Tears, Sighs and Laughter

Expressions of Emotions in the Middle Ages

Editors:
Per Förnegård, Erika Kihlman, Mia Åkestam & Gunnel Engwall

Abstract
In the 1990s a new interest for research on emotions and affectivity in the humanities and the social sciences began to develop. This movement, later referred to as "the affective turn", has been a most productive and vigorous field of research in the past decades as it opens up for new interpretations of historical source materials and enables studies of the relationship between states of mind and materiality. In addition, it prompts questions of, for example, gender, power and religiosity, thus being conducive to a fuller understanding of historical events, places and persons.

This anthology is the result of the Marcus Wallenberg symposium at the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities in early spring 2014. All studies included concern the interpretation of emotional expression in medieval art and literature, written by scholars representing a wide variety of disciplines.

Keywords
Middle Ages, affectivity, expressions, emotions, medieval studies, material culture, humor theory, medieval texts, representation

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ISBN 978-91-7402-447-0
ISSN 0348-1433

Publisher
Box 5622, SE-114 86 Stockholm, Sweden
http://www.vitterhetsakad.se

Distribution
eddy.se ab, Box 1310, SE-621 24 Visby, Sweden
http://vitterhetsakad.bokorder.se

Illustrations
See captions

Cover image
The Last Judgement, 1233–1235. Door of the Princes (detail), Bamberg Cathedral. © 2016. Photo Scala, Florence

Cover design
Lars Paulsrud

Graphic design
Bitte Granlund/Happy Book

Printed
in Sweden by Elanders Sverige, Mölnlycke, Sweden 2017
Contents

*Per Fornegard, Erika Kihlman, Mia Akestam & Gunnel Engwall*: Introduction 7

*Piroska Nagy*: The Power of Medieval Emotions and Change: From Theory to Some Unexpected Uses of Spiritual Texts 13

*Jean-Claude Schmitt*: Demons and the Emotions 41

*Corinne Penneau*: The Law and the King’s Heart: Emotions as Political Statements in the *Chronicle of Duke Erik* 64

*Kim Bergqvist*: Tears of Weakness, Tears of Love: Kings as Fathers and Sons in Medieval Spanish Prose 77

*Kurt Villads Jensen*: Crying Crusaders 98

*Wojtek Jezierski*: Fears, Sights and Slaughter: Expressions of Fright and Disgust in the Baltic Missionary Historiography (11th–13th centuries) 109

*Elisabeth Waghall Nivre*: A Dangerous Place to Be: Fearing City Life in Georg Wickram’s *Von guten und bosen Nachbaurn* (1556) 138

*Martha Bayless*: Laughter in a Deadly Context: *Le Sacristain, Maldon, Troilus, Merlin* 153

*Olle Ferm*: Laughter and the Medieval Church 166

*Alexander Andre*: *Tempus flendi et tempus ridendi*: Manifestations of Emotion in Medieval Biblical Commentary 182
Wim Verbaal: Bernard’s Smile and the Conversion of Laughter

Mia Åkestam: “I Felt Like Jumping for Joy” – Smile and Laughter in Medieval Imagery

Claire L. Sabin: Tears and Weeping in the Spirituality of St. Birgitta of Sweden

Claes Gejrot: True Emotion or Convention? Sorrow and Joy in the Vadstena Memorial Book

Roger Andersson: Emotional Imagery in Anticlerical Preaching

Magnus Källström: Sighs and Sorrows – But No Laughter? Expressions of Emotions in Runic Inscriptions

Tomas Ekenberg: The Longing for Happiness: Virtue or Vice?

Carin Franzén: Joi d’amor as Discursive Practice

Sofia Lodén: The Weeping Lady in the Arthurian Romance

The Authors
Tears of Weakness, Tears of Love:  
Kings as Fathers and Sons in Medieval Spanish Prose  
Kim Bergqvist

Crying, the shedding of tears, is a constant human gesture, a bodily function integral to human existence. Its signification and cultural relevance, however, are not. The meanings attributed to and interpretations made of weeping men and women vary according to each historical situation, with each cultural context or emotional community (to use a phrase coined by Barbara Rosenwein). In the Castilian nobleman Don Juan Manuel’s book of chivalry (*Libro del cavallero et del escudero*, 1326), the eponymous squire and the old knight take leave of each other “weeping plenty, with pleasure” (*llorando mucho, con plazer*). Shedding tears was understood in different ways according to the situation at hand – it could be pleasurable, but it could also be an expression of devastation – which makes us aware of it being an ambiguous act, a gesture that was open to the interpretation of medieval agents and requires careful reading by medievalists today. A ritualized performance of an emotion, by an individual or by a group, and a private display of feeling had different functions and deserve different explanations.

The role of fatherhood in medieval history and literature has been a somewhat

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1 Rosenwein 2006.  
3 Most often at the occasion of someone’s death. In Don Juan Manuel’s *Libro de los estados* (*Book of the Estates*), ed. Blecua 1982, chapter VII, p. 216, the young *infante* Turin comes across a dead man for the first time, and the deceased’s loved ones weeping and grieving for him. Turin’s teacher explains that all things living feel anger (*enojo*) and fear (*espanto*) in the face of death, because it is the opposite of life.  
4 Gertsman 2012, pp. xii, xv. Such an approach has quite recently begun to be employed by historians, and such great figures of twentieth-century historical studies as Norbert Elias, Johan Huizinga and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie were far from grasping the cultural relativity of emotional expressions. See Blanchfield 2012, p. xxii.
neglected theme in scholarship until relatively recently. The long-established view has been that fathers took little part in the upbringing of their sons, because many boys were raised at courts or households presided over by men other than their fathers. This perspective colors the analysis in Ruth Mazo Karras’s influential book on medieval masculinity, where the treatment of fatherhood as a theme amounts to no more than the following passage:

Fatherhood meant more than participating in the conception of a child, since the father also gave the child a name and a social identity. Medieval fatherhood, however, did not mean participating continuously in the upbringing of a child. Mothers and servants commonly took the leading role in childrearing. Even sons who followed in their fathers’ footsteps, as knights or as craftsmen, usually trained in a household other than their fathers. It is hard to know what role paternal love played in fatherhood, because the extant sources [...] tend to show fathers mainly concerned with getting their children established in life. Fathers did grieve when their children died. But father/son companionship or bonding is not a prominent theme in literary sources. Fathers may be proud of their sons, but do not play a major role in their formation. It was the fact of patrilineal reproduction, rather than the relationship with a son, that contributed to medieval manhood.5

Even if we cannot fully grasp the relationship between medieval fathers and their sons, we should be able to get further than this. In connection with the recent burst of studies engaging with the history of emotions, fatherhood should be an aspect of this field that is ripe for astute analysis of gender and emotionality in medieval Europe.6 In what follows, it is my intention to examine weeping, the emotions connected to it, and the portrayal of kings as fathers and sons in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Spanish literature, with examples from history writing, imaginative literature, and a reading of the relevant didactic texts. The aim is to offer some reflections on the attitudes taken towards lachrymose behavior, and towards the bond between royal fathers and their sons, and to reach some insight into the distinction between the political and the emotional life in the context described. My results will not be conclusive, for they are drawn from a relatively small corpus of texts, and my aim is first and foremost to offer some interpretations and preliminary conclusions as well as to stimulate further research into this subject area.

As historians, we have to approach agents and their actions in a methodologically consistent manner. Feelings are hard to construe as actions, but the emotional expressions with which they are connected are actions – no matter if they are conscious or unconscious, voluntary or involuntary – and can thus be interpreted. Moreover, we

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5 Karras 2003, p. 166.
6 An attempt to approach the topic in medieval Castilian literature was made by María Luzdivina Cuesta in an article published in 1997. She is, however, mostly interested in the representation of the relationship between fathers and daughters, and the paternal preoccupation with the daughter’s marriage.
need to be sensitive to the particular context in which emotional expressions were constructed. The gestures of weeping may be interpreted on the one hand as an expression of an emotional state of grief, sorrow, or exultant joy, and on the other be loaded with significance not primarily related to the actor’s emotions but first and foremost to the interpretation of the gestures in a ritualized form, or as political communication by and for an intra-textual or an extra-textual audience that encountered these representations.

In other words, we have to examine the emotional aspect of medieval textual evidence and ponder the key role emotions played in medieval society, not because it was “uncivilized” (as Elias would have it), but because medieval agents were “sensitive, adaptive, and attuned to possibilities of adjustment.” Hence we have been doing violence to medieval society by trying to overlook or explain away the role of emotions. I would like to repeat the plea of Barbara Rosenwein that in the future emotion needs to be included as an essential aspect of history proper, not treated as a separate field.

The weeping king Alfonso X and the false death of his son

Some medieval chronicles make it difficult for the scholar to know what is actually a credible representation of the past and what parts of the text should be regarded as topos: though even these cannot be treated as mere generic commonplaces, devoid of meaning, and have to be regarded as parts of the discourse. Relating to kings and grief, we may be quite certain that the death of each king held by the chronicler in esteem is presented as giving rise to a great amount of communal grief and crying among the population. This may tell us a lot about the chronicler’s attitude – or that of his patron – towards the monarchs, but is in all probability not very useful in examining the meaning of grief, mourning, and the performativity of tears, except as public rituals. Other textual evidence seems to represent grief in ways that do not appear to be related to the employment of topos.

The relationship between a king and his subjects and that between a father and his son were bonds that were understood to be similar in medieval Europe, a fact that is evidenced by the political writings of Thomas Aquinas. The idea of the king as pater patriae became even more important to early modern rulers, but it was already present in medieval political thought. In medieval Western societies, fatherhood held great socio-political relevance and potency, not least as a metaphor for God, the king, and

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7 Rosenwein 1998, p. 3.
8 Peyroux 1998, pp. 4–5, argues: “When we write histories of the past in which feeling is omitted, we implicitly disregard fundamental aspects of the terms on which people act and interact, and we thus deprive ourselves of important evidence for the framework of understanding in which our subjects conducted the business of their lives.”
the priest, and their relationships to their respective communities. Thus it is understandable that the bond between a king and his own natural son, bearing this double connotation of kingship and fatherhood, would be a contentious link, fraught with tension and great importance. A striking example of the – to the modern reader – paradoxical relationship between the roles of king and father can be found at the end of the *Crónica de Alfonso X* (*Chronicle of Alfonso X*), written by the chancellor Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid in the 1340s, on behalf of the ruling King Alfonso XI of Castile and León (1311–1350), who wished to complete an existing tradition of history writing, begun during his great-grandfather’s reign, before his own regime could be portrayed as the fulfilment of this long chain of rulers.

In the midst of political turmoil and civil war raging because of a succession crisis, King Alfonso X (1221–1284) is reached by false news of the death of his second son, the *infante* Sancho (later King Sancho IV), and is struck by grief. This grief is apparent, expressed by copious weeping. His counsellors, upon seeing his reaction, are mortified.

When King Don Alfonso saw that it said in the letter that Prince Don Sancho, his son, was dead, he grieved greatly; and so as not to reveal it before those who were with him there, he withdrew to a private room so that no one dared to go to him in it. King Alfonso began to weep hard for Prince Don Sancho, and so great was the grief he experienced from it that he spoke very dolorous words, saying many times that the best man he had in his family was dead. When those of King Alfonso’s house saw that he was so withdrawn, they realized that he was demonstrating much great sorrow on account of the death of his son; so one of his confidants named Master Nicolás dared to go to him in the chamber, and he spoke these words to the king: “Sire, why are you showing such grief for Prince Don Sancho, your son, who has dispossessed you? For if Prince Don Juan and these other nobles who are here with you realize it, you will lose them all and they will make some movement against you.” And so as not to reveal that he was weeping or grieving for Prince Don Sancho, King Alfonso concealed it [...] and he spoke these words: “Master Nicolás, I am not weeping for Prince Don Sancho, but I weep for myself, a miserable old man; because since he died, I shall never recover my realms, [...] more quickly would I have recovered them from Prince Don Sancho, only one man, if he had lived, than from so many others.” And with this reason he hid the grief for his son.

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10 Moss 2013, p. 7.
11 Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, *Chronicle of Alfonso X*, transl. Thacker & Escobar 2002, p. 257. The original reads: “Et quando el rey don Alfonso vio la carta que dezié que era muerto el infante don Sancho su fijo, tomó muy fuerte pesar, commo quier que lo non mostrase ante los que estauan y. Et apartóse en vna cámara solo, asy que omne ninguno non osaua entrar a él, et comenzó a llorar por él fuertemente. Et tan grande fue el pesar que ende avía que deziá por él muy doloridas palabras, diziendo muchas vezes que era muerto el mejor omne que auía en su linaje. Et cuando los de su casa vieron que asi estaua apartado, entendieron que mostraua grant pesar por la morte de su fijo. Et atreuióse vno de los sus priuados, que dezían maestre Njcolás, e entró à la [cámara] a él et díxol estas palabras:
– Sennor, ¿por qué mostrades tan gran pesar [por] el infante don Sancho, vuestro fijo, que vos
In medieval societies, tears were often seen as a mark of sincerity in the display of emotions. Being conceived as such, this form of emotional expression could also be manipulated, to feign sincerity. In this case however, a show of sincerity seems to be unwanted. Alfonso is rather depicted as withdrawing of his own accord into solitude in a private chamber, which suggests the interpretation that he senses the inappropriate or unacceptable nature of his behavior, or at least that it was not intended for the public gaze. Since for a man to be seen weeping in public was not generally regarded as negative or improper, the actions that follow upon Alfonso's receiving the letter must be related to the particular background of this episode, that is, the power struggle between King Alfonso and his son.

One of Alfonso's advisors follows him into the chamber to reproach him for his behavior and the outcome it may have. To have someone of lower status reprimand the king is certainly an effective way of textually undermining his authority, and I am convinced this is a conscious strategy employed by the chronicler Fernán Sánchez to point out the king's weakness.

The historian Marlen Ferrer has offered a completely different reading of this episode, which she treats briefly in her 2008 doctoral dissertation, _Emotions in Motion_. She considers the episode to be positively attuned to Alfonso, since it shows him displaying parental love and affection, a trait she argues was highly valued in society at that time – and in this last respect she is correct. As she shows, the great legal code of Alfonso X, the _Siete partidas_ (_c. 1256–1265_), teaches the lesson that true parental love should stem from reasons both natural and moral. The problem in this case is that the idea that parental love was much valued in Spanish society at the time hinders a correct reading, grounded in an understanding of the context of production of the sources, of this episode and others, which we will see further on. Ferrer has not real-
ized that Fernan Sánchez de Valladolid composed his chronicle in part to contrast the pitiful reign of Alfonso with the more successful rule of his great-grandson of the same name, Alfonso XI, on whose behalf he was writing his chronicle. The latter was more victorious in his military struggles, enforced monarchical authority more successfully, and had fewer problems in subjugating the noble families trying to oppose his political strategy.\textsuperscript{17}

In all probability this particular scene is not based on any previous written evidence (such as documentary sources or letters) but either stems from an oral tradition or is a product of the chronicler’s imagination. Either way it was meant to communicate a particular message to the intended audience. As such it should be considered indicative of mentalities held towards the mid-1300s in the courtly environment of the Crown of Castile. To understand this scene, we must consider what it was meant to convey to the intended audience of a historical discourse at the court of Alfonso XI. More than a depiction of a factual event and real feelings, but also more than a literary trope, I think we must interpret it from the perspective of both author and audience: it is meant to convey a sense of real emotion, not of a ritualized performance, and so could be deemed according to the emotional standards of the audience.

**Emotional communities and emotional regimes**

First of all, I would like to argue that the royal court of Castile and León in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century constituted not only a social community, but also what Rosenwein termed an *emotional community*,\textsuperscript{18} a social group “whose members adhere to the same valuations of emotions and their expression”.\textsuperscript{19} Rosenwein explains:

> These are precisely the same as social communities – families, neighborhoods, parliaments, guilds, monasteries, parish church memberships – but the researcher looking at them seeks above all to uncover systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about other’s emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.\textsuperscript{20}

This description is applicable to a medieval royal court, in that the members of these milieus were molded by the same religion, the same teachings, and the same literature. I do not view the court as an *emotional regime*, a term coined by William Reddy\textsuperscript{21} that

\textsuperscript{17} See Gómez Redondo 2000, esp. p. 110.

\textsuperscript{18} Rosenwein 2006, pp. 23–25.

\textsuperscript{19} Rosenwein 2010, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{20} Rosenwein 2002, p. 842.

in my opinion is best applied to modern societies with more consolidated statecraft and better and more intensive links between the state and its common citizens.\(^{22}\)

Reddy apparently assumes that each emotional regime becomes socially uniform.\(^{23}\) I, on the other hand, am unsure of the extent to which the emotional attitudes and norms inherent in a medieval court milieu would have affected the emotional life of the majority of the subjects of the kingdom or principality – basically anyone outside the very restricted social group that led their lives at least in part at the royal court. I am reluctant to accept the idea that all systems of emotional norms tended to become universalized in this manner. I think that we are rather more equipped to study the court as a social, cultural, and emotional milieu apart, where conceptions of emotions and attitudes towards them were to a large extent shared between its members (and with other Christian European elite communities), but not necessarily directed at a larger social community. The courtly conduct and the emotional attitudes connected to the court were a symbolic capital that was probably closely guarded and hard-won. That is, its exclusivity was protected. The whole point of presenting oneself as courteous was often to signal membership of the upper social stratum of society, and in doing so to draw sharp boundaries downwards.

There is another important question that needs to be tackled. Even if the king was part of the court milieu and thus belonged to the same emotional community as the other members of court, would it be reasonable to assume that his position, his office, by the late thirteenth century entailed such a distinct role to that of other lords of high station, that the exigencies were greater? Did the aristocracy expect a more ideal behavior in emotional regard from their king than they expected of each other? This question has not been answered by previous research, and we shall return to it later.

To a medieval audience, the above-related episode from the chronicle of Alfonso X might very well have sounded an echo of a story from the Bible. We should consider the biblical precedent, namely the grief of King David when he learns of the death of his rebellious son, Absalom.\(^{24}\) This story would have been well known to the audience of the chronicle, and was a narrative parallel its author must have had to reckon with. King David was the foundation of traditions that defended the divine right of kings – what Walter Ullman called the descending theory of government. As one of the most widely diffused themes of sculptural art in the Romanesque period, the effigy of this biblical monarch was also present in many cathedrals and churches, not least in medieval Spain, which ensured that people recognized his story.\(^{25}\) In 2 Samuel 18:33 it is said that “the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate,

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\(^{23}\) See the review by Stearns 2003, p. 474.

\(^{24}\) I am grateful to Professor Wim Verbaal for his suggestions regarding this point.

and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!26 It is an expression of grief both lachrymose and verbal. David’s grief and crying is also the cause of outrage amongst his men, seemingly for the same reason as that of King Alfonso. The men interpret David’s grief as a betrayal of them, saying that he would prefer them dead, even though Absalom was disloyal. The followers of the king expected their loyalty to be rewarded, above and beyond any family ties that bound the king to his son.

In his article “Frustrated Masculinity: The Relationship between William the Conqueror and his Eldest Son,” William Aird argues that we need to emphasize the complexity of the father–son bond in the construction of medieval masculinity. While the son represented a continuation of the lineage and the ambitions of the father, at the same time he embodied a threat to the father’s position and role in the family, since he would eventually come to replace him: the son was therefore an ever-present memento mori.27 If this holds true for a wider range of medieval experiences, which is likely, perhaps we see indications of the same fears and anxieties in the case I have expounded on above. An article by Jonathan Lyon examines the preparation of youths from the most prominent noble lineages of twelfth-century Germany to be lords, and their fathers’ involvement in this process.28 Lyon points to similar frustration among these young noblemen, whose fathers’ longevity hindered their sons from assuming political power and the role of paterfamilias. Often, inter-generational conflicts would be the result of such frustration.

Prince Sancho’s uprising against his father King Alfonso could certainly be ascribed to similar emotions. Knowing that he was not next in line to the throne, he could probably accept that he would not be king, since he had an elder brother who would rule after the death of their father. But after the premature death of the heir, the infante Fernando de la Cerda, the appointment of Sancho’s young nephew as new heir angered him greatly, since Sancho was then closest in line to the throne in his own generation. A boy would not sidestep him, and the wrong he felt his father was doing him by making this choice only contributed to the widespread criticism of the king.

The reasoning ascribed to Sancho in the Crónica de Alfonso X when he appoints himself heir indicates that he believed himself to be fully in the right. He apparently thought his actions – the forceful protection of the realm in the absence of his royal father (when Alfonso was abroad to seek to fulfil his imperial ambitions, after having been elected King of the Romans in 1257 but never crowned or anointed by the Pope) – would earn him fatherly love and that he “deserved to inherit [the realm] after the

26 King James’s Bible (1611).
king’s days.” He came to see the king’s later actions as unlawful and illegitimate and his own rebellion as justified—and Fernán Sánchez’s version of events supports the claims of Sancho IV, who in hindsight came out victorious.

Public and private emotions

Marlen Ferrer identifies an *emotional exchange model* in the depiction of the relationship between parents and children in the legal code of Alfonso X, the *Siete partidas*: “While parents were expected to employ affection and care towards the child, the child was obliged to love, obey and serve his parents.” While correct, this description is far from exhaustive. I agree that parental love was highly valued and looked upon as a natural aspect of the relationship between parent and child, but we must not forget that the role of the father consisted in both loving and chastising his children. It is clear that a father had a responsibility to love (*amar*) his children, but also to instruct (*castigar*) them.

The role of the father in the household and that of the king in his realm is often presented as parallel. Aristotle in his *Politics* says that the rule of a father over his children should be as by a king over his subjects. And according to Thomas Aquinas, “he who rules a household is not a king, but the father of a family. He does, however, bear a certain resemblance to a king, and for this reason, kings are sometimes called the ‘fathers’ of their peoples.” This idea is also present in the literature composed in early fourteenth-century Castile, such as the book of chivalry, the *Libro del Caballero Zifar*—attributed to Ferrand Martínez, a cleric of Toledo—which states that “the king should love his subjects as his sons.” And in the *Siete partidas* (Second Part, Title X, Law 2), we read that the king should treat his subjects as a father who rears his sons with love, and chastises them with piety.34

The instructive faculty of the father is in focus in the most didactic part of the *Libro del Caballero Zifar*, the “Castigos del rey de Mentón” (“Instructions of the King of Mentón”), where the eponymous knight Zifar, now king, has had his sons returned to

34 *Siete partidas*, vol. II, 1807, p. 87.
It begins: “Entering the room with Garfín and Roboan, his sons, the king sat on his throne. He ordered them to be seated before him, with their faces turned toward him, just like a teacher who prepares to instruct scholars.” The first thing he does, after they have been apart for many years, is to offer them extensive lessons on how to live their lives and to behave properly according to their position in the social hierarchy. It is made clear that a lenient father can never have well-bred sons, and that any man who has sons ought to be merciless towards them. The filial gratitude to the wise father for the lessons imparted is emphasized: “After the instruction the king had given them, they both knelt at his feet and kissed them while shedding many tears of happiness and showing gratitude to him for the great favor he did for them.”

In this we find another clue to the reasoning ascribed to King Alfonso in the Crónica de Alfonso X. Since it was his responsibility as a father to raise his son properly, what was viewed as moral failings of the son, his choice to rebel, also reflected negatively upon the father. Perhaps this is what the audience was expected to read into Alfonso’s words – “I am not weeping for Prince Don Sancho, but I weep for myself, a miserable old man” – an admission of failure as a father. The connection between the two roles – which I have shown was not only a theme in scholastic political philosophy but also present in Castilian literary and legal works – though not necessarily their inseparability, would then have led to the conclusion that Alfonso was also a failure as a king.

Another complex cluster of ideas is directly related to the type of narrative episode at hand, namely that of public appearance and private emotions. Certain previous studies have given the impression that there was no division between public and private life in the Middle Ages. This entails an understanding of emotional expression as a purely communicative and social act, symbolic and strategic in its nature, a tool for the exercise of social and political power. I beg to differ. Medieval authors did not discuss the

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41 See e.g. Althoff 1998.
distinction explicitly in terms familiar to us, but there was some consciousness of the different nature of the public sphere, notions that differentiated actions performed in public from private ones. Paul Hyams, in relation to the problematic concept of feud, argues that by the twelfth century at the very latest, there was an awareness among the people that the king, transformed into a sacral figure by the coronation, possessed a different kind of authority, whereby his actions could be legitimated as acts of *publica potestas*. Hyams speaks of “a sense of the privileging of acts performed in the public interest over selfish and private ones”. This is precisely what we are dealing with here, in my opinion.

We see quite clearly in the case of the *Crónica de Alfonso X* that the private emotions, the grief, sadness, and suffering of the father over his loss, had to give way to the precedence of the political demands on the king. That is, if private emotions were not in line with political concerns, they had to be suppressed. Alfonso does not manage this satisfactorily: he is represented as a weak ruler whose emotional nature overtakes his rationality. In the end, the scene depicted is not supposed to be ambiguous or apprehended as paradoxical, but rather straightforwardly negative. We cannot deduce whether this really happened, or whether he expressed true feeling, but we can understand it as a depiction of emotional expression that was meant to convey a lesson to the audience. That is, he has no license to express his private emotions on the public stage. Herein lays a tentative conclusion that medieval agents could and did make distinctions between public and private concerns, consciously or unconsciously, and that as regards the office of the king, the former should be prioritized. There were notions that enabled the identification of private feelings as detrimental to the public figure.

But the episode also begs the question of whether Alfonso’s portrayed reaction should be understood as a deviation from the emotional norms of a certain community (the royal court of Castile), or whether it can better be understood if we consider the exceptional demands and requirements placed upon the monarch in the given context. What were the ideals for emotional display? How do we know? We may approach an answer to this question by examining the didactic literature, mirrors for princes and similar texts, produced in the same milieu.

Jaume I of Aragon and his illegitimate son

Another approach is to look at similar texts from other contexts. In the neighboring kingdom of Aragon, King Jaume I *el Conqueridor* (1208–1276, [James I]) produced an autobiography, *The Book of Deeds of James I of Aragon* (in the original Catalan *Llibre dels feits*), which gives intimate insight into his private and emotional life, at least such as he would have liked it to be perceived. It is an exceptional source; a text that is cer-

tainly self-exulting, and portrays King Jaume as a model knight and an authoritative king, but there is no reason to believe that this bias and subjectivity should be in any way harmful to the realistic representation of medieval emotions – or at least ideals, norms, and attitudes connected to emotional expression – except to ascribe ideal emotions to the king himself and his friends and negative emotions to his enemies.

A particularly relevant example is that of the rebellion of the nobles against Jaume, in which his illegitimate son was involved. The story ends with Jaume’s legitimate son, Pere, taking his half-brother captive and having him drowned. Apart from the version in *The Book of Deeds*, the chronicler of Pere (who succeeded Jaume), Bernat Desclot, also mentions the events in question in his chronicle, *Crònica del Rey en Pere*.

It grieved him deeply for he was his son, but on the other hand he was thereby greatly comforted, inasmuch as Ferran Sànxeç had plotted many evil things against him and against the prince his brother.

Desclot is apparently aware of the two distinct reactions pertaining to the different roles Jaume upheld, those of father on the one hand, and king on the other. Jaume’s main concern was not (at least ostensibly), as his own autobiography shows, the bonds of parental affection that bound him as a father to his son; the relationship between him as king and his son as a vassal – with all the regulations of proper conduct inherent therein – determined the emotions he was expected to express in this situation. And even though Desclot later attributed grief to Jaume in the moment he learns of his son’s death, which speaks to the humanly imaginative in the chronicler and his attitude towards emotions, Jaume himself only expresses pleasure, since that emotion best emphasized his correct kingly disposition:

Before we left there, news reached us of how Prince Peter, while besieging a castle of Fernando Sànchez, had taken him prisoner and had him drowned. And this greatly pleased us when we heard of it, because it was a very serious thing that he, being our son, had risen against us, after we had done him so much good and given him so noble an inheritance.

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43 Aurell 2012, p. 51.
The modern-day translators of Jaume’s *The Book of Deeds* ascribe “a streak of cruelty” to him, and argue that Desclot’s version is intended to redeem the heroic king.⁴⁷ I think we should rather see in it the constant precedence and urgency of political concerns for the king, which certainly affected his social display of emotions. The king’s private feelings were another matter, not intended for public consumption and therefore withheld from the chronicle discourse. We cannot infer from this that he was cruel or did not grieve.

It was the immediate situation that decided which emotional responses were legitimate. On losing a friend or comrade-in-arms in battle, weeping seemed to have been an expected response, as is evidenced by *The Book of Deeds*, though the repression of these emotional outbursts was also common. Perhaps it is correct to assume, that the court and the battlefield were distinct social fields that required different emotional expressions – and this is more or less the perspective taken by Ferrer – but that is probably not enough of an answer. Weeping had a particular and closely regulated role to play in religious worship and mourning, and seems overall to have become connected mainly to religious feeling by this time.

Marlen Ferrer interprets another episode from *The Book of Deeds*, that of Jaume withdrawing into a private chamber when struck by grief at the news of the death of an uncle, as a ritualized form of grief: “[…] we could argue that we should understand Jaume’s emotional conduct, his withdrawal to the more private sphere of the household/court as having a ritual dimension, the withdrawal itself actually displaying his grief”.⁴⁸ Such an interpretation is indeed possible, but is it really necessary to explain this action in terms of ritual? This reading offers no possibility of identifying a non-ritual form of mourning, since its public expression is evidently ritualistic. In the case of Alfonso, he apparently did not wish to display his grief, but on the contrary, hide it. From my point of view, ritual has no bearing on these textual passages. The imaginative and the didactic literature of the period offer an explanation of the problem, which is related to the ideas of self-restraint and the moderation of emotions.

**Moderation (mesura) as a dominant cultural ideal**

The *Siete partidas* of Alfonso X, written sometime around 1256–1265,⁴⁹ is an invaluable source for the political thought of this monarch and his contemporaries. It regulates every conceivable aspect of social and political life, including the ideal behavior of a king to members of his family and of his court, to his counsellors and all his other subjects. It is obvious that political relations were often depicted with the use of emo-

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tion words. For instance, Title XI of the second *partida* – which describes how the king should manage the upkeep of the kingdom, including practicalities such as roads and castles – deals with “How the king should love his land” (*Cual el rey debe amar a su tierra*).

Another important source is a mirror for princes produced in much the same context: at the Castilian royal court, although a few decades later. The *Castigos de Sancho IV* was composed sometime around the close of the thirteenth century, in 1292 or 1293, a few years before the death of King Sancho. It is basically a collection of *exempla* in the form of a dialogue. An examination of these sources will help us conclude which emotions were frowned upon in the upbringing of male royal children, and which expressions were to be avoided or repressed. A conclusion that comes out of the reading of these texts is that the king indeed had to meet greater expectations than anyone else – that is, if he acted dishonorably, it was a greater shame because of his high station – since the king is the example everyone else takes after (*a enxenplo del rey se tornan todos los otros*). Many of the virtues mentioned in the *Castigos* were the same as those that appear in mirrors for princes of the Carolingian era, the cardinal virtues of rulership.

In the *Castigos* the passions, which are also called movements of the heart (*mouimientos del coraçón*), are seen as a lesser form of virtue, uncontrolled by reason. True virtue is only possible if the good passions are regulated by reason and understanding, and when man is accustomed to them. Virtue, thus understood, allows men to act according to moderation. We may determine that emotions that were allowed unmanaged expression were frowned upon.

The most central emotion that is shown to be illicit in the text is anger, *ira* or *sanna* in the original Castilian. Medieval theologians considered anger a sin that had arisen out of the Original Sin. Thus, it had a prominent place in catalogues of sins. Previous research into the history of emotions, notably by contributors to the anthology *Anger’s Past*, has shown that anger could also be positively charged; legitimate reasons gave rise to righteous anger. In some situations, lords and kings (who were depicted as mild

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53 *Castigos de Sancho IV* (Ms. B), ed. de Gayangos 1952, p. 196. This theme is developed more extensively in this second redaction of the *Castigos*, composed in 1353, e.g. in ms. B (Ms. 6603 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid).
in their natural dispositions) were expected to act on their wrath to renegotiate or resettle social relationships or hierarchies.

In the *Castigos*, the appeal to avoid anger is part of a larger model of restraint and self-control. A lord should know how to act according to *mesura*, that is with moderation, and to avoid excess in all things. The *Castigos* say that “Non cae al rey ser desmesurado en el logar ó debe auer mesura” (“It is not fitting for the king to be immoderate when he should display moderation”). Also, more generally formulated, “in the customs of men all the extremes are reprehensible and evil [...] and the mean [the middle state] is to be praised, because, according to the Philosopher, all virtue resides in the mean.”

This ideal of moderation is also apparent in the *Siete partidas*. In the Second Part, Title XXI, Law 4, the four major virtues are listed as: “cordura: e fortaleza, e mesura: e justicia,” which in Latin would be prudentia, fortitudo, moderatio, and justitia. The ideal of moderation is also explicitly attributed to the king, the highest order of the clergy, and the knighthood. *Mesura* is expected to a higher degree according to the nobility of birth and lineage.

This ideal is present in many types of text produced in this society. For example, Juan Ruiz’s, the Archpriest of Hita, *Libro de buen amor* (“Book of Good Love”) also expounds this ideal: “Be modest and gentle as a dove, proud and poised as a peacock. Restrain yourself: do not show anger, peevishness, or irritation; the lover takes pride in his self-control.” Although here the ideal of restraint is not socially exclusive: “The poor man hides his poverty and the misery of his life by a show of humor and a cheerful face; he holds back his tears.” Juan Ruiz portrays a lack of self-restraint as indicative of madness: “She said, ‘Madman, why do you have to lament so much? Your futile complaints will profit nothing. Temper this grief with good sense. Wipe away your

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57 Althoff 1998, p. 70.
59 The original reads: “... ca en los costumbres de los homes todos los extremos son reprehensibles é malos, [...] et el medio es de loar; ca segund el filósofo, toda virtud está en medio”, *Castigos de Sancho IV* (Ms. B), ed. de Gayangos 1952, p. 196.
60 *Siete partidas*, vol. II, 1807, p. 200.
tears and plan your next move.”64 The same notions are reflected in the *Libro del Caballero Zifar*, which states that a noble man must be moderate in his speech, gestures, deeds, and desire for honor.65

Barbara Rosenwein has convincingly shown why one needs to avoid explaining a ‘new’ model of self-restraint as the beginning of a civilizing process.66 We should rather read this as a cultural ideal, in this case influenced primarily by Greek philosophy. Aristotle seems to be the main inspiration. Self-restraint is here part of a tradition inherited from classical antiquity, related to the Stoic ideal of eradication of emotions, but in another form, first and foremost connected to the peripatetic school.67 It strives not towards a complete eradication of emotions, but towards their moderation and control, in that it understands emotions to be opposed to reason and logic, their very enemy in fact – and one must therefore learn to be controlled by the latter so as to minimize the influence of the former.68 That cultural ideal is comprehensive and includes, among other aspects, emotional norms and attitudes. Whenever and wherever we choose to locate its appearance, or perhaps should I say re-appearance, the rise of self-restraint and courtliness was a recurring ideal that shaped the actions and attitudes of medieval agents, secular as well as clerical.69 This ideal was exclusive, insofar as it was attributed to the highest orders of society as a distinguishing trait. The same virtues that were held to be central to the king were also desirable in the nobility and among the knighthood.70 We can see this in the *Siete partidas* and in the *Castigos de Sancho IV*.

If the chronicler Fernán Sánchez represented Alfonso’s manner of tackling his grief as improper and immoderate, can we detect a similar tendency in the portrayal of other emotions? The king is depicted more frequently as angry and wrathful than grieving.71 This emotion was, as we have seen, regarded as a sin, but could also be employed justly. The distinction hinged on legitimate cause.72 Even a king needed a valid and right-

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67 Knuuttila 2004, p. 6, further pp. 88 and 102 on the Platonic application of this idea.
70 Rochwert 2002, pp. 93, 95.
71 Since I submitted this study for publication, a highly relevant article by Simon Doubleday (2015) has appeared in print.
72 For a discussion of anger in theological discourse and aristocratic society, in connection with
ful reason to display and act out his anger, and in that case it could be performed to restructure social relations and impose hierarchical ties. Let us consider the depictions of Alfonso’s anger to determine whether Fernán Sánchez ascribes legitimate cause to the king’s actions.

With all this, the two departed from one another very angry. King Alfonso kept his plan to finish what he had begun with the pope and with the King of France; and he again had the council who were there summoned to give him advice, and he asked that they agree to mint those coins as has been said. But they, who felt very aggravated, dared not tell King Alfonso, and they went to speak with Prince Don Sancho, begging him for mercy’s sake to take pity on them, because if they returned to their lands with this reply, they would be very badly received and everybody would be very angry at them. They said that he, Prince Don Sancho, knew very well how many deaths, how many outrages, and how many cruelties and sufferings the king, his father, had brought about in the kingdom, for which all of them were angry at him.73

In this scene, it strikes us that not only the king and the prince were angry with each other because of their disagreement, but that the men of the council, and indeed the whole people of the realm, also felt legitimate anger in the face of the suffering they underwent and which they believed had been caused by King Alfonso’s misjudgment and wrongful actions. We can then see the representation of the king’s anger in this case as another example of the exemplification of Alfonso’s actions demonstrating his unsuitability: he is revealed as an unjust king. As Gerd Althoff has pointed out: “[a]nger functioned [...] as proof that a ruler could not meet the demands of his office.”74 In this way, we can move beyond the understanding of emotions as communicative acts. The depictions of emotional expression in a chronicle could function as legitimizing and de-legitimizing tools, but they hinged on affective understanding of these emotions among their audience; an audience, we have to assume, that shared a set of valuations of and attitudes towards emotions and emotional expressions. Within the emotional community of the fourteenth-century Castilian court, emotions too

the exercise of lordship and legitimate authority, see Barton 1998.

73 Fernán Sánchez, Chronicle of Alfonso X, transl. Thacker & Escobar 2002, pp. 241–242, my emphasis. The original reads: “Et con tanto se partieron muy despagados el vno del otro. Et el rey fincó con entendimiento de yr por el pleito adelante e de lo acabar commo lo auía comenzado por el Papa e por el rey de Françia. Et tornó a mandar librar los conçejos que estauan y ayuntados para les dar recabdo que consintiesen labrar aquellas monedas, ca segunt es ya dicho. E ellos que se sentíen por mucho agrauiados, non lo osauan dezir al rey et fueron fablar con el infante don Sancho pidiéndole por merçet que se doliese dellos, que sy con esta mandadería tornasen a sus tierras que serían muy mal reçebidos et que se ternían por mucho agrauiados todos. Et que bien sabía quántas muertes e quántos desafueros e quántos despechamientos auíe fecho el rey su padre en la tierra por que estauan todos despechados dél [...]”; Crónica de Alfonso X, ed. González Jiménez 1998, p. 219.

rashly expressed were seen as indicative of lack of reason and moderation. Outbursts of grief could apparently serve the same function as anger in this respect.

Conclusions

This study has shown that there was indeed, in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Iberia, a consciousness of an opposition of private feelings and public emotions. In this respect, in the case of kings, public and political concerns were always of greater importance.

We have seen how representations of public expressions of emotion can be interpreted as manifestation of the strength or weakness, the legitimacy or unjustness, of power. A writer of a historical discourse could, in this way, use current attitudes towards the expression of emotions to evoke an expected response to his narrative from the intended audience.

Perhaps most importantly, emotions and their expression were crucial to the behavior of the private and the public agent; the appropriate emotions simply differed in accordance with each context and situation. The ideal of moderation, which can probably be linked first and foremost to the recovery of Aristotle, had gained such ground that it was highly influential in the formation of attitudes towards emotional expressiveness. In this process, intense expressions of grief began in some instances to be regarded negatively and severely, since it betrayed a lack of will power and rationality.

I am grateful to the scholars who commented on my paper when delivered at the symposium Tears, Sighs, and Laughter – Medieval Studies at the Royal Academy of Letters, namely Professors Piroska Nagy, Wim Verbaal, Anders Cullhed, Kurt Villads Jensen and Dr. Wojtek Jezierski, as well as to the organisers for the invitation. I also want to thank those who attended my seminar at the University of Gothenburg, where I had the chance to expound further on the theme. I am indebted to Professors Barbara H. Rosenwein, Ingmar Söhrman, Lars Hermanson, Folke Josephson, and Associate Professor Auður Magnúsdóttir. My thanks also go to Professor Simon Doubleday. This article is dedicated with much affection to my great friend and academic guide, Professor Olle Ferm.
Printed sources, literature and abbreviations


*Castigos de Sancho IV* (Ms. E), (ed.) Hugo Oscar Bizzari (2001), *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV* (Frankfurt am Main & Madrid).


Desclot, Bernat, *Crónica*, (ed.) Josep Coroloeu (1885), *Crónica del Rey en Pere e dels seus antecessors* (Barcelona).


