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POLITICAL MORALS IN THE MEDIEVAL WEST

It would be romanticism to evoke the Middle Ages from its tomb to serve as a model for our own thinking about political morals. However, quite apart from the specific and characteristic medieval features, there is another element which goes back to antiquity and forward into our modern epoch—the great continuity of ideas embraced in the terminology and the practical rules which make for their efficiency. It may be worthwhile to study these ideas instead of dismissing them as unimportant generalities.

The deathbed of a king such as Louis VI of France was surely not an occasion for commonplace remarks. Nevertheless, King Louis exhorted his heir to recall those rules governing political morals which the young man had heard again and again from his teachers and which he was to hear once more during the ceremonies of his coronation.

It is today a serious moment when a king or a queen of England receives the insignia of royalty from the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury; one cannot ascribe to the sense of tradition alone the persistence of similar exhortations during the ceremonies of coronation day.

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219216000802904 Published online by Cambridge University Press

When the Archbishop, on June 2, 1953, placed a ring on the right hand of the Queen, and then gave her the Scepter with the Cross and the Rod with the Dove, he spoke of the ruler's virtues and enumerated them just before the ceremony of coronation. The words of the investiture "per annulum, et per sceptrum et baculum," Part X of the coronation order, are:

Receive the Ring of kingly dignity, and the seal of Catholic Faith . . . as the Defender of Christ's religion. . . . Receive the Royal Sceptre, the ensign of kingly power and justice. . . . Receive the Rod of equity and mercy. Be so merciful that you be not too remiss; so execute justice that you forget not mercy. Punish the wicked, protect and cherish the just, and lead your people in the way wherein they should go.

The virtues specified are piety, justice, equity, and mercy; we shall see that "kingly power" also has a special significance in this context. This is a list of the main virtues of monarchical government and enjoys a very old tradition. To demonstrate this, we must turn back 980 years—from the year 1953 to 973, when King Edgar was crowned. St. Dunstan spoke to the King in Latin, using almost the same words we have just quoted. The Ring was called "signaculum sanctae fidei," the Scepter, "virga virtutis" (virtue meaning here "power," a survival of the Roman "virtus bellica"), and the Rod is the "virga virtutis atque aequitatis." With the rod in his hands, the king shall cherish the pious and frighten the wicked, but he shall also extend his hands to those who have fallen, and this we call "mercy," or clemency. Justice as well is mentioned in the exhortation.

This coronation order derives from Late Carolingian France, where it was used at least from 877 onward. But is its thought purely medieval? Actually, by heredity, it belongs to antiquity. We must go back nine hundred years farther and study the text of the *Monumentum Ancyranum*. Augustus himself tells us there that, in appreciation of his merits, the Senate and the people placed a golden shield in the curia Iulia, bearing the inscription that this was done because of his "virtue" (power), his clemency, justice, and piety.

These qualities were intrinsic to the ideal image of the first Roman emperor as they were to that of the medieval ruler. There are many examples of this continuity from the time of Augustus onward—in the works of late Roman panegyrists as well as in the preambles of charters, in the coronation orders, etc. It seems astonishing that Christianity

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219216000802904 Published online by Cambridge University Press

brought no change in this respect, the explanation being that the Latin versions of the Bible used the old vocabulary in their translation of the Greek and Hebrew texts, as did the Fathers of the church when they spoke of God's virtues. Tertullian, for example, depicted God and his angels and saints as the supreme monarch and his court—a transposition of earthly rule to heaven, also in the field of morals. God's piety, justice, clemency, and so on were now listed. Earthly rulers were to imitate their Overlord in heaven, and the old schemes could thus persist right through the Middle Ages.

It was pagan philosophy rather than Christendom which was at least partially opposed to such dogma. The Greek theorists had developed systems which reached much farther than the ancient practical ideals, in the sense of a total "philosophization" of morals. The old "virtus bellica" in particular did not fit into this framework, and we no longer find it among the official virtues of the Late Roman emperors. Nevertheless, it could and did persist in popular thinking, and it was renewed in the Middle Ages under the influence of Teutonic as well as biblical thinking: one found the "virtus potentiae" both in the Old Testament and in the liturgical texts, and it corresponded also to the ideals of Germanic kingship.

The second virtue of Augustus is clemency, or mercy. For the Christian authors it was self-evident that this was the given supplement to justice, "nam iustitia per se severa est" ("justice alone is much too severe"), as Isidore of Seville tells us; and Fulgentius of Ruspe, an anti-Arrian theologian of the early sixth century, found a formula which recalls the words of the English coronation orders: "so execute justice, that you forget not mercy." This formula found its way into an exhortation made to Louis the Pious, after which it was used for the Carolingian Order. The claim for mercy reaches back to the time of the civil war at the end of the Roman Republic. When Julius Caesar had ended the war victoriously, he renounced the slaughter of former enemies, which was his right by law. The Romans, in return for his generosity, dedicated a temple to the "clementia Caesaris," and henceforth an emperor had to follow Caesar's example. Seneca himself endeavored to make this clear to the young Nero, to whom he addressed his treatise on clemency.

Equity, also listed in the coronation order, was originally an affair of the forum and the civil service and not a princely virtue. The judge

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219216000802904 Published online by Cambridge University Press

or the officer could apply the natural law where the positive law appeared to contradict it. We do not therefore find this virtue on the shield of Augustus; in his time, moreover, equity was rather a claim made by some philosophically educated jurists (Cicero, for example) than a principle which was recognized everywhere. Later, under the growing influence of philosophy on the principles of government, it became one of the fundamental features of the imperial administration of justice, as in Christian times. The Middle Ages, however, did not see an absolute contrast between positive law and natural rights, holding the conviction that both had their origin in God, who could not permit concrete laws to hurt the primary rights of mankind. In the Anglo-Saxon period *aequitas* is translated simply by "right." Later, English orders separated the two principles again, and today each has its own emblem: the short scepter standing for "justice" and the rod with the dove for "equity."

The last of the imperial virtues is piety. It consisted primarily in a sense of tradition, involving the veneration of the deified ancestors of a Roman family. Augustus enlarged it in a political framework, intending the conservation of the ancient religious and political order in contrast to Caesar's autocratic innovations. During the Middle Ages piety meant godliness as well as conservatism. The king had to follow the examples of his ancestors as well as those of our Lord, whom the liturgy often named "the source of all piety."

We have said that the ancient political virtues did not harm Christendom and that military power was part of the Teutonic ideal of kingship, which was favorably disposed toward the rest of those virtues. Justice and piety were part of it even in pre-Christian times, while equity and mercy were accepted together with the new cult and the elevated forms of Roman statecraft. The Carolines were Christian in their faith, Teutonic as kings, and they tried to be Roman in everything which concerned the universal government of an emperor. Constantine, Theodosius, and Justinian were the models of this government, and they had shown that Roman statecraft went well together with Christianity. There was no reason to give up the old princely morals in favor of principles which were strictly and purely Christian. In fact, it would have been impossible to do so. One could demand that a prince shed no blood, that he should love his enemies, and that he offer the left cheek to those who had hurt the right one, but there were very few theorists in

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219216000802904 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the West who believed that a realization of such demands was possible. And there was no compelling reason to plead such radical claims—the claims of the Gospels had been directed to private men, not to an emperor, and the imperial government had been recognized by the apostles and by Christ himself. Many of the Western moralists, however, confused the practical schemes with learned matters and introduced the old philosophical theories in their Christianized form. In the treatises on princely morals we meet the four cardinal virtues; we also find humanity, love of mankind, and other Hellenistic survivals, all of which had been handed down to the Middle Ages as a part of learning. We do not find these virtues listed in documents of practical interest, such as the charters.

Could this learned theory really fulfil its purpose? I think that it could not, because it was far apart from the practical requirements of kingship. A prince could not derive much profit from such things, as, for example, the distinctions and subdivisions of virtues, borrowed from Aristotle. The maxims said that a king should be wise; Thomas Aquinas added that such wisdom had two branches, the first one concerned with substances, the second one with accidents. For the practice of governing this was indeed unimportant.

For a long time book-reading was mostly an affair of the clergy. What a prince had to know he knew by heart, in the form of short sentences learned during his youth and which he heard in the orders and prayers, in the charters which were read in his presence, in every speech which was directed to him as a sovereign. We can believe that most princes were impressed by these maxims, even when it was impossible to follow their commands. If they were not impressed, they had at least to keep up appearances.

Public opinion expected that a king should follow the fixed canon—to defend the weak, maintain justice, and so on. The king who disobeyed these rules was exposed to public disapproval and could even lose his throne. He who had obtained by God's will the highest place in the community was exposed to God's wrath when he strayed from the right way—which must have grave consequences for the whole realm. Every practical action of a ruler therefore was critically observed, and this fact seems to have prevented even strong personalities such as Frederick Barbarossa from spontaneous action. Barbarossa, for example, was filled with hatred of the citizens of Milan when he besieged their

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219216000802904 Published online by Cambridge University Press

city in 1162. Nevertheless, he could not command slaughter for the population when he entered Milan at the head of his troops. An emperor was God's image; he had to give justice to all. Now giving justice to rebels could mean capital punishment for the Milanese people who had committed the crime of lese majesty; so was it written in the emperor Justinian's code which Barbarossa so often relied on. But an emperor had to use justice with mercy, and public opinion had to be satisfied that mercy really was used in this case. Therefore a great formal ceremony was ordered, one which, according to the chronicler of Cologne, lasted two days.

For two days the people of Milan, according to the chronicler, had to appeal for the emperor's *misericordia* before the throne where Barbarossa was seated. During all this time his expression did not change. Then he told the people that all were liable to the death penalty but that it was now his intention to give room to clemency. And he uttered the verdict that the town should be destroyed and that the population should leave it and become peasants in the villages surrounding Milan.

We of course would not call this mercy but rather an expression of savage resentment against the largest town of Italy, which had resisted for so long an army of noblemen under the emperor's personal command. At least the Teutonic furor had compromised with law, and more: the code of practical morals had moderated what Justinian's code had made possible. To be sure, the letter of the canon was observed, not its intentions. If the fulfilment of a moral canon is partly or wholly fictitious, one may call this "hypocrisy," but even hypocrisy recognizes that there is such a canon. We know that Machiavelli and his followers thought otherwise, and we know of the consequences of their attitude in our modern time.

As for Barbarossa, he was perhaps personally convinced that his procedure corresponded to the moral code's claim, that a prince should master his emotions: nobody had heard him pronounce a hostile word toward the Milanese during those two days. This claim was a maxim, the wording of which can be followed back from the medieval literature on kingship to the Hellenistic treatises, back again to Socrates, to Xenophon and ancient Persia, and even to India. If Barbarossa or any medieval ruler openly followed his passions, his behavior gave license to his followers and to all the noblemen of his empire to do the same. We need not speak much of the political morals of these leading groups:

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their virtues had to be the same as those of the king, the only difference being that they worked in a more restricted sphere of action than did the monarch.

It has been a commonplace, from the days of Claudius onward, that the orders of a ruler are of less effect on the life of the governed than is his example. Other statements show us the reverse of the medal, the consequences of bad behavior in this field. A bad king not only does not instruct his subjects but depraves them all by his bad example, we are told by Gerald of Wales, a Welshman at the court of Henry II of England. A bad king follows his personal interests and not those of the community; this is, according to Aristotle and the medieval treatises, contrary to the idea of kingship. "You are a king when doing right; if you do not right, you are not a king" ("Rex eris, si recte facies; si non facias, non eris"). This was an old proverb which one can find in the poems of Horace as well as in Augustine, Isidore, and others. The English proverb, "The King can do no wrong," on the one hand, means that he cannot be called to account for his deeds and, on the other hand, that if he misuses his power he is no more a king and can be deposed.

In the popular mind of the early Middle Ages kingship was an office, but the king was not an officer as was a count. The king had received his office directly from God's hands and had to be an incarnation of God's own will, a "speculum virtutum." A private person may be full of good will but a sinner; his actions may be defective, even though they must not be totally condemned. A king's actions show him as God's servant, full of God's wisdom, or as the devil's minister, and the punishment for the sins of mankind.

Such views may seem strange to us, but we must remember that the Teutonic tribal king as well as the Late Roman emperor, even in early Christian times, was a sacred person, full of godly virtue and power; his functions made him mediator between the human sphere and the divine. The peace of God surrounded the good emperor, and so he was called "Your serenity." "The good monarch's reign was marked by fertility of the soil, calmness of the sea, and peace in the air," are the words of an Irish author of the seventh century, and at the beginning of the twelfth century the peasants were still convinced of this. They put grains of corn on the tomb of Emperor Henry IV so as to increase fertility, even though he had died unreconciled with the pope.

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Our Irishman tells us that all is contrary with the tyrant: "His rule provokes storms, and a burning of the harvest by thunder-claps." Even in 1527 the Swedish king, Gustav Wasa, complained to a diet that the peasants of his realm imputed the bad weather to him. They did so, said the king, "as if I were God, and not a human creature." Tyranny had its meteorological consequences, since it confused the general order of the world and offended the powers above. Resistance to tyranny was a pious action, and in pagan times the Scandinavians killed their bad kings as a sacrifice to the gods.

We are not concerned here with the right of resistance. We only wish to prove that the canon of princely morals had religious roots which made it much more severe than any canon of private morals. Everything depended on the king's personal qualities at a time when the institutional character of the government was still developing: the personal one prevailed in the field of administration, of politics, and of political morals. One could not yet distinguish between the ruler's person and the administration of his office. One can compare this with the popular attitude toward the priests: for a long time it was believed that the sacraments distributed by a priest who was a sinner were not valid. The question was ultimately solved in the affirmative sense in the twelfth century, from which time onward the old ideal of kingship gave way to a more realistic conception.

It was the people who judged the conduct of priests and tried to depose the bad ones in the Pataria movement of the eleventh century and elsewhere. Originally, the people rather than the church declared who was a saint and who was not, and for a long time it remained the people's own and proper affair to decide whether a king was as holy and virtuous as he ought to be or whether he was a tyrant. So far as private men were concerned, one left it to the spiritual power of the church to decide what was good and what was evil. The saints and the kings, however, with their immediate relation to God, remained outside this power and followed their own laws. Such popes as Nicholas I tried to show that it was the right of the "sacerdotium" and not of the "societas fidelium" to judge whether or not a king lived according to the eternal principles of morals and that it was the clergy's duty to decide what is his "vice" or his "virtue." A long time had to pass, however, before these ideals were accepted by the leading groups of medieval society.

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It is clear that the popular views on kingship deeply influenced the political thought of medieval historiography. This was, in part, court historiography, and it goes without saying that the king could do no wrong; but even among the more independent chroniclers in the monasteries criticism seldom arose. It was most improbable that God had given his power to a tyrant when people had not deserved this by their godlessness and when there were no meteorological *signa,* that is, signals of God's wrath. Apart from such exceptional cases one was convinced that this or that observed trespass of kingly morals was not done deliberately. A chronicler of a good king's reign had to show that most of this ruler's actions were good. If he found anything in them to reprove, he had to exculpate his hero; for example, he had received false information, or he had acted under the influence of bad counselors. Since the medieval clergy mistrusted the political qualities of women, the role of the bad counselor was very often given to the king's wife. Until the investiture contest, one was generally convinced that one's own lord was good and that tyrants were to be found, if at all, among the king's opponents and, in any case, among the heathen peoples behind the frontiers of Christianity.

From the eleventh century onward this natural confidence in the king's virtues diminished. Critics appeared, along with attempts to realize the papal "reform" and a hierocratic program. In the eyes of the hierocratists, an effort made to prevent the realization of such concepts could prove that this or that monarch was a tyrant and, as such, could do no good in any way. The royalists themselves were deeply troubled by such facts, as, for example, the deposition of Pope Gregory VII, or the murder of Thomas Becket, and often did not dare to oppose the antiroyalist propaganda completely. They could only prove that, alongside the bad features, there were also good ones in their king's portrait, and this made for progress in history-writing, since the archaic style of "black or white, good or bad" began to give way to a more modern interpretation of the leading men and their actions.

This new concept presupposed that the sacred character of kingship had diminished, which detracted much from the fundamentals of royal power and dignity. On the other hand, it also weakened the sacred conception of tyranny, which had very important consequences in the field of practical politics. If the king was a human being and a sinner, he had to be forgiven when he had shown himself penitent. This was

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219216000802904 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the situation of Henry IV at Canossa, and Canossa profoundly separated the Saxons from their ally, Gregory VII. For these Saxons, Henry was an old-styled tyrant; for Gregory, he was not. After the day of Canossa the Saxons felt themselves tricked by the pope and wrote to him, saying: "What an unheard-of confusion, shaking the earth to trembling!" A Saxon chronicler writes that belief in the good will of St. Peter had gone, although the Saxons had once believed that the earth would rather turn around the heaven than St. Peter lose his constancy.

To understand these words, we must bear in mind what we know of the connection of the ancient political morals with the cosmic order. We must remember, too, that the tyrant was "the devil's minister" and as such no more a human creature. His rage was inborn and not accidental; he was ferocious as a lion and rapacious like a bear, as we are told by Sedulius Scottus, a learned monk at the Carolingian court. Just as the king has vowed himself to God or to the deities, the tyrant vowed himself to the powers below, and his figure reminds us of the Teutonic *Berserkr,* those warriors whose actions revealed a demonic force and ferocity. Such views must have been vivid among the Saxons; and now the pope himself had absolved a tyrant—what peril for humanity when the Vicar of Christ compromised with so demonic a man!

During the investiture contest itself the old style still prevailed in the polemic treatises. Henry was either a "speculum virtutum" or a "speculum omnium vitiorum," a subverter of divine and human Law, devoid of justice and equity, a devastator of the churches and therefore impious. But in the next generation a biographer of Henry IV tried to be more objective. He listed the emperor's faults, as well as his virtues, which was also the case with Henry II, the English king. In both instances the party spirit had not completely yielded, but the author's own position is to be read between the lines: if he was a royalist, like the biographer of the German emperor, he began with the faults and then turned to the virtues; if he was opposed to the king, like Gerald of Wales, he proceeded in the inverse order. As Gerald says of Henry II:

> It is true that this prince governed his provinces well, that he founded a monarchy for all Britain, that he was much honored by the rulers not only of Europe but even of Asia, and it is true that many wise men filled his court. Nevertheless he was a tyrant, a vendor of justice, a public adulterer, faithless, impious, the hammer of churches and born to their destruction. Up to the time of the murder

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219216000802904 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of St. Thomas, God had let him be so, hoping for the king's moral improvement. Then the wheel of fortune was turned, but Henry hardened his heart instead of reforming himself.

We see that Henry had a chance—the chance of the penitent sinner. There was a way back to the Christian society, and there is something which we might call a "humanization of history."

Most of the chroniclers were clerics, and, as such, they were well informed on the internal struggle in the breasts of men. Ekkehard of Aura, our main source for the last years of Emperor Henry IV, tells us that this man was better qualified for his office than anyone of his generation. But, unfortunately, in the conflict of virtues and vices the *homo interior* degenerated and succumbed. May other princes contemplate this example and improve their actions, which so often are like those of Henry!

This is moralizing, and not yet psychologizing, in our modern sense. Neither was it a really historical concept, nor could it be one, since during the Middle Ages history was not a discipline on its own. It was not yet objectivity but a step toward it, and it led from the foreground of facts to the reasons for them which were found in the breasts of men.

However, we should not assume that such views prevailed from then on in historiography. The anonymous biographer of Henry IV and of Ekkehard of Aura belonged to the upper stratum of writers of history, and so did Gerald of Wales. In the works of others, reflection was either totally absent or followed the old way, the way of St. Jerome. This kind of reflection is purely theological: it speaks of God's plans for mankind —to abolish the consequences of original sin. The leading men are God's instruments for this purpose. Some of them can serve also as an example of this or that special virtue to the writer's own generation and especially to its princes.

This conception, unhistorical though it was, could nevertheless promote a feeling for history. The old Roman Empire, especially under Augustus, had become a function in God's strategy, and antiquity was linked up with the Middle Ages by the *translatio imperii* to the Frankish soil. Even the Roman Republic, which had developed a form of government strange to the medieval mind, became vivid again in exemplary men such as Cato Maior, or Scipio Africanus.

This was an affair of learned men, while the great mass preferred a still more naïve, and totally unreflective, way of thinking. History was

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vivid to them as a sense of the good old order, and they took pride in the fact that their family, their people, or their dynasty had a very old and a very noble origin. With the aid of some learned men, the nobility tried, even as in modern times, to show that this origin was to be found in ancient Rome, in Troy, or even in Babylonia.

Nobility was one concept this aristocratic society wished to prove, the other being the special mission of the society and its dynasty. As the Jews had received such a mission from God and had resigned it to the *populus Christianus,* the question now was which Christian people it had been granted to—those of Byzantium or the Franks, the French or the Germans, and so on. The mission showed that one's own nation was good and that its actions were justified: "Li Franceis ont dret, et li paiens ont tort" says the *Chanson de Roland*. God, and the good monarch, and his good people stood on one side in the eternal struggle of hell and heaven; on the other stood the tyrants and the bad nations outside the frontiers of Christianity and also within them.

Such a conception is a mark of every archaic period. We should not be astonished that it existed in the West, and we know that it lasted in the popular mind much longer than the Middle Ages did. It is not easy to say how much it has given to our modern nationalism, which observed the monarchs critically to see if their deeds had really promoted the nation's cause. If not, they were condemned as tyrants, just as the hierocratists had done some centuries before. Then the consequences of such a condemnation had been moderated by the church itself; now there was nobody who could assume this function. Revolution followed, and not a reorganization. There is a close connection between the change from personal government to a purely institutional one and the change from the old to the new type of history. Once history had been the sum of the deeds of leading men; now a *histoire sans noms* arose, the history of the masses and their social, economic, and cultural development.

This kind of history deeply influenced the Romantic schools in Germany, which devoted themselves to research in the fields of folklore, social and institutional history, history of thought, etc. It opened new perspectives to the historians and made them conscious of the complexity of phenomena they were trying to examine. But very often it removed the sense of personal action, and of its moral principles. The German school of *Historismus* began to reign, for which it was a dog-

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ma that every epoch has its own and proper *System der Werte,* its system of moral values. These systems could be an object of study, but it was not the historian's affair to judge in any way, and with the categories of his own time, the actions of the past: "Geschichte muss wertfrei sein"—history must be free of any application of values.

This was completely opposite to what the medieval historiographer considered the function of his work—to educate his readers by showing them examples of men who behaved well or badly. The Middle Ages had oversimplified history by reducing everything to a few general principles. Now the principles were thrown overboard, in the name of objectivity, and history became labyrinthine, losing its pedagogical functions.

Nowadays most historians have learned that *Historismus* can have catastrophic consequences, and the claim for it grows more and more obsolete. One begins to remember that research is quite different from *Darstellung,* the synthesis, and especially a synthesis intended for a greater public. Research is concerned with nothing but the facts and the reasons for them, while a synthesis must not forget the different kinds of responsibility the author has toward his public. However, at a time when the whole problem of *Historismus* must be reconsidered, the question is: Are its presuppositions correct? Is it really the case that, as *Historismus* maintains, every epoch had its own and proper system of moral values and that there was a total change at the beginning of every new period?

We have seen that there is a great continuity of terms in political morals, from Augustus to the Christian coronation orders, and not only of terms but also of maxims, which tried to give the ideals a practical application. That this was not merely a reminiscence of former times is shown by the slight differences between the Roman concept and the Teutonic one. This may be proof that such things had real meaning for those who copied the old Latin terms. It may be such a proof, but then, again, it may not. We can take a skeptical position toward everything which the sources tell us about political morals because we can never get absolute precision on the exact, concrete meaning of a word or a maxim in the mind of this or that author, nor can we ask leaders of the past what kind of significance the maxims had for them. For instance, we read in the work of Liutprand of Cremona, a contemporary of Emperor Otto I, that a riot had been beaten down in the

https://doi.org/10.1177/039219216000802904 Published online by Cambridge University Press

streets of Rome by the emperor's men. He called them back from the pursuit of the defeated, and Liutprand gives us the reason: Otto did it "misericordia inclinatu." We can have doubts about the real meaning of the word *misericordia* in this context; we may well doubt that this was in fact Otto's reason for his act, and we may doubt that this act expressed the same sentiment as did Caesar's clemency at the end of the civil war.

Such doubts lead us far into the philosophic problems of historical perception—problems which cannot be solved here. They may nevertheless point out the alternatives: either one can trust the sources when they clearly exhibit not only a continuity of terms and maxims but also a continuity of practical application of these maxims, or one can refuse to trust them. Here as well, however, it is impossible to know anything about the systems of values of the past. We cannot say that they differed from epoch to epoch and can therefore conclude nothing from this thesis—as the partisans of *Historismus* were able to do.

Philosophy apart, we may learn from our topic that the history of political thought is a very large field wherein morals in their popular form are worthy of further investigation. We may believe the sources, or we may not; in any case the historian should pay attention to data which the medieval mind accepted and not reject them when they fail to please his own taste. He should be all the more attentive, since it is not political thought alone for which such research might give results. It could prepare new material for the long-discussed question of continuity between antiquity and the Middle Ages and the Middle Ages and our modern time. These questions will be solved not by offering generalities but only by paying attention to a sum of details in the various fields of human life and thought; some of them may play the same role as petrified shells play for the geologist in his analysis of a stratum. Perhaps such shells are also the old terms and commonplaces we have found in three epochs which seem so different, and for this reason we should not dismiss them as pointless.

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