



Cour de France.fr / Vie quotidienne / Sociabilité et psychologie / Etudes modernes / Christian Values and Noble Ideas of Rank and their Consequences on Symbolic Acts

Gerd Althoff

Christian Values and Noble Ideas of Rank and their Consequences on Symbolic Acts

Article. Source : e-Spania

Gerd Althoff, Christian Values and Noble Ideas of Rank and their Consequences on Symbolic Acts, dans e-spania, n° 4, 2007.

Extrait de l'article

In the Middle Ages a Christian system of values met the values of a noble warrior society. Although these two systems had completely different conceptions of norms, they adapted from each other certain values and symbolic forms to express these values.

The development of this adaptation is depicted by treating the Christian values misericordia, humilitas and clementia. In which way did the noble warrior society take up these values and how did these norms possibly change ?

Misericordia, for example, became an essential part of noble behaviour, but the fundamental idea of Christian misericordia was changed. Helping the poor was often motivated by the nobles' will to prove his mercy, not by personal compassion.

Although the value of humilitas implied a sharp contrast to the values of honor and rank, one can find forms of expression, which revealed a noble's or ruler's humility. With his humble behaviour one proved one's qualification and legitimacy. Humility was expressed with symbolic forms of expression like walking barefoot and in penitential clothes or making footfalls. Similarly, these forms were used in inner-secular communication to acknowledge the existing order of rank.

[Lire la suite \(revues.org\)](http://revues.org)