

# Rationality of Action in Medieval Europe

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Qui facit veritatem venit ad lucem  
Augustine of Hippo

## 1. Introduction

Twentieth-century theorists of action commonly defined action as a purposeful process towards the attainment of goals. Thus the prototype of an actor was imagined to be a person who is driven by one or several motives to accomplish one or several goals that the person has set before the action began.<sup>1</sup> The measure of success then is the degree by which the actor accomplished the goal or goals through the application of appropriate means. As long as they take place in a social context, actions are believed to be rational if and as long as the degree of success in the choice of appropriate methods to attain the set goal or goals can be measured independent of the actor's beliefs. Max Weber promoted the use of the term *end-rationality* (*Zweckrationalität*) for this notion of action.<sup>2</sup> These theo-

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<sup>1</sup> Talcott Parsons, Edward A. Shils, *A General Theory of Action* (Cambridge, MA, 1951), pp. 53-69 [4<sup>th</sup> ed. 1959].

<sup>2</sup> See : Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, book I, paragr. 1, section 1-2, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.. Studienausgabe, ed. by Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen, 1980), pp. 1-2.

ries have been characterised by their lack of historicity, that is, their proponents have been inclined to assume that their theories define general principles of the conduct of actions with purportedly universal validity across cultures and periods.<sup>3</sup> This assumption is, however, far from obvious or self-evident. This is so not only because the possibility of establishing universally valid rationality criteria has been called into question by cognitive anthropologists,<sup>4</sup> but also, and more fundamentally, because there is no *prima facie* justification for the matter-of-factly done association of the rationality of action with goal-attainment. Why does the rationality of an action have to be determined in relation to the degree of successful accomplishment of one or several predetermined goals? Conversely, why are actions irrational if they are focused merely or mainly on their processes, with goal-attainment being of no or only subsidiary sig-

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Cf. for later versions of the theory which placed more emphasis than Weber on the interconnectedness of goal-making and goal-attainment: Alfred Schutz, "Choosing among Projects of Action", in: Schutz, *Collected Papers*, vol. 1: The Problem of Social Reality, ed. by Maurice Natanson (The Hague, 1973), p. 73 [first published in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 12 (1951)]. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, MA, 1965). Cf. for reviews of these theories: Roland Bernecker, Art. "Handlungstheorie", in: Gert Ueding, ed., *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. 3 (Tübingen, 1996), col. 1286-1297. Rainer Döbert, "Max Webers Handlungstheorien und die Ebenen des Rationalitätskomplexes", in: Johannes Weiss, ed., *Max Weber heute. Erträge und Probleme der Forschung* (Frankfurt, 1989), pp. 210-249. Helmut Gierndt, Art. "Handeln, soziales", in: Joachim Ritter, ed., *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 3 (Basle, Stuttgart, 1974), col. 994-996. Friedrich Kaulbach, *Einführung in die Philosophie des Handelns* (Darmstadt, 1982). Hans Lenk, ed., *Handlungstheorie interdisziplinär*, 4 vols in 6 parts (Munich, 1977-1981). Hans Posner, ed., *Philosophische Probleme des Handelns* (Freiburg, 1982). Alan R. White, ed., *The Philosophy of Action* (London, 1968). Johannes Winckelmann, Helmut Gierndt, Walter M. Sprondel, *Das soziale Handeln als Grundkategorie erfahrungswissenschaftlicher Soziologie* (Tübingen, 1967).

nificance? Or, historically speaking, since when and under which condition did the assumption receive support and credibility that all rational actions must be end-rational actions?

In the following essay, I intend to outline the conditions under which these questions may be answered. My attempt to historicise the concept of rational action is meant to be a contribution to the history of ethics. From the point of view of the history of action, I define ethics broadly as the field of inquiry into the interconnectedness of actions with values, norms and rules. I shall argue that rational action was beginning to be transformed from a mainly process-related to a mainly goal-oriented concept during the ninth and tenth centuries. I shall adduce supportive evidence from late

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<sup>3</sup> Most radically Arthur Coleman Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of Action* (Cambridge, 1973). See also: Jeffrey Friedman, ed., *The Rational Choice Controversy* (New Haven, London, 1996). Leif Lewin, Evert Vedung, eds, *Politics as Rational Action* (Dordrecht, Boston, 1980). For criticism of the analytical philosophy of action see: Annette Baier, "Intention, Practical Knowledge, and Representation", in: Nigles Brand, Douglas Walton, eds, *Action Theory. Proceedings of the Winnipeg Conference on Human Action. Held at Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 9-11 May 1975* (Dordrecht, Boston, 1976), pp. 27-43. Baier, "Auf der Suche nach Basis-Handlungen", in: Georg Meggle, ed., *Analytische Handlungsbeschreibungen*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt, 1977), pp. 137-162. Margaret Levi, "A Model, a Method and a Map. Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Perspective", in: Mark Irving Lichbach, Alan S. Zuckerman, eds, *Comparative Politics. Rationality, Culture and Structure* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 19-41. There is little awareness among historians of the historicity of the concept of action. For one, Richard van Dülmen, in his introductory survey *Historische Anthropologie*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cologne, 2001) [first published (Cologne, 2000)], categorises the human being as an actor in history but does not reflect on the history of action.

<sup>4</sup> See: Clifford Geertz, "The Way We Think Now. Toward an Ethnography of Modern Thought", in: Geertz, *Local Knowledge* (London, 1993, p. 147-163 [first published (New York, 1983)]. Christopher Robert Hallpike, *Die Grundlagen des primitiven Denkens* (Munich, 1990), pp. 567-568 [first published (Oxford, 1979)].

Carolingian polyptyques and correlate this evidence with findings from other early medieval normative and narrative sources, among them ecclesiastical canons, exegeses of the Book of Genesis and a variety of historiographical writings.

**2. *Standards of communication, social organisation, modes of behaviour and the concept of action in the early Middle Ages***

One context in which the goal-attainment of action receives significance in its own right is communication by way of writing. This is so because the authoring and sending of written messages are actions proceeding at a place and at a time that differ from the place and time at which the messages are communicated to their recipient or recipients. As the recipients of written messages are not considered to be present at the place and the time when the messages had been written, on principle, neither can the number of recipients of the messages be determined nor can the place and time be precisely predicted at which the recipient or recipients will obtain the messages. Thus, under the premise of written communication, the goal of the communicative action, namely the provision of information to one or several recipients, and the process of authoring and sending messages occur in different spatial, temporal and, consequently, also social contexts. The difference of space, time and social setting can alter the information provided through written messages and thus transform the goal or goals of the action. As authors of written messages are normally aware of this potential, they try to establish probability calculations about the possibility of changes between their own spatial, temporal and social setting and those of the expected or intended recipients. For example, most senders of

written messages have demands for and thus make assumptions about the length of time usually needed for transmission and reception, they choose the medium of transmission, which is most likely to meet their demands, and they make provisions for the eventuality that the demands can not be met.<sup>5</sup>

These calculations imply that authors and senders of written messages can and usually will differentiate between the goal or goals they pursue at the time of writing and the likelihood that these goals can be attained in the spatial, temporal and social setting in which the messages will be received. The possibility of differentiating between a goal or goals directly associated with the processes of action, in this case, the writing of messages, and the goal or goals to be attained through the reception of the messages opens a wide range of manipulations, from the taking of precautionary measures in the case that the message arrives too late to the deliberate concealing and purposeful misstatement of the author's goal or goals to the recipient. As most twentieth-century theorists of action take for granted their assumption that persons must set the goal or goals of their actions by themselves, these observations apply not only to the

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<sup>5</sup> See for the debate on the consequences of literacy: Florian Coulmas, *Über Schrift* (Frankfurt, 1981). Klaus Düwel, „Buchstabenmagie und Alphabetzauber“, in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 22 (1988), pp. 70-110. Düwel, „Epigraphische Zeugnisse für die Macht der Schrift im östlichen Frankenreich“, in: *Die Franken. Wegbereiter Europas*, ed. by Karin von Welck, Alfred Wiczerek, Hermann Ament (Mainz, 1996), pp. 540-552. Christine Ehler, Ursula Schaefer, eds, *Verschriftung und Verschriftlichung* (Tübingen, 1998). Jack Goody, Ian Watt, „The Consequences of Literacy“, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5 (1963), pp. 304-345. Clemens M. Kaspar et al., eds, *Viva vox et ratio scripta. Mündliche und schriftliche Kommunikationsformen im Mönchtum des Mittelalters* (Munster, 1997) (Vita regularis. 5) Brigitte Kasten, „Erbrechtliche Verfügungen des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Organisation und zur Schriftlichkeit bei der Verwaltung adeliger Grundherrschaften am

exchange of messages but to a variety of other types of action as well, namely the production of tradable goods, the movement of persons and objects as well as the generation and transmission of information in general, altogether core aspects of social action at large. In all these cases, actors are believed or expected to make decisions in given situations about the appropriate processes to accomplish the goals of their actions in future situations. Consequently, the measurement of success in the attainment of the goals of action demands situations in which not only the actors but also other persons can observe the actions under way and can thus make judgments about the degree of goal-attainment. The situations thus have to be ones in which communication between the actors and observing persons is possible. Were actions not connected with communicative situations, such as thinking, dreaming or wandering about in deserted areas, no communication between the actors and their social environment were possible and, hence, no one would be able to pass judgments as to whether the actions took place at all or whether goal or goals associated with them were accomplished.

However, actions do not only occur in situations where literacy is the standard of communication within and across groups. Instead, in groups in which orality is the standard of communication the situational contexts of actions are different from those in groups

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Beispiel des Grafen Heccard aus Burgund“, in: *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, Germanistische Abteilung 107 (1990), pp. 236-338. Hagen Keller, “Vom heiligen Buch zur ‘Buchführung’”, in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 26 (1992), pp. 1-31. Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989). McKitterick, ed., *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1989). Ursula Schaefer, ed., *Schriftlichkeit im frühen Mittelalter* (Tübingen, 1993). Rudolf Schieffer, ed., *Schriftkultur und Reichsverwaltung unter den Karolingern* (Opladen, 1996).

with literacy as the standard of communication.<sup>6</sup> One core difference is that oral communication requires the communicating persons to be present simultaneously at the same spot and, in these situations, it impossible to isolate the spoken words from the other communicative signs or signals that communicating persons send out. Among these other signs and signals, often so-called “non-verbal”, gestures, rituals, bodily bearing, postures and movements are in prominent roles. In orally communicating groups, these signs and signals, together with the verbal messages, constitute integrated processes of communicative action in which the processes of action necessarily receive a larger share of attention than the accomplishment of set goals. Likewise, the hazard that the messages may not reach the recipients and potential of manipulating messages by pretending false intentions are minimal as there is no or little time gap between the sending and the reception of the messages. Although purposeful misunderstandings are, obviously, possible, as integrated processes of communicative action can be faked, it is more difficult to fake an integrated process of communicative action in its entirety than it is to make a purposefully false statement in a written document.<sup>7</sup> If actors in orally communicating groups have less incentive to focus their actions on the accomplishment of set goals, it becomes difficult to hypothesise that the purposeful setting of goals is generally a mandatory part of actions. Instead, it must be admitted that actors can believe that they are accomplishing goals which others have set

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<sup>6</sup> See for recent studies on orality in the Middle Ages : Harald Kleinschmidt, “Wordhord onleac. Bemerkungen zur Geschichte der sprechsprachlichen Kommunikation im Mittelalter”, in : *Historisches Jahrbuch* 108 (1988), pp. 37-62. Kleinschmidt, “Die Bedeutung der Historischen Verhaltensforschung für die Geschichte der Unterschichten im Mittelalter. Wege zur Geschichte der sprechsprachlichen Kommunikation”, in : *Mediaevalia historica Bohemica* 1 (1991), S. 317-354. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song* (Cambridge, 1990).

for them, or they can take the view that goal-attainment is a marginal or irrelevant aspect of their actions. In these cases, which were frequent in the history of early medieval Europe,<sup>8</sup> process-orientation overwhelms goal-attainment in the conceptualisation of actions. If process-orientation is considered to be more important than goal-attainment, it is inappropriate for theorists of action to demand or expect that the success of such actions should be measured solely in terms of the degree of goal-attainment.<sup>9</sup> In summary, there are empirical cases of situations in which the rationality of actions can or may be determined not merely through judgments of success of goal-attainment but mainly through observations of the continuity and consistency of the processes of actions. These situations dominate in orally communicating groups.

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Michael Richter, *The Oral Tradition in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 1994) (Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental. 71.) Richter, "Die 'Entdeckung' der Oralität der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft durch die neuere Mediävistik", in: Hans-Werner Goetz, ed., *Die Aktualität des Mittelalters* (Bochum, 2000), pp. 273-285. Werner Röcke, Ursula Schaefer, eds, *Mündlichkeit -- Schriftlichkeit -- Weltbildwandel* (Tübingen, 1996). Ursula Schaefer, ed. *Vokalität. Altenglische Dichtung zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit* (Tübingen, 1992). Hanna Vollrath, „Das Mittelalter in der Typik oraler Gesellschaften“, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 233 (1981), pp. 571-594.

<sup>7</sup> See: Harald Kleinschmidt, "The Fragmentation of the Integrated Process of Communicative Action. Notes on the Conceptual History of Communication in Medieval Europe", in: *NOWELE [Northwest European Language Evolution]* 35 (1999), pp. 77-114.

<sup>8</sup> See: Harald Kleinschmidt, "Esthetics and Ethics", in: *地域研究* 24 (2002), pp. 173-198.

<sup>9</sup> Such concepts of action have frequently been referred to under the label of magical beliefs. See on the problem of the definition of magic: Valerie Irene Jean Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, 1991). Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge 1989). Kieckhefer, "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic", in: *American Historical Review* 99 (1994), p. 813-836. Harald Kleinschmidt, "Magie des Sprechens. Plädoyer für einen historischen Magiebegriff", in: *歴史人類* 24 (1996), S. 3-26.

Another feature of twentieth-century theories of action relates to the criteria for the measurement of success. Twentieth-century theorists of action maintain that actions are successful if the actors make sufficient efforts to choose the appropriate means to accomplish the set goal or goals and actually accomplish them or at least control the situation to the extent that the accomplishment of the goal or goals can continue to be expected.<sup>10</sup> Thus the conditions of success are, first, that one or several goals have been set by the actors before the beginning of the action ; second, that the actors are motivated to make their own efforts to accomplish the goals ; third, that the means chosen for the accomplishment of the goals can be found to have been adequate ; and, finally, that the fact of the accomplishment of the goals can be ascertained. The actors' motivation to accomplish one or several set goals thus takes a central position among the criteria for the measurement of the success of actions. Motivation in this context means the self-controlled mobilisation of energies by the actors even if motivation may be, and frequently is, assumed to be sparked by exogenous factors.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the expectation is that the actors avail themselves of the physical and mental energies contained in their bodies to the end of accomplishing the goal or goals, which they have themselves set for their actions. In other words, current theories of action rest on the assumption that successful action is determinable on the grounds of the actors' perceptible willingness and capability to mobilise and effectively use the physical and mental energies contained in their bodies. This expectation has been termed an autodynamic mode of behaviour.<sup>12</sup> The autodynamic mode of behaviour is a standard for the measurement of the success of action, which gives priority to

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<sup>10</sup> Weber (note 2), cap. 1, paragr. 1, section 4, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Peter M. Gollwitzer, *Abwägen und Planen. Bewusstsein in verschiedenen Handlungsphasen* (Göttingen, 1992).

impacts by actors on their physical and social environment over the reverse impacts from the physical and social environments on actors. Autodynamic modes of behaviour are thus at the very bottom of individualistic attitudes that place persons primarily in competition with others, anticipate the likelihood of conflicts of interests and power struggles between persons as individuals and the societies of which they happened to be members and demand that, in these conflicts and struggles, the interests and desires of individuals should be given priority over the demands of society.<sup>13</sup>

The belief that action as social action should take place in societies as hierarchically stratified and territorially demarcated social groups with claims towards exclusive membership<sup>14</sup> came into existence only towards the end of the eighteenth century<sup>15</sup> and can thus not be taken for granted for previous periods. Instead, the Latin

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<sup>12</sup> See for an explication of the term : August Nitschke, *Kunst und Verhalten* (Stuttgart, 1972). The demand that persons should their own physical and intellectual energies and that self-controlled action is the epitome of life is of course older. For an explicit nineteenth-century source see : Carl Wenceslaus von Rotteck, Carl Theodor Welcker, eds, *Das Staats-Lexikon*, second ed., vol. 3 (Altona, 1846), p. 105 [repr., ed. by Hartwig Brandt (Frankfurt, 1990)].

<sup>13</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (London, 1861), pp. 146-147 [repr. (Buffalo, 1991)].

<sup>14</sup> Theoretically argued by : Parsons/Shils, "The Social System", in : *General Theory* (note 1), pp. 192-196. Cf. for a concurring statement by an anthropologist : Fredrik Barth, *Models of Social Organization* (London, 1966) (Royal Anthropological Institute. Occasional Paper 23.)

<sup>15</sup> Best documented in : Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Der geschlossene Handelsstaat* (Tübingen, 1800). New edition in : Fichte, *Werke 1800 — 1801*, ed. by Reinhard Lauth, Hans Gliwitszky (Stuttgart, 1988), pp. 1-141 (Fichte. Gesamtausgabe. I/7.) See on the emergence of the concept of society in : Manfred Riedel, Art. "Gesellschaft/Gemeinschaft", in : Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck, eds, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1975), pp. 830-848.

word *societas* as well as its derivatives and variants in the vernacular languages carry with them a wide variety of meanings during the European Middle Ages but did not usually denote societies in the understanding of twentieth-century theory of action.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, a generic term for smaller or larger assemblies of people did not exist before the coming in use of the word group, which suddenly appeared from unknown origins in the late Middle Ages.<sup>17</sup> The linguistic evidence points to the existence of complex agglomerations where groups were primarily not hierarchically stratified and territorially demarcated but vertically arrayed and could overlap in terms of membership through the admission of multiple loyalties. In Europe, kin groups, neighbourhood groups, groups established by contracts, political groups established by adherence to beliefs in common traditions as well as social groups as groups established and maintained by legal codes were the most prominent types of groups during the Middle Ages whereas others, such as age groups or totem groups appear to have been of no more than marginal as loyalty-commanding and identity-conveying institutions.<sup>18</sup> The competition among these types of groups allowed persons a higher amount of membership choices and offered more membership alternatives than twentieth-century social theory would admit.<sup>19</sup> In an array of various types of groups, it was difficult for a person to become a complete outsider or outlaw if these terms are understood to

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<sup>16</sup> For sources see: Harald Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 91.

<sup>17</sup> Connected with such words as English crop and German Krippe. See: Niels Kranemann, *Über den Gebrauch des Wortes Krippe im Sachbereich der Uferbefestigung*, Phil. Diss. (Munster, 1958), pp. 107-112.

<sup>18</sup> Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages* (note 16), p. 90.

<sup>19</sup> Explicitly in: Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme* (Frankfurt, 1987), pp. 268-269 [first published (Frankfurt, 1984)].

imply that a person has cancelled core group memberships or has been expelled from core groups. Indeed, the word “outlaw” appeared in English only in the eleventh century<sup>20</sup> whereas, in the early Middle Ages, even expulsion from one type of group, such as a kin group, a rarely recorded measure anyway, could have been compensated by joining another type of group, such as a group by contract.<sup>21</sup> The implication is that the belief that actions must be purposefully directed at either confirming or contending social hierarchies is applicable only under the premise of the existence of societies as a specific and, for that matter, recent type of social group which rules out a situation where several types of groups can compete for membership and loyalties. In situations of the latter type, a person’s action must be focused in terms of process and goal on the group of which the actor is a member or otherwise must switch group membership. Orality as a standard of communication and vertical coordination as a principle of social organization are thus compatible as far as the conceptualisation of action as primarily process-oriented is concerned. But they contradict key assumptions on which twentieth-century theories of action are built.

In vertically arrayed groups in which orality is the standard of communication the autodynamic mode of behaviour does not necessarily provide for the most important criteria for the measurement of the success of actions. This is so because, if various types of groups compete for the loyalties of the members, the integration of persons into groups is an essential condition for the continuity of the institu-

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<sup>20</sup> *Laws of Cnut*, cap. II/31, 2, ed. by Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1 (Halle, 1903), p. 336.

<sup>21</sup> The pre-Alfredian English laws knew of expulsion only in cases of aliens with deviant behaviour. See: *Laws of Wihfred of Kent*, cap. 4, 28, ed. by Liebermann, *Gesetze* (note 20), pp. 12, 14.

tional structure of the groups. Consequently, the bonds and ties among group members are stronger in vertically arrayed types of groups than in hierarchically stratified societies that demand exclusive membership. Moreover, group members who are dissatisfied with the conditions of their lives in one type of group will more easily switch to another type of group rather than manifesting their own interests and desires against those of the group. Consequently, the mutual dependence of the group members on support from their group as well as of the group on support from its members forms the basis for a mode of behaviour according to which the criteria for the measurement of the success of action are more frequently informed by the degree by which persons can avail themselves of the supportive energies provided by other group members rather than on the energies contained in their own bodies. Likewise, persons as members in vertically arrayed types of groups will more readily assume that their chances for acting successfully increase by the extent that they are capable of availing themselves of these exogenous supportive energies, and they will even expect that the goals for their actions might more frequently be determined by other group members or be regarded as givens than resulting from their own free will. This mode of behaviour has been termed heterodynamic, suggesting that persons regard themselves primarily as members of groups and only secondarily as individuals.<sup>22</sup> Heterodynamic modes require elaborate processes of communication for the purpose of maintaining the group structure and are thus not only compatible with vertically arrayed groups in which orality is the standard of communication but they also rest on the actors' expectation that process-orientation of action is a salient condition for goal-attainment and thus demand that a high degree of attention should

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<sup>22</sup> Nitschke, *Kunst* (note 12).

be given to the processes of actions. For actors in these situations, it will be perfectly rational to measure the success of their actions in terms of process-orientation rather than goal-attainment.<sup>23</sup>

The heterodynamic mode of behaviour was appropriate at a time when, as in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, migration loomed large. Against social and physical environments, which were frequently perceived as hostile towards the lives of persons and the conduct of human actions,<sup>24</sup> actors preferred to rely on support from other group members or even divine and other superhuman agents and seek favourable conditions for their actions rather than placing priority on the use of their own physical and mental energies. This preference was advantageous at times of frequent long-distance migration because, while on the move, solitary migrants would be more directly exposed to the hazards perceived or imagined to emanate from their social and physical environments. Moreover, some of the group migrations at the time could continue beyond the lifetime of a person and, consequently, it was mandatory for the migrants at any point of time to act in support the continuity of their integration into a group structure that could be expected to last beyond their lifespan. Such was the demand first and foremost during the period between the fourth and the seventh centuries when a plethora of usually small groups migrated across the western portion of the Eurasian continental block. A large number of place-names in the northern and western parts of the Roman Empire record settlements at which these migrants eventually established themselves. Many of these names reflect structures of autonomously acting

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<sup>23</sup> Contrary to Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, vol. 1, 4th ed. (Frankfurt, 1987), pp. 33-44 [first published (Frankfurt, 1981)].

<sup>24</sup> Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages* (note 16), pp. 36-46.

groups tied together through some kind of contractual agreements regarding the condition of membership, the purpose of the group action and the expected rewards for the members. Other place-names record groups constituted by joint experiences in the course of the migrations, beliefs in common descent among the migrants as well as adherence to common traditions of some political significance.<sup>25</sup> The frequency of these place-names in areas, such as Britain, Swabia, Bavaria or the Rhine valley, where in-migration is known to have occurred during these centuries, has put on record the coexistence of these several types of groups, namely groups by contract, kin groups, neighbourhood groups and groups with a common political tradition. It is therefore possible to conclude that the social structures of these groups impacted heavily on the actions of the settlers at places bearing their names and thus identifying the settlers as group members.

As these settlements were mostly agricultural in kind, the heterodynamic mode of behaviour was also apt to stimulate the willingness of group members to subject themselves to the natural rhythms of growth and decay for the purpose of making optimal use of the bounties of nature. That is to say, settled groups of agriculturalists preferred to organise themselves in accordance with the seasonal rhythms rather than rely on trade for essential commodities in order to secure the provision of their daily needs.<sup>26</sup> Settlements were

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<sup>25</sup> I have reviewed the evidence in a forthcoming publication: Kleinschmidt, "The Name England", in: *Archives* (2001).

<sup>26</sup> Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages* (note 16), pp. 146-152. This is neither to say that trade was insignificant nor that traders were inactive at this time. Sufficient evidence exists proving that this view, articulated, among others, by Henri Pirenne is untenable. But, despite the existence of urban centers in the Frankish kingdom and its dependencies already from the seventh century,

not “naturally affluent”<sup>27</sup> at this time but it was the prime goal of settlers to accommodate themselves with and adapt to the local conditions of life as far as possible. There is ample archaeological evidence from the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries that road traffic declined,<sup>28</sup> that the supply of goods of remote origin became less fre-

trade focused on the provision of specialised or luxury goods, sometimes of remote origin, and some needs were provided for by migrant producers rather than trading products. See: Else Ebel, „Altnordische Quellen zu den skandinavischen Händlerorganisationen“, in: Ebel, Herbert Jankuhn, eds, *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr des vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, Part VI (Göttingen, 1989), pp. 146-172 (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl. 3. F. 183.) John Hines, „North-Sea-Trade and the Proto-Urban Sequence“, in: *Archaeologia Polona* 32 (1994), pp. 7-26. Richard Hodges, “In the Shadow of Pirenne. San Vincenzo al Volturno and the Revival of Mediterranean Commerce”, in: Riccardo Francovich, G. Noyé, eds, *La storia dell' Alto Medioevo Italiano alla luce dell' archeologia* (Florence, 1994), pp. 109-127. Hodges, “Henri Pirenne and the Questions of Demand in the Sixth Century”, in: Hodges, William Bowden, eds, *The Sixth Century* (Leiden, Boston, Cologne, 1998), pp. 3-14 (The Transformation of the Roman World. 3.) Sven-Olof Lindquist, Birgitta Radhe, eds, *Society and Trade in the Baltic during the Viking Age* (Visby, 1985) (Acta Visbyensia. 7.) *Mercati e mercanti nell' alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1993) (Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull' Alto Medioevo. 40.) D. M. Palliser, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (Cambridge, 2000). W. Prevenier, „Henri Pirenne et les villes des anciens Pays-Bas au Moyen Age“, in: Adriaan Verhulst, ed., *La fortune historiographique des theses d'Henri Pirenne. Actes du Colloque 1985* (Brussels, 1986), pp. 27-50 (Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique. 27, numéro spécial.) Helmuth Roth, “Zum Handel der Merowingerzeit auf Grund ausgewählter archäologischer Quellen”, in: Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, Dieter Timpe, eds, *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, Part III (Göttingen, 1985), pp. 161-191 (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl. 3. F. 150.) Heiko Steuer, et al., Art. „Handel“, in: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, second ed. (Berlin, New York, 1999), pp. 542-544, 548-552.

<sup>27</sup> See for this term: Marshall D. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago, 1972).

quent<sup>29</sup> and that Roman professional traders were less prominent in areas on the fringes or beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire of Antiquity.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, trade was and remained part of the agricultural economies throughout the early Middle Ages and merchandising of surplus products had been a common though not necessarily regular practice.<sup>31</sup> However, much of this trade had been managed by rulers or local lords<sup>32</sup> and had been used for the provision of luxury ware, mainly on demand, rather than for the regular supply of daily commodities.

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See also Richard Hodges, *Primitive Peasant Markets* (Oxford, 1988). Cf. on the subject matter for the early Middle Ages: Wendy Davies, *Small Worlds. The Village Community in Early Medieval Brittany* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1988).

<sup>28</sup> B. H. St. John O'Neill, „Grim's Bank, Padworth, Berkshire“, in: *Antiquity* 27 (1943), pp. 188-195. William I. Robertson IV, *Romano-British Pottery* (Oxford, 1982) (British Archaeological Reports. British Series. 106.) T. R. Slater, ed., *Towns in Decline. AD 100 —1600* (Aldershot, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> See: Steuer, „Handel“ (note 26), pp. 542-544. Adriaan Verhulst, „Der Handel im Merowingerreich“, in: *Antikvariskt Archiv* 39, 1 (1970).

<sup>30</sup> See: Dietrich Claude, *Der Handel im westlichen Mittelmeer während des Frühmittelalters* (Göttingen, 1985) (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl. 3. F. 44. = Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Part II.) Wolfgang H. Fritze, *Untersuchungen zur frühslawischen und frühfränkischen Geschichte bis ins 7. Jahrhundert*, Phil. Diss. typescript (University of Marburg, 1952) [newly ed. by Dietrich Kurze, Winfried Schich, Reinhard Schneider (Frankfurt, 1994)]. Peter Johaneck, „Der ‚Aussenhandel‘ des Frankenreichs der Merowingerzeit nach Norden und Osten im Spiegel der Schriftquellen“, in: Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, Dieter Timpe, eds, *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, Part III (Göttingen, 1985), pp. 245-247 (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl. 3. F. 150.)

<sup>31</sup> Bruno Andreolli, „Tra podere e gineceo. Il lavoro delle donne nelle grandi aziende agrarie dell' Alto Medioevo“, in: Giuseppina Muzarelli, Paola Galetti, B. Andreolli, eds, *Donne e lavoro nell' Italia medievale* (Turin, 1991), pp. 29-40. Franz Irsigler, „Divites und paupers in der Vita Meinwercei“, in: *Vierteljahrss-*

### 3. *Exegeses of the Book of Genesis as a source on the medieval theory of action*

Given these basic conditions, the question is which sources are available to provide evidence on heterodynamic modes of behaviour and the correlated process-orientedness of action in early medieval Europe. There are on principle two categories of sources relevant to this inquiry. One category reflects the theory of action, the other is about the translation of the theory into practice. Sources on the early medieval theory of action are indirect in the sense that they usually do not form a coherent corpus of text focused exclusively on

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*chrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 57 (1970), pp. 449-499.

<sup>32</sup> See, for a piece of evidence, the charter in the names of King Alfred of Wessex and Aethelred, under-king of the Mercians, to Bishop Waerfrith of Worcester, AD 889, ed. by Walter de Gray Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, vol. 2, no 561 (London, 1887) [repr. (New York, 1964)]. Cf. the charter by Emperor Otto II, dated 26 June 975 on Magdeburg traders, ed. by Theodor Sickel, *Die Urkunden Otto des II* (Berlin, 1888), no 112, p. 126 (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae*. 2,1.) Occasionally, the polyp-tyques contain references to merchants. See, for example, the Saint-Germain-des-Près Polyptyque, V/110, fol. 101 v (ed. Hägermann, note 73, p. 38). See for studies of this form of trade: Peter Johanek, "Der fränkische Handel der Karolingerzeit im Spiegel der Schriftquellen", in: Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, Dieter Timpe, eds, *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Part IV* (Göttingen, 1987), pp. 7-68 (*Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl. 3. F.* 156.) Adriaan Verhulst, "Der frühmittelalterliche Handel der Niederlande und der Friesenhandel", in: Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, Dieter Timpe, eds, *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa, Part III* (Göttingen, 1985), pp. 32-385 (*Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaft in Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl. 3. F.* 150.)

this issue.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the medieval theory of action has to be reconstructed on the basis of sources concerned with particular kinds of actions. One type of such sources is commentaries on the creation myth recorded in the Book of Genesis. Within a Christian context, the earliest substantive<sup>34</sup> commentary on Genesis is to be found in the work of Augustine. In *De Genesi ad litteram*, Augustine reflected on the Vulgate version of the myth, specifically the phrase “Deus dixit fiat lux” (God said: Let there be light). In the opening passage of the Book of Genesis, the phrase follows a descriptive statement according to which the divinity created heaven and earth. Augustine focused on the meaning of the verb *dixit* (he said). He linked this word to a communicative situation in which the message, to which the word refers, should go from the divinity to a recipient. Yet, according to the myth, there is no one to whom the divinity could have sent a message, let alone given an order to do something. Hence, there was no one who could have carried out the order of the divinity to create light. The problem Augustine raised was a twofold one: How could the divinity speak without there being a recipient of the message, and how could the divinity give an order if there was no one to carry it out?<sup>35</sup> Augustine’s answers followed from his

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<sup>33</sup> There is an interesting statement from the eleventh century on the meaning of the word *facere* by St Anselm of Canterbury who observed that this verb could be used to replace virtually any other verb, and concluded that *facere* therefore is the most general expression for doing. Anselm made this observation in a fragment, which was left among his papers in Lambeth Palace and was published only in 1936. See: Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, *Ein neues unvollendetes Werk des Hl. Anselm von Canterbury* (Munster, 1936), pp. 25-35 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. 33,2.)

<sup>34</sup> A brief commentary had previously been written by Ambrose, *Hexameron*, cap. I/3, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series Latina, vol. 14, col. 137-138.

<sup>35</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, cap. I/2-5, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, *Pa-*

theology of the divine word.<sup>36</sup> He assumed that the divine word is simultaneously divine and human and in no need of the differentiation between form and substance.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, according to Augustine, the divine word, unlike the human word, does not have to leave the speaker in order to go into the world but the divinity can be the undivided sender and recipient of a message. In his exegesis of the creation myth, Augustine thus concluded that the divinity needed no one as a recipient of a command. The creation was possible as a self-contained action, which had to be understood as an intellectual process and not as a physical generation. Whereas human action, in Augustine's view, required a differentiation between form and substance, between intellect and *physis*, and, consequently, between goals and process, divine action was believed to be comprehensive without a distinction between goals and process.<sup>38</sup> Augustine did thus not deny the goal-orientation of action but allocated this type of action to the human world. In his view, it was the divinely willed imperfection of human nature that required the specification of goals and the motivation to accomplish them. By contrast, process-orientation of action belonged to the hallmarks of the perfect divine world.<sup>39</sup>

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*trologiae cursus completus*. Series Latina, vol. 34, col. 248-250.

<sup>36</sup> See for studies of Augustine's theology of the word: Harald Kleinschmidt, "Thinking as Action. Some Principal Changes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe", in: *Ethnologia Europaea* 27 (1997), S. 1-20. Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages* (note 16), pp. 196-199. Henry Paissac, *Theologie du verbe* (Paris, 1951). Michael Schmaus, *Die Denkform Augustins in seinem Werk De trinitate* (Munich, 1962) (Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-Hist. Kl. 1962,6.)

<sup>37</sup> Augustine, *Tractatus in Johannem Evangelium*, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migné, *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series Latina 35, col. 1379-1384.

<sup>38</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* (note 35), cap. I/3, col. 249.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, cap. I/4, col. 249.

Between the sixth and the eleventh centuries, the textual genre of commentaries on the Book of Genesis is poorly recorded, although observations are to be found in the surveys of the world at large, such as in Raban Maur's *De universo*.<sup>40</sup> But in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Biblical creation myth received renewed exegetical interest. St Thomas Aquinas devoted a chapter of his *Summa theologiae* to the question whether the divinity must be believed to have had the will to create the world. Before providing what he considered the only appropriate answer to the question, Thomas referred to a position, which he subsequently rejected as inadequate. He let unnamed protagonists of this position believe that the divinity, being perfect and eternal, could not have a will and thus could be assumed to be motivated to pursue goals of action. In consequence of this view, the creation of the world was only a process, following from no motive and conducted for no goal.<sup>41</sup> This position was the one that can be gleaned from exegetical works of the early Middle Ages, specifically Raban Maur's *De universo*.<sup>42</sup> In the second step, Thomas defended the position he was determined to reject in the third step. He used two arguments for the defense. The first argument followed from the definition of will as the endeavour to obtain what the person does not have. If this definition was correct, the divinity could not have a will because the divinity was perfect and there was, consequently, nothing that the divinity could possibly want. For the second argument Thomas drew on Aristotle who had written in *De anima* that the will is motivation to move.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Raban Maur, *De universo libri XXII*, cap. I/1, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series Latina, vol. 111, col. 13-19.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I qu 19, ar 1, ed. by Roberto Busa, S. *Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1980), p. 215.

<sup>42</sup> Raban Maur, *De universo* (note 40), col. 16.

<sup>43</sup> Aristotle, *De anima*, cap. III/10, 433 a - 433 b.

Thomas concluded that the divinity cannot want to move because, following Aristotle, the divinity is the immoveable prime mover. In the third step, then, Thomas argued his reasons for rejecting the position that the divinity cannot have a will. He refuted the theory that the divinity could not have a will mainly through recourse to Romans XII. In this letter, Apostle Paul demanded that believers should try to probe what the will of the divinity is.<sup>44</sup> Thus the authority of the Bible was called in to help reject what Thomas believed to be a tradition of ethics informed by ancient Greek philosophy.<sup>45</sup> Thomas's position that the Apostle Paul had been right in suggesting that the divinity had a will was drawn on a simile. He construed that the will was equivalent to what he termed the appetite of brutes. He then argued that the appetite of brutes was triggered by the senses. He further assumed that, accordingly, will existed wherever there was insight, and believed that insight should spark willingness to act. As no one could deny that the divinity had insight, Thomas concluded that the divinity ought to be credited with the will to create the world.<sup>46</sup> His conclusion was that the divinity, even though perfect and eternal, could very well have a will and that, consequently, the action of creating the world could have had motives and goals. Thomas then proceeded to his specification of the goals, which the divinity ought to have had in Thomas's view.<sup>47</sup>

This discourse, already arcane from the point of view of the traditions of ethics up to the twelfth century,<sup>48</sup> becomes even more per-

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<sup>44</sup> Romans XII, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas, *Summa theologiae* (note 41), p. 215.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* I qu 19 ar 2-12, pp. 215-218.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* I qu 20, pp. 218-219.

<sup>48</sup> See, for one, Peter Abelard, *Liber dictus scito te ipsum*, cap. III, ed. by Jacques

plexing in the light of the eleven further distinctions that Thomas added to his principled ascription of will to the divinity. These distinctions provided affirmative answers to the questions whether the divinity had a will that extended to further matter beyond itself, whether the divinity wanted whatever it wanted for some necessity, whether the divine will was the cause for all matter, whether the divine will can determine other factors, whether the divine will had to be carried out, whether the divine will was unchangeable, whether the divine will needed to be imposed upon what had already been willed by the divinity, whether it could be believed that the divine will did not include the pursuit of evil goals, whether the divinity had the capability of free decision (*liberum arbitrium*), whether the divine will was recognisable to mortals and whether the signs of the divine will remained recognisable against a variety of obstacles. Thomas concluded by defending his conviction that the divinity would use its will to act beneficially for humans because he ascribed to the divinity love, justice and clemency as primordial motives.<sup>49</sup>

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-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series Latina, vol. 178, col. 636. New edition s. t. : *Ethical Writings. Know Yourself* (Indianapolis, 1995). Abelard proposed an ethics based on human free will and conscience. The position that human beings should be credited with free will had found support already in the fifth century in the work of Dionysius the PS.-Arcopagite, *De divinis nominibus*, cap. IV/11, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series Graeca, vol. 3, col. 770-771. Other editions by Philippe Chevalier, ed., *Dionysius, De divina hierarchia / de divinis nominibus*, 2 vols (Paris, 1937). John D. Jones, ed., *Dionysius, The Divine Names and Mystical Theology* (Milwaukee, 1980), and in the ninth century in the doctrine argued by John Scotus Eriugena, *Versio operum S. Dionysii*, cap. IV, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series Latina, vol. 122, col. 1140-1141, 1145.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (note 41), I qu 19 ar 2-12, pp. 215-218.

St Thomas Aquinas's exegesis of the creation myth recorded in the Book of Genesis thus reflected an approach to action that differed in many respects from that favoured by Augustine and early medieval theorists. Thomas's distinctions were informed by his conviction that the divinity and humans share the principal feature that actions are processes, which must be kept separate from motives and goals. Actions as mere processes were taken to be neutral and had meaning added to them through the specification of motives and goals. Thus moral actions included processes, whose goals were morally defensible and which followed from the motives to accomplish morally defensible goals. While Augustine had had no problem ascribing to the divinity actions, which carried their value and meaning in themselves, Thomas delved into the niceties of differentiating between moral and immoral actions as long as humans were concerned.

#### ***4. Sources for the translation of medieval theory of action into practice***

A dramatic recasting of the focus of the theory of action from the prioritisation of process-orientation to the preference for goal-orientation becomes visible from the comparison between the statements regarding action by Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. This process must now be correlated with what can be ascertained from empirical sources on the application of the theory into the practice of action. Among these sources, land charters, narrative sources and, last but not least, polyptyques can be scrutinised.

Early medieval charters present several specific features of formulary, which relate to the processes of actions. As a rule, charters<sup>50</sup>

were carefully designed and executed written documents whose production was expensive and time-consuming. It has been estimated that the making of a charter could take several years, could require the cooperation and consent of a substantive number of persons and could involve a considerable number of specialists in various fields of activity. Thus the making of a charter was a value in its own right and carried with it at least the same importance as the accomplishment of the goal of establishing a record.<sup>51</sup> As the handing over of a charter could be a legal act in its own right, the process of action was more than just instrumental to the accomplishment of the goal. For example, in 966, Aethelwold, the Bishop of Winchester received a charter, written out in the name of King Edgar of England confirming the privileges to the recently re-founded New Minster at Winchester. The charter was prepared in the context of the promotion of the reform of Benedictine monasteries, which it documented. The reform had been launched in 963 when the bishop expelled lay clergy from the monasteries under his control and had done so with support from the king.<sup>52</sup> Simultaneously, Aethelwold authorised the

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<sup>50</sup> Groundbreaking and still valuable for the terminology of insular diplomatics were the Sandars Lectures in Bibliography delivered by the Oxford philologist William Henry Stevenson at Cambridge in 1898. The unpublished manuscript of the lectures is preserved among the Stevenson Papers in St John's College, Oxford. See : Harald Kleinschmidt, "William Henry Stevenson and the Continental Diplomats of His Time", in : 歴史人類 26 (1998), pp. 3-39.

<sup>51</sup> See already : Harry Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1889), pp. 711-890, 818-874 [2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Leipzig, 1912-1915 ; part 2 of vol. 2 ed. by Hans-Walter Klewitz (Berlin, 1931) ; repr. (Berlin, 1958-1960)]. Heinrich Brunner, "Carta und Notitia", in : Brunner, *Abhandlungen zur Rechtsgeschichte*, ed. by Karl Rauch, vol. 1 (Weimar, 1931, pp. 459-486 [repr. (Leipzig, 1965 ; first published in : *Commentationes philologicae in honorem Thuedori Mommsen* (Berlin, 1877)]. Julius Ficker, *Beiträge zur Urkundenlehre*, 2 vols (Innsbruck, 1877-1878), esp. vol. 2, pp. 214 ff.

<sup>52</sup> See on the tenth-century Benedictine reform movement in England : Martin

compilation of a revised rule for monks and the making of several lavish liturgical books for his and other dioceses.<sup>53</sup> The charter was written and decorated in the monastic scriptorium at Winchester in which the liturgical books were made out. It is extant in its original version. The text is carefully written in a book minuscule and begins with a dedication picture as its frontispiece showing King Edgar presenting the book charter to Christ in *mandorla*.<sup>54</sup> In this

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Biddle, ed., *Winchester in the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1976). Eric John, "The King and the Monks in the Tenth-Century Reformation", in: *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 42 (1959), pp. 61-87. John, "Some Latin Charters of the Tenth Century Reformation in England", in: *Revue Bénédictine* 70 (1960), pp. 333-359. David Parsons, ed., *Tenth-Century Studies* (Chichester, 1975). Barbara A. E. Yorke, ed., *Bishop Aethelwold* (Woodbridge, 1997).

<sup>53</sup> *Regularis Concordia*, ed. by Thomas Symons (London, 1962). *The Benedictinal of Aethelwold*, ed. by George Frederic Warner, Henry Austin Wilson (Oxford, 1910). "King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries", ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, Martin Brett, Christopher Brooke, *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1981), pp. 148-149. See for studies of the Winchester School and the *Regularis Concordia*: John J. G. Alexander, "The Benedictinal of St. Aethelwold and Anglo-Saxon Illumination of the Reform Period", in: Parsons, *Studies* (note 52), pp. 169-183. Robert Dushman, *The Iconography of the Full-page Miniatures of the Benedictinal of Aethelwold*, Ph.D. Diss. (Princeton University, 1970). Dushman, "The Imagery of the Living Ecclesia and the English Monastic Reform", in: Paul E. Szarmach, ed., *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1986), pp. 261-282. Dushman, *The Benedictinal of Aethelwold* (Princeton, 1995). Michal Kobiakka, *This is My Body. Representational Practices in the Early Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, 1999), pp. 35-99. Andrew Prescott, *The Benedictinal of Aethelwold* (London, 1993). Prescott, "The text of the Benedictinal of St. Aethelwold", in: Yorke, *Bishop* (note 52), pp. 119-147. Mark Spurrell, "The Architectural Interest of the *Regularis Concordia*", in: *Anglo-Saxon England* 21 (1992), pp. 161-176. Francis Wormald, *The Benedictinal of St. Ethelwold* (London, 1959). Thomas Symons, "Sources of the *Regularis Concordia*", in: *Downside Review* 59 (1941), pp. 15-36, 142-170, 264-289. Symons, "*Regularis Concordia*. History and Derivation", in: Parsons, *Studies* (note 52), pp. 37-59.

case, then, the making of the charter was part of the reform and may have covered most of the three years between the beginning of the movement and the date of the promulgation of the charter.

A further conspicuous feature is the typified motivation for the issue of charters, which is to be found in the *arenga* as a part of the protocol of the New Minster and virtually all early medieval land charters.<sup>55</sup> One type of motivation featured in a substantive number of ninth- and tenth-century land charters for ecclesiastical recipients was expressed through the formula *pro remedio animae meae*. The formula indicates that the grants made or recorded in the charters had been intended by the donors for the care of their souls after death. That means that the grants were connected with the cult of the dead.<sup>56</sup> The donors appear to have expected that the ecclesias-

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<sup>54</sup> The text of the charter has been edited by Birch, *Cartularium* (note 32), vol. 3, Nr 1190. See for a print of the dedication picture: Janet Backhouse, D. H. Turner, Leslie Webster, eds, *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art* (London, 1984), plate IV [from London, British Library, Ms Cotton Vespasian A VIII].

<sup>55</sup> Heinrich Fichtenau, *Arenga* (Graz, Cologne, 1957). For the wider background of donations and land tenure see: Franz Dorn, *Die Landschenkungen der fränkischen Könige* (Paderborn, 1991). Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages. The Middle Rhine Valley. 400 —1000* (Cambridge, 2000). Philippe Jobert, *La notion de donation. Convergences 630 — 750* (Paris, 1977). Eric John, *Land Tenure in Early England* (Leicester, 1960) [reed. (Leicester, 1964)]. Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space. Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, London, 1999), pp. 63-73.

<sup>56</sup> For details see: Arnold Angenendt, Thomas Braucks, Rolf Busch, Thomas Lentes, Hubertus Lutterbach, "Gezählte Frömmigkeit", in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 29 (1995), pp. 26-30, 36-38. Michael Borgolte, "Gedenkstiftungen in St. Galler Urkunden", in: Karl Schmid, Joachim Wollasch, eds, *Memoria* (Munich, 1984), pp. 578-602. Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages* (note 16), p. 20. Angenendt et al., however, position the contracts between the donors and the recipients into the context of penitence rather than of the cult of the dead.

tical recipients of the grants would shoulder the task of saying prayers for the donors' souls after their deaths. That such expectations were shared by many Christian believers in the early medieval West, was put on record in the extant monastic registers or memory books (*libri memoriales*) which listed the names of persons for whom prayers were to be said by the monks and nuns as part of their regular liturgical duties.<sup>57</sup> In a number of cases, the preserved forms of the entries suggest that clusters of names written in the same hand and presumably entered consecutively within a short period of time, represented persons related to each other by kin or neighbourhood ties.<sup>58</sup> While the donations by persons seeking to in-

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<sup>57</sup> Some of the more elaborate *libri memoriales* are available in the following editions: Johanne Autenrieth, Dieter Geuenich, Karl Schmid, eds, *Das Verbrüderungsbuch der Abtei Reichenau* (Hanover, 1979) (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Libri memoriales et necrologia. N. S. 1.) Walter de Gray Birch, ed., *Liber Vitae. Register and Martyrology of New Minster, Winchester* (London, 1892). Jan Gerchow, *Die Gedenküberlieferung der Angelsachsen* (Berlin, New York, 1988). Eduard Hlawitschka, Karl Schmid, Gerd Tellenbach, eds, *Liber memorialis von Rémoiremont* (Munich, 1970) (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Libri memoriales. 1.) Sigismund Herzberg-Frankel, ed., *Monumenta necrologia monasterii s. Petri Salisburgensis. Liber confraternitatum vetustior* (Berlin, 1904) (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Necrologia. 2.) Karl Schmid, ed., *Die Klostergemeinschaft von Fulda im früheren Mittelalter*, vol. 1 (Munich, 1978). Schmid, Dieter Geuenich, Roland Rappmann, „Die Verbrüderungsbücher“, in: Michael Borgolte, Dieter Geuenich, Karl Schmid, eds, *Subsidia Sangallensia*, vol. 1 (St. Gallen, 1986), pp. 13-283 (St. Galler Kultur und Geschichte. 16.) The Remiremont *liber memorialis*, p. 1, contains in its opening page a contract which specifies the duty of the monastic recipients to say mass once per day for the donors. Similar entries are in the Salzburg *liber memorialis*, pp. 6, 42.

<sup>58</sup> See for studies on the medieval *memoria*: Otto Gerhard Oexle, „Memoria und Memorialüberlieferung im früheren Mittelalter“, in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 10 (1976), pp. 70-95. Oexle, „Die Gegenwart der Toten“, in: Herman Braet, Werner Verbeke, eds, *Death in the Middle Ages* (Louvain, 1983), pp. 19-77. Oexle, Dieter Geuenich, eds, *Memoria in der Gesellschaft des Mittelalters*

volve the monastic clergy in the care of their souls did not have to consist of land grants, this particular form of donation created perhaps a higher degree of obligation on the side of the monastic communities to perform their liturgical duties because the charters would be preserved in the monastery's archive and thereby serve as a lasting piece of evidence for both the will of the donor and the obligations of the recipients. The *pro remedio animae meae* formula thus served as a motivation for the conclusion of contracts of which the donations were part.<sup>59</sup> On the side of the donors, the contract specified the size of the land and the rights to be transferred into the recipient's ownership. On the side of the recipients the contract stipulated the *memoria* as a liturgical duty to be performed on principle up until Judgment Day.

The *memoria* as a liturgical duty of monks and nuns is further confirmed by a number of Bible manuscripts, which open with the pic-

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(Göttingen, 1995). Oexle, „Memoria in der Gesellschaft und in der Kultur des Mittelalters“, in: Joachim Heinzle, ed., *Modernes Mittelalter* (Frankfurt, Leipzig, 1999), pp. 297-323 [first published (Leipzig, 1994)]. Karl Schmid, „Unerforschte Quellen aus quellenarmer Zeit II“, in: *Festschrift für Berent Schwineköper*, ed. by Hans Patze (Sigmaringen, 1982), p. 117-140. Schmid, *Gebetsgedenken und adliges Selbstverständnis im Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen, 1983). Schmid, Joachim Wollasch, eds, *Memoria. Der geschichtliche Zeugniswert des liturgischen Gedenkens im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1984). Schmid, „Unerforschte Quellen aus quellenarmer Zeit“, in: *Francia* 12 (1984), pp. 119-147. Schmid, ed., *Gedächtnis, das Gemeinschaft stiftet* (Munich, Zurich, 1985). Schmid, „Von den ‚fratres conscripti‘ in Ekkehard's St. Galler Klostergeschichte“, in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 25 (1991), pp. 109-122.

<sup>59</sup> E. g. Birch, ed. *Cartularium* (note 32), vol. 2, no 701. This is a charter for St Mary's Worcester, written in the name of King Athelstan [7 June 934?]. It is preserved in a copy written probably late in the eleventh century on the basis of the lost original. A large number of charters containing the same formula are preserved in the archive of the monastery of St Gall.

ture of a ruler or other persons of high status as the donors of the manuscripts. These books were usually kept in monasteries as well as Episcopal churches and served there as proof of evidence that the donors had made their gifts as a condition for the performance of the *memoria* for their souls by the recipients of the manuscripts. That this was the overall purpose of such book donations emerges from a poem added to a ninth-century Gospel Book now in the possession of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.<sup>60</sup> The book, which was kept in the monastery of St Martin in Tours during the Middle Ages, opens with a dedication picture showing Emperor Lothair I and the poem explains that the dedication picture had been included in the book to remind its monastic readers of their duty to say prayers for the emperor.<sup>61</sup> As the dedication pictures could fulfill this task even without explanatory written texts, it is possible to assume that at least many of the similarly illuminated manuscripts from the early Middle Ages had the same task.<sup>62</sup>

At first sight, these arrangements appear to give priority to goal-oriented action with clearly specified motives for, processes of and goals of actions. In other words, it so seems that donors of land as well as other grants were motivated by the intention to procure for their lives after death, committed themselves to the single or, in

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<sup>60</sup> Ms Fonds Lat. 266, printed, among others, in : Hermann Fillitz, *Das Mittelalter*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1990), plate IX.

<sup>61</sup> Ed. by Ernst Dümmler. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, vol. 2 (Hanover, 1884), p. 671, vv. 23-27.

<sup>62</sup> See : Peter Ganz, ed., *Das Buch als magisches und Repräsentationsobjekt* (Weisbaden, 1992). Jesse M. Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, London, 1986). Wolfgang Christian Schneider, *Ruhm, Heilsgeschehen, Dialektik. Drei kognitive Ordnungen in Geschichtsschreibung und Buchmalerei der Ottonenzeit* (Hildesheim, New York, 1988).

some cases, even repeated processes of donating to church institutions and, perhaps, having their names registered in one of the *libri memoriales*, and did so for the purpose of obliging the recipient monasteries to preserve their *memoria* up until Judgment Day. It thus appears that the goal was the conclusion of contracts between the donors and ecclesiastical institutions for mutual benefit. However, the sets of obligations, which the contracting parties entered upon were unequal. The alienation of private or kin property to ecclesiastical institutions from the part of the donors was a finite process, which, although it may have needed the consent by other kin members, was the condition under which the recipients obliged themselves to fulfill their part of the contracts in the future. Hence, while the recipients controlled the transfer of property into the ownership of church institutions, the donors had no possibility to supervise the proper execution of the liturgical duties demanded by the *memoria*. That is to say that the legal process of the transfer of property rights on the one side was compensated on the other side by no more than the pledge of *memoria* for the donor's souls. It may have been the case that surviving kin members would execute some degree of control over these duties for a while. But the generation change would sooner or later reduce the interest in and knowledge of the more remote ancestors. That this was actually the case in the tenth century becomes clear from a decree passed by the Synod of Ingelheim in 948 that kin members should keep written genealogies in order not to forget their ancestries.<sup>63</sup> The decree was probably made for reasons other than facilitating the control of the *memoria*, namely the observation of the church ban on marriages between

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<sup>63</sup> *Synod of Ingelheim* [7 June 948], ed. by Ernst-Dieter Hehl, *Die Konzilien Deutschlands und Reichsitaliens. 916 -- 1001* (Hanover, 1987), p. 162 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, *Concilia*, vol. 6,1.)

closely related kin members, but, in any event, it made sense only under the condition that there had been many cases where kin members were becoming unable or unwilling to record their genealogies with exactitude through oral transmission. Thus, the traditional mechanism of the transmission of genealogical knowledge was becoming obsolete in the course of the tenth century, and this process must have had its own impact on the memory culture.

Yet, a more significant aspect of the two mutually intertwined sets of obligations between donors and recipients of land grants must have been considered to give confidence to the donors. This aspect resulted from the fact that the donation as a finite process was equated with the *memoria* as a process that was to be continued up until Judgment Day. Thus, the larger the number of donations for church institutions became, the longer became the lists of persons for whom prayers were to be said, year in, year out. It is difficult to make more explicit the preference for the process-orientation of action than through contractual agreements about *memoria*. If, in cases of donations of land, processes mattered, in cases of *memoria*, they did even more so. Therefore, process-oriented actions must have been considered as rational actions.

At the turn of the eleventh century, the formulary of the solemn land charters underwent an important change. Many of the formulae, which had previously filled charter protocols, were given up in a new type of charter, appropriately termed *breve* or writ.<sup>64</sup> These simplified charters focused on the disposition of the legal matter, and many of them were hastily scribbled down as mere written records of a legal act. Among the deleted or substantively reduced

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<sup>64</sup> Florence Elizabeth Harmer, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Writs* (Manchester, 1952).

parts was the *arenga* with its *pro remedio animae meae* formula. To be sure, solemn charters continued to be issued, mainly in the name of high-ranking rulers, but their share in the total of made-out charters decreased. The more businesslike writs had the advantage of being cheaper in production and requiring fewer people as well as less time for their issue. They also reflected a new attitude towards the concept of action, for the drafters and makers of the writs showed less willingness to appreciate the circumstantial formulae and ceremonies that referred to processes rather than motives for and goals of actions. Charter evidence thus supports the conclusion that goal-attainment was receiving priority over process-orientation in the conceptualisation of action in the course of the eleventh century.

This observation can be confirmed from a review of some narrative sources. Some early medieval descriptions of human action, namely reports about embassies dispatched between rulers were focused on process rather than goal.<sup>65</sup> These reports contain ample record of the lengthy proceedings and time-consuming rituals, which gave to

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<sup>65</sup> Nithard, *Historiarum libri IIII*, cap. II/2, ed. by Ernst Müller (Hanover, 1907), p. 14. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi. 44.). John of Metz, *De vita Joannis Abbatis Gorziensis*, cap. 115, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series Latina, vol. 137, col. 298. *Die Werke Liutprands von Cremona*, ed. by Joseph Becker (Hanover, 1915) (Monumenta Germanie Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi. 41.) See on embassies: Francois-Louis Ganshof, *De internationale betrekkingen van het Frankisch Rijk onder de Merowingen* (Brussels, 1963) (Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie vor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren. 25, 2.) Ganshof, „Merowingisches Gesandtschaftswesen“, in: *Aus Geschichte und Landeskunde. Forschungen und Darstellungen. Franz Steinbach zum 65. Geburtstag gewidmet* (Bonn, 1960), pp. 166-183.

processes of action significance of their own and thus relativised the importance of goal-attainment. That is to say that the sending of the embassies mattered for its own sake even if the results were meager or nothing was accomplished at all.<sup>66</sup> Obviously, ceremonies have continued to play important roles in connection with rulership as well as other aspects of life beyond the early Middle Ages.<sup>67</sup> But their context began to change in the eleventh century. Bishop Thietmar of Merseburg, who was well connected with the upper echelons of the aristocracy at the turn of the eleventh century and thus familiar with rulers' ceremonial, gave the following critical report of an incident which, he said, occurred towards the end of the brief reign of Emperor Otto III, at ca 1000 AD.<sup>68</sup> Impressed by the Byzantine court ceremonial, the emperor had decided to introduce a new arrangement for feasts for which he would meet with his retainers.<sup>69</sup> The traditional feasting ceremony is perhaps best described in the Old English poem of *Beowulf* where King Hrothgar and his wife, Queen Wealhtheow, at times would assemble their loyal retainers

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<sup>66</sup> See for other cases: Michael Joseph Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons* (Berlin, New York, 1985). Enright, *Lady with a Meadcup* (Dublin, 1996). Johannes Fried, "Die Kunst der Aktualisierung in der oralen Gesellschaft. Die Königserhebung Heinrichs I als Exempel", in: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 44 (1993), pp. 493-503. Fried, "Die Königserhebung Heinrichs I. Erinnerung, Mündlichkeit und Traditionsbildung im 10. Jahrhundert", in: Michael Borgolte, ed., *Mittelalterforschung nach der Wende* (Munich, 1995), pp. 267-318 (Beihefte zur Historischen Zeitschrift. 20.)

<sup>67</sup> Jörg Joachim Berns, Thomas Rahn, eds, *Zeremoniell als höfische Ästhetik in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Tübingen, 1995).

<sup>68</sup> Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, cap. IV/47, ed. by Robert Holtzmann (Berlin, 1935), pp. 185-186 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum N. S. 9.)

<sup>69</sup> On Otto III see: Percy Ernst Schramm, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio* (Leipzig, 1929) [repr. (Darmstadt, 1962)].

in a magnificent hall. In the hall, the company would spend several days sitting around a table, enjoying food and, perhaps more so, drinks, and receiving precious gifts from the royal couple. They would also sleep together in the hall.<sup>70</sup> According to Thietmar, Otto was determined to quit the company with his retainers and sit at a separate table. The emperor's table was to be placed at a higher level than the retainers' table, so that the emperor could mark the difference in rank between himself and the ordinary aristocrats among his retainers. Thietmar said, the emperor tried to change the seating order because he claimed for himself a special rank as an anointed ruler who owed his position to divine grace and not to consent from the ruled. Otto, however, met with storming protest from the side of the retainers who demanded recognition of the fact that the emperor would be unable to rule without their consent and support.

The story reflects Otto's attempt to reconstruct the imperial feasting ceremonial. In the new context, ceremonial action continued to be of significance. But the significance of the new ceremonial was different in kind from the old. Otto's choice of the new arrangement for the feast did not focus on communication and the maintenance of social bonds and ties between himself and his retainers. Instead, he chose to emphasise the uniqueness of his position of a ruler by divine grace. Claiming legitimacy by divine grace, Otto tried to restructure interactions with his entourage, whose members were no

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<sup>70</sup> *Beowulf*, vv. 64-85, 611-628, 2633, ed. by Frederick Klaeber, third edition (Lexington, MA, 1950), pp. 3-4, 21-22, 99. See on feasting: Gerd Althoff, "Der friedens-, bündnis- und gemeinschaftsstiftende Charakter des Mahles im früheren Mittelalter", in: Irmgaerd Bitsch, Trude Ehlert, Xenja von Ertzdorff, eds, *Essen und Trinken in Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Sigmaringen, 1990), pp. 13-25.

longer equal with him sharing the same table, into a hierarchical relationship that separated the emperor spatially from his retainers. The attempt failed at Otto's time. The reason appears to have been that the traditionally minded retainers shared Thietmar's view that the established ceremonial should be adhered to. But already Otto's successor on the imperial throne Henry II actually severed his ties with the higher aristocracy by insisting that canonical law should be applied to exogamy rules limiting the choice of marriage partners and preventing offspring from non-canonical marriages to succeed to high office.<sup>71</sup> Hence, even if Otto's attempted reconstruction of the imperial feasting ceremonial was frustrated in his own time, in the long run, it emerged as an early and somewhat premature attempt to shift the focus of the ceremonial from the task of maintaining integrated processes of communicative action between the rulers and their retainers to the display of the rulers' elevated rank and their rule by divine grace. The new structure of the ceremonial reduced the importance of the processes of actions because social bonds and ties were no longer maintained through communication and gift giving. Instead, what mattered more than the maintenance of ritualised process was the goal of marking difference between rulers and ruled.<sup>72</sup>

The ninth-century Frankish polyptyques represent a category of source, which makes explicit the concept of action in the context of

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<sup>71</sup> As can be judged from the Hammerstein marriage trial. See: Dorothea von Kessler, *Der Eheprozess Ottos und Irmingards von Hammerstein* (Berlin, 1923) [repr. (Vaduz, 1965)].

<sup>72</sup> Contra Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, new edition (Frankfurt, 1990), pp. 54-67, who underestimated the degree of involvement by the public in ceremonies of rulership during the Middle Ages [first published (Neuwied, 1962)].

the relations between rulers and ruled, specifically in the rural countryside.<sup>73</sup> According to these sources, these relations were not displayed in terms of personal bonds and ties but of rule over land and people. The institutional framework was that of the *seigneurité* or *Grundherrschaft* through which settlements of kin and neighbourhood groups of peasant farmers were subjected to the control of a personal or institutional lord.<sup>74</sup> In the polyptyques, the specific production obligations and other types of service of the farmers to monastic institutions as their lords were recorded. The polyptyques were not systematic records in the sense that descriptions of every

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<sup>73</sup> See for editions of major polyptyques : Claus-Dieter Droste, ed., *Das Polyptychan von Montierender* (Trier, 1988). Ingo Schwab, ed., *Das Prümer Urbar* (Düsseldorf, 1983). François-Louis Ganshof, ed., *Le Polyptyque de l'abbaye de Saint-Bertin* (Paris, 1975). Jean-Pierre Devroey, ed., *Le polyptyque et les listes de cens de l'abbaye de Saint-Remi de Reims (IX—XIe siècle. Edition critique* (Reims, 1984). Dieter Hägermann, ed., *Das Polyptychon von Saint-Germain-des-Près* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1993). Dieter Hägermann, Andreas Hedwig, eds, *Das Polyptychon und die notitia de arcis von Saint-Maur-des-Fossés. Analyse und kritische Edition* (Sigmaringen, 1990). Rudolf Kötzschke, ed., *Die Urbare der Abtei Werden an der Ruhr* (Bonn, 1906).

<sup>74</sup> For recent reviews of sources and research work see : Franz Irsigler, "Grundherrschaft, Handel und Märkte zwischen Maas und Rhein im frühen und hohen Mittelalter", in : Klaus Fink, Wilhelm Janssen, eds, *Grundherrschaft und Stadtentstehung am Niederrhein* (Kleve, 1989), pp. 52-78. Ludolf Kuchenbuch, *Grundherrschaft im früheren Mittelalter* (Idstein, 1991). Werner Rösener, ed., *Strukturen der Grundherrschaft im frühen Mittelalter* (Göttingen, 1989). Rösener, ed., *Grundherrschaft im Wandel* (Göttingen, 1991).

<sup>75</sup> See for recent studies on the polyptyques : J. Bessmery, "Les structures de la famille paysanne dans les villages de la France au IXe siècle", in : *Le Moyen Age* 90 (1984), pp. 165-193. J. F. Bregi, *Recherches sur la démographie rurale et les structures sociales au IXe siècle* (Paris, 1975).

Philippe Contamine, Marc Bompaire, Stéphane Lebecq, Jean-Luc Sarrazin, *L'économie médiévale* (Paris, 1997). Ch. Dette, "Die Grundherrschaft Weissenburg im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert im Spiegel ihrer Herrenhöfe", in : Rösener, ed.

holding and the conditions of service of all residents were entered.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, efforts were made to provide written evidence. In the case of the making of the first version of the Prüm polyptyque from

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*Strukturen* (note 74), p. 181-16. Jean-Pierre Devroey, *Etudes sur le grand domaine carolingien* (Aldershot, 1993) (Variorum Collected Studies Series. 391.) R. Doehard, *Le Haut Moyen Age occidental. Economies et sociétés* (Paris, 1971). J. Durliat, „Le mense dans le polyptyque d'Irminon“, in: Hartmut Atsma, ed., *La Neustrie*, vol. 1 (Sigmaringen 1989), pp. 467-503. Durliat, „Qu'est-ce qu' un polyptyque?“, in: *Media in Francia. Recueil de melanges offert à Karl Ferdinand Werner* (Paris, 1989), pp. 129-138. Konrad Elmshäuser, Andreas Hedwig, *Studien zum Polytychon von Saint-Germain-des-Près* (Cologne, Vienna, 1993). Robert Fossier, *Polyptyques et censiers* (Turnhout, 1978) (Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental. 28.) Hans-Werner Goetz, „Herrschaft und Raum in der frühmittelalterlichen Grundherrschaft“, in: *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 190 (1987), pp.7-33. Dieter Hägermann, „Eine Grundherrschaft des 13. Jahrhunderts im Spiegel des Frühmittelalters. Caesarius von Prüm und seine kommentierte Abschrift des Urbars von 893“, in: *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 45 (1981), pp. 1-34. Hägermann, „Anmerkungen zum Stand und den Aufgaben frühmittelalterlicher Urbarforschung“, in: *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 50 (1986), pp. 32-58. Hägermann, „Der Abt als Grundherr. Kloster und Wirtschaft im frühen Mittelalter“, in: Friedrich Prinz, ed., *Herrschaft und Kirche* (Stuttgart, 1988), pp. 345-385. Hägermann, „Quellenkritische Bemerkungen zu den karolingischen Urbaren und Güterverzeichnissen“, in: Rösener, ed., *Strukturen* (note 74), pp. 47-73. Charles Higounet, „A propos de la perception de l'espace au Moyen Age“, in: *Media in Francia* (as above), pp. 257-268. Wilhelm Janssen, Dietrich Lohrmann, eds, *Villa — curtis — grangia. Landwirtschaft zwischen Loire und Rhein von der Römerzeit zum Hochmittelalter* (Sigmaringen, 1983). Ludolf Kuchenbuch, „Die Klostergrundherrschaft im Mittelalter“, in: Prinz, ed. *Herrschaft* (as above), pp. 297-343. Kuchenbuch, „Teilen, Aufzählen, Summieren. Zum Verfahren in ausgewählten Güter- und Einkünfteverzeichnissen des 9. Jahrhunderts“, in: Ursula Schaefer, ed., *Schriftlichkeit im frühen Mittelalter* (Tübingen, 1993), pp. 178-206. Kuchenbuch, „Die Achtung vor dem alten Buch und die Furcht vor dem neuen. Cesa-rius von Milendonk erstellt 1222 eine Abschrift des Prümer Urbars von 893“, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 3 (1995), pp. 175-202. Kuchenbuch, „Potestas und Utilitas. Ein Versuch über Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung zur Grund-

the end of the ninth century, specially appointed commissioners traveled for inquiries to the widely dispersed holdings of the monastery to collect the data.<sup>76</sup> In this as in the case of other extant poly-

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herrschaft im 9.–13. Jahrhundert“, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 265 (1997), pp. 117-146. Kuchenbuch, „Sind mediävistische Quellen mittelalterliche Texte?“, in: Hans-Werner Goetz, ed., *Die Aktualität des Mittelalters* (Bochum, 2000), pp. 348-352. Yoshiki Morimoto, „Autour du polytyque de Saint-Bertin (844 - 859)“, in: Adriaan Verhulst, ed., *Le grand domaine aux époques merovingienne et carolingienne* (Gent, 1985), pp. 125-151 (Publications du Centre belge d'histoire rurale. 81.) Morimoto, „Etat et perspectives des recherches sur les polyptyques carolingiens“, in: *Annales de l'Est* 40 (1988), pp. 99-149. Morimoto, „Autour du grand domaine carolingien. Aperçu critique des recherches récentes sur l'histoire rurale du haut Moyen Age“, in: Morimoto, Adriaan Verhulst, eds, *Economie rurale et économie urbaine au Moyen Age* (Gent, Fukuoka, 1994), pp. 25-79. Morimoto, „L'assolement triennal au haut Moyen Age. Une analyse des données des polyptyques carolingiens“, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 91-125. Morimoto, „In ebdomada operatur quicquit precipitur ei' (Le Polyptyque de Prüm X). Service arbitraire ou service hebdomadaire?“, in: *Peasants and Townsmen in Medieval Europe. Studies in honorem Adriaan Verhulst*, ed. by J. M. Duvosquel, A. Dierkens (Brussels, 1995), pp. 347-362. Karl-Heinz Spiess, „Zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialstruktur des frühmittelalterlichen Grundherrschaft östlich des Rheins“, in: *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 41 (1991), pp. 265-276. Ulrich Weidinger, *Untersuchungen zur Wirtschaftsstruktur des Klosters Fulda in der Karolingerzeit* (Stuttgart, 1991). Chris Wickham, „Problems of Comparing Rural Societies in Early Medieval Western Europe“, in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, vol. 2 (1992), pp. 221-245. Wickham, „Overview. Production, Distribution and Demand“, in: Richard Hodges, William Bowden, eds, *The Sixth Century* (Leiden, Boston, Cologne, 1998), pp. 279-292 (The Transformation of the Roman World. 3.) Erich Wisplinghoff, *Untersuchungen zur frühen Geschichte der Abtei St. Maximin bei Trier von den Anfängen bis etwa 1150* (Mainz, 1970).

<sup>76</sup> See on Prüm: Jean-Pierre Devroey, „Les services de transport à l'abbaye de Prüm au IXe siècle“, in: *Revue du Nord* 61 (1979), pp. 543-569. Martina Knichel, *Geschichte des Fernbesitzes der Abtei Prüm in den heutigen Niederlanden, in der Picardie, in Revin, Fumay und Pépin sowie in Awans und Loncin* (Mainz, 1987) (Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelhessischen

tyques,<sup>77</sup> the results of these efforts were written records whose medium of transmission unwillingly made explicit a new conceptualisation of action. How new this concept was becomes clear when it is measured against the patterns that had informed agricultural production in the previous centuries of the early Middle Ages.

Up until the seventh century, many settlements in western, northern and eastern Europe can be imagined to have been clusters of residential kin and neighbourhood groups among whom production was mainly, though not exclusively, done for local consumption.<sup>78</sup> Yet there was also a high degree of self-organisation among the settlers among whom orality will most frequently have been the standard of communication. Their dependence on natural rhythms for local agricultural production induced them to rely on localised

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Kirchengeschichte. 56.) Ludolf Kuchenbuch, *Bäuerliche Gesellschaft und Klosterherrschaft im 9. Jahrhundert. Studien zur Sozialstruktur der Familia der Abtei Prüm* (Wiesbaden, 1978). Yoshiki Morimoto, „Le polyptyque de Prüm, n'a-t-il pas été interpolé?“, in : *Le Moyen Age* 92 (1986), pp. 265-276. Morimoto, „Un aspect du domaine de l'abbaye de Prüm à la fin du IXe siècle et pendant la dernière moitié du Xe siècle“, in : Rösener, ed., *Strukturen* (note 74), pp. 266-284. Morimoto, „Considerations nouvelles sur les ‚villes et campagnes‘ dans le domaine de Prüm au haut Moyen Age“, in : J.-M. Duvosquel, A. Dierkens, eds., *Villes et campagnes au Moyen Age. Melanges G. Despy* (Liège, 1991), pp. 515-531. Morimoto, „Die Bedeutung des Prümer Urbars für die heutige Forschung“, in : Reiner Nolden, ed., *„anno verbi incarnati DCCCXCIII conscriptum“. Im Jahre des Herrn 893 geschrieben. 1100 Jahre Prümer Urbar* (Trier, 1993), pp. 127-136. Klaus Petry, „Die Geldzinse im Prümer Urbar von 893“, in : *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 52(1988), pp. 16-42. Matthias Willwersch, *Die Grundherrschaft des Klosters Prüm* [first and party printed as Diss. Phil. (University of Berlin, 1912)], newly ed. by Ingo Schwab, Reiner Nolden (Trier, 1989).

<sup>77</sup> The texts consulted for this chapter are the polyptyques of Montierender, Prüm, Reims, Saint-Germain-des-Près and Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, quoted in note 73.

rather than centralised measurements of space and time.<sup>79</sup> Finally, there were a plethora of local styles and rules, which covered a number of neighbouring settlements but hardly larger areas.<sup>80</sup> Under these conditions, agricultural production consisted mainly of using the bounties of nature under the constraints of its vagaries. The essential goal of agricultural production, the harvesting of crops, could be taken to have been predetermined as a feature of the divinely willed world.<sup>81</sup> But the goal was considered to be attainable

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<sup>78</sup> For a discussion of some archaeological evidence see: Christopher J. Arnold, "Territories and Leadership", in: S. T. Driscoll, M. R. Niece, eds, *Power and Politics in Early Medieval Britain and Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 111-127. On the activities of Roman professional traders in Central and Northern Europe see: Gerhard Dilcher, "Marktrecht und Kaufmannsrecht in Frühmittelalter", in: Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, Dieter Timpe, eds, *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, Part III (Göttingen, 1985), pp. 392-397 (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl. 3. F. 150.) Jürgen Kunow, *Negotiator et vectura. Händler und Transport im Freien Germanien* (Marburg, 1980) (Kleine Schriften des Vorgeschichtlichen Seminars Marburg. 6.) Kunow, "Zum Handel mit römischen Importen in der Germania libera", in: Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, Dieter Timpe, Harald Siems, Dieter Timpe, eds, *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr in vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, Part I (Göttingen 1985), p. 430-459 (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl. 3. F. 143.) Harald Siems, "Die Organisation der Kaufleute in der Merowingerzeit nach den Leges", in: Herbert Jankuhn, Else Ebel, eds, *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, Part VI (Göttingen, 1989), pp. 62-145 (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl. 3. F. 183.)

<sup>79</sup> Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages* (note 16), pp. 17-20.

<sup>80</sup> For textiles see, among others: Hayo Vierck, "Trachtenkunde und Trachtengeschichte in der Sachsen-Forschung", in: Claus Ahrens, ed., *Sachsen und Angelsachsen* (Hamburg, 1978), pp. 231-270.

<sup>81</sup> See: Haymo of Halberstadt, *De varietate librorum*, cap. II/50-51, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series Latina, vol. 118, col.

the more easily, the more readily the production processes were kept in accordance with the environmental conditions and the natural rhythms, even when they were unfavourable to the attainment of the goal. In other words, early medieval agricultural production processes up to the eighth century followed a concept of action in which factors with a potentially detrimental effect on goal-attainment were regarded or even respected as givens and integrated into rather than eliminated from the production processes.

At the turn of the eighth century, Charlemagne inserted stipulations into his *Capitulare de villis*<sup>82</sup> to the effect that constant stocks of food should be kept in the royal villis and at other places at which itinerant rulers might stop over.<sup>83</sup> Here, then, goals for action were set in writing and the ruler expected obedience by the stipulations of the capitulary. Neither Charlemagne nor the ninth-century polytyques broke with these patterns. But they added two important aspects to the conceptualisation of action. One was writing as the means of production control.<sup>84</sup> The other was centralisation. The combination of both aspects added to the significance of goal-attainment and promoted a change of agricultural work ethics. In itself, the written record of agricultural production was ambivalent.

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917-918.

<sup>82</sup> *Capitulare de villis*, cap. 70, ed. by Alfred Boretius, *Capitularia regum Francorum*, vol. 1. no 32 (Hanover, 1883), p. 87 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Capitularia regum Francorum. 1.)

<sup>83</sup> See on itinerant rulers: Gerhard Baaken, Roderich Schmidt, *Königtum, Burgen und Königsfreie. Königsumritt und Huldigung in ottonisch-salischer Zeit*, 2nd ed. (Sigmaringen, 1981) (Vorträge und Forschungen, herausgegeben vom Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für mittelalterliche Geschichte. 6.) [first published (Constance, 1961)]. I. W. Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany* (Cambridge, 1993).

<sup>84</sup> For the general background see note 5 and: Michael T. Clanchy, *From Mem-*

For it reproduced, as the scribes of the Prüm polyptyque occasionally admitted, incomplete data or norms of crop yield, output of manufactured goods and provision of manual service that were not met because exemptions had been granted.<sup>85</sup> The holdings of the monasteries continued to be widely dispersed and were inhabited by a substantive variety of types of groups for whose members distinct norms were in effect. The polyptyques contain evidence that the administrators paid frequent respect to the various special legal statuses of the peasant servants to which reference was made through the formula *secundum ordinem suum*,<sup>86</sup> The formula served as a means to recognise the empirical fact that the conditions of service were usually defined through personal bonds and ties rather than the outflow of general legislation. Thus the effect of the norms was low as their general application upon the several different types of groups was difficult to engineer. Nevertheless, the compilers of the data as well as the monastic administrators had a notion of norms of crop yield, output of manufactured goods and manual service, by which they wanted the peasant farmers under their control to abide, and they took it for granted that these norms should be met continuously through the year, irrespective of the vagaries of nature

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*ory to Written Record* (Oxford, 1992). Adam J. Kosto, *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia. Power, Order and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 2001). Hagen Keller, Klaus Grubmüller, eds, *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1992). For studies specifically related to the polyptyques see : Hägermann, "Bemerkungen" (note 75). Kuchenbuch, "Achtung" (note 75). Yoshiki Morimoto, "Le polyptyque de Montier-en-Der", in : Patrick Corbet, ed., *Les moines du Der. 673-1790* (Langres, 2000), pp. 171-172.

<sup>85</sup> See for cases of deviations or exemptions from standards in the Prüm polyptyque, among others, fol. 7 v, 8 v, 9 r, 12 r (ed. Schwab, note 73, pp. 164, 169, 170, 177).

<sup>86</sup> Prüm polyptyque, among others, fol. 12 r, 13 v (ed. Schwab, note 73, p. 176, 180, 181).

and of the physical condition of the working people. Hence the compilers of the data for the polyptyques and the monastic administrators displayed their willingness to focus agricultural production on the attainment of goals which had not been predetermined by the divinity through the creation of the world but that were human-made and executed through precise supervision. From the same time, archaeological finds provide indirect evidence for trade in mass and bulky goods, such as wood, pottery, mill stones, glass, weapons, jewels and textiles.<sup>87</sup> These activities, like the attempts to enforce standards of production, could be conducted successfully only under the condition that goal-attainment was given priority. there was then interconnecting and, from the eighth century, even networking trade, which could cover long distances and included even spices of Indian origin as trading goods.<sup>88</sup> Even if the vagaries of nature could not be circumvented and exemptions had to be granted, the written norms of crop yield, output of manufactured goods and manual service provided the lasting standard by which success or failure of the production could be measured. The Prüm polyptyque provides evidence for the care and the speed with which

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<sup>87</sup> Note in the Prüm polyptyque, fol. 9 r (ed. Schwab, note 73, p. 170). The note includes the warning that persons intending to act otherwise should know that they were offending the omniscient divinity even if their lack of loyalty remained undiscovered by the monastic lords. See on the trading goods : Stéphane Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs frisons au haut Moyen Age*, vol. 1 (Lille, 1983). Heiko Steuer, "Der Handel der Wikingerzeit zwischen Nord-und Westeuropa aufgrund archäologischer Zeugnisse", in : Klaus Düwel, Herbert Jankuhn, Harald Siems, Dieter Timpe, eds, *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, Part IV (Göttingen, 1987), pp. 131-179 (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl. 3. F. 156.)

<sup>88</sup> See : Georg Jacob, *Arabische Berichte von Gesandten an germanische Fürstentümer aus dem 9. und 10. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1927) .

these norms were set. Unlike the time-consuming production of the solemn charters of the previous centuries of the early Middle Ages, the making of the polyptyques with their detailed information on the names and duties of dependent peasants made sense only if the entries, whenever and however the data were assembled, were made accessible to monastic administrators. Thus the making of the polyptyques in its own right already testifies to the willingness of the monastic administrators to set goals for themselves and instrumentalise the processes of action. The degree of goal-attainment was high: When the original manuscript of the late ninth-century of the Prüm polyptyque was edited in the thirteenth century, few changes were entered into the edited version.<sup>89</sup>

Similarly, the centralisation of control set new demands for the regularisation of production. The monastic institutions as major land holders not only depended on the supply of food from the peasant farmers under their control but also needed to maintain agricultural production as well as manufacturing in a variety of sectors which were not connected with the production of food. Most important in this context were the religious services of the monasteries, which demanded the provision of certain organic materials at regular intervals, such as wax and animal skin. It was thus mandatory to oblige peasant farmers to deliver the demanded produce at regular intervals. Again, the degree of goal attainment became measur-

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<sup>89</sup> Caesarius, the thirteenth-century editor of the Prüm polyptyque, fol. 51 r (ed. Schwab, note 73, p. 259), remarked that, 329 years after the completion of the original manuscript, woodlands had disappeared, new villages had been founded, mills had been built and new lands had been made ready for cultivation. Cf.: Kuchenbuch, „Achtung“ (note 75). Yoshiki Morimoto, “Le commentaire de Césaire (1222) sur le polyptyque de Prüm (893)”, in: *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 69 (1990), pp. 261-290.

able against the norms recorded in the polyptyques.<sup>90</sup>

It is difficult to determine with precision which measures were taken to advance the degree of goal-attainment of agricultural production in the monastic holdings of the ninth and subsequent centuries. But there are a number of indicators showing that the output of agricultural produce increased during the ninth and tenth centuries. Thus the yield ratio of key crops such as rye went up although this may have been due to the improvement of climatic conditions at the time.<sup>91</sup> Other sources confirm that this outcome resulted from a new work ethics, which emphasised the consistency of fieldwork and the necessity of supervision and control.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> See above note 86.

<sup>91</sup> *La croissance agricole du haut Moyen Age* (Auch, 1990). P. Galetti, "Un caso particolare. Le prestazioni d'opera nei contratti agrari piacentini dei secoli VIII-X", in: Vito Fumagalli, ed., *Le prestazioni d'opera nelle campagne italiane del Medioevo* (Bologna, 1987), pp. 69-103. Ludolf Kuchenbuch, "bene laborare. Zur Sinnordnung der Arbeit, ausgehend vom *Capitulare de villis*", in: Bea Lund, Helma Reimöller, eds, *Von Aufbruch und Utopie. Perspektiven einer neuen Gesellschaftsgeschichte des Mittelalters. Für und mit Ferdinand Seibt* (Cologne, 1992), pp. 337-352. Bernard Hendrik Slicher van Bath, *Yield Ratios. 810-1210* (Wageningen, 1963) (Landbouwhogeschool, Afdeling Agrarische Geschiedenis. Bijdragen 10.) Slicher van Bath, "The Yields of Different Crops", in: *Acta historica neerlandica* 2 (1967), pp. 26-106. For a precise account of the climatic changes of the period see: Ernst Hollstein, *Mitteuropäische Eichenchronologie* (Mainz, 1980).

<sup>92</sup> Atto of Vercelli, *Polypticum*, cap. 9, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, vol. 134, col. 869. *Rectitudines singularum personarum*, ed. by Liebermann, *Gesetze* (note 20), pp. 444-453. *Gerefa*, ed. by Liebermann, *Gesetze* (note 20), pp. 453-455. See for studies of medieval work ethics: Dieter Hägermann, "Technik im frühen Mittelalter zwischen 500 und 1000", in: Hägermann, Helmuth Schneider, *Landbau und Handwerk. 750 v. Chr. bis 1000 n. Chr.* (Berlin, 1997), pp. 317-345 (Propyläen Technikgeschichte. 1.) Ferdinand Seibt, *Glanz und Elend des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1987). James Carson Webster, *The Labors of the Month in Antique and Medieval Art to the End of the 13<sup>th</sup>*

Moreover, the polyptyques were not unique in their own time. In contexts other than the rural economy, normative as well as descriptive sources exist from the late ninth and early tenth centuries showing that rulers were willing to establish norms whose application they sought to control centrally. These sources record aspects of the defence policy of the kings of Wessex and of Saxony who appear to have been determined to erect defence works against armed immigrants from Scandinavia (the so-called Vikings) and East Central Europe (the Magyars).<sup>93</sup> These defense works were built, manned

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*Century* (Princeton, Evanston, 1938) (Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology. 21 = Northwestern University Studies in the Humanities. 4.)

<sup>93</sup> *Burghal Hidage*, ed. by Agnes Jane Robertson, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Cambridge, 1939), pp. 246-249 [2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Cambridge, 1957)]. Widukind of Corvey, *Rerum gestarum Saxoniarum libri III*, cap. 1/35, ed. by Paul Hirsch, Hans-Eberhard Lohmann (Hanover, 1935), pp. 48-49 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi. 60.) Janet M. Bately, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, vol. 3 : MS A, s. a. 893 (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 55-56.

<sup>94</sup> See for studies of these defense schemes : Richard P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1988), pp. 48-57. Nicholas Brooks, "Arms, Status and Warfare in Late Anglo-Saxon England", in : David Hill, ed., *Ethelred the Unready* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 81-103 (British Archaeological Reports. British Series. 59.) David Hill, Alexander R. Rumble, eds. *The Defense of Wessex* (Manchester, New York, 1996). Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke, *Burgenbau und Landesverteidigung um 900* (Sigmaringen, 1975) (Vorträge und Forschungen, herausgegeben vom Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für mittelalterliche Geschichte. Sonderband 16.) Margaret Gelling, "The Place-Names Burton and Variants", in : Sonia Chadwick Hawkes, ed., *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 145-148. Eric John, "War and Society in the Tenth Century", in : *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series 27 (1977), pp. 173-195. Karl Leyser, "Early Medieval Warfare", in : Janet Cooper, ed., *The Battle of Maldon* (London, 1993), pp. 87-108 [repr. in : Leyser, *Communication and Power in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (London, Rio Grande, 1994), pp. 29-50]. Else Roesdahl, ed., *Wikingen, Waräger, Normannen* (Mainz, 1992).

and controlled under central commands in both kingdoms.<sup>94</sup> The sources displayed the kings of Wessex and of Saxony as rulers over land and people who were placed in charge of supervising the building as well as the guarding and maintaining of the defensive fortresses.<sup>95</sup> These defense works were supplemented by mobile units that could be dispatched to places where the highly mobile immigrant armies appeared.<sup>96</sup> The joint command over the mobile forces and the fortresses made the coordination of defense efforts possible and effectively constrained the range of activity of the armed immigrants. Thus the goal of defending wide stretches of land and variegated types of population groups against armed immigrants obtained priority over organising armed forces and constructing defense works which were now reduced to mere instruments for the accomplishment of the set goal. This is, of course, not to say that early medieval warfare in the period up to the turn of the tenth century had been conducted without war aims set in advance of military action. Indeed, war aims are on record from the early period but, contrary to the goal pursued by the defense systems in Wessex and in Saxony at the turn of the tenth century, the previous types of war aims appear to have been focused mainly on the increase, the maintenance or the prevention of the change of the social status of rulers and combatants<sup>97</sup> rather than on the defense or conquest of territories.<sup>98</sup> The focusing of war aims on the indefinite processes of controversies about acquiring, keeping and avoiding

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<sup>95</sup> Explicitly so in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (note 93), p. 56.

<sup>96</sup> Abels, *Lordship* (note 94), pp. 63-66.

<sup>97</sup> See, for example: *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (note 93), s.a. 755, pp. 36-37. Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum X*, cap. III/3, ed. by Bruno Krusch, Wilhelm Levison (Hanover, 1951), p. 99 (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*. 1.1.)

<sup>98</sup> Early medieval conquerors, with the exception of Charlemagne, who was note-

loss of status had been more favourable to the process-orientation of action than the territorial defense schemes which were organised as finite actions in a peculiar situation and in pursuit of a short-term goal. From the turn of the tenth century, it was thus assumed, though not always correctly, that a defensive action was completed with the accomplishment of its goal. Hence, the degree of success of keeping enemy forces at bay or even repelling them could be measured more easily than the accomplishment of the previous aims of acquiring, keeping or preventing changes of the status of rulers and combatants. Therefore, the actions pursued through the late ninth- and early tenth-century defense schemes carried with them a higher degree of goal-orientation than previous military actions had done. In these respects, the rationality of action was determined more frequently in terms of goal-attainment than in the previous centuries of the early Middle Ages.

The newly cherished goal-orientation of action became the hallmark of the socio-economic organisation of towns and cities from the eleventh century. To be sure, neither trade nor the manufacturing of goods for markets were inventions of the urban communities of this or subsequent centuries. However, during the early Middle Ages up until the eighth century, production and distribution as processes had mattered more than market supply as a goal of action. This relationship was reversed through the increase of significance awarded to the goal-orientation from the later ninth century. The urban traders and producers began to act for the end of supplying markets which became ever more often defined in terms of local as

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worthy for the wars of conquest of the Saxons and their subjection to continuous Frankish rule, hardly used military victories for the purpose of establishing bureaucratic control over the population groups which they had subjected to their rule. Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages* (note 16), pp. 166-171.

well as of interdependent product markets that could span the entire old world of the tri-continental *ecumene*.<sup>99</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, it has been shown that the twentieth-century theorists of action were not justified in assuming that the concept of action can be defined without respect for conceptual change. Instead, the historicity of the concept of action has been demonstrated and some major changes have been described in this essay. Much of the early medieval period was governed by a concept of action that was focused on processes.<sup>100</sup> That is to say that the specification of motives received less attention and the measurement of the degree of goal-attainment carried with it less significance than the structuring and maintenance of the processes of action. The rationality of actions was thus determined in ways that differed from those admitted by twentieth-century theorists of action. Whereas in the twentieth century, theorists of action took for granted that rational actions oc-

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<sup>99</sup> For a recent survey see: Janet Lippman Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony* (Oxford, New York, 1989).

<sup>100</sup> See for studies of the process-orientedness of action in situations which have not been reviewed here, such as penitence: Hubertus Lutterbach, "Intentions- oder Tathaftung? Zum Bussverständnis in den frühmittelalterlichen Bussbüchern", in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 29 (1995), pp. 120-143. Lutterbach maintains that, in the early medieval Irish penitentials, a concept of penitence becomes explicit which associates sin with the process of an evil action in conjunction with an evil intention whereas the ancient Christian penitential literature had defined sin solely in terms of actions with an evil intention. Similarly, Charles Radding, "The Evolution of Medieval Mentalities", in: *American Historical Review* 83 (1978), pp. 577-597, has argued that early medieval mentality was characterised by a lack of attention paid to intentions of actions.

curred in communicative situations, were conducted towards goals set by the actors themselves and under conditions where the success or failure of actions could be measured by observing persons in terms of the degree of goal-attainment, early medieval actions were considered to be rational under the conditions that processes were chosen towards the accomplishment of goals which were believed to have been imposed by exogenous factors and that actors regarded the processes of their actions not primarily as instrumental to the accomplishment of goals but as a value in themselves. Oral communication featured first and foremost in many processes during the early Middle Ages and served purposes of the fostering of social bonds and ties among members of kin, neighbourhood and contractual groups. As persons could be members in various types of groups simultaneously, they could expect to be able to rely on heterodynamic modes of behaviour and receive assistance in their attempts to conduct processes of action in accordance with the local conditions of life and the natural rhythms of growth as well as decay and hope to be able to use the bounties of nature although being exposed to its vagaries. This attitude towards action was suitable in a social and physical environment in which the largest part of the early medieval population consisted of peasant farmers and was engaged in the production of agricultural crops, manufacturing goods, largely for local consumption, and providing mandatory service to their lords. The attitude was also appropriate in a world in which, up to the seventh century, long-distance migration across several generations loomed large. Under these circumstances, the integration of persons into groups was vital and demanded the subordination of personal interests, wishes and desires to the demands of the group.

With the petering out of the long-distance migrations and their

gradual replacement by movements of the internal colonisation of nearby woodland areas from the seventh century, action had to be reconceptualised. While process-orientation continued to have highest significance down to the ninth century, the desire to accomplish goals set by the actors themselves increased as agriculture became more intensive and was extended to less favourable soils in uphill locations. The transformation of village communities into settlements of dependent peasants and the emergence of classes of landholders consisting of secular aristocrats and church institutions enforced a division of labour between producers and consumers of agricultural products. Specifically, church institutions were in need of a steady supply for produce from their dependent peasants whom they expected to provide food as well as certain goods necessary for the performance of religious duties. The late ninth-century polyp-tyques together with contemporary normative and narrative sources put on record the injection of more goal-orientation of action into agricultural production, the emergence of a new agricultural work ethics and central control over land and people.

The injection of a higher degree of goal-orientation of action in the ninth century sparked an agricultural revolution, which in turn contributed to an increase in yield ratios and the enlargement of local markets for agricultural products. Up until the tenth century, trade remained mainly managed trade while it did become more supply-oriented. From the eleventh century, ever more producers and traders gathered in autonomous settlements categorised as towns and cities where processes of action became instrumental to the attainment of goals. Some of the late medieval theorists of action who recast the focus of theorising from process-orientation to goal-orientation of action worked in an urban setting or wrote for an essentially urban audience and thus defined the widening urban-rural

divide in terms of the readiness of only the urban actors to orient their actions towards self-imposed goals and reduce the role of processes to instruments of goal-attainment.