

GUESTS, STRANGERS, ALIENS, ENEMIES

CURSOR MUNDI

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES.

VOLUME 45

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Guests, Strangers, Aliens, Enemies

*Ambiguities of Hospitality in
the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1350*

Edited by

WOJTEK JEZIERSKI *and* LARS KJÆR

BREPOLS

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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ISBN: 978-2-503-61092-4
e-ISBN: 978-2-503-61093-1
DOI: 10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.5.136858

ISSN: 2034-1660
e-ISSN: 2565-943X

Printed in the EU on acid-free paper.

D/2025/0095/40

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Editors' Preface

The contributions presented in this volume are the result of two inspiring workshops that took place in September 2022 at the Centre of Medieval Studies, Department of History, Stockholm University and in July 2023 at the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds, respectively. The editors would like to thank the contributors and participants for their invaluable comments and critique that helped shape this volume and sharpen its main arguments. We would like to thank Kurt Villads Jensen for his and the CMS's assistance in organizing the Stockholm workshop. A special thanks also goes to Tim Geelhaar for his contribution and inspiration during this project.

The organization of these two events, the several internal project meetings, the preparation of this volume, and, above all, the funding of the research time leading to these results were possible thanks to the generous grants received from several Swedish institutions. The main funding has been provided by the Swedish Research Council (*Vetenskapsrådet*) project 'Ambiguities of Hospitality: Intercultural Integration and Conflict in Host-Guest Relations on the European Borderlands, c. 1000–1350' (VR 2020–01810), which employed both editors and Geelhaar. The project was conducted at the Department of History, Stockholm University and the Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg, 2021–2024. The workshop in Stockholm in September 2022 was financed thanks to the Research Initiation grant from *Riksbankens Jubileumsfond* (F22–0036). The production costs and costs for making this volume Open Access have been covered thanks to financial support from the project 'Baltic Hospitality: Receiving Strangers/Providing Security on the Northern European Littoral, c. 1000–1900' from The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies (*Östersjöstiftelsen*, grant nr 9/18) based at The History of Ideas, Södertörn University. The editors would like to express their gratitude to all these institutions and to their home departments for the support and aid along the way.

Guy Carney at Brepols and the editors of the *Cursor mundi* series deftly guided us through the editorial and reviewing process. We are also much obliged to the two anonymous peer reviewers whose generous feedback helped us improve this volume. Sarah Thomas has done a terrific job proofreading the book and Ben Allport with preparation of the index.

Wojtek Jezierski & Lars Kjær
Åstad, September 2024

Guests – Strangers – Aliens – Enemies

*Introducing Ambiguities of Hospitality
in the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1350*

Killing Guests: From Troy to Denmark

Many of our oldest stories are about killing guests. The thousand ships of Homer's *Iliad* set out to gain vengeance against Paris, who had abducted Helen, the wife of his host Menelaus. The cycle of killing that follows does not stop until, many years later, one of the avengers, Odysseus, returns home to kill his own overbearing guests, the suitors who had been attempting to woo his wife, Penelope.¹

The story of the massacre of the suitors and the servant girls who had had relations with them has rightly troubled scholars: Harry L. Levy saw it as fundamentally alien to the aristocratic ethos of the rest of the *Odyssey* and proposed it was an inherited tradition from a more parsimonious peasant tradition. For these, hypothetical, practically-minded country folk it was a crime worth killing for to waste the host's resources. But no such deconstruction is necessary: the ambiguity of hospitality, the obligations of guest and host, and the outcome of their interactions constitute a central narrative focus in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus himself is no perfect guest. He and his men predate the home of the cyclops Polyphemus, before themselves becoming the prey of their monstrous host. For his assault on Polyphemus, Odysseus earns the wrath of Poseidon, bringing destruction not only on himself but also his future hosts, before finally arriving at Ithaca. The clash between Odysseus and Polyphemus uncannily foreshadows the destruction

¹ Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome*.

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Guests, Strangers, Aliens, Enemies: Ambiguities of Hospitality in the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1350, ed. by Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Kjær, CURSOR 45 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), pp. 15–38
BREPOLS PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.5.149650

of the suitors and belies the naïve invocations of absolute guest rights also made in the poem.²

On the other side of Europe, in the North Sea world, broken hospitality haunts the early medieval story worlds. *Beowulf's* celebrations of hospitality are hedged about with stories of hospitality breaking down in murderous violence: the tyrannical Danish king Heremod who murdered the people he feasted with and Ingjald who was spurred on by an ancient warrior to avenge himself on his father's murderers, even as they sat drinking with him.³ *Beowulf* was not unique in this: the fragmentary *Fight at Finnsburg*, preserved in the same manuscript, gives us a glimpse of another story involving feasting gone wrong. The Danish lord Hnæf had visited the hall of his brother-in-law Finn of the Frisians, but at night the Frisians attack and great losses follow on both sides as the hall becomes a battlefield.⁴

Even setting such outright breaches of the social contract aside, the grand welcome in King Hrothgar's hall Heorot is also beset with ambiguity: the guest Beowulf is met with suspicion and ridicule by the king's counsellor Unferth, anxious that the hero has come to usurp his place at the king's side. Hrothgar's hall-project itself trembles on the edge of hubris. After his victories '[i]t became fixed in his mind that he would direct men to construct a hall-structure, a mead-mansion larger than the offspring of the ancients had ever heard of'. For this purpose, 'the work was imposed far and wide throughout this middle earth' and soon enough 'the hall towered, tall and wide-gabled, it awaited battle-surges, dreaded flame'. This bibulous Babel-tower invites in challenges in its pride, and the invitation is answered by the dreadful *ellengæst*, Grendel.⁵

The stories of hospitality abused, discussed above, were reimagined and re-narrated in the more state-like societies of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Europe. Writing c. 1165, the clerk Benoît de Sainte-Maure composed his *Roman de Troie*, based on Latin retellings of the stories of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. From these, Benoît created a tale in which hospitality and its ambiguities stands out even more dramatically as the cornerstones of the tale. Greek anger against Troy was first kindled when King Laomedon of Troy refused the Argonauts landing on his shores. Choosing to treat these armed strangers as potential enemies rather than guests to be accommodated, he orders them to leave. Benoît included themes from his own time with its conventions of chivalric treatment of prisoners and had the Trojans threaten that, should

2 Levy, 'The Odyssean Suitors', p. 147; Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome*, pp. 123–43; Bakker, *The Meaning of Meat*; Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*, pp. 13–40; Wodziński, *Odys gość*.

3 *Beowulf*, ed. and trans. by Fulk, ll. 1,713–14, 2,041–43, pp. 132, 220.

4 Tolkien, *Finn and Hengest*.

5 *Beowulf*, ed. and trans. by Fulk, ll. 65–86, 499–606, pp. 90–91: 'Him on mod bearn þæt healreced hatan wolde, medoærn micel, men gewyrcean þonne ylde bearn æfre gefrunon ... ða ic wide gefrægn weorc gebannan manigre mægþe geond þisne middangeard ... Sele hlifade, heah ond horngeap, heaðowylma bad, laðan liges.'

the Argonauts remain and fight, they would all be killed, no ransom would be accepted for them.⁶

But over the tragic war, the Greeks too lose their sense of right and wrong. At last having returned to Ithaca, Odysseus is troubled by prophesies that he will be killed by his own son and isolates himself in a lonely tower. Here, he is in the end killed by his illegitimate and estranged son by the sorceress Circe, Telegonus, in a case of mistaken identity, when the latter, on Odysseus's orders, is refused entry.⁷

In Scandinavia, Saxo Grammaticus made good use of older stories of killings at feasts in his *Gesta Danorum*, completed c. 1208. Here, again and again, we are told of Danish kings conquering foreign lands in open battles, only to be betrayed by their new subjects who try to murder them at feasts. In Saxo's text, it becomes almost a national tradition that helps to explain how the great empire of the early Middle Ages had slipped away.⁸

But some guests need killing. Saxo incorporated the story of Ingjald, turning him into a Danish king and the foul guests into Germans. *Beowulf's* grizzled veteran becomes the legendary warrior Starkad and his poetic speech comes to focus not just on the demands of vengeance but on the need to purge the Danish court of corrupt foreign influences. Ingjald's German queen and her brothers, who lounge around the royal table, have brought despicable German luxury, sexual mores, and fine dining to Denmark — 'a variety of unsavoury sausages' — and this is eroding the national character. Starkad's poem spurred Ingjald to action against his brothers-in-law:

uarieque farciminum sordes manauere ... His namque continuo trucidatis
sacra mense* sanguine inuoluit, infirmum* societatis uinculum diremit
erubescendumque conuiuium egregia crudelitate mutauit atque ex
hospite hostis, ex abiectissimo luxurie mancipio truculentissimus ultionis
minister euasit.

(Speedily he carved them to pieces and swamped the table ceremonies
in blood; he severed the frail bond of their fellowship, exchanged
shameful conviviality for unmitigated savagery, and turned from
hospitality to hostility, from the most groveling slave of luxury to the
grimmiest agent of retribution.⁹)

Saxo borrowed both his poetic form and moral analytical framework of encroaching decadence, from classical Roman writers' own anxieties about a lapse in Roman virtues. It highlights an important point that would not have been lost on either classical or medieval audiences: the dangers of hospitality did not just reside in outright violence (here presented as a glorious break

6 *Le Roman de Troie*, I, vv. 1055–60, p. 54.

7 *Le Roman de Troie*, IV, vv. 30,071–76, p. 374.

8 Kjær, 'Feasting with Traitors', pp. 269–94.

9 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, VI. 8. 7, 6. 9. 17, I, pp. 418–19, 442–43.

from more subtle treacheries), but also in the subtle and soul-destroying threat of *luxuria*.¹⁰

As this brief introduction indicates, firstly, hospitality has, as far back as we can trace it, been beset with anxiety and ambivalence.¹¹ To host someone, and to be hosted, hinges on trust between the parties, a tacit contract that can be betrayed by either side. Secondly, despite considerable social changes, the ambiguities and anxieties of hospitality continued to haunt and excite medieval writers and audiences long into the high Middle Ages, and beyond. Stories of guest-killing and host-killing grips us because they bring to the light ubiquitous, unacknowledged struggles, what Leonard Cohen called:

the homicidal bitchin'
that goes down in every kitchen
to determine who will serve and who will eat.¹²

To illustrate this widespread predicament of hospitality for our purposes, in the title of this introductory essay we replaced the commas used in the title of this volume with dashes and thus essentially turned it into a scale, or, better, a spectrum. This spectrum represents a continuum that covers the full stretch between positions of a guest (*hospes*) and an enemy (*hostis*), reflecting an occasional uncertainty about whom people in stories but also, at times, in reality were dealing with when hosting them — a spectre of hostility haunting hospitality¹³ — in the Middle Ages and beyond. For sure, the reverse was true as well. Sometimes innocent, unsuspecting, and well-intended guests suddenly found themselves faced with domineering, abusive, even murderous hosts. This uncertainty, mistrust, and genuine undecidability embedded in the situations, practices, and discourses of hospitality are the topic of this volume. Our purpose accordingly is to explore this theme in the manifold contexts of medieval society and literature, focusing in particular, but not exclusively, on those encounters and host–guest relations that brought together people in the borderlands and frontier zones of western European culture.¹⁴ Hospitality and the social roles it came to play varied over time, but many of the ambiguities remain, even as the contexts in which they were expressed and the consequences they could lead to changed. By juxtaposing the ambiguities of hospitality at different times and contexts, here in the introduction and throughout the volume, we hope to highlight these ambiguities.

10 See Friis-Jensen, *Saxo Grammaticus as Latin Poet* and Niblaeus, 'Saxo and the Germans'.

11 Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*.

12 Cohen, *Democracy*.

13 Derrida, *Hospitality, Volume I*, pp. 209–10.

14 Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*; Abulafia and Berend, eds, *Medieval Frontiers*; Reimitz, 'From Cultures to Cultural Practices', pp. 270–78.

The Meanings of Hospitality

Let us begin with some definitions. In his dictionary *Derivationes*, Huguccione da Pisa (d. 1210) defined *hospitalitas* primarily through its more common and more widespread adjective *hospitalis* which denoted the personal attitude and quality: ‘qui benignus et pronus est ad hospitandum’, i.e. the one who is willing and forthcoming when receiving or accommodating someone. Huguccione’s privileging of the attributive adjectives and adverbs over the noun suggest the primacy of attitude and intention over the material facts of provision. This idea was conditioned by a long classical and Judeo-Christian tradition emphasizing the idea that it is the thought that counts in matters of generosity, a principle captured neatly by the Book of Proverbs’ observation: ‘It is better to be invited to herbs with love, than to a fatted calf with hatred’.¹⁵

Huguccione’s definition finds parallels in modern usages. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, for instance, defines hospitality in a somewhat circular fashion as ‘the act or practice of being hospitable; the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill’.¹⁶ These definitions imply, in other words, that hospitality to a large extent resists substantivization and reification (also in conceptual and analytical terms) and that it exists primarily in the nexus between intention and its practical implementation.¹⁷ These definitions also serve as a reminder that hospitality was expected to and, as far as we can tell, normally did, function smoothly. A point demonstrated in Tim Geelhaar’s chapter. It is exactly against this expectation that the authors of *Beowulf*, the *Odyssey*, the *Gesta Danorum*, and other works played when depicting the occasions when the obligations and precepts of hospitality suddenly became frustrated or abused.

There is a considerable and important body of medievalist scholarship on the role of hospitality, much of it focuses on hospitality’s integrative character, the use of hospitality as a sort of ‘social glue’ to maintain and communicate societal ties and hierarchies or to incorporate outsiders into a community or societal structure. Much of this work has focused on societies with very limited state-like structures, where hospitality — like gift-giving and other ritualized forms of communication — is assumed to ‘stand in’ for state structures and create stability.¹⁸

15 Proverbs 15.17, all quotations from the Bible are taken from the Douay-Rheims translation.

16 ‘hospitality, n.’ *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/5961282775>.

17 Benveniste, ‘The Linguistic Functions’, pp. 163–79; Schwandt, *Virtus*, pp. 198–200; Jussen, “‘Reich’ – ‘Staat’ – ‘Kirche’?”, pp. 271–86.

18 See e.g. Hellmuth, *Gastfreundschaft und Gastrecht*; Hiltbrunner and others, ‘Gastfreundschaft’, cols 1061–1123; Lot, ‘Du régime de l’hospitalité’, pp. 975–1011; Pohl, ‘*Per hospites divisi*’, pp. 179–226; Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 162–205; Modzelewski, *Barbarian Europe*, pp. 26–41.

This volume builds on these important findings, but shifts the scholarly gaze from the high table, where king, queen, and honoured guests are graciously served by skilled servants, to the shadowy corners of the hall. To the places where gossip and complaint is exchanged, where outlaws hide under the guise of hospitality, hostages, and troublesome strangers are benched, and where the light from the hall-fire reflects on drawn blades — prompting difficult reflections on the processes of extraction and predation that provided the material foundations for the feast. In doing so, we draw on approaches to hospitality suggested not just by some medievalists but also by anthropologists and philosophers who treat this phenomenon as occasionally much more transformative and transgressive. According to this view, hospitality is seen not just as a form of intercultural lubricant or intracultural gravitational force. It is also treated as a threshold phenomenon and an uncertain cultural process occurring in the liminal zone between social orders or groups and cultures at odds with each other. Hospitality is more than a method for social or intercultural integration. It can also become the occasion for circumscribing and challenging the limits and the permeability of political, ethnic, cultural, and religious communities.¹⁹

When preparing the current volume, we thus asked our contributors and ourselves to go beyond the focus on hosts' positive qualities or hospitality's role in maintaining archaic societies. Instead we chose to cast a net as wide as possible to explore hospitality in an anthropological vein, that is, in its totality as a social, political, cultural, economic, and normative phenomenon.²⁰ We did so to encompass and be able to account for the visible contrast between the nominally integrative senses of hospitality visible in the definitions above and the mistrust and sense of risk associated with host–guest relations observable in the cases discussed in this book. Such a holistic approach comes close to Jacques Derrida's maxim that 'hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic among others.'²¹ Following Derrida's suggestion does not mean that the volume is predicated on some universal notion of hospitality functioning as a cultural constant or on a singular sense of hospitality that can be uncovered throughout the cases at hand and beyond. Quite the contrary, the authors in this volume approach hospitality as a situated, context-dependent, and often manipulable set of practices and concepts, which usually remained underdefined and which at times became contested. This, then, is not a book about hospitality in general, which, as we have seen, withstands such

19 Claviez, ed., *The Conditions of Hospitality*; Wodziński, *Odys gość*; Liebsch and others, eds, *Perspektiven europäischer Gastlichkeit*; Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*; Nauman and others, eds, *Baltic Hospitality from the Middle Ages*; Skaff, *Sui-Tang China*, pp. 136–37, 154; Sahlin, *Stone Age Economics*, pp. 153–75, 197–204; Marsden, 'Fatal Embrace', pp. 117–30; Ridley Elmes and Bovaird-Abbo, eds, *Food and Feast*; Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*.

20 Mauss, *The Gift*, pp. 5–6, 13, 79; Pitt-Rivers, 'The Law of Hospitality', pp. 501–17.

21 Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, p. 16.

objectification anyway. Rather, it is a book about many different *hospitalities* that were co-defined and practised through the variable and locally contingent domains and cultural practices adjacent to and permeated by codes of hospitality. These domains and practices include gift-giving, feasting, conviviality, trade, diplomacy, law and custom, public morality and religion, problematic luxury and conspicuous consumption, courtliness and chivalry, agonistic political cultures, emergent urbanity, kindness and material assistance towards the poor and strangers, parasitic exploitation, personal protection and corporal integrity, asylum and outlawry, hostageship, and, at the far end, even armed conflict. By radically expanding the field of hospitality in this way and giving space to the unusual, the transgressive, and ambivalent, we explore not just the intensity and limits to which hospitality interpenetrated the very fabric of social, cultural, and political life during the high Middle Ages, but we also emphasize the ambiguities that were normally overcome or sidelined (though never quite forgotten!) in the practice and narration of host–guest relations.

Hospitality: Four Types of Ambiguity

This is a book about *ambiguities* of host–guest relations in the Latin Middle Ages. Ambiguity is not, we contend, taking our cue from scholars such as Derrida, merely an outside factor that sometimes impinged or hindered the constructive work of hospitality.²² It is an inherent and constitutive aspect of hospitality due to the in-betweenness and mutuality embedded in the phenomenon itself.²³ The cultural and political work performed to exploit and contain these ambiguities forms a central part of the story of medieval hospitality.²⁴ As a starting point, we would like to point to four types of ambiguity that, on occasion, made the meaning of hospitality uncertain to medieval agents, writers, and audiences.²⁵

First, we would point to uncertainty about the *rules* regulating hospitality: the question of what was owed to hosts and guests, and how the obligations of hospitality interacted with other legal, religious, and societal obligations. The problem is powerfully dramatized in the heroic poem the *Nibelungenlied* (c. 1200), the most sustained and successful medieval engagement with the

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- 22 In our understanding of cultural ambiguity we follow Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity*, p. 10: 'We may talk of the phenomenon of cultural ambiguity if, over a period of time, two contrary, or at least competing, clearly differing meanings are associated with one and the same term, act, or object; or if a social group draws on contrary or strongly differing discourses for attributions of meaning to various realms of human life; or if one group simultaneously accepts different interpretations of a phenomenon, all of them entitled to equal validity'; Zielyk, 'On Ambiguity and Ambivalence', pp. 57–64.
 - 23 Giesen, 'Inbetweenness and Ambivalence', pp. 788–804; Irigaray, 'Toward a Mutual Hospitality', pp. 42–54.
 - 24 Berndt and Sachs-Hombach, 'Dimensions of Constitutive Ambiguity', pp. 271–82.
 - 25 Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*.

ambiguity of hospitality. The *Nibelungenlied* is structured around three flawed hospitality events that may, with unavoidable oversimplification, be summarized in the following way: the first features the arrival of the hero Siegfried at the court of Worms. Siegfried behaves uncourtly towards his hosts, seeking to assert himself above them, although he is at last won to their side through marriage to King Gunther's sister, Kriemhilt. The second occurs when Gunther invites Siegfried and Kriemhilt back to his court, secretly planning to have Siegfried killed in vengeance over the disrespect that he and Kriemhilt has shown towards Gunther and his wife Brunhild. The third and final event occurs when Kriemhilt later invites her brother Gunther and his court to visit her and her new husband, King Etzel of the Huns, only to have her knights assault them. The resulting violence leads to the doom and destruction not just of the Burgundian guests but also of their hosts.²⁶

In the *Nibelungenlied*, the question of how to receive a guest, especially a troublesome one, and of where the obligations of hospitality rank compared to other loyalties and obligations are discussed at length, no easy answer is provided but the hospitality setting raises the stakes, making the conflict more visceral, recognizable and, ultimately, tragic.²⁷ The anonymous author was not alone in finding that the clash between the absolute claims of hospitality and other obligations provided good narratives. Below Sigrun Borgen Wik explores the case of outlaws being hosted and protected by powerful women in the Icelandic sagas. Here, to some commentators, the obligation of hospitality was strong enough to make it commendable to a hostess to transgress against the laws of society by housing those who breached them.²⁸ Wik points to the particular interest shown to women who hosted outlaws — a positive, but also ambiguous, mirror to the murderous Kriemhilt.

The question of rules, of what behaviour is demanded, of who decides this, can become particularly pertinent where hospitality crosses cultural boundaries. Siegfried's uncourtly behaviour is connected to his status as outsider — heralding from the mysterious Xanten located somewhere to the north of the civilized lands of the Rhine at the centre of the story. Such encounters became more ubiquitous in the Middle Ages. As Robert Bartlett has shown, the expansion of Latin Europe led to vast population shifts. These ranged from the campaigns of conquerors and crusaders to the more peaceful migrations of settlers and merchants. Still further, the expansion of Latin European culture meant that many elite groups on the periphery of Europe now began to interact more intensely with the centre, as students, merchants, or — like Siegfried — as conquerors. It is important to bear in mind, however, that this process of European integration was outpaced, from the thirteenth

26 Classen, 'The Disrupted Dinner in the "Nibelungenlied"', p. 388.

27 Engel and Goehlich, 'Wann ist ein Gast ein Gast?', pp. 545–60.

28 McNulty, *The Hostess*.

century onwards, by the incorporation of most of the rest of Eurasia, including the eastern parts of the European cultural world, into the Mongol Empire.²⁹

These processes created new sites of ambiguity and tension, very often contained in and expressed through host–guest relations, which feature centrally in many of the contributions below. Kate Franklin explores the provision of hospitality across Eurasia and the contribution of local hosts and elites in creating this more cosmopolitan world. Lars Kjær explores the chronicle of William of Tyre (d. 1186) and his use of the idea of ‘laws of hospitality’ in an attempt to outline what could be expected of guests from Latin Europe, pilgrims and crusaders, and what they in turn could expect from their hosts in the Latin East. Miriam Tveit explores the way the question of how to house guests, foreign merchants, was dealt with in the laws of medieval Norwegian towns. Here, the ‘laws of hospitality’ evocatively raised, but never defined, by William of Tyre are replaced by concrete do’s and don’ts, a process that raised its own challenges in a culture where free elite hospitality was considered a central virtue.

The welcoming of a stranger into a governed space, a home, a palace, or a city, by its very nature raises the question of what rules govern behaviour in that space.³⁰ International relations scholar Dan Bulley suggested that

hospitality is the means by which *particular* spaces are brought into being as ‘homes’, as embodying an *ethos*, a way of being: an *ethics*. Practices of hospitality carve out spaces as *mine* rather than yours, as places of belonging and non-belonging, and then manage and enforce their internal and external boundaries and behaviours.³¹

The question of whose rules to follow, of who defines the rules quickly turn out to be closely related to our second type of ambiguity: the powerplay involved in interactions between hosts and guests. At its core, the conflict between Siegfried and the Burgundians, between Krimhilt and Brunhild, are about status and power.³²

Hospitality is about commensality and sharing, but also about who governs this sharing.³³ To act as a host then, as Derrida and others have observed, is, among other things, to reaffirm one’s position as a master of one’s house and domain (which can be further extrapolated and scaled up to political and territorial entities and spaces). Derrida built his claim upon Émile Benveniste’s etymological argument. Benveniste suggested that in Indo-European languages and institutions hospitality is a practice of establishing the position of the host, where Latin *hospes* is a compound stemming from the morphological

29 For a helpful introduction, see Zarakol, *Before the West*.

30 Friese, ‘Spaces of Hospitality’, pp. 67–79; Franklin, *Everyday Cosmopolitanisms*; Jezierski, ‘Spaces of Hospitality’, pp. 33–62.

31 Bulley, *Migration, Ethics & Power*, p. 4.

32 Shryock, ‘Breaking Hospitality Apart’, pp. 20–33.

33 Goehlich and Zirfas, ‘Zu Gast bei Freunden’, pp. 326–40.

structure *hosti-pet-s*, meaning master of the house (literally, the guest-master) and ‘the one precisely, “the very one”, i.e. the master and the dominant part in a host–guest relation.’³⁴

But asserting a status of ‘master’ is easier said than done, and guests are not the only ones whose behaviour have to be carefully controlled. In his *Rules for the Household*, the English bishop Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253) advised Margaret de Lacy, countess of Lincoln, that she should whenever possible, and especially when guests were present, eat ‘E a plus ke vus porrez pur maladie u deheyt aforcez vus de manger en sale devaunt voz genz, kar seyez certe graunt pru e honur vus envendra’ (in the dining hall before your people because you may be sure that from it great benefit and honour will come to you).³⁵ At each meal she should be seated in the middle of the high table: ‘So that your presence as lord or lady is made manifest to all’ but also, Grosseteste continues, in order

Estreitement defendez ke nule noyse seyt a vostre manger, e vus memes tutes oures en miliu seez del haute table, ke vostre presence a tuz uvertement cum seigneur ou dame aperge, e ke vous overttement puissez de une part e de autre ver tuz e le servise e le defautes. A co seyez ententive ke iescun iur a vostre manger eyes overttement deus survues sur vostre hotel quaunt vus seez a manger, e de co seez aseure ke a merveylle seyez cremue e dute.

(that you may see plainly on either side all the service and all the faults. And take care that you have every day at mealtime two men to supervise your household while you are at table and be sure that this will earn you great awe and reverence.³⁶)

Hospitality had to be handled in the right way: the lady should insist that servants serve the meals ‘ke ordeneement e saunz noyse’ (in an orderly fashion and without noise). Indeed, all loud noises were to be forbidden during the dinner.³⁷ Grosseteste was, however, well aware that behaviour in noble halls sometimes differed hugely from this vision. This is demonstrated in the letter he wrote to Earl William de Warenne, c. 1230, where he reprimands the earl for having had his chaplain celebrate mass in his hall:

Cum igitur aula vestra non sit locus Deo dicatus, sed sit communis habitatio hominum, receptaculum comedentium et bibentium, frivola, scurrilia, et forte multoties immunda colloquentium et fortassis aliquando etiam immunda facientium, canibus etiam ubique in ea discurrentibus et cubantibus, sordesque plerumque relinquentibus.

³⁴ Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European*, pp. 61–73; Derrida, *Hospitality, Volume I*, pp. 71–75.

³⁵ *Walter of Henley*, no. xxvi, pp. 406–07; The *Rules* have been frequently commented upon, see e.g. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy*, p. 299; Woolgar, *The Great Household*, p. 145.

³⁶ *Walter of Henley*, no. xxii, pp. 402–03.

³⁷ *Walter of Henley*, no. xxiv, pp. 404–05; Woolgar, *The Great Household*, p. 176.

(Your hall is not a place dedicated to God, but the common dwelling of men and women, a place where people eat, drink and talk about trifling, scurrilous, and perhaps often sinful matters, and possibly even at some time or other perform sinful acts, with dogs running and sleeping all over the place and very frequently leaving their messes behind.³⁸)

In his contribution below, Ralf Lützel Schwab offers a striking study of how a poorly managed feast could backfire on the host's reputation. He investigates the hospitality offered by the two cardinals Annibaldo Ceccano and Pedro Gómez to Pope Clement VI (d. 1352). Annibaldo's feast is grand, overly grand, but also disorganized, riotous, and — in its extravagance — becomes suspect of offering a challenge to the authority of the guest of honour, the real master, Pope Clement VI.

Grosseteste would have known how to handle this better. The *Lanercost Chronicle* records an incident where Grosseteste was hosting the enormously powerful Richard de Clare, earl of Gloucester. The bishop's servants served up two pikes for the two lords, giving the largest one to Grosseteste, as master of the house. Grosseteste, however, insisted that they serve up a fish of the same size to the earl and, when this proved impossible, ordered his pike to be given to the poor as alms and that he be served a smaller one instead. The earl, and the chronicler, were impressed by the bishop's courtesy. As host, Grosseteste *could* have insisted on eating the bigger pike, but by not doing so and voluntarily lowering himself to match the level of the powerful earl he strengthened his reputation as a courteous host.³⁹ As the anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers remarked in a seminal article on hospitality, it is precisely the freedom of the host to grant or hold back that enable him to act hospitably.⁴⁰ But, we add, it was ambiguous precisely how far this freedom extended.

In the *Nibelungenlied*, the status-contests and the complex, mutually conflicting systems of obligation and obedience ultimately leads to murderous collapse: not only are the Burgundians killed while visiting Kriemhilt and her new husband Etzel, but the very categories and vocabulary of society collapse around them as the Burgundians fight for their life and, above all, for vengeance. Words no longer mean what they had meant in better times, as Kriemhilt casts about for support in vanquishing her brother and his companions, she exclaims 'gedenke wold dar an, daz nie wirt deheiner so leide geste gewan' (consider that no host ever acquired such accursed guests).⁴¹ There is irony here: it is Kriemhilt's own vengeance that has turned

38 Grosseteste, *Epistolae*, p. 172, translation from *The Letters of Robert Grosseteste*, trans. by Mantello and Goering, pp. 198–99.

39 *Chronicon de Lanercost*, pp. 44–45; Labarge, *A Baronial Household*, p. 81.

40 Pitt-Rivers, 'The Laws of Hospitality'; Priddat, 'Gäste – ökonomisch', pp. 249–69.

41 *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. by Bartsch and de Boor, v. 2162, p. 339; *The Nibelungenlied*, trans. by Edwards, p. 196.

the Burgundians into enemy-guests, but the irony cuts deeper. The reader is left wondering whether the exchange of hospitality was ever quite as absent from ambiguity as Kriemhilt's exclamation suggests.

This brings us to our third type of ambiguity, which concerns the semantic and linguistic roots of hospitality. The supposed etymological evolution of the Germanic and German word *gast* pointed out by many scholars exemplifies well this type of ambiguity. Briefly put, *gast* supposedly evolved from meaning 'a stranger' and later came to be associated with meaning 'an enemy', which scholars took to explain hospitality's origin as an institutionalized reaction to unpredictability.⁴² Similarly, the Latin *hostis* etymologically stems from the notions of equalization and compensation, traceable, for instance, in the institution of hostageship, which is not just etymologically related to hospitality, but also — as Alice Hicklin shows in her chapter below — shares important characteristics with more voluntary forms of guesting.⁴³ *Hostis* historically mutated into meaning both 'stranger' and 'enemy' in classical Latin, before finally establishing the more abstract notion of hostility, as Benveniste explained.⁴⁴ Finally, Derrida put his own post-structural spin on the entire question and famously combined hostility with hospitality into *hostipitality*. In this way he stressed the interrelatedness between these seemingly mutually exclusive codes of conduct.⁴⁵ Etymology alone is obviously not a sufficient explanation of the individual cases we investigate. But as the contributions to this volume show a whole array of terms associated with host-guest relations in many linguistic contexts studied here — e.g. stranger, invitation, house, home, host, guest, hostess, table, feast, city space, hostage, etc. — were in fact ridden with vagueness and polysemy, which now and then became activated in concrete situations suddenly making hospitality quite fuzzy and undecidable.⁴⁶

Our fourth and final type of ambiguity (although more could be added) point to the anxiety medieval commentators and actors, sometimes, reveal about the morality, religious, and societal, of the feast. Writing for predominantly aristocratic audiences, many writers perform a demonstrative contempt for those whose work makes the conspicuous consumption possible: in the *Nibelungenlied*, on the night before the cataclysmic battle at Etzel's court, the Burgundian warriors Volker and Hagen spot armed Huns hurrying about. Volker calls them out:

42 Hellmuth, *Gastfreundschaft und Gastrecht*, pp. 19–22; Aalto, 'Commercial Travel and Hospitality', pp. 37–39.

43 Kosto, *Hostages in the Middle Ages*, pp. 10–11; Morschauser, 'Hospitality, Hostiles and Hostages', pp. 461–85; Derrida, *Hospitality, Volume II*, pp. 122–26.

44 Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts*, pp. 61–73.

45 Derrida, 'Hostipitality', pp. 3–18; Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*; Kearney, 'Gastlichkeit – zwischen Möglichkeit und Unmöglichkeit', pp. 479–96.

46 Winkler, ed., *Ambiguity: Language and Communication*.

wie gêt ir sus gewâfent, ir snellen degene? welt ir scâchen rîten, ir Kriemhilde man? dar sult ir mich ze helfe und mînen hergesellen hân.

(Why do you walk about thus armed, you bold knights? Do you want to ride out robbing you men of Kriemhilt? You shall have me and my companion-in-arms to help you in that!⁴⁷)

Kriemhilt's men, of course, are not planning to raid, but to murder their guests and the author uses the contrast between laudable, aristocratic, predation, and illegitimate treachery to emphasize the horror of the clash to come. Violence should be directed outwards, at enemies, or to enforce the obedience and resource-collections that enable the heroic feast.

But even so, the mixed metaphors of violence and hospitality open the door ajar, allowing less reassuring comparisons to sneak into the hall, a point investigated in Jezierski's chapter below. Feasting is about sociability, but it is also about the conspicuous consumption of meat; of resources drawn from the lower classes. It is saints who particularly draw attention to this — in ways that also threaten, albeit less violently, the commensal festivity. St Richard of Chichester was a friendly host, but his festivities would be somewhat spoiled at his reaction to seeing young animals served at his table:

quod cum agni vel edi seu pulli, ut assolent coquine, inferrentur, dicere solebat quasi mortem innocentum plangendo, 'O', inquit, 'si rationales essetis et loqui possetis, quantum ventres nostros malediceretis. Nos quidem mortis vestra causa sumus; vos, qui innocentes estis, quid morte dignum commisistis?

(when the cooks brought in lambs or kids or chickens, as they often did, he would cry out, as if mourning the death of the innocent, 'O if you could reason and were able to speak, how you would curse our appetites! For in truth it is because of us that you died. You are the innocent ones; what have you done to deserve to die?'⁴⁸)

For Richard's contemporary, St Elizabeth of Hungary (d. 1231), landgravine of Thuringia, it was anxieties about the plight of the peasantry that interrupted the joys of the hall. According to the testimony of her confessor Conrad of Marburg, the young landgravine's commitment to asceticism and charity had hardened when Thuringia was struck by a great famine. With the support of her confessor, Elizabeth refused to consume food or drink 'about which she did not have a clear conscience'. She would support herself and her small household on the incomes of her own dowry, that is, her allodial income, as opposed to the various feudal dues and exactions that made her husband,

47 *Nibelungenlied*, v. 1846, p. 290; *The Nibelungenlied*, trans. by Edwards, p. 168.

48 *Saint Richard of Chichester*, ed. and trans. by Jones, pp. 104, 180.

Ludwig, rich. The information is provided by Elizabeth's companion Isentrud, who also made clear the social complications:

though sitting at her husband's side at the table ... she would only pretend to eat in the presence of the knights or ministers, breaking up breads and other foods and disposing of the pieces here and there so that it looked like she was eating.

When she had to accompany Ludvig to an imperial diet, she brought with her only 'a large loaf that was black and hard', she managed to eat it, however, by softening it with warm water. The landgrave grew angry, but his wife put him firmly in his place and he was compelled, finally, to admit that he would have followed her example 'if I did not fear being slandered by members of my household and others'.⁴⁹

Dinner-table rebels motivated by animal or peasant rights are few and far between in the Middle Ages, but reformers harping on the subject of gluttony are ten a penny. For an example that addresses the tensions between calls to asceticism and the societal role of hospitality we can turn to a third contemporary, the Franciscan Adam Marsh (d. 1259). Writing at night to his friend Robert Grosseteste, whom we met above, Adam Marsh offered extensive reflections on the news of a grand and joyous feast recently celebrated in London by the great nobles. So far so good, but Adam Marsh worries:

let us hope that even if it furthers charity and peace it will not in any way be to the detriment of moderation.

Having cited copious Biblical verses against gluttony, Adam Marsh continues

utinam etsi caritatem conciliande profuerit, nequaquam nocuerit emulando moderamini ... audio sacerdotibus Dei et ministris altaris diuinitus esse commendatam hylarem mense liberalis communicationem; et nichilominus terribiliter condempnatam profusam ipsorum immoderantiam in epularum affluentis.

(I hear that priests of God and ministers of the altar were encouraged from above to participate in the cheerful feast, but they were nevertheless fearfully censured for their lack of restraint in partaking of the copious dishes.⁵⁰)

49 *Quellenstudien zur Geschichte der Hl. Elisabeth*, ed. by Huyskens, pp. 115–16, 156–57: 'sedens in latere mariti in mensa ... sepe simulabat se comedere coram militibus et ministris panem et alios cibos frangendo hac et illac, ut videretur comedere, disponendo' ... Hoc ipsum libenter facerem, si familie ac aliorum oblocutionem non timerem'; *The Life and Afterlife of St Elizabeth of Hungary*, trans. by Baxter Wolf, p. 196, for a discussion see: pp. 65–66 and for the wider context, Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*.

50 *The Letters of Adam Marsh*, ed. and trans. by Lawrence, I, pp. 108–11, adapted translation.

Adam was fully alive to the role played by churchmen in maintaining and furthering peace and to the importance of generosity and hospitality in elite life and recognizes the difficulty of balancing these obligations — he is writing to Robert for guidance on the subject — and ends with a prayer that ‘emanantio illa Omnipotentis Deo sincera’ (a genuine message from Almighty God) might help explain how to navigate this. For mere mortals, the ambiguity of hospitality presented an unresolvable challenge. To some readers the *Nibelungenlied*’s condemnation of Kriemhilt was too much, shortly thereafter another anonymous author penned a continuation, *Die Klage*, which defended Kriemhilt’s actions as a necessary, if lamentable, vengeance for her beloved husband.⁵¹

Recent research into ritual and gift-giving, hospitality’s sister-fields, has emphasized the point that the Middle Ages was no simple age in which the meaning of social performances were straightforwardly understood and accepted. Their meaning was disputed, debated, and manipulated, which is exemplified in Edward Loss’s chapter through the case of the ambivalent treatment and expectations of ambassadors in communal Italy. In other words, the aspects of deceit, contestation, and manipulability hold true for hospitality as well, in the Middle Ages, as before and after. In order to properly understand how hospitality worked in medieval society and literature we need to keep these ambiguities in mind.⁵² Taking the above four types of ambiguity of hospitality into consideration, we posed the following questions to the authors in this volume and asked them to deploy these in their specific areas of research and cases:

- In what ways did host–guest relations shape the identities and statuses of the participants in different contexts and periods?
- How were ambiguities of hospitality articulated and managed in linguistic, ritualistic, practical, normative, political, and spatial terms?
- How were differing notions and conventions of hospitality negotiated?
- How did hospitality affect intercultural cohesion or enmity?

Nine Chapters on Hospitality

This book offers a very broad, but necessarily incomplete panorama of medieval hospitalities. The authors, majority of whom are historians, use a wide range of primary sources to trace and tease out the ambiguities of host–guest relations: a plethora of narrative sources of different types and genres (both historical and works of fiction), chronicles and annals, Old Norse sagas of

⁵¹ *The Lament of the Nibelungen (Div Chlage)*, ed. and trans. by McConnell, vv. 134–35, pp. 8–9.

⁵² Algazi, ‘Introduction: Doing Things with Gifts’, pp. 9–27; Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*; Davies and Fouracre, eds, *The Languages of Gift*; Candea and da Col, ‘The Return to Hospitality’, pp. 1–19.

different genres, inscriptions, treatises, law codes, archival documents and city records, iconography, archaeological evidence, etc. Given the way hospitality saturated the social tissue, however, many more source types and cases could be used: documentary sources such as charters, inventories, wills, but also infrastructural and spatial remains. Perhaps the most underrepresented type of evidence in this volume are normative texts, statuses, and laws of different kinds (see, however, Chapter Nine by Miriam Tveit and the individual references in other chapters). This inadequate representation is justified to some extent by the fact that the authors of normative sources very often strove to eliminate, or at least gloss over, ambiguities connected to host–guest relations of different kinds. Lawmakers also tended to frame and compartmentalize hospitality quite narrowly, as an aspect of trade or type of sacred space, or as a noble duty to protect guests.⁵³ What sometimes escaped the legal purview were the more unruly, murky, and undecidable types of hospitality this volume primarily focuses on.

The book is organized in the following manner: the next nine chapters follow in roughly chronological order. The second chapter by Tim Geelhaar serves, however, as a crucial semantic anchorage and general linguistic background for the remaining chapters, whose considerations of ambiguities of hospitality are more case-based. By adopting a corpus-based approach, which analyses more than 480 narrative sources from Latin Europe from 1000 to 1400, Geelhaar offers instead a comprehensive semantic analysis of the medieval noun and concept of *hospitalitas*. The study proceeds in four steps. First, the author explores the lexicological findings of medieval dictionaries as well as the Christian interpretation of the concept of *hospitalitas* in Late Antiquity. In the second step, statistical observations on the use and word co-occurrences of *hospitalitas* in the corpus are presented. In the third step, Geelhaar explores how often this word was connected with situations of danger and ambiguity and what explains the increased use of the word between the mid-twelfth and mid-thirteenth century. He argues that the change is related to a deepening lay religiosity and to a decline in general hospitality due to the rise of commercial hospitality. The writing of many stories about hospitality during that period is seen as a way to enforce the Christian understanding of hospitality as a virtue endangered by avoidance, neglect, and commercialization.

The third chapter by Alice Hicklin uses evidence drawn from all over Eurasia for the period c. 800 to c. 1050 to interrogate the evidence for tensions and ambiguities inherent in accounts of the hospitality given to hostages and argues that the protection and hospitality hostage-holders offered formed a central element of the practice's utility to recipients. The medieval hostage was given from one party to another as a means of guaranteeing their commitment or acquiescence to particular obligations or terms. Whilst serving as hostages,

53 Boestad, 'Merchants and Guests'; Gautier, 'Hospitality in Pre-Viking'; Lambert, 'Hospitality, Protection and Refuge'.

individuals had little agency to protect themselves, and relied both on the fact that those who had given them would maintain the terms of the agreement, and that as strangers at the court or home of another they would be protected from harm by their custodians. The polysemic nature of hostage agreements at once aligned aspects of their treatment with multiple other arrangements of political and diplomatic hospitality and showed that hostageship was a unique status amongst the panoply of guests and travellers, with distinctive tensions and possibilities for the relationship to change over time.

In the fourth chapter Lars Kjær turns attention to the Latin East in the years before the Battle of Hattin (1187). Kjær explores how the twelfth-century chronicler, William of Tyre, used stories of hospitality, and in particular the idea of ‘laws of hospitality’, to narrate the complex interactions between the Latin East and West from the First Crusade down to his own time: what could be expected of hosts (be they Byzantine Emperors, local Armenians, Syrian Christians, or citizens of Jerusalem), and of crusaders and pilgrim guests arriving from the West? How could these expectations be articulated and balanced? William of Tyre walked a careful line, seeking to celebrate the achievements of his native country as a host of pilgrims and crusaders while also acknowledging and explaining the conflicts that had occurred in the past in a way that would be acceptable and convincing to the Western audiences he hoped to inspire to assist the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Hospitality became helpful to William of Tyre because it provided a set of expectations, expectations that William tried to make firmer, which could help explain why things had gone wrong and create a shared set of expectations about how future relations should be conducted.

In the fifth chapter Kate Franklin focuses on the cases and spaces of hospitality along the Silk Road in the Mongol thirteenth century. The Silk Road is often viewed as a precursor to contemporary globalization, the merchants who traversed it as early agents of cultural exchange. Missing from this picture are the lives of the ordinary people who inhabited the route and contributed as much to its development as their itinerant counterparts. This chapter takes the highlands of medieval Armenia as a case study for examining how early globalization and local life intertwined along the Silk Road. In thinking about Silk Road cosmopolitanism as framed within practices of hospitality, Franklin explores the capacities for ‘making worlds for others to live in’ within local traditions, at the same time raising the question of the ambiguity at the heart of such practices of welcoming, housing, and feeding strangers. The chapter thus frames cosmopolitanism-as-hospitality as a local praxis of globality and agency within the new worlds created under the Mongol rule during this period.

The sixth chapter, written by Sigrun Borgen Wik, explores the depictions of women hosting and protecting outlawed men in the sagas of Icelanders from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Although giving protection to outlaws was considered a legal offence and an action that often undermined the interests of husbands or male relatives of hostesses, such transgressive type of hospitality offered by women was consistently depicted in a positive

light in sagas. Wik closely investigates spaces of hospitality and purpose-built infrastructures for outlaws, cases of female trickery, and conflict-ridden weddings. She shows how the obligations of hospitality and the customary honour attached to it could sometimes supersede the obligations of kinship, marital bonds, and wider norms and laws of the Icelandic society bringing paradoxically more honour to a specific powerful woman as well as her husband and family, the memory of which was carried over centuries.

The seventh chapter, by Edward Loss, focuses on the ambiguous attitudes of medieval cities of northern and central Italy towards ambassadors. An ambassador was treated, at the same time, as an agent who facilitated fruitful negotiation, but also as a possible external threat for the city's secrets and security, an enemy even. By exploring normative sources, city council minutes, expense records, and diplomatic gifts this paper offers a privileged insight into diplomatic hospitality and its contradictions during this period. Loss demonstrates that the reception of these agents was both the object of immense expense with banquets and honourable procedures, and the subject for strict legislation that regarded this figure with open hostility, forbidding an ambassador to even speak with the local population in the cities to which they were dispatched.

The eighth chapter by Miriam Tveit delves into the understudied aspects of hospitality in medieval Norse urban life (particularly in Bergen, Nidaros/Trondheim, and Oslo), and explores the reciprocal relationships between hosts and guests, primarily in the context of trade-driven urban centres. She analyses both legal and literary sources to uncover the multifaceted nature of urban hospitality and highlights the complexities involved in hosting various groups, many of whom utilized the space where they were staying for economic transactions. Despite the lack of explicit discussions in the sources about urban hospitality, the study suggests that the exchange within the urban setting was transactional in nature, emphasizing reciprocity and the distribution of responsibilities. Tveit's findings reveal a nuanced understanding of how the principles and situational ambiguities of hospitality were negotiated and practised within the urban landscape, showcasing the convergence of traditional values and emerging urban cultures on the north-eastern Atlantic coast.

The ninth chapter, written by Ralf Lützelshwab, explores the cases of two banquets in the spring of 1343 during which two members of the College of Cardinals, Annibaldo Ceccano and Pedro Gómez, invited Pope Clement VI (d. 1352) to their lavish summer residences outside Avignon. These two receptions were unprecedented even by the exuberant standards of the papal court at Avignon. The chapter shows that although these banquets sought to honour the pope and to confirm the social bonds between the hosts and guests, these kinds of festivities were not always successful. Sometimes lavish, excessive hospitality could backfire. Lützelshwab's window into these feasts is an anonymous report written by a curial insider, which contains highly detailed descriptions underlining both the ostentation of wealth (and power) and the inherent danger of this kind of social interaction. While spatial, visual, and

material approaches bear witness to the prelates' economic and political power, at the same time they show the subtle play of superiority and subordination with their powerful guest. Although a certain ambiguity surrounding power relations was part of the game, the drastic contrast between two descriptions shows the potential of ritual failure even in the most orchestrated cases of host–guest relations.

In the final tenth chapter Wojtek Jezierski breaks with the case-based approach. His chapter examines a large set of metaphors of feast-like battles, *topoi*, figures of speech, visual metaphors, and associations between feasting and warfare featured in historiography and hagiography to pinpoint the referential affinities and conceptual relation between practices and notions of hostility and hospitality. By studying examples stemming both from core European areas and frontier or peripheral societies (the Latin East, the Baltic Rim, Scandinavia, etc.), Jezierski ponders what such metaphors convey about cultural ambiguity surrounding host–guest relations in the high Middle Ages. What did authors mean when they wrote that fighting was like feasting, that a battlefield was like a festive table, that enemies were like feasters, or that acts of hostility were like/unlike practices of hospitality? What do these establishments of similitude and dissimilitude disclose about the phantasmatic views of host–guest relations in the contexts in which they were articulated? In tracing the medieval elites' dark fantasies about hospitality and following phantom guests haunting aristocratic halls the author shows how the idea of *hostipitality* was an integral part of the medieval imaginary.

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Hospitalitas: A Virtue in Danger

*Semantic Observations on the Use of hospitalitas
in Latin Narrative Sources, 1000–1400*

A Scandal at Montecassino

The search for the dangers of *hospitalitas* starts in one of the most important places for Western Christianity. In his chronicle of the abbey of Montecassino, the monk and later cardinal Leo of Ostia (also known as Leo Marsicanus, 1046–1115) recounts a scandalous event in the winter of 1091. As his supplies were exhausted, the nobleman Richard of Spigno sought out the abbot of Montecassino, the famous home where Benedictine monasticism originated. Richard implored the abbot to help him out with wheat. Moved by charity and compassion, Oderisius I (1087–1105) immediately promised him help and told him where and when he could replenish his stocks. Richard, however, in his greed, persuaded Duke Raynaldus of nearby Gaeta to conspire against the monastery. Instead of being content with the allotted amount of grain, Richard wanted to take the entire castle of Fracte (today Ausonia) where the abbot had sent him. The chronicle continues:

Adveniente ergo festivitate sancte Prisce dux nefandi sceleris sub amici specie predictum castrum ingressus est. Quem nonnulli iuvenes bini ac bini demissis vultibus sequentes ab inabitantibus castrum communi hospitio recipiuntur, recepti autem non virtutis merito, sed fraudis magisterio de hospitalitate ad dominationem subito transeunt.

(Therefore, on the feast day of Saint Prisca (18 January 1098), the leader of this wicked crime entered the aforementioned castle under the guise of a friend. Some young men followed him in pairs with lowered faces and were received in the castle with the hospitality offered by the inhabitants. However, once they were received, not by virtue but by cunning and deceit, they immediately turned the hospitality into dominion.¹)

1 Leo of Ostia/Leo Marsicanus, *Chronik von Montecassino*, IV. 9, p. 473.

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Guests, Strangers, Aliens, Enemies: Ambiguities of Hospitality in the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1350, ed. by Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Kjær, CURSOR 45 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), pp. 39–73
BREPOLS PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.5.149651

Obviously, this plot was doomed to fail. The abbot first excommunicated the duke in front of Saint Benedict's tomb and then sent an army to Fracte, which, with God's help and Benedict's support, succeeded in capturing the hostile occupiers without harming anyone. A week later, Duke Raynaldus repented of his actions before the nobles of Capua, the representatives of Montecassino, and Pope Urban II. The intrigue, the deceit and the abuse of hospitality left such a strong impression on Leo that he included the whole story again, and unnecessarily, in his separate account of the consecration of Montecassino's church.²

In the context of this anthology on the ambiguities of hospitality, this story raises some interesting perspectives. First, it was based on contemporary events and the account was meant to be believable to contemporary audiences. In this way, this story differs from many fictional narratives that are the focus of interest in cultural and literary historical research on hospitality like the *Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, or the Arthurian stories.³ Situations of failed hospitality were therefore not only a literary subject but also a real threat. The account provokes the questions: how often was failed hospitality recorded in non-literary sources and how much attention did this phenomenon receive in writing?⁴

Second, as the introduction to this volume and many of its chapters argue, hospitality is intrinsically linked to uncertainty and ambiguity. Receiving a stranger, or even known guests, always comes with the possibility of abuse, deception, and other ill intentions which the Montecassino case perfectly illustrates.⁵ Leo adds another dimension of ambiguity in his carefully crafted account. When talking about the abbot's charity, he alludes to Sulpicius Severus's *Vita of St Martin*, then he quotes Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* to portray Richard as incited by the devil, before emphasizing the enormity of Richard's actions with an impressive chiasmus saying that Richard sought to repay with persecution the benignity received and the misery with impiety.⁶ This rhetoric element is a 'grammatical figure by which the order of words in one of two parallel clauses is inverted in the other' and was widely used in Ancient European and non-European Literature.⁷ The passage culminates in the formulation that Richard and his people transitioned from hospitality to domination ('de hospitalitate ad dominationem subito transeunt'). This

2 Hoffmann, 'Nachträge', p. 608.

3 Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*, pp. 13–116 discussing classical, biblical, and medieval hospitality.

4 How promising such a change of perspective can be, has been shown by Kjær, 'Food'.

5 Jezierski and others, 'Introduction', pp. 1–29; Deane, 'Hospitality', pp. 139–40; McNulty, *Hostess*, p. viii stresses the importance of the relation between hospitality and identity. Fauchon-Claudon and Le Guennec, 'Parution' who provide a working definition of hospitality; Hiltbrunner, *Gastfreundschaft*, p. 16.

6 Leo of Ostia/Leo Marsicanus, *Chronik von Montecassino*, IV, 9, p. 473: 'persecutionem pro benignitate, pro misericordia impietatem beato patri Benedicto rependere deliberavit'.

7 The definition is taken from the Oxford English Dictionary, see also Christensen, 'The Use of Chiasmus'.

powerful but enigmatic phrase perfectly describes the turning point of the narrative. Like a zeugma, it links two contradictory elements: hospitality and domination. But how can it be that the guests and not the hosts went from hospitality to domination? This sounds odd, particularly because Leo mentions that the guests have been received in the castle's guesthouse. This change of roles between hosts and guests makes the expression even more fascinating.

Eventually, this brilliant rhetorical miniature is also exceptional on a semantic level. Leo uses the term *hospitalitas* here for the first and the last time in a work which counts more than 212,000 words.⁸ This is peculiar because the chronicle contains thirty-eight other situations where words beginning with *hosp** occur. In other words, there have been many other stories about hospitable encounters. And why not? Such stories can be expected from the history of a monastery like Montecassino. It was at this place that Benedict of Nursia wrote his monastic rule imposing hospitality on the monks to emulate Christ himself.⁹ But it is only the story about the deceitful Richard where *hospitalitas* appears and only here one can find a direct connection between hospitality and danger.¹⁰ It seems as if the one word *hospitalitas* alone was linked to the perils of host–guest relationships.

Exploring the Semantics of *Hospitalitas*

All these aspects invite us to explore the semantics of hospitality, particularly the term *hospitalitas*. Unlike other terms from this word family such as *hospes* with its intriguing etymological ambiguity, the noun *hospitalitas* has received little attention from researchers.¹¹ This may be because Latin terms ending in *-tas* sound so familiar that their meaning is taken for granted. They are, however, dangerous false friends. Since many of these words represent important concepts like security, urbanity, liberty, piety or Christianity, one is easily inclined to forget the long sociolinguistic and conceptual development that these terms have undergone when their Latin counterparts *securitas*, *urbanitas*, *libertas*, *pietas*, or *christianitas* have been transferred to vernacular languages like French from where English has received it.¹² But this can lead to regrettable misunderstandings when the original meaning and its change over centuries, societies and languages are neglected.

The second, far more significant reason to reconsider the semantics of hospitality is that this concept and its linguistic manifestations belong to the

8 Leo of Ostia/Leo Marsicanus, *Chronica Casinensis* [LTA], search word 'hospitalitas'. The total word number also includes the continuations of the chronicle.

9 Benedict of Nursia, *La règle du Saint Benoît*, II. 53, pp. 610–16.

10 Leo of Ostia/Leo Marsicanus, *Chronica Casinensis* [LTA], search word *hosp**.

11 Benveniste, *Dictionary*, pp. 61–73; Derrida, 'Hostipitality', p. 13; Fleury, 'Hostis', pp. 25–28.

12 OED Online s.v. 'hospitality, n.'; Middle English Dictionary s.v. 'hospitalite'; Bon and Guerreau-Jalabert, 'pietas'; Geelhaar, *Christianitas*.

‘culturally semantically conspicuous words’ or ‘cultural keywords’ (‘kulturelle Schlüsselbegriffe’).¹³ By studying the semantics of these keywords we can not only unlock specific understandings and practices of hospitality but even more how concepts influence societies and vice versa, both on a discursive and practical level. The concept has already been identified in philosophy and literary studies as an ideal intercultural and cross-epochal subject to reflect the self-understanding of societies ‘and their foundational models such as self, nation, religion, identity, home, race, etc.’ by its semantics.¹⁴ Furthermore, it is well known that these terms exhibit ‘intercultural polysemy’, i.e., they have culture-specific usage patterns, behavioural dispositions and traditions, which in intercultural communication can lead to misunderstandings and a communication breakdown.¹⁵ And last, but not least, Jacques Derrida has discussed the inherent power relations connected to hospitality in our times by introducing the neologism *hostipitalité* (anglicized *hostipitality*) which provokes questions about the dangers of hospitality way beyond the historical setting Derrida was thinking of.¹⁶

Hospitality has received a lot of attention from literary and cultural history. In older historical research, studies on the concept of hospitality in the Middle Ages can be found to have departed from a conceptual historical background and go on to describe the transition from the unpaid hospitality of the early Middle Ages to the commercial inn system of the High and Late Middle Ages from a socio-historical perspective.¹⁷ Since the end of the 1990s, monastic hospitality has become the focus of various studies.¹⁸ The connection between social behaviour and codes like honour and hospitality has already been treated by Julie Kerr for the case of twelfth- and thirteenth-century England.¹⁹ Lately, hospitality has been increasingly researched under cultural-historical aspects like feasting, spatiality, risk, and security from the 2010s onwards.²⁰ Linguistic studies, however, mainly focused on the etymology of *hospes* without discussing *hospitalitas* at all. Even the most comprehensive and most important handbook on Medieval Latin, written by the late Peter Stotz, does not discuss *hospitalitas* but just offers a list of word forms with

13 Reeg and Simon, ‘Gastfreundschaft’, p. 16.

14 Parr and Friedrich, ‘Von Gästen’, p. 9: ‘Es zeigt sich dabei, dass die Semantik von Gast, Gastgeber und Gasträumen ein interkulturelles und epochenübergreifendes Modell zur kritischen Reflexion der Selbstreferenz von Gesellschaften, Kulturen und ihren (Be-)Gründungsmodellen wie Selbst, Nation, Religion, Identität, Haus, Rasse usw. bereitstellt’.

15 Reeg and Simon, ‘Gastfreundschaft’, p. 17.

16 Derrida, ‘Hostipitality’.

17 Peyer, *Von der Gastfreundschaft*.

18 Kerr, *Monastic Hospitality*; Berger, *Die Geschichte der Gastfreundschaft*; Fortin, ‘The Reaffirmation’.

19 Kerr, ‘The Open Door’.

20 Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*; Jezierski, ‘Convivium in terra horroris’; Jezierski and others, ‘Introduction’; Kjær, ‘Food’; Deane, ‘Hospitality’. Legal aspects have been highlighted by Sievers, ‘Gastfreundschaft’.

the root *hosp** that appear in medieval Latin sources.²¹ On the other hand, a new historical semantics has been established in Germany, France, and now also in the USA, which increasingly uses the possibilities of corpus-based, computer-assisted analysis.²² In essence, their aim is to recognize discourse formations through word usage and to achieve a higher degree of generalisability of one's statements compared to classical hermeneutic studies by no longer examining only the old familiar canon of sources, but much more broadly including sources from all genres in the search for discourse formations. In the meantime, there are word usage studies on terms such as *virtus*, *francus*, *christianitas*, or *populus christianus* in the early Middle Ages, but also on phenomena such as fatherhood.²³

Now, a comprehensive, corpus-based analysis of the medieval concept of hospitality in Europe would be a desideratum to go beyond the work of Hans Conrad Peyer from the late 1980s. The far more modest aim of this chapter, however, is to cut a swathe through the material and suggest avenues for future research. The chapter commences with a semasiological, i.e. word-centred analysis of the term *hospitalitas*, given that an understanding of the word usage itself has yet to be established. However, this is a crucial step to prevent erroneous preconceptions about the way hospitality was written and read during the period under examination. It starts already with the assumption that *hospitalitas* meant hospitality in a modern sense and that the term was the keyword for discussing hospitality. The basic question is what did *hospitalitas* mean and when, how, and why was it used by whom? And, to come back to the Montecassino case, it is worth asking if Leo's word usage corresponded to the general word usage, the mainstream semantics, or was it an exception? How often did medieval authors write about hospitality using *hospitalitas*? Was the word use and the idea of hospitality so stable over the centuries, as Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane suggests, or can we find changes?²⁴ Moreover, are these changes related to the semantic connection between *hospitalitas* and the abuse of and the threat to hospitality that we have found in the chronicle of Montecassino?

To answer these questions this chapter offers a multi-layered approach. The next section offers broad lexicological and etymological observations, discussing the word use in Antiquity and examining medieval encyclopaedias and dictionaries to capture the written condensates of and entry points to a (discursively) open understanding of the concept. This leads to the overview of the *interpretatio christiana* of the ancient concept of hospitality in Late Antiquity which was fundamental to the meaning of *hospitalitas* within the

21 Stotz, *Handbuch*.

22 Jussen and Rohmann, 'Historical Semantics'.

23 Schwandt, *Virtus*; Predatsch, *Migrationen*, pp. 235–80; Geelhaar, *Christianitas*; Geelhaar, 'Talking'; Geelhaar, 'Das christliche Volk'; Chevalyere and Schiel, eds, *Work Semantics*; Geelhaar and others, 'Historical Semantics', pp. 40–47 for paternity by Nicolas Perreux.

24 Deane, 'Hospitality', p. 139.

corpus of texts under scrutiny. According to the chronological scope of this volume and in line with the aim to examine non-literary texts (though the line is often blurred) the corpus selected for this study contains 480 texts by 350 authors from around 1000 to 1400 CE with slightly more than 12 million words.²⁵ The texts are mainly annals, chronicles, reports, and biographies, but also hagiographies, exempla literature and other religious-motivated stories. In other words, they represent a field that can give us insight into more pragmatic senses of *hospitalitas* in historical contexts and practical situations. This section also highlights a major shift in the word use from the late twelfth century onwards that needs to be explained in the last part of this chapter which asks for the possible reasons for this change. The penultimate section thus explores the question of how the changing patterns of *hospitalitas* may have been motivated by the accelerating inner Christianization of the Latin West in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In its conclusions the chapter discusses the connection between *hospitalitas* and the ambiguities of hospitality.

A couple of words about corpus building for this study are in place. Most of the texts studied could be retrieved in a digital format thanks to digital archives like the *Latin Text Archive*, the *Corpus Corporum*, and the *Archivio della Latinità Italiana del Medioevo*.²⁶ Some forty-two texts, however, mainly from Britain, needed to be pre-processed to be included into the corpus that covers most parts of continental Latin Europe.²⁷ Building historical corpora comes along with many challenges like dating issues or authorship attributions that should not be left unmentioned here. For the chronology, it was important to attribute a specific date to each text so that it can be allocated to a quarter century. As this interpretation needs to be done very pragmatically to establish a larger list of texts, misattributions are possible, but currently unavoidable since reliable historical corpora for specific times, genres, and regions are not yet available. This is particularly regrettable as many works from the late Middle Ages still need to be digitally edited to overcome the preponderance of edited early and high medieval works. These challenges notwithstanding, the established corpus allows a statistical approach towards word frequencies and patterns of use that is relevant and sufficiently reliable.

²⁵ The whole list of texts will be published separately as an online appendix.

See: <https://doi.org/10.1484/A.28343141> or under 'Media' at <https://www.brepols.net/products/IS-9782503610924-1>.

²⁶ See Online Source Databases.

²⁷ See the online appendix. These texts are marked as 'CNT' in the table of texts and hereafter in the footnotes.

Lexical Findings: From Etymologies to Dictionaries

In terms of lexis, the term *hospitalitas* represents the substantification of the adjective *hospitalis*, which in turn derives from the noun *hospes*. This way of forming words from an adjective by adding the suffix *-tas* was popular and common in both Antiquity and the Middle Ages to express abstract qualities and general abstractions as is the case with terms like *pietas* or *civitas*.²⁸ The word *hospitalitas* therefore means the fact of being hospitable. It is first documented in Cicero's *De officiis*, II. 64 where Marcus Tullius remembers the praise of hospitality by Theophrast, a Greek rhetorician and Aristotle's successor as the principal of his academy.²⁹ Cicero discusses the concept of hospitality as a special form of generosity that was a social and more specifically aristocratic norm and virtue concerning worthy guests. By referencing Theophrast, Cicero attributes a lengthy historical presence and a Greek provenance to his conceptualization of hospitality, thereby bestowing a degree of nobility upon the concept. In doing so, he is deliberately omitting the fact that Greek literary history has a much more complicated relationship with hospitality.³⁰

Since *hospitalitas* is semantically indirectly connected to *hospes* the question is now if *hospitalitas* has inherited the semantic ambiguity of its root term. Without going into the complexities of Indo-European linguistics, it can be stated that *hospes* is composed of *hosti* and *pet-* or *pot-*.³¹ The first term is the root of *hostis* which refers to the stranger, the pilgrim, as it already appeared in the ancient Roman Twelve Tables in the fifth century BCE,³² and which since that time has experienced a deterioration in meaning, in which the semantics shifted from 'stranger' to 'enemy'. The second term is the root of *potis* which stands for the 'powerful', the one who is in a position or capacity to do something. This also explains why *hospes* has been used in Latin to denote both the guest and the host — an ambiguity that has survived in Romance languages to this day. The lack of linguistic differentiation points to the semantic equivalence of both roles in the situation of meeting.

In his reading of Émile Benveniste, Jacques Derrida transferred this ambiguity to the twice-derived noun hospitality in order to create the linguistic and intellectual neologism *hostipitality*.³³ Philippe Fleury, however,

28 Stotz, *Handbuch*, VI § 50.

29 Cicero, *De officiis*, 2, 64: 'Recte etiam a Theophrasto est laudata hospitalitas; est enim, ut mihi quidem videtur, valde decorum patere domus hominum illustrium hospitibus illustribus, idque etiam rei publicae est ornameto, homines externos hoc liberalitatis genere in urbe nostra non egere'. About Theophrast see p. 415 in the edition.

30 Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*, pp. 13–40.

31 Fleury, 'Hostis', pp. 25–28; Benveniste, *Dictionary*, pp. 61–73; Vaan, *Etymological Dictionary*, does not mention the meaning 'enemy' for *hospes* and assumes that *hostis* has been developed from an earlier abstract noun for 'exchange'. See also Walde, *Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, pp. 660–61, who does also not mention any semantic ambiguity.

32 Fleury, 'Hostis', p. 28.

33 Derrida, 'Hostipitality', p. 3.

draws attention to the fact that already Cicero had to explain to the reader of his *De officiis* that the forefathers used *hostis* for what is called *peregrinus*, i.e. stranger or pilgrim, nowadays.³⁴ The use of *hostis* as stranger and guest was already archaic, especially, three generations later, when Vergil described his eponymous hero Eneas this way while parting from Dido. Around 400 years later, commentators like Servius needed to explain to the readers of the *Aeneid* that ‘nostri hostes pro hospitibus dixerunt’ (our [forefathers] had spoken of *hostes* when they meant guests).³⁵ From Fleury’s observations we can conclude that semantic disambiguation took place in the crisis-ridden first century BC, when in the fights between Cicero and Catilina *hostis* was mainly used to designate the external enemy in distinction to the internal enemy, the *inimicus*.³⁶

This can also be seen in the works of the so-called Latin grammarians of Late Antiquity. Agroecius in his *De orthographia* from c. 450 CE demonstrated the passive and active meaning of certain Latin nouns by presenting *vector*, *sacer*, and *hospes* which he briefly described as ‘the one who receives and who is received’ (et qui recipit et qui recipitur).³⁷ His definition was repeated directly by Bede in his work with the same name at the beginning of the eighth century. Isidore of Seville, however, slightly changed the wording in his *Differentiae* but kept the same idea.³⁸ He also stayed consistent in his use of *hostis* as the enemy which can be seen from his far more famous work, the *Etymologies*. Here, however, he did not provide definitions neither for *hospes* nor for *hostis*.³⁹

The separation of both notions — *hospes* as stranger and guest, *hostis* as stranger and enemy — started in Cicero’s times and was complete when post-Roman Europe evolved.⁴⁰ Medieval dictionaries kept the definition of the *hospes* as the one who receives and who is received. Later dictionaries like the *Liber glossarium* from the ninth century provided Isidore’s definition,⁴¹

34 Fleury, ‘Hostis’, p. 28, quoting Cicero, *De officiis*, I. 37: ‘Hostis enim apud maiores nostros is dicebatur quem nunc peregrinum dicimus’.

35 Fleury, ‘Hostis’, pp. 28–29, quoting Servius, *In Vergilii Aeneide comentarii*, IV. 424 [CC], p. 540:.

36 Fleury, ‘Hostis’, pp. 28–29.

37 Agroecius, *De orthographia* [CC], line 60–61 as one example from the corpus of *Grammatici Latini*, ed. by Heinrich Keil, now online available on the *Corpus Corporum*.

38 Isidore, *Differentiae* [CC], I. 160: ‘Nam hospitium tunc vocatur, cum aut aliquem recipimus, aut cum ab aliquo ipsi recipimur; unde et qui venit, et ad quem venit, hospes dicitur’.

39 Isidore, *Etymologiae* [CC], xv. 3 only discusses the origin of the term *hospitium* from the Greek: ‘xenodochium: Hospitium sermo Graecus est, ubi quis ad tempus hospitali iure inhabitat, et iterum inde transiens migrat’.

40 Fleury, ‘Hostis’, p. 26. This separation continued later in the vernacular languages like Old French.

41 *Liber glossarium* [LG], ‘HO 155 hospes’. This work of Visigothic origin was widely known in the Carolingian empire. It contains an earlier entry HO 154 giving *amicus* for *hospes*, but the source is unknown.

becoming itself one of the main sources for Papias who, around the year 1050, reused the definition in his *Elementarium doctrinae (e)rudimentum*.⁴² The *Lexicon Monacense anonymum* from the twelfth century contained the words *hospes*, *hospitalitas*, and *hostis* as a glossary but kept them alphabetically apart, without providing any information about their meaning,⁴³ whereas Osbern of Gloucester in the twelfth century did not even mention these lemmas in his *Derivationes*.⁴⁴

Generally inspired by Osbern's work, the grammarian Huguccione (or Uguccio) da Pisa published his *Derivationes magnae* later in the same century, where he discussed *hospes* at length and provided explanations on its etymology.⁴⁵ However, his explanations were based on a fundamental error. Since the letter 'h' at the beginning of the word was probably no longer in use in the Italian of his time and was not spoken, he regarded *hostium* only as another spelling for *ostium*, i.e. entrance or door.⁴⁶ This is explained by the context of his remarks, in which he explains the word field around *os* (mouth). His explanation of *ostium* would not have made grammatical sense, since *hostium* is the genitive plural of *hostis*. However, the etymologically incorrect derivation seemed plausible as it imagined the situation of a guest arriving at the doorstep of the host. Apart from this telling misunderstanding, Huguccione also repeated the traditional definition.

Up to this point, we can already assume that the ambiguity of *hospes* was abandoned already in Late Antiquity and that it was not remembered later. In this sense, the etymological research by Benveniste and others is helpful for looking back at the origins of this term but it does not tell us anything about its actual use.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the lack of a lexicographical definition makes it impossible to determine ultimately whether the ambiguity was

42 On Papias see Stotz, *Handbuch*, II § 2.6 and Cowie, *The Oxford History of English Lexicography*, I, p. 30. The manuscript BnF, MS lat. 17162, fol. 90^r, of Papias, *Elementarium doctrinae erudimentum*, written between 1200 and 1225 contains the following definition: 'Hospes est et qui uenit et ad quem uenitur ad hospitandum peregrinus hic et hec hospes hospitis facit licet hec hospita dicatur'.

43 *Lexicon Monacense* [CC], pp. 131–37.

44 Mai, *Classicorum auctorum e vaticanis codicibus editorum. Tom. VIII, Thesaurus*, pp. 265–77.

45 Huguccio da Pisa, *Derivationes* [CC], H, H 61: 'Item hostium componitur cum peto et dicitur hic et hec hospes -tis, et qui recipit et qui recipitur, quasi hostipes, idest hostium petens, quia hostio pedem inferat. Antiquitus hospes qui recipiebat et hospes qui recipiebatur ueniebant ad hostium et ponebant pedem in eo et firmabant quod unus non deciperet alium, unde et qui recipit et qui recipitur hospes dicitur; uterque enim, pedem in hostio ponendo, amicitie pactum firmabant. firmabant. Quod autem dicitur hospes quasi hostium petens ethymologia est. Unde facilis, benignus, aptus et qui adventum amicorum non subterfugit sed eis se libenter ad hostium exponit hospitalis homo dicitur'.

46 Stotz, *Handbuch*, VII § 118–19, particularly § 119.4. It is a double confusion because *hostium* was used for *ostium* whereas here the etymology was turned around once again by explaining *hostium* through *ostium*.

47 This can be confirmed by initial findings on the use of *hospes* in the corpus of this study. Nevertheless, this aspect deserves further investigation.

transferred to the term *hospitalitas*. However, since Cicero was the one who both first used the word and at the same time had to remind the Romans of the ambiguity of *hospes* in the first place, it seems very unlikely that there was such a transfer of ambiguity to a derived noun. The absence of a clear definition raises the question of whether further information about *hospitalitas* can be found elsewhere.

An answer to this offers the chronologically latest work to be consulted here, which follows the ordering principle of the medieval lexica. About 1450 an anonymous author created a collection of memorable quotations, the so-called *Rapularius*. He recorded three different sayings about the *hospes* — playing with the word's ambiguity:

Hospes. Post sepe dies piscis vilescit et hospes. More domus vivas, quod iubet hospes, agas! Quod iubet hospes, agas, si non vis tollere plagas!

(After three days the fish starts to stink as does the guest. You live according to the rules of the house, you do what the host (or: the guest) orders. You do what the guest (or: the host) wants if you do not want to bring plagues on yourself.⁴⁸)

The last two proverbs prove again the double meaning of *hospes* and how both roles had a certain power over each other. The equation of guests and fish is also already attested in the twelfth century,⁴⁹ whereas the idea that guests should not stay longer than three days goes back to early medieval Benedictine monasticism.⁵⁰ But the *Rapularius* also contains another entry that brings us finally to *hospitalitas* that was absent in the dictionaries between the age of Isidore to the fifteenth century.⁵¹ The entry H 148 has the title *Hospitalitatis exhortacio*, the exhortation of hospitality. It only contains quotations from Ambrose of Milan's *De officiis*, book II, cap. 21.⁵² The bishop of Milan (339–397 CE) wrote this moral treatise for his clerics in 388/389. As the title already reveals, Ambrose subjected Cicero's *De officiis* to a Christian relecture and adapted the rules of conduct to Christian moral and virtue teaching.⁵³ This brings us back to Cicero, but this time to the late antique *interpretatio christiana* of ancient models of hospitality.

But Ambrose of Milan was not the only one to have studied Cicero's *De officiis*. The so-called 'Christian Cicero',⁵⁴ Lactantius (c. 250–325 CE), had already discussed Cicero's statements on hospitality as an aristocratic virtue

48 *Rapularius*, p. 415; H 93.

49 Baldric of Dol, *Epistola* [LTA].

50 Sievers, 'Gastfreundschaft', pp. 1737–39.

51 Huguccio da Pisa, *Derivationes*, T 54, he talks about the tessera that could be a tuba to announce the coming of the enemy in war or the arrival of a guest ('tessera etiam accipitur pro signo hospitalitatis').

52 *Rapularius*, p. 436.

53 Döpp, *Lexikon*, p. 24.

54 Kendeffy, 'Lactantius', pp. 56–92.

at great length while presenting a Christian alternative.⁵⁵ Unsurprisingly, the rhetorician Lactantius refuted Cicero's ideas only by arguing on a philosophical level to beat the old philosopher at his own game. He quoted Cicero's passage about the praise of hospitality by Theophrast, agreeing with the old philosopher that 'praecipua igitur uirtus hospitalitas' (hospitality is therefore a special virtue).⁵⁶ However, he fundamentally criticized Cicero's ethical principles. There are no good deeds to be seen in acting generously and hospitably only towards suitable people (vi. 12. 6). Such an attitude was calculating and self-serving. Lactantius therefore also asked: 'velisque te iustum, et humanum, et hospitalem videri, cum studeas utilitati tuae' (Would you expect to look just, humane and hospitable when pursuing your own advantage?).⁵⁷ True justice and human greatness, he says, can only be found in selfless acts for those who truly need them. Therefore, 'Non enim iusti et sapientis viri domus illustribus debet patere, sed humilibus et abjectis' (A just and wise man's house ought to be open not to the distinguished but to the poor and desperate).⁵⁸

Three generations later, the situation had changed drastically in favour of the Christians. Bishop Ambrose of Milan was even able to successfully force Emperor Theodosius into a public act of penance for the massacre at Thessalonica in 390 CE. A year earlier, the bishop had published his Christian code of conduct named *De officiis* to convey his ideas to the clergy of his church. Like Lactantius, Ambrose treated hospitality in the context of moral philosophy and good conduct. In contrast to the latter, however, Ambrose connected hospitality with the Old and New Testament. In both parts of the Bible, hospitality and host–guest relations play famously a prominent role.⁵⁹ Ambrose referred to the hospitality of Abraham and Lot (Genesis 18 and 19) to show that hospitable behaviour will receive the highest possible reward. He also referred to the word of Christ (Matthew 25. 35–36) where Christ presents himself as a stranger, prisoner, a poor man, a pilgrim. According to this, it is the duty of every Christian to receive such a stranger, prisoner, or poor man to receive Christ in him.⁶⁰

For Ambrose, hospitality was a Christian norm and a personal virtue. He went as far as to call it a public expression of human behaviour ('publica species humanitatis')⁶¹ and connected it directly with the duty of being

55 Lactantius, *Divinarum Institutionum libri septem* [CC] vi. 12, for the Latin version. The English translation used here is Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*.

56 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, vi. 12. 5.

57 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, vi. 12. 12.

58 Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, vi. 12. 6.

59 For hospitality in the Bible and its exegesis, see Ebach, 'Gast'.

60 Ambrose, *De officiis* [CC], ii. 21.

61 Ambrose, *De officiis* [CC], ii. 21: 'Est enim publica species humanitatis, ut peregrinus hospitio non egeat, suscipiatur officiose, pateat advenienti janua' also a bit later: 'In officiis autem hospitalibus omnibus quidem humanitas impercienda est, iustis autem uberior

Decet igitur hospitalem esse, benignum, iustum, non alieni cupidum; immo de suo iure cedentem potius aliqua, si fuerit lacessitus, quam aliena iura pulsantem; fugitantem litium, abhorrentem a iurgiis, redimentem concordiam et tranquillitatis gratiam.

So it is proper to be hospitable, kind, just, not greedy for another's possessions; indeed, he would rather yield something of his own right, if he is provoked, rather than to strike against another's rights; to avoid lawsuits, to shun quarrels, to buy back peace and the favor of tranquillity.⁶²

Hospitality should not be practised for personal gain or display, that is why Ambrose considered hospitality to be a morally superior form of generosity.⁶³ This leads to the practical aspect. Ambrose admonished his clergy to refrain from a boastful, selfish form of generosity, but also from inhumane avarice. Guests are to be received with honour, a hospitable table is to be laid for them, which also means that the commandment of generosity also refers to meals.⁶⁴ On the other hand, as a host, one should keep the right measure and not overburden oneself and the guest. Two aspects are remarkable: first, Ambrose — as well as Lactantius — only addressed the possible host and not the guest. Second, since it is assumed that guests are mainly pilgrims, poor or otherwise needy persons they do not seem to pose a threat to the host. Possible scenarios of failed hospitality are not discussed. Since the *De officiis* served the educational purpose of encouraging others to show hospitality as a Christian virtue, it would probably also have been counterproductive to promote the reservations and fears of the addressees. More than eleven centuries later, the *Rapularius* recalled some passages from this treatise, which is only here given the title 'Exhortation to Hospitality'. The anonymous compiler included the required tasks of hospitality, the personal attitude, the divine reward to be expected and the admonition to act moderately.⁶⁵ In this respect, the *Rapularius* captured the essential statements of the Church Father and indicated what — according to the reading in the fifteenth century — should be remembered and observed.

These observations about the philosophical and theological discussions highlight the Christianisation of the formerly classical concept of hospitality

deferenda honorificencia'. The term 'humanitas' could be translated as humanity here. I have deliberately avoided this translation to avoid confusions between late antique and current conceptions of humanity.

62 Ambrose, *De officiis* [CC], II. 21.

63 Ambrose, *De officiis* [CC], II. 21: 'Largitatis enim duo sunt genera: unum liberalitatis, alterum prodigae effusionis. Liberale est hospitio recipere, nudum uestire, redimere captiuos, non habentes sumptu iuuare; prodigum est sumptuosius effluere conuiuui et uino plurimo'.

64 Ambrose, *De officiis* [CC], II. 21.

65 Ambrose, *De officiis* [CC], II. 21.

in Late Antiquity and that the origins of the Christianised concept were still correctly remembered more than 1000 years later. This alone hints at the dominance of the Christian concept where hospitality was not only linked to humanity, but also to charity as the principal theological virtue in Christianity. But instead of delving further into all the biblical passages and the subsequent theological discussions,⁶⁶ it seems more important here to recall the meaning of hospitality in the context of early monasticism.

The already mentioned Benedictine rule, written by Benedict of Nursia around 540 for the monastery of Montecassino, contains the lengthy chapter 53 entitled *De hospitibus suscipiendis*. The chapter starts directly with the word of Christ that Ambrose already discussed. Thus, the rule states that every guest should be treated as Christ himself. Also, the duty of the congruent honourable reception reappears.⁶⁷ The *Regula Benedicti* continues with several specific instructions about how hospitality should be offered without disturbing the monastery's daily life. This rule and therefore this concept of monastic hospitality had a tremendous impact on European history, because Benedictine monasteries would become one of the main providers of hospitality over the centuries to come.⁶⁸

More interestingly from the vantage point of *hospitalitas* is that the concept of hospitality is not called this way in the chapter although the term could have been used here. In chapter 61 on the permanent admission of foreign monks into one's own monastery, *The Rule* speaks literally of these monks being admitted after a period of hospitality ('tempore hospitalitatis'), during which others can form a picture of their way of life.⁶⁹ The same lexicographical observation can be made for Ambrose where he used the term only once in its nominative singular while connecting it with other terms on other occasions: 'pro hospitalitatis mercede' (*De officiis*, II. 21. 104), 'propter hospitalitatis adfectum' (*De officiis*, II. 21. 105), and 'hospitalitatis gratia' (*De officiis*, II. 21. 107). This word use appears to have been common and understandable. It also shows, however, that existing and even very elaborate concepts like hospitality could have been addressed directly through such nouns like *hospitalitas*, but more in an indirect way. It seems that such concepts have been rarely discussed directly in form of a single reifying term; this might be more representative of a very modern way of conceptual thinking.⁷⁰ It will therefore come as no surprise that this premodern linguistic use of conceptual terms is now also visible in the corpus of narrative texts.

66 For example: Luke 22. 30; John 13. 20; Romans 12. 13, Hebrews 13. 12; I Timothy 3. 2 and 5. 10; Titus 1. 7–9; Revelation 3. 20–22.

67 Benedict of Nursia, *La règle du Saint Benoît*, II, 53, p. 610: 'Omnes supervenientes hospites tamquam Christus suscipiantur, quia ipse dicturus est: Hospis fui et suscepistis me. Et omnibus congruus honor exhibeatur, maxime domesticis fidei et peregrinis'.

68 Kerr, *Monastic Hospitality*, pp. 198–201; Berger, *Die Geschichte der Gastfreundschaft*, p. 384.

69 Benedict of Nursia, *La règle du Saint Benoît*, II, 61, p. 638.

70 This is also the case for concept like Christendom, see Geelhaar, *Christianitas*.

Semantics of *Hospitalitas*: Corpus Observations

A statistical analysis of the corpus helps to gain a broader understanding of the use of *hospitalitas*. This approach starts with observations on the lexical field of hospitality, and it will then turn to the distribution of *hospitalitas* occurrences before exploring the same distribution according to cases. This leads to the final analysis of syntactical patterns which includes co-occurring words to see how the use of the term changes in the four centuries under scrutiny.

The lexical field can be captured by searching for all words containing the string ‘hosp*’ in the LiLa Knowledge Graph, a lexical meta-database for Latin.⁷¹ In total, fifty-nine different lemmata can be found, i.e. the canonical form of a set of words that functions as the dictionary form. Next to obvious entries like the nouns *hospes*, *hospitissa*, *hospitium*, verbs like *hospitare*, adverbs like *hospitaliter* are rather surprising ones like *cohospes*, *dehospito*, or *hospiticia* and its antonyms, the extremely rare adjective *inhospitalis* and the noun *inhospitalitas*.⁷² The last term actually appears only once in Otto von Freising’s *Chronica de duabus civitatibus*, when the bishop copied the Sibylline predictions about the arrival of the Messiah and his fate on earth from Saint Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*.⁷³ Apparently, the negation of hospitality in this manner played no role when talking of hospitality.⁷⁴

This lexical diversity points to a functional differentiation and adaptation to the ever-changing situations of talking about hospitality which can be considered as a sign of the fluidity of the concept itself. However, not even half of these lemmata occur in the present corpus or beyond.⁷⁵ Among these only *hospitium*, *hospes*, *hospitare*, *hospitale*, *hospitalis*, *hospita*, and *hospitalarius* occur

71 See [https://lila-erc.eu/query/ lemma search hosp* and Base-of search for hospes](https://lila-erc.eu/query/lemma%20search%20hosp%20%2A). The asterisk * after *hosp* stands for all possible endings, like *hospitalis*, *hospicium*, *hospitium*, etc., thus also including different spelling with c or t in the middle of the word. The word *cohospes* comes from Late Antiquity and means the fellow-guest, while *dehospito* means to expropriate and belongs into that branch of the semantic field where *hospes* stands for a settler. *Hospiticia* signifies the murderer of the guest. It maybe even a made-up word by one author, and thus in any way related to the murdering of a guest as a real event. The ninth-century papal librarian Anastasius Bibliothecarius used the word to describe the goddess Diana in his commentary on the seventh oecumenical council in Constantinople. See Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Interpretatio Synodi VII generalis* (879), actio 8, 22, [CC], 494D: ‘Ubi debacchationes Veneris, et sacra mysteria Cereris, atque Dianae hospiticia?’ As a so-called hapax legomenon in the whole CC it can be discarded from the search for the dangers of hospitality.

72 A list of these lemmas can be found in the online appendix to this volume.

73 Otto of Freising, *Chronica*, [LTA], II, 5, p. 72 and Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* [CC], XVIII, 23, 2, p. 299: ‘Ad sitim acetum et ad cibumfel dederunt, inhospitalitatis hanc ministrabant Domino mensam’ (For thirst they have given him vinegar, and for food gall: this inhospitable meal they have prepared for the Lord).

74 The CC contains thirty-five occurrences of *inhospitalitas* in 173 million words while fourteen of those are directly connected to the Sibylline predictions.

75 Several lemmata could be found neither in CC nor LTA.

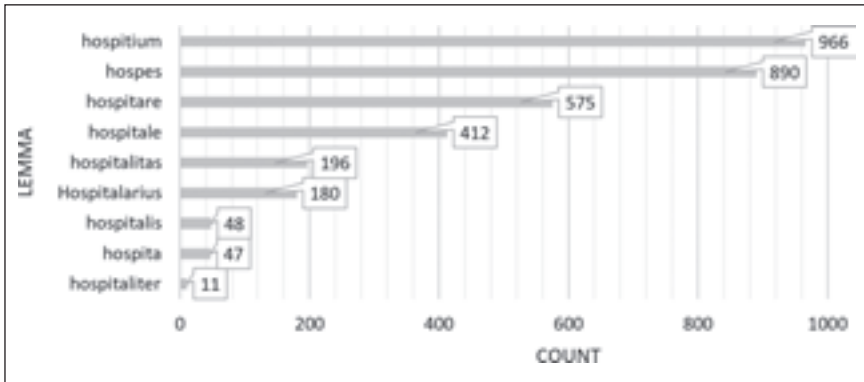


Figure 2.1. Occurrences of the most frequent terms in absolute numbers.

more than ten times in a corpus of twelve million words. In total, there are 3354 occurrences of words from the word family *hospes*. The number drops to 3022 (or 0.024%) if all words referring to the military orders like *Hospitalarius* or *Hospitularius* are discarded as they do not contribute to the understanding of *hospitalitas*. Figure 2.1 shows the repartition of the occurrences in absolute numbers. The abstract noun *hospitalitas* is among the most frequent terms, but it is found in the lower ranks. This observation, again, calls for caution to focus less on abstracts for a history of medieval hospitality and more on syntactical formulations in which practices rather become visible.

The low frequency of words belies the fact that the vocabulary of hospitality was basically common and widespread. On average, two-thirds of all texts studied here contain vocabulary on hospitality. Almost 80 per cent of all authors used some element of this vocabulary at least once. Among those who wrote particularly often about hospitality are Matthew Paris (*Chronica majora*, 1258, 243 hits), Jacob of Voragine (*Legenda aurea*, 1264, 117 hits), Orderic Vitalis (*Historia ecclesiastica*, 1141, 112 hits), Caesarius of Heisterbach (*Dialogus miraculorum*, 1223, 111 hits), Salimbene de Adam (*Cronica*, 1288, 92 hits), and Saxo Grammaticus (*Gesta Danorum*, 1208, 81 hits). This frequency and distribution indicate the ubiquity of hospitable encounters on the one hand and minor relevance as a subject on the other. All this points to a normal social practice that gave little cause for discussion or dispute.

When we now focus only on *hospitalitas* we see that seventy of 350 authors used the term in seventy-two out of 480 works. There are only 196 occurrences in the complete corpus, and more than one half of these can be attributed to eleven authors alone (101 of 196 hits). These are Matthew Paris (22 hits), Caesarius of Heisterbach (17), Saxo Grammaticus (13), Helmold of Bosau (8), Roger of Wendover (7), William of Tyre (7), Salimbene de Adam (6), William of Malmesbury (6), John Giles of Zamora (5), Rudolf of St Trond (5), and Orderic Vitalis (5). Some of these authors had written long works which may explain some higher occurrences, but a compelling

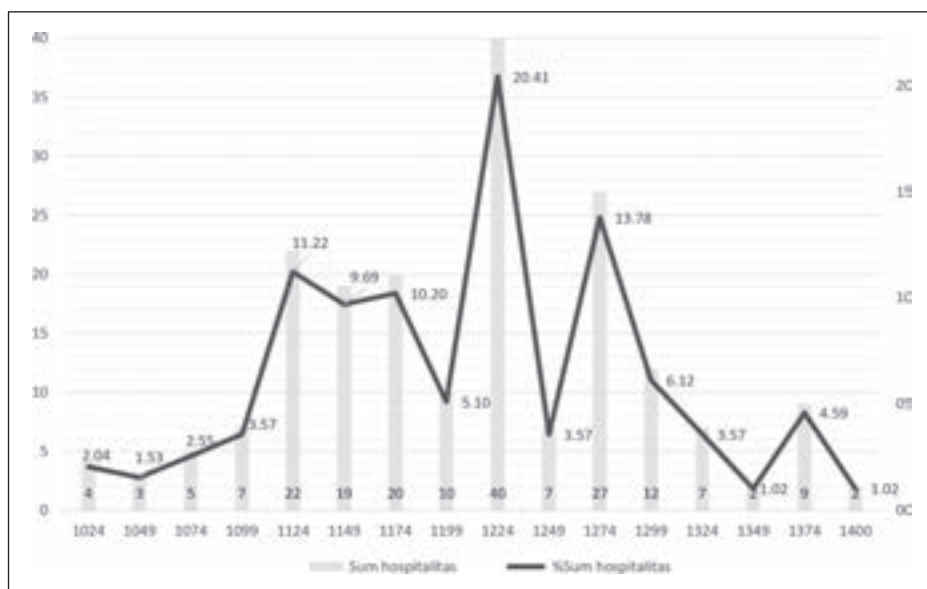


Figure 2.2. Occurrences of *hospitalitas* in quarter centuries from 1000 to 1400; each year marks the end of each quarter century; absolute number in columns; percentage based on the totality of all *hospitalitas* instances in the corpus and presented as a line. Y-axis left: total number of hits; Y-axis right: percentage of hits.

pattern is hardly recognizable. These authors had written quite different texts under very different circumstances and with different intentions from the first half of the twelfth to the end of the thirteenth century. It therefore seems unlikely that a major historical event like the First Crusade had triggered or shaped the use of *hospitalitas* although this seems not to be farfetched if the chronological distribution comes into play.

Figure 2.2 displays the distribution of all 196 occurrences of *hospitalitas* from 1000 to 1400 in quarter century steps. The lower axis of the diagram refers to the last year of each quarter century, the upper axis to the right refers to the absolute numbers, and the upper axis to the left to the percentages based on the totality of all *hospitalitas* occurrences. The number of occurrences rises with the twelfth century and attains its peak at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The apparent drop in the second quarter of the thirteenth century may be the result of missing texts for this period as only eleven texts could be found compared to sixteen works for the first quarter and twenty-three for the third quarter. However, the use decreases towards the end of the fourteenth century. In view of this distribution, Leo of Ostia's use still seems to belong to the first phase, which has been replaced by a second phase from 1100 until 1350 before a third phase started. Whether and to what extent word usage has changed on a semantic level can now only be determined by evaluating the semantic features of all occurrences.

By shifting the focus towards the semantic features, the distribution of cases come into play because in an inflectional language such as Latin the case provides information about the syntactic and semantic word use. The distributional diagram (figure 2.3) shows that *hospitalitas* was mainly used in the genitive, accusative, and ablative. Far less represented are occurrences of the dative and nominative. This is of importance insofar as the term was rarely the subject and agent of a sentence.⁷⁶ Instead, it was mostly used as an object or attribute. This is particularly the case when *hospitalitas* is syntactically connected to another noun or adjective, for instance *gratia hospitalitatis* (appearing 23 times), *officium* (7), *beneficium* (3), *lex* (3), *praecipuus* (3) *norma* (2), *virtus*, *caritas* (2), *necessaria* (2), or *bonum* (2).⁷⁷ In such cases, both are possible: either the word in the genitive describes the second noun, as in the case of *caritas hospitalitatis*, or the second word emphasizes a certain aspect of its syntactic companion, as in the case of *leges hospitalitatis*. The special cases *gratia* and *causa* occur both as nouns in the ablative and as so-called improper prepositions ('*hospitalitatis gratiam sectantur*'⁷⁸ vs. '*hospitalitatis gratia suscipiens*'⁷⁹). However, the sentence structures and the inflection of *gratia* indicate that it should be mostly understood as 'favour'. Other syntactical constellations are ruled by a verb or an adjective, meaning that the verb or adjective requires a certain case. Thus, the verb *inmemor* (being forgetful) requires the genitive, and the verb *secto* (to strive) the accusative. The adjectives *praecipuus*, *praecleara*, *praeditus*, and *insignis* are followed by the ablative. Consequently, the distribution according to cases highlight the use of *hospitalitas* as an object or an attribute for another object in more than 75 per cent of all the cases. As a subject does *hospitalitas* appear only thirteen times from which it is nine times in a passive voice (e.g. '*hospitalitas abbreviata est*'⁸⁰). All in all, the occurring syntactical constellations clearly show that *hospitalitas* was perceived as something that was talked about or mentioned indirectly but had the quality of being an abstract entity of its own contrary to other morphologically similar terms like *christianitas*.⁸¹

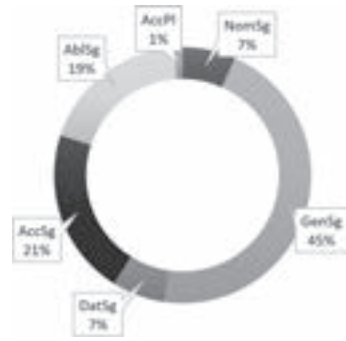


Figure 2.3. Distribution of *hospitalitas* according to grammatical cases.

⁷⁶ Schwandt, *Virtus*, pp. 198–200; Jezierski, 'Politics of Emotion', pp. 119–20.

⁷⁷ All findings are based on the analysis that is published in the publisher's online appendix to this volume.

⁷⁸ Helmold, *Chronica* [LTA], ch. 47.

⁷⁹ William of Malmesbury, *De antiquitate* [CNT], ch. 80/81.

⁸⁰ Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* [CNT], v, p. 199.

⁸¹ This term could lose its quality as an entity and become a simple adjective for the related term due to a speciality in Latin grammar where a term ending on *-itas* in its genitive can be used as an adjective. See Geelhaar, *Christianitas*, p. 236.

Table 2.1. Common verbs with *hospitalitas*.

Verbs (positive)	Freq.	Verbs (negative)	Freq.
<i>exhibeo</i> – to show	21	<i>inmemor</i> – being forgetful	4
<i>secto</i> – to strive	8	<i>subtraho</i> – to subtract	3
<i>suscipio</i> – to entertain	6	<i>violo</i> – to violate	2
<i>dedo</i> – to yield	5	<i>obliviscor</i> – to forget	2
<i>sustineo</i> – to support	4	<i>neglego</i> – to neglect	1
<i>recipio</i> – to receive	4	<i>nego</i> – to negate	1
<i>prosequi</i> – to pursue	3	<i>murmuro</i> – to murmur	1
<i>praebeo</i> – to offer	2	<i>interdico</i> – to forbid	1
(<i>in</i>) <i>servio</i> – to serve	2		
<i>amministro</i> – to administer	2		
<i>insisto</i> – to insist	2		

The last aspect is supported by the verbal collocations with *hospitalitas*. The list in Table 2.1 shows the main positive verbs (without *sum* – to be) and the main negative verbs directly related to *hospitalitas*. The positive verbs are much more frequent than the negative ones. The verb *exhibeo* (to display) particularly stands out: it can be found in different constellations like *exhibenda hospitalitate*, *hospitalitatem exhibere*, *hospitalitatis beneficium* [or *gratiam*] *exhibere*. More negative constellations include various neglects of hospitality, such as *hospitalitatis inmemores* or *neglectis legibus hospitalitatis*. Outright negative constellations are extremely rare like *hospitalitatis sacra violare* which can be translated freely as to violate the sacred hospitality. It appears twice in the whole corpus, both times used similarly by Saxo Grammaticus in his *Gesta Danorum* which will be further explored below.

More interesting than the verbs' polarity are two other features of the positive list. Except for *recipio* (to receive), all verbs clearly name actions by the host, the agency of the guests is almost entirely absent. The second feature is even more compelling: these verbs hardly contribute to concretizing the understanding of *hospitalitas*. They only show that *hospitalitas* was provided in some form, otherwise the formulations remain very vague. No clear picture emerges of what constitutes hospitality or if the notion changed. The question now is whether more can be said about *hospitalitas* through co-occurring words?

The list in Table 2.2 provides all the words that appear at least ten times with *hospitalitas*. These forty-one words contain evidently some of the verbs like *exhibeo*. Differences between Table 2.1 and Table 2.2, e.g. for the frequency of *suscipio*, can be explained by the fact that Table 2.2 contains all words from the sentences with *hospitalitas*. Christian Latin vocabulary such as grace, church, holy, God, abbot, charity, poor, order, office, monastery, monk, brother, pilgrim dominates, which is hardly surprising in a corpus that

Table 2.2. Most frequent co-occurring words (lemmatized) with *hospitalitas* within a sentence.

Lemma	Freq.	Lemma	Freq.
<i>hospitalitas</i> , noun – hospitality	196	<i>dico</i> , verb – to say	15
<i>omnis</i> , adjective – everyone	43	<i>suscipio</i> , verb – to support	15
<i>gratia</i> , noun – grace	33	<i>magnus</i> , adjective – big	15
<i>ecclesia</i> , noun – church	26	<i>rex</i> , noun – king	15
<i>sanctus</i> , adjective – saint	25	<i>monachus</i> , noun – monk	15
<i>deus</i> , noun – God	25	<i>dies</i> , noun – day	14
<i>dominus</i> , noun – lord	24	<i>tempus</i> , noun – time	14
<i>pauper</i> , noun – poor	23	<i>bonus</i> , adjective – good	13
<i>abbas</i> , noun – abbot	23	<i>hospes</i> , noun – guest	12
<i>locus</i> , noun – place	22	<i>officium</i> , noun – office	12
<i>exhibeo</i> , verb – to show	21	<i>opus</i> , noun – work	12
<i>caritas</i> , noun – charity	21	<i>ordo</i> , noun – order	11
<i>facio</i> , verb – to make	20	<i>nos</i> , pronoun – we	11
<i>possum</i> , verb – can	18	<i>frater</i> , noun – brother	11
<i>multus</i> , adjective – many	17	<i>religiosus</i> , adjective – religious	11
<i>vir</i> , noun – man	17	<i>peregrinus</i> , noun – pilgrim	10
<i>habeo</i> , verb – to have	17	<i>vita</i> , noun – life	10
<i>res</i> , noun – thing	16	<i>do</i> , verb – to give	10
<i>domus</i> , noun – house	16	<i>alius</i> , pronoun – the other	10
<i>noster</i> , pronoun – our	15	<i>monasterium</i> , noun – monastery	10
<i>virtus</i> , noun – virtue	15	<i>cura</i> , noun – cure	10

consists mainly of texts written by clerics and monks. On the other hand, very frequent words in general like *episcopus* (bishop, 8 times) are used less often. Another example is *pietas* (piety, 8 times) that also occurs less than ten times; it deserves an extra mention because it is three times directly linked to *hospitalitas*.⁸² So this table supports the idea of a prevailing Christian concept of hospitality that is linked to certain persons (Gods, man, poor, pilgrim, king, monk), places (place, house, monastery), and certain practices and norms (virtue, charity). Conceptual terms about personal relations seem to be of importance as well: the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ are very frequent as well as *omnis* and *alius* which — in combination with persons — are signs for the

82 *Chronicon Polono-Silesiacum* [CNT], p. 558: ‘propter hospitalitatis pietatem’; Iohannes Vitoduranus, *Chronica* [LTA], p. 122: ‘pietatis et hospitalitatis multum preditus’; *Vitae paparum* [VPA]: ‘nec in illis hospitalitatis seu pietatis opera servarentur’.

interpersonal relations connected to hospitality. This again is certainly not surprising but rather a proof for the reliability of this term list.

However, the pronouns are not directly related to *hospitalitas* that, therefore, was not possessed by someone or directly attributed to someone through a pronominal construct. This can be confirmed by the phrasing of the actual sentences. They support the findings so far. The term *hospitalitas* was used in more than 90 per cent of all cases in a positive way and it appears in a religious context that needs to be further explored in the following chapter. A vocabulary connected to uncertainty, danger, or ambiguity is completely missing. Until now, we can at least state that the term *hospitalitas* represents a moral concept because of its connection to other positive concepts like virtue, charity, piety and that it is clearly used in a Christian context. The missing definition, its openness or even opacity, also marks *hospitalitas* as a concept that leaves enough space for different uses though the questions remain as to whether the concept was redefined other time, or in other terms, how stable was this vague notion of *hospitalitas*?

But before answering these questions, however, two exceptions need to be mentioned. The first one refers to the only situation where the term was given a pejorative meaning. In his book about the coronation of Emperor Charles IV, its author John Porta de Annoniaco recalls how Charles, on his way to Rome in 1355, passed a brothel that his father had apparently visited. To atone for his father's sins, Charles had the house converted into an oratory so that a place of 'earthly hospitality and carnality and death-bringing business could become a temple of heavenly charity and spirituality and redemption-bringing devotion'.⁸³ John clearly devalued this kind of hospitality by his choice of words and rhetoric, equating prostitution with hospitality. What is significant here for the semantics of *hospitalitas* is not so much the exaggerated religiosity of the fourteenth century as the driving force of contempt, but rather the indirect hint of the fact that there will have been other understandings of hospitality outside of the written Christian discourse, which unfortunately does not surface otherwise in the material at hand.

The second case is an ironic use of words. Albert of Aachen recounts in his *Historia Hierosolymitanae expeditionis* (written by 1119), lib. v, cap. 15, how soldiers set out to meet Duke Baldwin (the later king of Jerusalem, r. 1100–1118) in the city of Rohas to be rewarded by him for their services. Albert only writes how the city filled up with more and more Frenchmen and was besieged by their hospitality.⁸⁴ Here again, as in the Montecassino case from the beginning,

83 Johannes Porta de Annoniaco, *Liber de coronatione*, [LTA] ch. 79, p. 125: 'Domus ergo, que voluptatis et lascivie fuerat, nunc honestatis et sanctimonie facta est et, que terrestres hospitalitatis et carnalitatis exemplum et mortifere negociationis infecta, iam celestis caritatis et spiritualitatis est templum et salutifere contemplationis effecta domus orationis vocabitur, et non minus exequenti genito quam genitori iubenti auctore Domino proderit ad salutem'.

84 Albert, *Historia* [LTA], v. 15, col. 520C: 'Affluebant autem et accrescebant singulis diebus in numero et virtute, dum fere tota civitas obsessa a Gallis, et eorum hospitalitate occupata est'.

we encounter an ambiguity in the use of the term *hospitalitas* since it is once again the guest party who is grammatically speaking the provider of hospitality. Compared to all other situations of use, the logic is again reversed. Since this is so unusual, we can assume a deliberate and thus ironic break with linguistic conventions, which on the other hand confirms the finding that *hospitalitas* was a quality of the host and did not imply reciprocity, as is the case with *hospes*. Regarding the actual historical setting, it is to be assumed it was a situation of forced hospitality, since the city of Rohas certainly did not want to voluntarily accept even more warriors into its ranks than it already had to.

Pragmatics of *Hospitalitas*: A Virtue in a Changing Society

When we now turn to the situations in which *hospitalitas* was used, we enter the field of linguistic pragmatics. Here, we find more support for the lexical and semantic findings so far when we answer the questions from the beginning. The first question is what did *hospitalitas* mean and when, how, and why was it used by whom? By analysing the lexicographical evidence, we already found out that there was no definition of what *hospitalitas* meant and entailed. The 196 situations of word use confirm the openness of the concept. Nothing is said on how exactly a guest was to be received or how a guest was to behave, whether food was served or where, and how a guest was to be accommodated for the night. The concrete encounter of guest and host rarely entered the scene. But also, possible ambiguities and dangerous situations appear extremely rare. Apart from Baldric of Dol's humorous remark about the likeness of guests and fish, there is hardly any concretization of what *hospitalitas* should stand for.⁸⁵ This openness supports the understanding of *hospitalitas* as a cultural concept in Koselleckian sense, since these are normally fluid, adaptive, and open to reinterpretation according to the needs of those who employ the term.⁸⁶

On the other hand, the word *hospitalitas* was far from being an empty shell. It had its place in the narratives in a very particular way due to a common feature of most of these narratives. Throughout the whole time covered by the corpus the word was mostly used in a monastic context to designate a religious virtue like charity, humility, patience, and liberality.⁸⁷ Almsgiving and *hospitalitas* were considered as two charitable works that aimed at supporting pilgrims and the poor.⁸⁸ The *Vita S. Hilduphi* presents *hospitalitas* as a service

85 See n. 49.

86 Koselleck, 'Begriffsgeschichte and Social History', pp. 75–92.

87 These other religious virtues are named together with *hospitalitas* in Letaldus, *Liber miraculorum* [LTA], ch. 5(28); *Chronica monasterii Sancti Michaelis Clusini* [ALIM], ch. 19; Constantinus, *Vita Adelberonis II* [LTA], ch. 14; Matthew Paris, *Chronica maiora* [CNT], v, pp. 303, 414.

88 Three examples for the connection of pilgrims with *hospitalitas*: Thietmar, *Chronicon*

to Christ himself which even adds up to the religious understanding since practising hospitality was thus meant to earn heavenly rewards.⁸⁹ Accordingly, it is also in this context that *hospitalitas* is linked to the biblical foundations of hospitality. Written in 1107, the *Life of William of Hirsau* reports how the abbot of the Hirsau reform movement exhorted the monks:

In primis de continuo amore Dei, de fervore monasticae religionis, de observantia mutuae dilectionis, de sectanda hospitalitate et cum omni sollicitudine impendenda, de diligenda eleemosyna et voluntarie eroganda, multaque his similia suadebat.

(First and foremost, he urged them to have constant love for God, fervour for monastic life, the practice of mutual affection, the pursuit of hospitality with all diligence, the love of almsgiving, and voluntary acts of charity, and many other similar things.⁹⁰)

The vita's author, Heymo, apparently recounts William's teaching in his own words which repeat the central statement about hospitality in St Paul's epistle to the Romans: 'hospitalitatem sectantes' ('seeking hospitality', Romans 12. 13). This biblical undertone, which pervades the essential part of the use of words in the corpus, manifests itself openly here.⁹¹ Later on, Matthew Paris from St Albans in England made use of this quote in his *Chronica Majora* (1258), as did Salimbene de Adam in his chronicle (1288) where he tells the story of a Poor Clare in Genova.⁹²

If we look at the authors and the settings they were writing about, we see that it was mostly monks who used the term: forty-one against twenty-seven other clerics. Their word use was highly normative and thus in accordance with the basic monastic rules about hospitality that we have mentioned already. The renewed statutes for the Black monks in England from 1249 and 1253 both underscore the importance of offering hospitality by the Benedictines according to their means.⁹³ Other mentions of *hospitalitas* as a monastic virtue and practice could be easily added for many monasteries over the centuries, from Italy (San Pietro in Novalesa), France (Le Bec, Normandy;

[LTA], IV, 33 (23) Corvey tradition, described the hospitality of an unnamed abbess: 'Hospitalitatis non oblita tante dapsilitatis circa egenos et peregrinos extitit, ut quadam die de vino nil sibi vel sororibus beneficencie comunicacionis causa pretermisit'; Carthuitus, *Vita Stephani* [LTA], ch. 41; Roger of Wendover, *Flores* [CNT], II, p. 4.

89 Valcandus, *Vita Hidulphi* [LTA], ch. 4: 'Eleemosynis maxime insudabat, hospitalitati largissime, ac si hanc ipsi Christo exhiberet, insistebat'.

90 Heymo, *Vita Wilhelmi* [LTA], ch. 24.

91 It is even possible to connect the quotation of Romans 12.13 to Ambrose of Milan in Landulfus, *Historia Mediolanensis* [LTA], ch. 7, where the Milanese historian tells a story about the Ambrose ordering the ecclesiastical affairs in Rome.

92 Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* [CNT], IV, ch. 313; Salimbene de Adam, *Chronica* [ALIM], p. 89 with quotes from Matthew 25. 35; Romans 12. 13 and 15. 7; Hebrews 13. 2; I Peter 4. 9.

93 Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* [CNT], VI, p. 179 for the statutes of 1249 and VI, p. 243 for 1253.

Vézelay), Germany (St Emmeran, Regensburg; St Blasien and Hirsau, Black Forest; Maria-Laach, Eifel), to Belgium (St Trond, Sint-Truiden), England (Reading; St Albans).⁹⁴ In the fourteenth century, John of Viktring explicitly characterizes a recently founded monastic community by saying: 'In quo viget caritativa hospitalitas, vite monastice et cenobitalis communitas, morum honestas et regularis observancie austeritas' (In which there prevails charitable hospitality, monastic life and community, honesty of manners and regular observance of austerity).⁹⁵

But *hospitalitas* did not only designate a monastic obligation, it was also considered to be a personal virtue. The positive, religious virtue character of *hospitalitas* is attested literally by, among others, Letald of Micy, Adam of Bremen, Caesarius of Heisterbach, and Burchard de Hallis.⁹⁶ The latter described in his chronicle of the St Peter in Wimpfen in Northern Baden-Württemberg (1320) the character of the dean Richard of Deidesheim who 'Inter omnes virtutes hospitalitatem permaxime diligebat' (among all virtues cherished especially hospitality).⁹⁷ The use of *hospitalitas* was not restricted to clerics, monks, and monasteries either. Dudo of St Quentin praised Duke Richard of Normandy by highlighting his magnanimity, humility, and particularly his hospitality.⁹⁸ Goscelin of Canterbury described how King Æthelberth of Kent (r. 550–614) invited Augustine and his crew of missionaries to stay in Kent by offering hospitality.⁹⁹ Adam of Bremen praised the hospitality of the Swedes. This passage, however, should not be taken at face value. The well-read Adam probably drafted his account after the model of Tacitus's *Germania* picking up a topos of ethnographical description in order to convince his fellow Christians to continue the mission to Scandinavia.¹⁰⁰ So, we have to think of

94 Chronicon Novaliciense [ALIM], ch. 1; Arnoldus, *De miraculis et memoria Emmerammi* [LTA], II; Bernaldus, *Chronica* [LTA], ad anno MLXXXIII; Rudolfus, *Gesta abbatum Trudonis* [LTA], VII. 20; Orderic Vitalis, *Historia ecclesiastica* [LTA], IV. 16; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum* [CC], v. § 413; Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* [CNT], v, p. 394.

95 Johannes Victoriensis, *Liber certarum historiarum* [LTA], Rec. A., v. ad ann. 1327, p. 98.

96 Letaldus, *Liber miraculorum* [LTA], ch. 5 (28); Adam of Bremen, *Gesta* [LTA], III. 39 (38) about archbishop Adalbert who glorified hospitality as the most important virtue: 'Adglorians hospitalitatem porro maximam esse virtutem, quae cum non careat divina mercede, sepe etiam inter homines habeat vel maximam laudem'. Caesarius, *Dialogus* [CNT], dist. 6, ch. 3.

97 Burchard de Hallis, *Chronik* [CNT], p. 140.

98 Dudo of St Quentin, *De moribus et actis* [LTA], IV. 72: 'Ad gratiam meritum promptus, ad ignoscendum offensibus paratus. Humilitatis gradibus summus, in omni hospitalitatis famulatu praecipuus'.

99 Goscelinus, *Vita Augustini* [LTA], ch. II (18): 'Attamen benevolentiae vestrae, qua de longinquo (ut video) ad nos venire, nostraeque salutis, prout nostis verius ac melius, consulere, nos nequaquam infesti, sed nec ingrati volumus existere: magis vero optamus benigna vos hospitalitate fovere, et vitae subsidia sufficienter praebere'.

100 There are striking similarities between Adam of Bremen, *Gesta* [LTA], VI. 21 and Tacitus, *Germania* [CC], ch. 21, which is rather surprising because this means, contrary to current research, that Adam of Bremen might have known the *Germania* directly and not only via

the audience and their christianised knowledge about hospitality to which Adam was appealing.¹⁰¹ And Adam influenced others like Helmold of Bosau directly who used *hospitalitas* to describe the hospitality of the Slavs.¹⁰² His word use stays close to established patterns like *gratia hospitalitatis* or the biblical *sectare*, but his frequent use stands out. This may be due to the frontier situation Helmold experienced in Holstein during the twelfth century and consequently to the actual encounters during his missionary work which he described.¹⁰³ Although Helmold was confronted with situations of insecurity and fear he never used *hospitalitas* in a context of danger nor did he allude to inherent dangers of *hospitalitas*. On the contrary, even when talking about the other's hospitality the virtue itself kept its very positive normative character. This is not surprising given how highly the Christian conception of hospitality was valued in the context of Christianization.¹⁰⁴ But where do we find then these dangers and ambiguities that came up in the monastic story about the deceitful Richard from Montecassino?

The corpus provides now only very few cases where *hospitalitas* was connected to danger. In the later eleventh century, we find first Goscelin's report on how Saint Augustine and his missionaries had been attacked instead of being welcomed by the inhabitants of settlement on their way to England.¹⁰⁵ Then, Marianus Scottus quotes a story of Gregory the Great's where the pope praised the hospitality of a bishop who tried to save the lives of his guests when the Goths attacked the city.¹⁰⁶ In the twelfth century, Guibert of Nogent tells a story of a crusader army on its way through Hungary where the crusaders pillaged the peasants; William of Tyre repeated this account in his *Gesta*.¹⁰⁷ Orderic Vitalis mentioned a monk who lamented about the loss of some relics due to robbery by those who he had trusted as his hosts.¹⁰⁸ Matthew Paris complained much later about the lessening of the king's hospitality which could have been quite an affront.¹⁰⁹ In other words, even though very rarely, it could happen that the virtue and the value of *hospitalitas* as a virtue and value was established by being threatened and endangered.

Only William of Tyre and Saxo Grammaticus used *hospitalitas* more than once to describe dangerous situations of hospitality. In William's

the *Translatio Alexandri* by Rudolf of Fulda as Brunhölzl, Art. 'Tacitus', VIII, cols 400–01 claimed. This may be possible as Adam seemed to have connections to the monastery of Hersfeld where the only copy of the *Germania* was present. On the stereotypical description see Rosik, *The Slavic Religion*, p. 228.

101 Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, pp. 116; Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, pp. 139–44.

102 Helmold, *Chronicon* [LTA], ch. 2 which corresponds with Adam of Bremen, *Gesta* [LTA], II. 22.

103 Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, pp. 195–217; Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, p. 78.

104 Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, pp. 139–74.

105 Goscelinus, *Vita Augustini* [LTA], ch. 1 (10).

106 Marianus Scottus, *Chronicon* [LTA], a. 584 referring explicitly to Gregory, *Dialogues*, III. 11.

107 Guibert, *Gesta* [LTA], II. 4; Guillelmus, *Historia* [LTA], I. 27.

108 Orderic Vitalis, *Historia* [LTA], VI. 3.

109 Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* [CNT], V, p. 199.

Historia rerum gestarum in partibus transmarinis (1186), we find three out of seven instances of *hospitalitas* connected to dangerous or ambiguous situations.¹¹⁰ Saxo, however, used it seven out of thirteen times this way in his *Gesta Danorum* (accomplished after 1208).¹¹¹ Why do they both stand out? When we compare their accounts with the overwhelming rest of the uses of *hospitalitas*, these two authors break out of the conventional storytelling. William of Tyre introduces a juridical language by coining the expression *leges hospitalitatis* which had not been used before. Since his approach towards hospitality is analysed by Lars Kjær in this volume, it suffices to mention here that this rhetoric may have been due to William's very long studies, particularly in Bologna, on the one hand, and to the goal to convince the Westerners to come to the Holy Land, on the other.¹¹² We can only guess if William came up with this wording because he thought it more appropriate and appealing to his contemporaries in the West. If this had been his plan, however, he seemed to be unsuccessful since the *leges hospitalitatis* do not reappear in the corpus. Incidentally, this also means that the narrative sources did not dwell on the legal organization of hospitality of any kind.¹¹³

In both William and Saxo, *hospitalitas* stands for hospitality as a fundamentally positive virtue without any ambiguity. This only emerges in the various, partly legendary stories, in which the danger naturally does not come from the hospitality itself, but from the people who have treachery and murder on their minds. This is the case with the king of the Britons, who first welcomes Amleth, but then hatches a plan to have him killed without violating the sacred commandments of hospitality, a scene which Wojtek Jezierski explores at depth in his chapter in this book.¹¹⁴ On a linguistic level, this history from a long-distant past contains both the vocabulary for a highly appreciated hospitality and its treacherous counterpart, which makes Saxo's narration so fascinating but also unique. On the one hand, there is suspicion (*suscipio*), fallacy (*fallacia*), pretention (*pretentio*), and violation (*violare*; *violatores*), and on the other hand, sacredness (*sacra*), duty (*obsequium*), office (*officium*), and grace (*gratia*). Particularly noteworthy is the expression *hospitalitatis sacra violare* that already contains the author's moral verdict on the matter.¹¹⁵ But why do these cases of endangered hospitality appear more often in Saxo's work than in all the others? One possible answer is connected to the scope and the focus of the *Gesta*. In contrast to almost all other works,

110 Guillelmus/William of Tyre, *Historia* [LTA], I. 27; III. 23, XXI. 14.

111 Saxo, *Gesta* [LTA], IV. 1. 11, XII. 7. 1, XIII. 11. 2, XIV. 12. 2, XIV. 12. 7, XIV. 18. 11, XIV. 26. 1. The positively connotated hits are: VII. 8. 1, XIV. 28. 12, XIV. 28. 14, XIV. 28. 22, XIV. 28. 23.

112 See Lars Kjær's chapter in this volume.

113 Rather, this is known from the sources on urban law in the late Middle Ages. See Sievers, 'Gastfreundschaft', pp. 1737–39.

114 Saxo, *Gesta* [LTA], IV. 1. 11: 'Sed quoniam hospitalitatis sacra violare nefas credebatur, aliena manu ultionis partes exsequi praeoptavit, innocentiae speciem occulto facinore praetenturus'.

115 Saxo, *Gesta* [LTA], XIV. 26. 1.

Saxo is telling the history of kings in an extremely elegant style that sometimes tends towards mannerism.¹¹⁶ The corpus contains also other works focusing on worldly affairs, kings, and princes. But even Saxo's role model, Geoffrey of Monmouth does not make use of *hospitalitas* in his *Historia regum Britanniae*. Saxo's interest in stories about competing nobles and their encounters reflects a particularly important element in the political rhetoric in Denmark as Lars Kjær points out.¹¹⁷ This would at least help us to understand why Saxo mentions that King Sven III 'Grathe' accuses his rivals King Valdemar I and Knut V of being violators of hospitality, oath-breaker, thieves, and patricides in order to win the support of the people, who at the time see through Sven and do not believe a word he says.¹¹⁸

All in all, the corpus findings for *hospitalitas* do not support the idea that this term was inherently ambiguous nor that the dangers of hospitality was expressed through discussions of *hospitalitas*. Indeed, when *hospitalitas* was mentioned to unfold a dangerous history of hospitality, its positive meaning was even reinforced. However, this realization has so far given the impression that the understanding of *hospitalitas* has been very stable, almost unchanging over the centuries. Therefore, the final question is whether there have been any changes in usage and meaning?

Despite so much continuity, we also recognize some notable changes. There is a change in storytelling to begin with. From the mid-twelfth century onwards, we find situations of use where the authors talk directly about hospitality. Before that, we already encounter *hospitalitas* and thus hospitality as a functional narrative element for the story of origin for the Piast dynasty that its author, the so-called Gallus Anonymous, had conceived after the model of Genesis (chapter 18).¹¹⁹ A very early case is the praise for the hospitality at the monastery of Bec by Orderic Vitalis saying: 'I cannot speak too highly of the hospitality of Bec'.¹²⁰ Helmold of Bosau dedicated a chapter to the hospitality of the Slavs following his role model, Adam of Bremen.¹²¹ Walter Map, writing during the same period, mentioned the reverence for hospitality of the Welsh on which he elaborated in a chapter called *De hospitalitate*.¹²² This chapter is important as it presents the social norms of the non-monastic world. This aspect becomes increasingly important when other authors like Gervase of Tilbury,¹²³ Caesarius of Heisterbach, or Roger of Wendover include miraculous stories about hospitable lay people into their works.

116 This is the case for Saxo, *Gesta* [LTA], xiv. 26. 1 where the author calls an ordinary hostel the 'penatium limina'.

117 Kjær, 'Feasting with Traitors'.

118 *Gesta* [LTA], xiv. 18. 11. See also *Gesta Danorum*, ed. by Friis-Jensen, II, pp. 1096–97.

119 Gallus Anonymus, *Chronica Polonorum* [LTA], chs 1 and 2.

120 Orderic Vitalis, *Historia* [LTA], iv. ch. 16: 'De hospitalitate Beccensium sufficienter eloqui nequeo'.

121 Helmold, *Chronicon* [LTA], ch. 83.

122 Walter Map, *De nugis* [CNT], chs 20 *De moribus Walensium* and 21 *De hospitalitate*.

123 Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia* [CNT], ch. 100: *De hospitalitate cujusdam*.

This connection attains its peak in the vision of the purgatory told by Roger of Wendover, who composed a kind of *Commedia divina* long before Dante. In his *Flores historiarum* he tells the story of a peasant named Turchill who is renowned for his hospitality and who is visited by St Julian the entertainer (*S. Julianus hospitator*). St Julian takes Turchill on a spiritual journey through the purgatory to display to him the punishments and torments for ill-doings. This highly entertaining story introduces a mysterious saint. Some decades later, Jacob of Voragine in his *Golden Legend* is at pains to connect this saint to a historic figure¹²⁴ and many centuries later the Bollandists search again intensively but also in vain.¹²⁵ Here, we encounter a seemingly made-up saint at the end of the twelfth century since St Julian is attested by name already in Chrétien de Troyes's late twelfth-century *Perceval*.¹²⁶ It is thus very likely that we are witnessing the journey of a literary fictional character into historical representation.¹²⁷ Apparently, the invention of a new saint for hospitality who received a rather regular name to disguise his origins can be brought together with a social and religious need or even demand for such a saint which, in turn, shed light on the travelling activities from the twelfth century onwards and the possible insecurities that came along.

The saint is mentioned later on in the *Speculum Historiale* by Vincent of Beauvais,¹²⁸ in one version of the *Gesta Romanorum* following the *Golden Legend* and even by Boccaccio in his *Decamerone*.¹²⁹ Surprisingly, the theological exegesis of the saint's legend completely disregards the hospitality offered as the atonement for Julian's sin to have killed his parents.¹³⁰ According to the story, Julianus was foretold that he would one day kill his parents. He therefore decides to leave them without notice and start a new life. The parents eventually find out where their son, who has since married, is staying. In his absence, they approach their son's house, where Julian's wife hosts them in her own bed. When rumours reach Julian that strangers are in his bed with his wife, he rushes back home enraged by the supposed adultery and accidentally kills his parents. To atone for his sin, he and his wife practise hospitality from then on. In the *Gesta Romanorum*, this by no means original story is interpreted by a

124 Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea* [CNT], ch. 30. 4, p. 142.

125 Whatley and others, 'The Life of St Julian': 'Various other trails, including the attempt to identify a relic in the cathedral at Macerata as the arm of Julian the Hospitaller, were initially pursued in a spirit of hope and excitement, only to conclude in similarly dead ends, and the Bollandists were finally forced to acknowledge that Julian's origins remained enveloped in obscurity'. [no page indication available, online publication].

126 Christian von Troyes, *Sämtliche Werke*, p. 522: 'Aliens nous donques Reposer dit le chevallier mais je croy que ce jour Thostel de saint Julien n'aürés'. See also <<https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/French/DeTroyesPercevalPartI.php>>.

127 Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, p. 92 n. 44.

128 Vincent, *Speculum*, IX. 115, *De alio Juliano pro quo dicitur oratio dominica*.

129 Boccaccio, *Decameron*, giornata II, novella 2, pp. 141–51.

130 *Gesta Romanorum*, ed. by Oesterley [CNT], pp. 311–13, based on Cod. Colmar. Issenhein 10. The Anglo-Latin version Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce MS 310 does not contain the chapter on St Julian. See *The Anglo-Latin Gesta Romanorum*, ed. by Bright and others.

Moralizacio that only focuses on Julian as the perfect example of someone who abandons his or her parents to follow Christ without discussing the hospitality in any way. This is even more astonishing because in historical reality, St Julian Hospitator did become an important saintly intercessor for travelling Christians. Several hospitals in the Flemish region were named after him, the cathedrals of Chartres and Rouen got stained glass windows with his pictorial representation, and Julian was mentioned at least in twenty manuscripts of the South English Legendary for 12 February.¹³¹

One final aspect needs to be addressed to highlight significant changes in the use of the word during the thirteenth century: the financial dimension of hospitality. It appears in a moral discourse in the *Dialogus miraculorum* by Caesarius of Heisterbach and in political disputes between the church of England and the English king on the one side and the Church in Rome on the other. Caesarius tells several stories about avarice and neglected hospitality. One concerns a woman who becomes wealthy through her initial hospitality to the Cistercians, but then also becomes impoverished again due to her arrogance and selfishness. This story is reminiscent of the criticism by Lactantius and Ambrose that one should not become too proud of one's good deeds to achieve even more esteem.¹³² The other stories are about monasteries who neglect their hospitable duties and therefore lose their income. Only by turning back to old customs it has been possible to gain solid financial ground. Interestingly, the metaphor of the two brethren Date and Dabitur is used to illustrate the idea that spending money leads to receiving it again. Behind this circular idea may be the experience that active monasteries gain more attention and attraction for potential donors who are more willing to support a monastery if this is able to maintain its terrestrial and spiritual reputation.¹³³ Another story tells of the accusations made by lay people against the Cistercian order of having become greedy. Caesarius responds to this by explaining that it is not a matter of greed, but of precaution, as they also need the means to receive guests like Christ in accordance with the order's rules.¹³⁴

It is not only Caesarius who provides stories about avarice. Matthew Paris, too, tells such stories like the one about the avaricious abbot of Westminster who needs to be forced by the king to spend money again on hospitality.¹³⁵ Apart from this, we find a second aspect of the financial dimension in his

131 Jacobs, 'Des hôpitaux', p. 238; Whatley and others, 'The Life of St Julian', mention 'two great pictorial representations [of S. Julian] in the stained-glass windows of the cathedrals at Chartres and Rouen, executed in the middle of the thirteenth century'; Görlach, 'Middle English Legends', pp. 442–43.

132 Caesarius, *Dialogus* [CNT], dist. 4, ch. 69, II, p. 846: 'De femina, quae hospitalitatem Abbatibus Cisterciensis ordinis exhibuit, et ditata est, et eadem exclusa, pauperata'.

133 Caesarius, *Dialogus* [CNT], dist. 4, ch. 68, II, p. 842: 'De clauistro ob Abbatis avaritiam depauperato et ob receptionem duorum fratrum, scilicet Date et Dabitur, rursum ditato'.

134 Caesarius, *Dialogus* [CNT], dist. 4, ch. 57, II, p. 814: *De avaritia et filiabus eius*.

135 Matthew Paris, *Chronica* [CNT], v, p. 303.

Chronica Majora. Here, *hospitalitas* becomes the crux of the argument in the recurring and never really resolved dispute between the representatives of the Church in England and in Rome. The English clergy and even King Henry III (r. 1216–1272) recurrently complained about the abuse of church income through stipendiaries for Italian clerics who did nothing to maintain the main tasks of their churches.¹³⁶ Matthew Paris even reproduces the gravamina raised in the official letter of the whole English Church to the Roman Curia.¹³⁷ Apparently, this action had not the effect the English had hoped for. They even raised the topic at the Ecumenical Council of Lyons in 1245.¹³⁸ The Roman Curia, however, made new demands for money in 1246 instead, which the English Church immediately rejected.¹³⁹ It can be assumed that these disputes will have continued for a long time. More important for the understanding of *hospitalitas* here is that it was not only a religious duty, but also a financial burden that every monastery had to bear and thus a valid argument against financial drain. These disputes also show that *hospitalitas* sometimes stood for an institutionalized obligation that was well grounded on the precepts of monasticism and on a daily business where accommodation at every monastery was necessary. This in turn, sheds light not only on the necessary charitable work of the institutions for pilgrims and poor, but also a steady flow of visitors who, due to their social position, could not use local hostels. If this is true, then we can conclude from Matthew Paris's many stories that the commercialization of hospitality in the thirteenth century also contributed to a further institutionalization of monastic hospitality as the religiously and morally safe alternative to urban accommodations.

Concluding Remarks

Turning back to Leo of Ostia and his account of a betrayed host by a treacherous guest we see now that in the Latin narrative discourse this kind of scandal was the exception to the rule or at least that these abuses of hospitality did not shape the notion of *hospitalitas* itself. Rather, we see that *hospitalitas* underwent a Christian interpretation already in Late Antiquity as Ambrose of Milan's discussion of hospitality showed and that it did not inherit the ambiguity of *hospes/hostes*. It comes as no surprise that this Christian understanding remained dominant throughout the whole time under scrutiny. This did not, however, prevent the notion from being adapted and changed over time.

¹³⁶ Matthew Paris, *Chronica* [CNT], vi, pp. 319–20 on behalf of the church of Hartburn (2 April 1256).

¹³⁷ Matthew Paris, *Chronica* [CNT], iv, p. 442.

¹³⁸ Matthew Paris, *Chronica* [CNT], iv, p. 528: 'Item, gravatur eo quod in beneficiis Ytalicorum nec jura, nec pauperum sustentatio, nec hospitalitas, nec divini verbi praedicatio, nec ecclesiarum utilis ornatu, nec animarum cura, nec in ecclesiis divina fiunt obsequia, prout decet et moris est patriae, sed in aedificiis suis parietes cum tectis corrunt et penitus lacerantur'.

¹³⁹ Matthew Paris, *Chronica* [CNT], iv, p. 582.

By studying the distribution of this term and the situations where it was used, it has become very clear that *hospitalitas* was considered to be a virtue that mostly was connected to other Christian virtues like *caritas* or *humilitas*, but that could also be used to designate the hospitality of non-Christians. The most important frame for *hospitalitas* was the monastic sphere and consequently, the monastic discourse of world perception. In this discourse there was no need for further explorations of the dangers of hospitality as a means of securitizing an ambiguous threshold situation. One is even tempted to suggest that it would have been counterproductive to address the dangers, as this would have further discouraged those who should be more encouraged by the vast majority of examples of successful hospitality in this corpus. As a term *hospitalitas* obviously did not cover the whole discourse of hospitality and the narrative corpus did not cover all the ways of talking about hospitality. But it is somehow intriguing that even such works as the Latin version of Marco Polo's *Il milione* as part of the corpus did not add other non-monastic aspects to the meaning of *hospitalitas*. This could be a promising avenue for further investigation.

The word use was, however, not completely frozen. During the twelfth century, the ways of using *hospitalitas* started to change. Obviously, most of the authors employing that word had a monastic or clerical background, but we have seen that the word use shifted towards stories about hospitality also outside the monastic sphere. The stories told by Walter Map, Gervase of Tilbury, or Caesarius of Heisterbach had been clearly meant to entertain and to educate the audience and to incite their willingness to provide hospitality on a day-to-day basis. One might speculate if this is due to a rather lukewarm attitude to hospitality that was perhaps even encouraged by the emerging commercialization of the hospitality industry in European cities.¹⁴⁰ In this sense, we find the dangers or ambiguities of hospitality not within the notion of *hospitalitas* or in its context, but rather in the attitude towards hospitality that put the virtue into danger. The fact that hospitality was not as easy as it sometimes appears in monastic sources can perhaps also be seen in the invention of a new saint of hospitality. St Julian could be interpreted as a sign of increasing religiosity within a society that has long been christianized but also as a response to the growing mobility and the increasing dangers of travel, for which people sought religious support.

This chapter was intended to be a first systematic semantic historical approach to the concept of hospitality by concentrating on the term *hospitalitas*. The findings so far help us to better understand the framing in which this word was employed. It is, however, only one piece of the puzzle. To see the whole picture such a semantic study needs to delve deeper into the patterns of word use respecting the whole word field. For a history of concepts, this chapter shows that a single term analysis can only be the first step into a much broader analysis since the concept could always be put into action in various ways.

140 For the commercialization, see Peyer, *Von der Gastfreundschaft*, pp. 281–83.

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A Gilded Cage?

*The Hospitality, Care, and Treatment of Hostages
in Eurasia, c. 800–1050*


Introduction

The medieval hostage was a form of surety, a way to bind individuals to particular obligations or terms through the transfer of individuals into the custody of another.¹ Bonds of kinship, friendship or loyalty between the donor and hostages exerted pressure on the former to adhere to their side of the agreement: if donors violated the terms, their hostages could lose their value, and endure harm, confinement, or execution. In order for the practice to have functioned effectively, and to have been trusted by its participants, hostages must have been given with the understanding that they would be released, either after a particular length of time or when the relationship had ameliorated. If hostages had no hope of being released, there would be little reason for donors to give them in the first place, or to stick to their side of the agreement. This was the premise that underpinned the practice in its broadest sense, but there was, too, a contract within the contract: that the hostages would receive fair and appropriate hospitality from their hosts. The hosting of these individuals was therefore a crucial yet potentially fraught arrangement, since while in the custody of their warders, hostages had little agency to protect themselves, and relied both on the fact that those who had given them would maintain the terms of the agreement, and that as strangers at the court or home of another they would be protected by their hosts.

* I would like to thank the editors of the volume for the invitation to contribute to this volume, and their constructive feedback on earlier versions of this chapter. Any errors that remain are my own.

1 For definitions of hostageship, see Gilissen, 'Esquisse d'une histoire', p. 52; Kosto, *Hostages*, p. 9; Parks, 'Living Pledges', p. 22. For older definitions focused on the legal practice, see Lutteroth, *Der Geisel*, esp. pp. 15–17. See also Hoppe, *Die Geiselschaft*.

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Guests, Strangers, Aliens, Enemies: Ambiguities of Hospitality in the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1350, ed. by Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Kjær, CURSOR 45 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), pp. 75–97
BREPOLS  PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.5.149652

A cultural universal, the oldest accounts of hostageship reach back to some of the earliest recorded writing, revealing a practice with origins rooted in ancient concepts of surety and guarantee that survived into the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries.² While historians traditionally interpreted the medieval practice as a legal mechanism, more recent work frames hostage-giving as a sociopolitical practice that spoke to struggles for power articulated through negotiation and diplomacy. One of the key arguments that has emerged in scholarship of the past two decades is that certain hostages were of such value that their presence in the courts of their hosts may have outweighed their function as a guarantee.³ The safety of hostages whilst in custody is naturally the central pillar to many such observations, yet while many have noted that noble hostages received care and honourable treatment, there is still much to say about how the practice, and its depictions, folded into broader performances of hospitality.

This study uses evidence drawn from societies around the world in the period c. 800 to c. 1050 to delve into and interrogate evidence for tensions and ambiguities inherent in accounts of the hospitality given to hostages. This period and geographical remit has been chosen to reflect the anecdotal and serendipitous nature of the scattered evidence. This was not a phenomenon that belonged to a particular cultural group or region, but a polysemous and near-universal behaviour with widely-understood connotations that were of importance both to those who gave and received hostages and to those who wrote about them. By focusing on a period of history that encompasses the rise and fall of multiple kingdoms, the chronological parameters have been chosen to allow for a corpus of evidence that is not limited to particular authors or political contexts and empires, terminating when changes to the phenomenon of hostage-giving and the writing of history more broadly altered the practice and its representation.

The corpus, viewed with sensitivity to its differences and intricacies, nevertheless often tells the same story, an aspect of its character that attests to the ancient and widespread use of hostages: in very different cultures, political and social contexts, and environments, the importance of hostages to those who received them and held them fed into narrative constructions of political dominance and interaction with those who lay beyond the borders of kingdoms or territorial units. The character of the evidential corpus and its similarities make comparative methodologies challenging: these scattered

2 For a summary of ancient cases from across Africa, Asia, and Europe, see Hicklin, 'Hostages, Political Instability, and the Writing of History', pp. 153-54. Discussion of some of these cases and historical contexts can be found in: Feucht, *Das Kind im Alten Ägypten*, pp. 266-304; Zawadzki, 'Hostages in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions', pp. 449-58; Radner, 'After Eltekeh', pp. 471-79; Amit, *Hostages in Ancient Greece*, pp. 129-42. For late medieval and early modern cases see especially Kosto, *Hostages*, pp. 78-276, and the contributions and bibliography in Bennett and Weikert, eds, *Medieval Hostageship*.

3 See, for instance, Lavelle, 'The Use and Abuse', pp. 269-96.

texts almost all present a third-party perspective distanced from the hostage or those involved in the transaction, with little insight offered into the explicit norms or societal expectations of the culture in which they operated. We nevertheless find very different contexts that required hostages to be given or exchanged, and the challenges of the evidence in fact open up possibilities. This chapter places accounts from different cultures alongside each other as a way to show the narrative possibilities hostage-hosting offered to medieval writers, a foil for accounts of piety, magnanimity, political canniness, or folly.

While acting as custodians, most hosts undoubtedly understood the hostages in their care to represent a kind of guest and treated them accordingly. As the contributions to this volume demonstrate, many of the tensions and ambiguities inherent in the status of hostage-as-guest were not unique, and aspects of their experience echo those of other guests who received hospitality but were viewed with suspicion or even fear as potential enemies.⁴ Like a number of other categories of guest, hostages had not chosen to be there, but instead acted as representatives of their donor, and sometimes as representatives of a political entity or a social group. Nor were hostages spontaneous guests; their presence at the host's court had usually been initiated by their custodians, with the terms of their stay agreed and arranged in advance of their arrival. Their freedom of movement may have been closely controlled, not just in choosing when to arrive or leave, but also whether they were kept under guard or restricted to certain buildings or areas of their host's home. Finally, and crucially, their safety was not assured and generally lay outside their control. A number of these limits to agency applied to other guests at court, from ambassadors to those sheltered whilst in exile. Similarly, while hostages were not the 'typical' guest who stayed for only a short time, nor were foster-children, or those delegated to conduct negotiations or deliver gifts. Yet few other hosts and visitors would have experienced all (or most) of these tensions: the polysemic nature of hostage agreements at once aligned aspects of their treatment to multiple other arrangements of hospitality, and showed hostageship to be a unique status amongst the panoply of guests and travellers with distinctive tensions and possibilities in terms of how the relationship might change.

Across diverse historical contexts, custodians were keenly aware that positive performances of hospitality allowed for the acculturation of hostages, and thus the potential for building and developing cultural bonds between discrete communities. It was therefore vital to control who had contact with these guests and how this might be managed. Those hosting hostages understood the long-term benefits that such connections could bring, and I argue that this widely known aspect of their experience resulted in a conscious

4 An ambiguity reminiscent of Isidore of Seville's influential description of a guest (*hostis*) as someone lodging at a place under the laws of hospitality who was expected to depart sooner or later: *Etymologiae*, Book xv. 2, p. 160.

elision in historical writing between hostages and similar individuals who were guests at court, from foster-children to exiles and foreign visitors to captives. After establishing the logics of the practice and the nature of the evidence that records its use, this chapter will focus on the tension between hospitality and the practice of hostage-giving in three specific contexts. First, we will explore the lodging of hostages, and what this meant for the parties involved. Secondly, we turn to the hospitality offered to child hostages, and the particular qualities and expectations this arrangement encompassed. Finally, we turn to the end of agreements, particularly those that failed, to explore how this impacted the treatment of hostages who no longer had the right to expect protection from their custodians.

Hostages as ‘Objects of Display’

This chapter proposes that we view the practice within the context of the opportunities it offered for the performance of largesse, the acculturation of children, and the building of alliances. When we adopt this perspective, it becomes clear firstly that hostages functioned as living objects of display, and secondly that part of their value was derived from what their presence conveyed. Writing in the tenth century, the Saxon chronicler Widukind of Corvey emphasized the visual power of hostages in his story of those given to the East Frankish ruler Otto the Great by Boleslav I, dux of the Bohemians: ‘obsides Bolizlavi [ibi] vidimus, quos populo rex presentari iussit, satis super eis laetatus’ (We saw the hostages sent by Boleslav, whom the king had ordered to be presented to the people. The king was very happy about them).⁵ The arrival of hostages was often accompanied by the honourable welcoming of donors and associated ceremonial activity, for instance the giving of gifts. This was not only vital for future relations with the donor and their circle (interpreted broadly), but sent a powerful message to those who witnessed the hostages’ treatment in custody, whether this audience comprised only members of the recipient court or included visitors who viewed the practice as outsiders and guests themselves. The eighth-century Irish legal poem *Críth Gablach* reveals the extraordinary potency the presence of hostages might have to assembled groups at feasts and assemblies. Describing the king’s court in some detail, it states that hostages sat at the king’s table in proximity to the ruler, and roamed freely at feasts and ceremonies.⁶ We might place this alongside the epitaph of the statesman Fan Chung-yen composed by the eleventh-century historian Ouyang Xiu, who relates that when he served as military governor of Shensi in the early 1040s, Fan permitted the sons he had received as hostages from

5 Widukind, *Res gestae Saxonici*, II. 40, p. 99, Widukind, *Deeds of the Saxons*, trans. by Bachrach and Bachrach, pp. 96–97.

6 *Críth Gablach*, vv. 592–96, p. 23. The poem is thought to date to the early eighth century. See Charles-Edwards, ‘A Contract’, pp. 107–19.

various tribal leaders to move about freely at his court. According to Ouyang Xiu, despite this freedom none of the boys and young men ran away, overawed by the governor's kindness towards them and the prestige of their host, and, by extension, the lodgings where they were housed.

The kinship framework that underpinned hostage-giving was crucially important to its functioning: familial relationships represented the most efficacious means of binding individuals to their word.⁷ These bonds were nevertheless placed under strain by the practice itself: being given up as a hostage and sent away from home and kin placed those given in danger, after all. The physical severing of kin relations and subsequent isolation offered a way for hostages' custodians to insert themselves into frameworks of kinship and loyalty through the careful treatment of their wards: alienated from their loved ones and isolated, hostages were vulnerable (or perhaps amenable) to hosts' attempts to build fictive bonds of kinship. It is important to note at the outset that for the period considered here (c. 800-c. 1050) we have almost no evidence for the lodging or care of hostages lower down the social scale, nor for hostages given to secure short-term agreements, for instance those handed over for the duration of an assembly or the negotiation of a truce. Consequently, most of the cases considered here were longer-term unilateral arrangements enacted between rulers (or their representatives) and those who submitted to them. If we leave aside normative and legal-poetic texts from Ireland and the writings of Islamic jurists, the corpus of evidence is almost exclusively found in narrative sources: we therefore have many hundreds of anecdotal accounts drawn from across cultures and periods. Many are unified by a common perspective, written with a view sympathetic to the *recipient* of the hostages. This is important, because most extant texts conveyed a sense of the importance to the hosts' circles of treating hostages honourably and with considerable attention to their care, sometimes even if the agreements they embodied were under threat or had been broken.

Showing this kind of hospitality to hostages was an important part of the practice itself, but it had a second politico-social function within the recipient's community or sphere of power. By making space for these individuals — outsiders — within court culture and its attendant social strata, the practice exposed already-existing hierarchies, dynamics, and relationships within the host's circle.⁸ In a number of cases we learn that the hostages' recipient placed their wards into the custody of followers, rather than retaining them at court. The hospitality offered and portrayed must thus have subject to a kind of mimesis: first the ceremonial handing over of the hostages from donor to recipient, and then their movement from host to the courts or households of those who were to be responsible for their care. In these cases, despite the apparent downgrade in the hostages' status that must

⁷ Kosto, *Hostages*, pp. 20–21, 31–33.

⁸ See Michelet, 'Hospitality', p. 24, paraphrasing Schmitt, 'The Rationale of Gestures', p. 61.

have accompanied their movement from the political centre of the recipient's polity, it provided an opportunity for those who acted as custodians to show allies and observers not only their own power, but also their connections to those whom they served in the attendant political and social hierarchies in which they operated. Writing in the middle of the tenth century, Flodoard of Rheims provides a striking instance of this phenomenon. In his account of the reign of the emperor Charlemagne, Flodoard claims that the emperor so favoured Wulfar, archbishop of Rheims, that he transferred fifteen hostages into his custody: 'Cui valde credidisse Karolus imperator Magnus ex eo probatur, quod illustres Saxonum obsides xv, quos adduxit de Saxonia, ipsius fidei custodiendos conmisit' (That Emperor Charlemagne put a great deal of trust in him is proven by the fact that he committed to his safekeeping fifteen noble hostages of the Saxons whom he had brought back from Saxony).⁹ Flodoard was clearly familiar with the practice in West Francia and Lotharingia during his lifetime, and included many records of hostage-transactions in his work. It therefore stands to reason that he included this detail was because, in his world, Wulfar's opportunity to act as custodian for Charlemagne's hostages was an indicator of considerable prestige, signalling the archbishop's bonds with the highest secular power in the kingdom.

If Flodoard's brief account likely tells us more about his own time than that of 150 years earlier, it is nevertheless based on a solid premise: that numerous hostages circulated in the Frankish kingdom in and after Charlemagne's reign. A number of extant texts dated to this period concern arrangements for hostages' lodging; taken together, these suggest two key aspects of the practice. Firstly, that transfer to local courts was indeed one way in which the Frankish emperor had managed the practice, and that considerable care and management went into how hostages were accommodated as guests. Our most striking example is the *Mainz Hostage List* (also known as the *Indiculus obsidum Saxonum Moguntiam deducendorum*, a title given by its most recent editor), a document listing some thirty-seven hostages in the custody of twenty-four Frankish nobles. While the Saxons were arranged in the list according to their different territorial units — Westphalians, Ostphalians, and Angrarians respectively — almost all the listed warders were members of the Alemannian nobility, suggesting hostages from three regions of Saxony were brought to an assembly or place and then distributed to nobles in a single area of the Carolingian empire. The *Mainz Hostage List* was perhaps originally one of many such documents produced in Francia, and magnates in other territories may have had similar hosting responsibilities.¹⁰ The dispersal of

9 Flodoard of Reims, *Historia Remensis*, II. 18, pp. 172–73; trans. in Kosto, 'Hostages in the Carolingian World', p. 144.

10 *Westfalahis, Ostfalahis and Angrariis* respectively: *Indiculus obsidum Saxonum*, in *Capitularia*, no. 115, I, pp. 233–34. For a prosopographical study of the counts mentioned in the document, see Borgolte, *Die Grafen Alemanniens*, pp. 46–48, 55, 65, 71–75, 157–59, 175–76, 195–99, 205–15, 224, 271–22, 276, 297–98.

Saxon hostages from different regions amongst the Alemannian elite may have been designed either to protect the elite (or the hostages themselves) from harm, avoiding clustering individuals together for their own protection. The Frankish magnates responsible for the hostages comprised bishops, laymen, and one abbot, suggesting that hostages were held on lay and religious estates, including monastic houses.

The use of monasteries as lodging for hostages is supported by the testimony of the *Translatio sancti Viti*, whose anonymous author wrote that Charlemagne sent Saxon hostages to monasteries across Francia for their religious education:

Illius gentis homines, quos obsides et captivos tempore conflictionis adduxerat, per monasteria Francorum distribuit, ad legem quoque sanctam atque monasticam disciplinam instituti praecepit.

(He distributed those men of that people, whom he had led away as hostages and captives at the time of the conflict, throughout the Frankish monasteries, and ordered that they be instructed in the sacred laws as well as in monastic discipline.¹¹)

As Janet L. Nelson has observed, certain custodians on the list were more eminent than others, raising the possibility that those responsible for organizing the care of Saxon hostages acknowledged social divisions amongst the men in their custody. This sensitivity to status must have had important ramifications for the hostages' treatment as guests: those of higher status would be placed with custodians of corresponding social standing. The hostages' experience of hospitality offered under Charlemagne's auspices was shaped both by their identities upon entering hostageship and by the environs in which they were placed, whether in a lay estate or within the confines of a religious enclave: it was not a 'one size fits all' model.¹²

Other documents produced during the heyday of the Carolingian empire support the conclusion that Charlemagne systematically distributed his hostages in courts and centres of power across the Frankish kingdom, perhaps as a way to isolate them from other hostages with whom they had a connection. Unlike other categories of guest, then, we perhaps see in this strategy a deliberate policy to remove the hostages' memories of home. The rationale for this may have been that such isolation made it more easy to control hostages, or it may have been intended to ease their process of acculturation at a new court or home. A capitulary issued by Charlemagne

11 *Translatio sancti Viti*, ch. 3, p. 35. The use of monasteries to detain political exiles and rebels within Merovingian and Carolingian Francia has been noted by Mayke de Jong, who points to co-operation between monks and Frankish rulers in such cases: de Jong, 'Monastic Prisoners', pp. 281–328.

12 Nelson, 'Charlemagne and Empire', p. 225. For an indication that Saxon hostages could also be taken from separate sectors of society: *Annales Laureshamenses*, s.a. 780, p. 31.

and his son Pippin for their lands in Italy between 802 and 810 reveals that hostages — given by whom we do not know — had been transferred in turn to Italian magnates.¹³ That these hostages may have been brought to Italy from elsewhere in the empire is suggested by the length of time that had elapsed between Charlemagne's conquest of Italy in 775, and the production of the capitulary in the early ninth century.

Another document allows us to pursue the distribution of hostages throughout the kingdom and beyond its borders further. The *Divisio Regnorum* of 806, a document outlining Charlemagne's intended organization for the Frankish empire after his death, states that he envisioned that hostages held by his sons would be dispersed throughout the Carolingian empire, and transferred from one kingdom to another:

De obsidibus autem qui propter credentias dati sunt et a nobis per diversa loca ad custodiendum destinati sunt volumus, ut ille rex in cuius regno sunt absque voluntate fratris sui de cuius regno sublatis sunt in patriam eos redire non permittat.

(Concerning the hostages who have been given as pledges and who have been sent by us to different places to be guarded, we desire that the king in whose kingdom they are kept not permit them to return to their native land without the consent of the brother from whose kingdom they were [received].¹⁴)

The *Divisio* is in essence a manifesto for the governance of the empire after Charlemagne's death, and the hostages mentioned in the document might denote hostages already given by 806, or individuals who Charlemagne envisaged would enter Frankish custody as hostages in the future. The document hints at the significant level of organization required to manage hostages in Frankish custody, and the increasing complexity of this management that would follow the division of the empire amongst Charlemagne's sons. The *Divisio* thus confirms that Charlemagne sent, and intended for his sons to send, hostages to their magnates, and envisaged that this would occur across the boundaries of his sons' territories after the proposed division of the kingdom. We therefore have a unique window into the widespread transfer of hostages from the courts of kings to regional centres of power; their distribution in this way permitted opportunities for hosting politically important guests across the kingdom.

The capitulary known to modern audiences as *De Villis* also contains instructions for its audience regarding the treatment of hostages. Dated to the late eighth or early ninth century (and therefore the reign of either Charlemagne or Louis the Pious) it ostensibly concerns the organization

13 *Capitulare missorum italicum*, no. 10, ed. in *Capitularia*, no. 99, I, p. 207.

14 *Divisio regnorum*, no. 13, ed. in *Capitularia*, no. 45, I, p. 129; trans. in Dutton, *Carolingian Civilization*, p. 150; Hägermann, 'Reichseinheit und Reichstellung', pp. 278–307.

and upkeep of Carolingian royal estates, and the duties of the *iudex* charged with managing their administration.¹⁵ It is not clear whether the stipulations contained in the document pertained to an individual location or a number of sites, although its content suggests its scope covered southern Frankish holdings.¹⁶ The clause referring to hostages stipulates: 'Ut nullus iudex obsidem nostrum in villa nostra commendare faciat' (No steward shall commend a hostage of ours on our estates), an unusual phrase with several possible interpretations.¹⁷ It may have been intended to prevent stewards from delegating the care of hostages to others, thus forbidding them from replicating the bonds connected to hosting created by such arrangements between rulers and their followers. Alternatively, the capitulary may prohibit hostages from commending themselves to stewards on royal estates. Both readings lead to the conclusion that the imperial authority behind *De villis* sought to control the political and social bonds that could be created through hostageship and hosting these individuals: hospitality could only be offered to those in custody with the approval and control of their original recipient.¹⁸

Taken together, these documents demonstrate that Charlemagne closely controlled the movements of hostages within his kingdom, and intended for his successors to do the same.¹⁹ When rulers distributed hostages amongst favoured members of their circle, imperial and royal courts undoubtedly eased their burdens, but the theme of the care of hostages emerges from this corpus as a means of reasserting and augmenting social bonds between rulers and their followers, expressed through hosting the emperor's guests while maintaining their safety and restricting their freedoms. By placing hostages into the custody of others, and perhaps by prohibiting his magnates from engaging in similar activity, the control and transfer of hostages became an important aspect of the vertical relationship between the emperor and his followers; it also shows us that hosting hostages was not a practice restricted to the very top of society, but may have been familiar to those lower down the social scale.

I have lingered on this particular context because the documentary and prescriptive evidence that survives is unparalleled for hostage arrangements from any early medieval polity. Yet further examples drawn from very different periods and locations show that the practice occurred elsewhere too. When hostages were transferred into the custody of new hosts by their original recipients, whether for shorter periods or the duration of their hostageship, these custodians were expected to offer them hospitality. In transactions undertaken within political entities where distances between centre and

15 For discussion of the text's origins, purpose and terminology: Campbell, 'The *Capitulare de villis*', pp. 243–64.

16 Campbell, 'The *Capitulare de villis*', p. 249.

17 *Capitulare de villis*, no. 12, ed. in *Capitularia*, no. 32, I, p. 84.

18 My thanks to Rosalind Love and Neil Wright for their assistance in the analysis of the passage.

19 Nelson, 'Charlemagne and Empire', p. 227.

periphery were prohibitively large, not all hostages first went to the centre of political power and then to their hosts. In 1017, for instance, a Sung imperial decree ordered the building of a *Na-chih yian* ('court for receiving hostages') in northern Shensi.²⁰ Elsewhere, hostages were brought to the centre of a polity but held in the custody of representatives of a ruler from the beginning of the agreement: in c. 950 the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII produced his famous manual for governance known in Latin as *De administrando imperio*, which recommended to his son Romanos the regular extraction of hostages from their neighbours the Pechenegs.²¹ The emperor advised that every year a diplomatic representative should travel to them and offer up gifts, receiving hostages in return. These hostages were then to be detained in Constantinople under the care of a government minister, and they would receive suitable benefits and gifts from the emperor during their time as hostages.²² Similarly, the tenth-century Andalusian historian Ibn al-Qūtiyya referred to the *dār al-rahā'in* (hostage quarters) established in Córdoba, housing those who provided living proof of the emir's martial successes, but also showing a different strategy that focused not on alienation but on shared experience, with a single host administering to the needs and requirements of his guests.²³

Child Hostages: A Unique Type of Guest?

Agreements that involved child hostages tend to have certain characteristics that distinguish them in the written record from transactions of adult hostages. Children given in such arrangements were usually from families of high status, and typically secured longer-term agreements whose end-point was rarely made explicit. The way these hostages are described can also be distinctive: child hostages were distanced from other categories of temporary guest and instead aligned with other children at the court, who may have spent many years there themselves either as guests or members of the household. This blurring between hostages and other guests, whether linked to their host by blood ties or joined by fictive kinship (such as godparenthood, fosterage, or other mechanisms) at once testifies to the hostages' importance and to the importance attributed to their care by custodians. One key aspect of hosting child hostages that repeatedly emerges from the written record is that their custodians made careful arrangements for their guests' education. Whilst not forgetting that the perspective of most of our sources reflected the culture of the hostages' recipients rather than that of the hostages themselves, the education offered to child hostages operated as a way to build bonds and

20 *Sung hui-yao kao*, cited in Yang, 'Hostages in Chinese History', p. 511.

21 On the Pechenegs and hostages, see Paroń, *The Pechenegs*, pp. 235–36.

22 Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, I. 2, p. 48.

23 Ibn al-Qūtiyya, *Ta'rikh iftitāh al-Andalus*, ch. 7, p. 94; Ibn Hayyān, *al-Muqtabis fi akhbār ahl al-Andalus*, p. 186.

acculturate their wards, but could also serve after the hostages' departure and return to their homelands as a living testament the learning and refinement of the hosts' court.

A colourful story from Ibn al-Qūṭiyya's *History of the Conquest of al-Andalus* shows one possible area of tension that could arise when providing an education to such guests. In an anecdote typical of his style of history-writing, Ibn al-Qūṭiyya states that during the reign of the emir Muhammad (in the late ninth century) one of the emir's most trusted ministers, Umayya ibn Shuhayd, encountered hostages from the Banū Qāsi people sat outside their quarters with a teacher. The hostages were reciting aloud from the heroic poetry of the sixth-century 'Antarah ibn Shaddād, educational material that apparently enraged Umayya ibn Shuhayd.²⁴ The minister declared that this material should not be taught to hostages:

You have gone to demons who have sorely grieved the emirs and taught them poetry which will give them an insight into real courage! Stop doing it! Teach them only poems like the drinking songs of al-Hasan ibn Hānī' and similar humorous verses.²⁵

The story suggests the acculturation of such individuals might ultimately prove formative, but it is especially notable for the implication that hostages given the wrong education might present a danger to their hosts, just as adult hostages did.²⁶ As we have seen, hostages were guests with very limited agency, whose physical safety lay in the hands of their warder and those who had given them. Yet here we are presented with an imagined reversal of this balance of power, one in which the type of hospitality and education offered might endanger the hostage-holder or recipient.

Crucially, the presence of child hostages at court allowed writers to play with semantic elision between hostages and foster-children and between fictive and biological kinship. In doing so, they distanced hostages and (especially) their hosts and guardians from the more unsavoury elements of the practice and its implications, a sleight of hand by historical authors that occluded the dangers faced by these children. In his praise poem for the Carolingian emperor Louis the Pious, Ermold the Black crowned his work with a famous account of the hospitality offered to the Danish ruler Harald Klak and his family at the emperor's court. Over several days Louis and his family sponsored the baptism of Harald's family and household, hunted and shared food with them,²⁷ and on his departure Harald left his son and nephew behind to be watched over by the Carolingian ruler.²⁸ The boys are

²⁴ On the Banū Qasī people, see Jiménez, *La dawla de los Banu Qasi*.

²⁵ Ibn al-Qūṭiyya, *History of the Conquest of al-Andalus*, trans. by James, p. 121. For the Arabic text, see Ibn al-Qūṭiyya, *Ta'rikh iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, ch. 7, pp. 94–95.

²⁶ The anecdote is discussed in greater detail in Fierro, 'Hostages', pp. 75–77.

²⁷ Ermold the Black, *In Honorem*, IV, vv. 2164–563, pp. 166–95.

²⁸ Ermold the Black, *In Honorem*, IV, vv. 2510–11, p. 190.

(I would suggest deliberately) not given a particular label, either as hostages or foster-children, and their custody by Louis might align with either practice. Provisions for the education of child hostages offered fertile ground for these semantic elisions. In praising the ninth-century ruler Alfred, king of Wessex, his biographer Asser claimed that the king hosted guests at his court from Francia, Frisia, Gaul, Brittany, Ireland, and Scandinavia. In particular, Asser praises that Alfred oversaw the education of many children at his court ‘non minus propriis diligens’ (whom he loved no less than his own children).²⁹ Again, while Asser does not make the status of the children explicit, some may have been left as hostages or foster-children, and their ambiguity is perhaps intentional: regardless of how they came to be there, all children under Alfred’s care were educated and loved by the benevolent king.

This type of blurring reaches its apogee in England during the reign of King Æthelstan, who in the 930s retained a panoply of noble youths from across Europe at his court. These included a son of the Scottish ruler Constantin, given to Æthelstan as a hostage, the captive sons of Count Herluin of Ponthieu, as well as children bound to him by biological kinship, namely his half-brothers Edmund and Eadred, who were infants at the time of his accession and both went on to reign as kings,³⁰ and his relative Louis IV, son of the deposed Frankish king Charles the Simple.³¹ Æthelstan also fostered Alain II, later duke of Brittany,³² and according to later Scandinavian tradition the Norwegian prince Hákon góði (nicknamed *Aðalsteinsfostri* (‘Æthelstan’s foster-son’)).³³ Keeping all these children at court served to cement the status of Æthelstan’s seat of power as a cosmopolitan centre of learning, but also one in which subservient rulers or elites need not fear for the care and hosting of their offspring if they were requested or demanded as hostages: they would be treated no differently than the king’s biological kin. This entailed the provision of an education that may have even been better than that which they could have received in their homeland, alongside the opportunity to forge diplomatic links with both their host and other displaced children that could prove politically advantageous at a later date.

Two very different works written with perspectives aligned with or sympathetic to the hostages also played on these themes. This viewpoint is crucial, since it is very rarely glimpsed in other early and central medieval narratives of hostageship, which are largely written from within the culture of the recipient rather than the donor. They therefore allow us a window into how contemporary writers compiling or composing texts might imagine the experiences of hostages as guests, and how the positive treatment they

29 Asser, *Vita Alfredi regis*, ch. 76, p. 60, *Life of Alfred*, trans. by Keynes and Lapidge, p. 91.

30 William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, II, p. 140, I, p. 228.

31 Flodoard a. 923, p. 61; Richer, *Historiae*, II.1, I, p. 158.

32 *Chronicon Namnetense*, ch. 27, pp. 82–83.

33 Sigvatr Þorðarson, *Bersöglisvisur*, stanza 5, pp. 16–17; Theodoricus Monachus, *Historia de Antiquitate*, ch. 2, p. 7; *Historia Norwegiae*, ch. 3, p. 104; *Ágrip*, ch. 3, p. 4.

received may have challenged their internal identity. The first of these is the *Life of Murvan*, a hagiographical text recounting the deeds of the early Christian Peter the Iberian (known as Murvan in his lifetime) that survives in several recensions.³⁴ Those preserved in the Georgian and Armenian chronicle traditions repeat earlier claims that the saintly hostage Murvan was sent to the Byzantine emperor Theodosius the Less, after the latter feared an alliance between the Georgians and Persia and so had demanded the boy as a hostage. Murvan was taken to Constantinople where the emperor educated him as though he were his own son, we are told, surrounding the young boy with luxury. Through his intellectual endeavours, learning Greek and Syriac, but predominantly through his piety, Murvan was inspired by his hosts to be more holy than their (already devout) practice. The saintly hostage also rejected the luxury offered in favour of pious garb and the distribution of the wealth he received from his hosts. Despite Murvan's positive experiences of hostageship with his pious hosts, which had spurred the young boy to greater holiness, he allied with a eunuch servant and escaped with the assistance of God, thwarting Theodosius's plans.

This juxtaposition of the well-behaved hostage who never forgot their origins is found in a second literary text — the ninth- or tenth-century epic *Waltharius* — allowing us to explore some of the themes suggested by the depiction of Murvan's time as a hostage, for they are developed more fully by the unknown poet, with the ambiguity of the hostages' status as guests brought to the fore. The poem begins by setting the historical scene, and tells how, as part of his military conquests Attila the Hun extracted three young hostages (Hagan, Waltharius, and Hildegund) from the Frankish, Aquitanian, and Burgundian kings respectively. The poem is well known for the way its author meditated upon, tackled and sometimes subverted their central themes, from heroism and masculinity to leadership and violence, yet this analysis has not extended to the poet's representations of hostageship, nor to their status at court as guests with little agency.³⁵

The ambiguity of the hostages' position is expressed throughout the narrative, as the poet describes Hildegund being 'sent into exile', and equates the hostages' arrival in Hunnish Pannonia with the bringing of treasure. Once in Attila's custody at court they are variously described as hostages, exiles, captives, and foster-children.³⁶ These statuses co-exist within the text alongside statements that the bond between the host and his quasi-imprisoned guests was more profound for their custodian than for the children: '[Attila] exulibus pueris magnam exhibuit pietatem/ac veluti proprios nutrire iubebat alumnos' (Attila showed great kindness to the exiled children/And ordered

34 *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, Q132–33; see Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, Appendix, nos 5–6, pp. 359–62.

35 Hostageship is mentioned briefly by Rio, 'Waltharius', p. 49; Stone, 'Waltharius', p. 61.

36 *Waltharius*, vv. 96–115, 379, pp. 8, 20.

them brought up as if they were his own),³⁷ phrasing reminiscent of Asser's description of King Alfred's care of children at his court, discussed above. But where Asser left the status of these child guests undefined, the *Waltharius* poet gives us a unique insight into the hospitality (and even love) offered to child hostages. Thus, where other sources imply such bonds, the poet makes explicit that the exalted visitors were shown kindness and treated as members of the community rather than outsiders. The relationship between warder and hostage is thus romanticized and taken to its limit: they are not guests at all, but immediately inculcated into Attila's court and nurtured to become paradigms of their hosts' culture, skills and values:

sed et artibus imbuunt illos | praesertimque iocis belli sub tempore habendis.
 | Qui simul ingenio crescentes mentis et aevo | robore vincebant fortes
 animoque sophistas, | donec iam cunctos superarent fortiter Hunos. |
 Militiae primos tunc Attila fecerat illos, | sed haud immerito, quoniam,
 si quando moveret | bella, per insignes isti micuere trisumphos [...]
 Virgo etiam captiva deo praestante supremo | reginae vultum placavit
 et auxit amorem, | moribus eximiis operumque industria habundans.
 | Postremum custos thesauris provida cunctis | efficitur, modicumque
 deest, quin regnet et ipsa; | nam quicquid voluit de rebus, fecit et actis.

(He also taught them many skills, | Especially the games one plays
 in time of war. | The boys, who grew in both age and intelligence, |
 Surpassed the strong in strength, the wise in intellect, | Until they
 were by far the best of all the Huns. | Attila made them captains of
 his army then — And with good reason, since whenever wars arose,
 | They were conspicuous with their outstanding triumphs [...] And
 with the help of God, the captive maiden too — | Abounding in good
 character and diligence — | Was pleasing in the queen's sight and
 increased her love. | At last the prudent girl was placed in charge of
 all | Supplies, and she was little short of being queen Herself; for she
 did what she wished concerning things.³⁸)

Unlike the Córdoba hostages we encountered earlier, the *Waltharius* poet included in their narrative no hint of negative consequences that might come from educating child hostages. nor to fears that their loyalty to their custodian may be less than genuine. Yet while Attila may have treated his three visitors as surrogate children and with great honour, their presence amongst the Huns at key assemblies and feasts serves in the text to remind both the hostages and the court of Attila's dominance over the distant Frankish kings and kingdoms.³⁹ The unique perspective of the poem allows us to imagine the lived experience of hostages in a way that many more terse accounts do not, including this

37 *Waltharius*, vv. 97–98, pp. 8–9.

38 *Waltharius*, vv. 100–08, 110–15, pp. 8–10.

39 *Waltharius*, vv. 279–315, pp. 17–21.

inherent tension between the hospitality offered and the status of the children. To cite just one example, despite Attila's munificence his three wards never forgot their status as prisoners, albeit in gilded cages: Hagan is said to have run away once the terms of the agreement he embodied were violated by the king of the Franks, while Waltharius rejected Attila's offers of land, wealth, and a bride from amongst the Huns because he yearned for his homeland and his betrothed Hildegund, albeit in secrecy.⁴⁰ Indeed, both Hildegund and Waltharius refer to themselves as exiles while in conversation with each other, presenting themselves in stark contrast to Attila and his queen's view of the dynamic between host and guest.⁴¹ When Waltharius and Hildegund get their hosts drunk and use the opportunity to escape, the king and queen's distraught reaction cements the perspective that they were truly loved, but rejected their hosts in favour of their 'true' families and communities.⁴²

Despite the very different historical and literary contexts, there are similarities in how our authors present the hostages Murvan and Waltharius. Both are the heroes of their respective narratives, and both were offered the opportunity to transition from hostage-guest to members of the community in which they lived through promises of luxury and opulence. Yet as our heroes, they are not motivated by wealth or opulence, but reject material goods (equated with acculturation) in favour of retaining their social identity prior to their hostageship. Both broke the agreements of their custody, escaping and therefore terminating the contracts that had underpinned their safety. Yet, in these unusual narratives of hostageship, our heroes' violation of both the hostage agreements and the demands of hospitality contained within them were not the subject of condemnation, but instead signs of their inner strength and quality of character. In the face of generally terse accounts of the practice, these literary explorations of what it meant to be a hostage at the court of another are important. They reveal the uncertain and uneasy position of the young hostage as guest and in the case of the *Waltharius* text in particular, the performance required of them: the grateful and eager visitor to the court who may nevertheless have inwardly felt very differently. Unlike other long-term guests whose stay may have been more open-ended, the hostages were permanently aware that their status was temporary. What happened to the host-guest relationship when the agreement these individuals represented ended?

40 *Waltharius*, vv. 142–60, p. 11.

41 *Waltharius*, vv. 231, 251, p. 16.

42 *Waltharius*, vv. 365–99, p. 23.

The Breaking and Termination of Agreements

A number of extant cases reveal that the agreement ended unsuccessfully: almost seventy accounts claim that one party involved in a hostage-agreement subsequently reneged and broke their promise. That medieval commentators noted such failures suggests an exceptional quality to such cases; the vast majority of records said nothing of the hostages' fate. In examining accounts of broken agreements, it is vitally important to note that the blame for these failures was almost always placed with the hostages' donors, rather than their recipients. The breaking of agreements could thus function as a means of 'othering' those responsible, with their subversion of expected norms of diplomacy offered up as evidence of general bad character. Secondly, while numerous commentators recorded agreements that were broken in this period, only a tiny fraction record any harm enacted against hostages in consequence. Hosts in this context may have been well within their rights to harm those in their custody, but this hardly ever made it into the written record. Where we do find harm against hostages, as Adam Kosto has noted in a slightly different context, it is generally reported as having happened not as a consequence of a broken agreement, but due to the faithlessness and cruelty of rivals or enemies who possessed hostages. The following unflattering account written by Ouyang Xiu of the warlord Tian Jun's irascible behaviour is typical of this attitude:

元瓘字明寶，少為質於田頔。頔叛於吳，楊行密會越兵攻之，頔每戰敗歸，即欲殺元瓘，頔母嘗蔽護之。後頔將出，語左右曰：「今日不勝，必斬錢郎。」是日頔戰死，元瓘得歸。

Whenever suffering defeat, Jun would return with the intent of murdering Yuanguan, only for Jun's mother to intervene, shielding the youth. Jun finally departed for battle and promised aides upon leaving, 'if we are not victorious on this day, we must decapitate the Youth Qian'. Jun died in battle on that very day, enabling Yuanguan to return home.⁴³

Other evidence for the harm of hostages is found only indirectly, in cases where hostage-holders only threatened violence, or hostage-donors feared violent reprisals. These accounts are easier to find, and emanate from more diverse perspectives and cultures, suggesting it was a common fear for those involved as grantors. For such narratives to have resonance, hostage-harm must have been a possible outcome to such arrangements, even if it occurred only rarely. These cases thus suggest that the threat of harm acted as a compelling motivator of behaviour in the early medieval period; they also show us glimpses of the profound tension in such arrangements: hospitality

43 Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Wudai Shi*, ch. 67, Ouyang Xiu, *The Historical Records*, trans. by Davis, p. 300. On hostility to these tenth-century warlords in Ouyang Xiu's work, see Davis, *The Historical Records*, pp. xliii–lxxvi.

proffered with an underlying and ever-present threat of physical harm. To describe execution or physical punishment as the withdrawal of hospitality would be glib, but harm did not always entail execution or mutilation, and could take the form of reduction in status or increased confinement: hostages continued to be guests, but looked more and more like prisoners. Although a little before the period under scrutiny here, the Merovingian historian Gregory of Tours records a number of such punishments: after a mutual agreement between the kings Theuderic and Childebert failed, for instance, both rulers effectively enslaved the hostages in their custody: ‘Ad servitium publicum sunt addicti; et quicumque eos ad custodiendum accepit, servus sibi ex his fecit’ (They were handed over to *servitium publicum* [i.e. to serve on the fisc], and whoever had received them to guard made one of them his servant).⁴⁴ These noble youths found themselves in bondage, although Gregory notes many escaped (including one of his relatives), suggesting relatively limited interest in their physical restraint. The Irish text *Críth Gablach*, discussed above for its insights into the treatment of hostages, states that while hostages sat near the king and roamed the hall freely, forfeited hostages sat at the north-east of the hall in fetters.⁴⁵

If custodians privileged the acculturation of certain hostages as a means to send them home with newly found cultural commonality and even sentiments of alliance, it stands to reason that the long-term relationship between recipient and hostage might come to outweigh that between the donor and recipient in importance. Broken agreements that did not result in harm, but in continued hospitality and the building of relations are the clearest indication of this. Hostage arrangements involving the Georgian kings include several cases where broken agreements were effectively ignored: after receiving the Georgian prince Bagrat IV as a hostage from his father, for instance, Emperor Basil II swore an oath that he would release him after three years, and did so despite apparent misbehaviour on the part of the donor.⁴⁶ When his turn came to rule Bagrat IV, meanwhile, held the son of his most powerful ally and sometime rival Duke Liparit of Kldekari, and reportedly released him after seven years despite the vacillating degree of friendship between the two men.⁴⁷

To highlight a more striking example still, according to the *History of the Five Dynasties* in the 920s Li Congshen served as a hostage at the court of the Emperor Zhuangzong of Tang, where he was made a member of the imperial guard. Apparently unconcerned for the welfare of his son, Li Congshen’s father rebelled. The text records that Zhuangzong placed his faith in the hostage’s loyalty despite the breakdown of the agreement, first deploying Li Congshen as a mediator, and then returned him home without punishment in the hope

44 Gregory of Tours, *Decem Libri Historiarum*, III, ch. 15, p. 112.; trans., pp. 96–97.

45 *Críth Gablach*, v. 596, p. 570: ‘Géithma dithma i nglasab’.

46 Kartlis Tskhovreba, pp. 277, 290, *Life of K’artli*, trans. by Thomson, pp. 270, 284.

47 *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, p. 300, *Life of K’artli*, trans. by Thomson, p. 293.

that Li Congshen could improve the deteriorating relationship between the pair.⁴⁸ Li Congshen was effectively abandoned by his own father, but instead of his warder executing him or restricting his movement he did the opposite, and trusted the hostage enough to use Li Congshen to repair the situation. Li Congshen ultimately died in the course of his efforts to resolve the crisis that enveloped his kin, but his loyalty to his custodian earned him more or less universal praise. This story shows us how forgoing the punishment of a hostage who represented a broken agreement, and instead offering continued support and hospitality, could be of real benefit to their host and of obvious benefit to the hostage themselves. Such behaviour had potential ripe to be exploited by authors seeking to valorize the behaviour of hostage-hosts, too: failure to punish hostages could on the page demonstrate the magnanimity or mercy of those about whom they wrote. Put another way, protecting the hostage and building bonds between host and guest was more important than a failed agreement: a number of hostage-holders preferred to continue to enjoy shared meals, accommodations, or other experiences typical of host–guest relations with their hostages.

Concluding Remarks

The near-universal practice of giving hostages to secure agreements is well attested in narrative and documentary sources from across diverse historical and geographical contexts in the premodern era; the period c. 800–c. 1050 is no exception. By definition a temporary arrangement that relied on the promise of eventual release, the care of hostages was of paramount importance to many medieval legal experts, writers, and historians who wrote about the practice. A number of texts offer a window into hostages' lived experiences whilst they held the status of guests of their keepers. This evidence mostly emanated from the circles or polities of hostages' custodians, and covered issues concerning the care of hostage-guests ranging from the mundane (where they would live, and with whom) to the intellectual and spiritual (the religion and education of hostages). It also covered their physical safety, their role at the court, and the bonds they might make in their new (albeit temporary) homes.

The protection and hospitality hostage-holders offered formed a central element — arguably, *the* central element — of the practice's utility to recipients. As I have argued throughout this chapter, in these respects and others hostages resembled other guests whose presence in their hosts' home or court brought with it numerous tensions. Few other hosts and visitors had such a complex status, however, nor as many competing interpretations or connotations attached to their very presence. The potential for bonds and relationships after hostages were freed permeated their experience as guests,

48 The case is discussed in Davis, *From Warhorses to Ploughshares*, pp. 19–20, 47, 125.

shaping their stay and the relationships they made whilst serving as hostages. This resulted in a conscious elision between hostages and similar individuals who were guests at the courts of elites, from foster-children to exiles and foreign guests to (even) captives, a kind of blurring that ultimately masks both the forced aspect of these relationships and the potentially destructive nature of the practice to bonds of kinship between donors and hostages. The looming threat of violence was ever-present, and we can only imagine how these individuals were affected by the possibility that the agreement they embodied might fail, and their lives would be forfeit. Yet this outcome was not desirable for any party involved in such agreements however, and if we take the corpus as a whole appears to have been one that rarely took place if it could be avoided. Instead, the magnanimity of hosts comes to the fore again and again, and it is therefore no coincidence that the ambiguities of hostages' status of guests and the danger they faced were minimized. Their warders were keenly aware that the acculturation of hostages offered potential for building and developing cultural bonds between discrete communities, a temporary relationship that could continue after the arrangement ended.

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'In True Obedience to the Laws of Hospitality'

*Hosts, Guests, Crusaders, and the Latin East
in the Historia of William of Tyre*


Introduction

What rules, even unwritten and ambiguous ones, governed the obligations of hosts and guests and what, furthermore, differentiated superficial obedience to such from heartfelt, true obedience to the ideal of hospitality?¹ In this chapter I will explore how such questions were investigated and utilized in the *Historia* of William, archbishop of Tyre, completed around 1184. I will investigate how William used stories of good and bad hosts and guests to tell the story of the crusades and the ambiguous interactions between East and West, and in doing so, how he sought to use the idea of laws of hospitality to shape such interactions in the future.²

Hospitality presented difficult challenges in the context of the crusades and later relations between Western Latin Christians and the polities that had been founded in the Middle East in the aftermath of the First Crusade. Crusaders, on the First (1095–1099) and Second Crusade (1145–1149), thought of themselves as the guests of their co-religionists in the East and believed they were there in response to the pleas for aid sent by (on the First Crusade)

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- 1 The funding for the research leading to these results has been provided by Swedish Research Council project 'Ambiguities of Hospitality: Intercultural Integration and Conflict in Host-Guest Relations on the European Borderlands, c. 1000–1350' (VR 2020–01810). Both I and the chapter have benefited greatly from discussions with my collaborators Wojtek Jezierski (Gothenburg) and Tim Geelhaar (Bielefeld) and my colleague Stephen Spencer (London), who read and commented on a draft. The chapter was presented at conferences in Stockholm and Leeds and I am grateful to all the participants for discussions and suggestions.
 - 2 On William of Tyre's *Historia*, see especially Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre* and Yolles, *Making the East Latin*, pp. 177–217.

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Guests, Strangers, Aliens, Enemies: Ambiguities of Hospitality in the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1350, ed. by Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Kjær, CURSOR 45 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), pp. 99–123
BREPOLS  PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.5.149653

Emperor Alexios Komnenos of Constantinople or (on the Second Crusade) by the rulers of the Latin East. Moreover, they were a very special, higher form of guest: pilgrims, who had been seen as particularly deserving of hospitality for centuries.³ The reception the pilgrim guests received in the East, however, did not always live up to these high expectations. Relations with Byzantium were soured by mutual accusations and conflicts, most notably over control of the city of Antioch. During the Second Crusade, the crusaders were disappointed by the support they received in the East and showed limited sympathy for the complex political circumstances of the Latin East. The disappointing results of the Second Crusade were frequently blamed on the failures of their hosts in the East, both Greek and Latin.⁴

Writing in the 1170s–1180s, William of Tyre sought to defend the honour of his native country, but in a way that would also appeal to Western audiences and inspire new commitment to the cause of the Eastern Latin polities. In doing so, William had to engage with the question of how the Eastern Latins had received the people of the West. For William it was imperative to show that the Easterners had, in general, acted ‘in true obedience to the laws of hospitality’.⁵

William’s appeal to imagined ‘laws of hospitality’ raises methodical questions. The concept comes close to being an oxymoron. In a classic article ‘The Law of Hospitality’ Julian Pitt-Rivers explored the duties and expectations placed upon hosts and guests in Mediterranean societies: the host must provide for, honour, and protect the guest, while the guest must respect their host, accept the hospitality provided, and accept the host’s precedence within their home. While Pitt-Rivers identifies key obligations for hosts and guests, he also makes it clear that there are no laws of hospitality, and, moreover, can be no laws of hospitality without making it into something different. ‘The law of hospitality is founded upon ambiguity’: it is because the host has the sovereignty, the freedom to show or withhold their grace that hospitality brings honour; equally, it is because the guest presents a potential threat that their decision to submit to and show deference to their host is honourable.⁶

William probably picked up the idea of ‘laws of hospitality’ from Isidore of Seville’s widely-read *Etymologiae*, which defined a *hospitium*, a place of hospitality, as a place where a person ‘stays for a while under the rules of

3 See Webb, *Pilgrims*.

4 On the relationship between the Latin East and West, see in particular Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land* and Paul, *To Follow in their Footsteps*.

5 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, IV, 7, I, p. 241: ‘invitarent ad hospicium et plenius hospitalitatis legibus eis et equis eorum necessaria ministrarent’, trans. Babcock and Krey, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, I, p. 196.

6 Pitt-Rivers, ‘The Law of Hospitality’, for a discussion of this aspect of Pitt-Rivers’s work, see Candea and da Col, ‘The Return to Hospitality’. For a discussion of freedom and generosity more widely in the medieval context, see Kjær, *The Medieval Gift and the Classical Tradition*.

hospitality' before moving on.⁷ It was, then, a well-known idea and one with considerable intellectual authority behind it, but one that was rarely employed by William's contemporaries.⁸ William of Tyre uses the phrase, or close variations on it, on five occasions in his *Historia*. None of these instances can be traced back to the crusade chronicles William is known to have used. In the below, I will argue that it was more than just a nice literary flourish for William and that it provides a way into understanding what he thought about the role of hospitality, the rights and obligations of hosts and guests, and the importance of hospitality encounters for the past and future of the Latin polities in the Middle East. It also allows us to reflect further about the possibilities and limitations of hospitality and the problems that the ambiguous conventions of hospitality could occasion in situations of intense stress. I will begin by offering an introduction to the background against which William of Tyre was writing, before exploring his narrative of the First Crusade and the founding of the Latin East, with a particular focus on the latter's complex relationship with Western guests up to William's own time.

A Balancing Act

No kingdom, no people, wanted a reputation as bad hosts, but several factors made such a reputation particularly problematic for the people of the Latin East. The Latin Christians of the East remained deeply dependent on financial and military assistance from Western Europe into the twelfth century, especially as Nur al-Din and Saladin expanded their dominion over nearby Muslim polities.⁹ Secondly, ideologically, the entire *raison d'être* of the Eastern Latin polities was to provide security for the pilgrims visiting Jerusalem and the other holy sites.¹⁰ But the Latin Christians had to balance this against the need to establish and maintain relations with local powers, including the various Muslim polities.¹¹

The challenges that this balance could present is vividly captured in some of the anecdotes recorded by the Syrian aristocrat Usama Ibn Munqidh in his memoir *The Book of Contemplation* from around 1183. Among them was the

7 *Etymologiae*, xv. 2, p. 160: 'Hospitium sermo Graecus est, ubi quis ad tempus hospitali iure inhabitat, et iterum inde transiens migrat', I owe this reference to Alice Hicklin. On William's interest in questions of law and legality, see Kostick, 'William of Tyre', Rubin, 'The Debate', Buck, 'A True "History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea"?', Tessera, 'Prudentes homines ... qui sensus habebant magis exercitados'.

8 See Tim Geelhaar's contribution to this volume.

9 See Riley-Smith, 'Peace Never Established' and now, Tibble, *The Crusader Strategy*.

10 Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 216–17. For an important debate about the relative importance of connections in the Middle East and with the West and the crusade legacy, see MacEvitt, 'What was Crusader about the Crusader States?' and the response by Buck, 'Settlement, Identity, and Memory in the Latin East'.

11 Rubenstein, 'Tolerance for the Armies of Antichrist'.

story of one of Usama's associates who had been invited to dinner by an old knight in Antioch who 'came out in one of the first expeditions of the Franks.' This old crusade-hand had, however, eagerly adapted to new circumstances. When he observed his Muslim guest hold back from the food, he exclaimed:

Eat and be of good cheer! For I don't eat Frankish food: I have Egyptian cooking-women and never eat anything except what they cook. And pork never enters my house.

Usama's associate ate, 'though guardedly' and left. Outside, he was accosted by citizens of Antioch and accused of murder, until the old knight intervened. Thus, the anecdote concludes: 'the effect of that meal was my deliverance from death.'¹² As Kate Franklin argues in her chapter, local hospitality-providers, such as the Egyptian cooking-women, played key roles in enabling social and political connections across cultural boundaries. Adaptation to local food and hospitality practices had important advantages.¹³ But how would these practices be received by Western arrivals?

Strange food practices play a central element in a story from the twelfth-century chronicler Lambert of Ardres, and although the focus here is on religious belief, it indicates how questions of what was eaten when could come to play a central role in cultural clashes. He tells the tale of the young aristocrat Anselm who settled for a time in the Latin polities of the Middle East. Here he was captured by Muslim opponents — not an unfamiliar experience for aristocrats of those polities — and converted to Islam.¹⁴ Although Anselm escaped and returned to Christianity and his homeland, he did not leave behind his foreign food customs but 'ate meat every day, not even excepting Fridays'; for this reason and the fact that he never hid his sometime apostasy he was 'hateful' to his relatives and eventually left for the East once more.¹⁵

The Eastern Latins had multiple guests with different desires that had to be balanced. Usama recounted his own experiences of this during a visit to Jerusalem. The Templars, whom Usama counted among his friends, had assigned him a mosque in which he could conduct his prayers. While praying, however, he was accosted by a recently arrived Frank who sought to direct Usama in an eastward direction, as in a Latin church. The Templars twice had to seize the interloper and turn him out before he would leave Usama alone. They explained to their Muslim guest: 'He is a stranger who has recently arrived from the Frankish lands. He has never seen anyone praying without turning to the east'. Usama went on to note how shocked the westerner

12 Usama Ibn Munqidh, *The Book of Contemplation*, pp. 153–54.

13 See Kate Franklin's paper in this volume.

14 On captivity and ransom in the Latin East, see Friedman, *Encounter between Enemies*, esp. p. 137.

15 Lambert of Ardres, *Historia comitum Ghisnensium*, p. 615: 'sed tamen cum christianis manens parentibus, omni die nisi excepta sexta feria carnibus utebatur nec se dissimulabat quandoque apostatum et in Sarracenis olim prolapsus immundicias. Unde et christicolis parentibus odiosus', trans. Shopkow, *The History of the Counts of Guines*, p. 144.

seemed, concluding that this was because he had never seen anyone pray towards Mecca. We might speculate that his shock could also come from the experience of being prevented from harassing a Muslim in Jerusalem by none other than the Templars, an order created to protect Christian pilgrims.¹⁶

William of Tyre, the East, and the West

These microhistories of confusion and consternation formed the background for events in which the question of hospitality became a key political question. The Second Crusade had ended in disappointment when the surviving Christian armies retreated from the siege of Damascus under threat from reinforcements from Aleppo. A Christendom-wide blame game ensued, and the Christian polities of the Latin East came in for particularly intense criticism.¹⁷

According to William of Tyre, the disappointment of the Second Crusade lay at the root of the problems that beset the Latin polities of his own day. After the failure of the siege of Damascus, the crusaders felt that they had been let down by the Eastern Latins whom they had entrusted with their welfare and safety.¹⁸ William of Tyre completed his *Historia* in 1184, about a year after Usama Ibn Munqidh finished his memoir.¹⁹ Looking back at the history of his homeland William noted that since the Second Crusade, fewer Westerners took the cross and those who did, stayed for as short a period as they could, in order not to be caught in the intrigues and treacheries of the Eastern Latins.²⁰

William had an excellent position from which to judge these developments. He had played a central role in the affairs of the Latin polities and their interactions with the rest of the world: on diplomatic missions in the 1160s and 1170s, including at the Third Lateran Council in 1179; as chancellor of the Kingdom of Jerusalem from 1174, and as archbishop of Tyre from 1175. The *Historia* was a continuation of this work, a retelling of the achievements of the Eastern Latins intended for his 'brethren in Christ', by which he probably meant to include the Church hierarchy in the West, which William hoped would reignite enthusiasm for the cause of the Latin polities of the East.²¹

William engaged in prodigious research and writing to achieve his goal. The *Historia* covered not just the achievements of the Latin polities of the East, especially the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the crusades but also

16 Usama Ibn Munqidh, *Book of Contemplation*, p. 147.

17 Constable, 'The Second Crusade as seen by Contemporaries', pp. 266–76; Phillips, *Second Crusade*, pp. 126, 134, 277–79; Loud, 'Some Reflections on the Failure of the Second Crusade'; Tyerman, *God's War*, pp. 336–42.

18 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 17. 6–7, 11, pp. 767–69.

19 See Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, pp. 23–31; Kedar, 'Some New Light on the Composition Process of William of Tyre's *Historia*'.

20 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 17. 6–7, 11, pp. 767–69.

21 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, p. 29.

their prehistory, beginning with the fall of Jerusalem to Muslim forces in the seventh century. Besides his own observations and investigations and interviews with old and knowledgeable people, William also drew extensively on existing histories of the First Crusade and the Latin polities. All these were combined and adapted to create a new, coherent and compelling literary work. Although it had a slow start, once the *Historia* was translated into French in the thirteenth century it became a great success and came to dominate European histories of the crusade and the Latin East.²² This success was due in no small part to William's literary skill: he had tied the complex history of the Latin East to widely recognizable themes from Christian and Classical literature.²³ This was not just a story of crusaders, compelling as that theme was in itself, but about eternal questions of virtue and vice, ideals and expediency. The idea of hospitality was a central component to this — and one which offered rich opportunities to engage with the idea that the Eastern Latins had failed their Western guests and allies during the Second Crusade.

For William, the shame associated with the failure of the Second Crusade would not just have been an abstract, political problem. William began his studies in Paris and Orleans c. 1146.²⁴ He would have arrived in time to witness the great enthusiasm that accompanied the launch of the Second Crusade that year. It was a 'tournament between heaven and hell', in the words of the troubadours; an opportunity for the kings and knights of Europe to follow in the footsteps of all those who had bled for the Holy Land before them, in the words of Pope Eugenius III and Bernard of Clairvaux who championed the crusade.²⁵ But William was still in France three years later, in 1149, when Louis VII and his surviving crusaders returned in disappointment bringing with them stories of the failures of their co-religionists in the East and rumours that the queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, had been seduced by one of the princes of the East, Raymond of Antioch.

We can only imagine how all that would have felt for William, a young Eastern Latin Christian student who, in his own words, 'burned with fervent loyalty and pure love' for his motherland (and his mother whom he had left behind in Jerusalem, and whose embrace upon his homecoming he fondly remembered when writing in later years).²⁶ Besides enumerating his brilliant teachers and the subjects he studied in his almost twenty years in France and Italy, the only hint that William gives of his circumstances while in the West

22 Handyside, *The Old French William of Tyre*, p. 7.

23 On William's sources and engagement with Western and Eastern intellectual traditions, see Yolles, *Making the East Latin*, pp. 182–201.

24 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, p. 13.

25 See especially Phillips, *Second Crusade*, pp. 37–135. For William of Tyre's description of the launch of the Second Crusade, see: William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 16. 18, II, pp. 739–41.

26 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, prologue, 19. 12, II, p. 99: 'pii fervore affectus et caritatis sincertiate', II, p. 880.

is that he spent these years in 'voluntary poverty'.²⁷ Precisely what is meant by this is difficult to substantiate: his family were burgesses of Jerusalem and he quickly made connections at church and court upon his return to the East, so his circumstances might not have been quite so humble as he implies.²⁸ William's autobiographical remark does, however, indicate that — like other twelfth-century students — he had been in a relatively humble, perhaps insecure, financial state during his studies, with all the dependence on generosity and hospitality that came with this. Perhaps also, that he had not been overwhelmed by the quality of Western hospitality. William had been a guest in the West at precisely the moment in which the reputation of the Eastern Latin hosts of Christendom suffered its most devastating blow. Like other guests, then and now, he would have been particularly exposed to his host's opinions about his homeland's virtues or lack thereof. In the prologue of his *Historia*, William declared that he had persevered because his motherland demanded that 'those things which have been accomplished by her during the course of almost a century be not buried in silence'. It may not only have been an understanding of contemporary politics that moved William to obey the motherland's demand.²⁹ The *Historia* could also have been an opportunity to get the last word in a long-remembered argument with his 'venerable brethren in Christ' in the West about the quality of the hospitality of the East.

The Lord's Wedding Feast

Towards the end of his prologue, William offered a Scriptural parallel that hinted at how much was at stake.³⁰ William explained that he would rather that he and his work be found to be full of the sober learning that instructs, than the outwards showiness which brings worldly glory, lest he suffer like the guest who was asked 'how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?'.³¹ The parable from which this came is full of significance for the topic of this volume. Matthew reports Jesus telling his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son.' The king sent messengers out bearing invitations, but those whom he invited would not come, preferring their own affairs; some even mistreated or killed the messengers. The angry king now sent out his armies and 'destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city'. Then the king had his servants invite in people who just happened to be

27 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 19, 12, 11, p. 880: 'in paupertate voluntaria'.

28 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, p. 15.

29 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, prologue, 1, pp. 97, 99: 'Venerabilibus in Christo fratribus ... instat, inquam, et auctoritate qua preminet imperiose precipit ut que apud se centum pene annorum gesta sunt curriculum, silentio sepulta non patiamur sentire posse oblivionis incommodum', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 1, p. 55.

30 On William and the Bible, see Murray, 'Biblical Quotations'.

31 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, prologue, 1, p. 101.

walking by in the street. Among these guests, the king saw one who did not wear a wedding garment. When the guest could give no satisfactory explanation why he was not appropriately dressed, the king had him bound on hand and foot and 'cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth'. For 'many are called, but few are chosen' (Matthew 22. 1–14).

Medieval commentaries such as the *Glossa ordinaria* spelled out the meaning: the wedding was the eternal life, those who rejected the king's invitation were people who preferred worldly things, while the guest who did not wear a wedding garment was one of those who had entered unworthily into the service of the Lord.³² It had provided rich material for crusade preachers for decades.³³ For William of Tyre, the reference to this parable allowed him to hint at some of the deeper and more troubling truths that would be out-of-place in the urbane and often strikingly secular *Historia*.³⁴ Firstly, those who failed to respond to the Lord's invitation risked punishment in this life or the next. The invitation to fight for the Holy Land came with a RSVP garnished with subtle threats of death and damnation. Secondly, not all those who took up the invitation were worthy of it — those who were not would also suffer the Lord's punishment. From the beginning, William made his audience reflect on what it meant to receive an invitation to the Lord's wedding feast: who dared ignore this call? But he also urged his readers to reflect on what kind of guests they would be, and what kind of guests those who had come before them had been: had they put on the spiritual wedding garment?

The Origins of the First Crusade

William's account of the origins, events, and outcome of the First Crusade is framed in a way that highlights the importance of hospitality in the story and emphasizes the hospitality of the contemporary Eastern Latin Christians' ancestors, both the crusaders and the Christian populations of the Middle East. William of Tyre placed his account of the origins of the First Crusade within a grand narrative stretching all the way back to the origin of Islam and the collapse of Byzantine dominion over Jerusalem. Two aspects of the near five hundred years in which Jerusalem was under Muslim dominion are highlighted: that Muslims would disrupt divine service and, at much greater length, the travails of pilgrims. A thousand pilgrims are refused entry by the Muslim garrison because they are unable to pay the required tribute. Outside the walls of the city, many of the pilgrims died miserable deaths. But William is still more interested in the anguish of the local Christians who are prevented from acting as proper hosts to their co-religionists:

32 See *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria*, IV, pp. 954–55, for an introduction to the exegesis, see Nalpathilchira, 'Everything is Ready: Come to the Marriage Banquet', pp. 38–43.

33 Riley-Smith, 'Crusading as an Act of Love', p. 186.

34 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, pp. 41–43.

These people [the pilgrims], whether living or dead, were an intolerable burden to the wretched citizens. They attempted to keep alive those who survived by furnishing them with such food as they could. They also made an effort to bury the dead, although their own affairs were beyond their strength.

Even those pilgrims who were able to pay the toll and entered Jerusalem faced dangers from the violent Muslim conquerors:

Consequently, as the pilgrims hastened to the holy places, the citizens followed them in brotherly kindness. Anxious for their life and safety and full of terror lest some unlucky accident befall them, they hoped in this way to prevent such mishaps.³⁵

From here William of Tyre moves deftly on to the experience of Peter the Hermit in the Holy Land in the late eleventh century, who is deeply affected by the sufferings of his hosts and on their request returns to Europe to preach the First Crusade. This ur-story of anxious hospitality presented an honourable origin myth for the Latin polities of his time with their increasingly mixed population of descendants of Latin and local Christians. It also — and this was probably not incidental to the classically-educated William of Tyre — allowed him to connect the great epic of the First Crusade within an older, equally prestigious story of Westerners conquering in the East: Latin and vernacular reworkings of the *Iliad* made breaches of hospitality central to the war.³⁶

Good and Bad Guests and Hosts on the First Crusade

Once the crusade has begun, William of Tyre offered a collection of complex and ambiguous stories of hospitality, which reached their climax in the great meeting of guests and hosts in the sacked city of Jerusalem.³⁷

In his account of the crusaders' journey through Europe, William of Tyre introduces hospitality language into the accounts he derived from older

35 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 1. 10, 1, pp. 120–24: 'Hi, tam viventes quam mortui, miseris civibus intolerabili erant oneri. Nam et viventes alere, et cibo quocunque modo sustentare satagebant; et mortuos sepulturae tradere nitebantur, cum tamen eis supra vires sua essent negotia. Quibus autem solito pretio, urbem dabatur ingredi, hi majorem civibus ingerebant sollicitudinem, timentibus, ne forte deambulantes incaute, tanquam loca sancta visere volentes, sputis et alapis afficerentur; ad postremum autem, ne clam suffocati interirent. Unde haec mala praevenire cupientes, peregrinos ad loca sancta volentes properare, cives de eorum vita et incolumitate, charitate fraterna solliciti, eorum sequebantur vestigia, timentes ne quid eis sinistri casus accideret', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 1, p. 80.

36 Kjær, *Medieval Gift*, pp. 127–29.

37 On William of Tyre and the First Crusade, see Buck, 'William of Tyre, *Translatio Imperii*', who points out, at pp. 626–27, that William's account of the First Crusade has received limited scholarly attention. Buck's forthcoming work will provide a wholesale reappraisal of these parts of William of Tyre's work.

crusade chronicles. Expanding upon the account found in Albert of Aachen's history of the First Crusade William emphasized the way in which the first wave of crusaders, traditionally known as the 'peoples' crusade' had failed as guests. They gorged themselves on the resources placed at their disposal by the Christians of Eastern Europe and then turned to violence against their hosts 'neglectis legibus hospitalitatis' (in utter disregard for the laws of hospitality).³⁸ William of Tyre has the king of Hungary point out how the first wave of crusaders had been 'received with hospitality' but, 'like a snake in the bosom' had 'poorly requited their hosts'. The crusade leaders who followed, however, were able to curb the appetites of their followers and press on.³⁹

In Byzantium, conversely, it is the host who fails his guests. From the stories of the encounter between crusaders and Byzantium composed by earlier crusade chroniclers, William of Tyre created a picture of a subtle and dangerous opponent.⁴⁰ From the moment the crusade leaders began to arrive in Constantinople, the emperor Alexios is shown to 'behave in the manner of a scorpion, which you need not fear when it shows you its face, but the poison from whose tail you would do well to avoid.'⁴¹ Alexios lavished gifts and abundant hospitality on the crusaders, but at length it became clear that

he had shown such apparent generosity to all of the princes, not because he was generous or grateful, but out of desperate fear and deceitful intrigue.

The gifts were a means of compelling the leaders to offer him fealty and of maintaining control of the crusader armies, which he feared greatly, and whom he shipped across the Hellespont as quickly as possible, with no lasting or deeply felt commitment to their security and welfare.⁴²

Once the crusaders arrived in Muslim lands things became more straightforward. William of Tyre highlights the hospitable struggles of the crusade leaders who look after their people, both fighters and non-combatant pilgrims, in a spirit of Christian compassion.⁴³ Even as the army starves at Antioch and Maara, William of Tyre finds opportunities to celebrate the hospitality of the commanders and their attention to the needs of their pilgrim companions. It is a sign of how bad things are on those occasions that 'the nobles felt no shame,

38 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 1. 27, 1, p. 154, trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 1, p. 110.

39 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 2.2, 1, p. 163.: 'Nam cum primo Petrum et suos exercitus suscepissemus hospitio, bona quae apud nos erant tam gratis, quam pretio illis communicantes justo, more serpentis in gremio, et muris in pera, male remuneraverunt hospites suos,' trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 1, p. 118, compare Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 2. 3, p. 64.

40 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, pp. 130–50; Kjær, 'I Fear Greeks, Even When They Bear Gifts.'

41 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 10. 13, 1, p. 467: 'vicem scorpionis agens, cui cum non sit in facie quod formides, prederenter feceris si caude posterioris declinare poteris maleficium.'

42 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 2. 19, 1, p. 187: 'quodque principibus quasi liberaliter contulerat, nec liberalitatis erat nec gratie, sed timoris desperati et fraudulente versutie.'

43 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 5. 9, 1, pp. 282–84.

the freeborn no hesitation in presenting themselves as uninvited guests at the table of strangers,' alas some of those 'who had formerly been regarded by their friends as most liberal and lavish in hospitality now sought the most retired places, inaccessible to others for taking refreshment'. It is particularly hard for the princes who 'had more people to maintain and could not refuse their bounty to those who sought it'. Even here, the obligations of hospitality are not quite dead.⁴⁴ Observing the hunger of the crusaders at Maara, Raymond of Saint-Gilles sets out on an expedition 'to procure at all costs the things that were necessary to sustain the life of the people'.⁴⁵ Securing food for a marching army is a simple logistic and strategic necessity, but for William of Tyre it offered an opportunity to portray the crusaders as caring lords, solicitously providing for the strange pilgrim-army they shepherd towards Jerusalem.

The hospitality of the crusaders is balanced by the commitment of the local Christians, namely the Armenians. In 'true obedience to the laws of hospitality' they provided the crusaders with food and other requirements.⁴⁶ Once the crusaders reached Lebanon, they were met by Syrian Christians who came down from the mountains 'to congratulate the pilgrims and to receive them with the love that came from their brotherly affection'. They also offer more practical help: they provide advice and guides who in 'good faith' help the crusaders on the journey towards the Holy City.⁴⁷ Although Latin Christians are the heroes of William's story, he seems here to offer an ecumenical vision that appreciates the contributions of other branches of Christianity.⁴⁸

As the crusaders approach Jerusalem, the twin narrative tracks of the fate of the crusaders and the Eastern Christians come together. The Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem were subjected to new persecutions and financial exactions. Gerald, host of the hospital in Jerusalem, where poor pilgrims had been received, was tortured and thrown into prison because the Egyptian

44 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 6. 7, 1, pp. 315–16: 'Non erat rubor nobilibus, non ingenuis verecundia, mensis alienis importunes ... quique apud suos in largiendis dapibus prius liberales judicabantur, et profusi, hi secessus quaerentes abditissimos et loca inaccessa caeteris, qualemqualem sumentes refectionem, his quae undecunque collegerant incumbant avidius, nemini quod eis erat pro cibo communicantes. ... Nec solum plebeios et mediae manus homines hujus tam miserabilis inediae calamitas involverat, verum et majoribus nimis importune se ingesserat principibus; eratque eis tanto molestior, quanto pluribus providentes, indigebant amplioribus; et suam, petentibus, negare non poterant munificentiam', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 1, pp. 270–71.

45 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 7. 12, 1, p. 358: 'ut vitae necessaria plebi quocunque periculo procuraret', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 315.

46 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 4. 7, p. 241: 'et plenius hospitalitatis legibus eis et equis eorum necessaria ministrarent', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 1, p. 196. For the Armenian contribution to the First Crusade, see Forse, 'Armenians and the First Crusade', pp. 13–22 and Tibble, *The Crusader Armies*.

47 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 7. 21, 1, p. 371: 'qui ad eos gratulabundi descenderant, ut fraternae charitatis dependerent affectum ... bona fide'.

48 Yolles, *Making the East Latin*, pp. 203–05, 210–13, Zimo, 'Us and Them: Identity in William of Tyre's *Chronicon*', pp. 13–15.

governors of the city suspected he would use his funds to support the crusader-pilgrims. Finally, the adult Christian men were expelled from Jerusalem:

but even outside there was no place of safety or refuge for them, surrounded as they were by their persecutors. Their every movement was viewed with suspicion by the inhabitants of the villages, who laid upon them the most degrading and intolerable tasks.⁴⁹

The diligent hosts of the Holy City are made into persecuted refugees — unwelcome guests — in their own land. As the siege unfolds, William juxtaposes the suffering of the crusaders outside the walls with that of the Christians within. The women, children, and elderly men who have been left behind are treated with increasing cruelty. In an inversion of the hospitality, they had eagerly provided for Christian pilgrims they are now involuntarily forced to open their homes for the Muslims who have retreated to the city:

They were obliged to receive into their homes refugees from the surrounding castles and villages who had fled to Jerusalem and to supply them with the necessities of life. Although their means were insufficient to provide even a meager and wretched living for their own households and dependents, yet they had to share with strangers, while they themselves were the first to do without.

The very homes of the Christians were under threat, for if any materials were needed for the defence, the Muslim overlords would break in and confiscate it from the Christians. Their suffering had reached the point where their only wish was to die in the Lord rather than continue to suffer a life that felt more like death.⁵⁰ In William's hands, the conquest narrative become a hostage drama: will the crusaders rescue the Christians in Jerusalem in time before their Muslim overlords finally execute their long-threatened plan to kill them all?

As the crusade encircles Jerusalem, William of Tyre highlights the contributions of the local Christians they meet: they advised the crusade leaders on where to make camp and attack the city. When it became clear that the crusaders would need to build siege weapons to take the walls it was a Syrian Christian who showed them where to find trees.⁵¹ The local Christians

49 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 7. 23, 1, p. 375: 'sed nec exterius inter persequentem populum, tuta eis dabatur requies, habentibus locorum incolis omnem eorum suspectam operam, et eos usque ad immundas et intolerabiles perurgentibus angarias', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 1, pp. 334–35.

50 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 8. 8, 1, p. 397: 'et eos qui ex vicinis oppidis et finitimis civitatibus se in urbem contulerant, hospitio cogeantur recipere et eis ministrare necessaria; cumque domesticis et familiaribus, eorum substantia ad victum tenuem et miserum non sufficeret, angariabantur tamen exteris bona communicare sua, ita ut ipsi indigerent primi', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 1, pp. 354–55.

51 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 8. 5–6, 1, pp. 390–93.

frequently went to the army and showed them where they could find springs to assuage their thirst.⁵²

In the climax of the story of the First Crusade, the crusader army's conquest of Jerusalem and the bloody slaughter of the population — the Muslim population that is, William emphasizes — the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem again take centre stage. After the conquest had been completed the crusaders cleansed themselves and went to offer prayers at the Holy Sites, just as in the older histories of the First Crusade. But in William of Tyre's chronicle, they

were met by the clergy and the faithful citizens of Jerusalem. These Christians who for so many years had borne the heavy yoke of undeserved bondage were eager to show their gratitude to the Redeemer for their restoration to liberty. Bearing in their hands crosses and relics of the saints, they led the way into the church to the accompaniment of hymns and sacred songs.⁵³

Then follows a scene which William seems to have made up himself, in which the local population recognized Peter the Hermit from his visit to Jerusalem half a decade earlier. The Christians thanked Peter fulsomely for all he had done to restore them and their Holy City to freedom.⁵⁴ In this way, William of Tyre tied the story of the First Crusade back once again to the story of the oppressed, dutiful, and pious hosts of Jerusalem and their faithful guest Peter the Hermit. The story of conquest and pious blood shedding is complemented by extended scenes of gracious welcoming. In Jerusalem, as earlier in Bethlehem, the crusaders are met with honour and rejoicing.⁵⁵ The massacring conquerors become the welcome guests of persecuted hosts.⁵⁶

William of Tyre used the story of Jerusalem before and after the First Crusade to emphasize the long and positive history of collaboration between Eastern and Western Christians. This collaboration had become evident during the First Crusade, but also in the preceding years, when local Christians did all they could to welcome pilgrims despite the attacks of their Muslim masters. Throughout the Eastern Christians had acted 'in true obedience to the laws of hospitality'.⁵⁷

52 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 8. 7, 1, p. 394.

53 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 8. 21, 1, p. 413: 'ubi clerus et populus fidelium, qui per tot annos durae nimis et indebitae servitutis jugum portaverant, de restituta libertate, Redemptori gratias exhibentes, cum crucibus et sanctorum patrociniis, principibus occurrentes, eos in praedictam cum hymnis et canticis spiritualibus introduxerunt Ecclesiam', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 1, p. 373.

54 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 8. 23, 1, p. 416, Blake and Morris, 'A Hermit Goes to War', p. 88.

55 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, VII. 24, 1, pp. 376–77.

56 On the massacre in Jerusalem, see Kedar, 'The Jerusalem Massacre of July 1099' and Hirschler, 'The Jerusalem Conquest of 492/1099'.

57 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, VII. 24, 1, p. 241, trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 196.

Ambiguous Guests and Hosts in the Twelfth-Century Latin East

The story of the pilgrim people of the First Crusade and their co-religionists in the East set the scene for the great work of William of Tyre's nation: to secure the lands around Jerusalem and provide protection and support for pilgrims seeking the holy sites.⁵⁸

This work begins straight after the conquest in William's *Historia*: the victorious knights who had seized houses in Jerusalem found them full of food and other goods, which they immediately began to share with the poor and destitute pilgrims,⁵⁹ and when the first new pilgrims arrive after the appointment of Duke Godfrey of Bouillon as protector of the Holy City they are 'most cordially received by the duke, the clergy and the people' of Jerusalem.⁶⁰ A high point is the reception of the Venetian crusaders in 1123–1124: 'All were ready and eager to treat them with full hospitality as the laws of humanity fittingly demanded'. Over Christmas the Venetian doge is treated 'with the highest honour and distinction', while the Venetians more generally are invited to make use of the goods of Jerusalem as if 'they were citizens of the city'. What in particular makes the visit of the Venetians worthy of celebration is that here the hospitable reception of the crusaders is followed by vigorous collaboration between Easterners and Westerners which culminates in the capture of the city of Tyre, the very city of which William would become archbishop in 1175.⁶¹

The efforts of the Latin Christians contrast sharply with those of Alexios Komnenos who continues his policy of betraying his guests. When a new mass pilgrimage is undertaken in 1101 Alexios plans to thwart them, so that the Latin polities will not be strengthened. He receives them graciously with gifts, but it turns out to be a canny ploy by which he can estimate their numbers — information which he then passes on to the waiting Turks who fall upon the crusaders with overwhelming numbers. By the time the survivors arrive in the Latin East they do so destitute and entirely dependent on the open-armed generosity of the Latin Christians.⁶²

58 For the complex relationship between Latin and Eastern Christians, see MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World*.

59 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 8. 24, I, pp. 417–18.

60 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 9. 14, I, p. 438: 'a domino duce et ab universo clero et populo devote suscepti', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, I, p. 401.

61 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 12. 24, I, p. 576: 'ex parte domini patriarchae, principum et populi salutare, et conceptam de eorum adventu laetitiam significant: invitantes eos, ut regni commoditatibus indifferenter, tanquam cives et domestici, uti frui non dubitarent; paratos se esse asserentes, humanitatis legibus et plena hospitalitatis gratia se eos velle tractare, prout decebat, habere propositum ... Ubi honeste susceptus, et cum multa tractatus honorificentia, Natale Domini celebravit', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, I, pp. 550–51.

62 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 10. 11–10. 12, I, pp. 465–68.

Although William at times seems to suggest that Alexios's mendaciousness is an inherent Greek trait, he is forthright in his praise for Alexios's grandson Manuel I Komnenos.⁶³ Under Manuel, a close alliance between Byzantium and the Latin states was formed, an alliance that William had played a key role in negotiating. William lavishes praise on the welcome provided in 1171 when King Amalric personally visited Constantinople: nobles are sent out to receive the king and escort him into the city where he is received with great honour. Gifts and entertainment were lavished upon the visitors, but it did not degenerate into luxuriousness and courtesy and decorum were observed throughout the visit.⁶⁴

Particular attention is focused on Amalric's reception with the emperor. This took place in private, surrounded by only a few court nobles and hidden behind costly tapestries. This was probably done to allow Amalric to perform obeisance before the emperor in private and avoid the potential for scandal and embarrassment that this might provoke.⁶⁵ In William's account the tapestry, conversely, becomes an opportunity for the emperor to show the king honours that could otherwise not be encompassed within Byzantine court decorum, for he recorded that he had heard that the emperor had stood up from his throne to give Amalric a friendly greeting, contrary to Byzantine court protocol. In his generosity and his courtesy, the emperor 'dutifully observed the laws of humanity'.⁶⁶ That William of Tyre accord this high praise to Manuel was probably related to the fact that here, as in the meeting between the Eastern Latins and Venetians related earlier, the hospitality encounter was only the beginning of a long, positive relationship in which Manuel, in William's account, loyally supported the Latin polities.⁶⁷ Manuel comes forth as a hospitable antithesis to his treacherous grandfather.

Difficult Guests and Fallible Hosts in the Latin East

Alongside these positive accounts of hospitality, however, William also offers rich discussions of occasions on which the meetings between guests and new arrivals from the West and their hosts in the East did not provide positive results.

The *cause célèbre* of William's childhood had been the arrival of Count Fulk of Anjou in the East, his marriage to Melisende, heiress to the crown of Jerusalem and the opposition he had met among the Eastern Latin

63 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, pp. 130–50; Hamilton, 'William of Tyre and the Byzantine Empire'.

64 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 20. 22–23, II, pp. 942–45.

65 Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusader States*, p. 116.

66 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 20. 24, II, pp. 945–46: 'plenis humanitatis legibus'.

67 See, in particular, Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States*, pp. 51–60; Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades*, pp. 59–76; Frankopan, *The First Crusade: The Call from the East*.

nobility: including the rebellion of Count Hugh II of Jaffa and an alleged assassination plot.⁶⁸ The stories had made it back to the West: at Saint-Evroul in Normandy, the chronicler Orderic Vitalis told of the envy that Fulk had provoked in the East by imposing his own Angevins in place of the Eastern Latin nobility. Orderic was not unsympathetic to the plight of the Easterners, who had fought against their enemies in the East ever since the time of the First Crusade.⁶⁹ But a story like this was of course not likely to convince Western aristocrats to go East. Stories like this were all the more troublesome because the Eastern Latins were in William's time devoting considerable effort to convince Fulk's grandson, Henry II of England, to follow his grandfather's example.⁷⁰

William approached Fulk's story with care. Count Fulk's first visit in 1120–1121 had been exemplary: he had fought with 'the greatest magnificence in the service of God' and deservedly won 'the greatest friendship with all the princes'.⁷¹ But when he returned in 1129 and married Melisende, the virile young count turned into a forgetful and suspicious old king. He had the bad habit of forgetting people's names, causing much embarrassment to those who thought themselves his friends.⁷² William claims that no one knew why Count Hugh II rebelled, but rumour had it that Fulk was jealous about the close relationship between the count and the queen.⁷³ The affair culminated when someone — William informs us many suspected the king — incited another new arrival, a knight of Brittany, to stab the count while he was peacefully enjoying a game of dice.⁷⁴ As Hans Eberhard Mayer concluded, William of Tyre had turned a delicate 'political affair into a marital drama'.⁷⁵ A drama, moreover, in which the many 'defects which the king suffered from, due to the laws that all mortals must obey', played a central role.⁷⁶ The forgetful and suspicious old king who had arrived in the East had brought it on himself, but he was not without glory and William offers much praise for the later part of his reign where he collaborated with Melisende.

William of Tyre employed similar techniques when he came to narrate the much more dramatic failure of the Second Crusade.⁷⁷ He drew attention to the diligent research that he had dedicated to the problem and the wise and

68 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 14. 16, II, pp. 652–53.

69 Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, Volume VI, 12. 48, VI, pp. 390–92, Mayer, 'Angevins versus Normans'.

70 Paul, *Follow in their Footsteps*, pp. 207–50.

71 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 14. 2, II, p. 633: 'magnifice plurimum in dei servicio ... universorum principum familiaritatem plurimam'.

72 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 14. 1, II, p. 631.

73 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 14. 15, II, p. 652; Mayer, 'Angevins versus Normans', p. 2.

74 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 14. 18, II, p. 654.

75 Mayer, 'Angevins versus Normans', p. 2.

76 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 14. 1, II, p. 631: 'Inter alios vero, quos lege mortalitatis patiebatur defectus'.

77 Forey, 'The Failure of the Siege', pp. 13–23.

knowledgeable people whom he had questioned.⁷⁸ Such rhetorical preparation was necessary because the story that William went on to narrate differed in an important way from the stories of treachery that circulated in the West. According to William the guests from the West were almost as much at fault as their hosts. In the West, William's story would be heard by powerful men and women, such as Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine and Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who had — as William notes — themselves participated in the crusade.⁷⁹ In order to convince them, and the many others who had shared stories of eastern duplicity, William had to be open about the many accusations that were levelled at the Eastern Latins. He reports frankly that it was said that Raymond of Antioch had seduced Eleanor of Aquitaine, while she and her husband, Louis VII, were Raymond's guests and thus alienated the king;⁸⁰ that the Latin Christians had been bribed by the Damascenes to give bad advice to the 'pilgrim princes';⁸¹ that Raymond of Antioch had become so indignant when Louis VII refused to follow his designs that he decided to work against him; that the Eastern Latin nobility had become disillusioned with the crusade when Louis VII and Conrad III had promised Damascus to the count of Flanders.⁸²

But William counterbalanced this with other reports that made clear that the crusaders had been far from perfect guests: some blamed the misère in Antioch on Louis VII's own bad behaviour: he had refused the well-thought through strategy of a host who had treated him and his men with much kindness and generosity.⁸³ At Damascus, it was understandable that the Eastern Latins had thought it unjust that the rewards of victory should be passed on to recently arrived strangers rather than those who had worn themselves out in defence of the holy places.⁸⁴ William offers an apology on behalf of his nation, but immediately follows it with explanations that point out the shared culpability of guests and hosts: 'sorry, but ...'.

Mixed with this were frequent reflections, otherwise relatively rare in the *Historia*, on the inscrutable will of God. Discussing how this great army could have been defeated, William notes that God had rejected the offerings of the crusades, perhaps because, William suspected, God had found them unworthy. The pilgrims of the Second Crusade had not come into the Lord's wedding feast wearing the wedding garment. This did not just lead to disaster for them but in fact worsened the situation of the very people they had sought

78 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 17. 7, II, p. 768.

79 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 17. 1, II, p. 760.

80 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 16. 27, II, pp. 754–55.

81 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 17. 5, II, p. 767: 'peregrini principes', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, II, p. 192.

82 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 17. 7, II, pp. 768–69.

83 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 16. 27, II, p. 755.

84 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 17. 7, II, p. 768.

to help. The disaster of the Second Crusade was God's common judgement on the sins of mankind — in the East as much as in the West.⁸⁵

As we saw above, for William one of the greatest problems to have arisen out of the Second Crusade was the fact that Westerners were now less committed to the affairs of the East. The most damning recent example of a Western guest who failed his hosts was Philip of Alsace, count of Flanders, who arrived in the Holy Land in August 1177. This visit offered William of Tyre his final, and most bitter, opportunity to reflect on the laws of hospitality. William explains that the arrival of the powerful count had been long expected — it was probably intended to align with that autumn's planned Byzantine-Latin expedition against Egypt. Philip was treated to a warm and honourable welcome by the dignitaries of Jerusalem, who offered him the regency as well as command of the expedition against Egypt.⁸⁶

These hopes, however, came to nought: the count was unwilling to take on any major responsibility in the East.⁸⁷ William, then chancellor, played a key role in the tortuous negotiations to get the count to commit to the expedition. He records his shock upon finally learning 'the secret thought of his [Philip's] mind', namely that King Baldwin IV should agree to let his two sisters be married to the sons of one of Philip's vassals, as part of a mean deal to increase the count's possessions in Europe:

as we listened to these words, we were amazed at the subtlety of the man and his evil designs. For the count who had been so courteously received by the king was now, in defiance of the laws of hospitality and the claims of kindred, attempting to supplant him.⁸⁸

Baldwin IV was still in his teens and suffered from leprosy, and although his sister Sibylla was pregnant with the child of her late husband William of Montferrat, the marriages of Sibylla and her sister Agnes was likely to determine the power and succession in the kingdom.⁸⁹ To William of Tyre, the count's attempts to control these made him a sort of late descendant of Penelope's suitors: attempting to steal the power and women of their host while enjoying his hospitality.⁹⁰

The mention of breaches of the laws of hospitality also recalled William's descriptions of the so-called people's crusade: the horror of the ungrateful

85 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 16. 19, II, p. 741.

86 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 21. 13, II, p. 979. See Dunbabin, 'William of Tyre and Philip of Alsace'; Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, pp. 231–38.

87 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 21. 13, II, p. 979.

88 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 21. 14, II, p. 980: 'Audientes hoc verbum, admirati sumus hominis malitiam, et sinistrum mentis conceptum, quod qui tam honeste a domino rege susceptus fuerat, contra leges consanguinitatis, hospitalitatis immemor, in supplantationem domini regis haec moliri attentaret', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, II, p. 418.

89 See Hamilton, *The Leper King and his Heirs*; Nicholson, *Sybil, Queen of Jerusalem*.

90 Levy, 'The Odyssean Suitors and the Host-Guest Relationship'.

crusader-guest had returned from the days of the First Crusade, but now not in the shape of poor peasants and lowborn knights, but a count of the finest pedigree, with a family tradition of crusading and connections to the royal family of Jerusalem. Just like those bad, early crusaders, Philip of Alsace proved to be a liability for his hosts. His prevarications scuppered the expedition against Egypt. When, instead, he participated in the siege of Harim, he did so without energy and determination: the crusaders kept returning to Antioch to indulge themselves in grand drinking and feasting, while the count himself was heard daily repeating that he would soon depart for home. Knowledge that the siege would soon be lifted inspired the garrison to hold out.⁹¹ When even a crusader of Philip of Alsace's stature proved such a liability to his hosts, it was no wonder that the Latin settlements in the East had fallen on hard times.

Concluding Remarks: The True Laws of Hospitality

Why did William find it useful to talk about the hospitality encounters during the crusades and in the Holy Land in terms of the 'laws of hospitality'?

To explain this, we must first try to get a sense of what William meant by it. He never explicates precisely what he means by the 'laws of hospitality' beyond noting that hospitality is 'a right which is justly due to all who are needy'.⁹² It is possible to reconstruct however what he thought it encompassed from the passages in which he describes actors as behaving in accordance with those laws (the Armenians during the First Crusade, the Latins in the reception of the Venetian fleet, and the Byzantines' reception of King Amalric) or breaking them (the first wave of crusaders and Philip of Alsace).

The host had to provide generously for their guests: the Armenians provided all that is needed by both horses and crusaders during the First Crusade, while the Byzantines provided useful, pleasurable, and edificatory entertainment for the Latins during Amalric's embassy to Constantinople.⁹³ The good host showed respect for the honour of their guests: the Jerusalemites provided a courteous reception of the Venetians in Jerusalem, while the Byzantines showed every courtesy to Amalric and his court in Constantinople.⁹⁴ The laws of hospitality also governed the behaviour of guests: the pilgrims of the people's crusade 'abused the abundance of food' provided by the Hungarians, giving themselves over to drunkenness and idleness and even resorting to violence against their hosts 'in utter disregard of the laws of hospitality'.⁹⁵

91 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 21. 24, II, pp. 994–96.

92 William of Tyre *Chronicon*, 3. 24, I, p. 227: 'hospitalitatis gratiam, quae ad omnes merito se porrigit indigentes', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 183.

93 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 4. 7, 20. 22–24, I, p. 241, II, pp. 940–46.

94 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 12. 24, I, p. 576.

95 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 1. 27, I, p. 154: 'alimentorum abutentes opulentia et ebrietati vacantes ... neglectis legibus hospitalitatis', trans. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, I, p. 110.

Philip of Alsace showed the same disregard for his hosts' rights and honour and delighted in worldly pleasures while conspiring to undermine his position.⁹⁶

These were widely shared conventions; they resemble, for instance, those identified by Pitt-Rivers: the host must show honour to his guest and provide for them to the best of the host's abilities. Similarly, the guest must display respect to his host, uphold their honour, and receive the provisions gratefully.⁹⁷ According to Pitt-Rivers, however,

hospitality bequeathed no commitment beyond the precincts of the domestic sanctuary so his guest might become his victim the moment he stepped outside them.⁹⁸

Here Pitt-Rivers's model of hospitality and the ideas of William of Tyre part ways. William expected a genuine and sustained commitment to the welfare of the other party which reached beyond the hospitality encounter: the Armenians, Manuel Komnenos, and the Latin Christians and their guests all act in true obedience to the laws of hospitality because they continued to assist each other, unlike the great villain of the early parts of the *Historia*, Alexios Komnenos whose generosity is only a cover for planned hostility that manifest itself soon after his guests have left.

This difference can, to some extent, be explained by the cultural and intellectual traditions that William was exposed to. For medieval writers, especially those who like William of Tyre had been raised on classical literature and philosophy, scripture, and exegesis, it was axiomatic that the underlying intention determined the value or otherwise of actions. The matter of intention has not been central to the anthropological literature that medievalists have drawn upon in studying hospitality and related topics, but it is indispensable for making sense of texts such as William of Tyre's *Historia*.⁹⁹

In closing, however, I would like to focus on the situational factors which might help explain why William of Tyre reached for the unusual vocabulary of law in his discussions of hospitality. The preceding century had seen a long list of hospitality encounters in the Latin East which had produced no lasting benefit to the Christian polities of the region: as William complained, increasingly, crusader guests returned home quickly without contributing to the defence of their hosts.¹⁰⁰ 'The law of hospitality is founded upon ambivalence', noted Pitt-Rivers, but William of Tyre's text points to the problems that arise when

96 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 21. 14, II, p. 980.

97 Pitt-Rivers, 'The Law of Hospitality', pp. 515–16. Compare also Kerr, 'The Open Door'; Kerr, 'Food, Drink and Lodging'; Kerr, "'Welcome the Coming and Speed the Parting Guest'".

98 Pitt-Rivers, 'The Law of Hospitality', p. 514.

99 Buc, *Dangers of Ritual*; Kjær, *The Medieval Gift*. Julian Pitt-Rivers does, however, stand out for his attention to this question in other writings, see especially Pitt-Rivers, 'Postscript: The Place of Grace in Anthropology'.

100 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 17. 6, II, pp. 767–68.

flexible and ambivalent norms are placed under stress.¹⁰¹ As Tim Geelhaar shows in his contribution to this volume, hospitality in normal circumstances functioned relatively smoothly; here flexibility and openness was helpful. But under the enormous demands created by the crusades and the defence of the realms they created — for both guests and hosts — the ambiguities of hospitality did not so much generate flexibility as opportunities for mutual blame and distrust.¹⁰²

The Latin East was in crisis: it needed something more regulated and controlled if it was to survive. A few decades later the process of bringing help to the Latin East did in fact become more regulated as crusading became increasingly institutionalized, although only after Jerusalem had been lost.¹⁰³ That, however, lay beyond William of Tyre's horizon. For him the crux and the solution were to be found in the interaction between individual Western crusaders and their Latin hosts in the East. In William's account the hospitality involved in this encounter teeters on the edge of becoming something else, something governed by explicit and extensive obligation and expectations.

William addressed the problems of the past head on. There had been failures, everyone could see that, but it was no simple tale of duplicitous hosts and naïve guests. For a century, or, more rightly, since the days of the Roman Empire and the rise of Islam, the Christians of the East had struggled under difficult circumstances to receive and support their co-religionists. These guests had often been difficult, so sometimes had the hosts, but overall, the intent had been good and the achievements considerable. It was time for Western audiences to resign the ambiguities and complexities to the past and commit themselves to the joint project of the defence of the holy sites. William thus used his tales of hospitality to set out a framework for future interactions, a set of expectations for those guests who accepted the invitation to the Lord's wedding feast.

101 Pitt-Rivers, 'The Law of Hospitality', p. 513. For discussion of hospitality under pressure in the context of changing political and institutional contexts, see the essays in Nauman and others, *Baltic Hospitality from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, for discussions in the context of migration, see Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 'Introduction to the Issue: Encountering Hospitality and Hostility'.

102 For a recent study emphasizing the scale of the challenges involved, see Tyerman, *How to Plan a Crusade*.

103 Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades*.

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Guests, Strangers, and Those in Need


Cosmopolitanism as Hospitality and Making Relations in High Medieval Armenia

Introduction

This chapter sets out to *embody* the abstract ideas of ambiguous hospitality, to embed this conversation in the concrete space and time of the Armenian highlands in the ‘long Mongol thirteenth century’. The chapter is methodologically ‘messy’, an archaeological rummaging in the concrete material and spatial substrates from which human projects, hospitable and inhospitable worlds were made during the Mongol thirteenth century, a spatiotemporal sphere of medieval globality also known as the ‘Silk Road World’. This chapter traces the ways of crafting worlds for others — different kinds of guests, strangers, and those in need — to live in (or be locked out of) in those contexts. In doing so, the chapter will move from anthropological work on gifting to Mongol silken world-building, to the architectural nesting of human body-beings, texts, buildings, and flourishing worlds among princely folk, their kin, and communities in the mountains, canyons, and valleys of the southern Caucasus. I will argue for the ambiguity of hospitality at telescoping scales and along intersecting sociocultural striations of the Mongol/Silk Road/thirteenth-century world: between local and global, allies and enemies, stone, silk, and flesh, human and material worlds. In doing this, I play with a working definition of *hospitality* which holds it as a synonym of *cosmopolitanism*, a welcoming of others into a social and ontological *cosmos* which is run through with *politics*.

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- * Thanks to Lars Kjær, Wojtek Jezierski, and Tim Geelhaar for the invitation and the challenge to think deeper about my own ideas. Thanks to the organizers and participants of the Ambiguous Hospitality workshop in Stockholm, and to the Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies, Stockholm University for enabling my participation. Thanks always to Dr Astghik Babajanyan. Parts of this chapter were workshoped at the 2021 *Armenia: Center and Peripheries* symposium, organized at the University of Chicago by Elizabeth Fagan and Alain Bresson. The research on which this chapter draws was made possible by funds from the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the SSRC, ARISC, the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, Birkbeck, University of London, and by the Science Committee of the Republic of Armenia (Grant no. 21T-6Ao56).

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Guests, Strangers, Aliens, Enemies: Ambiguities of Hospitality in the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1350, ed. by Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Kjær, CURSOR 45 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), pp. 125–153
BREPOLS  PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.5.149654

The themes of this chapter build from my 2021 book *Everyday Cosmopolitanisms: Living the Silk Road in Medieval Armenia*, as well as building on continual archaeological and historical work in Vayots Dzor, a canyon region of southern-central Armenia.¹ As will be discussed, medieval Armenia was a recurrent ‘host’ to the political projects and cosmographies of invading and occupying others, from early medieval Sasanian and Byzantine hegemonies through Arab, Seljuk, and Mongol invasions. But Armenians also played hosts within these wider geopolitical worlds. Armenian medieval historiography emphasizes the role of hospitable Armenians as transit-traders within the long-distance trade phenomena generally referred to as the Silk Road.² The central project of *Everyday Cosmopolitanisms* was to peer behind the curtain of the Silk Road as it is popularly and historically imagined, and to glimpse the people active in constructing the Silk Road world who are pushed into the darkened backstage of narratives like that of Marco Polo. My argument hinges on spotlighting the politics of hospitality, the ambiguity of roles and positionalities highlighted in the Introductions ‘second type.’³ I particularly focused on the importance and forms of care within world-making projects that situate local worlds within global cultures. In other words, how can a shared cultural world be made in providing rest and food for strangers, as well as in the commanding of architects, artisans, armies? But in conversations since the book was written, I realized my narrative was of course *itself* ambiguous. In my feminist project to expand the *cosmo-politics* of the medieval Silk Road into the everyday lives of people along the route, I had also held the door open wide enough to shine a light on one of the constraints of hospitality: the intimate compulsions of gifts given by host/patrons to guest/subjects within the medieval Mongol ecumene. In this chapter I work to centre that ambiguity in my analysis, and in particular to examine the ways that it commands attention to the material and spatial worlds of our historical texts, the systems, and apparatuses which empower human politics, but which also transform it along unpredictable axes. Ultimately, I will focus on one nexus of these, that of the travelling medieval body, the subject and site of ambiguous hospitality, and a vulnerable linchpin linking global politics and everyday life.

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- 1 See for instance: Babajanyan and Franklin, ‘Everyday Life on the Medieval Silk Road’; Babajanyan and Franklin, ‘Medieval Cultural Landscape in Vayots Dzor within the Context of the Silk Road’; Franklin and Babajanyan, ‘Approaching Landscapes of Infrastructure’.
 - 2 Major works on medieval Armenian participation in more global trade include: Manandyan, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia*; and Arak’elyan, *Cities and Crafts in Armenia*.
 - 3 See Jezierski and Kjær, ‘Introduction’ in this volume.

On Ambiguous Hospitality

As a way of inviting the reader into my Armenian case study, I will share some of the methodological toolkit I have used to conceptually frame it. In thinking through the knotty ties between hospitable care and power, I turned to Jacques Derrida's 1998 conversation with Anne Dufourmantelle in *Of Hospitality*, which I find useful in its situating of the politics of hospitality within dialectical confrontations between the guest/stranger (*xenos*) and the host/polity (*politeia*). In this formulation, based on engagements with Greek interrogations of the political order's relation with the self, the *xenos* and the *politeia* are rendered in fundamentally ambiguous and violent relations:

[The foreigner] has to ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the state, the father, etc. This personage imposes on him translation into their own language, and that's the first act of violence. That is where the question of hospitality begins: must we ask the foreigner to understand us, to speak our language, in all the senses of this term, in all its possible extensions, before being able and so as to be able to welcome into our country?⁴

The violence Derrida invokes is ontological and it is embodied: the guest/foreigner is called by the name of guest, they are 'interpellated' as a stranger (though of course, they are not strange to themselves). This interpellation of the stranger or foreigner requires a non-consensual reorientation, a situating of the self in new relations of obligation and vulnerability to the host, to other guests, and other others. As Sarah Ahmed discusses in *Queer Phenomenology*, orientation is always a question of intimacy, of agency, and of futurity, of situating the embodied self within spaces demarcated by others.⁵ This situating determines not only present relations but the future trajectories of the self along re-oriented paths. But I am also challenged by Derrida's centring of the state, and of language, in his discussion. The power of transforming the stranger into a guest is reserved to the state and performed in the semiotic act of interpellation, or of answering to a 'hail' and thus being recognized and named by your hailer. This process enacts a politics of hospitality in the compelling of the stranger to respond to their being hailed as a guest; that politics is centred in the transformative power of a name, a word, of language. How do we talk about the politics of hospitality without Derrida's framework of the state — or perhaps more relevantly, without the state's logocentric mechanics? This is not so much about rejecting logocentrism, but rather archaeologically de-centring the *logos*, re-embedding the politics of textual practice within material and spatial worlds. In what follows, I will

4 Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, p. 15.

5 Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*.

thus consider the agencies of material things, specifically textiles, as well as of texts in the making of hospitality, and focus on the spatial context (in landscape and architecture) of both texts and textiles, and their intimate relations with human bodies.

The Violence of the Gift

In order to interrogate hospitality at nesting global scales in Mongol Armenia, I would like to explicitly explore the ambivalence of hospitable cosmopolitanism, a framework that embeds hospitality within larger material, cultural, and political projects. To begin, I will focus on an ambiguity at the core of this framework: *the violence of the gift*. This phrase is itself a riff on the title of the anthropologist Marilyn Strathern's 1988 book *The Gender of the Gift*, which explores the relations between ethnographic practices of world-making (in that an ethnography is a self-contained account of a social world) and the complexity of other worlds of being, relating and knowing.⁶ So let me follow Strathern and jump from Eurasia briefly to Melanesia, the laboratory for so many anthropological ideas about hospitality and the giving of freighted gifts, and about the symbolic links between the supposedly mundane practices of everyday life and the worlds of more abstract conceptual meaning which situate human lives. Some ideas at the centre of my thinking on hospitality in Silk Road Armenia come from the work of anthropologist Nancy Munn, and especially her 1986 work *The Fame of Gawa*.⁷

In this work Munn is interested in 'the practices by means of which actors construct their social world, and simultaneously their own selves and modes of being in the world'.⁸ Her subjects are the Gawans, inhabitants of one island within the 'Kula ring': a social system of movement, gift-giving, war, and trade articulated across multiple archipelagos of Papua New Guinea. Among the practices Munn discusses are those central to acts of hospitality: hosting and especially feeding visitors from other islands in the Kula ring. And in particular, Munn orients these practices of world construction through her critical concept of 'intersubjective spacetime', or the transformations in spatial and temporal dimensions which are generated through action, and which manifest the *fame* at the core of her analysis. These transformations, enacted by hospitality, feeding, and care, reconfigure worlds at the entwined scales of human bodies, minds, intentions, rememberings, and futurities, as well as foodstuffs, objects, gardens, and landscapes. But at the heart of these nested scales is the human body, the scale and locus at which the symbolic construction of the world and the symbolic construction of the self intersect. The spatiotemporally complex *fame* which drives the sociopolitical worlds of

6 Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift*.

7 Munn, *The Fame of Gawa*.

8 Munn, *The Fame of Gawa*, p. 7.

Gawans and the Kula circle is thus made through hospitality oriented around bodily comfort and performative gift-giving. This hospitality in turn generates commodity trade, builds the fame of traders, and keeps the world running.

What Munn's framework of intersubjective space-time means for cosmopolitanism-as-hospitality is that the cosmos of our cosmo-politics intersects with the bodily space-time of ourselves and other-selves. The ambiguous politics at the heart of hospitality concerns the symbolic linking of human bodies and political worlds, the engendering of selves and their capacities for action, agency, futurity, and life itself. In short, worlds work on bodies and bodies work on worlds, such that 'economy' and 'politics' stake claims on the embodied self, and vice versa. It is through this modality of ambiguity that I would like to frame the practices of medieval people, and to link up disparate threads of political and cultural life which tie the little world of medieval Armenia into the overlapping and emergent universes of the Mongol thirteenth century, to which I will now turn.

Armenia in the 'Mongol Thirteenth Century'

The historical context for this chapter is geographically/spatially framed by the lands of the southern Caucasus, very roughly overlapping with the territory of the modern Republic of Armenia, in the period of the 13th–15th centuries. By referring to 'Armenians' throughout this chapter, I mean people who wrote or commissioned manuscripts and architectural inscriptions in the Armenian language, and who identified as Christian, participants within the liturgies and patronage politics of the Armenian Apostolic Church. However, as many scholars have explored, Armenians in this period were culturally cosmopolitan, in the sense that their architecture, material culture, personal adornments, dress, and cuisine reflected their connected position between Byzantium and the Islamic world, the Mediterranean, Iran, and Central Asia.⁹ It is thus difficult to write medieval Armenian social history without writing world history and without thinking about the ramifications of geopolitical shifts and shocks on local traditions and worldviews. Many of the high medieval Armenian traditions of self-fashioning and world-making which form the core of my work have earlier roots, in practices of patronage, lawmaking, and spatial politics from the early medieval period, which in Armenia is the 5th–8th centuries. Already in this period, as scholars like Tim Greenwood, Richard Payne, and Christina Maranci have explored, Armenian Christians were situated between Byzantine and Sasanian Persian political worlds.¹⁰ The first unified and recognized medieval Armenian kingdom of the Bagratuni

⁹ Blessing and Goshgarian, eds, *Architecture and Landscape in Medieval Anatolia*; Maranci, *The Art of Armenia*; Rapti, 'Displaying the Word'.

¹⁰ Greenwood, 'A Corpus of Early Medieval Armenian Inscriptions'; Maranci, 'Building Churches in Armenia'; Maranci, 'Locating Armenia'; Payne, *A State of Mixture*.

family, which came together in the ninth century, embodied the ambivalence of Armenian geopolitical identities. Bagratid kings were crowned both by the Byzantine Emperor and by the Abbasid Caliph, in addition to being invested by their own archbishop.¹¹

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Bagratid kingdom disintegrated, in the face of Byzantine and then Seljuk predations over the course of a century of territorial instability and warfare in Anatolia and the Near East known in Europe as ‘the early Crusader period’. My period of study picks up after the retraction of the Seljuks from the Armenian highlands at the end of the twelfth century. The epigraphic record in provinces like Aragatsotn show us how in a brief period — the lifespan of individual princely Armenians — older medieval traditions are rehabilitated in new construction projects, just in time for these same buildings to be damaged or neglected in the upheavals of the Mongol invasions of the 1230s.¹² For the past decade my research has focused on the lives of these Armenians who grapple with the reorientation of their political world, with centres not so much switching as *proliferating* to accommodate Mongol hegemonic power. The perspectives of these local people add polyphonic depth to the idea of the ‘long Mongol thirteenth century’.

For medieval historians writing in Armenia, and for a century of archaeologists building on their work, the Mongol invasions were perceived as an end of the world. Ceramic chronologies and the stratigraphic records of medieval urban sites like Dvin (thirty-five km to the south of modern Yerevan) were built backwards from what had been understood as a clear and irrevocable *terminus ante quem*.¹³ But the Mongol conquest of the Caucasus and the consolidation of Mongol governance in the Eastern Mediterranean, Iran, and Central Asia was of course really a beginning; in many ways the histories of this period testify to the struggle to make sense of the world on a new timeline. The art historian Roxann Prazniak wrote in her 2019 *Sudden Appearances*:

In the end, events would prompt a large-scale rethinking about human agency and history itself. During this period, every group, including the Mongols, needed a new story that would relocate themselves in a web of relations that constituted a new cultural and political whole. This was the defining project of the thirteenth century set in motion by the Mongol conquests.¹⁴

The Mongols, including the Il-khans of Persia, cannily engaged in the collection and redistribution of cultural capital across Eurasia, contributing

11 Jones, ‘Abbasid Suzerainty in the Medieval Caucasus’; Jones, ‘The Visual Expression of Bagratuni Rulership’; Vacca, *Non-Muslim Provinces under Early Islam*.

12 Franklin, *Everyday Cosmopolitanism*, Chapter 4.

13 For a discussion in French of the excavations at Dvin, see Kalantarian, *Dvin. Histoire et archéologie de la ville médiévale*. In archaeology, a *terminus ante quem* is an absolute chronological point which ends a period and dates the material it seals off, like the ash layer at Pompeii.

14 Prazniak, *Sudden Appearances*, p. 4.

to the conditions of possibility for the emergence of a world-scale culture linked by circulating objects, practices, and images. Much of the mountain of work on the high medieval (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries CE) Silk Road concerns itself with this globalizing culture. In parallel with anthropological and historical work on modern globalization, a thread running through this work questions the mechanics which make such a space-time compression possible. How did medieval people live globally in this emergent world?

One such mechanic is what I have conceptualized as a practical and situated cosmopolitanism. Following Strathern, Munn, and others, I would like to dissolve the apparent oppositions between the space-time of global mobility, east–west commodity trade, and cosmopolitan encounter on the one side, and that of everyday life, of quotidian practice and cyclical ‘maintenance work’ on the other. Classical and or Kantian cosmopolitanism hinges on one’s capacity to act as ‘a citizen of the world’ and invokes a politics of mobile, transcendently-universal subjects concerned with a homogenizing politics of ‘the world’. But feminist post-modernity staunchly posits a plurality of worlds, and asserts the need to situate these multiple worlds around the standpoints of their makers, their creators, and the creatures they make possible and impossible.¹⁵ If cosmo-politics inhere within imagined worlds, then a power-laden cosmopolitanism hinges on the practices and matterings (*sensu* Butler) of hospitality, on the welcoming of others into the material world under your care.

Investiture

Having developed my conceptual framework I will move deeper into the Mongol thirteenth century, and look at the ways that worlds were made, sustained, and physically wrapped around the body through hospitality. In the textual accounts we have from this period, the dynamics and demands of hospitality cast a long shadow across European encounters with the Mongol world. In his letter written in the 1250s to the French King Louis IX, detailing his mission to the court of Möngke Khan and the experience of the journey, the Franciscan William of Rubruck complained on multiple occasions about the incessant Mongol demand for gifts from him as a guest. These requests repeated and intensified as he moved through the satellite courts of Mongol nobles, to the royal court at Karakorum, starting with foodstuffs and ending with the clothes on his back:

Et venit ad nos interpres ipsius, qui statim cognito, quod nunquam fueramus inter ilios, poposcit de cibis nostrus, & dedimus ei, poscebat etiam vestimentum aliquod, quia dicturus erat verbu nostrum ante domine suum. Excusauimus nos. Quaesiuit quid portaremus domino suo? Accepimus unum flasconem de vino, & impleuimus unum veringal de

15 Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges’; Butler, *Bodies that Matter*; Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

biscocto & platellum unum de pomis & aliis fructibus. Sed non placebat ei, quia non ferebamus aliquem pannum pretiosum.

(His (Scacatai's, a Mongol captain) interpreter came to us, and as soon as he learnt that we had never visited them before, demanded some of our food, which we gave him. He also asked for some garment or other, since he was going to pass on our message to his master. We made our excuses. He enquired what we were taking for his master. We took a flagon of wine and filled a jar with biscuit and a dish with apples and other fruit. He was disgruntled that we were not taking some valuable cloth.¹⁶)

These trials continue at the *ordu* of Sartach, the khan of the Golden Horde:

In crastino mandauit mihi quod venirem ad curiam; afferens literas regis & capellam & libros mecum, quia dominus suus vellet videre ea; quod & fecimus, onerantes unam bigam libris & capella, & aliam pane & vino & fructibus. Tunc fecit omnes libros & vestes explicari, & circumstabant nos in equis multi Tartari & Christiani & Saraceni: quibus inspectis, quaesivit, si vellem ista omnia dare domino suo, quo audito, expaui, & displicuit mihi verbum.

(The following day [Coiac the Nestorian, his translator] sent instructions that I was to come to the court, bringing with me the king's letter, the liturgical items and the books, for his master wished to see them. We obeyed, loading up one wagon with the books and the ornaments, and another with bread, wine and fruit. Then he had all the books and the vestments displayed, while a great many Tartars, Christians and Saracens surrounded us on horseback. After he had examined them, he asked if I intended to present them all to his master. When I heard this, I was struck with fear, and his words displeased me.¹⁷)

Rubruck is repeatedly frustrated by Mongol demands for gifts of silken cloth, which climax in the demand that he render up his own embroidered vestments as the only suitable gift for his host. The friar responds by refusing, and donning 'the more expensive vestments' himself to make the point that they are sacral objects.¹⁸ Even then, he ultimately is compelled to part with a number of silken, embroidered, and gold-adorned vestments.¹⁹ Rubruck's disgust reveals his misperception of the desire of the Mongols, and of their expectations as hosts. The Mongol guides see Rubruck's embroidered garments

16 William of Rubruck, *Itinerarium fratris Willielmi*, p. 158, trans. William of Rubruck, *The Mission*, p. 100.

17 William of Rubruck, *Itinerarium fratris Willielmi*, p. 165, trans. William of Rubruck, *The Mission*, p. 116.

18 William of Rubruck, *The Mission*, p. 116.

19 William of Rubruck, *The Mission*, p. 258.



Figure 5.1. Depiction of Mongol robes in an image of Bahram Gur in the 'Great Mongol Shahnameh' Khalili MS 994 (Public domain).

not as sacral vestments, but as *silken robes*, and thus alienable components within the economy of Eurasian hospitality. Garments of gold-embroidered silk, like Rubruck's vestments but also the regal robes worn by his monarch Louis,²⁰ were vital materials in the negotiation of sovereignty in medieval Central Asia. These robes of 'Tatar cloth', embroidered in gold and silver and closing over the right breast (Figure 5.1), delimited the empowered and

20 The thirteenth-century Moralized Bible depicts St Louis in blue silken robes edged in golden tiraz embroidery. New York, the Morgan Library, MS M.240, fol. 8r. <http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/8/77422> (accessed 13 September 2023).

beautiful bodies of the Mongol world in ways that were immediately visible to observers.²¹

For instance, in the mid-fourteenth century the traveller and scholar Ibn Battuta effectively counted the distance of his journey through Eurasia in the number of silken robes — as well as horses, slaves, and concubines — he was gifted. In one episode, Ibn Battuta received an audience with the khatuns (queens) of Ozbeg Khan, commander of the Golden Horde, while on the northernmost leg of his travels in Eurasia. Describing the opulence of the khatuns' silver-and-silk draped wagons, Ibn Battuta also notes that each of the khatuns, their lady viziers, and all their slave girls wore 'a robe of silk gilt, which is called *nakh*'.²² As Thomas Allsen has discussed in-depth, the wearing as well as the arrangement and exchange of silk and fur garments was of critical significance within Mongol politics. This signals how situated the Mongol court was within traditions of Eurasian prestatory politics dating to the Sasanian Persian/Roman era; it also demonstrates the integration of Mongol tastes within the networks of commodity exchange which united the medieval world. The most public and politically weighted use of silk was in the practice of investiture, by which a supreme ruler would mark their subordinates, vassals, honoured guests, dependents, delegates, and fictive kin by dressing them in silken robes. In a famous passage, the Venetian traveller and romance writer Marco Polo describes the gifting of silken robes by Kublai Khan to his retinue on his birthday:

You must know that all the Tartars celebrate their birthdays as festivals. The Great Khan was born on the twenty-eighth day of the lunar cycle in the month of September... On his birthday he dons a magnificent robe of beaten gold. And fully 12,000 barons and knights robe themselves with him in a similar color and style, in cloth of silk and gold, and all with gold belts. These robes are given to them by the great Khan. And I assure you that the value of some of these robes, reckoning the precious stones and pearls with which they are often adorned, amounts to ten thousand gold bezants ... And you must now that the Great Khan gives rich robes to these 12,000 barons and knights thirteen times a year, so that they are all dressed in robes like his own and of great value.²³

In the most marked and symbolically weighted instances of investiture, robes would be ritually removed from the body of the ruler before being draped upon their subject. This performative practice would visually extend the corporeal agency of the ruler/host into the body of the guest/subject, colonizing the futurity of the invested person with the *fame* of their patron. Embroidered

21 For a discussion and more examples see Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*.

22 Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, p. 485.

23 Marco Polo, *The Travels*, p. 138. I have not presumed to provide an original against which to check this literary translation.

silk was also used by the Mongols and others for the tents of mobile courts. This long-standing tradition of transient silken architecture in the Eurasian and Mediterranean world linked practices of political performance into a common culture, and linked spaces of power across media from tents and pavilions to the masonry walls of palaces, draped in painted and mosaic textile motifs. Practices that tied this world together were motivated by the understanding that beautiful and powerful bodies were to be draped in silk brocade — whether the bodies of princes or the cosmologically complex ‘bodies’ of churches, mosques, palaces, manuscripts, and relics. All of these silk-dressed bodies circulated through the medieval world, as a medium for the more ephemeral mobility of images and cultural dispositions.

If we examine the practice of investiture directly as an instance of cosmopolitan hospitality, the semi-consensual transformation of the vassal body by the investing prince calls us back to the violent, political aspects of hospitality as framed by Derrida and the constraint of the gift as explored by Munn. To be clothed in gold-threaded silk and pearls by the khan is to receive a gift, but one which re-orientes the political body, claiming its enhanced agency, beauty, and power for the khan’s own *fame*, his project of self-centred world-making. Instances of Mongol investiture thus give us a glimpse at the machinery by which the culture of the thirteenth century was tied together both across space and through time. We see delegates and monarchs travelling to the Mongol courts to be transformed into new political subjects of a new political cosmology through the gift of silk, and the subsequent circulation of their newly configured, effective, and generative bodies, back to the ‘little worlds’ over which they held proxy control.

To go back to William of Rubruck, his uncomfortable experience of hospitality from his situated position at the edges of the Mongol ecumene reveals the constraint inherent in practices of gifting. In misrecognizing the requests for vestments, he is not just failing at Mongol politics, but at cosmopolitanism-as-hospitality as mediated by textile commodities. In contrast, Ibn Battuta’s willingness to give and receive silken robes and other gifts (including horses and enslaved humans) is central to the scholar-traveller’s relative ease of movement across the vast and internally complex medieval *Dar al-Islam*. When Rubruck is taking leave of Sartach again at the end of his mission, he further attests to his reader that he was offered two silken robes but refused them on his own behalf and chose to send them with the letter to Louis.²⁴ In doing so, Rubruck refuses both hospitality and world-making on the part of the khan, resolutely positioning his body and his potential agency outside of the political world of Mongol Eurasia. These episodes furnish us with a central allegory within Rubruck’s overall narrative of his failed mission to ‘welcome’ the Mongols into the Christian universe through conversion (even while, ironically, investing King Louis IX as a subject of the Khan)

24 William of Rubruck, *The Mission*, p. 256.

informed by his refusal to be fully ‘welcomed’ himself. This refusal stands in stark contrast to Ibn Battuta’s willing entrance into the bodily politics (and, through marriage, actual bodies) of his hosts. We are equipped as well with an orienting method for thinking about the nested practices of Silk Road cosmopolitanism, as we think about power by tracking which bodies are dressed, which do the investing, which make spaces and hold open doors for strangers to be brought inside the ‘worlds’ of hospitality.

How to Play Host in Another’s World: Armenians within Mongol Hospitality

Unlike William of Rubruck, Armenian princely folk in the Mongol era shared the traditions of investiture and ideas of bodily space-time within which investiture functions. The historians Lynn Jones, Anthony Eastmond, and others have explored the particular significance of robing and investiture for Armenian politics dating to the Bagratid period, or the 8th–10th centuries.²⁵ The gifting of silken robes and other textiles was central to the recognition of legitimate kingship within the overlapping peripheries of the Byzantine empire and the Abbasid caliphate. Moreover, Armenian politics in the thirteenth century were already cosmopolitan, situated within and straddling the borders of ever-shifting geopolitics. Armenian political bodies had been raised as Roman and Sasanian hostages, had been invested by Byzantine and Abbasid courts, and navigated conflicting Seljuk and Apostolic law codes. This situated cosmo-politics extended beyond the configured bodies of Armenian princely folk, to the worlds they in turn constructed for their own kin and for the people over whom they ruled.

Bodies, Architecture, Space-Time

The symbolic work of political performance, materiality, and especially architectural space in medieval Armenia enacted a particular kind of physical, visual, and cosmological metaphor rooted in the hospitality of creating physical space for social life.²⁶ The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were an active period of construction and architectural innovation in the Armenian highlands and Anatolia more broadly, the result of a robust culture of donation and endowment among (actual and aspirant) elites. This medieval Armenian architectural understanding of Munn’s ‘intersubjective spacetime’ is visible to historians and archaeologists not only materialized in the fabric of buildings themselves, but also through the rich corpus of donation inscriptions from

25 Eastmond and Jones, ‘Robing, Power and Legitimacy in Armenia and Georgia’, see also Jones, ‘The Visual Expression of Bagratuni Rulership’.

26 I discuss this at length in chapters 3 through 5 in: Franklin, *Everyday Cosmopolitanisms*.

the period from the seventh century onward. The walls of buildings and flanks of stone monuments in the cities, towns, and roadsides of medieval Armenia teemed with text, layered inscriptions recording construction, renovations, donations for the liturgical functioning of churches, and for the upkeep of monasteries, libraries, universities, and — critically — of caravan inns as well. The long-standing default mode of engaging with these inscriptions privileges their status as texts: transcribed and compiled by location in the rich treasure that is the multi-volume *Divan Hay Vimagrutyun* (Corpus of Armenian Inscriptions).²⁷ But inscriptions are fundamentally about the interpellation of spatially situated and embodied subjects, about hospitality in the Derridean and Munnian modes. A carved inscription *in situ* identifies the reader through its spatiality, and its meaning is contingent on its location and relationship to practices, whether liturgical or everyday.

Consider as an example this inscription from the church of the monastery of Tegher,²⁸ which was dedicated in 1232 by Mamakhatur, a princely woman of Aragatsotn who lived under Seljuks, Georgians, and Mongols:

ՈՁԱ Ծնորհաւքն Աստուծոյ եւ Մամախաթուն շինեցի զեկեղեցիքս զմեծ եւ զփոքր եւ զժամատունս — յիշատակ ինձ եւ առն իմոյ Վաչէի. իսկ բընակիչք սուրբ Ուխտիս հաստատեցին մեզ ի տարին պատարագ ի տանի Վարագայ սուրբ խաչին զամենայն եկեղեցիքս մատաղով եւ սիրով. իսկ որ զգրեալս խափանէ՛ Աստուծոյ տայ պատասխանի առաջի Յիսուսի Քրիստոսի — Մխիթար գրիչ.

(In 681 (1232), in thanks to God I Mamakhatur built the churches, the large and the small and the zhamatun,²⁹ in my memory and that of my husband Vache, and the inhabitants of this holy monastery offered a mass for us every year at the feast of the Holy Cross of Varaga in all churches with sacrifice and love, and those who may go against my writing, will answer before Jesus Christ (inscribed by Mxitar).³⁰)

This inscription describes in a traditional, standardized format the donations of Mamakhatur to the church, but consider its location: carved on the lintel above the door to the gavit of the church, where it could be read by clergy and laity alike. If you — as a stranger, guest, or a person in need — are reading this text, you are standing on the sun-soaked southern shoulder of Mt Aragats, with the peak behind you, the feudal farms of the Vachutyans laid out on

27 The *Corpus of Armenian Inscriptions* has been published serially since 1960. For this chapter I consulted in particular Volume III: Barkhudaryan, *Vayots Dzor, Yeghegnadzor and Azizbekovi Region*.

28 Throughout this chapter I have simplified Armenian transliterations for ease of reading.

29 Zhamatun or gavit is the Armenian term for a particular form of narthex, an accessory space built onto the west side of churches to provide access to lay congregations — and which therefore also provides a key space for the performance of pious patronage to a wider audience, including through burial.

30 Alishan, *Ayrarat*, p. 147, trans. Franklin, *Everyday Cosmopolitanisms*, p. 131.

the slopes below you, and the holy plain of Ararat opening in the distance.³¹ If you are reading this text, you are in the bodily process of walking from sunlight into cool shadow, from the workaday world into the physical space of Mamakhatur's donation. If you are reading this text, you are consenting to not only Mamakhatur's hospitality but also its terms: the perpetuation of her fame, or the condemnatory judgement of Christ himself. Donation inscriptions situated the donor within a world, while also reconfiguring that world through the metaphorical metaphysics of bodies and architectural space in ways that mirror the bodily logic of investiture — the wrapping of your body in the body of a prince who is now *your* prince.

Bodies and Space as Mutual Metaphors

This ambivalence of architectural hospitality, and its nested relationship to wider worlds, are reflected as well in the Armenian tradition of church donor portraiture. The depiction of pious donors on the walls of their donation is a technique of performance adopted from the Byzantine world but used in Armenia as a mode of multivalent medieval self-fashioning.³² Examples of donation portraits on the exterior walls of medieval churches can be found across the Armenian highlands, from the famous tenth-century examples at Haghpat and Sanahin to the thirteenth-century portraits at Dadivank (Figure 5.2) and Gandzasar (Figure 5.3). At Dadivank, the princes Hassan and Grigor are depicted above the long inscription recording the donation of the church in their names by their mother, Arzu Khatun. On the drum of the dome of the church at Gandzasar, the prince Hasan Jalal Dawla hoists his church to the sky, its soaring form mirrored in the carved drapery of his robes.

To a medieval viewer, these scalar juxtaposition of church, portrait, and portrayed church-in-donors'-hands represent in concise visual form the relationships of hospitality invoked in the inscriptions discussed above. The image of the model church interpellates the viewer, forcing them into reflection on its symbolic referent: the physical church the viewer/guest stands in front of. The reflection pulls further: if portrait-church and building-church are the same, then where is the portrait-prince? The logic of the pictorial metaphor implies an answer: the prince is embodied in the stony landscape which 'holds' the building towards the sky. Donor portraits thus jump-started a viewer into thinking in symbolic leaps about the role of the donor prince in maintaining an orderly world, one symbolized across scales of space-time from the bodily to the architectural to the geologic to the cosmic. This mode of metaphorical ambivalence and synchrony parallels that between battle and feast discussed in Wojtek Jezierski's chapter. It is not simply that buildings

31 Franklin, 'Moving Subjects, Situated Memory'.

32 For discussion in earlier periods, see Jones, 'The Church of the Holy Cross'.



Figure 5.2. The sons of Arzu Khatun depicted above her dedication inscription at Dadivank, they raise a model of the donated church (CC).



Figure 5.3. Donor portraiture of the prince Hasan Jalal Dawla at Gandzasar. The portrait is located on the drum dome, and he holds a miniature of the church (CC).

were metaphors for bodies or vice versa, but that these space-time-bodies were necessary to conceptualize and materialize each other and were always co-present as material metaphors.

These nested symbolic scales are part of a larger symbolic set within the medieval Armenian world, a cultural *mise en abyme* that linked not only bodies and buildings, but also books and the textual worlds they contained.³³ Of course, the substance which ties these material symbolisms together and ties them within the larger political worlds of the Mongol thirteenth century is, again, textiles. The historian Kirakos Gandzakeci described the donation of ‘astonishing’ (*zarmanali*) textiles by Arzu Khatun to numerous monasteries, including her own endowment at Dadivank. These embroidered weavings draped the altar, clothing the space in colour and imagery, just as they closed the bodies of the princes depicted on the wall. Likewise, fragments of Byzantine, Persian, and Chinese silks were wrapped around the holy ‘bodies’ of relics, which were further housed in the ‘casket’ of shrine architecture. Woven and embroidered silk donated by princely men and women draped the walls of

33 A term from art history, *mise en abyme* refers to placing a miniature of an image within an image, invoking an infinitude of nested scales.



Figure 5.4. Ilkhanid khans Abaqa (centre) and Arghun (left, holding Ghazan), as depicted in the fifteenth-century illumination of Rashid al-Din's *Compendium of Chronicles* (CC). Note the silk robe lined in fur worn by Abaqa. Paris, BnF, Supplement Persan 1113, fol. 211^v.

churches and the bodies of priests. Finally, silk wrapped the body-worlds of medieval books, as bindings, covers, and wrappings.³⁴ One book which may have been originally wrapped in princely silk was the universal and dynastic history of Stepanos Orbelyan, bishop of Syunik and patriarch of the monastery of Tatev. Stepanos was a scion of the princely Orbelyan family which administered the region of Syunik as privileged *inju* vassals of the Ilkhanid Mongols. The stories of the Orbelyans tie together our concept-threads of investiture, architecture, and Silk Road hospitality, weaving a more complete picture of ambiguous cosmopolitanism in Mongol Armenia.

34 See discussion in Kouymjian, 'Post-Byzantine Armenian Bookbinding'.

The Orbelyans, Investiture, and Mongol Cosmo-Politics

Stepanos Orbelyan completed his *Patmutiwn Nahangin Sisakan*, or the *History of the State of Sisakan*,³⁵ shortly before his death in 1305.³⁶ Orbelyan's history, like that of many medieval historians, is cosmographic. In its telling of the history of the world, it brings a world into being. In his introduction he compares himself to God, compelled (by divine nature) to create, to make worlds through the power of the word made flesh.³⁷ The *History* works as a politically freighted intersubjective space-time, a technology for creating and sustaining the fame of the Orbelyan dynasty through narrative situated in the landscape of the modern provinces of Syunik and Vayots Dzor. The *History of Sisakan* also, crucially, gives us further glimpses at global Mongol material-political culture, and suggests the close relationship of the Christian princes of Syunik with their Mongol sovereigns.

The *History* describes the investiture of Tarsayich Orbelyan (Stepanos' father) by Abaqa Khan (1234–1282). Abaqa (depicted with his son Arghun and grandson Ghazan in Figure 5.4) was the son of Hulegu, the founder of the Ilkhanid dynasty, and was the great-grandson of Genghis Khan. The narrative of the episode begins with the honouring and investiture of Smbat Orbelyan, who is elevated by the Georgian King David, before moving on to the honouring of his kin by the Mongols:

Իսկ զկնի սորա տիրեալ ամենայն իշխանութեանց նորա եղբայրն իւր Տարսայիճն որ պատուեալ էւ սիրեցեալ յաչս աշխարհակալացն էւ ամենայն մեծամեծաց՝ վարէր զիշխանութիւնն իւր բարձր էւ շքեղ փառօք, ստարկու ի վերայ ամենայն թշնամեաց. Եւ այնքան յարգեալ լինէր առաջի Ապաղայ դանին որ բազում անգամ զարքայական հանդերձն իւր մերկացեալ յանձնէ՝ հազուցանէր Տարսայիճին յոտից մինչէւ զգլուխն էւ զկամարն ի համակ նսկոյ բազմագին ականքք էւ մարգարտոք լցեալ՝ տայր ամել ընդ մէջ նորա.

(Now after [Smbat], his brother, Tarsayich, ruled over all his realm. He was honored and loved by the rulers and all the grandees, and thus did he rule over his principality with lofty and magnificent glory, feared by all enemies. So honored was he by Abagha-Khan that on many occasions *the latter removed his own royal garments and dressed Tarsayich in them from head to toe*, and put around [Tarsayich's] waist a belt of pure gold adorned with precious stones and pearls.³⁸)

35 The territory of the medieval region of Sisakan, also called Syunik, corresponds approximately to the modern marzes of Syunik and Vayots Dzor. Orbelyan's book title is frequently translated as the *History of Syunik*.

36 The medieval Armenian (grabar) text (*Patmut'iwn Nahangin Sisakan*) was published by Karapet Shahnazareants'; this was translated into English by R. Bedrosian.

37 Orbelean, *History of the State of Sisakan*, p. 3. Note: I maintain Bedrosian's spelling of Orbelean in references to his title for clarity of reference.

38 Orbelyan, *Patmut'iwn*, II, pp. 169–70, translation: Orbelean, *History of the State of Sisakan*, p. 216.

This is a fantastic example of the nested investiture discussed earlier. Tarsayich Orbelyan is not only given precious silken robes and a gold-and-pearls belt by the Khan, he is enfolded in robes taken directly from the Khan's own body. Orbelyan's bodily space-time — his selfhood, agency, and futurity — are thus reconfigured within a new Mongol cosmology through the ambivalent power of the gift.

A few pages later, Stepanos Orbelyan describes his own travels in the late 1280s to the ordu of 'the world-ruling king' Arghun Khan — Abaqa's son (r. 1284–1291) — in the Maragheh plain to the east of Lake Urmia, which under the Ilkhanids was the summer pasture of the court at Tabriz. The bishop is then himself invested:

Եւ հրամայեաց մեզ կալ եւ օրինել զեկեղեցին ի դրանն արքունի զոր առաքեալ էր մեծ պապն Հրոմայ: Անդ էր եւ կաթողիկոսն Նեստոր երկրոտասան եպիսկոպոսօք որք եւ օրինեցաք ի միասին մեծաւ հանդիսի: Եւ ինքն Արղունն զգեցուցանէր իւրով ձեռամբն զգգեստն հայրապետական զոր ինքն էր սահմանեալ կաթողիկոսին եւ մեզ եւ ամենայն եպիսկոպոսացն.

([Arghun] commanded us to remain and to bless a [portable] church at the royal court, which had been sent by the pope of Rome. Also present there was the Nestorian kat'oghikos with twelve bishops, and together, with great solemnity, we blessed [the church]. Arghun with his own hands dressed us in the patriarchal vestments which he himself had designated for the kat'oghikos, ourselves, and all the bishops.³⁹)

This investiture by Arghun parallels and complements the investiture of Stepanos by the Cilician King Levon III a few years/pages earlier and further demonstrates the multiple worlds of Armenian Christian and Mongol power straddled by the Orbelyans. Their example was followed by their own vassals, providing us with additional demonstrations of these practices of local world-making in the material language of Mongol political hospitality. While depictions of the Orbelyans are scarce, we have amazing donor portraits of their contemporaries and kin. The Proshyan family were vassals and kin-by-marriage of the Orbelyans, and their donations make up a component of the endowed landscape of Vayots Dzor province. The portraits of Eachi and Amir Hassan II Proshyan were carved into the walls of the gavit at the monastery of Spitakavor, north of Yeghegnadzor (Figure 5.5). The portrait, now in the Hermitage, shows the Armenian princes in Mongol visage, wearing the cross-breasted Mongol *deel* or silk robe, reminding (or persuading) the viewer that the represented prince has been invested in Mongol silk. Eachi holds a bow; both wear adorned belts, perhaps of gold and gems like that of Tarsayich mentioned above. In a second portrait, now in the History Museum of Armenia, Amir Hassan is shown holding a bow and posed in mid-Parthian

39 Orbelyan, *Patmut'iwn*, II, p. 230, translation: Orbelean *History of the State of Sisakan*, p. 244.



Figure 5.5. Mongol era Armenian portraiture: Eachi and Amir Hassan II Proshyan in a portrait originally in the wall of the gavit at Spitakavor monastery, Vayots Dzor (CC). St Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, AP-619.

shot' over the tail of his horse.⁴⁰ Amir Hassan II is thus shown as the potent symbol of steppe and Persian power, the ruler-as-hunter, the master of animals who likewise rules over nature and orders the world. These images provide a shorthand for the tactics of Armenians telling their own 'new stories' of the Mongol era, the significance of which is deepened if we re-embed these museum objects back into their landscapes, back into the walls and altars of monastic sites, situated within the metaphysics of embodied patronage and hospitality.

Thus far in this chapter I have ranged far across diverse, linked contexts for the making of ambiguous, embodied hospitality in the cosmopolitan practice of the thirteenth century. For the rest of the chapter I will bring the discussion to rest in a place-in-particular. Not coincidentally, this place is also the space in which a medieval traveller would rest from the labour of moving across the mountain landscapes of Armenia, *en route* to Karakorum, Tabriz, Jerusalem, or Paris. This space is the caravan inn, the spatiotemporal

40 The relief of Amir Hassan II Proshyan hunting from Spitakavor is visible here: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/681049>. See also https://historymuseum.am/en/collections_type/bas-relief-presenting-a-hunting-scene/. (accessed 13 September 2023).

intersection of global Silk Road culture and locally-invested politics, and the site of profoundly ambiguous hospitality for all different kinds of guests and strangers visiting them.

Caravan Inns: Spaces of Ambiguous Hospitality

A caravan inn is an infrastructural space for long-distance mobility from the late antique to the early modern period. These buildings and building complexes took different forms across space and time, but centred on key features: space for travelling humans, trade goods, and pack animals, enclosed by sturdy architecture against weather, and human and animal predation, usually accessible by a single entrance which could be closed at night. The caravan inn was called a *han* in the Seljuk world, a *caravanserai* in Persian, and a *karavanatun* (caravan house), *voghjatun* (guesthouse), or *ijevanatun* (dismounting house) in neighbouring Armenia. Despite the difference in naming, these buildings were very similar in terms of both shape and function across this region and period. Peaked roofs enclosed long galleries lined in arches, with walls built of rubble-cored *ablaq* masonry. In some cases, these galleried halls were augmented with enclosed courtyards lined with cells, as at numerous Seljuk khans and at the caravan inn at Talin, on the west side of Mt Aragats. And in many cases the single entrances to the caravan hall was surmounted by a carved lintel, upon which the donation of the space and its upkeep was recorded, along with the name of the donor, and their world-making invocations of hierarchy in this life and eternity in the next.

Building a caravan inn in Armenia, like building a church, was intimately linked with what it meant to be a prince, to inhabit a princely self and a princely body, and to extend the fame of that body to encompass the lives of others within one's own world-making. The Armenian way of thinking about churches I discussed above intersects with more widespread medieval ways of thinking about caravan inns, which carry through Mongol period into early modernity.⁴¹ In political writings from Karakhanid mirrors for princes to Armenian law codes to Armenian Christian and Sufi Islamic poetry, the caravanserai is a metaphor for the self, as well as for the world; as the Karakhanid vizier Yūsuf Khāss Hājib phrased it, 'this world is an inn'.⁴² This is a potent metaphor for the linked religious traditions of the Middle Ages which focused on the transitory nature of mortality and emphasized the eternal life to come. The caravanserai, which is a temporary home on a much longer journey, works as a political and religious metaphor for worldly life, and for the mortal body of a pious patron as well as a travelling subject.

⁴¹ See the discussion in Tveit's chapter in this volume.

⁴² Yūsuf Khāss Hājib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory*; Mxitar Goš, *The Lawcode*.

By setting foot in a caravanserai in Armenia you, the traveller, are involving yourself in deeply entwined political and religious traditions of the medieval world — whether you are aware of them or not! To enter a caravanserai in medieval Armenia was to participate in a relationship between guest and host, which relationship was highly charged with this interwoven religious and political significance. This is not just a theoretical historical argument — it is the argument made by medieval Armenians themselves in the donation inscriptions associated with their caravan inns and hotels. Let us consider two inscriptions from rest-houses for travellers; and as we do so, recall the process of interpellation involved in the reading of entry inscriptions discussed above. Both of these inscriptions are from Orbelyan-era Vayots Dzor.

The first inscription is located at the site of Noravank, a jewel of a monastery enfolded in the flame-red cliffs of the Gnishik river canyon, a southern tributary of the Arpa River. Noravank was a spiritual and political centre for the Orbelyan family, whose names repeat across the densely-inscribed walls and whose bodies are buried beneath the monastery's floors. Few of the donor portraits from Noravank survive, but a early fourteenth-century khachkar donated by Burtel Orbelyan in the memory of his brother Bughta depicts the princes (and brothers-in-law to Eachi Proshyan) in Mongol dress (Figure 5.6).⁴³ In the upper wall of the *gavit* of Sb. Karapet church, a mounted prince thought to be Smbat Orbelyan menaces a lion with a sword.⁴⁴



Figure 5.6. Portraits of Bughta and Burtel Orbelyan at the base of a khachkar (cross-stone) at Noravank. Photo by the author, 2023.

43 For the reconstructed text of the inscription, see Barkhudaryan, *Corpus*, p. 244.

44 For the depiction of Smbat, see Matevosyan, *The Epigraphic Inscriptions*, p. 20.

During the long thirteenth century Noravank was the workshop of artists, including the famous sculptor and architect Momik, and was a hub for negotiations between secular and episcopal power.⁴⁵ The guest house of Noravank dated to the lifetime of Tarsayich Orbelyan, whom we last encountered as a recipient of investiture from Abaqa Khan. This building no longer exists, but its donation inscription was preserved as spolia in the wall of a later building. In this inscription, the Bishop Sarkis enumerates his donations to the maintenance of the inn; the bishop gifts income and produce from villages, a mill, and garden plots throughout Vayots Dzor:

ՅՈՒՄՈՎԱՆ, ՈՐ ԱՌԱՅ (ՍՏՈՒՄ)Ծ, ԵՄ ՍԱՐԳԻՍ ԱՆԱՐԺԱՆ ԷՊԻՍԿՈՊՈՍ, ԿԱՄԱԲԵՒՆ ԶՐԱՍՄԱՆԱԲ ԱՄԷՆԱԲՐՆԵԱՂԱՐՈՆԱՅՆ ԻՍՈՑ ՏԱՐՍԱԻԾԻՆ ԵՒ ԵՂԱՐԱԲԻ ՍՄՊԱՏԱ ԱՐԱՊԻ ԵՒ ԱՍՈՒՍ[Ն]Ո ԻՐՈՆ ՄԻՆԱ ԽԱԹԱՌՆԻՆ ԵՒ ԵՂԱՐԱՅ ԻՐՈՑ ԼԻՊԱՐԻՏԻ ԵՒ ԹԱՂԱԻՆ, ՇԻՆԵՑԻ ԶՀԻՐԱՏՈՒՆՍ ԵՒ ՏՈՒԻ ՀԻՐԱՆՈՑՍ ՊԵՂ ԶԱԲԵՇ ԻՐ ԱՄԷՆ ՍԱՀՄԱՆԱԲՆ ԵՒ ԶԵՐԿՈՒ ԱԿՆ Ի ԶԱՂԱՅՆ ՅԱՌՓԱ ԵՒ ԱՅԳԻ ԶԱԽԱՄԱՐԵՆՑ ԲԱԺԻՆ Ի ՎԱՆՔՍ ԶԹՈՍԱԻՆ, ԶՈՎԱՆԻՍԻՆ ԵՒ ԶՊԵՏՐՈՍԻՆ, ՅԱԿՈՒԻ ԶԵՃԱՆԱՐՈՒՆՆ, Ի ՎԷՂԷ ԶՊԱՐՈՆԻՆ ԳՆԱԾ ԲԱԺԻՆ, ՀՈՂ Ի ՆՐԲՈՅՆ՝ ԶՍԱՐԳԱԿԱՆ ՓՈՐԱԿ ՅԱԳԱՐԱԿԻ ԶՈՐ՝ ԶՎԱՐԴՈՒՏՆ, ՅԱԶԱՏԻՆ՝ ԶԼՃԱԴՈՒՆՆ, ՍԱՐԻՆ՝ ԶԱԿՆԷՐ ՅԱՆԱՂԱՏ՝ ԶԹՉԵՆԻՆ, ՈՐ ԶԱՅ(Ս)ՈՑ ՄՈՒՏՔՆ Ի ՀԻՐԵՐԻՆ ՊԷՏՔՆ ԱՆՅԱՆԵՆ, ՈՐ ԱԻՏԱՐԱՐՆ ԵՒ ԿԱՐԱԲՏԵԱԼՔՆ ՈՒՏԵՆ, ՊԱՐՈՆԱՅՆ ԵՒ ԵՐԱԽՏԱԲՈՐԱՅՆ ԱՂԱԲԹՔ ԵՒ Ա(ՍՏՈՒՄ)Ծ ՈՂՈՐՄԵԱ ԱՍԵՆ, ՅԻՇԵԼՈՎ ԶԻՍ ԵՒ ԶԻՄ ԱՇԽԱՏԱՍԷՐ ԱՌԱՔԵԼԻՆ: ԵՒ՛ ՈՐ ՅԵՏ ՄԵՐ ԶԱՅՍ ՍԱՀՄԱՆԵԱՂ Ն[ՈՒԷՐ] ՔՍ ՅԱՅՍ ՀԻՐԱՏԱՆԷՍ ՀԱՆԵԼ Զ[ԱՂ]Ա ԿԱՄ ԽԱՓԱՆԵԼ, ԻՆՔՆ Յ(ԱՍՏՈՒԾՈ)Յ ՈՐ[ՈՇԵ]ԱԼ ԵՒ ՄԵՐ ՄԵՂԱՅՆ ՊԱՐՏԱԿԱՆ Ե[ՂԻՑԻ].

(Trusting in God, I Sarkis the unworthy bishop, by the blessed will and commandment of the blessed patron Tarsayich, brother of Smbat the king, husband of Mina Khatun, and his brothers Liparit and Tagha, built this guest-house and donated to the guest house the village of Avesh by its whole borders, and two channels of the mill in Arpa, and section of the Akhtamaryants' garden given to the monastery by Thoma, Hovhannes and Petros, Yntsanadur in Akori, the portion bought by Paron in Vedi, the plot (called) Mardakan Porak in Nrbuyn, (the plot called) Vardut in Agarakadzor, Ltchadur in Azat, Akner in Sar, Tzeni in Anapat. These are to hold the entry open to guests, to sustain strangers and those in need, who will pray for the patrons and worthy persons and say God have mercy, remembering me and my hardworking Arakel. They who will try to rob or oppose our established gifts by Christ from this guest house, may he receive God's judgement and be indebted for our sins.⁴⁶)

45 Matevosyan, *The Epigraphic Inscriptions*.

46 Barkhudaryan, *Corpus*, p. 246. Clean version from Matevosyan, *The Epigraphic Inscriptions*, pp. 156–57. Translated in conversation with A. Babajanyan.



Figure 5.7. The Selim caravanserai inscription, located on the eastern wall of the vestibule to the caravanserai. Photo by the author, 2019. This inscription was originally repeated in Persian on the tympanum of the entrance; this inscription has been effaced.

The second inscription is from the entrance to the caravan inn at the Selim pass, a vertiginous promontory between the canyons of Vayots Dzor and the highlands around Lake Sevan. This inn commands a breathtaking view down the canyons towards the river and mountains to the south, serving as a fitting entry point to the domains of the Orbelyans. This cascading vista is behind the traveller as they turn and enter the inn, stepping below a carved muqarnas archway flanked by carved beasts. In a fascinating case of local-global ambiguity, the Armenian inscription on the wall inside the door (Figure 5.7) repeats and elaborates on a Persian version carved on the tympanum, and records the donation of the ‘spirit house’⁴⁷ by Chesar Orbelyan, the great-nephew of Tarsayich, at the end of the Ilkhanid era:

ՅԱՆՈՒՆ ԱՍԵՆԱԿԱՐՈՂ ՀՉԱԻՐԻՆ ԱՅ: Ի ԹՎ: ՉՉԱ: ՅԱՇԽԱՐԱԿԱՆՈՒԹԵ.
 ԲՈՒՍԱԿՂ ՂԱՆԻՆ ԵՍ ՉԵՍԱՐ ՈՐԴԻ ԻՇԽԱՆԱՅ ԻՇԽԱՆԻՆ ԼԻՊԱՐՏԻ ԵՒ
 ՄԱԻՐՆ ԱՆԱԻՆ ԹՈՌՆ ԻՎԱՆԷԻ ԵՂԲԱՐՅ ԻՄ ԱՌԻԾԱԳԵՂ ԻՇԽԱՆԱՅՆ
 ԲԻՐԹԵԼԻՆ ԵՒ ՍՄԲԱՏԱ ԵՒ ԷԼԻԿՈՒՄԻՆ ՅԱՉԳԷ ԱԻՐՊԷԼԷՆՅ ԵՒ

47 *Hogetun*: the historian V. Harutyunyan glossed this as a ‘breath catching’ house — the word *hog* translating as both ‘spirit’ and ‘breath’.

ԿԵՆԱԿԻՑ ԻՄ ԽՈՐԻՇԱՀ ԴՈՒՍՏՐ ԻՇԽԱՆԻՆ ՎԱՐԱՆՆԱ ԵՒ ԴՈՓԻՆ
 ԶՐ...ՐԵՆ ՅԱԶԳԷՍ ՍԵՆԻԺԱՐԻՍԱՆՑ Ի ՀԱԼԱԼ ԱՐԴԵԱՆՑ ՄԵՐՈՑ
 ՇԻՆԵՑԱԶ ԶՀՈԳԵՏՈՒՆՍ Ի ՓՐԿՈՒԹԻ ՀՈԳՈՑ ՄԵՐ ԵՒ ՇՆՈՂԱՑ ԵՒ
 ԵՂԱՐՍ ԵՒ Ի ՔՍ ՆԵՋԵՑԵԼՈՑ ԵՒ ԿԵՆԱՑ ԵՂԱՐՍ ԻՄՈՑ ԵՒ ՈՐԴՈՑ
 ՍԱՐԶՍԻ ԵՒ ՀՈՎԱՆԻՍԻ ԶԱՀԱՆԱԻ ՔՐԴԻՆ ԵՒ ՎԱՐԴԻՆ ԱՂԱԶԵՄՔ
 ԶՊԱՏԱՀՈՂՍԴ ՅԻՇԵԼ ԶՄԵԶ Ի ՔՍ ՍԿԻԶԲՆ ՏԱՆՍ ԲԱԲՈՒՆԱՊԵՏԻՆ
 ԵՄԱՆ ԵՒ ԿԱՏԱՐՈՒՄՆ ԱՂԱԻԹԻԻՔ ՆՈՐԱ: Ի ԹՎԻՍ: ԶԶԱ.

(In the name of the all-capable and powerful God, in the year 761 (1332), of the world-rule of Busaid [Abu-Said Baladur] Khan, I Chesar son of the Prince of Princes Liparit and of my mother Ana, the grandson of Ivane and of my brothers, strong like lions, the princes Burtel and Smbat and Elikum, of the family Orbelean, and of my wife Xorišah the daughter of Vardan and Dop' of the house of Senikarams, out of our well-gotten proceeds we constructed this spirit-house for the salvation of our souls and those of our ancestors and brothers reposing in Christ. And of my living brothers and sons Sargis and Hovhannes the priest, Kurd and valiant Vardan. We implore passers-by to remember us in Christ. Begun under the high-priesthood of Esai and completed through his prayers in the year 761 (1332).⁴⁸)

I will draw attention to a few elements in these texts. First, we may note the sheer scale of the mills, gardens, and fields which are donated by Sargis for the welcoming of 'guests, strangers and those in need' at the Noravank inn. These fields and their produce, the cycles of planting and harvest and milling, are the space-time invested in the gift of Sarkis's hospitality, and which in turn leverage the orientation of the stranger-guest within the wider political world 'held in the hands of' Sarkis and his patron, Tarsayich Orbelyan. And of course, if the hospitality of this guest house activates the *fame* of Tarsayich, then in turn it empowers and expands the *fame* of the Ilkhanids, who have co-opted Tarsayich's local agency through investiture. This link between local host and Mongol super-host is made explicit in Chesar's inscription, which invokes Abu Said Bahadur Khan as the apex of the hierarchy of political hospitality. The Selim inscription also underscores the temporal aspect of cosmopolitanism-as-hospitality, as the return on the gift of a warm place to rest is a contracted commitment to pray for multiple generations of Orbelyans, extending backward in genealogical time ('ancestors') and forward in the lives, deeds, and memories of these interpellated 'passers-by'.

Finally, I want to draw attention to the elaboration in the Noravank inscription upon the intent and content of 'welcome': Sargis specifies the imperative that guests, strangers, and those in need literally *eat*. This raises a key aspect — and what is more, a fully material aspect — of the scalar and

48 Barkhudaryan, *Corpus*, pp. 177–78, my translation: see Franklin, *Everyday Cosmopolitanisms*, for additional sources.

embodied constraint at the core of hospitality in Mongol Armenia. Guests are not themselves merely housed within the building-body endowed by a princely donor; they are *fed*, filled with the produce of farms and gardens, the labour of subjects, the richness of soils and waters, the lives of animals and plants which all thrive through the fame of their host. The gratitude of the hungry traveller is at the same time a constraint on their agency to resist reorientation as guests in relation to the prince. At this intimate scale the nested cosmo-politics of hospitality extends the power of hosts into the futurity of the travelling guest, expanding the territory of their fame into the entirety of the Silk Road world.

Conclusions: Global Medieval History and Ambiguous Hospitality

In ending with the growling belly of a hungry traveller on a medieval Armenian road, I have left myself far from the scale at which I might have liked to conclude, which is thinking about the broader implications of ambiguous hospitality for reorienting approaches to global medieval history. Though at the same time, there is a critical tethering, an entangling, between the scales at which the *polity* demarcates the limits of its *cosmos*, and the vulnerable frame of the human body. There is an ambiguity, which is also a capacity for destructive violence as well as generative becoming, in the symbolic spatial nesting of souls, selves, polity, and world.

This ambiguity not only allows the body politic to penetrate and probe the body of the self, but also conversely expands the boundaries of selves into materials, into architecture, landscape, the tissues of other human and non-human beings, the timescales of travel, fertile and fallow seasons, of genealogy and memory. For me, this expansion *queers* embodied agency along the medieval Silk Road, as we see cosmopolitanism-as-hospitality less as a question of what men or women did, and more a consideration of how space, materiality, and temporality are imagined through the body, and are thus part of the technology of self-making as well as world-making. To play with terminology developed by the material historian Francesca Bray, we might then speak with historical and situated specificity of cosmogenic makings that gender their makers, of *gynotechnics* or *androtechnics*;⁴⁹ but we might also open up possibilities for complexly-embodied *cosmotronics*, world-makings hospitable to stranger, chimeric selves.

Ultimately, for me, the ambiguity of cosmopolitan hospitality compels reflections on our work as historians, if we are to be at least as reflexive as the thirteenth-century Stepanos Orbelyan about our own written world-makings. As Marilyn Strathern pointed out, '[a]nthropological exegesis must be

49 Bray, *Technology and Gender*.

taken for what it is: an effort to create a world parallel to the perceived world in an expressive medium (writing) that sets down its own conditions of intelligibility.⁵⁰ In this observation Strathern points out that we scholars are, like Stepanos Orbelyan, little gods, makers of worlds, and potentially hostile hosts to the beings we draw inside them. Our written worlds have their own centres and edges, their insides and outsides, their own names which must be taken up by the 'guests, strangers and those in need' whose stories we can tell or not tell. What strangers do we create by holding the door of our narratives open? What guests and needy do we accommodate? To beg from Strathern again, '[we] need to be conscious of the form that our own thoughts take, for we need to be conscious of our own interests in the matter'.⁵¹ To me, this signifies a need to turn from the vulnerable bodies of our subjects to our own standpoints and subjectivities, a consciousness of which is, I think, fundamental to an attunement to ambiguity — in our archives, assemblages, our texts, artefacts, and our own narratives.

50 Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift*, p. 17.

51 Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift*, p. 16.

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Women as Hosts and Protectors of Outlaws in the Sagas of Icelanders

Introduction

In the sagas of Icelanders, hospitality is presented as an important virtue for both men and women, where the act of hospitality is shown to be important both for the building of political friendships, social positioning, as well as the protection of guests from both the elements and human foes. This is thus something that many characters will go far to adhere to, even if it means challenging the will of their surroundings. In *Laxdæla saga*, after having killed a man, the now outlawed man Þórólfr travels to his distant relative Vigdís to seek protection as he has heard that she is made of a more solid material than her husband, Þórðr. These rumours are shown to be correct, as Þórðr attempts to shrink away from the potential threat from his pursuers, only to have Vigdís put her foot down on the issue in the ensuing exchange:

‘Veitt hefi ek honum áðr gisting, ok mun ek þau orð eigi aptr taka, þótt hann eigi sér eigi jafna vini alla.’ Eptir þat sagði hon Þórði vígit Halls ok svá þat, at Þórólfr hafði vegit hann, er þá var þar kominn. Þórðr varð styggr við þetta, kvazk þat víst vita, at Ingjaldr myndi mikit fé taka af honum fyrir þessa björg, er nú var veitt honum — ‘er hér hafa hurðir verit loknar eptir þessum manni’. Vigdís svarar: ‘Eigi skal Ingjaldr taka fé af þér fyrir einnar nætr björg, því at hann skal hér vera í allan vetr’.

(‘I have already invited him to stay overnight’, said Vigdís, ‘and I have no intention of going back on my word, even though he isn’t everybody’s friend’. Then she told Þórðr that Hallr had been killed and that Þórólfr, the man who had just arrived, was the killer. Þórðr grew angry at this and said he knew for certain that Ingjaldr would make him pay dearly for the shelter that Þórólfr had already been given — ‘considering that the man is already behind locked doors in this house’. ‘Ingjaldr won’t make you pay anything for giving

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Guests, Strangers, Aliens, Enemies: Ambiguities of Hospitality in the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1350, ed. by Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Kjær, CURSOR 45 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), pp. 155–176
BREPOLS PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.5.149655

Þórólfr shelter for one night', said Vigdís, 'because Þórólfr is going to stay here all winter'.')

Here Vigdís undermines her husband Þórðr's will and authority as her given word of hospitality and protection is here shown to be of more importance, even when the target of this protection is an outlaw and despite the repercussions of crossing Ingjaldr. This protection of an outlaw by itself is not unusual in Old Norse literature. In the sagas of Icelanders (*Íslendingasögur*), this protective hospitality is frequently shown to be extended not only to family, friends, and general strangers, but also to banished outlaws. It is within these saga motifs that hospitality leads to conflicts, both between those standing on opposing sides of the outlaw, as well as, as is shown above, conflicting feelings within the household.

Despite these outlaws being convicted criminals fleeing from both the law and the conflicts they have been involved in, as well as the legal aversion against protecting and aiding these criminals, the act of hosting is generally presented in a positive light, and frequently the host is rewarded for their deeds despite actively protecting murderers and criminals regarded as threats towards the local society. This chapter will look at the motif of women hosting and protecting outlaws in the *Íslendingasögur*, the way these women are depicted, as well as the ambiguity tied to this hosting being presented positively despite going against local jurisdiction and at times also defying the will of their husbands or family. This chapter will therefore relate to the first type of ambiguity referred to in the introduction, and on how the obligations of hospitality interacted with and sometimes went directly against other legal and societal obligations.

The sagas of Icelanders or *Íslendingasögur* is the name given to a group of texts describing the deeds of the families in Iceland from the settlement period 870–930 to the first half of the eleventh century. The versions finally written down in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries drew heavily on oral tradition, and today there are about forty surviving sagas. Due to the disparity in time between the time of the setting and the writing down of the sagas, they are uncertain as reliable sources for the eleventh century and earlier.² For this chapter, the study looks at the sagas depictions as an expression of the Christian thirteenth and fourteenth centuries looking back at its pagan ancestors' past, and how customs such as dealings with outlaws are portrayed. In addition to the sagas, this chapter also refer to Old Norse legal codes of the

1 *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 14, pp. 31–32; *Laxdæla saga*, ed. and trans. by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson, ch. 14, p. 71. For consistency in this chapter, the anglicized names and place names used in the translations have been changed into Old Norse.

2 On the topic of the saga debate and methodological approaches, see Andersson, *The Problem of Icelandic Saga Origins*; Mundal, *Sagadebatt*; Meulengracht Sørensen, 'Some Methodological Considerations'; Helle, 'Hvor står den historiske sagakritikken'; Bagge, *En kort introduksjon til Snorre Sturlason*, pp. 19–21.

Icelandic *Grágás*.³ While it is considered amongst the oldest surviving Old Norse legal codes that we have, and was also originally preserved orally, the existing written versions of it are dated back to the 1250–1270s. While it has its own limitations due to the fragmentation and uncertain uses, it still provides an alternative, morality-oriented perspective on the question of perceived crimes within the Old Norse Icelandic society, such as the matters of outlawry.⁴

Skógarmannabjörg: To Protect an Outlaw

The oldest Icelandic law code *Grágás* is believed to have been used in Iceland from about 930 in the period of the Icelandic Commonwealth, where it was transmitted orally until it was later codified in 1117, until 1271 when it was replaced by *Járnsíða* after the Norwegian subjugation of the island in 1262–1264.⁵ The laws within *Grágás* therefore portray a more horizontally organized society as the laws and penalties are more tied to the social virtues and social control that characterized the Commonwealth. This is particularly visible when it comes to the punishment of outlawry, which was the most severe punishment that could be dealt to people within the Old Norse laws, and was intended not only to banish those considered unwelcome from society, but also effectively to give them a death penalty. This is because being rejected from society and not being protected by its laws would leave them vulnerable to being hunted down and killed by their foes with impunity. For one, full outlawry meant the loss of all of one's goods through a confiscation court, the loss of one's status, making someone an untouchable outcast in Iceland. Furthermore, there is also the denial of all kinds of assistance and aid by others within society. This illegal assistance to outlaws, *skógarmannabjörg*, has its own section, on the assistance to an outlaw ('*vm scogar manz biorg*'), in *Grágás*:

Pat sagði ulfheðinn lög ef maðr vill sækia vm scogar manz biorg eða fiorbavgs manz er farning er mælt, ef þeir leita eigi við brott fór sem mælt er ilögom. heiman scal stefna manne vm biorg þeirra til alþingis oc til fiorðungs doms. telia fiorbavgs Garð varða.

(Úlfheðinn said this was law in the case of a man who wants to prosecute someone for assisting a full outlaw or lesser outlaw who has passage from the country laid down for him but who does not try to get away as prescribed in the laws. He is to summon him locally to the General

3 *Grágás* survives in two full manuscripts *Staðarholtsbók* and *Konungsbók* (*Codex Regius*) which are slightly different, as well as several other fragments. Going forward, I will refer to *Konungsbók* as K.

4 For more on the ambiguities of *Grágás* as an oral law, see McGlynn, 'Bergþor's Voice'; McGlynn, 'Orality'.

5 *Íslendingabók*, ch. 10.

Assembly and a Quarter Court for giving assistance to such men, and claim that his penalty is lesser outlawry.⁶⁾

This meant that acts of sheltering, sustaining, ferrying, advising, or simply sharing food and living quarters with an outlaw could be penalized in such a way. Ignorance could be used as a total or partial defence, but in *Grágás* K § 55, it is stated that anyone who gives their continued assistance to an outlaw after having been previously prosecuted for this and thus being aware of their crime would receive the punishment of full outlawry for continued assistance.⁷ This punishment would in theory be the same for both men and women, as the *Grágás* represented a legal code with more gender equal punishments compared to some of the other Old Norse laws, even if this notion did not necessarily mirror the legal retributions shown in the *Íslendingasögur*.⁸

Male *Skógarmannabjörg* in the Sagas

Despite the strict laws presented in the surviving lawbooks, within the sagas outlaws appear to frequently be taken care of by family and friends, as these bonds are not severed by outlawry.⁹ Setting aside the briefer cases of the aiding of outlaws such as feeding or transporting, outlaws are often shown being taken in by male relatives or friends, and hidden and otherwise kept safe from external hostilities for a time, mostly as a part of the household. These stays could last from brief periods to that of several years, depending on the hosts and the ones chasing the outlaw. Generally, the outlaw is forced to take on a more or less nomadic lifestyle as they move from one farm to another, attempting to live in the wilderness, if they do not attempt to escape abroad. The hosts themselves may be friends or family of the outlaws, or even strangers, and their motivations for hosting can be due to a sense of familiar duty, generosity. However, less generous hosts can also be driven by self-interest as their hosting may earn them a favour, such as heavy labour, or as is more frequently shown in the sagas, an assassination.¹⁰ The actual punishment of *skógarmannabjörg* is rarely shown in the sagas, but when it is shown it can also befall those of high status such as chieftains (*goðar*, sing.

6 *Grágás* K § 73. Translation from *Laws of Early Iceland*, ed. and trans. by Dennis and others; *Grágás* K § 73, pp. 120–21.

7 *Grágás* K § 55, pp. 97–98.

8 See Jochens, 'Gender Symmetry in Law?'; Tveit and others, "‘En kvinne skal straffes for alle forbrytelser som en mann’: Kjønnsspesifikke straffer’.

9 Amory, 'Medieval Icelandic Outlaw', p. 198.

10 The assassin outlaws were more frequently shown, and these were known as *flugumenn* (men of flies). See for example Snorri goði's rumoured deal with an outlawed rapist to get the better of a rival chieftain in *Eyrbyggja saga*, and the six *flugumenn* sent to kill Víga-Skúta. *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 36; *Reykðæla saga ok Víga-Skútu*, chs 21–22, 26–28; Amory, 'Medieval Icelandic Outlaw', p. 200.

goði). The saga hero Björn from *Bjarnar saga Hítadælakappa* is said to host a couple of outlaws for a winter and let them build small fortifications around his farm.¹¹ In this particular case, Björn's aiding of these outlaws is settled by paying a fee, instead of outlawry. Björn's case is, however, a peculiar one that shows how the lives of outlaws can be played with and exploited in the context of conflicts with other men, as their treatment is part of a series of aggressions between him and his rival Þórðr. When Þórðr, who had made it known that Björn was harbouring outlaws, himself aids two other outlaws flee Iceland, Björn organizes it so that he is able to catch and kill 'Þórðr's outlaws' before they are able to escape. The saga tells us that Þórðr did not gain honour from these events. Furthermore, while harbouring outlaws in this saga has actual repercussions, we more often see punishment or revenge as fears voiced as reasons for not taking in an outlaw as a guest, even if this may lessen the refuser in the eyes of others.

Like so many other ideals within Old Norse culture, hospitality as a virtue is tied to honour, which helps explain how far some male saga characters will go to fulfil the social expectations placed upon them.¹² While some men take in their guests without comment, some instead appear to be forced due to societal expectations, as well as personal honour, despite their personal distaste for the individual. Ingimundr from *Vatnsdæla saga* is an extreme version of such hospitality. Despite his own aversion, he brings home his outlawed relative Hrolleifr and his mother so as not to be regarded as 'eigi stórmannligt' (petty, unlike a grand man) by another relative. When the situation gets too bad, he builds a new farm for them to live on away from his, and even when Ingimundr is eventually killed by Hrolleifr, his own goodness as a host drives him to help his killer escape from his son's vengeance.¹³ A similar unwilling obligation, here due to blood relations, is shown in the contemporary saga (depicting the events of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries instead of the ninth through the eleventh) *Þorgils saga ok Hafliða*, where the *goði* Hafliði pays compensation and protects his troublesome nephew Már despite personally wishing to exclude him from the family due to his despicable actions.¹⁴

11 These fortifications could either be protection for the outlaws themselves, or for Björn's sake. *Bjarnar saga Hítadælakappa*, ch. 22, p. 172. A stone fence is also built by an outlaw in *Finnboga saga ramma*, ch. 39, p. 325.

12 Hospitality is also given much attention in *Hávamál*, the gnomic collection of poems attributed to Óðinn found in *Codex Regius*. The first poem, called *Gestaþáttr* (guest's section) contains advice for both hosts and travellers, such as the first lines of the second verse: 'Gefendr heilir! | Gestir er inn kominn. | Hvar skal sitja sjá?', *De Gamle Eddadigte*, p. 21; ('Hail to the giver! | a guest has come; | Where shall the stranger sit?'); *The Poetic Edda*, trans. by Bellows, p. 29.

13 *Vatnsdæla saga*, chs 20–22, pp. 55–61.

14 *Þorgils saga ok Hafliða*, ch. 6.

The Exceptionalism of the Protective Hostess Motif

While men are under strict restrictions when it comes to maintaining their honour and masculinity, women are shown to not be put under the same limitations, and instead they can be praised for actively influencing the events in a capable and honourable way. They might be regarded as grander and more exceptional because they to a higher degree than the men actively choose to do the hosting, rather than the men being obligated to do so under threat of losing honour and regard if they refuse. If so, it could mean that the hosting of an outlaw would be one way for a woman to win more honour, rather than maintaining it as in the case of a man.¹⁵ By utilizing her influence within the private, feminine space of the home a woman is able to influence the events of the more masculine public one.

This imbalance in female and male hosting is also shown in the way the scenes are depicted. While men are more frequently said to host outlaws, these cases are given less space and descriptions within the narrative than in the cases of female hosts, oftentimes only mentioned by a sentence or otherwise not specified. This discrepancy is likely due to the way these depictions of female hosting tend to stand out as exceptional within the narrative, leading to the woman being praised for her courage and personal skills for the hosting. In these cases, the characters are frequently called *skörungr* (a prominent or exceptional person) and *drengr góðr* (a good man), referring roughly to someone who fulfils the ideals of honour, fairness, respectability, and integrity. Outstanding men and women are referred to as *drengr*, and exceptional women in particular are called *skörungr*. These women may display grandness, honour, and physical or mental strength, like solving problems through wit and courage.

Loyalty and Female Honour

Married women stand in a particularly difficult position when it comes to honouring conflicting relations. As Else Mundal has noted, unlike men, married women possess a double loyalty, one to their own family and one to the family of the man they have married.¹⁶ This double loyalty would thus result in them having conflicting obligations when it comes to protecting relatives, in addition to cases where they would host people who were not related to them. Besides the women having to cater to double loyalty, they are also shown to possess their own personal honour with the praise they are given as capable hosts and protectors, as well as their pride in this.

¹⁵ On honour, see Meulengracht Sørensen, *Fortælling og ære*.

¹⁶ Mundal, 'Norron litteratur som kilde til nordisk kvinnehistorie', p. 104. For the case of Þórdís Súrsdóttir as an example of double loyalty, see also: Grønstøl, 'Kjærlæik og ættkjensle'; Karras, 'Marriage and the Creation of Kin'.

While women's hospitality in general can be memorable both for good and bad, it appears to be a personal honour for women to be lauded for and to take pride in, and it is not strictly tied to the husband alone, thus making it both a distinct and important feature.¹⁷

Was it easier for a woman to host an outlaw? While it physically may be more difficult to successfully protect and hide an outlaw from his pursuers, it may still be easier socially for a woman to do so, despite the laws not making a distinction for this. This may be due to them, while sometimes being able to extend out to the male public sphere, still keeping a foot within the feminine, internal one, and are thus less likely to be directly punished by both those representing the law and the avengers. Occasionally women are shown to be the ones to go to rather than their husbands, as the wives might come with both good counsel, be more sympathetic to the outlaw's cause, and ultimately be able to successfully argue in favour of the unwanted visitor.¹⁸ Approaching the women could also have a practical explanation, as while the homestead's wealth belonged more to the men, the women would have a more constant control over their shared resources as they would remain at home while the husband was away.¹⁹ This is also demonstrated by the scenes where the husband returns home to find the wife already having taken in the outlaw, as well as in the scenes where a woman will state her equal role in the comings and goings of the household.

A Dramatic Wedding

One of the more notable cases of hosting in the sagas is Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir's hosting of the outlaw Gunnarr, and how she at her own wedding prioritizes this hosting before her marriage to her husband or groom Þorkell Eyjólfsson, and how this is shown in an admirable light. This scene can be found depicted in the two *Íslendingasögur* *Laxdæla saga* and *Fljótsdæla saga*, as well as in the short story (*þáttur*) *Gunnars þáttur Þiðrandabana*.²⁰ In *Laxdæla saga*, the fourth wedding of the saga heroine Guðrún is a splendid affair, and it is all funded

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- 17 Apart from the hosting of outlaws, women are also shown to go far in the name of hospitality, including theft (*Brennu-Njáls saga*, ch. 48), and even reanimation (*Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 51).
 - 18 Besides the previously mentioned Vigdís, see also Guðrún in *Laxdæla saga*, *Fljótsdæla saga*, and *Gunnars þáttur Þiðrandabana*. Similarly, in *Vatnsdæla saga*, ch. 5, the jarl's wife protects her son's murderer after said son advised him to approach her first, and in *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja* Þorbjörg protects her nephews from her husband and his men.
 - 19 For more on women's position in the Old Norse society, see Jochens, *Women*.
 - 20 On the discussion of *Gunnars þáttur Þiðrandabana* being the remains of an older *Njarðvíkinga saga*, and the relation between the *þáttur* and *Laxdæla saga*, see Gísli Sigurðsson, *The Medieval Icelandic Saga and Oral Tradition*, p. 208. Jón Jóhannesson has argued that *Gunnars þáttur* is more similar to the original due to the author's desire to play up the part of Guðrún's involvement in *Laxdæla saga*. If so, the additional aid given to this outlaw would be regarded as something worth expanding upon. *Austfirðinga sögur*, 'Introduction', pp. lxxxvi–xcii.

by the bride instead of by her groom chieftain Þorkell Eyjólfsson. Everything is off to a great start, before an outlaw by the name of Gunnarr, the slayer of Þiðrandi, is noticed amongst the guests by Þorkell, who quickly orders his men to grab him. However, before anything bad happens to Gunnarr, Guðrún swiftly reacts:

En Guðrún sat innar á þverpalli ok þar konur hjá henni ok hofðu lín á hofði; en þegar hon verðr vör við, stígr hon af brúðbekkinum ok heitr á sína menn at veita Gunnari lið; hon bað ok engum manni eira, þeim er þar vildi óvísu lýsa.

(Guðrún was sitting on the dais at the upper end of the hall with some other women; they were all wearing linen headdresses. As soon as she realized what was happening, she left the bridal bench and called on her men to go to Gunnarr's help, and told them to spare no one who offered them any resistance.²¹)

Earlier in the saga it had been explained that Gunnarr had been taken in by Guðrún for protection after his killing of Þiðrandi, and it is said that she had kept him in close hiding as several powerful men were looking for him.²² As part of hiding him she made sure to have adequate manpower available, as it is stated that she had a much greater force than Þorkell.²³ In the end, their mutual friend Snorri goði steps between them and tells Þorkell to stand down as this proves Guðrún's superiority over them both. When Þorkell hesitates, stating his promise to a friend to get Gunnarr, Snorri drops the amicable act, simply stating: 'Miklu er þér meiri vandi á at gera eptir várum vilja; er þér ok þetta sjálfum hofuðnaðsyn, því at þú fær aldri slíkrar konu, sem Guðrún er, þótt þú leitir víða' (You have a much greater obligation now to do as we ask; and for yourself, this is a matter of the utmost importance, for however far you seek, you will never find such a wife as Guðrún).²⁴ With these words and the truth behind them, Þorkell backs down and the wedding feast continues merrily, with Gunnarr safely being sent away that evening. In spring, until which time they have seemingly hosted him well, Guðrún gets Þorkell to give Gunnarr a ship and gifts enough to help him on his journey.²⁵ Unlike before, Þorkell now approves of her grandeur: 'Eigi er þér lítit í hug um mart, Guðrún,

21 *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 69, p. 202, ed. and trans. by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson, p. 217.

22 *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 69, p. 202.

23 *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 69, p. 202: 'Hafði Guðrún lið miklu meira'. Similarly, in *Fóstbræðra saga*, the powerful woman Þorbjörg the stout (*digra*) personally prevents the hanging of Grettir by approaching the crowd of people with her followers. She here says that the hanging will not happen if she can rule, and the nameless crowd states that she has the power to decide. She lets Grettir go, and it is stated by the narrator that this action proved her to be *skörungr*. *Fóstbræðra saga*, ch. 1.

24 *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 69, p. 203, ed. and trans. by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson, p. 217.

25 Another housewife that sends a hunted man off on a ship is Gríma from *Fóstbræðra saga* that helps her freed slave flee from Iceland. *Fóstbræðra saga*, ch. 10.

segir hann, 'ok er þér eigi hent at eiga vesalmenni; er þat ok ekki við þitt æði; skal þetta gera eptir þínum vilja' ('No one can say you think small, Guðrún, and it would not suit you to be married to a weakling. It isn't in your nature. I shall do as you wish').²⁶ Gunnarr also compliments his treatment here as he would never be able to repay the favour, and leaves Iceland to be a highly esteemed man in Norway. This example shows a tense situation where the woman wilfully faces off against the man she is marrying by protecting the outlaw against the wishes of her husband-to-be. Not only does she succeed, but she also ends up being lauded by both the outlaw himself and the other men around, including her husband. The praise by Snorri goði is a further boost to her honour, as he is considered a highly esteemed chieftain and authority within the sagas, so his support in this otherwise unlawful action is also notable. The fact that this argument is not played out within the private sphere of a married couple, but instead in the public space of a wedding is also worth noting. In this setting that is generally about the tying of the bride to the groom and his family, Guðrún not only organizes and finances the wedding herself, but also possesses the superior force to dominate and ultimately decide Gunnarr's fate. The incident is not only exceptional as a display of a woman's power in general, but also as a possible inversion of the ordinary dynamic at a wedding, where the bride's will is of seemingly little consequence.²⁷ In the *þáttur* of Gunnarr, the dramatic scene at the wedding is also described, albeit in less detail. Here Þorkell calls for Guðrún and demands that Gunnarr is sent away as they cannot both be there, but Guðrún replies that it is the same for her if she does not get Þorkell as her husband, adding: 'En ekki vinn ek þat til hans at selja þá menn undir vápn, er ek vil halda' (Let him leave here as he came. But I will not do him the favour of forcibly turning over to him men I want to keep).²⁸ Here it is told that Guðrún had, together with Snorri goði, her ally, a hundred men, which made Þorkell back down. It is also said that Guðrún with help from Snorri gets Gunnarr out of the country and to Norway, and that she sent him off warmly.²⁹

In *Fljótsdæla saga*, the wedding scene is not featured, but Gunnarr is transported to Guðrún by his other protector Helgi Ásbjarnarson 'því at hann var sendr þangat til umsjár ok halds með gnógum jarteiknum' (since he

26 *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 69, pp. 203–04, ed. and trans. by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson, p. 218.

27 This kind of public power play stands in stark contrast to other wedding feast scenes such as the sudden double wedding in *Brennu-Njáls saga*. Here not only Hallgerðr is married, but also her daughter Þorgerðr is wed after the groom's uncle Þráinn hastily divorces his wife Þórhildr after she notes his interest in the girl in libel verse, and then forces her away from the feast and quickly weds the girl instead. Here both Þorgerðr and Þórhildr are shown to have little to say to control the events taking place. *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ch. 34, pp. 89–90.

28 *Gunnars þáttur Þiðrandabana*, in *Austfirðinga sögur*, ch. 7. p. 210; translation from *Sagas of Icelanders*, ed. by Viðar Hreinsson and trans. By Maxwell, ch. 67, v, p. 442.

29 *Gunnars þáttur Þiðrandabana*, in *Austfirðinga sögur*, ch. 7. pp. 210–11.

was sent there for care and safe-keeping with ample marks of accreditation).³⁰ When Þorkell, who in this version is already Guðrún's husband, returns home and recognizes Gunnarr he attempts to strike him with his sword. Here too Guðrún is notified and immediately orders Þorkell to stop with the threat of divorce. Her threats here are no less severe:

Hun gengr fram ok biðr Þorkel, bónda sinn, stöðvast. 'vil ek, at þú gjörir honum ekki grand, nema þú vilir, at vit skilim okkart félag upp frá þessum degi, ef þú gjörir honum nökkurt mein, því at Gunnarr var mér sendr af vinum mínum til halds ok trausts. Skal ek hann svó annast sem son minn, til þess er skip ganga af Íslandi í sumar. En ef nökkur maðr vill hár af höfði honum blása, þá skal ek þeim [þvi]líkan grimmleik gjalda, sem ek má mestu á leið koma. En þat mæla sumir, at þat sé lítit gaman þeim, sem þat hafa reynt, at verða fyrir reiði minni. Skal ek þá ok ekki af spara, þat er illt er, ef ek verð vör við, at nökkur gjöri honum mein. Þat vil ek, at þú eigir ekki við hann, því at honum mun einhlít mín umsjá ok velgjörningr.'

(She went in and told her husband Þorkell to stop. 'I want you not to harm him, unless you wish us to break our partnership from this day forward if you do him any injury, because Gunnarr was sent to me for help and protection by my friends. I shall look after him as though he were my son until ships sail from Iceland in the summer. If anyone wants to ruffle a hair of his head, then I will pay them back with as much cruelty as I can muster. Some say that those who have felt it don't find it much fun to incur my anger. I shall not hold back from doing my worst if I learn that anyone has harmed him. I do not want you fighting with him, because he is assured of my full protection and goodwill'.³¹)

It is due to her promise to her friend Helgi that she refuses to stand down on this issue, and just as in the other versions of Gunnarr's story, Þorkell quickly mellows and caters to her wishes, stating that he knows that things will not be solved unless she gets her way.³² After hosting Gunnarr as promised, Guðrún makes sure that he is given a ship with the support of Þorkell, and that no expense was spared over this. Gunnarr then sails to Norway, later returning the ship with great gifts in return.³³

All three depictions of Guðrún's hosting of Gunnarr the outlaw share key details. Here, Guðrún, a woman, is the central player. It is thanks to her abilities and social position that she can protect Gunnarr, and these qualities are also the reason why he is sent to her. The hosting of Gunnarr is a decision

30 *Fljótsdæla saga*, in *Austfirðinga sögur*, ch. 21, p. 286.

31 *Fljótsdæla saga*, ch. 21, p. 287; translation from *Sagas of Icelanders*, ed. by Viðar Hreinsson and trans. by Porter, ch. 21, v, p. 427.

32 *Fljótsdæla saga*, ch. 22, p. 288.

33 *Fljótsdæla saga*, ch. 22, p. 288.

that she refuses to change, either due to a promise or due to her own pride and honour as a hostess. Instead, the resulting conflict of interests is something she is willing to stake her marriage on, despite it being to a formidable and wealthy *goði*. Her threat, be it the divorce or the superior numbers of armed men (one hundred with Snorri), is consistently shown to be intimidating enough to make Þorkell accept her will instead of keeping his own promise to his friend. Finally, Gunnarr is allowed to stay until the spring, whereupon he is aided out of the country in great style with a ship and good gifts. Gunnarr rewards this help in return, showing gratitude and friendship. Her husband Þorkell, on the other hand, feels obligated to take revenge in his friend's stead and displays some of the conflict between personal bonds and those of a spouse, a conflict more usually seen applied to women. Even though his viewpoint is the lawful one, he remains on the losing side until he gives into Guðrún's pressure, and then he praises her for not doing things like hospitality in half-measures.

The wedding setting for this story is also noteworthy, as it gives shape to the dramatic conflict that takes place.³⁴ The wedding within Old Norse culture is an act of establishing or solidifying the bonds between two families, more specifically the men of those families.³⁵ The fact that this very public and politically important setting is taken over by the bride further expresses the transgression or rather the exceptionalism of the action.³⁶ By insisting on funding and organizing the wedding herself, Guðrún gives herself more opportunities to take control of the ensuing scene, which is shown both with the conflict at hand as well as by her putting the new marriage itself on the line.

Hospitality Through Trickery

While some women, like Guðrún, seem to be able to force their will onto their hesitant husbands on the matter of hosting, it is more often the case that they must combine their determination with the use of their wit to trick their husband into accepting the hosting. To return to the example from the beginning, the housewife Vigdís hosts and later helps her outlawed kinsman Þórólfr escape

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- 34 This wedding can also be seen in contrast to Guðrún's previous weddings. Both her first and third wedding were instigated with little to no direction of her own, and in both cases this eventually leads to ruin. In this wedding however, Guðrún is both determined and finally able to fully take control of the situation, and does so without fault, and this and even her protection of the outlaw is rewarded. For a more detailed look at a medieval Icelandic wedding, see Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'The Wedding at Flugumýri'.
- 35 Jochens, 'The Church and Sexuality', pp. 377–78; Jochens, 'Consent in Marriage'.
- 36 In *Brennu-Njáls saga*, there is another public altercation where the housewife Hallgerðr is generously hosting guests and even beggar women, only for it to be revealed that the food she was serving was stolen from an enemy. This results in the very public fight between Hallgerðr and her husband Gunnarr where he strikes her in front of everyone, before they both step outside. *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ch. 48, p. 124.

his pursuers despite her husband's disapproval and fear of retribution. Vigdís is introduced as being 'meiri skörungr í skapi' (more manly and grand in personality) than her husband, Þórðr, something that is quickly shown after she has taken in Þórólfr, and she tells him of her decisions, not giving him much of an opinion on the matter.³⁷ Despite Þórðr's opposition, Þórólfr stays with them that winter. When the man hunting him down, Ingjaldr, discovers this, he goes to Þórðr's farm with twelve men to get Þórólfr. He pressures Þórðr to come clean, and after seeing through his lie, he offers to pay three marks of silver (plus his silence about Þórðr's treachery) for Þórólfr.³⁸ Þórðr is easily persuaded by the silver and Ingjaldr's words. When Vigdís learns about this, she personally organizes for Þórólfr to escape together with the slave Ásgautr, whom she promises freedom if he leads Þórólfr to a kinsman of hers that she knows can protect him. After a hazardous journey, the two men reach the homestead, and the man welcomes them and acknowledges Vigdís's actions, stating: 'Mun ek at vísu taka við þessum manni at orðsending hennar; þykki mér Vigdísi þetta mál drengiliga hafa farit; er þat mikill harmr, er þvílík kona skal hafa svá ósköruligt gjaforð' (I shall certainly look after this man as she asks. I think Vigdís has acted very honourably, and it is a great pity that such a woman should be married to such a wretch).³⁹ In this story then, Vigdís is lauded for her bravery, honour, and *drengskapr* for protecting a kinsman from legal retributions and for opposing as well as tricking her husband, who in contrast to her is presented as greedy, cowardly, and spineless. By the end of the story, Vigdís divorces Þórðr, shaming him further for not fulfilling the role of a *drengiliga* host like herself. This case stands out even more as Þórðr, unlike some other unsupportive husbands whose actions are limited due to their conflicting loyalties, is willing to trade his honour for safety and silver.

The motif of a woman hiding of her kin is found in *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja*. After her outlaw brother's death, Þorbjörg protects his widow, Helga, and their two young boys. While the widow is safe and the boys are not technically outlaws themselves like their father, the two boys' lives are endangered as they are considered a future threat to their father's killers if they grow up.⁴⁰ Þorbjörg locks them up in their outbuilding (*útbúur*) while the men responsible for Hörðr's killing dine in their home. After pressurizing her husband Índriði to kill Hörðr's killer, she also makes him swear to let Helga and her two sons stay with them and give them all the aid they need, without

37 *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 14, p. 31.

38 Like Þórðr, occasionally male protectors of outlaws are offered deals by the pursuers so that they can give away the outlaw without losing honour.

39 *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 15, p. 35, ed. and trans. by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson, ch. 15, p. 74.

40 Considering how a group of men from the local society had ganged up in order to kill Hörðr and his men, his sons can be said to experience a momentary threat similarly to that of local lawlessness. For comparison, see also n. 43 below on the two nephews in *Gísla saga Súrssonar*.

saying that she has already invited them. Índriði says that he can promise her everything, wrongly believing that he does not need to uphold the promise as he thinks that they are dead. After this confirmation, Þorbjörg brings along Helga and her sons, and true to his word, Helga and her sons stay with them.⁴¹ It is then stated that everyone thought that Þorbjörg had been very brave.⁴² Þorbjörg is considered brave for both helping her kin, Hörðr's family, but also for standing in opposition of her husband's and his group's interests.⁴³ She is also able to take revenge on Hörðr's killer, and she is lauded for this as well by the society in general as reported by the saga, with even her husband agreeing.

Conflicting Loyalties and the Question of Honour

As shown above, in both Vigdís's and Þorbjörg's cases, the women can occasionally trick and even openly oppose their husbands to avoid having them harm the ones under their protection, which shows that in the ranking of these two women's personal values and connections, both husbands fall behind the women's other loyalties and personal honour as hosts. In the case of Vigdís this even leads to a divorce, as the opposing views of hospitality ultimately proved once more just how *óðrengeligir* (incompetent) Þórðr is compared to Vigdís.⁴⁴ This devaluation of the marriage bonds versus the honour of hospitality is not unique, as the bonds of kinship are shown to be treated in a similar way. To return to *Gunnars þáttur Piðrandabana*, Gunnarr is for a time protected by Helgi and his wife Þórdís. When Helgi goes away, Helgi makes Þórdís promise that she will protect Gunnarr in order to keep their friendship, as her brother Bjarni is among the people looking for Gunnarr

41 A fascinating parallel is found in Gallus Anonymus's *Gesta Principum Polonorum* (I. 13, pp. 60–63), where King Boleslaw I the Brave's supposedly executed aristocrats are in fact saved by his highly praised queen, who in secret has kept them safe and later brings them forth to the king after making sure that their return would be safe. While the queen like Þorbjörg is praised for their lifesaving deceit by both the king and the narrative, Índriði is depicted as less loving towards his nephews than Boleslaw towards his aristocrats, and he appears to be more restricted by his promise to Þorbjörg than by his own conscience. I would like to thank Wojtek Jezierski for making me of aware of these similarities.

42 *Harðar saga*, ch. 38, p. 92: 'Þótti öllum Þorbjörgu mikilmannliga verða'.

43 Auðr in *Gísla saga* does a similar feat, where she briefly hides her two nephews from Gísli from him after they have killed Gísli's brother Þorkell. While mad at first, Gísli is calmed down as soon as he is not able to reach them, and thus not bound by honour to avenge Þorkell by killing the two boys. *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, in *Vestfirðinga sögur*, chs 29–30. Women are other times also shown to hide and protect their sons from pursuers, such as Katla in *Eyrbyggja saga*, and Guðrún from *Hrafn's þáttur Guðrúnarsonar*. In chapter 2 of *Hrafn's þáttur Guðrúnarsonar* Guðrún hides Hrafn and then makes sure that he is protected and finally sent abroad.

44 In the case of Þorbjörg and her need for revenge of Hörðr, she is even ready to harm her own husband at first, and this conflict in the relationship is only smoothed over when Índriði redirects her anger towards another of Hörðr's murderers. *Harðar saga*, ch. 38, pp. 90–92.

to have him killed. When Bjarni arrives, she tricks him into thinking that she will hand over Gunnarr to him, only to later say:

Eigi veit ek, bróðir, hví þú vildir með slíku fara at sœkja heim systur þína ok unna mér svá ills hlutar at selja þann mann undir vápni þín, er bóndi minn seldi mér til geymslu, ok á ek ekki þann mun ykkar at gera, ok mun ek þér allt annat betr fara en þetta, ok muntu eigi fá vald á Gunnari at sinni, nema þú vinnir fullt til.

(I do not know, brother, why you would come in this manner to your sister's home and believe I would do such a terrible thing as to hand over a man whom my husband put in my charge. I should not have to choose between you. Everything else will turn out better for you than this. You will not take Gunnarr this time unless you do so by force.⁴⁵)

For taking this stance, Þórdís is lauded by her husband and thanked by Gunnarr, and only after Helgi's death does she send Gunnarr over to Helgafell and specifically to Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir for protection, and they part as good friends.⁴⁶ Here too, then, her honour won by protecting an outlaw and keeping her deal with her husband is a higher priority than her ties to her brother. A perhaps less generous depiction of Þórdís is found in *Fljótsdæla saga*, where it is the threat of divorce and being sent back to her domineering and worse off family that is shown as being her main motivation.⁴⁷ Arguably, this scene too is a case of the fake betrayal motif found elsewhere, as she like other women are shown to refuse a payment of silver for handing over Gunnarr, and in the end she is praised by Helgi for her aid and for prioritizing her husband and hospitality before her blood ties. Family ties as well as those with a spouse are thus both shown to be disposable in favour of hospitality within different sagas.

Habitual Hosting of Outlaws

While the hosting and protection of outlaws appear to generally be situational and driven by kinship or similar obligations, there appears to be some cases where the hosting of outlaws on a more regular basis could have had its own appeal for women. This could possibly be a means of gaining help and influencing those whom they hosted, as well as seeking to gain a reputation. One woman like this is the widow Þorgerðr that is found in *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, a woman said to have built her house to specifically be able to host outlaws on a more regular basis:

45 *Gunnars þáttr Þiðrandabana*, ch. 6, pp. 208–09; translation from *Sagas of Icelanders*, ed. by Viðar Hreinsson and trans. by Maxwell, ch. 6, v, p. 441.

46 *Gunnars þáttr Þiðrandabana*, ch. 6, p. 209. For more on Þórdís's situation, see also Karras, 'Marriage and the Creation of Kin', pp. 478–79.

47 *Fljótsdæla saga*, ch. 20, pp. 282–85.

Hann ferr nú út í Vaðil til móður Gestr Oddleifssonar ok kemr þar fyrir dag ok drepr á dyrr. Gengr húsfreyja til dura. Hon var opt vön at taka við skógarmönnum, ok átti hon jarðhús; var annarr jarðhússendir við ána, en annarr við eldahúsit hennar, ok sér enn þess merki. Þorgerðr fagnar vel Gísla — ‘ok mun ek þat til láta við þik, at þú dvelisk hér um hrið, en ek má eigi vita, hvárt þat verðr nökkut annat en kvenvælar einar’. Gísli kvezk nú þat þiggja mundu, en segir nú eigi verða körlunum svá vel, at ørvænt sé, at konunum verði betr. Gísli er þar um vetrinn, ok hefir hvergi verit jafnvel gört við hann i sekðinni sem þar.

(He goes now to Vaðil, to Gestr Oddleifsson's mother, and comes there before daylight and knocks. She answers the door. It was often her way to take in outlaws, and she had an underground room; one way into the underground room was by the river, and the other was in her kitchen, and traces of it can still be seen. Þorgerðr welcomes Gísli — ‘and I will let you stay here for a while, but I do not know whether I can give you anything but a woman's help here.’ Gísli says that he will accept, and says that men's help had not been so good that it would be unlikely that women's help would not be better. Gísli is there over the winter, and nowhere was he better treated during his outlawry.⁴⁸)

Not only does Þorgerðr here have a habit of housing outlaws, but her home is built to specifically hide them and to give them better chances to escape with the two entrances.⁴⁹ The description of these alterations made with outlaws in mind is particularly noteworthy, and it is done by a woman rather than male family members. A woman making specific alterations to her home to be able to host visitors is also mentioned and remembered fondly in the depictions of the settler woman Geirríðr in *Eyrbyggja saga*, who decides to have her house built on the road specifically to host everyone passing by:

Í þenna tíma kom út Geirríðr, systir Geirröðar á Eyri, ok gaf hann henni bústað í Borgardal fyrir innan Álptafjörð. Hon lét setja skála sinn á þjóðbraut þvera, ok syldu allir men ríða þar í gegnum; þar stóð jafnan borð ok matr á, gefinn hverjum er hafa vildi; af slíku þótti hon it mesta göfugkvendi.

(About this time Geirríðr, sister of Geirröðr of Eyri, came to Iceland, and Geirröðr granted her land at Borgardal, west of Álptafjörð. She built a hall right across the main road, and every traveller was expected

48 *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, ch. 23, p. 75; *The Saga of Gísli the Outlaw*, trans. by Johnston and Foote, ch. 23, pp. 35–36.

49 Starri from *Bolla þáttir Bollasonar* has a similar ‘earth house’ which he is said to have because he oftentimes had outlaws visiting. For more on the hiding places of outlaws, see Ahola, *Outlawry*, p. 155; Poilvez, ‘Access to the Margins.’

to pass through it. In the hall stood a table always laden with food which all were welcome to share, and for this people thought her the finest of women.⁵⁰)

Geirríðr's hospitality is mentioned already in Ari Þorgilsson's *Landnámabók* from the 1120–1130s, a source which describes the early settlers of Iceland:

Þau Geirríðr fóru til Íslands eftir andlát Bjarnar ok váru inn fyrsta vetr á Eyri. Um várit gaf Geirríðr systur sinni bústað í Borgardal, [...] Geirríðr sparði ekki mat við menn ok lét gera skála sinn um þjóðbraut þvera. Hon sat á stóli ok laðaði úti gesti, en borð stóð inni jafnan ok matr á.

(After Björn died, Geirríðr emigrated to Iceland and spent the first winter at Eyri. In the spring Geirríðr gave his sister a farmstead in Borgardal [...] Geirríðr was very free with food. She built a hall right across the road and she used to sit outside on a chair and ask travellers to come inside, where there was always food on the table.⁵¹)

In both sources, Geirríðr's hospitality and strategic placement of her hall must have been considered memorable and worthy of recording, and as with Þorgerðr it is her own accomplishments and hospitality that is mentioned, and not that of her dead husband.⁵² Hosting outlaws is simply an extension of a general facility to host. While Þorgerðr's downplays her assistance of Gísli Súrsson as *kvenvælar* (women's help), it is still said to be the best Gísli experiences during his thirteen years as an outlaw, and Gísli himself says that he has more faith in women's help as the men around him has let him down. While this comment might be directed towards the many men who have failed or refused to help him at that point, including his brother, it is still a fact that several of Gísli's most distinct helpers during his time as an outlaw on the run are women. Besides his wife Auðr, his foster-daughter, and the mentioned Þorgerðr, there are also female strangers who still help him out such as the slave woman Bothilðr who he helps him flee, and the cursing witch Álfðís who successfully distracts his pursuers.⁵³ Interestingly, a similar phrase is said by the *Laxdæla saga*'s Vigdís when Þórólfr goes to her for protection: 'en órráð vor kvenna verða jafnan með lítilli forsjá, ef nokkurs þarf við' (a woman's meddling in these affairs is typically not of much help in times of need), only to also prove the saying wrong with her assistance.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 8, p. 13, ed. and trans. by Hermann Pálsson and Edwards, ch. 8, p. 33.

⁵¹ *Íslendingabók: Landnámabók*, pp. 127–28, *The Book of Settlements*, ed. and trans. by Hermann Pálsson and Edwards, p. 86.

⁵² Besides her hospitality, Gerriðr is considered exceptional as her role as one of the few females considered settlers, being one of thirteen. Callow, 'Putting Women in their Place?', p. 13.

⁵³ *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, chs 23, 26–27.

⁵⁴ *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 14, p. 31.

The Locked Outbuilding and Fake Betrayals

While the general depictions of female hosting of outlaws are done from a sense of responsibility, honour, or possibly solidarity, their sense of honour, or general altruism, one possible ambiguity in these scenes is the motif of women locking in and essentially imprisoning the outlaws in outbuildings (*útibúr*) as a part of the hosting. These outbuildings are separate storage houses on the homesteads.⁵⁵ They prove to be particularly useful for hiding outlaws both because of their distance from the main building and because they are more likely to have locks, something that was not necessarily the case for the rest of the homestead.⁵⁶ These spaces can also be regarded as a female domain due to their usage and what were considered a woman's responsibilities within the household. This could both practically as well as symbolically make the outbuilding the woman's safe space for an outlaw, something she could keep even from her husband. In *Gunnars þáttr Þiðrandabana*, Bjarni, Þórdís's brother and the pursuer of Gunnarr, threatens to break open the door of her outbuilding if she does not open it for him, saying: 'Er mér svá sagt, at hann muni hér vera í útibúri, ok munum vér brjóta at upp, ef þú vilt ekki upp lúka' (I am told that he is here in the store-house, and we will force our way into it if you will not let us in).⁵⁷ Þórdís pretends to be on Bjarni's side, but convinces him to wait until the next day, while she secretly summons thirty friends and neighbours to scare Bjarni and his men away from the homestead.

While in this case it is a ruse on Þórdís's part, there are some occasions when women lock up outlaws, technically imprisoning them while they await their husbands' judgement. Thus, the given hospitality can temporarily be ambiguous, as the woman momentarily is given complete power over the outlaw and may choose to give the man up to his pursuers if she so wishes. Other times, the women, or perhaps rather the author in the name of creating some tension, create a momentary will-she-or-won't-she situation when it comes to giving up the outlaw. Some examples here include the two cases of the same motif where the female protector (Auðr and Vigdís) is offered silver and appear to be interested in it, only to then strike the offering pursuer with the silver pouch.⁵⁸ This is further questioned when even Gísli's foster-daughter

55 The inclusion of the *útibúr* and similar versions also appear in: *Harðar saga* (ch. 38), *Fljótsdæla saga* (chs 17–18), *Fóstbræðra saga* (ch. 24). *Búri* (*stokkabúri*) meaning storehouse or pantry.

56 As Emma Nordström argues, buildings are also mostly said to be locked in cases of people being confined within the building, such as the temporal housing of a 'refugee', or as is more frequently the case in the case of the later romance sagas, the protection of a young woman and her chastity. One example from the *Íslendingasögur* is found in *Kormáks saga* with Steingerðr. Nordström, *Iron Age Keys*, p. 106.

57 *Gunnars þáttr Þiðrandabana*, ch. 6, p. 208, translation from *Sagas of Icelanders*, ed. by Viðar Hreinsson and trans. by Maxwell, ch. 6, v, p. 441.

58 Auðr in *Gísla saga* (ch. 32), Vigdís in *Laxdæla saga* (ch. 16). See also Þórdís in *Fljótsdæla saga* (ch. 20).

briefly doubts Auðr's intentions only to be proven wrong. Another fake betrayal is found in *Gunnars þáttr Þiðrandabana*, when Gunnarr's protector's wife, Þórdís, goes to Gunnarr and asks him if he would like to be captured by her brother after his pursuers have already left.⁵⁹ In these cases then, the doubts are quickly put to rest, as the woman proves her position as a protector. This is, however, not to say that the saga authors are intentionally painting the women's honour as hosts as superior to men's, but rather that there could be less narrative incentive to depict women breaking these bonds and promises than a man.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has attempted to cast a light on the importance and position of hospitality in Old Norse society according to the *Íslendingasögur* by analysing some of its most transgressive depictions of women hosting outlaws. By the end of these *skógarmannabjörg* stories, a woman is praised and rewarded for breaking the law and even for defying the will of her husband or brother to protect criminals who may be distant relatives or even strangers. The woman's hospitality, despite its legal transgression, is not presented as unjust, and if the husband or male relative tries to stop her, he is either made to agree with her, or he is punished despite possibly being driven by his own conflict of loyalty. From these cases, it appears that gender plays a significant role in how the women host and protect outlaws in the sagas. This is visible through the women's motivations for hosting outlaws, their unique abilities as women to do so, and how they are perceived. While the women's courage in protecting an outlaw may make them be seen as 'more manly', the way their gender shapes the hosting is made apparent in other ways: praiseworthy qualities such as familiar or spousal loyalty may play a significant role, they can use private female spaces such as outbuildings to hide outlaws, and they are not punished nor condemned for hosting them.

As for the motivation the sagas give for this civil disobedience, it can be said to stand out in comparison to that of other highly esteemed women in similar positions. Unlike Sophocles's Antigone, who defied her uncle and buried her rebel brother's body due to fidelity and divine law, the saga women's hospitality is not shown to be tied to the will of the gods, nor necessarily to that of kinship or other relations.⁶⁰ Similarly, they differ from the biblical Rahab, who hosted and hid the spies in her home both in order to be merciful and because it was her self-interest for her and her family's survival. The saga women are not shown to be personally endangered in these situations, and

⁵⁹ *Gunnars þáttr Þiðrandabana*, ch. 6, p. 208.

⁶⁰ For discussions on Antigone's defiance, see Wiltshire, 'Antigone's Disobedience'; Tiefenbrun, 'On Civil Disobedience'. For more on Rahab, see Matthews, 'Herem versus Hospitality'; de Hemmer Gudme, 'Death at the Hand of a Woman: Hospitality and Gender', pp. 333–34.

while solidarity and mercy may be read as a driving force in some of the cases, it is instead a chance to excel in the way of honour, courage, and determination, as well as in their overall *skörungskapr* (*skörungr*-ness) which they are praised for by both their surroundings and the authorial voice.

Based on these stories in the *Íslendingasögur*, the social principle of hospitality and its obligations tied to honour are presented as something of outmost importance and even foundational for societal cohesion, as they are shown to challenge, ignore, and even supersede other key societal obligations such as loyalty, kinship, and law.

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Between Hostility and Hospitality


Reception of Ambassadors in Late Medieval Italy in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries

Introduction

This chapter focuses on diplomatic hospitality in late thirteenth and early fourteenth-century central and northern Italy. Since the nineteenth century, at least, the peninsula has been considered the cradle of modern diplomacy, especially after the establishment of ‘resident embassies’ in the first half of the fifteenth century,¹ but it’s only been more recently that the previous centuries of the late Middle Ages and their innovations and contradictions regarding the nascent role of *ambaxiator* have received more scholarly attention.² The present chapter explores the reception of ambassadors in these two centuries, highlighting how this flourishing charge was perceived with mixed views and attitudes, spanning all shades from honourable welcome to open hostility. The topic of hosting these individuals was the object of much experimentation and even conflict in communal Italy,³ mostly because of the immediate ambiguous status given to ambassadors as soon as this figure started to spread in the peninsula: on the one hand, a guest, a facilitator of negotiations, who should be received properly in order to avoid causing offence and jeopardizing possible agreements. On the other hand, they were a potential threat, a foreigner who

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- 1 On the phenomenon and its traditional interpretation, see Mattingly, ‘The First Resident Embassies’, pp. 423–39. Current historiography has challenged this notion of the ‘resident ambassador’ as a sign of a new and modern diplomacy, see, for example, Fubini, *Quattrocento Fiorentino*; Senatore, ‘Uno mundo de carta’ and Lazzarini, *Communication and Conflict*.
 - 2 Moeglin and Péquignot, eds, *Diplomatie et ‘relations internationales’*, pp. 869–74; Péquignot, ‘Les instructions aux ambassadeurs’, pp. 17–43.
 - 3 Created in the nineteenth century, the term communal Italy refers to the shared experience of local autonomous government experienced in cities of northern and central Italy from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. For an overview of this political context, see Maire Vigueur and Faini, eds, *Il sistema politico*.

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BREPOLS  PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.5.149656

could obtain and divulge delicate information from the host community, exposing its secrets to enemies and compromising security. While in the late fifteenth century one could count on a series of treatises, such as Bernard of Rosier's *Ambaxatorum Brevilogus* or Martino Garati of Lodi's *De Legatis*,⁴ as a reference concerning protocols on how ambassadors should behave on foreign territories and on how different polities in Western Christendom should receive them, the absence of specific guidelines gave much space for creativity, but also for controversy and dispute, rendering these centuries particularly interesting for the study of the topic.

By exploring the ambivalences surrounding ambassadors and their reception in late medieval Italy, the chapter intends to contribute to the general discussion of the volume concerning the ambiguities of hospitality in the Middle Ages in at least two forms: first, by stressing how even in elevated instances of hospitality, such as those involving agents engaged in negotiation and conflict resolution between polities, its ambiguities and uncertainties were inherently unsolvable, especially due to conflicting views of the status (guest/threat, ally/potential enemy) and agency of diplomatic envoys between the sending and receiving communities in the period. Second, by highlighting that, nevertheless, these core contradictions did not compromise the efficiency of late medieval Italian diplomacy — with some of its biggest feats taking place precisely in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries⁵ — but constituted a political resource for negotiations, in which cities could stretch these categories concerning diplomatic hospitality according to circumstance to obtain specific outcomes. Finally, the chapter highlights, though, that not all of these contradictions in terms of hospitality were the fruit of premeditated political moves, but were also the product of the political context of central and northern Italy in the second half of the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries.

The sources analysed in this chapter span from normative texts (*statuta*), council minutes (*riformagioni, libri fabarum*), expense records (*libri expensarum*) to legal cases (*ad maleficia* trials), produced in different cities of central and northern Italy, especially coming from Venice, Florence, Milan, Bologna, Ferrara, and Modena. While some of them, like the statutes,⁶ have been the object of substantial publishing activity in the past two centuries, most of them

4 On the contribution of fifteenth-century treatises on diplomatic practice, see Gilli, 'Bernard de Rosier', pp. 331–40; Behrens, 'Treatises on the Ambassadors', pp. 616–27; and Senatore, 'À propos de diplomatie médiévale', pp. 133–54.

5 For example, the creation of the Lombard League — an alliance of cities that opposed the imperial presence and attempts to reinforce imperial power in northern and central Italy — its renewal in the thirteenth century and most of its victories against the empire count as one of these exceptional feats of late medieval Italy diplomacy. For a detailed description of this initiative, see Raccagni, *The Lombard League*.

6 On the particular interest this source generated in the nineteenth century and the initiatives to edit and publish these sources, see Angiolini, 'Le edizioni degli statuti', pp. 495–507.

are still unedited and can only be consulted by direct visits to the archives in which they are preserved. The majority of the manuscript material mentioned in the text comes from the State Archive of Florence and the State Archive of Bologna: the latter is particularly rich for legal trials, since it possesses one of the largest collections of surviving criminal records from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries not only in the Italian peninsula, but in Europe.⁷ The sources from a few of these cities in late medieval Italy, such as Venice, have received some historiographical attention for the specific topic of diplomatic reception,⁸ but the majority is still underused and underexplored for this subject. Even the Venetian case within this timeframe is usually treated as an exception in central and northern Italy, especially considering its normative proximity to Byzantium and its reluctance to accept normative influence from other polities in the peninsula,⁹ lacking, thus, a more comparative approach. As the following pages demonstrate, even from a solely normative point of view, Venice was not an isolated case in central and northern Italy in terms of the production of refined statutes concerning foreign ambassadors. In fact, the lagoon city was not even a particular pioneer in the matter.

This corpus of sources offers the possibility to approach diplomatic hospitality from a number of angles: from the reception of the physical bodies of ambassadors and their movements in the receiving community to the interaction of these agents with the different levels of the population, including more minute questions related, for example, to their food and material provisions and gift-giving and receiving. The evidence analysed presents a layered and occasionally contradictory picture, which highlights the ambiguity of the topic, as mentioned earlier. None of the sources mentioned above strictly concern diplomatic agents, being the product of the regular political, administrative, economic, and juridical functioning of these cities, which impose some methodological specificities that are worth mentioning. Unlike in the later centuries in which the already cited treatises focused solely on the form of reception and of dispatching ambassadors were available, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, this information was scattered among general matters, such as those concerning the structures of general hospitality (taverns and hotels, for example) present in late medieval Italian cities, a topic that has received particular attention in recent years.¹⁰ It is necessary, thus, to read the fine print of these materials to comprehend fully the insights that they give on diplomatic hospitality in the period, especially considering the flexible terminology to refer to these agents employed at the time.¹¹

7 On the exceptional state of series of criminal records in the State Archive of Bologna, see Vallerani, *La giustizia pubblica*, and Blanshei, *Politics and Justice*.

8 Queller, *The Office of Ambassador*.

9 Queller, 'Early Venetian Legislation', pp. 7–17.

10 Pucci Donati, *Luoghi e mestieri dell'ospitalità*.

11 Fedele, 'Plurality of Diplomatic Agents', pp. 38–59.

Elements of Diplomatic Hospitality: The Mobility of Ambassadors

The issues concerning diplomatic hospitality in late thirteenth-century Italy started even before the arrival of a foreign ambassador inside the city's territory. Authorities largely debated the places in which these strange agents should be received upon arrival and the earliest surviving traces of these discussions reveal that these figures first met with open suspicion. They appear in the communal statutes (*statuta*), and include written transpositions of legal procedures, verbal norms, regulations of urban life, and even sumptuary restrictions, deeply rooted in the organization and identity of the cities which produced them.¹² An interesting example is the Venetian statutes of 1260. In a series of rubrics specifically dedicated to this first step of diplomatic in-person negotiation, the Venetian authorities clearly stated how ambassadors should be treated with the utmost caution because they represented a threat to the city's secrets and, therefore, should not enter the lagoon autonomously by any means.¹³ Four city officers should meet a foreign ambassador in the hinterland (*Terraferma*), escort him to and through the city at all times, being forbidden to leave this agent's side for the whole duration of the mission.¹⁴ Foreign ambassadors not only could not circulate freely inside Venice, but they were also only allowed to speak with these four city officers when strictly necessary.¹⁵ Restrictions of mobility were also imposed on these envoys in the places of actual negotiation: all interactions between ambassadors, the Great Council, and the *Doge* should be confined to the Great Hall, and everything said in this occasion should be diligently written down by an assigned trustworthy notary.¹⁶ Negotiations themselves could only be led by specific *tractatores*, elected by the Council of Forty,¹⁷ who found it difficult to find anyone willing to accept this position. Refusals to act as such were constant and no city officer wanted to have to interact with foreign ambassadors due to the level of scrutiny they could be subjected to, so much that fines and harsh punishments for those who refused the appointment became a constant theme in Venetian legislation all through the first half of the fourteenth century.¹⁸

If ambassadorial mobility and interaction were highly restricted in negotiation spaces, the attempts to restrict the contact of these agents with the rest of the population were even harsher. Under no circumstances was an ambassador

12 Cammarosano, *Italia Medievale*, p. 151.

13 Queller, 'Early Venetian Legislation', p. 8.

14 Queller, 'Early Venetian Legislation', pp. 8–9.

15 Queller, 'Early Venetian Legislation', p. 9.

16 Queller, 'Early Venetian Legislation', p. 10.

17 Created in the end of the twelfth century, the Council of the Forty acquired during the thirteenth century a myriad of prerogatives concerning civic and criminal justice, the fiscal management of the city and its foreign relations. For an in-depth description of its activities in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Venice, see Crouzet-Pavan, *Venise*.

18 Queller, 'Early Venetian Legislation', p. 12.

allowed to spend time in any Venetian citizens' private residences. With this prohibition, the authorities sought to avoid offering opportunities both to foreign envoys who had hidden agendas to obtain information which could be useful against Venice and to elements of the local population who could be looking for potential chances to betray the community.¹⁹

The Venetian regulations concerning the mobility of foreign ambassadors did not only limit themselves to the body of a single ambassador, but by the end of the thirteenth century, the local statutes aimed to restrict the number of ambassadors from a foreign polity as a whole who could be granted entrance to the lagoon. If followed, this limitation could generate a series of complicated situations, since the city had no actual means to predict the size of ambassadorial entourages, which by that time could be rather large.²⁰

Thus far, the Venetian statutes seem to present no ambiguity in their view of foreign ambassadors: they were seen as potential threats and needed to be controlled and put under surveillance. However, among these almost hostile limitations one does find hints of normative efforts that emphasize that these envoys were still considered to be guests, and honourable ones at that. Still focusing on the aspect of mobility and interaction, by the 1290s the statutes established that two rooms should be kept in each local inn to lodge these agents in the lagoon, stressing that they all should be 'honourably furnished' — an expression difficult to understand in practical terms, but that renders the idea of their extraordinary condition.²¹ Another interesting element emerges in the already mentioned regulations that restricted the negotiation areas in which foreign ambassadors should interact with the Doge and the Great Council: the statutes granted these envoys the possibility of carrying weapons inside these public buildings, an extremely generous concession in a period when most of the local population was forbidden to do so.²² Much has been said about the connection between weaponry, status, and power representation in the late Middle Ages, but it suffices to say that this specific permission did not concern the personal defence of these envoys — tremendously outnumbered even if granted access to swords and spears — but allowed these guests to display their virility and honour.²³

As mentioned in the introduction, Venice was by no means an isolated case and not even a complete pioneer in this. As early as 1245, Bologna was

19 Queller, 'Early Venetian Legislation', p. 13.

20 Péquignot, 'Les diplomaties occidentales', pp. 47–66.

21 Queller, 'Early Venetian Legislation', p. 16.

22 On the restrictions of carrying weapons in public building in late medieval Italy and its particular meaning, see Grillo, *L'ordine della città*, p. 32.

23 For an overview of the relationship between weapons and power ideals in the late Middle Ages, see Jones, *A Cultural History of the Medieval Sword*, pp. 37–74. Venice was not the only Italian city to offer this privilege to foreign ambassadors, and the same sort of concession can be found, for example, in Bologna, Padua, but also in Perugia. For the latter, see Angelini, *La diplomazia comunale*, pp. 46–48.

already promulgating statutes on receiving foreign ambassadors that employed a much more refined terminology even to refer to envoys, systematically using and distinguishing terms, just to mention but a few, such as *legati*, *nuntii*, and *ambaxatores*, according to the polity which sent them.²⁴ The presence in the city of an important *Studium*, which attracted people from all over Europe to learn about the then recently reconstructed *Corpus Juris Civilis*, surely played an important role in the creation of precise statutes, as more than one scholar has already noted.²⁵ The level and quantity of mobility restrictions concerning diplomatic agents present in the Bolognese statutes also varied significantly depending on their polity of origin, with some interesting cases of specific envoys who were only allowed to walk in the largest and most visible streets of the city during their brief occasions of movement while on mission. The statutes went as far as to determine that those caught disrespecting this rule could even be sentenced to have one of their feet amputated,²⁶ a gruesome penalty though perfect in line with the different justice systems of communal Italy, where corporal punishments were a structured element of punitive justice.²⁷

In another city where the study of law also occupied an important role, Padua, the communal statutes also imposed specific mobility restrictions on foreign ambassadors, emphasizing how the owners and keepers of the structures in which these agents resided while in town should keep a close eye on them. They were supposed to notify either the *Podestà* or the city Elders of their arrival in the premises almost immediately and, interestingly, the statutes of 1270 imposed on these hosts the task of thoroughly informing foreign ambassadors about what they could not do while their stay in Padua according to the statutes.²⁸ If not compliant, hosts could be fine in up to sixty *solidi* — a hefty sum considering the standards of the period.²⁹

The duality guest/threat concerning foreign diplomatic agents seems to tend more towards the latter when we look at mobility in the three examples

24 On the specific terminology employed to refer to ambassadors and other diplomatic agents in late medieval Bologna, see Loss, 'Ambasciatori, nunzi, spie ed esploratori', pp. 737–814.

25 Sbriccoli, *L'interpretazione dello statuto*, p. 33.

26 *Lo statuto del comune di Bologna del 1335*, I, pp. 174–76: 'Quod omnes et singuli nuncii [...] teneantur et debeant cum venerint ad civitatem et in civitate, comitatu vel districtu Bononie vel se separaverint a dicta civitate ire et redire per directas stratas publicas et non aliunde pena et banno amputationis capitis nec de civitate Bononie se debeant separare, absque licentia dicti officialis pena pedis'. (Each and every envoy should and must, when they come to the city or go away from the city, its district and countryside, come and go through the public streets and not elsewhere, under the penalty of losing their head. They should not leave the city of Bologna without a proper license, under the penalty of losing their feet).

27 For the role of corporal punishments in late medieval communal justice, with a particular focus on Perugia, Bologna, and Florence, see Blanshei, *Perugia, 1260–1340*, Vallerani, 'Criminal Court', pp. 27–54; Zorzi, 'Rituali di violenza', pp. 395–425.

28 *Statuti del Comune di Padova*, pp. 130–34.

29 For an attempt to comprehend the value of sixty *solidi* in the period, see Giansante, *L'usuraio onorato*.

explored thus far, but it is interesting to notice that while the communes of central and northern Italy were creating harsh statutory norms concerning ambassadors from other polities, they were also writing strict legislation regarding their own agents and how they should operate physically and spatially when on mission to their destination communities. Bologna, for example, required its own ambassadors to be diligent with their movements, writing down the day of departure and arrival of their missions,³⁰ notifying the presence of tolls during their journey³¹ and going as far as to determine the number of horses they could use in foreign polities.³² Unlike other parts of Europe, in which the number of days a foreign guest could stay inside a polity was strictly regulated — such as the ‘rule of three nights’, described by Miriam Tveit in her chapter in this volume — in central and northern Italy the statutes provided no indications on the specific amount of time diplomatic envoys could stay inside a foreign city. The constant reference is to the ‘least time possible’, and this principle was valid both for the agents communal authorities sent to other polities and for those they received.³³

The Bolognese statutes also requested that their ambassadors observe and obtain as much information as they could from their destination communities. This created, first, a contradiction between what the Bolognese expected from their own ambassadors and what they conceded to foreign ones and, second, a disparity between what they desired their ambassadors to obtain and what the foreign communities actually allowed them to do. This reveals the normative tensions concerning ambassadors in central and northern Italy, not only in terms of ambassadorial mobility: local regulations often clashed with legislation concerning foreign ambassadors, creating a myriad of potential causes for conflict and misunderstandings. The area in which this was particularly evident concerns food — the next element of diplomatic hospitality.

Food and Material Provisions

Feasts and banquets were a central element of medieval hospitality and their role in diplomatic relations has been explored in-depth by cultural historians.³⁴ While recognizing this aspect, polities in communal Italy approached the topic, and the question of ambassadorial nourishment in general, with much caution and occasional contradictions. In late thirteenth-century Venice, the size and variety of dishes offered to foreign ambassadors in banquets was limited by the city statutes to a certain number, and no more than 500 ducats a year should be spent on the reception of foreign ambassadors, regardless of their number

30 *Statuti di Bologna dall'anno 1245*, III, p. 180.

31 *Statuti di Bologna dall'anno 1245*, III, p. 181.

32 *Statuti di Bologna dall'anno 1245*, III, p. 178.

33 *Statuti di Bologna dall'anno 1245*, III, p. 178.

34 Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages*, pp. 71–89.

and the variety of their entourage.³⁵ Despite having enacted similar legislation in the 1250s, Bologna also included in its earliest statutes regulations trying to prevent their own ambassadors to take part in any banquets and feasts abroad. In fact, the Bolognese created a whole set of privileges concerning food transportation and consumption designed to prevent the undesirable participation in these activities. First, the Bolognese statutes granted a cook as part of the paid entourage of any ambassador travelling abroad, who should be responsible for preparing all meals.³⁶ Second, once elected to the charge, an ambassador was exempted from all food transportation restrictions applied to the rest of the population. They could carry grain, fish, birds, and berries found in the woods outside the city borders — no small concession considering that if regular citizens tried to do so, especially regarding grain and crops, they could be fined in up to one hundred Bolognese *lire*, a sum enough to buy a house in the city centre in the period.³⁷ Another concession concerned wine, with the statutes clearly stating that it was one of the Podestà's duties to provide ambassadors with enough quality wine for the duration of their missions, even if it needed to be extended for unforeseen reasons.³⁸ Game meat and a series of other unidentified drinkable liquids — referred to as *potum* — also appear in the special list of goods ambassadors should be given before their departure. A third concession designed to prevent their participation in banquets concerned the population from the Bolognese countryside, who should, still according to the statutes, provide city ambassadors with all edibles necessary all the way up until the border.³⁹ The Bolognese went as far as to create regulations regarding the nourishment of the horses brought on diplomatic missions, specifying who in the city or its countryside should be responsible for paying for the hay consumed by these animals.⁴⁰

The Bolognese statutes do not provide an explicit and clear explanation for why taking part in banquets was considered to be an issue, but they give us some hints which allow us to formulate a few hypotheses. First, feasts were regarded as occasions that offered too much potential for the corruption of diplomatic agents. The consumption of alcoholic beverages in large quantities could cloud their judgement; the festive environment could lead them to entertain conversations with people not directly involved in the negotiation process, amplifying the risk they would divulge information they were not supposed to; and so on.⁴¹ Another hypothesis concerned the risk of poisoning.

35 Queller, 'Early Venetian Legislation', p. 13.

36 *Statuti di Bologna dall'anno 1245*, III, p. 178.

37 *Statuti di Bologna dell'anno 1245*, I, p. 68.

38 *Statuti di Bologna dell'anno 1245*, I, p. 29.

39 *Lo statuto di Bologna*, I, p. 68.

40 *Statuti di Bologna dall'anno 1245*, III, p. 179.

41 On the concern of authorities with the corruption of city officials in late medieval Italy and the strategies they proposed to fight it, particularly in Bologna, see Loss, 'Studying Corruption and Anticorruption', pp. 229–56.

Food prepared by unknown hands from foreign lands was, to a certain extent, perceived to provide too much opportunity to harm diplomatic agents. Ever since Late Antiquity, literature had provided medieval men and women with countless tales of feasts ending with cases of excruciating deaths through poisoning.⁴² In this light, one can understand why the statutes insisted so much that ambassadors should bring their own cooks on their missions.

Another commune that expressed this same contradiction in their statutes between what they offered to foreign ambassadors and what they expected from their own agents regarding feasts and banquets was Ferrara. According to the statutes of 1287, ambassadors should at all costs avoid participating in banquets and to compensate for this prohibition, the statutes provided them with a special privilege of carrying as much fish from the river Po as they wanted, and the same applied to a very detailed list of other meat sources: pigs, cow, oxen, goats, capons (castrated cockerels), hens, geese, and so on.⁴³

On this specific topic of food and materials concerning diplomatic hospitality, one finds copious evidence in more dynamic sources than the statutes, which brings us to the second type of document explored in this chapter: the council minutes. Some interesting examples can be found in the Bolognese *Riformagioni* and *Provvigioni* and the Florentine *Libri Fabarum* and *Provvigioni*, all terms that reference the written material produced by their different main city councils in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, which are now preserved at the State Archive of Bologna and the State Archive of Florence.⁴⁴ Looking at some of these archival series in a quantitative analysis, one notices constant references to the fact that the commune needed to almost force selected citizens — those considered to possess the fine skills necessary for the task⁴⁵ — to agree to leave the city as ambassadors.⁴⁶ The reasons for refusal were many: departing on an embassy required citizens

42 See Buyck, 'Crimes de poison dans la Bologne médiévale'.

43 *Statuta Ferrariae*, III, p. 200.

44 On the *riformagioni* and its specificities, see Tamba, 'Le riformagioni del consiglio', pp. 237–57. For the *Libri Fabarum*, see Gherardi, *Le consulte*, especially the 'introduzione'.

45 The statutes in this regard were very precise, listing with detail all the qualities expected from city ambassadors. For a minute description of these traits, especially focused on the case of Perugia, see Angelini, *La diplomazia comunale*, pp. 21–24, 31. Some of the traits mentioned by the author include *experientia*, *sapientia*, *fidelitas*, and so on.

46 The Archival series analysed in this chapter are, for Bologna, ASBo, CG, RCPM, and for Florence, ASFi, LF and ASFi, P. An example of one of these deliberations, impossible to transcribe in its integrity in a footnote is a Bolognese council minute of 22 October 1288: 'Et quod domini ançiani et consules, et dominus potestas, et quilibet per se, liberi possint et valleant tales ambaxiatores elligendos cogere et compellere ad eundem in tali ambaxiata ad quam elligentur, omni exceptione remota, salvo quod in caxu evidentis infirmitatis, per duos medicos domino potestati vel domino capitaneo fide facta, retentis de predictis cambio et gabella.' (And the Elders, the Consuls and the Podestà can freely force elected ambassadors to depart on an embassy without any exception, unless in case the chosen ones are evidently ill, as proved by two doctors under the service of the Capitan and the Podest). Bologna, ASBo, CG, RCPM, 128, fol. 86^v.

to leave their affairs and activities for months, without an actual prospect of personal gain that could justify their economic losses. Not only was the role of ambassador not particularly well-paid in the period, but it did not yet constitute an important part of the *cursus honorum* for those interested in achieving a prominent political role in the city, as it would become in the late fifteenth century.⁴⁷ Travelling in the period was also considered to be a very risky activity that, if not justified by substantial economic gain — we are, after all, considering cities where merchants and artisans occupied a prominent role in the period — should be avoided at all costs.⁴⁸

Bologna and Florence in the centuries under analysis here were polities where the hostility towards traditional noble segments of the population even resulted in the creation of specific legislation depriving these groups of any privileges and legal protections against the *popolo* — the ensemble of the Arts and Arms societies.⁴⁹ Despite this political agenda, the reluctance of members of these societies to take part in embassies forced city councils to enrol many noblemen in their embassies, creating an ideological contradiction that is interesting to observe. The councils' desperation went as far as employing friars and members of religious orders, a problematic choice considering the many conflicts both cities had with the papacy during the period, and one that followed other polities of central and northern Italy. Modena, during its brief parenthesis of 'popular' government in 1306–1307, constantly stressed their need to resort to these elements because the members of their Art and Arms societies were unwilling.⁵⁰

The question of expenditure went alongside this recruitment problem as an issue of highest priority concerning ambassadors, touching more closely the topic of diplomatic hospitality and of feasts and banquets in particular. In many occasions, council members emphasized how respecting a pre-determined budget with honours, feasts, and banquets with foreign ambassadors was very difficult and how each envoy should be treated differently according to the current political situation of their city of origin and the specific relationship of these polities with their own.⁵¹ Another constant element is the deliberations concerning ambassadors and gift-giving, touching another key element of diplomatic hospitality and its ambiguities.

47 Gilli, 'Entre necessidade e desconfiança', pp. 27–52; Vedovato, *Note sul diritto diplomatico*, p. 66.

48 Gensini, ed., *Viaggiare nel Medioevo*, pp. 317–38.

49 On this specific type of legislation, known in Bologna as the statutes *sacratī et sacratissimī*, and in Florence as the *Ordinamenti di giustizia*, see Fasoli, 'Ricerche sulla legislazione', pp. 1–122.

50 *Respublica Mutinensis*, I, pp. 102–03.

51 Florence, ASFi, LF, 3, fol. 15^r.

The 'Two Bodies' of the Ambassador: Gift-Giving and Receiving

The anthropological notions of gift transfer between communities that establish contact and negotiation is a topic so large that it is impossible to even scratch its surface in just a few pages, and historians of medieval diplomacy have spent the past thirty years intensively writing on the subject from the very early Middle Ages to the late fifteenth century.⁵² In communal Italy, gift-giving was a very delicate matter — gifts by nature are ambiguous, designed to appear neutral, but imbued with political values and obligations⁵³ — and some of the incidents concerning gifts and diplomatic hospitality are described in detail in the council minutes. One of the earliest and most famous examples comes from late twelfth-century Milan, where two ambassadors were summoned to the city council to respond for a gift of a hundred gold coins given to them by the Byzantine Emperor, as was customary in Byzantine diplomatic etiquette. The Milanese council was upset because, according to their local statutory legislation, their agents should not have accepted anything. The council members spent days arguing what should be done with the sum the ambassadors received and debating whether the two men should keep it, considering the gift thus something partially given to their own person, or whether, instead, it all belonged to the city of Milan, which they represented.⁵⁴

This episode touches a topic very well known through the works of Ernst H. Kantorowicz — despite his focus on royalty — namely the double capacity of persons acting in office in the Middle Ages. In his classic work, the author demonstrated how the distinction between person and office and the coexistence of both in a single body was well acknowledged as early as the early Middle Ages, and became even more pronounced in the course of the high Middle Ages.⁵⁵ However, despite this shared understanding, what makes the case of the two Milanese ambassadors an object for council discussion is that being an ambassador in the period was not conceived as a proper office (*officium*), but more as a temporary task or a passing duality of roles, and they were not accorded the full power of representation or the capacity to make binding juridical decisions.⁵⁶ Still, this defining position and the contrasting expectations of communal cities between what they offered to foreign ambassadors and what they desired for their own agents makes

52 Nelson, 'The Role of the Gift', pp. 225–53; Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts*.

53 Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts*, p. 2: 'An effective gift is thus one that evokes ambiguity.'

54 Gilli, 'Entre necessidade e desconfiança', pp. 27–52.

55 Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, pp. 51–52.

56 On the capacity of ambassadors of taking binding juridical actions in the late medieval Italy, see Gilli, 'La fonction d'ambassadeurs', pp. 173–87. Ambassadors in communal Italy could not be considered officers in this specific period even using the broad concept of 'official' used in Groebner's definition, because they were not required to profess nor possessed a specific oath. Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts*, p. 55.

gift-giving a particularly interesting opening through which to observe the ambiguities of diplomatic hospitality.

From a normative perspective not only did Milan legislate on ambassadorial gifts, but also the already mentioned Venetian statutes of 1260 devote considerable time to the matter: it was forbidden to give gifts of money to any ambassador, except to the Turks, who considered it a vital part of their diplomatic negotiations.⁵⁷ The most common type of gift seems to have been clothing and just for the last decades of the thirteenth century through the first of the fourteenth century, I found more than 200 deliberations either in Florence or Bologna concerning these gifts of clothing, varying significantly according to all different types of envoys.⁵⁸ The political power of fashion in late medieval Italy has recently been received a certain amount of historiographical attention, with works such as those of Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, who emphasized how much a city also represented its political wealth and power by the way its officials dressed and by the way it dealt with clothing in general through important political events.⁵⁹

These questions on gifts of clothing to diplomatic envoys also surface in the payment records (*libri expensarum*) which provide even more concrete — but far from neutral⁶⁰ — evidence for the discussion on diplomatic hospitality. The *Camarlinghi* series in the State Archive of Florence contains 389 large folders (*buste*) and despite the massive document destruction in 1343,⁶¹

57 Queller, *The Office of Ambassador*, p. 196.

58 An example of this sort of council deliberation can be seen in the *riformazione* of 26 July 1321 in ASBo, CG, PCM, 213, fol. 142^v: 'Item providerunt ordinaverunt et firmaverunt et precipiendo mandaverunt [...] quod frater Angellus et frater Gerardinus de ordine sancti Gregorii massarius et generales depositarius pecunie et averis communis Bononie quod sine nostri preiudicio et gravamine dentis et solvatis Cechollo Phyllippi et çamolò jacobì de Cexena et Petinthullo Johannis Armino ambaxatoribus de Cexena et de Arimine duodecim libras bononie pro tribus vestitis scilicet quatuor libras bononie pro uno vestito proquolibet eorum pro honore comunis bononie'. (Likewise, they — the elders and consuls — determined and established [...] that the friars Angellus and Gerardinus of the order of Saint Gregory, bailiffs and general treasurers of Bologna should, without their personal damage, pay Cechollo Phyllippi, Çamolò jacobì of Cesena and Petinthullo Johannis Armino, ambassadors of Cesena and Rimini, twelve Bolognese *lire* for three garments, that is, four Bolognese *lire* for each garment, for each one of them in honour of the Commune of Bologna).

59 Muzzarelli, *Guardaroba Medievale*.

60 Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts*, p. 20: 'The meticulous written records of gifts, like the contemporaneous regulations concerning who should be given presents how and when, were thus no simple documentation of a 'social practice'. The documentation itself was produced by the conflict surrounding the control of these practices, and thus cannot be used as a neutral source for their sociability and their unifying circulation'.

61 In this tragic year from an archival perspective, the Florentine population, after expelling the Duke of Athens (Walter VI of Brienne) from the city over the accusation of exercising tyrannical power, decided to burn down all documents previous to his presence in town. For details on this specific event, see: De Vincentiis, 'Politica, memoria e oblio', pp. 209–49.



Figure 7.1. Drawing of the Bolognese lion of 1293, Bologna, State Archive of Bologna, Curia del Podestà, Accusationes, 11/a, fasc. 8, cover. Second half of the thirteenth century. Reproduced with the permission of the State Archive of Bologna.

seventy-six of these folders concern the first half of the fourteenth century.⁶² These records systematically report the expenditure on gifts of clothing to honour foreign ambassadors, alongside a series of expenses for banquets, varying according to the dignity of the sending polity, but, interestingly, also according to the dignity of the envoys themselves.⁶³ Comparing some

⁶² Florence, ASFi, CC, C, U, 1 to 74 and 388/2.

⁶³ It is impossible to transcribe all of them in a single footnote. One example of this type of payment order can be seen in Florence. ASFi, CC, C, U, 42, fol. 104^r. This specific payment order includes a very interesting account of gifts of clothing for Hungarian ambassadors.

of the sums registered, for example, in the books of 1303 — the earliest ones to survive in the State Archive of Florence⁶⁴ — one notices that the authorities put more money and more horses at the disposal of doctors in law (*legum doctores*), knights, and noblemen than humbler emissaries.⁶⁵ The same treatment was reserved for notaries. The distance emissaries had to travel to arrive in Florence was also taken into account in terms of expenditure with their hospitality.⁶⁶ One emblematic example comes from a Florentine payment order from the first half of the fourteenth century, in which the council members approved the acquisition of two lions for the entertainment of ambassadors from Constantinople.⁶⁷ Another lion was the gift given by Ferrara to Bolognese ambassadors in 1293, which generated much controversy: the minutes of the Bolognese Council of the People — the highest assembly authority of power in thirteenth-century Bologna⁶⁸ — reported for years the high upkeep of the beast and how difficult it was to handle it.⁶⁹ The lion often escaped from its cage, situated close by the municipal *Palazzo*, wreaking havoc in the main city square,⁷⁰ leaving such a lasting impression on many of the notaries and officials that worked nearby, that these officers included drawings and depictions of the beast in their own working registers (see Figure 7.1). Considering the troublesome relationship the Bolognese authorities entertained with the original owner of the creature — the Marquis of Este, Azzo VIII — in those years, one could see this gift both as a generous gesture, but also as an opportunity to create chaos; the gift of a ‘Trojan lion’ of sorts bestowed on an enemy, recently turned ally, and soon to be an enemy again.⁷¹

Taking into account the status of envoys and the distance they had travelled when determining the money to be spent on their hospitality was by no means a Florentine and Bolognese peculiarity, and not even a practice restricted to the Italian peninsula. A century later, Basel and other cities of the Swiss confederation followed the same reasoning in their accounting books, as Groebner demonstrated.⁷²

64 Florence, ASFi, CC, C, U, 388/2. This exceptional register was the object of an analytical synthesis in the nineteenth century: Gherardi, ‘L’antica camera’, pp. 313–61.

65 Florence, ASFi, CC, C, U, 388/2, fol. 20^v. Payment order from 5 September 1302 to *Dominio Johannis Rustichelli iudex* and *Ser Simoni Manetti notarius*.

66 Florence, ASFi, CC, C, U, 388/2, fol. 4^v. Payment order from 12 August 1303 to *Ser Ruggerio Ugonis Albiçi notarius* and *Lapo Bindi*.

67 Florence, ASFi, CC, C, U, 42, fol. 104^r. Payment order from 13 March 1348.

68 On the Council of the People — *Consiglio del Popolo e della Massa* — and its role in late medieval Bologna, see Tamba, ‘Il consiglio del popolo di Bologna’, pp. 41–54.

69 Bologna, ASBo, CG, RCPM, 137, fols 283^r and 288^r.

70 Bologna, ASBo, CG, RCPM, 137.

71 On the troublesome relationship between the Marquis of Este and the Bolognese in the last decades of the thirteenth century, see Gorreta, *La lotta*.

72 Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts*, p. 43.

It is interesting to notice that alongside these payments for gifts, banquets, and festivities for foreign ambassadors, the notaries in the service of the *camarlinghi* also registered compensation for actual spies — *spias* and *exploratores* in the Latin source⁷³ — sent to the city of origin of some of the foreign ambassadors mentioned, with the task of obtaining any logistic and strategic information that could be useful for Florence.⁷⁴ These payments validate the already mentioned distrustful tone and attitude with which the Italian cities treated each other's diplomatic envoys and are worth looking at in-depth in order to better understand the ambiguities of diplomatic hospitality in communal Italy.

Ambassadors and Actual Spies

The core justification for imposing very strict prohibitions about the mobility and interactions of foreign ambassadors in the communes of central and northern Italy was connected to security. The statutes — as mentioned earlier — emphasized that ambassadors could pose a threat to the cities' secrets. What the statutes do not reveal is that much of this apprehension concerning foreign envoys originated in the communal cities' own duplicitous behaviour. Returning to the Florentine accounting book of 1303 cited above, one finds an average of ten to eleven payments a day to *spias* and *exploratores*, a total of 155 payments just for the months of August and September of that year, for a sum of almost 400 golden florins.⁷⁵ This is not an isolated case: analysing the folders concerning the period from 1343 to 1363,⁷⁶ one notices the same tendency of consistently investing in individuals charged with the task of *explorandis et referendis novis* in at least two forms. First, through payments destined to specific structures designed to enrol and instruct these agents — in thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Florence these were known

⁷³ Loss, *Officium Spiarum*, pp. 7–25.

⁷⁴ The original Latin expression is very explicit: 'ad inveniendum et explorandum nova utilia et necessaria pro executione guerre quam comune Florentie habet cum suis inimicis' (to discover and explore information useful and necessary to wage the wars the commune of Florence sustain with its enemies).

⁷⁵ Florence, ASFi CC, C, U, 388/2, fols 1^r, 1^v, 3^v, 4^r, 4^v, 5^r, 5^v, 6^r, 6^v, 7^r, 8^v, 10^r, 10^v, 11^r, 14^v, 15^r, 15^v, 16^r, 17^r, 19^r, 19^v, 20^r, 20^v, 22^v, 23^r, 26^r, 26^v, 27^r, 28^v, 29^r, 29^v, 30^r, 31^r, 32^r, 33^r, 36^r, 36^v, 38^r, 41^r, 41^v, 43^r, 43^v, 44^v, 45^r, 45^v, and 46^r.

⁷⁶ In terms of documentation, this period of only 20 years corresponds to 171 large folders (*buste*). Florence, ASFi, CC, C, U, 1–170.

as the *Deputati super Spiis*⁷⁷ — and these add up to 149 payments.⁷⁸ Second, through nominal payments concerning individual *spias* and *exploratores*, often including some details on their identity and general indications of their mission — these documents were not public — in a total of eighty-eight payments.⁷⁹ These accounting records not only testify to the systematic employment of proper structures and espionage agents in late medieval Italian diplomacy — an aspect that has only been explored fully by historiography very recently⁸⁰ — but also allow us to think that the cities contributed to the ambivalent perceptions of their own agents abroad. Some council minutes directly related to these payment orders strengthen this impression, by affirming that some of the funds granted to ambassadors should be used during their mission to enrol and pay for spies, designed to complement the web of secret agents their own city maintained abroad. Two examples give a more concrete idea of this particular entanglement. On 3 November 1302,

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- 77 Robert Davidsohn was the first to mention the existence of this institution, after having found evidence of its operations in the State Archive of Florence. Despite his seminal findings in the second half of the eighteenth-century, no complete reconstruction of the *Deputati super Spiis* and their role in the Florentine has been written to this day. Scholars after Davidsohn have limited themselves to quoting from his research: Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze*, v, p. 208.
- 78 ASFi, CC, C, U, 1, fols 4^r, 4^v and 7^r; 2, fol. 37^r; 3, fol. 277^r; 4, fols 70^r–70^v; 5, fols 100^r and 112^r; 6, fols 141^r and 160^r; 7, fol. 183^r; 8, fol. 217^r; 10, fol. 275^r; 13, fol. 496^r; 16, fol. 347^r; 18, fol. 399^v; 20, fol. 453^r; 22, fol. 1^r; 24, fol. 153^r; 26, fol. 191^r and 609^r; 29, fol. 670^r; 30, fol. 685^r; 31, fol. 2^r; 33, fol. 724^r; 37, fol. 9^r; 39, fol. 38^r; 41, fol. 72^r; 44, fol. 159^r; 45, fol. 162^r; 48, fol. 212^r; 49, fol. 306^r; 51, fol. 240^r; 53, fol. 196^r; 56, fol. 546^r; 57, fol. 496^v; 60, fol. 430^r; 62, fol. 438^r; 64, fols 405^r and 420^r; 66, fol. 596^r; 67, fol. 627^r; 70, fol. 14^r; 72, fol. 163^r; 73, fol. 17^r; 76, fol. 181^r; 78, fol. 216^r; 79, fol. 612^r; 82, fol. 299^r; 84, fols 346^r and 381^r; 86, fols 391^r and 396^r; 88, fol. 298^r; 89, fol. 501^r; 91, fol. 574^r; 92, fol. 632^r; 93, fol. *n.n.*; 95, fols 263^r and 265^r; 96, fol. 39^r; 97, fols 72^r; 98, fol. 95^r; 99, fols 146^r, 157^r; 100, fols 188^r, 216^r; 101, fols 288^r, 311^r, 324^r; 102, fol. 303^r; 103, fol. 621^r; 104, fol. 161^r; 106, fols 436^r and 444^r; 107, fols 452^r and 482^r; 108, fols 493^r and 518^r; 109, fol. 350^r; 110, fol. 72^r; 111, fol. 119^r; 112, fol. 143^r; 114, fol. 217^r; 115, fol. 290^r; 117, fol. 365^r; 118, fol. 317^r; 120, fol. 432^r; 122, fol. 526^r; 124, fol. 700^r; 125, fol. 610^r; 127, fol. 570^r; 128, fol. 433^r; 131, fol. 357^r; 133, fol. 670^r; 134, fol. 157^r; 136, fol. 329^r; 141, fol. 130^r; 143, fol. 9^r; 145, fol. 24^r; 146, fols 57^r, 58^r and 63^r; 147, fol. 158^r; 148, fol. 248^r; 149, fols 314^r and 365^r; 151, fols 440^r and 446^r; 152, fol. 482^r; 153, fols 525^r and 526^r; 153, fol. 525^r; 154, fols 545^r, 551^r and 553^r; 155, fols 394^r, 398^r and 405^r; 156, fols 2^r and 6^r; 157, fols 48^r, 532^r, 533^r, 535^r; 159, fols 52^r; 160, fol. 43^r; 161, fol. *n.n.*; 162, fols 1^r, 6^r and 42^r; 163, fols 223^r and 242^r; 164, fols 8^r and 8^r; 165, fol. 7^r; 166, fol. 7^r; 167, fols 1^r and 6^r; 168, fol. 12^r.
- 79 Florence. ASFi, CC, C, U, 1, fols 7^r and 17^r; 2, fol. 39^r; 3, fol. 279^r; 4, fols 13^r, 68^r and 90^r; 6, fol. 139^r; 7, fol. 189^r; 8, fol. 214^r; 9, fol. 248^r; 11, fols 327^r and 329^r; 16, fols 329^r and 359^r; 18, fol. 8^r; 20, fol. 455^r; 22, fol. 477^r; 24, fol. 15^r; 26, fol. 198^r; 28, fol. 631^r; 30, fol. 695^r; 31, fols 11^r and 30^r; 33, fol. 8^r; 35, fol. 758^r; 37, fol. 13^r; 39, fol. 39^r; 46, fol. 176^r; 48, fol. 217^r; 50, fol. 221^r; 52, fols 251^r and 264^r; 54, fols 707^r and 716^r; 55, fol. 563^r; 58, fols 492^r and 492^r; 66, fol. 619^r; 70, fol. 19^r; 72, fol. 169^r; 76, fol. 184^r; 95, fol. 265^r; 97, fol. *n.n.*; 98, fol. 98^r; 99, fol. 146^r; 100, fols 187^r and 214^r; 101, fol. 288^r; 103, fol. 630^r; 104, fol. *n.n.*; 110, fols 62^r, 75^r and 116^r; 111, fol. 138^r; 115, fols 238^r and 291^r; 117, fol. 365^r; 118, fols 310^r and 322^r; 120, fol. 435^r; 121, fol. *n.n.*; 122, fol. 526^r; 123, fols 751^r and 756^r; 127, fol. 558^r; 128, fol. 438^r; 131, fols 344^r, 347^r and 359^r; 136, fol. 327^r; 138, fols 218^r, 238^r and 238^r; 156, fol. 16^r; 166, fol. 4^r and 168, fol. 6^r.
- 80 Cirier, 'Communication et politique', pp. 435–64.

the Florentine city council ordered that *Andrea Neri de Victoriis*, a Florentine ambassador sent to Perugia and to the Marche region should, first, receive golden fl150 for the thirty-five days he spent on his mission as his salary (*pro eius salario*), and then an extra fl35 for all the *exploratores* he had himself sent to various parts (*ad diversas partes*) to bring advantage to Florence.⁸¹ Andrea thus was also acting as a spymaster, and this sort of evidence is also found throughout the second half of the thirteenth century: on 10 May 1292, the Florentine council deliberated that the ambassadors sent to the city of San Miniato — who had just informed the council members of the Pisan army's intentions to devastate the territory — should intensify their activity of sending and receiving *exploratores* in order to better understand the enemy's designs.⁸²

In light of this evidence, one can easily imagine that communal cities were afraid of ambassadors acting as spies because their own agents were highly involved in the activity, if not directly, at least serving as a reference point for its coordination. Florence in this aspect went even further: the payment records analysed reveal how authorities paid, besides their actual spies, also traitors from the communities with which it entertained diplomatic relations. An example is that of a payment order of 31 August 1359, directed to a certain *Piero Michelio*, who revealed that his community of origin, *Castro Uççani*, had intended to rebel against Florence and who was kept for months on the Florentine payment roll.⁸³

Hospitality and Diplomatic Immunity

The last source for this ongoing research mentioned in the introduction, the criminal records, offers insight into another crucial element of diplomatic hospitality connected to the preservation of the ambassadors' physical bodies while on mission, known in modern diplomacy as diplomatic immunity.⁸⁴ The *ad maleficia* trials present copious examples of how difficult it was and sometimes, how little desire there was to respect the immunity of foreign

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- 81 Florence, ASFi, DB, DCS, 10, fol. 74^v: 'Andree Neri de victoriis civi florentino ambaxatori olim electo et misso per dictos officiales ad partes Marchie Anconitane et Perucii et alias pro eius salario dierum trigintaquinque suprastalli intiatorum die vigesimonono maii proximi elapsi ad raitonem florenorum trium pro quolibet die in summa florenos centumquinque auri. Andree predicto pro expensis per eum factis in dicta ambaxiata in exploratoribus missis ad diversas partes florenos octogintaquinque et solidos triginta octo florenos.'
- 82 Florence, ASFi, LB; 3, fol. 140^v: 'In consilio quam plurium sapientium congregati coram domino Altonato Iudice potestatis et domino capitano et prioribus in domo abbacie Florentie proposiut dominus Altonatus iudex domini potestatis quod placet dicto consilio providere super ambaxatam ambaxatoris Sancti Miniatis continentis quod pisani intendunt venire in eorum territorio ad vastando illos de Sancto Miniati pro eo sicut asserit idem ambaxator comune Sancti Miniati habere per suos exploratores et ideo petit quod gens mictatur per comune florentie ad terram Sancti Miniati.'
- 83 Florence, ASFi, CC, C, U, 138, fol. 238^r. Piero also appears in the subsequent folios.
- 84 Nerlich, *Diplomatische Gesandtschaften*, pp. 133–49.

ambassadors in thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Italy. One of these cases is the trial against *Franciscus*, son of *Johannis* of *Dolio* of Parma, who lived in Bologna, and who was accused on 14 March 1296 for hitting and threatening *Guixerolus Omeboni*, *ambaxator* of Parma, with a knife.⁸⁵ After hearing ten witnesses — who provided details on the location, the size of the knife used, and the interactions between those involved — the judge *ad maleficia* dismissed the case, considering *Franciscus*'s actions to be of minor importance.⁸⁶ The man only managed to hit *Guixerolus* on his vest over the shoulders, without perforating his skin or shedding blood — both important elements in the intricate classification system of corporal aggressions of late medieval Bologna to indicate their gravity.⁸⁷

The incident quickly became known to the members of the Council of the People and, on reconsidering the case in light of the damage it might cause in the relationship between Bologna and Parma, the Council decided that *Franciscus* instead should have his right hand chopped off. This new verdict was thus inserted on the top corner of the trial's opening folio, as a later entrance.⁸⁸

This trial is but one example of a series of forty-four cases concerning ambassadors and acts of violence I have identified between 1243 and 1350 in Bologna, which are still under analysis.⁸⁹ The most interesting aspect of *Franciscus*'s trial consists on the conflict between two elements of the government and administration of the same city concerning the immunity and protection of foreign ambassadors. It reveals how the problem was not understood the same way even by those involved in the structures of power inside a commune: the judge saw in front of him only two foreigners, coming, one might add, from the same city — Parma — involved in a minor aggression of no consequence. The council members saw, instead, in *Guixerolus*, a representative of another authority, enforcing on *Franciscus* a penalty included amongst the most serious in the statutes, which was usually reserved to those who falsified documents.⁹⁰ An uncertainty on the same subject — the status of ambassadors — and on an object — diplomatic immunity — which by the thirteenth century already had a long theoretical tradition behind it. Official *legati* already had a right for protection in the Roman period, and this precept, present in the *Justinian*

85 Bologna, ASBo, CP, GM, LIT, 36, fasc. 3, fol. 42^r.

86 Bologna, ASBo, CP, GM, LIT, 36, fasc. 3, fol. 44^r.

87 This hierarchy is explicitly created by a series of statutory rubrics, such as '*Liber IV, XXXX, De pena vulnerantis aliquem unde sanguis exiverit. Rubrica*', '*Liber IV, XXXXI. De pena percucientis aliquem de qua percussione sanguis non exiverit. Rubrica*'. *Lo Statuto di Bologna dell'anno 1288*, I, pp. 206–07.

88 '*amputata fuit ei Francisco manus*'. Bologna, ASBo, CP, GM, LIT, 36, fasc. 3, fol. 42^r.

89 All pertaining to the Bologna, ASBo, CP, GM, LIT, and ASBo, CP, GM, A series, these legal trials were explored in-depth in my paper presented at the International Medieval Congress 2023 at Leeds 'Honourable Guest or Dangerous Spy? Contradictions of Diplomatic Hospitality in Late Medieval Italy'.

90 *Lo Statuto di Bologna dell'anno 1288*, I, p. 213.

Code, appears in the reconstructive operation of the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, already mentioned.⁹¹ The presence of these criminal records concerning ambassadors is also particularly interesting in light of recent scholarship on much earlier periods of the Middle Ages, which emphasized how cases of disrespect for the right to immunity in sources, such as chronicles, actually represent exceptional episodes that confirm a general impression of compliance in the matter.⁹² These *ad maleficia* cases, thus, suggest intriguing elements that require further investigation.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter highlighted how many crucial aspects of diplomatic hospitality in thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Italy were permeated with profound ambiguities and inherent contradictions, sometimes even purposely left unsolved. As shown, an important element that created ambiguity in diplomatic hospitality in these centuries was the multitude of contrasting expectations projected onto a city's own ambassadors, their actual margin of action in foreign polities and the very different concessions given to foreign agents inside a thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Italian commune. These conflicting expectations and concessions permeated all aspects of diplomatic hospitality: from the status of ambassadors to their abilities of physical mobility, passing through aspects such as gift-giving, feasts, and banquets.

These conflicting views inherent in diplomatic hospitality, and the duplicitous role of both hosts and guests, played a major part in exacerbating the uncertainty surrounding ambassadors in the period. Many were the examples of Italian communes paying and sending actual spies to polities with which they entertained diplomatic relations, insisting that ambassadors themselves should act sometimes as spymasters, enrolling and maintaining *spias* and *exploratores* responsible for gathering strategic information, and acting as a complement to these cities' own structures dedicated to espionage and intelligence gathering. The suspicious behaviour a city demonstrated towards a foreign ambassador thus also stemmed from the behaviour they expected from their own agents.

Furthermore, the documents and examples put forth in this chapter stress a well-known statement of diplomacy as a field of negotiation, but not only in the actual discourses and messages communicated by ambassadors, but also in the way in which these agents were received and in the practices of hosting them in the polities of destination. Political hospitality relations were not far away from hostility in central and northern Italy in these two centuries,

91 For a detailed description of the elements present in the 'juristic revival' of the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, see Radding and Ciarelli, *The Corpus Iuris Civilis in the Middle Ages*.

92 Drocourt, 'L'ambassadeur matraite', pp. 88–98.

which demanded much political experimentation and revealed the strategic exercise of power between different polities and city states. By balancing hostile/welcoming attitudes towards foreign ambassadors and the ambivalent treatment of them as guests/threats, cities demonstrated their position of power in relationship to one another. The constant reminder of city council members that ambassadors should be treated differently according to their polity of origin hints at this specific way of using and stretching categories for one's own benefit and circumstances. The study of diplomatic hospitality thus gives us insight into the categories and strategies of power.

The contrasting attitudes in some specific areas, for example, in the use of ambassadors from different political backgrounds than the ones actually supported by the regime highlighted, however, that not all contradictions of hospitality were the fruit of premeditated political moves. They were also the product of the political conditions of central and northern Italy in the second half of the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries, a period which saw a rapid exchange of the forces in power in situations where the open conflict and the drastic opposition between important segments of the population was a defining trait.

The Italian cases studied in this brief chapter thus tie into the general discussion on medieval hospitality, many aspects of which are explored in this volume, but one could conclude with at least two. First, the conflicting expectations regarding communal ambassadors just highlighted reflect the widespread uncertainty about the rules concerning hospitality characteristic of many other contexts of medieval Europe studied by the authors. It demonstrates that, despite all the sensitivity and effort the Italian communes expressed towards norms and legislation, the topic was too complex and ambiguous to fit in one satisfying set of attitudes and clear categories completely shared by both hosts and guests. Second, the documents and examples described reinforce the general issue as the host/guest relationship as a power play in the Middle Ages; an interaction in which guests easily shifted to become enemies according to circumstance and also due to the ambiguous behaviour of hosts, who were often uncertain as to whether others were acting as duplicitously as they were — for example, by sending actual spies to the polities they were negotiating with.

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Ambiguities of Urban Hospitality in the Norwegian Realm, 1100–1350

Introduction

Hospitality was an intrinsic element of medieval urban life, which was largely reliant on outside contact with traders, travellers, and guests. Catering for these temporary visitors must have formed part of the structure of medieval towns. Norse literary culture presents hospitality as the arena of political discourse among the elite.¹ Hospitality is also a deeply rooted virtue in the expressions of Norse culture that have been passed down, most directly in the *Hávamál* and its first section, the *Gestabáttir* or ‘guest’s part’.² Therein lay an expectation of reciprocity, as Marcel Mauss noted when quoting from the *Gestabáttir* in the opening of his seminal work ‘The Gift’.³ However, while social exchange within the Norse elite has been widely studied, the type of hospitality that arises from economic relations has not yet been explored in any great detail. This study highlights the transactional and ambiguous aspects of hospitality by examining urban host–guest relations.

Urban contexts were an exception in the Norse world: an estimated 5 per cent of the population lived in towns of medieval Norway.⁴ The traditional historiographical view of urban life is that it was peculiar compared to that of the free farmer on his rural property.⁵ The few Norwegian towns were nevertheless dominant hubs for international trade and governmental and clerical administration and also served as redistributive centres. The trade aspect has been the subject of expansive research, but less consideration has

1 Alto, ‘Commercial Travel and Hospitality’, pp. 31–42; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Viking Friendship*, pp. 37–46.

2 *Hávamöl*, pp. 54–78.

3 Mauss, ‘Essai sur le don’, p. 30.

4 Helle, ‘Fra opphavet til omkring 1500’, pp. 61–62, 117–18.

5 Helle and Nedkvitne, ‘Norge. Sentrumsdannelser’, pp. 189–278; Helgi Þorláksson, ‘Island’, pp. 161–88.

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been given to whether and how the culture of hospitality was shaped through the constant presence of visitors. This chapter explores how urban hospitality was represented within the Norwegian realm by juxtaposing two categories of sources, both of which relate to guests in towns and adopt an idealistic perspective: Norse laws and the sagas. The chapter analyses perceptions of guests' status in urban settings in legal and literary sources and considers how Norse urban settings conceptualized hospitality towards these guests.

Norwegian towns were all constructed around seafaring trade. Like most port towns, they produced very little⁶ and instead gained their status by serving as hubs for the redistribution and exchange of resources. Some towns of substantial size or centrality — such as Oslo, Bergen, and Nidaros (Trondheim) — fulfilled other functions, serving, for example, as royal or episcopal seats, places of pilgrimage, or centres of administration.⁷ For these reasons, the towns attracted many visitors, all of whom needed food and lodging. In this respect, it is of interest to discuss how and to what extent urban hospitality differed from what we encounter on the farms of rural householders and the landed properties of aristocrats and kings.

Tobias Boestad has pointed out that unlike “guests”, “hospitality” is almost never mentioned as such in the sources about foreign trade, and further that within medieval trade, hospitality was understood as a fundamental service provided for a collective and ‘did not necessarily involve the provision of food, drink, and shelter to the guests.’⁸ Little is known of guesthouses in Norwegian medieval towns, and it is unclear whether private lodgings or hostels were more common. An early fourteenth-century royal decree demanding that guesthouses be built along the main inland travel routes indicates that the guesthouse was a known concept within the kingdom but underdeveloped in reality.⁹ King Hákon V (r. 1299–1319) decreed that there be one guesthouse for every day’s travel. These guesthouses were to display the royal seal as a sign of his protection, and financial support was provided to those who agreed to run them. It is unclear whether guesthouses were also to be constructed in the towns. However, as the development was motivated by the lack of infrastructure in the countryside, it is reasonable to assume similar inns existed in most towns, and that this was a rural development project. When the virtues of the merchant is discussed in the mid-thirteenth-century *King’s Mirror* (*Konungs skuggsiá*), the merchant is advised to ‘seek lodgings from the innkeeper who is reputed the most discreet and the most popular among both

6 Holt, ‘What if the Sea were Different?’, pp. 132–47.

7 Helle ‘Fra opphavet til omkring 1500’, pp. 23–142.

8 Boestad, ‘Merchants and Guests’, p. 86.

9 *Norges gamle Love* (henceforth *NgL*), IV, no. 1 a) and b), pp. 357–59. On the connection between princely power and buildings and inns for travellers, see Kate Franklin’s chapter on Armenia in this volume.

kingsmen and boroughmen', indicating inns to be a known concept, and of varying reputation.¹⁰

The concept of *urban hospitality* is not discussed explicitly in any single text from the period under examination. Rather, it has to be pieced together from a range of sources, both literary and normative. This approach poses a methodological problem relating to the representativity of the sources. It can be argued, however, that because the texts do not aim to explain hospitality, it is possible to infer from them authentic understandings of urban guests, attitudes towards hosting them, and the nuances of this social category in Norse culture. In this chapter, understandings of hospitality are primarily studied based on the legal texts that regulated the rights and duties of different groups of urban guests: visiting merchants (from within the kingdom, from within the Norwegian realm, and from abroad), clergy, pilgrims, diplomats, and royal guests. The legal texts are complemented with literary sources, which reference additional groups of guests, such as visiting artists (musicians, skalds, etc.) and foreigners with a mission (e.g., settlement, vengeance, or adventure). The legal sources relevant to this analysis are by-laws, legal amendments, and urban case law, in addition to the two known collections of urban laws. The oldest of these is the *Bjarkeyjarréttr*, a collection of rules pertaining to the metropolitan Nidaros, dated to the 1170s.¹¹ The second is *The Town Law* of King Magnús VI Lawmender (*lagabætir*), which was promulgated in 1276 for the town of Bergen.¹² The law was soon adapted for other major towns.¹³ The literary sources consist of kings' sagas and Icelandic sagas (*Íslendingasögur*), as well as other narratives and *þáttir* (short stories). It is important to note that although these short stories describe events from the eleventh and twelfth centuries or even earlier, they date primarily from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and are thus contemporary with the legal sources. In these stories, the protagonists, often of Icelandic origin, find themselves visiting towns, often in Norway. Icelandic in origin and outlook, these sources presents the guest's perspective in contrast to the laws of the Norwegian host community. As such these narratives offers valuable insights into the expectations of those who might encounter the regulations and hospitality from outside. Documented knowledge about guest housing, private lodgings, and spaces of hospitality form the background to the discussion, but the ways in which guests are perceived, (self-)portrayed, and catered for are the chapter's main focus.

10 *The King's Mirror (Speculum regale-Konungs skuggsjá)*, p. 85. Original text printed in *Kongespeilet*, p. 8: 'þa tak þér þar herbergi, sem þú spyrr spakastan húsbúanda í bæ ok vinsælastan bæði við bæjarmenn ok konungsmenn'.

11 *NgL*, I, pp. 303. On dating, see Hagland and Sandnes, *Bjarkøyretten*, p. xi.

12 Printed versions are *Magnus Hákonsson Lagabotes bylov og farmannslov* (hereafter *MHLbf*), and the earlier, much cited edition in *NgL*, II, pp. 185–290.

13 Tveit, 'Urban Legal Procedure', p. 160.

Both source categories wrestle with the written and unwritten *rules* regulating hospitality, and how to read the obligations and options faced by the parties, corresponding with the first type of ambiguity set out in the introduction of this volume. The *narratives* depict host–guest relations in a literary setting and thus conceptualize the relationship between the imagined hosts and guests. As such, they present something of a caricature of this relationship. Caricatures, also in sagas, are important literary devices that reveal archetypes,¹⁴ in this case of the urban guest. The equally idealized but generically different *legal* concepts of the urban guest and host are based on norms and portray host–guest relations through a lens of what should and should not be. Analysing the discourse of Norse urban hospitality in this way will expand our knowledge of the urban societies and culture. The intersection between ideals of hospitality, which were widespread, and urbanity, which was marginalized, presents a rare opportunity for improving our understanding of an oft-overlooked aspect of Norse culture.

Following a section which explains the premises for Norwegian urban hospitality and its terminology, the chapter describes the existing regulations regarding hospitality in the town laws. Legal definitions of the terms ‘guest’ and ‘host’ are presented, followed by a discussion of temporality in urban hospitality and the assignment of legal responsibility in the host–guest relationship. The chapter then considers some examples from the literary expressions of urban hospitality and explores the richer categories of guests therein, as well as how the host–guest relationship unfolds in texts that represent the guest’s perspective. The final section discusses how urban hospitality is conceptualized in these sources and the tension between such representations.

Terminology and Conceptual Considerations

While the phenomenon and virtues of hospitality were ingrained in the Norse culture, the terms surrounding the host–guest relationship are difficult to define. In Old Norse, there are words for ‘guest’, ‘guesting’, and having guests, but no precise terminology for ‘hospitality’ or the Latin word *hospitium* or *hospitalitas*, which Tim Geelhaar discusses in his chapter. The meaning of the medieval urban ‘guest’ is also multifaceted and depends on the historiographical tradition in question. In studies of the history of Northern European trade connections, a guest is often a merchant travelling between port towns.¹⁵ In contrast, in medieval urban history, guests come in many forms, but are often identified as boarders in tavernas and similar establishments.¹⁶ In a Norse context, ‘guest’ often conveys the meaning of a visitor who forges a personal

14 Andersson, ‘Character and Caricature in the Family Sagas’, pp. 1–10.

15 Olsson, ‘Guests or Strangers?’, p. 144.

16 Hanawalt, ‘Medieval English Women’, p. 24; Salzberg, ‘Mobility, Cohabitation and Cultural Exchange’, p. 399.

relationship with their host, regardless of whether they have been invited by or are familiar with the host.¹⁷ The Old Norse terms *gist* or *gestr* (m), meaning ‘guest’, ‘visitor’, ‘stranger’, and ‘foreigner’, and *gista*, ‘to visit’, are some of the terms used to refer to visitors and visits.¹⁸ More often, a guest, in particular an urban guest, would be described using other terms. In a late medieval urban context, ‘guest’, Middle Low German *gast*, usually denotes a merchant, often of foreign origin, whose length of stay could vary. The influx of merchants from German and Flemish towns, often collectively referred to as the Hansa, to Scandinavia characterized the concept of the guest.

The granting of privileges to these merchants and the restrictions placed on them were key components of the royal legislation and therefore also of the political image of the fourteenth century.¹⁹ German merchants visiting Bergen in particular but also Oslo and Tunsberg (modern Tønsberg) have been treated as the archetypical guest in Scandinavian historiography. This chapter does not discuss the numerous decrees concerning the privileges of foreign merchants, except in so far as these decrees shed light on the concept of the urban guest. Regarding terminology, one of these decrees is of interest: in his 1278 grant of privileges to Lübeck and other German towns, King Magnús VI used the phrase *mercatores, hospites et advene* three times when categorizing the visitors.²⁰ This triplet can be translated as ‘merchants, guests, and visitors’, with *advene* seeming to refer to those recently arrived rather than to more permanent guests. The Germans’ dominance in trade, and indeed in the sources and historiography, introduces the risk of overlooking the other visitors to the Norwegian towns. A discussion of guests in a Norse urban setting, however, must also consider visitors from the different regions of *Noregsveldi*, the dominions of the Norwegian king, which comprised semi-independent communities in Greenland, Iceland, the Faroes, Shetland, and Orkney, as well as provinces in mainland Scandinavia.²¹ This group of urban guests has received limited attention in studies of the culture of both trade and hospitality.²²

When one compares the literary guests in the sagas, who are mainly visitors of Icelandic origin, to those treated in the legislation, it is interesting to ask whether the law distinguished these guests from the dependencies

17 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Viking Friendship*.

18 Heggstad and others, *Norrøn ordbok*, p. 210: ‘gestr’, ‘gista’, ‘gisting’.

19 The decree from 1294 particularly defined the privileges for merchants from German and Flemish trade ports but also restricted the areas in which German merchants were allowed to trade to Bergen and the southern half of the kingdom and concentrating their trade in towns and markets: *Diplomatarium Norvegicum* (hereafter DN), v, no. 23, pp. 23–25.

20 DN v, no. 10, pp. 11–12. See also privilege on tax exception on herring and cargos of grain in DN v, no. 52, pp. 50–51.

21 The legal independence of the inhabitants of the Atlantic isles, often referred to as *skattland*, or ‘dominions’, has been discussed by Grohse, ‘Norgesveldet som rettsfelleskap’, pp. 261–81.

22 Two mentionable exceptions regarding trade are Helgi Þorláksson, ‘King and Commerce’, pp. 149–74 and Helgi Þorláksson, *Vaðmál og verðlag*.

and other alien and domestic subjects and where in this classification urban guests would have been placed. The twelfth-century town regulations for Nidaros, *Bjarkeyjarrétt*, awarded all those living in town the *haulðsrétt*, an elevated status above that of freeborn, freedmen, and unfree, regardless of their birth or origin.²³ The thirteenth-century version of the provincial *Law of Gulapíng* gave Icelandic merchants in Norway the same rights — the status of *hauld* — while other foreigners had the same rights as *buande*, that is, settled freeborn men.²⁴

‘Icelander’ is the only ethnonym that occurs in the extant *Bjarkeyjarrétt* text. The Norwegian laws did not determine worth according to ethnicity but based on a complicated hierarchy of social status.²⁵ However, even the status system was dissolving by the promulgation of the laws from the 1270s, and with it the *haulðsrétt* of both Icelandic guests and townspeople. *The Town Law of 1276* does not distinguish the members of the tributary lands from aliens or domestic people staying in the town. It would nevertheless be fair to assume that the Icelanders and people from other dominions in the realm would have had a status within the realm as ‘the inner other’, and that when they were on the Norwegian mainland, they would have enjoyed legal rights closer to those of the domestic population than those of, for instance, German or English merchants — or Danes, for that matter. On the other hand, a distinction is made between inlanders and outlanders, although their respective duties and privileges might have been the same. In his decree for Bergen in 1302, King Hákon V placed an eight-day restriction on how long after docking both merchants ‘of this land’ (*herlendskir*) and from foreign lands (*utlendskir*) could wait before unloading their cargo onto the pier.²⁶ As the rule was the same for all arriving merchants, it upheld the distinction between alien and domestic visitors.

Regulations on Hospitality

This section considers how the authorities perceived urban hospitality and how best to ensure it. Generally, all persons within a town’s legal boundaries were subject to its laws. This was also the case in Scandinavian towns. Because the Norwegian towns depended on visitors — domestic, overseas, and foreign — the need to balance securing the profit of the hosting town and ensuring

23 *Bjarkeyjarrétt*, ch. 47, *NgL*, I, p. 318.

24 *Gulapíngslog*, ch. 200, *NgL*, I, p. 71. The privilege of *hauld* status had allegedly been given to Icelanders in Norway in the legal text known as *King Olaf’s Agreement with the Icelanders*. *Diplomatarium Islandicum*, I, nos 16, 21; *Norske middelalderdokumenter*, no. 1, pp. 12–15.

25 Unlike the Swedish town law of King Magnus Eriksson (c. 1350s), which mentions: *Magnus Erikssons stadslag*, ‘Köpmålabalken’, ch. XXXIV, p. 130: ‘merchants from Flanders, Germany, Gotland or wherever they are from’.

26 *NgL*, III, no. 13.

its attractiveness to foreigners motivated regulations. Mobility in medieval Europe necessitated tools for visitors, which introduced a conflict between territorial law and personal law.²⁷ Urban laws frequently addressed this topic: King Henry I of England (r. 1100–1135), for instance, granted the inhabitants of London, among fourteen other privileges, the right to not be forced to host members of the royal family ‘or anyone else’.²⁸ The thirteenth-century town law of Slesvig demanded an oath of twelve when a guest was both the accuser and the accused within the town boundaries.²⁹ The full band of oath-givers was to consist of fellow guests, underlining their lesser status as non-burghers.

Despite the need for detailed regulations regarding how to receive guests, how to protect the rights of hosts and guests, and how to handle conflicts, the existing urban legal corpus comprises very little legislation that directly addresses hospitality issues. Norwegian laws identified the correct forum for conflict management according to the origin of the issue at hand. Problems involving local townspeople or people from the county fell by default under the town law or national law, respectively.³⁰ Thus, guests were also subject to the town law. However, it is unclear whether they also enjoyed special privileges or any juridical restrictions when they were within the jurisdiction of the town law.

Regarding the townspeople’s duties and responsibilities, the law distinguishes between householder (*husbonde*), merchant (*kaupmaðr*), and, to some degree, those in the king’s guard or retinue (*hirð*). For example, the responsibility to give surety after causing a fire was due from these three groups.³¹ This division neatly conveys how the law writers understood the law, the social groups in the town, and the jurisdiction: the king’s guard answered to the king, and the merchants represented the guests, while the householders, whether they owned or rented (parts of) the house, represented the town. The category *husbonde* sometimes overlaps with *husfaste men* (‘permanent resident’), which is an exclusively urban legal category comprising those with legal rights at the town assembly as well as duties of the town.³² In the *Town Law of 1276*, the

27 Constable, *The Law of the Other*, pp. 7–27.

28 Robertson, ed., *The Laws of the Kings of England*, p. 289: ‘Et infra muros civitatis nullus hospietetur, neque de mea familia neque de alia vi alicui [hospitium] liberatur’. Dating suggested to 1118–1131 by Robertson, ed., *The Laws of the Kings of England*, p. 229.

29 *The Laws of Slesvig*, § 16.

30 *Town Law of 1276*, Inheritance section, ch.16, *MHLbf*, p. 171; *National Law of 1274*, Inheritance section, ch.16; *Kong Magnus Håkonsson Lagabötes landslov* (hereafter *MHLI*), pp. 516–17.

31 *Town Law of 1276*, *Bøarskipan*, ch. 10: ‘husbonde oc kaup maðr sem konungs maðr’ (‘householder and merchant as well as the king’s man’).

32 Hertzberg, ‘húsbondi’, ‘Glossarium’, p. 300. The term *husfastr* has a particular urban connotation in Old Norse, as well as in modern Norwegian. It denotes householders who owned or permanently rented property in a town, specifically ¼ of a town house or more. These individuals were also entitled to attend meetings at the town assembly, *mót*, and at the special assembly for *husfaste men*. It seems that a woman could also have this right if she owned or rented, according to the *Town Law of 1276*, *kaupa bolkr*, 26, *MHLbf*, p. 290.

same distinction is made in the explanation of the town's collective duties, among them pulling ships in the harbour — the hauling of ships along the quay or ashore for maintenance. The rule opens with a statement that all merchants share this collective duty:

Kaupmen aller þa gange til skipdrattar þegar horn kueðr uíðr huart sem þeir koma norðan eða sunnan oc hafa veret þrearr netr i bø. Sva skulu oc bøndr ganga til skipdratar oc heraðsmen sem kaupmenn ef þær hafa .iiij. netr i bø veret.

All merchants shall go to ship-pulling immediately when the horn sounds, whether they are from the north or the south, when they have stayed three nights in the town. Householders and district men shall also go to ship-pulling like the merchants if they have stayed three nights in the town.³³

The rule establishes the authorities' distinction between short-term visitors and guests that were more involved in the society they were visiting. The collective duty of ship-pulling was a service from which visiting ships in particular benefited. All the Norwegian towns were port towns, and the discussion of this activity in the laws illustrates the importance of taking care of the ships that formed part of the town's main activity.³⁴ Guests, in participating in the performance of collective duties, were tied to the town they were visiting by accountability. The rule covered both 'district men' visiting from the surrounding countryside, and merchants. German cities such as Lübeck that had trade interests in Bergen quickly rid themselves and their merchants sailing to Norway of this particular responsibility.³⁵ Visiting German merchants from the same cities were still obliged to meet several other obligations. For instance, all foreign craftsmen in Bergen had to comply with the levy duties (*leiðangr/leidang*), confirmed anew by King Magnus Eriksson in 1344.³⁶ Permanent and temporary stays within the urban boundaries entailed an obligation toward the host town.

See Hertzberg, 'husfaste menn', 'Glossarium', pp. 300–01; Blom, 'Borgare – Norge', in *KLNM*, II, cols 140–41; Entry: 'húsfastr', in Love and others, *A Lexicon of Medieval Nordic Law*, p. 164. The terms *husfaste* and *húsbóndi* ('householder') are often understood as synonyms, but the former is exclusively used in an urban context and the latter emphasizes the person as head of the household.

33 *Town Law of 1276*, Børskipan, ch. 17, *MHLbf*, pp. 225–26. The full regulation comprises parts of a rule from the older *Bjarkeyjarréttir*, ch. 134, but this particular section is new.

34 Even the inland episcopal town of Hamar was situated on Norway's largest lake, Mjøsa.

35 Tveit, 'Urban Legal Procedure', pp. 155–80.

36 *NgL*, III, no. 75, pp. 163–64; *Hansisches Urkundenbuch*, III, no. 23. Other examples include the obligation to tithe to the archbishopric of Nidaros from 1309: *Norske middelalderdokumenter*, no. 55, pp. 260–66. Thus the Norwegian government showed more leniency for accepting strangers partaking in internal affairs than for instance the Italian city states discussed in Edward Loss's chapter in this volume.

Guests that sought permanent stays were subject to separate regulations. Foreign merchants began wintering in Norwegian towns in the 1250s.³⁷ They were soon subjected to a set of rules from both the Norwegian kings and their hometowns.³⁸ In particular, the German merchants' demands are a constant presence in the legislation of the Norwegian king.³⁹ Besides these semi-permanent foreign merchants in Bergen, Oslo, and Tunsberg, other groups also sought to settle in the towns for longer stays. Drifters, journeymen, and servants would arrive in the towns from the countryside. The section on attending the assembly (*Þingskipanarbolkr*) includes a revised clause from *The National Law of 1274* that addresses the danger of welcoming strangers into one's home.⁴⁰ It warns that the help that outsiders could provide would decline in value over time and makes the host responsible for ensuring that a guest was trustworthy:

[giælkyri eða systlu maðr] þui lysa at menn skulu ægi þa menn i hus sín taka/ er laupa vestan ok austan. norðan ok sunnan. [Sem fyr segir i bokinni]. Nema þeir uítí skil a. at þær ero skila menn. Þui at slikir menn ero Því vaner at vera nokoro likt æin vætr eða.íj. eða .íij. ok hylla sik sva uíð men. Sidan skiliazt þeir ægi bætr við en annanhuart stela þeir fe mann. eða laupa brot með husþrøyium manna. eða frendkonom. eða gera onnu vanð verk. En huær sem oðru uís gerer ok tækr slika men þa sæckizt mork. Silfrs. Er hín prouazt at illum manne.

([The town sheriff or the district sheriff] is to declare that people are not to take into the house those people who run from the east or west, north or south [as is said in the book] unless they know them to be just men. Such people have the habit of being somewhat useful for one winter or two or three, but then they do not leave things better: they steal people's property or run away with a man's housewife or his kinswomen. And anyone who does otherwise is to pay a fine of a mark of silver to the king if the other person [the guest] is proven to be bad.⁴¹)

The essence of the rule is that people should know what kinds of guests they are housing. The principle of dealing only with trustworthy men (*skilríki men*) is ubiquitous in Norse legal culture.⁴² 'Untrustworthy men' denotes fugitives, outlaws, and general runaways. A rule from the older *Bjarkeyjarréttir* similarly

37 The first documented case is from 1259: Helle, *Kongssete og kjøpsstad*, pp. 472–75.

38 Helle, *Kongssete og kjøpsstad*, pp. 378–90.

39 For example, DN v, nos 1, 6, 10, 23. *The Town Law of 1276*, *Landvarnarbolkr*, chs 4, 6, *Boarskipan*, chs 3, 17. See Helle, *Kongssete og kjøpsstad*, pp. 472–87; Helle, 'Fra opphavet til omkring 1500', pp. 107–18, 129–39; Wubs-Mrozewicz, *Traders, Ties and Tensions*.

40 *Town Law of 1276*, *Þingskipanarbolkr*, ch. 5; *The National Law*, Assemblies section, ch. 7.

41 *MHLbf*, p. 69.

42 Hertzberg, 'skilríkr', *NgL*, v, pp. 569–70.

fined those who gave hospitality to an outlaw or drank with them.⁴³ Such individuals would have been a constant threat to the port towns, as it was possible for those outside the law and those with a dubious past and status to seek hospitality in regions where they were unknown. The privileges of the Danish town of Flensborg from 1284 included a stipulation regarding situations where an individual had come to town but was later accused of being a runaway or a slave.⁴⁴ The Norwegian towns were under the king's peace, and therefore offences and crimes perpetrated within the urban space were not taken lightly. Several sources attest to guests partaking in everything from drunken brawls to full-on riots in Norwegian towns — and the guests' origins and behaviour were commented on by the relevant authorities — but there is no evidence of their local hosts being held accountable in the aftermath.⁴⁵

The pairing of opposite compass points, 'from the east or west, north or south', reflects the above-mentioned rule regarding collective duties, to which all guests 'from the north or from the south' were subject. As directions were typically given in the more specific intercardinal points or from spatial perspectives,⁴⁶ this phrasing was probably a mode of expression underlining that one should be careful of people who 'run' from anywhere. This general scepticism towards strangers extended to visitors of all geographical origins. Measures were also taken to catch those who were 'running between towns' to avoid taxes or between town and countryside to avoid the census.⁴⁷ The general xenophobia expressed in these rules is found elsewhere in *The Town Law*, for instance illustrated by the regulation that no more than one-third of the men appointed to beacon duty could be foreigners 'from other king's realms'.⁴⁸

Hospitality and Temporality

A closer look at the rule directing the collective responsibilities of urban residents reveals, notably, that the new laws issued in 1276 established a length of stay after which a visiting guest was subject to the same legal restrictions as the local residents. The rule establishes a three nights differentiation of visitors. Those who 'have stayed three nights in the town' or more were also required to appear when called to do so.⁴⁹ A limitation of three nights for

43 *Bjarkeyjarréttr*, ch. 101, *NgL*, I, p. 322.

44 *The Law of Flensborg 1284*, § 17.

45 For example, two merchants from Lübeck involved in brackets in Bergen c. 1341, *DN VIII*, pp. 150–51. Consider also the attack on a beer hall in Bergen 1181, *Sverris saga*, ch. 64, p. 103: 'Gestum líkaði illa er hīrðmenn drukku mjǫð, en þeir mungát'.

46 Holtmark, 'Himmelstrøk og -retninger', cols 566–68.

47 *Town Law of 1276*, *Landvarnarbolkr*, ch. 6, *MHLbf*, p. 95; *National Law of 1274*, Defence section, ch. 7, *MHL*, pp. 245–48; *Town Law of 1276*, *Landvarnarbolkr*, ch. 7, *MHLbf*, pp. 96–97.

48 *Town Law of 1276*, *Landvarnarbolkr*, ch. 4, *MHLbf*, p. 91: 'or annar konunga ríki'.

49 *Town Law of 1276*, *Boarskipan*, ch. 17, *MHLbf*, p. 226: 'hafa .íj. netr i bø veret'.

guests is previously attested in Anglo-Saxon law as well as in later traditions.⁵⁰ Hospitality is also a question of temporality, the permanence and transience of the phenomenon of guesting, and how the urban hosts or host communities perceived this temporal aspect. Studies of mobility have often addressed the reception of migrants — through infrastructure, legislation, and hospitality — focusing on migrants who aimed to remain in their destinations permanently. As Bert De Munck and Anne Winter have shown, most migration to towns was temporary.⁵¹ The fleeting quality of these visits is described well by Rosa Salzberg, who, in her examination of the much larger and busier city-state of Venice, states that ‘many of the ephemeral encounters, interactions and exchanges between people on the move and urban inhabitants that made up day-to-day life in a cosmopolitan city remain obscured.’⁵²

While historiography has been occupied with wintering merchants in Norwegian towns, short-term visitors have received little attention. We know, however, that the towns had a large influx of domestic people during the sailing season between April and October, when producers brought their produce to the urban markets. A particular event was the arrival of boats bringing stockfish from the great fisheries of the north to Bergen for export. The northerners onboard became a well-known element in the town, where they would spend some weeks buying supplies before returning home. Guests visiting on business other than trade are rare in the sources but not unheard-of: for example, *Doraren* ‘the painter’, was a guest at the king’s court in Bergen in 1340.⁵³ Several letters of credence were issued for clergy on visitation to the archbishop’s court in Nidaros or Church institutions in other towns.⁵⁴ Clergy were most likely lodged in the Church’s own facilities for guests.⁵⁵

The reasoning behind the rule of three nights is unclear aside from tradition. Alban Gautier has argued that after three nights, additional mechanisms come into play, leading the guest to establish a more permanent presence with the host, which may shift their loyalty or render them a potential threat.⁵⁶ Moreover, he identifies a belief that guests who remain for an extended period could accumulate an obligation to the host, a concept particularly pertinent in urban contexts. The number also carries strong numerological symbolism, which is evident in other areas of medieval Norwegian law, including the town laws.

50 Gautier, ‘Hospitality’, p. 28.

51 De Munck and Winter, ‘Regulating Migration in Early Modern Cities’, p. 1.

52 Salzberg, ‘Mobility, Cohabitation and Cultural Exchange’, pp. 398–418.

53 DN IX, no. 123, p. 138.

54 For instance, DN IV, no. 387 (1325); DN V, nos 56–57 (1337), and DN IV, no. 290, pp. 236–37.

55 Take the example presumably from 1310: a complaint from the bishop of Bergen regarding the misconduct at Halsnøy monastery, south of Bergen. Among other things, that their abbot occupied the guest’s house, *domus hospitum*, ‘which they have named the house of the Abbot’ (quam domum abbatis nominant) instead of the dormitorium together with the monks: DN IV, no. 88, p. 85.

56 Gautier, ‘Hospitality’, pp. 28–31.

While the late twelfth-century *Bjarkeyjarréttr* stipulated most fines in sums of three, *The Town Law of 1276* contains the number three in a few other instances: three men were to do beacon watch each night and to only light the beacon if they saw at least three warships.⁵⁷ There were supposed to be three weeks of peace during Christmas and three watchmen were to patrol together.⁵⁸ More relevant is the king's three-day right of pre-emption to any goods brought by 'foreign merchants' (*kaup men utlendzskir*), after which the merchant could sell to anyone.⁵⁹ This rule count is in days (*dagha*) and not nights, but the idea of an expiration date placed on both visitors and wares is the same. Beyond this period, they belonged to the town, rather than to the king.

The limit of three nights has several legal implications. First, although counting in nights instead of days was normal in Norse culture, it would also imply that the visitor had spent nights in the town, and therefore presumably lodged somewhere in the town for those nights, when they would fall under the responsibility of a host. Second, this limit gave the outsiders themselves a particular quality, distinguishing between those whose visits were brief encounters and those with a more lasting engagement with the town and its population. The two-night visitors presumably had a superficial impact on the town in question, while those staying three nights or more would enjoy the town's facilities, and indeed hospitality, and as such were asked to repay this debt by assisting with those tasks performed by the collective. Third, in relation to the question of hospitality, it is useful to consider whether this limitation covered all aspects of the guest's interaction with the town. It is reasonable to assume that these guests, by extension, were also obligated to contribute to the night watch and firefighting alongside the townsmen.⁶⁰ Furthermore, it is probable that the host would have to vouch for guests staying three nights, but it is unclear what responsibilities the host had when a guest stayed only one to two nights. A number of travellers would have fallen into this category, despite the lack of urban inns and taverns and even the custom of sleeping onboard one's ship.

The limitation of the number of nights that distinguished between visitors with and without legal responsibilities also raises the question of what distinguished guests and permanent citizens, both foreign and domestic. Here, it is useful to examine the regulations for military services and the equivalent tax collected in peacetime. The inhabitants of a town paid the levy tax according to their property, and 'foreign men' (*utlendzskir menn*) paid the same as the locals when they had owned or rented in the last twelve months.⁶¹ The time prescriptions for outsiders thus reflect the European concept of urban freedom

57 For example, three marks in *Bjarkeyjarréttr*, chs. 13–17, *NgL*, I, pp. 305–07; *Town Law of 1276*, *Landvarnarbolkr*, ch. 4, *MHLbf*, pp. 90–93.

58 *Town Law of 1276*, *Boarskipan*, chs 1, 3, *MHLbf*, pp. 178–91.

59 *Town Law of 1276*, *Boarskipan*, ch. 18, *MHLbf*, pp. 232–33.

60 *Town Law of 1276*, *Boarskipan*, chs 1–3, 10–12, *MHLbf*, pp. 178–91, 209–16.

61 *Town Law of 1276*, *Landvarnarbolkr*, ch. 6, *MHLbf*, pp. 94–95.

for those who had stayed in a town for ‘a year and a day’.⁶² Those who only wintered (i.e., stayed until the next sailing season) had a reduced tax of five *penning*. As Norwegian towns did not introduce the concept of the ‘burgher’ until the fifteenth century, it seems that the requirement for ceasing to be a guest and becoming a *bøarman*, ‘town man’, was to stay for more than a year. However, to enjoy the full rights of the town, one had to become a *husfastr*, renting a quarter or more of a town house.

Hospitality and Legal Responsibility

The question of how foreign merchants adhered to Norwegian law has been the subject of a lot of research, particularly with respect to how collectives of foreign traders negotiated rights and privileges within the realm’s towns.⁶³ The legal responsibilities of the individual host toward the guest and vice versa have been given little consideration. Groups of German merchants would readily organize extensive lodgings for their fellow countrymen, but it remains unclear how those seeking private accommodation or boarding at known lessors or public inns were answerable for any offences committed during the stay. Although the two town laws say little on the topic, the regulations relate the host–guest relationship to two issues that are fundamental in medieval urban law: keeping the peace and social control.

The late twelfth-century *Bjarkeyjarréttr* required that a landlord should know whether their guests had been inside during the night, and to provide such information if there had been a robbery during the night.⁶⁴ In the relationship between hosts and guest tenants, the guest appears to have had less legal responsibility than the host, according to *The Town Law of 1276*. The lessor was given a much larger fine than the lodger if the latter broke the law. Tenants renting a space for producing crafts or selling from market stalls were fined one-eighth of what the owner was fined if they sold or worked in parts of the town not designated for their particular trade.⁶⁵ As those offering hospitality were required to vouch for their guests, as described above, a host also had to stand surety for their guests and represent them in the town’s legal system. Those who aided a guest in avoiding rent payments, for example skippers who took such offenders aboard their boats and new lessors who took the offenders in, were also liable for 1 mark.⁶⁶ By holding the locals accountable for the behaviour of strangers and the guests themselves, the law laid down a flimsy foundation for a culture of urban hospitality.

62 Maitland, ‘Possession for Year and Day’, pp. 253–64; Strahm, ‘Stadtluft macht frei’, pp. 103–21.

63 Helle, *Kongssete og kjøpstad*; Helle, ‘Fra opphavet til omkring 1500’; Wubs-Mrozewicz, *Traders, Ties and Tensions*.

64 *Bjarkeyjarréttr*, ch. 27, *NgL*, I, p. 309.

65 *Town Law of 1276*, *Bøarskipan*, ch. 8, *MHLbf*, pp. 202–06.

66 *Town Law of 1276*, *Bøarskipan*, ch. 14, *MHLbf*, pp. 219–21.

Even so, guests evading rent or taking lodging elsewhere were answerable to the king, as the king alone received fines from rent-evading lodgers and did not share these fines with the town's reserves, as was the practice for other offences committed within the town boundaries.⁶⁷ There are surviving sureties for lodgers receiving extensions for their rent payment, proving that legal action against rent evasion was enforced in practice.⁶⁸ *The Town Law of 1276* was written with *husfaste men* in mind. This was a social group that was wealthy enough to own or permanently rent urban property and as such had something to lose. Since much of the legislation clearly favours this privileged group, it is notable that their interests as hosts are not further acknowledged.

The late twelfth-century *Bjarkeyjarréttr* defined how the urban host was to act if an Icelandic guest died while in their lodgings.⁶⁹ It was the host's responsibility to arrange the funeral and otherwise keep the deceased's property intact, probably for possible heirs who needed time to learn of the death and travel to Norway. The medieval Norwegian laws in general protected a rightful heir's inheritance. *The National Law of 1274* included a rule about people who died with 'no heirs in proximity', which also mentions the inheritance of 'foreign men'.⁷⁰ Generally, there was expected to be a period of twelve months during which heirs could come forward and claim their inheritance, probably to give geographically distant relatives, or those who were only distantly related to the deceased, the time to receive the news of the death. After this twelve-month period, the inheritance went to the king for safekeeping for another ten years, after which it became the king's property. For comparison, the Danish *Slesvig Town Law* from the mid-thirteenth century gave the king the right to inherit the property of all guests, whether from Iceland or elsewhere in Denmark.⁷¹

The number of people a landlord could bring into their house was also restricted to five — two men and three women.⁷² The restriction is followed with a statement that the landlord was answerable if any member of their household was found begging in other quarters. The rule addresses the number of workers and not guests per se. Nonetheless, it illustrates concepts of hospitality and the differentiation of strangers in the town from the perspective of the legislators and, presumably, the town authorities, with the aim of preventing the accumulation of drifters in the town. It was also a way of securing labour for the agricultural land for the labour-intensive seasonal work. A decree from 1384 ordered the bailiff to deport to the countryside all excess labour from the town houses, and those providing accommodation to more

67 *Town Law of 1276*, Boarskipan, ch. 14.

68 For example, Svale Römer and his father in 1398: DN II, no. 554.

69 *NgL*, I, p. 328. This was found only in the Y-MS, see *NgL*, I, p. 315.

70 *National Law of 1274*, Inheritance section, ch. 11, *MHL*, pp. 499–500: 'æigi ærvingi i nand' and 'vtlendzkra manna'.

71 *Slesvig stadsret 1216–1241*, § 29. See also Jansen and others, 'Danmark', pp. 63–64.

72 *Town Law of 1276*, Boarskipan, ch. 7. *MHLbf*, pp. 199–202.

individuals than the law allowed risked losing their guest house.⁷³ Combatting beggary was an aim of numerous royal by-laws of late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Norway. Even if neither the towns themselves nor the legislators did much in terms of poverty relief, the nuisance of beggary was targeted.⁷⁴ The landlord was further responsible for the actions of those in their household to the extent that they would have to pay the fines if one of these members broke the law and subsequently disappeared.⁷⁵ The negative sentiment towards beggars was also reflected in *The National Law from 1274*, where those who were able-bodied but begged instead of finding work lost their legal rights and could subsequently not sue for compensation if they were harmed in any way.⁷⁶

The system of poverty relief that developed in the Norwegian kingdom made the urban poor themselves ‘guests’ of the town houses. The urban households were required to offer hospitality in a system called the ‘fatökra manna flutning’, which literally translates as ‘the moving of poor people.’⁷⁷ In this context, the poor referred to the disabled and sick — those unable to work for a living — rather than the ‘deserving poor’, or *personae miserabiles*, a morally distinguished and diverse group of socially and culturally impoverished individuals, such as pilgrims, students, widows, and orphans.⁷⁸ These individuals did not belong to a household as lodgers and lacked a security network in the form of kin, who were otherwise responsible for supporting relatives unable to sustain themselves.⁷⁹ The households shared responsibility for the poor in this system, rotating them according to a rota established in advance during a village or town quarter assembly.⁸⁰ One household would house a poor person or family for one night before they were moved on to the next property. The system is not referred to in *The Town Law of 1276* but is mentioned in a letter to the king from 1269 and in a royal amendment from 1302.⁸¹ In the amendment, King Hákon V states that the route taken and the distribution of the poor was to be in accordance with the ‘old custom’ and specifies that the poor would stay for one night in each household. The same practice of enforced mobility also developed in the countryside, where

73 DN v, no. 331, p. 240.

74 Tveit and Vogt, ‘The Invisible Poor’, pp. 2–19.

75 *Town Law of 1276*, Bøarskipan, ch. 7.

76 *National Law of 1274*, Mannhelgebalk, ch. 29. *Town Law of 1276*, Mannhælgar bolkr, ch. 28, *MHLbf*, p. 148.

77 The system is first mentioned in the so-called ‘New Law’ of Hákon Hákonarsson, (r. 1217–1263) in the *Law of Frostaping*, Prologue, ch. 17.

78 Tveit and Vogt, ‘The Invisible Poor’, p. 7.

79 *National Law of 1274*, Inheritance section, ch. 20, *MHL*, p. 527.

80 For example, see the so-called ‘Bleie-document’ from 1294, where various matters were settled between two farms in Hardanger, including the timing for the transfer of the poor during the year. DN iv, no. 6. In rural areas, it appears that the poor stayed in one place for several weeks, rather than just one night, as Hákon V’s decree implies.

81 *NgL*, III, § 13, pp. 43–44.

the poor were transported between the rural properties,⁸² although it was presumably much easier to execute this practice within the confines of a town than in the sparsely populated countryside of Norway. The introduction of responsibilities for poor relief in early Norwegian law has been interpreted as a measure to address the long-term consequences of abolishing slavery in the twelfth century, which resulted in large segments of the population being socially degraded and left without means.⁸³ This system can thus be seen as a security measure to prevent a significant number of people from falling into destitution. Moreover, by the late thirteenth century, this approach to poverty relief aligned with contemporary ideas of *caritas* promoted by the Church, particularly in a country with few hospitals and limited capacity to care for the needy.⁸⁴ The description of duties in the laws suggests that this poverty relief measure was considered a great burden which most households carried out reluctantly. The constant rotation must also have placed particular strain on impoverished invalids, motivating the Bishop of Stavanger to build a hospital for these individuals in 1269 to save them from the discomfort of constant movement.⁸⁵ The rotation system was created in the spirit of hospitality but probably generated feelings of economically motivated hostility.

The Urban Guest in Literary Sources

Narratives from the Norse culture include numerous observations regarding the concept of hospitality. In these narratives, we meet a rural guest, typically Icelandic, in an urban setting, typically Norwegian. A recurring *topos* in the literary genre comprising *Islendingasögur* and *þattr*, 'short stories', is the 'Icelandic visitor in the Norwegian town'. This is similar to the group 'Icelander with a Norwegian king or ruling jarl',⁸⁶ identified by Joseph Harris as the most frequent among seven groups, and to one of the two groups of *þættir* given by Bjarni Guðnason, which is 'those that occur outside of Iceland, most often at the Norwegian *hirð*'.⁸⁷ Another subcategory of this group is the visitor attacking one of the king's guards and taking his place in the among the retainers (in the *hirð*). However, the emphasis here is that the plot of these stories unfolds in one of the Norwegian towns. The urban setting itself is significant as the place where the kings resided, as where Icelanders landed when visiting

82 *The National Law of 1274*, Landsleiebolck, ch. 57.

83 Sunde, 'Verdiar i lovverket', p. 109.

84 Knut Helle suggest that the various measures to combat poverty would have had a 'limited effect' (*begrenset virkningsgrad*). Helle, 'Fra opphavet til omkring 1500', p. 106.

85 Letter from Bishop Torgils (1269–1270), DN x, no. 4, p. 12: 'siuiker eda sarer eda nesta dauder'. The letter is re-dated to 1269–1270, see Gunnes and others, *Regesta Norvegica*, II, no 89, p. 62 n. 1.

86 Harris, 'Þættir', p. 2.

87 Bjarni Guðnason, 'Þættir', col. 406. My translation.

Norway, and also as a scene of congested life. The town in question is typically a major trade town, such as Bergen or the metropolitan Nidaros, and would have figured as a well-known urban setting for the (Icelandic) audience of the stories and thus as a recognizable backdrop against which the events played out. Here, the Icelander is the protagonist, and the audience follows his deception first of his opponent and then of the assembly, and finally his achievement of impressing the king himself.

The guest's entrance onto the urban scene could be described as fairly uncomplicated, entailing the establishment of their presence in the town and their acceptance of hospitality in the form of accommodation. In *Þattr Snegluhalla*, when a certain Halli is visiting Nidaros, it is merely stated that 'Sigldu þeir kaupmennirnir inn til Kaupangs, ok skipuðu þar vöru upp, ok leigðu sér hús í bænum' (the merchants sailed into town. They unloaded the ship and rented a house in the town).⁸⁸ It is similar in the *Þorvarðar þáttur krákunefs*, where 'Þorvarðr leigði sér skemmu ok ruddi skip sitt' (Þorvarðr rented a hut and unloaded his ship) before he went to meet the King.⁸⁹

The practicalities of the available hospitality options are not problematized in the sagas, which indicates that the possibilities were numerous and well known. However, dramatic events often follow the guest's arrival. In the *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja*, the Icelander Geirr kills one of the men of the king's mother Gunnhildr.⁹⁰ The quasi-historical figure Gunnhildr (c. 910–980) which recurs in the sagas, often serves as a plot device symbolizing unhinged female power.⁹¹ Before the drama begins, we learn that Harðar's ship has arrived in Bergen and the visitors are looking for a place to stay. They are helped by their Norwegian travel companion, Brynjólfur, who 'does everything for the best for them'.⁹² Brynjólfur invites the group to Bergen because he thinks Harðar is a strapping man who deserves 'to stay with high-ranking men' (vera á hendi tígnum mönnum).⁹³ When the party is settled, Brynjólfur leaves town and leaves the Icelanders to their own devices. It is then that Geirr meets the group of men from the town with whom he quarrels. They take his cape from him when he refuses to give it up and ridicule him for not guarding it better. A man loses his arm in the fight that ensues and later dies. After learning of these events, the Icelanders gather in council. The king and his armed men come to them and demand that they hand over Geirr, but the Icelanders refuse and suggest settling the matter with payment. Their host Brynjólfur returns at this point and offers to pay the fine on behalf of his guest, which he can do because he is wealthy.

88 *Þattr Snegluhalla*, p. 280.

89 *Þorvarðs þáttur krákunefs*, p. 503.

90 *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja*, ch. 13.

91 Fulk, 'Gunnhildr konungamóðir', p. 149.

92 *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja*, ch. 13: 'Þeir leituðu sér skjótt skemmuvistar ok fengu þat með umgengi Brynjólfs, því at hann gerði við þá allt it bezta'.

93 *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja*, ch. 12.

When interpreting the story from the perspective of hospitality, the way in which Brynjólfur acts as the Icelanders' host becomes meaningful. He enables them to become guests and is their rescuer. The virtue and practices of hospitality hinge on his conduct and status, and, as the town regulations decree, he accepts all legal responsibilities for his guest. More importantly, he spells out the expectations of the guests and the attributes, often found in these narratives, that they need in order to be worthy of reception: courage, beauty, strength, or all three. The hosts, too, needed to embody certain qualities, such as wealth, status, and ties to the royal court. The host–guest relation is thus presented as one that is unequal, but where both sides have attractive qualities that benefit the other party.

Literary Motif of the Icelandic Guest

The narratives of the saga literature offer valuable observations of various groups in the towns that introduce a diverse range of guests. Such diversity is not found in the legal sources, but it is important to be aware that these observations serve as a double mirror: they depict how guests were perceived and received by the local community, but they are told from the perspective of the outsider. In this way, they showcase the guest's representation of how they imagine their host sees them.

Cultural hospitality went hand-in-hand with a general and widespread scepticism towards strangers, as unknown guests could be good acquaintances but also a nuisance or simply dangerous. Sirpa Alto has called attention to this dual promise of strangers.⁹⁴ In the *Íslendingasögur*, too, guests could have ill intentions or legitimate claims to vengeance. Ögmundur, one of the two central figures of the fourteenth-century *Ögmundar þáttur dytts ok Gunnars helmings*, sails to Nidaros to take revenge after suffering defamation. He manages to get close to and eventually kills his insulter, Hallvard.⁹⁵ This vengeance is made possible by a coincidental swap of capes with the story's other main figure, the local townsman Gunnarr. Ögmundur wears Gunnarr's scarlet-gold cape, and Gunnarr is subsequently accused of the murder and has to flee the town. Gunnarr, here representing the host, has already welcomed the visitor, the infamous Ögmundur, upon his arrival in the harbour. He does so out of curiosity and because of the latter's two-coloured fleece. Gunnarr presents himself with the byname *helmingr* (two-piece), referencing his interest in two-coloured textiles.⁹⁶ Their exchange of words about Hallvard's whereabouts leads Ögmundur to his target, and their exchange of clothing gives Ögmundur cover. Through Gunnarr's naïve welcome of the Icelandic guest, the story

94 Alto, 'Commercial Travel and Hospitality', p. 37.

95 *Ögmundar þáttur dytts ok Gunnars helmings*, chs 2–5.

96 *Ögmundar þáttur dytts ok Gunnars helmings*, ch. 4: 'en þui er ek sua kalladr at mer þikir (gaman) at hafa halflit klæde'.

depicts the universal duality of hospitality as on the one hand offering the possibility of obtaining news while on the other risking the status quo. This duality is further reflected in Gunnarr's fetish for *dualitas* that leads to him to be framed for murder.

The sagas frequently include skaldic poems. The skalds themselves are often portrayed as visitors to the towns with origins in Iceland or other non-urban areas, even when they are described as more permanent inhabitants of the urban court. The short story of the skald Einarr from the early thirteenth century, *Einars þáttr Skúlasonar*, explores the precarity of the skald as an outsider in the town. Two of the three strands of the story also concern other types of urban guests — artists and women — and the skald's compositions about them.⁹⁷ One scene occurs in Bergen and introduces visiting musicians (*leikarar*) to the town.⁹⁸ One of these visitors, Jarlmaðr, steals and eats a goat kid on a Friday. The double breach of both secular law (theft) and canon law (abstaining from meat) leads to Jarlmaðr being whipped. The skald Einarr asks the king for mercy on behalf of 'our fellow' (*félaga várn*).⁹⁹ It is not clear whether this reference means that Einarr and Jarlmaðr are both minstrels or both Icelanders, but the former seems plausible, since the king replies that the man will be whipped for as long as it takes the skald to produce a poem about it, which turns out to be five lashes. The tale depicts a view of the artist as an urban guest and portrays them as dubious, hinting at the association between their class and poverty. *Leikarar* have elsewhere been likened to *trúðar*, a term that, according to Icelandic law, was used of beggars that could not be called as witnesses at the assembly (*thing/bing*).¹⁰⁰ By association, minstrels were represented as a popular but untrustworthy group of guests. Einarr's association with the musician who succumbed to un-Christian temptations and theft reveals the unreliability of the group of visiting artists as a whole.

The same *þáttr* features a scene of the arrival and departure of Ragnhildr, a female merchant who is visiting Bergen. Ragnhildr is depicted as a 'wonderful woman' (*dýrlig kona*) with a long ship and behaviour worthy of an aristocrat (*lendmadr*). Her origins as an inlander, from Utstein in the south-western part of mainland Norway, are hinted at in a poem. Her disposition fascinates everyone, including the king. As he watches her prepare to leave town, he laments the lack of skalds commemorating the scene. Einarr-skald is brought to the king's side and asked to produce a poem about her departure, which he does for the promise of a measure of honey for every word of the poem that the king and seven of his men cannot subsequently remember. The poem praises Ragnhildr as a merchant and attractive woman, as it likens her bosom to the swelling of the ship's sail:

⁹⁷ *Einars þáttr Skúlasonar*, pp. 28–63.

⁹⁸ On minstrels, see Seip, 'Leikarar', cols 462–67.

⁹⁹ *Einars þáttr Skúlasonar*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ *Grágás* II, ch. 347.

Hola báru rístr hlýrum
 hreystisprund at sundi,
 blæss élreki of ási,
 Útsteins, vefi þrútna.
 Varla heldr und vildra
 víkmarr á jarðríki,
 breiðr viðr brimsgang súðum
 barmr, lyftingar farmi.

(The spirited woman carves the hollow billow with the bow toward the straits of Utsteinen; the storm-chaser [WIND] fills the swollen sails above the sprit. There is hardly another bay-steed [SHIP] on earth that sails beneath a more precious burden of the deck; the broad rim gains surf-speed for the ship-boards.)¹⁰¹

The king and his men only remember the first and last verse, providing Einarr with a handsome reward. The story constructs the guest in positive terms, as welcome and interesting. The narrative centres on Ragnhildr's attractiveness and not her status as a female merchant or a guest of the town. Nevertheless, she is a welcome visitor, and her departure is portrayed as bittersweet for the onlookers. The preparations for a guest's departure create a spectacle for the townsmen. Read alongside the musician's bad behaviour, both the descriptions of the locals' excitement and the guests' deception of them offer an image of the guest as an exciting contribution to Norwegian town life.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter considered how hospitality has been conceptualized in a Norse urban setting as it was presented through the perceptions of guests in legal and literary sources. These sources yield a depiction of the ideal culture of Norwegian urban hospitality that is complex in several ways. There is tension in the dichotomy between the insistence on the virtue of hospitality in Norse culture and the emerging urban culture. There is further ambivalence regarding the nature of guesting and whether it serves the interests of the town-dwellers or the guest. In addition, there is uncertainty regarding the permanence and mobility of those arriving in the towns and how different groups of hosts perceived the guests.

Studying urban hospitality through two types of sources, both of which are based on imagined models, offers insights into Norse ideas of guests and hosts. Generally, the relationship is depicted as a possible threat to those offering hospitality. What emerges is a more complex image of host-guest relations, possibly more in line with what is often assumed to be the reality in

101 'Einarr Skúlason, *Lausavísur* 6', pp. 573–74.

the medieval towns. The legal sources are sceptical about welcoming strangers but not necessarily in the interest of the urban host. However, these texts do not present a simplified, stylized image of the guest as untrustworthy. Rather, the legislators' scepticism towards outsiders increases the responsibility of those who host them and are therefore legally required to vouch for them. Furthermore, the complexity of the image extends our knowledge of how contemporary observers understood temporary and permanent hospitality. As such, new understandings into the study of Norwegian town law can be gained by examining hospitality.

The intended audience of the saga stories was probably not the urban population of Norway but Icelanders. The aim of these stories was not to accurately portray how a provincial guest experienced hospitality in a town but rather to depict cunning in the face of authority. The guest thus stands out as a dubious character, portending trouble for the townspeople upon his arrival. Nevertheless, certain perceptions of the concept of urban hospitality can be identified in the narratives. First, the idealized relationship can be understood as one between two parties, each with something attractive to offer the other. As such, host–guest relations ideally benefited both parties. Second, the idea of the guest as a positive element is conveyed by the responses attributed to those who witness their arrival and departure. The guest represented novelty, news, and excitement. This representation might have been a self-image constructed by the Icelandic author or a depiction designed to meet the expectations of his audience.

Together, these images of urban hospitality reveal that urban hospitality generally was clearly regulated, and with precise expectations for both host and guest. Any ambiguous character of its practices and discourses emerges from the transactional sense of hospitality, and of the frequent meetings that occurred in the port towns of the Norwegian realm.

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Opulent and Prone to Disruption

*The Reception of Pope Clement VI
by Two Cardinals in 1343*


Introduction

Pope Clement VI had had a busy few days during the Holy Week of 1343. After the celebration of protracted and exhausting services which culminated in the solemn Easter Mass on Sunday, 21 April, he probably felt the need to relax. The papal palace in Avignon was not suitable for this, but the pope's summer residence in Sorgues very much was.¹ On Easter Sunday 1343, Clement VI left the city in the late afternoon with the usual troop of cardinals, high curial officials, and servants, spent the night at the residence of one of his most influential cardinals, Élie Talleyrand de Périgord,² and reached his own residence in Sorgues the next day. There he stayed for a week. What happened during the two following days, on 30 April and 1 May, is recorded in a unique surviving account that is among the most colourful and detailed descriptions of papal receptions in the entire Middle Ages. Two cardinals dwelling in their own summer residences in the immediate vicinity of the pope honoured the Pontifex Maximus with spectacular receptions attended by most of their colleagues in the Sacred College. We will probably never know the name of the author of this impressive description. But we can make more progress in narrowing down the religious-political attitude that was the basis of his remarks. The following pages are thus always to be seen as a contribution to deciphering the *causa scribendi* of the source itself.

Acts of generosity were not necessarily problematic. In the Acts of the Apostles, Christ's statement (referring decidedly to the poor and the weak as the addressees of generosity) has acquired a certain notoriety: 'It is more

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- 1 Generally, on the history of the Avignon papacy: Mollat, *Les papes d'Avignon*; Guillemain, *La cour pontificale d'Avignon*; Rollo-Koster, *Avignon and its Papacy*.
 - 2 Zacour, *Talleyrand*; Prat, 'Le cardinal de Talleyrand-Périgord'.

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Guests, Strangers, Aliens, Enemies: Ambiguities of Hospitality in the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1350, ed. by Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Kjær, CURSOR 45 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), pp. 227–253
BREPOLS  PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.5.149658

blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20. 38: 'Beatius est magis dare quam accipere'). And Paul confesses, 'God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Corinthians 9. 7: 'hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus'). As a look at the cardinals' wills and *post-mortem* inventories will prove, the *porporati* were less inclined to follow an admonition from the Gospel of Matthew:

Nolite thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terra, ubi aerugo et tinea demolitur, et ubi fures effodiunt et furantur; / thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in caelo, ubi neque aerugo neque tinea demolitur, et ubi fures non effodiunt nec furantur; / ubi enim est thesaurus tuus, ibi erit et cor tuum.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. / But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. / For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.³

On the contrary, the testamentary dispositions show very well what the heart of the cardinals was attached to: material goods that embodied a wealth that, in the light of the Gospel's warning, could almost be called obscene.

For sure, if God blesses the actions of those who give freely and wholeheartedly, the activity as such gains a spiritual component. This is especially true in those moments when the Vicar of Christ is the recipient of these benefits. The cardinals were probably less concerned with arousing the benevolence of God than that of the *Vicarius Christi*. The two receptions took place only a few months after the election of Pope Clement VI, at a time when it was probably still a matter of a first mutual acquaintance, when it was still useful to profit from the 'peace-, alliance- and community-building character of the meal', as Gerd Althoff called it.⁴ The cardinals were well aware of the fact that they had not elected a compliant, easily controllable man to head the church. How power-consciously and autonomously Clement VI had actually *ruled through* became clear after his death, when the cardinals wanted to limit the power of the next pope to be elected from their ranks in advance by means of an electoral capitulation, thus considerably expanding their own powers.⁵ They envisioned a form of government in which the pope would hold little more than the position of *primus inter pares*. During his pontificate, Clement VI had the rhetorical and power-political means to put a stop to these efforts. His behaviour regarding the spectacle presented to him by his two cardinals speaks volumes in this regard.

This chapter concerns two contrasting stories of two receptions given by cardinals in honour of Pope Clement VI. Interestingly, both descriptions include criticism of the reception given by one of the two cardinals, Annibaldo

3 Matthew 6. 19–21.

4 Althoff, 'Der frieden-, bündnis- und gemeinschaftstiftende Charakter'.

5 Ullmann, 'The Legal Validity of the Papal Electoral Pacts'; Krüger, 'Überlieferung und Relevanz'.

Ceccano. In a nutshell it is a moralistic cautionary tale and passing of judgement on Annibaldo and his failed — because overdone and excessive — hospitality and generosity.⁶ It is shown in what ambiguous ways such hospitality on the top echelons of the medieval society could be presented. There was a fine line between what was expected and prescribed by protocol and what was considered offensive, overdone, vainglorious, and morally questionable. Excessive hospitality was to be avoided (because it was prone to sinfulness and discord) as well as a reception that could have offended the pope because of the lack of splendour. Cardinals with their ceremonial staff were expected to have one key qualification above all: *discretio*, the insight into what — depending on the specifics of place and time — was necessary and appropriate. In fact, Cardinal Annibaldo Ceccano failed in quite an impressive way, while Cardinal Pedro Gómez, who seemed to follow Ovid's principle 'in medio tutissimus ibis' (the safest way to go is in the middle),⁷ acted much more successfully in this regard.

In the following pages, we will first look at the report written by the anonymous author shortly after the event, shedding also light on its transmission and reception history, followed by a brief presentation of the *dramatis personae*, i.e. pope and cardinals. Finally, some of the central themes within the report are analysed: confusion, rooms and walls, gifts and of course the banquets themselves with their multiple *divertissements*. Why are those elements especially highlighted and what do they tell us about aspects of hospitality in a socially uniform and high-ranking environment? Which elements contributed to strengthen social cohesion, and which elements, on the contrary, have a counterproductive effect? Which specifics linked to the person of the pope needed to be taken into account? In short, what made some acts of hospitality successful and others failures?

At the end there is an attempt to answer the *cui bono* question. Why was this report written? What makes it an unusual solitaire in the *mare magnum* of sources on cultural history of the Avignonese papacy in the fourteenth century?

Medieval Meanings of *Hospitalitas*

As Tim Geelhaar also shows in his chapter in this volume, the Latin equivalent of the English hospitality (*hospitalitas*) is not entirely foreign to the late Middle Ages, but unlike in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, it is quite difficult to find concrete evidence for the use of the noun in the period after 700.⁸ In Late Antiquity, the social-stabilizing function of hospitality as

6 Kjær, 'Glory and Legitimation'; Reuter, *Medieval Politics*, pp. 111–26; Buc, *The Dangers of Rituals*, pp. 203–47.

7 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ch. 2, p. 137.

8 Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français*, p. 395, with references to Rufinus, Tertullian, Ambrosius, and Isidore of Seville.

a means of establishing and maintaining contacts is emphasized, as is the act of receiving guests itself. In the high and late Middle Ages, however, the meaning seems to have narrowed, if we are to believe the contemporary dictionaries. According to the fourteenth-century dictionary AALMA, the term *hospitalitas* primarily refers to the building that accommodates someone and thus becomes a place of hospitality.⁹ A glance at the relevant dictionaries used in the late Middle Ages, first and foremost Huguccione da Pisa's (d. 1210) *Derivationes*, shows that the noun *hospitalitas* has taken a clear back seat to the corresponding adjective *hospitalis*, in other words: the adjective *hospitalis* seems to be more widespread, denoting 'qui benignus et pronus est ad hospitandum', i.e. 'the one who is willing and able to receive or accommodate someone'. The practice itself is thus still described and highly valued, but only rarely goes the way of a substantivizing abstraction. Shortly before him, it was Osbern of Gloucester (d. 1200), who, in his treatment of the word forms derived from the verb *hostio*, emphasized its Janus-faced nature explored in many chapters of this volume: on the one hand it refers to battle and war (*hostis*, *hostilis*, *hostiliter*), and on the other hand to hospitality (*hospes*, *hospita*, *hospitatio*, *hospitium*).¹⁰ Jacques Derrida was therefore not the first to notice the tension between hospitality and hostility describing a continuum between hospitable and hostile behaviour which involved hosts as well as guests and/or strangers. It was Derrida, however, who created the successful concept of *hostipitality* summarizing this tension and different forms of ambiguity in one noun.¹¹

The Source: History, Transmission, and Reception

Two cardinals of the Avignonese papacy counted among those 'benigni et proni ad hospitandum'; their receptions given in honour of Pope Clement VI are among the most lavish we know from the whole Middle Ages. The description of these two acts of lavish hospitality is transmitted in a *codex unicus* held by the *Archivio di Stato* in Florence (Fondo del Bene, MS 49, no. 385). It is a composite manuscript in which 420 short pieces, mainly letters, coming from the fourteenth century were bound together. It was long in the possession of the del Bene family, with whose family archives it passed to the Florentine State Archives in the 1860s. The archival unit no. 385 is a paper written on both sides in large format (62x42.5 cm), which is in a good state of preservation. The inventory describes its content as follows: 'Carte Del Bene. Busta 1. Relazione anonima di feste e banchetti dati al Papa da alcuni cardinali presso

⁹ *Le Dictionnaire AALMA*, pp. 362–63.

¹⁰ Osberno, *Derivazioni*, lib. 1, pp. 321–22 (H ix). Osbern continued to be read in the late Middle Ages, as evidenced by a manuscript of the *Derivationes* annotated by Petrarch, Pellegrin, 'Un manuscrit des Derivationes'.

¹¹ Derrida, 'Hostipitality'; Derrida, 'Die Gesetze der Gastfreundschaft'.

Avignone Sec. XIV (?)¹² Due to scribal mistakes it is evident that this sheet of paper must be a copy.¹³

The text, written not in Latin, but in *volgare*, and divided into thirty-seven short chapters, is not completely unknown to the scholarly world. It was first published by Gaetano Milanese, who presented a small separate print as a wedding gift in Florence in 1868 on the occasion of the marriage of his friend Salvatore Bongi to Isabella Ranani. Only a short time before, the del Bene family archive had been acquired by the State Archives. Milanese admittedly made mistakes in identifying the names and events that appear in the text: he moved the reception to 1308, and identified the cardinals as Arnaud de Pelagruie and Bertrand de Montfavet. This erroneous attribution was adopted by Eugenio Casanova in his edition of the text in 1899.¹⁴ The great researchers of the Avignon papacy, from Eugène Müntz to Guillaume Mollat to Dominique Paladilhe, knew the text and printed brief excerpts in their own studies.¹⁵ In 1987 Georges de Loye published a French translation including a concise commentary,¹⁶ followed by a German translation by Gottfried Kerscher in 2000.¹⁷

When it comes to the question of the authorship and origin of this text, Francesco Del Bene, born around 1328, could at least chronologically be considered the one who had the disparate text material collected and put together. He was hardly involved in the internationally operating trading company founded by his father in Florence in 1318, since he had opened up a new, lucrative business field for himself with wool and cloth processing.¹⁸ Within the *Fondo del Bene*, which primarily documents the economic activities of the family, the description of the banquet is a solitary testimony of this kind. And even with regard to what we know about banquets attended by the pope as a guest of his highest clerics, the account stands out for its dazzling attention to detail. It is all the more valuable because the social life of a travelling pope in the late Middle Ages still awaits treatment.¹⁹

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- 12 Courtesy of Michele di Sivo, Ministero della Cultura, Direzione Generale Archivi, Archivio di Stato di Firenze (4 October 2022).
 - 13 Word duplications due to line breaks point in this direction. Of course, the copyist could have been the author of the description himself, who would then have transferred a kind of draft into a fair copy. Compare: de Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 83. Only a few arbitrarily placed full stops indicate a need for an outline qua punctuation.
 - 14 Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese'.
 - 15 Müntz, 'L'argent et le luxe'; Mollat, *Les papes d'Avignon*, p. 35; Paladilhe, *Les papes en Avignon*, pp. 151–55.
 - 16 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI'.
 - 17 Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, pp. 199–205.
 - 18 Klein, 'Francesco del Bene'.
 - 19 Even for the thirteenth century, there is little reliable information about travels and the travel ceremonial. The great exception is the report of Richard of San Germano, which describes a journey of Pope Innocent III from Anagni to S. Germano. At San Germano a tent was pitched for the banquet. As *divertissement*, the pope was presented a tournament

Within the manuscript MS 49, the description of the papal receptions stands out as a foreign body insofar as the economic ties of the del Bene family or their contacts with the papal court are not the subject of the description. We are rather dealing with a snapshot of the leisure activities of the curia outside the papal palace. The author, if he was not himself part of the ceremonial action, must have had excellent insider knowledge and contacts within the curia and an intimate knowledge of papal ceremonial. He seems to have had a reserved attitude towards the first host, Annibaldo Ceccano, and a benevolent attitude towards the second, Pedro Gómez. Further conclusions would be mere speculation.

One thing seems certain: when the pope went to one of his summer residences, he was accompanied by cardinals of the curia who did not live inside, but outside the papal residence in close proximity. In 1387, Clement VII even obliged his cardinals to book their own summer residences in advance of the planned summer stay in Roquemaure — quite obviously not all cardinals had their own properties. The allocation of these residences took place exclusively via the papal treasurer François de Conzié.²⁰

Dramatis personae

Three people in particular were involved in the receptions of 1343 that are of central interest here: Pope Clement VI and the two cardinals Annibaldo Ceccano and Pedro Gómez.

Pope Clement VI

Born in 1291 as Pierre Roger into a noble family in the south of France, he entered the Benedictine monastery of La Chaise-Dieu, studied theology at Paris, and climbed the Church's hierarchical ladder astonishingly fast.²¹ Pierre Roger was a brilliant, thought-provoking theologian. His rhetorical skills were considered breathtaking; he counted among the best preachers within the French kingdom.²² Good contacts with the French court facilitated his career. At the age of thirty-seven he was appointed bishop of Arras, and less than a year later he was promoted to the archbishopric of Sens. In 1330 he was transferred to the see of Rouen which was considered the richest bishopric in Christendom after Winchester. 1338 saw his elevation to the cardinalate. His election as Pope Clement VI took place in 1342 — a very nice career indeed.

in which fifty horses participated, Magistris, 'Il viaggio di Innocenzo III'; Maccarrone, *Studi su Innocenzo III*, pp. 181–92; Paravicini Bagliani, 'Der Papst auf Reisen', pp. 330–32; Kast and Märkl, *Papstreisen im Mittelalter*, pp. 149–211; Lützelshwab, 'Die letzte Reise'.

20 Dykmans, 'Les transferts de la curie romaine', p. 110.

21 Anheim, *Clément VI au travail*; Lützelshwab, *Flectat cardinales ad velle suum?*; Wood, *Clement VI*.

22 Mollat, 'L'œuvre oratoire de Clément VI'.

Annibaldo Ceccano (Annibaldus Gaietani de Ceccano)

Born c. 1282, Annibaldo Ceccano came from one of the most powerful noble families of the Roman Campagna.²³ His relatives included two popes and several cardinals. After his studies and graduation as *doctor theologiae* in Paris, Annibaldo first received a profitable canonry at St Peter's in Rome in 1323. On 5 May 1326, he was appointed archbishop of Naples and a year later he was admitted to the College of Cardinals by Pope John XXII.²⁴ Backed by a plethora of benefices, he led the life of a grand seigneur. The palaces he inhabited can be considered a tangible and visible sign of his lifestyle: a *livrée* in Avignon and a residence in Sorgues.²⁵ Politically, Annibaldo hardly made an appearance until Clement VI made him a high-ranking diplomat and sent him not only to England and France but also to the Kingdom of Naples. He was the official representative of the pope during the Holy Year 1350 in Rome. Annibaldo lacked everything that makes a good diplomat, however. He was hated by the Romans whose animosity manifested itself in an assassination attempt directed against him. Annibaldo left Rome in July 1350 and died a little later near the abbey of Montecassino. The cause of his death was disputed, but rumours of possible poisoning fell on fertile ground.

It might be true what Annibaldo's modern biographer, Marc Dykmans once said: 'Le cardinal de Ceccano est un grand seigneur d'un type que connut surtout la Renaissance.'²⁶ Despite this characterization, Annibaldo remains a shining example of a second-tier Avignon cardinal. Exceptionally gifted at flaunting his power and wealth, he lacked any political or diplomatic talent. Even as a theologian he was apparently mediocre.

Pedro Gómez (Cardinalis Hispanus)

In the fourteenth century, the College of Cardinals usually lacked a Spanish presence, but the third protagonist, Pedro Gómez, who came from the Kingdom of Castile, is the exception to this rule.²⁷ Born in Toledo he was appointed bishop of Cartagena in 1326 and made cardinal just one year later by Pope John XXII. For ten years he held the responsible office of treasurer of the College of Cardinals. Like Annibaldo Ceccano, he was involved in all kinds of diplomatic transactions, being considered an expert of the affairs of northern France and Flanders. Five years after the events depicted here, in 1348, Pedro fell victim of the plague in Avignon. Unlike Annibaldo, Pedro

23 Lützeltschwab, *Flectat cardinales ad velle suum*, pp. 142–61, 195–223, 431–33; Dykmans, 'Le cardinal Annibal de Ceccano'.

24 Lützeltschwab, 'Wer wird Kardinal?.'

25 His residence in Avignon, the *Livrée de Ceccano*, has survived the times and today serves as the city library.

26 Dykmans, 'Le cardinal Annibal de Ceccano', p. 219.

27 Lützeltschwab, *Flectat cardinales ad velle suum?*, pp. 481–82; Díaz Ibáñez, 'El cardenal Pedro Gómez Barroso el Viejo'.

Gómez had undeniable skills in diplomacy and economy, but, it is true, 'his career was lacking in brilliance', as one scholar put it.²⁸ He too was a second-tier cardinal, and one cannot entirely deny him a penchant for ostentation and luxury. But unlike Annibaldo, Pedro acted successfully for the papacy.

The different backgrounds and approaches of the two cardinals are also reflected in the description of the two receptions.

The Two Receptions of 1343

Both receptions took place in an area where not only the pope, but also many cardinals maintained their summer residences. Of course, not all cardinals had the means to purchase their own real estate in the countryside. However, economically weaker members of the Sacred College had the possibility of temporarily renting summer residences or having them assigned to them. Both Annibaldo Ceccano and Pedro Gómez had the means and, like the pope, chose a strategic place, located in a middle position between Orange, Avignon, and Carpentras, a place secluded enough for indulging in the summer retreat, but at the same time so central that the curial flow of information was not interrupted. In case of necessity, one could react quickly to unforeseen events and return to Avignon.

The source says nothing about the motives of the two cardinals or what led them to receive, feed, and host the pope and his entourage in their own residences. The papal protocol did not provide for such invitations, so that it can be assumed that the two cardinals acted on their own behalf. The desire to impress the pope by showing off economic power certainly played a role. It should not be forgotten that both cardinals were papal electors, i.e. they had not been appointed to the College of Cardinals by Clement VI, but had already received the red hat beforehand. Technically speaking, therefore, they were not the creatures of Clement VI, precisely because they had not been created by him. In the curial self-image, this reflected a relative emotional and power-political remoteness. Were the receptions intended to establish a relation of proximity with the newly elected pope? After all, receptions sustain and guarantee not only a social order but also constitute a closer relationship through bonds of solidarity that arise in the act of eating.²⁹

The text, however, bristles with concrete figures: the financial commitment of both cardinals was considerable. Should Annibaldo and Pedro have followed the *do ut des* principle, at no point is it articulated what concrete *quid pro quos* they might have expected. However, the immaterial countervalue may have been considerable. The pope and his entourage, including almost all the

²⁸ Wrigley, 'The Conclave', p. 68.

²⁹ Gauvard, 'Cuisine et paix en France'.

cardinals residing in Avignon,³⁰ were shown economic strength and excessive wealth: a demonstration of power politics, financed by the eagerly gushing revenues from dozens of opulent benefices.³¹

The Reception Given by Annibaldo Ceccano (30 April 1343)

The narration concentrates mainly on the first reception organized by Cardinal Annibaldo Ceccano. If the second reception is described in less detail, it is certainly partly out of an effort to avoid unnecessary repetition, but also due to the fact that the second reception turned out much less splendid and opulent than the first one.

Confusion

An event of this magnitude and importance was organized long in advance. The text leaves no doubt about this: 'First and foremost, the Cardinal put all his mind and strength into preparing for the arrival of the Pope and all the ways in which he was honored.'³² Respect was demonstrated by the choice and quality of vestments. Since the cardinal and his entourage moved out of the chapel to meet the pope, it is more than likely that a first inkling of the intended display of splendour was shown in the form of exquisite liturgical attire:

Com'egli senti ch'egli s'apresava, si fece parare, come a tanto signore s'appartiene, tanto ricamente, quanto più si potesse dire; e quivi con lui si pararono da venti capelani; gli ornamenti de' quali fu nobilissima cosa.

When he heard that the pope was approaching, he had himself dressed as befits such a great man, as richly as possible. With him, another twenty chaplains put on splendid liturgical garments.³³

But despite meticulous planning, the arrival ceremony was anything but successful and the pope himself was to blame. Contrary to the plan, he did not enter the cardinal's estate through the main portal, but through a side door, which presented insurmountable difficulties to the large procession already in formation at the main entrance. If perfect order and harmony had been sought, this was massively disturbed by the pope's high-handed decision:

Fu gridato dietro: 'Messere, e' viene di verso la porta de l'orto'. Volsesi ed entra per l'orto. Il romore era grande. "E' viene di qua: e' va di là". Finalmente Nostro Signore entrò per una piccola porticiuola da lato de l'orto.

³⁰ The chronicler mentions sixteen cardinals who accompanied the pope.

³¹ On the threat of *luxuria* see Jezierski's and Kjær's introduction to this volume.

³² Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 85; Kersch, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 199.

³³ Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 86; Kersch, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 199; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 374.

An acclamation alerted them to the fact that the Pope was entering through the garden portal. The spectacle was great. He comes from there and goes to there. Finally, the Holy Father entered the estate through a small side entrance of the garden.³⁴

The resulting disorder is expressed by the anonymous chronicler through a brief change from the otherwise predominant imperfect tense of the historical narrative to the present tense of an immediate event. Quite obviously, the ceremonial construct devised by Cardinal Annibaldo and/or his master of ceremonies was prone to failure. Best intentions and meticulous planning could not neutralize intrusions of contingency. The cardinal clad in precious liturgical vestments and followed by twenty chaplains at least managed to preserve a remnant of protocol dignity reaching the first intended space without further incidents (albeit on a different processional route): the chapel. Disturbance of order and the appearance of chaos would proliferate later at the banquet as well.

Rooms and Walls

What plays a major role in both descriptions are the aspects of spatiality and materiality. This concerns, on the one hand, the rooms in which the receptions took place and, on the other, the concrete ceremonial procedure in the exchange of gifts, the course of the banquets and the *divertissements*. The source gives the impression that the stone structure of the residence's chapel is not discernible due to the abundance of decorative precious silk and brocade fabrics. Walls seem to have dematerialized. The chapel was

la quale era parata di finisimi drapi d'oro e di seta, di capoletti di lana, di tapeti per terra; insomma, in niuna parte de la chiesa ned in terra, ned intorno, ned a alto, si vedeva se no drapi d'oro, veluti, tapeti per terra, e capoletti, a meraviglia. Ed in costa de l'altare, una sedia papale parata d'un drappo che propriamente pareva una massa d'oro in forma di sedia. L'altare ornato di croci, di reliquie, d'immagine d'oro, di pietre, di paramenti, di dosali, di tante cose e di sì maravigliose beleze, che sarebe impossibile a credere a chi no le vide.

richly draped with gold and silk, with curtains, with fabrics and with tapestries all over the floor and everywhere in the church. One could not see the floor, the walls or the sides of the chapel because of the many decorations, because everything was decorated; one could only see the altar and the pope's chair, which resembled a gold mass in the shape of a chair. The altar was adorned with crosses, with relics, with

34 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 86; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 199; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 375.

images of gold and precious stones, miters and other liturgical garments, and with other splendid beauties such as one could not imagine.³⁵

Such liturgical opulence, such adornment was actually reserved only for the very highest feast days within the Church calendar. Quite obviously, the pope was to be made aware that the cardinal counted this visit among these feast days.³⁶

The same impression of excess applies to the bedroom prepared for the pope which also presented itself as a dream made of fabric. And it seems important to the chronicler to note that these were *new* fabrics and *new* curtains, that they had been purchased specifically for the occasion. The bed curtains were decorated with the personal coat of arms of the pope and thus expressed the heraldic appropriation of the room by Clement VI in a meaningful way. The papal bedroom was part of an apartment consisting of three, in the case of Pedro of even four rooms, two bedrooms and a *sala*, which served as small, personal dining room.

The document allows us to draw conclusions about the purposeful and consistent transfer of the spatial order in the Avignonesse period. The three rooms designed for the pope in the place in which he was a guest correspond in number and sequence to the apartment that he occupied in his palace in Avignon. Therefore, a part of Avignon was transferred to the countryside, in order to meet the needs of the ceremonial, but also in order to make the pope feel at home. Thus, wherever the pope stayed, not only was Rome to be found, but also a sequence of rooms that corresponded to that of the papal palace.³⁷

Gifts

The exchange of gifts was obviously an essential part of such receptions:

venono cherici e scudieri di messer Anibaldo. E l'uno de' cherici a Nostro Signore: "Padre Santo, egli è quaggiù un destriere bianco belissimo e nobilissimo; ed ecco due anella, ed uno nappo coperchiato che si mette in su un piede, come voi vedete. Il cardinale suplica a la Vostra Santità che vi piaccia di prendere queste cose". Nostro Signore prese l'anella, che fu un grosissimo zafiro ed un grosissimo topazio, e mise segle in dito; e prese il nappo, e comandò che fosse preso il destriere. Il nappo incontanente donò a l'uno de' quatro cavalieri che 'l serviva inanzi. Fu detto, e coi si parla,

35 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 85; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 199; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 374.

36 As a relic of a glorious past, some cathedral and abbey churches hold on to this practice. Nowadays, it is mainly the altar that is decorated with reliquaries and liturgical vessels in silver and gold on high feast days. Praised by the ornament is Christ alone, considered to be the treasure above all treasures.

37 Maccarrone, 'Ubi est papa, ibi est Roma'; Polancec, 'Ibi papa, ubi Roma'.

che 'l destriere si pregia di .cccc. fiorini d'oro, l'anella di .cl. fiorini d'oro; il nappo, di .c. fiorini d'oro.

One of the clerics brought the pope a beautiful white horse, two rings, and a bowl with a lid on it ... Cardinal Annibaldo asked His Holiness to accept these gifts. Our Father took the ring with the large sapphire and the topaz and put it on his finger. Then he took the bowl and gave orders to take the horse. He handed the bowl to one of the four servants who surrounded him. This is how it happened and it was said that the horse cost 400 gold florins, the ring 150 gold florins and the bowl 100 gold florins.³⁸

In total the cardinal handed over gifts to the pope worth 650 florins. One can understand the scope of this financial engagement by means of comparison: it was possible to purchase over 320 pigs or 160 calves for this sum. It could also have been used to buy 50 precious panels of fabric to cover the walls or to purchase 20 barrels of the most delicate wine consumed at the papal court coming from Saint Pourçain. A type of wine, by the way, which apparently flowed in streams at the reception: 'una fontana, che nel mezzo era una toricella, ed in sulla toricella avea una colona che gitava da cinque parti vino: da l'uno vernaccia, dal secondo greco, dal terzo bielna, dal quarto sanporciano, dal quinto vino renesè' (The wines of Rociella, San Porciano, and Reno were present in such large quantities that there was enough for everyone. The wine was excellent).³⁹ The quality of the wine was matched by the eccentricity of its presentation. Five kinds of wine poured in five streams from a fountain, or more precisely, from a small column on the fountain. This fountain had been brought in after the fifth course and captivated with a naturalistic decoration: 'Intorno in su le sponde de la detta fontana avea paoni che parevano vivi, ed erano cotti, co le code a padiglioni, avevavi fagiani, perdici e grue, ceceri ed ogni salvagina d'ucielli' (At the foot of the fountain were peacocks all around, which seemed to be alive, but prepared, and their tail feathers beat a wheel in which there were pheasants, partridges, cranes, and other birds).⁴⁰

Not only was the pope given precious gifts, but also the sixteen cardinals accompanying him were each able to enjoy a precious ring. Especially when compared to the description of Cardinal Gómez's behaviour just one day later one gets the impression of an overall *too much*. However, ring gifts so prominently highlighted at the banquet hosted by Annibaldo are also found in Pedro Gómez's last will. The Spanish cardinal gave each of his executors

38 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 88; Kersch, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 201; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 377.

39 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 91; Kersch, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 202; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 377. In general Renouard, 'La consommation des grands vins'.

40 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 88; Kersch, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 201; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 375:.

in cardinal rank a ring worth 50 florins, whereas the other executors each received 100 florins in cash.⁴¹

Annibaldo's love of luxury was notorious and very well known to his contemporaries. Petrarch mentions it in a letter to the cardinal himself interpreting it a weakness in character.⁴² Petrarch opens this letter (entitled *Contra avaritiam pontificum*, 'Against the avarice of bishops'), by citing a couple of ancient authors describing the monstrosity and destructive power of *avaritia*. What he is concerned with, however, is the behaviour of the cardinal himself. Apparently, Petrarch had visited the cardinal shortly before writing the letter and was horrified by the altars that bent under the weight of silver and gold in the cardinal's palace. Christ, according to Petrarch, does not need the worship manifested in gold and jewels, on the contrary: it is this kind of obscene worship that provokes his wrath: 'He [Christ] hates not gold, but the greedy, who in their desire for more and more know no measure' (Non aurum odit ille sed cupidos, quibus optandi querendique nullus est finis).⁴³ What is striking is Petrarch's harsh judgement, which is only inadequately cushioned by phrases of apology or modesty. Even though Petrarch assures Cardinal Annibaldo at the beginning that he would speak to the conscience of all those whom he sees threatened by *avaritia* in this way, the use of a moral cudgel, which in some sections is also rhetorically quite crudely carved, with regard to one of the most influential representatives of the curia is nevertheless very surprising. Petrarch emphasizes that clerical wealth not only runs counter to the evangelical commandment of poverty, but is also absurd insofar as the accumulation of values and wealth inevitably implies their passing on, i.e. inheritance. If, therefore, worldly people legitimize their excessive striving for possessions by the fact that they think only of the provision of their

41 Pansier, 'Histoire du monastère de Ste. Praxède', p. 82: 'Volumus autem et ordinamus, ut anuli emanant pretio quolibet quinquaginta florenos dandos singulos et assignandos singulis dictorum dominorum executorum nostrorum cardinalibus; singulis vero aliorum executorum nostrorum centum florenos auri relinquimus et legamus'; The will of Cardinal Gómez, dated 26 February 1348, has survived (Avignon, AD Vaucluse, 77 H 50, liasse 2, n. 1). As with most of his peers, Gómez's testament focused on what served to perpetuate his own *memoria*. In his particular case this was the monastery of S. Praxedis in Avignon, to which he had already felt a special bond during his lifetime, which he designated as his burial place and endowed with large sums of money. Multiple mass stipends and anniversaries in various churches served the same goal. After a long list of different legacies and dispositions, the cardinal's familiars and servants are at the end of the post-mortem chain of exploitation. They are allocated precisely graduated sums of money. The poor ('pauperibus Jhesu Christi') are assigned the everyday, non-liturgical clothing of the cardinal. An edition of the testament can be found in Pansier, 'Histoire du monastère de Ste. Praxède', pp. 76–84. The printing of Andreas Kistner's PhD dissertation from 2017 'Kirchenfürst und Würmerfraß. Kardinalstestamente (1305–1378)' is imminent. I would like to thank Kistner for his permission to consult the edition.

42 Belluomo Anello, 'La "Familiare" VI,1 di Petrarca'.

43 Petrarca, *Le familiari*, lib. VI. ch. 1 (*Ad Anibaldum Tusculanum episcopum cardinalem, contra avaritiam pontificum*), pp. 47–54, at p. 52.

offspring, this excuse for clerics is also obsolete: 'This is not a concealment of vice' (*velamen vitii nullum est*).⁴⁴

The last will of the cardinal shows how much in wealth he actually had to bequeath. The absence of cardinalitial account books, in which, for example, the acquisition of precious tableware or silverware would have been documented, cannot be compensated for by testaments, but last wills do provide valuable clues with regard to some of the items that were also used at the two guest banquets described. Precious things are passed on. This also applies to tableware and silver. This had already been the practice in the thirteenth century. Valentina Brancone already pointed in this direction in 2009 and provided research with meaningful inventory lists of books and mobile goods formerly owned by cardinals.⁴⁵

Unlike in the case of the two Avignon cardinals Pedro Gómez and Annibaldo Ceccano, detailed inventories of household effects are available for some of their predecessors. They were not part of the actual wills, but were commissioned by the executors *post mortem* — most likely with a view to a possible sale or auction or to facilitate their distribution to the cardinal's loyal followers. One example among many: the inventory *post obitum* of the movables of Cardinal Luca Fieschi, cardinal deacon of Santa Maria in Via Lata. Created cardinal in 1300, he had witnessed the transfer of the Curia to Avignon and died there on 31 January 1336.⁴⁶ The extensive inventory (*Inventarium rerum bone memorie domini Luce Sancte Marie in Via Lata diaconi cardinalis*) of his movables also includes sections entitled *Argentum album*, white silver, and *Argentum deauratum et laboratum*, gilded and worked silver, where all those items are listed, that were used at the cardinal's banquet table — from four large sterling silver wine jugs with enamelled lids ('*IIII^{or} poti magni pro vino de argento albo cum esmaltis in coperculis de liga sterlingorum*') to four large silver plates ('*IIII^{or} platelli magni de argento albo*'), twelve large bowls ('*Item duodecim scutelle magne forme, que sunt de liga sterlingorum*'), to four small silver candlesticks ('*IIII^{or} candelabra parva de argento albo*') and many things more.⁴⁷ This gives a rather adequate impression of what might have been found on Annibaldo Ceccano's and Pedro Gómez's tables in 1343.

Annibaldo Ceccano wrote his testament on 17 June 1348, anticipating the plague that would strike Avignon with great force in the summer of 1348.⁴⁸

44 Petrarca, *Le familiari*, lib. vi. ch. 1, p. 50. Birgitta of Sweden can be used as another example of someone with influence and viable curial networks rebuking the cardinal in sharp tones. She did not fail to point out to the cardinal in Rome in 1350 the dangers of too much luxury uttering urgent admonitions against overly public manifestations of luxury, compare: Birgitta of Sweden, *Revelaciones*, ch. 78, pp. 245–48.

45 Brancone, *Il tesoro dei cardinali del Duecento*.

46 Brancone, *Il tesoro dei cardinali del Duecento*, pp. 171–81; De Rosa, *Luca Fieschi alla corte di Avignone*; Ameri, *Luca Fieschi. Cardinale, collezionista, mecenate*.

47 Brancone, *Il tesoro dei cardinali del Duecento*, pp. 172–73, 176.

48 Avignon, AD Vaucluse, 20 H 6, n. 7; critical edition edition in Dykmans, 'Le cardinal Annibal

He decreed that a large part of his fortune should be used for a new Franciscan convent to be founded in Ceccano, consisting of at least twenty friars.⁴⁹ Unlike Pedro Gómez, he possessed considerable real estate, in addition to his *domus magna* in Avignon, *domus nostrae* located in Villeneuve, but also other houses located within the diocese of Avignon are explicitly mentioned. Whether among them was the property in Sorgues, where the reception in honour of Clement VI took place, is not entirely certain, but probable. Individual everyday utensils that did not serve liturgical use are not mentioned. Here it can probably be assumed that the *bona mobilia* were sold by the executors of the will and that the money obtained in this way was used for the realization of the extensive legacies in monetary form. Something of the splendour of the liturgical vestments with which both cardinals sought to impress the pope upon arrival at their summer residences is also conveyed when one reads about the workmanship and artistic decoration of all the copes and chasubles that both cardinals donated to different institutions. Pedro Gómez, for example, bequeathed to his Roman title church Santa Praxedis a whole set of liturgical vestments, gold fringed with elaborately embroidered figures.⁵⁰ Toledo Cathedral was given 'our wonderful cape' (*pluviale nostrum pulcrum*) and an altar frontal on which figures in gold stood out on red Florentine velvet; and it was specifically mentioned that the cope was gold fringed in the English manner with images ('*ad ymagines*').⁵¹ Annibaldo bequeathed to his new foundation in Ceccano a total of four complete sets of liturgical vestments in the colours gold, red, purple, and black, which (in terms of colour) covered a large part of the liturgical year. We learn that birds were embroidered on the red velvet vestments ('*cum avibus*') to be used on the feast of Pentecost and on the memorial days of martyrs.⁵²

Let us stop this enumeration of items and their worth. The thrust should be clear: in the eyes of the author of the source the gift-giving was equally impressive and obscene, a completely over-dimensioned act of generosity that may have impressed those present, but hardly the pope himself.

de Ceccano', pp. 281–311; Lützelshwab, 'Horribilitates et crudelitates'; Lützelshwab, 'Papst und Pest'.

49 Dykmans, 'Le cardinal Annibal de Ceccano', p. 290.

50 Pansier, 'Histoire du monastère de Ste. Praxède', p. 79: '*unam cappellam de dyaspro, que habeat casulam, dalmaticam, tunicellam, amictos et albas, cingulos, stolas et manipulos concedentes habeatque ipsa casula romanum auriffrisium cum figuris eidem ecclesie sancte Praxedis*'.

51 Pansier, 'Histoire du monastère de Ste. Praxède', p. 81: '*pluviale nostrum pulcrum ... ac quoddam frontale ad ymagines factas de auro in velluto rubeo de opere Florentino, pluviale vero predictum est cum auriffrisiis anglicanis pulcris ad ymagines*'.

52 Dykmans, 'Le cardinal Annibal de Ceccano', p. 305: '*paramenta alba, videlicet planetam, dalmaticam, tunicellam et pluviale ad folia de auro; item unum paramentum rubeum completum de catassamito vel de panno totaliter aureo cum avibus; item unum paramentum violaceum completum; item paramenta nigra*'.

The Banquet

The impression of *too much* continues during the festive banquet:

Quivi furono nove vivande triplicate, che furono ventisette, di tante diversitadi, che a volerle scrivere non ò memoria; e questa penna perderebe la temperatura, però ch'ò a scrivere molte altre cose: ma in soma, qui fu d'ogni cosa che si può pensare che fosse cara, bona, migliore e ottima.

Nine courses were served, each with three different dishes, twenty-seven different dishes in total. If I wanted to describe them all, I would not have enough memory and the writing pen would dry out, while there are many other things to report. On the whole, there was everything you could imagine there, whether it was expensive, good, better or the very best.⁵³

The author refrains from describing the individual dishes in terms of consistency and taste.⁵⁴ What seems important to him, however, is their presentation, is what pleases not only the palate but also the eye. The display began to culminate after the third course, when a large basket in the form of a cage intended for wild animals was brought in: 'cioè, un grandissimo cerbio che pareva vivo, ed era cotto, un cinghiale, cavriuoli, lievri, conigli; che tuti parevano vivi ed erano cotti' (In it was a deer, that appeared to be alive, but it was prepared, as well as a wild boar, a goat, rabbits and hares. All of them seemed to be still alive, but they were already cooked).⁵⁵ This kind of optical illusion, in which it was clear to all involved what level of artistry underlay it, continued. As a special form of culinary artistry, it mirrored the artistry of the gifts given to the pope and his entourage. The Italian-born Annibaldo Ceccano seems to have favoured small arts and jewellery — objects for which Italy was famous at that time. Culinary illusionism perfectly fits into this wider picture.

The Avignonese papacy has always had bad press not least due to its nepotistic tendencies.⁵⁶ The text shows in what unexpected forms this nepotism could present itself during the reception in the banquet hall:

ed ebervi una tavola, dove furono dodici fanciulli cherici, che 'l maggiore à dodici anni, che sono tutto n'poti del papa o streti di parentado, e continuo

53 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 87; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 201; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 375.

54 An impression of the menus served on such occasions is given by Laurioux, 'Les menus de banquets dans les livres de cuisine'. In Avignon, as an important trading city, goods and information from all known parts of the world flowed together, including spices from the Orient which were used at the papal table, compare: Gadrat, 'Avignon, porte pour l'Orient'; Bueno, 'L'Orient in città'.

55 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 87; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 201; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 376.

56 Pasquini, 'Il mito polemico di Avignone'; Vasina, 'Dante di fronte ad Avignone'; Picone, 'Avignone come tema letterario'; Gagliano, 'La polemica antiavignonese di Petrarca'.

da una pezza in qua vanno e stanno co' lui dove che sia ed àno maestri, cavalieri, scudieri, che gli amaestrano e costumano, e servongli. [...] a ciascuno una cintura e borsa [...], cioè di .xxv. fiorini d'oro.

There was also a table for twelve young clerics, not older than twelve years, all nephews of the pope or bound to him by the ties of *familia*. These boys travel with the pope and have their own servants at their side, who teach and serve them [...]. Likewise, the twelve young clerics received ... twenty-five gold florins each.⁵⁷

The text testifies to the presence of not just one, but twelve nephews under the age of twelve during the receptions. All *nepoti* were either real nephews or bound to the pope by ties of the papal *familia*. They were looked after by specially trained personnel, by people 'who teach and serve them'. These *nepoti* were considered the future leaders within the curia. Their presence was therefore justified not only by their close ties with the reigning pope but also by their future career in the bosom of the Church. One more thing concerning hierarchy has to be mentioned. Both cardinals combined two possible approaches to mark hierarchical differences: the food consumption that staggered in time and seating positions, i.e., proximity or distance to the main person present in the room.

Divertissements

One of the biggest challenges was to coordinate the work of three separately operating kitchens, that of the pope,⁵⁸ that of the cardinals and that providing food for all others guests. Not everything went as smoothly as desired, however. Food did not always reach the tables at the desired temperature, legions of servants interfered with and bumped into each other. The anonymous chronicler saw the reason for these disturbances in the *divertissements*, which interrupted the serving of the individual courses at some points and took up so much time that any kitchen, no matter how well it operated, would have been overwhelmed.

No piece of entertainment took more time than what happened after the seventh course. Ten horses with ten armed *chavalieri* came into the hall and fought a tournament that lasted about an hour. The chronicler remarks that 'it was marvelous to watch the tournament and the fights'⁵⁹ and thus shows

57 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 87; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 200; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 376.

58 Genequand, *Officiers et Gouvernement de l'Église*, pp. 157–68. The papal personal chefs held a special position of trust, since it was primarily their responsibility to prevent poisoning of the pope, Collard, 'Le banquet fatal'; Lentsch, 'La Proba'.

59 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 88; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 201; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 378: 'E veramente e' fu una bellissima cosa a vedere, e nuova giuoco'.

himself quite receptive to the overwhelming-strategy intended by Annibaldo. However, not only the responsible kitchen staff, but also the papal ceremonial staff may have had a completely different view of the spectacle. Some may have longed for the continuation of the meal, others for a return of something that was absolutely crucial to enhance the dignity of the pope: silence.

Instead, all the *divertissements* were associated with sound and even noise. What sound was produced by the *chavalieri* who 'played the various instruments as people played in Avignon' during the third course, is not clear from the chronicler's account. It is, however, likely that it was opposite to the sacred chant the guests had heard before the ninth course. Admittedly it was not the Gregorian chant still favoured by Pope Clement VI's predecessors, but early polyphony: 'e per tramessa fu udito un cantare di cherici, ma non veduti; di boci d'ogni maniera, grosse, men grosse, mezzane, piciole e puerili' (One did not see the singers, but one heard voices of every sort: high, less high, half voices, small, and childlike).⁶⁰ In Avignon, it was in the chapels of the cardinals that this most advanced form of musical practice, the *Ars Nova*, was primarily practised. In fact Annibaldo could have drawn on his own resources here and thus convinced the pope of his progressive artistic mind.⁶¹ It is known that Annibaldo's chapel included singers who came from Paris, the epicentre of modern Church music at that time.⁶² Celestial spherical music was soon replaced again by much more rustic sounds when 'vene il mastro quoco del cardinale con una brigata di suoi compangni cogli stormenti inanzi, e furono da trenta, con falcole dificiate, con sonagli' (the Cardinal's cook came in with a brigade of his own, led with instruments. It was a group of thirty men with torches and bells).⁶³

The text does not inform us what the pope thought of this spectacle or of the six fencers who staged a mock fight in front of the table, making one believe, based on the sounds of weapons, that thirty men were fighting with each other. The pope's only reaction, which is explicitly described, came when, after the reception, he rose 'Apresso il vino e le spezie Nostro Signore si levò suso de la sedia ed andòne ad una finestra sopra il giardino e sopra' prati e sopra la Sorga [...] onde egli prese solazzo e diletto' (and went to a window from which one could see the garden, the surrounding meadows, and the Sorgue [...] which he delighted in).⁶⁴

60 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 88; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 202; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 378.

61 Fuller, 'A Phantom Treatise of the Fourteenth Century'; Anheim, 'Diffusion et usage de la musique polyphonique mesurée'; Tomasello, *Music and Ritual at Papal Avignon*, pp. 12–20, 216–18.

62 Guillemain, *La cour pontificale d'Avignon*, p. 262.

63 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 89; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 202; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 378.

64 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 89; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 202; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 379.

The peaceful picture that presented itself to his eyes, the positioning in the midst of a *hortus conclusus* and the silence that accompanied it, was obviously much more appropriate to the papal *persona* than everything that had occurred before.⁶⁵

The Reception Given by Pedro Gómez (1 May 1343)

The ostentatious display of luxury shown by Annibaldo Ceccano could hardly be outdone. Therefore it comes as no surprise that the reception given by the Castilian Cardinal Pedro Gómez in honour of the pope the following day was purposefully much more modest, but at the same time much more dignified in its overall reduction. This change in tone and solemnity was tangible from the very beginning: Pedro Gómez, eighteen cardinals, and other clerics went to meet the pope 'with the utmost solemnity according to custom and without noise'.⁶⁶ The fact that the cardinal's residence was well guarded and 'no one was disturbed by any strangers' was worth a special mention by the chronicler.⁶⁷ Does this mean in reverse that on the day before no attempt had been made to limit the influx of strangers, but that, on the contrary, one wanted to additionally emphasize the special nature of the reception, its eventful character, by the presence of enthusiastic fence guests — fence guests producing additional noise? It is impossible to tell, but the importance given to order and tranquillity of the latter banquet is obvious.

The description of the logistical procedure of serving the pope, cardinals, and other clergy, who were supplied from three different kitchens, points in the same direction. The 'coordinators of the cardinals and other people in charge of the wine and other things' ensured that everything ran smoothly, and 'since the doors to the stairs of his palace were closed, the noise of these people was not disturbing'.⁶⁸ In Annibaldo's case, the coordinators, among whom may have been the pope's and the cardinals' masters of ceremony, as well as the heads of the household, who usually acted as chief of protocol,⁶⁹ obviously found it difficult to dovetail the abundance of dishes

65 Wirth, 'Hortus conclusus'; Fowler, 'Acoustic Delay'; Nabert, 'De l'hortus conclusus au jardin de l'âme'.

66 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 91; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 203; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 380: 'Messer di Spagna lo ricevieta con grandissima solenità e co molto ordine, senza romore'. See also Jezierski's and Kjær's introduction in this volume.

67 Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 380: 'E però che fecie bene guardare le porte de la sua bastita, no v'èbe pressa di gente da fare noia'.

68 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 90; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 203; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 381: 'Onde serato l'uscio de le scale da montare in sul palagio, niuna noia si poteva ricevere di strette di gente'.

69 Genequand, *Officiers et Gouvernement de l'Église*, pp. 92–99.

and *divertissements* in such a way as to maintain calm and dignity during the feast. It is interesting to note that this personnel, with its so important control and steering function, only makes a marginal appearance. Thus, one learns nothing about whether the specialized papal staff was involved in the organization of this act of hospitality or whether the cardinal's employees were exclusively responsible for it. This is not entirely improbable, since cardinals tended to run households on a smaller scale which were modelled on the papal household in terms of their office structure.⁷⁰ The chronicler comparatively clarifies that the previous day games and *divertissements* had been responsible for a massive disruption of the reception. In Pedro Gómez's case the food came to the table 'fresher and in equal portions for all' and was 'finer and more carefully prepared', because 'there were no games performed or other disturbances in the hall'.⁷¹

While the day before a stream of precious gifts had descended on the pope and cardinals, the only gift Pedro provided was a Spanish horse worth 1000 florin. It was given to the pope. The cardinals and all other dignitaries went away empty-handed. The Spaniard showed himself no less generous but focused his financial engagement on only one item: the horse. More modest was the decoration of the rooms, where the textile luxury was significantly reduced: 'I paramenti de le sale e de le camere di messer di Spagna furono più temperatamente fatti, che quegli di messer Anibaldo' (The fabrics and tapestries of the halls and rooms of the Spanish cardinal were less elaborate than those of Annibaldo Ceccano).⁷² *Summa summarum*, 'it was very quiet everywhere and there was great order' (Sì che in ogni parte andò la cosa molto cheta e con grandissimo ordine).⁷³

70 Beattie, 'Die Kardinäle und das kulturelle Leben im päpstlichen Avignon'; Verger, 'L'entourage du cardinal Pierre de Monteruc'; Rey-Courtel, 'L'entourage d'Anglic Grimoard'; Genequand, *Une politique pontificale en temps de crise*, pp. 79–119.

71 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 91; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 203; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 381: 'Le vivande furono assai, e furono molto bene aparechiate; e però che no vi furono tramesse né giuochi né così fatte cose, che inpedisono la sala, venono le vivande più a punto e più ordinatamente che a casa di messer Anibaldo; e furono nobilissime e dilitatamente fatte'.

72 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 90; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 203; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 380.

73 Loye, 'Réceptions du pape Clément VI', p. 91; Kerscher, *Architektur als Repräsentation*, p. 203; Casanova, 'Visita di un papa avignonese', p. 381.

Concluding Remarks

Less is sometimes more. Pedro Gómez, the second host, seems to have internalized this maxim. He convinced with a certainly splendid, but much more restrained reception.⁷⁴ More restrained, at least, than what Annibaldo Ceccano offered the pope and his entourage the day before. In his case, the complexity of the ceremonial procedure was hardly manageable, and the excess of food, drink, and entertainment during the breaks had a counterproductive effect.

The description of the reception that Cardinal Annibaldo hosted for Pope Clement is characterized by two opposing elements: order and chaos. One would expect the former, while the latter dominates and astonishes. It is tempting to speculate whether the anonymous author emphasizes the disruption of the ceremonial hospitality in honour of the pope as a way to pass judgement on the problematic personality and the lack of political-diplomatic skills of the host himself. It is striking that while in Annibaldo's case there is partial disorder, even chaos, underlined by the partly unbridled and uncontrolled nature of the festivities, in Pedro's case there is order, there is control, symbolized by the absence of noise. If, as Philippe Genequand so aptly noted, at the papal court one feared noise, confusion, and everything resulting from it, then one must have been satisfied with the reception Pedro organized.⁷⁵ If moderation, self-control, and wisdom are things to strive for, things that (as Louis IX of France, canonized in 1298, would have put it) are benchmarks of successful *prud'hommie*, then it was certainly Pedro Gómez who demonstrated true *prud'hommie* (closely linked to the monastic concept of *discretio*) with his reception.⁷⁶ Successful human relationships are based on friendly (and in most cases moderate) interactions.⁷⁷ This includes receptions especially against the background of their communicative (verbal and non-verbal) potential.⁷⁸ Noise and chaos oppose these interactions, especially in the (ceremonial) environment of the pope, where such things had to be avoided at all costs.⁷⁹ In his case, well ordered sobriety beats unbridled opulence and *discretio* triumphs over the empty display of opulence. In this way, the anonymous author's description can also be read as contribution to the art of good governance, sort of disguised mirror of princes (*Fürstenspiegel*). It is thus no major leap to entertain the idea that the text in question was probably written in the circle of Cardinal Gómez or among the papal entourage by

74 On this very spot, from 1343 onwards, he founded a monastery, endowing it sumptuously in his will.

75 Genequand, *Officiers et Gouvernement de l'Église*, p. 178.

76 Le Goff, 'Saint Louis à table'; Scholl, 'The Mother of Virtues'; Böckmann, 'Discretio im Sinne der Regel Benedikts'; Ingham, 'Discretio'.

77 Gauvard, 'Cuisine et paix en France'.

78 Lazzari, 'Mangiare insieme'; Montanari, *Mangiare da cristiani*, pp. 180–93; Montanari, 'La tavola come rappresentazione del mondo'.

79 Vincent, *Les confréries médiévales dans le royaume de France*, pp. 130–35.

someone who had friendly inclinations towards the Spaniard and were less fond of Annibaldo Ceccano.

It should have become clear now: the ambiguity of the reception mirrors the fact that acts of hospitality can be meticulously planned, but not controlled down to the last detail. They are prone to disruption. Cultural codes of pope and the hosting cardinals might have been the same. What Annibaldo forgot and Pedro respected was the divide between the papal office and their own standing as cardinals.

Annibaldo Ceccano certainly did not make the mistake of trying to put himself on a par with the pope. What he did not take into account, however, was the fact that a key qualification of the papal office, as of any leader in general, was *discretio*, the wise, sober weighing of facts. And one looks in vain for sobriety in Annibaldo's case. A (well-intentioned) excess, a kind of ceremonial *embarras de richesse*, does not necessarily unfold the desired effects; strategies aiming at overwhelming are not always crowned with success.

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Dark Delights

From Metaphors of Feast-Like Battles to Ambiguities of Hospitality in the Latin Middle Ages

– Rome has so many subjects. She must feed them.
– They can eat war!

Gladiator II, dir. Ridley Scott

Introduction

For starters, consider the following scene from Helmold of Bosau's *Chronica Slavorum* (written c. 1163–1171). It is Duke Henry of Alt-Lübeck's (c. 1066–1127) harangue with which he encouraged his Christian troops to give battle to the pagan Rugians in a winter campaign of 1123/1124. After a day-long pursuit through the snows of the northern Germany, his troops finally faced their enemy, who surrounded them on a peninsula. Seeing that the sea cut them off from any possibility of escape, the duke turned to his men:

Mementote, o viri, unde venistis et ubi consistitis. *Ecce mensa posita est, ad quam equo animo nobis accedendum est, nec est locus subterfugii, quin oporteat nos participari deliciis eius.* Ecce mari undique conclusi

* This chapter has greatly benefited from comments by Philip Lavender (Gothenburg), Lars Kjær (London), Miriam Tveit (Bodo), Jacek Banaszkiewicz (Warsaw), Sari Nauman (Gothenburg), Tim Geelhaar (Bielefeld), Auður Magnúsdóttir (Gothenburg), and Ittai Weinryb (New York). Lewis Webb (Gothenburg & Oxford) and Matthew Coulter (Cambridge) generously provided me with examples of metaphors. Previous drafts of this chapter were presented at seminars and conferences at IMAFO in Vienna in 2021, at a conference organized by this project at the Centre of Medieval Studies in Stockholm in 2022, and during the IMC Leeds 2023. I would like to express my thanks to the colleagues and participants of those venues for their kind feedback and suggestions. Funding for the research was provided by Swedish Research Council project 'Ambiguities of Hospitality: Intercultural Integration and Conflict in Host-Guest Relations on the European Borderlands, c. 1000–1350' (VR 2020–01810). The project was conducted at the Department of History, Stockholm University and at the Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg, 2021–2024.

The chapter is dedicated to Hans Jacob Orning on his sixtieth birthday.

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Guests, Strangers, Aliens, Enemies: Ambiguities of Hospitality in the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1350, ed. by Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Kjær, CURSOR 45 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), pp. 255–302
BREPOLS PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.5.149659

sumus, *hostes ante nos, hostes post nos, periitque a nobis fugae presidium. Confortamini igitur in domino Deo excelso et estote viri bellatores, quia unum e duobus restat aut vincere aut mori fortiter.*

(Remember, men, where you came from and where you are! *Here is a table prepared for us*, which we must sit down at with heavy hearts; *there is no way to avoid it and we have to partake in this delight.* Look: we are closed in by the sea all around, the enemies in front of us, *the enemies behind us*, no way to escape left for us. Be strong in our God Almighty and brace yourselves because there is only one thing left for us to do: to win or to die like men.¹)

What did Duke Henry — or rather the priestly chronicler ventriloquizing him half a century later — mean when he said that a battlefield was like a table and fighting felt like feasting? What similar delights did bloody combat and cheerful commensality share? What kind of excessive pleasures did these two practices conjure which made them comparable? Was killing pagans and eating exquisite food equally delightful? Though Helmold's metaphor does not really play on the similarity between the two juxtaposed activities but rather on their drastic opposition, it reveals a riddle that merits an investigation.

Before I pose a general question, let me offer a tentative interpretation of this metaphor. Helmold seems to suggest that like feasts battles were communal occasions that were experienced collectively. Unlike the delights of banquets which usually implied voluntary participation, situations of combat, particularly when one party surrounded the other, were unavoidable traps and the invitation to them was or felt unconditional. Feasts, in contrast, were eminently survivable and enjoyable. Battles may have been potentially enjoyable too, but they lacked any guarantees of survival or positive outcomes. Further, Helmold presents Henry's troops as guests and their surrounding enemies (*hostes*) as implicit hosts (*hospes*) setting the table.² For Christians, dying on the battlefield could serve as a direct way to joining the heavenly banquet promised by Christ — so perhaps another, greater host was in the waiting. One practice was not far from the other and both helped to reinforce the Christian warrior identity. Finally, Helmold might have had some personal predilection for such figurative language. It has been demonstrated that his *Chronica* — similarly to William of Tyre's *Historia* as it is explored by Lars Kjør in this volume — was uniquely filled with situations of ambiguous host–guest relations and structured by discourse about hospitality. This seems to have reflected the author's worldview that was shaped by his unique situated experience of the Baltic frontier where the seemingly bona fide host–guest relations often verged on hostility, which easily triggered such odd metaphors.³

1 Helmold of Bosau, *Chronica Slavorum*, ch. 38, pp. 156–57.

2 Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European*, pp. 61–73; Barkan, *The Hungry Eye*, pp. 229–46.

3 Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, pp. 139–74; Kaljundi, 'Medieval Conceptualizations', pp. 25–40.

The synesthetic associations of eating and combat like this one read like eccentric conceptual short circuits between not just disparate, but seemingly opposed domains. It is my contention here that such metaphors, similes, and contrasting comparisons of battles and scenes of combat to scenes and situations of feasting reveal a great deal about the occasional ambiguity of practices and discourses about hospitality in frontier contexts and, more generally, about how hospitality in medieval Europe was sometimes conceptualized as a transgressive type of pleasure analogous to fighting.⁴ But what did medieval authors mean — and they often meant quite different things or many things at once — when they wrote that fighting was like (or radically unlike) feasting, that a battlefield was like a festive table, that enemies were like feasters, or, more generally, that acts of hostility were like/unlike practices of hospitality? What do these establishments of similitude and dissimilitude tell us about the views of host–guest relations in the different contexts in which they were articulated? What kinds of transformative and transgressive potential might hospitality have in order to enable the creation of political, religious, and cultural identities? Or, to paraphrase Caroline Walker Bynum for the sake of wider generalizability of this inquiry: what sort of societies did these articulations of similitude reflect, evoke, or critique?⁵

Metaphors can be studied from a wide variety of viewpoints. As my reading of the fragment from Helmold shows, I am mainly interested in two of their functions: the cognitive-conceptual and the referential. The first concerns the ways they conceptually quilt or stitch together practices and discourses, feasting and warfare, or, broadly, hospitality with hostility, to make the latter notions understandable.⁶ The second concerns what kinds of associations and wider references they rely upon and create. In addressing these two functions, I explore a row of metaphors, similes, and associations of feast-like battles or scenes of combat being compared to feasts in order to understand the explicit or suggested ways in which combat and was un/like feasting. Now and then, however, I consider what those comparisons, by way of a conceptual feedback loop, indirectly tell us about the latent battle-like qualities of feasting or hostile dimensions of hospitality. As literary critic James Wood put it, ‘as soon as you liken x to y , x has changed, and is now $x + y$, which has its own, parallel life.’⁷ Though essentially all examples of metaphors I deal here with are unidirectional — they compare or link scenes of battle to feasting and not the other way round, which is interesting in itself — this conceptual and referential undertow which metaphors create cannot be arrested. As soon as one likens a battle to a feast, not just battles but also feasts have changed and now have their own, parallel and quite ambiguous life.

4 Žižek, *For They Know Not*, pp. 72–81.

5 Bynum, *Dissimilar Similitudes*, p. 90.

6 Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, pp. 95–97.

7 Wood, *The Broken Estate*, p. 51.

The outline of this chapter is as follows. First, I discuss how metaphors function, what they can tell us about the ambiguity of hospitality, and what problems collecting a dataset for this study involved. The second section takes a broad approach in exploring Latin metaphors of feast-like battles from the high Middle Ages together with some of their ancient inspirations. The third section takes these preliminary insights to explore feast-like battles in a specific historical context: the crusader historiography and its warfare dominated by sieges and imagery derived from the Hebrew Bible. The fourth and fifth sections, by way of comparison, consider how the language of hospitality helped to metaphorically frame scenes of warfare and hostility in two vernacular contexts: Old Norse and Middle High German. The sixth section broadens the types of evidence considered here and offers a close study of a visual metaphor. The last section summarizes the findings and ponders what the feedback loop from those metaphors tells us about potentially battle-like, dangerous, or ambiguous aspects of feasting and hospitality in general.

Dealing with Metaphors: Remarks, Pleasure, and Ambiguity

As my opening example shows, empirically this chapter deals with textual breadcrumbs so small they are very easy to overlook. Rhetorical commonplaces and figures of speech are a type of evidence which historians often find as the most banal, empty, and thus happily disregarded, if not actively detested, given how conditioned by Ernst R. Curtius's view of *topoi*, motifs, and literary clichés medievalists are.⁸ On this customary view literary clichés like Helmold used, are inconsequential ornaments which draw attention from the facts to the literariness of the text. At best they can reveal something about the authorial erudition and literary tastes, but nothing about the social or political reality behind them. They are conventionally seen as the site of the unoriginal, of the generic in the pejorative sense of the word.⁹ This depreciatory view pertains particularly to metaphors and the traditional — if misguided — notion of dead metaphors 'as a linguistic expression that had once been novel and poetic, but had since then become part of mundane conventional language, the cemetery of creative thought.'¹⁰ In this light, literary clichés and hackneyed metaphors are treated as epitomes of medieval intellectual conservatism.¹¹

8 Curtius, *European Literature*; Hageneier, *Jenseits der Topik*; Dahl, 'Topos og motiv', pp. 23–36; Black, 'Metaphor', pp. 281–82.

9 Meiner and Tygstrup, 'Fra normativ till historisk', pp. 37–53; MacLochlainn, *The Copy Generic*, pp. 3–5, 17–19.

10 Lakoff, 'The Death of Dead', p. 143; Alm-Arvius, 'Live, Moribund, and Dead', pp. 7–14; Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, pp. 30–31.

11 Jaeger, 'Ernst Robert Curtius', pp. 367–80; Battles, *Medieval Literature*, pp. xv–xvi.

Such perception of metaphors as utterly trivial may miss their informative potential, however. The relative ubiquity of the feast-like battle metaphors, their adaptable replicability, and memetic quality, but above all their generic nature are in fact the very features that make them useful for making sense of the social experience of the world.¹² Furthermore, it is precisely the throwaway status of such metaphors as remarks that trigger surprising associations which makes them also most revealing, I contend. On my reading such off-the-cuff metaphors and comparisons of feast-like battles are sporadically crystallizations of murky beliefs, odd conceptual comparisons, and startling referential intersections, which would otherwise be difficult to formulate explicitly.¹³ When brought back from the dead, so to say, these associatory wormholes spark off and articulate shadowy and transgressive connections between ostensibly disparate domains of feasting and warfare that emerge in opposition to the generally positive notions of hospitality. Following Slavoj Žižek, we could say that a metaphor of this class is ‘a kind of atom of enjoyment, the minimal synthesis of language and enjoyment, units of signs permeated with enjoyment (like a tic we compulsively repeat)’.¹⁴ When thickly described and set deep in the context of their enunciation, such minuscule pieces of intellectual *jouissance* — equal parts insightful, pleasant, and disturbing — become glimmering symptoms of the occasional uneasiness, sense of treachery, and destructive potential dimly associated with host–guest relations, I argue.¹⁵

Before I address them empirically, a few explanatory words regarding metaphors and metaphorical concepts are in place. The basic notion of what metaphors are and how they work — a way of carrying meaning or name across from one place to another (μετά (meta) ‘across’ + φέρω (pherō), ‘to carry’) — has remained quite astoundingly stable since Aristotle’s times.¹⁶ As Kenneth Burke gorgeously defines it, ‘metaphor is a device for seeing something *in terms* of something else. It brings out the thisness of a that, or the thatness of a this.’¹⁷ In that sense, metaphors are perspectival comparisons which establish or designate identity of objects, phenomena, or people by comparing them to something else. They consider A from the point of B, in this case using feasting as a perspective on warfare.¹⁸ Metaphors — particularly structural metaphors, as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson dubbed them —

12 Battles, *Medieval Literature*, pp. xvi–xviii; MacLochlainn, *The Copy Generic*, pp. 5–6, 9–17, 87–90.

13 Žižek, *For They Know Not*, pp. 72–80; MacLochlainn, *The Copy Generic*, pp. 49–54.

14 Žižek, *How to Read Lacan*, p. 78.

15 Meiner, ‘The Double Topology’, pp. 53–77; Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, pp. 74–92; Müller, ‘A Metaphorical Perspective’, pp. 112–15; Swanson, ‘Toward a Psychology of Metaphor’, pp. 163–66.

16 Kłosiński, ‘Metafora’, pp. 310–14; Black, ‘Metaphor’, pp. 282–85; Constable, ‘Medieval Latin Metaphors’, pp. 3–4.

17 Burke, ‘Four Master Tropes’, pp. 421–22.

18 Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 6; Black, ‘Metaphor’, pp. 282–85; Burke, ‘Four Master Tropes’, pp. 422–23; Schaffer, ‘Two Ways to Compare’, pp. 48–50, 52–54.

typically consist of two elements.¹⁹ The first, the source domain from which a concept or image is borrowed to describe the second, the target domain; it is, in other words, a way of mapping one conventional image onto another. Usually, the transfer or mapping of meaning occurs from a more concrete domain to a more abstract one, the latter thus becoming more intellectually graspable, easier to conceptualize.²⁰ In that sense metaphors are more than just literary figures. They can be cognitive and conceptual apparatuses too, because how you metaphorize reveals how you think.²¹

This chapter deals with ambiguities of hospitality and the ways of thinking about host–guest relations expressed through metaphors of battles and scenes of warfare which are framed, compared, or directly linked to feasts, feasting, and food consumption in general. I consider not just metaphors proper (a battle *is* a feast), but also similes and comparisons (a battle *is like* a feast), and, occasionally, looser associations and situations of textual, practical, and spatial proximity between these two types of actions. Such an inclusive approach is motivated by several reasons. First, it enables collecting and dealing with a larger dataset — still relatively small — in which one can later discriminate between different conceptual approaches and types of links between these two domains. Second, as Nelson Goodman argues, conceptually and cognitively metaphors and similes do the same thing. They liken one object or practice to another and should thus be considered jointly, as both to some extent modify the sense of their constitutive elements.²² Third, in order to grasp how hospitality related to hostility it is helpful to explore a wider set of connections between these two semantic fields and then focus on what metaphors specifically can teach us.

As metaphors trade in contradictory qualities, they may at once seem like particularly fortunate and unfortunate objects for studying ambiguities of hospitality. They are fortunate because by their very nature metaphors utilize ambiguity. By conceptually connecting two separate domains or phenomena they establish some sort of similitude or analogy between the two. They imply or create likeness by simultaneously blurring the disconnect between these phenomena and drastically simplifying each of them, reducing each to a few chosen aspects or traits. Two separate things are *like* or *unlike* each other only from a certain limited perspective or a set of conditions which are often culture-dependent and context-coherent.²³ If they were similar in too many or in all aspects, metaphor would either be too vague and incoherent or would not emerge at all, since these two things, by definition, would have to

19 Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

20 Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 2.

21 Cohn, 'Sex and Death in the Rational World', pp. 688–718.

22 Goodman, *Languages of Art*, pp. 77–78: 'The difference between simile and metaphor is negligible. Whether the locution be "is like" or "is", the figure likens the picture to person by picking out a certain common feature.'

23 Schaffer, 'Two Ways to Compare', pp. 48–50, 52–54.

be identical.²⁴ At the same time metaphors as research objects are unfortunate because the conceptual blur, simplification, and ambiguity that make them possible, command their readers to perform an interpretation.²⁵ What our sources present us with are only metaphorical feast-like battles, but they rarely reveal how such metaphors were read or understood. This means our interpretation of metaphors is not just elusive. It depends squarely on the contexts in which they were used, i.e., it hangs on the social and historical contexts of the texts and on the authorial intentions.

Finally, I need to say a few words about the type of data and its collection. First, I focus on non-fiction texts: mainly historiography and hagiography. As the introduction to this volume and Tim Geelhaar's chapter stress, the works of fiction relish in and privilege scenes of duplicitous hospitality and images of feasts that turn into killings. It is thus important to counterbalance this by studying ambiguities of hospitality in texts that were read *as true*, which purportedly had an implicit ambition of verisimilitude. Second, similarly to comparisons metaphors are very difficult to find through automated searches due to their variable and often extended linguistic structure.²⁶ Hence in gathering the examples for this study and similarly to other students of medieval metaphors,²⁷ I relied on serendipitous finds, searches of parts of phrases (e.g. 'quasi ad convivium', 'epulas') in several databases (e.g. *dMGH*, the *Latin Text Archive*, etc.), and generous tips from colleagues. The ambition here is not to work with any kind of representative dataset; metaphors like these are generally quite rare. What is crucial is to understand what such exceptional, critical cases can tell us about tacit conceptualizations of hospitality and its occasional ambiguities.²⁸ The wider we cast the net — and here I cast it across three language domains and images stemming from multiple medieval contexts and societies — the better equipped we are to answer why host–guest relations sometimes felt like relations of hostility.

The Latin Evidence I: Eucharist, Sacrifice, and Eagerness

In what ways were battles like feasts and combat like conviviality? Some of the ideas about this connection were inherited from the ancient authors. Consider the following maxim attributed by Livy to Lucius Aemilius Paullus (c. 229 BCE–160 BCE), a two-time Roman consul and general who conquered Macedonia in the Third Macedonian War (171–168 BCE): 'uolgo dictum ipsius

24 Black, 'Metaphor', pp. 285–90; Jay, 'Introduction: Genres of Blur', pp. 225–27; Kövecses, 'Metaphor, Culture, and Discourse', pp. 18–21; Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, pp. 302–08; Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 71, p. 29, § 77, p. 31.

25 Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, pp. 105–06, 111, 143–44; Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, p. 113; Berndt and Sachs-Hombach, 'Dimensions of Constitutive Ambiguity', pp. 271–82; Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, pp. 440–49.

26 Neubert and Schwandt, 'Comparing in the Digital Age', pp. 391–96.

27 Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 6.

28 Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter*, pp. 77–81.

ferebant, *et conuiuium instruere et ludos parare eiusdem esse qui uincere proelio sciret* (the man who knows how to organize a feast ['conuiuium'] and put on games ['ludos'] is the same man who knows how to win in a battle ['proelio']).²⁹ As Harriet I. Flower argues, this isomorphism between feasts, games, and battles concerned the spectacular, conspicuous character of Roman political culture and the ways these three practices opened up pathways and electoral opportunities to higher magistracies for members of the elite. It took very similar types of resources, organizational skills, and raw capital — but also, to some extent, a tightly related sense of aesthetics and stagecraft — to put on memorable games and banquets to those needed to run military campaigns and leading an army; to make an act of destruction and consumption (vicarious or personal) seem desirable and glorious.³⁰ This idea of the essential transferability of skills between war making and show making had a long shelf life. For instance, in the early twelfth-century Cosmas of Prague put a following harangue into Duke Vlastislav's mouth as he led the tribe of Lučané to a battle against the Czechs:

'Quid opus est armis? Arma ad speciem milicie portare faciatis. Quin pocius falcones, nisos, herodios et omne huiusmodi genus volatiliū, quod magis aptum est ad iocunditatem et ludum, tollite vobiscum, quibus carnes inimicorum, si forte sufficient, dabimus ad vescendum'

(*'What are the weapons for? Wear the weapons as martial splendour, but bring rather falcons, hawks, kestrels, and other such birds with you, more apt for entertainment and play ['ludum'], to which we will give the flesh of the enemies to devour, if there is enough of it'*).³¹

Cosmas's and Livy's contrasting comparison also exemplify well the contention that in the strict sense the 'opposites (like sugar and salt) are things alike in all significant respects but one', as Marshall Sahlins put it building on Floyd Lounsbury's work.³²

Connecting warfare and soldierly consumption was further expanded and made more layered by the precepts of Christianity. Perhaps the most prevalent context in which such associations appear are thus pre-battle harangues of military leaders similar to the one from Helmold.³³ After all, 'let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die', as the book of Isaiah (22. 13) taught. The connection quickly became a commonplace. Consider, for instance, the non-metaphorical juxtaposition of feasting and warfare in the description

29 Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 45. 32. 11. 1, <https://latin.packhum.org/loc/914/1/o#1752>; Rome's *Mediterranean Empire*, trans. by Chaplin, ch. 32, p. 242. On Livy's transmission during the Middle Ages, see Reynolds, 'Livy', pp. 205–14.

30 Flower, 'Spectacle and Political Culture', pp. 322–43; Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, pp. 143–46; Engberg-Pedersen, *Martial Aesthetics*.

31 Cosmas of Prague, *Chronica Bohemorum*, I. 10, pp. 46–47; Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, pp. 202–03.

32 Sahlins, *The New Science*, p. 88.

33 Bliese, 'Rhetoric and Morale', p. 215.

of the Battle of Evesham from the *Lanercost Chronicle*, one of the decisive battles of the Second Barons' War (1264–1267) that took place on 4 August 1265. On the morning of the battle Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, exhorted his men: 'Eamus mori constanter quoniam hic jentati sumus, et in caelo manducabimus' (We go on in a constant manner, since we have taken breakfast here together, and we shall dine together in heaven).³⁴ Also later during the day, when Simon's forces were surrounded and the baron commanded his friend, Hugh Despenser, to take flight the latter replied: 'My lord, my lord, let it be. *Today we shall all drink from the same cup, just as we have done in the past*'.³⁵ The meals and drinks enjoyed together did not merely serve as a way of feeding the troops and bringing the knights and their leaders closer to each other in the face of peril, but they functioned as political pledges and community-building promises. In the eyes of the chroniclers of the Battle of Evesham, Simon, like Duke Henry, alluded also to the heavenly banquet awaiting Christian warriors for their sacrifice and the spilling of their blood, thus more distantly evoking the eucharistic symbolism.³⁶

This eucharistic imagery of the battle is spelled out to the full in Stephen V Báthory of Ecsed (István Báthory, 1430–1493), Voivode of Transylvania's harangue preceding the battle of his Christian troops against the Turks in the Battle of Breadfield (Hungarian: Kenyérmező) on 13 October 1479. On the day of the battle the voivode ordered his troops to be fed both a proper breakfast and the mystical meal of eucharist, aiming to strengthen them both in physical and spiritual terms.³⁷ After the mass Stephen delivered a long speech encouraging his troops to sacrifice themselves for a long list of things, among them, their *patria*, freedom, wives and children, faith, fortunes, and salvation. They were to make themselves ready to abstain from the temporal delights and pleasures from this list for the ability to enjoy the eternal ones, however.³⁸ To hammer this point home the voivode made an explicit comparison between the prospect of his troops spilling blood on the battlefield and the Christ's cup:

'Pluris profecto momenti est gutta sanguinis, que pro Christi charitate funditur, quam cetera, que in toga et reliqua vite securitate meremur. A comitibus discipulisque servatoris nostri accipite coniecturam. Cur ille neminem in apostolorum numerum et beatorum ordines adoptavit, nisi quos suo calice impartivit?'

34 *Chronicon de Lanercost* 1201–1336, p. 76.

35 Quoted in Kjær, 'Food, Drink and Ritualised', p. 84.

36 Kotecki, 'The Prince and the *prandium*', pp. 22–23, 36; Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*, p. 66; Ryan, 'Exchanging Blood for Wine', pp. 211–18; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp. 136–37; Bellis, 'The Dregs of Trembling', pp. 47–61.

37 de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, vi. 55, vol. iv. 1, p. 109: 'mysticam cenam eucharistie loco'.

38 de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, vi. 58, pp. 109–10: 'Multi totam inedia, abstinentia religioneque durissima vitam absumunt, nos plus uno momento lucri, quam per totam illi etatem, facimus et lucrum quidem stabile ac perpetuum'.

(Indeed, the drop of blood shed for the charity of Christ is more important than what we would deserve in terms of [slave-like] protection and safety for the rest of our life. Accept the conclusion from [the example of] the companions and disciples of Our Savior! Why did he not accept anyone into the ranks of the apostles and the blessed, *except those with whom he shared His cup?*³⁹)

The associations of feasting and warfare at Breadfield did not stop there. After the crushing victory by the Christian army, Ban Pál Kinizsi of Timișoara (Latin: Paulus de Kenezy, Romanian: Paul Chinezu, 1432–1494), Báthory's co-commander and the eventual triumphant hero in this battle, ordered to tables to be set up in the middle of the battlefield that was strewn with Turkish corpses. If we are to believe the chronicler, some tables were placed directly on top of the heaps of enemy cadavers.⁴⁰ Then a drunken banquet ensued that lasted long into the night. As a part of theatre for his heavily intoxicated soldiers Pál Kinizsi offered something absolutely special. He mockingly lifted a body of a dead Turk off the ground without the assistance of his hands but with his bare teeth and danced a victory dance with it to the great amusement and hilarity of his warrior spectators.⁴¹

These two scenes come from the propagandistic *Decades*, which the Italian poet and chronicler Antonio Bonfini penned at the court of King Matthias I Corvinus (r. 1458–1490) less than a decade after these events occurred and when the main protagonists were still alive. Let us unpack this sequence of events. Although it is difficult to establish, to what extent Báthory's speech and metaphor are his own or rather Bonfini's invention (for one, he certainly addressed his troops in Hungarian or German, not in Latin), it is worth accepting, for the sake of argument, that like most military harangues it falls within a certain spectrum of plausibility of their contents.⁴² In fact, Báthory simply fully articulates and metaphorizes the idea present in a nutshell in the *Lanercost Chronicle* and in other contexts. Through the mediating cup as symbol of Christ's sacrifice at the Last Supper, he tightly links the food consumed and the mystical food of the Mass. As Joanna Bellis has shown based on Old French and Old English texts, Jesus's cup and its romance iterations

39 de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, VI. 59, p. 110:

40 de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, VI. 102, pp. 113–14: 'Paulus victoria quamvis haud incruenta letatus cum collega legionibusque victricibus et pientissimis inter cadavera cenare decrevit. [...] Super cadavera strate mense, quippe que usque adeo fre quentia densaque iacebant, ut per universum campum quoquo versus in stadia pene sedecim in cadaver prosilire potuisses.'

41 de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, VI. 105, pp. 113–14: 'cum in publice hilaritatis monumentum quotusquisque miles gestu motuque corporis aliquid ageret, quo risum a ceteris exigeret, Paulus saltare iussus in media corona ita subsiliit, medium sublimemque cesum hostem humo porrectum dentibus sine ullo manu adminiculo plane corripuit, mox in orbem admirantibus potius, quam ridentibus spectatoribus numerose saltavit.'

42 Bachrach, 'Conforming with the Rhetorical', pp. 1–19.

(like Holy Grail) were perceived as quite ambivalent objects. They were both symbols of the community and its integration and sad portents of disaster. At Breadfield, too, Christ's cup becomes an overloaded metaphor. It symbolizes both the spiritual transaction of worldly types of pleasure for eternal ones — an exchange performed through warfare, a form of physical indulgence in itself — and the allegiance to God and His community constituted through suffering and ascetic enjoyment.⁴³

Pál Kinizsi's eccentric conduct after the battle, though admirable in Bonfini's eyes, seems to undermine the voivode's introductory high-flying rhetoric. Or does it simply complete the picture sketched by Báthory by putting a heavy shadow on it? It is, in a way, a physical manifestation of Helmold's idea: the battlefield is almost literally a table, a place of feasting, where soldierly comrades eat (among) the bodies of their enemies. The religious undertones are suppressed and what makes the feast and warfare overlappingly similar instead are their joint qualities as spectacles and forms of dominance, a distant echo of Livy's word. The triumphant banquet on top of the enemies' bodies becomes thus a performative fulfilment of the purely military defeat — the symbolic annihilation of the enemies enhancing the physical and material, so to speak.⁴⁴ Ban Kinizsi's playful dance at the feast, too, is a comical and grim act of mocking consumption of an enemy's corpse. It helps showcase his combined abilities as a military leader able to host his surviving host of men by providing them with victory, drink, and entertainment at their enemies' expense.⁴⁵

Let us, however, leave harangues aside given the amount of authorial puppeteering that goes on in them. Consider instead one of the most illuminative examples of how feasting related to warfare that emerge from a string of related (though not directly) but contextually highly variable uses of the motif 'going into the battle *as if going to a feast*'. These well demonstrate a wide range of ways hospitality could inform and shape depictions of hostility. The non-metaphorical origin of this comparison seems to be Justin's (Marcus Junianus Justinus) *Epitome*, likely a third-century-CE work abbreviating Gnaeus Pompeius Trogus's *Philippic Histories* (*Liber Historiarum Philippicarum*). In this fragment Justin tells the story of Cyrus the Great (c. 600–530 BCE) of the Achaemenid Empire invading Scythia (Massagetae) ruled by Queen Tomyris. Soon after invading the country Cyrus pitched camp only to vacate it the following day in pretend alarm, leaving behind an abundance of wine and other things proper for a feast ('ita vini adfatim et ea, quae epulis erant necessaria, reliquit'). Tomyris's son was dispatched to pursue the aggressors.

43 Bellis, 'The Dregs of Trembling', pp. 47–61; Kotecki, 'The Prince and the *prandium*'; Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*, pp. 51–52; Barkan, *The Hungry Eye*, pp. 247–83.

44 Banaszkiwicz, *Takie sobie średniowieczne*, pp. 541–61; Aklujkar, 'Battle as Banquet', pp. 353–61; Derrida, *Hospitality, Volume II*, pp. 27–28; Sahlins, *Apologies to Thucydides*, pp. 110–11.

45 Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, pp. 200–03.

However, as his army noticed the deserted camp 'the youth, inexperienced in military matters, seeming to think *he was come to feast and not to fight*, paid no attention to the enemy'. Overnight the young prince 'allowed his barbarians, who were unused to wine, to overload themselves with it', only to be swiftly killed by Cyrus's troops who returned in the morning.⁴⁶ Though Justin's sympathies in this fragment rest with the Scythians and particularly with Queen Tomyris, who, despite having to grieve for her son, becomes Cyrus's and the Persian army's eventual nemesis, this episode is clearly told as a cautionary tale. The comparison of a military victory celebrated way too early hinges on the contrasting and incompatible attitudes of the youths. Their recklessness, temptation, and gullibility in view of a (treacherous) feast left behind and their lacking shrewdness which fighting demands.

Epitome was a popular read and Justin was a household name north of the Alps and in Italy during the Middle Ages and many authors eagerly, some probably unknowingly, borrowed its formulations.⁴⁷ This offers an opportunity to study the mutating iterations of feast-like battles and trace the associative wormholes it relied upon. Take, for instance, the account of the siege of Bytom Odrzański where the invading German forces besieged the Polish defenders in 1109, excerpted from the *Gesta principum Polonorum* written by Gallus Anonymous at the court of Polish Duke Bolesław III Wrymouth (r. 1107–1138) in the mid-1110s. The author remarks that King Henry V of Germany amazed at the fierceness and conspicuous bliss of the Polish troops making a sortie from the hillfort castle to valiantly face the German army. 'Quod considerans imperator, vehementer est miratus homines scilicet nudos contra clipeatos, vel clipeatos contra loricatos nudis ensibus decertare *et tam alarciter ad pugnam velud ad epulas properare*' (The sight of this greatly amazed the emperor: how could unprotected men face foot soldiers, or foot soldiers face knights in armor with bare swords, and go into battle as cheerfully *as if they were going to a feast*).⁴⁸ A very similar, equally approbatory mutation of the same figure can be found in William the Breton's early thirteenth-century account of the Battle of Bouvines (1214), where King Philip II Augustus (r. 1179–1223) 'had himself hastily armed and he jumped on his steed, *as lively and in as great spirits as if he had been on his way to a wedding or a celebration to which he had been invited*' among cheers of his troops who went into battle with fanfare.⁴⁹

46 Justin, *Epitome*, I. 8, p. 12: 'Cum ventum ad castra Cyri esset, ignarus rei militaris adulescens, veluti ad epulas, non ad proelium venisset, omissis hostibus, insuetos barbaros vino se onerare patitur, priusque Scythae ebrietate quam bello vincuntur' emphasis mine, trans. Selby Watson, <https://www.forumromanum.org/literature/justin/english/trans1.html#8>.

47 Reynolds, 'Justinus', pp. 197–99.

48 Gallus Anonymous, *Gesta principum Polonorum*, III. 3, pp. 230–31.

49 William the Breton, *Gesta Philippi Augusti*, I, ch. 183, pp. 270–71: 'Quo audito, rex intravit ecclesiam, et brevier orans ad Dominum, egressus iterum arma induitur, et alacri vultu *nec minori letitia quam si ad nuptias vocaretur, equum insilit*', translation from: Duby, *The Legend of Bouvines*, p. 39.

In both cases, the cautionary element from the *Epitome* is gone. It is replaced with the contrast concerning the incomparability of the collective exuberance, which forgoes the sacrifice and suffering involved in fighting and which would normally be associated with feelings produced through feasting. The metaphors hinge on the radically opposed and yet strangely corresponding emotional intensity of both practices. But given that both Gallus's and William's works are pieces of glossy royal propaganda whose perspectives align with their main protagonists and military commanders, these comparisons serve only purposes of glorification and there is nothing disturbing about them.

The same emotional disparity making feasts and, in this case, brutal punishment oddly comparable is evoked in Adam of Bremen's *scholion* to his *Gesta* (c. 1070s) where he considers some unusual legal customs of the nominally Christian but in his eyes still barbaric Danes. 'Publica securis in foro pendet minitans reis capitalem sententiam, qua, si ita contigerit, *accepta videas moriturum exultantem ire ad supplicium quasi ad convivium*' (An ax hangs before the people in the market place, threatening the guilty with capital punishment; and, when it so happens that this is inflicted, one may see the person *who is about to go to die go rejoicing to his execution as if to a banquet*).⁵⁰ The remark pops up in a longer depiction of the Danes, who seemingly tended to take punishments joyfully, an attitude which Adam found both impressive and bizarre. The jarring comparison was thus for him a means of cultural and emotional othering of the Danes and pinning an alien identity on them as people of a frontier region.⁵¹

The metaphor itself was not necessarily culturally estranging though. It could be approbatory and directed at Christian heroes, saints even. A sense of self-sacrifice when facing utter hostility framed like a hospitable gesture of invitation to feast is found in Herbord of Michelsberg's *Dialogus de vita Ottonis episcopi Babenbergensis* (written c. 1159). In 1128, during his second Pomeranian mission and right after a successful conversion of the pagan Szczecinitians, the future saint Bishop Otto of Bamberg contemplated whether he should convert the fierce pagan people of the island of Rügen. But in response to his inquiry whether they would accept him as their missionary the Rugians promised him he would meet certain death if he even attempted to convert them. Undeterred, 'Ille autem accepta legacione tali tacite apud se exultat, animum parat ad martyrium, cogitat et disponit omnia, tractat anxie apud se, *an melius sit solum se ad tale convivium ire an cum multis*' (he silently rejoiced and prepared himself for martyrdom, and he thought out and arranged everything and debated anxiously with himself *whether he ought to go alone*

⁵⁰ Adam Bremensis, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae Pontificum*, IV. scholion 110 (109), p. 234; *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. by Tschan, p. 190.

⁵¹ Adam Bremensis, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae Pontificum*, IV. 6, p. 234: 'Alia non est ibi species penae preter securem vel servitutem, et tunc, cum dampnatus fuerit, laetum esse gloria est'. On Adam's emotional othering, see Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, p. 234.

or accompanied by others to this feast).⁵² Herbord's metaphor, encompassed in a text arguing for Bishop Otto of Bamberg's sanctity, seems to comprise both a *Christomimesis* of his protagonist and some eucharistic connotations. Otto's hypothetical — because never materialized — bloody feast and sacrificial martyrdom at Rügen, paired with his anguish and solitude, evokes the ambiguous cup which Jesus mentions in His prayer on the Mount of Olives (Luke 21. 42), from which he needs to drink alone fulfilling God's will.⁵³ In the *Dialogus* meeting brutal death can thus be like partaking in a *convivium* because every feast is to some extent a reminder of the Last Supper containing a chance that a sacrificial victim (*hostia*) will emerge at its centre. In other words, Otto, as an adamant, self-invited guest, tries to re-enact Christ's gesture of sacrifice who conjecturally serves himself to his refusing pagan hosts and thus turns them into bloodthirsty killers.⁵⁴

Often the comparison *hastening as if to a feast* is an elaborate adverbial euphemism that simply means 'with great eagerness', as it does in Gerhard of Augsburg's *Vita s. Oudalrici episcopi* (written c. 980–993). Though even there the figure is curiously used in the depiction of St Ulrich's grief over newly deceased Bishop Conrad of Constance (d. 976). The holy man processed this sorrow by daily celebrating the mass ('post expletionem salutaris hostiae') and through ostensive dietary ascetism at the table — eating only bread dipped in water and even spitting this out on an occasion — which he performed in the company of feasting others.⁵⁵ Other cases of the *quasi ad convivium* figure — like in the *vita* of St Wenceslas known as *Crescente fide* (c. 973)⁵⁶ or in the *Annales Altahenses Maiores* (s.a. 1037)⁵⁷ — are not metaphors or comparisons at all. They do seem to be making a deliberate nod to this very

52 Herbord, *Dialogus de vita s. Ottonis*, III. 30, p. 192; *The Life of Otto Apostle of Pomerania*, trans. by Robinson, p. 178.

53 Bellis, 'The Dregs of Trembling', pp. 47–61.

54 Koch, 'Zur Agapen-Frage', pp. 139–46; Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*, pp. 70–74, 77–78; Pitt-Rivers, 'From the Love of Food', pp. 275–81.

55 Gerhard of Augsburg, *Vita s. Oudalrici episcopi*, ch. 25, p. 410: 'Sanctus autem episcopus Oudalricus coeptum iter peregit, et ibi quasi ad convivium vocatus, post expletionem salutaris hostiae, quam cottidiae per se, quamvis viribus corporis valde esset destitutus, Deo persolvere satagebat, cum convivantibus cottide ad mensam sedebat, et nullum corpori cibum exhibuit, nisi micas panis aquae infusas in os misit, quas etiam saepissime aquis exspoliatas de ore reiecit'; Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*, pp. 68–70; Žižek, *For They Know Not*, p. 143.

56 *Crescente fide*, pp. 186–87: 'Tunc frater eius praedictus, sicut et olim cum impiss facto consilio misit nuncium, ut eum fraudolenter invitaret in domum suam quasi ad convivium, sed potis necandum; ipse autem ex hoc certus esset'. Compare Cosmas of Prague, *Chronica Bohemorum*, I. 17, pp. 66–67.

57 *Annales Altahenses Maiores*, s.a. 1037, p. 792: 'Imperator pascalem festivitatem Placentiae celebravit, deinde Mediolanensis archiepiscopus, eum isidiose quasi ad convivium invitans, occulte voluit perdere, sed malitiae suae diffamatus a pessimo incoepto condigne est frustratus, et ipse, comprehensus a imperatore et aliquamdiu retentus, eheu se custodientibus est fuga elapsus'.

cliché though, as in both cases, the same expression addresses duplicitous invitations to feasts, whose hosts intended to kill (and in St Wenceslas's case succeeded) their unsuspecting guests.

In other words, even on those occasions when we wander outside of the realm of metaphors, comparisons, or similes proper and when scenes of warfare are nowhere in sight, there still seems to be a strong attractive force that conceptually and contrastingly associates hospitality with (violent) death, deceit, and hostility. This is a good reason to test these insights them in a more narrowly defined setting: the chronicles of the First Crusade. The reason is not only that like no other military campaign in the Middle Ages the conquest of the Holy Land in 1096–1099 was like a feast because the crusaders were literally hurrying to their salvation and to meet the Lord at the heavenly banquet. It was also like a feast because this crusade articulated the highly troubled connection between warfare and eating pushing it to its uttermost logical and horrific limits, which the chroniclers had to grapple with.

The Latin Evidence II: The First Crusade, Cannibalism, and the Bible

Many crusader sources feature the same basic junction of emotional comparability between feasting and fighting like that from Justin. Still, it is worth studying the crusader corpus separately, not only because of the occasionally stupefying concentration of the feast-like battle metaphor's use. It is worth doing so because this corpus can reveal how in specific contexts a seemingly stable cliché — an almost dead metaphor by traditional standards —, occasionally is put out of joint and slides into the literal, and a metaphor comes back from the dead, so to speak.

As a typical example, take Guibert of Nogent's use of this figure in the opening of his *Gesta Dei per Francos* (completed c. 1107–1108). It spells out to the full the general sense of crusaders' sacrifice and emotional exultation at the very onset of their journey to the Holy Land, which was more implied in Gallus Anonymous's text. There is, however, nothing particularly transgressive about this association between hospitality and violence:

Deo ergo incentore motas vidimus nationes et, ad omnia necessitudinum affectionumque genera precordiales aditus predurantes, tanta aviditate ad christiani nominis hostes evertendos exilium petere orbemque Latinum, noticias etiam terrarum excedere, *quanta neminem alacritate viderimus aut epulas aut dies festos adire.*

(Therefore, we have seen nations, inspired by God, shut the doors of their hearts towards all kinds of needs and feelings, taking up exile beyond the Latin world, beyond the known limits of the entire world, in order to destroy the enemies of the name of Christ, *with an eagerness*

greater than we have seen anyone show in hurrying to the banquet table, or in celebrating a holiday.⁵⁸)

Guibert, moreover, is nowhere near as fond of this comparison as Albert of Aachen/Aix is, who repeats it no less than three times in a single chapter — in the space of just over one hundred words! — of his *Historia Ierosolimitana* (written c. 1101–1130s). The fragment really does read like a neurotic tic. Or as if the scribe's parchment folded during writing and he did not notice he was replicating the same phrase over and over again:

Altera autem die prima aurora radiante, uniuersus populus Dei uiui bello armatur, in uoce exultationis et omni modulatione iocundati, cytharis et musis, *tamquam ad conuiuium pergentes letati* [...]

Prefectus autem ciuitatis Ramnetis uidens populum in tibiis, cytharis, musarumque sonis et uoce exultationis iocundari et psallere, *tamquam ad epulas omnium deliciarum inuitati essent* [...] Miror [...] unde populus hic in tanta leticia *et uoce exultationis glorietur quasi ad conuiuium iturus*, cum hodie mors iliis presto sig, et presens martyrium uniuersos prestoletur, et uarius fuerit euentus belli. (emphasis mine)

(On the second day [...] the people of the living God was armed for war, rejoicing in songs of exultation and all sweet music, with stringed instruments and bagpipes, *as happy as if they were going to a feast*;

Moreover, the prefect of Ramla, when he saw the people rejoicing and singing psalms with flutes, stringed instruments, the sounds of bagpipes, and the voice of exultation, *just as if they had been invited to a banquet of all kinds of delights*, was greatly amazed [...],

I wonder [...] why this people glories *in such great happiness and with a voice of exultation as if going to a party*, when today death is so close at hand for them and instant martyrdom waits for them all and the outcome of war may go either way.⁵⁹)

This cumulation of Albert's feast-like battles appears in the context of the Battle of Ascalon (Ashkelon/Ashqelon) on 12 August 1099 (mere weeks after the capture of Jerusalem), when the crusaders faced the Fatimid army. The former gentile prefect of Ramla (Ramlā/ar-Ramleh) who talks to Godfrey of Bouillon on the eve of the battle is not just amazed by the emotional exuberance of the Christian troops, but by their discipline and refusal to

⁵⁸ Guibert de Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, I. 1, p. 87; *The Deeds of God Through the Franks*, trans. by Levine, p. 28. See also: Guibert de Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, III. 10, p. 155: 'Ducis itaque nomine dignus, specimen militia, Godefridus, et ab ea quae regi competit fortitudine non degener, immo pardalica, ut sic dicam, animositate patrisans Hugo Magnus, cum suis primi copiis *quadam epulari alacritate concurrunt*'; *The Deeds of God Through the Franks*, trans. by Levine, p. 66: 'And so Godfrey, worthy of the title of duke, a model warrior, accompanied by Hugh the Great [...] together with his retinue, *raced to the battle as to a feast*'.

⁵⁹ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, VI. 43, pp. 458–59.

take booty and spoils with which the enemy was tempting them.⁶⁰ The battle thus becomes a display of enthusiastic sacrifice, ascetism, and self-denial. It is a higher form of delight than a usual banquet would offer, which points to the shared political character of fighting as well as feasting and fasting.⁶¹ But despite their peculiar accumulation Albert's metaphors are a form of affirmative praise that is neither ambiguous nor dark.

Against this stable, stiffening if you like, background of metaphors gripped by rigor mortis consider Ralph of Caen's use of the same figure in his *Gesta Tancredi in expeditione Hierosolymitana* (completed c. 1112–1130). It appears in the depiction of the attack on the city of Ma'arrat al-Nu'man during the First Crusade in the late autumn of 1098. Though the Muslim inhabitants laid waste the adjacent countryside to their city to hinder the Christian army from besieging them, 'At Christicolae, qui sublata cruce semetipsos abnegaverant, qui propter Deum corpora sua ad supplicia tradiderant, nihilominus urbe circumdata gratulantur, quasi ad epulas invitati' (the supporters of Christ [...] having taken the cross, never gave up and handed their bodies over to prayer for the sake of God, rejoicing once the city was surrounded as if they had been invited to a banquet).⁶² At first, this seems to follow the same pattern as above: that the collective, emotional intensity of warfare was only comparable to the exuberant joy of communal feasting, which like in Gallus's case occurs in connection to a siege.

Ralph's metaphorical loan from the *Epitome* or from other crusader authors is not as reassuring a remark as those of Guibert and Albert, however. Instead, it is nightmarish and inspired at the same time. It becomes undead by sarcastically and ghastly foreshadowing the famous scene of anthropophagy that occurred among the besieging army at Ma'arrat in December of the same year which the author depicts in the next chapter. He reports that already at the siege's onset the most basic provisions became scarce. The Christians desperately searched for grain and dug new wells to replace those destroyed by the fleeing enemy. Soon the ceaseless rain and lack of food took their toll on the beleaguering people increasing their hunger. Consequently,

Pudet referre quod audierim, quodque didicerim ab ipsis pudoris auctoribus. Audiui namque qui dicerint cibi se coactos inopia, ad humanae carnis edulium transisse, adultos gentilium cacabo immersisse, pueros infixisse verubus, et vorasse adustos: vorando aemulati sunt feras, torrendo homines, sed caninos.

(it is shameful to report what I learned from the authors of this shame.
For I heard that they said that they were forced by the lack of food

60 Brett, 'The Battles of Ramla', pp. 207–28.

61 Heng, *Empire of Magic*, pp. 30–31; Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, pp. 184–86.

62 Radulfus Cadomensis, *Gesta Tancredi*, ch. 96, p. 674; *The Gesta Tancredi*, trans. by Bachrach and Bachrach, ch. 96, p. 115 (emphasis mine).

*to begin to eat human flesh. Adults from among the gentiles were put into the cooking pot and their youth were fixed on spits and roasted. In devouring them, the Christians looked like wild beasts, like dogs roasting men.*⁶³)

The siege of Ma'arrat plays a central role in the discussion of the role of crusader cannibalism in the practice and symbolism of holy war. Though some crusader authors, like Albert of Aachen for instance, insisted that cannibalism here and elsewhere during the First Crusade were just acts of desperation and hunger,⁶⁴ Jay Rubenstein and Philippe Buc have pointed out that these acts and scenes were much more than just material necessity. Rather they also featured concurrently sublime and transgressive undertones fused into a moment of dark enjoyment, which the author's metaphorical play implies (and Albert's prudish refusal to play in his sanitized and tragic depiction of the same siege, despite sharing the same comparative predilection!), hence undercutting somewhat Ralph's affected shame and disgust. Beyond its nourishing function, cannibalism of the besieging crusaders was likely intended as an act of terror and conspicuous consumption. It was an equally actual and theatrical feast intended to terrorize the Muslim opponents by ostentatiously devouring their compatriots' corpses — an act which some crusader military leaders used on other occasions in pretend fashion to smoke out the spies from Christian military camps.⁶⁵

In this widened context Ralph of Caen's initial metaphor of a feast-like battle simply collapses crushed by the weight of the actual, literal banquet into which the siege has turned. The monstrosity of these feasts dissolves their social and human boundaries too and radically redefines the ethics of hospitality and spectrum of identities such feasts produced. The first disintegrating transformation concerns what was served at these 'wicked/unspeakable banquets', as Baldric of Bourgueil called them.⁶⁶ The human flesh of their fallen *hostes* renders the Christians simultaneously as cooks, hosts, and self-proclaimed guests of these feasts, targeting their culinary efforts at distant Muslim onlookers. The second dissolution of the boundaries of the feasting community relates to the doubts about their participants' humanity. Both Ralph and other crusader authors spoke of Christian cannibals' semblance to dogs, who, ironically, appeared to practice an inverted yet still cultivated form of cooking. As Geraldine Heng and Rubenstein stress, these disturbed,

63 Radulfus Cadomensis, *Gesta Tancredi*, ch. 97; *The Gesta Tancredi*, trans. by Bachrach and Bachrach, ch. 97, p. 116 (emphasis mine).

64 Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, v. 29–31, pp. 374–77; Heng, *Empire of Magic*, pp. 21–27; Mazzitello, 'Eating Enemies, Eating Sins', pp. 359–63.

65 Rubenstein, 'Cannibals and Crusaders', pp. 525–52; Buc, *Holy War*, pp. 262–66; Mazzitello, 'Eating Enemies, Eating Sins', pp. 363–65; Jurgensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, pp. 124–28.

66 Baldric of Bourgueil, *The Historia Ierosolimitana*, lib. III, p. 93: 'nefandis dapibus'; *History of the Jerusalemites*, trans. by Edgington, p. 131 (emphasis mine); Rubenstein, 'Cannibals and Crusaders', p. 533.

undecidable boundaries of humanity at Ma'arrat made later French and German chroniclers vacillate between calling these scenes 'banquets of men' (humanis dapibus) — an expression which took the perspective of the food served — and 'inhuman banquets' (inhumanis dapibus) — which took the perspective of the monstrous feasters. In other words, the Christian authors, despite their repugnance, were unable to abandon the frame of hospitality in relation to their co-religionists altogether, but at the same time needed to determine and come to terms with the question whether cannibalism was an utterly inhumane, even inhuman form of feasting, or, rather, an all-too-human one.⁶⁷

Finally, it is the siege setting itself that triggers the associations to cannibalistic imagery from the Bible which were not lost on the medieval authors. There is no space here to discuss these references in full, but in general the biblical scenes of cannibalism are usually projected against a background of devastation and widespread suffering, which relate to God's punishing the people of Israel or taking vengeance on its enemies. Gruesome cannibalism is embodied in the figures of desperate parents forced to cook and eat their children, especially during sieges — be them actual, hypothetical, or figurative.⁶⁸ In the Deuteronomy, for instance, God promises to persecute those who disobey His law by making their enemies besiege them so that they are forced to eat the fruit of their womb.⁶⁹ Similarly, in the Book of Jeremiah, God makes detailed promises as to how He will harass Baal's worshippers in Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Judah. He will not only give their carcasses as food to the birds and the wild animals, but also besiege them so much they will eat their children's flesh.⁷⁰ All those depictions and references were seen as quite evocative by the crusader historiographers too.⁷¹

This association of sieges and warfare with cannibalism and inhuman feasting culminates in the following back-and-forth between the leaders and the hungry people of Israel during their wandering in the desert in Numbers 13–14. As the Israelites approached the land of Canaan, their scouts returned with the news of the opulence of the food there. Though the leaders pushed for an invasion, the scouts advised against it. The people there were too strong, they said, and '*Terra, quam lustravimus, devorat habitatores suos*' (*the land we explored devours those living in it*).⁷² To this Joshua and Caleb, encouraged

67 Rubenstein, 'Cannibals and Crusaders', pp. 537–38; Heng, *Empire of Magic*, pp. 27–35; Mazzitello, 'Eating Enemies, Eating Sins', pp. 371–75; Barkan, *The Hungry Eye*, pp. 200–01, 242; Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust*, pp. 46–49, 97, 156.

68 Ezekiel 5. 10, Leviticus 26. 29, 2 Kings 6. 28–29, Lamentations 2. 20, 4:10; Graybill, 'A Child Is Being Eaten', pp. 235–55.

69 Deuteronomy 28. 53–57 NIV; Vulgata 28. 53–57.

70 Jeremiah 19. 7–9 NIV; Vulgata 19. 7–9.

71 Kangas, 'The Slaughter of the Innocents', pp. 74–102.

72 Numbers 13. 32 New International Version; Vulgata 13. 32. For the conceptual figure of space-as-eater-of-flesh ambiguously stranded between the metaphor and the literal consider the example from Thomas di Celano's *Second Life of St Francis* (Thomas de Celano, *Vita secunda S. Francisci*, part 2, ch. 151.99, p. 244) of how the saint recommended to celebrate Christmas:

by God, responded: 'Nolite rebelles esse contra Dominum: neque timeatis populum terrae hujus, quia sicut panem ita eos possumus devorare. Recessit ab eis omne praesidium: Dominus nobiscum est, nolite metuere' ('Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, *because we will devour them*. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them).⁷³ In this fragment, it is the verb *devoro*, *-are* (devour, consume; engulf/ingulf, absorb, drink in; swallow) that keeps the meaning ambiguously suspended between the literal and the metaphorical.⁷⁴ The fragment also evokes wider biblical, Near Eastern, and early Rabbinical mythological traditions that equated death and violence with eating and, further, the eschatological banquets of the righteous at which the bodies of Leviathan and Behemoth are consumed after the beasts' deadly combat.⁷⁵ As a result in the example from Numbers warfare is thus not just *like* eating or a *pretend* consumption. It is in and of itself a form of aggressive feasting where one army devours the other, sometimes with their double-edged and thus double-mouthed swords.⁷⁶ No wonder that Baudry of Bourgueil hybridized such Old Testament imagery with eucharistic references when he wrote of the swords of Christians becoming drunk on human blood.⁷⁷

As we see, the Latin evidence appears to play with a certain set of primarily religious references and conceptualizations relating feasting to warfare. But what about its more secular uses? Let us expand the catalogue with the examples from Old Norse (ON) and Middle High German (MHG) to broaden the understanding of the feast-like battles in the broader, more general and highly ambiguous nexus linking hospitality and hostility.

Old Norse: Hostile Hospitality

Feast-like battles and this type of similes are not just difficult to find in the ON texts, but they seem to be genuinely rare. What can be found in abundance regarding likening — non-human in this case — hospitality to hostility is the widespread *beasts of battle* motif known from ON (and Old English) skaldic and Eddic poetry that depicts carrion beasts (particularly wolves, ravens, and eagles) that feed on the corpses left on the battlefield. These motifs do suggest to some extent, by means of conceptual reversal, that battles are feasts

'Cum de non comedendis carnibus collation fieret, quia dies Veneris erat, respondit fratri Morico dicens: "Peccas, frater, diem Veneris vocans quo Puer natus se nobis. Volo", inquit, "quod etiam parietes tali die comedant carnes, et si non possunt, vel de foris liniantur!"'

⁷³ Numbers 14. 9 NIV; Vulgata 14. 9.

⁷⁴ Geoff, 'Monstrous Appetites', pp. 34–37; Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, pp. 108, 111–12.

⁷⁵ Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, pp. 56–58, 142–53, 168–80; Hylan, 'Metaphor Matters', pp. 789–92.

⁷⁶ Berman, 'The "Sword of Mouths"', pp. 291–303. Compare Akhujar, 'Battle as Banquet', pp. 353, 358.

⁷⁷ Rubenstein, 'Cannibals and Crusaders', p. 543; Baldric of Bourgueil, *The Historia Ierosolomitana*, lib. II, p. 51: 'Sed omnis Christianus gladium suum occisorum sanguine inebriabat'; *History of the Jerusalemites*, trans. by Edgington, p. 91.

for animals where the food is humans, as opposed to actual feasts where humans eat animals, which the above quote from Cosmas also suggests.⁷⁸ This age-old inverted idea might have tainted some notions of hospitality and consuming hostility in the Old Norse culture, but it does not imply any community of the feasters. Crucially, the motif does not surface in the very few exceptional examples of battle-like-feasts which directly fall under to the class of metaphors discussed here. Rather, it seems that it is the twelfth- and thirteenth-century chivalric spirit that gives thrust to such metaphors in the ON context.

Consider thus the following scene from *Sverre's saga* which Karl Jónsson wrote on the verge of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries at the behest of its protagonist. It pops up in the moment Sverre (r. 1177–1202) readies himself to face the troops of his main antagonist, King Magnus Erlingsson (r. 1161–1184), in what proved to be the decisive battle at Fimreite in Sogn valley on 15 June 1184 which paved the way to the throne for Sverre. Just before the battle the future king secluded himself from the rest of his men. He went to a small stream in the valley, where ‘Lét konungur gefa sér þar laug ok strýkja klæði sín, svá sem hann skyldi fara till nökkurrar veizlu. Konungur hafði öll brúnuð klæði’ (the king was given some water to wash himself and he let his clothes to be straightened as if he was going to a feast. The king’s clothes were brown all over).⁷⁹ After this the king re-joined his troops and the battle commenced.

What we see here is a minuscule ritual, a literary type-scene of arming of a hero before battle known from heroic and chivalric literature, though told with a consequential twist.⁸⁰ Quite like Herbord or William the Breton, *Sverre's saga* contrastively stresses the contender king’s solemn and humble demeanour in the face of death, feelings normally much more appropriate for a feast. The spiritual humility, which in Otto’s case is hinted as taking a form of internal dialogue, is in the saga expressed through Sverre’s consciously chosen attire. The colour of his clothes, I contend, is a nod to the solemn brown clothing which the mid-thirteenth-century *King's Mirror* (*Konungs skuggsjá*) stipulated the members of the Norse elite should wear when meeting their king.⁸¹ In fact, this frame of chivalric hospitality is already announced at the beginning of this chapter, in Sverre’s speech addressing his men as they sit together at a feast and await Magnus’s army. The moment the news of approaching troops arrive Sverre says to his men to ready to battle like before: ‘ekki þurfa at dyljask við at Magnús konungur mun brátt

78 Magoun, Jr., ‘The Theme of the Beasts of Battle’, pp. 81–90; Jesch, ‘Eagles, Ravens and Wolves’, pp. 251–80; Battles, *Medieval Literature*, pp. 7–8; For early medieval Christian Latin variants of this motif, see Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom*, pp. 88, 102; Aklujkar, ‘Battle as Banquet’, pp. 354, 357.

79 *Sverris saga*, ch. 88, p. 137.

80 Battles, *Medieval Literature*, pp. 3–6.

81 *Kongespeilet*, ch. 30, p. 66: ‘Vel þér þau klæði jafnan til hosna, er brúnuð sé at lit; [...] Kyrtíl máttu ok hafa með brúnuðum lit, eða með grœnum eða rauðum, ok þó góð klæði ok sœmilig.’

koma at vitja vár' (because I do not think it can be denied that King Magnus will soon be *coming to visit us*).⁸² In other words, at the absolutely pivotal moment of his autobiography — right at the cusp of his ascension to sole rulership, in a momentous and, in his own eyes, miraculous before-and-after event of his life which is placed symbolically at the exact midpoint of his saga⁸³ — Sverre presents himself in an ambiguous double role tightly framed by the discourse of hostile hospitality and cruel chivalry. On the one hand, he acts as an unwilling host who solemnly offers an inevitable, enforced reception to his guests in form of a battle, additionally fashioning himself like David valiantly facing Goliath.⁸⁴ On the other hand, him washing himself and putting on exceptional clothing, a conscious gesture of metamorphosis of identity,⁸⁵ signals also that he acts *like* and *is* a humble knightly guest, who appropriately dressed hastens to meet his hosting king. Not just the hostile current co-ruler, whom he intends to kill, but also as someone who factors in his own death, after which he would meet Christ as host at the heavenly banquet.⁸⁶ The latter reference is suggested by the saga's author emphasis that 15 June was a Friday and that Sverre's feast with his men occurred around 3 pm with the battle lasting long into the night. The scene thus consciously plays with some *Christomimesis* of Sverre. This would not be particularly surprising given his ghost-writer was the abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Þingeyrar in northern Iceland, and that Sverre himself was most likely ordained as priest in the Faroes before he arrived in Norway to fight for the throne.⁸⁷ The whole scene and the metaphor at its midpoint thus quilts Sverre's identity in a completely new way and thus adds to the central theme of the saga: the wholesale transformation of a rebel into a king achieved not just through the military action but crucially through the precepts of the chivalric culture.

82 *Sverris saga*, ch. 88, p. 135; On 'vitja', 'veita' and 'veizla' as concepts of gift-giving and feasting see: 'veizla', in *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*: <https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?o85418> [accessed 16 June 2023]; 'Veizla', in Johan Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske Sprog*; 'Veitsle', in *Kulturhistorisk Lexikon for Nordisk*, XIX, cols 632–34; Viðar Pálsson, *Language of Power*, pp. 64–67; Orning, 'Festive Governance', pp. 196–200. Also earlier, when King Magnus Erlingsson hears that the Sverre's troops, the Birchlegs, are approaching Bergen where he and his warriors are stationed, he turns to his men and tells them (*Sverris saga*, ch. 86, p. 132): 'ok munu vilja hafa göngudrykkju við yðr. Mun þeim svá þykkja sem þér ættið nú at skenkja þeim', where the invitation of the enemies to a drinking bout is clearly a euphemism for an invitation to a fight.

83 Orning and Rosén, '*Sverris Saga*', pp. 76–77.

84 Bagge, *From Gang Leader*, pp. 43–48; Bandlien, 'Multiple Spaces, Multiple Selves?', pp. 91–94.

85 von Moos, 'Das mittelalterliche Kleid', pp. 123–46; Barthes, *The Language of Fashion*, pp. 8–10.

86 Another association in the Old Norse context would obviously be Snorri Sturluson's famous image of Valhalla (Valhöll), as a majestic hall, draped in weapons and shields, in Asgard where Odin would welcome warriors slain in combat to an everlasting feast. But this reference simply does not seem to be implied anywhere here.

87 Orning and Rosén, '*Sverris Saga*', pp. 66–67, 69–71.

The second ON example to consider here which similarly conflates an act of hostility with a gesture of hospitality for the sake of metaphorizing the former is a warfare scene fought by King Sigurd the Crusader's/Jerusalemfarer's (*Jórsalafari*, r. 1103–1130) troops against pagan or Muslim pirates on the island of Formentera in 1110. The battle was a part of Sigurd's pilgrimage-cum-crusade to Jerusalem (*Jórsalaferð*, 1108–1111), a journey dotted with feats of martial prowess demonstrated by the Norwegian elite force. The combat at Formentera is particularly memorable due to the unusual form it took. All major kings' sagas (the anonymous *Fagrskinna*, and *Morkinskinna* as well as Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, all written in the 1220s–1230s)⁸⁸ report the course of events in the similar manner. As the Norwegians arrived at the island, they learned of the pirates settled in an inaccessible cave in the face of a rock cliff (interpreted as Cova des Fum), whose entrance was surrounded with a stone wall. Inside the pirates had amassed innumerable treasures. Unable to reach the cave from beneath King Sigurd ordered his men to drag their ships to the top of the cliff above the entrance to the cave and affix them with lines and cables so that they could be lowered. Coming from above Sigurd's troops first rained arrows on the pagans and as the defenders retreated deeper into the cave, the attackers set the cave on fire to smoke them out. Some of the pagan pirates died inside while others faced the Norwegians. Eventually all of them were killed or burned and the Norwegians collected an unimaginable booty.⁸⁹

It is this coming out of the pagans from inside of the burning cave that triggers a metaphor in question. The figure of speech, curiously, appears only in one of the three accounts at our disposal. Its uniqueness makes it worthwhile to bring in these background texts to closely observe not a sorry death but a majestic birth of a metaphor. *Fagrskinna* simply informs that 'Varð þá sá eldr svá mikill, at allt heiðinna manna þá brann, nema þat er upp gekk á vápn kristinna manna' (the fire grew so large that all the heathen men were burned there, except those who succumbed to the weapons of the Christians).⁹⁰ Snorri in his *Heimskringla* is just as straightforward: 'En heiðingjar, er eldr ok reykr sótti þá, þá létu sumir lífit, sumir gengu á vápn Norðmanna, en allt fólk var drepit eða brennt' (the heathens, when the fire and smoke overcame them, then some lost their lives, some went onto the Norwegians' weapons, but all the people were killed or burnt).⁹¹ *Morkinskinna*, however, offers an unexpected turn of phrase: 'Nú ætla heiðingjar sinn kost, er eldr ok reykr soekir at þeim, ok létu þar sumir lífit inni. Sumir gengu út ok tóku gisting á vápnnum Norðmanna, ok var þar allt fólk drepit eða brennt' (the heathens considered

88 Phelpstead, *An Introduction to the Sagas*, pp. 6–11; Bampi, 'Genre', pp. 15–30.

89 Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything', pp. 121–40.

90 *Fagrskinna*, ch. 86, p. 317; *Fagrskinna*, trans. by Finlay, ch. 86, p. 254.

91 Snorri Sturluson, 'Magnússona saga', in *Heimskringla*, III, ch. 6, p. 245; *Heimskringla*, trans. by Finlay and Faulkes, III, ch. 6, p. 149.

their choices. Some died inside, and *some went out to test the hospitality of Norwegian weapons* ('ok tóku gisting á vápnum Norðmanna', literally: 'took/received lodging/guesting from the weapons of the Norsemen')). All of them were either killed or burned'.⁹²

Weapons as tools for offering hospitality — this figurative compression reads quite like the aforementioned blood-sucking swords, minus the eucharistic connotations. The idea also comes very close to a pun in Gallus Anonymous's depiction of a battle during Duke Bolesław III's invasion of Bohemia in 1110, when the Polish duke struck a Czech soldier in the enemy line first and 'et cum eo simul Dirsek pincerna potum alteri mortiferum propinavit' (his cup-bearer Dzierżek served a fatal drink to another).⁹³ In *Morkinskinna*, however, the metaphor conceptualizes first and foremost a rather stunning reversal of roles. The arriving Norsemen are presented as hosts from whom the piratical inhabitants of the cave passively and forcibly receive or take hospitality. The latter are thus demoted to the position of guests being killed in their own house, so to speak, which automatically elevates the invading inimical Norsemen to the position of masters of the situation and the place itself.

Also referentially, this potent metaphor draws the entire Norse political culture into its vortex. The crucial ON term here, *gisting*, comes from *gista* meaning 'to visit', 'to be a guest'.⁹⁴ It is a distant cousin of the Germanic technical term *gistum* which during the high Middle Ages came to mean *Herrschaftsgastung*, a service and obligation to offer hospitality to rulers and elite members in general.⁹⁵ The terms are central for the extended vocabulary and semantics of the Norse elite hospitality in the kings' sagas. As shown by scholars, feasting, gift-giving, and hospitality in general constituted a particularly important political arena for the Scandinavian elites to express relations, demonstrate power and legitimacy, and establish pecking order between their members.⁹⁶ There is no space here to discuss this problem to the full, but as forms of governance in the Norse political culture of feasting and hospitality had a double-edged and ambiguous nature. Exactly because they were so politically consequential, feasts and practices of hospitality were balancing acts. They were consequently perceived with great deal of ambivalence. Now and then they served as occasions for power games, agonistic behaviour, violent guesting, economic extraction and predation by the elites on their peers and subjects, which gave opportunities for a great

92 *Morkinskinna*, II, ch. 65, p. 82; *Morkinskinna*, trans. by Andersson and Gade, ch. 61, p. 319.

93 Gallus Anonymous, *Gesta principum Polonorum*, III, 23, pp. 264–65.

94 'gista', 'gistning', in Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske Sprog*, p. 204; 'gista' in *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*: <https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?027133>; Kosto, *Hostages in the Middle Ages*, pp. 10–11.

95 Brühl, *Fodrum, gistum, servitium regis*.

96 Monclair, *Lederskapsideologi på Island*, pp. 143–205; Viðar Pálsson, *Language of Power*; Miller, 'Gift, Sale, Payment, Raid', pp. 18–50.

deal of treachery which sometimes led to open hostility and killing during feasts — all of these aspects and potentialities flickering in this comparison.⁹⁷

This contextualization allows us to make an informed guess why the metaphor pops up only in *Morkinskinna* and not in the other kings' sagas, even though all of them feature many other scenes of ambiguous feasting and hospitality. As shown by Ármann Jakobsson and others, the story of Sigurd's armed pilgrimage to Jerusalem in *Morkinskinna* is an extended fantasy about how a poor Scandinavian periphery triumphs over the rich Mediterranean centre through two types of practices: acts of military prowess and by being tried at a series of spectacular feasts. The latter include feasts with Count Roger II on Sicily, with King Baldwin I of Jerusalem, and, most famously, Sigurd's duelling feasts with Alexios I Komnenos and his wife, Empress Irene Doukaina in Constantinople. At all those meticulously described feasts Sigurd, as guest (and once acting as a host) performs his superior distinction and royal dignity and demonstrates his cunning. All of this allows him to dominate his hosting partners to force them to make symbolic concessions to him in form of recognition, raw capital, and gifts of precious relics.⁹⁸ If we thus broaden this argument to comprise the scene on Formentera it turns out that feasting is a mere continuation of war with other means. Consequently, the hostile hospitality the Norsemen showed with their weapons to the pirates in *Morkinskinna* is not a literary bug. It is a conceptual feature. The (metaphorical) medium is the message (of ambiguity) here. The metaphor simultaneously denotes the relation of utter, partially religiously motivated hostility and warfare and presents them as a transgressive and exuberant reversal of hospitality.

Middle High German: Hospitable Hostility

Let me include one more area into this expanded conceptual nexus in which metaphors feast-like-battles should be considered. The numerically most abundant and textually most concentrated set of examples of situations-of-hospitality-being-like-situations-of-hostility comes from the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, a piece of military historiography-cum-literature written by an anonymous Teutonic Knight probably around 1290. Composed in verse in Middle High German (MHG), the *Chronicle* covers the history of the crusades and colonization in Livonia (region roughly corresponding roughly to contemporary Latvia and Estonia) from the beginnings of the Christian

97 'Valdgästning', in *Kulturhistorisk Lexikon for Nordisk Medeltid*, xx, cols 280–81; Ármann Jakobsson, *A Sense of Belonging*, pp. 169–93; Orning, 'Festive Governance', pp. 175–208; Jezierski and Żmudzki, 'Feasting and Elite Legitimization', pp. 103–42.

98 Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything', pp. 121–40; Ármann Jakobsson, *A Sense of Belonging*, pp. 159–60, 163–65; Weiler, *Paths to Kingship*, pp. 100–02; Jezierski and Żmudzki, 'Feasting and Elite Legitimization', pp. 134–37.

mission in the 1180s, through to the foundation of the Order of the Livonian Sword Brothers in 1202, their inclusion into the Teutonic Knights in the 1230s, until the end of the thirteenth century.⁹⁹

Throughout the *Chronicle*, as Alan V. Murray noted, there is a recurring pun that plays on the homonymy and double meaning of the MHG word *gast* (pl. *geste/gesten*), meaning both guest and stranger/outsider.¹⁰⁰ In that way the author heavily leverages the language of hospitality to conceptually frame the scenes of warfare. For example, during the attack of the Samogitians on the stronghold of the Teutonic Knights in Dobeln (Dobele), as the pagan forces began to storm the castle ‘the brothers were not slow to lavishly entertain their guests [‘*gesten*’], but the pagans had little joy from such gifts [reception] given to them — many men who rushed the house [castle] were laid low’. The pagans withdrew and ‘those who had tasted of the Brothers’ welcome had soon enough of it and were carried away dead’.¹⁰¹ Interestingly, the positions of who can occupy the roles of guests and hosts in those vicious witticisms are symmetric and perfectly reversible between Christians and pagans. For instance, during the retaliatory attack on the castle of Kretenen (Kretinga), the roles changed: ‘die brüdere jageten in nâch | zû Kretênen in die veste. | die ernsthaften geste | ir wirtre slügen si alle tôt’ (The brothers pursued them into the fortress at Kretenen and there the earnest guests/strangers [‘*geste*’] killed all their hosts [‘*wirtre*’]).¹⁰² The victims of this attack were pagan women and children so the author added with cruel sarcasm: ‘den sie hetten vor nomen. | in wâren sulche geste komen, | der sie genuzzen cleine’ (They [women and children] learned that [these] guests had come from whom they would have little use, and they paid for the victory they had won earlier).¹⁰³

Such violent guests would now and then force the door of the host’s house like, for instance, Teutonic Knights did in the mid-1250s on their way from Memel to Samland when they cut through a barricade made of tree trunks on the Curonian Spit. After the breach, ‘dâ wart den Samen bekant, | daz sie wâren verladen | mit gesten, die in wolden schaden’ (the Samites knew that they were being burdened with guests who wished to do them harm).¹⁰⁴

99 Murray, ‘The Structure, Genre and Intended Audience’, pp. 235–51; Mackensen, *Zur deutschen Literatur Altlivlands*, pp. 21–58; Kugler, ‘Über die *Livländische Reimchronik*’, pp. 85–104.

100 Murray, ‘The Structure, Genre and Intended Audience’, pp. 243–44.

101 *Livländische Reimchronik*, vv. 5455–64: ‘die brüdere wâren nicht zû laz, | sie schenketen baz unde baz | iren gesten, die dar wâren komen. | die heiden hatten keinen vromen | des schenkens, des man in dô pflic. | vil manich man dâ nider lac, | der vor daz hûs quam gerant. | ûf hór sie trâten al zû hant. | geschenket wart in sô genûc, | daz man sie tôt von dannen trûc’; *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, trans. by Smith and Urban, p. 69.

102 *Livländische Reimchronik*, vv. 7044–47; *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, trans. by Smith and Urban, p. 87.

103 *Livländische Reimchronik*, vv. 7051–53; *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, trans. by Smith and Urban, p. 87.

104 *Livländische Reimchronik*, vv. 3994–96; *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, trans. by Smith and Urban, p. 53.

Sometimes the guests would invade in pairs and jointly burden the host: for instance, in the mid-1280s the Semgallian army prepared itself to attack the Teutonic Knights' castles at Heiligenberg and Terweten (Tērvete). When they saw their Lithuanian allies arrive, they 'rejoiced', and together with *their guests* rushed toward the above-mentioned castle.¹⁰⁵ The visits of such guests pleased nobody, as we learn on the occasion of the attack on the Curonian fortress of Gresen near Amboten (Embūte) that probably took place in the mid-1260s: 'ez was dannoch harte vrû. | daz her in die burc trat, | niemant ez zû gaste bat, | bereitet alzû mâle wol, | als ich verwære sprechen sol. | dô wart in sneller île | in vil kurtzer wîle | der wirt vil geslagen tût | und ouch gebrâcht in sulche nôt' (It was still very early when the army entered the fortress, *where no one invited those guests* — I can assure you of that. Many of the hosts were slain in very short order).¹⁰⁶

Once in, the guests — crusaders in particular — would overstay their welcome and assault their hosts. During the campaign against the Semgallians around 1227, the Knights plundered the region for a long period: 'der meister in dem lande lac | dri wochen. wie man sîn dô pflic, | des mochten sie wol nemen war, | durch die er was geriten dar: | wâ der gast gebieten mac | dâ hât der wirt vil swâren tac' (The Master stayed in the land for three weeks and those who were the cause of his coming soon learned how they should take care of him. *When the guest gives the orders, it is a very hard day for the host*).¹⁰⁷ The outcomes of such courtesy and hospitality were always the same: terror and flight. When c. 1265, Master Konrad von Mandern (r. 1263–1266) led a campaign against the Semgallian forces, the latter 'die Semegallen alle sider | vlohen ûf ir vesten | vor den vremen gesten; | daz wâren die brûdere mit ir schar' (all fled into their fortresses to escape *from their foreign guests*, that is, the Brothers and their army).¹⁰⁸ After such devastating visits, 'nicht lenger wart dô gebiten, | die geste hin zû hûse riten' (the guests then rode home without further delay), as the crusader army had done after it destroyed the Semgallian stronghold of Racketen (Rakte) around 1290.¹⁰⁹ Guests — strangers — aliens — enemies: the entire spectrum.

Tasting the welcome, rejoicing over deadly gifts, and frustrated joys. Again, warfare, violence, and open hostility are poised as sources of murky pleasure and

105 *Livländische Reimchronik*, vv. 9991–95: 'des wâren die Semegallen vrô. | nicht lenger sûmeten sie sich dô: | die Semegallen mit den gesten | îlten vor die vesten, | diu ûch hie vor ist genant'; *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, trans. by Smith and Urban, p. 121.

106 *Livländische Reimchronik*, vv. 7252–60; *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, trans. by Smith and Urban, p. 89.

107 *Livländische Reimchronik*, ed. by Meyer, vv. 1713–18; *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, trans. by Smith and Urban, p. 24.

108 *Livländische Reimchronik*, ed. by Meyer, vv. 7414–17; *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, trans. by Smith and Urban, p. 91.

109 *Livländische Reimchronik*, ed. by Meyer, vv. 11087–94; *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, trans. by Smith and Urban, p. 133.

jouissance otherwise produced through hospitable invitations and receptions at feasts. But in the face of the astonishing glut of these figures of speech one has to wonder: have we finally found not just a cemetery, but a mass grave of metaphors, which *topoi*-phobic scholars promised was there? Are these similes even alive? Or is there some deeper meaning or conceptualization to those cruel jokes and the positionally reversible metaphors of hospitality?

There are three good reasons to suggest that these metaphors are not just not dead, but also quite significant and transgressive, particularly when considered on the aggregate level. First, it has been argued that the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* was written with equal parts for entertaining and propagandistic purposes for the members of the Teutonic Knights and their crusader guests annually arriving from Western Europe.¹¹⁰ The castles of the Order scattered across Livonia and Prussia, in which these guests were received and where they likely listened to such stories, doubled in their roles as military strongholds and spaces of chivalrous hospitality and receptions. The language of courtliness and ceremonial guesting and hosting so central for the Teutonic Knights' position and identity could thus be conceptually mapped over to battle scenes. The roles of guests (*gesten*) and hosts (*wirte*) readily translated into those of attackers and defenders. Accordingly, the nonviolent, ritual ways of demonstrating dominance in feast halls corresponded to and were comparable with those achieved through warfare against the pagan Baltic tribes.¹¹¹

Second, the astounding abundance, the formulaic character, and the reversibility of those metaphors is, I contend, a symptom of an even deeper and disconcerting political fantasy.¹¹² This odd metaphorical style unwittingly exposes a worldview. 'Style', as Martin Amis put it, 'is not something grappled on to regular prose; it is intrinsic to perception. We are fond of separating style and content [...], but they aren't separable: they come from the same place. And style is morality. Style judges'.¹¹³ In other words, when considered against the background of numerous instances of deviant hospitality between the Teutonic Knights or German settlers and the subjugated indigenous population depicted in the *Chronicle*, these obsessively repeated, generic metaphors of hospitable hostility reflect perhaps some of the author's and his audience's sense of their troubled and complicated relationship with the indigenous inhabitants in the Livonian colony. A century into the colonization and subordination of the Baltic tribes by the Christians, these metaphors seem to obliquely ponder on the fundamental question of who exactly were the guests/strangers and who were the hosts in this region. This metaphorical style does judge then, but it is, ironically, a form of self-judgement. The metaphors are a repressed

110 Murray, 'The Structure, Genre and Intended Audience', pp. 235–51.

111 Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, pp. 245–53; Normore, *A Feast for the Eyes*, p. 10.

112 Bakker, *The Meaning of Meat*, pp. 157–69; MacLochlainn, *The Copy Generic*, pp. 50–55.

113 Amis, *War against the Cliché*, p. 467.

commentary on the persistent fragility of the political status quo, it seems.¹¹⁴ In contrast to the ON metaphors, which primarily expressed the asymmetric but changing relations of domination between fighting parties and equally radical and exceptional ways of turning them around that only extraordinary rulers like Sigurd or Sverre could achieve, the MHG metaphors instead symbolically locate and at the same cast a shadow on the master position and permanent presence of Teutonic Knights and their international crusader guests as the dominant hosts in their expanded Livonian household.¹¹⁵ The reversible metaphorical frame of host–guest relation then seems to offer a space for this type of political reflection about the identity, hegemony, and place of crusaders in the colonial cosmopolitanism in Livonia. It is an altogether different and darker type of colonialism than this in Armenia discussed in Kate Franklin's chapter.¹¹⁶

Three, as already mentioned, these metaphors hinge and play on the semantic ambiguity of the MHG word *gast*, which evokes a context populated by (dangerous, potentially inimical) strangers and (invited, valuable) guests.¹¹⁷ The dark pleasure and the fantasy these figures incite may accordingly seem more available, more enjoyable, and more politically potent in one language than in others. Such conclusion seems warranted if we briefly consider a very similar expression from Nicolaus von Jeroschin's rhymed *Kronike von Pruzinlant* from the 1330s, used on the occasion of storming of castle of Kymel (Kelmė) in 1295:

It was strong and well garrisoned and the brothers' forces had attacked it repeatedly in the past at great cost and to little effect. They fearlessly ran at the castle gates before the heathens in the castle knew they were coming. *The unwanted guests ferociously attacked the host and his household and murdered all of them.* Then they set the castle on fire and razed it to the ground.¹¹⁸

In Nicolaus's version then, the connection between the roles involved in hospitality (*gestin, wirt*), the sense of the home space (*huisgenōzen*), and invasive hostility (*vientlich*) is spelled out even more fully than in the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*. This example is fascinating because the *Kronike*

114 Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders*, pp. 42–48.

115 Shryock, 'Breaking Hospitality Apart', pp. 23–28.

116 Jezierski, *Risk, Emotions, and Hospitality*, pp. 238–39, 271–74.

117 'Gast', in Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, p. 334; Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, pp. 8–9.

118 Nicolaus von Jeroschin, *Di Kronike von Pruzinlant*, vv. 20798–815: 'wol gemmanit unde vast, | von der di brüdre ubirlast | hattin genüc gedoigit | und ofte geurloigit | dākegin mit kostlichir craft | und doch lutzil icht geschafft. | Zu der burc sī sundir grūwe | nāmin einen snellin hūwe | und daz tor irrantin, | ê denn ir kumft irkantin | di heidin ūf der vestin. | Dā wurdin von den gestin | wirt unde huisgenōzen | vientlich vorstōzen, | want sī sī gar irmorten. | Darnāch an allin orten | wart di burc von in inzunt | und vortilgit in den grunt'; *The Chronicle of Prussia*, trans. by Fischer, p. 232.

von *Pruzinlant* is a MHG translation-cum-adaptation of the *Chronicon Terrae Prussiae* by Peter von Dusburg written in Latin prose in the 1320s. But the Latin original in which this scene appears simply states that the inhabitants (*habitoribus*) of Kymel were slaughtered by the brothers of the order. The discourse of hospitality is simply not there.¹¹⁹ The battle scene is evidently reframed and metaphorized by Nicolaus through a script of home invasion. This suggests that for the writers in the Teutonic Order, and likely for their audience consisting mainly of German guest crusaders, some ambiguous aspects of hospitality were language-specific and enhanced by code-switching to MHG's semantic and linguistic frames.¹²⁰

Iconographic Evidence: Paris Feast, 6 January 1378

The last type of evidence of the conceptual feast-like battles, which is part of this wider nexus linking hospitality and hostility, and which I would like to explore here is a visual metaphor. This imagery is important to consider as it allows us to see how the relatively generic association between and social experience of these two domains travels into a different medium and what visual, material, and semiotic means are mobilized to express this strange conceptual connection.¹²¹

The metaphor in question features in the illumination from *Les Grandes Chroniques de France de Charles V* (see Figure 10.1), which represents the lavish feast which King Charles V of France (r. 1364–1380) threw for Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV (r. 1346/1349–1378) and his son King Wenceslas IV of Luxembourg (r. 1376/1378–1419) in Paris on 6 January 1378 and several bishops and the 800 guests of lesser standing, mostly knights, sitting 'below the salt'. The main piece of entertainment — *ludus*, as Livy and Cosmas would say — during the feast was an extravagant crusader play reenacting the siege of Jerusalem in 1099, a much more historically and referentially poignant play than the one mentioned in Ralf Lützel Schwab's chapter. It was orchestrated by Philippe De Mézières (c. 1327–1405), a courtier, author, impresario, and an ex-crusader. De Mézières likely channelled his own experiences from the Holy Land and Asia Minor into this performance, which well exemplifies how the aforementioned transferability of skills between war making and play making occurred in practice. His 'secular, if sanctified, historical scene' in Paris had everything. It included a reproduction of a crusader cog arriving into the hall, a tall stage set with a part of actors playing the Saracen defenders

119 Peter von Dusburg, *Chronicon Terrae Prussiae*, ch. 265 (258), p. 162: 'viderent castrum firmum dictum Kymel, pro cuius destructione fratres et sumptus et labores per se et per suos sepius iterabant, licet non proficerent. Quod intrantes viriliter, occisis habitatoribus, ipsum apposito igne funditus cremaverunt'; Wüst, 'The Chronicles of the Teutonic Order', pp. 371–400.

120 Black, 'Metaphor', pp. 278–81.

121 MacLochlainn, *The Copy Generic*, pp. 26, 60–61, 76–80.



Figure 10.1. The banquet given by King Charles V of France to Emperor Charles IV and his son Wenceslas IV in 1378. *Grandes Chroniques de France*, Paris, BnF, MS fr. 2813, fol. 473^v. Reproduced with the kind permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France. <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84472995/f958.item>>.

of the city in blackface, the crusaders scaling the walls on ladders under the leadership of ‘Godfrey of Bouillon’ (identifiable by his coat of arms), with ‘Peter the Hermit’ piously observing the siege from the ship.¹²²

¹²² Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*; Laurioux, ‘Écrire ce que manger’, pp. 103–37; Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades*, pp. 394–95; Loomis, ‘Secular Dramatics’, pp. 242–55; Bullough, ‘Games People Played’, pp. 97–122; Jorga, *Philippe de Mézières*, pp. 65–67, 70–76.

But something is off in this image. At first glance, it seems almost as if the reality of the feast in the upper part of the illumination and that of the battle in the lower were separate. They peel off each other. It is because the author of the illumination erased all the traces of backstage and the play's theatricality. For instance, the wheels of the ship and several men whom we know were hidden in it to move it around — its human engine — are rendered invisible, just like the 800 less important guests. The waves of the sea on which the ship arrives are not meant to look faux either.¹²³ Sure, like in many medieval illuminations the scale of the human figures, the ship, and the other props in the hall are conventionally disturbed. But this does not prevent the viewer from suspending their disbelief and reading the crusader scene as having a reality effect in its own right. In anachronistic terms, the illumination, more than like one coherent image, looks like a double exposed photograph in which the image of a battle, closer to the viewer, was neatly overlaid on that of a banquet.

What quilts and stitches together the upper and the lower scene in mimetic and memetic senses are the exact same shapes of the ship ('nef', 'nave' in the *Chroniques*) on which the arriving Peter the Hermit is praying and the salt boats, *nefs*, proudly displayed on the high table. Such ship-shaped saltcellars became commonplace on elite tables in the early thirteenth century and by growing more elaborate and sumptuous they quickly became the embodiments of and vehicles for communicating lordly and sovereign status and the dominant position at the table.¹²⁴ The most immediate predecessors and models for such *nefs* were curiously not ships, but liturgical objects. The boat-shaped *naviculae*, which emerged in the twelfth century, were containers from which priests extracted resin for censers to create smoke for ceremonial purification and sanctification of objects and people during the Mass. The illuminator's play with the sacro-secular references of these ships, *nefs*, and *naviculae* — the nomadic objects of transcendence in both terrestrial and celestial senses¹²⁵ — suggests that in the Paris scene the royals' liturgically inspired tools of hospitality were modelled on and evoked the Christian army's tools of hostility. The ambiguity created by the similarity of the saltcellars and the ship is thus another materialization of Baldric's and *Morkinskinna's* ideas about the identity of the tools of hostility and hospitality, in the Paris scene the infinitesimal difference between them being reduced to their scale and purpose. With the conspicuous waste of the feast matching the staged waste of blood in combat, the impression is that in the artist's as well as his contemporaries' minds hospitality and hostility constituted two connected

123 Loomis, 'Secular Dramatics', pp. 242–47.

124 Lightbown, *Secular Goldsmiths*, pp. 3, 30–33, 38–39, 49, 101–02; Oman, *Medieval Silver Nefs*. For the Parisian context of such metalwork, see Gertsman and Rosenwein, *The Middle Ages in 50 Objects*, pp. 146–49; Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, pp. 151–58.

125 Collins and Martin, 'Early Modern Incense Boats', pp. 513–19; Normore, 'Navigating the World', pp. 26–27.

and isomorphic ways of achieving, manifesting, and haloing dominance. The symbolic knitting and the shared spectacular attributes compressed in this image are a supercharged metaphor: a feast — itself like a Mass¹²⁶ — is like a battle. And vice versa.

That this specific feast was a game of dominance is evident in two ways. First, except for the kneeling servant who is cutting something that looks like a sausage, there is no food on the table. No substance or sustenance — all you see here is a *front*. It is a front both in the sense of a spectacle and as a projected military formation which this feast was meant to incite. The artist lays the power relations and hierarchy between the feasters bare, sublimating them through the tableware and the frame of the banquet. Second, let us take a closer look at the feasters' clothing. The invited emperor and his son visibly stand out in the great hall of the Palais de la Cité. Like the two bishops, they do match the required status of this place, but as guests, their vestments signal that they are perceptibly not from it. The centrally positioned King Charles V, on the other hand, with full command of the saltcellars is unmistakably presented as the host.¹²⁷ With his royal blue robes adorned with fleurs-de-lis he virtually dissolves into the matching tapestry on the walls. He *is* this space of hospitality; he embodies it, and the space incorporates him. Through symbolic and courtly means — with a nod at the sphere of liturgy — the king demonstrates his master identity and superiority over his guests and the hall they all occupy, much akin to that the crusaders of 1099, and the actors in front of him, achieved through violence and military subjection over their enemies. This was, at the very least, how the painter conceptualized and compressed the tensions and isomorphisms embedded in the Parisian hospitality and intended his audience to take them, as this metaphor and morphological similitude is only visible in this illumination. It is nowhere alluded to in the chronicle's text.¹²⁸

126 The liturgical context of 6 January — the celebration of Epiphany and of the arrival of the three magi, here evoked by the three kings — is worth keeping in mind too. Additionally, before the feast the emperor and his son had visited the relics of the Passion at Saint Chapelle. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, pp. 209–211; Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades*, p. 394; Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, pp. 124–26; Laurioux, 'Écrire ce que manger', pp. 107, 121–22, 127.

127 This was an important performative statement to make not just in general, but specifically on this occasion. It seems namely that the emperor very much invited himself to Paris: Laurioux, 'Écrire ce que manger', pp. 107–08, 120–21; Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, pp. 211–15.

128 *Les grandes Chroniques de France: Chronique des règnes de Jean II et de Charles V*, II, pp. 238–42; Bullough, 'Games People Played', pp. 97–102, 119–20; Normore, *A Feast for the Eyes*, pp. 13–15; Bynum, *Dissimilar Similitudes*, pp. 183–220; Derrida, *Hospitality, Volume I*, pp. 39–51.

Concluding Remarks: Negation, Antinomy, and Hamlet

Before I conclude, ponder for a moment the social conditions and the spatial circumstances of consumption and circulation of all these anecdotes and metaphors. Setting aside the demands of education, literacy, and erudition and the fact that we are dealing with literary tropes the question is: who could afford to hasten to a feast out of joy and for whom was feasting primarily about fun more than about labour or sustenance? Who could even fantasize entering a battle like this?¹²⁹ To think in spatial terms: where would it feel the funniest, most out-of-place to remark about the feast-like qualities of warfare? On what occasions would such puns incite most intellectual delight? Whose social experience do they reflect?

The hint is in the Paris scene from 1378. Except for Herbord's monastic *Dialogus*, Gerhard's *Vita s. Oudalrici*, and Helmold's chronicle, but particularly regarding the ON and MHG texts and the works inspired by the courtly and crusader cultures, the primary context and the greatest chance for those stories and remarks to reach a wider elite audience was through public performances and table talk in the conventionally safe, jovial, and convivial atmosphere of feast halls. All over Europe, but particularly in the peripheral or agonistically organized political cultures considered here, the commemoration of recent and distant martial deeds through both storytelling and gift-giving was *the* topic at elite feasts, where even the sitting order of the participants sometimes mirrored their military formations on the battlefield.¹³⁰ And if, by and large, the brain of an elite warrior consisted of two hemispheres — one fed by and fixated on warfare and the other on feasting — both being powered by and powering a strong sense of identity and serving as means of community-building, these figures of speech and associations were the sparks travelling back-and-forth between these brain halves. A feast hall populated with such brains was thus a perfect setup for these jokes and a starting point for creating and using such metaphors and associations.

In what ways did warfare seem feast-like as people sat and listened to those comparisons then? As the above analysis demonstrates there are many entangled threads tying and comparing and contraposing hospitality to hostility. None of them, however, runs the full length of the connection. And many of them do so in highly situated, even idiosyncratic ways in both referential, politico-cultural, and linguistic senses depending on the specific society and community, text and context in question. There is no single pleasure principle at work here. Battles were contrastively comparable or similar to feasts through the consumption of resources that went into both practices; through their performative, spectacular aspects; through eucharist,

129 Heß, *Social Imagery*, pp. 28–30; Cole, 'Seeing Beyond the Beauty of Vermeer'.

130 Heng, *Empire of Magic*, pp. 30–31; Banaszkiewicz, 'Trzy razy uczta', p. 98; Årmann Jakobsson, *A Sense of Belonging*, pp. 139–93; Palma, *Savoring Power*, pp. 6–11; Crouch, *The Chivalric Turn*, pp. 176–200; Shryock, 'Breaking Hospitality Apart', pp. 27–28.

Christomimesis, and heavenly banquets; through the potential treachery of feasts; through the similarity of tools; through their play-like character; through their ways of inciting joy and collective exuberance; through the presence of meat and blood; through sacrificial hosts and bloody (self-)sacrifice; through transgressive eating and suggestions of cannibalism; through the surplus enjoyment of ascetism and self-restraint with which one could approach both of them; through chivalric codes of conduct regulating both feasting and fighting; through hospitality's and hostility equal ability to articulate strong individual and collective identities and to powerfully transform them; through how both established one's dominance and place in the world and could at the same time put these into question. Hospitality, truly, was culture itself,¹³¹ and yet the synesthetic impulses firing between the two brain hemispheres were able to carry very different, even contradictory valuations of this cultural practice, it seems.

There is no way to deny the palpable intellectual pleasure and conceptual acumen these metaphors offered to their authors and consumers. But what about the unease of such delights? As Wood notes, metaphor

insists on relationship, but to compare one thing with another is also to suggest non-relationship, for nothing *is* ever like anything else. Metaphor always carries the danger of being a wandering away *from* relationship. Thus metaphor, which so promises to illuminate and enlarge, also registers our ultimate inability to compare things.¹³²

All those strange connections and articulations of similarity between warfare and feasting are conceptually and referentially meaningful and thus concurrently enjoyable, uncanny, and insightful because, when all is said and done, they all seem to implicitly affirm that generally feasts *are not like* warfare. That in usual circumstances banquets do not lead to murder — that *feasting is non-killing*. That practices and discourses of hospitality metaphorically reflect themselves in hostility under the form which *they are not*.¹³³

Such circuitous reaffirmation of feasting and hospitality as generally peaceful, benign, and innocuous through their radical opposites, may be illusory though. Even if all those metaphors by their unidirectional norm insist on illuminating the audience about warfare through notions of feasting, what they also inadvertently do is to sow unease about the domain whose concepts they have borrowed. And once the symbolic partition between the two has been opened — even if only through negating comparisons — the reverse conceptual and phantasmal movement that entertains the potential of monstrous, hostile, and battle-like qualities of feasts cannot be paused. The similarity itself suddenly becomes a quandary and the poison from the target

131 Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, p. 16.

132 Wood, *The Broken Estate*, p. 55.

133 Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, pp. 50, 222; Žižek, *For They Know Not*, p. 78.

domain seeps back and slowly starts polluting the source.¹³⁴ The wandering away from the metaphorical relationship mentioned by Wood may thus take a form different than just abandoning the comparative stance. It can lead to a wholesale eradication of the conceptual distance that makes the comparability and similitude of feasts with warfare possible in the first place. This severance is instead replaced with an excessive identification between these two types of conduct embodied in Pál Kinizsi's dance or in Ralph of Caen's and Baldric of Bourgueil's imploding metaphors. In place of a proper detachment between hospitality and hostility, there emerges a terrifying suggestion of an antinomic, indefinite, literal sameness of both.¹³⁵

Nowhere is this realization of a parallel, twinned life of hospitality-cum-hostility expressed in a more direct and non-metaphorical way than in a scene from Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum*, which tells of a feast to which the treacherous British king and queen invited Amleth (Hamlet). In fact, Amleth was invited with the intention of sending him away to be murdered under the pretence of receiving hospitality. The moment he sat at the table, however, 'Tunc Amlethus omnem regiarum dapum apparatus perinde ac uulgare edulium aspernatus summam epularum abundantiam miro abstinentie genere auersatus est nec minus potioni quam dapibus pepercit' (Amleth spurned the state banquet in its entirety as though it were coarse fare, drew back from the lavish feast).¹³⁶ When his friends inquired about his motives, Amleth clarified that 'that the bread was tainted with blood, the drink had the flavour of iron, and the banquet meat was smothered in the odour of a corpse, as though it had been polluted by proximity to the stench of death'.¹³⁷ As the British king learned of the Danish prince's discontentment he dispatched his steward to find out about the origin of his foodstuffs. The steward reported that the corn for the bread grew at 'a field close by which still bore evident traces of a massacre long ago, strewn as it was with the ancient bones of men slain' and thus picked up the iron taste of blood.¹³⁸ The pork came from the 'pigs [which]

134 Bynum, *Dissimilar Similitudes*, pp. 40, 45–47, 186–87, 197; Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, pp. 165–66.

135 Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders*, pp. 105–06; Žižek, *The Parallax View*, pp. 21–22: 'Kant introduced a key distinction between negative and indefinite judgment: the positive judgment [...] can be negated in two ways: when a predicate is denied to the subject [...] and when a non-predicate is affirmed – the difference is [...] known to every reader of Stephen King, between "he is not dead" and "he is un-dead". The indefinite judgment opens up a third domain which undermines the underlying distinction: the "undead" are neither alive nor dead, they are precisely the monstrous "living dead", [...] external to humanity, [...] marked by a terrifying excess which, although it negates what we understand as "humanity", is inherent to being human'; Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative*, pp. 108–14.

136 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, I, III. 6. 17, pp. 194–95.

137 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, I, III. 6. 18, pp. 194–95: 'Interrogatus igitur a sociis Amlethus, quid ita hesternis epulis perinde ac uenenis abstinuisset, panem cruoris contagio respersum, potioni ferri saporem inesse, carneas dapes humani cadaueris oliditate perfusas ac ueluti quadam funebris nidoris affinitate corruptas dicebat'.

138 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, I, III. 6. 19, pp. 194–97: 'Qui respondit haud procul

had escaped from their sty and fed on the decaying carcass of a robber; thus, quite by chance, their meat had gathered a tang similar to that of rotting flesh.¹³⁹ Finally, the water and honey for the drink arrived, respectively, from a spring in which 'several swords eaten away by rust' lay and from a honeycomb whose bees 'had bred in the belly of a corpse.'¹⁴⁰ Learning about all of this made the king marvel at Amleth's superhuman taste and lucidity in judging both the food's and people's characters.

The scene from the *Gesta* is usually interpreted as a proof of Amleth's elite palate and distinction. It showcases his aristocratic faculties that also allow him to preternaturally discern the slavish and serf origins of his royal hosts and their malicious intentions hidden behind the fraudulent veil of a fine banquet.¹⁴¹ His refusal to eat and partake in conviviality is thus nothing like St Ulrich's ascetic gesture. Amleth's (read: Saxo's aristocratic patrons' and readers') disgust and revulsion are a poorly concealed contempt for and *ressentiment* towards his inferiors, those social aliens who enjoyed life above their station.¹⁴² In a wider frame, however, Amleth's noble identity is concocted on that same boilerplate of indefinite, ambiguous hospitality that cannot hold proper distance from past and present acts of violence and brutal warfare that sustain, and haunt, the aristocratic lifestyle in its material, social, and symbolical dimensions. It is also worth remembering that Amleth — like the poison seeping back in — did return from Jutland to the same feast hall in Britain a year later to vengefully wreak havoc and bloodshed on his inimical hosts. The prince's initial aftertaste of blood, violence, and murder was equal parts a revelation and a premonition, a foretaste of things to come, it seems.¹⁴³

For Amleth, so also for other feast attendees during the high Middle Ages the walls of festive halls may have sometimes appeared to be porous, the delights savoured on the inside gathering a much darker yet strangely

abesse campum uetustis interfectorum ossibus obsitum et adhuc manifesta antique stragis uestigia pre se ferentem, quem a se perinde ac ceteris feraciorem opime ubertatis spe uerna fruge consertum dicebat. Itaque se nescire, an panis hoc tabo uitiosi quicquam saporis contraxerit'. One is tempted to entertain the idea that the steward harvested his grain not from a legendary deep past, but from a historical deep future, that is, from Breadfield (Kenyérmező).

139 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, I, III. 6. 19, pp. 196–97: 'Ille sues suos per incuriam custodia elapsos putri latronis cadauere pastos asseuerabat, ideoque forte eorum carnis corruptioni affinem incessisse saporem'.

140 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, I, III. 6. 19, pp. 196–97: 'Vt fauo et aqua temperatam cognouit, demonstratum sibi scaturiginis locum in altum fodere aggressus complures gladios rubigine adesos repperit, ex quorum odore lymphas uitium traxisse existimatum est. Alii ideo potionem notatam referunt, quod in eius haustu apes abdomine mortui alitas deprehenderit, uitiumque referri gustu, quod olim fauis inditum extitisset'.

141 Kjær, 'Glory and Legitimation', pp. 154, 157; Esmark, 'Just Rituals', pp. 237–67; Normore, *A Feast for the Eyes*, p. 123; Bakker, *The Meaning of Meat*, pp. 48–50.

142 Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust*, pp. 38–51, 143–207; Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, pp. 95–96.

143 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, I, III. 6. 22–25, pp. 198–201.

gratifying taint.¹⁴⁴ In other words, Saxo and, above all, the metaphorical expressions studied above evoke the sinister, ambiguous potential of hospitality or of *hostipitality* as Jacques Derrida called it.¹⁴⁵ Derrida's concept, though an intellectually pleasant crystallization of this aporia, is just the owl of Minerva spreading its wings at dusk. The figures of speech studied here already witness of the same troubling insight in manifold medieval contexts, especially those involving intercultural and interreligious confrontations. As elites and warriors enjoyed themselves listening to those metaphors and stories, at the back of their heads small lights were flickering: tables could be battlefields, guests and hosts could be enemies, bread could taste of blood, people could be eaten.

144 Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, pp. 165–66.

145 Derrida, 'Hostipitality', pp. 3–18.

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