

Aldo Scaglione. *Knights at Court: Courtliness, Chivalry and Courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1991)

This is a scholarly work which draws from a wide selection of primary sources, particularly court records, from all regions of Europe. His examples draw most heavily from French, German and Italian archives.

The author cites the early Carolingian court *schola* wherein clerics ran the government (at the emperor's requirement) based upon Roman models. In the schola students learned governance through emulating the craft and comportment of their mentors, much as companions of the service orders instruct SCAdians in the craft and comportment of holding offices. European curial mentors emphasized instruction in ethics and character to make their charges fit to bear the responsibilities demanded by the liege. Carolingian and Ottonian teachers used Cicero's *De officiis* as a primer which required a civic officer to possess the cardinal virtues of justice, fortitude, temperance and prudence, trying to recreate the imperial virtues of *honestum, decorum* and (from the Greek) *tó kalón*, defined as "the moral good" or "morally beautiful."

Later, secular armigers chosen by a king to hold office will attempt to ape the ways of the clergy. Scaglione outlines the evolution of curial attendants from service-oriented *curiales* (courtly officeholders) to knightly, self-interested *courtiers* (with all the implications of intrigue and politicking so familiar to the stereotype.) One's behavior was supposed to be an outward manifestation of inward virtues, particularly temperance and prudence.

Scaglione offers a number of examples of good and bad behavior mostly from the High Middle Ages and the Renaissance. He regularly quotes his sources in the original Latin, but only occasionally remembers to translate the quotes for his reader. (Those familiar with the Romance languages might puzzle out some of the bits.) Overall this work gives good background into how countries were run in period and what behavior was required (or at least acceptable) by the aristocracy of Europe.