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**HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND INSTITUTIONAL CONCERN
IN EUROPEAN MEDIEVAL HISTORIOGRAPHY (11th and 12th centuries)**

Since all historiography is a "reflection of discourses with the past" (Franz-Josef Schmale) and *per definitionem* written with the intention of memorizing the past and visualizing it for the present and for posterity, it is inevitably based on (and at the same time is an expression of) a certain concept of history (*Geschichtsbild*) and a certain historical consciousness (*Geschichtsbewußtsein*), the former referring to the author's conception of the past, the latter referring to his attitude towards this or, rather, towards his own past. Both, however, are determined by interests resulting from the present, they "create" the actuality of history, the "presence of the past". A "historical consciousness", as I understand it, is determined by three major elements: a consciousness of a historic nature of the world (*Geschichtlichkeitsbewußtsein*), a conception of history (*Geschichtsbild*) and a specific interest in history (*Geschichtsinteresse*). If the first element, the consciousness of a historic nature, includes at the same time an awareness of the mutability of history itself and of the historic authenticity of individual events, the second element, the conception of history, covers a mental act of organizing the amorphous mass of historical information and knowledge into a systematic process, and the third element, the historical interest, closely combines past and present (and sometimes also the future): then we may conclude that it is exactly the historical consciousness that is responsible for the close relation between the present and the past which is significant for all historiography. And it is this relation, the historiographical function as a narrative "re-presentation" of

the past, which is responsible for any uses and misuses of the past. Of course, these are modern expressions which cannot be transferred to a medieval past except in a completely wide and general sense and have to take the contemporary notions of that period into consideration. In this short, essayistic survey, I wish first (I) to outline characteristic features of the "typical" historical consciousness in occidental historiography of the eleventh and twelfth centuries and afterwards (II) to point out elements of its "actuality" (*Aktualität*), its uses and, above all, its relation to the institutions from which they were derived and/or for which they were written. This is not so much "the church", as one might think, or Christianity as a whole (although the so-called universal chronicles recommence to play an important part in this period), and it is only partly the Empire or realm in "imperial" or "regal" chronicles (as a sign of a germinating national consciousness), but first of all ecclesiastical and local institutions: bishoprics and monasteries, but also noble families (lineages) or dynasties, and, later on, cities and territories.

I

(1) On the whole -- and this is my **first statement** -- medieval chroniclers had a developed **consciousness of a historic nature of the world** in so far as they believed in a divine process of a history of salvation in which every past (and present) were integrated. They also had a notion (though completely different from ours and, of course, without our norms of a "historical criticism") of historical "mutations" or changes and even of a difference between "fact" and "fiction", that is, a sense of verity emphasized so often by almost every medieval historian. Medieval historiography was mainly interested in political events and human activities of the leading classes, in time

and chronology, in deeds that seemed worth being remembered and that could teach people (readers) how to think, live, or govern properly, and in most cases it was recognizably and strictly tied to certain institutions as centres of identification. In this sense, history was "one's own history". Finally -- and this is decisive in our context -- the chroniclers had a notion of the impact of the past on the present and future. This attitude explains the widespread appreciation of history and historical writing during the Middle Ages. "He who does not look back to the origins, will not discern the future", as Saint Augustine had taught. The esteem of historical knowledge can be inferred from the (theological) position of *historia* in the system of sciences (as in Hugh of Saint-Victor) above, not within the *artes liberales* (as has been asserted), from a theological quality of history (as history of salvation) -- historiography was kind of "historical theology", a kind of (literary) exegesis of historical events --, from the vast number of historiographical works and manuscripts that survived, from the variety and development of historiographical genres and, above all, from its function in the whole spectre of the intellectual and social life and thought of the Middle Ages. History could be "applied" (as we shall see below). From this point of view, historiography was much more than a "pleasant hobby" (Josiah C. Russell) and even more than a "serious entertainment" (Nancy F. Partner). It is significant that medieval authors were not content with continuing the old chronicles which they appreciated, but they always desired to conceive their own, new versions again and again. History was not only worth being recorded, but also being constantly rewritten and reorganized and applied to actual needs. However, we have to distinguish as far as "success" is concerned. Only a few chronicles have been handed down in more than thirty or forty manuscripts and significantly these chronicles all dealt with the past, whereas "contemporary

chronicles" (describing the present) rarely survived in more than one or two manuscripts.

(2) That leads us to a **second conclusion**: Medieval historiographers had a **distinct sense of (and for) the past**. Looking back into one's past was inevitable and unre-nouncable. There was a strong interest in the origins and beginnings of the world (as in universal chronicles which started with the Creation), of a people (as in the *origines gentium*, the narratives of the ancestry of the early peoples), of a noble family (as in genealogies) or of an ecclesiastical or monastic institution (as in the *gesta episcoporum*, *gesta abbatum* or in monastic *fundationes*). "He who knows the source (or spring)," Walther of Marchthal, a monastic writer, taught, "will easier find and pursue the courses of its river." Frutolf of Michelsberg, a universal chronicler at the end of the eleventh century, depicted conciously the descent of all medieval peoples known from the 72 languages of the Tower of Babylon, and when he came to the end of the West Roman Empire, he inserted the origins of the individual Germanic peoples. The issue of one's (own) descent was an essential factor in the medieval concept of the past.

Decisive for a medieval consciousness of the past, however, was the fact that the past as an ideal had a great authority. That is why the chroniclers searched for a beginning that was as remote as possible: Universal chronicles, which began with the Creation, developed into ones of the favourite genres of that epoch. Episcopal chronicles (falsely, of course) claimed that their particular see was derived from Saint Peter himself and from his disciples, German towns claimed to have been founded by Caesar (who never had subdued the regions east of the Rhine) or, as in Trèves (Trier), even by the

Assyrian prince Trebetas, a son of Ninus, the first universal ruler. (The similarity of the name produced and favoured such an allusion.) In any case, present phenomena needed to be reminded of their historical roots. According to the (monastic) *Chronicon Ebersheimense*, it was Caesar himself who established (medieval) institutions such as the "princes" (high nobility), the *ministeriales* or the chivalry. Nothing can illustrate the necessity of a remote origin more clearly than the invention, embellishment and falsification of one's own mythical origins and past: Historiography detected the origins of the present development (which, in our opinion, more than often seemed to be myths) and pursued them to the present. By this method it created a continuity through the epochs from the beginning to the present day (and further into the prophesied future so that also visions or, as in Otto of Freising's famous chronicle, even eschatology could become part of the chronicles).

The strong connection between past and present in medieval historiography does not mean that historical changes were neglected. On the contrary, according to Otto, the "mutability of the world" was the most significant feature of history on earth. But the breaks were either of a theological (like the incarnation of Christ) or a political nature (like the sequence of four universal kingdoms: Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans). People, therefore, did have a sense of the past, but for a certain past that was universal only in a theological sense whereas all changes occurred within the framework of a historical continuity. A well-known example to illustrate this is the doctrine of the *translatio imperii*, the (various) transfers of power from one kingdom or dynasty to another within the Roman Empire (which was believed would survive till the end of time). Through this doctrine, the various successions in the course of

universal power were integrated into a closed continuity of power. History was change and continuity at the same time, it was political change, ups and downs of kingdoms and rulers, but it was *not* conceived as a structural change of changing epochs. This enabled to distinguish certain periods or epochs without denying the relation between them.

This relation, however, made it not only possible, but also desirable to constantly compare events of the present with those of the past. Medieval historiography (like medieval scientific thinking) was characterized by typology and symbolism, former events serving as symbols or "types" of their later fulfilment. Compared to these lines of communication, historical distinctions were irrelevant. In the famous cycle of book illuminations in the chronicle of Otto of Freising, Augustus, Charlemagne and Otto the Great were nearly indistinguishable, they wore the same clothes and insignia because they not only represented historical personalities, but above all they embodied the institution and function of a (continuing) Roman Empire. Simultaneously, however, they symbolized three changes, namely three transfers of power within the Empire. For the same reason, contemporary affairs or situations could be described with words borrowed from ancient authors, and the names of ancient peoples were used for modern ones if they were seen in an immediate sequence (the Magyars, for example, were still Huns). Such a way of thinking inevitably resulted in a great number of what we might call anachronisms, the more as any change of the meaning of words was neglected (for the *Chronicon Ebersheimense*, the Roman *castella* were conceived as medieval castles, the soldiers became knights, the magistrate turned to ministerials).

In spite of a distinct sense of the past the medieval concept of history lacked an understanding of a structural alterity and individuality of historical epochs. Instead, the chroniclers emphasized an immediate comparability which was presupposed when interpreting events. As Janet Coleman has said, the twelfth century was not concerned with "the pastness of the past", but with a universal truth and "a timeless edification". To see the past completely with the eyes of the present, therefore, is not really anachronistic thinking, but expression of a concept of history that finds an important sense and end in the chronicler's discovering such parallels between the past and the present. Medieval historiography was not so much interested in a criticism of sources, but in the "interpretation" of events, with a strong desire to ask for their meaning and sense. Moreover, such thinking actually finds its explanation in a belief that historical events were open to interpretation for the present because they did not happen by chance, but were inspired by the divine will and thus had a "sense" for the contemporaries. This way of thinking gave the past its enormous value and made it applicable to the present.

(3) From these observations, we may deduce a **third statement: The distinct sense of the past in the Middle Ages was strictly orientated towards the present.** Remembering the past served for the benefit of the present; it was responsible for a certain "actuality" of the past. "He who wants to record the historical events," the author of the chronicle of the bishopric of Halberstadt wrote, "accomplishes something honest and useful, because by writing a lively text he brings the deeds of our ancestors to the knowledge of posterity in order to prevent that they might be buried with the ashes of oblivion." By such a concept, historiography was given a distinct meaning,

and the historical consciousness was firmly orientated towards their own (Christian) society. Chronicles did not confine themselves to historical information, but they confronted the present with the "mirror of the past" so that at the same time the future could be seen as in a picture, as Henry of Huntingdon wrote in his "Historia Anglorum". By historiography, the past turned to become "present". Past and present were tied (related) to each other by a chronological narrative from the origins to the present day, by a conscious choice of the events handed down, by the preference of an exemplary narrative and a contemporary interpretation, by an exegetical and typological interpretation and by the author's comments or conclusions.

Looked at in this way, the past could serve various functions (laid down in the prologues of the chronicles): It rendered knowledge of God's work, of the concept of the world and the interpretation of the past, it stayed within human memory and was not lost in oblivion, it was also used to praise one's own institution, or as a model for a just, political and moral action. Thus, the past had a practical utility: Guided by a didactic, theological, moral and memorizing intention, medieval historiography wanted to instruct and edify (while being entertaining at the same time). The choice of events, the understanding of the sources, the interpretation of the past, and not least the measures and criteria of judgment were developed from the present and from current interests. On the one hand, the past served as a mirror, but it was interpreted according to present values (which, however, were thought to possess a timeless validity). It is not true, that only the old times were good, as Johannes Spörl once thought. Terms like *antiquus* and *modernus* could both be used by one and the same author for praising or blaming, dependent on his point of view and the current aspect, as Nico Lettinck has

shown. That is why the present time was not mirrored by *the* past as a whole, but by certain persons or events.

The actuality of historiography ("the presence of the past") is nowadays widely accepted and need not be testified more precisely here. Chronicles, too, were written for pragmatic reasons, with concrete interests and on account of special occasions. Very often, we can reveal or suppose legal or political claims behind the above-mentioned endeavour to detect the origins and foundations of the current development and to establish a continuous development from the origins to the present day. The authors not only "wrote history", they also used the past with certain aims and purposes (though in many cases it may not be easy to demonstrate these interests convincingly). Looking back into the past was not only meant to explain the present in a historical manner, but also to justify "the" present or some of its features (which at the same time proves the high esteem of the past). Adam, the chronicler of the bishopric of Bremen, for example, intended to emphasize and legitimize the claim of his see to christianize the northern and eastern peoples in order to prove and support its position as archbishopric of all northern Europe. This is why Adam added to his chronicle a fourth book with an ethnographic description of the northern regions and peoples. He did that, however, significantly enough, at a time when the Scandinavians were thinking of founding an ecclesiastical province of their own. The myth of an Assyrian origin of the city of Trèves mentioned above, actually played an important part in the disputed order of precedence among the three Rhenish metropolises (Trèves, Mayence, and Cologne). There were similar biases behind the effort of most of the sees in Gaul and Lorraine to derive their origins from the early church and from Saint Peter himself.

Not less revealing than the beginning of a chronicle is its end. When Otto of Freising, who ended his chronicle with a series of catastrophies under the reign of Conrade III, added an eighth book on eschatology, this procedure derived obviously from apocalyptic fears of being near the end of the world. One can read Otto's whole chronicle under the assumption of its author's anxious and doubting retrospect into the past. Lampert of Hersfeld made his "Annals" end with the election of Rudolf, the contending king against Henry IV because, according to his own words, after the disastrous reign of the Salian king, he expected from Rudolf a better future. The Annals of Pöhlde ended with the fall (1180) and exile (1182) of Henry the Lion, the anonymous "Annalista Saxo" with the death of Henry the Haughty who for him was the true successor of the Emperor Lothar III (and not the Staufen king Conrade III). Such "conclusions" were reproaches directed towards the contemporaneous development. It is hard to tell whether complete chronicles were written for certain purposes, but they were obviously written from certain situations and with certain interests. This is not a contradiction to the theological purpose: Bernold of Saint-Blasien who wrote what seemed to be a universal chronicle, actually, as a good "Gregorian" (follower of Pope Gregory VII), turned his source (Herman of Reichenau) into a very tendentious papal chronicle, because he was convinced at the same time that this was in line with the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation.

II

It is not these pragmatic purposes as such that I want to trace here, but their specific relation with and relevance for the medieval historical consciousness. It is significant,

for example, that the medieval Empire referred much more to the Roman Empire than to its (historical) Frankish origins. In his "Historia Brittonum", Geoffrey of Monmouth reminded (an Anglo-Norman) Britain of its ancient British (that is Celtic) past -- which in its turn was traced back to a Trojan origin --, neglecting the Anglo-Saxon origins of his present-day England. The enormous success of his chronicle (which is handed down in 217 manuscripts) reveals the broad impact of such thinking (and it is not by chance that, from such a tradition, even nowadays England is still called "Britain"). In the second part of this essay, I intend to illustrate **the "actuality" and purposeful use (and "misuse") of historical thinking**, exemplarily, by touching four aspects in order to point out the concrete interests and motifs behind the historical narrative, thus characterizing relevant features of the medieval historical consciousness and the "actuality" of the past.

(1) The first element of historical use (and "misuse") is **a conscious partiality** and political bias of the author. (This is more than a bias in the traditional sense of source criticism because it may well be the cause or reason for writing a chronicle at all). A clear example is the historiography surrounding the Investiture Contest. Since the quarrel between king and pope meant the end of concord between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, the author's partisanship was inevitable. Episcopal chronicles, which were normally written some time after the events, often altered the actual partiality of their bishop, contrary to the historical truth, according to the current situation. The author of the chronicle of the see of Halberstadt, for example, made Bishop Burchard, who was actually one of the greatest enemies of Henry IV during the Saxon wars, appear as the king's best friend because in his own time the bishop of Halberstadt took sides with the

king, whereas Gregory VII (who's original name, Hildebrand, is interpreted by the author as "hell's burning") is not only said to have been enthroned illegally, but also to have murdered his predecessor! The interpretation of the past finds its explanation in the author's point of view and that of his institution. Nevertheless, all authors shared a common feature beyond their partiality: they condemned the quarrel and were preferably searching for a way to solve it. The author of the chronicle of the monastery of Afflighem started by deploring the time when there was a deep schism between Pope Gregory VII and the Emperor Henry IV, a schism which divided the church "because its head, which consisted of *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, was struck by the disease of discord and the rest of the body could not remain uninjured by such an exhaustion". This was not only supposed to emphasise the ideal of concord, but also to function as a guideline for the entire history of the monastery. Although it began under such a prognostic, the foundation of the monastery was so to speak an antidote (or counterweight) against this development.

(2) If historiography was meant to justify and legitimize, then its historical contents, the *res gestae*, would become an **argument** (and in the famous *libelli de lite*, historical proofs and arguments were used side by side with biblical, legal and theological ones). From this point of view, the chronicles may be more or less regarded as (arguing) treatises (though their function was never completely restricted to this purpose). The universal chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux defended the case of Henry IV with historical arguments, whereas Bernold of Saint-Blasien defended the case of the Pope. A good example of a political treatise that was completely based on historical arguments, but at the same time was a "chronicle" that pursued political purposes was

the "Liber ad amicum" written by Bishop Bonizo of Sutri: Whereas Gregory VII is justified here not only by his "martyrdom", but by historical parallels that were meant to prove the traditionality (and thus legitimacy) of his policy, the antipope Wibert of Ravenna, by the same argumentation, is historically proven to be illegitimate by Bonizo's attributing the cardinals' right of electing the pope (recently established by Nicolas II in 1059) already to the Donation of Louis the Pious to the Pope in 817. At the same time, Henry IV becomes a tyrant, as Lothar II once had (ostensibly) been, by conquering Rome. Since a tyrant had to be opposed -- and in the fourth century, the Emperor Valentinianus was rewarded for his resistance against Julian the Apostate by afterwards becoming emperor himself --, Bonizo's "chronicle" as a whole is a writing that has been compiled carefully in order to prove, by giving historical examples, the just case of the Gregorians and to encourage them to continue their fight against Henry in the actual situation immediately after Gregory's death in 1085.

Regarding the method, such a way of thinking presupposed a concept of history that must be called exemplary: The authors searched history (that is: their historical sources) for precedents which, as such, did not only hold their historical value, but also a legal validity that established a legal or at least a moral obligation. According to a historical concept that had a high esteem for the past, the authors looked for evidence from a (remote) past and, for example, justified the investiture of bishops by examples from the Old Testament. This was, of course, anachronistic, but again it testifies to the fact that the past had a deep meaning for the present and that historical events could be freely transferred to current problems. Even more, a historical argumentation was indispensable. Consequently, if precedents were lacking they had to be invented.

Nothing can prove the value of history and of a historical interpretation better than the invention of mythical foundations and legends of origins (of churches, families or complete peoples) or than the falsification of historical examples in order to justify current claims.

(3) Behind these activities we can almost always detect an **institutional bond**: to the kingdom (or nation), the bishopric or monastery, the noble family or court, or, later on, the city or territory. It is the consequence of the author's being charged with writing his history by a king, a bishop or an abbot, of his devoting his book to a certain official, or of the genre and contents of his chronicle (which normally do not reflect different concepts or kinds of historical consciousness, but an institutional character). We can observe some changes in the centuries under consideration here: Universal chronicles adopted a new appearance (as complete and consciously structured chronicles, such as Frutolf of Michelsberg or Sigebert of Gembloux, as well as brief chronicles sometimes organized in different "lists" for various aspects, such as Hugh of Saint-Victor, as encyclopedical surveys, as in Honorius Augustodunensis' "Imago mundi", later on resulting in lists of Popes and Emperors, such as Martin of Troppau). The so-called family chronicles (of noble families) were at the same time "territorial" chronicles of the rulers of larger territories, and, in the course of the twelfth century, we detect the beginnings of an urban history. It is not by chance that, in our period, this kind of chronicle is restricted to Italy where the urban communities appeared first. Our oldest example, the "Annals of Genoa" written by Caffaro, an alderman of the city of Genoa, were perceived completely from the view of urban, Genoese, and, within this context, patrician interests. Most chronicles consisted of the *gesta* of rulers, heroes, saints,

functionaries respectively, according to the genre. But these persons were not considered for their own sake, as individuals, but because of their official function (for example as kings, bishops, or abbots), and it may be significant that in most chronicles these persons were characterized more frequently by their function or title than by their name. Episcopal and monastery chronicles were usually compiled in the style of the so-called "Gesta", that is, a sequence of the deeds of the individual bishops or abbots to whom the author frequently attributed single chapters; many chronicles are preceded or concluded by a list of these officials. From this point of view, the "Gesta" may be considered as the most adequate medieval genre of an institutional historiography.

When the history of a region or town, as was often the case, was integrated into the larger historical (or even universal) context, the events recorded were mostly motivated by references to the own relevant institution, and it is not by chance that many universal chronicles ended up in a history of the author's realm or even region. Some chroniclers, however, inserted reports of the history of their institution into works which actually had a much larger scope. The author of the Annals of the monastery of Saint-Blasien inserted a complete abstract of the history of his monastery. The Life of Bishop Benno II of Osnabrück, for example, is not just a saint's life, but an apologetic justification of Benno's foundation of the monastery of Iburg (the place where Benno wished to be and was buried), and it is most probable that the author of this Life was the Abbot Norbert of Iburg. Although nearly all chroniclers of the eleventh and twelfth century were ecclesiastics or monks, they did not so much write from their clerical but from institutional interests, as defenders not so much of their "class", of "the" church, or of monasticism, but of their own episcopal see or monastery. Medieval

historiography is, therefore, the history of one particular church rather than ecclesiastical history, more the history of one monastery rather than a history of monasticism, more the history of a kingdom or a certain dynasty rather than "imperial" history.

It is exactly these institutional reasons and interests from which the author's bias and motives resulted. This conclusion can be deducted from the tendencies to promote one's own institution by writing its history in a favourable manner or by emphasizing its remote or even mythical origins or even by inventing beginnings that were far older than the real historical ones and to connect them with the present by a continuous historical narrative: The concern for the past that has already been mentioned above is used in the service and favour of one's institution. A further indicator for such a way of thinking is the tendency to project current interests back into the past: Chroniclers wanted to counteract current problems by means of historical models, for example the threat of their monastery by the bishop or of their church by its advocates, ministerials or castellans. In these cases the authors emphasized how exemplary former officials had acted. Historical precedences and historical events were meant as a contribution to solve current problems or at least they were supposed to reveal the legitimacy of one's own position.

Since *memoria* (a kind of historical memory) was the aim of all historiography, the chroniclers also contributed to the (broader) function of memorizing the dead which was one of the central themes of medieval religious mentality. This function again adopted an institutional character when it concerned corresponding events, and it is not by chance that monastic chronicles used to commemorate the founders and foundresses

and their families as well as the benefactors of their institution and quite frequently recorded their death anniversaries. These actions meant something like "historizing" the annual memorial of the dead and at the same time perpetualizing their institutional relationship. Walter of Marchthal wished to "entrust to the posterity facts by which persons or under which prelates our church had been founded, equipped or honoured by donations" in order, on the one hand, to hand down the names of the benefactors and the benefactions to the memory of the convent who should pray for these people and, on the other hand, to document the monastery's property rights. Such an attitude also explains why many church chronicles carefully registered the burial places of their saints, bishops or abbots, thus establishing a claim on their relics which were often contended for by several churches (and the chronicles fulfilled another "pragmatic function" here to justify the claims). The corpse of Bishop Benno II of Osnabrück, for example, was a cause of dispute between the episcopal church and Benno's monastic foundation, the monastery of Iburg. When Benno's Life has been called a "memorial testimony of the founder", such an attribute has again to be seen in relation to the monastery's claims on the relics. No less usual, and again serving the same function, that is propagating the outstanding position of one's own institution, was an emphasis on the holiness of the site and its representatives. Willibald, the canonized founder of Eichstätt, played an outstanding role in the episcopal chronicle, and the chronicler of the bishopric of Toul was over-zealous in showing that nearly all the ancient bishops of Toul had been saints.

Such a concept of history could propagate the institution's fame externally, but it could also create a feeling of identity inside. The identification of the chroniclers with their

subject, however, is a further important indicator of an institutional concept of the past. It could refer to several "levels". In Western Europe, but also with other peoples (such as Poles, Hungarians or Scandinavians) that seemed to be marginal before, the beginning of a national consciousness becomes visible in chronicles of the twelfth century. Normally there are different structures of identification which encompassed each other like concentric circles. Adam, the chronicler of the bishopric of Bremen and Hamburg, identified himself, on the "ecclesiastical" side, with his episcopal church, then with "the" church on the whole and finally with Christianity, and, on the "secular" side, with the region of Saxony, the (German) kingdom or Empire and finally with humanity. Decisive in our context is the identification with one's own history. Thus, the author of the chronicle of the abbey of Saint Gallen, the "*Casus sancti Galli*", even deplored in his preface that "our ancestors" had neglected to write down the laudable deeds of the abbots and monks of Saint Gallen and therefore he started to continue the chronicle of the early times of the monastery written by "our authors". Thus the author located himself in a triple identification with the monastic tradition: with the monastery, its history and its historiography. By naming his abbot Burchard a second Moses (a favourite typological figure) he even raised his monks to the level of the history of salvation and identified them with the "People of God".

It is interesting to observe where these attitudes and models of identification entered into conflict with each other. Helmold of Bosau, for example, the late twelfth century's chronicler of the christianization of the Slavs, maintained his strong antagonism between "Germans" (he did not yet use this expression) and Slavs even after the christianization of the Slavs: For him the "national" distinction was obviously more

important than the religious contrast between Christians and heathens. It was not until the colonization and conquest by the Saxons, he argued, that the "deserted country" east of the river Albion became a civilized settled area. By his first person-("we")-references, he showed himself strongly related to his bishop (of Oldenburg-Lübeck) as well as to his duke (Henry the Lion), but when there was a quarrel between these two (as in the contest for the investiture of Bishop Gerold) Helmold definitely took the bishop's side.

(4) A last, though important aspect may be outlined only briefly. In my opinion, medieval historiography frequently sprang from a current consciousness that there was a **crisis** looming (which again referred to a crisis of the chronicler's institution). The Investiture Contest which has been mentioned above offers an important clue for such an assumption. To interpret historiography as a pragmatic justification and argumentation in critical times may explain why so many chronicles were not written until long after the climax of an institution's history. It may also explain why many chronicles already ended in the past, normally with such heydays. Bonizo of Sutri intended to refute a crisis of the reform papacy historically and to explain it theologically. A good example of an awareness of critical times is the monastic chronicle of Saint-Trond. There the author, Abbot Rudolf, described the historical development of his monastery from its summit to its (almost completed) destruction, and he depicted it in a way that made the reader feel as if the crisis of the monastery was the greatest catastrophe in universal history since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Emperors Titus and Vespasianus. Here again, the Investiture Contest was to blame because it led to a state whereby, from opposite claims, there were two (and

more) abbots at the same time fighting each other and ruining the monastery's wealth although none of them had been elected legally. The whole chronicle consists of a series of lamentations. Though it may be an outstanding example, it is not actually an exception in deploring present times. From this point of view, medieval historiography was not a means of overcoming one's past, but of overcoming one's present by consulting a (better) past.

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The historiography of the "High" Middle Ages (the eleventh and twelfth centuries) on which I have concentrated here, notwithstanding its being integrated in a long, mainly late-Roman and Christian tradition, is extremely rich and variable and inventive. It was derived from a desire to see and record the past, that is, a specific past, on the ground of this historiographical tradition and was often based on a great deal of other of chronicles that had been handed down and were available to the readers. These were then presented in a new light from the author's or orderer's point of view, with the eyes and for the needs of the present. This does not only concern the history of kingdoms and kings which former generations of historians regarded almost exclusively, but also the history of churches (episcopal sees as well as monasteries), families, and towns. Medieval historiography was not "dictated" by the kings' wishes or official perspectives, but was the individual work of learned ecclesiastics who were, however, for the most part deeply involved in their subject and identified themselves with their institutions. Thus, in one way or other, medieval historiography may be characterized as "institutional history", with a specifically medieval concept of the past, but also with specific interests respectively.

Medieval historiography and the medieval concept of the past no doubt were different from ours, though there are, of course, certain features that may also give us the impression of a structural resemblance. It was one purpose of this paper to clarify some characteristic features of the (specifically) medieval concept of the past. In this regard, it was particularly my intention to make clear that medieval historiography, contrary or at least additional to former opinions of its character as a chronological record of the past, was deeply rooted in the present: it had a sense of actuality. By recording the memorable deeds of kings, bishops, popes, or saints, it used the past as an argument for current purposes and was meant to solve current problems or prove the legitimacy of one's own position. After all that has been said so far, there can be no doubt of a widespread use of history in the eleventh and twelfth centuries: Historiography was written for pragmatic purposes, to ascertain and justify certain claims, and it was written to be used. There can be no doubt either that these interests were responsible for an equally widespread "misuse" of history, by exaggerating, concealing or even inventing "facts", in spite of a constantly repeated claim for truth as a constitutive element of historiography. Nevertheless, such "misuse" was based on the conviction that the past not only had to tell us something, but it told the people how things should be because it was the consequence, or "mirror", of God's acting on earth and therefore open to exegesis. In this regard, the use (and misuse) of history was completely in conformity with the chronicler's deep convictions of his own just cause (or that of his institution) in the direct line of a history determined to end in human salvation by the divine will.

Schematic Representation of the institutional impacts in the concept of the past

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Institution | Empire | Bishopric | Monastery | Noble Family | Town | Gesta |
| <u>Character</u> | | | | | | <u>Genre</u> |
| Person | Emperor | Bishop | Abbot | Lord of the Territory | Magistrate/ Lord of the town | Vita |

Notes

1. This article is based on a broader survey of the historical consciousness recently published: Hans-Werner GOETZ, *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewußtsein im hohen Mittelalter* (Orbis mediaevalis. Vorstellungswelten des Mittelalters 1) Berlin 1999.

1. Franz-Josef SCHMALE, *Funktion und Formen mittelalterlicher Geschichtsschreibung. Eine Einführung*, Darmstadt 1985, p. 55ss. As an introduction to medieval historiography, cf. further Benoît LACROIX, *L'historien au moyen âge*. Montréal-Paris 1971; Bernard GUENÉE, *Histoire et Culture historique dans l'Occident médiéval*, Paris 1980; *L'historiographie médiévale en Europe*, ed. Jean-Philippe GENET, Paris 1991.

1. Cf. Hans-Werner GOETZ, *Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Geschichtsbewußtsein*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 255, 1992, p. 61-97.

1. Cf. Hans-Werner GOETZ, *Von der *res gesta* zur *narratio rerum gestarum*. Anmerkungen zu Methode und Hilfswissenschaften des mittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibers*, in: *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 67, 1989, p. 695-713.

1. *De civitate Dei* 7,7, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, Leipzig ⁵1928/29, p. 283.

1. Cf. Hans-Werner GOETZ, *Die "Geschichte" im Wissenschaftssystem des Mittelalters*, in: SCHMALE, *Funktion* (n. 2) p. 165-213.

1. Thus Josiah C. RUSSELL, *The Writing of History in the Twelfth Century* (1954), in: *Ders., Twelfth Century Studies*, New York 1978, p. 1-20, here p. 17.

1. Nancy F. PARTNER, *Serious Entertainments. The Writings of History in Twelfth-Century England*, Chicago-London 1977.

1. Cf. GUENÉE (n. 2) p. 248ss.

1. Historia monasterii Marchtelanensis prol., ed. J. A. GIEFEL (Württembergische Geschichtsquellen 4) Stuttgart 1891, p. 5: *cognito fonte, facilius rivulos eiusdem invenimus*.

1. Frutolf von Michelsberg, Chronicon, ed. Georg WAITZ, MGH SS 6, p. 35.

1. Cf. Heinz THOMAS, Julius Caesar und die Deutschen. Zu Ursprung und Gehalt eines deutschen Geschichtsbewußtseins in der Zeit Gregors VII. und Heinrichs IV., in: Die Salier und das Reich, ed. Stefan Weinfurter, vol. 3, Sigmaringen 1991, p. 245-277.

1. Gesta Treverorum 1ss., ed. Georg WAITZ, MGH SS 8, p. 130ff.; cf. Heinz THOMAS, Studien zur Trierer Geschichtsschreibung des 11. Jahrhunderts, insbesondere zu den Gesta Treverorum (Rheinisches Archiv 68) Bonn 1968; Ilse HAARIOBERG, Die Wirkungsgeschichte der Trierer Gründungssage vom 10. bis 15. Jahrhundert (Europäische Hochschulschriften III/607) Bern-Berlin-Frankfurt/M.-New York-Paris-Wien 1994; František GRAUS, Troja und trojanische Herkunftssage im Mittelalter, in: Kontinuität und Transformation der Antike im Mittelalter. Veröffentlichung der Kongreßakten zum Freiburger Symposium des Mediävistenverbandes, ed. Willi Erzgräber, Sigmaringen 1989, p. 25-43.

1. Chronicon Ebersheimense 2, ed. Ludwig WEILAND, MGH SS 23, p. 432.

1. Cf. Herkunft und Ursprung. Historische und mythische Formen der Legitimation, ed. Peter WUNDERLI, Sigmaringen 1994; Amy G. REMENSNYDER, Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France, Ithaca, N.Y. 1995.

1. Otto of Freising, Chronicle, ed. Adolf Hofmeister, MGH SSrG 1912.

1. Cf. Werner GOEZ, *Translatio imperii. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkens und der politischen Theorien im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*, Tübingen 1958.

1. Cf. Walther LAMMERS, *Ein universales Geschichtsbild der Stauferzeit in Miniaturen. Der Bilderzyklus zur Chronik Ottos von Freising im Jenenser Codex Bose q.6* (1963), in: Id., *Vestigia mediaevalia. Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur mittelalterlichen Historiographie, Landes- und Kirchengeschichte* (Frankfurter Historische Abhandlungen 19) Wiesbaden 1979, p. 45-87.

1. Cf. n. 14.

1. Thus Janet COLEMAN, *Ancient and Medieval Memories. Studies in the reconstruction of the past*, Cambridge 1992, p. 294, 324.

1. *Gesta episcoporum Halberstadensium* prol., ed. Ludwig WEILAND, MGH SS 23, p. 78: *Qui res gestas in scriptum redigere moliantur, arbitror utique cum eisdem utile ac honestum fore, ut, ne actus veterum favillis oblivionis sepeliantur, vivacis litteris certa quadam noticia ad posteros deriventur.*

1. Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, prol., ed. Diana GREENWAY, Oxford 1996, p. 4: *Historia igitur praeterita quasi praesentia visui repraesentat; futura ex praeteritis imaginando dijudicat.*

1. Johannes SPÖRL, *Das Alte und das Neue im Mittelalter. Studien zum Problem des mittelalterlichen Fortschrittsbewußtseins*, in: *Historisches Jahrbuch* 50, 1930, p. 297-341, 498-524.

1. Nico LETTINCK, *Geschiedbeschouwing en beleving van de eigen tijd in de eerste helft van de twaalfde eeuw*, Amsterdam 1983.

1. Cf. Hans RALL, Zeitgeschichtliche Züge im Vergangenheitsbild mittelalterlicher, namentlich mittellateinischer Schriftsteller (Hist. Stud. 322) Berlin 1937 (ND. Vaduz 1965; The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe, ed. Paul MAGDALINO, London-Rio Grande 1992; Patrick GEARY, Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millenium, Princeton, N.J. 1994; Ritual, Memory, Historiography. Medieval Concepts of the Past, ed. Patrick J. GEARY, Johannes FRIED u. Gerd ALTHOFF, mit Eckhardt FUCHS, Cambridge-Washington (in print).

1. Adam of Bremen, Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum, ed. Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH SSrG 1917.

1. Cf. Egon BOSHOF, Köln, Mainz, Trier – Die Auseinandersetzungen um die Spitzenstellung im deutschen Episkopat in ottonischer und salischer Zeit, in: Jahrbuch des Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins 49, 1978, p. 19-48.

1. Lampert of Hersfeld, Annales, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SSrG 1894.

1. Annales Palidenses, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS16, p. 48-98.

1. Annalista Saxo, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS 6, p. 512-777.

1. Bernold of Saint-Blasien, Chronicon, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 5, p. 385-467.

1. Cf. Francis INGLEDEW, The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: The Case of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, in: Speculum 69, 1994, p. 665-704.

1. Cf. Julia C. CRICK, The *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, vol. 3: A summary catalogue of the manuscripts, Cambridge 1989; vol. 4: Dissemination and reception in the later Middle Ages, Cambridge 1991; Michael D. REEVE, The

Transmission of the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, in: *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 1, 1991, p. 73-117.

1. Cf. Gerd ALTHOFF, *Causa scribendi und Darstellungsabsicht: Die Lebensbeschreibungen der Königin Mathilde und andere Beispiele*, in: *Litterae medii aevi. Festschr. Johanne Autenrieth*, Sigmaringen 1988, p. 117-133.

1. *Gesta episcoporum Halberstadensium* (n. 21) S. 98f.

1. *Chronicon Afflighemense* 1, ed. Georg Heinrich PERTZ, MGH SS 9, p. 407.

1. Cf. Hans-Werner GOETZ, *Geschichte als Argument. Historische Beweisführung und Geschichtsbewußtsein in den Streitschriften des Investiturstreits*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 245, 1987, p. 31-69.

1. Cf. Jutta BEUMANN, *Sigebert von Gembloux und der Traktat de investitura episcoporum* (Vorträge und Forschungen Sonderband 20) Sigmaringen 1976, p. 57ss.

1. Bonizo von Sutri, *Liber ad amicum* 3, ed. Ernst DÜMMLER (after the edition of Philipp Jaffé), MGH Ldl 1, p. 568-620.

1. *Ibid.* 3, p. 578.

1. *Ibid.* 3, p. 579.

1. *Ibid.* 2, p. 574.

1. Cf. Hans-Werner GOETZ, *Fälschung und Verfälschung der Vergangenheit. Zum Geschichtsbild der Streitschriften des Investiturstreits*, in: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter 1* (Schriften der MGH 33/I) Hannover 1988, p. 165-188.

1. Caffaro, *Annales Ianuenses*, ed. Luigi Tommaso Belgrano (*Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 11) 1890, p. 3-75.

1. *Annales s. Blasii*, ed. Georg Heinrich PERTZ, MGH SS 17, p. 278.

1. Vita Bennonis, ed. Harry Bresslau, MGH SS 30,2, p. 869-892, and MGH SSrG 1902.

1. Cf. Otto Gerhard OEXLE, Die Gegenwart der Toten, in: Death in the Middle Ages, ed. Herman Braet and Werner Verbeke (Mediaevalia Lovaniensia I,9) Leuven 1983, p. 19-77.

1. Historia monasterii Marchtelanensis, 1891, prol. (n. 10) p. 8: *sollicitus fui scire volentibus scriptis propalare et successorum nostrorum memorie commendare, a quibus personis vel sub quibus prelati et quo tempore predicta ecclesia fundata, dotata, prediis nobilitata et aucmentata exstiterit.*

1. Thus Karl SCHMID, Der Stifter und sein Gedenken. Die Vita Bennonis als Memorialzeugnis, in: Tradition als historische Kraft. Interdisziplinäre Forschungen zur Geschichte des früheren Mittelalters (Festschrift Karl Hauck), Berlin-New York 1982, p. 297-322 here p. 313.

1. Cf. Jörg KASTNER, Historiae foundationum monasteriorum. Frühformen monastischer Institutionsgeschichtsschreibung im Mittelalter (Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissanceforschung 18) Freising 1974, p. 94ss.

1. Anonymus Haserensis, De gestis episcoporum Eistetensium, ed. Stefan Weinfurter, Die Geschichte der Eichstätter Bischöfe des Anonymus Haserensis. Edition – Übersetzung – Kommentar (Eichstätter Studien n.F. 24) Regensburg 1987.

1. Gesta episcoporum Tullensium, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS 8, p. 631-648.

1. Cf. Gerhard THEUERKAUF, Die Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte Adams von Bremen. Über Gesellschaftsformen und Weltbilder im 11. Jahrhundert, in: Historiographia mediaevalis. Studien zur Geschichtsschreibung und Quellenkunde des

Mittelalters. Festschrift Franz-Josef Schmale, Darmstadt 1988, p. 118-137.

1. Casus s. Galli Cont. I prol., ed. Heidi LEUPPI, Zürich 1987, p. 58/60.

1. Ibid. 17, p. 110/112.

1. Helmold von Bosau, Chronica Slavorum 2,110, ed. Bernhard SCHMEIDLER, MGH SSrG ³1937, p. 218. Cf. Friedrich LOTTER, Bemerkungen zur Christianisierung der Abodriten, in: Festschrift Walter Schlesinger, vol. 2, Köln-Wien 1974, p. 395-442, particularly p. 406ss.

1. Ibid. 1,80, p. 150.

1. Gesta abbatum Trudonensium prol., ed. Rudolf KÖPKE, MGH SS 10, p. 213-448.