

**The Re-invention of Tradition:  
Form, Meaning, and Local Identity in Modern Cologne Carnival**

Jeremy DeWaal

Over the past few decades, a flood of historical scholarship has been spawned by the groundbreaking works of Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, and others who have illustrated how a host of traditions were creations invented in the recent past to inform modern identities. The rituals of the British monarchy, the trappings of Scottish Highland culture, and many other traditions were revealed to have anything but ancient origins. Examination of such inventions, Hobsbawm argued, provided, among other things, a means to observe broader historical shifts.<sup>1</sup> The intention of this article is not to illustrate another example of a tradition invented in the recent past. Rather, it seeks to examine how longer-standing traditions have been subject to related processes of *re-invention*.<sup>2</sup> Some recent work, even if not written to theorize on re-invention, could be read through such a lense. Work in memory studies, for example, has shown how broad notions of national, regional, or local “tradition” could be reshaped based on how and which historical events are remembered. Works on “sites of memory” have similarly shown how conceptions of traditional objects and places can shift due to the fluctuation of memories attached to them.<sup>3</sup> Beyond memory studies, scholars of theological traditions, often confronted with themes of universal truth and intergenerational change, have also produced works that could be viewed through the prism of re-invention.<sup>4</sup> Kurt Schori demonstrates, for example, how the transmission of theological tradition through the written word could lead to submerged reformulation as different generations constructed linguistic meanings according to temporally specific circumstances.<sup>5</sup> While such work could be read through the lense of re-invention, I would

argue that more explicit consideration of the dynamics of re-invention is needed both to expand our knowledge of such processes and to develop theoretical models that characterize its diverse occurrences. I would also suggest, as Hobsbawm does with invented traditions, that examination of re-invention provides a means to lay bare symptoms of broader historical shifts.

Through a *longue durée* study of the Carnival tradition in the German city of Cologne, this article traces different routes of re-invention of performed ritual tradition. It draws particular attention to slippages between form and meaning as a site of re-invention. Like many performed traditions, Cologne Carnival contained a broad host of tropes and symbols that were bound into broader metaphors of meaning. These symbols and outer forms were transmitted across multiple generations, a process that was central to discreet but radical shifts in meaning. Far from being a recently invented tradition, continuous celebration of Cologne Carnival can be documented from 1341 to the present, with Cologne having the largest modern Carnival in Germany.<sup>6</sup> Since the nineteenth century, however, Carnival has become an integral part of local identity. Indeed, for nearly two centuries, to be a local patriot of Cologne has often meant to be a carnivalist—a development that played a crucial role in Cologne Carnival’s historical re-invention.

Previous studies of Carnival in Cologne and the Rhineland have focused primarily on short segments of the festival’s history and have used analysis of the tradition as a lense to shed light on politics and social history. The early nineteenth century and the emergence of bourgeois Carnival associations have been the primary points of interest. This period witnessed significant structural changes in the tradition’s organization, with new local elite associations filling the vacuum left by the abolition of the guilds that formerly organized events. Elaine Glovka Spencer has illustrated how, through such associations, the bourgeoisie shaped the tradition according to regimented bourgeois values, and used celebrations to both prop up social hierarchies and “define and present

themselves in public.”<sup>7</sup> James Brophy has also illustrated how Cologne Carnival in this period facilitated political communication, arguing persuasively that, in an era of repression of political speech, *Vormärz* popular culture became an important arena of the public sphere.<sup>8</sup> Christina Frohn likewise demonstrates the politicization of Rhenish Carnival across the century, with 1840-1848 representing its radical democratic phase. Frohn further points to the “organized jester” as a microcosm of the modern tradition.<sup>9</sup>

This article does not seek to overturn the notion that bourgeois reorganization and politicization were both critical in the “birth” of modern Carnival.<sup>10</sup> Rather, it argues for analysis beyond how Carnival became a vehicle of politics and social action to look in-depth at how local citizens constructed and discussed understandings of the *meaning* of the tradition itself. This article analyses how radical historical shifts in Carnival’s meaning integrated a broad host of continuous Carnival forms and symbols, many of which stretched back to the Middle Ages. I argue that radical diachronic shifts in interpretations of these forms, including the fool’s ship, the Carnival jester, the Carnival number eleven, and the state symbolism of Carnival, are symptomatic of broad re-invention of the constructed meaning of the tradition.

Exploring such re-invention necessitates a *longue durée* purview. This article takes as its point of departure works on European Carnival in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period by scholars such as Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, Siegfried Wagner, and Werner Mezger, who have shown the medieval origins of the tradition and the connection of its symbols to the metaphor of Carnival as the Kingdom of Hell.<sup>11</sup> The indulgence and licentiousness of Carnival were, as they have illustrated, parts of a medieval metaphor of man’s fallen and evil state. The diabolic Kingdom of Carnival stood across from the Kingdom of God represented by the forty days of Lent. The crux of medieval Carnival’s meaning came in its abrupt end on Ash Wednesday when celebrants

rejected Carnival diabolism in favor of the purity of the Church. This deeper meaning was reflected in a host of forms and rituals. Carnival was thus inherently bound up in notions of Christian piety and presented a foil against which the Kingdom of God was to be understood.

Fast-forwarding to Carnival in the early nineteenth century and zooming in on Cologne, this study illustrates how the meaning of Carnival had undergone radical re-invention. No longer representing a diabolic kingdom to be rejected, Colognians saw it as embodying the “healthful” and positive aspects of Colognian identity, which they argued included local natures of “light-heartedness,” “gaiety,” and “friendliness.” The interpretation of Carnival as an embodiment of positive local values to be promoted, rather than wickedness to be rejected and overcome, constituted an astonishing inversion of the tradition’s original meaning. I seek to demonstrate how amidst such re-invention, a panoply of medieval Carnival forms remained, but had become constituent parts of entirely new metaphors of meaning. This article further examines how political communication facilitated by modern Carnival seeped into notions of the meaning of the tradition itself in ongoing processes of re-invention. Conceptions of Carnival as embodying a Colognian democratic character, Rhenish resistance to authority, anti-Prussianism, or nationalism would fluctuate substantially throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Such re-invention of meaning continued in the twentieth century. Following an examination of Nazi attempts to coordinate Carnival and define it as an “ancient Germanic festival,” I trace changing conceptions of Cologne Carnival in the postwar period. The turn of Colognian citizens to the local in the face of postwar trauma and tainted national identity led to a magnification of nascent nineteenth-century notions of anti-Prussianism and a democratic spirit as defining the tradition. Simultaneously, Carnival became a crucial point of reference for a new tenet of local identity: the idea of “Colognian tolerance.” The idea emerged as a ubiquitous catch

phrase that postwar local enthusiasts used to describe their Cologne character as seen through the refracting lense of Cologne Carnival.

Positing a spectrum of re-inventedness upon which different traditions could be placed, the *longue durée* history of Cologne Carnival revealed its position at the far side of such a scale, possessing a remarkable capacity for re-invention. Different factors informed this “re-inventability.” The first factor regarded transmission of memory and Carnival’s origins in a distant past of which little was well documented and publically known. As Jan Assmann emphasizes in his *Vergessenstheorie*, intergenerational processes of forgetting are common, with durable transmission of memory requiring effective “intermediate storage,” typically as circulated text. Oral communication alone, in contrast, expires within a few generations. While Assmann categorizes festivals and rituals as mediums of intermediate storage,<sup>12</sup> the example of Cologne Carnival presents a different image. Mimetic transmission of outer forms proved quite successful. While Carnival could conceivably exist without fools’ ships, mystical numbers, etc, such forms traversed several centuries. Notions of their respective meanings, however, proved infinitely more unstable. The scarcity of broad circulating historical documentation, in particular, permitted more unrestrained imaginings of new interpretations of older continuous forms.

Organizational dynamics and Carnival’s participatory nature also informed the tradition’s re-inventability. Carnival, as Bakhtin noted, knows no “footlights” in that it does not draw firm boundaries between performers and observers.<sup>13</sup> This dynamic often prevented groups from establishing monopolies on celebrations and traditional forms that could be used and shaped by a wide array of groups. In turn, a host of separate Carnival groups and societies often existed in which interpretations of Carnival as a democratic, nationalist, or anti-Prussian tradition, for example, found varying degrees of support. Such structural fragmentation, in short, made defining

the meaning of the tradition into a highly participatory process.

In spite of such radical re-inventions, however, local enthusiasts have often viewed the tradition's meaning as timeless. Joseph Klersch's definitive work projected the festival back to the Romans and posited it as one whose outward forms develop, but whose inner spirit remained stable.<sup>14</sup> The medieval idea of Carnival as a representation of sin and human weakness would certainly strike a dissonant chord with modern Colognians accustomed to hearing local Carnival slogans such as "To everyone well-being and to no one pain!" (*Allem Wohl und Niemand weh!*). It would seem equally odd to suggest that Colognian tolerance, rooted in Carnival, was anything but timeless. One recent work on Carnival projects the idea back to the ancient Ubier—the pre-Roman inhabitants near Cologne.<sup>15</sup> Uncovering re-invention of tradition, in short, requires not only using *longue durée* history to tease out evolutions in meaning, it also requires brushing against the grain of modern identities for which older forms of tradition have been coopted.

### **Medieval Carnival: Piety, Contrariety, and the Diabolic**

The paucity of surviving sources on early Carnival has effected scholars and celebrants alike, with the tradition's origins long standing in a historical haze. Rhenish cities discovered this problem in the early nineteenth century, when Friedrich Wilhelm III banned Carnival in localities that could not demonstrate a tradition preceding the Napoleonic occupation. Cities with long Carnival traditions scrambled to collect some sort of written documentation. The absence of written sources has permitted broad speculation on the origins of the festival and its myriad of rituals, with debates even extending to the words for Carnival (*Karneval, Fastnacht, Fasching, Fastelovend*). Karl Meisen's historical analysis of the terms has convincingly illustrated that *Karneval* derives from the Latin for meat, or "*carne*," signifying the indulgence prior to Lent. The

term “*Fastnacht*,” and its regional variations, Meisen demonstrates, derive from the word “*fasten*,” referring to Carnival as the evening preceding Lent.<sup>16</sup> These interpretations have debunked theories of the word’s etymology that insisted on Carnival’s “pre-Christian” origins. Attempts to discover Carnival’s “true origins” have long been the focus of research on European Carnival. This scholarship has overturned popular misconceptions that Carnival originated in either the Roman Saturnalia or ancient Germanic spring festivals. The new consensus among historians is that it emerged in the Middle Ages, with a nearly thousand year gap in sources separating pre-Christian festivals from European Carnival. Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, in particular, has presented substantial evidence of Carnival’s Christian origins and the Christian meanings of a host of Carnival rituals and symbols. An examination of his work is called for, as I argue that the original meanings of many Carnival forms that Moser and others have deciphered took on radically different meanings in modern Cologne.

Moser argues that Carnival symbols, such as the number eleven, the “ship of fools” (*Narrenschiff*), the “fool’s cap,” and the metaphor of Carnival as a state, all originated from the idea that the festival represented the devilish counterpoint to Lent. Its ghosts, devils, witches, and animalistic figures, each symbolizing different vices, were connected to the idea of Carnival as representing the Kingdom of Hell. Dispelling notions that the Carnival number eleven originated in the nineteenth century, for example, Moser illustrates that the number’s association with Carnival extends at least to 1530 and that it symbolized the overstepping of the ten commandments and the eleventh hour before the return of Christ. Turning to other medieval Carnival symbols, Moser reveals that the ship of fools represented a symbolic foil to the “ship” of the church. The idea of the church as a “ship” is itself reflected not only in the English “nave” and the German “*Kirchenschiff*,” but also in medieval iconography. By entering the ship of the church

on Ash Wednesday, celebrants abandoned the ship of fools, which, in medieval depictions, ultimately sank due to human folly and weakness. The shape of the Carnival cap donned by the Carnival jester, Moser further demonstrates, was reminiscent of the ship of fools, bolstering the symbol's prominence. Moser also presents evidence that the Carnival jester in medieval iconography was depicted as the denier of Christ and a figure of sin and death that appeared in Dance of Death allegories.<sup>17</sup> The overt connection of Carnival with death in the Middle Ages, I argue, offers us a stark contrast to modern Cologne, where, as we shall see, celebrants imbued Carnival with "life-affirming" powers.

The meaning of medieval Carnival, in short, was defined by its rejection and the ultimate victory of Lent. It reflected the Augustinian two-city model of Christian thought, in which the *Civitas Dei* was to be understood in contrast to the *Civitas Diaboli*. Late medieval descriptions, uncovered by Moser, describe Carnival as facilitating knowledge of the holy against the foil of the evil—understanding Jerusalem by juxtaposing it with Babylon.<sup>18</sup> Siegfried Wagner's work on medieval and early-modern Carnival confirms many of Moser's conclusions. In his study of *Narrenliteratur* and *Fastnachtspiele*, he examines a ubiquitous "battle motif" between Carnival and Lent in which Lent always achieved glorious victory. Wagner illustrates how Carnival was bound up in a proliferation of Carnival/Lent binaries, in which the boundary between the two was that between "barbarism and civilization."<sup>19</sup>

While historians have reached a consensus on the emergence of the tradition in the late Middle Ages, debates have continued on how it came into being. While Moser argues that the Catholic Church instituted and controlled Carnival, Wagner explains it as an explosion of the clerical Feast of Fools beyond the bounds of the clergy.<sup>20</sup> Werner Mezger, in his study of the medieval and early-modern Carnival jester, argues that the tradition began as organic reoccurring



moments of consumption prior to Lent. Carnival was not, he argues, consciously established at any one moment by any one group. Rather, reoccurring consumptive moments evolved into a full tradition, taking on a host of tropes and figures. It was in this context, Mezger argues, that the religious metaphor of Carnival emerged. He further presents a massive collection of images in which the jester, the microcosm of the festival, appeared as the embodiment of evil, devilishness, a cannibal, oversized monster, violent masochist, or torturer of Christ.<sup>21</sup> While challenging Moser's narrative of Carnival's emergence, Mezger's work has solidified our understanding of its meaning as a diabolic counterpoint to Lent. This notion also fits with our knowledge of the importance of contrariety and binaries in notions of piety from the late medieval period into the seventeenth century. Stuart Clark, for example, illustrates the prominence of contrariety, dual classification, and binary thinking in the religious and intellectual foundations of witch hunts, in which such figures were needed as a foil against which piety was understood.<sup>22</sup> Robert Scribner has also illustrated the use of a Carnival "inversion motif" in Protestant and Catholic visual propaganda during the Reformation in attacks of their opposing confession.<sup>23</sup>

The scarcity of sources in these periods does not permit a local case study on the use of Carnival symbols in Cologne, though there is little reason to believe that it deviated from the rest of Catholic Europe. The early sources that we have come from financial and legal documents, and brief accounts in local chronicles. A handful of these sources confirms the presence of the diabolical metaphor in Cologne. A fifteenth-century legal document indicates that in 1441, a resident of Cologne and four costumed companions built a shrine to the devil on Carnival and paraded it through the streets. The devil figure atop the shrine held a banner and an aspergillum, the instrument for sprinkling holy water. A report stated that "some people" took offense at the display, resulting in the men being tied to the pillory for several hours.<sup>24</sup> As legal documents are

one of the few surviving sources on early Carnival, it should not surprise us to find such evidence in the case of a legal infraction. That only some took offense at the building and procession of a devil shrine would lead us to believe that locals were quite familiar with the idea of Carnival as a theatrical representation of evil and that the punishment resulted from the sheer excess of the display. Beyond this incident, legal documents indicate other forms of mockery of piety, such as costuming in the garb of clergy and beguines.<sup>25</sup> A 1578 reference to Carnival by Hermann Weinsberg also indicates the familiarity of citizens with the idea of Carnival as a representation of sin. The Cologne burgher recorded his decision not to dress up on Carnival, instead deciding to be “*narrisch*” by vain self-praise in a Carmina. The resulting text, “*Von samenfoegung der Weinsbergschen personen und gutter*” praised his worldly possessions and family’s future.<sup>26</sup> Such connections of Carnival with the sin of vanity appeared throughout Catholic Europe.<sup>27</sup>

Early Cologne Carnival also included grotesque and violent displays that would have fit within Carnival/Lent binaries. The local historian, Wolfgang Herborn, whose recent work provides a collection of known early sources on the festival, has also uncovered new financial documents that prove that medieval tournaments took place in Cologne Carnival until the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>28</sup> Tournaments, as David Crouch reminds us, involved not simply jousting, but rather included large and tremendously bloody mock-battles. The rural aristocracy likely held such Carnival tournaments not simply to enjoy the urban atmosphere of Carnival, as Herborn suggests, but because of the existence of a Lentian ban on tournaments, established due to the bloodiness of the displays.<sup>29</sup> Other violent events also occurred during early Cologne Carnival, such as blindfolded swine-beating, with participants also causing amusement in their accidental beatings of each other. Herborn demonstrates that the practice was common in early Cologne Carnival.<sup>30</sup> While Herborn does not consider metaphorical meanings of Carnival,<sup>31</sup> his findings, I

would argue, demonstrate the presence of violent displays that would have contrasted sharply with the subsequent peace and restraint of Lent. This duality would have fit closely with a host of binaries that established Carnival and Lent as metaphorical realms of the profane and the holy.

Beyond religious metaphor, early Cologne Carnival also provided a medium of social and political presentation. While historians of the modern tradition have emphasized how Carnival was used for such purposes, this arguably followed a longer-standing pattern. In late medieval Cologne, the *Patriziat*, an oligarchy of ruling families, hosted prominent festivities until their overthrow in 1396. The subsequent system of rule based on guilds and *Gaffeln* also took up the organization of Carnival.<sup>32</sup> The advantage in doing so was clear: it allowed them to keep order in celebrations and use events to demonstrate their local prominence. As Vera Jung points out, guilds in numerous cities used Carnival for such purposes.<sup>33</sup> Having just secured control of Cologne in 1396, Carnival would have offered a prime venue for the Cologne guilds to solidify their control and display their authority through symbolic presentation. The guilds, however, did not hold a monopoly on the tradition and had to compete with private celebrations.<sup>34</sup> Rather than holding joint celebrations, different guilds also held their own decentralized events. The degree to which this decentralized structure encouraged subjective deployment and interpretation of Carnival symbols and rituals can only be a matter of speculation.

By the modern period, however, it is clear that interpretations of Carnival symbols had undergone fundamental re-invention. While historical transmission of outer forms of tradition had been successful, celebrants had dramatically different understandings of their meanings and of the tradition itself. Slippages in intergenerational transmission of memory played a significant role in these changes.<sup>35</sup> While the concreteness of symbols and forms allowed for greater ease in their mimetic transmission between generations, interpretive meaning relied strongly on oral

communication. Such communicative memory, as Jan Assmann has points out, is notable for its rapid expiration, compared with transmission through text, which Assmann argues is a form of more durable cultural memory.<sup>36</sup> If we look to Cologne at the end of the sixteenth century, we see some of the first cracks in the late medieval Carnival metaphor. While some members of the clergy had celebrated Carnival, emerging arguments of Cologne Jesuits against the tradition demonstrate a lack of understanding of Carnival and Lent as a religious metaphor in which Lent triumphed. Rather, the Jesuits conceived of the tradition as representing the triumph of sin, spurring them to hold special sermons during Carnival in protest.<sup>37</sup> Religious argumentation against Carnival in later centuries follows a similar pattern in not seeing the possibility of a religious metaphor in the Carnival/Lent binary.

Much speculation would be involved in attempting to enumerate all developments in notions of piety, confession, social change, intellectual movements, and the history of mentalities that could have informed inter-generational reformulation of the meanings of Carnival forms. Moderate decline of the festival in the seventeenth century, in the wake of the Thirty Years' War, also makes it difficult to trace such shifts. However, during the late early modern period, as Peter Burke suggests, a process of "weak secularization" began taking hold in the realm of popular culture.<sup>38</sup> *Kirchweih* festivals present us an example of this. Created to celebrate church anniversaries, the clergy struggled to control unwieldy observances that ultimately failed to serve their intended religious purpose.<sup>39</sup> New festivals invented in the modern period, moreover, were more secular in nature, attenuating the strength of the Christian calendar.<sup>40</sup> As we shall see in Cologne Carnival, the festival had undergone a related process by the early nineteenth century. While the religious metaphor had been displaced, it remained a *weak* process of secularization in that it did not reflect fundamental rejection of religion in public life. Many locally patriotic

celebrants, for example, looked not only to Carnival in fashioning local identity, but also to strong confessional identities.

Such changes in modern understandings of the tradition, however, have been overlooked in histories of early Carnival, which have shown little interest in the modern tradition and have not considered the possibility of radical change in the meanings projected onto older forms. While Mezger briefly mentions a fading of the strength of diabolism in Carnival after the seventeenth century,<sup>41</sup> Moser argues that the tradition's origins and symbolic logic determine its modern meaning. In concluding his work, Moser references a Carl Spitzweg painting of a jester's incarceration after Carnival (Figure 1) writing: "The incarceration of the jester, a theme taken up by Carl Spitzweg in his 1855 painting *Ash Wednesday*, has always meant the liberation of the Christian from all which inhibits his proper beliefs. It has remained so up to the present day."<sup>42</sup> An examination of the painting, not reproduced in Moser's work, reveals anything but continuity. What we see are cold stone walls, a sober jug of water, and a colorful jester juxtaposed against a draconian cell. This was not like the jesters of Sebastian Brant's 1492 *Narrenschiff*, depicted as a devil, torturer of Christ, villain, and masochist (Figure 2). Nor was it the horrific Jester Cannibal that can be found in numerous sixteenth-century images. The viewer sees no evil in the figure, but rather develops a sympathy for his unjust imprisonment. This is not representative of how understandings of Carnival remained the same, but rather how they had radically changed.

### **Carnival in Cologne: From the Kingdom of Hell to the Empire of Rhenish Jollity**

Historians have long situated the "birth" of modern Cologne Carnival in 1823, with the introduction of structural reforms. Modernization of the festival, as Brophy has demonstrated, involved the use of Carnival as a medium of political communication. Frohn, who also traces

modern politicization of Carnival throughout the century, additionally emphasizes the importance of bourgeois organizing societies and early attempts to infuse modern Carnival displays with romantic poetics. Bourgeois regimenting of revelry, as Spencer points out in her study of the question of social class in Carnival, likewise typified the nineteenth-century festival. Modern Carnival reforms, initiated by the Olympic society, also added new elements to celebrations, such as the first centrally organized parade held on Rose Monday, and a new Carnival triumvirate led by the Carnival monarch, “Hero Carnival.” While historians have focused on the development of new forms, social dynamics, and politics in the modernization of Cologne Carnival, a crucial part of the festival’s modernization has been overlooked. In its emergence as the central festival of modern local identities—coming to represent Rhenish and Colognian natures of lightheartedness and jollity—the perceived meaning of the tradition had undergone a radical transformation. Though Carnival continued to be celebrated throughout much of Germany and Europe, Cologne was unique both for having the largest Carnival in Germany and in viewing themselves as the people whose local natures were defined by the tradition. Prominent carnivalists, such as Thomas Liessem, insisted that Colognian children grow up with Carnival in their blood, soaking up local folk humor in their mother’s milk.<sup>43</sup> Anton Keim argues that Rheinländer view Carnival as a “gravely serious matter.”<sup>44</sup> The wearing of Carnival uniforms to funerals of prominent carnivalists offers evidence that such statements were far from hyperbolic.<sup>45</sup>

Beyond new societies and organizing structures, the emergence of modern Carnival in Cologne was very much about how its traditional forms acted as sliding signifiers onto which celebrants projected radically new meanings that reflected modern local identity and modern mentalities. Carnival topoi, such as the jester figure, the ship of fools, the number eleven, and the statist metaphors of Carnival, all reveal astonishing transformations in which Carnival went from

representing the Kingdom of Hell—embodying values to be rejected—to a metaphor of positive localist values to be enthusiastically embraced. A microcosm of this shift can be seen in a complete transformation in the depiction of the Carnival jester. While hundreds of medieval Carnival images depict the jester as the torturer of Christ, ferocious cannibal, liar, villain, and evil-doer, in nineteenth-century Cologne we see a very a different picture. Examining an image from an early-nineteenth century Cologne Carnival song book, we see that the devil has been radically transformed (Figure 3). In the upper right of the image, we see the crest of Cologne, representing Carnival as an expression of local identity. The jester, far from being devilish, is a gallant and happy figure wooing the Carnival maiden. Below appear two devilish monster figures who have been vanquished, labeled “*Neidhardt*” and “*Griesgram*” (curmudgeonry and grumbledom). The luscious vines, a motif that proliferated in modern Cologne Carnival images, associated Carnival with life and fertility. This contrasts starkly with medieval images that overtly associated it with death and barrenness. The jester no longer represented mortal weakness, human folly, sin, and the depravity of human nature; rather, it embodied a positive break with the evil forces of drudgery. Even more, in Cologne, it represented the Colognian citizen and the uniqueness of Colognian identity, rooted, in their minds, in positive Carnival gaiety. It is in this period that many stock phrases of modern local uniqueness emerged, such as the idea of Colognians having only “sunshine in their hearts.” The local Carnival call (*Narrenruf*) was “*Kölle Alaaf*” (Long Live Cologne), a term that existed prior to the Carnival reforms and proliferated in modern celebrations, appearing in hundreds of Carnival songs.

The disappearance of the diabolic metaphor of Carnival, and ubiquitous adherence to the notion of Carnival as the Kingdom of Rhenish jollity, had already been realized by the early nineteenth century. Examples of such new notions proliferated. Tickets to a masked Carnival ball

in Cologne's Gürzenich in 1830, for example, were inscribed with a Bacchian print that read: "Believe, friends, joy makes one young and healthy. For this reason, foreswear yourself anew to the joyous."<sup>46</sup> The author Johanna Schopenhauer described the meaning of Cologne Carnival in a similar vein, writing of Carnival after her 1828 visit to Cologne:

The foundational principle of this festival was the fight of  
Unrestrained joy and freedom against the evil elements, which lie  
partially in human nature itself and partially in the exterior world,  
namely: moroseness, boredom, fearful adherence to the  
conventional and so forth.<sup>47</sup>

During her visit to Cologne, Schopenhauer also noted the strength of local patriotism among the citizenry and the carnivalistic natures of their local character, including "blithe humor," "friendly character," "joyousness of life," and "uninhibited" natures.<sup>48</sup> Schopenhauer also recalled the enactment of a mock battle during Carnival's Rose Monday parade, which proves particularly revealing. Given the long history of the metaphor of Carnival as an embattled state, it was not the first time that such a mock battle was performed. In Zittau in 1505, for example, there was a mock Carnival battle in which Hanswurst, the symbol of Carnival gluttony, battled a herring, the figure of Lent. The battle ended with the defeat of Hanswurst, who was thrown down a pipe well.<sup>49</sup> In the battle in Cologne in 1825, however, we see a quite different outcome. In this theatrical battle "Hero Carnival," the Carnival monarch, engaged in victorious battle against the enemies of Carnival led by "General Isegrim." Isegrim, the medieval figure of evilness and grimness, had as his standard bearer the devil Mephistopheles, who held a "banner of conspiracy against jovial humor." He was joined in nefarious battle by representatives of "barbarity and malice" and "indolence and pettiness," who found ultimate defeat at the hands of carnivalistic



forces. The victorious forces of Hero Carnival included local heroes such as Jan von Werth, *Jungfrau Colonia*, figures of the medieval patriciate, and representatives of the old guilds.<sup>50</sup>

In this metaphorical display, many older forms of tradition had been maintained, such as the idea of Carnival as a state, with a monarch, capable of engaging in battle. Carnival was, however, no longer the *Civitas Diaboli* that stood in contrast to the holiness of Lent. Rather, the devil, who appeared in earlier Carnival celebrations, went from ally of a diabolic medieval Carnival to the sworn enemy of the festival of Rhenish jollity. The reversal of Carnival from the defeated to the victor inverted the very foundational principle of the medieval tradition. What is most astonishing is the utter lack of surprise or discussion from the public about Carnival being the ultimate victor. No protests or objections to this display came from local citizens, Carnival participants, or the Church. Accounts of the event took the victory of Carnival forces as a given. If the display was notable in any way, it was due to its theatrical poetry. The maintenance of older forms combined with the process of forgetting older interpretations, allowed for radical reformulation in which the topsy-turvy principle of Carnival had been turned in on itself. The dominant theme of damnation and redemption of medieval Carnival had been displaced in the process.

Looking at a host of other older forms of tradition, we see that the “forest of symbols” of Cologne Carnival had shifted in kind. While the ship of fools in medieval depictions always hovered on the verge of sinking due to human folly, in modern Cologne, it was anything but a ship of weak fools destined to sink. It appeared not as the foil to the Church, but rather as a stalwart battleship prepared to wage war against the forces of unhappiness. A Cologne Carnival song entitled “*Narrenschiff*,” which gained cult-status by the end of the nineteenth century, depicted the enemies of the ship not as coming from any disorder from within, but rather from pirates and

sea-robbers from without. The means of survival was not abandoning the ship of fools for the ship of the Mother Church; instead, as the song proclaimed, they would stay afloat if they kept up their “happy song” as they pressed full speed ahead on the “Sea of Joy.”<sup>51</sup> This ship metaphor can be seen throughout nineteenth-century Cologne Carnival. In the 1897 Rose Monday parade, themed “the Curmudgeondom battle,” a parade float of the ship of fools was drafted not with devilish rowdy fools who sank the ship. Rather it depicted courtly figures in a ship covered with Cologne crests and topped with an Imperial crown.<sup>52</sup>

Reformulation of the metaphor of Carnival as a legal state proved to play a prominent role in new understandings of the tradition, with the Empire of Rhenish jollity fully displacing medieval diabolism. The sworn enemy of the empire was no longer the *Civitas Dei*, but rather the realm of drabness, austerity, and lifelessness. Cologne Carnival songs depicted skirmishes of Carnival warriors who armed themselves with the forces of happiness to destroy the enemy in grand victory. One song refers to the enemy of their Rhenish Carnival Empire to be the “Empire of Slavery,” which wanted to subject Carnival to its yoke. The song declared that they would win their freedom in their “victory festival,” proclaiming “Triumph! Triumph! Joy has conquered!” It was by indulging local jollity that Cologne carnivalists would win the “good war” waged by the Carnival Empire.<sup>53</sup> This state metaphor continued into the twentieth century, with Carnival princes such as Johann Maria I declaring in the eleven articles of his constitution that grumblers and those who did not chant *Kölle Alaaf* would be photographed and ordered to wear necklaces of sour lemons. Prince Hubert II ordered the creation of a spy ring to incarcerate enemies of his empire who fought against cheerfulness.<sup>54</sup> Engaging in more than playful banter, such Carnival princes drew on a statist metaphor with centuries of tradition. The way that modern carnivalists understood this long-standing metaphor, however, reveals a process of forgetting what previous

generations viewed the original Carnival state as representing. While the exterior signifier remained, new generations had re-imagined new enemies for the Jesters' Empire.

Religious engagement with Cologne Carnival in the nineteenth century also demonstrates the extent of processes of forgetting. If we look closely at the nineteenth-century religious and moralist engagement with Carnival presented in Frohn's work, we see an utter absence of the notion that Carnival could itself bear religious meaning. Rather, their goals were restricted to preventing extremities of disorder, bawdiness, or overstepping the bounds of respectability,<sup>55</sup> rather than channeling Carnival into a religious metaphor. Squaring religion with Carnival involved not making it bear religious meaning, but rather in arguing, as one Colongian did regarding religion and Carnival, that there was a time and place for everything, including carnivalistic merry-making.<sup>56</sup> Religious readings of Carnival became even more unlikely in light of growing beliefs that the tradition originated from the Roman Saturnalia or from a fusion of Roman and ancient Germanic traditions.<sup>57</sup> As one Colongian carnivalist argued, the Roman tradition was merely integrated into the Christian calendar to "compensate" them for the fasting of Lent.<sup>58</sup> Such a notion harmonized with local pride in Cologne's Roman origins, while further rendering Christian theology irrelevant to interpretation of Carnival's meaning.

### **Carnival, Politics, and Contested Meanings**

Throughout the nineteenth century, the localist valence of meaning in Cologne Carnival enjoyed a ubiquitous presence. Though the romantic reformers helped solidify this localist sentiment, they were certainly not the inventors of the idea of Carnival as a localist tradition.<sup>59</sup> They did, however, introduce new symbolism that promoted popular memory of Cologne as a Free Imperial City, such as the new Carnival triumvirate, which included the figure of the

“*Kölsche Boor*”—the representation of the free citizen of Imperial Cologne. Members of Cologne’s new Carnival society, the *Rote Funken*, moreover, donned the red uniform of the old Imperial city soldiers. Beyond such localist sentiment, however, as Brophy and Frohn have illustrated, Carnival also became a vehicle of politics. Brophy does suggest a growing association of Rhenish identity with an affinity for “constitutional rights and participatory politics,” though he focuses primarily on the tradition as a “communicative phenomenon.”<sup>60</sup> As opposed to simply mirroring political and social realities, Carnival also offered a means to challenge them and advocate for change. As both Werner Mezger and Hermann Bausinger have argued, Carnival did not absolutely affirm or overturn current orders but rather provided a space to engage in dialogue with them.<sup>61</sup> In addition to facilitating political communication, however, the politicization of Carnival also added new layers of contested meaning onto the festival itself. This included notions of the tradition as containing in its essence, a spirit of democracy, anti-Prussianism, and/or nationalism. Unlike the idea of Carnival embodying Colognean jollity, however, I argue that these new layers of political meaning remained in a state of flux throughout the nineteenth century. The contestedness of these political meanings can particularly be seen in unstable and fluctuating understandings of the meaning of yet other Carnival symbols.

The Carnival number eleven provides an excellent example of nascent re-interpretation of Carnival along “democratic” lines. Studies of the politicization of nineteenth-century Carnival have repeatedly pointed to the meaning of the number as symbolizing equality. The symmetry of the number 1:1, so the nineteenth-century narrative went, represented the equality of Carnivalists amongst each other and the social leveling of Carnival. Another possible interpretation, which surprisingly few adhered to, was that the number came from the eleven flames in Cologne’s crest.<sup>62</sup> Yet another interpretation, whose origins are uncertain, held that the number represented

the French revolutionary principles of *Egalité*, *Liberté*, *Fraternité*, whose anagram spelled the German word for eleven. Historians of Rhenish Carnival who have pointed to the number's equality symbolism, however, have not drawn attention to the fact that the jester's number long preceded the nineteenth century. Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, who discovered the number's medieval origins and its symbolism as an overstepping of the ten commandments, also brushes over the nineteenth-century interpretations of the number as mere misunderstandings.<sup>63</sup> I would argue, however, that they constituted not trivial misinterpretations, but rather demonstrated political re-inventions of the meaning of the tradition through a reconfiguration of its symbolic elements.

The number's appearance in nineteenth-century celebrations reveals both its ubiquity and the actual instability of its meaning. It proliferated particularly as a symbol on Carnival caps. This was not coincidental as many Carnival societies officially adopted the cap as a symbol of its members' equality.<sup>64</sup> An 1829 image that appeared in numerous prints combined the cap and "11" by illustrating a carnivalist with a Jacobin-like cap inscribed with the number (Figure 4). Standing on a stool, the figure holds two identical caps at his sides at a perfect ninety-degree angle. The association of both the number and the cap with equality in this image is clear.<sup>65</sup> It is also clear, however, that many did not understand the meaning of this symbolism. Just one year previously, Johanna Schopenhauer described the number's appearance in Cologne Carnival during her visit in 1828. Reporting the myriad of ways that it entered into celebrations, such as the opening of festivities with eleven cannon shots, and the prevalence of caps inscribed with the number, she reported that no one whom she encountered seemed to know exactly what the number meant.<sup>66</sup> While democratic leaders of Carnival associations must have pushed these new interpretations, for many citizens who lacked memory of older meanings, the number eleven remained an empty signifier.

Just as modern Rhenish carnivalists imagined new enemies for the Carnival Empire in “Griesgram,” and “Muckertum,” some also began to view their tradition as embodying a foil to Prussia, the new sovereigns of the Rhineland. Historical studies have sharply disagreed on the presence of anti-Prussianism in nineteenth-century Carnival. Hildegard Brog has argued that nineteenth-century carnivalists emphasized Rhenish exuberance as a sign of overt opposition to Prussian strictness and rigidity. She argues that an entrenched anti-authoritarian vein existed in Rhenish Carnival that fed into anti-Prussianism.<sup>67</sup> Other scholars, such as Herbert Schwedt and Max-Leo Schwering, have denied the presence of anti-Prussian sentiment in nineteenth-century Carnival, with Schwering even arguing that, in some ways, Carnival brought Prussians and Colognians closer together.<sup>68</sup> While the detailed arguments of these scholars cannot be iterated here, the presence of anti-Prussian sentiment in the early nineteenth-century Rhineland is well established.<sup>69</sup> I would argue, moreover, that anti-Prussianism in nineteenth-century Cologne Carnival is best understood not in terms of ubiquity or absence, but rather as a new, inchoate layer of meaning projected onto the tradition. The contestedness of this layer of meaning can be seen in varying perceptions of the military uniforms worn by the members of Carnival associations. Notions of Carnival as an “anti-Prussian” tradition have relied heavily on these Carnival military figures (*Funken*), who supposedly parodied Prussian militarism. Carrying fake wooden rifles and dancing the “*Stippeföttche*,” a dance consisting largely of posterior rubbing, these military figures are viewed by contemporary Colognians as mocking Prussian militarism.<sup>70</sup> Historical research, however, demonstrates that Carnival reformers introduced the uniforms in 1823 to promote the memory of Cologne as a Free Imperial city.<sup>71</sup> Nineteenth-century depictions of the soldier uniforms, however, illustrate the ambiguity of their use for anti-Prussian persiflage. Such depictions vacillate between presenting the soldiers as a respectable Imperial military force or

contrarily as a rag-tag disordered group portrayed in the unflattering style of parody.<sup>72</sup> The notion that Cologne Carnival contained little or no anti-Prussian persiflage is also questionable given our knowledge of nineteenth-century Cologne localism.<sup>73</sup> Cologne's famous *Hänneschen Theater*, for example, was well-known for its anti-Prussian marionette plays. Two stock characters of their plays, Tünnies and Schäl, invariably performed nasty Carnival tricks on the rigid Prussian policeman, Schnäuzerkowski. Local citizens saw in Tünnies the embodiment of their carnivalistic natures, making him the personification of Cologne in popular folklore.

The nineteenth century also witnessed attempts to imbue Cologne Carnival with a layer of nationalist meaning, presaged by Goethe advocating that the tradition be made into a national *Volksfest*. In the first half of the century, these attempts drew on a more open notion of nation. In their attempt to “poeticize” and shape Cologne Carnival as a national *Volksfest*, organizers made a host of artistic figures into honorary Cologne carnivalists in 1839, and invited them to contribute to the “poetic depiction” of Carnival through new melodies, sketches, or ideas. Such invitations were extended not only to German cultural figures, but also to foreign artists such as Donizetti, Nicolini, Vernet and Victor Hugo.<sup>74</sup> By the latter half of the nineteenth century, nationalism in Cologne Carnival took a more exclusionary turn. Alongside the frequent singing of *Deutschland über Alles*, late nineteenth-century Carnival songs often contained the topoi of the Watch on the Rhine, and the Germanness of their river. Anti-French Carnival songs denounced the “welsh hen,” while others denounced Denmark and praised the banding together of German brothers to free Schleswig-Holstein from Danish chains.<sup>75</sup> Such nationalist sentiment in late nineteenth-century Carnival often intermixed with pro-Prussian sentiment. This is seen in 1870, with the changing of the Carnival monarch's title from “Hero Carnival” to “Prince Carnival” in honor of the Prussian king.<sup>76</sup> Such nationalist sentiment, however, did not extinguish anti-Prussianism in the festival.

Carnival floats in 1904 and 1914, for example, continued persiflage of Prussian militarism and excessive demand for order.<sup>77</sup>

In short, nineteenth-century Cologne Carnival became a contested site in terms of the political meaning projected onto the tradition. The fundamentally participatory dynamic of the tradition and its lack of distinction between performers and observers both did much to encourage the formation and maintenance of such divergent political meanings. Barring state action, rival groups structured their own celebrations according to different political transcripts. The break-up and creation of new Carnival societies very much demonstrated this phenomenon. The first of such splits took place in the 1840s, when the democrat Franz Raveaux led a group of more revolutionary carnivalists in breaking from the main bourgeois organization. The result was a more democratic, critical, and anti-Prussian *Allgemeine Karnevalsgesellschaft* and a more elitist *Große Karnevalsgesellschaft*.<sup>78</sup> After 1870, in addition to the often anti-Prussian *Rote Funken*, the *Blaue Funken* became a focal point of nationalist and pro-Prussian carnivalists. By the end of the century, Cologne boasted an array of different Carnival societies, with divergences between the “wild societies,” the disorder of street Carnival, those for a politically critical festival, and the Carnival societies of order and respectability.<sup>79</sup> The decentralized structures and the festival’s participatory nature permitted celebrants space to observe the tradition on their own terms, without having to seize control of central organization in the process.

What remained ubiquitous throughout the nineteenth century, however, was the idea of Carnival as a positive embodiment of a Colognian character of gaiety and breaking with the “evil” forces of rigidity. By the end of the century, these meanings were bolstered and augmented by industrialization, in which Cologne Carnival became an oasis from “exhausted nerves,” “uniformity and monotony,” and “daily work.”<sup>80</sup> In 1904, Cologne’s mayor argued that their



Carnival was a “fountain of youth” in which the “worn out” workers regained their strength.<sup>81</sup> Another turn-of-the-century Cologne Carnival celebration, arranged for patients of a psychiatric ward, revealed a similar mentality. The doctors of the institution argued for the salutary effect of Carnival on the patients, with reporters writing that the organization of the celebration demonstrated a love of neighbor in a society that was bidding farewell to the “straight jacket.”<sup>82</sup> Into the twentieth century, this valence of meaning remained strong, though, as we shall see, later generations continued to reformulate understandings of older forms of tradition.

### **“Ancient Germanic” Revelry and “Coordinated” Fastnacht**

Cologne Carnival in the first half of the twentieth century was most typified by the absence of celebration. The outbreak of World War I and subsequent allied occupation of the Rhineland led to the cancellation of Carnival from 1914 to 1924. Many approved of the pause during the war while “Colonia’s sons” fought in the field.<sup>83</sup> Locals, however, looked jealously at the explosion of Carnival in unoccupied Düsseldorf in 1919.<sup>84</sup> Stringent bans prohibited public celebrations or any events that included Carnival poems, games, singing, or costuming.<sup>85</sup> Local Celebrations were relegated to private family events, with the police quickly stopping random Carnival processions.<sup>86</sup> Locals frequently expressed concern that the long period without observance could lead to the tradition’s disappearance. Fervid desire to resume its observance expressed itself, among other places, in the placement of Carnival themes on local emergency currency bills. With the lifting of the ban in 1924, a triumphal spirit of the tradition’s invincibility emerged in local discourses. As one commentator wrote, while the thrones of Europe may fall, the throne of Prince Carnival would remain standing. The introduction of children’s celebrations reflected new emphasis on passing the tradition on to future generations.<sup>87</sup> The determined spirit

of carnivalists to maintain the tradition demonstrated its continued hold on the local imagination. Nevertheless, a lack of money put a significant damper on celebrations.<sup>88</sup> Weimar Street Carnival paled in comparison to the years of the Empire.<sup>89</sup> The festival was used, however, to confront some of the trauma of the period. Celebrations could be found, for example, that were dedicated to burned, wounded, and amputee war veterans.<sup>90</sup>

Given the degree of political struggle in the Weimar period, the role of politics in Weimar Carnival was surprisingly small. Political societies such as a local society of socialist Carnivalists continued to exist, though Carnival rarely became entangled in the political turbulence of the period. The 1931 celebrations was one of the few exceptions, with Nazis and Communists holding rallies during events. A small group of Hitler Youth also dressed in military uniforms and marched in lock-step through the streets. An article in the *Lokalanzeiger* argued that there was something “false” and “disharmonious” about the display, and reported that it was drowned out by normal Carnival celebrations.<sup>91</sup> Even when such political moments emerged, however, Weimar Carnival was noted for a surprisingly low level of violence and criminality.<sup>92</sup>

Following the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Cologne Carnival faced Nazi “coordination” as the party moved to take control of its organization, in so doing bristling some carnivalist feathers. It also became a moment of attempted top-down re-invention of the tradition as a purely Germanic festival. Historiography of Cologne Carnival during the Third Reich, however, has revolved around debates over the degree to which it became a point of resistance. While Klersch held that Cologne carnivalists demonstrated the incompatibility of their tradition with Nazism,<sup>93</sup> Schwering argued that they only objected to Nazi attempts to restructure Carnival societies. Schwering argued that the content of events was never a subject of discussion and that carnivalists were often supporters of Nazi goals.<sup>94</sup> Carl Dietmar and Marcus Leifeld, in a recent

work, have convincingly argued for a more nuanced assessment, by viewing celebrants as an intermixed group of enthusiastic regime supporters, regime conformers, and those who exercised cautious resistance.<sup>95</sup>

The ambiguity of carnivalist responses to the Nazi regime manifested itself from the first celebrations in 1933. A parliament of Carnival societies met after the seizure of power to decide whether to cancel events given recent political developments. Deciding against cancellation, they sought to shield themselves by asserting Carnival's "unpolitical" nature. Cologne's chief of police followed up on this point by insisting that all Carnival celebrations must refrain from politics.<sup>96</sup> In 1933, Carnival remained peaceful, while the introduction of the new *Veedelszoch*, a parade of Cologne's city quarters, was added as previously planned in order to broaden popular involvement in Carnival presentations. In the coming years, however, defining the meaning of Carnival would be anything but broadly participatory. The regime began taking steps to control Carnival, infuse it with propaganda, and portray it as an ancient Germanic festival. The creation of a new national organization, the *Bund Deutscher Karneval*, permitted more central control. Carnival groups such as the *Rote Funken*, which formerly had Jewish members, were required to remove them and forbid Non-Aryans from joining.<sup>97</sup> The Nazis also removed prerogatives from traditional societies and placed the festival under the authority of *Kraft durch Freude*.

Nazi cultural authorities insisted that the festival would remain a "down-to-earth traditional Carnival,"<sup>98</sup> while simultaneously portraying themselves as the rescuers of the festival who would make it rise like a "phoenix from the ashes."<sup>99</sup> In spite of such reassurances, new levels of organizational control alarmed some. The party mandated that Carnival speeches, notorious for political critique, must be censored and remain unpolitical. Two Cologne newspapers openly opposed these changes, arguing that they did away with the true spirit of the

festival.<sup>100</sup> The Nazis also clamped down on the long tradition of cross-dressing in Carnival. They decreed that the *Jungfrau* of the Carnival triumvirate and all dancing maidens, traditionally depicted by men in drag, should be played by women.<sup>101</sup> Arguments against the practice included concerns that it could cause “gender-sickness.”<sup>102</sup> While carnivalists accepted some changes, a push-back occurred against plans for an umbrella society with broad control over local Carnival societies. Five presidents of major societies issued a letter rejecting the plan, which city newspapers printed under the title “Cologne’s Jesters Revolt.”<sup>103</sup> The group insisted, among other things, that the new plans would threaten the local uniqueness of the tradition, though they reiterated the line that Carnival was supposedly unpolitical.<sup>104</sup> The *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, the local mouthpiece of the Nazi party, shot back at the carnivalists, insisting that they were poor guardians of the folkish tradition, and that their societies had been hotbeds of Jewish influence.<sup>105</sup> Following Carnival society threats to boycott celebrations, the plans for a new umbrella organization were scrapped.

Beyond this confrontation, however, coordination of Carnival continued without major opposition. Uncooperative carnivalists were firmly dealt with through bans on contributing to celebrations. The famous Carnival speaker Karl Küpper, for example, received such a ban for masking jokes about the regime behind double entendre and Cologne dialect. One of the few appearances of overt anti-Nazi sentiment occurred in 1938 with the publication of a mock-*Rosenmontagszeitung*, the newspaper traditionally distributed to display parade floats. One float depicted a Nazi officer milking Germany portrayed as a malnourished cow, proclaiming his hatred for Jews and milk inspectors. Another float draft depicted a fiendish skeleton and Nazi soldiers, with the caption “With everything around us going up in flames, we have the FÜHRER to thank.”<sup>106</sup> Such forms of resistance in Carnival, however, were few and far between. It would be

wrong to create a mythology of broad opposition, as it would be to ignore moments of its occurrence. No societies, for example, registered any protest to two anti-Semitic Carnival floats put out by KdF in the late 1930s. While Weimar Cologne had its own Jewish Carnival society, the *Kleinen Kölner Klub*,<sup>107</sup> no carnivalists protested the exclusion of the Jews from the tradition.

As Nazi cultural figures sought to refashion Carnival as an ancient Germanic tradition, they attempted to negate notions that it had either medieval Christian,<sup>108</sup> or Roman origins. Such attempts were particularly undertaken in the press and often focused on the origin of the term “*Fastnacht*.” The Nazi line rejected its derivation from the word “fasting,” in spite of Carnival’s celebration prior to Lent. Rather, they insisted that it derived from the ancient Germanic word “*vaseln*,” meaning to thrive or to be joyous, with “*Karneval*,” being a foreign word used to refer to the ancient festival.<sup>109</sup> A 1938 article, which reiterated such theories, insisted that Carnival was a pagan spring ritual whose meaning was about growth and the fertility of nature, concluding that “ancient memories of a pre-Christian system of belief resonate within it.”<sup>110</sup> While popular interpretations of Carnival’s origins previously held that it emerged from Roman or a mixture of Roman and Germanic traditions,<sup>111</sup> the Nazis sought to isolate and magnify notions of its Germanic origins while suppressing ideas of its Roman origins. Traces of Carnival’s supposed Roman origins were to be extinguished. Rather than giving Carnival monarchs Latin names, such as “Jungfrau Colonia” or “Prinzessin Bonna,” Rhenish cities were instead to opt for Germanic names.<sup>112</sup> Beyond questions of origins, the Nazis also had little use for notions that Carnival embodied a Rhenish democratic character. The number eleven proved particularly inconvenient, having been historically interpreted as a symbol of equality, democracy, or Christian religion. Rather than drawing on past symbolisms, they argued that it was a lucky number that originated from the mystic science of the stars.<sup>113</sup> Unlike structural coordination, however, such re-

interpretive efforts were not systematically pursued. Adolf Spamer, an academic with Nazi sympathies, for example, argued that attempts to tie Carnival to ancient Germanic festivals lacked sound reasoning.<sup>114</sup> The brief stint of Nazi control of Carnival and the scattered nature of their re-interpretive agenda also left little time to transform public consciousness.

### **Postwar Cologne Carnival: Democracy, Anti-Prussianism, and Cognian Tolerance**

From 1940 to 1945, Carnival celebrations were officially suspended. By the end of the war, absent most of its population, around ninety percent of the city had been destroyed. The Cologne Cathedral, the iconic symbol of the city, amazingly stood nearly untouched, towering over the ruins. As former Cognian citizens flowed back into the city from the haven of the Rhenish countryside, they sang not *Deutschland über alles*, but rather “*Heimweh nach Köln*,” a song that recounted how love of their local Heimat always drew them back.<sup>115</sup> Throughout occupied Germany, the years after 1945 witnessed a broad turn to localism triggered by national disaster and extreme trauma, and Cologne was no exception. The carnivalist Joseph Klersch argued that it was this turn to local sentiment that fueled successful rebuilding of the city.<sup>116</sup> Cologne Carnival also proved attractive to postwar citizens given its connection to a sense of local community. The term that postwar Cognians continually used to describe the festival was the word “*lebensbejahend*” (life-affirming). Carnival represented, as one carnivalist proclaimed, the “mobilization of life-affirming forces.”<sup>117</sup> Heinrich Lützel, in his history of Cognian humor, insisted that Rhenish humor played an important role in surviving the trauma of the Third Reich.<sup>118</sup> The idea of Carnival as a source of healing from the trauma and destruction of war is clearly reflected in the theme for the first full postwar Carnival in 1949, “*Mer sin widder do un dun wat mer künne*.” (We are here again, and will do what we can).

Small unofficial celebrations took place from 1946 to 1948, thanks in part to the help of a pre-war Jewish carnivalist, who convinced the British occupiers to permit celebrations.<sup>119</sup> One Jewish carnivalist, Günther Ginzel, who had been interned in a concentration camp, returned to Cologne and expressed a surprisingly enthusiastic sentiment for Carnival and local “Heimat feeling.” Carnival, he insisted, had an “unusual power of attraction” for Colognean Jews. He promoted it as a point of reconciliation, and praised the Jewish actions of convincing the British occupiers that it was not a militarist festival.<sup>120</sup> Postwar carnivalists proclaimed Carnival to be an “oasis of freedom” where all would have their different views respected.<sup>121</sup> Gone were the ideas of the tradition as a nationalist celebration, replaced by a renewed emphasis on local sentiment that was viewed as salubrious to a decentralized vision of nation. The president of the postwar *Bund Deutscher Karneval*, argued that Nazi Carnival downplayed the local rootedness of the festival. The postwar aims of the federation would be to reverse the “massification mill” of *Kraft durch Freude* and tend to the local nature of different Carnival celebrations.<sup>122</sup>

Postwar Cologne Carnival witnessed a strong resurgence of nascent nineteenth-century ideas of the tradition as containing democratic meanings connected to the idea of Colognean democracy. A comparison of two images of pre- and postwar Carnival figures again offers us a microcosm of this re-invention. The first is a 1935 sketch of the Carnival poet (Figure 5), whose shelves are filled with tropes of local carnivalesque identity: humor, the Rhine, the gaiety of wine and sway, Rhenish love, and Carnival songs going back to 1000 B.C. (no doubt a mockery of exaggerations of the length of the tradition). The second image is a *Rosenmontag* float from 1950 titled “Tünnies wird entnazisiert” (Figure 6). Here Tünnies, the personification of Cologne’s carnivalistic natures, receives a thorough medical treatment after Nazi efforts to inculcate him with negative values. He is surrounded by a team of physicians and medicines, titled “Anti-Nazin

Cream,” “Anti-Nazi powder” and a few doses of “demokratin.” The resemblance of one doctor to Cologne’s old Lord Mayor and new Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, is unmistakable. Adenauer quickly became a local democratic hero, appearing on flattering Carnival floats that presented him, for example, in giganticized form sitting arm-in-arm with “Mother Colonia.”<sup>123</sup> While both satirical and non-satirical floats appeared in parades, the Tünnies float belonged firmly to the latter.<sup>124</sup> It was representative of clear attempts to fashion a postwar local identity linked to democracy via definition their local “Heimat tradition.” Carnivalists such as Joseph Klersch, in the spirit of such interpretations, argued that their tradition was a festival for “democratic upbringing.”<sup>125</sup>

Such notions had public resonance. A letter published in the *Kölnische Rundschau* emphasized democracy and permissiveness in Cologne Carnival. Drawing on the memory of the distrust that absolutist rulers had of Carnival, the letter insisted that it was no coincidence that the tradition had historically found its most fertile ground in a Free Imperial City. A political lesson, the writer concluded, could be found in the humor of Carnival and its power of disarmament.<sup>126</sup> Such notions of Carnival as a force to promote and identify with democracy, nascent in the nineteenth century, now echoed strongly throughout the Rhineland and hardened formerly inchoate notions of democratic Colognian and Rhenish identities. Works like Anton Keim’s *11 Mal Politischer Karneval* argued that Carnival was a political activity, based on “Jester’s Law,” which entailed challenging authority, lifting class boundaries, and permitting freedom of expression.<sup>127</sup> Lützel, who propagated notions of Colognian democracy rooted in Carnival, held that it was less a “theory of state” than a “life feeling.”<sup>128</sup>

The strong postwar turn to local sentiment also revived and solidified understandings of Cologne Carnival as embodying “anti-Prussianism.” Hostility to “Prussian tradition” flourished in



local postwar discourse and manifested itself in local actions such as suggestions to rename the historic Hohenzollern bridge spanning the Rhine. One-third of Colognians supported the action as a symbolic rejection of “Prussiandom.”<sup>129</sup> By turning to local traditions, Heimat enthusiasts viewed themselves not as rejecting the national, but as rejecting a centralized “Prussian” vision of nationhood rooted in militarism. While anti-Prussian sentiment was certainly present in nineteenth- and early-twentieth century Cologne, postwar Cologne carnivalists drew on such memories and in so doing magnified formerly contested notions of Carnival as being about anti-Prussianism. The surge of this idea manifested itself in interpretations of Carnival uniforms as mocking Prussian militarism. While such interpretations remained inchoate in the nineteenth century, in the postwar period they became unambiguous. In one poll, seventy-three percent of postwar Colognians responded that the military costumes were anti-Prussian persiflage.<sup>130</sup> Prominent carnivalists such as Joseph Klersch propagated this interpretation. Lützeler did the same, insisting that these Carnival soldier figures embodied pacifism and disrespect for authority, with oranges in their cannons, and chocolates in their war sacks.<sup>131</sup> The *Festkomitee Kölner Karneval* also promoted anti-Prussian persiflage, arguing that Carnival medals of honor, worn on Carnival uniforms, disparaged Prussian military pomp and critiqued the Prussian “cult of medals.”<sup>132</sup>

While postwar notions of Carnival as democratic and anti-Prussian magnified previously contested notions, the idea of “Colognian tolerance” rooted in Carnival, was a new postwar claim that became a ubiquitous catch-phrase in the city’s self-understandings. The phrase can be found peppered throughout contemporary Cologne Carnival songs and in popular *Kölschrock* songs, a genre sung in local dialect. In spite of its contemporary ubiquity the phrase “*Kölner Toleranz*” is nowhere to be found in prewar Carnival songs, images, discourses, Carnival speeches, and so

forth. Yet, by 1960, the Carnival Prince, Peter IV, praised the spirit of “Colognian tolerance” and its “power of assimilation,” while others bragged about the number of selected Carnival princes who were not native to Cologne as affirming the “spirit of Colognian tolerance.”<sup>133</sup> While the idea of Carnival as embodying “*Kölner Toleranz*” proliferated after the 1950's, it was preceded by attempts of some to construct a notion of local identity based on inclusion rather than the exclusion of the outsider. In the face of the influx of Eastern expellees, a local professor argued during the 1948 Carnival season that Colognian life was about including those from outside of the city.<sup>134</sup> Local *Heimatkundler*, such as Klersch pushed the notion of a Colognian tradition that embodied “forbearance” and “world-openness,” insisting that Colognian tradition was about embracing those from the outside—“*wer vun druufße kütt.*”<sup>135</sup> To the South, Mainzer carnivalist Anton Keim, argued similarly that “the true jester practices tolerance!”<sup>136</sup>

Postwar Colognians also attached the locally unique concept of the “*Jeck*” to notions of Colognian tolerance. The term *Jeck*, which existed for centuries, was a carnivalistic way of referring to one’s fellow man. During the 1954 Carnival season, an article in the *Kölnische Rundschau* insisted that the local term embodied “good-naturedness,” “tolerance,” and understanding between different people. The author wrote that the idea of the “*Jeck*” expressed the rights of an individual to their own “*Jeckigkeit*”—their own individuality, which demanded respect. To be a *Jeck*, he argued, was to say “you are as you are...no judgement, no exclusion, no offense.”<sup>137</sup> Aphorisms tied to the *Jeck* concept proved useful for fashioning such interpretations. Sayings such as “*Jeck sin mer all, ävver jede Jeck eß anders*” (We are all *Jecks* but every *Jeck* is different), which existed prior to 1945, became ubiquitous in postwar Cologne.

While the idea of Carnival embodying Colognian tolerance was a recent notion, Carnival proved well-suited to bear these new constructions. Being an inherently participatory festival

“without footlights,” Carnival was, to use Bakhtin’s words, “vividly felt by all its participants.”<sup>138</sup> It would be wrong, however, to exaggerate the descriptive breadth of the idea of a local tradition of “tolerance” rooted in their Carnival tradition. Carnivalist localism could also take exclusionary turns. One female Carnival enthusiast, for example, insisted in 1953 that only native Cologne girls should participate in *Weiberfastnacht*, the celebration on Carnival Thursday when male authority is turned upside-down.<sup>139</sup> Some local enthusiasts argued that integrating outsiders into the community was welcome, so long as they did not make native Cologneans a minority.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, notions of Cologne Carnival containing traditions of democracy, tolerance, and openness did little to assist in coming to grips with the Nazi past—even if they seldom claimed that such notions influenced valuations of their participation in Nazi crimes. Within Cologne local culture, moreover, shibboleths continued to exist that excluded the outsider, such as the idea of the “*Imi*” or the “imitation Colognean,” applied to those not native to the city. In spite of the concept usually being used in carnivalistic jest, its power of exclusion was real.

Nevertheless, the impulse of such identity claims had performative potential and, in some sectors, spurred attempts to be more inclusive. By 1960, both the Lord Mayor of Cologne and the President of the Standing Committee of Cologne Carnival stated that the word “*Imi*” was obsolete and should be done away with.<sup>141</sup> Later generations, far from being passive receptacles, actively shaped notions of Cologne tolerance. Progressive localists, for instance, argued for the use of Carnival to promote inclusion of immigrants. In 1961 one carnivalist wrote of the importance of considering the city’s immigrants in arranging the festival so that they could win over their affections for the city.<sup>142</sup> Jan Brügelman, the head of the *Verein der Freunde und Förderer des Kölnischen Volkstums*, argued for vigilance in fighting against all forms of exclusivity in the tradition.<sup>143</sup> Attempts to extend the idea of carnivalesque tolerance to include the

embrace of foreigners, however, remained an ongoing process. In 1976, for example, a controversial float appeared in the Rose Monday parade portraying a Turkish immigrant rhapsodizing about the beauty of the Rhine and pushing a tram filled with dozens of babies holding child-benefit money. Immigration supporters subjected the floats to egg attacks, while the float drafters received a stern rebuke from Heinrich Böll, who argued that such mockery was counter to local tradition. Böll argued that Cologne Carnival was about mocking secure authority figures and should not be used against minorities and vulnerable groups.<sup>144</sup> More tolerant voices won out in 1992, when Cologne Carnival musicians and dialect bands held a concert in response to right-wing attacks on immigrants. The concert entitled “*Arsch huh, Zäng Ussenander*” (Stand up and open your mouth!) was attended by 100,000 participants and denounced intolerance toward foreigners.<sup>145</sup>

Many contemporary carnivalists have also reformulated the notion of Colognian tolerance to mean acceptance of the city’s large gay and lesbian community. Indeed, Cologne not only has the largest Christopher Street Day celebration in Germany, but is also the only one that includes a locally patriotic Carnival call (*Kölle Aloha!*), which organizers teach celebrants to say with a demonstrably limp wrist. The gay Carnival society, the *Rosa Funken*, which became a full member of the *Festkomitee Kölner Karneval*, have appeared in both Carnival and the CSD parade, wearing the eighteenth-century uniform of the Imperial city soldiers—only in pink instead of red. Contemporary Carnival songs, such as the cult-classic *Viva Colonia*, emphasize Cologne’s sexual progressiveness as evidence of its tolerance. Given the origins of the medieval pre-Lentian festival as a religious metaphor, contemporary notions of Cologne Carnival as containing a localist tradition of tolerance that includes sexual minorities demonstrates the sheer capacity of the tradition’s meaning to evolve. Such re-formulations, furthermore, have not only altered how

celebrants understand the meaning of the tradition; they have also offered a means through which the content of local identities themselves could be changed and modernized.

## **Conclusion**

While much attention has been given to traditions invented in the recent past, examination of longer-standing traditions, such as Cologne Carnival, illustrate the often dynamic processes of re-invention to which such traditions were subject. Though radical changes in meaning could occur over time, the point of this study is not to argue for the “inauthentic” nature of such traditions. As Regina Bendix convincingly argues, the idea of the authentic is itself a discursive construction rather than an objective transcendent category to be wielded by the scholar.<sup>146</sup> Rather, this study argues for the need for more focused analysis on the routes of re-invention and theoretical consideration of the phenomenon. This study has specifically focused on the case of performed ritual tradition and the need to consider how continuities in outer forms of such traditions can mask radical processes of change. As the case of Cologne Carnival demonstrates, while effective mimetic transmission of historical forms across multiple centuries proved successful, the origins of the tradition in a distant past of which little was documented and publically known, permitted broad imaginings and re-invention of meanings. Temporally specific meanings were often projected into the distant past in the process.

Cologne Carnival provides an example of the often radical changes in meaning that could result from such processes. Evolving from a medieval understanding of the tradition as a representation of the evil and fallen state of man—values to be rejected and overcome on Ash Wednesday—in nineteenth-century Cologne Carnival we witness a fundamental transformation from the medieval to the modern. No longer the metaphor of evil human natures, the tradition had

been appropriated by modern local identities and became a metaphor of local and regional natures to be embraced. While many symbols of medieval Carnival remained, constructed understandings of these symbols had undergone substantial reformulation. The notion of Carnival as an embattled state continued, but as a state of a quite different nature. Carnival's devilish figures went from being the allies of the Carnival state, who fell with the ultimate victory of Lent, to symbols of "curmudgeondom" and "lifeless sobriety" that were destroyed by the modern Rhenish "Carnival Empire" in a glorious battle of Rhenish exuberance.

A host of other diachronic slippages between form and meaning reflect these processes. While the ship of fools endured into the modern tradition, it no longer sank as a result of human wickedness. Rather, it stayed afloat so long as local celebrants kept up their "happy song." The Carnival jester remained, but appeared as a gallant, positive, and locally patriotic figure, rather than as a cannibalistic devil, sadist, and torturer of Christ. Yet other slippages in the panoply of Carnival forms demonstrate efforts to instill Carnival with politicized meaning, such as the idea of the Carnival number eleven as a democratic symbol. Even newly invented forms, such as Carnival uniforms, were subject to revisions of their symbolic content, representing at different times and to different people a symbol of Cologne as a Free Imperial City or a critique of Prussian rigidity and militarism. Carnival, moreover, proved capable of re-interpretation as a "national folk festival," or, due to the haze of its historical origins, as an ancient Germanic tradition. In the postwar period, it lent itself equally well to interpretation not only as an embodiment of Colognian jollity, but also to Colognian tolerance, openness, and democracy. Notions of a local tradition of tolerance rooted in Carnival acted itself as a sliding signifier that meant tolerance toward different groups for different generations of localists.

*Longue durée* history, I have argued, is a crucial tool in uncovering processes of re-

invention. A host of traditions with genuinely long histories could greatly benefit from such treatment with an eye toward re-invention. Sharp-shooter festivals, to present but one example, have existed since the Middle Ages and continued through massive changes in military systems, state structures, the rise and fall of a host of ideologies, and appropriation as local or national festivals.<sup>147</sup> Church anniversary festivals, the origin of the modern *Kirmes*, would likewise benefit from *longue durée* analysis,<sup>148</sup> as would a host of long-standing local traditions in the realm of folk culture.<sup>149</sup> In the European Carnival tradition itself, the tradition of gender inversion has a history extending back centuries, deserving of analysis over the long haul. More explicit considerations of how re-invention played out in an array of long-standing traditions would help further expand our knowledge of such processes and elucidate open-ended questions. How, for example, did other constellations of factors regarding public participation, borders between performer and audience, structures of control, the presence or lack of circulating documentation of former meanings, etc, facilitate or hamper processes of re-invention in other traditions? To what extent have the extinction of certain traditions resulted from an inability to be re-invented?

Finally, like research of invented traditions, probing re-invention also entails de-constructing narratives of continuity propped up by modern identities for which traditions have been appropriated. While, in the case of Cologne Carnival, modern localists recognized outward developments of form, in the popular imagination, meaning was timeless. Joseph Hoster, the capitular of Cologne expressed precisely such a sentiment in 1945 in the face of historic destruction of the city, drawing a metaphor between local tradition and the human body. While every seven years its cells were replaced, in its “inner essence,” he insisted, it never changed.<sup>150</sup> Here, I have argued precisely the opposite. Indeed, it is often where outer forms of tradition remained continuous that some of the most radical diachronic changes could occur.

1. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4-5.
2. In defining the category of "invented traditions," Hobsbawm excludes older traditions that could have displayed "adaptability," insisting that "Where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented." *Ibid.*, 8.
3. For more on sites of memory, see Pierre Nora, ed., *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de mémoire*, vol.1-4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Etienne Francois and Hagen Schulze, eds., *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, vol.1-3 (Munich, CH Beck, 2001). In the collective results of an edited volume on the Augsburg *Friedensfest* we also see an example of a festival that acted as a shifting site of memory regarding the Peace of Westphalia and confessional fragmentation. Johannes Burckhardt, Stephanie Haberer, and Theresia Hörmann, eds., *Das Friedensfest. Augsburg und die Entwicklung einer neuzeitlichen Toleranz-, Friedens- und Festkultur* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000).
4. See Michael A. Williams, Collett Cox, and Martin S. Jaffee, eds., *Innovation in Religious Traditions: Essays in the Interpretation of Religious Change* (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992); David Brown, *Tradition and Imagination: Revelation and Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); David Brown, *Discipleship and Imagination: Christian Tradition and Truth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
5. Kurt Schori, *Das Problem der Tradition. Eine fundamentaltheologische Untersuchung* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1992).
6. Karl Meisen, "Namen und Ursprung der Fastnacht," *Rheinisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 17/18 (1967): 18.



7. Elaine Glovka Spencer, "Regimenting Revelry: Rhenish Carnival in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Central European History* 28 (1995): 457-462, 477-478. Spencer's work gives us a counter-example to Bakhtin's argument that Carnival universally leveled hierarchies. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965), 251. The threat of Carnival permitting challenges to hierarchies, however, remained a constant. For more on historical tensions of political authorities with Rhenish Carnival over the long haul, see Hildegard Brog, *Was auch passiert, D'r Zoch kütt! die Geschichte des rheinischen Karnevals* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2000). Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, in his study of the 1580 massacre at Romans Carnival, also illustrates how Carnival acted as a venue for both challenging and reasserting social hierarchy and state authority. See Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival in Romans*, trans. Mary Feeney (New York: George Braziller, 1979).
8. James Brophy, *Popular Culture and the Public Sphere in the Rhineland, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 171-215. James Brophy, "Carnival and Citizenship: the Politics of Carnival Culture in the Prussian Rhineland, 1823-1848," *Journal of Social History* 30 (1997): 873-904.
9. Christina Frohn, *Der organisierte Narr. Karneval in Aachen, Düsseldorf und Köln von 1823 bis 1914* (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2000).
10. The notion that the 1823 reforms represented, in the words of Jacob Kemp, the "birth of modern Cologne Carnival" is a point of long-standing consensus among historians of the festival. Jacob Kemp, "Zur Geschichte der Kölner Fastnacht," *Zeitschrift des Vereines für rheinische und westfälische Volkskunde* 3 (1906): 259.
11. Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, *Fastnacht - Fasching - Karneval. Das Fest der verkehrten Welt* (Vienna: Styria, 1986); Siegfried Wagner, *Der Kampf des Fastens gegen die Fastnacht. Zur Geschichte der Mäßigung* (Munich: tuduv-Verlag, 1986); Werner Mezger, *Narrenidee und Fastnachtsbrauch. Studien zum Fortleben des Mittelalters in der europäischen Festkultur* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1991).
12. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1992), 1-67, 90-91; Jan Assmann, "Der zweidimensionale Mensch: das Fest als Medium des kollektiven Gedächtnisses," in *Das Fest und das Heilige. Religiöse Kontrapunkte zur Alltagswelt*, ed. Jan Assmann, (Gütersloh: Gütersloh Verlagshaus, 1991), 13-27. Aleida Assmann, similarly situates tradition in the realm of cultural memory. See Aleida

- Assmann, *Zeit und Tradition. Strategien der Dauer* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999), 88.
13. Bakhtin, 7.
14. Joseph Klersch, *Die Költnische Fastnacht von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Cologne: JP Bachem, 1961), 7.
15. Helene Klausner, *Költner Karneval zwischen Uniform und Lebensform* (Münster: Waxmann, 2007), 232.
16. Karl Meisen, "Namen und Ursprung der Fastnacht," *Rheinisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*, 1967, V.17/18. 4-47.
17. Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, *Fastnacht - Fasching - Karneval*, 71-75, 86, 140-147, 166-169, 313-325; Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, "Der Nar halt die Gebot Gottes Nit," in *Narren, Schellen und Marotten elf Beiträge zur Narrenidee*, eds. Werner Mezger and Irene Götz, (Remscheid: Ute Kierdorf, 1984), 135-160; Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, "Ein Babylon der verkehrten Welt. Über Idee, System und Gestaltung der Fastnachtsbräuche," in *Fas(t)nacht in Geschichte, Kunst und Literatur*, ed. Horst Sund, (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1984), 10, 42-45.
18. Moser, *Fastnacht - Fasching - Karneval*, 34-40.
19. Wagner, 46-81, 177-178.
20. Moser, *Fastnacht - Fasching - Karneval*, 11-48; Wagner, 93- 97.
21. Mezger, 9-51.
22. Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: the Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 31-79.
23. Robert Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 148-188, 235-240.
24. Reprinted in Walther Stein, ed., *Akten zur Geschichte der Verfassung und Verwaltung der Stadt Köln im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, vol.2 (Bonn: Hermann Behrendt, 1895), 295-296. Partial Quotation and Modern German transcription in Wolfgang Herborn, *Die Geschichte der Költner Fastnacht von den Anfängen bis 1600* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2009), 51-52.
25. Herborn, 107, 116.
26. Josef Stein, ed., *Das Buch Weinsberg*, vol.5 (Bonn: Verlag von P. Hanstein, 1926), 124.

27. Werner Mezger, "Bemerkungen zum mittelalterlichen Narrentum," in *Narrenfreiheit. Beiträge zur Fastnachtsforschung*, ed. Hermann Bausinger (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde e.V., 1980), 57-62.

28. Hans Moser points out that tournaments were held in many European cities during Carnival. Klersch's work also asserted that they occurred during Cologne Carnival, though Herborn's work is the first to provide concrete evidence. Herborn, 24-44; Klersch, *Kölnische Fastnacht*, 32, 101; Hans Moser, "Städtische Fastnacht des Mittelalters," in *Volksbräuche im geschichtlichen Wandel. Ergebnisse aus fünfzig Jahre volkskundlicher Quellenforschung*, ed. Hans Moser (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1985), 106-110.

29. David Crouch, *Tournament* (London: Hambledon and Continuum, 2005), 6, 33-34.

30. Herborn, 53.

31. Rather than presenting an overarching thesis on early Carnival, Herborn focuses on a series of more limited arguments. Drawing primarily on known sources discussed more briefly by Klersch, Herborn focuses largely on Carnival tournaments and reassessing Hermann Weinsberg's references to Carnival, which he argues do not reflect Klersch's reference to Weinsberg as an anti-carnivalist. Herborn, 24-40, 68-103.

32. All citizens of Cologne were required to belong to a *Gaffel* through automatic membership in a guild or through individual membership for those not in a guild. For more on Gaffeln, see "'Gaffeln, Ämter, Zünfte': Handwerker und Handel vor 600 Jahren," *Jahrbuch des Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins* 67 (1996): 41-59.

33. Vera Jung, *Körperlust und Disziplin. Studien zur Fest- und Tanzkultur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001), 78-79. Leander Petzoldt points out that elite families and guilds in early modern towns typically played prominent roles in organizing Carnival. Leander Petzoldt, "Fastnacht, Fasching, Karneval in der Bürgerkultur der frühen Neuzeit," in *Das Fest. Eine Kulturgeschichte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Uwe Schultz (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1988), 148-149.

34. Joseph Klersch, *Volkstum und Volksleben in Köln. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Soziologie der Stadt*, vol. 1 (Cologne: J.P. Bachem, 1965), 98-102, 109-110.

35.Burke, 91.

36.Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 1-56.

37.For more on Jesuit opposition to Carnival, see Herborn, 117-120; Klersch, *Kölnische Fastnacht*, 43.

38.Burke, 258.

39.Jung, 124-143.

40.Michael Maurer, "Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des Festes," in *Das Fest. Beiträge zu seiner Theorie und Systematik*, ed. Michael Maurer (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), 51-52; Hans Peter Henecka, "Soziale Bedingungen von Festen: Zur Dramaturgie des Außeralltäglichen," in *Feste. Erscheinungs- und Ausdrucksformen, Hintergründe, Rezeption*, ed. Richard Beilharz and Gerd Frank (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1991), 13-24.

41.Mezger, 25-26, 323, 512-513.

42."Die Einkerkering des Narren, wie sie Carl Spitzweg um 1855 zum Thema des Aschermittwochs gemacht hat, bedeutet immer die Freisetzung des Christen von allem, was seinem rechten Glauben behindert. Dabei ist es geliebet bis auf den heutigen Tag." Moser, *Fastnacht - Fasching - Karneval*, 345.

43.Thomas Liessem, *Kamelle und Mimosen* (Cologne, M. DuMont Schauberg, 1967), 10.

44.Anton M. Keim, *11 Mal Politischer Karneval, Weltgeschichte aus der Bütt. Geschichte der demokratischen Narrentradition vom Rhein* (Mainz: Hase & Koehler, 1966), 11.

45.Dagmar Hänel, "Der Tod des Narren: Karneval und Tod," in *Vom Stadtsoldaten zum Roten Funken. Militär und Karneval in Köln*, eds. Heinz-Günther Hunold, Winfried Drewes, and Michael Euler-Schmidt (Cologne: Greven, 2005), 288-296.

46."Glaubt, Freunde, die Freude macht jung und gesund. Beschwört drum aufs Neue den fröhlichen." Rheinisches Bildarchiv, 13247.

47."Die dem Feste dieses Mal zum Grunde gelegte Idee war der Kampf unbefangener Fröhlichkeit und Freiheit mit den böartigen Elementen, welche teils in der menschlichen Natur selbst, teils aber in der Außenwelt liegen, namentlich Mißmut, Stumpfsinn, ängstliches Hängen am conventionellen und so weiter." Johanna Schopenhauer, *Ausflug an den Niederrhein und nach Belgien im Jahr 1828* (1831; reprint, Kevelaer: Reimar Hobbing Verlag, 1987), 239-240.

48.Ibid., 137, 174, 235, 261.

49.Hans Moser, "Städtische Fasnacht des Mittelalters," in *Volksbräuche im geschichtlichen Wandel. Ergebnisse aus fünfzig Jahre volkskundlicher Quellenforschung*, ed. Hans Moser (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1985), 119.

50.Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln (hereafter USBK), Zeitungsausschnittsammlung (hereafter ZAS), 15, Article 1499. "Das große Maskenfest in Köln 1825," *Beiblatt der Kölner Zeitung*, No.3, February 2, 1825; Schopenhauer, 240-241.

51.HASStK, Abt 1162:Amtenbrink, Nr.34,Karnevals-Gesellschaft Greesberger, 1913, Jahr- und Liederbuch, 35-36.

52.Rhenisches Bildarchiv, 132406, R. Giffels. "Wagen in Gestalt des Kölner Wappens und in Anlehnung an die Vorstellung des Narrenschiffes."

53.Festordnenden Comite, *Lieder-kranz für den Karneval zu Köln, 1823* (Cologne: Fr. X. Schlösser, 1825), 4-27.

54."Die närrische Proklamation," *Kölnische Rundschau*, February 14, 1952; "Das närrische Regierungsprogramm" *Kölnische Rundschau*, February 18, 1954.

55.Frohn, 300-320.

56.USBK, ZAS, II.78, 92-93, Dr. Göckeler, "Aus einer alten Predigt von der Fastnacht," *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, February 11,1907.

57.For local explanations of Carnival's Roman origins, see USBK, ZAS, II.20, 179-180, "Etwas über den Karneval," *Rheinischer Merkur*, February 20, 1897; ZAS II.38, 68-69, Hermann Becker, "Zur Geschichte des Karnevals," *Kölner Tageblatt*, February 18, 1900; ZAS II.43, 44, "Der Kölner Karneval" *Kölner Stadtanzeiger*, January 27, 1901; ZAS II.56, 189, Emil Lehfeldt, "Fastnachtsgebräuche in alter Zeit" *Kölner Stadtanzeiger* February 15, 1903; ZAS II.43, 39, Detta Zilcken, "Fastnacht und Fastnachtsgebräuche," *Kölner Tageblatt*, February 6, 1901; ZAS II.41, 88-90. Dr. Rudolf Schellenberg, "Deutsche Fastnacht," *Publication Source not Given*, (1900). Schellenberg argues that Carnival has purely Roman origins, but has been successfully transformed into a national German festival. For local explanations of Carnival as emerging from a fusion of the Roman *Saturnalia* and Germanic spring

festivals, see USBK, ZAS, 9, 882, "Karneval im Volksglauben," *Kölner Nachrichten*, February 21, 1882; ZAS II. 16, 79, "Die Kunst im Carneval," *Kölner Stadt Anzeiger*, March 12, 1896; ZAS II.67, 137, "Stimmen aus dem Publikum," *Kölner Tageblatt*, October 18, 1904; II. 78, 83-84. "Der Ursprung des Karnevals," *Kölnische Zeitung*, February 7, 1907.

58. USBK, ZAS, II.133, 164. Berthod Funke, "Der Ursprung des Karnevals," *Rheinisch-westfälische Zeitung*, February 25, 1914.

59. In the early years of Carnival reforms, the idea of Carnival as a representation of Colognian jollity was already firmly established. The connection of the patriotic "Kölle Alaaf" also found expression in Carnival prior to the reforms, for example, during the French occupation. See Walter Hoffmann, "Neues zur Geschichte und zur Verbreitung des rheinischen Karnevalsrufes Alaaf," in *Geschichtliche Landeskunde der Rheinlande. Regionale Befunde und raumübergreifende Perspektiven*, eds. Georg Droege, Marlene Nikolay-Panter, Wilhelm Janssen, and Wolfgang Herborn (Cologne: Böhlau, 1994), 505-515.

60. Brophy, 171-215.

61. Werner Mezger, "Fasnacht, Fasching und Karneval als soziales Rollenexperiment;" in ed. Bausinger, 203-220; Hermann Bausinger, "Narrenfreiheit nach Vorschrift: Zwischen Organisation und Spontaneität," in ed. Bausinger, 239-248.

62. The eleven flames referenced the legendary 11,000 martyred virgins of St. Ursula. The flames did not appear in Cologne's crest until the sixteenth century, around the time when the number can already be found in connection with Carnival outside of the Rhineland. A connection between the crest and the Carnival number is thus highly unlikely. A 1903 reference from a Cologne carnivalist may explain public hesitancy to latch onto such an interpretation, insisting that the crest flames came from a far too "serious" background to be connected to Carnival. USBK, ZAS, II.62, 134-138. L. Huk, "11, die Geckenzahl: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kölner Karnevals," *Kölner Tageblatt*, October 28/29, 1903. See also Heiko Steuer, *Das Wappen der Stadt Köln* (Köln: Greven, 1981), 42-51.

63. Moser, *Fastnacht - Fasching - Karneval*, 165-178.

64. Frohn, 80-84.

65. Rheinisches Bildarchiv, L 2172/50. Karnevalistische Symbolfigur, 1829, (Archival notation: "Diese

tritt in den Druckwerken der neubelebten Fastnacht nach 1823 immer wieder auf“).

66.Schopenhauer, 239, 245-247.

67.Brog, 89, 185-197.

68.Max-Leo Schwering, *Kölner Karnevalsorden 1823-1914. Noblesse op Plütsch* (Cologne: Greven, 1989), 53-54; Herbert Schwedt, “Der Prinz, der Rhein der Karneval. Wege der bürgerlichen Fastnacht,” in *Fastnacht/Karneval im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. Michael Matheus (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999), 64.

69.For more on anti-Prussianism in the nineteenth-century Rhineland, see Georg Mölich and Meinhard Pohl, eds., *Preussens schwieriger Westen. Rheinisch-preussische Beziehungen, Konflikte und Wechselwirkungen* (Duisburg: Mercator, 2003).

70.Kölsche Funke rut-wieß, *Uns Leederheff* (Cologne: Selbstverlag der Roten Funken, 2004), 4.

71.Frohn, 46-47.

72.Rheinisches Bildarchiv, 23210 “Kölner Rote Funken Karikatur”; L113 J. Schlappal, “Rosenmontagszug 1828.”

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74.”Der Fasching, Köln, Februar,” *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser*, March 4, 1839, 215-216.

75.Keim, 87-100.

76.Klaus Zöllner and Ilse Prass, *Vom Helden Carneval zum Kölner Dreigestirn 1823-1992* (Cologne: Greven, 1992), 95.

77.Rheinisches Bildarchiv, 104261, J. Passavanti, Rosenmontagszug 1901; 135762, H.W. Brockman, Rosenmontagszug 1914.

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*Rhineland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 98. Klersch, *Kölnische Fastnacht*, 133-119; Brophy, 173-174; Frohn, 104-109.

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84."Vom Aufruhr zur Karneval: Im befreiten Düsseldorf," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, March 3, 1919.

85."Das Karnevalsverbot," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, February 23, 1922.

86."Karneval," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, February 25, 1922; "Städtische Nachrichten," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, February 7, 1921.

87."Karnevalssitzung en der Schull," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, February 26, 1927; "Fastelovend in der katholischen Mädchenschule," *Kölner Lokalanzeiger*, February 10, 1931; "De Funke trecke op Waach: "Kleiner" Fastnachtszauber am gestrigen Sonntag," *Kölner Lokalanzeiger*, February 8, 1932.

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- 91."Köln am Fastnachtssonntag 1931," *Kölner Lokalanzeiger*, February 16, 1931; "Politik im Karneval oder Karneval in der Politik?," *Kölner Lokalanzeiger*, February 17, 1931.
- 92."An den Karnevalstagen kein Verbrechen," *Kölner Lokalanzeiger*, February 18, 1931.
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- 94.Max-Leo Schwering, "Freiheit der Narren – Narrenfreiheit! Karneval in Nationalsozialismus," in *Zwischen Stunk und Prunk. Ein Klatschmarsch durch die Institutionen*, ed. Wolfgang Schmitz (Cologne: Volksblatt Verlag, 1991), 75-81.
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- 100.Brog, 221,227-230.
- 101.Peter Genath and Alexander Boden, "Brauchkultur im Wandel - von der Begleitfigur zur Leitfigur: Zur Rolle des Funkmariechens der Kölsche Funke rut-wieß vun 1823 e.V. im 19 und 20 Jahrhundert," in ed. Hunold, Drewes, and Euler-Schmidt, 309.
- 102.HASStK, Abt 1162: Amtenbrink, 4. Zeitungsausschnitte von Karnevalsberichten, 1937 II, 184.
- 103.Liessem, *Kamelle und Mimosen*, 28-33.

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- 106.Rhenisches Bildarchiv, Rosenmontagszeitung, 1938, RBA 168543, 168550.
- 107.Dietmar and Leifeld, 40.
- 108.Dietz-Rüdiger Moser, "Nationalsozialistische Fastnachtsdeutung: Die Bestreitung der Christlichkeit des Fastnachtsfestes als zeitgeschichtliches Phänomen," *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 78 (1982): 205-209.
- 109.HASStK Abt 1162: Amtenbrink, 6. Zeitungsausschnitte von Karnevalsberichten 1938 I, 132, "Fastnacht und Fasnacht," (publication source not given), January 17, 1938.
- 110.HASStK, Abt 1162: Amtenbrink, 11. Zeitungsausschnitte von Karnevalsberichten 1938 VI, 879 "Fasnacht im deutschen Lied: Züge vom ewigen Antlitz unseres Volkes," *Neue Tag*, February 27, 1938.
111. For such explanation in Weimar Germany, see USBK, ZAS, II.150-151, 42, Karl Clemen, "Der ursprüngliche Sinn des Karnevals," *Kölnische Zeitung*, January 25, 1926; "Karneval vor 100 Jahren," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, February 7, 1931.
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- 113.HASStK, Abt 1162: Amtenbrink, 14. Zeitungsausschnitte von Karnevalsberichten 1938 IX, 1220, "Die gecke Elf," *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, 11 November, 1938.
- 114.Adolf Spamer, *Deutsche Fastnachtsbräuche* (Jena: Eugen Diedrichs, 1936), 68.
- 115.Given the chorus of the song which recounted returning to the city on foot, the song was uniquely suited to the event. See Louis, 87-98; In the last months of war, soldiers were forbidden to sing the song, as it implied a desire for desertion. For some re-entering the city, this may have given the song a second layer of meaning. Wilhelm Staffel, *Willi Ostermann* (Cologne: Greven, 1976), 84-85.
- 116.Klersch, *Volkstum und Volksleben*, 27-28.
- 117."Mobilmachung Lebensbejahenden Kräfte," *Kölnische Rundschau*, January 25, 1951.

118. Lützel, *Kölner Humor in der Geschichte* (Bonn: Dr. Hans Peter Verlag, 1960), 43.
119. Günther Ginzler and Sonja Günther, "Juden in Köln: Erlebte Geschichte in Texten und Bildern" in "Zuhause in Köln." *Jüdisches Leben, 1945 bis Heute*, eds. Günter Ginzler and Sonja Günther (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998), 136.
120. Ibid., 11-12.
121. "Prunkvolle Proklamation des närrischen Prinzen," *Kölnische Rundschau*, February 10, 1955; Eberhard Hamacher, *Die Kölsche Funke rut-wieß. 125 Jahre im Kölner Karneval* (Cologne: M. DuMont Schaubert, 1948), 5.
122. Thomas Liessem, *Hauptreferat des Präsidenten des B.D.K. Thomas Liessem anlässlich der III. Haupttagung am 14. Oktober 1956 im Gürzenich zu Köln* (Cologne: Bund Deutscher Karneval, 1956), 5-7.
123. Adenauer Float (Image), *Kölnische Rundschau*, February 10, 1959.
124. Satirical floats relied on acerbic mockery absent in this float. Persiflaged politicians were depicted in the most unflattering terms, with Konrad Adenauer receiving overwhelmingly flattering portrayals in postwar Carnival. The medical metaphor was also prominent in postwar references to overcoming Nazi ideology. See Jennifer Kapczynski, *The German Patient: Crisis and Recovery in Postwar Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).
125. Klersch, *Kölnische Fastnacht*, 55-65; Klersch, *Volkstum und Volksleben*, 47-48, 109.
126. "Politik und Narretei," *Kölnische Rundschau*, February 27, 1960.
127. Keim, 7-14, 72-74, 152, 189-237.
128. Heinrich Lützel, *Philosophie der Kölner Humor* (Bonn: Dr. Hans Peter Verlag, 1954), 64.
129. "Dom oder Hohenzollernbrücke," *Kölnische Rundschau*, May 13, 1948.
130. Brog, 179.
131. Klersch, *Kölnische Fastnacht*, 99-100; Lützel, *Kölner Humor in der Geschichte*, 25, 33-34.
132. Festkomitee des Kölner Karneval, *Fastlovend op Orde un Plakette* (Cologne: Festkomitee des Kölner Karnevals, 1967), 5.
133. "Kölsche Toleranz stimmt immer versöhnlich: Offene Bekenntnisse der Stadtoberhäupter – "imis"

- und Kölsche ziehen stets an einem Strick," *Kölnische Rundschau*, February 26, 1960.
134. "Um die Erhaltung Kölner Eigenart," *Kölnische Rundschau*, March 13, 1948.
135. Klersch, *Volkstum und Volksleben*, 46-49.
136. Keim, 227.
137. "Do bess jeck heißt nicht anders als: Na ja, du bist mal so...keine Bewertung, keine Absonderung, keine Beleidigung." "Kölsch für Imis," *Kölnische Rundschau*, February 11, 1954.
138. Bakhtin, 7.
139. "Wieverfastelovend als Startsignal," *Kölnische Rundschau*, February 12, 1953.
140. "Kölns eingeborenen bleiben klar in der Mehrheit," *Kölnische Rundschau*, January 29, 1956.
141. "Es leb das edle, närrische Brauchtum!," *Kölnische Rundschau*, February 28, 1960.
142. "Karneval zu vornehm," *Kölnische Rundschau*, January 28, 1961.
143. HASTK, Bestand 7740, Nr.351, Karneval, Presse, 1969-1979. "Dem Prinzen das jecke Volk ans Herz gelegt: Plaedoyer gegen die Exklusivitaet im Karneval," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, February 2, 1978.
144. Heinrich Böll, "An die Redaktion des Kölner Volks-Blatt" (1976), reprinted in, Heinrich Böll, *Werke: Kölner Ausgabe*, vol.19 (Cologne: Kiepenhauer & Witsch, 2008), 258.
145. For more on the movement of localists against violence against foreigners, see, AG Arsch huh, ed., *Arsch huh, Zäng ussenander! Gegen Rassismus und Neonazis* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1992).
146. Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997).
147. Interest in *Schützenfeste* have focused on its nineteenth century history. For a brief outline of its longer tradition, see Klaus Zieschang, *Vom Schützenfest zum Turnfest. Die Entstehung des Deutschen Turnfestes unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Einflüsse von F.L. Jahn* (Diss., Justus-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, 1973).
148. Vera Jung, in her brief discussion of Church anniversary festivals (*Kirchweihfeste*), has likewise pointed to the need for more research of the tradition. Jung, 124-143.
149. For an extensive list of local festivals and traditions in Germany, see Leander Petzoldt, *Volkstümliche Feste. Ein Führer zu Volksfesten, Märkten und Messen in Deutschland* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1983).

150. Joseph Hoster, "Köln als Zeichen und Bild," in *Köln: die Stadt und ihre Bürger*, ed. Johann Jacob Hässlin (Munich: Prestel, 1972), 32.

## Figures



Figure 1. Carl Spitzweg, "Ash Wednesday," 1855. Source: Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.





Figure 2. Woodcut from Sebastian Brandt's *Das Narrenschiff* (1494). Source: Sebastian Brant, *Das Narrenschiff*, (Nuremberg: Peter Wagner, 1494), (Enlarged copy of the Exemplar of the Berliner Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz), 134.



Figure 3. Carnival Jester and Maiden stand triumphantly over the enemies of Carnival, “Griesgram” and “Neidhard.” Early Nineteenth Century. Source: Rheinisches Bildarchiv, 23216.



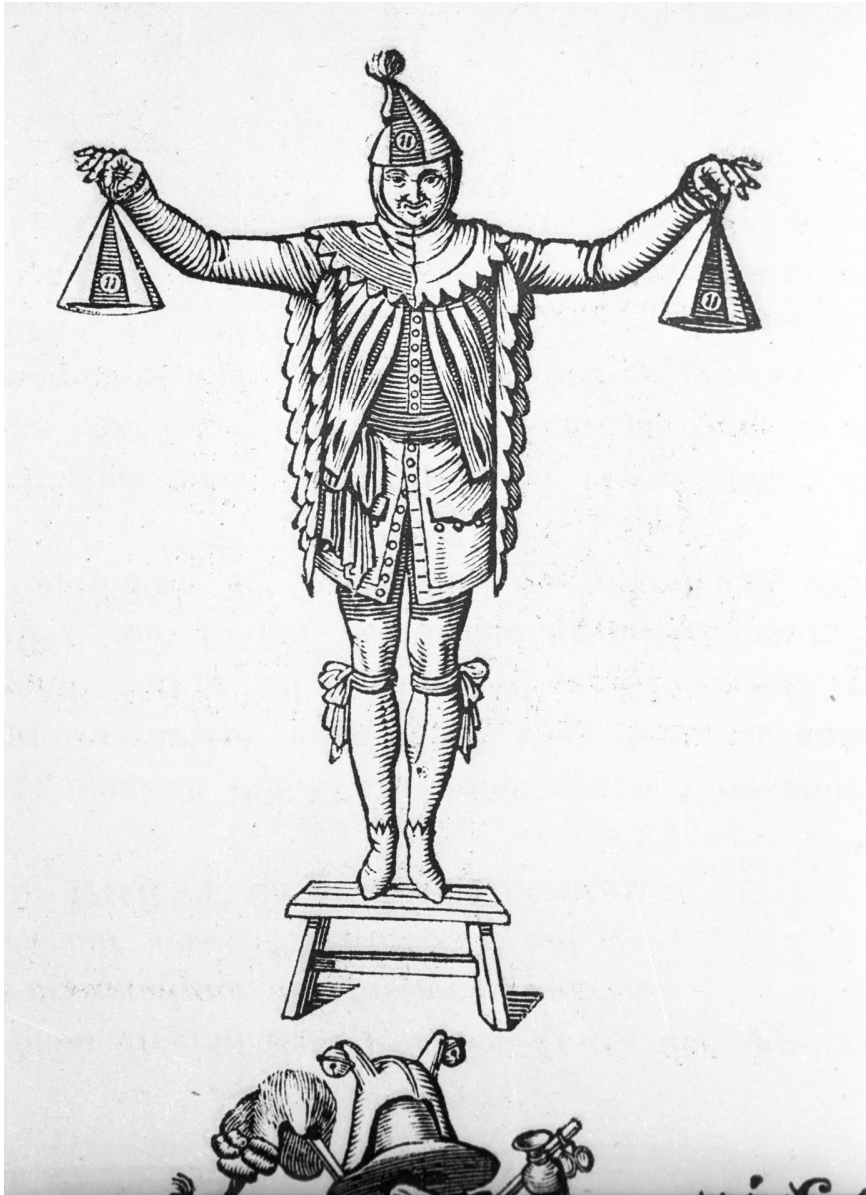


Figure 4. Sketch of a carnivalist with three Carnival caps inscribed with the number 11. This print appeared in several printed Carnival works after 1823. Source: Rheinisches Bildarchiv, L 2172/50.



## Der Fastelovendsdeechter

Figure 5. “Der Fastelovendsdeechter.” A 1938 drawing of a carnival song writer, sorting through his arsenal of carnival topoi. Artist: Strausfeld. Source: Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, Abt 1162: 3. Zeitungsausschnitte von Karnevalsberichten, 1937, I. pp.10





Figure 6. Rosenmontag Carnival Float, "Tünnes wird entnazisiert." 1950. Source: *Rosenmontagszeitung*, 1950.