Love of God and the Deceitful Tongue, discuss the question, if the dubious hope for bliss was worth the painstaking efforts of those who followed the right path. The Deceitful Tongue speaks, in particular, about the stupidity (*stultitia*) of Christian feats: no matter how much you labour, because “those who are predestined to life will be saved, but those who are to be punished, will be damned.”¹³ The author does not explain, who this Deceitful Tongue was, he clearly considers the answer evident. However, the Deceitful Tongue’s recollections about how he “seized Adam through Eve,”¹⁴ are designed to clear up the last doubts: The readers are facing the devil himself.

One could suppose that the tongue is incorporated in the demonic sphere mainly because of its sinfulness. No doubt, the tongue was seen as an especially vicious part of the body. Nevertheless, the sinfulness of the tongue as such is not so clear as it seems. The formulation “my sinful tongue” (as Pushkin put it in “The Prophet”), when applied to the Christian worldview, very much simplifies the actual state of affairs, since the Church Fathers constantly underlined that the tongue *as such* is not sinful. St. Augustine states: “Nothing else than a guilty mind can make the tongue guilty.”¹⁵ But it is absolutely undoubted and generally accepted that the tongue is *dangerous*; it needs to be restrained and controlled

¹⁰ Augustinus, *Sermo* 216, PL 38, cl. 1080.

¹¹ For example, “Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue” – KJV, Ps. 52:4 (*dilexisti omnia verba praecipitationis, lingua dolosa* – Vulg., Ps. 51:6); “Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue” – KJV, Ps. 120:2 (*Domine libera animam meam a labiis iniquis, a lingua dolosa* – Vulg., Ps. 119:2).

¹² *Dialogus de conflictu Amoris Dei et Linguae dolosae*. PL 213, cll. 851-864.

¹³ Ibid, cl. 860.

¹⁴ Ibid, cl. 856.

¹⁵ Augustinus, *Sermo* 180. PL 38, cl. 973.

much more than any other part of body. “There is no such member in whole my body, which I would be so afraid of, as I am afraid of my tongue.” This statement of one of the desert fathers fairly describes the essence of the situation.¹⁶

The imagery associated with the gesture of sticking out the tongue to a great degree is ruled by ideas of *fear* and *sin*, and these ideas are, again, indissolubly tied with the demonic sphere.

Fear

Let me begin with the notion of fear. There was fear of the tongue, and this fear was fed by the similar spirit of the Old Testament. Medieval authors apprehended and elaborated the comparisons of the tongue with a weapon – a whip: “The stroke of the whip maketh marks in the flesh; but the stroke of the tongue breaketh the bones” (KJV, Sirach 28:17); a sword: “their tongue a sharp sword” (KJV, Ps. 57:4); a bow: “they bend their tongues like their bow for lies” (Jeremiah 9:3). Caesarius of Arles (sixth century), while demanding from monks to fight their vices unceasingly, suggested to them “to sheath the swords of tongues,” so that they will not hurt each other in this battle.¹⁷ Palladius in the “Lausiaca History” (419-420) compared St. Anthony’s sharp reproaches on a certain sinner to “scourging with the tongue.”¹⁸

The motif of the “bare” tongue which wounds like a sword was included in the description of Christ’s passion. Thus, the idea of “double,” outer and inner wounds of Christ emerged: The first were inflicted by real weapons, the latter by tongues of those who blasphemed and mocked him. Christ, “submissive to the blasphemies of Jews, patient to wounds, is stabbed by tongues inside and by nails outside” (*intus linguis, clavis exterius pungeretur*).¹⁹

St. Bernard persuaded his flock in one of his sermons: “Do not scruple to say that the tongue is crueller than the lance which pierced the side of Christ. For it pierced the body of Christ also ... and not the already lifeless body, but it made it lifeless while piercing” (*facit exanime fodiendo*); the tongue is “more harmful” (*nocentior*) than thorns which wounded the head of Christ, and than the iron nails which stabbed his hands and feet. Afterwards, St. Bernard drew the attention of listeners to the fact that the tongue only seems to be inoffensive, but in actuality it is mortally dangerous: “The tongue is a delicate member, however, it can hardly be restrained, because its substance is fragile and little, but, while in use, it turns to be great and powerful. It is moderate in size, but, if you do not

¹⁶ Peter Cantor (12th century) ascribes it to Father Serapion: Petrus Cantor, *Verbum abbreviatum*, 64: *De vitio linguae*. PL 205, cl. 195.

¹⁷ *Linguae gladios recondamus... ut non... invicem non inferamus injurias* (Caesarius Arelatensis, *Homilia* 7. PL 67, cl. 1059).

¹⁸ *Magnus Antonius incipit lingua flagellare mutilatum...* (Palladius. *Historia lausiaca* 26. *De Eulogio Alexandrino*). PL 73, cl. 1125.

¹⁹ Bernardus abbas Clarae-Vallensis, *In die Sancto Paschae sermo*. PL 183, cl. 275.

beware, it is great evil.”²⁰ According to the English pupil of St. Bernard, Gilbert of Hoyland, even Christ himself was afraid of the tongue as a mortal weapon: “Christ trembles (*horret*) more at ... stings of the tongue than at sharp points of thorns.”²¹

In this context the motif which frequently appears in depictions of the Passion becomes clearer. The enemies of Christ stick out tongues at the Cross. Tongues belong to the same level as swords and lances of soldiers surrounding the Cross, and to put the tongue out means not to “tease,” but to inflict Christ with the worst wound, with the mortal, “inner” wound. One can suppose that the idea of the tongue as a weapon which injured Christ with inner injury was also mirrored in the images of demons with naked tongues. According to medieval authors, the condemnation and execution of Christ were organised by the devil, and sacrilegers who surrounded the dying God are the pupils of the devil.²² Demons, as well as their pupils, do not “tease” with their tongues, they threat and hurt with them.

Sin

If one moves from the motif of *fear* (and from the interpretation of the tongue as an unsheathed sword, connected with it) to the motif of *sin*, one finds the associated imagery much more complicated. Bodily “areas of sinfulness” as recognised in Christian anthropology came into active interaction, vivid interplay in the medieval visual thinking, and the tongue had in this play the most prominent role, since it is multifunctional and can correlate to different sins. Its connection with verbosity and gluttony is clear.

Martin of Braga (sixth century) recommends: “As if they were wanton slaves of your soul, rule strictly over your tongue, womb and lust.”²³ The tongue, the womb, the lust (*lingua, venter, libido*) are three areas of sin, which constitute in the human body some kind of an axe of sinfulness. The medieval imagination created between these spheres a constant “imagery exchange;” iconographical motifs moved along the axe of sin (mainly downwards) to demonstrate the essential identity of all three sinful areas, the identity acquired in the bodily lower stratum, the sinfulness of which is unquestioned. Thus, the ap-

²⁰ Bernardus abbas Clarae-Vallensis, *Sermones de diversis. Sermo 17, De triplici custodia: manus, linguae et cordis*. PL 183, cl. 585.

²¹ Gillebertus de Hoilandia, *Sermones in canticum Salomonis. Sermo 20*. PL 184, cl. 107.

²² In the commentary (ascribed to Haymon, the bishop of Halberstadt) on the above-mentioned verses of Isaiah (57:3-5), where “the drawing out” of a tongue is described, the scene is interpreted allegorically, as “the prototype” of the future Passion: The “sons of the sorceress” are Jews who stick out tongues “for sake of blasphemy” (*ad blasphemandum*) against the Son of God. They are “sons of the devil,” but “not because of their nature, but because of imitation” (*non per naturam, sed per imitationes*). See Haymonus, episcopus Halberstatensis, *Commentariorum in Isaiam libri tres. Liber 2, 57*. PL 116, cll. 1012-1013.

²³ Martinus Dumiensis, *Libellus de moribus*. PL 72, cl. 29.

pearance of a tongue on the place of phallus in the depictions of the devil was supposed to show that “the sinful tongue” is equally bad as “the shameful limb.”

The medieval imagination, probably, played this “game with the tongue” to overcome its ambiguity as part of the body, to distinguish visually the sinful tongue and the righteous tongue. The tongue of the just and that of a demon look the same, but the imagination of the medieval artist strived to find the difference between them by means of visual representation.

Indeed, among all three areas of sin as named above, the “area of the tongue” is distinguished by its ambiguity,²⁴ which can be seen as a disturbing obstacle that has to be overcome. This ambiguity of the tongue is evident, for example, from the treatise “Allegories on the Entire Holy Scripture” ascribed to Rabanus Maurus, where the author differentiates the following allegorical meanings of the word *lingua* in the Bible: “The tongue is the Son, as in the psalm ‘My tongue is the pen of a ready writer’ (KJV, Ps. 45:2), that is, my Son together with the Holy Spirit is my co-worker (*cooperator*). The tongue is the voice of Christ, as in the psalm ‘My tongue cleaveth to my jaws’ (KJV, Ps. 22:15), that is, my voice is silenced in presence of Jews. The tongue is the heretical teaching, as in Job: ‘With a rope you will fasten his tongue’ (Job. KJV, 41:1),²⁵ that is, with the sacred Scripture you will subdue the heretical teaching. The tongue is the mind (*animus*), as in the psalm: ‘All day long your tongue is planning injustice’ (KJV, Ps. 52:4), that is, your mind is always planning unfairness ... The tongue is the secular teaching, as in Isaiah: ‘The Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea’²⁶ (Isaiah 11:15), that is, he will destroy the unilluminated teaching of this world.”²⁷ It must be added that Rabanus always considers tongue as material organ, not as language. It can symbolise oppositions: the Son of God and the “heretical teaching.” The tongue can be the metonymy for the devil (*lingua dolosa*), but it can also metonymically signify a saintly apostle, as in “The Golden Legend,” where St. Bartholomew is called “mouth of God, tongue of fire that speaks wisdom.”²⁸

²⁴ In a certain context and from a specific point of view *venter* and *libido* could also sometimes be justified. For example, Bernard Silvestris’ *prosimetrum De universitate mundi* contains the praise of male genitals, unique for the Middle Ages: They wage war with death, restore Nature, prevent the return of chaos (see the analysis in: Curtius, *European Literature*, 111). *Venter* is cleaned of any sin, when one speaks about the womb of the Mother of God. – However, these examples are rather isolated (the first in historical sense, since it is a unique evidence of twelfth-century humanism, the second in the context of the single and inimitable miracle of the Immaculate Conception) and they cannot create a counterpart to the general sinfulness of the womb and the genitals. The ambiguity of the tongue is determined by its inevitable participation in sinful and righteous talking simultaneously; the tongue is the tool of both true and false speech.

²⁵ Biblical quotations are given in translation from the Latin text of Rabanus Maurus.

²⁶ That is, the gulf.

²⁷ Rabanus Maurus, *Allegoriae in universam sacram scripturam*. PL 112, cl. 985.

²⁸ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, tr. William Granger Ryan (Princeton, N. J., 1993), vol. 2, 116. Here, Jacobus de Voragine retells the homily of Theodore the Studite in the translation of Anastasius Bibliothecarius (PL 129, cl. 735).

The tongue is a part of the body which can help to sin as well as to accomplish saintly deeds, but the latter case is less frequent, in the same degree in which sainthood is less frequent than sin. The tongue is the last weapon by which Christ was hurt “inside,” but at the same time it is the last weapon which Christ himself used. The motif of the tongue as the “last weapon of Christ” was elaborated by Jacobus de Voragine in his “Golden Legend.” All members of Christ’s body were affected in one way or another: “The head which angels trembled to look upon is stabbed with clustered thorns,” spittle befouled his face, “the eyes that outshined the sun are clouded over in death; the ears that hear the angels sing hear the taunts of sinners,” the mouth was to drink gall and vinegar, the feet and hands were nailed to the Cross, “the body is scourged, the side is pierced with a lance.” Briefly, “nothing is left in him except the tongue, so that he could pray for sinners and commend his mother to a disciple.”²⁹ In the “Golden Legend” this motif is also applied to saints, who imitate Christ and frequently also use the tongue as the last weapon. A young Christian “at the time of Decius” was bound down to a bed, and a harlot was sent to him “to defile the body of the youth.” However, when she approached, the young man “bit out his tongue and spat it in the face of the lewd woman,” and in this way “he drove out temptation by the pain of his wound.”³⁰ The tongue of St. Christina was cut off, but she took it and threw it in the face of her judge, who immediately lost his sight.³¹

In the fact that the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles precisely in the form of tongues,³² Jacobus de Voragine noticed deep meaning: “The tongue is the member ignited by the fire of Gehenna, is hard to control, and is useful when well controlled. Therefore, because the tongue was inflamed by hellfire, it needed the fire of the Holy Spirit ... it needs the grace of the Spirit more than the other members do.”³³ The ambivalence of the tongue is expressed in a visual image: A human tongue is similar to a tongue of flame, but this tongue of flame can be a part of the Gehennal fire or it can be a gleam of those flames in the shape of which the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles. Jacobus de Voragine refers here to the consideration on a tongue from the letter of James: “And the tongue is a fire, a world (*universitas*) of iniquity... it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell” (James 3:6). However, the apostle’s strictly negative attitude towards “the fire of the tongue” is beveled by Jacobus de Voragine: The “fire of the tongue” can be blessed, if it is kindled by the Holy Spirit, not by the flame of hell.

²⁹ Jacobus de Voragine, vol. 1, 206. This description is presented by Jacobus as a quotation from St. Bernard of Clairvaux, but I was not able to identify it, neither was the French translator of “The Golden Legend.”

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 84: “Saint Paul, Hermit.”

³¹ *Ibidem*, 387: “Saint Christina.”

³² “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them” (Acts 2:3).

³³ Jacobus de Voragine, vol. 1, 306: “Holy Spirit.”

The medieval artist perceived and played with the similarity of these two tongues, a physical and a spiritual one. The motif of the tongue is often “duplicated” in the depictions of demons. The tongue hanging down from the mouth is accompanied by hair standing on end and winding as tongues of everlasting fire; the demon bears on his head the fire of hell, and “the sinful tongue” falling from his mouth is only a part of this flame.



Fig. 2: Hell, German woodcut (15th c.)

Another way of motif duplication is that in the depictions of hell torments. There, the sinners in pots surrounded by tongues of flames stick out tongues themselves (fig. 2). Their tongues, by which they clearly blaspheme,³⁴ on the one hand, represent the metaphor of “false,” sinful speech, on the other hand, they are in a kind of polyphonic interplay with the tongues of hellfire. The visual motif of the tongue is present on two interacting levels simultaneously: the hu-

³⁴ Sinners in hell are in *statu termini*, “in the final state,” they are not able to repent, they can be only confirmed in their sinfulness (see A. M. Makhov, “Sad demonov – Hortus daemonum,” in *Slovar’ infernal’noi mifologii srednevekov’ia i vrozhdzenia* (Moscow, 1998), 16.

man “sinful tongue,” the tongue of crime, and, as a response, the tongue of hell flame, the tongue of punishment.

The ambiguity intrinsic to tongue and speech as such made the search for a distinguishing feature of the “sinful tongue” necessary. The nakedness of the tongue became such a feature. It completely corresponds to the general principle of the demonic imagery, which is the parody of sanctity and its shift downward the material bodily lower sphere. According to Tertullian, the devil “rivals with truth” (*aemulatus est veritatem*)³⁵ and tries to make a twisted copy of the divine world order, but he does that by means which are available to him, by means of the material lower world, since he is its “prince” (John 12:31). As a result, everything “what God, while creating, named pure (*mundum*), the enemy, while infecting, turned into impure (*immundum*)” (Petrus Chrysologus).³⁶ On the level of imagery this demonological idea means that spiritual elements in the iconography of the devil came to be “materialised,” visible, sensible, and at the same time they “move downwards.” A modern researcher on medieval iconography, Jean Wirth, while describing the parallels in the development of sacred and infernal motifs, states that “the images of evil,” which to a great extent imitate the sacred, at the same time somehow “draw the spiritual in the sphere of devouring and sexuality, shift it towards the bodily lower principle ... As the beings created after the likeness of God are usually depicted with a closed mouth, even when they are speaking, the devils’ grimacing masks broadly gape their mouths. Thus, the degradation of words is accomplished, the spiritual function is made equal to devouring or, depending on where these gaping mouths are situated on the body, to a sexual act or to defecation.”³⁷

But the naked tongue is more than symbol of the word which became “external,” therefore, has degraded. The stuck out tongues of the devil, his servants and “imitators,” that is, sinners, the possessed and demonomaniacs, played a certain role in all three spheres of sinfulness mentioned above.³⁸ It is the metaphor of phallus, a part of devouring mouth and a tool of verbosity, that is, the attribute and the sign of untruthful speech, of *Pseudo-Logos*.

Jean Bodin’s demonological treatise “The Witch Persecutions” shows how the theme of “untruthful speech” (where the speech of the possessed, of demonomaniacs, is certainly included) connects the imagery of three areas of sin, while involving in this interplay also the motif of the stuck out tongue. This is how Bodin describes the speech of the possessed: “When the evil spirit speaks [from inside a possessed woman – *A. M.*], sometimes he speaks as if from the

³⁵ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxeam*. PL 2, cl. 154.

³⁶ Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 96. PL 52, cl. 470.

³⁷ Jean Wirth, *L’image médiévale. Naissance et développements (VI-XV siècle)* (Paris, 1989): 341.

³⁸ The reflection of these spheres is present also in the area of the sacred. According to Jean Wirth, “in the midst of the medieval sacred one can perceive a series of analogues between feeding, sex and speech. A sacral act is, first of all, the affair which impregnates by means of absorbing the Word” (Ibid, 340).

belly, and the mouth of the woman remains closed, sometimes with her tongue hanging down to the knees, sometimes through her shameful parts (*par les parties honteuses*).³⁹

Speaking “with the tongue hanging down,” speaking through belly (womb), speaking through genitals are three metaphors of the same untrue speaking, of false speech. The bare tongue forms a line with “lower” areas of sin, sticking the tongue out is interpreted as a variation on the theme of material, bodily lower stratum and its sinful manifestations.

In the demonic iconography, the motif of the naked tongue is indivisibly interwoven with the motifs of two other “lower” areas of sin. The stuck out tongue has in these spheres its counterparts. On the level of sexuality it replaces phallus; on the level of devouring it is represented as a part of maw which leads to the womb. But even “in its own realm,” on the level of false speech, the bare tongue interacts with “lower” imagery. Hence the motif of “speaking backside” emerges, and the speech of the backside is practically identical to the false speech of the sinful tongue. Now, I would like to examine all three spheres in more detail.



Fig. 3: The appearance of the devil to St. Anthony of Padua.
Jacobus de Voragine. The Lives of the Saints (Augsburg, 1472)

1. The sphere of voluptuousness. In this area the stuck out tongue is equaled to phallus.⁴⁰ For the visual representation, this means that one of the

³⁹ That is, through genitals. Jean Bodin, *De la demonomanie des sorciers* (Paris, 1587; reprint La Roche-sur-Yonne, 1979) 2, chapter 3 (*Des invocations expresses des malins esprits*), 8.

faces of the devil (who has many faces, as is well-known) is situated on his belly or his groin, and the put out tongue takes the place of the phallus as its analogue and substitute (fig. 3). In this way the devil's talking is likened to the movement of genitals, thus, it is exposed as false, "nullified" by purely visual means.

2. The sphere of the womb. The stuck out tongue is connected with the idea of gluttony, and, generally, of eating, devouring. In application to the devil, the motif of devouring has its symbolic meaning. The devil consumes souls and bodies of sinners; "as a roaring lion," he seeks "whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The devouring of the sinner implies his union with the devil's body, the same as the union of the righteous with the body of Christ. Sinners are the limbs of the devil, as well as the righteous are the limbs of Christ.⁴¹ However, this analogy is not complete at least in one point, namely, in the representation of the union. If the just participate in the ecclesiastical body in a mystical, immaterial way, then the union of sinners with the devil's body is quite physical, material: The devil devours the sinner, absorbs him in his enormous body (womb). No surprise, as the devil, "the prince of this world," is able to parody the *unio mystica* of God and the righteous, making them accessible for his means.

In the depictions of the devil's *unio profana*, that is, the absorbing, devouring of sinners, the motif of the stuck out tongue appears again. The sculpture at the Church of St. Peter in Chauvigny (eleventh-twelfth centuries) represents a monster (which, of course, signifies the devil) swallowing a sinner (fig. 4). One sees two gaping mouths, that of the devil and that of the monster, but only one hanging tongue, the tongue of the sinner. However, the image can be also understood in another way, since the head of the sinner, clearly shaped in the form of a tongue, can be interpreted as "the devil's tongue," and in this case there are two heads, two mouths, two tongues. The sculptor commemorated the moment of union between the devil and the sinner, the moment when the head of the sinner literally becomes the tongue of the devil. The metaphor "the sinner is the tongue of the devil" confirms this interpretation. It appears in "The Golden Legend," when St. Vincent names his torturer Dacian the "tongue of the devil:" "You venomous tongue of the devil... I have no fear of your torments!"⁴²

⁴⁰ The naked tongue and naked "shameful parts" are brought close to each other in the image of Judas, the main follower of the devil. In a French Passion diptych (first half of the 14th century; ivory carving, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg) the hanged Judas puts out his tongue. His clothes do not meet in front, and one can see the bottom part of his body with falling out guts.

⁴¹ "Those who are rejected by the body of the Church, which is the body of Christ, are handed over in the possession of the devil, since they are foreigners and aliens to the body of God" (Hilarius, episcopus Pictaviensis, *Tractatus in CXVIII psalmum*. PL 9, cl. 607). Those who are handed over in the possession of the devil take part in his body: "The devil and the unjust are the unite body" (Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia in librum B. Job* 13, 34. PL 75, 1034). Another version of the same metaphor: Christ and the devil are the "heads" of bodies, and the bodies are the assemblages of virtuous and vicious people accordingly (Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia* 4, 11. PL 75, cl. 647).

⁴² Jacobus de Voragine, vol. 1, 106: "Saint Vincent."



Fig. 4: The devil devours a sinner (11th-12th c.) Chauvigny, Church of St. Peter

The tongue is the place of fusion between the devil and the sinner. If it is the tongue of the devil, one sees how the sinner literally transforms into this tongue; if it is the tongue of the sinner, the devil catches it and in this way acquires the sinner. The second option, long before it was elaborated visually, was realised by St. Augustine: “you [the children of light, the children of peace] are in danger among those... whose tongues are in the hand of the devil.”⁴³

A French image from the end of the fifteenth century represents an intricate variation on the theme of the tongue and gaping mouth. The punishment for sinners is that they are to swallow disgusting food and drink. Demons with hanging tongues feed sinners with toads and lizards which jut out from sinners’ mouths as “quasi-tongues,” parodies of real tongues (fig. 5). The central group is the culmination of this multiplied motif of the tongue: The devil and the sinner interwove their tongues in an obscene kiss. This junction probably symbolises their absolute union in vice, the emergence of a united “devil’s body.”

⁴³ Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 143, § 18, in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini enarrationes in psalmos CI-CL* (Corpus Christianorum, series latina 40; Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), cl. 2085.

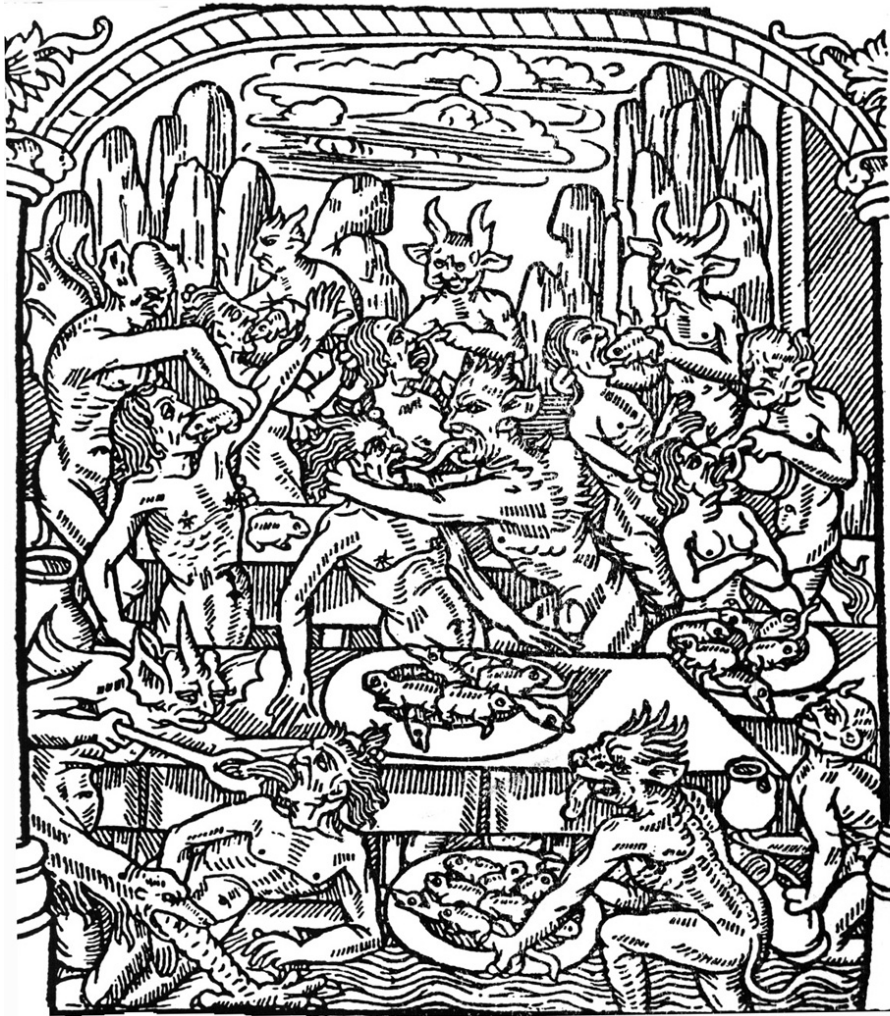


Fig. 5: Punishments for the Seven Deadly Sins: Demons make gluttons to eat toads, rats and snakes. From *Le grand kalendrier et compost des Bergiers* (1496)

Since the depictions of “the devil’s banquet” are supposed to represent the moment when the sinner ceases to be “the image of God” and becomes a part of the devil’s flesh, they possess certain variety. It need not be the tongue but the entire body of a sinner which sticks out of the devil’s jaws (fig. 6). It has the same function as the tongue, but it represents another stage of the transformation, when the sinner’s body did not yet become the devil’s flesh.

In the mouth of the devil the sinner and the tongue are equal, only the degree of the change is differentiated. The tongue is the sinner which already became the devil’s limb; the sinner hanging from the mouth is about to reach this union. In the sculpture from Chauvigny (fig. 4) mentioned above the artist found a unique method to merge these two stages.



Fig. 6: Lucifer with Judas hanging down from his mouth.
From Dante, *The Divine Comedy* (Venice, 1512)

Thus, the stuck out tongue is connected with the metaphor of devouring-absorbing. A sinner, while being eaten, being drawn into the womb of the devil, becomes a part of the devouring maw (one should remember that hell itself was often depicted as a maw). The tongue which the devil sticks out is at the same time the sinner which sticks out of the devil's mouth.

3. The sphere of the tongue as the sphere of speech. The put out tongue is a sign of talking, a sign of speech, but of the false speech, of *pseudo-logos*. A number of images depicting the devil with bare tongue clearly depict him speaking (Fig. 7). The effect of "visualised speech" is supported by the gestures of the devil.

Words pronounced by the devil can have an understandable meaning. For example, the devil bares his tongue while boasting about his victory over God (fig. 8): *super astra Dei exaltabo solium meum*, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isaiah 14:13).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ At the beginning of the 20th century Russian popular prints still used the same way of depiction. In the picture "St. Antioch' parable about bribery" (artist S. Kalikina) the scrolls with written speech fly out of mouths of speakers; only from the mouth of Satan together with the scroll the tongue comes out. See *Russkii risovannyi lubok*, 120.



Fig. 7: The council of demons and the conception of Merlin, Northern France (c. 1290). Paris, French National Library, MS Fr. 95, fol. 113v

The motif of “the visualised speech” (that is, the talking as showing tongue) has its textual counterpart in “The Golden Legend,” in the Life of St. Dominic. The devil appears before the saint, and Dominic leads him around the monastery asking him how he tempts friars in its different parts. “Dominic led him to the parlor and again asked how he tempted the brothers there. In reply he rolled his tongue rapidly, producing a weird confusion of sounds; and being asked what this meant, he said: ‘This place belongs entirely to me! When the friars come here to talk, I studiously tempt them to prattle all at the same time, to confuse each other with idle words, and never to wait to hear what the other is saying.’”⁴⁵

Thus, in a number of cases the devil’s naked tongue can be interpreted as a sign of talking. To understand better the meaning of this visualised talking, one should bear in mind that in other cases which concern with “righteous” characters, outside of the demonic sphere, oral speech can never be the subject of visualisation. Not only Christ, but also a talking saint cannot be depicted with the open mouth and the stuck out tongue.

⁴⁵ Jacobus de Voragine, vol. 2, 54: “Saint Dominic.”

The devil is always a mocker, an imitator of God. He imitates, among all, the word of God, but if the true *logos* is spiritual and invisible, then the devil's *pseudo-logos* is sensual, material, as well as all his parodies and fakes. Another paradox motif associated with the tongue enlarges the divergence between the false and true speech as between the material pseudo-logos and the invisible "Word." For the true speech the tongue as a physical organ is not necessary. Gregory the Great in his "Dialogues" tells the story about Bishop African, whose tongue was cut out by the enemies of Christian faith, but he continued to speak "for the defense of truth." In Gregory's opinion, there is nothing strange in it. In the Gospel it is said "In the beginning was the Word" and "All things were made by him" (John 1:1, 3). "Then why are we surprised, if the Word which created the tongue could produce words without tongue?"⁴⁶ In the "Golden Legend" the tongues of Saint Christina, Saint Leger, and Saint Longinus are cut out, but they continue to speak. St. Leger "applied himself to preaching and exhortation,"⁴⁷ as before. St. Longinus talks with demons and the governor who will execute him.⁴⁸

The showing of the tongue signifies the materialisation of the word in the devil's talking. It is the parody of the true *logos* (fig. 8), whereas the Word of God does not need a tongue as a material organ at all.⁴⁹



Fig. 8: The devil, detail of a drawing depicting the "Tree of Death" (14th c.).
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 373, fol. 5

⁴⁶ Gregorius Magnus, *Dialogorum liber* 3, 32. PL 77, cl. 293.

⁴⁷ Jacobus de Voragine, vol. 2, 219 : "Saint Leger."

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, vol. 1, 184: "Saint Longinus."

⁴⁹ Modern phraseology witnesses the same phenomenon. The material nature of speech, its connection with the tongue as a part of the body is underlined in cases when one wants to designate false speech, for example, "to wag tongues" means "to gossip about somebody."

The opposition between the true and false word involves one more important motif: audible, vocal beauty versus hideousness. In spite of the fact that the devil is a perfect rhetor, endowed with great ability to persuade, he does not possess the pure spoken completeness of the Word, the completeness of sound, breath, *pneuma*. According to the apostolic definition, pagan idols (the same as demons) are “dumb” (1 Cor 12:2). A demon is speaking in “harsh voice,”⁵⁰ his voice lacks of the most important element, the breath of life. At the same time the voice of Christ, according to Gilbert of Hoyland, is “powerful” (*valida*), it sounds like music, whereas Christ himself is like a musical instrument: “All his strings are taut and resonant (*sonorae*).”⁵¹

This vocal hideousness of the devil’s speech is most clearly depicted by an obscene motif which sometimes appears in connection with the stuck out tongue, but can appear also independently. It can be called the motif of sounding or speaking backside.

A demon’s backside sometimes produces the sound described, in particular, by Dante: “And he [one of the demons] had made a trumpet of his ass” (*Inferno* 21, 139; Mandelbaum’s translation⁵²). This motif is typical for mystery plays, where the ashamed and exposed devil leaves the stage with the appropriate sound: “Now I make my way to hell to be thrust into endless torment. For fear of fire I crack a fart.”⁵³

In the “Lives of the Fathers” by Gregory of Tours the motif of “speaking backside” made one of its first appearances. A huge snake crept into the cell of St. Caluppanus. The saint, suspecting in it the devil, delivered to him a lengthy, denouncing, exorcizing speech. The snake listened to the saint in silence and left, but “gave off an intense sound through his inferior part, and filled the cell with such a stench that he could be considered nobody else as the devil.”⁵⁴

The disgusting sound of the devil’s backside is an essence of all his arguments, their emptiness, their intrinsic “nothingness.” From the point of view of the devil’s body structure, this oral gesture brings close the mouth and the backside. The devil’s speaking mouth in a way moves to the backside, it actually transforms into the speaking backside.

An episode from the Life of St. Dominic in “The Golden Legend” shows the connection between the motifs of the speaking backside and the naked tongue. When St. Dominic was driving the devil away from a group of women

⁵⁰ This motif appears already in “The Sayings of the Desert Fathers.” A demon talks *aspera voce*. *Verba seniorum* (Vitae patrum 6) 1, 15. PL 73, cl. 996. In Dante’s depiction, Plutus has “grating voice” (*Inferno* 7, 2, Mandelbaum’s translation). Even according to Johannes Weier (16th century) the demons speak *rauce voce* (see Makhov, “Sad demonov,” 198).

⁵¹ Gillebertus de Hoilandia, *Sermones in canticum Salomonis*. *Sermo* 42, 4. PL 184, cl. 222.

⁵² *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, Book 1: *Inferno*, tr. Allen Mandelbaum (Berkeley et al., 1980), 198.

⁵³ “Fall of Lucifer” from *Ludus Coventriae*; cited in the translation by Jeffrey B. Russel, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, London, 1984), 252.

⁵⁴ Gregorius Turonensis, *Vitae patrum* 11: *De sancto Caluppane reclauso*. PL 71, cll. 1059-1060.

heretics, “they saw a hideous cat leap out from their midst. He was as big as a large dog, had huge, flaming eyes, a long, wide, bloody tongue that reached to his navel, and a short tail that stood up and exposed the filth of his hind parts ... and emitted an intolerable stench.”⁵⁵

The naked tongue and the naked backside interact in Dürer’s engraving (1493) for “The Book of the Knight” by Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry (fig. 9). The engraving is named “About a noble lady, how she stood in front of a mirror and arrayed herself, and saw in the mirror the devil who showed her his ass.”⁵⁶



Fig. 9: Albrecht Dürer, woodcut (1493) for “The Book of the Knight”
by Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry

⁵⁵ Jacobus de Voragine, vol. 2, 52 : “Saint Dominic.”

⁵⁶ Chapter 31: “I wolde ye knew all ensaumple of the lady that wolde haue alwey a quarter of a day to arraie her.” The text does not say anything about the stuck out tongue: “atte the same’ tyme and houre as she loked in a mirrour, in stede of the mirrour, the deucl turned to her his ars, the whiche was so foule and orible that for ferde she was wode and oute of her mynde, and was so sike longe.” Geoffroy de La Tour Landry, *The Book of the Knight, translated from the original French into English in the reign of Henry VI*, ed. Thomas Wright (Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1997), 43.

The motif of the naked tongue repeats here several times. The devil's open mouth and the put out tongue are reproduced in his naked ass with the tail which, in a way, duplicates the tongue. The backside, again, reflects itself in the mirror, instead of the lady's face. One can easily imagine an acoustic element of this episode, namely, the "word" of the devil to the deluded lady. One can also interpret this woodcut as a depiction of the devil's speech, which is simply shifted towards the bodily lower stratum.

These attributes of the devil, the naked tongue and the naked backside causing stench, have similar function. They reveal the mocking of the spoken word in the demonic sphere, its "re-creation" by means accessible to the devil, and, in this way, its materialisation, lowering, nullifying, emptying.

Until now, I discussed the naked tongue mainly as an attribute of the devil's physical nature, as a feature of his body structure. The bare tongue witnesses the demonic distortion of the "normal" physical organisation. The natural place for the tongue is inside the mouth, the stuck out, "wandering" tongue is the violation of the divine body order. St. Augustine wrote: "The peace of all things is the tranquility of order (*tranquilitas ordinis*)."⁵⁷ The devil "abode not in the truth" (John 8:44), which means that he "did not abide in the tranquility of order."⁵⁷ The devil's body is not "ordered" in the way the human body is. His members are constantly, unceasingly moving, roving. It is not by chance that numerous faces of the devil are often placed on his knee and elbow joints, that is, on the most unstable, restless parts of the body.

The devil's tongue violates the bodily order, it "lives without order." Father Sisoi in "The Sayings of the Fathers" (fourth-fifth century) poses a question: "In which way can we save our soul, when our tongue so often leaps forth through the open gate (*aperto ostio saepe prosiliat*)?"⁵⁸ The interior of the mouth is the home of the tongue, the mouth is the open gate. The tongue which roams outside its home resembles the devil himself, who left his "own habitation" (Jude 1:6) and is destined for eternal wanderings outside of "the tranquility of order."

The stuck out tongue as a sign of the distorted bodily order is an *attribute* of the devil, but if it has to be called a *gesture*, it should be examined not only in the system of the devil's body structure, but also in the structure of the devil's behavior, that is, it should become clear that the devil, while sticking out his tongue, follows a certain behaviour pattern.

Let me now return to the problem of the naked tongue as a gesture. For that I will have to scrutinise cases which give reasons to suppose that the devil actually gesticulates with the tongue.

Some observations on this matter were already brought up earlier. Particularly, in connection with the motif of fear it was stated that the devil and his servants do not "tease" with the tongue (as children do today), but "threat" with

⁵⁷ Augustinus. *De Civitate Dei* 19, 13. PL 41, cll. 640-641.

⁵⁸ *Verba seniorum* (Vitae patrum 7), 32. PL 73, cl. 1051.

it. But does this mean that the matter of relationship between the devil's bare tongue and the modern gesture of "teasing" is settled?

Delusion

I argue that the devil's bare tongue is linked with the modern gesture of teasing through the theme of "game-delusion," which is quite typical for demonology. The puerile teasing is a particular case of game behaviour. While sticking out the tongue, the devil also "plays a game," but in a quite special, early Christian meaning of the word.



Fig 10: Descent into Hell, England (mid-15th c.).
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce fol. 4

Let us turn to the most important one for this kind of imagery text, namely, to the above mentioned reference in the Book of Isaiah. The Latin text

says about “the sons of the sorceress:” ... *super quem lusistis, super quem dilatastis os et ejectis linguam* ... (57:4). The verb *ludere*, which is associated here with the gesture of putting the tongue out, has a complicated system of meanings: “to deride” and “to tease,” but also “to play,” “to deceive.” This is how St. Jerome in the comment to this verse deciphers the described scene: “the sons of the sorceress” are Jews – sacrilegers surrounding the Cross; they laugh at him, “spitting on his face and pulling his beard,” and they broaden and gape their mouths and stick out their tongues, “saying to him: ‘thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil’ (John 8:48), and again, ‘This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils’ (Matthew 12:24).”⁵⁹ Later this fragment came to be understood as the description of “impious” behaviour of demons themselves, which is confirmed by the depiction of Christ’s Descension into Hell, where the demon not only puts out his tongue, but also “broadens his mouth,” literally following the text of the prophet (fig. 10).

Blasphemers not only “deride” Christ, they also “tease” him, spit on his face and pull his beard. In the treatises of the Church Fathers the verbs *ludere*, *illudere* (and their derivatives) in application to the behaviour of the demons and their servants gain sometimes even more elaborate meaning, which includes the element of “the game” in a quite specific sense. One should rather speak here about “the game-delusion,” since the game of demons implies inevitably also deceit, and this deceit does not only mean lie and falsehood. In the demonic sphere the deceit as such, the lie acquires a special game element. Demons create an illusional situation (*illusio* is the derivative from the verb *illudere*), where man loses himself and the right path. In “The History of Monks” (c. 400) Macarius of Alexandria came into a church and saw that “through the whole church as if young ugly Ethiopian boys are running about” (*parvulos puerulos Aethiopes tetros*), they “jest” (*alludebant*) with monks inside, “playing with different appearances and images” (*diverso habitu et variis imaginibus ludentes*). These images (of a woman, etc.) which “the demons fashioned as if playing” (*quasi ludendo formassent*) entered the minds of monks and hindered their prayer.⁶⁰ The verbs connected with playing, *ludere* and *illudere*, are constantly repeated in this text. They signify not the plain deceit, but the deceit-illusion, which suggests play creation (*quasi ludendo*; such creation is, of course, only a parody of the divine world making) of an imaginary reality; thus, the “deluded” person diverges from the right path.

In an anonymous Life of St. Lupicinus (c. 520) a monk, when entering St. Martin’s basilica in Tours, was greeted by one of the possessed: “He is truly one of our monks ... Are you in a good health, you Dativus, our friend?” The frightened monk realised that “the devil plays with him” (*inlusum se a diabolo*) and

⁵⁹ Hieronymus, *Commentariorum in Isaiam prophetam* 16, 57. PL 24, cl. 549.

⁶⁰ The Latin version of the Greek collection, which is traditionally ascribed to Rufinus Tyran-nius: Rufinus Tyran-nius, *Historia monachorum* 29. PL 21, cl. 454.

immediately repented.⁶¹ Here the verb “to play” is the best translation of Latin *illudere*: Strictly speaking, nobody deceives the monk, he is just literally “played with.” He is frightened by understanding that the devil involved him in his game, made him his toy.

The only correct way of behaviour in this case is not to get involved in this game. Once, when relatives came to visit St. Anthony in his solitude, they were scared by thunder and voices sounding from his cell. Anthony advised them to cross themselves and not to pay attention to the noise: “Leave them [the demons] to play with themselves” (*sinite illos sibi ipsos illudere*).⁶²

Illusions created by demons can be sometimes rather whimsical and relatively harmless. In the Life of St. Pachomius demons tempt the saint with the following “performance” (*phantasma*): “For one could see how many of them, having gathered together, tied huge ropes to a tree leaf and pulled with biggest effort, standing on the right and the left side in ranks; and, encouraging each other, they so much struggled to stay firm, as if they were moving a huge stone of enormous weight.” The purpose of this performance is “if possible, to weaken his mind with laughter” (*mentem ejus, si possent, in risum forte resolverent*).⁶³

John Cassian distinguishes a special type of demons, whose main business is to provoke laughter. These demons (“common people call them fauns” [*Faunos*]), “satisfied only with laughter and delusion (*de risu tantummodo et illusionem contenti*), devote themselves rather to exhausting than to injuring.”⁶⁴

The ability to “play,” however ruinous and dangerous the demonic play is, brings demons close to children. Characteristically, in early Christian texts demons often look like children or take the appearance of children.⁶⁵ There is nothing strange in it, especially if one bears in mind that St. Augustine’s theology did not regard a child as the quintessence of innocence, but, on the contrary, considered them “dependent on the devil,” since they inherited the original sin.⁶⁶

I could not find a text where the “play” of demons would be mentioned together with their stuck out tongues. Only the starting text of the tradition can be considered as such: the verses from the book of Isaiah cited above, where the motif of “game-delusion” and of the bare tongue are clearly connected. Nevertheless, all what was already said about the play of demons makes possible to associate this play with the elements of children’s games which are present in the gesture of sticking out the tongue (in the gesture, which in some of the de-

⁶¹ *Vita S. Lupicini*. Vie des pères du Jura (Sources chrétiennes 142), ed. François Martine (Paris, 1968), 334.

⁶² Athanasius, *Vita sancti Anthonii* 13. PG 26, cl. 863.

⁶³ *Vitae patrum: Vita sancti Pachomii* 17. PL 73, cl. 240.

⁶⁴ Joannus Cassianus, *Collationes* 7, 32. PL 49, cl. 713.

⁶⁵ A demon looks like a black child, *niger scilicet puer* (Athanasius, *Vita sancti Anthonii* 6. PG 26, cll. 830-831); he appears as a twelve-years-old boy (Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 18: *Vita abbatis Nathanaeli*. PL 73, cl. 1108); as a youngster, *in habitu adolescentis* (*Vitae patrum: Vita Sancti Abrahae eremitae*. PL 73, cl. 290).

⁶⁶ *Obnoxii diabolo parvuli*. Prosper Aquitanicus, *Pro Augustino responsiones ad capitula objectionum vincentianarum* 4. PL 51, cl. 180.

scribed cases could represent open threat, lacking any game element). A demon's bare tongue can reveal the illusional game nature of the situation which he created. It can be a signal of the demonic "play" constructing the illusion which makes man to diverge from reality and truth by mocking them, and leads him to death. The naked tongue is the visual analogue of the demonic *illudere*, it indicates that the demon plays a game, but not as a child, but in a special, threatening, "fatal" manner.

There are some depictions which allow the interpretation of the devil's bare tongue precisely in this manner, as a sign of the dangerous game-delusion. In a miniature from an *Ars moriendi*, which represents the temptation with "the earthly glory," demons (two of them with stuck out tongues) offer crowns to a dying person (fig. 11). Of course, this coronation is false; it is a typical *illusio*, formed by demons as the result of play, *quasi ludendo*, and the stuck out tongue is the mark of this game-delusion.



Fig. 11: The temptation by earthly glory (15th c.).
Paris, French National Library, MS 6320Bis, fol. Bi v

In an illustration out of an edition of St. Augustine's "City of God" (end of the sixteenth century) demons with books in hands are running around the saint; one of them puts out his tongue (fig. 12). Isn't this a parody of the episode in the eighth book of the "Confessions," when God with the voice "of a boy or a girl" orders St. Augustine to take the book and to read from it: "Pick it up, read it; pick it up, read it," and St. Augustine cannot recall that children "in any kind of game (*in aliquo genere ludendi*)" say these words?⁶⁷ The demons, indeed, "pick books up," either offering them to Augustine, or pretending that they carry them out. Most probably, the demons are trying to distract Augustine from his concentrated study. It is possible that they want to make him laugh and stick out tongues indicating this "play."



Fig. 12: The fight of angels and demons around St. Augustine, woodcut from "The City of God" (c. 1486). Abbéville, Municipal Library

In a German woodcut from the fifteenth century, which depicts the pseudo-resurrection of Antichrist, a devilish bird is represented with a stuck out tongue (fig. 13). This bird is obviously a caricature of the Holy Spirit which ostensibly descends on Antichrist. The bare tongue designates the same delusive game (*ludus* transforms into *illusio*) which the devil and his servants play with man. It is the sign that this "pseudo-miracle" is only illusion.

⁶⁷ Augustinus, *Confessiones* 8, 12.



Fig. 13: The pseudo-resurrection of Antichrist, “The Book on Antichrist” (Germany, 15th c.)

The principle of the game-delusion, *ludus-illusio*, regulates the relation of the devil towards man, but it works also the other way round: to defy the delusion. Man has to respond to the devil with the same game-delusion. The definition of this mutuality, reciprocity of delusion is found in “The History of Monks,” where one of the monks tells to the rich: “Those who follow God delude the world (make game of the world – *illudunt mundo*). But we feel sorry for you, since you are, on the contrary, deluded by the world (the world makes game of you — *vobis econtrario mundus illudit*).”⁶⁸

In this counter-play of two delusions the victory belongs, of course, to God and the righteous. The idea that the devil who regards himself to be a lucky deceiver of the entire world, in fact, had been deceived long ago, became a commonplace. He is deceived, first of all, by the Son of God. The Church Fathers interpret the whole conduct of Christ in his fight with Satan as a successful deceiving tactic, as *pia fraus*, pious fraud, according to Ambrose of Milan. The devil tempts Christ in the desert mainly for the sake of knowing, if he is God or human. But Christ does not betray to the devil his divine nature until the very end⁶⁹ and makes him murder an innocent man, to whom the devil did not have

⁶⁸ Rufinus Tyrannius, *Historia monachorum* 29. PL 21, cl. 455.

⁶⁹ Thus, according to Ambrose’s logic, Christ suffered hunger in the desert (what neither Moses, nor Eliah allowed themselves) to show human weakness and to disorientate the devil: “The hunger of God is the pious fraud” (Ambrosius Mediolanensis, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* 4, 16. PL 15, cl. 1617). According to Leo the Great, the devil, being deceived by the extreme humility and submissiveness of Christ, incited Jews to crucify him. He did not believe in Christ’s divine nature, in accordance with the words of the apos-

any rights. In this way, the devil violates divine *justitia* and loses rights to mankind. It appears that the devil deceived also himself. St. Augustine asks: “How can the deceiver of man win, if he himself is already deceived?”⁷⁰

A saint, while imitating Christ, also deceives the devil, “plays him up.” Athanasius characterises the first victories of young St. Anthony: “He who deemed himself to be similar to God, is now deluded by a youth” (*deludebatur* – made game of, mocked).⁷¹

Moreover, there emerges the idea that the devil is “bound” by God precisely for us to “play” with him. The devil “is tied up by God as a sparrow, so that we can make game of him (*ut illudatur a nobis*).”⁷² Here Anthony alludes to the verse of the Book of Job: “Wilt thou play with him [Leviathan] as with a bird? Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?” (Job 41:5).

The devil is the Leviathan who became “a tied sparrow” as the result of the divine game-delusion. In St. Augustine’s opinion, Psalm 104 also refers to this Leviathan. In King James’ Bible, verse 26 reads: “There is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein [in the sea],” but in the *Vulgata Clementina* (Psalm 103) it was *draco iste quem formasti ad illudendum ei*, which can be interpreted as “the dragon whom you created to play with him (delude him).” This is how this verse was understood by St. Augustine. The dragon is “our ancient enemy,”⁷³ “in this way he is placed, so that he would be fooled (*ut illudatur*), to the position he is ordered ... You think his seat is great, because you do not know the seats of angels, where he fell from; what you see as his boasting is his condemnation.”⁷⁴ The grandeur and power of the “dragon”–Leviathan, the vastness of his realm are illusory. For him his earthly existence is only humiliation and imprisonment. Such is the *illusio*, created this time by God himself.

Another metaphor for the devil’s “confinement,” his enslavement as the result of the game which he lost, is contained in the sentence from the Book of Job: “Canst thou draw out Leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?” (Job 41:1). Here the motif of the devil’s tongue appears for the last time: The devil–Leviathan stuck out his tongue, and he is grasped by it.

The image of the devil–Leviathan seized by the tongue develops into an allegory which includes the entire history of the game-delusion between God and the devil. This allegory is visualised in the miniature of “The Garden of Delights” by abbe Herrade (twelfth century, fig. 14), and the verbal explanation

tle: “for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor 2:8) (Leo Magnus, *Sermo* 69, 4. PL 54, cl. 378).

⁷⁰ Augustinus, *Contra adversarium legis et prophetarum* 1, 15. PL 42, cl. 615.

⁷¹ Athanasius, *Vita sancti Anthonii* 5. PG 26, cll. 847, 849.

⁷² *Vita Sancti Anthonii* 24, PG 26, cll. 879, 880.

⁷³ Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 103, 7. Corpus Christianorum, series latina 40 (Turnhout, 1990): 1526; also PL 37, cl. 1382.

⁷⁴ Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 103, 9. *Ibidem*, 1529; also PL 37, cl. 1385.

can be found in works of many Church Fathers. In particular, Honorius of Autun stated: “By the sea, this time is meant ... Here the devil swims around like Leviathan and devours multitudes of souls. Now God, residing in heaven, threw the hook into the sea, when he sent his Son in this world to seize Leviathan. A fishing-line for this hook is the genealogy of Christ ... A sharp point is the divine nature of Christ, and bait is his humanity. Next, a stick on which the fishing-line is held to reach waves is the sacred cross on which Christ is hanged to deceive the devil.”⁷⁵ The devil smells the human body and wants to catch Christ, but the iron hook tears his mouth up.

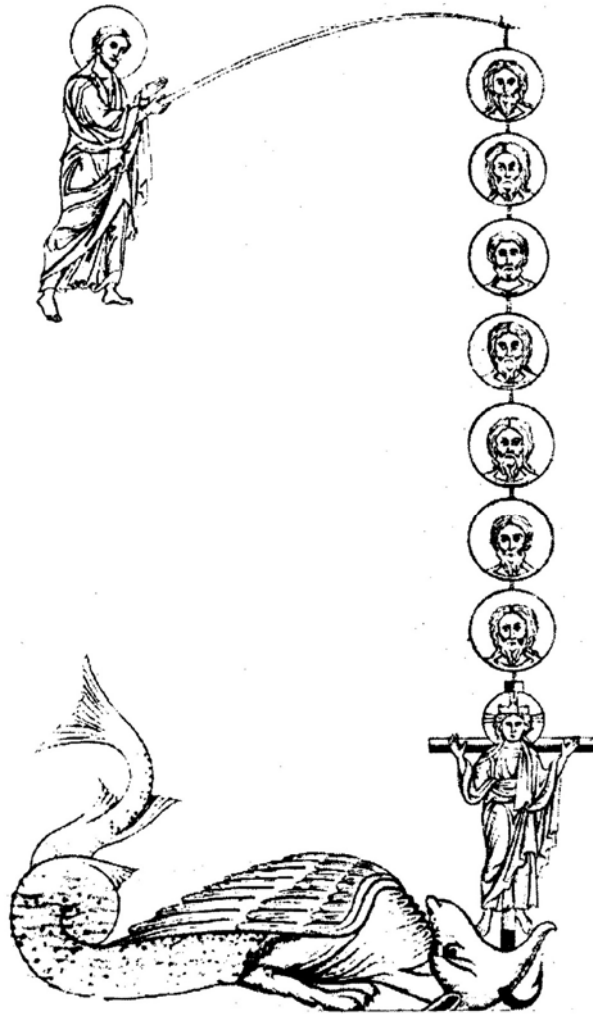


Fig. 14: The catching of Leviathan, from *Hortus deliciarum* of abbess Herrade (12th c.)

The tongue of the devil, although he would threaten by it and would bare it as a weapon, is torn by the “iron” of the divine “hook.” In spite of all, its claims to be a sword, that is, the mortal weapon, the devil’s tongue remains simple flesh, the only thing which the devil dominates. The sinful tongue, although it

⁷⁵ Honorius Augustodunensis, *Speculum ecclesiae: De paschali die*. PL 172, cl. 937. See the similar discussion on the devil–Leviathan caught on the hook of God in: Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia* 23, 9. PL 76, cll. 682-683; Isidorus, episcopus Hispalensis, *Sententiarum* 1, 14. PL 83, cll. 567-568.

can wound, remains vulnerable. It is not by chance that tongues of sinners are often afflicted on the depictions of hell torments.⁷⁶

For this reason, the naked tongue of the devil is not frightful for the just. Paulinus of Nola says about the devil's servants, "they that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches" (Psalm 49:6): "Let them sharpen arms of their teeth against us, and... to belch out arrows of words with their snaky tongues; instead of us, God will respond to them."⁷⁷

But how will God respond to such impious sticking out of the tongue? The gesture is reciprocal, and God can also put out his tongue. Moreover, the tongue of God is a real sword, being unsheathed, it strikes to death. John describes the strength of this "sword" coming from the mouth of God in the Revelation, in the vision of "one like unto the Son of man" (Revelation 1:13): "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword" (Revelation 1:16).

One has already recognised that the tongue is ambiguous, it can denote the devil as well as the apostle. Now one sees that not only the devil but also God can stick the tongue out. But the naked tongue of God, the most dreadful of all stuck out tongues, is not a simple tongue. The final hallowing of the tongue, of the bare tongue, implies also its definitive transformation. The bare tongue of God is sacred, but it ceased to be the actual tongue, it became *something else*, namely, the sword, the invincible sword. Then, from the idea that it is not the soft and weak tongue which corresponds to the true Word, but another material organ of speech, the motif of replacement of the "natural" tongue with the true, better one emerges. Father Equitius, the character of the "Dialogues," explains how he became a preacher: One night a beautiful youth (obviously, an angel) inserted into his tongue a medical instrument, a lancet (*medicinale ferramentum, id est phlebotomum*). As the Father says, "since that day, even if I would like to, I cannot keep silence about God."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Already in the Life of St. Macarius of Rome monks see in hell "a woman with her hair undone, whose body is wrapped by a huge dreadful dragon. And whenever she wanted to open her mouth to speak, the dragon, immediately thrusting his head into her mouth, bit her tongue." *Vitae patrum: Vita sancti Macarii Romani* 9. PL 73, cl. 418-419.

⁷⁷ Paulinus Nolanus, *Epistola* 37. PL 61, cl. 360.

⁷⁸ Gregorius Magnus, *Dialogorum liber* 1, 4. PL 77, cl. 169. This motif of "the replaced tongue," which appeared in the New Testament, survived through the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century and reborn in Pushkin's "Prophet," where the symbolic meaning of the tongue is again enlivened as intensely ambiguous, both demonic and divine: The tongue given to man from birth, with "all its lies and idle rust," is replaced by "a subtle serpent's forked sting," which becomes a real tool of the divine "Word." However, Pushkin certainly remembered that "the serpent," who "was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Genesis 3:1), by that very sting had ruined the world! At the same time, a medieval theologian would probably have understood Pushkin quite well. The salvation can only "abolish" death when it goes by its roads, uses its weapons. Virgin Eve ruined the world, Virgin Mary should save it, according to Irenaeus ("Against Heresies," III, 22, 4). In the same sense death wins over death in Crucifixion. "The sting," which had ruined mankind, will now save it.

The tongue as a bodily member which embodies different spiritual and material functions, acquires its final truth, innocence and unconquerable power at the moment when it ceases to be itself. But in fact, of course, the visible transformation of the tongue into something else, hard and unbending, is only a medieval metaphor of its *inner* purifying. The tongue-“sword” and the tongue-“lancet” are touchable symbols of the miraculous transformation which the tongue undergoes when, still being itself, still being part of the human body, it ceases to be a mortal weapon and becomes the tool of salvation.

Besprechung

Evamaria Engel und Frank-Dietrich Jakob, *Städtisches Leben im Mittelalter. Schriftquellen und Bildzeugnisse*. Köln, Weimar und Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2006, ISBN 978-3-412-20205-7 / ISBN 3-412-20205-3, VIII, 465 S., 130 SW-Ill., Gb. Euro 34,90, sFr 60,40.

Die vorliegende Publikation repräsentiert eine umfangreiche Quellensammlung zur Geschichte der deutschen Stadt im Mittelalter. Sie ist als eine Art von Fortsetzung zu dem 2003 im gleichen Verlag erschienenen Buch von Siegfried Epperlein (*Bäuerliches Leben im Mittelalter. Schriftquellen und Bildzeugnisse*) anzusehen. Das Quellenwerk setzt ein mit dem 12. Jahrhundert, sein Schwerpunkt ist jedoch eindeutig im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert zu erkennen.

Die Verfasser stammen aus der Historikerschule der ehemaligen DDR und hatten sich bereits vor der ‚Wende‘ als im Westen wie im Osten anerkannte Spezialisten zur vorgelegten Thematik ausgewiesen. Evamaria Engel konzentrierte sich dabei immer auf sozial- und wirtschaftsgeschichtliche Fragestellungen, während Frank-Dietrich Jacob als besonderer Fachmann zur Ikonographie der Stadt hervortrat. Die beiden Autoren haben nun ihre reiche Erfahrungen und Kenntnisse dazu verwendet, um eine Publikation zu schaffen, die auch interessierte Laien ansprechen kann und wohl vor allem im universitären Unterricht und seiner Auseinandersetzung mit dem mittelalterlichen Stadtleben herangezogen werden sollte. Für den Schwerpunkt der dargebotenen schriftlichen Quellen, die immer in neuhochdeutscher Übersetzung vorgelegt werden, zeichnet Evamaria Engel verantwortlich. Die Auswahl und Kommentierung des Bildmaterials nahm vorrangig Frank-Dietrich Jacob vor.

Das Werk ist in vier Hauptkapitel gegliedert. Der erste Teil widmet sich Bürgerrecht und Bürgerpflicht sowie den Problemkreisen der Ratspolitik und des städtischen Alltags. Hinsichtlich jenes Bereiches des täglichen Lebens wird besonderer Bezug auf Fragen der Umwelt, von Wohnqualität, Erziehung und der Ausformungen von Frömmigkeit genommen. Allerdings ist anzumerken, dass auch mehrere andere, nicht dezidiert als solche bezeichnete Unterkapitel der Veröffentlichung als wichtige Bereiche einer Alltagsgeschichte des spätmittelalterlichen urbanen Raumes anzuerkennen sind und Alltag damit natürlich breiter zu sehen ist. Das zweite Kapitel beschäftigt sich vor allem mit Handel und Händlern, während sich der dritte Abschnitt auf den Handwerkerstand konzentriert. Abschließend werden Quellen vorgestellt, die sich auf das Leben städti-

scher Unterschichten beziehen: Die Autoren widmen sich dabei „den ‚Letzten‘ in der Stadt ..., den am untersten Rand der städtischen Gesellschaft lebenden Individuen und Gruppen“ (S. 339).

Das Buch repräsentiert nicht nur eine Quellensammlung, sondern bietet auch mehr oder weniger umfangreiche einführende Darstellungen und individuelle Kommentare. Diese fungieren als Erläuterungen zu den jeweiligen Unterkapiteln und sollen dem Leser auch als Interpretationshilfen einzelne Quelleninhalte und deren Bedeutung näher bringen. Die allgemeine Informationsdichte ist groß und vermittelt umfangreiche und verschiedenartigste Mitteilungen zum städtischen Leben und den darauf bezogenen Diskursen, sowie zu deren Perzeption und Performanz.

Eine Quellensammlung macht es natürlich immer zu einem recht schwierigen Unterfangen, die Aufeinanderfolge und Zusammenstellung des dargebotenen Materials systematisch zu organisieren und zugänglich zu machen. Dies ist hier jedoch recht gut gelungen. Allerdings würde ein detaillierteres, auch auf die einzelnen präsentierten Quellen bezogenes Inhaltsverzeichnis die Benützung des Werkes sehr erleichtern. Ohne dem Vorliegen eines solchen würde man wohl zum Beispiel kaum erwarten, im Unterkapitel „Wasserversorgung, Abwasserbeseitigung, Müllentsorgung und Umweltschutz“ eine Quelle zur „Schweinehaltung sogar in der Wohnung“ zu finden, gefolgt von einem Beleg zu „Schweine(n) zu Ehren des hl. Antonius in Lübecks Straßen“, gefolgt von „Ein Schwein hat ein Ohr abgebissen“ und von Anordnungen zum Umgang mit Tierkadavern (S. 83 f.). Darüber hinaus hätte die Vielzahl der in der Quellensammlung auftretenden Bereiche und Objekte städtischer Lebenswelten natürlich auch die Bereitstellung eines Sachregisters sehr wünschenswert gemacht. Dass dies unterlassen wurde, schmälert die Freude an der Publikation ein wenig, was als Anregung und Bitte für eine eventuelle zweite Auflage verstanden werden soll.

Die Autoren sind in besonderem Maße aufzuzeigen bestrebt, dass Bild-, Schrift- und Originalzeugnisse einander vielschichtig ergänzen: in ihren Aussagen genauso wie in den Möglichkeiten und Schwierigkeiten ihrer Verwendung und vergleichenden Interpretation.

Ein umfangreiches Verzeichnis der verwendeten Quellenwerke und eine recht umfassende Literaturlauswahl beschließen die Publikation und eröffnen Möglichkeiten zu weiterer und intensiver Auseinandersetzung mit spätmittelalterlicher Stadtkultur. Insgesamt kann das Werk als ein für die mittelalterliche deutsche Stadtgeschichte seit langem erwünschtes und sehr willkommenes Quellenbuch angesehen werden, und somit allgemein als Vertreter eines Typs von Veröffentlichungen, die in den deutschsprachigen Ländern etwa im Vergleich zum anglophonen Raum noch immer als recht stiefmütterlich behandelt angesehen werden müssen.

Gerhard Jaritz (Krems und Budapest)

MEDIUM AEVUM
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53

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HERAUSGEGEBEN
VON GERHARD JARITZ

GEDRUCKT MIT UNTERSTÜTZUNG DER KULTURABTEILUNG
DES AMTES DER NIEDERÖSTERREICHISCHEN LANDESREGIERUNG

niederösterreich kultur

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Vorwort

Das vorliegende Heft von *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* enthält drei wichtige Beiträge, die sich mit sehr unterschiedlichen Bereichen von Alltag und materieller Kultur des Mittelalters auseinandersetzen. Dolly Jørgensen beschäftigt sich mit Latrinen in Nordeuropa und den darauf bezogenen rechtlichen Komponenten und Bestimmungen im städtischen Raum.

Gertrud Blaschitz widmet sich in ihrem Beitrag zum Pferd in der mittelhochdeutschen Literatur erneut einem Interessensschwerpunkt, der bereits im Jahre 2005 in Heft 52 und Sonderband XVI (*Animal Diversities*) unserer Reihe Berücksichtigung fand. Ihr Aufsatz führt weiter in die relevante Sphäre interdisziplinärer Ansätze zur mittelalterlichen „Zoologie“.

Schließlich untersucht Aleksandr Evgenevich Makhov das ikonografische Motiv des zungezeigenden Teufels und gelangt dabei zu wichtigen neuen Ergebnissen bezüglich spätmittelalterlicher visueller Kultur. Wir freuen uns hier im besonderen darüber, dass unsere guten Kontakte zum bedeutenden russischen Jahrbuch *Одиссей. Человек в истории* die Übernahme des Artikels möglich gemacht haben. Wir möchten uns wieder vor allem bei Svetlana Luchitskaya (Moskau) sehr herzlich dafür bedanken, dass sie die Übersetzung und Aufnahme von Beiträgen aus dem Jahrbuch unterstützt und zu verwirklichen hilft. Das nächste Heft von *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* wird neuerlich drei Beiträge aus der russischen Forschung enthalten, die sich vor allem der mittelalterlichen Festkultur widmen werden.

Gerhard Jaritz
Herausgeber