

The Moral Ambiguity of the Medieval Feast

MARY FRANCES ZAMBRENO

Moral ambiguity is integral to the medieval concept of the feast. On the one hand, the feast is a ceremonial affirmation of the stability of society. It establishes the power and position of the king or lord who gives it, and maintains his fitness to rule. On the other hand, the feast is an opportunity for excess and self-indulgence. In several illustrated manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, the vice Luxuria is represented presiding over a banquet. The text describes the approaching Luxuria as "languidly belching after a night-long feast" (*pervigilem ructabat marcida cenam*; *Psychomachia*, 316), but her debauchery is not part of the narrative.¹ That this "off-stage" feast should be depicted by the poem's illustrators seems to me to indicate the grip which the abuse of the feast has on the medieval imagination. I propose, therefore, to examine the nature and extent of this abuse. What precisely constitutes immorality at the feast? Why should a positive, joyous, and legitimate celebration be so explicitly associated with vice and vicious behavior? I believe that considering these questions will tell us a great deal about the medieval attitude towards food and dining in general.

I first noted the ambiguity of the concept of the feast through an examination of the stability of its conventions. In whatever manner the medieval feast is represented, the meal itself seldom changes significantly. There are always feasters, one of whom generally dominates the others; there is a richly draped table, lavish food and drink, the necessary utensils, and specialized servers and entertainment. Any representation which does not include several of these elements cannot properly be called a feast.² They indicate that the meal so depicted or described is more than people eating; it is an event recognized by participants and observers as distinct from the daily round. And yet, at the heart of this occasion is the physical act of eating, a daily necessity which must inevitably remind feasters of their own mortality. In some senses, the feast is a

¹ See Prudentius, trans. H. J. Thomson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949), I, 300-301. All references to the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius use this edition.

² For a more complete discussion of the feast and its ceremony, and of several other issues considered briefly in this essay, see my dissertation, "The Image of the Feast: Content and Conventions of the Medieval Feast-Scene", University of Chicago (in progress).

ritual made to embellish and contain that necessity – even to make a pleasure out of weakness.

To this extent, all feasts are similar. What, then, makes some vicious and others virtuous? In spite of didactic diatribes against gluttony, neither the abundance nor the richness of food serves as sufficient to make a feast immoral.³ All medieval feasts were lavish, by definition. Each had three courses, with each course serving one or more pottages, several meats or fish, and various vegetable or egg dishes. Wine and bread accompanied each course. A fourth dessert course of sweets, fruit, and spiced wine was often offered as well. The coronation feast of Henry IV, described by Froissart, served fifty dishes, and white and red wine flowed from an elaborate table fountain. Marvellous “table fountains” for wine were evidently a common conceit, especially in France and Burgundy.⁴ They surface in English literature at Arthur’s New Year’s feast in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, where fountains of fine gold and clear silver offer feasters not merely white and red but seven different kinds of wine (*Alliterative Morte*, 200–205).⁵ Arthur’s feast itself has twenty-one dishes, but its lavishness is praised even by his enemies:

There ne es prelatte, ne pape, ne prynce in þis erthe,
That he ne myghte be wele payede of þees pryce metes.

(*Alliterative Morte*, 229–230)

In short, there is little that is modest or humble about the medieval feast; its richness is a cause for marvelling and admiration. The potential viciousness of the concept must therefore stem from something else. But what?

To answer that question, I return to the illustrations of Prudentius with which I began. We have several examples of Luxuria’s feast, from both continental and English manuscripts. I note in particular Brussels 9968–72, Paris

³ An example of the condemnation of gluttony may be found in Chaucer’s Parson’s Tale. See *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), 316–320. References to Chaucer throughout use this edition.

⁴ See Henry L. Harder, “Feasting in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*”, *Chivalric Literature*, ed. Larry D. Benson and John Leyerle (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1980), 52; and *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Mary Hamel (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1984), 261–262. For the precise citation, see *Oeuvres de Froissart*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels: Devaux et Cie, 1871), XVI, 208. I also note the English version of Froissart’s *Chronicles*, selected and trans. George Brerton (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978), 465.

⁵ References to the text of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* use throughout *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Valerie Krishna (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., Inc., Publishers, 1976).

8085, the manuscript called the Codex Burmannorum, the Codex Vossianus, London 24199, and Corpus Christi 23.⁶ All of these represent Luxuria's feast as charming. The text speaks of vice, but were these illustrations taken out of context it would be difficult to determine if they depicted scenes of debauchery or of celebration. Our clearest clue to the presence of vice is in the two English manuscripts, London 24199 and Corpus Christi 23. Both manuscripts are Anglo-Saxon and very similar in style, with elegant feasters and detailed furnishings. In both, there are puddles of spilled wine on the tables. Luxuria in these English manuscripts presides over not a lavish feast, but a wasteful one. The carelessness of the diners provides us with our first real distinction between the virtuous feast and the vicious, for the watchword at the virtuous feast is control.

In fact, the medieval feast is more than merely controlled; it is so organized that we might almost call it regimented. Certain foods are to be cooked in certain seasons and served in certain combinations; to do otherwise is not only incorrect, but unhealthy. Medieval health handbooks speak at length of the dangers of careless indulgence in particular foods. Beets, for example, set the blood on fire unless they are served with vinegar and mustard; and chestnuts cause headaches if they are not cooked in water before being eaten.⁷ Wine, especially red wine, causes dizziness and loss of memory when taken to excess.⁸ Wine is also and more seriously associated with lust and rage, of which we have several literary instances. The demon in the Anglo-Saxon *Juliana*, to mention one such instance, serves strife out of a goblet to encourage men to kill each other in the hall (*Juliana*, 486-490).⁹ In the *Queste del Saint Graal*, to name another, Perceval is tempted to lechery immediately after eating well and

⁶ The manuscripts in question date from approximately the tenth and eleventh centuries, though precise dating is of course not the focus of this study. I refer those interested to Helen Woodruff, *The Illustrated Manuscripts of Prudentius* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1930); and to Richard Stettiner, *Die illustrierten Prudentiushandschriften* (Berlin: Druck von J.S. Preuss, 1895) and *Die illustrierten Prudentiushandschriften, Tafelband* (Berlin: G. Grote, 1905).

⁷ See *The Medieval Health Handbook: Tacuinum Sanitatis*, ed. Luisa Cogliati Arana, trans. and adapted by Oscar Ratti and Adele Westbrook (New York: George Braziller, 1976), Color Plates 4 and 5.

⁸ A circumstance which I do not find particularly surprising. See *The Four Seasons of the House of Cerruti*, trans. Judith Spencer (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1984), 96-97.

⁹ References to the Anglo-Saxon *Juliana* use *The Exeter-Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936). I note also the English translation provided in S. A. J. Bradley, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1982).

drinking strong wine. The *Queste's* author excuses Perceval's weakness on the grounds that the young knight was not accustomed to such a potent vintage, since wine was rare in Britain "in those days", but the principle is unchanged.¹⁰ In addition, Chaucer's Pardoner explicitly links the fires of lechery with both gluttony and drunkenness (Pardoner's Tale, 483-484; 498-499). Food and drink at the feast must be lavish but appropriate; there is no fault in abundance, only in carelessness.

Service and manners are equally well-organized. A feast requires many servants, among them a butler, carvers, cup-bearers, basin-holders, and an almoner. Each has his own specific function to fulfill according to the medieval books of nurture.¹¹ Food is served in measured portions, and leftovers are gathered up by the almoner and given to poor.¹² The behavior and duties of the diners are also specific. The feast-giver, the king or ranking lord, rules the feast. He eats first and best, and all present defer to him. His role is to govern others by wise example. The feast is his showcase, and his function is to be the center of it, to demonstrate how worthy he is as both lord and feast-giver. His guests, in turn, predicate their actions upon his. They listen when he speaks, drink after he does, and refrain from swearing, lying, gorging, drunkenness, tale-telling, and scratching the dogs.¹³ All of these things and more earn praise for the dinner-guest; his manners demonstrate his courtesy and, by extension, his virtue. Even a minor deviation is shameful. When the feast follows a set, acceptable pattern, it is a virtuous celebration; when it varies from that pattern by so much as a cup of spilled wine, it becomes vicious.

The loss of control understandably manifests itself first and most importantly in the behavior of the ranking lord. In the description of Belshazzar's

¹⁰ See *La Queste Del Saint Graal*, ed. Albert Pauphilet (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1923), 108-109. References to the *Queste* throughout use this edition. I note also the English translation, *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, trans. P. M. Matarasso (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1969).

¹¹ For several examples of medieval books of nurture, see Frederick J. Furnivall, ed., *The Babees Book* (London: For the Early English Text Society by N. Trübner & Co., 1868; rpt. New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1969).

¹² See *A Collection of Ordinances for the Government of the Royal Household* (London: Printed for the Society of Antiquaries by John Nichols, 1790), 89-90.

¹³ For examples of medieval courtesy books, see again Furnivall. Jonathan Nicholls argues in favor of a distinction between these works, aimed at members of the nobility, and the books of nurture, intended to instruct servants. However, he concludes, and I agree, that all such works are related and together demonstrate the importance of outward behavior and organization at a medieval feast. See his *The Matter of Courtesy: Medieval Courtesy Books and the Gawain-poet* (Woodridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 1985), 7-18.

feast in the Middle English poem *Cleanness*, it is the king whose actions break decorum.¹⁴ Belshazzar, his heart warmed by wine (*Cleanness*, 1420), is the one who conceives of using sacred temple vessels at his very secular feast.¹⁵ His announced motive in so doing is to demonstrate his liberality to the dissolute ladies of his court:

Bryng hem [the vessels] now to my borde, of beuerage hem fylles,
 Let þise ladyes of hem lape – I luf hem in hert;
 þat schall I courtaysly kyþe, and þay schin knawe soon,
 þer is no bounté in burne lyk Baltazar þewes.

(*Cleanness*, 1433–1436)

Validation of a lord's magnificence and generosity is, of course, one of the purposes of a feast; it is for these very qualities that the Arthur of the *Alliterative Morte* is praised. However, Belshazzar's generosity is suspect. In using temple vessels as table service, he claims an excellence which is not rightfully his by appropriating goods which are not rightfully his, and his feast, from being rich, becomes excessive and vulgar – even vicious. As the handwriting on the wall will soon make clear, everyone who follows Belshazzar's example is equally at fault.

Even more relevant is the behavior of Holofernes in the Anglo-Saxon *Judith*.¹⁶ The poet does not change events in the Biblical story unduly, but he does stress the feast and Holofernes' governing of it as contributing to the lord's downfall. In the traditional account, Holofernes' drinking is exceptional behavior for him, but the Anglo-Saxon poet makes it seem customary and a part of this feast-giver's normal wildness.¹⁷ The feast is a perversion of a legitimate celebration on several levels. To review, Holofernes prepares his mighty banquet to celebrate his victory over the people of Bethulia, and commands all of his noblest thanes to attend. At the feast, bowls and cups and tankards

¹⁴ See Elizabeth B. Keiser, "The festive decorum of *Cleanness*", *Chivalric Literature*, ed. Larry D. Benson and John Leyerle (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1980), 72–73.

¹⁵ All references to the works of the Gawain-poet (specifically to *Cleanness* and to *Gawain and the Green Knight*) use *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

¹⁶ References to the Anglo-Saxon *Judith* use *Beowulf and Judith*, ed. Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953). I note also the English translation provided in Richard Hamer, trans., *A Choice of Anglo-Saxon Verse* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1970).

¹⁷ See Hugh Magennis, "Adaption of Biblical Detail in the Old English 'Judith': The Feast Scene", *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 84 (1983), 332–333.

of strong drink are carried around to the men. Their lord, "in festive mood", laughs and roars exultantly. More, he encourages his men to overindulge, as he does:

... se stiþmoda [Holofernes] styrnde and gylede,
modig ond medugal, manode geneahhe
bencsittende þæt hi gebærdon wel.
Swa se inwidda ofer ealne dæg
dryhtguman sine drencte mid wine,
swiþmod since brytta, oþþæt hie on swiman lagon,
oferdrencte his duguþe ealle, swylce hie wæron deaþe geslegene,
agotene goda gehwylces.

(*Judith*, 25–32)

Though his men do not know it yet, both they and their lord are already dead, in vice if in no other way. Holofernes' debauchery leads to his assault on Judith and to his own death, though in this version of the story his vice seems to be as much drunkenness as lust.¹⁸ More significantly, Holofernes' example and encouragement lead his men to be first drunk and then unready when attacked the next morning. They are destroyed because they obey their leader's will and copy his excess. In Prudentius, the vice *Luxuria* is herself a leader in battle. She tempts men to sin and death by scattering sweet flowers before them and by dazzling them with wealth (*Psychomachia*, 321–339); for a moment, she even succeeds in seducing the virtues who oppose her:

et iam cuncta acies in deditiones amorem
sponte sua versis transibat perfida signis
Luxuriae servire volens dominaeque fluentis
iura pati et laxa ganearum lege teneri.

(*Psychomachia*, 340–343)

As feast-giver in the illustrations, her importance and leadership are stressed by the position and size of the figure. The resemblance to Holofernes is instructive: when the lord of the feast counsels lack of control, as Holofernes does, he is acting as the representative of *Luxuria*.

The relationship between this vice and loss of control is only the beginning, however. *Luxuria* is frequently translated as lust, but in point of fact she is all wasteful, excessive, sensual behavior. Her direct opposite among the vices is *Avaritia* – Avarice, the desire to possess goods for their own sake and

¹⁸ In the *Psychomachia*, in contrast, Judith is an emblem of chastity. The focus in the Anglo-Saxon poem differs slightly in that it concentrates on temperance.

not for use. Both of these vices are often linked in medieval imagery.¹⁹ In the *Psychomachia*, Avaritia and Luxuria are the only two of the original vices to threaten the virtues seriously. Avaritia gathers the wealth which Luxuria has tossed aside and nearly deceives the virtues into following her greedy example (*Psychomachia*, 454-571). It seems that in avoiding Luxuria, one falls into the traps of Avarice, and vice versa. A wastrel is also prone to greed, while a miser enjoys excess (though not sharing). Chaucer's Pardoner declares that the theme of his sermon is "alwey oon, and evere was -/ *Radix malorum est Cupiditas*" (Pardoner's Prologue, 333-334), but he begins his Tale with exhortations against lechery, gluttony, drunkenness, and gambling - all forms of excess associated more with Luxuria than Avaritia. The three young men whose story he tells do eventually die because of their greed, but they begin in wastefulness, and even their greed is partially motivated by the desire to possess enough gold to fulfill all their pleasures (Pardoner's Tale, 833). Most interesting, though, is the fact that both of these sins demonstrate a loss of control over material things, over the needs and desires of the body. Such a loss of control is not only a component of Luxuria. It is in the nature of vice, perhaps of all vices, so that carelessness at the feast immediately creates a vicious feast. The motives may vary; the cause and consequences are the same.

We have, then, vice at the feast directly resulting from loss of control over the feast. This connection, however, is complicated by feasts which are not vicious, at least not overtly. The excessive feasts which I have described so far all seem to end in death or at least in bloodshed; but so do some apparently virtuous feasts. In the *Alliterative Morte*, for example, Arthur's feast is a prelude to war, as is William of Normandy's great feast in the Bayeux Tapestry just before the Battle of Hastings.²⁰ That these feasts precede victories does not invalidate the violence of the conflicts which follow them. Hrothgar's feast in *Beowulf* is not excessive, yet it is marred by the night-attack of Grendel's mother, as many earlier nights of celebration were darkened by Grendel himself.²¹ The feast in the *Queste del Saint Graal* does not end in war, but the quest to which the knights pledge themselves at it certainly means death and dishonor for many of them. In the *Stanzaic Morte Arthur*, as in its French

¹⁹ Adolf Katzenellenbogen calls Avaritia and Luxuria together "the most dangerous embodiments of sybaritism"; see his *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art*, trans. Alan J. P. Crick (London: The Warburg Institute, 1939), 2.

²⁰ For consideration of the Bayeux Tapestry, see Frank Stenton, *The Bayeux Tapestry: A Comprehensive Survey*, 2nd edition (London: Phaidon Press, Ltd., 1965).

²¹ See *Beowulf and Judith*, ed. Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953). I note also *Beowulf: The Donaldson Translation*, ed. Joseph F. Tusso (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975).

source, Guenevere presides at a feast which literally results in murder, when she innocently hands a poisoned apple to a knight who is dining with her (*Stanzaic Morte*, 834–855).²² At none of these meals (except perhaps Guenevere's) is there any obvious loss of control, yet they are hardly tame or peaceful occasions. Does the fact that all apparently lead to or end in strife mean that there is something inherently wrong with the concept of the feast? I doubt it, but this association with conflict has far-ranging implications for our discussion. The feast, though a moment of pleasure and joyous satisfaction, also seems to be a moment of danger. Inevitably, at all feasts, there is some risk of injury.

To consider the meaning of that risk, we must return to the virtuous feast. It is, as I have demonstrated, characterized by control and restraint. However, the control does not automatically prevent disaster; it merely makes disaster less likely. Eating remains a necessity; and the temptation for us here is to see the feast as unnecessary, as a kind of ostentatious luxury. But the Last Supper is also a feast. It too centers around the act of eating, as does its recreation in the Eucharist. At the Last Supper, the feast directly nourishes the soul which is contained in the body; in this way, it extends our understanding of eating and the feast until both become necessities. To come to terms with the image of the Last Supper is beyond the scope of this essay. Nonetheless, a brief exploration into the medieval interpretation of a single Biblical feast, particularly of a Gospel feast, may offer us at least some insight into the significance of such feasts. As my example, I choose the exegesis of the Marriage at Cana (John 2:1–12) in the *Glossa Ordinaria*. The *Glossa Ordinaria* suits our needs here because of its compact selection of various authorities, and because of its status as the first widely used commentary on the whole text of the Bible.²³ The Marriage at Cana is a good feast to consider because it looks forward to the Last Supper (without being as complex as that meal) and because of the nature of the commentary on it.²⁴

The miracle at Cana is one of transformation: water becomes wine, as wine will later be transformed into blood at the Last Supper. This change is central

²² References to the *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* throughout use *Le Morte Arthur: A Critical Edition*, ed. P. F. Hissiger (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975). For the French version of the episode, see *Le Morte le Roi Artu*, ed. Jean Frappier (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1954), 75–78. All references to this work use Frappier.

²³ For a discussion of the *Glossa Ordinaria* and its position in medieval Biblical exegesis, see Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), 46–66.

²⁴ For specific references to the exegesis of the Marriage at Cana in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, see the *Biblia cum glossa ordinaria* (Strassburg: Adolf Rusch, ca. 1480). This printing does not include page numbers.

to the exegesis of the marriage-feast. That interpretation has the traditional four levels. First is of course the literal: water turns into wine. Second is the moral: by attending a marriage, Jesus legitimates the sacrament of marriage, while by doing his Mother's bidding (and turning the water into wine) he shows that he does not deny her. Third is the allegorical level: by changing water into wine rather than creating wine out of nothing, Jesus demonstrates that the new Christian dispensation is created from the Old Law – that the law of the Old Testament is not rejected but is fulfilled by his coming. Fourth is the anagogical level: the marriage represents the ultimate wedding between Christ and his Church (promised by the New Law). The literal level involves physical change, while both moral and anagogical interpretations rely to some extent on the central allegory – on the transformation of water into wine (at the marriage-feast) which represents the shift from Old Law into New. The significance of the marriage-feast at Cana, therefore, is that it is a moment of change, and therein lies the danger. So long as any change is possible, there is a risk of change for the worse – of decay and pain replacing pleasure and happiness. The virtuous feast is beneficial and nurturing, but in this world nothing, good or ill, lasts forever. By acknowledging the inevitability of change – even embracing it – we accept the possibility of loss.

Ultimately, then, whether virtuous or vicious, the feast must be seen as transitory. An individual risks himself by attending a feast. If he makes the wrong choices – if he misbehaves – then he will lose something. It may be recognition of this risk which causes so many medieval literary feasts to be interrupted by a call to arms or a challenge. After the murder in the *Stanzaic Morte*, for example, the dead knight's brother arrives to demand justice as the court is being served the third course at yet another feast (*Stanzaic Morte*, 1512–1519).²⁵ Such a late interruption is unusual for Arthurian feasts, which are usually disrupted as they begin – in part due to Arthur's well-known vow to wait for an adventure or miracle before dining on feast days. In *Gawain and the Green Knight*, Arthur is waiting for his wonder when the Green Knight provides it by riding into the hall with his challenge to a Christmas game (*Gawain*, 85–106). In the *Queste del Saint Graal*, Arthur has to be reminded of his vow by Sir Kay, but the arrival of Galahad's sword and later of Galahad himself offer marvel, interruption, and challenge together, as will the entry of the Grail that evening (*Queste*, 34–44). Even when the tradition of Arthur's vow is omitted, though, the feast is often immediately interrupted. In the *Alliterative Morte*, Arthur waits for no adventures, but the Roman emissaries arrive with their

²⁵ A similar interruption, omitting in particular the detail of which course it occurs at, is also in the French original; see Frappier, 84–104.

emperor's demand for tribute just as the court is going in to its New Year's feast.²⁶ As interesting and less purely literary is an incident which Froissart includes in Henry IV's coronation feast, where a knight in crimson trappings rides into the hall to issue a challenge to all present on behalf of the new-made king.²⁷ The feast is thus easily established as a moment at which challenge is appropriate; from there, it is only a step to perceiving the feast as a challenge in and of itself. We may conclude, therefore, that the feast tests human behavior. Specifically, it tests the human capacity to control mortal weakness, to satisfy human needs without surrendering to human desire.

And that, of course, returns us to our starting point: the question of why the feast is associated with vice. In general, the feast can most usefully be approached as a creation of the human mind, which surrounds it with ceremony and endows it with power. The ritual of the feast is the means by which the human mind controls its own creation. The feast is thus not inherently vicious; it is inherently human, and so potentially either virtuous or vicious. It is associated with vice because it mirrors humanity, and vice is an adjunct of human nature. Mortal weakness and necessity can be transformed into spiritual immortality, but only if the individual uses caution and control. Man must eat, after all, but he who lives to eat rather than eating to live will injure himself by his own excess. Even more, medieval man eats to feed both body and soul, but pandering to the body can destroy the soul. The feast, therefore, functions as an opportunity to control physical desires and as a warning of what might happen if that control gives way. As human nature is dual – both physical and spiritual – so too is the feast.

²⁶ This feast and entry occur also in chronicle versions of the story of Arthur and the Emperor, notably those of Geoffrey, Wace, Layamon, and Manning. Malory mentions a feast, but not explicitly that it is interrupted.

²⁷ See *Oeuvres de Froissart*, XVI, 208–209; and Brerton, 466.

MEDIUM AEVUM QUOTIDIANUM

newsletter 13

Krems 1988

Herausgeber: Medium Aevum Quotidianum. Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der materiellen Kultur des Mittelalters. Körnermarkt 13, A-3500, Österreich. — Für den Inhalt verantwortlich zeichnen die Autoren, ohne deren ausdrückliche Zustimmung jeglicher Nachdruck, auch in Auszügen, nicht gestattet ist. — Herstellung: Druck & Kopie Witte • Tel. 587 97 12

Inhaltsverzeichnis/Contents

Editor's Preface	4
Terence Scully: Studies in Medieval Food	6
John D. Fudge: Supply and Distribution of Foodstuffs in Northern Europe 1450–1500	8
Mary Frances Zambreno: The Moral Ambiguity of the Medieval Feast	18
Liliane Plouvier: La confiserie européenne au Moyen Age	28
Berichte – Besprechungen – Mitteilungen	48
Adressenverzeichnis der Autoren	59

Editor's Preface

The present volume of *Medium Aevum Quotidianum*-Newsletter is an indirect result of the editor's participation at the 23rd International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo this May. Among the numerous other papers delivered there, which have been relevant for historians of material culture and daily life of the Middle Ages, my attention was particularly drawn to a session on medieval food organized by Terence Scully from the Department of French Language and Literature of Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario. Terence Scully is one of the few specialists on medieval food and cooking in North America and well known for his editions of French cookery books and recipe collections (cf., e. g., "Du fait de cuisine par Maistre Chiquart 1420", *Vallesia* 40, 1985, 130-231; *Chiquart's On Cookery. A Fifteenth-Century Savoyard Culinary Treatise*. New York, Berne, Frankfurt/M., 1986; *The Viandier of Taillevent*, to be published this October by the University of Ottawa Press). For several years now, he has been organizing sessions on "Foods in the European Middle Ages" at Kalamazoo.

When I offered Terence Scully and the speakers of his session – John D. Fudge, Mary Frances Zambreno and Liliane Plouvier – to publish the papers in *Medium Aevum Quotidianum*-Newsletter, they all immediately accepted. By that, we get the opportunity to be quickly informed about some important new research. I would like to thank the authors, particularly for their readiness to send their manuscripts in such a short time after the conference, in spite of their many other obligations.

This Newsletter 13 will soon be followed by Newsletter 14, which is dedicated to the conference "Mensch und Objekt im Mittelalter. Leben – Alltag – Kultur", organized by *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* and the *Institut für mittelalterliche Realienkunde Österreichs*, taking place in Krems from September 27 to 30, 1988. As in the years 1984 and 1986, we would like to present summaries of the papers delivered at the conference to inform our members about the main topics and aspects to be discussed.

Two guest editors will be responsible for Newsletter 15. Grethe Jacobsen and Jens Christian Johansen, both from Copenhagen, have agreed to edit the volume, which will be dealing with the research on daily life and material culture of the Middle Ages in Denmark. It will be the first of the already announced volumes concerning research in particular countries. We hope that this newsletter will be published at the end of 1988.

For 1989, we already have started the preparations for two volumes continuing our select bibliographies. One volume will be devoted to medieval dress, the other to medieval ships. We also plan an updated version of the general select bibliography, which was published as *Medium Aevum Quotidianum*-Newsletter 7/8 in 1986. Numerous new books and articles have come out since then; a second edition seems to be necessary.

At last, I would like to thank those members of our society who have been – some of them continuously – contributing to *Medium Aevum Quotidianum*-Newsletter. All others, I again would like to invite to send us articles, reviews, notes or announcements.

Gerhard Jaritz, editor