



Where were Jesters?

Jesters were found all over the world.

There are records of them in Rome, China, India, Ghazna, Baghdad, Basra, Spain, Ulster, Mantua, Scotland, France, Florence, Britain, Medina, Persia, Italy, Hesse, Ferrara, Unspach, Heidelberg, Aragon, Saxony, Ireland, Constantinople, Egypt, Naples, England, Genoa, Austria, Normandy, Sweden, Pomerania, Mantua, Neuburg, Cologne, Baden, Galicia, Turkey, Russia, Holland, New Zealand, Prussia, and Bohemia.

When were Jesters?

The first recorded Jester is found in 2325 B.C. in Egypt and last is 1860 in New Zealand. There are likely more modern Jesters, but we might view them more as comic actors rather than jesters.

Otto 271-290

Looking at Jesters

Jesters have been around for thousands of years. They are known in many different countries and eras. There are literary fools, who may or many not have been based on real people, and there are literal fools, who are real people. We usually don't get a lot of information about these people but here are some things we do know.

- ◇ Jesters were:
- ◇ Real people
- ◇ Male or female
- ◇ Differently-abled or not
- ◇ Great companions
- ◇ Usually employed by a patron
- ◇ Often found in the company of Kings
- ◇ Usually quite funny

*Southworth 164-167
**Southworth 168
***Otto 64-65

The often bizarre and colorful clothing worn by many innocents was multifunctional. One purpose of the mixed threads and colors was to provide a durable and warm garment suitable for someone who is clumsy and falls a lot. Another purpose of the multicolored garment was to help hide stains from either food or mud and grass stains* or even bodily fluids.

Artificial fools wore the contemporary dress of their peers but often in combinations of contrasting colors characteristic of jesters. Sometimes they wore the identical clothes.** In other cases they were lavishly dressed in velvet, or silk in the most vibrant colors or cloth of gold.***

Other words for Jester

Fool, nebulo, buffoon, clown, jongleur, jogleor, jocularor, sot, stultor, scurra, fou, fol, truhan, minus, histrio, morio*. There are also two main types of jesters.

There are *naturals* and *artificial*.

Natural fools are people who had a physical or mental disability. They were the simple minded. They may also have been insane. **Artificial fools** are people who chose to be fools and were known for being funny, clever, or talented. Some jesters and jestesses were skilled musicians, poets, and scholars.

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Jester Facts



Fast Facts about Fools
in the Middle Ages
by

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