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# Peace Diplomacy in *Ruodlieb*. Ruodlieb's Role as Advisor, Lobbyist, Diplomat, and Member of the Ruler's Immediate Entourage

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# Peace Diplomacy in *Ruodlieb*. Ruodlieb's Role as Advisor, Lobbyist, Diplomat, and Member of the Ruler's Immediate Entourage

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Scholarly reading of the *Ruodlieb*, a Latin romance of the eleventh century, focuses particularly on the royal journey of the eponymous hero and his various experiences with men, women and love that follow his stay with the *rex maior*. Less attention has been paid to his role as advisor, lobbyist, diplomat, and member of the ruler's immediate entourage himself. This applies in particular to his incorporation into the *curia minor*<sup>1</sup> and his role in the group of *fideles* of the *rex maior*, as it becomes visible in the following quotation<sup>2</sup>:

*Ruodlieb*<sup>3</sup> V, 194-201: To the advisers of the king and all his loyal counsellors who are in his daily service and who like sea-shells always whisper in the king's ears and come to anyone's help for heavy gain, he gives exemplary gifts of the value of a thousand talents. Among them he rewards that foreign hunter [i. e. Ruodlieb] more richly, so too his associate. They had been sent to him and brought about peace. [*Regis simnitis aliisque fidelibus eius, / Eius servicio qui sunt in cottidiano, / Qui veluti glandes semper flant regis ad aures / Et pro mercedis succurrunt pondere cuivis, / Bona dat eximia census ad mille talenta. / Inter quos illum venatorem peregrinum / Munerat uberius, sic collegam facit eius, / Missi qui fuerant ad se pacemque patrabant.*]

In his edition of the *Ruodlieb*, Konrad Benedikt Vollmann calls it the "first fictional romance<sup>4</sup>" of the Middle Ages. It is a romance that occupies a curiously solitary position in the literary landscape of the eleventh century. The romance itself, the surviving two-thirds of which were extracted as a mutilated autograph from manuscripts at the Tegernsee Abbey library (18 fragments), relates how the hero went into exile, was tested at the court of the foreign *rex maior*, was called home by a letter from his mother, and how twelve proverbs were bestowed upon him for his

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the *curia minor* see Johaneck, 1997, p. 54-55: "Dabei meint *curia minor* oder auch *curia cottidiana* den eigentlichen Hofstaat den *Kreis der ministri*, der sich ständig um den Fürsten und seine Gemahlin aufhielt und die organisatorischen Aufgaben im Ablauf des Alltags wie der höfischen Feste versah." See also Annas, 2020, p. 24-25 always referring back to the *Ökonomik of Konrad von Megenberg*.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the nobility in the 11th and early 12th centuries, see Zotz, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the edition of Konrad Benedikt Vollmann (1991) and the translation of Edwin H. Zeydel (1959).

<sup>4</sup> Vollmann, 1991, p. 1306: "des ersten uns bekannten fiktionalen Romans".

services. Finally, it added various experiences of his own and others with love (including a failed courtship). The missing ending is anticipated by a dwarf, who prophesies that the hero will marry a king's daughter, the heiress Heriburg, after engaging successfully in battles.

The romance describes the protagonist's success story and path to kingship: Ruodlieb demonstrates his abilities at the court of the greater king in various roles as hunter, commander, and diplomat. The *rex maior* is regarded in academic literature as the ideal embodiment of the *rex pacificus*<sup>5</sup>, Ruodlieb as a loyal, reliable, but also intelligent and skillful helper of his lord on the path to his own kingship<sup>6</sup>.

The traces of editing in the extant parts of the manuscript suggest that it is an autograph, that is, the author's own copy – a rarity in the transmission of early and high medieval literature. The protagonist himself is described in the first stage of editing as “a foreign knight [*miles peregrinus*]” (Ruodlieb III, 49) or “a foreign hunter [*venator peregrinus*]” (ibid. V, 199). Only in the further course of editing does he receive the name Ruodlieb written over an erasure (ibid. V, 223). A single fragmentary copy survives in St. Florian<sup>7</sup>.

The *Ruodlieb* was therefore not a successful romance, but it was a literary experiment with pioneering potential<sup>8</sup>. Without a known model, the romance tells the success story of its hero, who simultaneously possesses outstanding martial, strategic, and intellectual qualities. The romance is thus 150 years ahead of the subsequent romance literature in Latin and the vernacular.

Wolfram von Eschenbach does not tell such success stories far from the hero's homeland until 1200 in the Gahmuret books of *Parzival*, albeit there with a tragic outcome, and later with a few hints in *Willehalm*. Ruodlieb's successful reception as *venator peregrinus* at the court of the *rex maior* is reminiscent of Tristan's success at the court of King Marke as told around 1210 by Gottfried of Strasburg. The virtuously displayed skill of a hunter is held in the highest esteem. Ruodlieb and Tristan are both quickly accepted into the ruler's inner circle and the ranks of his closest advisers.

It is precisely this closeness to the ruler that will be the focus of my article. I will examine Ruodlieb's status and role and the secret of his success at the court of the *rex maior*, and I will examine his role in the peace agreement with the *rex minor*.

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<sup>5</sup> Haug, 1974, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> Dronke, 1986, p. 33-65; Ruh, 1977, p. 29-34; Haug, 1989, p. 12-26. A summary of the contradictory research debate on function and target audience in Archibald, 2015, p. 181-184.

<sup>7</sup> Haug, 1974, p. 141-146.

<sup>8</sup> Godman, 1997, p. 248.

My thesis is that the *Ruodlieb* depicts conflict resolution processes at the high medieval court in literary form, thus offering a behind-the-scenes look at documented and formalized peace agreements. Moreover, the text paints a picture of the ruler's retinue that resists idealization but at the same time plays a crucial role in the process of conflict resolution<sup>9</sup>

The introductory quotation introduces us to confidants and followers of the king who accompany him every day and "who like sea-shells always whisper in the king's ears and come to anyone's help for heavy gain. [*Qui veluti glandes semper flant regis ad aures / Et pro mercedis succurrunt pondere cuivis.*]" (*Ruodlieb* V, 196-197).

Fragment V belongs to the first section, in the context of the rulers' meeting<sup>10</sup> between the *rex maior* and the *rex minor* to be precise, whose diplomatic preparation is in the hands of the hero *Ruodlieb*. He has been entrusted with the responsibility of preparing the staged peace agreement as well as the preceding campaign.

*Ruodlieb* belongs to a status group at the court of the *rex maior* whose characterization by the narrator is not particularly flattering<sup>11</sup>. This group forms the leader's personal retinue; it enjoys – and this is of paramount importance – direct access to him: "whisper in the king's ears [*flant regis ad aures*]" (*Ruodlieb* V, 196) At the same time, this status group proves to be not only loyal to *Ruodlieb* but also interested in him remaining in the circle of the *rex maior*. *Ruodlieb's* explicit inclusion in this group, which enjoys material advantages thanks to his success, puts him at the center of power, without his being required to occupy any particular social or hierarchal position. And yet, acting "for heavy gain [*pro mercedis*]" (*ibid.* V, 197). does not fit into the ideal of the court of the *rex maior* depicted for long stretches in *Ruodlieb*. It feels out of place, as if it were a foreign element that flowed spontaneously into the author's pen to characterize this group of people close to the ruler – one might say, because this was simply the everyday experience at court<sup>12</sup>.

Without steady incomes and salaries, those who lived and worked at court had to rely on earnings of all kinds, and the asset that could be used to best advantage was

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<sup>9</sup> Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger and Gerd Althoff refer to the author's knowledge of political rules: "Die literarische Fiktion lebt von dem Wissen um Logik und Spielregeln des Gabentausches im realen Leben [...]" (2015, p. 11). Unaware of historical research, Benedikt Konrad Vollmann claims: "[*Ruodlieb* ist] weiter von der Realität entfernt als die Heldensage und das Tiererepos" (2001, p. 515).

<sup>10</sup> If one follows the historical sources, rulers' meetings have been relatively rare since the 11th century. Ingrid Voss (1987, p. 65-72) provides evidence of six meetings of German and French rulers in the 11th century, the last time in 1056. The next meeting is not documented until 1171.

<sup>11</sup> About the syntax see Vollmann, 1991, p. 1351 to *Ruodlieb* V, 196.

<sup>12</sup> Cracks in the ideality only become apparent through a close reading, so that Stefan Vander Elst easily comes to the conclusion that „the 'Ruodlieb' sets out to describe ideal behaviour in all layers of society" (2011, p. 2).

proximity to the ruler. The text indicates that it was possible to capitalize on this proximity without criticizing it as illoyal behavior in the same breath. The words "Among them he rewards that foreign hunter more richly [*Inter quos illum venatorem peregrinum / Munerat uberius*]" (Ruodlieb V, 199) even refer in this connection to the material advantages the protagonist himself derives from it. Nothing is criticised; it seems natural to use the proximity to the ruler for one's own benefit. What we have here, following modern political terminology, is a medieval form of lobbying. The group of advisers or people close to the ruler agrees to represent the ruler's interests in return for payment. Conflicts of loyalty arising as a result are not part of the literary conception in the *Ruodlieb*.

The literary text calls attention to a phenomenon within the court as a system of power and relationships that has become a major focus of historical research in the last decades: groupings<sup>13</sup>. At the court of the *rex maior*, the group consists of the so-called *fideles*. They belong to the *curia minor* and are thus distinct from the higher-ranking nobility, who are only temporarily present at court. The social composition of this group is not described by the author of the *Ruodlieb*. Ruodlieb belongs to this group. Within the group, his social rank based on noble origin is irrelevant. All that counts are his strategic, martial, political, diplomatic, and group-conducive qualities. We will also see that the principle of co-optation (*pactum*) and the characteristic of equality (*fraternitas*) apply to this court-bound group<sup>14</sup>.

The sententious introduction characterizes Ruodlieb as:

*Ruodlieb* I, 1f.: A certain man [i. e. Ruodlieb], born of gentle stock, graced his inbred nobility with good manners. [*Quidam prosapia vir progenitus generosa / Moribus ingenitam decorabat nobilitatem.*]

If we take the adorning *mores* as referring to his social behavior or his life at the court of the *rex maior*, then it relates to Ruodlieb's acting in solidarity with the group and on behalf of the ruler, as well as to the reliability intrinsic to the clientele. With these qualities, he makes himself interesting not only to the rulers but also to members of his own status group, who do not want to do without him:

*Ruodlieb* V, 270-272: They say that they have never seen anyone like him in quality of rearing and in honest loyalty, and that he harms no one but, wherever possible, has been helpful to everyone. [*Dicunt, quod numquam vidissent huic similem quem / Moris honestate fidei vel in integritate, / Quod nec obest ulli sed, ubi quit, profuit omni.*]

What I mean by 'group' is – in the words of Jakobus Wössner – a:

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<sup>13</sup> For a presentation of the plentiful research on this theme, see Oexle, 1990, p. 1-22.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15 and 17.

collective of people who, through social relationships designed to last, seek to achieve specific goals and purposes through coordinated roles. [*Kollektiv von Personen, die durch auf Dauer abgestellte soziale Beziehungen bestimmte Ziele und Zwecke durch aufeinander abgestimmte Rollen erreichen wollen*<sup>15</sup>.]

Ruodlieb easily fits into this social structure, since his personal successes are at the same time benefits for the entire group<sup>16</sup>.

His successes are based on innate talents (*nobilitas*), combined with cleverness and pragmatism. Insight into the hopeless situation in his own homeland turns him into a *miles peregrinus*, and insight into his own desperate plight convinces him to take up the offer of the foreign hunter in fragment I and to work at the court of the *rex maior* as a hunter himself:

*Ruodlieb* I, 95f.: Whoever has can give, and who has not, what, tell me, can he give? He [i. e. the king] will give, if not daily, at least diligently. [*Quisquis habet, dare quit, qui n<on> habet, hic dare, dic, quid? / Si non cottidie, tamen assidue dabit ille.*]

Out of gratitude, he enters into a *pactum fidei* (*Ruodlieb* I, 117) with the hunter of the *rex maior*, a personal alliance for mutual benefit. The new partner then arranges for Ruodlieb to be accepted into the *clientela* (*ibid.* I, 139) of the *rex maior*. It is noteworthy that the bond is not based on common experience in battle but is determined exclusively by qualities that are promising at court. On account of his externally perceptible *opima virtus* (*Ruodlieb* I, 82), the foreign hunter offers Ruodlieb his support. He tells of his proximity to the ruler: "He is wont to listen to no one so graciously as he does to me [*Nec solet audire quemquam clementius ac me*]" (*Ruodlieb* I, 87), then provides a "useful advice [*utile consilium*]" (*ibid.* I, 91) and proposes a "treaty of friendship [*foedus fidum*]" (*ibid.* I, 108). The terminology points to legal language, as also found in contracts between early medieval rulers, particularly the use of the terms *pactum fidei* and *foedus fidum*<sup>17</sup>. The friendship between Ruodlieb and the hunter of the *rex maior* is an alliance of convenience for mutual benefit and thus fits into the political alliance structures of the Early and High Middle Ages, as described by the historian Gerd Althoff<sup>18</sup>, but with the crucial difference that it is not a form of 'interstate' but of interpersonal relations, that is, a personal relationship. In the Middle Ages, these relations were of course structured in personal terms even at the 'state' level, as an alliance between rulers and/or principes, but in the case of *Ruodlieb* we reach a fundamental level of interpersonal relations not documented in the historical

<sup>15</sup> Quoted from Hergemöller, 1995, p. 2073 (with my own translation).

<sup>16</sup> Problems arise when the personal bond with the ruler is perceived within the group as inadmissible profiling. Cf. on the complex 'Huld' Althoff, 1991, p. 259-282.

<sup>17</sup> Schneider, 1964, p. 178-184; Voss, 1987, p. 182.

<sup>18</sup> Althoff, 1990a, p. 145-167.

sources. It can be seen from this summary that the structures of personal relationships at the court are thought of in the literary context in the same way as relationships between rulers and tribal leaders. They follow the model of friendships or relations arranged for mutual benefit<sup>19</sup>.

Ruodlieb not only demonstrates skills as a hunter, but particularly as a diplomat in the negotiations with the *rex minor*. It is a textbook example of medieval diplomacy: Fragment V relates the meeting between the two rulers at the scene of the battle, namely in the border area of the two kingdoms. The choice of location is highly plausible, as most meetings between rulers since the eleventh century have taken place in border areas<sup>20</sup>. The meeting has been prepared by Ruodlieb and the procedure agreed upon in advance with the *rex minor*. Unfortunately, Ruodlieb's first meeting with the *rex minor* between fragments III and IV has been lost. The *colloquium secretum*<sup>21</sup>, at which the procedure was discussed, probably took place there. This is indicated in Ruodlieb's retrospective report to the *rex maior* on the negotiations (*Ruodlieb IV*, 78-172). After a confidential discussion with the lesser king, Ruodlieb has to play chess with him on equal terms, because the king wants to learn what is new about Ruodlieb's style of play: "I wish you would help me learn the moves I do not know. [*Nam quos ignotos facies volo discere tractus.*]" (*Ruodlieb IV*, 207). The metaphor of the strategy game and Ruodlieb's three victories over the lesser king allude to his diplomatic triumph, which the greater king confirms after hearing Ruodlieb's report: "Now may you have thanks because you promote our cause. [*Nunc grates habeas, causas quod agis bene nostras!*]" (*Ruodlieb IV*, 230).<sup>22</sup> The assumption is supported by textual evidence from the *colloquium publicum* held by the lesser king the following day: The king refers to the *rex maior* already at this point as *amicus* (*Ruodlieb IV*, 21) and advocates to his followers that they should accept the peace offer, but without reference to the 'fine print' discussed in the *colloquium secretum* the previous day. He refers to this – seeking confirmation from Ruodlieb – with his closing words: "if he carries it out as he has pledged it through you. [*Si sic persolvat, per vos velut ipse spondit.*]" (*Ruodlieb IV*, 27).

The peace agreement then follows a protocol that Ruodlieb evidently drafted in agreement with both rulers: The leitmotif of his action is described by the *rex maior* himself: "For I prefer to pay evil with good rather than to excel by injustice. [*Nam mala malo bono quam reddere vincere pravo.*]" (*Ruodlieb V*, 42). The arranged signing of the pompous peace agreement is committed to this intention<sup>23</sup>. Every gesture of

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<sup>19</sup> See Vollmann, 2001, p. 515f.

<sup>20</sup> Voss, 1987, p. 65-72.

<sup>21</sup> Althoff, 1990a.

<sup>22</sup> Honemann, 2004, p.367-368 reads the passage differently, as an expression of the "souveräne[n] Gelassenheit und Überlegenheit [*sovereign composure and superiority*]" of the *rex minor*. I read the passage as a recognition of Ruodlieb's diplomatic superiority in representing the *rex maior*.

submission offered by the lesser king is turned down by the greater king (*Ruodlieb V*, 45-59), as are each of the meticulously described gifts (*Ruodlieb V*, 164-202). Symbolically, the king chooses two bears as well as a magpie and a starling. Gifts to monasteries and hermits are permitted, as they help the giver to achieve salvation.

Once again, those close to the king, the royal *clientela*, benefit from remarkable special treatment: They are rewarded in secret: "yet they were well rewarded in secret and made happy. [*Hi bene donantur secretim sive beantur.*]" (*Ruodlieb V*, 217)<sup>24</sup>. In return, the *rex maior* provides the enemy prisoners with lavish accoutrements. The magnanimity of the *rex maior* thus becomes a demonstration of sovereign superiority that does not require the weaker party to submit or pay tribute. This is the reason for the detailed description of the gifts, which then end up being mostly rejected.

Narrative sources of the time contain similar accounts. One example is Emperor Henry II's meeting with King Robert II of France in 1023, in which Henry is offered magnificent and precious gifts and turns them down – probably according to prior agreement<sup>25</sup>. Like the *rex maior* in *Ruodlieb*, the emperor and empress make a symbolic choice: they choose a book of the Gospels, the tooth of Saint Vincent, and little golden ships:

Rodulfus Glaber, *Opera*<sup>26</sup>, p. 108-109: After the meal was finished, King Rotbertus offered Henry immense gifts of gold, silver and precious stones, as well as a hundred horses with the most splendid bridles, each with leather armour and headgear; he also let it be known that he would diminish the friendship by as much as he would like to leave behind. But Henry, seeing his friend's generosity, took of these things only a Gospel book set with gold and precious stones, and a reliquary of the same workmanship, containing a tooth of the holy deacon and martyr Vincent; his wife likewise took only corresponding little ships of gold. [*Expleto quoque prandio, obtulit Rotbertus rex immensa munera auri atque argenti et preciosarum gemmarum Henrico, centum insuper equos honestissime faleratos, super unumquemque lorica et galea, mandans insuper tantum illorum amicitiam minuere quantum contingeret ex omnibus illi relinquere. At Henricus, cernens amici liberalitatem, suscepit ex illis tantum librum euangelii, auro et lapidibus preciosis insertum, ac philaterium simile factum continens dentem sancti Vincentii leuite et martyris; uxor uero illius pares auri tantum naues accepit.*]

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<sup>23</sup> Voss, 1987, p. 151-165.

<sup>24</sup> Not taken into account in Stollberg-Rilinger / Althoff, 2015, p. 10f.

<sup>25</sup> Like recent historical research, I do not see this as the template for the events and the sequence of events in *Ruodlieb*. Cf. Werner, 1965, p. 23, note 2. Similar already Braun, 1962, p. 80, whose remark "So und nicht anders handelt ein wahrer König" levels the staging moment and its precise meaning in the context of the ceremonial.

<sup>26</sup> Text and translation quoted from the edition of John France, Neithard Bulst, and Paul Reynolds (1989). Compare this with the *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*, 1846, p. 480, lines 37-49.



The ritual and its interpretation are also confirmed by the rules of procedure of the *Ordinatio Imperii* from the year 817, which establishes that the person of higher rank should always give more abundantly:

*Ordinatio Imperii*, § 5<sup>27</sup>: We establish and require that if one or two of his brothers come to him with gifts, as was announced beforehand, the elder brother, in pious and brotherly love, present them with a greater gift, according to the fact that by God's providence the greater power has been assigned to him. [*Volumus atque monemus, ut senior frater, quando ad eum aut unus aut ambo fratres sui cum donis, sicut praedictum est, venerint, sicut ei maior potestas Deo annuente fuerit attributa, ita et ipse illos pio fraternoque amore largiori dono remuneret.*]

But that also means that an agonal principle is inherent in gift-giving, which confirms or creates rankings or dependencies.

Following the successfully mediated staging of the peace agreement, Ruodlieb receives a letter from his mother asking him to return home. His status group does not want to allow him to leave (*Ruodlieb V*, 399-402). The *rex maior* does not give in to their urging. His reasoning sheds a telling light on the relationship between the two:

*Ruodlieb V*, l. 405-408: The king said: 'Far be it that my friend should be troubled by me, he by whom I have never been aroused to the least anger. Nay, when I am angry he makes me mild as a lamb, and in everything he shows himself full of complete loyalty.' [*Rex ait: 'absit, ut is de me tribuletur <ut hostis,> / A quo sum numquam minimam commotus in <iram,> / Quin irascentem me mitem reddit ut ag<num,> / Totius fidei plenum se prebet in omni.*]

The emphasis on *fides* ('loyalty') should come as no surprise, as it is a *topos*. More significant is the moderating influence Ruodlieb has on the *rex maior*. Moderation of the emotions is crucial for successful action as a ruler<sup>28</sup>. *Clementia* ('mercy') and *patientia* ('patience') were regarded as cardinal princely virtues in the Middle Ages. The important distinction is that between demonstrative, that is, staged, and spontaneous emotionality. The latter must be controlled. Ruodlieb's influence and action guarantee this.

The *Ruodlieb* is unquestionably the success story of an ideal aristocratic social climber whose actions are oriented more toward Christian than heroic norms. In this respect, the character Ruodlieb is under great pressure to live up to this ideal – which he does, as far as may be discerned from the fragmentary transmission of the text. For a certain time, however, he belongs to a courtly status group whose proximity to the ruler grants them privileges but at the same time exposes them to

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from the edition of Alfred Boretius (1883) with my own translation.

<sup>28</sup> Anton, 1968; Mähl, 1969; Althoff, 1996, p. 60-79.

the material arbitrariness and the favor of their masters. This situation propels the entire plot of the *Ruodlieb* forward, because the lack of a reward for his loyalty initially drives him into exile.

Firstly, the demonstration of Ruodlieb's qualities takes place at the court of the *rex maior*, not in the search for adventure (*aventure*) or in battle. The Latin phrases in the *Ruodlieb* demonstrate better than the expressions in vernacular texts that personal relationships on the vertical and horizontal levels are terminologically bound to a code that is also found in Latin chronicles, historical sources and charters of the same time. There, *foedus*, *pactum*, and *amicitia* stand for freely chosen friendships and relations among equals; they are discussed primarily in relation to political elites<sup>29</sup>.

Secondly, we still find this model almost 200 years later, but then expressed in the vernacular by Freidank: "Freely chosen allies are still there in times of need when relatives have already abandoned each other. [*Gemachet friunt ze nôt bestât, / dâ lîhte ein mâc den andern lât.*]" (*Bescheidenheit*, l. 95, 16f.<sup>30</sup>). In the *Ruodlieb*, these types of relationships apply to basic personal relationships at court on the horizontal level, like that between the venator peregrinus Ruodlieb and the *rex maior's* nameless hunter (*venator*). Their tight personal bond arises from an alliance of convenience that, in the course of the narrative, proves advantageous to both sides. Ruodlieb's relationship with the greater king and with the entire status group of the ruler's *fideles* essentially follows the same functional mechanisms. Disturbances in the balance of power are not discussed in *Ruodlieb*.

Thirdly, the court system functions without a hitch for the *rex maior*. In the understanding of both author and recipient, this functioning includes the alimentionation of one's own clientele and their willingness to put in good words with the ruler in exchange for money. These breaks in the ideal design of the court are reflections of courtly realities, without being connected with a critical perspective of the court, as Althoff assumes<sup>31</sup>. They show the court's system of gratification without associating it with an ethical judgement. Functionalities of the court beyond an ideal design become visible and also determine Ruodlieb's actions when he initially asks to be allowed to lose in a chess game with the *rex minor*, in keeping with his role. At the same time, the sovereign ruler is conscious of the fact that he owes his successful action as a ruler to the reliability, quick wits, and emotional control of those close to him. Their success and survival is in turn due to the success and survival of the king.

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<sup>29</sup> Althoff, 1990b.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted from the edition of Heinrich Ernst Bezzenger (1872) with my own translation.

<sup>31</sup> Althoff, 1993, p. 33, note 22.

Fourthly, a symbiotic model of relationships at the court becomes visible – in a vertical and horizontal direction – extending in its mutual interdependence across all hierarchal levels. This is the context of the peace diplomacy between the greater and the lesser king, in which Ruodlieb takes on the role of the mediator and ‘scriptwriter’. Although he is the hero of the narrative, in the process of peace diplomacy he acts from a hierarchically subordinate position. In his supporting role as diplomatic mediator, he does have the leading role in this case. But in the context of the staged peace agreement, it is only a supporting role, albeit one of crucial importance. Conflict resolution processes described by historical medieval studies form the background of this literary design<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, the text paints a picture of the ruler's retinue that resists idealization but at the same time plays a crucial role in the process of conflict resolution.

Finally, the Latin chronicles, historical sources and charters from which historians draw offer only staging and demonstration – the portrayal of tension between behind-the-scenes negotiation and public performance belongs to the literary domain.

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<sup>32</sup> Althoff, 1992, p. 331-352.

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