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Autore	Althoff Gerd
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Nota di contenuto	Front Matter -- Copyright page -- Preface -- Illustrations -- Original Publications -- Introduction -- What Exactly Are Spielregeln? -- Spielregeln and Rituals -- Spielregeln, Order of Rank and Conflicts -- Rules -- Authority and Violence of Kings in Tenth and Eleventh Century Germany -- Rules of Conflict among the Warrior Aristocracy of the High Middle Ages -- Openness and Secrecy: Two Fundamental Categories of Medieval Communication -- Saxon Bishops in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Strategies and Rules of Their Political Activities -- The Perspective of an Expert: Gislebert of Mons -- Rituals -- Rituals and Their "Spielregeln" in the Middle Ages -- The Variability of Rituals -- Rituals as Lingua Franca? Joint Cultural Practises at the Eastern Borders of the Realm -- Symbolic Communication and Medieval Order: Strengths and Weaknesses of Ambiguous Signs -- Gregorian Revolution -- Papal Authority in the High Middle Ages -- Communicating Papal Primacy: the Impact of Gregory VII's Ideas (11th–13th Century) -- Examples of Justifying and Rejecting Churchly Violence at the Time of the Gregorian Revolution -- History in Literature -- Do Poets Play with the Rules of Society? -- Heroes Who Break the Mould: Duke Ernst and the Emperor Otto -- Conclusion -- Back Matter -- Works Cited -- Index.
Sommario/riassunto	Gerd Althoff's new book collects fifteen of his more recent contributions, most of them previously published in German, which

elucidate the functioning of prestate societies. Examples from the Frankish and later German realm (800-1200) are used to clarify how rules and political rituals governed behavior in the power games between kings, churchmen and nobles. Such rules (*Spielregeln*) and rituals guided public and private behavior despite the fact that they existed only as unwritten customs. The long-overlooked significance of this way of establishing order has sparked a vivid and controversial international discussion in the last decades which continues today.
