

INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL HISTORY



Antoni Grabowski

# The Construction of Ottonian Kingship

Narratives and Myth  
in Tenth-Century Germany

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

## The Construction of Ottonian Kingship

# The Construction of Ottonian Kingship

*Narratives and Myth in Tenth-Century Germany*

*Antoni Grabowski*

Amsterdam University Press

Cover illustration: Interior of Collegiate Church of Quedlinburg

Source: NoRud / Wikimedia Commons [CC BY-SA 3.0 de (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/de/deed.en>)

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6298 723 4

e-ISBN 978 90 4853 873 7 (pdf)

DOI 10.5117/9789462987234

NUR 684

© Antoni Grabowski / Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2018

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the written permission of both the copyright owner and the author of the book.

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Note on Citations	9
Introduction	11
1 Aims and State of the Art	12
2 What is Myth/Mythology?	15
3 Liudprand's Biography	19
4 Origins of <i>Antapodosis</i>	23
5 Language of <i>Antapodosis</i>	27
6 Other Contemporary Sources: Widukind's <i>Res gestae saxoni- cae</i> ; <i>Continuation of the Chronicle of Regino of Prüm</i> ; Hrotsvit's <i>Gesta Ottonis</i>	29
7 Interpreter of Liudprand: Frutolf of Michelsberg	30
8 Understanding Liudprand's Works: Textbooks	31

## Part I The Making of a King

1 Henry I at Fritzlar 919	47
The Beginning of a New Dynasty	
1 King's Designation	47
2 <i>Rex Renitens</i>	66
2 Otto I at Aachen 936	85
A Successor – Continuator	
1 Death of a King	85
2 Rise of the New King	93
3 Anointment of the King as a political revolution	98

## Part II King and his Kingdom

3 How Henry I Subjugated the Kingdom without Bloodshed	109
4 Otto I and the Rebellion of 937-939	125
1 Reasons for Rebellion	125

2	Similarities and Main Differences in the Descriptions of the Rebellion Found in Sources	127
3	Concept of Porphyrogenitus	130
4	Further Discussion of Reasons for Rebellion	133
5	Beginning of the Civil War in 937	151
6	Battle of Birten	152
7	After the First Battle	161
8	Lorsch Affair	165
9	Battle of Andernach	171
10	Aftermath	182

### **Part III War Against Heathens as a Road to Empire**

5	How Hungarians were Defeated by the Ottonians	197
1	Henry's Victory in the Battle of Riade	197
2	Battle of Lechfeld, The End of Hungarian Attacks	214
3	The Hungarians as Enemies of Civilization	216
6	The Holy Lance	223
	A Symbol of Empire	
	Conclusions	237
	List of Abbreviations	241
	Bibliography	243
	Index	289

# Acknowledgements

The book originates from a PhD thesis written at the Faculty of History University of Warsaw under the supervision of Jacek Banaszekiewicz and was reviewed by Tomasz Jasiński and Andrzej Pleszczyński. I thank them for all the comments and help that lead to writing this book. I also thank the following people and institutions: Amsterdam University Press staff and the anonymous reviewer, Institut Bibliotheca Fuldensis, Magda Kozłowska, Jerzy Łazor, Beata Spieralska-Kasprzyk, Marta Tycner, Paweł Żmudzki and last but not least my family, especially Jadwiga, Katarzyna, Piotr, Franciszek and above all Edyta.





## Note on Citations

The citations to the primary sources are shortened in keeping with the scholarship of ancient history. Where possible the citation consists of the author and original title of the source, followed by the book and chapter, or else the year if the text is divided in such a way. If the text contains no such division then, and only in such an instance, I use a page number. In the bibliography the exact edition used is noted for all sources. For translations only the name of the translator and page number are noted – translations are listed separately in the bibliography. If no name is listed, then the translation is mine. When I make a reference to the footnotes or the introduction of a translation then the reference is made using short title (and the text is listed among other primary sources under that short title).

The exceptions to this are citations to Liudprand of Cremona's works, Widukind of Corvey's chronicle and both Regino of Prüm's chronicle and the continuation written by Adalbert of Magdeburg. I note only the titles of Liudprand's works (and *Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana ad Nicephorum Phocam* is shortened to *Relatio de legatione*) – all citations are from Paolo Chiesa's edition. For Widukind's *Res gestae saxonicae* I use 'Widukind'. With Regino and its continuation, I use only 'Regino of Prüm', which equally applies to the part of the text written by Adalbert. In both cases I am referring to the MGH SRG editions.

I have refrained from translating *dux* into duke. From time to time I refer to East Frankish kingdom as Germany and to the West as France. This is done out of convenience, as the nineteenth and twentieth century historiography often conflates these terms.



# Introduction

The tenth century was a peculiar age. It was Harald Zimmermann's *Dark Century*,<sup>1</sup> whilst at the same time there was also the Ottonian renaissance. For part of the older German historiography, it was the beginning of the German nation. The argument that Germany originated during the reign of Henry I, while no longer treated seriously, still looms over its perception.<sup>2</sup> Later, Otto I's imperial coronation in 962 was another focal point of history. From then on, Germany turned from a concern with the expansion into the East to the concern with Italian affairs.

It has been argued that before 962 sources written in the Ottonian kingdom did not show any interest in the promotion of the idea of an Empire. There are scholars who have claimed that most people did not see the importance of the imperial title and that Rome was perceived as a place of moral decay, and not a source of imperial glory. The title was strongly connected to the King of Italy, so that both were used interchangeably. In some instances *in Italia* was added to the imperial title.<sup>3</sup>

For the early Ottonian kingdom there are four major narrative sources from the tenth century: Adalbert of Magdeburg's continuation of the chronicle of Regino of Prüm, Liudprand of Cremona's *Antapodosis*, Widukind of Corvey's *Res gestae saxonicae*, and Hrotsvit of Gandersheim's *Gesta Ottonis*. Adalbert, Hrotsvit, and Widukind were authors of the imperial era, who composed their works after 962. This leaves *Antapodosis* as the only major historical text written before Otto's coronation.

In my opinion, Liudprand meant to show the Liudolfings as the most powerful rulers of what he called Europe, both in terms of military strength but also in the expression of their dominance over other kingdoms. The chronicler explains that he wanted to write the history of the kings and princes of all Europe. But 'Europe' here should be understood not as a geographical term, but as a metaphor for an Empire. Liudprand followed the Carolingian authors, for whom Europe was identified with the lands ruled by Charlemagne. Therefore, in *Antapodosis*, kingdoms outside his regions of interest were ignored. He concentrated on Italy, Germany, and Byzantium, which were to constitute his Europe – the Empire. The thing which binds this Empire together are their common enemies, Hungarians and Muslims,

1 Zimmermann, *Das dunkle Jahrhundert*.

2 On this, see Groth, *In regnum*, p. 2-29.

3 Maleczek, 'Otto', p. 156-57, 170-72.

who are viewed as pagans. There is no explanation for the exclusion of other kingdoms, such as France, from this construction. Europe and Empire are names standing for the continuation of the Carolingian tradition which treated them as synonymous. This construction had an additional meaning, with Liudprand depicting the Emperors of Constantinople as weak and laughable, to make the Ottonians appear worthy of Imperial glory. They might not have the crown, but it is clear that they had all the qualities which Byzantine rulers apparently lacked. They were thus *de facto* emperors.<sup>4</sup>

For Robert Holtzmann, Liudprand was the 'most eminent historian of that time.'<sup>5</sup> His emotional and vigorous approach make him one of the most important historians of the age.<sup>6</sup> For Adolf Hofmeister, Liudprand was an author of a collection of anecdotes with simply a historical background. Hofmeister even made a short list of examples of his falsehoods.<sup>7</sup> Martin Lintzel has noted that it is known that 'Liudprand liked to fantasize and relate anecdotes.'<sup>8</sup> He is the main subject of my book.

## 1 Aims and State of the Art

This book is divided into three strands of argument that are concerned with different problems stemming from Liudprand's chronicle and questions of how history was created and recreated by authors of three different eras. The main subject of my inquiries is *Antapodosis* and other sources about and from the tenth century. This will be followed with a note on how these texts were interpreted by the highly influential author of the eleventh and twelfth century: Frutolf of Michelsberg, and the way the history of the Ottonians was treated by German historiography of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The first aim is to explain and show how Liudprand constructed his narrative about the Ottonians and built an image of an ideal dynasty. Through his use of motifs and references to biblical and classical texts he made Henry I and Otto I into rulers who held every mark of being emperors, lacking only the title. The title was in the hands of the Byzantine emperors, but Ottonians were the only rulers who truly deserved it. While Liudprand has received his share

4 More on this in Grabowski, 'Liudprand z Cremony'; cf. Kempshall, *Rhetoric*, p. 328-29.

5 'Hervorragendsten Historikern der Zeit', Holtzmann, *Geschichte*, p. 230.

6 Holtzmann, *Geschichte*, p. 243.

7 Hofmeister, *Die heilige Lanze*, p. 7; list in note 3.

8 'Daß Liudprand gern fabelt und Anekdoten erzählt, weiß man längst', Lintzel, 'Die Mathildenviten', p. 166.

of scholarship this topic has never been thoroughly researched.<sup>9</sup> I will try to verify the extent to which his work could be called propaganda. There is a big problem in using this word to describe Early Middle Ages texts. Propaganda is intended for a certain audience with the clear aim of changing opinions. The way to perceive who read these works is, as Rosamund McKitterick has pointed out, to look at the manuscript tradition of the texts.<sup>10</sup> Keeping this in mind, the notion of propaganda character of tenth century works is hindered by the limited number of surviving copies from Ottonian times. There is no evidence that they were propagated. Ludger Körntgen has also noted that there is hardly any evidence of the use of chronicles for a specific propaganda policy. They did not spread widely – for example Widukind's readership was limited to Saxony – and in Körntgen's opinion there is no clear idea about who was the intended audience for Liudprand's work.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, as McKitterick points out, there are works that seem to have been intended as propaganda but, like Nithard's chronicle, they exist in only one manuscript.<sup>12</sup> This brings up the larger context of McKitterick's statements, in which she noted the existence of lay readership in the Carolingian period. The extent of this is obviously debatable, but her evidence points out that it was far from being negligible.<sup>13</sup> Thus it brings up the question of the audience. Who could be seen as the intended readers of texts rich in literary allusions and sometimes full of difficult vocabulary? As she points out, for the poetry of period in which she was interested, it seems that the texts were to be read on many levels, where both the highly educated and those with less education could acquire certain information or pleasure.<sup>14</sup> How then could Liudprand's chronicle be conceived as propaganda? Especially as, during Otto I's reign, there was no centre of culture or royal patronage of literary work.<sup>15</sup> There was not even a court scriptorium.<sup>16</sup> This does not mean that there were no manuscripts conceived of as propaganda. There is not enough information to state how many manuscripts of particular chronicles existed. More importantly, considering that three historical works were written by people from the Ottonian court or else somehow connected to it, it is clear

9 For a review of the latest scholarship on Liudprand, see Sivo, 'Studi recenti'; Grabowski, 'Ostatnie studia'.

10 McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, p. 241.

11 Körntgen, *Königsherrschaft*, p. 38-46 and note 100 on p. 45.

12 McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, p. 237.

13 McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, p. 227-43.

14 McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, p. 229.

15 Maleczek, 'Otto', p. 155-56.

16 McKitterick, 'Ottonian', p. 174-75.

that the text mattered. It is also important to note that limiting propaganda to a modern idea of mass produced texts does not mean that there could not have been propaganda produced in the Middle Ages, perhaps directed at a much smaller, but still politically important audience.

I am not interested in whether *Antapodosis* gives an accurate account of what really happened. I am sceptical about the possibility to see beyond – what could be called – a ‘veil of memory’.<sup>17</sup> This expression comes from the idea that the authors in question wrote their chronicles as records of their own memory. There is a question as to the extent that their words correspond to the past. Did they describe what actually happened, or maybe their memories were wrong? For the most part these texts do not provide ways to look beyond them into the past. The available means for historical inquiry end at the ‘veil’ that is the text itself. From time to time I will venture into the question of how reliable the chronicles’ narratives are, but only to show that Liudprand was not concerned with what actually happened, but was more concerned with the themes and motifs he derived from historical events. I wish to show that chronicles cannot be separated from their ideological constructions and that Gerd Althoff’s idea that rulers controlled such texts to convey a realistic vision of the past is wrong.<sup>18</sup> I will point out that there is little for traditional history to search for in these narratives, as differences and similarities between them are more connected to their ideologies than with facts.

As to Liudprand’s reception, I will discuss it by way of the example of Frutolf’s text. *Antapodosis* was the most important tenth century source for him. Therefore, for later authors, Liudprand’s chronicle became the main source of information via his work.

Finally, by analysing books written after the unification of Germany I will show how the historiography of the late nineteenth and twentieth century came to interpret sources from the tenth century. There was no significant change in the interpretation of the past. Some ideas that were a part of the nationalistic (and national-socialistic) ideology remained dominant even in the work of authors who were otherwise far from such ideology. There is a clear continuation in the way that Henry and Otto have been interpreted.<sup>19</sup> This element of the so called politics of memory is generally overlooked.

17 This is the expression used in Fried’s lecture given at the German Historical Institute in London. See Fried, *The Veil of Memory*.

18 Althoff, ‘Geschichtsschreibung’, p. 156.

19 For obvious reasons these conclusions cannot be said to include all German scholarship. Nevertheless, the chosen works are more or less representative and influential.

I will make it clear that for them the sources were mostly unimportant, as their reliability was assumed and lacked the basis of any research or inquiry. Liudprand was treated suspiciously by scholars, who preferred Widukind. This attitude had more to do with faith, than with any attempt to establish his work's reliability.

This book is divided into three sections. The first concerns the making of a king, and has two chapters. The first chapter is concerned with Henry I and the way in which he was made a king after the death of Conrad I. The second is concerned with Otto I. The next section is about the civil wars and the internal affairs of the kingdom. This is also divided into two chapters, beginning with the matter of how Henry's subjugation of the kingdom, after which the first rebellion against Otto's rule is discussed. Finally, the third section is concerned with the conflicts with the Hungarians and the Holy Lance.

## 2 What is Myth/Mythology?

As myth is brought up in this book's title, the meaning of the word and its reference to history ought to be discussed. Often it is stated that history is about what really happened, while myths are fables, imagined stories.<sup>20</sup> Such a view comes mostly from a concept of history, originating from Leopold von Ranke, stating that objectivity and reality are the most important elements of the study of the past.<sup>21</sup>

Roland Barthes observed that myth is a word and that everything can be a myth.<sup>22</sup> According to Joseph Campbell, there are four functions of myth: mystical, cosmological, sociological, and pedagogical.<sup>23</sup> Myth is also important in creating a community.<sup>24</sup> Such division and awareness of the roles of myth are needed, as it underlines that myths are not just tales about Heracles or similar.

The popular belief that myths are false stories from ancient times depicting events which are even further in the past is wrong. Mircea Eliade observed that among societies where myths are still alive, they are seen as

20 For example, see George Osborne Sayles, where he ascribes nineteenth century histories to a realm of false histories or myths. Sayles, *Scripta diversa*, p. 1. Cf. for criticism of history from the point of scholars of mythology, see Campbell, *The Hero*, p. 249. See also Bascom, 'The Forms of Folklore', p. 12-13; Weber, 'Historiographie und Mythographie'.

21 This was not entirely true, as Ranke was aware that there is more than facts in historians work. See: Lorenz, 'Drawing the Line', p. 47-48

22 Barthes, *Mitologie*, p. 239.

23 Campbell and Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, p. 38-39.

24 Schöpfliin, 'Functions of Myth', p. 20.

true histories, distinctively different from fables. They include tales about the origin of their societies, about the hero of the group (ethnic, national, or other), and finally stories about the shamans, or people, who hold supernatural powers.<sup>25</sup> Thus, it is clear why myth is a very useful tool for a group's self-definition; for a transfer of the group's identity, or its radical change; for communication inside the group; as political myth; it also explains the status and position of the group.<sup>26</sup> Some myths give a group a special mission, a role in the larger scheme of things, connected to war and conflict. There is also the idea of rebirth, with a hope for a better existence in the future.<sup>27</sup> Many popular concepts held in the Middle Ages, both in the views of historiography and in the sources, like *translatio imperii*, are rooted in similar ideas.

Myths were and are alive. They are repeated and replicated. People imitate the heroes of the past. Even contemporary history can be seen and interpreted through myths, helping to explain what happened. This is why the past can easily be transformed into a myth. This is done involuntary, with whatever remains as people's memories fade away. Memories are reconstructed, retaining the core points of what took place and introducing other elements fitting the concept of the story. These myths appear even when there are eyewitnesses. This is not a creation of a false tale, but a way of retaining the core of an event.<sup>28</sup> It could be said that myth is true for those who repeat or create it and is a model history describing what really happened.<sup>29</sup>

Bearing all this in mind, it is not strange that myths are an important element in the discussion of historical figures. Frederick II is a good example of such a transition. Even during his life, he was a mythical figure, a messiah. The myth of the eternal emperor was so strong, that it survived almost into modern times.<sup>30</sup> While Frederick is a stark example of such mythical creation, he is not the only one. Ancient Rome is sometimes wrongly treated as a society without its own myths, but the Romans had their own mythology in history itself. The creation of the city and its later narrations were myths and Roman historians were definitely mythographers.<sup>31</sup>

25 Eliade, *Aspekty mitu*, p. 14; cf. on criticism of Eliade Strenski, *Four Theories of Myth*, p. 106-09; on living societies Overing, 'Role of Myth', p. 5-6.

26 Schöpflin, 'Functions of Myth', p. 22-25.

27 Schöpflin, 'Functions of Myth', p. 31-33.

28 Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, p. 34, 37, 38, 44-46; cf. still valuable as an example of process, if with caveats to many parts: Hajduk-Nijakowska, 'Proces mityzacji'. See also Alfred Speer's self-made myth of the good Nazi: Fried, 'Can Neuro-Biology', p. 30-34.

29 Eliade, *Traktat*, p. 442-44; see also Munz, 'History and Myth'.

30 Eliade, *Aspekty mitu*, p. 172-74; Cohn, 'Kaiser'; cf. Stürner, 'Friedrich II.'. Cf. Fried, 'Karl'.

31 Puhvel, *Comparative Mythology*, p. 146-48, 162-65.



Figuring out what were the myths of the Romans is very helpful in this discussion. The assumption, according to Claude Levi-Strauss, is that myths do not have authors. They are created by a community and come from group imagination.<sup>32</sup> As Michael Grant has observed, this model does not apply to the Roman mythology, which was created to influence the masses by authors and the elites. This could mean that they were not myths, but such a division would be pointless, as it is not only the Romans who have had such a politicised mythology. In Japan, China, and even Greece myths were constantly re-evaluated by authors. One very important element of Roman mythology and historiography was the aim to create moral guidance, to present examples of proper behaviour.<sup>33</sup>

Hans-Jürgen Hube titled his translation and retelling of Saxo Grammaticus: *Saxo Grammaticus Gesta Danorum. Mythen und Legenden des berühmten mittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibers Saxo Grammaticus*.<sup>34</sup> While it is clear that Hube limits the definition of myth and legend to the early parts of Saxo's work, which is concerned with ancient times, it also gives us a point in this discussion. Was Gallus Anonymus putting the story of Piast the Plowman in the realm of myth?<sup>35</sup> Were many stories of *origo gentis* treated as such? Paul the Deacon, sceptical about the pagan tale of the origins of the Longobards, repeated it, but set it in a Christian reality.<sup>36</sup> The myth of the Longobards origins survives, but it is changed. Its strength leads it to further transfiguration and change, even to an impressive variation where this *origo* is transformed into a conflict between the quasi Italian Lombards and the German Longobards.<sup>37</sup>

Such an attitude towards the past did not vanish with the popularisation of education. Herfried Münkler discussed various German myths in order to counter the idea that Germany was a unique state in modern times, being without myths. It appears that this was even seen as something to be proud of there.<sup>38</sup> Münkler argued that this preconception was wrong and that myths both existed in the past and are in some cases still clearly visible in German culture and in the perception of German people. Practically every generation has its own 'political myths'.<sup>39</sup>

32 Cf. Levi-Strauss, 'The Structural Study', p. 216-18.

33 Grant, *Mity rzymskie*, p. 256-57, 259, 263-65.

34 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum: Mythen und Legenden*.

35 *Galli Anonymi Cronica*, I.1-2.

36 Paul the Deacon, *Historia gentis Langobardorum*, I.8-10.

37 See Pohl, 'Memory', p. 9.

38 Münkler, *Die Deutschen*, p. 9.

39 'Politische Mythen', Münkler, *Die Deutschen*, p. 28.

The problem of the division between myth and history was recently addressed by Johannes Burkhardt. He examined how the past was expressed as a form of mythology during World War I in Germany.<sup>40</sup> There are also very strong and important modern myths in India, deeply rooted in the way in which history is remembered and conceptualized.<sup>41</sup> In response to William McNeill's term 'mythistory' Chris Lorenz has discussed the question of how to interpret history, where there is no clear division between what is myth and what is not.<sup>42</sup> For McNeill and Lorenz this was in the context of the attempt to find out what really happened in the past and how to approach different views of the past. Therefore, it is clear that modern historiography is not free from falling into a mythography. A good example of the problem of the relations between myth and history is the discussion of whether the nation can be considered a myth.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, myth is something strongly present in scholarship and historiography. If modern historians are, in fact, in many situations mythographers, then it would be strange not to see medieval authors in similar way. Even Althoff wrote that myths were an important element of medieval writing. In one of his more methodological articles he noted that the story about a duel between Widukind and Charlemagne evolved as a myth. He even accepted that the story about Conrad giving the crown to Henry I has some common ground with myths, but was adamant in stating that the story has enough information so as not to become one.<sup>44</sup>

Myth is a form of communication.<sup>45</sup> Its main point lies in the story it tells.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, I see narratives of the Ottonian age as myths that were supposed to show proper acts of kings, to give examples and moral guidance. These myths were written, re-written and re-interpreted. They were alive and changed accordingly with the needs of their authors. Liudprand presented three myths of the Ottonians: the myth of a beginning and transfer of power (Part I), a myth of God's providence and Ottonians' special status (Part II), and finally a myth of a special mission (Part III).

40 Burkhardt, 'Von der Geschichte zum Mythos'. See also Frank Hadler's article, where he describes how Great Moravia was reinterpreted throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a part of the myth of the Czechs and Slovaks, Hadler, 'Der Magna-Moravia-Mythos'.

41 Heehs, 'Myth'.

42 McNeill, 'Mythistory'.

43 Lorenz, 'Drawing the Line', p. 45-46. For a very traditional survey, where it is argued that the German nation began in the tenth century, see Averkorn, 'The Process'.

44 Althoff, 'Formen und Funktionen', p. 16-20, 31-32.

45 Barthes, *Mitologie*, p. 239.

46 Lévi-Strauss, 'The Structural Study', p. 210.

Studying such mythology demands a complex approach, and I will look at the same narrative from different points of view. I will compare Liudprand's text to the work of his contemporaries. By comparing these tales, I want to show the ideological differences and similarities in order to explain the construction of the myths and their role in the text. I will also look at a broader range of sources from different times and places. In such approach, there is the question, whether such comparison is even appropriate, whether examples from twelfth century England are applicable to the discussion of tenth century Germany. I am aware of this problem, but this is more a question of the exact tales or motifs that are being compared. In some situations it is profitable to compare the panegyrics about Æthelstan and Abd ar-Rahman III, roughly contemporary but coming from very different backgrounds and culture.<sup>47</sup> What is most important are the questions which are being asked and the approach taken to the sources. Of course, this does not mean that something can be compared with anything. The texts under discussion share a similar confluence of themes and ideas. Certain motifs, concepts and constructions are present in narratives written at distant times. Liudprand's narratives contain ideas that have their counterpart written down both long before he was born and long after his death. By referring to them, it is possible to better explain what the author had in mind. Therefore, the use of sometimes quite diverse texts written much later or earlier will provide insight into their general structures and ideas that were not limited to the tenth century.

### 3 Liudprand's Biography

Almost everything known about Liudprand's life is derived from his own writings, in addition to various speculation and hypotheses. There is no material for something that could be called a reliable biography. Only a fractured image that leaves a lot of questions can be recovered.

Liudprand was born in Pavia sometime in the early 920s. He was young when his father died and his mother re-married.<sup>48</sup> His family's position at the court is difficult to attest. Father and stepfather were both diplomats in the service of Hugh of Arles and later Berengar II.<sup>49</sup> Liudprand was introduced to the court as a member of the choir (he noted that Hugh of Arles liked his

47 Bobrycki, 'Breaking'.

48 *Antapodosis* III.24.

49 *Antapodosis* V.14, 15; Leyser, 'Ends'.

voice).<sup>50</sup> His career survived the political turbulences and the transition of rule from Hugh to Berengar thanks to a bribe paid to the latter. Liudprand then obtained a post in the chancellery.<sup>51</sup>

Around this time, he was given into Church service and joined court school in Pavia at young age. He subsequently became a deacon.<sup>52</sup> Because of his stepfather's patronage, he became a diplomat. He led Berengar's mission in reply to Constantine Porphyrogenitus' inquires on the status of Hugh's son Lothar. The Emperor had heard that Lothar had been stripped of power as a formal King of Italy. This was of interest to him, because his son Romanos had married Lothar's sister Bertha (Eudochia).<sup>53</sup> Liudprand was also sent to learn Greek.

Recently Andrew W. Small has proposed a view of Liudprand as a client of the Macedonian dynasty (in line with Karl Leyser's offhand remark: 'something of a client') or even of Basileios the Nothos, an influential son of Romanos Lekapenos and a grey eminence at the Byzantine court until 986.<sup>54</sup> While he presented some compelling arguments, Small's proposal lacks evidence. It is also highly questionable, as he interprets the depiction of Romanos in *Antapodosis* as overtly positive.<sup>55</sup> As will be shown, this is not the case.

Sometime after his return from the East, Liudprand left his service at Berengar's court and moved to Germany for unknown reasons. There he was probably in a position close to the diplomatic missions sent to Otto's court. He was also working as a diplomat for the King and was sent to Byzantium in 959/960 and then in 968 (described in *Relatio de Legatione*) after he was made a Bishop of Cremona in 961-962.<sup>56</sup> He participated in many of the most important happenings of Otto's rule. Around 970, he acquired the County of Ferrara.<sup>57</sup>

Four of his texts are extant: *Antapodosis*, *Relatio de Legatione*,<sup>58</sup> *Historia Ottonis* (written between June 964 and February 965, describing the invasion

50 *Antapodosis* IV.1.

51 *Antapodosis* V.30.

52 Sutherland, *Liudprand*, p. 4-5.

53 *Antapodosis* VI.2.

54 Leyser, 'Ends', p. 128

55 Small, 'Constantinopolitan', p. 88-89, 94-95.

56 Sutherland, *Liudprand*, p. 78. On the mission, see: Schummer, 'Liudprand of Cremona'; Mayr-Harting, 'Liudprand'; Hoffmann, 'Diplomatie in der Krise'.

57 Sutherland, *Liudprand*, p. 98.

58 It survived only as an editio princeps prepared by Henricus Canisius in 1600; Liudprand of Cremona, 'Legatio Luitprandi'.

of Italy in 961).<sup>59</sup> The final text written by Liudprand is *Homilia*, which was only discovered in the 1980s.<sup>60</sup>

Mario Giovini has worked on Liudprand's autobiographical statements, especially on those where he refers to how he became a member of a royal court and joined the king's choir thanks to his good voice. Giovani notes that Josef Becker compared this description with what Cornelius Nepos wrote about Titus Pomponius Atticus, who was praised for having a good voice.<sup>61</sup> Giovini has also pointed out a similarity in Liudprand's account of being complimented on his knowledge of Latin with how Atticus was praised for his knowledge of Greek and their similar reasons for leaving their homeland.<sup>62</sup> Cornelius Nepos mentioned that Atticus 'was also a strict imitator of the customs of our ancestors, and a lover of antiquity' and wrote historical works about the acts of the Romans.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, like Liudprand, he was writing poems about their deeds. Giovini concluded that Liudprand styled himself as a sort of second Atticus, but in contrast to the original figure living in a period of glory, he was living in an age of decline for Italy.<sup>64</sup> There are some problems with this proposition, as Cornelius Nepos was not widely known in the Middle Ages.<sup>65</sup> It is unknown if Liudprand even knew his works. He never referenced Nepos' work, a problem which has not been addressed by Giovini.

Still, there are parallels between Liudprand's life and potential literary models. Nicholas Staubach has suggested that his reasons for going into exile could have been inspired, or else even came from his reading of Rather of Verona and Boethius. The narrative could have been based on an established model while the reality might have been quite different. There is some indication that Liudprand was part of Otto's entourage during the Augsburg

59 On this, see Grabowski, 'Liudprand of Cremona's'; Chiesa, 'Così si costruisce'.

60 Bischoff, 'Ein Osterpredig'. See also Leyser, 'Liudprand'.

61 Liudprand von Cremona, *Die Werke*, p. 104 note 2; Giovini, 'Percorsi', p. 96. Recently Chiesa noted Giovini's article, but was not convinced, arguing that Nepos' works were relatively unknown and that Liudprand does not give an impression of knowing them; Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, p. 495; also François Bougard saw Giovini's proposition only as a hypothesis which is far from being proven; Liudprand, *Liudprand*, p. 486 note 4.

62 *Antapodosis* VI.3; Cornelius Nepos, *Atticus*, 2.2, 4.1; Giovini, 'Percorsi', p. 97-98.

63 Giovini, 'Percorsi', p. 98-99.

64 Cf. Reeve, 'The Manuscript Tradition', p. 53. The oldest known manuscript of the life of Atticus is from the late twelfth century (Guelferbytanus Gudianus lat. 166). There is hardly any reference to Nepos before that date; Albrecht, *A History*, p. 485; Schanz, *Geschichte*, p. 354-61. See also Cornelius Nepos, *Cornelii Nepotis Vitae*, p. V-IX.

65 Cf. Reeve, 'The Manuscript Tradition', p. 53. The oldest known manuscript of the life of Atticus is from the late twelfth century (Guelferbytanus Gudianus lat. 166). There is hardly any reference to Nepos before that date; Albrecht, *A History*, p. 485; Schanz, *Geschichte*, p. 354-61. See also Cornelius Nepos, *Cornelii Nepotis Vitae*, p. V-IX.

council in 951 which would mean that he changed sides during the Saxon intervention in Italy. For Staubach, this would lead to a better understanding of Berengar's harassment of Liudprand's family and help explain why he did not describe it in *Antapodosis*, whilst at the same time denouncing him for it.<sup>66</sup>

Another item of Liudprand's biography that needs to be brought up here comes from Chiesa's suggestion that the manuscript which was originally in the possession of Bishop Abraham of Freising (also owner of a manuscript containing *Homily*) and is now held in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (under signature Clm 6388 – containing the whole of *Antapodosis* and the locally made copy of *Historia Ottonis* added later) was personally overseen by Liudprand, corrected and with the Greek words and notes written by him.<sup>67</sup> Wolfgang Huschner, based on the dates of their activity, and the parallels in their careers, has proposed that Liudprand was the notary known as Liudolf F. He also argued that their handwriting is identical.<sup>68</sup> His claims have been refuted by Hartmut Hoffmann.<sup>69</sup> If Huschner is correct, then the whole understanding of Liudprand's position during his exile would change. It has been presumed that, apart from limited work in diplomacy, he was not doing much at the Ottonian court and things changed for him only after the campaign in Italy. Identifying him as Liudolf F would not only give Liudprand a post in Otto's chancellery, but would also make him one of the most important notaries, the notary who introduced the term *consors regni* to describe queen Adelheid.<sup>70</sup> As noted, there is no clear explanation for the reasons for Liudprand's departure from Berengar's service. Therefore, it is possible to connect his career with Adelheid. His first patron was Hugh of Arles, Adelheid's father-in-law, and it is certainly possible that he remained loyal to the family.

Not much is known about Liudprand's later years. He appears in some documents and is known to have worked for the bishopric of Cremona, but these are only brief glimpses of his life. There is a text about the translation

66 Staubach, 'Graecae Gloriam', p. 364-5

67 Chiesa, *Liutprando di Cremona*. For the contrary opinion see Hoffmann, 'Autographa'; for a more in-depth view of the Greek in Clm 6388 see Schreiner, 'Zur griechischen Schrift'. For Chiesa's reply see Chiesa, 'Sulla presunta autografia', especially p. 162-71.

68 Huschner, *Transalpine Kommunikation*, p. 572-73, 577-78.

69 Hoffmann, 'Notare', p. 468-71.

70 Huschner, *Transalpine Kommunikation*, p. 523; *Diplome Otto I* 236, 240. Adelheid had a role in enriching the culture of Germany and in the education of her children; Maleczek, 'Otto', p. 155; on education, see Dümmler and Köpke, *Kaiser*, p. 516. Liudprand used the term *consors regni* towards Mathilda in *Antapodosis* IV.15. There is some problem with how to interpret this term. Christina La Rocca saw the use of it in sixth century texts as marking the lower status of women; La Rocca, 'Consors regni'; Liudprand, *Liudprand*, p. 492-93 note 67 (relevant part is on p. 493). Cf. Föbel, *Die Königin*, p. 56-66.

of relics dating from the twelfth century, which fits the popular views on the tenth century realities. It follows many examples of *furta sacra* and Liudprand's actions were not much different from Dietrich of Metz's.<sup>71</sup> The story begins with Bishop of Amelia's fall from grace at the court. He went to Liudprand for help, since he was held in great esteem at the court. But there was a price for the aid: the relics of Saint Himerius from Amelia.<sup>72</sup> The Bishop decided that it was worth paying and together they entered the church at night. The noise they made attracted the interest of the guards into what was happening inside, but Liudprand was prepared and bribed them, so they would not alarm the city. Afterwards, Liudprand returned to Cremona with the relics, and was welcomed there, as he enriched the city with a new patron saint. In the end, the author of the text wrote that Liudprand died returning with Teophanu from Constantinople.<sup>73</sup>

Liudprand has been and still is seen by historians as a vengeful person driven by vile emotions. He is seen as a misogynist, one who not only did not like women, but hated them and took pleasure in disgracing them. He has even been called a pornographer.<sup>74</sup> His personal religiosity was highly doubted, but such a view, raised by Becker,<sup>75</sup> were largely dismissed after the discovery of *Homilia*.<sup>76</sup>

#### 4 Origins of *Antapodosis*

*Antapodosis* was written between 958 and 962. It is divided into six books, with first two books written in 958, and the later parts, up to the end of the fifth book, written around 960 during Liudprand's unspecified travel (possibly on a diplomatic mission) on the island of Paxos.<sup>77</sup> It is accepted that he wrote this particular section (from II.17 till V) shortly before the beginning of Otto's invasion of Italy in the 960s.<sup>78</sup> But, as Ernst Karpf has noted, Liudprand wrote about Constantine Porphyrogenitus in

71 See for example, Siegebert of Gembloux, *Vita Deoderici*, c. 16. On the theft of relics see Geary, *Furta Sacra*; Banaszkiwicz, 'Bischof Alberich'.

72 Himerius was a fifth/sixth century Bishop of Amelia, cf. Piazzzi, *Dal sacramentario*, p. 284-306.

73 Liudprand von Cremona, *Die Werke*, p. X, based on: Ughelli, ed., 'Translatio S. Hymerii Episcopi'.

74 Cf. Pieniędz, 'Wokół „Antapodosis”', p. 30.

75 Leyser, 'Liudprand', p. 120-21; Liudprand von Cremona, *Die Werke*, p. XIII-XIV, XVII, XX.

76 Liudprand of Cremona, *The Complete*, p. 19; Leyser, 'Liudprand', p. 112-13, 114; Bischoff, 'Ein Osterpredig', p. 24-34.

77 *Antapodosis* III.1; cf. Karpf, *Herrscherlegitimation*, p. 6.

78 Karpf, *Herrscherlegitimation*, p. 7-8; cf. Hauck, 'Erzbischof Adalbert', p. 299-305.

the third book of *Antapodosis* as though he were alive, when he died on 9 November 959. Most probably then, at least the third book was written before 960, or in the first few months of that year.<sup>79</sup> The final, sixth book, was probably added later, definitely after Otto's imperial coronation in 962.<sup>80</sup> *Antapodosis* was never finished, ending abruptly in the middle of its narrative. It is unknown what Liudprand would have included in further parts of his work, although Philippe Buc has proposed that it would have been Otto's Imperial coronation, for which there is unfortunately no proof.<sup>81</sup>

There are two redactions of *Antapodosis*. Liudprand subsequently rewrote and rephrased some parts of his text, which included his writing Greek words differently. The manuscript overseen by Liudprand (Clm 6388) was the second redaction.<sup>82</sup> The changes he made to the chronicle have little impact on the analysis undertaken in the present study.

Liudprand stated he wrote his text for Recemund of Elvira, in 956 an ambassador of the Caliph of Cordoba, Abd ar-Rahman III to Otto.<sup>83</sup> Liudprand was then asked to compose the history of all Europe, consisting mainly of 'the deeds of the emperors and kings'. Liudprand was to be able to base his writing not on 'hearsay', but could write 'like an eyewitness'. In 958 he excused himself for being late with his work because the size of it and expressed his uncertainty over whether he was the right person for the task before complaining about the 'envy of detractors'.<sup>84</sup> It has been suggested that this is a reference to his previous experience of writing, evidence for which would be a catalogue entry, where he is noted as the author of an otherwise unknown historical work. All of this is rather doubtful.<sup>85</sup>

79 *Antapodosis* III.26; Karpf, *Herrscherlegitimation*, p. 8.

80 *Antapodosis* VI.4.

81 Buc, 'Noch einmal', p. 166.

82 Liudprandus Cremonensis, *Opera Omnia*, p. LXXIV-LXXIX; Williams, 'The Transmission and Reception', p. 96-100.

83 He was sometimes identified with Rabi ibn Zaid, on Recemund and *Calendar of Cordoba* attributed to him, see Christys, *Christians*, p. 108-34. Calling Recemund a Bishop of Elvira might mean that Liudprand either had contacts with Recemund after his return to Cordoba, or had a source of further information, as Recemund most probably took this post in 958 (on the post see there, p. 111).

84 'Imperatorum regumque facta [...] auditu dubius [...] visione certus [...] detrectatorum invidia', *Antapodosis* I.1; Squatriti, p. 44.

85 Sutherland, *Liudprand*, p. 50-53. The idea was revived in Riu Riu, 'Consideraciones en torno'; see the point by point discussion of this proposition on a well known blog: Jarrett, 'Chasing a Fake Chronicler'; on this see also comments by Bougard in Liudprand, *Liudprand*, p. 37-38; on the author of the chronicle of the *fake Liudprand* see Rodríguez Mediano and García-Arenal, 'Jerónimo Román de la Higuera'.



It is interesting to see how Liudprand responded to his imagined critics. Quoting Terence, he writes that they would attack him as there are too many books and too few readers for all of them.<sup>86</sup> Also, everything has already been said. Liudprand's answer is that those people who 'love knowledge' are like people who have 'dropsy', with each one read they need more books to read.<sup>87</sup>

He notes that the stories about pagans could be harmful to readers and as the acts of those whom he describes in his work were not in any way worse than those of Julius, Pompey, Hannibal, Hasdrubal, and Scipio Africanus, then there is no reason not to write about them. His chronicle is also needed as there is a clear connection between the acts of its heroes and God's providence. Showing this, would enable Liudprand to point at both proper and wrong deeds. Thus, he describes the acts of 'weak kings and effeminate princes', as examples of bad rulers.<sup>88</sup> In *Antapodosis* it is seen how it is right for God to punish them for their improper deeds.

Liudprand also writes that a mind is hampered by reading the same things all the time, and that readers occasionally need a change. It could either be a 'comedy', or a 'history of the heroes'.<sup>89</sup> In their interpretation of these statements, some scholars have created the idea that Liudprand purposely wrote a humorous history of Europe. Gustavo Vinay has called the chronicle 'La "Commedia" di Liutprando'.<sup>90</sup>

Initially Liudprand did not explain *Antapodosis*, the strange title he chose for his work. In two manuscripts, in Clm 6388 and in the twelfth or thirteenth century Harl. 2688<sup>91</sup> the following text is placed at the beginning of the text:

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND SON AND HOLY SPIRIT, HERE  
 BEGINS THE ΑΝΤΑΠΟΔΟΣΕΩΣ [retributive] BOOK OF THE KINGS AND  
 PRINCES OF THE EUROPEAN AREA, COMPOSED BY LIUDPRAND,  
 DEACON OF THE PAVIAN CHURCH, EN TH ΕΧΜΑΛΟΣΙΑ ΑΥΤΟΥ [during  
 his wanderings], FOR RECEMUND, BISHOP OF THE SPANISH PROVINCE  
 OF ELVIRA.<sup>92</sup>

86 Terentius, *The Eunuch*, Pr. 41.

87 'Phylosophi ydropicorum', *Antapodosis* I.1; Squatriti, p. 44.

88 'Enervorum [...] regum principumve effeminatorum', *Antapodosis* I.1; Squatriti, p. 45.

89 'Comoediarum [...] heroum [...] historia', *Antapodosis* I.1; Squatriti, p. 44.

90 Vinay, *Alto Medioevo latino*, p. 391.

91 Liudprandus Cremonensis, *Opera Omnia*, p. XXXI-XXXII.

92 'IN NOMINE PATRIS ET FILII ET SPIRITUS SANCTI INCIPIT LIBER ΑΝΤΑΠΟΔΟΣΕΩΣ REGUM ATQUE PRINCIPUM PARTIS EUROPAE, A LIUDPRANDO, TICINENSIS ECCLESIAE DIACONE, EN TH ΕΧΜΑΛΟΣΙΑ ΑΥΤΟΥ, AD RECEMUNDUM, HISPANIAE PROVINTIAE LIBERRITANAE ECCLESIAE EPISCOPUM, EDITUS', *Antapodosis* Incipit; Squatriti, p. 41.

This title is only later explained in a second prologue at the beginning of the third book. There, writing to an unnamed Recemund, Liudprand suggests that he probably wondered why the chronicle is given the title *Retribution*, since it is about 'illustrious men'. He explains that he wanted to repay all the misdeeds he and his family endured under Berengar and Willa. He attacks them, writing that Berengar 'does not so much rule as tyrannize in Italy', while Willa is 'called a second Jezebel on account of the immensity of her despotism and a child-eating witch on account of her insatiable desire for robbery'.<sup>93</sup> Liudprand wanted to show their wrongdoing, and their sacrilegious acts. He wanted to achieve a retribution for their evil deeds and praise good people.

Finally, in the first chapter of the sixth book, Liudprand describes himself as the victim of various evil things and states that he should be a 'writer of tragedies instead of histories', nevertheless he implores his readers to be optimistic.<sup>94</sup> It is not proper to lament over misfortunes; instead everyone should look for a positive change. Liudprand quotes both Psalm 22, in which David explains that he will not only be protected but also will be granted many good things in return for his faithfulness and loyalty to God, and the Letter to the Romans (Rom 5.3-5) about the gratification for believing in God.

It is also important to consider whom Liudprand addressed his chronicle to. Unlike Widukind's chronicle, it was not meant for a member of the Liudolfings family, but was dedicated to a legate of a foreign power. Recemund's mission was treated as a very important one. He was welcomed with great pomp at the court.<sup>95</sup> This does not mean that *Antapodosis* was actually written for him to read. It is possible that Recemund never received it.

Some scholars are doubtful about Liudprand's expressed reasons for writing. In his discussion of the similarities between *Antapodosis* and *Gesta Berengarii imperatoris*, Buc noted that Liudprand's chronicle could be

93 'Virorum illustrium [...] in Italia non regnat sed tyrannizat [...] ob immensitatem tyrannidis secunda Jezebel et ob rapinarum insacietatem Lamia proprio appellatur vocabulo, actus designat ostendat et clamitet', *Antapodosis* III.1; Squatriti, p. 110-11. Cf. *Historia Ottonis* c. 1. Liudprand also added that Willa, the wife of Berengar II had an affair with a certain chaplain Dominic on account of the size of his penis. This could be Liudprand suggesting that Berengar was not manly enough for her, *Antapodosis* V.32; Balzaretti, 'Liutprand', p. 121.

94 'Tragoedum [...] quam historiographum', *Antapodosis* VI.1; Squatriti, p. 195.

95 Stephen Wailes has speculated that the way in which Recemund was welcomed was criticized by Hrotsvith. Pelagius, one of main martyrs of her work, was executed after he refused Abd ar Rahman III's sexual advances, Wailes, *Spirituality and Politics*, p. 68-78; Wailes, 'The Sacred Stories in Verse', p. 107-09; Stevenson, 'Hrotsvit in Context', p. 58-59; Dronke, *Women Writers*, p. 56-57.

thought of as a reply to that text, as some sort of anti-panegyric.<sup>96</sup> Elsewhere, Buc claimed that the whole idea of the chronicle was to provide a needed cause for the justification of Otto's campaigns in Italy.<sup>97</sup> Then, he suggests that Liudprand was attempting to hide his treacherous behaviour towards the Italian kings by describing them in the most evil way.<sup>98</sup> *Antapodosis* is open to interpretations, as can be seen in Leyser's suggestion that the text was mainly connected with the relations between Christianity and Islam, where it would be some form of instruction about proper behaviour for the Spanish Church.<sup>99</sup> While in his translation of Liudprand's works Paolo Squatriti noted that *Antapodosis* was written for readers from outside Saxony, he also saw the German magnates as a targeted audience.<sup>100</sup> Finally, Anastasia Brakhman proposed Rather of Verona as the intended reader of *Antapodosis* in the hope that he would help Liudprand's career.<sup>101</sup> The only certain thing is that the only extant tenth century copy of the chronicle was in the possession of Abraham of Freising and that he also possessed other works by Liudprand. It is also possible that there was a complete manuscript of the first redaction in Metz, but all that is left is a photocopy of a medieval excerpt containing the Greek words from it.<sup>102</sup>

## 5 Language of *Antapodosis*

Liudprand's language is an example of the learned Latin of the tenth century.<sup>103</sup> He knew it well and was able to stylise his text to resemble classical authors like Virgil. An evocation of other writers is an important element of his style. His use of Greek is also interesting.<sup>104</sup> There has been some debate about the extent of his knowledge of Greek.<sup>105</sup> Why Liudprand decided to write words or even sentences in Greek, a language not well

96 Buc, 'Noch einmal', p.164.

97 Buc, *The Dangers*, p.19; Buc, 'Noch einmal', p. 167.

98 Buc, 'Italian Hussies', p. 210.

99 Leyser, 'Ends', p. 133-135.

100 Liudprand of Cremona, *The Complete*, p. 14-15, 87 note 30.

101 Brakhman, *Außenseiter*, p. 65-71. For a review of Brakhman study, which also notes its weaknesses, see Roach, 'Anastasia Brakhman'.

102 See Grabowski, 'Author's Annotations'

103 On Liudprand's language, see Gandino, *Il vocabolario*; Ricci, *Problemi sintattici*. See also Janson, *Prose Rhythm*, p. 41-42.

104 On this, see: Grabowski, 'Author's Annotations'.

105 Sutherland, *Liudprand*, p. 23; Sutherland, 'The Mission', p. 73 note 57; cf. Schreiner, 'Zur griechischen Schrift', p. 305-17; Koder and Weber, *Liutprand*, p. 23-61.

known in the West, is difficult to explain.<sup>106</sup> Liudprand could not expect that readers would understand what he wrote, especially as the meaning of words or sentences could not be deduced from the context in which they were used. Some scholars believe that this was his way of showing off his education and knowledge. In Clm 6388 Greek is transliterated and translated into Latin.<sup>107</sup> This shows that for Liudprand being understood was something of great significance. Staubach, with whom I agree, has argued that Liudprand's use of Greek was a way of highlighting the Imperial idea behind his chronicle.<sup>108</sup>

There are 14 poems in *Antapodosis*. Liudprand clearly wanted to show his poetic abilities. The clearest example of this is his invocation to mountains that let Berengar II and Willa pass them.<sup>109</sup> There is no pattern for their appearance in the text. Sometimes they are difficult to interpret.<sup>110</sup> In the poems Liudprand expressed his opinions more freely. They also allowed him to reinforce some of his arguments by repeating them in a different form. Poems also make a change in the monotonous narration. Including poetry in a historical work comes from ancient rhetoric and the Bible, where the prose text of scripture is interlaced with poetry.<sup>111</sup> Also, as Henry of Huntingdon argued, it provides a moral guidance just as a history does.<sup>112</sup>

106 Cf. Berschin, *Greek Letters*.

107 Liudprand of Cremona, *The Complete*, p. 16-17; for the discussion of the Greek used in Clm 6388 see Koder and Weber, *Liudprand*, p. 62-68; see also Schreiner, 'Zur griechischen Schrift' and Grabowski, 'Author's Annotations'.

108 Staubach, 'Graecae Gloriam', p. 347, 349, 365. See also Grabowski, 'Author's Annotations'. Anastasia Brakhman has a completely different argument about Liudprand's use of Greek: along with the structure of the work it was an attempt at self-presentation as a person eligible for work in Otto's diplomatic service. She also adheres to the idea that as the readership of Greek was limited, then it is possible to see Rather of Verona among the few intended readers. Brakhman, *Außenseiter*, p. 48-50. This is hardly proven and ignores the manuscript evidence for the text including translations in various forms.

109 *Antapodosis* V.11.

110 Nevertheless, never to such extent as in case of Dudo of Saint-Quentin's chronicle, who like Liudprand, used many poems, but because of their length and complexity it is impossible to have one interpretation of them. See Lifshitz, 'Dudo of Saint Quentin', p. 914. On Dudo see Kersken, *Geschichtsschreibung in Europa der 'nationes'*, p. 81-86.

Michael Lapidge sees Liudprand, Atto of Vercelli and Dudo as continental authors who followed a hermeneutic style and used intentionally difficult, obscure and arcane words. Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style', p. 70-71.

111 Brakhman saw in Liudprand's use of poems an influence from his 'friend and mentor' ('Freund und Mentor') Rather of Verona; Brakhman, *Außenseiter*, p. 55.

112 Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, [Prologus]; cf. Kempshall, *Rhetoric*, p. 360-3 (on the possible negative effects of using poetry in medieval historiography, see p. 363-66).

## 6 Other Contemporary Sources: Widukind's *Res gestae saxonicae*; *Continuation of the Chronicle of Regino of Prüm*; Hrotsvit's *Gesta Ottonis*

The corpus of Ottonian historiography is diverse. Widukind's *Res Gestae Saxonicae* was written in the late 960s, and later expanded to cover the rest of Otto's reign.<sup>113</sup> It was dedicated to Otto's daughter Mathilda.<sup>114</sup> It covers the history of the Saxons from their *origo gentis* to the death of Otto in 973 and the beginning of Otto II's reign.<sup>115</sup> Narratives about the Ottonians found in Liudprand's chronicle have corresponding accounts in Widukind's text. As there is no direct evidence that either author knew about the other or his work, the *Res Gestae Saxonicae* provides ample material for comparison. Widukind presents the story from a Saxon perspective, rarely ventures abroad and is mostly concerned with what took place in his homeland and around the ruling family.

*Continuation of the Chronicle of Regino of Prüm*, was most probably written by Adalbert of Magdeburg, who continued the narrative of Regino's text from 907 to 967. As Lintzel, Karl Hauck and Buc have shown, it was in many passages based on Liudprand's works.<sup>116</sup> It is valuable not only because of Adalbert's range of interests, but also because of the changes he made. As others have shown, Adalbert also made a revision of Regino's text in order to create a unified text (yet one which was clearly written by two authors).<sup>117</sup> Adalbert probably wrote in the context of Otto II's imperial coronation. It would have been then designed by William of Mainz as a present for his younger brother on such a glorious occasion. The final version was given to Otto II and then placed in the archives, from where it was acquired by Annalista Saxo. Other manuscripts were based on versions written prior to the occasion.<sup>118</sup>

Hrotsvit is nowadays one of the most popular authors of the tenth century. While her theatrical works are the best known, all her texts have

113 On Widukind, see Beumann, *Widukind*. See also Bagge, *Kings*, p. 23-94. On the dating, see Robbie, 'Can Silence'.

114 Widukind, *Ad Dominam Mathildam Imperatoris Filiam Libri Primi Incipit Prephatio*.

115 On that see: Banaszkiwicz, 'Widukind'.

116 Lintzel, 'Studien', p. 352-69; Hauck, 'Erzbischof Adalbert', p. 276-353; Buc, 'Noch einmal', p. 151-78. Michael Frase has disagreed with this thesis and he has noted many differences between both texts. In his view, the similarities are not sufficient proof that one text has been based on another, Frase, *Friede und Königsherrschaft*, p. 50-56.

117 See for example Frase, *Friede und Königsherrschaft*, p. 23; Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg, *History and politics*, p. 57.

118 Jasiński, 'Zagadnienie', p. 20-22; for more context see Nass, *Die Reichschronik*, p. 264-67.

received attention from scholars.<sup>119</sup> *Gesta Ottonis* is one of the two historical poems she wrote; the other is the history of the Gandersheim monastery known as *Primordia Coenobii Gandeshemensis*.<sup>120</sup> Sadly, *Gesta* exists only in an incomplete version with many parts lost. There are some similarities between the text of Hrotsvit's *Gesta Ottonis* and Liudprand's *Antapodosis* in information and the wording used.<sup>121</sup>

*Vita Mathildis reginae antiquior* and *posterior* will also be considered. While both were written long after Otto's death, they contain much valuable information about the events described by Liudprand and others.<sup>122</sup>

## 7 Interpreter of Liudprand: Frutolf of Michelsberg

Frutolf's biography is not well known.<sup>123</sup> He wrote about many subjects, and the most popular of his works was his chronicle. He was a director of the *scriptorium*, the library, and the school at Bamberg. There he had access to many texts, not only from Germany, but also from Italy and France. His main source was the collection of historical works held there. Frutolf ended his text in 1099. His only known original manuscript was later continued by Ekkehard of Aura.<sup>124</sup>

Frutolf attempted to construct a unified text from sometimes contrary sources, breaking one narration with interpolation from elsewhere. While he followed previous authors, he nevertheless expanded upon them and made corrections. He was a supporter of Henry IV and his chronicle was written with the glorification of the Emperor in mind.<sup>125</sup>

His Chronicle had many copies and it is clear that it was the main source of knowledge about their history for many generations.<sup>126</sup> It was both read

119 Cf. the following collections of articles Brown and Wailes, eds., *A Companion to Hrotsvit*; Brown, Wilson, and McMillin, eds., *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim*; Wilson, ed., *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: rara avis in Saxonia?*. The edited collection of a selection of her works with an introduction and interpretative essay, *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: A Florilegium* is a good introduction to Hrotsvit.

120 Cf. Szczepański, 'Prorectwo i obietnica'.

121 Staubach, 'Graecae Gloriam', p. 364 and especially note 141 there.

122 On *Vita*, see Schütte, *Untersuchungen*.

123 Gawłowska, *Frutolfa*, p. 57. The best concise introduction to Frutolf, his life and his work is the introduction to the English translation of the last 100 years of his chronicle, see Frutolf and Eccardus, *Chronicles*, especially p. 15-44. Christian Lohmer prepares new edition of the chronicle for MGH.

124 Gawłowska, *Frutolfa*, p. 58-61, 79-80, 103.

125 Gawłowska, *Frutolfa*, p. 107-11, 113, 117, 123-24.

126 Cf. Neudeck, *Erzählen von Kaiser Otto*, p. 74.

and directly served either as the basis upon which other chronicles were written, or else was used extensively in the process of making a new text. Among those that used his work are: Annalista Saxo, Godfrey of Viterbo and Otto of Freising.<sup>127</sup> Such influence marks Frutolf as among the foremost chroniclers of his times. The nature of the reception of his text made his work a guide for subsequent authors. The various continuations also had a role in disseminating his narrative and serve as further proof of his status as a quintessential chronicler of the end of eleventh and beginning of twelfth century. This popularity make Frutolf an important source of the views about and visions of how Ottonian history was perceived in later periods.

## 8 Understanding Liudprand's Works: Textbooks

When inquiring into the subject of the modern reception of the Ottonian past, a guideline as to which texts will be considered has to be established. For this type of study biographies and more general studies of dynasties are the most fitting. While some of this type of work have a questionable academic status, they give a much better insight into the character and nature of the interpretation of the past. Such works were also much more influential with the general public than more academic scholarships.

While it seems that the best date to begin the inquiry would be the unification of Germany in 1871, this has a certain limitation. The most influential work on Henry I for most of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries was first published in 1837: Georg Waitz's *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs unter König Heinrich I.*<sup>128</sup> The book had later editions which updated the text to include what was then the most up to date modern research, with the third edition appearing in 1885. Therefore, it seems most sensible to include the post-unification edition of this book. There is also the need to define the best end date of research. For such an arbitrary limit I went with the beginning of the twenty-first century, therefore Matthias Becher's biography of Otto will not be discussed here.<sup>129</sup>

The selection was achieved by including the most well-known books that also mark certain stages in the historical research and approach to the Ottonian dynasty. This is of course a small sample, as German historiography

<sup>127</sup> Annalista Saxo; *Otonis episcopi Frisingensis Chronica*; Dunbabin, 'The Distinctive Elements', p. 37-38; Ehlers, *Otto von Freising*, p. 166.

<sup>128</sup> The first edition from 1837 included an introduction by Ranke.

<sup>129</sup> Becher, *Otto*.

is one of the most widely published, but the character of each of the books signifies the dominant traditions and changes that have taken place. The following books will be discussed here: Waitz, *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs unter König Heinrich I*; Dümmler and Köpke, *Kaiser Otto der Große*; Cartellieri, *Die Weltstellung des Deutschen Reiches 911-1047*; Lüdtkke, *König Heinrich I*; Thoss, *Heinrich I (919-936)*; Holtzmann, *Kaiser Otto der Grosse and Geschichte der sächsischen Kaiserzeit*; Günter, *Kaiser Otto der Grosse*; Diwald, *Heinrich der Erste*; Giese, *Heinrich I*; Althoff, *Die Ottonen*; Althoff and Keller, *Die Zeit des späten Karolinger und der Ottonen*; Laudage, *Otto der Grosse*.<sup>130</sup>

When discussing German historiography, a special place needs to be given to Ranke.<sup>131</sup> In 1833 he opened the historical seminary at the University of Berlin. Whilst he is best remembered these days for his often misunderstood statement that his aim was to write 'how it really was' ('wie es eigentlich gewesen') and for his establishing the methodological drive to go back to primary sources, mainly archives and documents, Ranke's influence on German historiography was not limited to this. Even more important was that his students governed the most important institution for studying the past, from MGH to *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*.<sup>132</sup> His seminary should be seen as the birthplace of the dominant group of German historians in the nineteenth century. His influence was not only confined to his students, but should also include those who were influenced by the works of Ranke's school. His pupils believed that the aim of the historian is to present an account of what really happened in the past, whilst additionally many of them were also proud patriots and promoters of the idea of Germany acquiring a fitting place amongst other states and nations. These beliefs were not seen as contradictory for them, something which is best exemplified

130 While at first sight it could be profitable to look at the way the Ottonians were seen in, say, Poland, or England, this would not provide sufficient basis for the discussion of German myths. There is not enough comparative material (for example the first Polish biography of Otto the Great, written by Jerzy Strzelczyk, was published by Wydawnictwo Poznańskie in 2018) and to a certain degree these works are based on German scholarship. Thus, the subject of how German scholarship was read by the outsiders and how it influenced, or not, both national and international histories in nineteenth and twentieth century is rather a subject for another study.

131 The following section is a very brief summary of the history of German historiography. This subject easily encompasses multiple multi-volume studies, and consequently some simplification of the complicated evolution of German historical scholarship has had to be employed. On the subject generally, see Althoff, ed., *Die Deutschen*; Moraw and Schieffer, eds., *Die deutschsprachige Mediävistik*.

132 Thompson, *A History*, p. 187-88; see also chart on p. 190-91.



by the attitude of Ranke's student Friedrich Wilhelm von Giesebrecht. In *Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit* he combined a very detailed account of German history with nationalist and imperial idea of Germany.<sup>133</sup> Most of Ranke's students were firm believers in *Machtpolitik*, that is the view of power (understood broadly as military might and political influence) as the driving force of politics in a world which was dominated by so called Great Powers.<sup>134</sup> As has already been noted, Ranke and his followers had significant influence on the choices for employment at most of the academic centres in Germany. This created the situation where a small group of anti-revolutionary and mostly pro-Prussian (or to be exact pro-Hohenzollern) professors shaped later generations' conception of history as they decided who would become a professional historian.<sup>135</sup> It has to be added that never before had historians had such political importance in Germany as in the years 1830-71, that is in the period leading up to the unification of the country.<sup>136</sup>

Ranke himself wrote what could be called 'national histories'. His works were deeply rooted in the Romantic rejection of the Enlightenment and its claims to universalism. It was in the same tradition that the brothers Grimm research into folk-tales was carried out.<sup>137</sup> For German historians, the state became a focal point of their research, seen as the point to which history led up to. The German nation was divided into regional elements, but was bound by the higher power that is the state and was distinct from other European nations. Such views led to the domination of certain subjects in German historical research: politics, dynasties and the military.<sup>138</sup> Ranke saw history as a manichean conflict between powers and ideas. This conflict could be a clash between the Empire and the Papacy, but also between religion and science.<sup>139</sup> Whilst ostensibly he was not involved in modern day political affairs, it did not mean he was against Prussian policies. He endured a fair share of criticism, even from his own students, for such a

133 Mierzwa, *Historia*, p. 212-13. Nationalism is a loaded word, and thus it can be difficult to discuss what it actually means when it is said that someone was nationalist or espoused nationalist attitudes. For example, Ranke has been labeled a 'European' as being the opposite of a nationalist; see Iggers, 'The Intellectual', p. 44. Such a view is highly limiting since, in the nineteenth century, there was little contradiction between being both a nationalist and a European.

134 Thompson, *A History*, p. 189.

135 Iggers, 'Nationalism', p. 20.

136 Iggers, *The German*, p. 91.

137 Berger, 'The Invention', p. 23.

138 Berger, 'The Invention', p. 28-30; Iggers, 'The Intellectual', p. 48.

139 Stuchtey, 'German', p. 166.

lack of direct involvement in politics.<sup>140</sup> This does not mean that his works were devoid of reference to modern politics. There is a clear political outlook visible throughout his works, in which he expresses an anti-revolutionary attitude and to a certain degree a belief in the old conservative structures of Austria and Prussia.<sup>141</sup> His students were in this respect very different. Heinrich von Sybel, for example, who broke with Ranke, was one of the pillars of the so-called Prussian school of history. For them, history and politics were united, to the extent that a historical work written about the French revolution was overtly a work written against the possibility of revolution in Germany.<sup>142</sup>

In the early years of his seminary, Ranke conceived a series of books that would describe the history of Germany under the reign of the Ottonians. This was proposed in line with the patriotic tendencies which were present at the time in Germany. The Saxon dynasty reigning over a unified Germany was something that was looked up to and admired in the early part of nineteenth century. This was well understood by Ranke.<sup>143</sup> It was also clearly connected to a search for the origins of the German state and nation.<sup>144</sup> His own pupils would produce the work, and would take part in a contest to write the best possible text. Ranke later mentioned that he was inspired by other works on the great dynasties.<sup>145</sup> It can be argued that, to a certain extent, these books expressed Ranke's ideas about historical work most profoundly, of historical narratives consisting of a detailed account of what happened in the past, devoid of the historian's emotions.<sup>146</sup>

Three authors who had enormous impact on the nineteenth century vision of the Ottonian kingdom came from this school. The first was Waitz and his already mentioned work *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs unter König Heinrich I.* Waitz was probably the closest student to Ranke and it is interesting to note that, rather symbolically, they died two days apart.<sup>147</sup> The book exemplifies Ranke's school and ethos, being very dry in style, and a systematic reconstruction of history based on a critical reading of

140 Thompson, *A History*, p. 189.

141 Eskildsen, 'Leopold Ranke's', p. 447, 449; cf. Schleier, 'Geschichtstheorie', especially p. 120. Ranke could be seen as someone who saw God's providence at work in history, an idea which has to a large extent been left out of the vulgarised view of his work.

142 Thompson, *A History*, p. 209-10; cf. Schleier, 'Geschichtstheorie', p. 128-29.

143 Ranke, 'Vorrede', p. VI-VII.

144 Zientara, "'Teutones'"; Grabowski, 'Wizje'.

145 Thompson, *A History*, p. 188.

146 Eskildsen, 'Leopold Ranke's', p. 453.

147 Thompson, *A History*, p. 202.

the sources. Waitz himself was considerably more involved in the politics of the time than was Ranke. He participated in the Frankfurt Assembly in 1848-1849 on behalf of *Erbkaiserliche Partei*, a moderate-liberal party that wanted a united Germany with the Hohenzollerns as Emperors.<sup>148</sup> From 1875 to his death in 1886 he was also the president of MGH at the time when it was reformed from being a private into a state institution, located in Berlin. Waitz's book was not only popular, but had a long lifetime with two subsequent editions during his life.<sup>149</sup> His book became the main reference and served as the only serious biography of Henry until the twenty-first century.

Ranke's second student was Rudolf Köpke, and his entry was on Otto I. *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs unter der Herrschaft König Otto's I. 936-957* was published in 1838.<sup>150</sup> The rest of Otto's reign was described by Wilhelm Dönniges.<sup>151</sup> Köpke was also involved in political affairs. He participated in the events of 1848 and in 1866 published a series of articles and then a booklet propagating the idea of the unification of Germany under Prussia.<sup>152</sup> Despite his political sympathies, Köpke was loyal to Ranke's concepts for the writing of history.<sup>153</sup>

There is one other student of Ranke that has to be considered here. Whilst he did not become a historian, he nevertheless had a profound influence on the direction of historical research. King Maximilian II of Bavaria studied in Berlin in 1830-1 before he acquired his crown and was taught by Ranke. Historical research remained one of his greatest interests and it was an important element of Maximilian's project for making Bavaria and especially Munich an important centre of culture and sciences. Thus, in 1858 a Historical Commission was created at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

This institution took over the role of publishing the *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs* and it was where Waitz's book was published from the second edition onwards.<sup>154</sup> Also, Köpke began work on the second edition of his book on Otto for the Commission, in which he encompassed the whole reign. The work started in 1863, but took a long time to complete, the completion of the work undoubtedly was effected by Köpke's decision

148 On Ranke and the revolution, see also Mommsen, *Stein*, p. 145-59.

149 Waitz, *Jahrbücher* (1885) p. V, VII.

150 Köpke, *Jahrbücher*.

151 Dönniges, *Jahrbücher*.

152 Köpke, *Das Ende*.

153 Dümmler and Köpke, *Kaiser*, p. V.

154 Waitz, *Jahrbücher* (1837), p. II; Waitz, *Jahrbücher* (1863), p. II; Waitz, *Jahrbücher* (1885), p. II.

to rewrite his work from scratch. The book also changed in its style and its scope. Instead of a yearly account like the first edition of *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs*, it became a biography of the King, something highlighted by the change of the title: *Kaiser Otto der Große*, with the earlier title *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs* relegated to a subtitle. Work on the book was interrupted by Köpke's bad health in the late 1860s before his death in 1870, leaving behind an unfinished book. The Commission chose Ernst Dümmler, with whom Köpke had been in contact, to finish the work.<sup>155</sup> Dümmler was also a student of Ranke and later on succeeded Waitz in the post of director of MGH.

Alexander Cartellieri, another person important in my study, exemplifies both the evolution of the German historiography and the influence of Ranke. Cartellieri, who died in 1955, was originally one of the most eminent scholars of the Wilhelmine era, but lived long enough not only to see it fall apart, but also to witness to the end of the Third Reich. This long life made him into a somewhat peculiar figure, to some extent a leftover from bygone times. His *Die Weltstellung des Deutschen Reiches* shows this quite well. It is a book that was deeply rooted in nineteenth century ideas of the state as an ultimate goal and in the concepts of *macht*, as both the aim and the goal for nations. *Macht* – broadly speaking and understood even more broadly – power was seen as the end-goal of the state.<sup>156</sup> Thus he was interested in politics and military history but also with the idea of the need for painstakingly researched facts. Even though the book was published after the end of the Empire in the period of the Weimar Republic, it exemplifies the *longue durée* of historiographical concepts. After 1918 there was hardly a change with regard to the view of the state as the end goal of all progress, in which it fought for its rightful place with other states. Even though there were repeated attempts to shift historical research onto a different track (for example by Karl Lamprecht in the nineteenth century), there was a clear continuity of ideas and approach up to 1945.<sup>157</sup> In the perception of many German historians the success of policy and of politicians was a form of moral justification for their actions.<sup>158</sup>

Thus, when in 1933 the new regime led by Hitler conceived the idea of a Third Reich, it meant more the breaking with Weimar – that being

155 Dümmler and Köpke, *Kaiser*, p. V-VI.

156 Iggers, *The German*, p. 130.

157 Stuchtey, 'German', p. 164-65.

158 Iggers, *The German*, p. 96.

the Second Reich – than an attempt to return to the Imperial past of the Hohenzollerns. For the historiography of the Saxon dynasty, the new regime provided new impetus. This was the consequence of the combination of the firm ideological belief on the part of the new elite of a connection with the Saxons and of anniversaries lining up. In 1936, on millennial anniversary of the death of Henry I there were extravagant celebrations led by Heinrich Himmler in Quedlinburg.<sup>159</sup>

This new age also introduced new people to compete with established academia. NSDAP was not a unified political party and the ideology of it was a garbled mixture of not only different but sometimes contrary ideas and concepts. This was also seen in the approach taken towards academia. On the one hand, there was a clear need for the new regime to legitimise itself through a connection with the old elites, but at the same time there was a strong element of rebellion against that establishment. Therefore, it is not surprising that the two most important books on Henry that appeared at that time, were written by the people who were outside of the old system, and yet who still claimed to fit with the tradition of a previous research.

To understand this mixture, it is helpful to look at the authors. The first author under consideration here is Franz Lüdtke, who was not a professional historian – in the sense of being employed in academia. He was a teacher in what was then German Bydgoszcz before World War I. Active in nationalistic circles, he was especially angry about its outcome. He was viciously anti-Polish and believed that the lands lost by Germany in the war should be

<sup>159</sup> Besier, 'Neo-Pagan Religiosity'. Halle, '936 Begräbnis Heinrichs I.', p. 17-19; the speech Himmler made during the celebrations was subsequently printed: Himmler, *Rede*.

The division of power in the Third Reich and the conflicts between Hitler's associates had an impact on how Henry I was perceived. He was an SS hero, consequently the organizations under the control of Alfred Rosenberg were much less interested in him; Halle, '936 Begräbnis Heinrichs I.', p. 19-20. One of the exceptions to this was the book by Werner Radig, who argued for the existence of a cycle of 1000 years in history, enabling him to directly compare Henry with Hitler in the introduction to his book. He arranged a series of dates for Henry which were intended to parallel Hitler's career. A reader aware of Nazi history would easily see the parallel with the dates 919, 924 and 933. With the addition of 1000 years, the dates can be connected with Hitler's rise. So while Henry became a king in 919, Hitler created NSDAP in 1919. In Radig's argument Henry had difficulties in the East in 924 while 1924 was the year of the Munich Putsch. In 933 Henry won a war against the Hungarians, while Hitler became Chancellor in 1933. Radig, *Heinrich I.*, p. 10-12; Halle, '936 Begräbnis Heinrichs I.', p. 20. The book was published as part of the commemoration of the 1000 year anniversary of Henry's death and is primarily a summary of archaeological findings. In other publications connected to the anniversary, Henry was compared to Frederick Wilhelm I, as Otto the Great was compared to Frederick the Great: Diederichs, *Heinrich*, p. 4. This vision of the repetition of history in cycles was very popular in Germany, see for example Vowinckel, '... ein zweiter Napoleon?'

returned.<sup>160</sup> He worked in many organizations for emigrants to Germany after 1918 and was the editor of the virulently anti-Polish weekly *Ostland*. Amongst the elite of the Nazi regime he was connected to Alfred Rosenberg and held a post in the Office of Foreign Affairs (*Außenpolitisches Amt*) of NSDAP.<sup>161</sup> These sentiments led him to later write a textbook for Wehrmacht about what he called a thousand years struggle between Germany and Poland.<sup>162</sup> Apart from this, his writing was mainly of historical fiction and poems,<sup>163</sup> including one about Henry, in a book dedicated to the infamous Arthur Greiser.<sup>164</sup> In the 1930s, he produced non-fiction books, of which the third was *König Heinrich I*. For Lüdtkke, as is clear from his foreword, Henry was a king principally concerned with Germany expansion into the East.<sup>165</sup> He argued that scholars were cautious when writing about Henry, and he wished to fill this perceived gap in order to show Henry as the ‘creator and leader’ of the German people.<sup>166</sup> Even though Lüdtkke claims to use a lot of scholarship and sources his ideological views dominate the text.<sup>167</sup>

There is very little information available about Alfred Thoss. He studied in Berlin, Vienna, and Jena.<sup>168</sup> He could be seen as someone who could have been employed at a university, but things did not line up that way. By 1934 he was working in Rassenamt, a part of SS-Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt (RuSHA).<sup>169</sup> He was in the SS (number 153 988) and on 9 November 1940 he became an *SS-Sturmbannführer*.<sup>170</sup> He was responsible for failed plans for

160 He held a prominent position in the Bund Deutscher Osten, cf. Haar, *Historiker*, p. 133-34. See also his short biography in Walther, ed., *Musen*, p. 193. Strangely, this biography completely omits the fact that Lüdtkke was a Nazi. It also mentions that there was a street in Bydgoszcz named after him without noting that this happened during the German occupation of the city.

161 Lüdtkke and Müller-Schwanneke, eds., *Rufer des Ostens*, p. 118.

162 Lüdtkke, *Ein Jahrtausend Krieg*. On the importance of this book for later historiography, see Strauchold, ‘Der Westgedanke’, p. 69. Lüdtkke also edited a book of propaganda about the Polish-German border: Lüdtkke and Thiele, eds., *Der Kampf um deutsches Ostland*. There is no date on the book, but it was published either in 1931 or 1933; see Fiedor, *Bund Deutscher Osten*, p. 320 – Karol Fiedor also seems confused about the nature of this publication, see p. 89-90.

163 He wrote a poem glorifying Paul von Hindenburg for a number of qualities including *furor teutonicus*, that which helped the Germans win the battle of Tannenberg; see Hoegen, *Der Held von Tannenberg*, p. 160-61. For other historical poems see Lüdtkke, *Um Weichsel und Warthe*.

164 Lüdtkke and Müller-Schwanneke, eds., *Rufer des Ostens*, p. 119-20.

165 Lüdtkke, *König*, p. 3.

166 ‘Gestalter und Führer’, Lüdtkke, *König*, p. 4-5.

167 Lüdtkke, *König*, p. 206-08.

168 The Thüringer Literaturrat webpage provides some information. He was born on 13 March 1908 at Obergrochlitz near Greiz. He studied history at Jena University and acquired the title of doctor in 1933; ‘Thüringer Literaturrat’.

169 Emberland, ‘Å stjele norsk’, p. 27 note 24.

170 Information from the online database: Najbarowski and Sadaj, ‘Numery Członków SS’.

recruiting Scandinavian citizens into the SS, as well as some research trips to ancient Germanic cult sites.<sup>171</sup> During the war, he produced many works of propaganda as well as numerous articles.<sup>172</sup> These included *Waffen-SS im Kampf vor Leningrad*, published in the series *Kriegsbücherei der deutschen Jugend*. A series aimed at a younger readership in which war was glorified, Thoss' work was the only one in the series concerned with the SS.<sup>173</sup> His biography of Henry was supposedly written on Himmler's order, and was published by the SS publishing house Blut und Boden.<sup>174</sup> It was a highly popular book, with two consecutive editions in 1936 and in 1943, when it was amended and expanded.<sup>175</sup> This expanded addition was produced without reference to the latest scholarship. Thoss explains in the text that he began his work in early 1942 whilst recovering from the wound he received at the Eastern Front where he was unable to read any of the new books and articles on Henry.<sup>176</sup>

Thoss' book expressed the ideology of the SS and presented Henry as a forefather not only of the Reich, but also of the ideas present in Himmler's organization. In the earlier editions the importance of Henry for the NSDAP propaganda is clearly stated. Adolf Hitler is presented as the spiritual successor to the Saxon king. He continued the earlier king's style of rule and mission for the German people.<sup>177</sup> Like Henry, Hitler was to achieve peace with France and concentrate on the East.<sup>178</sup> Therefore, Hitler is following

171 Emberland, 'Å stjele norsk', p. 24-26. For general information, see Salmon, *Scandinavia and the Great Powers*, p. 208, 212; Emberland, 'Pure-Blooded Vikings', p. 114-15. Terje Emberland notes in both works that the first recruits that Thoss sent to the SS failed their exams. One was overweight, the other was flatfooted and they both had alcohol problems.

172 Thoss, 'Die Umsiedlung der Volksdeutschen'; Thoss, 'Die Umsiedlungen und Optionen'; cf. Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors*, p. 131. Thoss also wrote a booklet on the subject of German settlers in the East: Thoss, *Heimkehr der Volksdeutschen*; and Thoss and Hoffmann, *Der vierte Treck*. In June 1943 Thoss wrote a text for Himmler about sexual politics, which had the objective of presenting children born out of wedlock in a positive light. While Michael Kater saw it as an example of Himmler's bizarre ideas, it should be noted that there was a practical reason for such a study. Himmler fathered two children with Hedwig Potthast, his secretary turned lover; Kater, *Das 'Ahnenerbe' der SS 1935-1945*, p. 205; Sievers, *Tagebuch 1943*, p. 186 (entry for 16 VI 1943).

173 Thoss, *Waffen-SS im Kampf vor Leningrad*; on the series see Kuykendall, "The Unknown War".

174 Besier, 'Neo-Pagan Religiosity', p. 173.

175 One of the copies of first edition I have been able to access came from Fachschule für kindergärtnerinnen der NSDAP in Steinenhausen.

176 Thoss, *Heinrich* (1943), p. 8.

177 Thoss, *Heinrich* (1936), p. 58.

178 Thoss, *Heinrich* (1936), p. 98.

the German tradition which began with Henry's rule.<sup>179</sup> Elsewhere, Thoss argues that Hitler outlined the connection between 'blood and soil' as an important element in the creation of the state which was also realised by Henry.<sup>180</sup> There are differences between the first two editions of the book and the third one, but the ideology they propagate is the same. Here I will mainly refer to the third edition.

Both Lüttke and Thoss' books have been deemed as unhistorical and containing strange concepts.<sup>181</sup> It seems that at the time Lüttke's received more criticism, even prompting Hermann Heimpel to write an article rejecting his ideas, especially his criticism of Otto.<sup>182</sup> But as Wolfgang Giese has argued, Heimpel avoided making any criticism of Lüttke's ideology.<sup>183</sup> It is difficult to say whether this was because he was afraid to do so, or because he was in agreement with it.<sup>184</sup> Thoss was in many ways very crude in his ideological approach. Giese even wrote that Thoss' book was good for those people who wanted their 'hair to stand'.<sup>185</sup>

What makes these books worthy of study is the fact that both authors to a large extent followed the ideological trends and scholarship of both Imperial and Weimar Germany. These books, rather than rejecting previous concepts took them to their logical extremes. This makes them difficult to study. They were expressing their belief in the fact that history legitimised Hitler and his party, but as has already been discussed above this idea that history legitimises present had already long been a part of traditional German historiography. What differentiates them from previous books is criticism of both religion and Otto I.

Even before 1933 in Germany Christianity was seen in several ways. On the one hand, it was perceived as a civilising force, one of the elements that

179 Thoss, *Heinrich* (1936), p. 126.

180 'Blut und Boden', Thoss, *Heinrich* (1936), p. 180-81.

181 Schneider, *Die neueren Anschauungen*, p. 39-42. See the very critical review by Max Buchner, who attacked both authors for their ignorance of the scholarship and Thoss for his mistakes in Latin. Buchner concluded that both books cannot substitute for Waitz's. Buchner, 'Franz Lüttke, König Heinrich I.', p. 457-64.

182 Heimpel, 'Bemerkungen zur Geschichte', p. 3-11.

183 Giese, *Heinrich*, p. 27.

184 There is some controversy over Heimpel's relationship with National Socialism. See Racine, 'Hermann Heimpel'.

185 'Die Lektüre dieses Buches kann jedem empfohlen werden, der das Bedürfnis hat, sich die Haare zu Berge stehen zu lassen', Giese, *Heinrich*, p. 26. Theodor Schieffer in his review of Walter Mohr's *König Heinrich I. 919-936* wrote that as scholars Lüttke and Thoss were not on the same level as Holtzmann and called them 'half-intellecutals' ('Halbintellektuellen'); see Schieffer, 'MOHR W., König Heinrich I.', p. 261.



created the German nation. On the other hand, particularly the Catholic church was seen as a foreign element. It was not German in its essence and was an obstacle to the creation of a more unified state. Unsurprisingly for many liberal historians, Otto von Bismarck's gradual reduction of *Kulturkampf* in the late 1870s and 1880s was seen as him betraying the cause.<sup>186</sup> Nevertheless, in national-conservative circles Christianity was seen as a way of ordering and civilising the East. Christianity was seen as part of Germanisation and the German mission of creating order in Europe. Later this idea was included as part of Nazi ideology, even though the Nazis were incredibly antagonistic towards the Church and religion.<sup>187</sup> Such contradictions were quite common in National Socialism.

There was a form of establishment response to the new Nazi scholarship. Robert Holtzmann, for example, is considered to be one of the most important scholars of the Saxon dynasty. He was the son of Heinrich Holtzmann, an evangelical theologian, which might have influenced his positive view of Christianity. In his political alignment, he was a national liberal, although his sister Adelheid Steinmann was more well known when it comes to politics.<sup>188</sup> Still, he was a historian who can be assumed to have been aware of political symbolism. For example, in 1931 he wrote a letter to a French historian advising against his visit to the meeting of the Association of German Historians in Rhineland after it was reincorporated into Germany.<sup>189</sup>

In 1936 he published a biography of Otto I, which is sometimes seen as a direct response to Lüdtké's work.<sup>190</sup> This biography begins with an introduction titled 'German Nation'.<sup>191</sup> Holtzmann aimed to represent Otto as a great German leader, underlining the Germanic elements of his character and biography.<sup>192</sup> Later on, Holtzmann produced a more in-depth look into the Saxon dynasty in *Geschichte der sächsischen Kaiserzeit*, which begins with Charlemagne, followed by an account of the disintegration of the Carolingian

186 Iggers, *The German*, p. 122-23.

187 Wolnik, *Mittelalter*, p. 120-21, passim.

188 Cf. Harvey, 'Hans Rothfels', p. 59.

189 Erdmann, *Toward a Global Community*, p. 143; cf. a remark on Hitler's rise to power made by Holtzmann during the ICHS meeting in Warsaw in 1933, p. 146. On Holtzmann, see also Fahlbusch, *Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialistischen Politik?*, p. 704-07.

190 Fried, *Zu Gast im Mittelalter*, p. 108-09.

191 'Dem deutschen Volke', Holtzmann, *Kaiser*, p. 7. On the meaning of the word Volk in those times see Makowski, *Manipulierte Sprache*, p. 200-07; cf. Wolnik, *Mittelalter*, p. 55-63, 132-34, 218-20.

192 Holtzmann, *Kaiser*, p. 7-8. Holtzmann was not alone. In his PhD thesis Heinz-Werner Friese claimed that Otto was a real German hero in spite of the popular perception, Friese, 'Das Bild Ottos des Großen', p. 121; cf. Diederichs, *Heinrich*.

kingdom.<sup>193</sup> Following this it looks at Conrad I's reign before turning to the main subject of the book, Ottonian rule up until the end of the dynasty with the death of Henry II. It concentrates on the Saxons; other lands and people appear only in connection to the Liudolfings. To a large extent, this later book presents his ideas and shows why he was in conflict with Lüdtké and Thoss' way of writing and interpreting history. Holtzmann had no problem with their nationalism, but disputed their descriptions of the Church. In his conclusions to this later book, in a section titled 'The Meaning of Saxon Empire', it is clear that Holtzmann wanted to demonstrate that there would not be a Germany and an Empire without the influence of Church and the Christian religion.<sup>194</sup> His clear aim was to dispute the claim that the Church and its clergy were constantly acting against German interests. While Holtzmann acknowledged that the Empire was larger than Germany, he still believed that it was Germany that was at the centre and was the core of it.<sup>195</sup>

He was not the only historian who produced a book clearly expressing the idea that the Church was an indispensable element of Germany and the Empire. Heinrich Günter was 71 years old when he wrote a biography of Otto. He had already published a longer book about Germany in the Middle Ages.<sup>196</sup> His aim was to reply to claims about Otto and his non-German politics. His book was intended to improve the image of Otto's Germanic character, and also to defend the Church which he argued had participated in the creation of Germany. Günter's biography is of interest here. He studied in the Catholic seminary at Wilhelmsstift in Tübingen and then studied history at the university there. In the early twentieth century he had trouble with Paul Wilhelm von Keppler, the Bishop of Rottenburg, when he did not obey the proscription for lecturing about Christian legends, but he still remained committed to the Catholic Church.

Holtzmann's general study of the Saxon dynasty and Günter's book were published during World War II. When it ended, Germany was defeated and subsequently divided into two states. Both states were supposedly denazified, but it took a long time before a broader change took place in the way the German nation and its history were understood. It was only during the 1960s and later on that the notion of the ethnic nation was replaced by the construct of a community based on constitutional ideas.<sup>197</sup> German historians were supposedly able to dismiss the national ideology in the creation of a modern

193 Holtzmann, *Geschichte*, p. 5-15.

194 'Die Bedeutung der sächsischen Kaiserzeit', Holtzmann, *Geschichte*, p. 524-27.

195 Holtzmann, *Geschichte*, p. 537.

196 Günter, *Das Deutsche Mittelalter*, I.

197 Iggers, 'Nationalism', p. 23.

society. Behind this there is the preconceived notion of the specialness of Germany and German experience, which to some extent is a continuation of a nineteenth century vision, where the notion of being *great* was substituted with the idea of being *guilty of the worst possible crimes*. Thus, instead of talk of bringing a German *Kultur* and glorious history to the world, nowadays there is a strong anti-nationalistic approach and an awareness of the crimes which need to be taught especially with respect to the East.<sup>198</sup>

The historiography produced after 1945 is a topic that, to large extent, has not yet been described in such detail as the period which preceded it. This is mainly because those involved are still alive and as yet there has not been the space for a proper overview of the achievements and failures of more recent scholarship. Providing insight into the attitude of post war historiography towards the Saxons is the first biography of Henry appearing after 1945, which was prepared by Hellmut Diwald.<sup>199</sup> Diwald was belonged to a particular generation of German scholars. He was German born in Czechoslovakia before the war, who spent his youth in the Wehrmacht. After the war, it was some time before he found his place in the new order. He eventually became a professor at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in 1965 and for some time after he was a well-respected scholar. Appearing on television and newspapers, he published books (among them including biographies of great Germans) and articles.<sup>200</sup> Whilst at the beginning of his career he was seen as a serious historian, after remarks in *Geschichte der Deutschen* which were seen as downplaying if not entirely dismissing the occurrence of the Holocaust, he became a much more controversial figure.<sup>201</sup> This was further heightened by him being influential in establishing a revisionist *Zeitgeschichtliche Forschungsstelle* Ingolstadt. Nevertheless, his biography of Henry was commercially a very successful book.<sup>202</sup> His outlook on historiography was distinctly pre-war, but appeared in a post war reality. Some ideological elements of his work could easily pass unnoticed, but they are clear if his work is closely examined. An example of this is his use of the word *Urwald* (that is a primeval forest), which has a direct connection to concepts of the Nazi regime.<sup>203</sup>

198 An example of such an approach is visible throughout Iggers, 'Nationalism'.

199 On Diwald see Helzel, *Ein König*, passim. Diwald, *Heinrich*.

200 Diwald, *Wallenstein*; Diwald, *Luther*.

201 It seems that sometimes the controversy was downplayed, see Engelhardt and Killy, eds., *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie*, 2, p. 562.

202 Iggers, *The German*, p. 293.

203 Diwald, *Heinrich*, p. 27. It has to be added that the forest had a special meaning in German national consciousness. For a brief introduction to this subject see Zechner, 'Politicized Timber'. A prime example of its role in the Third Reich is the famous film *Ewiger Wald*.

This was a different outlook to the one which was represented by Wolfgang Giese, Gerd Althoff and other historians of the post-war era. While some, like the two names mentioned, were born just before or during the war, they were raised in the new era of a peaceful Germany. But they were connected to the old system through the influence of their teachers. They studied in German academia and their works are German in style and substance. Althoff's PhD on necrology led to the study of *memoria*, and then to the study of rituals and *amicitia* pacts. The underlying theme of his research is the attempt to prove that sources give a glimpse into the past and that by diligent inquiry it is possible to say what really took place. Thus, he tends to make many references to sources, which he translates himself, but these translations are of a somewhat dubious nature.<sup>204</sup>

Giese has noted that he was in a way raised with Henry. His mother sang Carl Loewe's song (with words by Johann Nepomuk Vogl) about him. Henry was also now presented in schools as the *primus inter pares* in connection with the democratization of Germany that began in 1945.<sup>205</sup>

Finally, there is Johannes Laudage, who was born fourteen years after the war. He was a prolific author, who was mostly interested in the German Early Middle Ages. He wrote on sources from the Ottonian times and on the investiture controversy, producing scholarship deeply rooted in the German historiographical tradition. He sadly died in 2008. Laudage's book on Otto I begins with the statement that it has been said that it is impossible to make a proper biography of Otto, as there is not enough information about him as a person. Therefore, Laudage decided to attempt to show that this was possible.<sup>206</sup> He wanted to write a modern biography with a broader look at Otto. This was done not through the application of modern methodology, but rather by the rejection of the chronological approach to his life. In the end, the history is the same, but framed in a different, supposedly modern, way.

204 About Althoff's use of Latin see Kaminsky, 'Spielregeln der Politik', p. 688.

205 Giese, *Heinrich*, p. 9.

206 Laudage, *Otto*, p. 9.