

Christian Scholl / Torben R. Gebhardt /  
Jan Clauß (eds.)

# Transcultural Approaches to the Concept of Imperial Rule in the Middle Ages



PETER LANG  
EDITION

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During the Middle Ages, rulers from different regions aspired to an idea of imperial hegemony. On the other hand, there were rulers who deliberately refused to be «emperors», although their reign showed characteristics of imperial rule. The contributions in this volume ask for the reasons why some rulers such as Charlemagne strove for imperial titles, whereas others voluntarily shrank from them. They also look at the characteristics of and rituals connected to imperial rule as well as to the way Medieval empires saw themselves. Thus, the authors in this volume adopt a transcultural perspective, covering Western, Eastern, Northern and Southern Europe, Byzantium and the Middle East. Furthermore, they go beyond the borders of Christianity by including various caliphates and Islamic «hegemonic» rulers like Saladin.

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Christian Scholl, Torben R. Gebhardt, Jan Clauß (Münster)

## Transcultural Approaches to the Concept of Imperial Rule in the Middle Ages: Introduction

The last years have seen a growing interest in the thematic strand of “empire”: not least the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s has stimulated public debates about the role the United States as the single remaining super power were supposed to play in the world. These debates were intensified after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, which, according to the sociologist Michael Mann,<sup>1</sup> constituted the United States’ transition from a hegemonic power widely accepted and acting benevolently to a militarist world ruler ruthlessly claiming “imperial” leadership.<sup>2</sup>

In the years following George W. Bush’s war against Iraq, a number of monographs on “empire” and/or “imperial rulership” were published both by historians and political scientists. In Germany, for example, Herfried Münkler published a volume on *Empires: The Logic of World Domination from Ancient Rome to the United States* in 2005, which soon became a standard work on the topic.<sup>3</sup> In the same year, Hans-Heinrich Nolte published a monograph on empires in early modern times.<sup>4</sup> Besides these general studies, several comparative studies were published in recent years: after an article published by Susan Reynolds in 2006,<sup>5</sup> the afore-

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- 1 Mann, Michael: *The Incoherent Empire*. Verso: London / New York 2003, p. 252: “Whereas in the recent past American power was hegemonic – routinely accepted and often considered legitimate abroad – now it is imposed at the barrel of a gun. This undermines hegemony and the claim to be a benevolent Empire.”
  - 2 Cf. Münkler, Herfried: *Imperien. Die Logik der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten*. Rowohlt: Berlin 2005, p. 13.
  - 3 Cf. the German title in the footnote above. The English translation was published in 2007 by Polity Press.
  - 4 Nolte, Hans-Heinrich: *Weltgeschichte. Imperien, Religionen und Systeme 15.-19. Jahrhundert*. Böhlau: Vienna / Cologne / Weimar 2005.
  - 5 Reynolds, Susan: “Empires: A Problem of Comparative History”. *Historical Research* 79, 2006, pp. 151–165.

mentioned Hans-Heinrich Nolte edited a comparative study focusing on empires from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in 2008,<sup>6</sup> before in 2012 Peter Fibiger Bang and Dariusz Kolodziejczyk published the excellent survey *Universal Empire. A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, dealing with empires from Assyrian times to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> Most recently, in 2014, Michael Gehler and Robert Rollinger edited two vast volumes on empires from antiquity to the present.<sup>8</sup>

It is especially the last-mentioned work that deals with empires – or political systems similar to empires – of the Middle Ages. The empires dealt with include the empires of the Umayyads, Fatimids, Ayyubids, Mamluks, Almoravids, Almohads, Mongols, Byzantines, Ottomans, Merovingians and Carolingians as well as the European territories of the high and late Middle Ages, empires in India, the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy.<sup>9</sup> Münkler only refers to the empire of the Mongols,

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- 6 Nolte, Hans-Heinrich (ed.): *Imperien. Eine vergleichende Studie*. (Studien zur Weltgeschichte). Wochenschau Verlag: Schwalbach/Ts. 2008.
  - 7 Bang, Peter Fibiger / Kolodziejczyk, Dariusz (eds.): *Universal Empire. A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2012.
  - 8 Gehler, Michael / Rollinger, Robert (eds.): *Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte. Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche, vol. 1: Imperien des Altertums, mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Imperien, vol. 2: Neuzeitliche Imperien, zeitgeschichtliche Imperien, Imperien in Theorie, Geist, Wissenschaft, Recht und Architektur, Wahrnehmung und Vermittlung*. Harrasowitz: Wiesbaden 2014.
  - 9 Cf. Hämeen-Anttila, Jaakko: “The Umayyad State – an Empire?”, pp. 537–558; Halm, Heinz: “Die Reiche der Fatimiden, Ayyubiden und Mamluken”, pp. 559–566; Id.: “Die Reiche der Almoraviden und Almohaden”, pp. 567–570; Rothermund, Dieter: “Imperien in Indien vom Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit”, pp. 571–588; Gießauf, Johannes: “Size does matter – das mongolische Imperium”, pp. 589–620; Chrysos, Evangelos: “Das Byzantinische Reich. Ein Imperium *par excellence*”, pp. 621–634; Inan, Kenan: “The Ottoman Empire”, pp. 635–658; Steinacher, Roland / Winckler, Katharina: “Merowinger und Karolinger – Imperien zwischen Antike und Mittelalter”, pp. 659–696; Vogtherr, Thomas: “Die europäische Staatenwelt im hohen und späten Mittelalter. Imperium oder konkurrierende Territorialstaaten?”, pp. 697–710;

whereas the volume by Bang and Kolodziejczyk contains three articles on medieval empires.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from these articles and Münkler's references to the Mongols, there are also several recent monographs dedicated to medieval empires or at least elements of imperial rule. Stefan Burkhardt, for example, analysed the Latin Empire of Constantinople as a Mediterranean Empire; Almut Höfert dealt with the imperial monotheism in the early and high Middle Ages, examining the aftermath of Roman imperial tradition not only in Western Europe, but also in Byzantium and the Islamic caliphate in the early and high Middle Ages.<sup>11</sup> This shows that in recent years, researchers have increasingly turned their attention to the Islamic world, too, thus going beyond a Eurocentric perspective. In addition to Hoefert's survey and the contributions to the Islamic world in the above mentioned volumes, this becomes evident in Robert G. Hoyland's latest publication of a monograph on the early Islamic empire.<sup>12</sup> Last but not least, the topic "empire" was discussed among medievalists on several conferences, among them the International Medieval Congress (IMC) in

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Kampmann, Christoph: "Das Heilige Römische Reich deutscher Nation – das nominelle Imperium?", pp. 711–724; Schima, Stefan: "Der Heilige Stuhl und die Päpste", pp. 725–760. Unfortunately, an article about the Abbassid caliphate is missing.

- 10 Cf. Fowden, Garth: "Pseudo-Aristotelian Politics and Theology in Universal Islam", pp. 130–148; Angelov, Dimiter / Herrin, Judith: "The Christian Imperial Tradition – Greek and Latin", pp. 149–174; Haldén, Peter: "From Empire to Commonwealth(s): Orders in Europe", pp. 280–303.
- 11 Burkhardt, Stefan: *Mediterranes Kaisertum und imperiale Ordnungen. Das lateinische Kaiserreich von Konstantinopel*. (Europa im Mittelalter 25). Akademie Verlag / De Gruyter: Berlin / Boston 2014; Höfert, Almut: *Kaisertum und Kalifat. Der imperiale Monotheismus im Früh- und Hochmittelalter*. (Globalgeschichte 21). Campus Verlag: Frankfurt am Main / New York 2015; on the Norman Empire, cf. besides Bates, David: *The Normans and Empire*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 2013.
- 12 Hoyland, Robert G.: *In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire*. Oxford University Press: New York / Oxford 2015.

Leeds in 2014,<sup>13</sup> a conference held at the University of Münster in 2015,<sup>14</sup> and another at the University of Hamburg in 2016.<sup>15</sup>

There are numerous definitions about what constitutes an “empire”. We here follow the definition given by the aforementioned German historian Hans-Heinrich Nolte<sup>16</sup> who defined an empire by seven characteristics: 1. a monarch at the top of the hierarchy, 2. a close cooperation between church and crown, 3./4. an elaborate bureaucracy based on and working with written records, 5. centrally raised taxes, 6. diverse provinces, 7. a low degree of political participation of the subjects.<sup>17</sup> Other authors add further characteristics, for example regarding space and time. According to most definitions, an empire must cover a vast geographical area, although this criterion is difficult if not impossible to assess for seaborne empires.<sup>18</sup> Besides, even if seaborne empires often were not that large, they gained their power from controlling important trade routes, which can be regarded as more important than pure seize.<sup>19</sup>

Researchers disagree, however, as far as the factor time is concerned: whereas Herfried Münkler holds the view that an empire must have lasted a certain amount of time and have gone through at least one circle of rise and fall,<sup>20</sup> others disregard this factor and count, for example, Napoleonic

13 The IMC took place from 7 to 10 July 2014 in Leeds. The triple session “To Be or not to Be Emperor – Transcultural Approaches to the Concept of Imperial Rule from Iceland to Jerusalem”, organised by the editors, was the starting point and basis for this volume. We thank all speakers and participants of the sessions for their valuable contributions and statements to our topic.

14 The conference in Münster, organised by Wolfram Drews, took place from 11 to 13 June 2015 and dealt with the interaction between rulers and elites in imperial orders of the Middle Ages. Cf. the conference report by Jan Clauß, Nadeem Khan and Tobias Hoffmann under <http://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-6170> [last accessed: 13 July 2016].

15 The conference in Hamburg, organised by Stefan Heidemann, took place from 7 to 8 October 2016 and was dedicated to the Islamic Empire. It was entitled “Regional and Transregional Elites – Connecting the Early Islamic Empire”.

16 To Münkler’s criteria cf. the contribution by Nadeem Khan in this volume.

17 Nolte 2008, p. 14. To Nolte’s criteria cf. also the article by Stefan Burkhardt in this volume.

18 Münkler 2005, p. 23.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

France, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany as empires.<sup>21</sup> Especially for the European Middle Ages, a further criterion seems indispensable to us, videlicet the claim to be the only empire with one single emperor dominating the whole of the world. As a result of this claim, empires could not accept others as equals.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, conflicts arose when two political systems within the same geographical area claimed to be empires, as with the Western and Eastern empires in the Middle Ages (*Zweikaiserproblem*).

In this volume, however, we not only deal with classic examples of medieval empires such as that of Charlemagne or the Byzantine empire, but we also cover other communities or “kingdoms”, among them the Barbarian successor states of the Roman West, Anglo-Saxon England, Denmark, Iceland, Poland, Burgundy and Provence and look at elements of imperial rule (for example imperial titles, claims etc.) which played a role in ruling these communities. The following central questions were given by the editors as common ground for all authors to work with: for which reasons and in which situations did some rulers, for example Charlemagne, aspire imperial titles such as “emperor” or “basileus”, whereas other sovereigns, whose rule showed certain characteristics of “imperial” rule such as that of Theodoric the Great, voluntarily shrank away from them? Related to this point is the question as to why some rulers like Charles I of Naples or James of Baux strove for “virtual” or titular titles like “Emperor of Constantinople”, although no immediate power was connected to them.

Concerning imperial terminology and related matters, it is necessary to point out that titular emperorship seldom came alone. Instead, it was semantically flanked; claims of emperorship were underlined by a more or less sophisticated cluster of titles and symbolic prerogatives. Although these ritual aspects are not part of the pragmatic criteria formulated by Hans-Heinrich Nolte above, several contributions will analyse them regarding their underlying traditions and ideological references. After all, these

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21 These three systems are included in the aforementioned volume edited by Gebler and Rollinger, for example, cf. Broers, Michael: “The Napoleonic Empire”, pp. 893–912; Moos, Carlo: “Mussolinis faschistisches Imperium”, pp. 1133–1164; Thamer, Hans-Ulrich: “Das Dritte Reich und sein Imperium”, pp. 1119–1132.

22 Münkler 2005, p. 17.

specific symbolic resources could not only help to transform royal into imperial power, they could also enable real and “would-be” emperors to furnish their sovereignty with a charismatic aura helping to stabilize their rule. We therefore ask where these titles and rituals arose from, if they originated from a society’s “own” cultural horizon or if they were trans-cultural borrowings, as was the “basileus”-title in Anglo-Saxon Britain?

Analysing the cultural and conceptual background reveals that imperial titles can occasionally be understood as government programmes. This might include that newly-crowned emperors aimed at reforming the style and intensity of their rule. Around the year 800, for instance, Charlemagne pursued a more comprehensive policy than his predecessors on the Frankish throne had done. Thus, imperial augmentation could bring about internal as well as external changes, among them the sacralisation of the emperor and his realm as a means to stand out from royal opponents, whose power was *per se* conceived as inferior. For this reason, several contributions in this volume turn towards the changing claim to power as well as to its ethos. They ask as to what extent processes of imperialisation affected other political entities, which were – at least nominally – demanded submission, how the agents politically relevant dealt with conflicts possibly arising from their imperial concepts, and how they used them to order the world mentally.

Apart from that, this volume asks for the legitimacy of imperial rulers: whose consent was necessary to make a ruler emperor? Which role did other rulers, for example the popes, play in the process of the elevation of an emperor: was another ruler necessary to make someone emperor or could this be done by the latter and his surrounding alone? Which (invented) traditions and rituals were used to legitimise one’s imperial rule or dynasty? Further emphasis is put on the representation of imperial rule in the Middle Ages: which titles were held by imperial rulers, which rituals and symbols did they use to represent themselves? How were they portrayed on coins or images? How was this representation perceived by other rulers and which conflicts arose from certain kinds of representations?

Last but not least, we ask for the perception of imperial rule in the Middle Ages: whose rule was perceived by others as “imperial”? Was it necessary to carry an imperial title such as “emperor” or “basileus” to be

recognized as superior or did it occur that rulers were regarded as such without holding these titles?

In answering these questions, the articles in this volume refer to examples from the early to the late Middle Ages, with a temporal emphasis on the early and high Middle Ages. Geographically, the articles not only cover Western, Northern and Eastern Europe (the Western Mediterranean, England, Scandinavia and Poland), but also the Eastern Mediterranean (the Byzantine empire) as well as the Islamic world. Thus, this volume approaches elements of imperial rule in a transcultural perspective, going beyond central Europe and including the alleged periphery in the North and East as well as Latin Europe's Byzantine and Islamic neighbours.

The concept of "transculturality" was originally developed by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz<sup>23</sup> and taken up by the German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch in the 1990s.<sup>24</sup> According to this concept, "cultures" cannot be understood as monolithic blocks, as was the understanding in the past, but – following Homi Bhabha and Edward Said – as hybrids and processes which permanently interact with and borrow from each other.<sup>25</sup> The fact that

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23 Ortiz, Fernando: *Contrapunto cubano del tabaco y el azúcar. Advertencia de sus contrastes agrarios, económicos, históricos y sociales, su etnografía y su transculturación*. Jesus Montero: Havanna 1940.

24 Welsch, Wolfgang: "Transkulturalität – Die veränderte Verfassung heutiger Kulturen". *Via Regia. Blätter für internationale kulturelle Kommunikation* 20, 1994, pp. 1–19; Id.: "Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures today". *California Sociologist* 17/18, 1994/1995, pp. 19–39.

25 Mersch, Margit: "Transkulturalität, Verflechtung, Hybridisierung – ‚neue‘ epistemologische Modelle in der Mittelalterforschung". In: Drews, Wolfram / Scholl, Christian (eds.): *Transkulturelle Verflechtungsprozesse in der Vormoderne*. (Das Mittelalter. Perspektiven mediävistischer Forschung 3). De Gruyter: Berlin / Boston 2016, pp. 239–251, esp. pp. 244–247. The contributions in this volume further discuss the concept of "transculturality" and apply it to the Middle Ages and the early Modern Period. Further contributions to transculturality in the Middle Ages include Borgolte, Michael: "Migrationen als transkulturelle Verflechtungen im mittelalterlichen Europa. Ein neuer Pflug für alte Forschungsfelder". *Historische Zeitschrift* 289, 2009, pp. 261–285; Id. et al. (eds.): *Mittelalter im Labor. Die Mediävistik testet Wege zu einer transkulturellen Europawissenschaft*. (Europa im Mittelalter 10). Akademie-Verlag: Berlin 2009; Id. / Schneidmüller, Bernd (eds.): *Hybride Kulturen im mittelalterlichen Europa. Vorträge und Workshops einer internationalen Frühlingsschule*. (Eu-

“cultures” permanently borrow from each other also becomes apparent in the articles of this volume, for example borrowings of imperial titles or rituals from Byzantium or Ancient Rome by rulers from Latin Europe.

The first article, written by Christian Scholl, deals with the *imitatio imperii*, which means the imitation of the Roman emperor by the rulers of the Barbarian kingdoms in the early Middle Ages. It asks for the reasons why Barbarian kings adopted certain elements of rule formerly employed by the Roman emperors and, in a second step, identifies some elements which were adopted by the Barbarian rulers and some which were not. Special interest is given to the question as to why no Barbarian ruler before Charlemagne strove for the title “emperor”, not even the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great, who was ruling over a considerable part of the former Roman empire, thus exerting hegemony over the Western Mediterranean in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century.

Sebastian Kolditz addresses Byzantium’s relations with the peoples of the Eurasian steppe zone primarily in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Conflicting with their own self-understanding, the East Roman emperors had to admit that right at their borders Türks, Avars and later on Khazars attained quasi-imperial plenitude of power. Kolditz expounds the diplomatic and military relationships between these polities and the Romans as well as their reception in Byzantine historiography. These relations encompassed a vast range of contact forms between hostile confrontations, encounters of emperors and the Nomads’ rulers, the qaghans, and even marriage projects. Kolditz’ paper focusses on the (changing) usage of the title “qaghan” and related terminology for Avar, Türk and Khazar rulers in the Greek sources. In this way, it unfolds how the Romans at times denied imperial qualities, or in case of Menander’s assessment of the Türks even applied the title of “basileus” to their leader, although this term was normally reserved for the Roman emperor, only.

The article by Jan Clauß deals with cultural and political long-term processes in the Carolingian world prior to Charlemagne’s imperial coronation. Traditional Carolingian scholarship advocated the position that Charlemagne

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ropa im Mittelalter 16). Akademie-Verlag: Berlin 2010; Id. et al. (eds): *Europa im Geflecht der Welt. Mittelalterliche Migrationen in globalen Bezügen*. (Europa im Mittelalter 20). Akademie-Verlag: Berlin 2012; Id. / Tischler, Matthias M. (eds.): *Transkulturelle Verflechtungen im mittelalterlichen Jahrtausend. Europa, Ostasien, Afrika*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 2012.



was taken by surprise when Leo III crowned him emperor, and therefore attributed the driving force of the restoration of emperors in the West to the pope. Against this narrative of a passive Frankish king, Clauß' paper gathers evidence which evinces that around the turn of the century Frankish scholars actively paved the way for Charlemagne's imperial perception. The imperialisation of the *regnum Francorum* and Charlemagne involved political entities in and outside the Carolingian sphere of influence. Corresponding with actual power politics, the status of the papacy, the Byzantine emperor and the Abbasid caliph in Bagdad were denied or (argumentatively) ascribed to the Frankish king himself. For this purpose Frankish scholars made use of selective borrowings from imperial traditions. The paper accordingly outlines that Charlemagne's imperial rise was above all a transcultural project, which implied a critical reflection on empires of the past and present.

Simon Groth's paper discusses the role the papacy played in the coronations of emperors in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Although Charlemagne was crowned emperor by pope Leo III at Christmas 800 – as is discussed in the article by Jan Clauß –, and although a pope was necessary for the coronations in the high and late Middle Ages, there were two emperors in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, Louis the Pious and Lothair I, who were not crowned emperors by the pope, but by their fathers Charlemagne and Louis – in both cases, the papal consent was given afterwards by a second coronation carried out by the pope, but these papal acts were not constitutive. It was not before the coronation of Lothair's son Louis II, carried out by pope Stephan IV in 850, that the papacy regained the decisive position it had already assumed at Charlemagne's coronation. This position was confirmed by the coronations of Charles the Bald and Charles the Fat in 875 and 881, both carried out by pope John VIII. Groth's article examines these events in detail and reflects the process in which the papacy regained its essential position in the "making" of a Medieval emperor.

In her article, Jessika Nowak looks at successful and failed imperial projects in post-Carolingian Provence and Burgundy. Nowak elucidates why the Provençal kings Hugh of Arles and Louis the Blind as well as the Burgundian Rudolph II pursued differing agendas towards the *regnum Italiae* and either strove for or declined the imperial crown. In order to do so, she identifies essential political and cultural factors which shaped the respective political options. Drawing predominantly on charters, but also on numismatic sources,

Nowak shows that the ambition to become Roman emperor mainly depended on family networks, especially connections to the Carolingian dynasty, and territorial powerbases and alliances in Italy. The lack of these features caused Rudolph II to emphasise his Burgundian kingship even when he was ruling in Italy, and at the same time led to a rather modest concept of Burgundian kingship. Nowak's contribution thus demonstrates that 'not being Emperor' could be a preferable option for medieval royal agents, as it had been the case with the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great.

Torben Gebhardt examines in his contribution the curious case of the use of the title "basileus anglorum" by the Anglo-Saxon king Æthelstan, which was to become something of a tradition with his successors. Gebhardt demonstrates that while the Anglo-Saxon king viewed himself as more than a mere "rex", he did not strive for the Roman emperor title that Byzantines and Ottonians competed for. He rather aimed at an elevated state between contemporary kings and the Roman emperor, for which he drew inspiration by Bede's account of English history. Gebhardt comes to the conclusion that basileus, in this context, is more to be understood as a "superrex" in the lexical sense than emperor. Still, the title expressed Æthelstan's very own concept of a British imperial hegemony. It reflects his rule over a regional construct he, following Bede, envisioned as *Britannia*.

Nadeem Khan's contribution deals with the caliphates of the Islamic classic (Rāšidūn, 'Umayyād, 'Abbāsīd and Fāṭimid caliphates), showing that these can be classified as "empires" according to the definition given by the aforementioned Herfried Münkler, at least until the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> centuries. By taking into account the aspect of symbolic communication, Khan furthermore demonstrates that the 'Abbāsīd and Fāṭimid caliphs were still of "global" or "imperial" importance after they had lost most of their factual political power. Source of their power was their potential to give – or deny – authority to local, "factual" rulers, a power Khan calls "imagined" or "pretended suzerainty". To exemplify this imagined suzerainty, Khan refers to Saladin, probably the most famous figure in premodern Islam, who was alternating between the 'Abbāsīd and Fāṭimid caliphs, using them both as a source of legitimacy.

Tobias Hoffmann investigates the Western perspective on the Byzantine court ceremonial, which intended to emphasize the emperors' socio-economic pre-eminence and was therefore often arranged as a downright running the gauntlet for Western visitors. In the early and high Middle Ages,

there were anecdotal reports on the experiences of Frankish, Norman and Scandinavian kings and their emissaries visiting Constantinople. Literary echoes of these official visits to the imperial court can be found in writings such as Wace's "Roman de Rou", the "Morkinskinna"-saga or Notker's "Gesta Karoli Magni", all written for a Western audience. Hoffmann demonstrates that these sources share the common feature of turning the tables in favour of the Western side; they aim at playing the Greeks at their own game, styling their respective protagonists as cunning diplomats who avoid compromising themselves and / or their lords, or who deliberately provoke scandals outshining Byzantine ostentation. It turns out that the allegedly trivial anecdotes on golden horseshoes and eating habits in fact were quite aware of the symbolism of courtly protocol and its political implications. Using the Byzantine court as an antagonistic background, the entertaining episodes thus mirror a transcultural rivalry between East and West.

Roland Scheel's subject are imperial concepts in the Scandinavian North. While there are almost no Scandinavian rulers that assumed an imperial title, emperors feature frequently in sagas and other prose texts. In his article, Scheel examines the choice of words for these occurrences as well as their semantics and is able to show that western emperors were either uninteresting to the authors or depicted as hostile and inferior. In addition, Byzantine rulers featured far more often and enjoyed great popularity in the North. Scheel concludes that it was the Byzantine method of soft power, which employed the Byzantines' cultural heritage and wealth to exert control, in contrast to the brute Western hegemonic claim, that ensured the Eastern emperors favorable depictions over their central European counterparts.

Stefan Burkhardt asks for the reasons why a number of French princes from Southern Italy strove for "virtual" imperial titles, especially the title "Emperor of Constantinople", in the decade after the Latin empire of Constantinople had been reconquered by the Byzantines in 1261. Burkhardt demonstrates that it was especially princes with expansive ambitions in the Eastern Mediterranean, above all Charles I of Naples whose aim was a crusade to recapture Constantinople, who tried to attain these titles. Thus, a virtual title like "Emperor of Constantinople" was regarded as a preliminary stage to justify the exertion of "real" power in the future.

Grischa Vercamer's article focuses on a realm that is normally not associated with imperial ideas. Yet, Vercamer manages to identify various

imperial concepts in medieval Polish historiographies between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The first conclusion the author draws is a temporal limitation of the use of imperial concepts in historiography to the pre- and early Polish history. The works of Gallus Anonymus and Vincentius Kadłubek take a prominent position among the works analysed because of their early composition and their far-reaching influence on subsequent authors. Therefore, Vercamer puts a special emphasis on them without ignoring different depictions in other Polish chronicles. He comes to the conclusion that Polish historiographies use a variety of discourses, among them Pan-Slavism and superiority over imperial aggressors, to present Poland as an *imperium* in the collective memory (*kollektives Gedächtnis*) of the contemporary elites.

Thus, the contributions in this volume examine a wide range of regions as well as a wide span of time, thereby referring to numerous elements and characteristics of imperial rule in very different political communities. Furthermore, the volume not only covers different (interacting) cultural regions, the case studies also deal with a rich spectrum of source material. They include historiography, *realia* such as coinage, seals and architecture as well as charters, poetry and dogmatic treatises. In this way, the articles often reveal a certain asynchrony of different social contexts with regard to imperial concepts. At a given time and cultural sphere, there could be diverse reflections on imperial rule, which sometimes stimulated one another, but also could conflict with each other. The collected articles, therefore, investigate the dynamics resulting from these colluding forces. Besides, different types of sources often witness the transcultural interferences mentioned above. Localizing the dogmatic treatises and provisions issued by Charlemagne in the context of an increasing rivalry with Byzantium for imperial authority, for instance, clarifies the immediate repercussion of Greek dogmatics on Frankish ecclesiastical politics; the coinage of Knud the Great mirrors his familiarity with imperial symbolism of the Salian dynasty.

But of course, it is impossible for any volume to treat the subject “empire” comprehensively because there will always remain a variety of other questions concerning this topic which cannot all be addressed here. Therefore, we can only hope to have shown the scientific potential that surfaces when looking at elements of imperial rule in various regions, times and communities of the Middle Ages.

Christian Scholl (Münster)

# Imitatio Imperii? Elements of Imperial Rule in the Barbarian Successor States of the Roman West

## Introduction

In nearly all of the “Barbarian”<sup>1</sup> kingdoms which were created on formerly Roman soil during the Migration Period, the monarchs adopted certain elements of the ruling style employed by the Roman or Byzantine emperors. In German Medieval Studies, it has become common to use a Latin term for this adoption of Imperial rule: *imitatio imperii*. This term is problematic, however, because it can neither be found in the sources about the Roman Empire nor in those about the Barbarian kingdoms founded in the fifth and sixth centuries. The phrase *imitatio imperii* is taken from the “Constitutum Constantini” or Donation of Constantine<sup>2</sup> which was not composed before

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- 1 The word “barbarian” will be used in this article as a neutral term referring to non-Romans. The term formerly used by researchers, “Germanic”, is rejected both for a lack of clarity – it simply cannot be said for sure who were the “Germans” in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages – and for the ideological misuse in the past, cf. for the problems relating to the term “Germanic” Jarnut, Jörg: “Germanisch. Plädoyer für die Abschaffung eines obsoleten Zentralbegriffes der Frühmittelalterforschung”. In: Pohl, Walter (ed.): *Die Suche nach den Ursprüngen. Von der Bedeutung des frühen Mittelalters*. (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse. Denkschriften 322 / Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 8). Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Vienna 2004, pp. 107–113. For the Migration Period, Walter Pohl prefers the term “barbarian” to the term “Germanic” as well, cf. Id.: “Vom Nutzen des Germanenbegriffes zwischen Antike und Mittelalter: eine forschungsgeschichtliche Perspektive”. In: Hägermann, Dieter / Haubrichs, Wolfgang / Jarnut, Jörg (eds.): *Akkulturation. Probleme einer germanisch-romanischen Kultursynthese in Spätantike und frühem Mittelalter*. (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 41). De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 2004, pp. 18–34, here p. 22.
  - 2 Paffgen, Bernd: “Imitatio Imperii – die Nachahmung des Kaisertums in den germanischen regna des 5. bis 8. Jahrhunderts”. In: Puhle, Matthias / Köster,

the late eighth century, and thus more than 200 years after the Migration Period. Chapter sixteen of the famous forgery says that emperor Constantine had placed a *phrygium* – later called *tiara* – on pope Silvester’s head *ad imitationem imperii nostri*, meaning “to imitate our (Imperial) rule”.<sup>3</sup>

Due to its ecclesiastical origin, the term *imitatio imperii* was first used by the German historian Percy Ernst Schramm in the 1940s to denote the imitation of Imperial rule by the Papacy.<sup>4</sup> It was another famous historian of the Middle Ages, Karl Hauck, who in 1967 expanded the meaning of *imitatio imperii* to the Barbarian rulers of the Early Middle Ages adopting elements of Imperial rule.<sup>5</sup> It is in this sense that the term *imitatio imperii* has become common in German Medieval Studies and in this meaning the term will be used in this article.

This paper addresses several questions concerning the imitation of Imperial rule by the Barbarian rulers: first of all, it will be asked why nearly all of the Barbarian kings imitated elements of Imperial rule. In a second step, the paper will examine which Imperial elements were adopted and which were not. In this context, it will be asked which elements the Barbarian rulers were reluctant to adopt and – more important – why they intentionally shrank away from them.

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Gabriele (eds.): *Otto der Große und das Römische Reich. Kaisertum von der Antike zum Mittelalter. Ausstellungskatalog. Landesausstellung Sachsen-Anhalt aus Anlass des 1100. Geburtstages Ottos des Großen*. Schnell & Steiner: Regensburg 2012, pp. 283–285, here p. 283; Becker, Hans-Jürgen: “Imitatio Imperii”. In: *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, vol. 2, cc. 1173–1175, here c. 1173.

- 3 Fuhrmann, Horst (ed.): *Das Constitutum Constantini (Konstantinische Schenkung)*. Text. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Fontes iuris Germanici antiqui in usum scholarum separatim editi 10). Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover 1968, pp. 92–93. Cf. regarding the meaning of “imitatio imperii” in this context Fried, Johannes: *Donation of Constantine and Constitutum Constantini. The Misinterpretation of a Fiction and its Original Meaning*. (Millennium-Studien 3). De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 2007, pp. 44–45.
- 4 Schramm, Percy Ernst: “Sacerdotium und regnum im Austausch ihrer Vorrechte. Eine Skizze der Entwicklung zur Beleuchtung des “Dictatus papae””. *Studi gregoriani per la storia di Gregorio VII e della riforma gregoriana* 2, 1947, pp. 403–457.
- 5 Hauck, Karl: “Von einer spätantiken Randkultur zum karolingischen Europa”. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 1, 1967, pp. 1–93, here pp. 53–55, 92–93.

## Reasons for the imitation of Imperial rule

The first answer to the general question as to why the Barbarian kings imitated certain elements of Imperial rule is quite obvious: of course, Barbarian kings could increase their status by copying elements formerly employed by the Roman emperors, thus enlarging their symbolic, cultural and social capital.<sup>6</sup> Apart from that, they did so to enhance their legitimacy among the indigenous, Roman population who had already been living in the Barbarian kingdoms before the arrival of the new rulers.<sup>7</sup> The consideration of the Roman population also explains why the leaders of the Barbarian *gentes* had hardly ever imitated Imperial rule before the establishment of Barbarian kingdoms in Spain, France, Northern Africa or Italy. As long as a Barbarian leader was the head of non-Romans only, he did not have to care about being accepted by the Roman population; in this case, it was sufficient to be accepted by the members of the *gens* and this kind of acceptance primarily depended on military success and loot,<sup>8</sup> not the imitation

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- 6 Cf. to different forms of “capital” Bourdieu, Pierre: “Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital”. In: Kreckel, Reinhard (ed.): *Soziale Ungleichheiten*. (Soziale Welt. Sonderheft 2). Schwartz: Göttingen 1983, pp. 183–98. An English translation of Bourdieu’s text, done by Richard Nice, is available online, cf. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm> [retrieved: 2 August 2016].
- 7 Christian Rohr exemplifies this on the basis of Theodoric’s rule over Italy, cf. Id.: “Das Streben des Ostgoten Königs Theoderich nach Legitimität und Kontinuität im Spiegel seiner Kulturpolitik”. In: Pohl, Walter / Diesenberger, Maximilian (eds.): *Integration und Herrschaft. Ethnische Identitäten und soziale Organisation im Frühmittelalter*. (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse. Denkschriften 301 / Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 3). Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Vienna 2002, pp. 227–231, here p. 229.
- 8 It was indispensable for the leaders of the Late Antique and Early Medieval *gentes* to be militarily successful because loot constituted the major source of income for their soldiers. As soon as military success and loot failed to appear, there was the danger of either being overthrown or being left by the members of the tribe, who in this case joined the leaders of other, more successful tribes. In this respect, the *gentes* resembled armies much more than peoples with their own customs or traditions. Mainly responsible for this new view of the *gentes* was Wenskus, Reinhard: *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes*. Böhlau: Cologne 1961.

of the emperor. But as soon as the Barbarians had settled down within the (former) Roman Empire, their leaders also exercised power over the indigenous Romans, who greatly outnumbered the Barbarian population. Thus, it was impossible for the Barbarians to establish a successful rule without being recognized by the locals, especially by the senatorial upper class,<sup>9</sup> who in Roman times had held the most important positions in local administration. To gain the support of the indigenous Romans in general and the senatorial nobility in particular, the kings of the Goths, Franks, Vandals etc. wished to convey the impression that the Barbarians' seizure of power had not caused any significant changes and that everything would go on as before, prior to the Barbarian invasions.<sup>10</sup> There was only one difference according to this view: the tasks formerly accomplished by the Roman emperors were now accomplished by the Barbarian kings.<sup>11</sup>

### Imperial elements adopted by the Barbarian rulers

The elements of Imperial rule which were adopted by the Barbarian kings can be grouped into three categories: inner policy, foreign policy and representation. The fact that Barbarian kings tried to represent themselves in a way similar to the Roman emperors becomes already obvious in their

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9 The importance of the senatorial upper class for the barbarian rulers is highlighted by Rohr, Christian: "Wie aus Barbaren Römer gemacht werden – das Beispiel Theoderich. Zur politischen Funktion der lateinischen Hochsprache bei Ennodius und Cassiodor". In: Pohl, Walter / Zeller, Bernhard (eds.): *Sprache und Identität im frühen Mittelalter*. (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse. Denkschriften 426 / Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 20). Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Vienna 2012, pp. 211–217, here p. 216.

10 Again, this becomes obvious when the reign of Theodoric is considered, cf. Claude, Dietrich: "Universale und partikulare Züge in der Politik Theoderichs". *Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte* 6, 1978, pp. 19–58, here p. 51.

11 However, the adoption of Imperial elements did not necessarily cause continuity, but could also lead to a break with the past. This was the case when acts of the emperors in Byzantium were copied, which had not been performed in the West before. Cf. on this aspect the further course of this article.



titles.<sup>12</sup> Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths for example, did not simply carry the title *rex*, meaning “king”, but he expanded his official title to *Flavius Theodoricus rex*.<sup>13</sup> Although the name *Flavius* had already developed into a sort of title in Late Roman Antiquity, referring to a member of the ruling class, Theodoric’s use of the name clearly alludes to emperor Constantine, whose official name was Flavius Valerius Constantinus.<sup>14</sup> After Theodoric, other Ostrogothic kings such as Theodahad as well as several kings of the Visigoths and Langobards called themselves Flavius, too.<sup>15</sup> Apart from this name, a number of Barbarian kings, for example those of the Vandals, Burgundians and Visigoths, used adjectives such as *gloriosissimus* when they entitled themselves or they were addressed as *dominus noster* or *pius victor*,<sup>16</sup> all of which had formerly been prerogatives of the Roman emperors. This culminated in an Italian inscription which praised the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great as “Our Lord, the most glorious and celebrated king Theodoric, victor and triumphator, ever augustus.”<sup>17</sup> It is important to mention, however, that Theodoric never bore a title such as “augustus” or “imperator” himself; he was only praised as such in this description.

Apart from Theodoric, it was the Frankish king Clovis, who – according to Gregory of Tours – was called “augustus” after he celebrated a

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12 On royal titles in the Early Middle Ages in general, cf. Wolfram, Herwig: *Intitulatio, vol. 1. Lateinische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*. (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung. Ergänzungsband 21). Böhlau: Graz / Vienna / Cologne 1967.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 58.

14 Pääffgen 2012, p. 283; Wolfram, Herwig: *Geschichte der Goten. Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts. Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie*. Beck: Munich 1979, p. 356.

15 Wolfram 1967, p. 61.

16 Pääffgen 2012, p. 284; Fanning, Steven C.: “Clovis Augustus and Merovingian *Imitatio Imperii*”. In: Mitchell, Kathleen / Wood, Ian (eds.): *The World of Gregory of Tours*. (Cultures, Beliefs and Traditions 8). Brill: Leiden / Boston / Cologne 2002, pp. 321–335, here pp. 326, 329.

17 Dessau, Hermann (ed.): *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, vol. 1*. Weidmannsche Buchhandlung: Berlin 1954, nr. 827, p. 184: *Dominus noster gloriosissimus adque inclutus rex Theodericus, victor ac triumphator, semper Augustus*. Translation after Fanning 2002, p. 327. Cf. Claude 1978, p. 53.

triumphal *adventus* into the city of Tours in 508.<sup>18</sup> German scholars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century held the opinion that this was the first coronation of an emperor in Germany. Modern research, however, is meanwhile sure that Clovis was only appointed honorary consul by the Byzantine emperor Anastasios I Dicorus, which allowed him to bear the title “augustus” as a special honour.<sup>19</sup>

A further privilege originally granted to emperors only was praising the ruler in panegyrics. The most famous panegyric for a Barbarian king is certainly that of Ennodius, bishop of Parma, which he composed for Theodoric.<sup>20</sup> Therein, he portrays the Gothic king as a *princeps venerabilis* who is full of virtues and acts like an “imperator”. Venantius Fortunatus composed similar panegyrics for the Frankish kings Charibert and Chilperich,<sup>21</sup> claiming that they possessed the same qualities as the later Roman emperors.

Last but not least, the Barbarian kings introduced a court ceremonial modelled on the example of Byzantium. Part of this ceremonial were diadems, crowns, coronations, splendid clothing and thrones, which the Bar-

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18 Krusch, Bruno / Levison, Wilhelm (eds.): *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Libri historiarum X, vol. 1*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum 1,1). Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover 1951, book 2, chapter 38, pp. 88–89: *Igitur ab Anastasio imperatore codecillos de consolato accepit [...] et ab ea die tamquam consul aut augustus est vocitatus*. Michael McCormick has shown, by the way, that Clovis celebrated his entry into Tours like an Eastern Roman general, not like the (Western-)Roman or Byzantine emperor, cf. Id.: “Clovis at Tours, Byzantine Public Ritual and the Origins of Medieval Ruler Symbolism”. In: Chrysos, Evangelos K. / Schwarcz, Andreas (eds.): *Das Reich und die Barbaren*. (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 29). Böhlau: Vienna / Cologne 1989, pp. 155–180.

19 Becher, Matthias: *Chlodwig I. Der Aufstieg der Merowinger und das Ende der antiken Welt*. Beck: Munich 2011, pp. 236–237. Cf. also Ausbüttel, Frank M.: *Die Germanen*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 2010, p. 110.

20 Rohr, Christian (ed.): *Der Theoderich-Panegyricus des Ennodius*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Studien und Texte 12). Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover 1995. Cf. Rohr 2002, p. 230.

21 Leo, Friedrich (ed.): *Venanti Honori Clementiani Fortunati presbyteri Italici Opera poetica*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi 4,1). Weidmannsche Buchhandlung: Berlin 1881, pp. 13–22. Cf. Fanning 2002, p. 323.

barians did not use before settling down in the Roman world. An example of the introduction of such a court ceremonial is given by Isidore of Seville, who in his “History of the Goths” writes that the Visigothic king Liuvigild “was the first one to sit in royal garments on his throne, because so far, the Goths have had equal seats and clothes with their kings”.<sup>22</sup>

The next examples of *imitatio imperii* deal with the area of inner policy. An important prerogative of the emperors in this field had been legislation. As a consequence, the kings of the Franks, Burgundians and Visigoths had the laws of their peoples codified to demonstrate that they had replaced the Roman emperors as legislators.<sup>23</sup> These laws, the *Leges Barbarorum*, were composed in Latin by Roman scribes, which shows that the Barbarian kings established their administration and chancelleries according to the tradition of the Roman emperors. Theodoric the Great even went a step further and appointed members of the senate,<sup>24</sup> officially still the highest

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22 Mommsen, Theodor (ed.): *Isidori iunioris episcopi hispalensis historia Gothorum, Wandalorum, Sueborum*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi 11). Weidmannsche Buchhandlung: Berlin 1894, p. 288: [*Levigildus*] *primusque inter suos regali veste opertus solio resedit: nam ante eum et habitus et consessus communis ut populo, ita et regibus erat.*

23 Famous law codes initiated by Barbarian rulers are the Edictum Theoderici, either issued by the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great or the Visigothic king Theodoric II, the Lex Salica by the Frankish king Clovis as well as several law codes in the Visigothic kingdom. The legislation of the Ostrogoth Theodoric is highlighted, for example, in an anonymous chronicle from the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. This chronicle says that Theodoric was considered to be “the strongest king” due to his edict, cf. König, Ingemar (ed.): *Theodericiana primum ab Henrico Valesia edita. Denuo edita, translata, adnotationibus exegeticis criticisque instructa. Aus der Zeit Theoderichs des Grossen. Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar einer anonymen Quelle*. (Texte zur Forschung 69). Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 1997, p. 80: [*Theodericus*] *et a Gothis secundum edictum suum, quo eius constitit, rex fortissimus in omnibus iudicaretur.*

24 Wolfram 1979, p. 358; Epp, Verena: “Goten und Römer unter Theoderich dem Großen”. In: Beer, Mathias / Kintzinger, Martin / Krauss, Marita (eds.): *Migration und Integration. Aufnahme und Eingliederung im historischen Wandel*. (Stuttgarter Beiträge zur Historischen Migrationsforschung 3). Franz Steiner Verlag: Stuttgart 1997, pp. 55–73, here p. 59. Cf. on Theodoric’s administration in general Ausbüttel, Frank M.: *Theoderich der Große*. (Gestalten der Antike). Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 2003, pp. 77–88.

organ of administration and one of the most important carriers of continuation between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages in Italy,<sup>25</sup> just like the emperors of Antiquity had done.

Another way of following in the footsteps of the emperors was the free distribution of grain, the so-called *annona civica*, to the inhabitants of Rome, as well as the organization of circus games. As an anonymous chronicler from Ravenna tells us, both was done by Theodoric whom the Romans – according to the chronicler – therefore “called a Trajan or a Valentinian”.<sup>26</sup> Gregory of Tours finally mentions that apart from Theodoric, the Merovingian king Chilperic organized games in a circus he ordered to be erected.<sup>27</sup> The effects of the games organised by Theodoric and Chilperic were different, however. Theodoric, after all, organised these games – probably *venationes*, i.e. the hunting and killing of wild animals – in Italy around the year 500, whereas Chilperic organized chariot races 80 years later in France. The difference is that circus games in Italy had not come to end when Theodoric seized power. Consequently, Theodoric continued the traditions of the past when he exhibited the games. In France, however, the tradition of the circus had already died out around the year 400 so that Chilperic organized the first games after nearly 200 years. Therefore, as Bernhard Jussen has pointed out, Chilperic did not follow the traditions of the Western circus but imitated the circus of Byzantium, which, however, was fundamentally different from that in the West. Thus, the examples of Theodoric and Chilperic show that similar acts of *imitatio imperii*, in these two cases the organization of circus games, could have completely different implications: whereas Theodoric’s circus games were in accordance with

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25 Cf. to the senate in Ostrogothic times Schäfer, Christoph: *Der weströmische Senat als Träger antiker Kontinuität unter den Ostgotenkönigen (490–540 n. Chr.)*. Scripta Mercaturae: St. Katharinen 1991.

26 König 1997, p. 80: [*Theodericus*] *ut etiam a Romanis Traianus vel Valentinianus, quorum tempora sectatus est, appelaretur. [...] [D]ona et annonas largitus, exhibens ludos circensium et amphitheatrum.*

27 Krusch / Levison 1951, book 5, chapter 17, p. 216: *Quod ille [Chilpericus] dispiciens, apud Sessionas atque Parisius circus aedificare praecepit, eosque populis spectaculum praebens.*

the past and caused continuity, those of Chilperic broke with the past and caused discontinuity.<sup>28</sup>

Irrespective of whether the circus games caused continuity or discontinuity, the construction of circuses leads me to the next point, building activity, which was maybe the best way to widely demonstrate that the Barbarian kings had assumed the role of the former emperors. Famous in this respect was Theodoric the Great, again, who not only repaired public buildings and facilities such as aqueducts which had been constructed under the former emperors, but he also had new palaces, baths, colonnades, amphitheatres and city walls built in Ravenna, Verona and Ticinum [= Pavia].<sup>29</sup> Most outstanding, however, is the gigantic mausoleum which was built on Theodoric's order in his capital Ravenna (cf. figure 1),<sup>30</sup> in front of which was placed a bronze equestrian statue of Theodoric.<sup>31</sup> Roof

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28 Cf. to the circus games organized by Chilperic, causing discontinuity, Jussen, Bernhard: "Um 567. Wie die poströmischen Könige sich in Selbstdarstellungen übten". In: Id. (ed.): *Die Macht des Königs. Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*. Munich: Beck, pp. 14–26, here pp. 17–19, 21–23. Jussen, however, states that the imitations of the emperor by the barbarian rulers necessarily were imports from the East and thus always caused discontinuity, cf. *ibid.*, p. 18. While this is certainly true in the case of Chilperic and later rulers, it is not in accord with Theodoric's imitations of the emperors in general and his organizations of circus games in particular.

29 König 1997, p. 84: [*Theodericus*] *erat enim amator fabricarum et restaurator civitatum. Hic aquae ductum Ravennae restauravit, quem princeps Traianus fecerat, et post multa tempora aquam introduxit. Palatium usque ad perfectum fecit, quod non dedicavit. Portica circa palatium fecit. Item Veronae thermas et palatium fecit et a porta usque ad palatium porticum addidit. Aquae ductum, quod per multa tempora destructum fuerat, renovavit et aquam intromisit. Muros alios novos circum dedit civitatem. Item Tricini palatium thermas amphitheatrum et alios muros civitatis fecit.*

30 Bovini, Giuseppe / von Heintze, Helga (transl.): *Das Grabmal Theoderichs des Grossen*. (Bände der römischen, christlichen, byzantinischen, hochmittelalterlichen Antike. Neue Serie 7). Ed. Dante: Ravenna: 1977.

31 This statue was later imported to Aachen by Charlemagne, which shows that the latter considered Theodoric as an important ruler who was suitable for justifying his own claim to the Imperial throne, cf. Epp, Verena: "499–799. Von Theoderich dem Großen zu Karl dem Großen". In: Godman, Peter / Jarnut, Jörg / Johanek, Peter (eds.): *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung. Das Epos "Karolus Magnus et Leo papa" und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn*

of the mausoleum was a monolith of 109 m<sup>3</sup> which the Goths had imported from Istria, thus proving their sophisticated skills in transporting and lifting technologies.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from the gigantic mausoleum, the most evident example of Theodoric's desire to imitate the Roman emperors in his urban policy is a city which Theodoric called "Theodoricopolis" after himself,<sup>33</sup> thus following the tradition of Constantine the Great, the founder of "Constantinopolis". Just like Constantine and Theodoric, Charlemagne named "Karlsburg" after himself,<sup>34</sup> whereas the Vandal king Huneric renamed the African city Hadrumetum "Hunericopolis".<sup>35</sup> Last but not least, the Visigothic king

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799. Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2002, pp. 219–229; Thürlemann, Felix: "Die Bedeutung der Aachener Theoderich-Statue für Karl den Großen (801) und bei Walahfrid Strabo (829). Materialien zu einer Semiotik visueller Objekte im frühen Mittelalter". *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 59, 1977, pp. 25–65, here pp. 36–38; Löwe, Heinz: "Von Theoderich dem Großen zu Karl dem Großen. Das Werden des Abendlandes im Geschichtsbild des frühen Mittelalters". In: Id.: *Von Cassiodor zu Dante. Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Geschichtsschreibung und politischen Ideenwelt des Mittelalters*. De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 1973, pp. 33–74, here pp. 66–70.

32 Hänseroth, Thomas / Mauersberger, Klaus: "Spekulative Betrachtungen über die Entwicklung des technischen Wissens im Mittelalter, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung vom Heben und Versetzen von Lasten". In: Lindgren, Uta (ed.): *Europäische Technik im Mittelalter. 800–1200. Tradition und Innovation. Ein Handbuch*. Mann: Berlin 1996, pp. 87–93, here p. 87. For the transport and lifting of the monolith, cf. Korres, Manolis: "Wie kam der Kuppelstein auf den Mauerring? Die einzigartige Bauweise des Grabmals Theoderichs des Großen zu Ravenna und das Bewegen schwerer Lasten". *Römische Mitteilungen* 104 (1997), pp. 219–258.

33 Wolfram 1979, p. 360. According to Bryan Ward-Perkins, "Theodoricopolis, [...] apparently located north of the Alps, is something of an enigma" because it is never referred to in the contemporary Ostrogothic sources, cf. Id.: "Constantinople. Imperial Capital of the Fifth and Sixth Centuries". In: Ripoll López, Gisela / Gurt Esparraguera, José María (eds.): *Sedes regiae* (ann. 400–800). (Real Acadèmia de Bones Lletres. Series maior 6 / Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona 25). Reial Acadèmia de bones lletres: Barcelona 2000, pp. 63–81, here p. 78.

34 "Karlsburg" is probably the modern town of Paderborn, cf. Becher, Matthias: *Karl der Große*. Beck: Munich 1999, p. 59.

35 Ward-Perkins 2000, p. 78.

Liuvigild founded a new city in Spain in 578 and called it “Reccopolis”, after his son Reccared.<sup>36</sup>

Clovis, king of the Franks, chose another way of imitating Constantine. He did not call a city after himself, but built a church in Paris consecrated to the twelve Apostles as a burial place for him and his family. This church was modelled on the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, which had been commissioned by Constantine and where he was buried after the church was finished.<sup>37</sup>

After these examples taken from the area of inner policy, this paper now turns to *imitatio imperii* in foreign policy. Especially prominent in this respect was Theodoric the Great, again. Just like the Roman emperors, he used, for example, sophisticated technology to impress and intimidate his foreign rivals.<sup>38</sup> This became evident when Theodoric tried to prevent the Burgundians from entering the war of the Franks against his allies, the Visigoths.<sup>39</sup> To achieve this aim, Theodoric sent the Burgundian king Gundobad both a water and a sun clock in order to demonstrate the technological and thus cultural superiority of the Goths. In a letter about this diplomatic mission, written by his chancellor Cassiodorus and sent to the Roman patrician Boethius who was commissioned to find both clocks, Theodoric was full of expectation concerning the Burgundians’ reaction to receiving the presents:

So, by obtaining and enjoying these pleasures [that means the pleasures of the presents], they will experience a wonder which to me is a common-place. [...] How often will they not believe their eyes? How often will they think this truth the delusion of a dream? And, when they have turned from their amazement, they will not dare to think themselves the equals of us, among whom, as they know, sages have thought up such devices.<sup>40</sup>

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36 Ripoll López, Gisela: “Reccopolis”. In: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 24. De Gruyter: Berlin 2003, pp. 204–208.

37 Becher 2011, pp. 268–269.

38 Claude 1978, pp. 25–27.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26.

40 Mommsen, Theodor (ed.): *Cassiodori Senatoris Variae*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi 12). Weidmannsche Buchhandlung: Berlin 1898, book 1, letter 45, pp. 39–41, here pp. 39 and 41: *Quatenus impetratis delectationibus perfruendo, quod nobis cottidianum, illis videatur esse miraculum. [...] Quotiens [Burgundi] non sunt credituri quae viderint? Quotiens hanc*

In a letter accompanying the two clocks, sent to Gundobad himself, Theodoric goes on to state that

Under your rule, let Burgundy learn to scrutinise devices of the highest ingenuity, and to praise the inventions of the ancients. Through you, it lays aside its tribal way of life, and in its regard for the wisdom of the king, it properly covets the achievements of the sages. Let it distinguish the parts of the day by their inventions; let it fix the hours of the day with precision. The order of life becomes confused if this separation is not truly known. Indeed, it is the habit of beasts to feel the hours by their bellies' hunger, and to be unsure of something obviously granted for human purposes.<sup>41</sup>

In the words of Ian Wood, “[i]n these two letters Theodoric’s sense of superiority is almost tangible.”<sup>42</sup> Both letters leave no doubt as to Theodoric’s claim that in technological and cultural terms, the Goths were far superior to the Burgundians in particular and all other Barbarian kingdoms in general. After all, the Burgundians are portrayed as primitive and beast-like, who desperately need the Ostrogoths in order to escape this tribal, ‘uncivilized’ way of life. Theodoric behaved similarly when he sent a lyre-player to the Frankish ruler Clovis. This lyre-player also should “tame the savage hearts of the barbarians” with his “Orpheus-like, sweet sound”,<sup>43</sup> thus

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*veritatem lusoria somnia putabunt? Et quando fuerint ab stupore conversi, non audebunt se aquales nobis dicere, apud quos sciunt sapientes talia cogitasse.* English translation: Barnish, Samuel J. B.: *The Variae of Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator: the Right Honourable and Illustrious Ex-Quaestor of the Palace, Ex-Ordinary Consul, Ex-Master of the Offices, Praetorian Prefect and Patrician. Being Documents of the Kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy, Chosen to Illustrate the Life of the Author and the History of his Family.* (Translated Texts for Historians 12). Liverpool University Press: Liverpool 1992, pp. 20 and 23.

- 41 Mommsen 1898, book 1, letter 46, p. 42: *Discat sub vobis Burgundia res subtilissimas inspicere et antiquorum inventa laudare: Per vos propositum gentile deponit et dum prudentiam regis sui respicit, iure facta sapientium concupiscit. Distinguat spatia diei actibus suis, horarum aptissime momenta constituat. Ordo vitae confusus agitur, si talis discretio sub veritate nescitur. Beluarum quippe ritus est ex ventris esurie horas sentire et non habere certum, quod constat humanis usibus contributum.* English translation: Barnish 1992, p. 24.
- 42 Wood, Ian: “The Latin Culture of Gundobad and Sigismund”. In: Hägermann / Haubrichs / Jarnut 2004, pp. 367–380, quotation p. 367.
- 43 Mommsen 1898, book 2, letter 40, p. 72: *citharoedum [...] facturus aliquid Orphei, cum dulci sono gentilium fera corda domuerit.* English translation: Barnish 1992, pp. 42–43.



trying to prevent the Franks from continuing their aggression against the Visigoths in Southern France.

From this alleged superiority – as Ian Wood has shown, it was in fact rather the Burgundians who were culturally superior to the Ostrogoths<sup>44</sup> –, Theodoric deduced the claim of an Ostrogothic hegemony over the West. To underline this assertion, he established a system of alliances by which he tried to exert influence over the actions of the other Barbarian kings.<sup>45</sup> For that purpose, he had married off several of his female relatives to the rulers of the Burgundians, Vandals and Thuringians, whereas he himself married the sister of Clovis, king of the Franks. The fact that Theodoric tried to gain influence over the other kings by this marriage policy becomes especially obvious in the marriage between his sister Amalafriada and the Vandal king Thrasamund. After all, the Byzantine historiographer Procopius of Caesarea tells us that his sister was accompanied by several thousand soldiers<sup>46</sup> who, in fact, rather functioned as an occupational force, securing the Gothic influence in Northern Africa, than as an escort for Amalafriada.<sup>47</sup>

Theodoric's attempt to establish superiority either by precious presents or by his marriage policy failed, however: not only could he not prevent that Hilderic, Thrasamund's successor as king of the Vandals, captured and later killed Amalafriada along with the Gothic soldiers,<sup>48</sup> he was not able to prevent

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44 Wood 2004, p. 368.

45 On Theodoric's marriage policy, cf. Ensslin, Wilhelm: *Theoderich der Große*. Münchener Verlag: Munich: 1959, pp. 80–81.

46 Dewing, Henry B. (transl.): *Procopius in Seven Volumes, vol. 2: History of the Wars, Books III and IV*. (The Loeb Classical Library). William Heinemann / Harvard University Press: London / Cambridge, Mass. 1953, pp. 77: "And Theodoric sent him not only his sister but also a thousand of the notable Goths as a bodyguard, who were followed by a host of attendants amounting to about five thousand fighting men."

47 Kampers, Gerd: *Geschichte der Westgoten*. Ferdinand Schöningh: Paderborn et al. 2008, p. 159.

48 Dewing 1953 (The Vandalic War), book 3, chapter 9, pp. 83–85: "During the reign of this Ilderich, [...] they [= the Vandals] became enemies instead of allies and friends to Theodoric and the Goths in Italy. For they put Amalafriada in prison and destroyed all the Goths." Shortly thereafter, but probably only after Theodoric's death in 526, Amalafriada was executed, cf. Merrills, Andy / Miles, Richard: *The Vandals*. (The Peoples of Europe). Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester 2010, p. 133.

the defeat of his Visigothic ‘brethren’ in the aforementioned war against the Franks, either. Theodoric made the best of the Visigothic defeat, however, and seized the power over their kingdom, expanding his rule from Italy to Spain and thus reuniting a considerable part of the former Western Empire.<sup>49</sup>

### Imperial elements not adopted by the Barbarian rulers

After having examined several elements of Imperial rule which were adopted by Barbarian kings, this paper now turns to those Imperial elements which were not imitated by the Barbarians. Thanks to the chronicle of Cassiodorus, we know, for example, that Odoacer, who dethroned the last Roman emperor Romulus Augustulus in 476, neither used the imperial insignia nor the colour purple, which was used by the emperor in Byzantium only.<sup>50</sup> The Ostrogothic chancellery under Theodoric avoided purple, as well.<sup>51</sup> In the Frankish kingdoms, it was not before Charles the Bald in the ninth century that the rulers began to sign their deeds in purple.<sup>52</sup> The only exception to that rule was the Visigothic king Theodoric II who used purple.<sup>53</sup> The Ostrogoth Theodoric, however, avoided not only the colour purple, but also refused to call the laws passed by him *leges*, but only called them *edicta*, because the passing of *leges* had been the prerogative of the emperor, whereas *edicta* could also be passed by Roman magistrates or prefects.<sup>54</sup> Besides, most of the coins minted in the Barbarian kingdoms showed the portrait of the emperor in Byzantium,

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49 Cf. on Theodoric’s reign over Visigothic Spain Kampers 2008, pp. 157–164.

50 The chronicle says about the year 476: *His cons. ab Odovacere Orestes et frater eius Paulus extincti sunt nomenque regis Odovacer adsumsit, cum tamen nec purpura nec regalibus uteretur insignibus*. Cf. Barnwell, Paul S.: *Emperor, Prefects and Kings. The Roman West, 395–565*. Duckworth: London 1992, p. 134.

51 Claude 1978, p. 49.

52 Trost, Vera: *Gold- und Silbertinten. Technologische Untersuchungen zur abendländischen Chrysographie und Argyrographie von der Spätantike bis zum hohen Mittelalter*. (Beiträge zum Buch- und Bibliothekswesen 28). Otto Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 1991, pp. 4, 13.

53 Fanning 2002, p. 329.

54 Claude 1978, p. 50; Jones, Arnold Hugh Martin: “The Constitutional Position of Odoacer and Theodoric”. *The Journal of Roman Studies* 52, 1962, pp. 126–130, here p. 129.

not that of the Barbarian kings.<sup>55</sup> But above all, there was no Barbarian ruler until Charlemagne in the year 800 who bore the Imperial title “imperator” or “augustus”.

The first one to voluntarily shrink away from these titles was Odoacer. Numerous usurpers in the decades and centuries before had proclaimed themselves “emperor” after having overthrown the incumbent. Yet, as the aforementioned chronicle of Cassiodorus tells us, Odoacer was content with assuming the title “rex”.<sup>56</sup> He even sent the insignia of the Western emperors, the *ornamenti palatii*, to the emperor in Constantinople to show him that he renounced the title “imperator”.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Procopius writes about Theodoric that “he did not claim the right to assume either the garb or the name of emperor of the Romans, but was called ‘rex’ to the end of his life”.<sup>58</sup>

There were basically two reasons why rulers like Odoacer and Theodoric intentionally shrank away from the title “emperor”. Odoacer first and foremost did so in order to establish a secure and stable rule. As the decades before had shown, the title “emperor” was a hindrance to that; after all, there had been as many as nine emperors between the 450s and 470s. By refusing to proclaim himself “emperor”, Odoacer made sure that one important bone of contention, videlicet the title “emperor”, had disappeared.<sup>59</sup> And indeed, Odoacer’s decision was crowned with success: with him as “rex” instead of “imperator”, Italy enjoyed the first longer period of peace

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55 Claude 1978, pp. 49–50. For the pictorial representation of Barbarian rulers, cf. Rummel, Philipp von: *Habitus barbarus. Kleidung und Repräsentation spätantiker Eliten im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert*. (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde 55). De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 2007, pp. 256–268.

56 Cf. note 50.

57 Ausbüttel 2003, p. 50.

58 Dewing, Henry B. (transl.): *Procopius in Seven Volumes, vol. 3: History of the Wars, Books V and VI*. (The Loeb Classical Library). William Heinemann / Harvard University Press: London / Cambridge, Mass. 1953, book 5, chapter 1, pp. 10–11.

59 Pohl, Walter: *Die Völkerwanderung. Eroberung und Integration*. Kohlhammer: Stuttgart / Berlin / Cologne 2005, p. 34.

after decades, taking twelve years<sup>60</sup> until Theodoric invaded Italy on behalf of the Byzantine emperor.

The fact that Theodoric was sent to Italy by the emperor in Byzantium hints at the second reason why the Barbarian kings refused to call themselves “emperor”. Theodoric, after all, had signed a treaty with the Byzantine emperor Zeno according to which Theodoric was supposed to conquer Italy and afterwards rule the country until the emperor himself appeared to seize power.<sup>61</sup> This treaty and especially Zeno’s intention to seize power over Italy shows that the emperors in Constantinople still considered the Western Mediterranean as belonging to their Empire although “the West” had been conquered by the Barbarians.

As various letters written by the Barbarian kings to the Byzantine emperors demonstrate, the Barbarians were willing to recognize this claim, thus formally acknowledging the superiority of the emperor in Byzantium. The Burgundian king Sigismund, for example, stated in a letter to emperor Anastasius that “my people are yours”, that “though we may seem to rule our own people, we think of ourselves as nothing other than your soldiers” and, finally, that “our country is your sphere.”<sup>62</sup> A similar letter was sent by Theodoric to the same emperor, saying: “You are the fairest ornament of all realms; you are the healthful defence of the whole world, to which

60 Ausbüttel 2003, pp. 47, 51. For the period of peace after the end of the empire also cf. Pohl, Walter: “Rome and the Barbarians in the Fifth Century”. *Antiquité tardive* 16, 2008, pp. 93–101, here p. 99.

61 The treaty between Zeno and Theodoric is mentioned by the anonymus chronicler from Ravenna, cf. König 1997, pp. 76–77: *Zeno [...] mittens eum [Theodericum] ad Italiam. Cui Theodericus pactuatus est, ut, si victus fuisset Odoacer, pro merito laborum suorum loco eius, dum adveniret, tantum praeregnaret. Ergo superveniente Theoderico patricio de civitate Nova cum gente Gothica, missus ab imperatore Zenone de partibus Orientis ad defendendam sibi Italiam.* Cf. Wolfram 1979 pp. 354–356; Pohl 2005, p. 16.

62 Peiper, Rudolf (ed.): *Alcimi Ecdicii Aviti Viennensis episcopi Opera quae supersunt.* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi 6,2). Weidmannsche Buchhandlung: Berlin 1883, letter 93, p. 100: *Vester quidem est populus meus. [...] Cumque gentem nostram videamur regere, non aliud nos quam milites vestros credimus. [...] Patria nostra vester orbis est.* English translation: Shanzer, Danuta / Wood, Ian: *Avitus of Vienne. Letters and Selected Prose.* (Translated Texts for Historians 38). Liverpool University Press: Liverpool 2002, letter 93, pp. 146–147.

all other rulers rightfully look up with reverence. [...] Our royalty is an imitation of yours [...], a copy of the unique Empire.”<sup>63</sup> Here, we even have the word “imitatio”, but it is improbable that this letter had any impacts on the formulation of the phrase “imitatio imperii” in the Donation of Constantine a few hundred years later.<sup>64</sup> Irrespective of this, the two letters commissioned by the Burgundian and Ostrogothic kings reveal that the rulers of the Barbarian kingdoms refused to bear the title “emperor” and contented themselves with titles like “*rex*” in order to demonstrate their formal subordination to the Byzantine emperors.

The fact that Byzantium put huge emphasis on the Barbarians’ subordination becomes evident in a passage written by Procopius of Caesarea. This passage deals with the Vandal king Gelimer, who – according to Procopius – sent a letter to emperor Justinian beginning with the words “Basileus Gelimer to basileus Justinian” (*Βασιλεὺς Γελίμερ Ἰουστινιανῶ βασιλεῖ*), thus pretending to be on an equal level with the emperor.<sup>65</sup> The latter, who, according to Procopius, had already been angry with Gelimer before, “was still more eager to punish him [...] upon receiving this letter.”<sup>66</sup> There is no doubt that Gelimer would never have used a formulation like that because he knew that the title “basileus” was a prerogative of the Byzantine emperor; officially, it was not before the reign of Heraclius (610–641) that the Byzantine emperors called themselves “basileus”, but unofficially this title had already been used, for example in literary sources, for a long time.<sup>67</sup>

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63 Mommsen 1898, book 1, letter 1: *Vos enim estis regnorum omnium pulcherrimum decus. [...] Regnum nostrum imitatio vestra est, [...] unci exemplar imperii.* English translation: Hodgkin, Thomas: *The Letters of Cassiodorus. Being a Condensed Translation of the Variae Epistolae of Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator.* Henry Frowde: London 1886, p. 141.

64 Fried 2007, p. 45, note 140.

65 Dewing 1953 (The Vandalic War), book 3, chapter 9, pp. 88–89. Cf. about this passage Demandt, Alexander: “Von der Antike zum Mittelalter”. In: Id.: *Zeitenwende. Aufsätze zur Spätantike.* (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde). De Gruyter: Berlin 2013, pp. 467–488, here p. 483.

66 Ibid., p. 91.

67 Chrysos, Evangelos K.: “The title basileus in Early Byzantine International Relations”. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 32 (1978), pp. 29–75, here p. 59. Even before its official introduction in 629, the Byzantine emperors never conceded the title “basileus” to any of the Barbarian rulers, cf. *ibid.*, p. 33.

Consequently, there is no doubt that this passage was invented by Procopius. He did so to justify Justinian's attack on the Vandals, which shows that in Byzantine eyes the non-recognition of the emperor's superiority in rank was sufficient to provide the reason for a *bellum iustum*. As a consequence, the Barbarians had to be extremely cautious to avoid any conflicts with the Byzantine Empire which was both economically and militarily much stronger than any of the Barbarian kingdoms.

The risks accompanying the title "emperor" are also shown in another passage in Procopius' work. In his "History of the Gothic War", the Byzantine historiographer informs his readers that the Goths were willing to declare the Byzantine general Belisarius "emperor of the West" (*βασιλέα τῆς ἐσπερίας*) after he had conquered the Ostrogothic capital of Ravenna and captured their king Vitiges.<sup>68</sup> Belisarius, however, "was quite unwilling to assume the ruling power against the will of the emperor; for he had an extraordinary loathing for the name of tyrant."<sup>69</sup> Later on, the Goths make a second try, suggesting that their newly elected king Ildibad would come to Belisarius to "lay down the purple at his feet and do obeisance to Belisarius as *basileus* of the Goths and Italians."<sup>70</sup> Again, however, Belisarius refused the "Imperial name" (*βασιλείας ὄνομα*), saying "that never, while the emperor Justinian lived, would [he] usurp the title of *basileus*" (*ποτε ζῶντος Ἰουστινιανοῦ βασιλέως Βελισάριος ἐπιβατεῖοι τοῦ τῆς βασιλείας ὀνόματος*).<sup>71</sup>

In these passages, Procopius makes it crystal-clear that adopting the title *basileus*, which at his time at least unofficially had been the title of the emperor in Byzantium, was a cause for war because someone adopting this title

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68 Dewing, Henry B. (transl.): *Procopius in Seven Volumes, vol. 4: History of the Wars, Books VI (continued) and VII*. (The Loeb Classical Library). Harvard University Press / William Heinemann: Cambridge, Mass. / London 1954, book 6, chapter 29, pp. 129–131: "All the best of the Goths decided to declare Belisarius emperor of the West."

69 *Ibid.*, p. 131.

70 *Ibid.*, book 6, chapter 30, p. 145.

71 *Ibid.* When referring to Belisarius, Dewing translates the word *basileus* as "king", but due to the significance of the title *basileus*, which Belisarius – according to Procopius – was not willing to adopt because he did not want to seem like a usurper, I prefer the meaning "emperor" here.

did not recognize the superiority of the Byzantine emperor, but pretended to be an equal partner. An Imperial ruler, however, could not accept an equal partner because this would contradict the Imperial claim of sole and universal rulership, stretching over the whole of the world.<sup>72</sup>

The tradition of avoiding the title “emperor” became so strong in the West that even Charlemagne, the most powerful ruler in Western Europe for centuries, had to justify his actions when he had himself crowned emperor in the year 800. As the annals of Lorsch tell us, this justification consisted of the well-known claim that the Greeks at that time only had a *feminum imperium* and thus lacked a “real” emperor.<sup>73</sup> This line of argumentation was based on the fact that Byzantium had been ruled by a woman, Empress Irene, between 797 and 802. Thus, even hundreds of years after the end of the Empire in the West, it was not possible to make someone “emperor” without delivering a justification.

## Conclusion

This paper has shown various examples of Barbarian kings adopting elements of Imperial rule. Especially prominent in this respect was the king of the Ostrogoths, Theodoric the Great. This is hardly surprising because he was ruling Italy, the heartland of the former Western Empire, just a few years after the deposition of the last emperor Romulus Augustulus. Therefore, in Theodoric’s kingdom both Roman institutions and Imperial

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72 Burkhardt, Stefan: *Mediterranes Kaisertum und imperiale Ordnungen. Das lateinische Kaiserreich von Konstantinopel*. (Europa im Mittelalter 25). Akademie Verlag / De Gruyter: Berlin / Boston 2014, pp. 213–216. Cf. also Burkhardt’s article in this volume.

73 *Annales Laureshamenses ad annum 801*. In: Pertz, Heinrich Georg (ed.): *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores in Folio, vol. 1*. Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover 1826, pp. 22–39, here p. 38: *Et quia iam tunc cessabat a parte Graecorum nomen imperatoris, et femineum imperium apud se abebant, tunc visum est et ipso apostolico Leoni et universis sanctis patribus qui in ipso concilio aderant, seu reliquo christiano populo, ut ipsum Carolum regem Franchorum imperatorem nominare debuissent*. On Charlemagne’s coronation as emperor, cf. Classen, Peter: *Karl der Große, das Papsttum und Byzanz. Die Begründung des karolingischen Kaisertums*. (Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 9). Sigmaringen: Thorbecke 1985, as well as the contribution of Jan Clauß in this volume.

traditions were still particularly strong so that he had to make special efforts in order to present himself as the successor of the former emperors. However, the farther the Barbarian kingdoms were away from Italy and the more time passed on since the end of the Western Empire, the less efforts were necessary to portray oneself as successor of the emperor. Hence, *imitatio imperii* was much less extensively practiced by the Barbarian leaders after Theodoric's times.

What is more, the later Barbarian kings increasingly orientated themselves towards Byzantium when imitating the emperor because the Imperial traditions in the West became increasingly extinct. However, as Byzantium had developed its own Imperial tradition, the *imitatio* of the Eastern emperor often had a different effect than the imitation of the Western one: imitating the Western emperor caused continuity because a Barbarian leader like Theodoric replaced the emperor and accomplished the tasks formerly accomplished by him. In contrast to that, the *imitatio* of the Eastern emperor often saw the introduction of new elements of Imperial rule into the West, which had never existed there before, and thus caused discontinuity.

To conclude, it is beyond doubt that in the Barbarian kingdoms of the early Middle Ages, the adoption of Imperial elements comprised both risks and chances: on the one hand, the kings could legitimize their rule and increase their symbolic capital by imitating the emperors. But if they went too far and evoked the impression of being on equal terms with the emperor in Constantinople, for example by calling themselves "imperator" or "basileus", they were in great danger of falling prey to the Byzantine Empire.



*Figure 1: The Mausoleum of Theodoric the Great in Ravenna, URL: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theoderich\\_der\\_Gro%C3%9Fe#/media/File:RA\\_Theoderich-Mausoleum\\_2010.JPG](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theoderich_der_Gro%C3%9Fe#/media/File:RA_Theoderich-Mausoleum_2010.JPG) (Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0).*





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## Barbarian Emperors? Aspects of the Byzantine Perception of the qaghan (*chaganos*) in the Earlier Middle Ages

As direct heirs to the Roman imperial tradition, Byzantine emperors had a strong claim to universal rule over the *oikoumenē*<sup>1</sup> and according to a well-established tradition, they only acknowledged one ruler equal to them: the Persian king of kings, whose place was later accorded to the Muslim caliph.<sup>2</sup> In the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, however, the Constantinopolitan court came into contact with another type of “imperial” monarchs: the qaghans (or *khagans*) of the Eurasian steppe zone. These partly close, partly remote encounters have left their traces in a number of early and middle Byzantine sources,<sup>3</sup> so that the Byzantine modes of perception of the steppe rulers can be discussed.<sup>4</sup> Although the Eurasian nomadic polities of the earlier Middle Ages still occupy a rather marginal position in Medieval Studies in general,<sup>5</sup> their relevance to the Byzantine civilization as more

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- 1 For the complex notion of *oikoumenē* in Byzantium see Koder, Johannes: “Die räumlichen Vorstellungen der Byzantiner von der Ökumene (4. bis 12. Jahrhundert)”. *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 137(2), 2002, pp. 15–34.
  - 2 Cf. Schmalzbauer, Gudrun: “Überlegungen zur Idee der Oikumene in Byzanz”. In: Hörandner, Wolfram et al. (eds.): *Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik. Beiträge zum Symposion 40 Jahre Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien im Gedenken an Herbert Hunger*. Verlag der ÖAW: Vienna 2004, pp. 408–419.
  - 3 The basic resource for any study on Byzantine-Turkic relations is Moravcsik, Gyula: *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2: *Sprachreste der Türkvölker in den byzantinischen Quellen*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Akademie Verlag: Berlin 1958.
  - 4 See also the study by Savvides, Alexis G.C.: “Some Notes on the Terms khān and khagan in Byzantine Sources”. In: Netton, Ian Richard (ed.): *Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth*, vol. 1. Brill: Leiden / Boston / Cologne 2000, pp. 267–279.
  - 5 Notwithstanding the recent efforts to raise historical awareness of their important role in European Medieval history, cf. Curta, Florin (ed.): *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages: Avars, Bulgars, Khazars and Cumans*. (East Central

or less permanent neighbours has long been recognized.<sup>6</sup> Research in this field does not only concentrate on the interaction between the nomads and Byzantium,<sup>7</sup> but also on their perception in the East Roman Empire.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand there is a flourishing tradition of profound turkological, archaeological and historical research specifically dedicated to the steppe peoples and their polities.<sup>9</sup> Scholars have not only introduced and discussed

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and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages 2). Brill: Leiden / Boston 2008; Spinei, Victor: *The Great Migrations in the East and South of Europe from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Hakkert: Amsterdam 2006. See also Pohl, Walter: “The Role of Steppe Peoples in Eastern and Central Europe in the First Millennium A.D.”. In: Urbańczyk, Przemysław (ed.): *Origins of Central Europe*. PAN: Warsaw 1997, pp. 65–78.

- 6 Cf. Schreiner, Peter: “Die Rolle der Turkvölker in der byzantinischen Reichspolitik”. In: Id. (ed.): *Studia byzantino-bulgarica*. Verein Freunde des Hauses Wittgenstein: Vienna 1986, pp. 39–50.
- 7 Inter alia Kralides, Apostolos F.: *Οἱ Χάζαροι καὶ τὸ Βυζάντιο. Ἱστορικὴ καὶ θρησκευτικὴ προσέγγιση*. Sabbalas: Athens 2003; Kardaras, Georgios: *Τὸ Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἄραροι (6–9 αἰ): πολιτικὲς, διπλωματικὲς καὶ πολιτισμικὲς σχέσεις*. Elleniko Idryma Ereunon: Athens 2010 (not consulted); Vásáry, István: *Cumans and Tatars. Oriental Military in the pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2005.
- 8 Carile, Antonio: “I nomadi nelle fonti bizantine”. In: *Popoli delle steppe: Unni, Avari, Ungari*. (Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo 35). CISAM: Spoleto 1988, vol. 1, pp. 55–87; Ahrweiler, Hélène: “Byzantine Concepts of the Foreigner: The Case of the Nomads”. In: Ead. / Laiou, Angeliki (eds.): *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*. Dumbarton Oaks Library: Washington 1998, pp. 1–15; Malamut, Élisabeth: “Les peuples étrangers dans l’idéologie impériale. Scythes et Occidentaux”. In: *L’étranger au Moyen Âge. Actes du XXX<sup>e</sup> congrès de la SHMESP*. Publications de la Sorbonne: Paris 2000, pp. 119–132; Ead.: “L’image byzantine des Petchénègues”. *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 88, 1995, pp. 105–147.
- 9 To cite only some recent works of general character: Golden, Peter B.: *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*. (Turcologica 9). Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 1992; Kljaštornyj, Sergej G.: *Die Geschichte Zentralasiens und die Denkmäler in Runenschrift*. Schletzer: Berlin 2007; Id. / Sultanov, Tursun I.: *Staaten und Völker in den Steppen Eurasiens: Altertum und Mittelalter*. Schletzer: Berlin 2006; Roemer, Hans Robert / Scharlipp, Wolfgang-Ekkehard (eds.): *History of the Turkic Peoples in the Pre-Islamic Period*. (Philologiae Turcicae fundamenta 3.1). Schwarz: Berlin 2000; Güzel, Hasan Celâl /

a wide range of sources, reaching from Chinese dynastic records and early Turkic inscriptions to literary testimonies in all major written languages of the Medieval Mediterranean world, but also developed structural concepts about the steppe empires, their economic base and their models of rulership, especially the qaghanate.<sup>10</sup>

We shall not try to summarize the history of the qaghanal institution – as far as it is known – in this place, but only mention that the title qaghan (in Chinese *ke-han*)<sup>11</sup> seems to occur in the Xianbei polity of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE for the first time and was later used by the Rou-ran, the supposed ancestors of the European Avars.<sup>12</sup> When the Türk tribes<sup>13</sup> successfully revolted against these overlords in 552, their leader Bumïn consequently claimed the qaghanate for himself.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, the Avars retained the same in-

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Oğuz, C. Cem / Karatay, Osman (eds.): *The Turks I: Early Ages*. Yeni Türkiye Publications: Ankara 2002; Beckwith, Christopher I.: *Empires of the Silk Road. A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present*. Princeton University Press: Princeton / Oxford 2009.

- 10 Pritsak, Omeljan: “The Distinctive Features of the *pax nomadica*”. In: *Popoli delle steppe* (as n. 8), vol. 2, pp. 749–780, has analyzed the fundamental concepts that characterized steppe rulership; see also Golden, Peter B.: “The Türk Imperial Tradition in the Pre-Chinggisid Era”. In: Sneath, David / Kaplonski, Christopher (eds.): *The History of Mongolia*, vol. 1. Global Oriental Ltd.: Folkestone 2010, pp. 68–95, here pp. 71–75. There are also comparative approaches to steppe rulership, e.g. Stepanov, Tsvetelin: “Ruler and Political Ideology in Pax Nomadica: Early Medieval Bulgaria and the Uighur Qaganate”. In: Curta, Florin (ed.): *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor 2005, pp. 152–161.
- 11 The origins and meaning of the title are not yet sufficiently understood, see Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), pp. 71–72.
- 12 For the Rou-ran see Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), pp. 76–79; Kollautz, Arnulf / Miyakawa, Hisayuki: *Geschichte und Kultur eines völkerwanderungszeitlichen Nomadenvolkes. Die Jou-Jan der Mongolei und die Awaren in Mitteleuropa*, vol. 1: *Die Geschichte*. Geschichtsverein für Kärnten: Klagenfurt 1970, pp. 56–137.
- 13 For the origins and meaning of the name Türk see Scharlipp, Wolfgang-Ekkehard: *Die frühen Türken in Zentralasien. Eine Einführung in ihre Geschichte und Kultur*. WBG: Darmstadt 1992, pp. 13–17.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19; Kljaštornyj / Sultanov, *Staaten und Völker* (as n. 9), pp. 100–101.

stitution when they established their control over Pannonia around 568.<sup>15</sup> Avar domination over the Western margins of the Eurasian steppe zone proved much more persistent than the Türk Empire as the latter's history is indeed troubled: de facto subdivided into an Eastern part under the direct rule of the *qaghan* from the Ashina-clan<sup>16</sup> and a Western part headed by his relative, the *yabghu*, the strength of this empire depended on the shifting loyalties of tribes and tribal confederations and on its relations with powerful neighbours such as Tang China. The decomposition of the Western Türk polity led to the ascent of the long-lived and much studied<sup>17</sup> Khazar qaghanate in northern Caucasia and the lower Volga region during the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. The original structures of rulership in the Khazar polity seem to be derived from the Türk model.

The Türk tradition thus exercised a strong influence on patterns of rulership with various political forces of the Eurasian steppe zone. The Türk qaghanate has therefore been interpreted as the prototype of a specific model of sacralized monarchy in the steppe zone with strong imperial connotations.<sup>18</sup> Among the criteria which gave steppe rulers a legitimate claim to qaghanal status, heavenly fortune (*qut*) surely played the central role. This became particularly visible by successful conquests. Further aspects having been proposed in research are e.g. the possession of sacred places (mountains or forests) and a direct connection to the charismatic Ashina

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15 For the formation of Avar rule in the Hungarian plain in these decades see Pohl, Walter: *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567–822 n.Chr.* Beck: Munich 1988, pp. 43–76.

16 See Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), pp. 121–124 for a discussion of the origins of this probably non-Turkic name and related questions.

17 For an excellent outline of the development and current state of this particularly rich field of study see Golden, Peter B.: “Khazar Studies: Achievements and Perspectives”. In: Id. / Ben-Shammai, Haggai / Róna-Tas, András (eds.): *The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives. Selected Papers from the Jerusalem 1999 International Khazar Colloquium.* (Handbuch der Orientalistik 8, 17). Brill: Leiden / Boston 2007, pp. 7–57.

18 Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), p. 71: “the title qağan, which we may translate as ‘Emperor of the nomadic, steppe peoples’”; Pritsak, “The Distinctive Features” (as n. 10), p. 754: “The qayan was an autocrat (*bilgä*) and sole intermediary between the sedentary empire (China, Byzantium) and the *el*, both as a negotiator (peace, money, trade) and a war leader.”

clan (which does of course not apply to the Avar qaghans).<sup>19</sup> These and other criteria can certainly be evidenced in several cases, but it should be stressed that the defining characteristics of a qaghan have never been fixed in written form by the nomads. Moreover, there were some powerful and long-lived political entities in the steppe zone which seemingly ignored the qaghanal institution, such as those of the Pechenegs and the Cumans.<sup>20</sup> Their emergence in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries in fact marks the very end of the occurrence of qaghans in the Byzantine sources.

Consulting Gyula Moravcsik's *Byzantinoturcica*, one easily finds out that Byzantine historiographers used the term *chaganos* (χαγάνος) regularly with respect to rulers of three *ethnika*: the *Turkoi* (a rather ambiguous term), the Khazars and the Avars.<sup>21</sup> A first group of authors comprises Menander Protector, Theophylaktos Simokates and the compiler of the "Chronicon Paschale", all of them active in the later 6<sup>th</sup> and / or earlier 7<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>22</sup> and thus not yet acquainted with the Khazars. A second group consists of the "Short History" written by the patriarch Nikephoros and the "Chronography" attributed to Theophanes the Confessor, both of them were composed at the turn from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>23</sup> Most occurrences of the qaghan in later sources derive more or less directly from these texts.

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19 Golden, Peter: The Question of the Rus' Qaghanate. *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2, 1982, pp. 77–97, repr. in: Id.: *Nomads and their Neighbours in the Russian Steppe: Turks, Khazars and Qipchaqs*. Ashgate: Aldershot 2003, nr. VI, here pp. 84–86; see also Stepanov, Tsvetelin: "Rulers, Doctrines and Title Practices in Eastern Europe, 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Centuries". *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 14, 2005, pp. 263–279, here pp. 267–268. See also Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), pp. 146–149; Id., "Türk Imperial Tradition" (as n. 10), pp. 75–79.

20 For the political structure of these two polities see Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), pp. 264–281.

21 Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica II* (as n. 3), pp. 332–334; cf. Savvides, "Some Notes" (as n. 4), p. 275.

22 For this period of Byzantine historiography, see now Treadgold, Warren: *The Early Byzantine Historians*. Palgrave: Basingstoke 2007, pp. 293–349; cf. Hunger, Herbert: *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, vol. 1. (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft XII.5, 1). Beck: Munich 1978, pp. 309–319 and 328–329.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 334–339, pp. 344–347. The various discussions concerning the authorship and the sources of the "Chronography" are now concisely summarized by Conterno, Maria: *La "descrizione dei tempi" all'alba dell'espansione islam-*

The historical work of Menander Protector, which covers the years from 558 to 582, has only fragmentarily been preserved. Its author<sup>24</sup> mainly uses the unspecific term *hēgemōn* when referring to a barbarian ruler such as Sandilchos, chief of the Utigurs,<sup>25</sup> the ruler of the Hephthalites,<sup>26</sup> but also the Merovingian king Sigibert.<sup>27</sup> The same terminology can occasionally be found for the rulers of the Türk<sup>28</sup> and the Avars,<sup>29</sup> but Menander gives their titles more precisely. The Avar leader Baian is more often than not called *Chaganos* (*Χαγάνος*) (not necessarily specified by an ethnic attribute).<sup>30</sup> As a major protagonist of diplomatic contacts and military confrontation with the Romans, he is often just called by his name: *ὁ Βαϊανός*. This implies, however, that the name of this qaghan was well-known in Constantinople, which stands in striking contrast to the fact that none of the subsequent Avar qaghans is mentioned by name in any historiographical record.<sup>31</sup>

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*ica. Un'indagine sulla storiografia greca, siriana e araba fra VII e VIII secolo.* (Millennium Studien 47). De Gruyter: Berlin / Boston 2014, pp. 4–21. See also the detailed introduction by Rochow, Ilse: *Byzanz im 8. Jahrhundert in der Sicht des Theophanes. Quellenkritisch-historischer Kommentar zu den Jahren 715–813.* (Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten 57). Akademie Verlag: Berlin 1991, pp. 37–74.

- 24 On his personality and the character of his work see Baldwin, Barry: “Menander Protector”. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 32, 1978, pp. 99–125.
- 25 Blockley, Roger C. (ed.): *The History of Menander the Guardsman.* (ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 17). Cairns: Liverpool 1985, frg. 2, p. 42: τῷ Σανδίλχῳ τῷ τῶν Οὐτιγούρων ἡγεμόνι.
- 26 Menander, frg. 4,3, p. 46: ὁ Κάτουλφος κωλύων τὸν τῶν Ἐφθαλιτῶν ἡγεμόνα.
- 27 Id., frg. 11, p. 126: ἐσήμηνεν ὁ Βαϊανὸς Σιγισβέρτῳ τῷ τῶν Φράγγων ἡγεμόνι.
- 28 Cf. Id., frg. 4,2, p. 44: ὁ Σιλζιβουλὸς ὁ τῶν Τούρκων ἡγεμόν.
- 29 Id., frg. 8, p. 94: the Avar envoys sent to Constantinople refer to their qaghan as τὸν καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἡγεμόνα; frg. 12,6, p. 138: ὁ Βαϊανὸς ὁ τῶν Ἀβάρων ἡγεμόν; frg. 21, p. 192: the emperor Tiberius sends an embassy to Βαϊανὸν τὸν ἡγεμόνα τῶν Ἀβάρων.
- 30 Cf. Id., frg. 5,3, p. 50; frg. 27,3, p. 240; frg. 12,5, p. 136: Bonus, the commander of Sirmium (perhaps *magister militum per Illyricum*) sends a message to Baian, addressing him ὦ Χαγάνε.
- 31 Pohl, *Die Awaren* (as n. 15), p. 176; cf. Id.: “A non-Roman Empire in Central Europe: the Avars”. In: Goetz, Hans-Werner / Jarnut, Jörg / Pohl, Walter (eds.): *Regna and gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World.* (The Transformation of the Roman World 13). Brill: Leiden / Boston 2003,



In a fragment concerning the Roman-Avar confrontations of 579, Menander nearly exclusively uses the term *ὁ Χαγάνος* to designate Baian, who is nevertheless characterized very negatively and accused of having broken the treaty with the Romans in a shameless, most barbarian way (*βαρβαρότατα*).<sup>32</sup> While the confrontation with the Avars usually plays on a local scene involving only generals or governors, in this passage the emperor (Tiberius II) is mentioned several times (as *basileus* or *autokrator*) and thus figures as the qaghan's main antagonist. The relationship between the two monarchs is explicitly referred to in a previous fragment concerning the mission of the Avar envoy Targites to Constantinople. He declared to the emperor Justin II: "I am here, o basileus, sent by your son. For you are truly the father of our lord Baianos."<sup>33</sup> The idea of fictitious parental relationships between rulers is a common feature of 'international' relations in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, specifically associated with Byzantium.<sup>34</sup> According to Menander, however, it is not the Byzantine side that proposed such a concept, but the Avar ruler who pursues an obvious goal: that the emperor should show his "paternal love" (*στοργή*) and give to his "son" what the son is entitled to: *τὰ τοῦ παιδός*.<sup>35</sup> Besides this utilitarian logic,

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pp. 571–595, here p. 586, assuming that "the ideology of Avar rulership obliterated the individuality of the khagan; it was inconceivable that there was another khagan."

32 Menander, frg. 25, pp. 216–226, here especially p. 218, l. 8. For the rather typical patterns of Menander's perception of barbarians see Baldwin, "Menander" (as n. 24), p. 115.

33 Menander, frg. 12,6, p. 138: *ὁ βασιλεῦ, πάρεμι σταλεις ὑπὸ τοῦ σοῦ παιδός· πατήρ γάρ αὐτός ἀληθῶς Βαϊανοῦ τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς δεσπότου.*

34 This has been (over)emphasized by Dölger, Franz: "Die 'Familie der Könige' im Mittelalter". In: Id.: *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt. Ausgewählte Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Buch-Kunstverlag: Ettal 1953, pp. 34–69, who tries to trace the structures of a coherently ordered Byzantine "monarchical world system" out of an address-list given in the treatise "De Cerimoniis"; Dölger's view has been thoroughly criticized by Brandes, Wolfram: "Die 'Familie der Könige' im Mittelalter. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag zur Kritik eines vermeintlichen Erkenntnismodells". *Rechtsgeschichte – Legal History* 21, 2013, pp. 262–284.

35 Menander, frg. 12,6, p. 138, ll. 17–19: *πέποιθα δὴ οὖν ὡς ἐπιδείξασθαι προθυμηθεῖς τὴν περὶ τὸν παῖδα στοργὴν τῷ δίδόναι τὰ τοῦ παιδός*. For the implications of the Avar's demand see also Claude, Dietrich: "Zur Begründung

Menander's report seems to reveal that the Avar qaghan did not insist on his own hierarchical superiority with respect to the basileus, nor did he raise claims to universal rule.

The case of the Türk Empire is clearly different. Apart from two short fragments, Menander above all includes extensive accounts of two ambassadorial exchanges with them, which took place under changing political circumstances. The first exchange was initiated by İstāmi, the *yabghu qaghan* of the Western Türk called Sizabul in the Greek source, in about 567 in order to establish an alliance between the Türk and the Romans against Persia.<sup>36</sup> The account on Valentinus' mission around 576, however, shows clear signs of alienation since the Türk ruler had been informed about treaties between Byzantium and the Avars, whom he considered disobedient subjects who should be punished.<sup>37</sup>

In the account of the first Roman mission, led by Zemarchos,<sup>38</sup> Menander refers to Sizabul usually only by his name, but he once states that Zemarchos arrived at his destination, the "White Mountain" (*Ektag* / Aqdagh)<sup>39</sup>, which was the place "where the qaghan personally was".<sup>40</sup> The reception

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familiärer Beziehungen zwischen dem Kaiser und barbarischen Herrschern". In: Chrysos, Evangelos K. / Schwarcz, Andreas (eds.): *Das Reich und die Barbaren*. (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 29). Böhlau: Vienna / Cologne 1989, pp. 25–56, here p. 31.

36 Menander, frg. 10, 1–5 pp. 110–126. Cf. also Haussig, Hans Wilhelm: "Byzantinische Quellen über Mittelasien in ihrer historischen Aussage". In: Harmatta, János (ed.): *Prolegomena to the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*. Akadémiai Kiadó: Budapest 1979, pp. 41–60, here p. 47.

37 Cf. Menander, frg. 19, pp. 170–178.

38 For Zemarchos, his mission and its sources (besides Menander also in the "Ecclesiastical History" of John of Ephesos) see Dobrovits, Mihály: "The Altaic World through Byzantine Eyes: Some Remarks on the Historical Circumstances of Zemarchus' Journey to the Turks (AD 569–570)". *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 64, 2011, pp. 373–409; see also Carile, "I nomadi" (as n. 8), pp. 58–61.

39 Dobrovits, "The Altaic World" (as n. 38), pp. 386–387 shows that the term can refer to any snowy mountain.

40 Menander, frg. 10,3, p. 118, ll. 21–23: *Τούτων δὲ ταύτη γεγενημένων ἔπειτα ἐπορεύοντο ζῆν τοῖς ἐς τὸ τοιόνδε τεταγμένοις, ἵνα ὁ Χαγάνος αὐτὸς ἦν, ἐν ὄρει τινὶ λεγομένῳ Ἐκτάγ, ὡς ἂν εἴποι χρυσσοῦν ὄρος Ἑλλήν ἀνήρ.*

is described in detail.<sup>41</sup> Sizabul was sitting on a golden wheeled “kathedra” in a tent when the ambassador officially greeted him and expressed the Romans’ desire of friendship with the “tribes of the Turks” (τῶν Τούρκων τὰ φύλα). The qaghan was addressed as “ruler of so many peoples” (ὁ τοσούτων ἔθνῶν ἡγεμών) instead of any specific title, but the fact that Zemarchos calls the Byzantine emperor “our Great emperor” [emphasis S.K.] (ὁ καθ’ ἡμᾶς βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας) underlines the imperial connotation of this address.<sup>42</sup> It is thus perhaps not accidental that at the onset of this chapter, Menander states that the growing fortunes of the Turks determined their Sogdian subjects<sup>43</sup> to advise their (i.e. the Türk) *basileus* to send an embassy to Persia.<sup>44</sup> The title *basileus* is usually strictly reserved for the two rulers of Rome and Persia in Menander’s work. Therefore, this passage clearly alludes to the imperial quality of the Türk *qaghan* or, more precisely, the *yabghu qaghan*, since Menander seems not to be aware of the existence of a supreme qaghan of even higher rank in the East. Instead, he certainly depended on the information given by İstāmi’s Sogdian envoy Maniach in Constantinople when being asked for the structure of rulership among the Türk and their territories (περὶ τῆς τῶν Τούρκων ἡγεμονίας τε καὶ χώρας). Maniach explained that there were four parts (ἡγεμονίαι) among them, but the supreme rule over the whole people (κράτος τοῦ ζύμπαντος ἔθνους) lay in the hands of Sizabul alone. If this was not a bold lie, should we perhaps assume that the supreme rank among the Ashina clan had indeed (temporarily) devolved to İstāmi as senior ruler at some unknown date?<sup>45</sup>

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41 For prestigious objects and riches available at the qaghan’s court see Stark, Sören: *Die Alttürkenzeit in Mittel- und Zentralasien. Archäologische und historische Studien*. Reichert: Wiesbaden 2008, pp. 189–195.

42 Cf. Menander, frg. 10,3, p. 118, ll. 27–42.

43 For the position of the Sogdian merchants as economic elite of the Türk qaghanate see de la Vaissière, Étienne: *Sogdian Traders. A History*. (Handbook of Oriental Studies 8, 10). Brill: Leiden / Boston 2005, pp. 199–216.

44 Menander, frg. 10,1, p. 110, ll. 2–5: ὡς γὰρ τὰ Τούρκων ἐπὶ μέγα ἦρθη, οἱ Σογδαῖται οἱ πρὸ τοῦ μὲν Εφθαλιτῶν, τῆνικαῦτα δὲ Τούρκων κατήκοοι, τοῦ σφῶν βασιλέως ἐδέοντο πρεσβεῖαν στείλαι ὡς Πέρσας.

45 Id., frg. 10,1, p. 114, ll. 68–73. Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), p. 128, interprets Maniach’s statement in another way: “the Byzantines learned that Σιλζιβουλος was the supreme ruler of the Western branch of the Türk Empire which appears to have been broken up into four administrative units.” The text, however, does

In the fragment concerning Valentinus' mission, the image of Türk rulership is much more polycentric: Menander repeatedly refers to the leaders (*hēgemonēs* or *proestōtas*) of the Turks in plural, not using the term *chaganos* or any other title. Instead of a plurality of Turkic tribes or peoples, the Türk are now referred to as one Scythian tribe that has subdivided its land into eight parts (instead of four).<sup>46</sup> The Roman envoy is received in audience by Silzibil's (Sizabul's) son Turxanthos,<sup>47</sup> who later sends him to his brother Tardu<sup>48</sup> residing at mount Ektal. Furthermore, a most ancient monarch Arsilas is mentioned.<sup>49</sup> The imperial character of Türk rulership in Byzantine eyes is also confirmed by the content of the negotiations: Valentinus tries to convince the Türk to keep friendship with the Romans (implying equal standing),<sup>50</sup> but Turxanthos invokes the "invincible might" of the Türk and purposefully declares that he knows where the rivers Danube and Dnepr are. The qaghan thus delineates potential territorial claims, especially if the Romans collaborated with the Uarhonitai who call themselves Avars, but were considered "slaves" of the Türk.<sup>51</sup>

This deep antagonism between the Türk and the Avars – accused of having usurped the Avar name because of its prestige – is even more clearly

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not refer to a distinction between Eastern and Western Türk, and Golden also underlines (p. 131) that in the time of İstāmi the Western Türk Empire did not represent "an independent political entity".

46 Menander, frg. 19,1, p. 170, ll. 15–16: *Σκύθαας ἀνδρας ἐκ τοῦ φύλου τῶν ἐπιλεγόμενων Τούρκων*, and p. 172, ll. 32–33: *ἐν ὅκτῳ γὰρ μοίραις διεδάσαντο τὰ ἐκείνη ἅπαντα, οἷς γε τοῦ φύλου τῶν Τούρκων ἔλαχε προεστάναι*.

47 Beckwith, Christopher: "The Frankish Name of the King of the Turks". *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 15, 2006/7, pp. 5–12, here pp. 7–8, has argued that this name in fact stands for the title \**türkwač* (ruler of the Türk) instead of a meaningless \**türkšad*. The title has also left traces in the so-called Fredegar-chronicle.

48 Menander frg. 19,1, p. 178, ll. 133–135. For Tardu, son of İstāmi, ruler of the Western Türk empire (575–603) and finally even qaghan in the East (600–603), see Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), pp. 131–133; Scharlipp, *Die frühen Türken* (as n. 13), pp. 27–28.

49 Menander frg. 19,1, p. 172, l. 34: *Ἀρσίλας δὲ ὄνομα τῷ παλαιτέρῳ μονάρχῳ Τούρκων*. Arsilas has been identified with the dynastic name Ashina by Christopher Beckwith, see Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), p. 121.

50 Menander frg. 19,1, p. 172, ll. 35–49.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 172, l. 50-p. 174, l. 74.

outlined by Theophylaktos Simokates, who continued Menander's work in his "Oikumenikē Historia". His famous excursus on the Scythian peoples has often been commented on and nevertheless remains partially cryptic.<sup>52</sup> It is introduced by a letter sent "in this summer"<sup>53</sup> to the emperor Maurikios by "the one who in the East is praised as *Chaganos* by the Türk".<sup>54</sup> The title "qaghan" is thus not explained to the reader, but it becomes clear that its holder is highly venerated. Theophylaktos furthermore cites the letter's *inscriptio* (*epigraphē*) literally: "to the basileus of the Romans from the *Chaganos*, the great lord of the seven generations and ruler of the seven

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52 The most detailed discussion is Haussig, Hans Wilhelm: "Theophylakts Exkurs über die skythischen Völker". *Byzantion* 23, 1953, pp. 275–457. See also the comments by Peter Schreiner in: Id. (transl.): *Theophylaktos Simokates, Geschichte*. (Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 20). Hiersemann: Stuttgart 1985, pp. 340–347.

53 The letter's date is controversial, although it is generally agreed upon that the events mentioned by Theophylaktos in the surrounding chapters belong to 595. Therefore Schreiner, *Theophylaktos* (as n. 52), p. 341, n. 951, pleads for 595, but Whitby, Michael: *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian. Theophylakt Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare*. Clarendon Press: Oxford 1988, pp. 315–316 prefers a much earlier date shortly after 580 for the letter, as did Haussig, "Theophylakts Exkurs" (as n. 52), pp. 383–384 with regard to the oral victory reports, but not to the actual letter, which he dates to 600. Against such a rather unconvincing split Harmatta, János: "The Letter Sent by the Turk Qaḡan to the Emperor Mauricius". *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 41, 2001, pp. 109–118, tries to show that all events mentioned in the letter can be dated to the years between 580 and 599, this last one serving as *terminus post quem* for the letter's redaction (p. 118).

54 De Boor, Carolus (ed.) / Wirth, Peter (rec.): *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae*. (Bibliotheca Teubneriana). Teubner: Stuttgart 1972, VII 7, 7, p. 257, ll. 1–3: *κατὰ τοῦτον δὴ τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ὁ πρὸς τῇ ἔφ ὑπὸ τῶν Τούρκων Χαγάνος ὑμνούμενος πρέσβεις ἐξέπεμψε Μωρικίῳ τῷ αὐτοκράτορι*. The sender of this letter has usually been identified with Tardu qaghan, who thus announced his ascent to supreme power in 600, cf. Haussig, "Theophylakts Exkurs" (as n. 52), pp. 378–379; Harmatta, "The Letter" (as n. 53), pp. 114–115. Recently, however, de la Vaissière, Etienne: "Maurice et le qaghan: à propos de la digression de Théophylacte Simocatta sur les Turcs". *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 68, 2010, pp. 219–224, has proposed to identify him with Nili qaghan, pretender to the Eastern qaghanate from a secondary Ashina-branch, and has dated the letter to 595.

climates of the Oikumene”<sup>55</sup>. This *intitulatio* does not correspond to the usual style of Türk rulers – in contrast to the Orkhon inscriptions from the Second Eastern qaghanate, references to heaven as the source of legitimate rule are curiously absent – but it seems to reflect the Persian royal title.<sup>56</sup> But with regard to the Byzantine perception it seems interesting that Theophylaktos quotes this part of the letter extensively,<sup>57</sup> while he only gives a paraphrase of its main content, a message of various victories obtained by the qaghan over the Hephthalites, the (Eastern) Avar and Oghur peoples and finally against the “rebel” Turum.<sup>58</sup> This last victory, the actual cause of the qaghan’s message to the emperor,<sup>59</sup> now allows the qaghan to rule felicitously and conclude treaties with the Tabghast (i.e. Sui-China). The ideal state of perfect peace (*βαθειαν γαλήνην*) and unshakeable rule (*ἀστασίαστον ἀρχήν*) is invoked.<sup>60</sup> All these characteristics seem to imply that

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55 Theophylacti Historiae VII 7,8, p. 257, ll. 5–6: *τῷ βασιλεῖ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ὁ Χαγάνος ὁ μέγας δεσπότης ἐπὶ γενεῶν καὶ κύριος κλιμάτων τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐπὶ.*

56 This has extensively been discussed by Haussig, “Theophylaktos Exkurs” (as n. 52), pp. 317–325.

57 It should be noted that the name of the destinatary precedes the qaghan’s long *intitulatio*.

58 Theophylacti Historiae VII 7,8–9 (Hephthalites and Avars), VII 7,13 (Oghur) and VII 8–11 (civil war). For historical interpretations of the external victories see Haussig, “Theophylaktos Exkurs” (as n. 52), pp. 325–338, 344–345. Turum is identified with qaghan Dulan (588–599) of the Eastern Türk by both Harmatta, “The Letter” (as n. 53), p. 115 and de la Vaissière, “Maurice” (as n. 54), p. 223, independently.

59 Haussig, “Theophylaktos Exkurs” (as n. 52), pp. 372–373, has made an important distinction between the external victories as representatives of the conquest of the four parts of the world (thus reflecting not necessarily personal victories of this qaghan, but of the Türk in general) and the recent defeat of the rebel as actual cause. Cf. Harmatta, “The Letter” (as n. 53), p. 111, who furthermore reckons the letter among the “literary genre” of triumphal reports familiar in the Near Eastern world. For the historical background of Nili’s victory see de la Vaissière, “Maurice” (as n. 54), pp. 222–224, for Tardu’s battles see Haussig, “Theophylaktos Exkurs” (as n. 52), pp. 372–386; Harmatta, “The Letter”, pp. 115–118.

60 Cf. Theophylacti Historiae VII 9,1, p. 260, ll. 25–29: *ὁ μὲν οὖν τῶν Τούρκων Χαγάνος τὸν ἐμφύλιον καταλυσάμενος πόλεμον εὐδαιμόνως ἐχειραγῶγει τὰ πράγματα, ποιεῖται δὲ καὶ συνθήκας πρὸς τοὺς Ταυγάστ, ὅπως βαθειαν πάντοθεν τὴν γαλήνην ἐμπορευόμενος ἀστασίαστον τὴν ἀρχὴν καταστήσῃται.*

the sender of this letter exercised monarchical power over the Türk, but such a conclusion is immediately contradicted by the mention of three further Great Qaghans who had helped the sender to obtain his victory. Their names are given, but unfortunately, there is no hint to their hierarchical position or place of residence.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, Theophylaktos displays – like Menander – a vivid interest in the political structures of the Türk Empire and a certain appreciation for its rulers who were located far away from the actual Byzantine zone of influence.

Instead, the person usually alluded to by the title “qaghan” in the “Histories” is the ruler of the Avars, but Theophylaktos follows the Türk interpretation about their unlawful, usurped claim to the qaghanal title and the arrogation of the Avar name by some tribes among the Uar and Chunni on their flight to the west.<sup>62</sup> The Avars’ nearly permanent confrontation with the Roman Empire is outlined in a long series of episodes, among them the legation of the physician Theodoros to the Avars who warned the qaghan not to push his military luck, referring to the classical tale about pharaoh Sesostris and the wheel.<sup>63</sup> Theodoros thus manages to tame the ambitions of a ruler who is depicted as the prototype of a barbarian. In another situation, however, he is praised as an example of humanity when supplying the starving Roman army near Tomis with plenty of provisions for the Easter Days of 598.<sup>64</sup> Instead, it is the Roman emperor Maurikios whom the chronicler

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61 Ibid., VII 8,9, p. 259, ll. 21–23: *πρεσβεύεται ὁ Χαγάνος πρὸς ἑτέρους τρεῖς μεγάλους Χαγάνους· ταῦτα δὲ τούτοις ὀνόματα, Σπαρζευγοῦν καὶ Κουναζολάν καὶ Τουλδίχ.* Tuldich is identified with the Eastern qaghan Duli (599–608) by de la Vaissière, “Maurice” (as n. 54), p. 223; for further proposals of identification see Haussig, “Theophylakts Exkurs” (as n. 52), pp. 376–378 and Harmatta, “The Letter”, pp. 115–116, proposing two great grandsons of Tardu’s as his allies which obviously causes chronological difficulties.

62 Theophylacti Historia VII 8,1–6, pp. 258–259: Theophylaktos states that the Avars should rightly be called Pseudavars: *οἱ Ψευδάβαροι (λέγειν γὰρ οὕτως αὐτοὺς οἰκειότερον).* For a critical analysis of this myth about the origin of the European Avars see Pohl, *Die Awaren* (as n. 15), pp. 28–37; Haussig, “Theophylakts Exkurs” (as n. 52), pp. 345–371.

63 Theophylacti Historia VI 11, pp. 242–244.

64 Ibid., VII 13, 3–5, pp. 267, leading to the conclusion: *διὰ τοῦτο μέχρι τῶν χρόνων τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς τῶν παραδοξολογουμένων τὰ τῆς βαρβαρικῆς φιλανθρωπίας ταύτης καθέστηκεν.* Cf. Pohl, *Die Awaren* (as n. 15), pp. 152–153.

Theophanes holds responsible for the horrible fate of Roman captives after the combats at Drizipera: they were massacred because the avaricious emperor did not pay the ransom demanded by the qaghan.<sup>65</sup> Such episodes have repeatedly been cited by later Byzantine authors: Ioannes Tzetzes refers to the Theodoros-story in his monumental, but rather eclectic “Historiai”<sup>66</sup> and Michael Psellos recounts the ransom-story in his “Short History” (*Historia Syntomos*).<sup>67</sup> For Tzetzes the barbarian ruler is just “the qaghan”, and Psellos seems to believe that this was a military leader. It is perhaps revealing that the “Suda Encyclopedia”, compiled in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, cites episodes from Theophylaktos involving *the chaganos* in several lemmata, but under the lemma “*chaganos*” itself, this opus magnum of Byzantine scholarship fails to give a definition, and we only read: “this one was ...”<sup>68</sup>

In Theophylaktos’ account the term *chaganos* is frequently used thanks to the fact that the Avar ruler is never called by his personal name. This is likewise the case in the so-called “Easter Chronicle” compiled probably still during the reign of emperor Herakleios (610–641). This work does not contain information on the Türk of Central Asia, but the Avar qaghan appears prominently, especially in the account on the siege laid to Constantinople in 626 by the allied Persian and Avar forces.<sup>69</sup> Portrayed as archenemy of

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65 De Boor, Carolus (ed.): *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. 1. Teubner: Leipzig 1883, AM 6092, pp. 279–280; see also Schreiner, Peter (ed.): *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. 1: *Einleitung und Text*. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 12/1). Verlag der ÖAW: Vienna 1975, Chronicle 1, nr. 13, pp. 43–44. The qaghan is characterized as enraged, but not as a cruel barbarian in this context.

66 Leone, Petrus Aloysius (ed.): *Ioannis Tzetzae Historiae*. Libr. Scientifica Ed.: Naples 1968, ch. III 240, p. 93 and IV 573, p. 149 – both verses also contain the word *Chaganos*.

67 Aerts, Willem J. (ed.): *Michael Psellos, Historia syntomos*. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 30). De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 1990, ch. 74, p. 60: τῷ ἀρχηγῷ τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ στρατοπέδου (Χαγάνος δὲ ὁ γενναιότατος ἦν).

68 Adler, Ada (ed.): *Suidae Lexicon*, vol. 4. Reprint Teubner: Stuttgart 1971, lemma X. 2/3, p. 779: Χαγάνος· οὗτος ἦν ... A second entry simply quotes a passage on the Avar qaghan from Theophylaktos I 3,13–4,1, p. 46, without any attempt to define the title: ὁ δὲ Χαγάνος τοὺς ὄρκους ταῖς αὔραις φέρειν ἐδίδου ἀθρόον τε τὴν πολέμῳ φίλην ἀράμενος σάλπιγγα τὰς δυνάμεις ἤθροιζε.

69 For the history of the siege see Pohl, *Die Awaren* (as n. 15), pp. 248–255; Stratos, Andreas N.: *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, vol. 1: 602–634. Hakkert: Amsterdam 1968, pp. 173–196; Howard-Johnston, James D.: “The Siege of



the Romans, the Avar ruler is often endowed with insulting attributes, such as goddess (*ἄθεος*) or accursed (*ἐπικατάρατος*),<sup>70</sup> but he finally bears witness to the divine protection of the city, since he himself sees a woman – the Theotokos – appearing on the walls.<sup>71</sup> With this crucial event the Avar qaghans practically disappear from the Byzantine sources. There is a last reference to them in the report on the year 677 (AM 6169) in Theophanes’ “Chronographia”: after the conclusion of a peace treaty with the Arabs, the *basileus* received a number of ambassadors from other rulers, who requested the confirmation of peace and friendship. These legates came from the various inhabitants of the West, from the kings, exarchs and *gastaldi*. But at the head of the enumeration we find the Avar qaghan,<sup>72</sup> who is thus

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Constantinople in 626”. In: Mango, Cyril / Dagron, Gilbert (eds.): *Constantinople and its Hinterland*. Ashgate: Aldershot 1995, pp. 131–142; Kaegi, Walter: *Heraclius – Emperor of Byzantium*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2003, pp. 132–141; Szádeczky-Kardoss, Samu: “Persisch-awarische Beziehungen und Zusammenwirken vor und während der Belagerung von Byzanz im Jahre 626”. In: Bálint, Csanád (ed.): *Kontakte zwischen Iran, Byzanz und der Steppe im 6.-7. Jahrhundert*. Academia Sc. Hung.: Budapest 2000, pp. 313–322; Hurbanič, Martin: *Posledná vojna antiky. Avarský útok na Konštantínopol roku 626 v historických súvislostiach*. Vydateľstvo Michala Vaška: Prešov 2009.

- 70 Cf. Dindorf, Ludwig A. (ed.): *Chronicon Paschale*. (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae), vol. 1. Weber: Bonn 1832, p. 724, ll. 1, 17 etc. The qaghan is even more drastically stylised as a cruel barbarian tyrant in a homily on the siege: Makk, Ferenc: *Traduction et commentaire de l’homélie écrite probablement par Théodore le Syncelle sur le siège de Constantinople en 626*. Universitas Attila József: Szeged 1975, ch. 8, p. 13 (transl.) and p. 76 (text from the Edition by L. Sternbach, Analecta Avarica): Ὁ δὲ δυτικὸς ἐχθρὸς, τὸ μωσαρώτατον ἔκτρομα, ὃν Χαγάνον ἐπιχωρίως ὀνομάζουσι βάρβαροι.
- 71 Chronicon Paschale, p. 725, ll. 9–11: Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγεν ὁ ἄθεος Χαγάνος τῷ καιρῷ τοῦ πολέμου ὅτι ἐγὼ θεωρῶ γυναῖκα σεμινοφοροῦσαν περιτρέχουσαν εἰς τὸ τεῖχος μόνην οὖσαν. The intervention of the virgin is also the leading motif in Theodoros’ homily, who indirectly evokes the qaghan as a witness of the virgin’s deeds, see Makk, *Traduction* (as n. 70), ch. 34, p. 88 (text) and p. 32 (transl.). On liturgical repercussions of the virgin’s ‘intervention’ during the siege see Peltomaa, Leena Mari: “Role of the Virgin Mary at the Siege of Constantinople in 626”. *Scrinium. Revue de Patrologie* 5, 2009, pp. 294–309.
- 72 *Theophanis Chronographia* (as n. 65), AM 6169, p. 356: ταῦτα μαθόντες οἱ τὰ ἐσπέρια οἰκοῦντες μέρη, ὃ τε Χαγάνος τῶν Ἀβάρων καὶ οἱ ἐπέκεινα ῥήγες, ἔξαρχοι τε καὶ κάσταλδοι καὶ οἱ ἐξοχώτατοι τῶν πρὸς τὴν δύσιν ἐθνῶν, διὰ πρεσβευτῶν δῶρα τῷ βασιλεῖ στείλαντες εἰρηνικὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀγάπην κυρωθῆναι ἠτήσαντο. Pohl, *Die*

perceived as the most eminent among the Western barbarians, but not as a truly imperial ruler.

Emperor Herakleios did not only inherit the confrontation with the Avars in the West from his predecessors, he also renewed the ‘alliance’ between the Romans and the Türk in the East.<sup>73</sup> Their mutual military cooperation during the emperor’s long campaign against the Persians is first mentioned under the year 625 (AM 6117)<sup>74</sup> when Theophanes states that the “Turks from the east called *Chazareis*”<sup>75</sup> invaded the Persian lands from the North through the Caspian Gates. Their leader Ziebel is char-

*Awaren* (as n. 15), p. 278, interprets this as an evidence for changing political conditions in the Danube-Adriatic area and the emergence of new political players there, but it is perhaps more probable that the whole ‘West’ of Europe, including Italy and beyond, is meant.

- 73 The famous passage of the so-called Fredegar on the opening of the Caspian Gates by Herakleios, though linked to the emergence of Arab power, is certainly a repercussion of this alliance: Esders, Stefan: “Herakleios, Dagobert und die “beschnittenen Völker”. Die Umwälzungen des Mittelmeerraums im 7. Jahrhundert in der Chronik des sog. Fredegar”. In: Goltz, Andreas / Leppin, Hartmut / Schlange-Schöningen, Heinrich (eds.): *Jenseits der Grenzen. Beiträge zur spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibung*. (Millennium-Studien 25). De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 2009, pp. 239–311, here pp. 285–287. Haussig, “Byzantinische Quellen” (as n. 36), pp. 58–59 argues that the Türks’ fear of an Avar empire in the steppe was the driving force behind the alliance.
- 74 Theophanes’ chronology for Herakleios’ campaign, which lasted from 624 to 628 (death of Chosrau II), is notoriously misleading, see Zuckerman, Constantine: “Heraclius in 625”. *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 60, 2002, pp. 189–197. Zuckerman establishes a revised chronology, showing that the events mentioned under AM 6115 and 6116 in fact both belong to the spring of 625, while most of those under AM 6117 should be placed in 626, among them also the first contact between Herakleios and the Türk, but not their concerted campaign.
- 75 *Theophanis Chronographia* (as n. 65), AM 6117, p. 315, ll. 15–16: τὸς Τούρκους ἐκ τῆς ἑώρας, οὓς Χάζαρεις ὀνομάζουσιν, εἰς συμμαχίαν προσεκαλέσατο. The “Turks from the East”, however, need not be “eastern Turks” as rendered in Mango, Cyril / Scott, Roger (transl.): *Theophanes Confessor, The Chronicle*. Clarendon Press: Oxford 1997, p. 446. The anachronistic identification of the Türk with the Khazars has widely been accepted in earlier research, see Zuckerman, Constantine: “The Khazars and Byzantium – The First Encounter”. In: *The World of the Khazars* (as n. 17), pp. 399–432, here p. 403. Inversely, some later entries of the “Chronographia” use the term *Τούρκοι* obviously for the Khazars, see Balogh, László: “Notes on the Western Turks in the Work of Theophanes Confessor”.

acterized as second in dignity after the qaghan.<sup>76</sup> He has now convincingly been identified with Sipi, the “*xiao kehan*” (little qaghan), who later in 628 killed the *yabghu qaghan* Tong (in 628) and was himself ousted in 629 and killed in 630.<sup>77</sup> Theophanes gives a rather detailed report on Ziebel’s meeting with the *basileus*: while the Türk leader did obeisance to Herakleios, his whole army stretched on the ground to honour the emperor,<sup>78</sup> Ziebel presented his son to him and enjoyed the conversation.<sup>79</sup> The patriarch Nikephoros basically refers to the same events in his “Short History”, but he does not identify these Turks with the Khazars nor does he give the name of their lord (τὸν *Τούρκων κύριον*).<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, his independent report on the meeting is more detailed than that of Theophanes. Nikephoros tells us that the emperor, having received the extremely great honour (τὸ *ὑπερβάλλον τῆς τιμῆς*) of the prostration of the entire Türk army,<sup>81</sup> responded by similar gestures: he called Ziebel his son, crowned him with his own crown (*στέφανος*), presented him with rich gifts after a banquet, among them an imperial garment (*στολῆ βασιλικῆ*),<sup>82</sup> and finally

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*Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 58, 2005, pp. 187–195, here pp. 190–193.

- 76 Theophanis Chronographia, p. 316, ll. 2–3: *σὺν τῷ ἑαυτῶν στρατηγῷ Ζιέβηλ, δευτέρῳ ὄντι τοῦ Χαγάνου τῆ ἀξίᾳ.*
- 77 De la Vaissière, Étienne: “Ziebel qaghan identified”. In: Zuckerman, Constantine (ed.): *Constructing the Seventh Century*. (Travaux et mémoires 17). Association des Amis du Centre d’Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance: Paris 2013, pp. 761–768.
- 78 Theophanis Chronographia, AM 6117, p. 316, ll. 5–11, esp. ll. 8–10: *πᾶς δὲ ὁ λαὸς τῶν Τούρκων εἰς γῆν πεσόντες πρηνεῖς, ἐκταθέντες ἐπὶ στόμα τὸν βασιλέα ἐτίμων τιμὴν τὴν παρ’ ἔθνεσι ξένων.*
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. 316, ll. 11–13: *προσήνεγκε δὲ ὁ Ζιέβηλ καὶ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν ἀρχιγένειον τῷ βασιλεῖ, ἠδυνόμενος τοῖς τούτου λόγοις καὶ ἐκπλητόμενος τὴν τε θέαν καὶ τὴν φρόνησιν αὐτοῦ.*
- 80 Cf. Mango, Cyril (ed.): *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History*. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 13). Dumbarton Oaks Library: Washington 1990, ch. 12, p. 54, l. 17.
- 81 *Ibid.*, p. 54, ll. 20–24.
- 82 *Ibid.*, p. 54, l. 25–p. 55, l. 32. The crowning of the Türk commander with the *basileus*’ own crown is a rather singular gesture in Byzantium. The close parallels between this encounter and the meeting between Bolesław Chrobry and Otto III at Gniezno in 1000 according to the description given by the Gallus Anonymus in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century have already been recognized by Wasilews-

even promised his daughter Eudokia in marriage to him.<sup>83</sup> It is significant that Herakleios calls his daughter “Augusta of the Romans” (*Ρωμαίων Αβγούστα*), since Eudokia indeed bore this official title. She appeared on Byzantine coins together with her father and the co-emperor Herakleios the Younger, and her bust was only removed from the coins in 629 when Eudokia received her father’s order to depart from Constantinople and join her husband. The marriage project was, however, never actually put into effect due to Ziebel’s assassination.<sup>84</sup> Theophanes perhaps deliberately omitted all these features of Roman-barbarian relations from his report on the events – the difference between his version, which shows the

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ki, Tadeusz: “Bizantyńska symbolika zjazdu gnieźnieńskiego i jego prawno-polityczna wymowa”. *Przegląd Historyczny* 57, 1966, pp. 1–14. Influenced by Dölger’s theory, however, Wasilewski interpreted Nikephoros’ account as the official incorporation of a barbarian ruler into the Byzantine “family of kings” as “son of the emperor” (pp. 7–8). In his view, the similarities thus result from a deliberate imitation of Byzantine ceremonial (by the semi-Byzantine Otto III) in a Middle-European context (p. 11), and the Gniezno events should be seen as Bolesław’s reception into the Ottonian “family of kings” on the highest rank as the emperor’s brother (“do godności braterskiej”, p. 12), but not as an actual coronation. Wasilewski’s interpretation has found a positive echo from numerous scholars, cf. Labuda, Gerard: “Der “Akt von Gnesen” vom Jahre 1000. Bericht über die Forschungsvorhaben und -ergebnisse”. *Quaestiones Mediaevi Novae* 5, 2000, pp. 145–188, here pp. 151–152 and (though slightly distorted) Wyrozumski, Jerzy: “Der Akt von Gnesen und seine Bedeutung für die polnische Geschichte”. In: Borgolte, Michael (ed.): *Polen und Deutschland vor 1000 Jahren. Die Berliner Tagung über den “Akt von Gnesen”*. (Europa im Mittelalter 5). Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2002, pp. 281–291, here pp. 288–289. As far as I see, however, this idea has not been developed further in the intensive debate about the meaning of Bolesław’s “coronation”, see Strzelczyk, Jerzy: *Zjazd gnieźnieński*. Wydawnictwo WBP: Poznań 2000, esp. pp. 47–61. Nevertheless, the theory should be reviewed because it is based on problematic assumptions about the “reality” of a construction like the “family of kings”, which certainly has nothing to do with what happened in the Caucasus in 627. For very helpful advice on this scholarly debate, I wish to thank Sven Jaros, Leipzig.

83 Nikephoros, *Short History* (as n. 80), ch. 12, p. 56, ll. 32–40, cf. Claude, “Begründung familiärer Beziehungen” (as n. 35), pp. 26–27.

84 See Zuckerman, Constantin: “La petite Augusta et le turc. Epiphania-Eudocie sur les monnaies d’Héraclius”. *Revue Numismatique* 150, 1995, pp. 113–126; Id.: “Au sujet de la petite Augusta sur les monnaies d’Héraclius”. *Revue Numismatique* 152, 1997, pp. 473–478.

Türk humbly obedient towards the emperor, and that of Nikephoros, who emphasizes symbolic elements of reciprocity in Byzantine-Türk relations, is too significant to be merely accidental.

The identification of the Turkic forces with the Khazars, though undoubtedly anachronistic, is not only found in Theophanes' "Chronography", but also in the "History of the Caucasian Albanians", compiled some centuries later by the Armenian chronicler Movsēs Dasxuranc'i.<sup>85</sup> Dasxuranc'i based these parts of his account on two sources. One of them is a rather contemporary report on the deeds of the Albanian *katholikos* Viroy, which denigrates the invaders and their atrocities, but actually does not call them Khazars.<sup>86</sup> This account also mentions the genesis of the Roman-Turkic alliance in the war against the Persians via a Roman embassy sent to Ĵebu Xak'an (i.e. the *yabghu qaghan*),<sup>87</sup> which established a treaty. This finally led to the campaign of the Türk army under the command of the *šat'*, the nephew of the "king of the north",<sup>88</sup> who is characterized as an imperial ruler of universal ambition.<sup>89</sup> Dasxuranc'i's

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85 Dowsett, Charles J. F. (transl.): *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxuranci*. Oxford University Press: London et al. 1961.

86 For the structure of the report see Zuckerman, "The Khazars and Byzantium" (as n. 75), pp. 404–410: the chapters II 12–16 belong to the report on Viroy; most notably his leading role in a large Albanian delegation to the Türk *šat'* that obtained the restoration of peace from this ruler, cf. Dasxuranci, *The History* (as n. 85), ch. II 14, pp. 92–102 (all this happens after the death of Chosrau). Zuckerman, pp. 410–412, shows that the invaders are not identified as Khazars, but as "Turks" in this source.

87 Dasxuranci, *The History* (as n. 85), ch. II 12, p. 87. The *yabghu* is characterized as "viceroy of the king of the north who was second to him in kingship". The "king of the north" is therefore identified with the Qaghan of the Eastern Türks, who does not actually enter the scene. The Roman embassy is dated to 625 by Zuckerman, "The Khazars and Byzantium" (as n. 75), pp. 412–414.

88 Dasxuranci, *The History* (as n. 85), ch. II 12, pp. 87–88. Although this campaign is dated to the "beginning of the thirty-seventh year [of Xosrov]", i.e. summer 626, it obviously belongs to 627 as an immediate prelude to the fall of Chosrau: see Zuckerman, "The Khazars and Byzantium" (as n. 75), p. 415.

89 Dasxuranci, *The History* (as n. 85), p. 88, in a message of this "king of the north" to Chosrau: "the king of the north, the lord of the whole world, your king and the king of kings, says to you: [...]". Chosrau directs his answer to "my brother Xak'an" whom he reminds of the long tradition of mutual respect and

second source only shortly mentions this first Northern invasion (“in great hordes the Khazars”)<sup>90</sup> and dates the second one, led by Ĵebu Xak’an himself, to the year of Chosrau’s end. During this campaign the Roman and the Türk rulers met outside the walls of the besieged town of Tiflis, but did not succeed to conquer the city and were instead mocked by its inhabitants.<sup>91</sup> The Türk took their revenge in the following year,<sup>92</sup> but their invasion likewise came to an end: after another victory over a Persian army in 629, terrible news arrived from Ĵebu Xak’an himself who had overdrawn his fortune.<sup>93</sup> This apparently caused the invaders to withdraw from the Caucasian region.

The direct cooperation between Herakleios and the *yabghu qaghan* thus remained an episode, but since this episode concerned a relationship between the *basileus* and a nomadic ruler of imperial position, it could later easily be projected onto the Khazars as the new imperial factor in the Western steppe.

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alliances sealed by intermarriage: “for we were allied with each other through our sons and daughters”.

- 90 According to Zuckerman, “The Khazars and Byzantium” (as n. 75), pp. 407–410, this source comprises the chapters II 9–11 and can be identified as the initial part of the Eulogy of prince Juanšer of Albania continued from ch. II 18 onwards. The first Khazar attack is mentioned at the beginning of ch. II 11, pp. 81–82.
- 91 See Dasxuranci, *The History* (as n. 85), ch. II 11, pp. 83–86. The report ends with their withdrawal from Tiflis. The scene of mockery conveys some physical features of Ĵebu Xak’an: his typical facial features, accentuated by the pumpkin caricature, were missing eyelashes and beard and a paltry moustache – perhaps a striking contrast to Herakleios with his impressive beard emphasized on the coins.
- 92 In contrast to Zuckerman’s reconstruction, two sieges of Tiflis should clearly be distinguished, as has correctly been seen by Ludwig, Dieter: *Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren-Reiches im Licht der schriftlichen Quellen*. University of Münster, thesis 1982, pp. 121–122: one in 627 that failed after the mockery and caused a temporary retreat of the Turks while Herakleios proceeded to Mesopotamia alone (all this is described in II 11, pp. 85–86), and another in 628 (or 629), which led to the fall of the city on the hands of the Turks (described in II 14, pp. 94–95, after the end of Chosrau). Theophanes is thus perfectly justified in likewise mentioning the Türks’ retreat before the actual Persian campaign in winter 627/8 (contra Zuckerman, p. 416). There is no reason to believe that the Türk army accompanied Herakleios to Persia in the decisive months.
- 93 On the last battle between Türk (“Khazar”) and Persian troops see Dasxuranci, *The History* (as n. 85), ch. II 16, p. 105; the news from the *yabghu* are mentioned *ibid.*, p. 106.

Their polity actually took shape only in the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>94</sup> at the expense of Kuvrat's extensive but shortlived "Great Bulgaria"<sup>95</sup> in the Ponto-Caucasian area and after the collapse of the Western Türk qaghanate, which had succumbed to the imperial Tang in 659.<sup>96</sup> From that time onwards both Khazars and Bulgars became the principal political protagonists among the Northern peoples in contact with Byzantium for several centuries.

In contrast to the Avar rulers of the 6<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, Khazar qaghans are rarely mentioned in Byzantine chronicles, but they also usually remain unnamed.<sup>97</sup> The two most prominent situations concern the adven-

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94 Zuckerman, "The Khazars and Byzantium" (as n. 75), pp. 417–431. The first Khazar expedition to Caucasia is dated to 685. In fact, the (ethnic as well as political) origins of the Khazar polity have been the subject of long debates, cf. Golden, "Khazar Studies" (as n. 17), pp. 52–55; see also Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft* (as n. 92), pp. 24–68 and 134–142; Romašov, Sergej A.: "Ot tjurkov k chazaram: Severnyj Kavkaz v VI–VII vv.". In: *Tjurkskie narody v drevnosti i srednevekovie*. (Tjurkologičeskij Sbornik 2003/4). Izdat. RAN: Moskva 2005, pp. 185–202, here pp. 195–198.

95 For Kuvrat's Bulgar polity see Beševliev, Veselin: *Die protobulgarische Periode der bulgarischen Geschichte*. Hakkert: Amsterdam 1981, pp. 145–155; Ziemann, Daniel: *Vom Wandervolk zur Großmacht. Die Entstehung Bulgariens im frühen Mittelalter (7.-9. Jahrhundert)*. Böhlau: Cologne / Weimar / Vienna 2007, pp. 142–160; András Róna-Tas: "Where was Khuvrat's Bulgharia?". *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 53, 2000, pp. 1–22. The main sources are Nikephoros, *Short History* (as n. 80), ch. 35, pp. 86–88 and *Theophanis Chronographia* (as n. 65), AM 6171, pp. 356–359. Kuvrat is called κύριος [...] τῶν φύλων τούτων (Nikephoros, p. 88, l. 7) or τοῦ κυροῦ τῆς λεχθείσης Βουλγαρίας (Theophanes, p. 357, ll. 12–13) respectively.

96 Cf. Chavannes, Edouard: *Documents sur les Tou-Kioue (Turcs) Occidentaux*. Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient: Paris 1900, pp. 63–67, 267–268; Scharlipp, *Die frühen Türken* (as n. 13), p. 29, Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), p. 136.

97 The *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit. 1. Abteilung (641–867)*. De Gruyter: Berlin 2000/1 contains six qaghans of the Khazars. There are four *anonymi* among them: see vol. 5, #11103, p. 428 (the qaghan of the "Life of John of Gotthia"), #11187, p. 452 (a qaghan mentioned in "De administrando imperio"), #11573, p. 547 (the qaghan ruling in the 830s, demanding Byzantine help to build the fortress of Sarkel) and #12023, p. 658 (the qaghan of the "Vita Constantini"). The names of the two others depend on quite uncertain, non-historiographical sources: Theodoros or Virchor for the father-in-law of Emperor Constantine V (vol. 4, #7524, pp. 411–412) and Ibuzēros Gliabanos for that of Justinian II (vol. 2, #2654, p. 162).

tures of Justinian II after his deposition in 695, when he fled to the Khazar territory and was married to a daughter of the qaghan,<sup>98</sup> and the marriage of Constantine V to another Khazar bride.<sup>99</sup> Referring to these events, the patriarch Nikephoros uses a changing terminology with respect to the Khazar ruler, who is called *hēgemōn*, *archōn* or *kyrios*, but the author explains that the Khazars call their ruler *chaganos*.<sup>100</sup> Theophanes instead regularly employs the title *chaganos*, sometimes with an ethnic denomination (*tōn Chazarōn*).<sup>101</sup> He furthermore uses the territorial denomination *Chazaria* rather frequently in the context of events belonging to the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>102</sup>

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98 See Dunlop, Douglas M.: *The History of the Jewish Khazars*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ 1954, pp. 171–173; Artamonov, Michail I.: *Istoriija Chazar*. Izdatel'stvo G. Ermitaža: Leningrad 1962, pp. 196–197; Noonan, Thomas S.: “Byzantium and the Khazars: A Special Relationship?”. In: Shepard, Jonathan / Franklin, Simon (eds.): *Byzantine Diplomacy*. Ashgate: Aldershot 1992, pp. 109–132, here pp. 111–112; Howard-Johnston, James: “Byzantine Sources for Khazar History”. In: *The World of the Khazars* (as n. 17), pp. 163–193, here p. 168.

99 This second Byzantine-Khazar marriage has received little attention in Byzantine sources, perhaps due to their bias against the so-called iconoclast emperors. See Dunlop, *The History* (as n. 98), p. 177; Artamonov, *Istoriija* (as n. 98), p. 233; Noonan, “Byzantium and the Khazars” (as n. 98), p. 113.

100 Nikephoros, *Short History* (as n. 80), ch. 42, p. 100, ll. 8–9: *αἰεὶ δὲ τὸν τῶν Χαζάρων ἡγεμόνα (χαγάνους δὲ τούτους αὐτοὶ καλοῦσιν)*; *ibid.*, l. 14: *τὸν τῶν Χαζάρων ἄρχοντα*; ch. 45, p. 110, l. 48: *τῷ χαγάνῳ*; *ibid.*, l. 62: *ὡς τὸν κύριον τῶν Χαζάρων*; ch. 63, p. 130, ll. 1–2: *ἐκπέμπει ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς τὸν τοῦ ἔθνους τῶν Χαζάρων ἡγούμενον* (with reference to the marriage negotiations for Constantine V). In one case (ch. 45, p. 110, l. 67) the qaghan is simply called “the Khazar” (*πρὸς τὸν Χάζαρον*).

101 The title is repeatedly used in the long account of Justinian II's comeback and final downfall, see *Theophanis Chronographia* (as n. 65), AM 6196-AM 6203, pp. 372–380, and furthermore p. 407, l. 5; p. 426, l. 16 (both discussed in the following note). As far as I see, Theophanes does not substitute the title with other designations for rulers (as Nikephoros does), but when introducing the marriage of Constantine V he calls the qaghan “lord of the Scythians”, thus perhaps reflecting official terminology: AM 6224, p. 409, ll. 30–31: *Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει Λέων ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν θυγατέρα Χαγάνου, τοῦ τῶν Σκυθῶν δυνάστου, τῷ νιῷ Κωνσταντίνῳ ἐνυμφεύσατο*.

102 Cf. *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 373, l. 14; 375, l. 21; p. 378, ll. 22–23 (*ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς τὸν Χαγάνον εἰς Χαζαρίαν*); p. 434, l. 16 (as a geographical area around the frozen Pontus). The perception of the qaghan as a territorial



It should be noted that the Latin equivalent of this term – together with the first Latin occurrence of “Bulgaria” – is already found in the “Life of Pope John VII” (705/707) in the “Liber Pontificalis” with regard to the exile of Justinian II.<sup>103</sup> Although this slight shift in terminology should not be overestimated, we might conclude that Khazar rulership was perceived with relation to a specific territorial circumscription (above all referring to the lands beyond the Pontos and close to Crimea) in Latin and Greek imagination, at least more so than other steppe empires before.<sup>104</sup> Due to the basically positive relations between Constantinople and the Khazars prevailing between the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> and the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (at least), the Khazar qaghans are not portrayed as prototypes of barbarian rulers in our sources as the Avar rulers were.<sup>105</sup> In contrast, they remain rather marginal and shadowy figures in the Byzantine texts.

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ruler is especially clear when the son of the Khazar ruler, waging an expedition against the Arabs, is introduced as *ὁ υἱὸς Χαγάνου τοῦ δυνάστου Χαζαρίας* in the entry of AM 6220, p. 407, ll. 5–6. Under AM 6241, p. 426, l. 16, the bride of Constantine V is mentioned as *τῆς τοῦ Χαγάνου τῆς Χαζαρίας θυγατρὸς*. The territorial terminology is only once employed by Nikephoros, *Short History* (as n. 80), ch. 42, p. 104, l. 75.

- 103 Duchesne, Louis (ed.): *Le Liber Pontificalis*, vol. 1. Boccard: Paris 1886, p. 220: *Huius temporibus Iustinianus imperator a partibus Chazariae per loca Vulgariae cum Terveli usque ad regiam urbem veniens*.
- 104 The difference is most notable with respect to the Avars, whose polity is only twice called *Ἀβαρία*, namely in *Theophanis Chronographia* (as n. 65), p. 357, l. 24 and 359, l. 16 (in his digression on the early Bulgars), cf. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica II* (as n. 3), p. 51. The frequency of *Τουρκία* for the territory of either the Turks or the Khazars in Byzantine sources is likewise minimal, see *ibid.*, p. 320. For the more common use of *Βουλγαρία* see also Gjuzelev, Vassil: “Les appellations de la Bulgarie médiévale dans les sources historiques (VII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> s.)”. In: *Id.: Medieval Bulgaria – Byzantine Empire – Black Sea – Venice – Genoa*, Baier: Villach 1988, pp. 5–9, here pp. 5–6.
- 105 A certain exception is the negative depiction of the *Chaganos* in the “Life of bishop John of Gothia”; significantly, however, the author cannot portray him stereotypically as a persecutor of the Christian faith. In fact, the qaghan only punishes those who are unwilling to accept his rule, among them the bishop (§ 4). Nevertheless the qaghan is accused of putting innocent people to death (§ 4) and John calls him “my persecutor” (*τοῦ διώκτου μου*, § 5), see Auzépy, Marie-France: “La vie de Jean de Gothie (BHG 891)”. In: Zuckerman, Constantin (ed.): *La Crimée entre Byzance et le Khaganat khazar*. Association des

Another episode relating to a Khazar ruler mentioned in Byzantine historiography once again reinforces the impression of a positive relationship between the two powers: the so-called “Theophanes continuatus” reports<sup>106</sup> that in 839<sup>107</sup> the qaghan of the Khazars and the Pech sent an embassy to the emperor Theophilus.<sup>108</sup> They asked for Byzantine help in the construction of the fortress Sarkel on the river Don in order to secure the Khazar territories against the Pechenegs. The emperor granted the request and sent the *spatharokandidatos* Petronas Kamateros to the Khazars who duly put the work into effect and later (in 841) became *strategos* of the newly established *thema* of Cherson.<sup>109</sup> This same contact is also mentioned in Constantine VII’s famous treatise misnamed “De administrando imperio”<sup>110</sup> and in the chronicle of John Skylitzes from the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, who attributes the legation uniquely to the *chaganos Chazarias*.<sup>111</sup> Skylitzes thus fails to transmit the most interesting point, namely that a second

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Amis du Centre d’Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance: Paris 2006, pp. 69–85, here pp. 81–83.

- 106 Theophanes Continuatus III 28. In: Bekker, Immanuel (ed.): *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*. (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae). Weber: Bonn 1838, pp. 122–123.
- 107 The date of this mission is not explicitly given in any source; but see the excellent discussion by Zuckerman, Constantine: “Two Notes on the Early History of the *thema* of Cherson”. *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 21, 1997, pp. 210–222. For the event see also Artamonov, *Istoriija* (as n. 98), p. 298 within a chapter dedicated to the archaeological site of Sarkel (pp. 288–323); Dunlop, *The History* (as n. 98), pp. 186–187; Howard-Johnston, “Byzantine Sources” (as n. 98), pp. 169, 174–175.
- 108 *Theophanes Continuatus* (as n. 106), p. 122, ll. 19–20: ὁ τε χαγάνος Χαζαρίας καὶ ὁ Πέχ πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Θεόφιλον ἐπεμπον πρεσβευτάς.
- 109 Cf. Zuckerman, “Two Notes” (as n. 107), pp. 214–215.
- 110 Gyula Moravcsik / Jenkins, Romilly J. (eds.): *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio*. Revised edition. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 1). Dumbarton Oaks Library: Washington 1967, ch. 42, p. 182, ll. 27–29: Ὁ γὰρ χαγάνος ἐκεῖνος καὶ ὁ πέχ Χαζαρίας εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν βασιλέα Θεόφιλον πρέσβεις ἐναποστείλαντες, κτισθῆναι αὐτοῖς τὸ κάστρον τὸ Σάρκελ ᾗτήσαντο. The attribution of *Chazararia* to the *beg* might indicate that Constantine VII was aware of the change of actual rulership among the Khazars.
- 111 Thurn, Johannes (ed.): *Ioannes Skylitzes, Synopsis Historiarum*. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 5). De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 1973, emperor Theophilus, ch. 22, p. 73, ll. 78–79: ὑποστρέψας δὲ ὁ Θεόφιλος πρεσβεῖαν

ruler, called *beg*, acted together with the qaghan. The Sarkel-story indirectly reflects a fundamental but still somewhat obscure “constitutional change” in the Khazar polity, i.e. the establishment of a dual monarchy comprising the *beg* as actual political and military leader, whom Arab sources of the 10<sup>th</sup> century identify as king (*malik*), and the qaghan who retained his supreme sacral<sup>112</sup> authority, but ultimately lost his political role and seems to have been strictly secluded in his palace.<sup>113</sup> It seems that this was not yet the case in the late 830s, when the qaghan still played a role in political affairs: the Sarkel-story thus probably gives a *terminus post quem*. Nevertheless, there is no explicit repercussion of the political transformation in the Byzantine sources at all. Instead, they suggest a long-term continuity of traditional political structures among the Khazars: it is in the qaghan’s presence that Konstantinos the philosopher took part in the debate with representatives of the Jewish and Muslim faiths in 861, which is broadly described in his *Vita*.<sup>114</sup> According to “De administrando imperio”, the

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ἐδέξατο τοῦ χαγάνου Χαζαρίας ἐξαιτουμένον κτισθῆναι τὸ Σάρκελ ὀνομαζόμενον προύριον.

- 112 However, the process should not be understood as a secondary sacralization of the qaghanal position compensating the loss of effective power. The characteristics of qaghanal sacrality, as described above all in Muslim sources, were clearly inherited from the Türk qaghans of the Ashina clan and the adherence to Judaism could hardly be reconciled with the sacralization of a human, see Golden, Peter B.: “The Khazar Sacral Kingship”. In: Reyerson, Kathryn L. et al. (eds.): *Pre-Modern Russia and its World. Essays in Honor of Thomas S. Noonan*. Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 2006, pp. 79–102 with further literature; Petrukhin, Vladimir Ya.: “A Note on the Sacral Status of the Khazarian Khagan: Tradition and Reality”. In: al-Azmeh, Aziz / Bak, János M. (eds.): *Monotheistic Kingship. The Medieval Variants*. CEUP: Budapest 2004, pp. 269–275.
- 113 For an overview of the Muslim sources of the 10<sup>th</sup> century describing this powerless, but still venerated position of the qaghan in contrast to the king (*malik*, *beg* or *īša*) as actual ruler, see Dunlop, *The History* (as n. 98), pp. 89–115 and 204–214.
- 114 Cf. inter alia Dvornik, Francis: *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs. SS. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ 1970, pp. 65–70 and Ziffer, Giorgio: “Konstantin und die Chazaren”. *Welt der Slaven* 34, 1989, pp. 354–361, who also discusses the difficulties caused by the late manuscript tradition of this Slavic source. Pritsak, Omeljan: “Turkological Remarks on Constantine’s Khazarian Mission in the *Vita Con-*

Khazar qaghan intervened repeatedly in the affairs of the Magyars in the later 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>115</sup> And Chapter II 48 of the famous “Book of Ceremonies”, likewise attributed to Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos and compiled in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>116</sup> only names the *chaganos Chazarias* (but no king or *beg*) among the foreign rulers who receive imperial letters. He is honourably addressed, though with a markedly Christian invocation, and the letter should be sealed with a golden trisoldia bull.<sup>117</sup> The qaghan is thus

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stantini”. In: Farrugia, Edward G. et al. (eds.): *Christianity among the Slavs – The Heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius*. (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 231). Pontif. Inst. Studiorum Orientalium: Rome 1988, pp. 295–298 plainly dismissed the historical reliability of the *Vita* concerning *Khazaria* as the work of an uninformed author – this is probably a too simple way to cope with the contradictions between the *Vita* and other sources.

- 115 See *De administrando imperio* (as n. 110), ch. 38, pp. 170–174. There are several references to *Khazaria* and the Khazars within this account on the “genealogy” of the *ethnos* of the *Τούρκοι*, i.e. the Magyars. The Khazar ruler is termed *ὁ χαγάνος ἄρχων Χαζαρίας* (p. 170, l. 15; p. 172, l. 32, reduced to *chaganos (Chazarias)* only *ibid.*, ll. 34, 36, 39, 46). This combination of *chaganos* and *archōn* might imply some uncertainty about the existence of still another ruler with the Khazars. But the qaghan is shown as the authority whose decision initiates the “making” of an *archōn* (of the Turks), following the custom (*zakanon*) of the Khazars, see *ibid.*, p. 172, ll. 46–53. For Magyar-Khazar relations see inter alia Dunlop, *The History* (as n. 98), pp. 199–204; Róna-Tas, András: “The Khazars and the Magyars”. In: *The World of the Khazars* (as n. 17), pp. 269–278.
- 116 The history of the work and its manuscripts has recently become the object of intensive research, cf. inter alia Kresten, Otto: “*Staatsempfänge*” im *Kaiserpalast von Konstantinopel um die Mitte des 10. Jahrhunderts*. *Beobachtungen zu Kapitel II 15 des sogenannten “Zeremonienbuches”*. Verlag der ÖAW: Vienna 2000; Featherstone, Michael J.: “Preliminary Remarks on the Leipzig Manuscript of *De Cerimoniis*”. *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 95, 2002, pp. 457–480; Id. / Grusková, Jana / Kresten, Otto: “Studien zu den Palimpsestfragmenten des sogenannten “Zeremonienbuches” 1: Prolegomena”. *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 98, 2005, pp. 423–430.
- 117 Reiske, Johann Jacob (ed.): *Constantini Porphyrogeniti De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae libri II*. (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae). Weber: Bonn 1829, ch. II 48, p. 690: *εἰς τὸν χαγάνον Χαζαρίας βούλλα χρυσοῦ τρισολδία*. “*ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, τοῦ ἐνὸς καὶ μόνου ἀληθινοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν. Κωνσταντῖνος καὶ Ῥωμανὸς, πιστοὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Θεῷ βασιλεῖς Ῥωμαίων πρὸς τὸν ὁ δέϊνα εὐγενέστατον, περιφανέστατον χαγάνον Χαζαρίας*”.

ranked at the same level as the king of Armenia, slightly below the caliph,<sup>118</sup> but quite above the subsequently mentioned *archontes* of Rhosia and of the Pechenegs. The title *basileus* is only accorded to the Bulgarian ruler.<sup>119</sup>

Byzantine sources also fail to reflect the second major transformation in Khazar history: the conversion of the Khazars, or at least their political elite, to Judaism. The reconstruction and dating of this process is a particularly difficult problem in Khazar studies due to the either allusive or legendary character of the sources available,<sup>120</sup> but it seems fairly established that the religious transformation was actively promoted by the emerging dynasty of the *begs* and thus intimately linked to the constitutional change that ousted the qaghan from power.<sup>121</sup> While earlier studies on the question had

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118 The Abbasid caliph (ἄμερμουμνης) is entitled to a golden bull of four soldia, see *ibid.*, p. 686; for the king (ἄρχων τῶν ἀρχόντων) of Great Armenia see *ibid.* It is remarkable that the letters to Muslim rulers seemingly do not contain the Christian *invocatio* mentioned for the Khazar qaghan nor the formula proclaiming that the Holy Trinity is the only true God. These elements are, e.g., also mentioned in letters sent to Carolingian and post-Carolingian kings (*ibid.*, p. 689), but in the Khazar context their use is quite provocative. For the addresses to Muslim rulers see Beihammer, Alexander: “Reiner christlicher König – ΠΙΣΤΟΣ ΕΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩ ΤΩΙ ΘΕΩΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ. Eine Studie zur Transformation kanzleimäßigen Schriftguts in narrativen Texten am Beispiel kaiserlicher Auslandsbriefe des 10. Jahrhunderts an muslimische Destinatäre”. *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 95, 2002, pp. 1–34, here esp. pp. 21–22.

119 The *archontes* of the Rus’ (Ῥωσίας), of the Magyars (τῶν Τούρκων) and of the Pechenegs (τῶν Πατζινακίτων) are only entitled to bulls of two soldia, and the letters do not begin with an *invocatio* or *intitulatio*, but with the formula “letter (γράμματα) of [the emperors] to [the *archontes*]”, see *De cerimoniis* (as n. 117), pp. 690–691. For the Bulgarian ruler, whose address is given (*ibid.*, p. 690) in an old fashion (as ἐκ Θεοῦ ἄρχοντα τοῦ χριστιανικοῦτάτου ἔθνους τῶν Βουλγάρων) with the said *invocatio* and a new form (as *basileus* without *invocatio*), see Dölger, Fanz: “Der Bulgarenherrscher als geistlicher Sohn des byzantinischen Kaisers”. In: *Id.*, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt* (as n. 34), pp. 183–196.

120 A very comprehensive overview of the Arabic as well as Hebrew accounts and their respective problems of authenticity and dating has already been furnished by Dunlop, *The History* (as n. 98), pp. 89–170.

121 This axiom is generally accepted but rests on shaky ground as it is not explicitly stated in any source. It can only implicitly be inferred from the Hebrew sources: the letter of king Joseph to Ḥasday b. Šaprūt credits king Bulan with the introduction of Judaism. He is presented as a direct ancestor

suggested that change took place before or around 800,<sup>122</sup> two important recent contributions have come to different, mutually exclusive results. They fix the date of the conversion either to around 838 (based on numismatical evidence),<sup>123</sup> or to around 861 (based on a new combination of the Hebrew sources, the “Vita Constantini” and a remark by Christian of Stavelot<sup>124</sup> from around 864).<sup>125</sup> Both arguments are indeed impressive, but neither

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of king Joseph. The ascent of the dynasty of kings and the introduction of Judaism were thus seemingly linked, cf. the German translation of the letter in: Pletnjowa, Svetlana A.: *Die Chasaren: Mittelalterliches Reich an Don und Wolga*. Koehler & Amelang: Leipzig 1978, pp. 151–158, here pp. 153–155. The person of the qaghan is only incidentally mentioned in this account (not by the title) as he initially had to give his consent (p. 153). The Cambridge document, instead, seems to reflect a tradition according to which the office of qaghan as a supreme judge had only been introduced together with Judaism; see Dunlop, *The History* (as n. 98), pp. 158–159. The interpretation of the qaghan as judge is clearly an assimilation to the biblical tradition and thus serves to keep the legitimacy of a non-Jewish institution in the new religious context, see Shapira, Dan: “Two Names of the first Khazar Jewish Beg”. *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 10, 1998/99, pp. 231–241, here p. 236.

- 122 For example Dunlop, *The History* (as n. 98), pp. 169–170; Pritsak, Omeljan: “The Khazar Kingdom’s Conversion to Judaism”. *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 2, 1978, pp. 261–281, here pp. 271–280. The debate is outlined by Golden, Peter B.: “The Conversion of the Khazars to Judaism”. In: *The World of the Khazars* (as n. 17), pp. 123–162, here pp. 151–157. The conversion is often understood as a process comprising several steps, a first around 740 (based on a rather approximative date given by Juda ha-Levi), a second around 800 (identified with the ‘reform’ of Obadiyah) and a third step in the 830s.
- 123 Kovalev, Roman K.: “Creating Khazar Identity through Coins: The Special Issue Dirhams of 837/8”. In: *East Central and Eastern Europe* (as n. 10), pp. 220–253.
- 124 Huygens, R.B.C. (ed.): *Christianus dictus Stabulensis, Expositio super Librum Generationis*. (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 224). Brepols: Turnhout 2008, p. 436, ll. 124–130: *Nescimus iam gentem sub caelo, in qua Christiani non habeantur. Nam et Goc et Magoc, quae sunt gentes Hunorum quae ab eis Gazari uocantur, iam una gens, quae fortior erat ex his quas Alexander conduxerat, circumcisa est et omne Iudaismum obseruat, Bulgarii quoque [...] cotidie baptizantur.*
- 125 Zuckerman, Constantin: “On the Date of the Khazar’s Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus Oleg and Igor”. *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 53, 1995, pp. 237–270; here pp. 237–254; followed by Shepard, Jonathan: “The Khazar’s Formal Adoption of Judaism and By-

of them seems to be strictly conclusive.<sup>126</sup> In any case, the nearly complete silence of Byzantine sources about the new religious situation in *Khazaria* and their continuing fixation on the qaghan as ruler instead of the king is indeed remarkable, and it certainly requires caution not to overestimate the consequences of the conversion for Khazar-Byzantine relations. Even if the Khazar king reacted sharply on anti-Jewish measures taken by Romanos I Lakapenos in Byzantium around 931,<sup>127</sup> it is nevertheless out of question that Christian communities were tolerated in the Khazar state. Two letters by the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos from the early 10<sup>th</sup> century seem to imply that the patriarchate was able to reorganize clerical structures and regular spiritual life in *Chazaria* by nominating a new archbishop to Cherson.<sup>128</sup> In this case the geographical term might, however, refer to the

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zantium's Northern Policy". *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 31, 1998, pp. 11–34, here pp. 11–23.

- 126 Kovalev, "Creating" (as n. 123) bases his argument entirely on a coin emission dated exclusively to 837/38, which obviously propagates the Mosaic religion (pp. 226–230). The growing external threats of these years (Sarkel) form the background for the rise of the *beg* Bulan, who was able to oust the qaghan from power before 843 (Abbasid letter to *Ṭarḥān malik al-ḥazar*). However, the open problem – why the new coins were no more struck afterwards – remains; this seems quite strange if a permanent religious change was implied and not only an unsuccessful (first) attempt. Zuckerman, "On the Date" (as n. 125), pp. 242–245, is perhaps too hasty in equating the religious debate mentioned in the Khazar tradition about the people's conversion with that of the "Vita Constantini". He conclusively confutes the dating of the conversion to the 8<sup>th</sup> century and the historicity of king Obadiyah (pp. 245–250), but he slightly overloads the passage by Christian of Stavelot (p. 245), which cannot serve as evidence for a recent (!) conversion of the Khazars. Instead, according to Christian's phrase the conversion could likewise have happened some decades earlier.
- 127 See Zuckerman, "On the Date" (as n. 125), p. 255; Shepard, "The Khazar's Formal Adoption" (as n. 125), pp. 30–31.
- 128 Jenkins, Romilly J. (ed.): *Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople, Letters*. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 6). Dumbarton Oaks Library: Washington 1973, nr. 68, p. 314; nr. 106, pp. 388–390. For the role of Christianity in the Khazar polity see also Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft* (as n. 92), pp. 318–325; Noonan, Thomas S.: "The Khazar-Byzantine World of the Crimea in the Early Middle Ages: The Religious Dimension". *Archivum*

land of the Khotzirs in Eastern Crimea instead of the qaghanate.<sup>129</sup> Khazar-Byzantine relations did probably deteriorate considerably in the later 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, but the reasons for this development should primarily be sought in the circumstances of changing political contexts<sup>130</sup> due to the emergence of new powerful players in or at the margins of the steppe zone during the 9<sup>th</sup> century: the Pechenegs and the Oghuz (Torki), the Magyars and the Rus', not to forget the key role of Bulgaria in the Balkans.<sup>131</sup> Notwithstanding this new plurality, the supreme head of the Khazars remained the only *chaganos* in the horizon of Byzantine sources<sup>132</sup> from the late 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

For Carolingian authors, in contrast, the prototypical qaghan was still that of the Avars whose state had been defeated by Charlemagne in 796, but seemingly continued to exist in a rudimentary way well into the 9<sup>th</sup> century, as several mentions of leading Avar representatives in the Frankish Annals suggest.<sup>133</sup> The Khazars occur only incidentally in the Frankish

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*Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 10, 1998/99, pp. 207–230 (who also discusses Mystikos' initiative, pp. 226–228).

129 Zuckerman, Constantin: "Byzantium's Pontic Policy in the Notitiae Episcopatumum". In: *La Crimée* (as n. 105), pp. 201–230, here pp. 221–226.

130 This line of interpretation has been followed by Thomas S. Noonan, "Byzantium and the Khazars" (as n. 98), esp. pp. 115–117 and 128–132. Noonan attempts to explain, "how Khazaria and Byzantium tried to use each other to serve their own interests in a constantly changing environment" (p. 128).

131 This is well reflected in the information on antagonistic attitudes between peoples of the steppe and other parts of the "north" in "De administrando imperio", cf. Howard-Johnston, "Byzantine Sources" (as n. 98), pp. 176–192; Huxley, George: "Steppe-Peoples in Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos". *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 34, 1984, pp. 77–89.

132 Neither the reemerging Eastern Türk Empire after the 680s nor the Türges qaghans succeeding to the former Western qaghanate nor the Uyghur Empire (744–840) have left any traces in Byzantine sources. This certainly reflects the shrinking Byzantine horizon towards Inner Asia. For these polities see Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), pp. 136–141, 155–163; Scharlipp, *Die frühen Türken* (as n. 13), pp. 30–44, 93–105; Kljaštornyj / Sultanov, *Staaten und Völker* (as n. 9), pp. 118–123; Stark, Sören: "On Oq Bodun. The Western Türk Qaghanate and the Ashina Clan". *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 15, 2006/7, pp. 159–171.

133 See Pohl, *Die Awaren* (as n. 15), pp. 320–323.



sources.<sup>134</sup> This difference of perception is reflected in a short passage of the famous letter to Basileios I written almost certainly by Anastasius Bibliothecarius in the name of the Carolingian Emperor Louis II in 871 after the Frankish conquest of Bari.<sup>135</sup> In order to refute the basileus' claim to be the unique legitimate holder of the *basileia*, i.e. the (Roman) imperial title, Anastasius had to prove that the 'correct' translation of *basileus* actually was "king" or *rex*. He found his arguments for this claim not only in the Scriptures, but also in more recent Greek books (*Graecos noviter editos codices*), where the rulers of the Persians, Epeirots, Indians, Goths and other nations were called *basileis*.<sup>136</sup> But Basileios had pointed to the existence of other proper titles for foreign rulers, such as *protosimbulus*

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- 134 See Aalto, Pentti / Pekkanen, Tuomo: *Latin Sources on North-Eastern Eurasia*. (Asiatische Forschungen 44). Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 1975, vol. 1, pp. 5–6, s.v. Acatziri, Agazari, (A)gaziri, referring to passages in Cassiodorus, Iordanes and the Ravenna Cosmographer; see also *ibid.*, p. 149 s.v. Chazari, Chaziri and Chazaria in contrast to *ibid.*, pp. 79–98 s.v. Avar, Avares, Avari, Aba-. The Khazars are furthermore mentioned in a letter by Anastasius Bibliothecarius (nr. 15) to bishop Gauderic of Velletri, in: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, vol. 5 (MGH *Epistolae VII*). Weidmann: Berlin 1928, pp. 435–438, here p. 437, ll. 14–16, where he states that Constantine the philosopher had been sent by the emperor Michael III in *Gazaram pro divino praedicando verbo, directus eum Cersonem, quae Chazarorum terrae vicina est*. They are probably also listed as *Caziri* in the so-called Geographus Bavarus. For the information transmitted by Christian of Stavelot see above, note 124.
- 135 Henze, Walter (ed.): "Ludovici II Imperatoris Epistola ad Basilium I. imperatorem Constantinopolitanum missa". In: *MGH Epistolae VII* (as n. 134), pp. 385–394. Included in the "Chronicon Salernitanum", which was composed in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, the authenticity of the letter had initially been questioned and was only established by Henze, Walter: "Ueber den Brief Kaiser Ludwigs II. an den Kaiser Basilius I.". *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere Geschichtskunde* 35, 1910, pp. 661–676. For the interpretation of this source see inter alia Grierson, Philip: "The Carolingian Empire in the Eyes of Byzantium". In: *Nascita dell'Europa ed Europa carolingia: un'equazione da verificare*. (Settimane di Studio 27). CISAM: Spoleto 1981, vol. 2, pp. 885–916, here esp. pp. 891–895; Peri, Vittorio: "'Universalità' culturale cristiana dei due sacri imperi Romani". In: Arnaldi, Girolamo / Cavallo, Guglielmo (eds.): *Europa medievale e mondo bizantino*. (Nuovi Studi Storici 40). ISIME: Rome 1997, pp. 125–162, here esp. pp. 134–151.
- 136 "Ludovici II Epistola" (as n. 135), p. 386, l. 36-p. 387, l. 11.

for the caliph of the Arabs, which induces Anastasius to discuss the “accuracy” of these designations.<sup>137</sup> It is at this point that the qaghan briefly appears. Anastasius declares that *chaganus* should be used for the ruler (*praelatum*) of the Avars, but not for the *Gazani* and *Nortmanni* nor the princeps *Vulgarum* who is rightly called *rex* or *dominus* of the Bulgarians.<sup>138</sup> This phrase is revealing as it seems to imply that the Byzantines used the term not only to designate the heads of the Khazars (*Gazani*), but also for Norman (i.e. Rus’) and Bulgarian rulers. Such an indirect evidence has to be used with great caution, the more so as the preceding letter of Basileios is lost, but it is not devoid of any fundament. There are indisputable traces that the title “qaghan” was used for princes of the Rus’ (although the clearest among them belong only to the 11<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>139</sup> The actual title of the Bulgar rulers, on the other hand, remains

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137 Ibid., p. 388, ll. 11–15.

138 Ibid., p. 388, ll. 15–18: *Chaganum vero nos praelatum Avarum, non Gazanorum aut Nortmannorum nuncupari repperimus, neque principem Vulgarum, set regem vel dominum Vulgarum. Quae omnia idcirco dicimus, ut quam aliter se habeant, quae scripsisti, legens in Graecis voluminibus ipse cognoscas.* For the interpretation of *Nortmanni* see Liudprand, *Antapodosis* I 11, in: Becker, Joseph (ed.): *Die Werke Liudprands von Cremona.* (MGH SSrerGerm), 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover / Leipzig 1915, p. 9: *Habet [sc. Constantinopolis] quippe ab aquilone Hungarios, Pizenacos, Chazaros, Rusios quos alio nos nomine Nordmannos apellamus, atque Bulgarios nimium sibi vicinos.*

139 The interpretation of the phrase *rex illorum chaganus* in the eldest Latin source mentioning the Rus’, a passage in the “*Annales Bertiniani*” (for 839), is far from certain, see Garipzanov, Ildar: “The Annals of St. Bertin (839) and Chacanus of the Rhos”. *Ruthenica* 5, 2006, pp. 3–8, who raises doubts about the interpretation of *chaganus* as qaghan, but the spelling *cacanus* is also often used for the Avar qaghan by Paulus Diaconus, see Aalto / Pekkanen, *Latin Sources* (as n. 134), p. 139. References to “our kagan” in the sermon “On Law and Grace” by Ilarion of Kiev and in an 11<sup>th</sup>-century graffito from Saint Sophia in Kiev leave little space for doubts that the title qaghan was used at least occasionally for the Rurikid princes, see Szili, Sándor: “Kagan – A Ruler’s Title in Early Eleventh-Century Kievan Rus’? Ilarion’s “On Law and Grace” as a Historical Source”. *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 47, 2013, pp. 373–385. The existence of a Khāqān Rūs is furthermore attested by various Muslim authors, among them Ibn Rustah and Gardīzī, see Golden, Peter B.: “The Question of the Rus’ Qaghanate”. *Archivum Eurasiae Medii*

quite unknown to us.<sup>140</sup> Greek sources often call them *kyrios* or *archōn*, and there are Latin authors who use the term *rex*.<sup>141</sup> The title *chaganos* in combination with Bulgaria appears only in one Byzantine text, but it

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*Aevi* 2, 1982, pp. 77–97, reprinted in: Id.: *Nomads and their Neighbours in the Russian Steppe: Turks, Khazars and Qipchaqs*. Ashgate: Aldershot 2003, nr. VI, here pp. 82–83. Basing his argument primarily on these last-mentioned sources, Golden seeks to reconstruct the Rus' qaghanate as a vassal polity of the Khazar Empire in pre-Ryurikid times. Noonan, Thomas S.: "The Khazar Qaghanate and its Impact on the Early Rus' State: The Translatio Imperii from Itil to Kiev". In: Khazanov, Anatoly / Wink, André (eds.): *Nomads in the Sedentary World*. Curzon: Richmond, Surrey 2001, pp. 76–102, here pp. 86–94, instead emphasizes the deliberate transfer of Khazar political ideology and prestige by the Ryurikids, especially after they had destroyed the Khazar Empire.

- 140 Although early Bulgarian rulers are usually called "khan" by modern historians, it should be stressed that there is no explicit source evidence to support this assumption, see Curta, Florin: "Qagan, Khan or King? Power in Early Medieval Bulgaria (Seventh to Ninth Century)". *Viator* 37, 2006, pp. 1–31; esp. pp. 1–3; see also the careful discussion of titles by Stepanov, Cvetelin: *Vlast i avtoritet v rannosrednovkovna Bălgarija (VII – sr. IX v.)*. Agat6: Sofija 1999, pp. 77–78 and 80–82. Instead, Bakalov, Georgi: *Sredno-vekovnijat bălgarski vladetel (titulatura i insignii)*. Nauka i izkustvo: Sofija 1985, p. 85 starts his discussion of the evidence with the affirmation that "it is known" that the early Bulgar rulers bore the Central Asiatic title *khan*, without giving any evidence for that; more cautiously Golden, *Introduction* (as n. 9), p. 249. Beševliev, *Die protobulgarische Periode* (as n. 95), pp. 333–334, assumes that all early Bulgar rulers held the title *kanasybigi*, and hence *khan* as first part of that. Though based on Bulgar tradition, the Bulgarian Prince List is of limited value for this question: written in Slavonic language, it calls the princes (explicitly only Asparuch and Kormisoš) *knjaz*, see Pritsak, Omeljan: *Die bulgarische Fürstenliste und die Sprache der Protobulgaren*. (Ural-altaische Bibliothek 1). Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 1955, pp. 50, 76–77 and Tafel 1.
- 141 Cf. Bakalov, *Vladetel* (as n. 140), pp. 86–87; Curta, "Qagan" (as n. 140), pp. 2, n. 5; 10–19; Stepanov, *Vlast* (as n. 140), p. 79; Beševliev, *Die protobulgarische Periode* (as n. 95), pp. 334–336. Introducing the lemma *καβάς*, Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica II* (as n. 3), pp. 148–149, suggests that this term appears in Greek sources for the Bulgarian rulers, but nearly all references adduced there refer to *kanasybigi* in various ways (and thus to the Protobulgarian inscriptions of a very limited timespan).

is an obvious misattribution.<sup>142</sup> The actual meaning of the title *kanasybigi* used by Omurtag (814–831) and his son Malamir (831–c.836) in official inscriptions remains a debated issue. It undoubtedly marks a substantial raise of prestige of the Bulgarian ruler in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>143</sup> but it seems to be clearly distinct from the title “qaghan”.

The conversion to Christianity offered new reference frames to both Bulgarian and Rus’ princes for the expression of their potential imperial ambitions. While Symeon of Bulgaria did not hesitate to claim the title *basileus* for himself and ultimately achieved the Byzantine recognition of this title for his son and successor Peter,<sup>144</sup> the Rurikid princes did not

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- 142 In the third book of the “Patria Konstantinupoleos” with regard to the Kastellion of Galata, see: Preger, Theodor (ed.): *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, vol. 2. Teubner: Leipzig 1907, p. 265: *Τὸ δὲ Καστέλλιν ἔκτισεν Τιβέριος ὁ πενθερός Μαυρικίου διὰ τὸ ἐλθεῖν Χαράνον τὸν ἄρχοντα Βουλγαρίας καὶ ἐμπρῆσαι καὶ κατακαῦσαι ἅπαντα τὰ Θρακῶα μέρη*. The notice obviously alludes to the Avar qaghan, cf. Berger, Albrecht: *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos*. (Poikila byzantina 8). Habelt: Bonn 1988, pp. 689–691. Furthermore, there are some instances for the use of the qaghanal title for the Bulgarian rulers in texts originating from a Slavic background in the 11<sup>th</sup> century; these are discussed by Stepanov, Tsvetelin: “From ‘Steppe’ to Christian Empire, and back: Bulgaria between 800 and 1100”. In: *The Other Europe* (as n. 5), pp. 363–377.
- 143 The debate is linked to the introduction of the Byzantine clause *ἐκ θεοῦ* combined with the Greek title *ἄρχων* by Omurtag: cf. Bakalov, *Vladetel* (as n. 140), pp. 89–94; Stepanov, *Vlast* (as n. 140), pp. 80–83; Id.: “The Bulgar title ΚΑΝΑΣΥΒΙΓΙ: Reconstructing the Notions of Divine Kingship in Bulgaria, AD 822–836”. *Early Medieval Europe* 10, 2001, pp. 1–19; Curta, “Qagan” (as n. 140), pp. 22–29 (“imperial title”); Ziemann, *Vom Wandervolk* (as n. 95), pp. 306–309.
- 144 For Symeon’s conflicts with Byzantium, especially his “coronation” of 913 and the peace of 927, see inter alia: Karlin-Hayter, Patricia: “The Homily on the Peace with Bulgaria of 927 and the “Coronation” of 913”. *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 17, 1968, pp. 29–39; Dujčev, Ivan: “On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians”. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 32, 1978, pp. 217–295; Shepard, Jonathan: “Symeon of Bulgaria – Peacemaker”. In: Id., *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe*. Ashgate: Farnham 2011, nr. III, pp. 1–53; Ziemann, Daniel: “Byzanz als Referenz- und Konfliktpunkt. Bulgarien zur Zeit Symeons des Großen”. In: Speer, Andreas / Steinkrüger, Philipp (eds.): *Knotenpunkt Byzanz. Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen*. (Miscellanea Mediaevalia

undertake any efforts to obtain such an advance in titular prestige within Christian schemes of royalty for many centuries. This circumstance might raise some doubts if the concept of qaghanate, which is well attested for the early Rus', but not for the Bulgars, did always imply imperial status.

Our concern here is, however, with the Byzantine perception of the qaghan.<sup>145</sup> In this respect a seemingly obvious aspect should not be ignored, namely that the *basileus* never adopted the qaghanal title for himself as the Tang emperor Taizong (626–649) did when he considered it appropriate.<sup>146</sup> The qaghan thus always remained a phenomenon belonging to the world outside of Byzantium, but chroniclers of the earlier Byzantine period generally were well familiar with this title used by the rulers of some, though not all of the “barbarian” *ethnika* living in the Eurasian steppe zone. The term *chaganos* appears rather frequently in their texts. However, the qaghanate has not been perceived as a specific concept of rulership such as the *basileia*. The usual image of Avar qaghans as prototypical barbarian rulers with mainly treacherous and avaricious traits differs significantly from the rather neutral but shadowy perception of the Khazar qaghans, while only Türk qaghans are sometimes delineated with truly imperial connotations (and once even called *basileus*<sup>147</sup>). These divergences in perception are par-

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36). De Gruyter: Berlin / Boston 2012, pp. 559–573. Todorov, Boris: “The Value of Empire: Tenth-Century Bulgaria between Magyars, Pechenegs and Byzantium”. *Journal of Medieval History* 36, 2010, pp. 312–326, has linked the Byzantine–Bulgarian conflict to the dynamics of the Northern steppe zone, which obliged Bulgaria to become a sedentary imperial power. I was not yet able to consult Leszka, Mirosław J.: *Symeon I Wielki a Bizancjum: Z dziejów stosunków bułgarsko-bizantyńskich w latach 893–927*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego: Łódź 2013.

145 It would certainly be useful to examine also the Chinese and Arabic sources in this respect. For the image of the qaghan in the Orkhon inscriptions from the Second Türk qaghanate see Kljaštornyj, *Die Geschichte Zentralasiens* (as n. 9), pp. 233–235.

146 Taizong started to use the title *Tian Kehan* (“The celestial qaghan”) after the conquest of the Eastern Türk Empire had been accomplished in 630 and the last qaghan Xieli had been sent to Chang’an as captive, see the short record from the Jiu Tangshu in: Liu Mau-tsai: *Die chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (T'u-küe)*. Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 1958, vol. 1, pp. 240–241; Stepanov, “Rulers, doctrines” (as n. 19), p. 268.

147 Cf. above n. 44.

tially due to the different quality of political relationships the Byzantines upheld towards these peoples in certain phases. But at the same time the discrepancies might also reflect differences and developments in the actual notion of the qaghanate as royal, imperial or sacral rulership with the various steppe peoples. In this respect the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries offer the most blurry vision: qaghans are still referred to in Greek as well as Latin texts – also with regard to the rulers of Rus' and Bulgaria – but these appellations are far from clear and uncontroversial, as is the actual role of the qaghan among the Khazars at this time. These ambiguities are perhaps a sign of change and transition, since the period of qaghans now approached its end in those parts of the steppe that stood in closer contact with the Byzantine *oikoumenē*.

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# Imports and Embargos of Imperial Concepts in the Frankish Kingdom. The Promotion of Charlemagne's Imperial Coronation in Carolingian Courtly Culture

## Introduction: Charlemagne's Imperial Coronation and its Early Medieval Context

In 1864 when Western Empires struggled for supremacy on the global scene, the British historian James Bryce published a successful book entitled *The Holy Roman Empire*. Quite naturally, Bryce began his outline of thousand years of history with the time of Charlemagne's reign and aspiration of the imperial title. With regard to this pivotal point of his subject, Bryce arrived to the following conclusion:

The coronation of Charles is not only the central event of the Middle Ages, it is also one of those very few events of which, taking them singly, it may be said that if they had not happened, the history of the world would have been different.<sup>1</sup>

The world is not the same as it was in Bryce's times. In the meantime, Empires, which perceived themselves in the line of tradition of Charlemagne's medieval empire, emerged and (luckily) vanished. Still, even for

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1 The quotation is from the edition of 1950, Bryce, James Viscount: *The Holy Roman Empire*. Macmillan and Co: London 1950, p. 50. For Bryce Charlemagne's imperial coronation was truly unparalleled. Even among other groundbreaking events of 'world history', it appeared to be unique. Would not Charlemagne have achieved it, the renewal of the Roman Empire in the West would never have happened. Bryce went on: "The assassins of Julius Caesar thought that they had saved Rome from monarchy, but monarchy came inevitable in the next generation. The conversion of Constantine changed the face of the world, but Christianity was spreading fast, and its ultimate triumph was only a question of time. Had Columbus never spread his sails, the secret Western sea would yet have been pierced by some later voyager; had Charles V broken his safe-conduct to Luther, the voice silenced at Wittenberg would have been taken up by echoes elsewhere. But if the Roman Empire had not been restored in the West in the person of Charles, it would have never been restored at all."

a world changed entirely, the imperial coronation of the Frankish King Charlemagne (768–814) by the hands of Pope Leo III (795–816) in Rome on Christmas Day 800 undoubtedly represents one of the central events in the medieval History of the Latin West. Monographs on the legendary Frankish King, as well as school- and textbooks on medieval history concede remarks and even entire chapters to it.<sup>2</sup> Charlemagne’s imperial coronation still represents one of the few medieval dates which are both commonly known and at the same time influential for the conceptions of history of past and present European political culture.<sup>3</sup> The Roman events have left a permanent impact especially on the conception of history in France and Germany – as imagined heirs of the Frankish Realm and its famous emperor.<sup>4</sup> Yet, also for more specialized disciplines, in Carolingian Studies as well as in scholarship on medieval constitutional history Charlemagne’s transformation from a king of barbarian peoples into *imperator Romanorum* and *augustus*, remains a permanent focal point of scholarly debate.<sup>5</sup>

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- 2 See from the large body of literature for instance, Weinfurter, Stefan: *Karl der Große. Der heilige Barbar*. Piper: Munich 2013, pp. 225–247; Fried, Johannes: *Karl der Große. Gewalt und Glaube*. Beck: Munich 2014.
  - 3 For a critical of assessment of Charlemagne’s suitability as a figurehead of a unified European identity, Nelson Janet L.: “Charlemagne ‘father of Europe’?”. In: Id. (ed.): *Courts, Elites, and Gendered Power in the Early Middle Ages. Charlemagne and Others*. (Variorum Collected Studies Series 878). Ashgate: Aldershot 2007, pp. 3–20; Fried, Johannes: “Ein dunkler Leuchtturm. Über die Verklärung Karls des Großen zum Vater Europas”. In: Aust, Stefan / Schmidt-Klingenberg, Michael (eds.): *Experiment Europa. Ein Kontinent macht Geschichte*. DVA: Munich 2003, pp. 40–60. On this issue already, Fuhrmann, Horst: “Das Papsttum und das kirchliche Leben im Frankenreich”. In: *Nascita dell’Europa ed Europa Carolingia. Un’Equazione Da Verificare 19–25 Aprile 1979*, vol. 1. (Settimane di Studio Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi Sull’Alto Medioevo 27). Presso la Sede del Centro: Spoleto 1981, pp. 419–456, p. 424.
  - 4 Even today, the national anthem ‘El Gran Carlemany’ remembers the ‘Great Charlemagne’ as father and founder of the Andorran nation.
  - 5 Latowsky, Anne A.: *Emperor of the World. Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority 800–1229*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca / New York 2013.



Even though the euphoric opinion on the first imperial coronation in the medieval West expressed by James Bryce has not gone unchallenged,<sup>6</sup> the outstanding importance of the Roman events is generally accepted. This praise uttered by modern societies and scholars is, however, in contrast to the accounts given by the two central contemporary sources. Their version of the events is rather laconic, and the picture they draw is by no means consistent.<sup>7</sup> Still, the constituent elements and the approximate order of events that took place at the *Confessio of St. Peter* can be deduced from these “prime witnesses”, that is the “Royal Frankish Annals” (“*Annales regni Francorum*”) and from Leo's *vita* given in the “*Liber Pontificalis*”.<sup>8</sup> At the end of the Christmas service Leo III made Charlemagne Emperor (*imperator Romanorum*) by placing a precious crown on his head. Then, the gathered Roman people acclaimed him by invoking three times: *Karolo piissimo Augusto a Deo coronato, magno et pacifico imperatore, vita et victoria!*<sup>9</sup> Praises of Saints (*laudes*) were sung. According to the Frankish Annals, an *adoratio* followed, which is to be understood as the ritual *pro-*

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- 6 See for instance Geoffrey, Barraclough: *History in a Changing World*. Greenwood Press: Westport Connecticut 1984, pp. 109–110.
- 7 Cf. Nelson, Janet L.: “Warum es so viele Versionen von der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen gibt”. In: Jussen, Bernhard (ed.): *Die Macht des Königs. Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*. Beck: Munich 2005, pp. 38–54; Patzold, Steffen: “Geheimnis eines Weihnachtstages”. In: Pieper, Dietmar / Saltzwedel, Johannes (eds.): *Karl der Große: der mächtigste Kaiser des Mittelalters*. DVA: Munich 2013, pp. 137–149.
- 8 Duchesne, Louis (ed.): *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, vol. 2. De Boccard: Paris 1955, no. 98: Leo III, ch. 23–24, pp. 7–8; Kurze, Friedrich (ed.): *Annales regni Francorum inde ab a 741 ad. a. 829, qui dicuntur Annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi*. (MGH SS rer. Germ. 6). Hahn: Hanover 1895, ad. a. 801, p. 112. Peter Classen gives an analysis and contextualisation of these constitutive elements in Classen, Peter / Fuhrmann, Horst / Märkl, Claudia (eds.): *Karl der Große, das Papsttum und Byzanz. Die Begründung des karolingischen Kaisertums*. (Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 9). Jan Thorbecke Verlag: Sigmaringen 1988, pp. 62–74.
- 9 *Liber Pontificalis*, ch. 23, p. 7. The acclamation given in the Frankish Annals only slightly differs, *Annales regni Francorum*, ad. a. 801, p. 112: *Carolo augusto, a Deo coronato magno et pacifico imperatori Romanorum, vita et victoria!*

*skynesis* bestowed to the ancient emperors.<sup>10</sup> The “*Liber Pontificalis*” sums up the crowning by concluding that all this made Charlemagne Roman Emperor.<sup>11</sup> Peter Classen has argued that this liturgical procedure including coronation, acclamation and *proskynesis* was apparently influenced by Byzantine ritual. In 800, Pope Leo assumed the role of the Patriarch of Constantinople or the emperor himself who administered the coronation of his son as co-emperor.<sup>12</sup> Yet by changing the order of coronation and acclamation, he augmented his own importance within the ritual.

The papal historiography, then, adds that immediately after the coronation Leo anointed the Emperor’s son Charles (d. 811) as king (ch. 24).<sup>13</sup> The “Royal Frankish Annals” pass over this royal anointing of Charles [the younger], Charlemagne’s eldest legitimate son and potential principal heir, and instead continue their account with the trial against Leo, which had been the apparent cause for Charlemagne’s last journey to Rome. The Frankish source also conceals the reactive response of the new emperor and his family, which the rest of chapter 24 of the papal biography contends: Charlemagne is said to have spent the rest of the day bestowing rich liturgical gifts to the church of St. Peter and the other papal basilicas.<sup>14</sup> Thirteen objects, such as silver tables, a votive crown, and a paten with a KAROLO engraving are described and their weight accurately catalogued. Apparently, Charlemagne and his family proved themselves grateful and

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10 Davis, Raymond: *The Lives of the eight-century Popes (Liber pontificalis)*. (Translated Texts for Historians 13). Liverpool University Press: Liverpool 2007, p. 188, n. 60.

11 *Liber Pontificalis*, ch. 23, p. 7: *et ab omnibus constitutus est imperator Romanorum*.

12 Classen, pp. 62–63.

13 *Liber Pontificalis*, ch. 23, p. 7: *Ilico sanctissimus antistes et pontifex unxit oleo sancto Karolo, excellentissimo filio eius, rege, in ipso die Natalis domini nostri Iesu Christi*.

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8: *Et missa peracta, post celebrationem missarum, obtulit ipse serenissimus dominus imperator mensa argentea cum pedibus suis, pens. lib. Sed et in confessione eiusdem Dei apostoli obtulit una cum praecellentissimos filios suos reges et filiabus diversa vasa ex auro purissimo, in ministerio ipsius mensae, pens. lib. Sed et corona aurea cum gemmis maiores, quae pendet super altare, pens. lib. LV; et patena aurea maiore cum gemmis diversis, legente KAROLO, pens. lib. XXX.*

above all as well prepared. If one is not to refuse the Frankish gifts to papal Rome as mere fiction, one has to infer that the Frankish King was neither taken by surprise nor that he even rejected his new imperial position.<sup>15</sup> The named objects must have been at hand right after the ceremony. Moreover, they had to be crafted and collected, probably during the summer of 800 before Charles finally left *Francia* for Rome. Leo III came to meet the Franks at Mentana (Nomentum) twelve miles north of Rome on 23 November.<sup>16</sup> The following day, Charlemagne and the Frankish delegation entered the city. Consequently, they had been in the Holy City only for a month, which hardly left time enough to commission all the luxurious and personalized artifacts. The votive crown, which might have been similar to the famous Visigothic crown of King Recceswinth (d. 672), was kept in St. Peter and survived there at least until the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> After the year 800/01, Charlemagne never returned to Rome.<sup>18</sup> His imperial coronation was therefore the most likely occasion for the crown and the other objects to arrive there, which adds to the reliability of the “*Liber Pontificalis*” depiction of the events.

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15 Cf. Becher, Mathias: “Das Kaisertum Karls des Großen zwischen Rückbesinnung und Neuerung”. In: Leppin, Hartmut / Schneidmüller, Bernd / Weinfurter, Stefan (eds.): *Kaisertum im ersten Jahrtausend: wissenschaftlicher Begleitband zur Landesausstellung “Otto der Große und das Römische Reich. Kaisertum von der Antike zum Mittelalter”*. Schnell & Steiner: Regensburg 2012, pp. 251–270; Classen, p. 67.

16 Even this reception of the Frankish King by the Pope was symbolically charged and hinted at the things which were about to happen. According to the Roman protocol the popes honoured emperors by receiving them at the twelve-mile-landmark. The parties involved in the meeting certainly were aware of the fact that Charlemagne was treated like a Roman Emperor already one month before his actual coronation. *Annales regni Francorum*, ad a. 800, p. 111; Kaufhold, Martin: *Wendepunkte des Mittelalters. Von der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen bis zur Entdeckung Amerikas*. Thorbecke: Ostfildern 2004, pp. 11–17; Weinfurter, pp. 232–233.

17 Duchesne, p. 38, n. 36.

18 Schieffer, Rudolf: “Charlemagne and Rome”. In: Smith, Julia Mary Howard (ed.): *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West. Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*. (The Medieval Mediterranean 28). Brill: Leiden 2000, pp. 279–295, here pp. 279–280.

One can explain the shift and difference in the way the Frankish and Roman sources describe Charlemagne's imperial rising. Both had a natural interest in presenting their respective sovereigns as the true leading protagonist. Problems of medieval long distance communication then caused the creation of divergent recollections of the Roman events. The official Frankish historiography chose to downplay the role of the Papacy, as well as the importance of the city of Rome and its inhabitants as factors for Charlemagne's elevation.<sup>19</sup> Instead, it stresses that by accepting the *nomen imperatoris* Charles only received the title suitable for his fullness of power. Thus, the pope did not grant a higher status to the Frankish King, but only acknowledged the *status quo* Charles had already achieved by himself.<sup>20</sup> At this crucial moment, the Carolingians opted for an adoption of the ancient Roman title of Emperor. In the future, they were able to use its ideological and symbolic implications as instruments of their own rule. Yet at the same time, the politically influential circles around the Frankish King avoided to concede increased importance to their Roman partners, the donors of the title. The acceptance of the new title was therefore conditional and happened in a selective way. As we have already seen, some aspects of imperial culture at hand were tacitly adopted, while others were deliberately glossed over or changed.

In the following, this paper wants to ask for some of the long-term developments within the Frankish realm, but also on the level of transcultural politics, which prepared the Carolingians for their new imperial role. To that end, it discusses Frankish receptions and concepts of transcultural

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19 Cf. Classen, pp. 68–73; Nelson 2005.

20 In this context, it is significant that by this time, Frankish scholars extensively made use of late antique *nomen*-theory, which demanded that *nomen* and *res* had to be in accord with one another. Especially Theodulf of Orléans had applied it in his dogmatic work the *Libri Carolini*, cf. Ertl, Thomas: "Byzantinischer Bilderstreit und fränkische Nomentheorie. Imperiales Handeln und dialektisches Denken im Umfeld der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen". *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 40, 2006, pp. 13–42; Freeman, Ann (ed.): *Opus Caroli regis contra Synodum (Libri Carolini)*. (MGH Conc. Suppl. 2,1). Hahn: Hanover 1998, pp. 54–58; liber 4, c. 23, p. 547. Theodulf's impact on contemporary Frankish imperial concepts can hardly be overestimated. He might have even had a hand in the concrete proceedings, which led to Charlemagne's imperial coronation. Therefore, some of his relevant sources will be discussed below, see from n. 58.

hegemony of the other contemporary powers, especially Byzantium, and of the ancient Roman Empire, which were influential in the years around the turn of the century.<sup>21</sup> Showing that imperial concepts and practices were an issue in Frankish political culture at this stage and that Charles or at least his learned advisors were conscious of problems revolving around this issue means to contradict the traditional judgement that Charles was surprised or unwilling to accept his new title. On the contrary, it helps to prove that by the year 800, imperial concepts were not only in the horizon of Frankish political culture but even a matter of creative appropriation. Consequently, Charlemagne's coronation seems less dependent on the very moment, or even the characters of the main protagonists, but on the structural, political and cultural constellations in this period. This, however, means to counter the outstanding singularity of the Roman events, which for instance James Bryce attributed to them.<sup>22</sup>

Instead, the following remarks want to investigate into practices of imports and embargos of imperial concepts in the Frankish Kingdom around the turn of the century. The 780s and 90s appear to be crucial years for setting the course for the revival of the imperial institution in the West by the Franks. The article will therefore present political developments as well as contemporary statements which witness to an ongoing debate on imperial concepts and traditions in the Carolingian Empire. This aims at moving away from the rather contingent single event of the coronation by bringing processes and structural continuities, which led there, to the fore. In this context, the following remarks quite generally understand 'imperial rule' as a mode of direct and indirect hegemony over distinct, independent political and cultural entities.<sup>23</sup> This for the Franks new form of exercise of power exceeded the gentile and territorial horizon, which had become the common reference frame of the so-called Barbarian kingdoms after the

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21 Pohl, Walter: "Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West: Introduction". In: Id. / Heydemann, Gerda: *Post Roman Transitions. Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*. (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 14). Brepols: Turnhout 2013, pp. 1–46.

22 Cf. n. 1.

23 Holtzmann, Robert: "Der Weltherrschaftsgedanke des mittelalterlichen Kaisertums und die Souveränität der europäischen Staaten". *Historische Zeitschrift* 159, 1939, pp. 251–264, here pp. 251–252.

dissolution of the Roman Empire in the West. The new plenitude of power not only enhanced Charlemagne's sphere of influence. It also entailed new resources for Carolingian self-presentation and brought about extended expectations of Frankish and non-Frankish protagonists towards the king.

The terms "import" and "embargo" used in the title of this contribution obviously originate from commercial language. In the present context, they serve to highlight that opting for or against imperial concepts was a deliberate choice that had a longer history within the Frankish kingdoms.<sup>24</sup> There were not only model cases of historical empires at hand, which the Franks could adopt or refuse. There were also external cultural and political entities involved, as we have already seen with regard to Papal Rome. This paper follows the leading assumption that Charles' *nomen imperatoris* was above all a relational title for the Carolingians.<sup>25</sup> It functioned to signal varying

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24 This applies to both the political history and the history of political thought: already the Merovingian King Childeric (d. 481/82) had received the *paludamentum* and a treasure of 100 solidi paid by the Emperor. This regalia designated him as a confederate king of the Roman Empire (*foederatus rex*). Even though he still was a 'Barbarian' king, Childeric simultaneously reinforced his power by connecting it to imperial traditions, cf. Ewig, Eugen: *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Kohlhammer: Stuttgart 2006, pp. 78–79: "Siegelring, Fibel, Mantel und Münzschatz kennzeichneten den Vater Chlodwigs [i.e. Childeric] als Förderatenkönig und römischen Offizier. [...] Purpurtunica, Chlamys (langer Festmantel kaiserlicher Würdenträger, wohl mit Gold und Purpur durchwirkt) und Diadem bildeten die *vestis regia*, die Kaiser Anastasius 508 zugleich mit dem Recht der Akklamation verlieh". Pitz, Ernst: *Die griechisch-römische Ökumene und die drei Kulturen des Mittelalters. Geschichte des mediterranen Weltteils zwischen Atlantik und Indischem Ozean 270–812*. (Europa im Mittelalter 3). Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2001, pp. 251–253; Lebecq, Stéphane: "The Two Faces of King Childeric. History, Archaeology, Historiography". In: Noble, Thomas F. X. (ed.): *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms*. (Rewriting Histories). Routledge: London 2006, pp. 327–344, pp. 331–336.

25 This purpose is to a certain extent reflected in the carefully chosen title used in the charters: *Karolus serenissimus augustus a deo coronatus magnus pacificus imperator Romanorum gubernans imperium, qui et per misericordiam dei rex Francorum et Langobardorum*, cf. note 116. Of course, the legal issues are predominant here. Nevertheless, the chosen form deliberately avoided styling Charles as *imperator Romanorum*, which had become a common expression in the West since the fourth century and which would have matched the gentile elements of Charlemagne's royal titles. Charles did not become the emperor

relationships between the Carolingian King and entities in and outside his direct sphere of influence. I, thus, understand the affirmative or critical reference to the imperial title or existing empires as a deliberate strategy of communication to organize or to modify these reciprocal relationships. In order to illustrate this, some remarks on the constellations of power in the West of the 8<sup>th</sup> century are due.

### Charlemagne's Imperial Coronation – Expression of a Changed Topography of Power

The Roman events of 800 figure as an epochal watershed and a potential starting point of the Early Middle Ages in general.<sup>26</sup> Charlemagne's coronation focuses characteristic features of the era, for instance the newly-achieved importance of Germanic peoples and their realms as successors of a by then decomposed, but in a conceptual sense still influential Roman Empire. Therefore, modern historians have seen the imperial coronation of Charlemagne not only as the climax of his own reign, but also as that of a long-term emancipation process.<sup>27</sup> Under command of the Franks, a 'Barbarian West' established itself as a new political power confronting the hitherto predominant powers: that is the Roman papacy and the Byzantine Empire. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century, both suffered from internal struggles and continuous attacks from the outside by heathen peoples, such as the Bulgars, Avars and Saracens.<sup>28</sup>

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of the Romans, which would have emphasized the importance of the Roman citizens or their sovereign the pope. Instead, the wording interrelated the title with the Roman Empire, which Charlemagne controlled. This concept conveyed by the *intitulatio* used in imperial charters is in line with the presentation of the "Annals of Lorsch", see note 56. Classen, pp. 70–73; Classen, Peter: "Romanum gubernans imperium. Zur Vorgeschichte der Kaisertitulatur Karls des Großen". *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 9, 1952, pp. 103–121.

26 For the vast literature on the imperial coronation and its groundbreaking ramifications, see for instance Scharer, Anton: "Die Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen 800". In: Scheibelreiter, Georg (ed.): *Höhepunkte des Mittelalters*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 2004, pp. 59–69; Kaufhold, pp. 11–17.

27 Kaufhold, pp. 12–13; Pohl, Walter: *Die Völkerwanderung. Eroberung und Integration*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Kohlhammer: Stuttgart 2005, pp. 16–38.

28 Gantner, Clemens: "New Visions of Community in Ninth-Century Rome: The Impact of the Saracen Threat on the Papal World View". In: Pohl, Walter / Gantner, Clemens / Payne, Richard (eds.): *Visions of Community in the Post-*

On the other hand, Constantinople and Rome had defended their status as universal centres of Christendom in an otherwise atomized world of *gentes* and territories. Consequently, the high esteem and self-perception both the papacy and the Eastern Roman Emperor in Constantinople enjoyed were in contradiction to the pragmatic power they could actually exercise.

Contrasting with the situation of the established Christian powers, the Franks had come to rule the West.<sup>29</sup> Charlemagne continued a policy of

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*Roman World. The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1100.* Ashgate: Burlington 2012, pp. 403–421. Since the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Duchy and City of Rome were under constant threat of the expansion of the Lombard Kingdom. After the Lombards had conquered Pavia in 572, the city served as their capital. In the years to follow, they pushed forward into central and southern Italy, which was officially still under Byzantine rule but left on its own. Though they still were subjects of the Byzantine Emperor, this left the bishops of Rome in the uneasy situation to look for a new protecting power. Under their first Carolingian Kings, Pepin III and Charlemagne, the Franks finally took this position. Thereby the aspiring Carolingians dynasty broke the traditional Frankish-Lombard alliance and instead used the papacy's religious prestige in order to reinforce their young kingship. In 754, for instance, Pope Stephen II took refuge in the Frankish kingdom and had to ask for Frankish support against the Lombard king Aistulf. On this occasion, he reaffirmed the new Frankish King Pepin by anointing him and his sons as kings, cf. *Annales regni Francorum*, ad. a. 754, p. 13; Duchesne, Louis (ed.): *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, vol. 1. De Boccard: Paris 1955, no. 94: Stephanus II, chap. 24–27, pp. 447–448. On the alliance between the Carolingians and the papacy, see Engels, Odilo: "Zum päpstlich-fränkischen Bündnis im 8. Jahrhundert". In: Goetz, Hans-Werner / Berg, Dieter (eds.): *Ecclesia et regnum. FS Franz-Josef-Schmale*. Winkler: Bochum 1989, pp. 21–38; for the Carolingian use of ecclesiastical prestige, cf. Drews, Wolfram: *Die Karolinger und die Abbasiden von Bagdad. Legitimationsstrategien frühmittelalterlicher Herrscherdynastien im transkulturellen Vergleich.* (Europa im Mittelalter 12). Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2009, pp. 66–67.

29 Classen, p. 1: "Beide Papsttum und Kaisertum, verstanden sich als christliche, von Gott unmittelbar gesetzte Institutionen und zogen ihre Kraft aus den Überlieferungen des Imperium Romanum. Aber während das Papsttum in der verkümmerten Stadt Rom selbst an den Rand des Reiches gedrängt war, dafür aber weit über die Reichsgrenzen hinaus seine geistliche Autorität in der wachsenden lateinischen Kirche zu wahren und zu steigern vermochte, sah sich das Kaisertum seit dem 7. Jahrhundert faktisch auf einen kleinen Teil des alten Römischen Reiches beschränkt, es beherrschte ein Reich fast ausschließlich griechischer Sprache und Kultur. [...] Niemals gab es den zuletzt von Justinian



military expansion already his grandfather, Charles Martel (d. 741), and his father, Pepin (d. 768), had pursued. After a phase of decline during the last generations of the Merovingian dynasty, under the first Carolingians the Frankish Kingdom started to impose its rule over surrounding regions such as Thuringia, Frisia and Aquitaine. Ruled by dukes with king-like powers, the latter had gained relative independence from an only nominal Frankish hegemony. Charlemagne and his predecessors crushed these duchies and opened them to imminent Frankish rule. In 788, Charlemagne finished this process when he finally deposed the Bavarian Duke Tassilo III in a show trial, accusing his Agilofing cousin of perjury (*harisliz*) committed 25 years ago.<sup>30</sup> Allegedly, Tassilo had deserted Charles' father Pepin in 763, though according to the "Royal Frankish Annals" Tassilo had been the Frankish King's vassal since 757; as such, he would have been obliged to take part in the king's campaign against Aquitaine. Now in 788, Charles gathered Franks, Bavarians, Lombards and Saxons for the trial at Ingelheim. The assembly, even Tassilo's fellow Bavarians, made further allegations against him. The certainly carefully selected representatives of the *gentes*, who formed the new *regnum Francorum*, demanded capital punishment for treason and conspiracy with the Avars. Albeit, Charles showed mercy. Tassilo and his son Theodo were imprisoned in Jumièges, a monastery closely allied with the Carolingian family. The message of Tassilo's fall was evident: Franks, Bavarians, Lombards and even the only recently conquered Saxons had a share in the administration of the multi-gentile Frankish Kingdom. Harmony, consensus and participation could be attained, but fidelity towards the Carolingian King was indispensable to the vision of community.

With the displacement of Tassilo, duchies, which could claim independent lordship over single *gentes*, had ceased to exist.<sup>31</sup> Instead, the Carolingians established control by introducing loyal members of a so-called

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verwirklichten Anspruch auf die Universalherrschaft im ganzen Mittelmeerraum auf, vor allem nicht in Italien."

30 *Annales Regni Francorum*, ad a. 788, p. 80. Zehrfeld, Klaus: *Karl der Große gegen Herzog Tassilo III. von Bayern: Der Prozess vor dem Königsgesicht Ingelheim 788*. Pustet: Regensburg 2011.

31 Summarizing Steiger, Heinhard: *Die Ordnung der Welt. Eine Völkerrechtsgeschichte des karolingischen Zeitalters (741 bis 840)*. Böhlau: Cologne 2010, pp. 27–30.

*Frankish Reichsaristokratie* as counts, bishops and abbots or holders of other judicial and military services (*honores*). Royal envoys, *missi dominici*, safeguarded a close connection with the Frankish court. On visitation journeys, they held the assizes and double-checked that local officials fulfilled their duties towards the realm. Finally, they reported to the king, keeping him well informed of developments and problems in his vast and diverse empire.<sup>32</sup> And yet, these practices of rulership should not be misunderstood as an attempt of strict equalization. In order to stabilize Carolingian hegemony, it was indispensable to respect local rationalities and elites. The Frankish aristocracy was by far more than a mere instrument in the hands of the Carolingian King; its members had to be regarded as the King's partners.<sup>33</sup> If feasible, the office of *missus dominicus* was given to an agent who already had bonds with the area (*missactium*) he was about to control. Hereby, local *magnates* could profit from a royal office by exercising power on behalf of the king. Material rewards and social prestige bound them to the throne. At the same time, the king assured himself of local power bases and fidelity of the elites.<sup>34</sup> Besides, peoples were still judged by their gentile laws, which Charlemagne codified, and if possible corrected but never replaced by a single Frankish law. In this manner, one must regard the *regnum Francorum* as a multi-ethnic, heterogeneous conglomerate of different legal spaces, which required a unifying cohesion.<sup>35</sup>

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32 Hannig, Jürgen: "Zentrale Kontrolle und regionale Machtbalance. Beobachtungen zum System der karolingischen Königsboten am Beispiel des Mittelrheingebietes". *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 66, 1984, pp. 1–46, pp. 2–7.

33 Airlie, Stuart: "Charlemagne and the Aristocracy. Captains and Kings". In: Story, Joana E. (ed.): *Charlemagne. Empire and Society*. Manchester University Press: Manchester 2006, pp. 90–102, here pp. 91–93.

34 See for instance, c. 34 of the "Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae": *Interdiximus ut omnes Saxones generaliter conventus publicos nec faciant, nisi forte missus noster de verbo nostro eos congregare fecerit; sed unusquisque comes in suo ministerio placita et iustitias faciat. Et hoc a sacerdotibus consideretur, ne aliter faciat*. Schwerin, Claudius von (ed.): *Leges Saxonum und Lex Thuringorum*. (MGH Font. iur. Germ. 4). Hahn: Leipzig 1918, pp. 43–44; Hannig, pp. 9–14.

35 On the religious character and the use of the church as an instrument to rule this multi-ethnic empire, Padberg, Lutz E. von: "Die Diskussion missionarischer Programme zur Zeit Karls des Großen". In: Godman, Peter / Jarnut, Jörg / Johaneck, Peter (eds.): *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung. Das Epos "Karolus Magnus et*

## Carolingian Power and Cultural Politics

As Charlemagne waged war in the East against the non-Christian Saxons and Avars, the situation described above exacerbated. The Avar khagan surrendered in 796. Along with his people, he was baptized; the rich, over long time accrued Avar treasure, became Frankish booty and was distributed among the Christian princes in the West in order to augment Charlemagne's fame as spearhead of Christianity.<sup>36</sup> Already in 785 after years of fierce warfare, the *dux Saxonum* Widukind, leader of Saxon resistance against the Franks, surrendered and was baptized in the royal palace at Attigny. From a Frankish point of view, both heathen peoples could be regarded as subdued and led on a way to Christianity at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> As early as 774, Charlemagne had conquered the once allied Lombard Kingdom. He deposed and replaced King Desiderius. On this occasion, Charlemagne and his Frankish soldiers came to know the imperial cities of Pavia and Ravenna, where the antique Roman heritage was ever-present.<sup>38</sup> In the libraries of these north

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*Leo papa*" und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799. Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2002, pp. 125–143, here pp. 141–143; Fuhrmann, 1981, pp. 429–437.

- 36 See for instance a letter by Charlemagne to the Mercian King Offa (d. 796), Dümmler, Ernst (ed.): *Epistolae Karolini aevi*. (MGH Epp. 4,2). Weidmann: Berlin 1895, Alcuin, ep. 100, pp. 144–146, esp. p. 146: *de thesauro humanarum rerum, quem dominus Iesus nobis gratuita pietate concessit, aliquid per metropolitanas civitates transmisiimus. Vestrae quoque dilectioni ad gaudium et gratiarum actiones Deo omnipotenti dirigere studuimus unum balteum et unum gladium Huniscum et duo pallia sirica; quatenus ubique in populo christiano divina predicetur clementia et nomen domini nostri Iesu Christi glorificetur in aeternum.*
- 37 Cf. *Annales Regni Francorum*, ad a. 785, p. 69–70; ad a. 795, p. 96: *etiam venerunt missi tudun, qui in gente et regnum Avarorum magnam potestatem habebat; qui dixerunt, quod idem tudun cum terra et populo suo se regi dedere vellet et eius ordinatione christianam fidem suscipere vellet*; ad a. 796, p. 98: *In eodem anno tudun secundum pollicitationem suam cum magna parte Avarorum ad regem venit, se cum populo suo et patria regi dedit; ipse et populus baptizatus*; Patzold, Steffen: "‘Einheit’ versus ‘Fraktionierung’: Zur symbolischen und institutionellen Integration des Frankenreichs im 8./9. Jahrhundert". In: Pohl / Gantner / Payne (as n. 28), pp. 375–390, p. 375.
- 38 Pohl 2013, pp. 2–3; Luchterhandt (as n. 39), p. 106: "Die Eroberung des Langobardenreichs im Sommer jenes Jahres [774] brachte auch die Begegnung mit den Eliten einer ethnisch heterogenen Gesellschaft, deren Lebensformen der

Italian cities and monasteries, the works of classical authors had survived. Late-Antique architecture such as the imperial basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna deeply impressed the Franks, which would prove influential for royal Frankish construction programmes in the future.<sup>39</sup> Columns – and in 801 even the late-antique equestrian statue which was said to portray the Ostrogothic King Theodoric –, were imported to Aachen as *spolia* from the 780s onwards.<sup>40</sup> These not only lent their splendour to the new Frankish capital, but – what is more important – also put the Frankish Kingdom itself into a reference frame of world history. By having access to artefacts originating from imperial display of power and by importing them into the centre of his reign, Charlemagne could prove his own significance in line with these historical role models.

Moreover, personnel helped to foster this process of an intensified emulation of antiquity for the sake of political culture. The first scholars leaving a lasting impact on the Frankish Court were Lombards.<sup>41</sup> The scholars Paulinus of Aquileia, Peter of Pisa and a little later Paul the Deacon joined their new King Charlemagne in the aftermath of the fall of their Lombard Kingdom. They were the first to contribute to his glory by means of poetry; poetry, which

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Spätantike noch näher standen als die der romanisierten Gebiete des Frankenreichs und deren Herrschaft trotz der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Umbrüche eine erstaunliche Kontinuität vorweisen konnte. [...] In Mailand, Pavia, Monza, Verona und Ravenna nahm das Königtum Paläste in Besitz, deren bisherige Eigentümer sich schon im 7. Jahrhundert den lokalen Führungsschichten akkulturiert und etliche Rituale, Symbole und Rechtstraditionen der römischen Welt adaptiert hatten.”

- 39 On this issue, see the contributions in Pohle, Frank (ed.): *Karl der Große, Charlemagne. Orte der Macht: Essays*. Sandstein Verlag: Dresden 2014, especially Luchterhandt, Manfred: “Rom und Aachen. Die Karolinger und der päpstliche Hof um 800”, pp. 104–113; Ranaldi, Antonella / Novara, Paola: “Karl der Große, Ravenna und Aachen”, pp. 114–121; Meckseper, Cord: “Antikenrezeption in der Baukunst Karls des Großen. Rückbezug oder Fortschreibung?”, pp. 160–169, for a critical assessment of Rome as a role model.
- 40 Cf. Gundlach, Wilhelm (ed.): *Codex Carolinus*. (MGH Epp. 3,1). Weidmann: Berlin 1892, pp. 476–657, Hadrian I, ep. 81, p. 614; Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ch. 26, pp. 30–31.
- 41 Bullough, Donald A.: “Aula renovate”. In: Id. (ed.): *Carolingian Renewal. Sources and Heritage*. Manchester University Press: Manchester 1991, pp. 123–160, pp. 130–131.

was full of references and allusions to classical panegyrics. From the beginning, copying entire verses was common among Carolingian poets. Imitation of Vergil and Ovid would become one of the common features of Carolingian courtly poetry.<sup>42</sup> As we shall see below, this not only helped to revive forms of antique poetry, it also allowed to parallel contemporary constellations with the glorious past of the Augustan Age. Ovid, Horace and Vergil had dedicated their epic poetry to the emperor, competed for his favour and had consequently helped to immortalize him. The international scholars and poets, who from the 770s onwards became increasingly aware of the Frankish King, acted similarly. The poetic *spolia* functioned as a bridge, which renewed the personal constellations of the Augustan Court in their own days. The use of Vergil and Ovid as role models for Carolingian poets also helped to parallelize the addressees of the panegyric verse, Augustus and Charlemagne.

Overall, under Charlemagne the *regnum Francorum* stretched from the Adria in the South to the Shores of the North Sea, and from the Ebro in the West to the Elbe. Annual warfare had brought its elites into contact with Christian and non-Christian *regna*. This had not only proved a relative dominance of the Frankish forces, but also familiarized the Franks with commodities and ideas beyond their rather restricted cultural horizon.<sup>43</sup> However, not only warfare increased the Frankish action scope. The 'diplomatic field' also mirrors that around the turn of the century, the Carolingians made use of more sophisticated practices of government. Where the Franks were not able to establish direct influence by conquest or military campaigns, they sent or received embassies. The Frankish court cultivated diplomatic relations with Christian courts and religious centres in Britain, Spain and Byzantium, but also with the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn Ar-Rašīd (d. 809).<sup>44</sup>

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42 Contreni, John Joseph: "Getting to know Virgil in the Carolingian Age: The Vita Publii Virgiliti". In: Garver, Valerie Louise / Phelan, Owen M. (eds.): *Rome and Religion in the Medieval World: Studies in Honor of Thomas F. X. Noble*. (Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West). Ashgate: Farnham 2014, pp. 21–45, pp. 22–28; Godman, Peter: *Poetry of the Carolingian*. Duckworth: London 1985, pp. 8–9.

43 Cf. Prielzel, Malte: "Lernen durch Krieg. Die Feldzüge Karls des Großen und die Weltsicht der politischen Elite". In: Pohle (as n. 39), pp. 58–65.

44 See for instance the account of the year 797/98 in the *Annales regni Francorum*, pp. 101–102.

Charlemagne pursued a policy of alliance or matrimony with the Mercian King Offa and Alfonso II of Asturias (d. 842). Exchange of presents loomed large in this context.<sup>45</sup> Even though the intended arrangements, for instance the marriages of Charlemagne's daughters, were scarcely put into practice and had little or no impact on the international relations, presents offered an excellent occasion for grandstanding. Received gifts could be interpreted as tokens of respectful appreciation or even as tributes of distant rulers, who acknowledged Frankish superiority.<sup>46</sup> The gifts themselves henceforth embodied and represented their exotic origin for the Frankish Court, which in this way could assure itself of its central position within a network of global relations.

In 802, the most prominent of these presents arrived at Aachen: it was the Asian elephant Abul Abbas. Hārūn Ar-Rašīd had given it to the Frankish delegation, which had left for Bagdad in 797. In his new environment Abul Abbas was a sensation, he accompanied the emperor on his journeys and therefore bestowed his exotic charisma to the Carolingian Court. Even though there is a good case to believe that the Frankish envoys Lantfried and Sigismund had asked for the elephant or that the Caliph had given it to Charlemagne as an act of generosity towards an equal or even inferior ruler, the Frankish contemporaries must have seen Abul Abbas as a token of Charlemagne's global

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45 Cf. note 36. See also the contribution by Tobias Hoffmann in this volume.

46 The relations with King Alfonso II of Asturias are a good point in case here. In the 790s, his Christian kingdom in the North of the Iberian Peninsula suffered from annual military campaigns by the emirate of Córdoba. For this reason, Alfonso was looking for Frankish support. He sent envoys to Charlemagne (797/98) and his son Louis, who ruled the adjacent kingdom of Aquitaine. The Asturians came with gifts and Muslim captives, which were allegedly spoils of the war against the 'infidels'. Though there are no reliable indications that by doing so Alfonso accepted a subordinate role to Charlemagne or even became his vassal, the Frankish sources, Einhard in particular, suggest the opposite. Alfonso allegedly insisted being Charles' subordinate (*proprium suum*). Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ch. 16, p. 19: *Auxit etiam gloriam regni sui quibusdam regibus ac gentibus per amicitiam sibi conciliatis. Adeo namque Hadefonsum Galleciae atque Asturicae regem sibi societate devinxit, ut is, cum ad eum vel litteras vel legatos mitteret, non aliter se apud illum quam proprium suum appellari iuberet.* Cf. *Annales Regni Francorum*, ad a. 798, p. 102; Pertz, Georg Heinrich (ed.): *Vita Hludowici Pii imperatoris*. (MGH SS 2). Hahn: Hanover 1829, pp. 604–648, ch. 8, p. 611; Bronisch, Alexander Pierre: "Asturien und das Frankenreich zur Zeit Karls des Großen". *Historisches Jahrbuch* 119, 1999, pp. 1–40.

rank. The elephant was among a number of political luxurious gifts that from a Frankish point of view attested their cultural pre-eminence.<sup>47</sup> When Abul Abbas died in 810, the official “Royal Frankish Annals” reported his death.<sup>48</sup>

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- 47 It is remarkable that on the flipside, Frankish gifts were not interpreted as tributes but used as christening gifts or similar distinctions for foreign rulers. According to this logic, Frankish legates and their gifts alike epitomized Frankish superiority at the foreign courts. Some anecdotes in Notker's late 9<sup>th</sup> century *Gesta Karoli* are instructive examples of this constellation. The monk of Saint Gall, who wrote on behalf of Charlemagne's great-grandson Charles III, repeatedly reports diplomatic missions. Even though the source value of the work is rather limited, its accounts reveal that the Franks assessed their own significance in situations of diplomatic contact. One story in chapter 9 of the second book, which deals with Charlemagne's warfare and ‘foreign policy’, tells us how a Frankish delegation visited the court of Hārūn Ar- Rašīd. The Caliph appeared rather unimpressed by the Frankish gifts but only asked to test the hounds he had asked for. Their chance comes immediately, when a lion terrorizes the peasant population. Despite the long journey, the Franks and their dogs do not hesitate to lead off the uneven fight and valiantly kill the beast. The antagonistic characterization of both opponents is telling. The ‘Germanic’ hounds and their Frankish handlers, whose swords have been tempered in Saxon blood (*gladiis in Saxonum duratis sanguine*), kill the ‘Persian’ lion. The incident opens Hārūn's eyes. He not only relates the bellicose might and willpower of the Frankish hounds and envoys directly to Charlemagne himself, but also decides to surrender the Holy Land to the Franks and to act as Charlemagne's governor (*advocatus / procurator*) only. In the fictitious anecdote Frankish virtues, that is valour and religious zeal, manifest, and ultimately justify Charlemagne's imperial rule: *Qui iussa complentes et acerrime advolantes, a Germanicis canibus Persicum leonem comprhensum, Yperboreę venę gladiis [in Saxonum] duratis pro sanguine peremerunt. Quo viso, nominis sui fortissimus heres Aaron (i.e. Hārūn), ex rebus minimis fortiozem Karolum deprehendens, his verbis in eius favorem prorupit: Nunc cognosco, quam sint vera, quę audivi de fratre meo Karolo, quia scilicet assiduitate venandi et infatigabili studio corpus et animam exercendi cuncta quę sub cęlo sunt, consuetudinem habet edomandi. [...] dabo quidem illam [i.e. the Promised Land] in eius potestatem, et ego advocatus eius ero super eam; ipse vero, quandocunque voluerit, vel sibi opportunissimum videtur, dirigat ad me legatos suos, et fidelissimum me procuratorem eiusdem provintię redituum inveniet.* Haefele, Hans F. (ed.): *Notker der Stammler. Taten Kaiser Karls des Großen (Notkeri Balbuli Gesta Karoli Magni imperatoris)*. (MGH SS rer. Germ. N.S. 12). Weidmann: Berlin 1959, liber 2, ch. 9, p. 64. Cf. Giese, Martina: “Kompetitive Aspekte höfischer Jagdaktivität im Frühmittelalter”. In: Becher, Matthias / Plassmann, Alheydis (eds.): *Streit am Hof im Frühen Mittelalter*. (Super alta perennis. Studien zur Wirkung der Klassischen Antike 11). Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen 2011, pp. 263–284, pp. 275–276; 280–281.
- 48 *Annales regni Francorum*, ad a. 810, p. 131.

Even though only few had access to these foreign objects, their presentation and circulation casted a truly imperial light on Charlemagne. Through the exchange of envoys, Charlemagne presented himself as a ruler who received valuable gifts or even tributes from princes all over the world, and who himself showed the imperial virtue of generosity (*largitas; liberalitas; magnitudo*) by bestowing rich gifts on them in return.<sup>49</sup> It is significant that in the years before and after Charlemagne's imperial coronation, this development reached a peak. The Frankish King thus made himself felt, where he was not able to conquer. Michael Borgolte outlines that during Charlemagne's rule the Franks dramatically spread their political horizon. Long-distance trade as a central aspect of intensified cultural contacts increased. The Franks sent and received embassies to and from Jerusalem and ecclesial princes of the Holy Land. Here, Charles supported Christian communities in Muslim ruled territories such as a Latin Monastery on Mount Olivet.<sup>50</sup> Around 808/10 he even established a community of 17 *sanctimoniales* there.<sup>51</sup>

All this supports the notion that one might speak of a Frankish Empire even before Charlemagne actually acquired the title. Not only had the Franks successfully expanded their sphere of direct and indirect influence through various means. They had also come into intensified contact with the cultural and political entities near and far. In Carolingian political culture, this new constellation instigated questions on the nature of the Frankish Kingdom. These questions were answered by adopting forms of imperial

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49 Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ch. 23, p. 26.

50 *Ibid.*, ch. 27, pp. 31–32: *Circa pauperes sustentandos et gratuitam liberalitatem, quam Greci eleimosinam vocant, devotissimus, ut qui non in patria solum et in suo regno id facere curaverit, verum trans maria in Syriam et Aegyptum atque Africam, Hierosolimis, Alexandriae atque Cartagini, ubi Christianos in paupertate vivere conpererat, penuriae illorum conpatiens pecuniam mittere solebat; ob hoc maxime transmarinorum regum amicitias expetens, ut Christianis sub eorum dominatu degentibus refrigerium aliquod ac relevatio proveniret.*

51 Borgolte, Michael: "Karl der Große. Ein Global Player?". In: Segelken, Barbara (ed.): *Kaiser und Kalifen. Karl der Große und die Mächte am Mittelmeer um 800*. Philipp von Zabern: Darmstadt 2014, pp. 16–23. Cf. McCormick, Michael: *Charlemagne's Survey of the Holy Land. Wealth, Personnel, and Buildings of a Mediterranean Church between Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Humanities). Dumbarton Oaks 2011, esp. pp. 77–91.



self-presentation. Ultimately, the Christmas events of the year 800 left no doubt: now there was a triad of powers. The Frankish King Charles and his 'capital' Aachen had to be considered as players on a global scale.<sup>52</sup> This clearly was meant to be a convulsion of the established power relations between the Frankish West and Byzantium. The latter had to interpret the acquisition of the imperial title by the Franks as a usurpation and, therefore, as an act of immediate aggression.<sup>53</sup> Charles' biographer Einhard consequently set his account of the imperial coronation in the context of the confrontation between the Franks and the Byzantine Empire. He concluded his famous comment on Charlemagne's initial reluctance of his new imperial title by portraying the hostile reaction of the Eastern Roman Emperors (*Romani*).<sup>54</sup> According to the claim to universal power, which the imperial title implied, there could be one emperor only. From the Greeks' point of view, in the year 800 Empress Eirene held this office (792/97–802).<sup>55</sup> Even though, she had seized power by dethroning her own son and rightful emperor, Constantine VI (780–797). But although the rule of a woman was a novelty, which was not unchallenged in Byzantium, the imperial throne was by no means vacant.<sup>56</sup> Despite the fact that Charlemagne at no time used

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52 Hauck, Karl: "Von einer spätantiken Randkultur zum karolingischen Europa". *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 1, 1967, pp. 3–93.

53 Ostrogorsky, George: *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates* (Byzantinisches Handbuch part. 1, vol. 2). Beck: Munich 1963, p. 155.

54 Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ch. 28 p. 32: *Quo tempore imperatoris et augusti nomen accepit. Quod primo in tantum aversatus est, ut adfirmaret se eo die, quamvis praecipua festivitas esset, ecclesiam non intraturum, si pontificis consilium praescire potuisset. Invidiam tamen suscepti nominis, Romanis imperatoribus super hoc indignantibus, magna tulit patientia.* On Charlemagne's initial refusal of the new title, which is best understood as a topos of humility, as a *recusatio imperii* that Einhard borrowed from antique Lives of Emperors and hagiography, Kaufhold, p. 12.

55 Ohnsorge, Werner: "Das Kaisertum der Eirene und die Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen". *Saeculum. Jahrbuch der Universalgeschichte* 14, 1963, pp. 221–247, here pp. 225–230.

56 This is exactly the impression contemporary Frankish sources, e.g. the "Annales Laureshamenses", tried to convey when they denigrated Irene's regiment as *femineum imperium*: *Annales Laureshamenses*, ad a. 801 c. 34 (MGH SS 1), p. 38. *Et quia iam tunc cessabat a parte Graecorum nomen imperatoris, et femineum imperium apud se abebant, tunc visum est et ipso apostolico Leoni et universis*

the imperial title to expand his reign or to justify war against Byzantium,<sup>57</sup> a multiplication of confined empires was per se inconceivable. Consequently, the Greeks had to understand the Frankish gambit as an unveiled attack on their supremacy. From Einhard's report, one can deduce that the acquisition of the imperial title further impaired the tense diplomatic relations between the East and the West. The conflict only ended in 812 when Eirene's successors took an interest in stabilizing their own precarious rule by securing their Western frontier, and Charlemagne himself aimed at securing his own succession.

By now, we have seen that at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, there were decisive developments on the macrostructural level of power politics, which gave rise to the notion that the Frankish King de facto had achieved an imperial status. The outward relations of the *regnum Francorum*, both hostile and peaceful, improved in favour of the Franks at this time. Albeit, the intensified contact instigated the question of how this successful, yet at the same time young and heterogeneous empire would conceptually stabilize and position itself among the established powers. With this sketch as a background, I want to turn to individual but apparently influential utterances on this problem. In order to do so I am going to take a couple of contemporary works by Theodulf of Orléans (d. 821) as point of departure.

## Theodulf of Orléans as an Arbiter of Frankish Imperial Concepts

Why might Charlemagne's Visigothic advisor Theodulf be a useful source for questions on Frankish imperial politics? Around the turn of the century, the bishop of Orléans, one of the main protagonists of the so-called Car-

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*sanctis patribus qui in ipso concilio aderant, seu reliquo christiano populo, ut ipsum Carolum regem Franchorum imperatorem nominare debuissent, qui ipsam Romam tenebat, ubi semper Caesaris sedere soliti erant, seu reliquas sedes quas ipse per Italiam seu Galliam nec non et Germaniam tenebat; quia Deus omnipotens has omnes sedes in potestate eius concessit, ideo iustum esse videbatur, ut ipse cum Dei adiutorio et universo christiano populo petente ipsum nomen aberet.*

57 Classen, p. 91.

olingian Renaissance, was at the zenith of his power.<sup>58</sup> Spatially and conceptually close to the Frankish King, he was not only well-informed about the issues which moved the Carolingian Court and Realm. At that time, he was also a politically influential agent himself.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, his oeuvre lends itself as a highly informative source for anyone who wants to analyse concepts of lordship and their direct influence on political decision-making in the pre-800 period.

Born around 760 in the North of the Iberian Peninsula, it is safe to assume that Theodulf arrived in the Frankish Kingdom by the beginning of the 780s. He was most likely among the stream of Visigothic refugees who had endorsed the Frankish campaign of 778, and who had to bear the bitter consequences once Charles' expedition, which was directed against the Emirate of Córdoba, had failed at the city walls of Saragossa.<sup>60</sup> As a refugee – or expatriate (*exul*) how he programmatically labelled himself in one of his first poems to the Frankish King – he crossed the Pyrenees for the Frankish Kingdom, where his rise to power is virtually without paral-

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58 On the much debated expression 'Carolingian renaissance', Staubach, Nikolaus: "‘Cultus divinus’ und karolingische Reform". *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 18, 1984, pp. 546–581. In defence of the term, Godman, p. 80.

59 For a sketch of Theodulf's mobility, see Tigolet, Claire: "Les élites et la mobilité à l'époque carolingienne: L'exemple de Théodulfe d'Orléans". In: *Des sociétés en mouvement. Migrations et mobilité au Moyen Âge*. (Histoire ancienne et médiévale 104). Publications de la Sorbonne: Paris 2010, pp. 237–241; Alexandrenko, Nikolai A.: *The Poetry of Theodulf of Orléans. A Translation and Critical Study*. Tulane University: Ann Arbor 1970, pp. 3–8. The given English translations of Theodulf's poems are taken from here.

60 Freeman, Ann: "Theodulf of Orléans: A Visigoth at Charlemagne's Court". In: Fontaine, Jacques / Pellistrandi, Christine (eds.): *L'Europe héritière de l'Espagne wisigothique. Colloque international du C.N.R.S., tenu à la Fondation Singer-Polignac (Paris, 14–16 mai 1990)*. (Collection de la casa de Velázquez 35). Casa de Velázquez: Madrid 1992, pp. 185–194. On the whole, the failed Frankish military campaign against the Muslim-ruled Iberian Peninsula engulfed Charlemagne's reign in a crisis. It was consequently concealed during his lifetime. This painful memory must have meant an unfavourable starting condition for Theodulf, who only used to hint at the reasons for his presence in the Frankish Realm or his Iberian descent. Cf. Abel, Sigurd (ed.): *Jahrbücher des fränkischen Reiches unter Karl dem Großen*, vol. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Duncker & Humblot: Leipzig, pp. 294–302; Jarnut, Jörg: "Chlodwig und Chlothar. Anmerkungen zu den Namen zweier Söhne Karls des Großen". *Francia* 12, 1984, pp. 247–253.

rels among Charles' non-Frankish advisors.<sup>61</sup> Having claimed a place close to the king, he made his voice heard in the contemporary discourses and thereby partook in the formation of the political culture of the Carolingian Empire.<sup>62</sup> Directly ordered by King Charles himself, he gave official opinions on theological issues that no doubt also comprised political overtones. This holds true for his statements on the *flilioque*-controversy, his explanation of the baptismal-ordo, which is introduced by a kind of Frankish social contract, or his involvement in the reform synods of 813, to name just a few.<sup>63</sup>

Among Theodulf's politically influential utterances, the "Libri Carolini" as a polemically charged Frankish reaction to the Second Council of Nicaea of 787, which rehabilitated iconodule practices and proponents in the Byzantine church, are a good point in case to start with. Theodulf used this dogmatic debate as a forum to both promote his view on the Frankish King Charles and to ridicule and refute the Emperors residing in Constantinople. The concept of the "Libri Carolini" is an excellent example for the application of both concurrent strategies of absorption (import) and rejection (embargo) of imperial aspirations. The work as a whole presents Charlemagne, the Frankish King himself, as its author.<sup>64</sup> Not unlike

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61 Theodulf, carmen 23 v 28. In: Dümmler, Ernst (ed.): *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini* 1. (MGH Poetae 1). Weidmann: Berlin 1881, pp. 480–482, p. 481.

62 On the genuine link between theology and politics in the Carolingian era, Nagel, Helmut: *Karl der Große und die theologischen Herausforderungen seiner Zeit. Zur Wechselwirkung zwischen Theologie und Politik im Zeitalter des großen Frankenherrschers*. (Freiburger Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte 12). Peter Lang: Frankfurt 1998.

63 Theodulf, *Libellus de processione Spiritus sancti*. In: Willjung, Harald (ed.): *Das Konzil von Aachen 809*. (MGH LL Conc. Suppl. 2,2). Hahn: Hanover 1998, pp. 313–382; Theodulf, *De Ordine baptismi*. *Migne PL* 105, 1864, coll. 223–240; Cf. Haendler, Gert: *Epochen karolingischer Theologie. Eine Untersuchung über die karolingischen Gutachten zum byzantinischen Bilderstreit*. (Theologische Arbeiten 10). Evangelische Verlagsanstalt: Berlin 1958, pp. 99–101; Werminghoff, Albert (ed.): *Concilia aevi Karolini (742–842)*. (MGH LL Conc. 2,1). Hahn: Hanover 1906, pp. 273–285.

64 Meyvaert, Paul: "The Authorship of the 'Libri Carolini'. Observations Prompted by a Recent Book". *Revue bénédictine* 89, 1979, pp. 29–57; Id.: "Medieval Notions of Publication: The 'unpublished' Opus Caroli regis contra synodum and the Council of Frankfurt (794)". In: Id. (ed.): *The Art of Words. Bede and Theodulf*. (Variorum Collected Studies Series 913). Ashgate: Aldershot 2008,

Constantine the Great – and there is no doubt that the first Council of Nicaea 325 actually stood in the conceptual background of the Frankish response –, Charles is alarmed by heretical confusion, on which he is informed by the records of the Greek council. If we link the “*Libri Carolini*” and the subsequent Council of Frankfurt in 794, the role of the Frankish King as defender of the orthodox faith becomes clear. Already the opening *praefatio* clarifies that in this regard Charles is by no means restricted to his own kingdom. Whereas the “*Libri Carolini*” put argumentative effort in denying the Greek council's status as *ecumenical* by making it a Greek and thus local “problem”, the work's *intitulatio* introduced Charles and his mission as follows:<sup>65</sup>

*In nomine Domini et Salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi. Incipit opus inlustrissimi et excellentissimi seu spectabilis viri Caroli nutu Dei regis Francorum, Gallias, Germaniam Italiamque sive harum finitimas provincias opitulante regentis, contra synodum, que in partibus Graetiae pro adorandis imaginibus stolide et arroganter gesta est.*

In the situation of Charlemagne's imperial coronation, which caused just another crisis with Byzantium, the “*Annals of Lorsch*” repeated this territorial motive as another proof of Charles' just claim to imperial power.<sup>66</sup> We might assume Theodulf as the paragon of this line of thought. Already at the end of the 780s, he linked the notion of Charlemagne's quasi-universal power, which became evident in his control over the former provinces of the Roman Empire, with the Frankish King's authority concerning dogmatic issues.<sup>67</sup> In contrast to Charles' comprehensive sphere of influence, the

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pp. 78–89; Dahlhaus-Berg, Elisabeth: *Nova Antiquitas et Antiqua Novitas. Typologische Exegese und isidorianisches Geschichtsbild bei Theodulf von Orléans*. (Kölner Historische Abhandlungen 23). Böhlau: Cologne 1975, p. 216.

65 *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, praefatio, p. 97.

66 See n. 56.

67 On the manifest parallels between the diction of the “*Annals of Lorsch*” regarding the imperial coronation and Charlemagne's titling in the about ten years older “*Opus Caroli regis*”, Nelson, Janet L.: “The libera vox of Theodulf of Orléans”. In: Chandler, Cullen J. / Stofferahn, Steven (eds.): *Discovery and Distinction in the Early Middle Ages. Studies in Honor of John J. Contreni*. Western Michigan University. Medieval Institute Publications: Kalamazoo 2013, pp. 288–306, pp. 292–293. Like this already Classen, pp. 60–73. With regard to the form of the title already Caspar, Erich: “Das Papsttum unter frän-

Byzantine Emperor Constantine VI and his council are consistently talked down. Never is the present Emperor referred to by his title, his predecessor Constantine V is even explicitly only addressed as *rex*.<sup>68</sup> The only one Theodulf consistently calls *imperator* is Constantine the Great. Apart from continuous mocking, which is supposed to ridicule the arrogance of the Greeks and their absurd heretical ideas,<sup>69</sup> the “Opus Caroli” compares the claim for the veneration of images with the idolatrous image cult of the evil King / Emperor Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>70</sup>

Empress Eirene also got her share. Under the heading *Quia mulier in synodo docere non debet, sicut Herene* [i.e. Eirene] *in eorum synodo fecisse legitur* (Opus Caroli III, c. 13), Theodulf attacks her for the dominant position she arrogated in the synod. While the Greek council fathers had celebrated her as the ‘new Helena’, Theodulf found just another role model for her.<sup>71</sup> He not only quoted passages from the New Testament, among them 1 Cor. 14, 1 Tim. 2 or Luke 7, in order to claim a humble and passive position for women in church hierarchy, but at the end of the chapter Theodulf also invoked the negative example of queen Athaliah from the Old Testament (2 Kings 11 / 2 Chron 22).<sup>72</sup> She was a suitable model (*typus*) to denigrate both Eirene and the decisions of the council. Athaliah was the daughter of the infamous King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, two outstanding paragons of blasphemy, who waged war against the true faith in Israel’s God YHWH. The biblical narrative tells us that Athaliah not only continued the idolatry of her parents, but that she also patronized her son Ahaziah. As queen mother, she used her power to lead her son and Israel astray promoting the cult of Baal.

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kischer Herrschaft”. *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 54, 1935, pp. 132–266, p. 260–262.

68 *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, praefatio, p. 99. As a notorious iconoclast and initiator of the council of Hiereia 754, Constantine V functions as the other negative paragon of Byzantine extremes, which Theodulf contrasts with the Frankish *via regia* that is in perfect accord with the faith of the fathers.

69 *Ibid.*, liber 1, c. 1, p. 105: *I. De eo, quod Constantinus et Herena in suis scriptis dicunt: Per eum, qui conregnat nobis Deus*. Cf. the introduction by Ann Freeman, p. 24.

70 *Ibid.*, liber 3, c. 15, pp. 402–403.

71 *Ibid.*, liber 3, c. 13, pp. 385–391; Cf. Nelson, 2013, p. 294.

72 *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, liber 3, c. 13, pp. 390–391.

Besides the cautionary tales of this biblical villains, whom Theodulf presents as templates for the current Byzantine Emperors, the “Opus”, most notably book III chapter 15, uses the Greek council’s pleading for the cult of images as a stepping stone for a negative assessment of imperial practices in general. To Theodulf and the Franks, it is revealing that the emperors had their own effigies and images venerated. However, this imperial ceremony could by no means be an argument for the return to iconodule customs, as the fathers of Nicaea II had claimed, but was ultimately nothing but a proof of the blatant hubris of the Emperors.<sup>73</sup> Theodulf’s rhetoric drives an argumentative wedge between the first and second council of Nicaea.<sup>74</sup> It is said that the latter had nothing in common with its glorious forerunner: whereas in 325 the holy faith was safeguarded, the council of Constantine and his mother Eirene, who are by no means a new Constantine and Helena, is a menace to orthodoxy. In addition, there could be no talk of an ecumenical rank. Neither was there the need for a seventh council in salvation history, nor were there representatives of all churches present; after all, in 787 there had been no bishops of the Frankish Church.<sup>75</sup> Accordingly the “*Libri Carolini*” most of the time avoid the toponym “Nicaea” when speaking of this synod, but instead call it “Bythinian” (eight times).<sup>76</sup> Theodulf only refers to Nicaea II when he exposes it as a distorted picture of its glorious forerunner. Consequently, Theodulf aimed at disconnecting Eirene and her church council from the ecumenical tradition, which the Greeks themselves were so eager to demonstrate. Imperial orthodoxy was now in the hands of someone else; according to the “*Opus Caroli*”, this was the Frankish King Charlemagne.

On the whole the stance of the “*Opus Caroli*” towards the empire still existing in the East and its theological scope is best understood as an act of Frankish emancipation. It appears to be a form of “provincializing” the East. Theodulf, as the spokesman of Carolingian theology, makes the

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73 Mayr-Harting, Henry: “Charlemagne’s Religion”. In: Godman / Jarnut / Johaneck (as n. 35), pp. 113–124, p. 116: “[...] allowing veneration of their own images, that is by Babylonian pride, [the Byzantine Emperors] had lost their power and entitlement to be Roman Emperors.”

74 *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, Introduction, p. 46; liber 4, c. 13, p. 519.

75 *Ibid.*, introduction, p. 46; liber 4, c. 13, p. 521; Dahlhaus-Berg, pp. 208–209.

76 *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, p. 128 n. 1.

about-face concerning the religious veneration of images a Greek ‘problem’ that is a spatially restricted heresy. More or less ten years before Charles’ own imperial coronation, the Franks not only critically assess and refuse Byzantine’s religious-dogmatic authority. In fact at this stage one can already perceive the tendency to imperialize Charles’ own standing and self-awareness in ecclesiastical regards. The treatise was therefore profoundly informed by relational-politics; and it was the Visigoth Theodulf as the mastermind behind this sweeping undertaking, who organized the relationship between the Frankish Kingdom and the Eastern Roman Empire.

Aside from statements requested by the king himself, Theodulf also used rather subtle channels to communicate his conceptions of Charles’ kingship – here the corpus of his poems is the place to look at. Theodulf’s key position generally allows getting insights into the discourses of his time, from where we can also highlight complementary or conflicting opinions on political thought. This also extends to the thematic complex of imperial rule.

On this issue, Theodulf conveys a rather differentiated, one might say ambiguous view. Still, it is safe to assume that he was able to advance his opinions to Charles – both in the longer period of the 780s and 90s as well as in the summer of 800 when Charles was leaving for Rome. Charlemagne’s itinerary is quite revealing in this context: before finally crossing the Alps and arriving at Rome on 24 November, Charles used the summer for a round trip to visit Centula (Saint-Riquier), the monastery of Saint Martin at Tours, and Orléans. The years before Charles had spent most of his time in the still troubled territories of the Saxon borderlands. His last visits to the Somme- and Loire regions date back to 797 and even 782.<sup>77</sup> As Charles seldom travelled *in Gallias*, his visit there must have had profound reasons. Most likely, he was conferring and preparing his journey to Rome with his at that time most influential advisors Angilbert and Alcuin, who were by that time abbots in Centula and Tours, and the bishop of Orléans, Theodulf.

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77 It is even more instructive that the *Regesta Imperii* record almost no legal issues Charles had dealt with on his journey. As it seems the purpose of his visit was exclusively devoted to the preparation of the upcoming journey to Rome. The last visits in the area without even specifying the places properly have to be derived from the historiographical sources.



In line with scholars like Elisabeth Dahlhaus-Berg, Peter Brommer and Dieter Schaller, it is even safe to assume that Theodulf was the only one of these learned advisors to accompany Charles to Rome,<sup>78</sup> where he would intervene on behalf of Pope Leo III in the trial against him. Though there is no explicit evidence for Theodulf's stay in Rome in his own records, Theodulf's involvement in the Roman events can help to explain why Leo rewarded him with the *pallium*, the symbol of archiepiscopal dignities. We can infer this from a letter for Theodulf written by Alcuin.<sup>79</sup> In a letter (Ep. 225) dating from April 801, Alcuin, who himself had not joined the Frankish delegation but was well informed by his near student Wizo Candidus,<sup>80</sup> complimented Theodulf on the honour he had recently obtained. Faithful to Rome and the papacy, Alcuin was shocked by the news of Leo's overthrow and mutilation. Now that the affairs had been settled in favour of the pope, he expressed his thanks to Theodulf that the Visigoth had imposingly championed Leo's cause.<sup>81</sup> As a rhetorically gifted advocate of the pope, Theodulf had apparently used the council (*conventu publico*), which had to judge the allegations against Leo, as a platform.<sup>82</sup>

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78 Dahlhaus-Berg, p. 11; Schaller, Dieter / Peter Brommer: "Art. Theodulf von Orléans". In: Wachinger, Burghart et. al. (eds.): *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 9. De Gruyter: Berlin 1995, cols. 764–772; here col. 765.

79 Alcuin, ep. 225, pp. 368–369.

80 On Wizo / Witto Candidus' life and close relation to Alcuin, Löwe, Heinz: "Zur Geschichte Wizos". *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 6 (1943), pp. 363–373; Close, Florence: "L'itinéraire de Candide Wizo. Un élément de datation des oeuvres anti-adoptianistes d'Alcuin? Note sur les Lettres 41 et 204 de la Correspondance d'Alcuin". *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 103.1 (2008), pp. 5–21.

81 RI n. 369–370, p. 164.

82 Alcuin, ep. 225, p. 368, ll. 16–21: *Maxime, quia filius noster Candidus, vester fidelis famulus, plurima bonitatis insignia nobis de vestrae beatitudinis nomine narrare solet: vel quam libera voce in conventu publico veritatis testimonia protulisses; vel quam honestis moribus inter maiores minoresque personas tuae beatitudinis foret conversatio; etiam quam pia et relegiosa sedulitate ecclesiastica coleres officia; vel qualiter impias disceptationes odio haberes*. On this letter and Theodulf's role in the trial against Leo III, Nelson, Janet L.: "The libera vox of Theodulf of Orléans". In: Chandler / Stofferahn (as n. 67), pp. 288–306, here pp. 292–294.

It seems that in return for his service, Theodulf received the honour of the archiepiscopal *pallium*. The diocese of Orléans was not enhanced in status, but remained to be the subject to the metropolis of Sens.<sup>83</sup> Consequently, Theodulf's *pallium* must be seen as a badge of personal distinction, which he earned as defender of the pope. Apparently, in the winter of 800/801, it was not only the Frankish King Charlemagne who reached the peak of his reign. It is revealing that the Visigoth, as by the time one of Charles' closest advisors, would return from Rome with the nominal rank of an archbishop.

The impression that Theodulf was in the centre of events is further corroborated by his poem entitled "Ad Regem" (Carmen 32). Theodulf was among a growing circle of poets who wrote panegyrics – a former prerogative of the Roman Emperors – to praise Charlemagne.<sup>84</sup> Skilled in the classics of the Augustan Age like no other, Theodulf acquired a reputation as

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83 Though after 801 Theodulf was addressed as *Aurelianensis Ecclesiae archiepiscopus* in imperial charters and letters, the Frankish hierarchy still rated him as bishop. Among the witnesses of Charlemagne's last will, for instance, Theodulf does not occur in the first rank but is listed after the archbishops as the first of the bishops, cf. Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ch. 33, p. 41. In the same way Theodulf had composed a treatise on the orthodox form of baptism in 812. As we can see from its letter of dedication, he did so on behalf of his metropolitane Magnus of Sens. Like other archbishops, Magnus had received Charlemagne's survey on this issue and redirected it to his learned subject Theodulf to answer the emperor's request. This procedure shows, however, that Theodulf and his diocese remained part of the see of Sens. Theodulf, ep. 24, pp. 533–534; Cf. Hahn, August (ed.): *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der alten Kirche*. Olms: Hildesheim 1962, p. 70.

84 It is telling that his earliest poetic work commissioned by, and addressed to the king is a *carmen figuratum* (carmen 23, pp. 480–482). After all, there is only a small number of Carolingian poems which belong to this sort of visual poetry. Theodulf chose a *carmen quadratum* Optantius Porphyrius had created for Constantine as a template for his own composition. In order to win the Frankish King's favour, Theodulf thus made reference to the famous Christian emperor and applied forms that invoked antique glory, cf. Schaller, Dieter: "Die karolingischen Figurengedichte des Cod. Bern. 212". In: Jauß, Hans Robert (ed.): *Medium aevum vivum. Festschrift für Walther Bulst*. Carl Winter: Heidelberg 1960, pp. 22–47, here pp. 25; 37–47; Ernst, Ulrich: *Carmen Figuratum. Geschichte des Figurengedichts von den antiken Ursprüngen bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*. (Pictura et poesis 1). Böhlau: Cologne 1991, pp. 188–187.

a court poet, which has sometimes eclipsed his political importance. However, like many of Theodulf's works addressed to the Carolingian Court, Carmen 32 is more than panegyric praise of the Frankish King, which had become so numerous by the 790s. Theodulf composed his "Ad Regem" as a welcome address for Charlemagne in a moment of uncertainty, between Leo's departure from Paderborn, where he had resorted after his Roman adversaries had tried to mutilate him, and Charles' arrival in Orléans in May 800. Theodulf applied the poem as a strategic instrument to set the course for the things to come by ascribing features of highest sovereignty to the Frankish King. With regard to imperial concepts, "Ad Regem" is important because it presents Charles as the one and only Champion of Christendom.

Your prosperity is the glory of the Christian people, to whom keeper and father you are. Keeper of treasures you are, avenger of sacrileges, donor of honours, whatever you do happens under the leadership of God.<sup>85</sup>

Theodulf argues that Charles' and divine governance are but one. To this end the titles he chose weave a conceptually dense web, which puts Charlemagne in the frame of great emperors. Theodulf took the entire fifth verse from Prudentius' "Contra Symmachum", a fourth century apologetic poem against the restitution of paganism in Rome.<sup>86</sup> Here, the triad *Tutor opum es, vindex scelerum, largitor honorum* originally referred to Augustus, whom Prudentius portrays as the prototype of emperorship and the saviour of Roman commonwealth. In addition *scelus* – "wickedness" / "sacrilege" carries religious overtones and thus alluded to the religious authority of the emperor as the *pontifex maximus*. In the summer of 800, Theodulf obviously wanted to adopt this tone, but he went the extra mile. In Carmen 32, parallel to the panegyrics of Eusebius of Caesarea to his ideal or rather idealized Christian Emperor Constantine, Charles is the central authority of Christianity. His authority, but also his duties towards the

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85 Theodulf, carmen 32, pp. 523–524, ll. 3–6: *Nam tua prosperitas decus est et gloria plebis Christicolae, cui tu tutor es atque pater. Tutor opum es, vindex scelerum, largitor honorum, Quaeque facis fiunt haec moderante deo.*

86 Tränkle, Hermann (ed.): *Prudentius. Contra Symmachum. Gegen Symmachus.* (Fontes Christiani 85). Brepols: Turnhout 2008, liber 2, pp. 196–197, ll. 429–440.

church exceed the Frankish *Reichskirche*. Both have become universal.<sup>87</sup> To emphasize this, Theodulf in his poem even poetically overrode the allegorical parallel between Saint Peter and the Roman Bishop as his vicar – a connection that Leo’s predecessors had forcefully tried to establish particularly in their correspondence with the Carolingians.<sup>88</sup> The present events in the other centres of the Christian world – Rome, Constantinople and Jerusalem – give rise to the notion that Charles might substitute not only the Emperor. Carmen 32 seems to suggest that he might even enter into a direct relationship with Saint Peter, the Prince of the Apostles:

For although Peter, in the Quirinian city [i.e. Rome], could have saved him [Leo] from malicious enemies and wild treacheries, he sent him to be saved by you, most merciful king, and he wishes that you function in his stead.<sup>89</sup>

Theodulf did stop short explicitly calling Charlemagne *vicarius beati Petri*, a title and alliance the eighth-century popes had successfully claimed for themselves,<sup>90</sup> but l. 28 (*Teque sua voluit fungier ille vice*) is obviously in the same semantic field. With regard to the Frankish King’s comprehensive ecclesiastical status, Theodulf was well in line with the preeminent figure among Charlemagne’s advisors, Alcuin of York.<sup>91</sup> Analogous to Theodulf’s poem, Alcuin’s letter from June 799 (Ep. 174) expressively shows that from his point of view, Charlemagne’s rule had achieved world-historical importance. As all other Christian sovereigns relevant for salvific history, that

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87 Rzehulka, Ernst: *Theodulf, Bischof von Orléans, Abt der Klöster St. Benoît zu Fleury und St. Aignan in Orléans*. Wrocław 1875, p. 39.

88 See for example *Codex Carolinus*, epp. 6; 7; 45, pp. 488–493; 560–563; Clauß, Jan: “Die Salbung Pippins des Jüngeren in karolingischen Quellen vor dem Horizont biblischer Wahrnehmungsmuster”. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 46, 2012, pp. 391–417, pp. 407–409.

89 Alexandrenko, p. 215; Theodulf, carmen 32, p. 524, ll. 25–28;: *Nam salvare Petrus cum posset in urbe Quirina, Hostibus ex atris insidiisque feris, Hunc tibi salvandum, rex clementissime, misit, Teque sua voluit fungier ille vice.*

90 See for instance Alcuin’s titling of Leo III in n. 92.

91 For Alcuin’s influence on Charlemagne’s reign and Carolingian culture, see from the large body of literature the contributions in: Tresp, Ernst / Schmuki, Karl (eds.): *Alcuin von York und die geistige Grundlegung Europas. Akten der Tagung vom 30. September bis zum 2. Oktober 2004 in der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen*. (Monasterium Sancti Galli 5). Verlag am Klosterhof: St. Gallen 2010.

means the pope and the Roman *basileus*, had failed or vanished, it was up to the Frankish King to safeguard the welfare of the entire Christian world:

There have hitherto been three persons of greatest eminence in the world, namely the Pope, who rules the see of St. Peter, the chief of apostles, as his successor – and you have kindly informed me of what has happened to him; the second is the Emperor who holds sway over the second Rome – and common report has now made known how wickedly the governor of such an empire has been deposed, not by strangers but by his own people in his own city; the third is the throne on which our Lord Jesus Christ has placed you to rule over our Christian people, with greater power, clearer insight and more exalted royalty than the aforementioned dignitaries. On you alone the whole safety of the churches of Christ depends.<sup>92</sup>

One can add that Alcuin's description of Constantine VI's situation not only seems to downplay the Byzantine Emperors' religious competence by calling him a *saecularis potentia*, who is in addition restricted to the Second Rome. Alcuin also strengthened Charlemagne's standing in the sacral sphere. Analogous to Theodulf, who portrayed Charlemagne as the chosen one of Saint Peter – virtually replacing the pope –, in Alcuin's figure of thought it is Christ himself who elected the Frankish King as the one and only champion of his people. All this was undoubtedly a confident acquisition, or maybe even a usurpation of comprehensive imperial privileges in ecclesiastical regards. In this sense, Charlemagne's rule has been rightly termed *theocratic*.<sup>93</sup> The royal advisors wrested notions of supremacy es-

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92 Alcuin, ep. 174, pp. 287–289, here p. 288: *Nam tres personae in mundo altissime hucusque fuerunt: id est apostolica sublimitas, quae beati Petri principis apostolorum sedem vicario munere regere solet [...] Alia est imperialis dignitas et secundae Romae saecularis potentia; quam impie gubernator imperii illius depositus sit, non ab alienis, sed a propriis et concivibus, ubique fama narrante crebrescit. Tertia est regalis dignitas, in qua vos domini nostri Iesu Christi dispensatio rectorem populi christiani disposuit, ceteris praefatis dignitatibus potentia excellentiorem, sapientia clariorem, regni dignitate sublimiorem. Ecce in te solo tota salus ecclesiarum Christi inclinata recumbit.* Translation by Allott, Stephen: *Alcuin of York. c. A.D. 732 to 804. His Life and his Letters.* William Sessions: York 1974, p. 111.

93 Especially the Franks' conduct at councils mirrors the outstanding importance of Charlemagne prior to his imperial coronation: once more the council of Frankfurt of 794 is a good point in case here. Its canons, which are collected in form of a capitulary and therefore show the close link between the ecclesial and the secular sphere, not only demonstrate the active participation of the King, they

pecially in the sacral sphere from the traditional dignitaries and credited them to the Frankish King, instead.

There remains the question as to what extent we can also speak of embargos in the delicate moment prior to Charlemagne's imperial coronation. Are there elements of an imperial display of power which the Franks assessed negatively or perhaps even refused, as Theodulf had already done a decade earlier in his "Opus Caroli regis"? For this question, one can use again Carmen 32 ("Ad Regem") as point of departure: the Imperial cities of Rome and Constantinople are at best neutrally estimated. In this context, one should note that "Ad Regem" does not explicitly mention "Rome" as the site of the shocking events of Leo's overthrow, but instead uses the odd paraphrase *in urbe Quirina*.<sup>94</sup> Besides, the supremacy in worldly demands of the city of Rome is entirely bypassed. Even worse, Theodulf

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even derive their authority and legal force from his acceptance. After 800 this status was enhanced even further. The five parallel reform councils of 813 held at Reims, Mainz, Chalon-sur-Saône, Tours, and Arles all convened on behalf of the emperor, who also stipulated their agendas. However, Charlemagne's power did not stop here. He did not only convoke the church meetings. The council fathers obediently asked the king for his approval. They considered their own decisions as recommendations, which the emperor himself could approve or reject, Fuhrmann, 1981, pp. 442–453; Cf. Alexandrenko, p. 11.

94 The expression makes visible Theodulf's (Iberian) cultural matrix. It is possible that Theodulf used the term because he had more detailed information on the assault on Leo III than we possess today. The attack took place on the Feast of Saint Mark (April 25) while the pope was celebrating the *litania maior* Procession. Perhaps the group around Paschalis and Campulus struck when the procession was near the *collis Quirinalis* one of the Seven Hills of Rome only a kilometre away from San Marco. However, Theodulf might have had something else in mind, as in l. 25 he did not refer to the hill but the entire city (*urbs*). Isidore of Seville had mentioned Quirinus in his "Etymologiae". In liber 8, c. 11 Quirinus, the mythical founder and first king of Rome, served as a negative example of the pagan practice of deifying mortal humans. Of course, Isidore depicted this as a void yet demonic form of manipulation. Theodulf's erudition in Isidore's works as well as the further Rome-critical context of Carmen 32 suggest that he might have intended this negative implication for the Eternal City as well. Lindsay, Wallace Martin (ed.): *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi etymologiarum sive originum*, vol. 1 (Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca oxoniensis). 3<sup>rd</sup> reprint. Oxford University Press: Oxford 1966, liber 8, c. 11.1–4, pp. 331–332.; for Theodulf's familiarity with Isidore's works, see Dahlhaus-Berg, *passim*.

as well as Alcuin portray the inhabitants of the First and Second Rome (= Constantinople) as vicious, treacherous, decadent and even heretic so that they extremely contrast with the pious Franks. Both overthrow their divinely ordained masters and therefore become accomplices of chaos. While Charles “consoles, soothes, shelters, honours, nourishes” not only Pope Leo,<sup>95</sup> but also the Christian people as a whole, whose order Charles ensures,<sup>96</sup> Theodulf parallels the citizens of Rome with Judas, the betrayer of God (*proditor [...] dei*). In order to show the collective dimensions of their crime, he goes on: “A seditious crowd followed Judas in this respect: he wanted the death of the Lord; the crowd the death of the head of the church.”<sup>97</sup> In these verses, Theodulf dramatically contrasts his expectations of Charlemagne with the subversive frenzy of the Roman citizens. While the latter follow in the footsteps of Judas and work for the destruction of the Christian church, Theodulf conceptionally tied together St. Peter and Charlemagne. With his panegyric “Ad Regem”, Theodulf thus called on the Frankish King to follow St. Peter's lead and to undo the blasphemous crimes the Romans had committed against their head (*Reddidit haec Petrus, quae Iudas abstulit ater*).

One might object to this argument that the Franks indeed held the Holy City of Rome in high esteem.<sup>98</sup> The graves of the Princes of the Apostles Peter and Paul could be revered here. The palaces, churches and triumphal arches of the Eternal City mirrored the ancient glory of Imperial Rome. One might retort that the radiance of imperial and sacral Rome had only been temporarily eclipsed by the *crimen majestatis* committed against the pope. After all, Charlemagne and his father Pepin had developed an interest in the city; the first Carolingian kings richly bestowed

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95 Theodulf, carmen 32, p. 523, ll. 13–14: *Quem [Leo] bene suscepit tua, rex, miseratio clemens, Solatur, mulcet, perfovet, ornat, alit.*

96 *Ibid.*, p. 523, ll. 7–8: *Arma es pontificum, spes et defensio cleri, Per te pontifices iura sacrata tenent.*

97 *Ibid.*, p. 523, ll. 17–20: *Reddidit haec Petrus, quae Iudas abstulit ater, hic quia confessor, proditor ille dei est. Seditiosa cohors Iudam est hac parte secuta, Ille necem domini, praesulis ista volens; cf. Alexandrenko, p. 215.*

98 Schieffer, pp. 279–281.

Roman churches.<sup>99</sup> However, if one expands the search for Theodulf's appraisal of contemporary and ancient Rome to the entire corpus of his poems, it becomes clear that he did not share the fascination with the capital of the Roman Empire, which became so prevalent around the turn of the century among the Frankish elite.<sup>100</sup> On the contrary, in Carmen 7, Theodulf recalled the pagan past of the city. Rome had indeed devoted herself to Christ, but the poet inextricably linked the antique roots of the city to its abhorrent pagan traditions, its from a Christian stance demonic cults and the fratricide, which marked the birth of the city.<sup>101</sup> Apparently, there was some kind of discourse on Frankish identity going on: should "foreign" agents, thoughts and goods, which more and more found their way into courtly culture, play a prominent role in the formation of an imperial Frankish identity, or should the Franks instead ward off such influence? Probably some of Charlemagne's habits, retained by Einhard in his biography, are not recorded incidentally. Concerning the royal cos-

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99 Cf. Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ch. 27, p. 32: *Colebat prae ceteris sacris et venerabilibus locis apud Romam ecclesiam beati Petri apostoli; in cuius donaria magna vis pecuniae tam in auro quam in argento necnon et gemmis ab illo congesta est.*

100 Another instance for the new Frankish sense of life inspired by Roman culture is the so-called Paderborn Epic. Composed shortly after Charlemagne's imperial coronation, it is imbued with the logic of Aachen as a second Rome. The King himself presides over its construction, cf. *Karolus magnus et Leo papa*. In: Dümmler, Ernst (ed.): *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini* 1. (MGH Poetae 1). Weidmann: Berlin 1881, pp. 366–379, ll. 92–98, p. 368: *Rex Karolus, caput orbis, amor populique decusque, Europae venerandus apex, pater optimus, heros, Augustus: sed et urbe potens, ubi Roma secunda Flore novo, ingenti, magna consurgit ad alta Mole, tholis muro praecelsis sidera tangens. Stat pius arce procul Karolus loca singula signans, Altaque disponens venturae moenia Romae.* Cf. Ratkowsitch, Christine: *Karolus Magnus – alter Aeneas, alter Martinus, alter Iustinus. Zu Intention und Datierung des 'Aachener Karls-epos'.* (Wiener Studien, Beiheft 24). Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Vienna 1997.

101 Theodulf, *De eo quod avarus adglomeratis diversis opibus satiari nequit*, pp. 460, ll. 49–54: *Urbsque prius, daemon, tua, iam nunc dedita Christo, Quod caput orbis ovans, quod pia mater habet, Fraternali aspersos quae temnens sanguine muros, Caelica regna petit, fana profana fugit, Haudque lupa eolit hunc alitum, sed virgine natum, Statque in apostolico robore fixa cluens.*



tume, Einhard reports that Charles used to wear the traditional style of dress, and leaving no doubt he states that this was according to Frankish fashion.<sup>102</sup> Then, to render all misunderstanding impossible, Einhard explains to his readers how these typical Frankish garments looked like. It indeed appears to be adequate to speak of cultural embargoes at this point, as Einhard continues:

Foreign clothes as beautiful as they might have been he rejected. Indeed, he never accepted to don them. Only once in Rome respecting the wish of Pope Hadrian and a second time on the request of his successor Leo he put on a long Tunic and the Chlamys and also shoes of Roman fashion.<sup>103</sup>

Of course, one should not overstate this isolated passage. However, assorted with further evidence such as Wahlafrid Strabo's (829) critical poem on the equestrian statue of Theoderic the Great, which Charles in an act of *imitatio* put in front of his imperial palace,<sup>104</sup> it becomes clear that there was indeed an inner-Frankish discourse on how to fend off external absorptions of this outstanding Frankish King. Around the turn of the century, Theodulf conveyed his stance on this issue as well. In his didactic poems, the Visigoth fought vices such as greed, judiciary corruption for the sake of material gain, or vain-loving showiness. Best known for this parenetic intention is Theodulf's famous poem on his journey as *missus dominicus* from 798.<sup>105</sup> Here he lists objects the people of *Septimania*, his *missactium*, offered him as bribes:

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102 Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ch. 23, p. 27: *Vestitu patrio, id est Francico, utebatur.*

103 *Ibid.*, p. 28: *Peregrina vero indumenta, quamvis pulcherrima, respuebat nec unquam eis indui patiebatur, excepto quod Romae semel Hadriano pontifice petente et iterum Leone successore eius supplicante longa tunica et clamide amictus, calceis quoque Romano more formatis induebatur.*

104 Epp, Verena: "499–799: Von Theoderich dem Großen zu Karl dem Großen". In: Godman / Jarnut / Johaneck (as n. 35), pp. 219–229; Thürlemann, Felix: "Die Bedeutung der Aachener Theoderich-Statue für Karl den Großen (801) und bei Walahfrid Strabo (829). Materialien zu einer Semiotik visueller Objekte im frühen Mittelalter". *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 59, 1977, pp. 25–65.

105 From the large body of literature on Theodulf's "Ad iudices", see for instance Fuhrmann, Manfred: "Philologische Bemerkungen zu Theodulfs Paraenesis ad iudices". In: Luig, Klaus / Liebs, Detlef (eds.): *Das Profil des Juristen in der europäischen Tradition. Symposium aus Anlass des 70. Geburtstages von*

One offered both crystal and gems from the East [...]. Another brought a large number of fine golden coins, which were struck with Arabic letters and characters, and coins of white silver imprinted with a Roman stamp [...].<sup>106</sup>

Further attempts to corrupt the judge of Carmen 28 as well as the purity of the soul in another parenetic poem already cited (Carmen 7) describe Arab rugs, fine worked cups probably of Roman origins, the riches of the fantastic Island of Ceylon, gems, spices and ivory of India, fragrant from Assyria, the riches of Persia, Sheba, Baghdad and Cordoba.<sup>107</sup> The list could be endlessly pursued, as the first 31 verses of the poem are nothing but an enumeration of stunning riches hailing from near and far realms and fabled countries. The most striking object among the offered bribes in the “Contra Iudices”, however, is a vessel (*vas aliquod signis insigne vetustis*) depicting the twelve labours of the demigod Hercules, which he took on to ascend to the Olympus.<sup>108</sup> Theodulf shows his poetical genius to give a detailed description of the narrative of classical pagan mythology. But his *ekphrasis* – the vivid depiction of the ancient hero Hercules, who functioned as icon and paragon of the Roman emperors<sup>109</sup> – has a twist. As Lawrence Nees has shown in a persuasive study on this very passage of Theodulf’s poem, the poet transforms his antique literary templates to attack not only the heroic figure of Hercules, but also imperial Roman traditions which stand conceptually close to the myth of Hercules. Making some alterations

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Franz Wieacker. Gremer: Ebelsbach 1980, pp. 257–277; Geary, Patrick J.: “Judicial Violence and Torture in the Carolingian Empire”. In: Karras, Ruth Mazo / Kaye, Joel B. / Matter, E. Ann (eds.): *Law and the Illicit in Medieval Europe*. (The Middle Ages Series). University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia 2008, pp. 79–88, here pp. 83–86.

106 Theodulf, carmen 28, p. 498, ll. 170–176: *Ariete quo tali mens male pulsa ruat. Hic et cristallum et gemmas promittit Eoas, Si faciam, alterius ut potiatur agris. Iste gravi numero nummos fert divitis auri, Quos Arabum sermo sive character arat, Aut quos argento Latius stilus inprimit albo, Si tamen adquirit predia, rura, domos*; Alexandrenko, p. 166.

107 Theodulf, carmen 7, pp. 460–462.

108 Theodulf, carmen 28, pp. 498–499, ll. 179–204.

109 For Hercule’s role in Roman ruler cult, cf. Bellen, Heinz: “Adventus Dei. Der Gegenwartsbezug in Vergils Darstellung der Geschichte von Cacus und Hercules. (Aen. VIII 184–275)”. *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 106.1, 1963, pp. 23–30.

on Virgil's pro-Augustan Epos the "Aeneis",<sup>110</sup> Theodulf subtly transforms the ancient hero into a rather monstrous passion-ridden brute, whose life does not end with Hercules' ascent to heaven and *apotheosis*. While Emperor Commodus had himself depicted as Hercules at the end of the second century, Theodulf now disavowed him as a role model for the Frankish King, whose vigour the court poets praised and who would soon become emperor.

One is to wonder why Theodulf made a connection between all these foreign, but at the same time for Frankish recipients so highly attractive objects and deadly sins or practices, which endangered the Frankish Realm as a whole. Besides, many of the mentioned commodities stemmed from empires which threatened the Franks at that time, or are ascribed to fallen empires. Due to their bad press in the biblical narrative, which proved so influential for Charlemagne's reign, these empires such as Assyria, Babylon / Baghdad and Persia had a rather bad reputation for being wicked, idolatrous enemies of God's chosen people.<sup>111</sup> In this way in the decade before the imperial coronation, Theodulf repeatedly warned against what he saw as inherent vice of the Roman manner of imperial power and downside of unlimited supremacy: megalomaniac, blasphemous hubris. In Theodulf's poetry, the mentioned objects represented their cultural place of origin and thus had to be regarded as allusions to alien influence and political

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110 Virgil, *Aeneid* 8, 185–275; Nees, Lawrence: *A Tainted Mantle. Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court*. (The Middle Ages Series). University of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania 1991, passim; pp. 28–30. For a critical assessment of Nees, see Staubach, Nikolaus: "Odysseus und Herkules in der karolingischen Kunst. II. Herkules an der "Cathedra Petri". In: Keller, Hagen (ed.): *Iconologia sacra. Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas: Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*. Walter de Gruyter: Berlin 1994, pp. 383–402.

111 Garrison, Marry: "The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an identity from Pippin to Charlemagne". In: Hen, Yitzhak / Innes, Matthew J. (eds.): *The Uses of the Past in the early Middle Ages*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2000, pp. 114–161; Rieber, Ernst: *Die Bedeutung alttestamentlicher Vorstellungen für das Herrscherbild Karls des Großen und seines Hofkreises*. University of Tübingen 1949; Kottje, Raymund: *Studien zum Einfluss des Alten Testaments auf Recht und Liturgie des Frühen Mittelalters. (6.-8. Jahrhundert)*. (Bonner historische Forschungen 23). Röhrscheid: Bonn 1964.

options, which were on the table when the Visigoth addressed his verse to the Carolingian Court.

On the other hand, there is also some evidence for positive reception of foreign agents and objects in the poetry of Theodulf. Albeit, the poet made sure to tie the transfer of commodities and tributes together with narratives of conversion or submission to Christianity. As the Frankish King Charles was the excellent embodiment of the Christian faith, the military subjugation of Saxons and Avars becomes equivalent to their Christianization in Theodulf's poems of the mid 790s. In his famous poem on the Carolingian Court "Ad Carolum Regem" (Carmen 25) from 796, Theodulf envisioned that other non-Christian peoples such as the Arabs, who by the time were ruling Theodulf's native land, were to follow the actual surrender of the Avars. According to this idea of universal expansion including pagan peoples from all over the world, the Frankish Kingdom became an empire, an intrinsically Christian one, however.<sup>112</sup>

Behold with joyous heart the manifold gifts which God has sent you from the realm of Pannonia. And so give pious thanks to almighty God on high, make offerings to Him generously, as you always have done. The heathen peoples come prepared to serve Christ; you call them to Him with urgent gestures. Behind the Huns with their braided hair come to Christ, once fierce savages, now humbled in the faith. Let them be accompanied by the Arabs. [...] Cordoba, send swiftly your long amassed treasures to Charlemagne who deserves all that is fine! As the Avars come, the Arabs and Nomads should come too, bowing neck and knee before the king's feet.<sup>113</sup>

In sum Theodulf's poems on political theory – or better political theology – feature a recurring pattern of what I have called imports and embargos: non-Christian contemporary influence on the Frankish ethos of rule (*Herrschaftsethos*) must be fought off because the blind adaption of imperial fashions to express Charles' supremacy will inevitably damage the Frankish body politic. On the other hand material revenues of military expansion may be "imported" and enjoyed, but only if they are assuredly marked as devotions to the king as embodiment of a Christian realm. In this way, Theodulf made sure to interpret material gains as tributes to Charles

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112 On Alcuin's concern about the Christian character of Charlemagne's empire, expressed in the term *imperium Christianum*, Classen pp. 77–79.

113 Theodulf, carmen 25, p. 484, ll. 33–46; Godman, p. 153.

as a champion of Christianity. Luxury objects and gifts, whose centrality for political culture we have seen before and which added to the imperial radiance of the Carolingian Court, lost their foreign danger and instead proved the religious devotion of the Frankish King. Charles' advisors, the epistolary correspondence with Christian rulers as well as the "Annales Regni Francorum" emphasize that these spoils of Christian triumph were first and foremost reinvested for the benefit of the church. This argument allows once more turning to Carmen 32 and Theodulf's address to the king:

Hail blessed king, be strong through long times and may the one who is the supreme good grant to you all prosperous things. For your prosperity is the honor and glory of the Christian people, whose keeper and father you are.<sup>114</sup>

## Conclusion

Each subject area, which this article could only briefly touch upon, would allow for further insights in a process of 'imperialization' of Frankish politics and thought in the phase before the year 800. This article merely aimed at illustrating that there was indeed a discursive culture on issues such as Charles' highly symbolic building programme, recognition by and intensified contact with foreign realms, and last but not least Charles' privileges and obligations in the religious field. All these phenomena mutually influenced one another; they all reveal the striking importance of cultural contacts for the self-perception of the *regnum Francorum* around the turn of the century.

When Charles started his journey to Rome, many predominantly legal aspects of his future imperial rule were still unsettled.<sup>115</sup> Nonetheless, in the

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114 Alexandrenko, p. 214.

115 This primarily concerns the relation towards Byzantium. The very few sources mirror that by the year 800 several options were on the table for the Franks. These could range from the total negation that there actually was an Emperor on the Byzantine throne, as did the "Annals of Lorsch", cf. n. 56, to the option of two emperors, each one with a delimited (Eastern or Western) power sphere, which would prove most viable in the long run. The title βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων, which emphasizes the continuity of the Roman Empire, already had a longer history in Byzantine literature and historiography but became official title of the Byzantine Emperors only after the issues with the Franks had been settled in 812, cf. Classen, pp. 94–97.

last decades of the 8<sup>th</sup> century various ideas, demands and reflections on the nature of Charles' present kingship had repeatedly been brought forward by making use of different communication strategies. Although one should abstain from calling these statements 'concepts' in the sense of elaborate or comprehensive models based on a restored (Roman) Emperorship, many of them convey the notion that Charles' reign had by this time long achieved a quasi-imperial quality. Charles and his contemporaries were well aware of the Frankish hegemony over geographically, culturally and ethnically distinct peoples. Even so, as the foreign powers triggering and inspiring Carolingian imperial aspirations posed a threat to Frankish identity at the same time, negotiations on the ethos of the Frankish reign became necessary. The central advisors, such as Theodulf, were on the one hand fascinated by this emergence on the stage of world history; on the other hand, they tried to direct this process of 'imperialization' into the right, which is into Christian channels. The intitulatio *Karolus serenissimus augustus a deo coronatus magnus pacificus imperator Romanorum gubernans imperium, qui et per misericordiam dei rex Francorum atque Langobardorum* is to be seen as an bundling epitome,<sup>116</sup> which helped to display relationships Charles maintained in- and outside his direct sphere of influence.

In this sense, the imperial title was a relational instrument expressing a global significance, which by the grace of God the Frankish King had successfully claimed for himself. Charlemagne's advisors had already attributed imperial qualities to him in the two decades before the turn of the century. As we have seen in the case of Theodulf, this could simultaneously entail that the established powers were denied imperial power. Making use of political poetry, but also of dogmatic debate, Theodulf took pains to diminish the Byzantine Emperors' as well as the Papacy's authorities. In turn, he ascribed forms of imperial ritual, splendour and authority to his champion, Charlemagne. On Christmas Day of the year 800, the Frankish King was consequently prepared to fill a conceptual vacuum of imperial power, which his learned advisors had helped to create. They had done so by imports and embargos of imperial concepts.

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116 Mühlbacher, Engelbert (ed.): *Die Urkunden der Karolinger*. (MGH DD Kar. 1). Hahn: Hannover 1906, p. 77; no. 197, p. 265.

Simon Groth (Frankfurt am Main)

## How to Become Emperor – John VIII and the Role of the Papacy in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century\*

Charlemagne's proclamation as emperor within the context of a papal ceremony performed on Christmas Day in the year 800 in Rome<sup>1</sup> significantly shaped, in retrospect, the relation between Frankish king and Roman pope in the Middle Ages, effectively putting the proclamation of the emperor in the hands of the pope in Rome. The fact that Charlemagne as well as his son, Louis the Pious, both passed their emperorship on to their sons in an independent ceremony held in Aix-la-Chapelle has been noted but rarely made the subject of a detailed discussion,<sup>2</sup> since these cases remained

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\* I am grateful to Anne Walter-Koschwitz and Dr. James Thompson for their help with the translation.

- 1 See Fried, Johannes: *Karl der Große. Gewalt und Glaube. Eine Biographie*. Beck: Munich 2013, pp. 433–495; Patzold, Steffen: “Die Kaiseridee Karls des Großen”. In: Pohle, Frank (ed.): *Karl der Grosse, Charlemagne. Orte der Macht. Essays*. Sandstein Kommunikation: Dresden 2014, S. 152–159. For a more recent publication on this topic, see Becher, Matthias: “Das Kaisertum Karls des Großen zwischen Rückbesinnung und Neuerung”. In: Leppin, Hartmut / Schneidmüller, Bernd / Weinfurter, Stefan (eds.): *Kaisertum im ersten Jahrtausend. Wissenschaftlicher Begleitband zur Landesausstellung “Otto der Große und das Römische Reich. Kaisertum von der Antike zum Mittelalter”*. Schnell & Steiner: Regensburg 2012, pp. 251–270; the older literature discusses Heldmann, Karl: *Das Kaisertum Karls des Großen. Theorien und Wirklichkeit*. (Quellen und Studien zur Verfassungsgeschichte des Deutschen Reiches in Mittelalter und Neuzeit 6,2). Böhlau: Weimar 1928.
- 2 In some works it has been subsumed as a so-called ‘Aachener Kaiseridee’; cf. Lintzel, Martin: “Das abendländische Kaisertum im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert. Der römische und der fränkisch-deutsche Kaisergedanke von Karl dem Großen bis auf Otto den Großen”. *Die Welt als Geschichte* 4, 1938, pp. 423–447, here p. 429; Erdmann, Carl: “Die nichtrömische Kaiseridee”. In: Friedrich Baethgen (ed.): *Carl Erdmann. Forschungen zur politischen Ideewelt des Frühmittelalters, aus dem Nachlass des Verfassers herausgegeben*. Akademie: Berlin 1951, pp. 1–51, here pp. 16–31; see also Schieffer, Rudolf: “Konzepte des Kaisertums”. In: Schneidmüller, Bernd / Weinfurter, Stefan (eds.): *Heilig • Römisch • Deutsch. Das Reich im mittelalterlichen Europa (Internationale Tagung zur 29. Aus-*

individual episodes and were overshadowed by the ensuing imperial coronations carried out by the pope. In the early days of Carolingian emperors, however, this procedure was far from universally accepted. The connection to the papacy as the authority bestowing the title of emperor as well as the connection to Rome can only be seen as a consolidation of power toward the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. On this account, the time between Lothair I and Otto the Great should be considered a separate period in the history of emperorship.<sup>3</sup> Against this background, this paper tries to comprehend how the papacy became the legitimising authority universally accepted in the Frankish Empire.<sup>4</sup> Here, Pope John VIII played a crucial role.<sup>5</sup>

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*stellung des Europarates und Landesausstellung Sachsen-Anhalt*). Sandstein: Dresden 2006, pp. 44–56, here p. 47–48; Schulze, Hans K.: *Grundstrukturen der Verfassung im Mittelalter, vol. 3: Kaiser und Reich*. Kohlhammer: Stuttgart / Berlin / Cologne 1998, pp. 256–260. For a brief account, see Mierau, Heike Johanna: *Kaiser und Papst im Mittelalter*. Böhlau: Cologne et al. 2010, pp. 48–49; Schneider, Reinhard: “Die Erben Karls des Großen im 9. Jahrhundert”. *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins* 104/105, 2002/03, pp. 51–67; Schneidmüller, Bernd: *Die Kaiser des Mittelalters. Von Karl dem Großen bis Maximilian I.* (Beck Wissen 2398). Beck: Munich 2012, pp. 31–37; Goetz, Elke: *Papsttum und Kaisertum im Mittelalter*. (Geschichte kompakt). WBG: Darmstadt 2009, pp. 25–26.

- 3 Cf. Groth, Simon: “Papsttum, italisches Königtum und Kaisertum. Zur Entwicklung eines Dreiecksverhältnisses von Ludwig II. bis Berengar I.”. *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 124, 2013, pp. 151–184.
- 4 In contrast to the Eastern Roman continuity of the Byzantine *basileus* (βασιλεύς), the empire in the West had been vacant since the deposition of Romulus Augustulus (476), despite a few attempts to overthrow the empire. See, for example, Classen, Peter: “Der erste Römerzug in der Weltgeschichte. Zur Geschichte des Kaisertums im Westen und der Kaiserkrönung in Rom zwischen Theodosius d. Gr. und Karl d. Gr.”. In: Beumann, Helmut (ed.): *Historische Forschungen für Walter Schlesinger*. Böhlau: Cologne / Vienna 1974, pp. 325–347; see also Anton, Hans Hubert: ““Solum imperii” und “Principatus sacerdotum” in Rom, fränkische Hegemonie über den Okziden / Hesperiden. Grundlagen, Entstehung und Wesen des karolingischen Kaisertums”. In: Erkens, Franz-Reiner / Wolff, Hartmut (eds.): *Von sacerdotium und regnum. Geistliche und weltliche Gewalt im frühen und hohen Mittelalter. Festschrift für Egon Boshof zum 65. Geburtstag*. (Passauer historische Forschungen 12). Böhlau: Cologne et al. 2002, pp. 203–274.
- 5 Cf. the general survey by Arnold, Dorothee: *Johannes VIII. Päpstliche Herrschaft in den karolingischen Teilreichen am Ende des 9. Jahrhunderts*. (Euro-



In affirmatively reinforcing the coronations of Louis the Pious (816)<sup>6</sup> and Lothair I (823),<sup>7</sup> the papacy upheld its claim of legitimising the emperor, which in Lothair's case probably resulted in an elevation of his status compared to his brothers.<sup>8</sup> However, their emperorships did not depend just on a papal ceremony. In this context, it is astonishing that Lothair I did not continue the practice his father and grandfather had established, but instead sent his son, Louis II, to Rome<sup>9</sup> in April 850 where he was appointed

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päische Hochschulschriften Reihe 23, Theologie 797). Peter Lang: Frankfurt am Main et al. 2005. See also Ullmann, Walter: *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages. A Study in the Ideological Relation of Clerical to Lay Power*. Methuen: London <sup>3</sup>1970, pp. 219–225.

- 6 Cf. Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern 751–918, ed. by Johann Friedrich Böhmer, revised by Engelbert Mühlbacher and completed by Johann Lechner. Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung: Innsbruck <sup>2</sup>1908, no. 633a (cited in the following as RI,I,1).
- 7 Cf. RI,I,1, nos. 770a, 1018a.
- 8 Cf. Groth, Simon: "Kaisertum, Papsttum und italisches Königtum. Zur Entstehung eines schwierigen Dreiecksverhältnisses". *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 94, 2012, pp. 21–58, here pp. 50–52.
- 9 Some sources report that already his grandfather Louis the Pious pledged Italy to Louis II; cf. Annales Bertiniani, ed. Grat, Félix / Vielliard, Jeanne / Clémencet, Suzanne. Paris 1964, a. 856, p. 72: *Ludoicus rex Italiae, filius Lotharii [...]* *Italiam largitate avi Ludoici imperatoris se asserens assecutum*; Andreae Bergomatis historia, ed. Waitz, Georg. (MGH SS rer. Lang. 1). Hannover 1878, Rpt. 1988, c. 6, p. 225: *Habuit Lotharius filius Hludowicus [sic!] nomine, cui avius suus Hludowicus Italiam concessit*; Carmina de Ludovico II. imperatore, ed. Traube, Ludwig. (MGH Poetae III). Berlin 1886, Rpt. 2000, II., p. 405, l. 4. In 840 Louis entered the dominion in Italy (cf. Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern 751–918 [926], vol. 3: Die Regesten des Regnum Italiae und der burgundischen Regna, part 1: Die Karolinger im Regnum Italiae 840–887 [888], ed. by Herbert Zielinski. Böhlau: Cologne / Weimar / Vienna 1991, no. 1 [cited in the following as RI,I,3,1]) and in 844 his father, Lothair I, sent him with Archbishop Drogo of Metz and others to Rome in order to clarify the irregularities in the election of Pope Sergius II; cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 21–26; Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern 751–918 (926 / 962), vol. 4: Papstregesten, 800–911, part 2: 844–872, section 1: 844–858, ed. by Klaus Herbers. Böhlau: Cologne / Weimar / Vienna 1999; section 2: 858–872 (Nikolaus I), ed. by Klaus Herbers. Böhlau: Vienna / Cologne / Weimar 2012, nos. 30–32 (cited hereafter as RI,I,4,2). See also Zimmermann, Harald: *Papstabsetzungen des Mittelalters*. Böhlau: Graz et al. 1968, pp. 40–41; Hartmann, Ludo Moritz: *Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter*, vol. 1–4. (Allgemeine Staatengeschichte 1/32, 1–4). Georg

emperor by Pope Leo IV.<sup>10</sup> As to Lothair I's reasons for doing so, we can only speculate. For instance, he might have hoped that the papal bestowal of the title would lead to a greater acceptance of his son's emperorship by his brothers, Louis the German and Charles the Bald; or perhaps he wanted to establish a direct connection between his son's emperorship and that of Charlemagne; or his own experiences with regard to his imperial succession were what prompted him to exercise these changes. An imperial coronation in which the reigning emperor crowned his own son never occurred again, and Lothair I abstained altogether from participating in the ceremony set to take place in Rome. For the first time since Charlamgne's coronation, the pope acted as a constituting actor in the decision process. The papal ceremony conducted by Paschal I (5 April 823) may have held a higher level of legitimation for Lothair I than that of his father. Perhaps his own experiences following the papal affirmation of his status as an emperor caused Lothair to modify the contemporary practice of 'Mitkaisererhebung'

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Olms Verlag; Gotha 1900–1915, III,1, pp. 196–197; Hees, Herbert: *Studien zur Geschichte Kaiser Ludwigs II.* Diss. phil. Regensburg 1973, pp. 29–30. In Rome Louis II was appointed *rex Langobardorum* (Liber Pontificalis), that is to say an Italic king; cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 27; RI,I,4,2, no. 33; RI,I,1, nos. 1115a, 1177d; Liber Pontificalis (Vita Sergii II.), ed. Duchesne, Louis, 3 vol. Paris <sup>2</sup>1955, p. 89; Hees 1973, pp. 32–37; Henggeler, Annemarie: *Die Salbungen und Krönungen des Königs und Kaisers Ludwigs II. (844, 850, 872).* Diss. phil. Freiburg i. Ue. 1934, pp. 28–35.

- 10 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 67; RI,I,4,2, no. 220; RI,I,1, nos. 1142a, 1179a; Herbers, Klaus: *Papst Leo IV. und das Papsttum in der Mitte des 9. Jahrhunderts. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen päpstlicher Herrschaft in der späten Karolingerzeit.* (Päpste und Papsttum 27). Hiersemann: Stuttgart 1996, pp. 210–213; Hees 1973, pp. 51–55. In the short message contained in the “Annales Bertiniani” (a. 850, p. 59) Prudentius writes that Lothair had sent his son (*mittere*). In the context of Charles the Bald having taken possession of Lothair II's kingdom in the year of 869, one reads that *imperator* [Lothair I] *constituerit imperatorem* [Louis II] (Hadriani II. papae epistolae, ed. Perels, Ernst. [MGH Epistolae 6]. Berlin 1925, Rpt. 1995, ep. 19, p. 722, l. 17–18). Since there are no sources either confirming or disconfirming an “act of elevation” (Erhebungsakt) on the part of the father (analogous to the cases of Louis the Pious and Lothair I), the status of this event should be treated with caution (cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 67: “ein weltlicher Erhebungsakt durch Lothar I. wird nicht erwähnt, er läßt sich allenfalls indirekt aus dem genannten Schreiben Hadrians II. von 869 erschließen” [Herbert Zielinski]). The “Liber Pontificalis” remains silent on this issue.

(elevation by the father, as it had occurred in the cases of Charlemagne/Louis I and Louis I/Lothair I),<sup>11</sup>

The fact that Lothair I sent his son to the pope and that the latter carried out the coronation without hesitation – Louis II became emperor virtually by fatherly will – ties in with the appointment of co-emperors by his father and grandfather, and shows that this process was subject to a constant dynamic development.<sup>12</sup> This act not only reanimated the pope as the legitimising authority, but also meant that the emperorship was once again proclaimed in Rome, for the first time since Charlemagne's imperial coronation.

Analogous to the co-emperorships of 812 and 817, there were again two emperors in the Frankish realm.<sup>13</sup> However, there are basically no reports or clues as to Louis II's activities outside of Italy.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to his prede-

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11 Cf. Groth 2012.

12 See also Giese, Wolfgang: "Die designativen Nachfolgeregelungen der Karolinger 714–979". *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 64, 2008, pp. 472–479: "hinter diesem Akt [stand] zum geringsten karolingisches, macht- und dynastieorientiertes Interesse, sondern in erster Linie päpstliche Schutzbedürftigkeit".

13 For a general treatment of the phenomenon of co-emperorship ('Mitkaisertum'), see Ohnsorge, Werner: "Das Mitkaisertum in der abendländischen Geschichte des früheren Mittelalter". *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Germanistische Abteilung* 67, 1950, pp. 309–335; cf. for the aspect of the coexistence of Western and Byzantine empires ('Zweikaiserproblem') Id.: *Das Zweikaiserproblem im frühen Mittelalter. Die Bedeutung des byzantinischen Reiches für die Entwicklung der Staatsidee in Europa*. Lax: Hildesheim 1947; Anton, Hans Hubert: "Art. Zweikaiserproblem". In: *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 9 (1998), col. 720–723; Hehl, Ernst-Dieter: "Zwei christliche Kaiser im mittelalterlichen Europa. Eine problematische Geschichte". In: Leppin, Hartmut / Schneidmüller, Bernd / Weinfurter, Stefan (eds.): *Kaisertum im ersten Jahrtausend. Wissenschaftlicher Begleitband zur Landesausstellung "Otto der Große und das Römische Reich. Kaisertum von der Antike zum Mittelalter"*. Schnell & Steiner: Regensburg 2012, pp. 271–295; cf. for the Latin empire of Constantinople: Burkhardt, Stefan: *Mediterranes Kaisertum und imperiale Ordnungen. Das lateinische Kaiserreich von Konstantinopel*. (Europa im Mittelalter 25). Akademie Verlag / De Gruyter: Berlin / Boston 2014.

14 Concerning his dominion in Italy, see Cariello, Nicola: *Stato e chiesa nel regno d'Italia al tempo di Ludovico II (844–875)*. (Collezione storica 9). Scienze e Lettere: Rome 2011; Bougard, François: "La cour et le gouvernement de Louis II, 840–875". In: Le Jan, Régine (ed.): *La royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carol-*

cessors, he actively tried to expand the Frankish sphere of influence into the South of Italy. In the course of his expansion efforts, he was taken prisoner by his vassal, Adelchis of Benevento, in August 871 and was released as a result of negotiations conducted by the bishop, Aio of Benevento, in September of the same year.<sup>15</sup> The following papal ceremony in May 872, during which Louis II was crowned emperor for a second time, can probably be seen in light of this loss of prestige; it meant a renewed recognition of the papal legitimising authority and was supposed to confirm Louis' imperial suitability, thus constituting an acclamatory act.<sup>16</sup> Ambitions tied to the expansion of Frankish rule into the South of Italy ended with his death on 12 August 875. Local powers, again, submitted themselves to Byzantine supremacy and Saracen influence increased.<sup>17</sup>

75 years after the coronation of Charlemagne, the emperorship was again vacant, and fell completely into the hands of the papacy. Louis II died without having sired a male heir, which enabled the papacy to once again expand its influence. Not only did it have the constituting power to proclaim the emperor, but it also gained the authority to select and decide over the emperorship. That things were already moving in this general direction became apparent shortly before Louis' death. Since the previous practice of passing on the emperorship from father to son was not possible in the case of Louis II, another authority had to be found that would comprehensively legitimise the rise of a Carolingian above his relatives. The papacy had already assumed this function prior to Louis II's death, a seemingly mutually satisfying solution. Given that one of the emperor's most fundamental duties was the protection of the Roman church, choosing an emperor was a significant decision for

*ingienne (début IX<sup>e</sup> siècle aux environs de 920).* (Collection Histoire et littérature régionales 17). Villeneuve d'Ascq 1998, pp. 249–267; Hees 1973.

15 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 328, 330; RI,I,1, nos. 1251a, 1251b.

16 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 348, 349; RI,I,1, nos. 1253c, 1253d. Carlrichard Brühl thinks of this act in terms of a “corroborating coronation” (“Befestigungskrönung”) (Brühl, Carlrichard: “Fränkischer Krönungsbrauch und das Problem der “Festkrönungen””. *Historische Zeitschrift* 194, 1962, pp. 279–280 and p. 324 no. 22. See also Hees 1973, pp. 75–77.)

17 Cf. Hees 1973, pp. 95–101; Enzensberger, Horst: “Unteritalien seit 774”. In: Schieder, Theodor: *Handbuch der europäischen Geschichte, vol. 1: Europa im Wandel von der Antike zum Mittelalter*. Klett-Cotta: Stuttgart 1976, pp. 793–794; Hartmann, 3,1, pp. 297–301.

the pope. This meant that the agreements negotiated between the pope and the imperial candidate became a decisive criterion. Among all of the prospective Carolingian candidates for the emperorship, the pope was an authority generally accepted who could refer to a basic tradition and remained the legitimising authority in case of the discontinuation of the fatherly mandate.

Against this background, the Empress Angilberga<sup>18</sup> and Louis the German went to Trento in May 872 and met with two papal legates, while Charles the Bald, who had also been asked to join, refused to follow the invitation.<sup>19</sup> Two years later, a meeting took place near Verona between Emperor Louis II, King Louis the German of East Francia and Pope John VIII.<sup>20</sup> It can be reasonably assumed that both consultations focussed on the question of the succession in the Italic kingdom.<sup>21</sup> This view is supported by the fact that Carloman, Louis the German's son, referred to a designation of Louis II in his first charter for

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- 18 Cf. the short survey by Fösel, Amalie: "Politische Einflussnahme und Handlungsstrategien frühmittelalterlicher Königinnen. Das Beispiel der karolingischen Kaiserin Angilberga". In: Kunst, Christiane (ed.): *Matronage. Handlungsstrategien und soziale Netzwerke antiker Herrscherfrauen. Beiträge eines Kolloquiums an der Universität Osnabrück vom 22. bis 24. März 2012*. (Osnabrücker Forschungen zu Altertum und Antike-Rezeption 20). Leidorf: Rahden 2013, pp. 157–164.
- 19 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 351; RI,I,1, nos. 1254a, 1490 f. Subsequently, Angilberga submitted herself to the protection of John VIII (the exact date is unclear [July 874 till April 880]); cf. RI,I,4,3, no. 121; for more along these lines see: nos. 235, 236, 271, 320, 496, 586, 662, 670, 671.
- 20 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 391; RI,I,1, nos. 1263b, 1504b; RI,I,4,3, no. 115. John VIII had been consecrated as pope on 14 December 872 in the succession of Adrian II; cf. RI,I,4,3, no. 1.
- 21 Cf. Hartmann, 3,1, pp. 297–298; Hees 1973, pp. 11–15; Hartmann, Wilfried: *Ludwig der Deutsche*. WBG: Darmstadt 2002, p. 120; Bigott Boris: *Ludwig der Deutsche und die Reichskirche im Ostfränkischen Reich (826–876)*. (Historische Studien 470). Matthiesen: Husum 2002, pp. 155–156; Arnold 2005, p. 61; Goldberg, Eric Joseph: *Struggle for Empire. Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817–876*. (Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past). Ithaca, NY et. al. 2006, pp. 324–326; MacLean, Simon: "'After his Death a Great Tribulation Came to Italy...'. Dynastic Politics and Aristocratic Factions after the Death of Louis II, c. 870–c. 890". *Millennium* 4, 2007, pp. 243–250; Scholz, Sebastian: *Politik – Selbstverständnis – Selbstdarstellung. Die Päpste in karolingischer und ottonischer Zeit*. (Historische Forschungen 26). Steiner: Stuttgart 2006, pp. 224–226.

Italy.<sup>22</sup> For his part, and regardless of Louis II's intentions of succession,<sup>23</sup> Charles the Bald had already contacted the pope quite early on, and Adrian II made it clear to him that he, i.e. Charles, could become emperor after Louis' death.<sup>24</sup> The papal motivation for such a constellation probably included that Carloman, as an intended Italic king, would exist beside the Emperor, Charles the Bald, as a second centre of power,<sup>25</sup> and that the papacy could play both sides against one another if there were any problems. Of course, all of the parties involved were looking to gain their own advantage in this situation and accepted different arrangements to this end.

On this occasion, the behaviour of the papacy is especially noteworthy: while Adrian II had sharply criticised the annexation of Lothair II's *regnum* by Charles the Bald in 869 and had written several letters regarding this situation,<sup>26</sup> he nevertheless offered the emperorship to him in another letter three years later.<sup>27</sup>

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22 Cf. Ludowici Germanici, Karlomanni, Ludowici Iunioris Diplomata, ed. Kehr, Paul. (MGH Diplomata regum Germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum 1). Berlin 1934, Rpt. 1980, no. 4, pp. 289–290, here p. 290, l. 25: *Ludouuici [...], qui nobis regnum istud disposuerat*. See also Schneider, Reinhard: *Brüdergemeine und Schwurfreundschaft. Der Auflösungsprozeß des Karlingereiches im Spiegel der caritas-Terminologie in den Verträgen der karlingischen Teilkönige des 9. Jahrhunderts*. (Historische Studien 388). Matthiesen: Lübeck et. al. 1964, p. 14.

23 Referred to the *Libellus de Imperatoria Potestate in Urbe Roma*, ed. Zucchetti, Giuseppe. (Fonti per la storia d'Italia 55). Rome 1920, pp. 205–206, shortly before his death, Louis II had declared that “*Carolum magnum*” should succeed him in the empire. Moreover, Empress Angilberga has sent a delegation to him after the death of her husband (pp. 207–208). Giuseppe Zucchetti (p. 206 note 1) and Herbert Zielinski (cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 474) suppose that the author of the “*Libellus*” meant Carloman.

24 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 359.

25 Both the presence of John VIII at the meeting near Verona (see note 20), where the succession of Carloman had been discussed, and Charles the Bald's subsequent resignation of the Italic kingdom (see note 55), can be offered as evidence supporting this thesis.

26 Scholz 2006, pp. 214–218 has paraphrased the relevant letters. Even pope Nicholas I warned Charles the Bald in a letter to keep peace with Louis II (cf. RI,I,4,2, no. 737) and, subsequently, appealed to the episcopate in his kingdom (cf. no. 740).

27 Cf. Hadriani II. papae epistolae, ep. 36, pp. 743–746.

John III, too, had been prompted by Louis II to write a letter shortly after his ordination in 872, in which he criticised Charles.<sup>28</sup> For as long as emperor Louis II was alive and ruling the Italian kingdom as Emperor, the papacy had been willing to support him, i.e. Louis II, in case of Lothair's death,<sup>29</sup> because at this point Louis was the only one to guarantee the papal safety in Italy. With regard to the unsettled question of succession, the pope pursued his own aims, which becomes quite evident in Adrian II's letter.<sup>30</sup> Regardless of the historical context in which the origin of this letter must be seen,<sup>31</sup> the contours of the papal conception of the emperorship had already taken form and became clearly visible under John VIII: the duty of the emperor, who is appointed by the pope, is the protection of the church.<sup>32</sup>

28 Cf. *Fragmenta registri Iohannis VIII. papae*, ed. Caspar, Erich. (MGH *Epistolae* 7). Berlin 1928, Rpt. 1993, no. 6, pp. 276–277; RI,I,4,3, no. 49.

29 Cf. Hadriani II. *papae epistolae*, epp. 18 and 19, pp. 720–723. Even John VIII had pressured Charles the Bald (cf. note 27) and Louis the German's sons to accept Louis II's claims concerning the realm of his deceased brother Lothair II (cf. RI,I,4,3, no. 106).

30 Cf. note 27.

31 Adrian II's letter preceded that of Charles (cf. Migne PL 124, 881–896), where, on the one hand, he assured his worship of St. Peter, but, on the other, pointed out that he felt deeply offended by Adrian's previous letters. He reminded Adrian of the story of Pope Vigilius, who had been seized by Emperor Justinian I and brought to Constantinople, where he had to renounce his previous position against Monophysitism before a public congregation in 553. In addition, Charles was on his way to Italy, because he thought that Louis II had died. However, in Besançon, he was told that this was only a rumour (cf. *Annales Bertiniani*, a. 871, pp. 182–183).

32 Cf. Hadriani II. *papae epistolae*, ep. 36, p. 745, l. 22–24: *Igitur ergo integra fide et sincera mente devotaque voluntate – ut sermo sit secretior et litterae clandestinae nullique nisi Melissimis publicandae – vobis confitemur devovendo et notescimus affirmando, salva fidelitate imperatoris nostri, quia, si superstes ei fuerit vestra nobilitas, vita nobis comite, si dederit nobis quislibet multorum modiorum auri cumulum, numquam adquiescemus, exposcemus aut sponte suscipiemus alium in regnum et imperium Romanum nisi te ipsum. Quem, quia praedicaris sapientia et iustitia, religione et virtute, nobilitate et forma, videlicet prudentia, temperantia, fortitudine atque pietate refertus, si contigerit te imperatorem nostrum vivendo supergredi, te optamus omnis clerus et plebs et nobilitas totius orbis et Urbis non solum ducem et regem, patricium et imperatorem, sed in praesenti ecclesia defensorem et in aeterna cum omnibus sanctis participem fore.* Even Nicholas I had addressed the issue of defending the Church;

King Charles the Bald of West Francia was considered<sup>33</sup> a protective authority by the Roman church (in view of the Saracen danger).<sup>34</sup> After the death of Louis II, John VIII articulated the papal self-conception in a short message to Charles the Bald in which he emphasized the aspect of Charles' selection (*eligere*).<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, however, the pope assumed the crucial role of deciding the question of the succession given that the emperor died.<sup>36</sup> Other letters also discuss this aspect,<sup>37</sup> and shortly after the imperial coronation of Charles, John VIII hinted at the fact that Louis the German would also have been a definite candidate for the emperorship.<sup>38</sup>

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cf. Nicolai I. papae epistolae, ed. Perels, Ernst. (MGH Epistolae 6). Berlin 1925, Rpt. 1995, ep. 35, pp. 303–305, here p. 305, l. 5–6. Eduard Eichmann concluded from this part of the letter (*machaerae usum, quem [Louis II] a Petri principis apostolorum vicario contra infideles accepi*) that Louis II was handed a sword at his elevation in 850 (cf. Eichmann, Eduard: *Die Kaiserkrönung im Abendland. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des kirchlichen Rechts, der Liturgie und der Kirchenpolitik, Erster Band: Gesamtbild*. Echter Verlag: Würzburg 1942, p. 49).

- 33 Already in a secret letter written by Adrian to Charles the Bald, the protective function is mentioned and Adrian furthermore writes that he had heard Charles had always been an advocate for the affairs of the Church (cf. Hadriani II. papae epistolae, ep. 36, p. 743); in addition, see *Fragmenta registri Iohannis VIII. papae*, no. 59, p. 311, l. 13–16: *Cuius et nos non solum nostris diebus, set etiam beati papę Nicolai tempore reminiscentes excellentiam tuam ad honorem et exaltationem sanctę R[omane] eccliesię et ad securitatem populi Christiani eligendam esse speravimus*. See also RI,I,4,3, no. 138.
- 34 Cf. Nicolai I. papae epistolae, epp. 33 and 34, pp. 301–305; Hadriani II. papae epistolae, ep. 19, pp. 721–723; see also Scholz 2006, pp. 202–203 and pp. 214–216.
- 35 Cf. *Fragmenta registri Iohannis VIII. papae*, no. 59, p. 311, l. 16.
- 36 Cf. *Fragmenta registri Iohannis VIII. papae*, no. 59, p. 311, l. 10–13: *Igitur quia, sicut Domino placuit, Hludouuicus gloriosus imperator defunctus est, cum nos, quis in loco eius propitia divinitate succedere debuisset, cum fratribus nostris et inclito a R[omano] senatu concorditer tractaremus, devotione et fide tua ad medium deducta, hanc multi dignis preconiiis efferre ceperunt*.
- 37 See for a compiling of the sources Schramm, Percy Ernst: *Der König von Frankreich. Das Wesen der Monarchie vom 9. Bis zum 16. Jahrhundert. Ein Kapitel aus der Geschichte des abendländischen Staates, Band II: Anhänge, Anmerkungen, Register*. WBG: Darmstadt <sup>2</sup>1960, p. 47 note 1.
- 38 Cf. *Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae*, ed. Caspar, Erich. (MGH Epistolae 7). Berlin 1912, Rpt. 1993, ep. 22, pp. 19–21, here p. 20, l. 33: *[S]p[re]to magno*



With regard to the conflict with Byzantium, Louis II's view was basically in line<sup>39</sup> with this papal self-conception.<sup>40</sup>

When Louis II died on 12 August 875, both the emperorship as well as the Italic kingship remained vacant despite efforts towards a regulation of succession. Using this constellation, Charles the Bald immediately went to Italy upon receiving the news of his nephew's death.<sup>41</sup> En route, a delegation

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*et bono fratre, vos more Dei gratuita voluntate tanquam alterum regem David elegit et prelegit atque ad imperialia sceptrata provexit.*

39 From a Byzantine point of view, Louis II's attempts to extend his rule to southern Italy were seen as an affront to their own southern Italic ambitions. For this reason, Basil I began a correspondence with Louis II in which the fundamental questions concerning a mutual understanding of empire were discussed. The letter from Basil I is not recorded; its contents have been derived from Louis II's response. A reconstruction, for example, is given by Dölger, Franz: "Europas Gestaltung im Spiegel der fränkisch-byzantinischen Auseinandersetzung des 9. Jahrhunderts". In Mayer, Theodor (ed.): *Der Vertrag von Verdun 843. 9 Aufsätze zur Begründung der europäischen Völker- und Staatenwelt.* (Das Reich und Europa). Koehler und Amelung: Leipzig 1943, pp. 230–231. See also: RI,I,3,1, nos. 324–326; RI,I,1, no. 1247; *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453*, part 1, vol. 2: *Regesten 867–1025*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition ed. by Andreas E. Müller in collaboration with Alexander Beihammer. Munich 2003, no. 487. In addition to the extensive literature referred to in the Regest, see Sickel, Wilhelm: "Die Kaiserkrönungen von Karl bis Berengar". *Historische Zeitschrift* 82, 1899, pp. 21–23; Hees 1973, pp. 65–74; Pfeil und Klein-Ellguth, Sigurd Graf von: *Die Titel der fränkischen Könige und Kaiser bis 911*. Universität Göttingen: ms. Diss. phil. Göttingen 1958, pp. 185–195; Hehl 2012, pp. 277–281. In the letter Louis protested against the Byzantine point of view concerning the permission for his imperial title, and argued that he owed his imperial dignity, which went beyond a Frankish imperial title, to the papal anointing and the paternal inheritance; cf. *Chronicon Salernitanum*, ed. Westerbergh, Ulla. (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensi Studia Latina Stockholmiensi 3). Stockholm 1965, c. 107, p. 112, l. 21–24: *Nam Francorum principes primo reges, deinde vero imperatores dicti sunt, hii dumtaxat qui a Romano pontifice ad hoc oleo sancto perfusi sunt* and c. 107, p. 110, l. 33 to p. 111, l. 4: *[Q]antum ad lineam generis pertinet, non sit novum vel recens, quod iam ab abavo nostro non usurpatum est, ut perhibes, sed Dei nutu et ecclesie iudicio summi per presulis impositionem et uncionem manus optinuit, sicut in codicibus tuis invenire facile poteris.*

40 Cf. Scholz 2006, p. 202 and pp. 214–218.

41 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 475.

of Italic magnates reached him. Having already consulted with Empress Angilberga in September and disagreeing about how to proceed further, delegations were sent to both of Charlemagne's living grandsons.<sup>42</sup> By this time at the very latest, the pope had finally decided the matter of imperial succession and also sent a delegation to Charles the Bald, inviting him to the imperial coronation ceremonies in Rome.<sup>43</sup> At this point, Charles had already assumed the governing duties and issued charters accordingly. On this occasion, and to further substantiate his claim, he twice referred to Louis II's succession.<sup>44</sup>

On 25 December 875, Charles the Bald was proclaimed emperor in Rome by John VIII.<sup>45</sup> Subsequently, emperor and pope negotiated the renewal of the *Pactum* in detail, which primarily focused on the ruling rights with regard to the Patrimonium Petri and, once more, on the question of the imperial protection of the papacy.<sup>46</sup> For the first time, the papal position regarding the appointment of the imperial candidate for the purpose of imperial protection had been decisive; a point emphasised by John VIII, who declared that he was carrying out the divine will.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, the

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42 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 474; RI,I,1, no. 1512a.

43 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 477; RI,I,4,3, no. 139; Arnold 2005, pp. 80–81.

44 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 478, 479.

45 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 485, 486; RI,I,4,3, nos. 144, 145; Arnold 2005, pp. 69–76 and pp. 80–87; Boshof, Egon: “Karl der Kahle: Novus Karolus magnus?”. In: Erkens, Franz-Reiner (ed.): *Karl der Große und das Erbe der Kulturen (Akten des 8. Symposiums des Mediävistenverbandes Leipzig 15.-18. März 1999)*. Akademie-Verlag: Berlin 2001, pp. 135–152, here p. 138 and p. 152; Arnaldi, Girolamo: *Natale 875. Politica, ecclesiologia, cultura del papato altomedievale*. (Nuovi studi storico 9). Istituto Storico Italiano per il medio evo: Rome 1990.

46 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 492; RI,I,4,3, no. 148; Stengel, Edmund Ernst: “Die Entwicklung des Kaiserprivilegs für die Römische Kirche 817–962. Ein Beitrag zur ältesten Geschichte des Kirchenstaats”. *Historische Zeitschrift* 134, 1926, pp. 235–238; Drabek, Anna Maria: *Die Verträge der fränkischen und deutschen Herrscher mit dem Papsttum von 754 bis 1020*. Böhlau: Vienna / Cologne / Graz 1976, pp. 50–52 and pp. 83–85; Maleczek, Werner: “Otto I. und Johannes XII. Überlegungen zur Kaiserkrönung von 962”. In: Petersohn, Jürgen (ed.): *Mediaevalia Augiensia. Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters*. Thorbecke: Stuttgart 2001, pp. 176–177; Arnold 2005, pp. 84–85.

47 Cf. Arnold 2005, p. 82 note 59.

new emperor tried to enforce his newly acquired claim by virtue of papal authority throughout the Frankish Empire.<sup>48</sup>

Even if Louis II had envisioned Carloman as his successor in Italy<sup>49</sup> (probably in agreement with John VIII), Charles the Bald was able to assert himself in Italy through his quick intervention upon Louis II's death. Because Louis the Younger, the youngest son of Louis the German, having been sent to Italy in September, was unable to enforce his authority over his uncle's,<sup>50</sup> shortly thereafter, Carloman intervened in the Italic relations.<sup>51</sup> However, having already circumvented the defensive positions of his opponent and having crossed the Alps, Carloman almost immediately agreed to a truce with Charles at the river Brenta and withdrew to Bavaria.<sup>52</sup> One of the reasons for his actions was probably that Charles the Bald enjoyed

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48 At the pan-Frankish synod held in June 876, which the East Frankish bishops (despite papal charge) did not attend, John VIII confirmed the imperial dignity of Charles the Bald in a letter read aloud by two papal legates. He also urged the West Frankish bishops, who stood by the East Frankish king during Louis the German's invasion, to recognize the empire of Charles (see also Scholz 2006, pp. 227–228). Toward the end of the year 875, John VIII had already admonished Louis the German, his sons, the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and other great men of the East Frankish Empire to refrain from an invasion of Charles the Bald's kingdom and subsequently reprimanded the archbishops and counts in February 876 for their behaviour; cf. RI,I,4,3, nos. 141, 164, 165. In two other letters, he blamed, on the one hand, the bishops of the West Frankish realm, who supported the invasion, and, on the other, praised bishops and counts who remained faithful to Charles the Bald. In both cases he refrained from using names; cf. RI,I,4,3, nos. 166, 167. See also RI,I,4,3, no. 169 (admonition of Louis the German by two legates) and no. 187 (John VIII's reply to Louis the German, in which he exhorts Louis to preserve peace).

49 In addition to the message of the "Libellus de Imperatoria potestate" (cf. note 23), the meetings between Angilberga and Louis the German in Trento (872) and between Louis II, Louis the German and John VIII in Verona (874) are of particular interest because it would seem unreasonable to assume that Louis II's succession was not a topic during these gatherings. Since John VIII was present at the second meeting, we can also assume that he was informed about the Louis II's plans. Perhaps Louis II and Louis the German aspired to win over the papacy as a further assurance (as legitimising authority) for their plans.

50 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 476, 480.

51 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 481.

52 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 482, 528.

greater support from the political community in Italy, thus Carloman accepted a postponement of the decision.<sup>53</sup> Charles, however, exploited the situation and took the East Frankish side by surprise on his way to Rome and the imperial coronation.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, he wanted an unspecified high position in Italy. On his homeward journey, in Pavia, the centre of the former Lombard realm, he was elected *protector, dominus* and *defensor* of the Italic kingdom (*eligimus*),<sup>55</sup> while his brother-in-law, Boso of Vienne,<sup>56</sup> was elevated<sup>57</sup> to *dux*<sup>58</sup> of Italy. In February 876, after the election meeting in Pavia, Charles the Bald – now emperor – issued a capitular for Italy with the approval of the Italic magnates, in which the protection of the papacy was emphasised once again.<sup>59</sup> In December 875, he transferred this duty to the brothers Lambert I and Guy III of Spoleto,<sup>60</sup> two powerful Italian magnates residing in the proximity of Rome so that they could rapidly intervene there; but the behaviour of the two brothers was unsatisfactory, and the pope complained to Charles about them just a year later.<sup>61</sup> While Charles claimed an unspecific supremacy for himself (including an oath

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53 See Hlawitschka, Eduard: *Franken, Alemannen, Bayern und Burgunder in Oberitalien (774–962). Zum Verständnis der Fränkischen Königsherrschaft in Italien*. (Forschungen zur oberrheinischen Landesgeschichte 8). E. Albert: Freiburg im Breisgau 1960, pp. 68–69.

54 Cf. *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. Friedrich Kurze. (MGH SS rer. Germ. 7). Hannover 1891 (Rpt. 1993), a. 875, pp. 84–85.

55 Cf. MGH *Capitularia regum Francorum* 2, ed. Boretius, Alfred / Krause, Viktor. (MGH Capit. 2). Hannover 1897, Rpt. 2001, no. 220, p. 99, l. 20–21; *Konzilien der karolingischen Teilreiche 875–911*, ed. Hartmann, Wilfried / Schröder, Isolde / Schmitz, Gerhard. (MGH Conc. 5). Hannover 2012, no. 3, p. 19, l. 10.

56 See also Airlie, Stuart: “The nearly Men. Boso of Vienne and Arnulf of Bavaria”. In: Duggan, Anne J. (ed.): *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe. Concepts, Origins, Transformations*. Boydell & Brewer: Woodbridge 2000, pp. 25–41.

57 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 496.

58 Cf. *Annales Bertiniani*, a. 876, p. 200: [D]uce ipsius terrae constituto.

59 Cf. MGH Capit. 2, no. 221, pp. 100–104; RI,I,3,1, no. 497. The advice and consent of the elites is, thereby, prominently emphasised: *Capitula, quae dominus imperator Karolus [...] una cum consensu et suggestione venerabilium episcoporum et illustrium optimatum [...] fecit* (p. 101, l. 6–11).

60 Cf. RI,I,3,2, nos. 802, 804.

61 Cf. RI,I,3,2, no. 806.

of fidelity by the Italic elites), he neither demanded the Italic kingship for himself (according to the papacy), nor did he stay in Italy for very long.<sup>62</sup>

This separation between emperorship and reign over the Italic kingship can be seen as a reaction to the papal experiences under Louis II's rule.<sup>63</sup> However, in the long run, this situation could not satisfy the needs of the pope. Contrary to his predecessors, John VIII operated more independently from the current emperor. Because the latter, in the eyes of the pope, did not live up to his protective obligations (whether due to a lack of will or inability), the pope repeatedly contacted the emperor (as well as his spouse Richilde) and Bosso of Vienne, requesting protection against the Saracens.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, it was not until August 877 that Charles, once more, went to Italy.<sup>65</sup> Ostentatiously, and prior to his trip to Rome, he had John VIII summon a synod in the antique imperial city of Ravenna, where his position as emperor was re-affirmed. However, John VIII also used this synod as an occasion to press his own claim and explicitly referred to his legitimising as well as executing authority at Charles' imperial coronation.<sup>66</sup> From this

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62 Only on his two campaigns from September 875 (RI,I,3,1, no. 475) to March 876 (no. 501) and from August 877 (no. 517) to September 877 (no. 525) was he present in Italy. See also Groth 2013, pp. 166–175.

63 During this time, the papacy was subjected to a greater control by the emperor (due to the geographic proximity) and was affected by various acts of violence at the hands of Frankish warriors. Already in the context of Louis II's first visit to Rome in 844, the "Liber Pontificalis" reports excesses by the Franks (cf. Liber Pontificalis [Vita Sergii II.], c. 8–11, pp. 87–88). In various sources concerning the papal election, Nicholas I's (858) imperial influence in the election is discussed, while the "Liber Pontificalis" remained silence (cf. RI,I,4,2, no. 421). In 864, Nicholas I, in conjunction with a rumour about Louis II intending to capture him, fled from the Lateran Palace (cf. RI,I,4,2, nos. 688–691). Concerning the relationship between Louis II and the papacy, see Hees 1973, pp. 78–94; Hartmann, 3,1, pp. 196–199, pp. 221–225, pp. 235–241, pp. 244–246, pp. 251–265 and pp. 269–276.

64 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 504, 505, 509, 511, 515; RI,I,4,3, nos. 163, 188, 192, 209, 212, 214, 227, 228, 229, 261.

65 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 517.

66 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 516; RI,I,4,3, no. 271; Hartmann, Wilfried: *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien*. (Konziliengeschichte Reihe A: Darstellungen). Schöningh: Paderborn et al. 1989, pp. 347–350; Eckhardt, Wilhelm Alfred: "Das Protokoll von Ravenna 877 über die Kaiserkrönung Karls des Kahlen". *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 23, 1967,

point forward, the papacy was the only legitimising authority regarding the western emperorship.<sup>67</sup> This authoritative role was reinforced in the proclamation of Charles' spouse, Richildis, as empress in Tortona<sup>68</sup> – an act that Charles the Bald could have understood in terms of a dynastic emperorship and thus as an act directed against the competition of the East Frankish ruling elite. An imperial coronation of the spouse was neither

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pp. 295–311; Arnold 2005, pp. 90–100: “Indem Johannes VIII. die göttliche Bestimmung bekannt gibt und als Mittler in der Kaiserkrönung vollzieht, wird die bisherige konsolidierende und konstituierende Bedeutung nun auf den Papst bezogen und in ihm überhaupt erst motiviert” (p. 95); Scholz 2006, pp. 228–229. The reason for this synod might have been Charles the Bald's defeat at the hands of Louis the Younger at Andernach on 8 October 876. After this loss of prestige, Charles would have tried to improve his imperial position through papal mediation (a strategy that Louis II had already pursued after his brief captivity in southern Italy). The pope's claim becomes quite clear in a sermon before the present bishops; cf. RI,I,4,3, no. 273; Konzilien (MGH Conc. 5), no. 8, pp. 64–66: *Neque enim sibi honorem presumptuose adsumpsit ut imperator fieret, sed tamquam desideratus, optatus, postulatus a nobis et a deo vocatus et honorificatus ad defendendam religionem et Christi ubique servos tuendos humiliter atque oboedienter accessit operaturus et roboraturus in imperio summam pacem et tranquillitatem, et in ecclesia dei iustitiam et exaltationem* (p. 65, l. 34–39). The papal ‘Kaisererhebung’ had been completed *secundum priscam consuetudinem* (p. 65, l. 25). The enhancement of the papal ceremony is articulated in almost all documents referring to the imperial context. See also Eichmann 1942, p. 53: “Es ist von Interesse, wie die Rollen hier verteilt sind: neben der göttlichen Vorwahl ist es der von der römischen Kirche und dem römischen Volk einhellig gebilligte Entschluß des Papstes, der zum Imperium beruft”. The aims John VIII pursued also become clear in two letters (February and May 877) addressed to Charles the Bald, in which he begins his calls for protection indicating that ‘he had chosen him over another’ (*quasi non vos specialiter ex omnibus et pre omnibus amaverit [...] vel quasi nos non vos [...] in imperium coronaverimus*; Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae, ep. 32, p. 31, l. 27 f.) respectively over the rest (*vestram per ceteris elegit*; ep. 56, p. 51, l. 1–2) and made him emperor (with regard to the two letters see also RI,I,4,3, nos. 229, 261).

67 See also a letter by John VIII to the episcopate in the realm of Louis the German: [P]er apostolicae sedis privilegium cunctorum favoribus approbatum sceptris imperialibus sublimavit (Iohannis VIII. papae epistolae passim collectae, ep. 7, p. 321, l. 34–35).

68 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 523; RI,I,4,3, no. 283. Previously, John VIII had prepared an honourable arrival for Charles the Bald (RI,I,4,3, no. 279) and moved with him across Pavia (no. 280) to Tortona (no. 282).

completely new in the history of the Carolingian empire, nor was it subject to any special regulations.<sup>69</sup>

If Charles' position against the East Frankish kings had been more apparent during his first campaign in Italy, it most certainly would have prevented the protracted conflict he had with the sons of Louis the German. However, the situation was different now. Threatened by Carloman, who advanced into Italy with his military forces, Charles – together with John VIII – withdrew to Tortona.<sup>70</sup> Since the military assistance Charles requested from the West Frankish and Burgundian elites went unfulfilled for political reasons, Charles decided to return across the Alps. Charles died on the way back on 6 September 877.<sup>71</sup> Despite being a papal favourite, Charles' son, Louis the Stammerer, limited his rule to the West Frankish Empire because he lacked the power base and therefore neither sought the Italic kingship, nor pursued the emperorship.<sup>72</sup>

In Italy, Carloman was able to assert his authority after an obeisance of the Italic magnates in Pavia;<sup>73</sup> however, on account of his illness, he could not maintain this position for long.<sup>74</sup> Despite having already informed the pope of his plans to come to Rome and having received the pope's request to commence with negotiations about renewing the papal-imperial pact, Carloman's poor health prevented him from pursuing the imperial coronation.<sup>75</sup>

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69 See Zey, Claudia: “Imperatrix, si venerit Romam...”. Zu den Krönungen von Kaiserinnen im Mittelalter”. *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 60, 2004, pp. 3–51.

70 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 519, 522, 523, 530.

71 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 524, 525; Hack, Achim Thomas: *Alter, Krankheit, Tod und Herrschaft im frühen Mittelalter. Das Beispiel der Karolinger*. (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 56). Hiersemann: Stuttgart 2009, p. 198–206.

72 Cf. Fried, Johannes: “Boso von Vienne oder Ludwig der Stammler? Der Kaiserkandidat Johanns VIII.”. *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 32, 1976, pp. 193–208; Brühl, Carlrichard: “Karolingische Miszellen”. *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 44, 1988, pp. 33–35; Id.: *Deutschland – Frankreich. Die Geburt zweier Völker*. Böhlau: Cologne / Vienna 1990, p. 370 and p. 512–513; Arnold 2005, pp. 103–104; Scholz 2006, p. 230 note 1068; RI,I,4,3, no. 491.

73 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 531.

74 Cf. Hack 2009, pp. 212–214.

75 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 531, 537, 543, 544, 545, 550, 551, 553, 567, 569, 575; RI,I,4,3, nos. 285, 289, 878. Carloman had promised protection to the Roman church; cf. RI,I,4,3, no. 305, 345.

Due to Carloman's illness, John VIII wrote to the Melanese bishop, Anspert, in the spring of 879, stating that no king could be consecrated without his approval. Anspert was forbidden to undertake any unauthorized actions because it was the papacy alone that could appoint a candidate and bestow the emperorship.<sup>76</sup> In addition to coronating the emperor, the papacy further claimed its selective authority with regard to the Italic king. With this in mind, the pope planned a meeting in Rome.<sup>77</sup> This request, which implicitly signalled that the Italic king was to become emperor,<sup>78</sup> may also be interpreted as a reaction to Charles the Bald's two-year-reign. Along these lines, the papacy may have wanted an Italic king to become emperor; the close proximity of the emperor to Rome would offer obvious and immediate advantages concerning matters of protection. Thus, with his request, John VIII re-established the situation which had been prevalent under Louis II, when the emperor was also the Italic king.

Nevertheless, the emperorship remained vacant from October 877 to February 881. During this time, Charles the Fat, the last son of Louis the German, benefited from the death of his brother, Carloman, and became heir of the Italic kingship.<sup>79</sup> Having been invited by John VIII,<sup>80</sup> he was able to move to Italy and assume the dominion over it in January 880, in the presence of the

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76 Cf. Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae, ep. 163, p. 133, l. 32–34: *Et ideo antea nullum absque nostro consensu regem debetis recipere, nam ipse, qui a nobis est ordinandus in imperium, a nobis primum atque potissimum debet esse vocatus atque electus*. See also RI,I,4,3, no. 495. The idea that Carloman was unable to exercise the dominion within the Italic realm can also be found in the “Annals of Fulda”, which report that John VIII had attempted to transfer this realm to Boson (cf. *Annales Fuldenses*, a. 878, pp. 91–92).

77 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 558; RI,I,1, no. 1538a.

78 See also Arnold 2005, p. 191–192.

79 Initially, Carloman had – at least by papal tradition – prompted John VIII to take over the responsibility for the Italic kingdom (cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 575; RI,I,4,3, no. 557), but then designated his brother Charles shortly before his death (no. 586). Aside from this, Louis the Younger was intended for the succession in Bavaria (no. 557); see also Hack 2009, pp. 260–266.

80 During Carloman's lifetime (spring of 879), John VIII got in touch with Charles the Fat and awaited his arrival (cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 559, 562, see also no. 569; RI,I,4,3, nos. 501, 524). Likewise, he was in contact with Carloman and Louis the Younger (no. 517).



pope in Ravenna.<sup>81</sup> Afterwards, Charles returned across the Alps to meet his brother, Louis the Younger.<sup>82</sup> In a letter addressed to Charles, John VIII communicated his surprise regarding Charles' idleness and reiterated the church's need for protection. In return, the pope promised to grant Charles "honour and fame" (*honor et gloria*). This is commonly understood by scholars to be a promise of the emperorship.<sup>83</sup>

Only on his second journey to Italy in February 881 was Charles the Fat (possibly together with his wife, Richgard) proclaimed emperor by John VIII in Rome.<sup>84</sup> Because the protection and recognition of the papal rights were of utmost importance to the pope on this occasion, the pope initially prohibited Charles from entering Rome until the matters were settled.<sup>85</sup> This measure can be interpreted as a sign of papal strength towards the Frankish king. The letters previously sent to Charles also focussed on these issues.<sup>86</sup> A few years later, pope Stephen V made it once again clear

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81 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 591, 598, 600, 601; RI,I,4,3, no. 613. Charles the Fat probably moved to Italy without informing John VIII; the pope expressed his astonishment about this development in a letter; cf. RI,I,4,3, no. 606.

82 Cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 618, 619, 621.

83 Cf. Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae, ep. 224, p. 199, l. 22. In addition, John VIII called on Charles to send a legation to Rome whose task it was to conclude the negotiation process of the contracts (cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 610; RI,I,4,3, nos. 619, 622). See also Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae, ep. 251, p. 219–220: *Et quia pro exaltatione atque utilitate sedis apostolice totiusque terre sancti Petri defensione vos prompta mente desudare velle cognoscimus, in quo scilicet vestri desiderii affectu piissimo et divinam circa regiam gloriam vestram habebitis adiutricem et placabilem maiestatem et dignam non solum in hoc seculo, sed etiam in celesti postmodum regione retributionem procul dubio recipietis* (concerning this, see also RI,I,4,3, no. 636).

84 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 646; RI,I,4,3, no. 660; RI,I,1, no. 1679; Arnold 2005, pp. 76–87. For the first time, an emperor and an empress were crowned simultaneously (see Zey 2004, p. 13).

85 Cf. RI,I,3,1, no. 646; RI,I,4,3, no. 658. Whether a *Pactum* was completed, must remain open because of the lack of tradition. The importance that John VIII attributed to the papal protection is also evident in this case. The same applies to the run-up to the imperial coronation ('Kaisererhebung') of Charles the Bald as well as in correspondence with Carloman. (cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 610, 622, 623, 625, 626, 629, 631, 646).

86 Cf. note 79 as well as RI,I,4,3, no. 646.

to Charles the Fat that he owed his emperorship to the Roman church.<sup>87</sup> The papacy had established itself as an inevitable legitimising authority.

After his initial journey to Italy in November 879, Charles paid five extended visits south of the Alps.<sup>88</sup> During this time, he issued a significant number of charters for Italic receivers. Nonetheless, he, too, had not been able to satisfy the protective needs of the papacy.<sup>89</sup> Eventually, once he was removed by the East Frankish magnates in November 887 – a removal that had been primarily enforced by Arnulf of Carinthia – Francia disintegrated into several kingdoms.<sup>90</sup> The first reaction within the Frankish realm after the removal of Charles the Fat was visible in Italy. With neither the consent of the pope, nor having contacted Arnulf, Berengar I of Italy took over the Italic kingship in Pavia.<sup>91</sup> The emperorship remained vacant until 891.

87 Cf. *Fragmenta Registri Stephani V. papae*, ed. Caspar, Erich. (MGH Epistolae 7). Berlin 1912, Rpt. 1993, no. 14, p. 341, l. 2–4: *Novimus itaque vestram gloriam ad huius ecclesiae decentiam et exaltationem summopere anhelare, prout talis filius tantae matris honorificentia, a qua totius imperii diadema suscepit.*

88 November 879 (RI,I,3,1, no. 591) to April / May 880 (no. 621); October / November 880 (no. 632) to May 881 (no. 667); October / November 881 (no. 670) to the end of March 882 (no. 696), April 883 (no. 702) to November 883 (no. 731), early November 884 (no. 736) to the end of April / early May 885 (no. 748) and February / March 886 (no. 753) to April / May 886 (no. 760).

89 Both John VIII and Stephan V repeatedly requested protection from Charles the Fat, yet they did not receive any reaction (cf. RI,I,3,1, nos. 658, 671, 680, 690, 693; RI,I,4,3, nos. 666, 674, 695, 714).

90 Cf. Keller, Hagen / Althoff, Gerd: *Die Zeit der späten Karolinger und Ottonen. Krisen und Konsolidierungen, 888–1024.* (Gebhardt. Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte 3). Klett-Cotta: Stuttgart 2008, pp. 45–53; Kortüm, Hans-Henning: “Multi reguli in Europa ... excrevere”. Das ostfränkische Reich und seine Nachbarn”. In: Fuchs, Franz / Schmid, Peter (eds.): *Kaiser Arnolf. Das ostfränkische Reich am Ende des 9. Jahrhunderts (Regensburger Kolloquium, 9–11. 12. 1999).* (Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte Beiheft 19 Reihe B). Beck: Munich 2002, pp. 68–88; MacLean, Simon: *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century: Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire.* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought. Fourth Series). Cambridge University Press: New York et al. 2003, pp. 169–185; Brühl 1990, pp. 368–389; see also Hack 2009, pp. 172–183 and pp. 266–274.

91 Cf. *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern 751–918 (926 / 962)*, vol. 3: *Die Regesten des Regnum Italiae und der burgundischen Regna*, part 2: *Das Regnum Italiae in der Zeit der Thronkämpfe und Reichsteilungen 888*

With Louis II, who was proclaimed emperor half a century after the foundation of the Western empire in the Middle Ages, as well as with Charles the Bald and Charles the Fat, the understanding of the emperorship changed decisively compared to that of Louis I and Lothair I: the papacy regained its influence regarding the bestowal of the emperorship. For the first time since the proclamation of Charlemagne, the pope acted as the constituting and legitimising authority in the coronation of Louis II. Although this by no means showed an irreversible break with the previous practice, the successive development paved the way for Charles the Bald and Charles the Fat (due to the papal advantage resulting from Louis II's death without male offspring).

From this point onwards, there was no alternative to the papal ceremony as the constituting element of the emperorship, even if Wido tried to cut the papal power of disposition and selection by means of dynastic succession, i.e. by having Pope Formosus make Guy's son co-emperor. In this sense, the papacy had become the sole legitimising authority. Louis II's lack of male heirs meant that, for the first time since Charlemagne, the emperorship in Francia was vacant; the tradition of passing on the emperorship from father to son effectively came to an end. Although the emperorship initially remained within the Carolingian family, the papacy now had leverage to enforce its own interests – at first still limited to the Carolingian family, but later extending the proclamation of the emperor beyond the Carolingians. Only Otto the Great, with the imperial coronation of his son Otto II, was able to restore the initial situation. For the fifth<sup>92</sup> (and the last) time in the history of the Western emperorship, a son was elevated to the role of em-

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(850)-926, ed. by Herbert Zielinski. Böhlau: Cologne / Weimar / Vienna 1998, nos. 858, 859; RI,I,3,1, no. 793. A singular source reports a designation of Berengar by Charles the Fat (cf. *Gesta Berengarii imperatoris*, ed. Winterfeld, Paul von. [MGH Poeta Latini aevi Carolini 4,1]. Berlin 1899, Rpt. 2000, I, p. 359 (cf. to this information RI,I,3,1, no. 793; RI,I,3,2, no. 858; Giese, Wolfgang: "Designative Nachfolgeregelungen im Regnum Italiae (891–950)". *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 68, 2012, pp. 506–508: "Die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass Regest Nr. 858 den historischen Tatsachen entspricht, ist mehr als gering"). Berengar was a grandson of Louis the Pious on his mother Gisela's side.

92 Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, Louis the Pious and Lothair I, Lothair I and Louis II, Guy and Lambert of Spoleto, Otto I and Otto II.

peror within the lifetime of his imperial father.<sup>93</sup> But, in contrast to the first and second co-emperors in the Frankish empire, Otto II was made emperor by a pope. The development of the papacy into the sole, generally accepted legitimising authority, as outlined here, had lasting effects.

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93 In addition, Henry VI was appointed by his father to Caesar in 1186 in Milan; cf. Böhmer, J. F., *Regesta Imperii IV. Lothar III. und ältere Staufer 1125–1197*, part 3: *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Heinrich VI. 1165 (1190)-1197*, ed. by Johann Friedrich Böhmer and revised by Gerhard Baaken. Böhlau: Cologne / Vienna 1972, no. 5c.

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## Imperial Aspirations in Provence and Burgundy\*

The recent decades have seen a rebirth of interest in the kingdoms of Provence and (Upper-)Burgundy, which were merged shortly before the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. After the turn of the millennium many monographs were published, especially in France, such as those authored by Florian Mazel (2002), François Demotz (2008, 2012), Nicolas Carrier (2012) and Nathanaël Nimmegeers (2014).<sup>1</sup> They were flanked by several anthologies: the first one, entitled *Des Burgondes au royaume de Bourgogne*, was published in 2002,<sup>2</sup> followed by *Le royaume de Bourgogne autour de l'an Mil*, in 2008,<sup>3</sup> and *De la mer du Nord à la méditerranée*.

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- 1 Mazel, Florian: *La noblesse et l'Église en Provence, fin X<sup>e</sup>–début XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle. L'exemple des familles d'Agoult-Simiane, de Baux et de Marseille*. (CTHS. Histoire 4). Éd. du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques: Paris 2002; Demotz, François: *La Bourgogne, dernier des royaumes carolingiens (855–1056). Roi, pouvoirs et élites autour du Léman*. (Mémoires et documents publiés par la société d'histoire de la Suisse romande 4 sér/IX). Société d'histoire de la Suisse romande: Lausanne 2008; Id.: *L'an 888. Le royaume de Bourgogne – une puissance européenne au bord du Léman*. (Collection le savoir suisse 83). Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes: Lausanne 2012; Carrier, Nicolas: *Les Usages de la servitude. Seigneurs et paysans dans le royaume de Bourgogne (VI<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*. (Cultures et civilisations médiévales 59). Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne: Paris 2012; Nimmegeers, Nathanaël: *Évêques entre Bourgogne et Provence (V<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> siècle). La province ecclésiastique de Vienne au haut Moyen Âge*. Presses Universitaires de Rennes: Rennes 2014.
- 2 Paravy, Pierrette (ed.): *Des burgondes au royaume de Bourgogne (V<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècle). Espaces politique et civilisation (Journées d'études des 26 et 27 octobre 2001 aux Archives Départementales de l'Isère, Grenoble)*. Académie delphinale: Grenoble 2002.
- 3 Guilleré, Christian et al. (eds.): *Le royaume de Bourgogne autour de l'an Mil (Actes du séminaire, Centre Interuniversitaire d'Histoire et d'Archéologie Médiévales, Lyon, 15–16 mai 2003)*. (Langages, littératures, sociétés. Collection sociétés, religions, politiques 8). Université de Savoie: Chambéry 2008.

*Francia media, une région au cœur de l'Europe (c. 840–c. 1050)* in 2011 (resulting from a conference held in 2006).<sup>4</sup> A fourth and a fifth book dealing with Saint-Maurice, the ‘heart’ of the kingdom of Burgundy, were produced in 2012 and 2015.<sup>5</sup> Other volumes arising from conferences recently held at Freiburg,<sup>6</sup> Paris<sup>7</sup> and Besançon<sup>8</sup> are forthcoming. They shed light on the kingdom(s) beyond the Alps, but hardly mention the not-so-glorious time when Rudolph II, the king of Burgundy, was also king of Italy. In Italy, however, the focus has shifted from the king’s perspective to the high lay and ecclesiastical aristocracy, as e.g. the very interesting studies of Edoardo Manarini reveal.<sup>9</sup> But why not focus on Rudolph’s

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- 4 Gaillard, Michèle et al. (eds.): *De la mer du Nord à la méditerranée. Francia media, une région au cœur de l'Europe (c. 840–c. 1050) (Actes du colloque de Metz, Luxembourg, Trèves, 8–11 février 2006)*. (Publications du CLUDEM 25). CLUDEM: Luxembourg 2011.
  - 5 Brocard, Nicole et al. (eds.): *Autour de Saint Maurice (Actes du colloque. Politique, société et construction identitaire, 29 septembre–2 octobre 2009, Besançon / Saint Maurice)*. Fondation des Archives Historiques de l'Abbaye de Saint-Maurice: Saint-Maurice 2012; Andenmatten, Bernard / Ripart, Laurent (eds.): *L'abbaye de Saint-Maurice d'Agaune 515–2015. Histoire et archéologie*, 2 vols. Infolio: Gollion 2015.
  - 6 Nowak, Jessika (ed.): *Deutsch-französisches Forschungsatelier 'Junge Mediävistik' I. Das Königreich Burgund (888–1032)*. Rombach: Freiburg i. Br. 2017.
  - 7 Vannotti, Françoise (ed.): *Honneur à Saint Maurice! 1500 ans de culte. Lieux et supports de la liturgie (Actes du colloque, Paris, 2–4 avril 2014)* (in print).
  - 8 Brocard, Nicole / Wagner, Anne (eds.): *Les royaumes de Bourgogne jusqu'en 1032. L'image du Royaume de Bourgogne à travers sa culture et sa religion (Actes du colloque, Besançon, 2–4 octobre 2014)* (in print).
  - 9 Edoardo Manarini is working especially on the Hucpoldings, see e.g. his PhD-thesis *Gli Hucpoldingi. Poteri, relazioni, consapevolezza di un gruppo parentale ai vertici del regno italico (secc. IX–XII)*. Università degli studi di Torino 2014; Id.: “Gli Hucpoldingi. Una parentela marchionale ai vertici del regno italico”. In: *Studiare il Medioevo oggi (III Seminario di giovani studiosi e studiosi della SISMED, Bologna 17 aprile 2015)*, retrieved 10 December 2015, from [https://www.academia.edu/11765103/Gli\\_Hucpoldingi.\\_Una\\_parentela\\_marchionale\\_ai\\_vertici\\_del\\_regno\\_italico](https://www.academia.edu/11765103/Gli_Hucpoldingi._Una_parentela_marchionale_ai_vertici_del_regno_italico).– See also Bougard, François: “Lo stato e le élites fra 888 e 962: il regno d'Italia a confronto (brevi considerazioni)”. In: Valenti, Marco / Wickham, Chris (eds.): *Italy, 888–962. A Turning*

ambitions fostered in the *Regnum Italiae*<sup>10</sup> and compare his aims to those of his predecessors and contemporaries from Provence? Why not contrast his attitude with that of Louis, surnamed the Blind,<sup>11</sup> who was the king of Provence from 890 to 928 and who went to the *Regnum Italiae* in 900 in order to obtain the imperial crown? And why not confront it with the attitude of Hugh of Arles<sup>12</sup>, “the de facto regent for the incapacitated

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*Point (IV Seminario Internazionale Cassero di Poggio Imperiale a Poggibonsi (SI), 4–6 dicembre 2009). (Seminari internazionali del Centro Interuniversitario per la Storia e l’Archeologia dell’Alto Medioevo 4). Brepols: Turnhout 2014, pp. 77–84.*

- 10 See e.g. Grütter, Max: “Rudolf II. von Hochburgund. Versuch zu einer Deutung seiner Politik aus den mittelalterlichen Zeitanschauungen”. *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Geschichte* 9, 1929, pp. 169–187; Trog, Hans: *Rudolf I. und Rudolf II. von Hochburgund*. Detloff: Basel 1887; Poupardin, René: *Le Royaume de Bourgogne (888–1038). Études sur les origines du royaume d’Arles*. (Bibliothèque de l’École des Hautes Études, 4. Section Sciences Historiques et Philologiques 163). Champion: Paris 1907 [Slatkine Reprints: Genève 1974], chap. II: Le règne de Rodolfe II (912–937), pp. 29–65, esp. pp. 34–48.
- 11 On Louis, see Poupardin, René: *Le Royaume de Provence sous les carolingiens (855–933?)*. (Bibliothèque de l’École des Hautes Études 131). Bouillon: Paris 1901 [Slatkine: Genève 1974], esp. chap. V: Les expéditions de Louis de Provence en Italie (900–905), pp. 164–189, chap. VI: Les dernières années de Louis l’Aveugle. Hugues d’Arles et Charles-Constantin (905–933), pp. 190–242; Zielinski, Herbert: “Ludwig der Blinde”. In: *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 15, 1987, pp. 331–334, retrieved 23 May 2015, from <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/ppn100952496.html>; Prévité-Orton, Charles William: “Italy and Provence. 900–950”. *English Historical Review* 32, 1917, pp. 335–347; Bautier, Robert-Henri: “Aux origines du royaume de Provence. De la sédition avortée de Boson à la royauté légitime de Louis”. *Provence historique* 23, 1973, pp. 41–68 [again in: Id.: *Recherches sur l’histoire de la France médiévale. Des Mérovingiens aux premiers Capétiens*. (Variorum Collected Studies Series 351). Ashgate Publishing Group: Aldershot/Hampshire 1991, pp. 41–68. On Louis’ imperial plans, see Schulze, Albert: *Kaiserpolitik und Einheitsgedanke in den karolingischen Nachfolgestaaten (876–962) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Urkundenmaterials*. Der Reichsbote: Berlin 1926, p. 61.
- 12 On Hugh of Arles, see e.g. Gingins-la-Sarraz, Frédéric Charles Jean: “Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire des royaumes de Provence et de Bourgogne jurane. II.

Louis of Provence”,<sup>13</sup> who seized control of the *Regnum Italiae* and replaced Rudolph II in 926?

The sources illustrating the royal perspective are manageable and the material is conveniently available, thanks to Herbert Zielinski who recently edited three volumes of the *Regesta Imperii* dealing with the *Regnum Italiae*<sup>14</sup> and the kingdom of Provence in those years.<sup>15</sup> A further volume of the *Regesta* giving attention to the *regnum* of Burgundy will likely follow in 2018, edited by Andrea Hauff; the charters of the kings of Burgundy were already published by Theodor Schieffer in 1977.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, we have at our disposal the older editions of the Italian charters assembled by Schiaparelli

Les Hugonides”. *Archiv für Schweizerische Geschichte* 9, 1853, pp. 85–260; Bellani, Sara: “Politiche familiari e rapporti di fedeltà nel secolo X. Un approccio prosopografico ai regni di Ugo di Provenza e di Berengario II”. *Ricerche storiche. Rivista semestrale del Centro Piombinese di Studi Storici* 27, 1997, pp. 127–148; Vignodelli, Giacomo: “King, Bishops and Canons. Political and Patrimonial Action of King Hugh of Arles, 926–945” (paper presented at the IMC at Leeds, July 2015; retrieved 23 November 2015, from [https://www.academia.edu/13884555/King\\_Bishops\\_and\\_Canons\\_Political\\_and\\_Patrimonial\\_Action\\_of\\_King\\_Hugh\\_of\\_Arles\\_926-945](https://www.academia.edu/13884555/King_Bishops_and_Canons_Political_and_Patrimonial_Action_of_King_Hugh_of_Arles_926-945)).

- 13 Koziol, Geoffrey: *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Royal Diplomas. The West Frankish Kingdom (840–987)*. Brepols: Turnhout 2012, p. 249.
- 14 J. F. Böhmer. *Regesta Imperii*, I,3. *Das Regnum Italiae und die burgundischen Regna. 840–926 (962). Das Regnum Italiae in der Zeit der Thronkämpfe und Reichsteilungen 888 (850)–926*, ed. by Herbert Zielinski. Böhlau: Cologne et al. 1998; J. F. Böhmer. *Regesta Imperii*, I,3. *Das Regnum Italiae und die burgundischen Regna. 840–926 (962). Das Regnum Italiae vom Regierungsantritt Hugos von Vienne bis zur Kaiserkrönung Ottos des Großen 926–962*, ed. by Herbert Zielinski. Böhlau: Vienna et al. 2006.
- 15 J. F. Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii*, I,3. *Das Regnum Italiae und die burgundischen Regna. Die burgundischen Regna 855–1032. Niederburgund bis zur Vereinigung mit Hochburgund (855–940er Jahre)*, ed. by Herbert Zielinski. Böhlau: Vienna et al. 2013.
- 16 Schieffer, Theodor (ed.): *Die Urkunden der burgundischen Rudolfinger. Regum Burgundiae e stirpe Rudolfina diplomata et acta*. (MGH DD Burg.). *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*: Munich 1977 [1983].



more than a hundred years ago<sup>17</sup> and the charters of the kings of Provence edited by Poupardin in 1920.<sup>18</sup>

These editions all shed light on the three rulers, revealing their priorities and demonstrating their divergent behaviour as regards the imperial crown:

The first protagonist, Louis, managed to obtain the imperial crown from Pope Benedict IV in 901, but was forced by Berengar to turn to Provence in 902 and had to promise never again to set foot in the *Regnum Italiae*; however, he still attempted to reconquer the *Regnum Italiae*, failed, was blinded and henceforth led a shadowy existence in Provence.<sup>19</sup>

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- 17 Schiaparelli, Luigi (ed.): *I diplomi di Berengario I*. (Fonti per la storia d'Italia 35). Tipografi del Senato / Forzani: Rome 1903 [Bottega d'Erasmus: Turin 1960 / Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo: Rome 1966]; Id. (ed.): *I diplomi di Guido e di Lamberto*. (Fonti per la storia d'Italia 36). Tipografi del Senato / Forzani: Rome 1906 [Bottega d'Erasmus: Turin 1960 / Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo: Rome 1970]; Id. (ed.): *I diplomi italiani di Lodovico III e di Rodolfo II*. (Fonti per la storia d'Italia 37). Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo: Rome 1908 [Tipografi del Senato / Forzani: Rome 1910 / Bottega d'Erasmus: Turin 1960 / Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo: Rome 1970]; Id.: "I diplomi dei re d'Italia. Ricerche storico-diplomatiche 3: I diplomi di Lodovico III". *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano* 29, 1908, pp. 105–207; Id. (ed.): *I diplomi di Ugo e di Lotario, di Berengario II e di Adalberto*. (Fonti per la storia d'Italia 38). Tipografi del Senato: Rome 1924 [Bottega d'Erasmus: Turin 1966].
- 18 Poupardin, René: *Recueil des actes des rois des Provence (855–928)*. (Chartes et diplômes relatifs à l'histoire de France 5). Imprimerie nationale: Paris 1920. – Furthermore there are, of course, the narrative sources, e.g. Liutprand, Flodoard and Constantine Porphyrogenitus.
- 19 For more information see the literature listed in annotation 11. – Of course Louis maintained the claim of being emperor. After his defeat one still finds in his own charters the *Signum Ludovici serenissimi augusti* and phrases like *more imperiali propriis manibus subter eum firmavimus* (Poupardin, *Receuil* 1920, n. 50, pp. 93: May 16, 908). – But as Constance Brittain Bouchard emphasizes "no one outside of lower Burgundy seems to have paid him the slightest bit of attention" (Bouchard, Constance Brittain: "Burgundy and Provence, 879–1032". In: Reuter, Timothy [ed.]: *The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. III: c. 900–c. 1024*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1999, pp. 328–345, esp. p. 334).

The second protagonist, Rudolph II of Burgundy, became king of Italy, but never reached for the imperial crown.<sup>20</sup> A lack of support eventually forced him to leave the *Regnum Italiae*. However, instead of disappearing into political obscurity and vegetating in darkness in Burgundy, he was ruling quite successfully. Furthermore, he resisted when some malcontent magnates invited him to return to Italy. He did not follow their request. This decision was beneficial to him, because he probably received compensation. According to Liutprand, Provence was ceded to him (or at least the lands Hugh had held in Provence before becoming king of the *Regnum Italiae*) in exchange for the promise not to interfere in the *Regnum Italiae* anymore.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, the third one, Hugh of Arles, who had only been a kind of regent before ascending to the throne of the *Regnum Italiae*, tried to get hold of the imperial crown, but failed in the attempt to become emperor. Nonetheless, he was at least able to transfer the royal dignity to his son Lothair.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, we have to deal with three quite different fates: an inglorious emperor from Provence, a ruler from Burgundy disinterested in emperorship and a king whose roots were in Provence, who was longing in vain for the

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20 See e.g. Grütter, “Rudolf II. von Hochburgund” 1929, pp. 169–187. – Only Rudolf Hiestand (Hiestand, Rudolf: *Byzanz und das Regnum Italicum im 10. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur ideologischen und machtpolitischen Auseinandersetzung zwischen Osten und Westen*. [Geist und Werk der Zeiten 9]. Fretz & Wasmuth: Zurich 1964, p. 142) thinks to spot some signs Rudolph did, but his argumentation is not convincing. The formula “*absque imperiali et nostrorum iudicium palatinorum iudicio*” in a charter dated November 9, 924 (Schiaparelli, *Diplomi Italiani di Lodovico III e di Rodolfo* [Forzani: Rome 1910], [D R II] VII, p. 115) may only be the result of the employment of Berengar’s chancellor who used this phrasing. Furthermore, it is highly questionable that Rudolph’s primary goal by investing Boniface, his brother-in-law, as margrave of Tuscany was to pave the way to the Tiber and to Rome.

21 *His temporibus, Italienses in Burgundiam ob Rodulfum, ut adveniat, mittunt. Quod Hugo rex ut agnovit, nuntiis ad eundem directis omnem terram, quam in Gallia ante regni susceptionem tenuit, Rodolfo dedit, atque ab eo iusiurandum ne aliquando in Italiam veniret accepit* (Liutprand: “Antapodosis”, III, c. 48, p. 93. In: *Liutprandi Cremonensis Opera Omnia*, ed. by Paolo Chiesa. [Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 156]. Brepols: Turnhout 1998).

22 For more information see the literature listed in annotation 12.

imperial crown and who ended up being stigmatised as a tyrant.<sup>23</sup> We shall ponder whether it was mere coincidence that the rulers harbouring imperial aspirations originated from Provence, while the ruler who was not vying for the imperial title came from Burgundy. In addition, we shall look for factors such as family ties, assets and properties in the *Regnum Italiae*, or such as relations to the Papacy, which might have influenced the decision to pursue or not to pursue the imperial crown.

### Family ties and Carolingian background

One difference between Louis' and Hugh's yearning for the imperial crown on the one hand, and Rudolph's lack of any such desire on the other, was closely linked to the existence or non-existence of a direct blood lineage to the illustrious Carolingians. Grandfathers or great-grandfathers of both Louis of Provence and Hugh of Arles had been emperors: Louis the Blind was the son of Boso of Vienne and importantly also of Ermengard, the daughter of Emperor Louis II. Moreover Louis was (*quasi*) a *filius adoptivus* of Emperor Charles the Fat,<sup>24</sup> and in the Italian charters he referred to his imperial ancestors.<sup>25</sup> Drawing on similar roots, Hugh of Arles was the son

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23 On the history of the *Regnum Italiae* in those days, see e.g. Sergi, Giuseppe: "The kingdom of Italy". In: Reuter, Timothy (ed.): *The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. III: 900–1024*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1999, pp. 346–371, esp. pp. 346–351; cf. also Hlawitschka, Eduard: *Franken, Alemannen und Burgunder in Oberitalien (774–962). Zum Verständnis der fränkischen Königsherrschaft in Italien*. Alber: Freiburg i. Br. 1969, esp. pp. 67–94.

24 [...] *obviam quem imperator ad Hrenum villa Chirihheim veniens honorifice ad hominem sibi quasi adoptivum filium eum iniunxit*. In: *Annales Fuldenses sive Annales regni Francorum orientalis*, ed. by Friedrich Kurze. (MGH SS rer. Germ. 7). Hahn: Hannover 1891 [1978/1993], ad a. 887, p. 115; Hlawitschka, Eduard: "Adoptionen im mittelalterlichen Königshaus". In: Schulz, Knut (ed.): *Beiträge zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Herbert Helbig zum 65. Geburtstag*. Böhlau: Cologne et al. 1976, pp. 1–32; Ewig, Eugen: "Kaiser Lothars Urenkel, Ludwig von Vienne, der präsumtive Nachfolger Kaiser Karls III.". In: Elbern, Victor H. (ed.): *Das erste Jahrtausend. Kultur und Kunst im werdenden Abendland an Rhein und Ruhr*. Verlag L. Schwann: Düsseldorf 1962 [21963], vol. I, pp. 336–343.

25 [...] *antecessorum nostrorum dona tam regum quam et imperatorum* [...] (Schiaparelli, *Diplomi Italiani di Lodovico III e di Rodolfo* [Forzani: Rome 1910],

of Theobald, Count of Arles, and of Bertha, the illegitimate daughter of Lothair II, and therefore the great-grandson of Lothair I.<sup>26</sup> Rudolph II also referred in his Italian charters to his imperial predecessors,<sup>27</sup> but he could not point to any ancestors who had been crowned emperor.<sup>28</sup>

To be sure, having and referring to imperial relatives did not represent a mandatory requirement for aspiring emperors in those days. Rudolph's opponent Berengar of Friuli<sup>29</sup> who had succeeded in being crowned em-

[D L III] II, p. 6); [...] *a Karolo imperatore avunculo scilicet nostro* [...] (ibid., [D L III] IV, p. 12).

- 26 On Hugh's charters, see Bougard, François: "Charles le Chauve, Bérenger, Hugues de Provence. Action politique et production documentaire dans les diplômes à destination de l'Italie". In: Dartmann, Christoph et al. (eds.): *Zwischen Pragmatik und Performanz. Dimensionen mittelalterlicher Schriftkultur*. (Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 18). Brepols: Turnhout 2011, pp. 57–84.
- 27 *Si antecessorum nostrorum regum videlicet sive imperatorum ecclesiastice concessa privilegia etiam nostrae largitatis auctoritate roboramus* (Schiaparelli, *Diplomi Italiani di Lodovico III e di Rodolfo* [Forzani: Rome 1910] [D R II] IX, p. 121; cf. ibid., I, p. 96; IV, p. 104; VII, p. 116; VIII, p. 119; X, p. 124).
- 28 Boso was the grandfather of Rudolph II. But the mother of Rudolph II, Willa of Provence, was not the daughter of Ermengard of Italy. When Boso's marriage with Ermengard took place in 878 Willa had already seen the light of day. – Only Rudolph's sister had been, according to Hlawitschka, married to Louis the Blind (Hlawitschka, Eduard: "Die verwandtschaftlichen Verbindungen zwischen dem hochburgundischen und dem niederburgundischen Königshaus". In: Schlögl, Waldemar [ed.]: *Grundwissenschaften und Geschichte. Festschrift für Peter Acht*. [Münchener historische Studien. Abteilung Geschichtliche Hilfswissenschaften 15]. Lassleben: Kallmünz 1976, pp. 28–57).
- 29 On Berengar, see e.g. Gabotto, Ferdinando: "Da Berengario I ad Arduino". *Archivio storico italiano* ser. 5, vol. 42, 1908, pp. 306–325; Pivano, Silvio: *Stato e Chiesa da Berengario I ad Arduino 888–1015*. Bocca: Turin 1908; Pastine, Onorato: *Il regno di Berengario I*. Papolo e Panozzo: Lonigo 1912; Hirsch, Paul: *Die Erhebung Berengars zum König von Italien. Geschichte des italienischen Königreiches unter Kaiser Berengar I*. Schmidt Universitäts-Buchhandlung: Strasbourg 1910; Arnaldi, Girolamo: "Berengario I, duca-marchese del Friuli, re d'Italia, imperatore". In: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 9, 1967, pp. 1–26; Sielaff, Frithjof: "Der ostfränkische Hof, Berengar von Friaul und Ludwig von Niederburgund". In: Scheil, Ursula (ed.): *Festschrift Adolf Hofmeister zum 70. Geburtstag*. Niemeyer: Halle 1955, vol. I, pp. 275–282; Rosenwein, Barbara H.: "The Family Politics of Berengar I, King of Italy (888–924)". *Speculum* 71, 1996, pp. 247–289; Ead.: "Friends and Family, Politics and Privilege in the Kingship of Berengar I". In: Cohn, Samuel Kline / Epstein, Steven A.

peror in 915 by the hands of John X certainly was the son of Gisela, the daughter of Louis the Pious. However, his opponent, Guy of Spoleto,<sup>30</sup> had substantial claims to the crown of Italy at his disposal and even got hold of the imperial crown without possessing this kind of maternal link to the Carolingian emperors.

### Patrimony, possessions and bonds in the *Regnum Italiae*

A further dissimilarity between Hugh and Rudolph II might have represented a crucial factor for nourishing or not nourishing imperial aspirations and for succeeding or failing to maintain the rule in the *Regnum Italiae* over a longer period: Hugh's family was deep-seated in the *Regnum Italiae*<sup>31</sup> while

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(eds.): *Portraits of Medieval and Renaissance Living. Essays in Memory of David Herlihy*. The University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, Mich. 1996, pp. 91–106; Viehmann, Karina (†): *Urkundenpraxis als Bild der politischen Ordnung. Berengar I. im nachkarolingischen Regnum Italiae (888–924)* (PhD-Thesis, Leipzig [2015], unpublished). – On the rule attributed to the ascendance, see esp. Isabella, Giovanni: “Between regnum and imperium: the Political Action and Kingship of Berengar I, 888–924, in the *Gesta Berengarii*”. (Paper held at the IMC in Leeds, 2014; retrieved 16 December 2015, from [https://www.academia.edu/7704771/Between\\_regnum\\_and\\_imperium\\_the\\_Political\\_Action\\_and\\_Kingship\\_of\\_Berengar\\_I\\_888-924\\_in\\_the\\_Gesta\\_Berengarii](https://www.academia.edu/7704771/Between_regnum_and_imperium_the_Political_Action_and_Kingship_of_Berengar_I_888-924_in_the_Gesta_Berengarii)). – On his charters, see Schiaparelli, *I diplomi di Berengario I* 1903; Id.: “I diplomi dei re d'Italia. Ricerche storico-diplomatiche 1: I diplomi di Berengario I”. *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano* 23, 1902, pp. 1–167.

30 On Guy of Spoleto, see e.g. Hlawitschka, Eduard: “Die Widonen in Dukat von Spoleto”. *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 63, 1983, pp. 44–90; Id.: “Kaiser Wido und das Westfrankenreich”. In: Althoff, Gerd et al. (eds.): *Person und Gemeinschaft im Mittelalter. Karl Schmid zum 65. Geburtstag*. Thorbecke: Sigmaringen 1988, pp. 187–198; Hiestand, *Byzanz* 1964, pp. 27–28, 45–82.

31 Guy of Spoleto's and Berengar's family were also deeply enrooted in the *Regnum Italiae*. The large possessions Berengar could dispose of allowed him to retreat to his stronghold, to his land near Verona, without renouncing his claim to power when his antagonist Rudolph II became king of the *Regnum Italiae*. Even after Berengar had been defeated at Fiorenzuola, near Piacenza, he seems to have kept a part of the *Regnum* before being murdered by one of his own men in April 924 (RI 1377, 1378, 1379). At least Constantine Porphyrogenitus – admittedly a quite dubious source – reports that Rudolph II and Berengar divided the *Regnum Italiae* after this combat (Constantine Porphyrogenitus: *De admini-*

Rudolph II lacked comparable ties. Hugh's mother Bertha of Lotharingia<sup>32</sup> married Albert II of Tuscany after her first husband Theobald of Arles had died and she gave birth to two sons of Albert II, Guy and Lambert, as well as to a daughter, Ermengard. Ermengard was wed to Adalbert I of Ivrea, whereas Guy became count and duke of Lucca and margrave of Tuscany following his father's death and espoused a very powerful Roman noblewoman, Marozia, who had allegedly been the mistress of Pope Sergius III and who knew how to influence and control his successors. When Guy deceased in 928, Lambert came into the possession of Lucca and Tuscany, but was soon deposed by Hugh who preferred to provide first his (full) brother Boso and then his illegitimate son Hubert with these possessions. Hugh established a huge network. His numerous relatives received important positions in Church, too. Hubert's brother Boso was appointed bishop of Piacenza, Hugh's cousin Manasses, archbishop of Arles, was put in charge of the bishoprics of Verona, Mantua and Trento and of the

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*strando imperio*, ed. by Gyula Moravcsik. English translation by Romilly James Heald Jenkins. [Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 1]. Dumbarton Oaks: Washington 1967, c. 26, p. 111). Rudolf Hiestand, who considers the narration as reliable, believes that the delimitation of the spheres of influence was only accomplishable because it took place between a king and an emperor (Hiestand, *Byzanz* 1964, p. 141). Mor (Mor, Carlo Guido: *Letà feudale*. Vallardi: Milan 1952, vol. I, p. 78) doubts that Constantine's report is correct, but Schiaparelli (Schiaparelli, Luigi: "I diploma dei re d'Italia. Ricerche storico-diplomatiche. Parte IV. I. Un diploma inedito di Rodolfo II per la Chiesa di Pavia. II. Alcune note sui diplomi originali di Rodolfo II". *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano* 30, 1909, pp. 7–39, esp. p. 12), Poupardin (*Bourgogne* 1907/1974, pp. 45–48) and Fasoli (Fasoli, Gina: *I re d'Italia* [888–962]. Sansoni: Firenze 1949, p. 93) believe in the credibility of the division, considering the fact that partitioning of the kingdom in two spheres of influence had already taken place between Berengar and Guy, between Lambert and Berengar and between Louis and Berengar.

32 On Bertha, see e.g. Lazzari, Tiziana: "La rappresentazione dei legami di parentela e il ruolo delle donne nell'alta aristocrazia del regno Italico (secc. IX–X): l'esempio di Berta di Toscana". In: La Rocca, Cristina (ed.): *Agire da donna. Modelli e pratiche di rappresentazione nell'alto medioevo europeo (secoli VI–X)*. (Atti del convegno, Padova, 18–19 febbraio 2005). Brepols: Turnhout 2006, pp. 163–189.

march of Trento.<sup>33</sup> Even if Hugh's attempt to seize the imperial crown by marrying his half-brother's influential widow, the *senatrix* Marozia, failed, his familial power base in the *Regnum Italiae* was evidently much stronger than that of Rudolph II, who had wed only his sister Waldrada to Boniface of Spoleto.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, according to Liutprand and Flodoard,<sup>35</sup> Rudolph II was engaged in a brief liaison with Ermengard, the influential widow of Adalbert of Ivrea.<sup>36</sup> But Ermengard intrigued and plotted a conspiracy against Rudolph that involved numerous magnates and forced Rudolph to retire to Burgundy.<sup>37</sup>

Lacking landed property as well as relatives in the peninsula, Rudolph was consequently less in the position to establish ties of loyalty and to gather supporters in the *Regnum Italiae*.<sup>38</sup> It may be symptomatic that he

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33 For more information, see Wickham, Chris: *Early Medieval Italy. Central Power and Local Society 400–1000*. Macmillan: London, Basingstoke 1981 [University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, Mich. 1989], p. 77.

34 On this bond, see Edoardo Manarini's contribution at the IMC in Leeds 2015, entitled "A Marriage, a Battle, an Honour: The Aristocratic Career of Boniface of the Hucpoldings during Rudolf II's Italian Reign (924–926)", retrieved: 15 December 2015, from [https://iiss-it.academia.edu/Edoardo\\_Manarini](https://iiss-it.academia.edu/Edoardo_Manarini).

35 *Les annales de Flodoard*, ed. by Philippe Lauer. (Collection des textes 39). Picard: Paris 1906, ad a. 926, p. 35; Liutprand, *Antapodosis* III, c. 8–13, p. 71–73. – Of course Liutprand's description is far from being objective, especially if women are concerned.

36 Ermengard is mentioned in some of Rudolph II's charters, see e.g. Schiaparelli, *Diplomi Italiani di Lodovico III e di Rodolfo* [Forzani: Rome 1910], [D R II] VI, p. 112; X, p. 124.

37 His presence in Burgundy is documented in January 926. Schieffer, *Regum Burgundiae* 1977/1983, 22, pp. 123–125.

38 The same applies likewise to Louis the Blind. His grandparents had played an important part in the *Regnum Italiae*. His homonymous grandfather had been emperor until his death, which occurred in 875, his grandmother Angilberga was probably the daughter of Adelchis of Parma and originated hence from the Supponids, one of the most powerful families in the *Regnum Italiae*. She had exerted a huge influence over her husband and she had been abbess of San Salvatore in Brescia and of San Sisto in Piacenza. She even had assisted her daughter and her grandchild extensively when they attempted to win Louis' recognition as king of Provence. But Angilberga had died in 901 and therefore could not come to the aid of her grandson when Louis' position in the *Regnum Italiae* got contested. – On Angilberga, see the studies of Roberta Cimino, e.g. Cimino,

had to ask the duke of Swabia (his father-in-law) for assistance when he faced difficulties in the *Regnum Italiae*, and that Rudolph decided, after the death of his father-in-law who had been killed by Rudolph's opponents near Novara, to abandon the *Regnum Italiae* and to return to Burgundy once and for all.<sup>39</sup>

## Relationship with the Papacy

Given that after 875 an imperial coronation could hardly take place without the backing of the pope,<sup>40</sup> it is necessary to consider the relationship with the Papacy, too.<sup>41</sup> Boso and Guy had even been 'adopted' by the pope.<sup>42</sup> Louis the Blind and Hugh of Arles had also established good relations with the popes. Furthermore, the archbishop of Vienne had called on the pope and appealed for his consent when Louis' mother sought to establish her son as king of Provence. When Hugh arrived in the *Regnum Italiae* in June 926, he was welcomed by a papal legate.<sup>43</sup> By contrast, the pope was not mentioned at all when the Holy Lance was handed over to Rudolph II, when he was

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Roberta: "Beni fiscali e potere delle donne nel Regno Italico: l'imperatrice Angelberga". *Società Donne & Storia* 5, 2010, pp. 76–159.

39 See e.g. Liutprand, Antapodosis III, c. 13, 15, 16, pp. 73–75; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, c. 26, p. 112.

40 On the increasing role of the papacy, see e.g. Ullmann, Walter: *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages. A Study in the Ideological Relation of Clerical to Lay Power*. Methuen: London 1955, esp. pp. 161–162; Groth, Simon: "Kaisertum, Papsttum und italisches Königtum. Zur Entstehung eines schwierigen Dreiecksverhältnisses". *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 94, 2012, pp. 21–58; Id.: "Papsttum, italisches Königtum und Kaisertum. Zur Entwicklung eines Dreiecksverhältnisses von Ludwig II. bis Berengar I.". *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 124, 2013, pp. 151–184, as well as Groth's paper in this volume.

41 According to Regino of Prüm, Charles the Bald was even reputed to have bought the *nomen imperatoris* from John X (MacLean, Simon [ed. and tr.]: *History and Politics in Late Carolingian and Ottonian Europe. The Chronicle of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg*. Manchester Univ. Press: Manchester et al. 2009, ad a. 877, p. 177).

42 Eichmann, Eduard: "Die Adoption des deutschen Königs durch den Papst". *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Germanistische Abteilung* 37, 1916, pp. 291–312, esp. pp. 302–305.

43 Liutprand, Antapodosis, III, c. 17, p. 75.



solicited by the Italic magnates<sup>44</sup> to become king of the *Regnum Italiae*, and when he arrived in his new *regnum* where he received the crown at Pavia.<sup>45</sup> Another indication that Rudolph did not aim to cultivate his bonds to the pope might lie in the fact that we do not have even a single papal document referring to Rudolph's reign as means of dating.<sup>46</sup>

The list of differences between Louis and Hugh on the one side and Rudolph II on the other might be extended, for example by considering the diverging attitudes *vis-à-vis* Byzantium. Rudolph II did not pay any attention to Byzantium, whereas Louis seems to have married Anna, a Byzantine princess,<sup>47</sup> and Guy and Hugh sought to establish ties with the Byzantine Empire, too.<sup>48</sup> These ties might be regarded as useful and advantageous if one planned to be recognised as emperor. But Rudolph II did not pursue this objective. Perhaps he sensed that his prospects of wearing the imperial crown were rather slim given the lack of Carolingian ancestry, appropriate family bonds and vast possessions in the *Regnum Italiae*, as well as the absence of an adequate relation to the papacy. Possibly, this constellation moreover explains the reason why Rudolph did not comply with the magnates' request when they called on him some years later, in the 930s, and when they encouraged him to reclaim the *Regnum Italiae*

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44 Among these magnates Adalbert of Ivrea played a major role. On Adalbert (ca. 890–935), see Fasoli, Gina: “Adalberto d’Ivrea”. In: *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* I. Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana: Rome 1960, pp. 217–218; Keller, Hagen: “Zur Struktur der Königsherrschaft im karolingischen und nachkarolingischen Italien. Der ‘*consiliarius regis*’ in den italienischen Königsdiplomen des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts”. *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 22, 1967, pp. 123–223, esp. p. 206; Rosenwein, “The Family Politics of Berengar I 1996”, p. 274. – Other famous supporters backing Rudolph were Giselbert, count of Bergamo, and Lambert, archbishop of Milan.

45 Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, III, c. 17, p. 75.

46 According to Leo Marsicanus, Pope Leo X even played an important part in the revolt of Italic magnates against Rudolph II: *Interea Iohannes papa undecimus iunctus magnatibus Italie depulit ex ea Rodulfum et mittens invitavit Hugonem Aquitanie ducem, qui tunc et prudentia maxima et virtute multa pollebat*. (Die Chronik von Montecassino [Chronica Monasterii Casinensis], ed. by Hartmut Hoffmann [MGH SS 34]. Hahn: Hannover 1980, I, 61, p. 153).

47 Bouchard, Constance Brittain, “Burgundy and Provence” 1999, p. 334.

48 Hugh married his (illegitimate) daughter to a Byzantine prince (Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, c. 26, p. 112).

and to substitute Hugh of Arles. Rudolph preferred to come to an arrangement with Hugh, and this agreement ultimately paved the way for the expansion of Burgundy in the Southern regions<sup>49</sup> during the reign of Rudolph II's son, Conrad. By contrast, both Louis the Blind and Hugh of Arles attempted to recover their lost power and they returned to the *Regnum Italiae* when the magnates approached them a second time.<sup>50</sup> Hugh was even so eager to stabilise his reign that he was willing to renounce a part of his former power base, Provence, in favour of Rudolph II. Seeing that Rudolph II was barely attracted by the imperial crown, it is probable that another aspect exercised a significant impact, too: the conception of kingship that appears to have differed in Burgundy from the one we find in Provence.

### The conception of kingship in Provence and Burgundy

Even if Rudolph I was influenced by Charles the Fat whom he had served during his life,<sup>51</sup> the Burgundian kings were not sufficiently interested in linking up with the Carolingian tradition to adopt the Carolingian naming.

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49 Pokorny, Rudolf: "Eine bischöfliche Promissio aus Belley und die Datierung des Vereinigungsvertrages von Hoch- und Niederburgund (933?)". *Deutsches Archiv* 43, 1987, pp. 46–61.

50 It is uncertain whether Hugh had been in the *Regnum Italiae* in 912, in 917/918, in 920 or in 923/924 or several times. See e.g. Fasoli, *I re d'Italia* 1949, pp. 233–235; Prévité-Orton, "Italy and Provence" 1917, p. 339; Manteyer, Georges de: *La Provence du premier au douzième siècle 1. Études d'histoire et de géographie politique*. (Mémoires et documents publiés par la société de l'École des Chartes 8). Picard: Paris 1908 [RP Laffitte: Marseille 1975 / Bibliolife: Charleston 2009], pp. 119–120; Mor, *L'età feudale I* 1952, pp. 74–75; Poupardin, *Provence* 1901/1974, p. 219; Id., *Bourgogne* 1907/1974, p. 47–48; Hiestand, *Byzanz* 1964, p. 147–148 n. 16). Apparently, the first time he was defeated by Berengar he had to promise not to come back as long as Berengar was alive (Poupardin, *Bourgogne* 1907/1974, p. 48).

51 See Sergi, Giuseppe: "Genesi di un regno effimero. La Borgogna di Rodolfo I". *Bollettino storico-bibliografico subalpino* 87, 1989, pp. 5–44; Id.: "Istituzioni politiche e società nel regno di Borgogna". In: *Il secolo di ferro. Mito et realtà del secolo X*. (Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 38). Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo: Spoleto 1991, pp. 205–240.

While Louis the Blind named his son “Carolus” (Charles-Constantine)<sup>52</sup> in order to emphasise the Roman and Greek imperial parentage, the Rudolfingian kings avoided ‘imperial names’ like “Charles” or “Judith”. Most likely, the Burgundian kings saw neither the need to produce historiographical documents nor to diffuse a certain image of Burgundian kingship, and they had no desire to demonstrate pomp or magnificence, as François Demotz recently emphasised in his quite accurate description of Burgundy as “une monarchie modérée”.<sup>53</sup> We do not know, for instance, of any spectacular secular buildings constructed by the kings. The *palatium* was small, and the Burgundian chancellery was rather simple. Being held initially by the archbishop of Besançon, it was later entrusted to a simple notary.<sup>54</sup> By contrast, in Provence during the reign of Louis the Blind, the archbishops of Vienne became archchancellors: Bernoinus (886/892–899), Raginfred (899–907) and Alexander (907–926).<sup>55</sup>

Demotz has emphasised that if moderation prevailed in Burgundy, this was not because there were no or insufficient resources.<sup>56</sup> In all likelihood, it was a matter of a different self-conception which was based on moderation and thus rather incompatible with emperorship. The situation differed in Provence, where antiquity<sup>57</sup> and the ancient imperial traditions were still fairly perceptible and where the kingdom had already been established some decades before, in favour of Lothair I’s son, Charles of Provence. The hierarchic structure was not the same in Upper Burgundy that only became a kingdom in 888. Possibly, the Burgundian magnates would not have accepted a ruler who was considering establishing a pompous kingdom.

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52 Prévité-Orton, Charles William: “Charles Constantine of Vienne”. *English Historical Review* 29, 1914, pp. 703–706.

53 Demotz, François: “Eine Herrschaft zwischen Tradition und europäischer ‘Dreh Scheibe’. Diversität der Modelle und der Eliten”. In: Nowak, Jessika (ed.): *Deutsch-französisches Forschungsatelier ‘Junge Mediävistik’ I. Das Königreich Burgund (888–1032)*. Rombach: Freiburg i. Br. 2017.

54 Ibid.

55 Nimmegeers, Nathanaël: “Eine geistliche Entität zwischen der Provence und Burgund. Die Kirchenprovinz Vienne von 888 bis 1032”. In: Nowak, Jessika (ed.): *Deutsch-französisches Forschungsatelier ‘Junge Mediävistik’ I. Das Königreich Burgund (888–1032)*. Rombach: Freiburg i. Br. 2017.

56 Demotz, “Herrschaft” 2017.

57 Nimmegeers, “Eine geistliche Entität” 2017.

This might also be the reason why Rudolph II refrained from imitating the emperor's seals. We do not know what the seals looked like which Rudolph II applied in Burgundy, but the seal we find in a charter issued during his reign in the *Regnum Italiae* differs completely from those his predecessors and the rulers in the West Frankish and Est Frankish kingdom or in Provence employed.<sup>58</sup> Rudolph II's seal,<sup>59</sup> however, is the first one that does not present the king in an 'imperial style', by a man wearing a *paludamentum* and a laurel wreath or a diadem, but rather by a man with long hair wearing a *corazza* and a jewelled crown with three lilies.<sup>60</sup> The circumscription + *RODULFUS GR(ATI)A DEI PIUS REX* followed the West Frankish tradition by adopting the *gratia dei*. By contrast, *pius rex* was a new element which until that moment had only been in use in charters. There is a further element of potential significance for the varying conception of kingship: while Louis appears as *gloriosissimus rex* in his Italian charters,<sup>61</sup> Rudolph II is often qualified as *piissimus*.<sup>62</sup>

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58 Rudolph I's seal was inspired by one of Charles the Fat's seals. Remarkably it is not Charles' seal with the lance and the buckler that served as a model in East Francia, but the one without the buckler and without the lance. – The seal Louis the Blind made use of after having become emperor is showing the legend + XPE SALVA HLVDVICVM AVG(us)T(u)M and reminds the oval seals of Charlemagne, Louis the Pious, Lothair I, Lothair II and of the kings of the *Francia occidentalis* which had a circumferential circumscription. On the seals, see Dalas, Martine: *Corpus des sceaux français du Moyen Âge, vol. 2: Les sceaux des rois et de régence*. Archives Nationales: Paris 1991.

59 For a description, see Schiaparelli, "I diploma dei re d'Italiae. Parte IV. I" 1909, esp. p. 37.

60 For a figure, see Stükelberg, Ernst Alfred: *Denkmäler des Königreichs Hochburgund vornehmlich in der Westschweiz (888–1032)*. (Mitteilungen der Antiquarischen Gesellschaft in Zürich 30,1 [Neujahrsblatt 89]). Leemann: Zurich 1925.

61 See e.g. Schiaparelli, *Diplomi Italiani di Lodovico III e di Rodolfo* [Forzani: Rome 1910], [DD L III] I, p. 5; II, p. 8; III, p. 101; IV, p. 15; V, p. 18. – On his charters, see Zielinski, Herbert: "Zum Urkundenwesen Kaiser Ludwigs III. des Blinden". In: Cherubini, Paolo / Nicolaj, Giovanna (eds.): *Sit liber gratus, quem servulus est operatus. Studi in onore di Alessandro Pratesi per il suo 90 compleanno*. (Littera antiqua 19). Scuola Vaticana Paleografia: Vatican City 2012, pp. 169–182.

62 See e.g. *Signum*: Schiaparelli, *Diplomi Italiani di Lodovico III e di Rodolfo* [Forzani: Rome 1910], [DD R II] I, p. 97 (Pavia, 922, February 4); VIII, p. 120

It may well be symptomatic for the diverse value contributed to the *Regnum Italiae* (and to the emperorship in general) that Louis never alluded to his kingship in Provence during the period he spent in the *Regnum Italiae*,<sup>63</sup> while Rudolph II's charters mention his Burgundian kingship. In his first charter issued in the *Regnum Italiae* his kingship in Burgundy is even listed in the first place;<sup>64</sup> in the subsequent charters his kingship in Italy is specified first, while the kingship of Burgundy has shifted to the second position;<sup>65</sup> only in charters he issued in 924 in Berengar's stronghold, Verona, and in the last charters issued after Berengar's death, the kingdom of Burgundy is omitted completely.<sup>66</sup>

This difference in the conception of royalty did not go unnoticed. It was Thietmar of Merseburg who later wrote the famous lines about Rudolph's homonymous grandson: "From what I have heard there is no other ruler like him. He possesses only a title and a crown and grants bishoprics to whomever the leading men propose".<sup>67</sup> The crown and a title, a royal title – maintaining them by establishing stability and a kind of "monarchie

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(Verona, 924 November 12); XI, p. 127 (924); [*datatio*]: *ibid.*, II, p. 100 (Pavia, 922 December 3); III, p. 103 (Pavia, 922 December 8); VI, p. 113 (Pavia, 924 October 8); VIII, p. 120 (Verona, 924 November 12); IX, p. 122 (Verona, 924 November 12); XI, p. 127 (924).

63 See e.g. Schiaparelli, *Diplomi Italiani di Lodovico III e di Rodolfo* [Forzani: Rome 1910], [DD L III] II–V, pp. 5–18.

64 *Ibid.* [DD R II] I, p. 97 (Pavia, 922 February 4); V, p. 111 (Pratis de Grannis, 924 September 27). – See Zimmermann, Harald: "Imperatores Italiae". In: Beumann, Helmut (ed.): *Historische Forschungen für Walter Schlesinger*. Böhlau: Cologne et al. 1974, pp. 379–399, esp. pp. 395–396.

65 Schiaparelli, *Diplomi Italiani di Lodovico III e di Rodolfo* [Forzani: Rome 1910], [DD R II] II, p. 100 (Pavia, 922 December 3); III, p. 103 (Pavia, 922 December 8).

66 Schiaparelli, *Diplomi Italiani di Lodovico III e di Rodolfo* [Forzani: Rome 1910], [DD R II] IV, p. 106 (Pavia, 924 August 18); VII–IX, pp. 116, 120, 122 (Verona, 924 November 12); X, p. 125 (Pavia, 924 December 5); XII, p. 132 (Pavia, 925, February 28).

67 Holtzmann, Robert (ed.): *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung (Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon)*. (MGH SS rer. Germ. N. S. 9). Weidmannsche Buchhandlung: Berlin 1935, lib. VII, p. 434.

modérée” was crucial for Rudolph II and his successors. Other ‘sacrifices’, such as renouncing the emperorship or the *Regnum Italiae*, might be made. In fact – not to be emperor and remaining king in Burgundy, that was the Rudolfingian way of thinking.

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## From Bretwalda to Basileus: Imperial Concepts in Late Anglo-Saxon England?

In 924 Æthelstan ascended the throne of Mercia after the death of his father Edward, while his younger half-brother Ælfweard received the crown of Wessex. The question whether or not this division of Edward's realm would have proven to be permanent was rendered obsolete by the death of Ælfweard only sixteen days after his father's, leaving Æthelstan as the sole sovereign of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom.<sup>1</sup> This kingdom in itself was already a conglomerate. A kingdom forged by Edward the Elder who obtained direct rule over Mercia in 918 and was accepted *to fæder and to blaforde*<sup>2</sup> by the kingdoms of York, Scotland and Wales. Yet it was Æthelstan who established direct rule over the Yorkish kingdom in the north, which was never held by a southern king before. Hence, historians, medieval and modern alike, for instance Sarah Foot in a recent biography, often styled him "First king of the English".<sup>3</sup> Yet, it might well be that this title, already loaded with a variety of implications which are hard to prove beyond doubt, does not reflect the aspirations of the king to their fullest, but that he contemplated over an imperial claim. Æthelstan is frequently called *rex totius Britanniae* ("king of all Britain") and even *basileus*,<sup>4</sup> titles implying an im-

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- 1 Foot, Sarah: *Æthelstan. The First King of England*. (Yale English Monarchs Series). Yale University Press: New Haven / London 2011, p. 17.
  - 2 The quote is from the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" meaning "as father and as lord". It can be found in Version A (the Winchester or Parker Chronicle) for the year 920.
  - 3 This is the subtitle of Foot's biography of Æthelstan. See also Dumville, David N.: "Between Alfred the Great and Edgar the Peacemaker: Æthelstan, First King of England". In: Id. (ed.): *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar. Six Essays on Political, Cultural, and Ecclesiastical Revival*. (Studies in Anglo-Saxon History). Boydell & Brewer: Woodbridge 1992, pp. 141–171.
  - 4 All charters in this article will be quoted according to the *Electronic Sawyer*: Sawyer, Peter et al. (eds.): *The Electronic Sawyer*. A revised, updated, and ex-

perial hegemony because they extend the king's rule beyond the boundaries of the English kingdom. The question whether this implication really was on Æthelstan's mind will be the topic of this article.<sup>5</sup>

At the dawn of Æthelstan's ascension to power, the kingdom was far from being an ethnic unity. Edward the Elder styled himself *angul saxonum rex* or *rex saxonum et anglorum* in his charters, clearly referring to two separate gentile groups which he united under his rule.<sup>6</sup> Although this intitulation

panded version of Peter Sawyer's *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography*, published in 1968, retrieved 23.7.2015, from <http://www.esawyer.org.uk>. The charters that call Æthelstan a variant of *king of all Britain/Albion* or *basileus* are S 388 (spurious), S 391 (spurious), S 401 (spurious), S 403, S 405, S 406 (spurious), S 407 (spurious), S 408 (spurious), S 409 (spurious), S 410 (spurious), S 411, S 412, S 413, S 414 (spurious), S 415 (spurious), S 416, S 417, S 418, S 418a, S 419, S 420 (spurious), S 421, S 422, S 423 (spurious), S 425, S 426, S 427 (spurious), S 429, S 430, S 431, S 432, S 433 (spurious), S 434, S 435 (spurious), S 436 (spurious), S 437, S 438, S 439 (spurious), S 440, S 441, S 442, S 444, S 445, S 446, S 447, S 448, S 449, S 455 (spurious), S 458. These represent the majority of Æthelstan's charters.

- 5 Æthelstan is not the first king whose rule has been connected to imperial concepts. The idea of an Anglo-Saxon emperorship has sparked a vast amount of scholarly discussion. See already in the mid-twentieth century Stengel, Edmund E.: "Kaisertitel und Suveränitätsidee. Studien zur Vorgeschichte des modernen Staatsbegriffs". *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 3, 1939, pp. 2–55; or Drögereit, Richard: "Kaiseridee und Kaisertitel bei den Angelsachsen". *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 69, 1952, pp. 24–73. More recently Fanning, Steven C.: "Bede, 'Imperium' and the Bretwaldas". *Speculum* 66, 1991, pp. 1–26; Molyneaux, George: "Why Were some Tenth-Century English Kings Presented as Rulers of Britain?". *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society Ser. 6*, 21, 2011, pp. 59–91.
- 6 The vast majority of the surviving 29 charters by Edward use a style that refers to the Saxons and Angles. In few instances he is called *rex angolsaxonum* (for example S 363), turning the two ethnic references into a composite, yet still referring to two separate ethnic groups. There are some exceptions from the rule: S 360 and 374 name Edward *rex anglorum*. While the former is almost certainly a forgery, see Rumble, Alexander R.: *Property and Piety in Early Medieval Winchester. Documents Relating to the Topography of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman City and its Minsters*. (Winchester Studies 4,3). Clarendon: Oxford 2002, no. XVIII, the latter seems to be genuine. S 365 uses the title *saxonum rex*, yet, is also spurious, see Whitelock, Dorothy: "Some Charters in the Name of King Alfred". In: King, Margot (ed.): *Saints, Scholars and Heroes: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Charles W. Jones*. Saint John's Abbey



did not die with Edward, it became very rare after his demise. Æthelstan changed his denomination quite quickly to *rex anglorum*,<sup>7</sup> thereby dropping the division of his subjects and suggesting an internal ethnic as well as political unity. The peculiar aspect about this development is that a West Saxon king dropped the Saxon aspect of his title for that of a different, yet of a similar origin, *gens*. Three points might, however, offer an explanation. First, Æthelstan had strong bonds to Mercia, an Anglian kingdom. He probably received most of his education at the court of his aunt and uncle, Æthelflæd and Æthelred, and gained first military experience during their campaigns against the Danes. Furthermore, after Edward established his rule over all of Mercia and East Anglia, Æthelstan stayed in the north of the realm to continue the defence and consolidate the region. Meanwhile, his brother Ælfweard built a power base south of the Thames, especially in the important cathedral town of Winchester.<sup>8</sup> The possible arrangement of joint rule between the two and the overall threat of the southern part of the kingdom might have tilted

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and University: Collegeville, Minn. 1979, 77–98, p. 93, n. 21. Rumble, Alexander R.: “Edward the Elder and the Churches of Winchester and Wessex”. In: Higham, Nick / Hill, David (eds.): *Edward the Elder, 899–924*. Routledge: London 2001, pp. 230–247, p. 231 considers it trustworthy, however. The very atypical title *rex Anglie* is used in S 370, but is also generally believed to be a forgery, see Rumble 2002, p. 178, no. III. S 372 names Edward *occidentalium Saxonum rex*, thereby limiting his power to the West Saxons. While this in itself is curious, it strengthens the argument that during Edward’s reign, the kingdom was perceived as a conglomerate of different ethnic groups. S 379 styles the king as *rex anglorum per omnipatrantis dexteram totius Britannie regni solio sublimatus* and is almost certainly a forgery based on a charter by Æthelstan of 933, see Miller, Sean (ed.): *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester*. (Anglo-Saxon Charters 9). Oxford University Press: Oxford 2001, no. 8. Harald Kleinschmidt goes as far as saying that *rex angulsaxonum* and *rex saxonum et anglorum* were the only titles in use during the reign of Edward the Elder and subsequently that every deviation from this norm indicates a forgery. Kleinschmidt, Harald: “Die Titulaturen englischer Könige im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert”. In: Wolfram, Herwig / Scharer, Anton (eds.): *Intitulatio III. Lateinische Herrschertitel und Herrschertitulaturen vom 7. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert*. (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung. Ergänzungsband 29). Böhlau: Vienna 1988, pp. 75–130, p. 99.

7 The first clearly datable charter with that denomination is S 395 from 925.

8 Foot, pp. 11–12 and 34–39. William of Malmesbury is the main source for Æthelstan’s youth, see William of Malmesbury: *Gesta Regum Anglorum I.* -

Æthelstan's mind further to the Anglian parts of the realm. Especially, since he still had three more brothers of whom two were to become king after him. Another factor might have been Bede's famous "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum", which has enjoyed wide circulation in England and on the continent and was even translated into Old English, probably during the reign of Alfred the Great.<sup>9</sup> It is very likely that Æthelstan, a royal prince and later king, knew about one, if not the most important work of Anglo-Saxon history.<sup>10</sup> Especially when we consider that his grandfather, Alfred the Great, took a special interest in his descendant during the last years of his reign.<sup>11</sup> Subsequently, Æthelstan's change in title might have been influenced by Bede's description of England, whose people the 8<sup>th</sup> century monk, under his subjective Northumbrian view, often subsumed as *Angli*. Additionally, Bede stressed that after the Angles immigrated to Britain, their homeland was said "to have remained deserted from that day to this."<sup>12</sup> Thus, in contrast to the Saxons who were not only perceivably present on the continent, but also supplied the ruling dynasty of the East-Frankish-German realm during

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(Oxford Medieval Texts). Mynors, Roger A. B. et al. (eds. and trans.), Clarendon: Oxford 1998, ii.6, pp. 210–211.

- 9 The Old English Bede is not a straight translation from the original Latin, but rather an abridged version. See the constitutive work by Dorothy Whitelock for a more detailed analysis, especially concerning the authorship: Whitelock, Dorothy: "The Old English Bede". *Proceedings of the British Academy* 48, 1962, pp. 57–90. Whitelock draws the conclusion that a member of Alfred's circle might have been the author of the Old English "Historia", but that it is impossible to prove (p. 77). For a recent article on the topic see Molyneux, George: "The Old English Bede: English Ideology or Christian Instruction?". *The English Historical Review* 124, 2009, pp. 1289–1323, esp. 1292–1295.
- 10 The fact that parts of the "Historia" were included in the manuscript of Bede's "Life of St Cuthbert" (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 183) that Æthelstan gave to Chester-Le-Street, makes Æthelstan's knowledge of Bede's historiography almost a certainty. See Karkov, Catherine E.: *The Ruler Portraits of Anglo-Saxon England*. (Anglo-Saxon Studies 3). The Boydell Press: Woodbridge et al. 2004, pp. 63–68.
- 11 That is, if the chronologically distant William of Malmesbury is to be believed. See William of Malmesbury, ii.6, p. 210.
- 12 *Ab eo tempore usque hodie manere desertus*. Beda Venerabilis: *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. (Oxford Medieval Texts). Colgrave, Bertram / Mynors, Roger A. B. (eds.). Clarendon: Oxford 1969, I.15, pp. 50–51.

Æthelstan's reign,<sup>13</sup> the Angles were nowhere to be found but in England. By dropping the Saxon aspect of his title the English king stressed his independence from his continental counterpart. The kingdom could, subsequently, not be taken as part of a Saxon empire, but stood as a unique entity. Admittedly, there is little evidence to support this view, but the fact that Æthelstan dropped the Saxon *gens* from his denomination shortly after a Saxon dynasty rose to power on the continent as well as the connection to Bede does lend it credibility.

All in all it should not surprise us that the title *rex anglorum* almost completely replaces the ethnically diverse denomination of his subjects in a time when Saxons already ruled a large part of the continent. Furthermore, Æthelstan successfully incorporated Northumbria with its Danish kingdom into his English realm in 927 at Eamont, pushing his border further north than any of his predecessors had done. While this development itself only hints at an imperial understanding of his rule, it definitely conveyed a sense of unity, similar to what Æthelstan's coronation ordo must have expressed which, as Janet Nelson compellingly argued, repeatedly refers to the unity of two people under Æthelstan's rulership.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the ordo changed the coronation ritual by crowning the king not with a helmet, as was the custom before, but with a crown, clearly stating that Æthelstan's reign differed substantially from the kings before him.<sup>15</sup> Æthelstan's later years encompassed an even more apparent connection to an imperial concept of rule. A decisive event seems to have happened in Eamont in the already mentioned year 927. The "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle D" tells us the following:

This year fiery lights appeared in the north part of the heavens. And Sihtric perished: and king Æthelstan obtained the kingdom of the Northumbrians. And he ruled all the kings who were in this island: first, Howel king of the West-Welsh; and Constantine king of the Scots; and Owen king of the Monmouth people; and

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13 See for an overview of the Ottonian Dynasty in the East-Frankish German realm Althoff, Gerd: *Die Ottonen. Königsherrschaft ohne Staat*. (Urban-Taschenbücher 473). Kohlhammer: Stuttgart <sup>3</sup>2012, for their rise to power p. 29.

14 Nelson, Janet L.: "The First Use of the Second Anglo-Saxon Ordo". In: Barrow, Julia S. / Wareham, Andrew (eds.): *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters. Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks*. Ashgate: Aldershot et al. 2008, pp. 117–126, pp. 124–126.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 121.

Aldred, son of Ealdulf, of Bambrough: and they confirmed the peace by pledge, and by oaths, at the place which is called Eamont, on the 4th before the Ides of July; and they renounced all idolatry, and after that submitted to him in peace.<sup>16</sup>

Sihtric was king of York and married to one of Æthelstan's sisters. His death meant the end of a treaty between the two, which included the promise to refrain from any attacks. Æthelstan might have been alarmed by the demise of his ally and attacked Northumbria as a pre-emptive strike before the attention of Sihtric's successor could turn south. He might just as well simply have seized the opportunity to finally conquer what, in his opinion, by ancestral right was already his, an idea he might have obtained from Bede, as was mentioned before. It is, however, not only Sihtric's former kingdom that is the subject of the entry in the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle". Æthelstan also managed to establish himself as an overlord over the adjacent kingdoms, forcing them to accept his rule. While previous Anglo-Saxon rulers sometimes held dominion over other kingdoms, they never united all the English kingdoms under direct sovereignty and received the submission of northern and western kings.<sup>17</sup> In the following years, Æthelstan's presentation of himself changed to reflect a ruler who is above the status of a normal king.

Let us return to Æthelstan's intitulations before we discuss other aspects of his rule. From the 930s onwards up to the death of Æthelstan, the vast majority of his charters adopted an imperial style, calling him *rex Anglorum per omnipatrantis dexteram totius Bryttaniæ regni solio sublimatus*<sup>18</sup>

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16 *Her oðeowdon fyrena leoman on norðdæle þære lyfte. 7 Sihtric acwæl, 7 Æþelstan cyning feng to Norðhymbra rice. 7 ealle þa cyngas þe on þysson iglande wæron he gewylde, ærest Huwal Westwala cyning, 7 Cosstantin Scotta cyning, 7 Uwen Wenta cyning, 7 Ealdred Ealdulfing from Bebbanbyrig, 7 mid wedde 7 mid aþum fryþ gefæstnodon on þære stowe þe genemmed is æt Eamotum on .iiii. Idus Iulii, 7 ælc deofolgeld tocwædon, 7 syþþam mid sibbe tocyrdon.* All Old English quotes from the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" are taken from: Dumville, David N. et al. (eds.): *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition.* 9 vols. Boydell & Brewer: Cambridge 1983–2004, here vol. 6, p. 41.

17 Foot, pp. 18–20.

18 *King of the Angles, by the right hand of God elevated to the throne of the whole of Britain.* The charters that use this phrasing are: S 403 (with parentheses), S 405 (with parentheses), S 407 (spurious), S 412, S 413, S 416, S 417, S 418, S 418a, S 421, S 423 (spurious), S 425, S 426, S 434, S 435 (spurious), S 436 (spurious), S 458.

with some variations. The title *rex totius Britanniae* is also used on a large part of his later coinage.<sup>19</sup> However, he is also styled *basileus* in some of the documents,<sup>20</sup> linking his rule to the Byzantine world and especially its monarch. The first question we need to address is whether the king actually had any influence on the intitulation of his charters and, in close connection, whether he had a royal chancery at his disposal. Harald Kleinschmidt, for instance, is of the opinion that proving the existence of a royal chancery would equally resolve the problem of defining the intitulations as either self-imposed or externally determined.<sup>21</sup> This issue has been the focus of an elaborate discussion for a long time.<sup>22</sup> Lately, however, it seems to be generally accepted that during Æthelstan reign at the latest a royal chancery was in existence.<sup>23</sup> Charters were powerful means of communication

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19 Blunt, Christopher Evelyn: "The Coinage of Athelstan, King of England 924–39". *British Numismatic Journal* 42, 1974, pp. 35–160, pp. 47–48. Especially the cross type shows the title in variously abbreviated form.

20 These are: S 409 (spurious), S 429, S 430, S 431, S 438, S 441, S 442, S 446, S 448.

21 "Die Frage, ob die englischen Herrschertitulaturen des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts Fremd- oder Selbstbezeichnungen der titulierten Könige darstellen ist gleichbedeutend mit der Frage nach der Existenz einer königlichen Kanzlei." Kleinschmidt, p. 79.

22 Against an existing chancery: Kleinschmidt, pp. 79–84; Chaplais, Pierre: "The Royal Anglo-Saxon 'Chancery' of the Tenth Century Revisited". In: Mayr-Harting, Henry / Moore, Robert Ian (eds.): *Studies in Medieval History. Presented to R. H. C. Davis*. Bloomsbury Academic: London 1985, pp. 41–51; Barlow, Frank: *The English Church 1000–1066. A History of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, Longmans: London / New York 1979, pp. 121–123. Also inclined towards rejecting a chancery: Harmer, Florence Elizabeth: *Anglo-Saxon Writs*. (The Ward Bequest 10). Manchester University Press: Manchester, pp. 57–61. Arguing in favour of an Anglo-Saxon Chancery is first and foremost Keynes, Simon: "Regenbald the Chancellor (sic)". *Anglo-Norman Studies* 10, 1988, pp. 185–222, for King Æthelstan pp. 185–187; already in Id.: *The Diplomas of King Æthelred "the Unready" 978–1016. A Study in their Use as Historical Evidence*. (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought Series 3, 13). Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1980, pp. 134–153. A similar verdict can be found in Bates, David: *William the Conqueror*, Repr. Hamlyn: London 1989, Tempus Publishing: Stroud 2004, p. 220.

23 "In short, it is no longer possible to construct a viable, effective and credible argument against the existence of a centralised, royal writing office during Æthel-

and as such it seems unlikely that kings would disregard their potential by leaving their composition to others. Furthermore, due to their status as an attestation to legal transactions, they had a relatively high chance of survival and were present in most parts of the realm. Charters were highly valued and most carefully preserved by the recipients because they were still valid even after a king died. Additionally, in order to profit from them, the recipient had to accept the charter as it stood, with all the intitulations and statements it contained, otherwise the whole document, including the grant, would have been rendered void. Subsequently, they represented an ideal means of establishing claims for kings.<sup>24</sup> But what are we to make of the imperial concepts Æthelstan conveyed in his intitulations? Did he see himself as an emperor? And if he did, did he assume the position of the western emperorship which Charlemagne held in the ninth century? Interestingly enough, the last western emperor Berengar had just died in 924, leaving the position vacant for almost forty years.<sup>25</sup>

When we speak of emperors in the Middle Ages, the subject is most of the time related to either the Byzantine Basileus or the Roman Emperor in the west. However, there were other realms that adopted an imperial style in the Middle Ages. In León the title of *imperator* was frequently used from the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards and in 1135 Alfonso VII even had himself crowned emperor of all Spain.<sup>26</sup> Something similar can be seen in medieval Bulgaria. In 913 Symeon of Bulgaria was able to force the Byzantine patri-

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stan's reign." Snook, Ben: *The Anglo-Saxon Chancery. The History, Language and Production of Anglo-Saxon Charters from Alfred to Edgar*. (Anglo-Saxon Studies 28). The Boydell Press: Woodbridge 2015, p. 59; see also Harvey, Sally: *Domesday. Book of Judgement*, Oxford University Press: Oxford 2014, pp. 19–21.

- 24 Eric John calls charters “the nearest thing to a medium for propaganda purposes”, cf. John, Eric: “The Age of Edgar”. In: Campbell, James (ed.): *The Anglo-Saxons*. Repr. Phaidon: Oxford 1982, Penguin Books: London et al. 1991, pp. 160–191, p. 176, and Ben Shook is of the opinion that through them the king “spoke in his own voice” (p. 49). See also Keynes 1980, p. 80.
- 25 For an evaluation of Berengar's rule by means of his social networks see Rosenwein, Barbara H. “The Family Politics of Berengar I, King of Italy (888–924)”. *Speculum* 71, 1996, pp. 247–289.
- 26 Drews, Wolfram: “Imperiale Herrschaft an der Peripherie? Hegemonialstreben und politische Konkurrenz zwischen christlichen und islamischen Herrschern

arch to crown him *basileus*. While Symeon understood this to extend his rule far into the west, making him *basileus Boulgaron kai Rhomaion*, the Byzantine side only granted him the title of a *basileus Boulgaron*, thereby limiting his rule to the same kingdom he held before and by no means elevating his status to that of the Byzantine ruler.<sup>27</sup> This is not the place to discuss the reason why it was especially the early 10<sup>th</sup> century which seems to have produced a variety of emperors across western Christianity,<sup>28</sup> but we should keep in mind that Æthelstan's adoption of such a concept must not have been too alien for his times and that the title of emperor was not yet tied to the Frankish, later holy Roman, empire.

The example of the Bulgarian Basileus has already shown that the title was not necessarily limited to a single person, most likely the monarch of Byzantium. There could be more than one *basileus* and also Charlemagne was addressed by the Byzantine emperor by this title, although only several years after his coronation in Rome.<sup>29</sup> While for Charlemagne this probably meant that he was regarded as an equal by the Byzantine ruler, in the case of the Bulgarians we can clearly make out gradations within the title. Not every *basileus* seems to have been an *imperator* and this also rings true for Æthelstan. The title *basileus* was not meant to render the king equal to either the western or eastern emperors, but was limited to his kingdom, which is why Æthelstan in his intitulations never extended his rule over the Romans, as Symeon did, or used it without geographical restrictions. Congruously, Æthelstan is never called *imperator* or a variant of this word in his charters. Furthermore, in the rare instances that we have of English translations of the term *basileus*, it is always translated as *rex* or *cyning*,

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im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen 'Westen' ". *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 46, 2012, pp. 1–39, pp. 1–14.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

28 This phenomenon can even be observed in the Muslim controlled parts of Spain, where a Spanish Caliphate emerged in the first half of the tenth century. See *ibid.*, pp. 14–16.

29 The peace treaty of Aachen from 812 between Charlemagne and Michael I calls the western ruler *basileus* in its Greek version, thereby accepting the existence of a second emperor, even though the Byzantine ruler was the only one to be allowed to refer to himself as emperor of the Romans. Classen, Peter: *Karl der Große, das Papsttum und Byzanz. Die Begründung des karolingischen Kaisertums. Erw. Sonderausgabe aus Karl der Grosse, Band 1*. Schwann: Düsseldorf 1968, p. 94.

obviously severing every connection to the highest of worldly offices, the emperorship.<sup>30</sup> Should we therefore simply ignore it and take it as a mere grecism? Steven Fanning in his article on imperial rule in Bede and thereafter concluded that “every imperium was a regnum, but not every regnum was an imperium”.<sup>31</sup> What he meant was that *imperia* were often also called *regna*, but never the other way round. An *imperium* incorporated several other kingdoms, a regnum did not and while the first was sometimes called by the name of the second their meaning was never interchangeable. Glossing *basileus* as *cyning* does therefore not exclude it from possessing an imperial connotation that elevates it above the office of a regular king. The example of Bulgaria supports this assumption: restricting Simeon’s rule to Bulgaria while still calling him *basileus* was acceptable to the Byzantine realm. Rendering him an equal by granting his title a wider claim was not.

Æthelstan, like his predecessors, took his legitimation from Christ or God. Yet, in his case the emphasis seems to have been stronger. Depictions of Christ wearing a crown become common during the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. This was a tradition that might have started during Æthelstan’s reign and that further emphasises his connection to Christ as the legitimising basis of his rule,<sup>32</sup> especially when we take into account the already mentioned altered coronation ordo with regard to the new role of the crown for the king. Jesus’ denomination as King of Kings, *Basileus tôn Basileôn*, in the Bible implicates that the title “King” could incorporate more than one concept, just as in the case of Salomon and David who were both called *basileus* in the Septuagint. This biblical reference could also be the origin of the English *basileus*-title.<sup>33</sup> Æthelstan styling himself *Basileus anglorum* expressed a wish to present himself as more than an ordinary king, but without assuming the office of THE emperor, of whose title he steered clear. Considering that there was very little contact between Byzantium and England in the 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>34</sup> the question of Greek in-

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30 For instance a charter by Edgar (S 806) has in its Old English translation *cyning* for *basileus*. See furthermore, Drögereit, pp. 57–58.

31 Fanning, p. 14.

32 Foot, p. 219.

33 Drögereit, pp. 57–58.

34 Michael Lapidge speaks of “sporadic contact”: Lapidge, Michael: “Byzantium, Rome and England in the Early Middle Ages”. In: *Roma fra Oriente e Occi-*



fluence arises. For an answer we most likely have to turn to clerics that possessed knowledge of Greek. Two examples come to mind, first Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus who was of Greek descent<sup>35</sup> and second a scholar by the name of Israel the Grammarian who is attested at Æthelstan's court.<sup>36</sup> Although knowledge from the time of Theodore (7<sup>th</sup> century), whose influence on the English Church was immense, might have stood the test of time, the latter possibility is far more probable, particularly because Harald Kleinschmidt in his study of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>-century intitulations in England sees the origin of the *basileus*-tradition in Abingdon and Winchester during Æthelstan's reign.<sup>37</sup> Besides, the bishop of Winchester, Ælfheah, frequently attended the king's court and undoubtedly met Israel there. That this would make Ælfheah or even Israel the person behind the intitulation does not mean that "we should not [...] assume that any particular political idea lay behind each use of a word like imperator or basileus" and that this rather has to be attributed to a "displaying of knowledge of a grecism" than to anything else, as George Molyneux suggested in a recent article.<sup>38</sup>

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*dente*. 19–24 aprile 2001. (Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo 49). Presso la Sede del Centro: Spoleto 2002, pp. 363–400, pp. 377–399.

- 35 Theodore came to England in the seventh century by the order of Pope Vitalian. See for a more detailed description Lapidge, Michael: "The Career of Archbishop Theodore". In: Id.: *Archbishop Theodore. Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence*. (Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 11). Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1995, pp. 1–29. Also Lapidge 2002, pp. 366–373.
- 36 Israel's presence at Æthelstan's court is only attested in sources from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, we have to keep in mind some restraint when we argue his influence. For a more detailed analysis of Israel the Grammarian see Lapidge, Michael: "Israel the Grammarian in Anglo-Saxon England". In: Id.: *Anglo-Latin Literature, vol. 2. 900–1066*. Hambledon Press: London 1993, pp. 87–103, p. 89; also Wood, Michael: "A Carolingian Scholar in the court of King Æthelstan". In: Leyser, Conrad et al.: *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876–1947)*. (Studies in the Early Middle Ages 37). Brepols: Turnhout 2010, pp. 135–162, p. 139 for Wood's argument that Israel came from Trier, which is not supported by the sources.
- 37 Kleinschmidt, pp. 91–94.
- 38 Molyneux 2011, p. 63. Ben Snook is of a similar opinion, when he says that titles like *basileus*, *gubernator* or *curagulus* in Æthelstan's charters were merely used to show the exalted nature of the king's office and that they would send every translator "hurrying to his glossary." (Snook, p. 76) Yet, especially the

It has already been addressed that intitulations were modes of representation for the Anglo-Saxon ruler and no mere wordplay by court attendees. The sheer closeness to political events disproves this point further. Only after Eamont did Æthelstan start to label himself king of the Angles and, what is more important, ruler of the whole of Britain. Furthermore, only after Æthelstan successfully subdued the Scots again in 934 did the title of *basileus* feature more prominently in his charters, becoming a constant after the Battle of Brunanburh, which established Æthelstan as the undisputed ruler of Scots and Danes alike.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, Welsh kings attended Æthelstan's court regularly and witnessed charters as *subreguli*.<sup>40</sup> Bede's influence becomes reminiscent once more when we take into account the geographical unit to which Æthelstan lays claim. From 930 onwards we find his rulership associated with *Britannia* and, less common, *Albion*, both of which feature prominently in Bede's "Ecclesiastical History".<sup>41</sup> For Bede, *Britannia* was a political and religious unity, representing the natural habitat of the English people. Subsequently, it had to be every ruler's aim to unite the English people living in this entity. Although Bede wrote in the eighth century, his work was so influential that it doubtlessly remained one of the most read works in the tenth century.<sup>42</sup> Æthelstan's styling of himself as ruler of *Britannia* would have invoked an immediate connection to that pivotal work of Anglo-Saxon literature and elevated his kingship above that of his predecessors. After all, not even Alfred the Great achieved the unification of *Britannia* under his rule. Accordingly, the king chose an elaborate title that expressed his status of a monarch, ruling over the whole land of the English as Bede had envisioned it. Of course, this could still

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term *gubernator* features prominently in charters of Charlemagne after he received the imperial crown in the form of *gubernans imperium* (MGH DD Kar. 1 no. 197–218, pp. 265–291), indicating that the term could have imperial connotation and might even link Æthelstan to the famous Carolingian. In S 437 it occurs in a similar context as in Charlemagne's charters. Æthelstan is named *totius Albionis gubernator*, connecting the position to his 'imperial' realm.

39 For the significance of the Battle of Brunanburh see Foot, pp. 169–183.

40 S 400, S 413, S 418a, S 420 (spurious), S 425, S 434 (spurious), S 435 (spurious), S 436 (spurious) all mention *subreguli* in their witness lists.

41 Bede, I.1, p. 14. *Britannia* is the first word of Bede's work, *Albion* is the sixth.

42 Snook, pp. 76–77.

mean that the responsible scribe saw it necessary to act according to the political events and knew Bede.

Yet, also Æthelstan's coinage styled him as king of all Britain,<sup>43</sup> thereby implying hegemony over several kingdoms and it is highly unlikely that the king had no say in their design,<sup>44</sup> especially since his laws name several places where he wished minters to be active on his behalf. These are foremost in the southern region of England, but the laws additionally state that in every burgh a minter should be active, extending the reach of Æthelstan's coins further north.<sup>45</sup> Interestingly enough the coins that name Æthelstan *rex totius Britanniae* also mark the regular appearance of mint-names on the king's currency.<sup>46</sup> Should we still intend to deny any influence on the title by Æthelstan himself, we would have to find an explanation why minters as well as scribes used the same intitulation for the king.

Æthelstan's coins show further connections to imperial models. The reverse side changed from the early 930s. The traditional design was a cross in its centre, but now it bore the king's crowned bust. The depiction itself is reminiscent of earlier Roman coinage, but more importantly, might follow an example set by Charlemagne. Coins of the early Carolingian period were similar to their Anglo-Saxon counterpart in that they did not depict persons. After Charlemagne was crowned emperor in Rome in 800 and especially after he was recognised by the Byzantine ruler in 812, this changed. Coins with the king's bust became common, conveying an imperial concept elevating the Carolingian above his former status. A similar ideology might have been on Æthelstan's mind when his coins started to bear his likeness. However, Sarah Foot pointed out that the style of Æthelstan's coins is

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43 Foot, pp. 155–157; Blunt, pp. 47–48.

44 Blunt calls Æthelstan's control of his coinage a "firm grip" (p. 116), which is especially reflected in the introduction of mint-names on the coins. See also Karkov, pp. 79–80.

45 Liebermann, Felix (ed.): *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*. Max Niemeyer: Halle (Saale) 1903, vol. 1, II As 14,2, p. 158–159. "In Canterbury are to be seven minters: four of the king and two of the bishop, one of the abbot; in Rochester: two of the king and one of the bishop; in London eight; in Winchester six; in Lewes two; in Hastings one; another in Chichester; in Southampton two; in Wareham two; in Dorchester one; in Exeter two; in Shaftesbury two; otherwise in the other burghs one."

46 Blunt, pp. 47–48.

decisively different from the Carolingian precedent, especially with regard to the headgear. While the English king is depicted with a crown, unique in style, the Carolingian coins present the rulers with laurel wreaths.<sup>47</sup> Yet, while there is no arguing about the difference in style, the fact that Æthelstan adopted a portrait of his crowned bust roughly at the same time when his charters started to use the *basileus*-title is too unlikely to be a coincident. It rather shows that the English king wanted to convey his elevated status above that of a king, while not assuming the title of the *Roman* (emphasis T.G.) emperor, as the Carolingians did and as it is expressed in the laurel wreath on their coinage.

However, Æthelstan did not only show imperial implications in his intitulations in charters and coinage, but also in his overall monarchic behaviour. Æthelstan tried to extend his influence a good deal further than his predecessors. The best known example for this is the marriage between his sister Eadgyth and the German heir to the throne, Otto, in 929,<sup>48</sup> which has been the focus of scholarship for years.<sup>49</sup> The most common view is that Æthelstan and Henry I forged an alliance against the lingering Viking threat. However, in 929 the Viking menace had already subsided and there is no coordinated attack or defence in the wake of the wedding which might strengthen this point.<sup>50</sup> A more likely explanation why Æthelstan was open

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47 Foot, pp. 216–223, as well as for the changes in coinage under Charlemagne.

48 For a reconstruction of the events see Bihrer, Andreas: *Begegnungen zwischen dem ostfränkisch-deutschen Reich und England (850–1100). Kontakte – Konstellationen – Funktionalisierungen – Wirkungen*. (Mittelalter-Forschungen 39). Thorbecke: Ostfildern 2012, pp. 298–300.

49 Föbel, Amalie: *Die Königin im mittelalterlichen Reich. Herrschaftsausübung, Herrschaftsrechte, Handlungsspielräume*. (Mittelalter-Forschungen 4). Thorbecke: Stuttgart 2000, p. 65. For an overview of the research see Müller-Wiegand, Daniela: *Vermitteln – beraten – erinnern. Funktionen und Aufgabenfelder von Frauen in der ottonischen Herrscherfamilie (919–1024)*. Kassel University Press: Kassel 2005, pp. 50–59.

50 The opinion of an alliance driven by fear of a Viking invasion is shared by Georgi, Wolfgang: “Bischof Keonwald von Worcester und die Heirat Ottos I. mit Edgitha im Jahre 929”. *Historisches Jahrbuch* 115, 1995, pp. 1–40, pp. 20–21; Müller-Wiegand, p. 56; more cautious: Leyser, Karl Joseph: “Die Ottonen und Wessex”. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 17, 1983, pp. 73–97, p. 87. Offering alternative explanations is for instance Körntgen, Ludger: “Gandersheim und die Ottonen”. In: Marth, Regine (ed.): *Das Gandersheimer Runenkästchen:*

for the idea to marry his sister off to Germany is twofold. First, by taking her of the English market he prevented other nobles to acquire a strong claim to the throne. After all, Æthelstan never married and subsequently did not produce an heir, a factor he might have had already decided on by 929. Second, Æthelstan's main aim behind the marriage was probably to establish a network between royal houses,<sup>51</sup> in this instance an affiliation of the House of Wessex and the East-Frankish-German ruling dynasty. Bishop Coenwald of Worcester was sent by the king to accompany his sister to the continent for the wedding, but had an additional assignment that further underlines the English king's intention of a lasting network. The confraternity book of St Gall tells us that Coenwald was to travel through the kingdom and visit every monastery to ask the monks to pray for Æthelstan and his close relatives.<sup>52</sup> The bishop was probably supplied with enough silver to ensure that the request was not denied.<sup>53</sup> Although confraternisation was not uncommon for Anglo-Saxon kings before Æthelstan, he was the first to have an envoy pursue this agenda systematically. Coenwald was to visit *every* monastery in *all* of Germany [emphasis T.G.],<sup>54</sup> stressing the countrywide objective of the undertaking twice. The confraternisation did not predominantly serve a

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*Internationales Kolloquium Braunschweig, 24.-26. März 1999.* (Kolloquiums-bände des Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museums 1). Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum: Braunschweig 2000, pp. 121–138, pp. 132–133; also Nelson, Janet L.: “England and the Continent in the Anglo-Saxon Period”. In: Saul, Nigel (ed.): *England in Europe. 1066–1453.* (A History Today Book). Palgrave Macmillan: London 1994, pp. 21–35, p. 28, and Bihrer pp. 296–298. Stenton is of the opinion that Henry the Fowler sought an alliance with Æthelstan to support his occupation of Lotharingia. See Stenton, Frank: *Anglo-Saxon England*, repr. Oxford University Press: Oxford 1989, Oxford University Press: Oxford 2001, p. 346.

51 Bihrer, p. 296.

52 See Piper, Paul (ed.): *Libri Confraternitatum Sancti Galli, Augiensis, Fabariensis.* (MGH. Antiquitates. Necrologia Germaniae, Suppl. Vol. 1). Weidmann: Berlin 1884, pp. 136–137. Coenwald was supposed to visit *omnibus monasteriis per totam Germaniam*. Later on in the entry it is revealed that he was sent by the *rege Anglorum*. The use of this title further strengthens the entry's credibility, since it is in Æthelstan's reign that it becomes more common, although most of the times with a further qualifier. See Kleinschmidt, pp. 103–110.

53 For a more detailed analysis of Coenwald's mission and subsequent life see Georgi, esp. pp. 29–35, and Bihrer, pp. 236–239.

54 *Omnibus monasteriis per totam Germaniam*, Piper, p. 136.

liturgical purpose to assure the salvation of Æthelstan's soul.<sup>55</sup> It bound the two dynasties together and established an obvious and constant link, thanks to the commemorative role of confraternity entries, between the monarchs of two of the most powerful realms.<sup>56</sup>

Æthelstan married more of his sisters off to foreign rulers, yet this does not seem to have had a lasting effect on his reign or his prestige. For instance, the bond between Edith and the king of Burgundy was already forgotten only 50 years later.<sup>57</sup> Andreas Bihrer's view that marriages represented potential connections that had to be renewed and called to mind to remain in effect seems valid in this context and would render the importance of Coenwald's mission to establish a longer lasting bond between the two kingdoms even clearer, especially since the connection did not end there, but was repeatedly renewed by both parties for a long time to come.<sup>58</sup> Of crucial importance is in this respect that this network is not congruent with an Ottonian-Wessexian alliance.<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, while England experienced several military incidents, the most severe being the Battle of Brunanburh,<sup>60</sup> no East-Frankish-German troops were present to assist and vice versa.<sup>61</sup> The relationship between the kings was not meant

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55 This is not to say that Körntgen was wrong to conclude that Æthelstan was interested in a liturgical assurance for salvation (Körntgen, pp. 132–133), simply that there are more aspects to it, which might have been even more important.

56 Bihrer, pp. 282–284.

57 Stenton, p. 346.

58 For Bihrer's opinion and the passing of Edith's and Louis' marriage into oblivion see Bihrer, pp. 294–295. For the continuous connection of the two dynasties see *ibid.*, p. 300.

59 Foremost Leyser (p. 96) is an advocate of this interpretation of the relationship.

60 Fought in 937 between the English kings and an alliance of the kings of Dublin, Scotland and Strathclyde it ended with a decisive victory for Æthelstan that resulted in the confirmation of the constituent parts as a unified realm. See Foot, pp. 169–183.

61 Actually, in 939 Æthelstan interfered on behalf of the West-Frankish king against Flanders and thereby indirectly against Otto, although with little effect. See Stenton, p. 347, who might have overestimated the significance of Æthelstan's part in the campaign. Similarly Cronenwett, Philip N.: *Basileos anglo-rum'. A Study of the Life and Reign of King Athelstan of England, 924–939.* (Dissertation) University of Massachusetts: Amherst 1974, p. 104. See also Foot, pp. 183–184, who also deems the expedition rather unsuccessful. Bihrer argues

to lend military help in times of distress, but rather to lift their respective prestige within their realms. In the case of Æthelstan, a connection to the old realm of the Carolingians as well as the other foreign ties he established were meant to elevate him above the kings that came before him in England and those that he faced as direct, dangerous neighbours, just as his titles were supposed to do.

Æthelstan extended his influence also further to the east to the court of the Norwegian king. Hakon, the son of king Harald, is also known by the name of Athalesteins fostri, for he actually was fostered by Æthelstan. While this in itself does not imply an imperial claim to Æthelstan's rule, and Æthelstan definitely did not lay claim to the Norwegian kingdom, it is interesting that Harald let his successor be fostered at a Christian court. The consequences must have been clear to Harald, and Hakon was indeed baptized while he was in Æthelstan's care and later tried to convert Norway to Christianity, albeit without success. The whole episode evokes the impression that Hakon was more hostage than foster child and Norwegian historiography seems to have felt the need to rehabilitate their kings, Harald as well as Hakon. Two vernacular texts, the "Fagrskinna" and the "Heimskringla", from around 1200 and the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, respectively, relate the episode as a victory for the Norwegian side. At first, Harald is tricked by Æthelstan when he unwittingly becomes the English king's vassal by unsheathing a sword that was masked as a gift. In return, Harald sends his son Hakon to Æthelstan's court to repay him in kindness. The young prince is welcomed and places himself on the English king's lap, thereby turning him into a vassal of the Norwegian kingdom.<sup>62</sup> Giving children as hostages into the care of a foreign sovereign was quite common and besides his Norwegian foster child, Æthelstan, following the events of 934, also fostered children from the Scottish royal court.

It seems that the English royal court was a busy place during Æthelstan's reign. Apart from Norwegian and Scottish foster children and Welsh kings there seem to have been a variety of German clerics in the king's presence. The latter probably were attracted by the impressive amount of books

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that the raiding of the Flemish coast might have been exactly what was expected from the English fleet. See Bihrer, pp. 334–335.

62 Foot, pp. 52–55.

and relics that Æthelstan is said to have collected during his reign.<sup>63</sup> His fondness for such treasures is best documented by the marriage agreement between Æthelstan's sister Eadhild and Hugh, Duke of the Franks. Hugh successfully convinced Æthelstan to give him the hand of one of his sisters by sending him a large amount of relics.<sup>64</sup> According to William of Malmesbury these included the sword of Constantine with a piece of the Cross incorporated into the sheath as well as the holy lance which, according to William, formerly belonged to Charlemagne.<sup>65</sup> William is, however, too remote from Æthelstan's times to be accepted as a reliable source, especially since a connection between Charlemagne and the Holy Lance is not attested before 1100. Nevertheless, the fact that Henry the Fowler claimed to have bought the lance from the king of Burgundy only a few years earlier and the appearance of the first image of Christ showing his pierced side in western Christendom in the Æthelstan psalter are interesting coincidences and might grant some credibility to William's report after all.<sup>66</sup> Whether a lance that was said to be the relic that pierced Christ was actually given to Æthelstan or not, the exchange of relics for an Anglo-Saxon bride is most probably true and attests for the English king's interest in them. Relics were no mere trophies in the Middle Ages. They could be used as instruments for royal

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63 Brett's theory of a systematic acquisition of relics through envoys of Æthelstan might take it a bit too far. At least there is no concrete evidence for it in the sources. Brett, Caroline: "A Breton Pilgrim in England in the Reign of King Æthelstan". In: Jondorf, Gillian / Dumville, David N. (eds.): *France and the British Isles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Essays by Members of Girton College, Cambridge, in Memory of Ruth Morgan*. Boydell & Brewer: Woodbridge 1991, pp. 43–70, pp. 45–47. See also for this topic Keynes, Simon: "King Æthelstan's Books". In: Lapidge, Michael / Gneuss, Helmut (eds.): *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England. Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1985, pp. 143–201, pp. 143–144.

64 Bihrer, pp. 267–269.

65 William of Malmesbury, ii.135, pp. 218–221.

66 For the veracity of William's account see Foot, pp. 192–198. Also, with a short overview on the scholarship regarding the passage in William's *Gesta*: Rollason, David W.: "Relic-Cults as an Instrument of Royal Policy c. 900-c. 1050". *Anglo-Saxon England* 15, 1987, pp. 91–103, p. 93 n. 11.



policies, above all representation.<sup>67</sup> Æthelstan's interest in collecting relics was reason enough for some scholars to postulate that the Anglo-Saxon king wanted to place himself in competition to the East Frankish-German King Henry the Fowler for the association with the Carolingian imperial legacy.<sup>68</sup> While this would explain the emergence of a Holy Lance in England shortly after Henry supposedly acquired one, it should not be ignored that especially Constantine and Charlemagne were models to be emulated, even without a conjunction to the East Frankish-German realm.

Furthermore, the donations of relics to domestic monastic institutions mostly made them means for domestic demonstrations of rank.<sup>69</sup> There is no reason, however, why these should not have imperial connotations, rendering the king above other rulers who were not in the possession of such illustrious artefacts. Instead of a competition between the two Houses it might be more accurate to speak of an affiliation. This was already manifest in Æthelstan's systematic confraternisation with German monasteries as well as in the marriage between Eadgyth and Otto I and becomes even more apparent when an exchange of two gospel books between the English king and the Ottonian ruler is considered. The books contain reciprocal entries naming the respective king and his mother in both cases.<sup>70</sup> Each book was an older, Carolingian gospel, linking both

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67 *Ibid.*, p. 91; also Bihrer, p. 269, who says that via relics "der eigene Rang demonstriert oder gar erhöht werden konnte."

68 Rollason, David W.: *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England*. Blackwell: Oxford 1989, p. 161–162 speaks of a challenge by Æthelstan and Wood, Michael: "The Making of King Aethelstan's Empire. An English Charlemagne?" In: Wormald, Patrick et al. (eds.): *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society. Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*. Blackwell: Oxford 1983, pp. 250–272, p. 267 goes as far as interpreting the donation of relics as a *translatio imperii*, making Æthelstan the most prestigious ruler of Western Europe.

69 Bihrer, pp. 268–269.

70 + *ODDA REX + MIHTHILD MATER REGIS* and + *eadgifu regina æPelstan rex angulsaxonum et mercianorum*, respectively. For a description of London, British Library Cotton MS Tiberius A II fol. 24r and Coburg, Landesbibliothek, Ms. 1 168r see Keynes 1985, pp. 147–153 and 189–193, respectively. The intitulation is uncommon for Æthelstan, it seems that the scribe was unfamiliar with contemporary conventions. See *ibid.*, p. 190. The title would have been more common for the time of Edward the Elder and might indicate that, since it is an Anglo-Saxon hand, the scribe left England for the continent before Edward

kings once more to the illustrious dynasty and emphasising the prestigious status of the gifts. The names had further, commemorative functions which would have been called to mind in liturgical contexts, reciting the connection between the two houses repeatedly and, thereby, renewing it in the religious houses to which the kings gave the gospels, Christ Church in Canterbury and Gandersheim Abbey, both of which were of particular importance to the ruling dynasties.<sup>71</sup> The connections of both kings to the imperial Carolingian family and to each other further strengthen Æthelstan's intention to elevate his status over that of a 'common' *rex* and is reminiscent of Coenwald's mission in 929.

Æthelstan's court was also the place where the first steps towards an English Benedictine reform were taken that was to develop its full force during Edgar's reign in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. Bishop Ælfheah, frequently attested at Æthelstan's court, seems to have been the driving force in this regard and his influence on Dunstan, a relative of his, and Æthelwold, who later followed him in the bishopric of Winchester, must have been significant. Oda of Canterbury, another confidant of Æthelstan, is also often cited as one of the most influential figures behind the initial steps of

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died in 924. Subsequently, the names would have been added after the gift was given to Otto at his court. Yet, even in Edward's time there is no evidence for the use of *mercianorum* as a royal title. See Kleinschmidt, pp. 99–100. For the discussion when, where and by whom the names were added see Bihrer, p. 271, and Keynes 1985, pp. 147 and 190, respectively.

71 For Otto's gospel in Gandersheim see Körntgen, p. 131–132. Before Æthelstan donated the book to Christ Church, he had the codex pompously rebound and embellished, commemorating the refinement with a short note and a poem which celebrates the king's fame throughout the world. Scholars concluded from this that Otto's gift was of inferior quality, see especially Hoffmann, Hartmut: *Buchkunst und Königtum im ottonischen und frühsalischen Reich*. (MGH Schriften 10). Hiersemann: Stuttgart 1986, p. 10. The Carolingian connection alone renders this conclusion doubtful. Bihrer's point that the refinements were done to honour the receiving church seems more likely (p. 272). The commemorative entries in the gospels prolonged the effect of the gift exchange, which was otherwise momentary in nature and demonstrated the status of the giving and receiving party in that very instance only. How transient the connection between gift and giver was is shown in the numerous instances where gifts were given away again or were simply forgotten. *Ibid.*, pp. 279–280.

the reform.<sup>72</sup> The appearance of an East-Frankish-German monk by the name of Gottschalk, who was supposedly made abbot of Abingdon by Æthelstan, gave rise to the idea of a ‘German connection’ which supplied the English realm with clerics from the continent, further emphasising Æthelstan’s role in the Benedictine reform.<sup>73</sup> Susan E. Kelly, however, showed that the charters that scholars built their theory on, were late 10<sup>th</sup>-century forgeries.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, the Anglo-Saxon king involved himself in religious matters, an association which should not be underestimated when it comes to the concept of imperial rule. Emperors are not only rulers of several kingdoms. They are also defenders of the Christian faith and Æthelstan acted accordingly when he forced the kings at Eamont in 927 to renounce all idolatry and when he baptized Hakon of Norway. The pivotal model for an emperor as a defender of faith is Charlemagne and it is not surprising that William of Malmesbury sought to connect the two in his account of Æthelstan’s collection of relics.

A panegyric poem called “*Carta dirige gressus*”, probably composed close after 927, represents an additional link to the Carolingian period. It seems to have been based on a poem that was written by *Hibernicus Exul* and represents for Michael Lapidge the missing link to Æthelstan’s mature ideology in his later reign.<sup>75</sup> While this does not prove an intentional connection to the first Carolingian emperor, it at least attests for Carolingian literature circulating at Æthelstan’s court, further demonstrating the high standard of learning that seems to have attracted foreign scholars like the aforementioned Israel. Furthermore, panegyrics were an imperial prerogative in late antiquity. While they lost that status

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72 For the significance of Oda and Æthelstan’s court in general with regard to the Benedictine reform see Gretsich, Mechthild: *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform*. (Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 25). Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1999, pp. 387 and 427.

73 The quote is taken from Wood 2010, p. 137. See also Stenton, p. 444 and Dumville 1992, p. 159 for a discussion on the topic.

74 Kelly, Susan (ed.): *Charters of Abingdon Abbey Part 1*. (Anglo-Saxon Charters 7). British Academy: London 2000, pp. lxxi, ccix and ccxii–xxciii. The two charters in question are S 409 and S 410.

75 Lapidge, Michael: “Some Latin Poems as Evidence for the Reign of Athelstan”. *Anglo-Saxon England* 9, 1981, pp. 61–98, pp. 83–93.

during the early Middle Ages, they still meant to elevate the ruler above other kings. There are additional connections to the Carolingian royal dynasty in products of Æthelstan's court. Especially some contemporary illuminations of codices are influenced by Carolingian predecessors.<sup>76</sup> Even though the majority was still dominated by the insular style, it shows the presence of Æthelstan's former continental counterparts at his court and hints further at his wish to affiliate with the imperial nature of their rule. One of these codices is worth a closer look. Æthelstan frequently gave books to monasteries and in the case of Chester-le-Street, which he probably visited during the return from his campaign in 934, we know of a copy of Bede's "Life of Cuthbert", who is said to have been buried there, that the king donated to the saint among other things.<sup>77</sup> An illustration that was added to the manuscript in Æthelstan's time shows the king standing before the saint, a depiction that is modelled once more on Carolingian prototypes (cf. figure 1).<sup>78</sup> His head is bowed over an open book that he seems to read, as David Rollason convincingly argued.<sup>79</sup> Opposite to him stands Cuthbert carrying a closed book in his left hand and supposedly blessing the king with his right. The figures are in separate spaces but the saint enters Æthelstan's space with his blessing giving hand. The whole image appears to praise Æthelstan's devotion to the saint,<sup>80</sup> who was after all one of the pivotal saints of the Anglo-Saxon period and had a special relationship to Northumbria as his place of origin, of which Æthelstan had just secured control to unite all English subjects under his 'British' rule.<sup>81</sup>

So far, I have tried to convey the picture of a king seeing himself as the imperial ruler of Britain and outwardly communicating this understanding in imagery and behaviour. While this kind of rulership definitely differed from Æthelstan's predecessor Edward, it has to be kept in mind

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76 For Carolingian influences on books in Æthelstan's sphere see Wood 1983, pp. 268–269.

77 Corpus Christi College MS 183, fol. 1v.

78 Karkov, pp. 55–58.

79 Rollason 1989, p. 150. For a different opinion see Karkov, pp. 59–60.

80 Foot, p. 120–121.

81 Another important saint in this regard was Oswald and Æthelstan sought affiliation with him as well, see Karkov, pp. 73–79.

that concepts of hegemonic rule are not new to the Anglo-Saxon world. In Bede's "Historia" we encounter a list of seven kings who held imperial rule,<sup>82</sup> most of them over the kingdoms south of the Humber, but the last three, Northumbrian, kings were also able to extend their dominion over the lands in the north. The "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" dubbed these rulers *Bret-* or *Brytenwalda*, spawning a massive debate over whether such a title actually existed and what it meant. Among others, Patrick Wormald and Stephen Fanning came to the conclusion that while there were several kings holding hegemony over large parts of Britain before the time of Æthelstan, an official *Bretwalda*-title never existed.<sup>83</sup> However, this does not mean that Bede's list of exceptional rulers did not inspire imitation or transported the idea of Britain as a political unity into later centuries, especially since two of Bede's kings were such paramount examples of rulership that they later were venerated as saints. Oswald of Northumbria in particular inspired a long lasting and influential cult that Æthelstan specifically promoted.<sup>84</sup> The addition of Ecgbert of Wessex to the list of imperial rulers by the author of the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" already suggests that the concept still existed in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>85</sup> Æthelstan's knowledge of Bede's writings was already discussed and the suggestion that he tried to emulate these hegemonic rulers of Britain would explain to some extent the intitulations and his imperial ideology. One of the few charters of Æthelstan that survived in English even calls him *God gyuing*

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82 Bede, II. 5, pp. 148–150.

83 Wormald, Patrick: "Bede, the Bretwaldas and the origins of the gens Anglo-rum". In: Id. et al. (eds.): *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society. Studies presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, Blackwell: Oxford 1983, pp. 99–129, pp. 118–127; Fanning, esp. 23–26. While Wormald later somewhat qualifies his statement by admitting that the status probably did exist (p. 128), Fanning draws the conclusion that the "entire concept ought to be abandoned" (p. 26).

84 Foot pp. 204–208. See also note 81.

85 The term is not limited to one version. See for instance in Version B of the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle": *7 he wæs eahtoða cyning Pe brytenwalda wæs*. Dumville 1983–2004, vol. 4, p. 30: "And he was the eighth king who was *Bretwalda*."

*kyng welding eal Brytone*,<sup>86</sup> using a phrasing that is suspiciously close to the term *Bretwalda*. Yet, Bede did not promote the idea of an English empire under one emperor, but of a geographical as well as an ethnical unit called “Britain” which incorporated several kingdoms of the *gentis anglorum*.<sup>87</sup> Æthelstan’s frequent connections to Bede’s work and especially the titles referring to his realm as *Britannia* or *Albion* show that the English king embraced this vision. Æthelstan saw the unification of Bede’s Britain under his rule as only few had accomplished it before, and none to the same, complete extent.

It is the connection to this older hegemonic concept which sheds further light on Æthelstan’s decisive victory over an army consisting of the retinue of the kings of Dublin, Scotland and Strathclyde in 937 which ended all efforts of autonomy by these rulers in Æthelstan’s reign. It saw the death of five petty kings, a number of jarls and also the son of king Constantine of Scotland. This devastating blow cemented Æthelstan’s status as king of all Britain, although that would not last long after he died. The importance of the battle was already apparent to the contemporaries and the longest poem that can be found in the “Anglo-Saxon Chronicle”, written in alliterative verse, is in praise of it. More importantly it also sets it into a wider, historical context when it says:

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86 S 391. The charter is somewhat spurious, however, as it gives 843 as the date of creation. The correct date seems to be 934. See Abrams 1996, pp. 187–188, 235.

87 Even though Bede uses the term *imperium*, all of the ruler he associates with it are called *rex*. (II. 5, pp. 148–150) See Drögereit, pp. 36–46. For Bede, the decisive element for an *imperium* seems to have been exercising rule over other people or kingdoms. Subsequently, there could be several *imperia* in Britain that included only parts of the geographical unit he described in the beginning. See Fanning, pp. 19–20, who also points out that Bede was not completely consistent in presenting the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms as an English unity. Yet, he as well has to admit that “It cannot be doubted that at times Bede included all of the various groups of the English in the term *gens Anglorum* or that his ‘Ecclesiastical History’ can be read in such a way as to establish the *Angli* as a distinct and self-aware people” (p. 20). See also Wormald, pp. 119–127 on this topic.

Never was there more slaughter on this island, never yet as many people killed before this with sword's edge: never according to those who tell us from books, old wisemen, since from the east Angles and Saxons came up over the broad sea, Britain they sought, proud war-smiths who overcame the Welsh, glorious warriors they took hold of the land.<sup>88</sup>

Not only is the battle set apart as being the most vicious one in British history, the victors, foremost king Æthelstan, also surpass the kings of old who sought Britain, for Æthelstan has obtained their object of desire. The word "Britain" as well as the reference to the arrival of the Angles and Saxons call Bede to mind once more. The eighth-century monk's account of the landing of the continental tribes probably inspired the comparison of the achievement at Brunanburh to that of the warriors of old, finally bringing the English campaign full circle in the hegemony of Æthelstan.<sup>89</sup>

In conclusion, Æthelstan's reign marks a decisive turning point in British history. Not only were the territories that were later to become the kingdom of England united under one rule for the first time, Britain as a political unity also came into being, an aspect that became very prominent with high medieval historians like Geoffrey of Monmouth or William of Malmesbury. Æthelstan's numerous imperial titles convey exactly this message. Neither *basileus* nor *imperator* or *imperare* are meant to set claim to the old Roman emperors, but they intended to set him apart from ordinary kings who were his *subreguli*. The same can be said about his monarchic behaviour. Æthelstan associated himself with other powerful rulers in Western Christendom, even with the Carolingians of past days, thereby enlarging his view across the channel. However, he did not seek to elevate himself above these, but to affiliate with them as an equal. His increased interest in relics, the connections via marriages and his systematic confraternisation with monastic institutions on the continent intended to do exactly that. Behind all stood the influence of Bede, who gave Æthelstan

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88 *Ne wearð wæl mare on þys iglande æfre gyta folces gefylled beforan þyssum swurdes ecgum, þæs ðe us secgað bec, ealde uþwitan, siððan eastan hider Engle 7 Sexe upp becomon, ofer brade brimu Bretene sohton, wlance wigsmiðas, Wealas ofercomon, eorlas arhwate eard begeaton.* Dumville 1983–2004, vol. 6, p. 43.

89 For Bede's role in the imperial concept of Æthelstan see Foot, pp. 223–225.

the framing for his imperial claim that raised him above his Wessexian predecessors. Æthelstan wanted to be associated with the illustrious group of the paramount kings of old who held hegemony over the English lands. Even more, he built on the concept of Britain as an ethnic unity that Bede promoted. As the monarch of this united realm, he was more than a king, he was a king of kings. In this regard the term *basileus* has to be translated as “king” and not “emperor”, but it still does not carry the same meaning as *rex*, rather *superrex* in the lexical sense. This shows that medieval titles like *rex* or *imperator* were much more nuanced in meaning than we often take them to be. Æthelstan’s adopted imperial concept of rule was similar to that of the most known emperors of East and West, but not congruent. He expressed his rule to be more than that of a mere *rex anglorum*, without laying claim to be an *imperator anglorum*.



Figure 1: *Æthelstan presenting a book to Saint Cuthbert*. Illuminated manuscript from Bede's "Life of St Cuthbert", c. 930. 29.2 x 20 cm (11 1/2 x 7 7/8"). Originally from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, URL: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Athelstan.jpg> (Wikimedia Commons).





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# The Caliphates between Imperial Rule and Imagined Suzerainty – A Case Study on Imperial Rituals during Saladin’s Rise to Power

## 1. Introduction

This article deals with power relations during the Islamic classic. The main question is whether the medieval Islamic caliphates of the Umayyāds, ‘Abbāsids and Fāṭimids can be described as empires. The recent milestone in the research of empires – *Imperien des Altertums, Mittelalterliche und Frühneuzeitliche Imperien*, being the first volume of *Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte. Epochenübergreifende und Globalhistorische Vergleiche* – has already been able to shed light on this question.<sup>1</sup> Hämeen-Antilla argues that while “[t]he Umayyād dynasty ended in 750”, their “Empire [emphasis N.K.] [...] outlived the dynasty and even though the change from the Umayyāds to the ‘Abbāsids was abrupt in dynastic terms, the change of the Empire was slow and gradual”<sup>2</sup>, thereby considering both the Umayyād and ‘Abbāsīd dynasties as part of a caliphal empire. In the same volume Heinz Halm describes the Fāṭimid polity as empire as it fulfilled any criteria of empire during the height of its power in late 10<sup>th</sup> and early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>3</sup> The definition of empire used in their studies was based on a global comparative approach, theoretically based on the ideas of Herfried Münkler, Hans-Heinrich Nolte and Ulrich Menzel. This study aims to narrowly use the definition brought forward by Herfried Münkler. His disregard for medi-

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- 1 Gehler, Michael / Rollinger, Robert (eds.): *Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte. Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche, vol. 1: Imperien des Altertums, Mittelalterliche und Frühneuzeitliche Imperien*. Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 2014.
  - 2 Hämeen-Antilla, Jaakko: “The Umayyad State – an Empire?” In: Gehler / Rollinger 2014, pp. 537–557, here p. 552.
  - 3 Halm, Heinz: “Die Reiche der Fatimiden, Ayyubiden und Mamluken”. In: Gehler / Rollinger 2014, pp. 559–565, here p. 560.

eval polities – Münkler only considers the Mongols a medieval empire – gave rise to the questions of whether the caliphates can be described as empires according to Münkler and if not, whether Münkler’s theory is applicable to the medieval period in a useful way.<sup>4</sup> Firstly, Münkler’s definition will be introduced, working out the main features of an empire. In a subsequent step I will present an overview of the four major caliphal dynasties of medieval Islam and test them according to the established indicators. Secondly, the concept of symbolic communication will be introduced in order to supplement the imperial markers. A case study on Saladin, who alternated between two caliphates, forms the main part of this study and examines imperial rituals in a period of caliphal decline.

## 2. Empire – A definition

In the following paragraphs, aspects of empire as defined by Herfried Münkler in his acclaimed book *Empires. The Logic of World Domination from Ancient Rome to the United States*<sup>5</sup> shall be gathered. Münkler tries to define empire based on historical precedents, starting with antiquity moving up to contemporary history. Being a political scientist, Münkler seems to base most of his argument on his reflections on the role of the United States of America in contemporary events, while almost completely glossing over the medieval period. His definitions are often made by case of example, sometimes betraying that his background is not in historical scholarship. In order to make Münkler operable for a medievalist, I have tried to form categories within Münkler’s definition of empire.

### a) Internal aspects

Unlike modern nation states, empires have no explicit borders; they traverse economic and language barriers in so far as they usually include multiple economic regions and a number of ethnicities speaking different languages.

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4 At this point it is incumbent to thank Dr. Christian Scholl, Jan Clauss and Thorben Gebhardt for introducing me to the issue of empires. I also want to express my thanks to Tobias Hoffmann, Stephan Tölke and Sarah Khan, whose remarks on earlier versions of this paper were of tremendous help.

5 Münkler, Herfried: *Imperien. Die Logik der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten*. Rowohlt: Berlin 2005.

Ruling over a wide territory – or at least controlling it politically and economically – is a major distinction of empires according to Münkler. Control over the empire is usually centralized, leading to a dichotomy between centre and periphery, power and right more often granted to residents of the centre than to those of the periphery.<sup>6</sup>

### b) External aspects

An empire does not accept other polities as its equal. According to Münkler, this distinguishes it from the phenomena of hegemony where a dominating actor is accepting other political actors as formally equal. Empires are prone to intervene with powers within their sphere of influence in order to conserve this imperial status.<sup>7</sup> Yet, according to Münkler, different empires can exist at the same time and actually did so given that their spheres of influence did not interfere with each other – an example being the Roman Empire and China. Where imperial claims collided, ceremonial acceptance as equal was denied to the opponent – examples are the Holy Roman Empire and Byzantium.<sup>8</sup> Münkler furthermore distinguishes between *Weltreich* – a global empire that fulfils the criteria mentioned above – and *Großreich* – a regional empire that does fit many but not all aspects of his definition, especially regarding territorial control.<sup>9</sup>

### c) Dynastical aspects

While spreading its hegemony is part of imperial politics, empires are seldom the result of planned expansion, but mostly come into being “in a fit of absence of mind”, as the English historian John Robert Seeley had stated about the beginnings of the British Empire.<sup>10</sup> Münkler therefore includes surviving the founder generation in his definition of an empire, claiming that an empire must endure a process of rise, decline and recovery.<sup>11</sup>

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6 Münkler 2005, pp. 16–18, 23.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 17–19.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27, 30.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 23–28.

10 Cited from Münkler 2005, p. 20.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 20–22. Others disregard this factor and count, for example, Nazi Germany as an empire, cf. the introduction to this volume.

As Münkler almost completely glosses over the Middle Ages, seemingly defining medieval empires as *Großreiche*, I want to argue in the following paragraphs that the caliphates of the classical period of Islamic history were in fact empires or one empire.

### 3. The caliphates

The word caliphate [*ḥilāfa*] derives from the title *ḥalīfat rasūl Allāh* – successor to the Messenger of God. According to Sunni historical understanding, this was the title the early Muslim community used for their leader after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, the early Islamic polity is only accessible via later accounts, often framed in religious and political rivalry.<sup>13</sup> Still, it seems useful to introduce this conception of history when speaking about the caliphates before analysing the Umayyād, ‘Abbāsīd and Fāṭimid caliphates in light of Münkler’s criteria of empires.

#### a) The Rāšīdūn Caliphate

As per the Sunni reading, the Prophet’s father-in-law Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq was the first man to use the title. He had been chosen by a council [*šūra*] of companions of Muḥammad to carry on the political and religious leadership of the community, thereby succeeding the deceased Prophet. He in turn was succeeded by another father-in-law of the Prophet – ‘Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb – under whose rule the Muslim polity began to violently expand from its native Arabian peninsula. It was ‘Umar who first used the caliphal title *amīr al-mu’minīn* – Commander of the Faithful.<sup>14</sup> The Muslim polity kept on expanding under the leadership of the succeeding

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12 Sourdel, Dominique et al.: “Khalīfa”. In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 12 vols. Brill: Leiden 1960–2005, here vol. 4, pp. 936–953. The second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* is cited hereafter as *EP*<sup>2</sup>. The third edition, begun in 2007 and still in progress, is cited hereafter as *EP*<sup>3</sup>. For the discussion on the possibility of the original title being *ḥalīfat Allāh* cf. Crone, Patricia: *God’s Rule. Government and Islam*. Columbia University Press: New York 2004, pp. 17–19.

13 Crone, Patricia / Cook, Michael: *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World*. Cambridge University Press: London / New York / Melbourne 1977, pp. 3–4.

14 Crone 2004, p. 18.

caliphs, ‘Uṭmān b. ‘Affān, and later on ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib – both sons-in-law to Muḥammad.<sup>15</sup>

Yet power struggles within the ruling tribe of Qurayš led to uprisings and civil strife. ‘Uṭmān was part of the influential clan Banū ‘Umayya, while ‘Alī – being the Prophet’s paternal cousin – belonged to the Banū Hāšim.<sup>16</sup> A number of ‘Alī’s supporters believed him to be the only rightful caliph as he was a close relative of Muḥammad and father to the only surviving descendants of the Prophet – the sons of Fāṭima bt. Muḥammad, namely al-Ḥassan and al-Ḥussayn.<sup>17</sup> The originally political split gave rise to the major opposing denominations of Islam, Sunnism and Shiism [Shiism is derived from *šiat* ‘Alī – the party of ‘Alī].<sup>18</sup> ‘Uṭmān was killed by opponents from the outlying provinces of Egypt and Iraq – groups that included supporters of ‘Alī. The latter’s hesitation to prosecute the killers of ‘Uṭmān after becoming caliph gave rise to multiple uprisings leading to his death.<sup>19</sup> While still contested by other Qurayšite pretenders to the caliphate in the founding years, the Banū ‘Umayya were able to seize power, thus establishing themselves as caliphal dynasty known to us as Umayyāds. Their dynasty ended a period in which caliphs were chosen by consultation [*šūra*]; the four chosen caliphs are known as *ar-Rāšidūn* [rightly guided] to Sunni Muslims.

When applying Münkler’s definition of empire to the Rāšidūn Caliphate, most if not all aspects are met. The Caliphate controlled a territory from Northern Africa to Northern India that included multiple ethnicities and a number of important economical regions. These regions were taken by force from other major polities like Byzantium and Sassanid Iran, which were obviously not considered as equals. The expansions “do not seem to have followed any plan, but were the result of a spontaneous use of occasions opened by spectacular victories.”<sup>20</sup> Governors for the different provinces

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15 Kennedy, Hugh: *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates. The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*. Pearson Longman: Harlow et al. 2004, pp 50–52.

16 Kennedy 2004, pp. 79–80.

17 Madelung, Wilfried: “Shī‘a”. In: *EP*, vol. 9, pp. 419–424.

18 Crone 2004, pp. 19–20.

19 Ibid., p. 20. Gleave, Robert M.: “‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib”. In: *EP*, consulted online on 10 July 2016.

20 Hämeen-Antilla 2014, pp. 538–539.

were dispatched from the capital region of Medina.<sup>21</sup> Yet the accumulation of power in the provinces, namely Egypt and Iraq during the rule of ‘Uṭmān and Syria during the rule of ‘Alī, led to conflicts with the centre as taxes from the provinces were gathered in and possibly for the centre. ‘Alī even had to move his capital to the Iraqi city of Kūfa.<sup>22</sup> Externally, the Caliphate was rapidly expanding militarily, crushing the Sassanids of Persia and weakening Byzantium, clearly not accepting the two as equals. Only the dynastical aspect is lacking. The Rāšidūn Caliphate is believed to have existed from 632–661, thereby apparently not surviving its founding generation. If one considers the Umayyād Caliphate as a continuation of the Rāšidūn Caliphate through a change in the ruling elite, this aspect would also correspond to Münkler’s definition.

## b) The Umayyād Caliphate

From their stronghold of Syria, where ‘Uṭmān b. al-‘Affān had installed his cousin Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān<sup>23</sup> as governor, the Bannū Umayya were able to gain control over the expanded Rašidūn Caliphate. After ‘Alī’s death at the hands of a disgruntled follower in 661, Mu‘āwiya became caliph. While some Muslims in Medina had pledged themselves to ‘Alī’s son al-Ḥassan, Mu‘āwiya’s rule stabilized after al-Ḥassan acknowledged him.<sup>24</sup> Mu‘āwiya’s son and successor as caliph – Yazīd – faced a Hashemite rebellion led by ‘Alī’s other son from Fāṭima – al-Ḥussayn –, but was able to crush the rebellion in its early stages, massacring al-Ḥussayn and less than a hundred followers near Karbalā’ in Iraq in 680, an event that is considered of utmost importance in Shia Islam.<sup>25</sup>

A more challenging uprising was led by ‘Abdullāh b. az-Zubayr – a grandson of Abū Bakr – who was declared caliph in Mecca after the Karbalā’ massacre. Neither Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya nor his son Mu‘āwiya b. Yazīd, who was proclaimed caliph in Damascus in 683, were able to suppress the

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21 Kennedy 2004, p. 57.

22 Ibid., pp. 76–77.

23 Hinds, Martin: “Mu‘āwiya I”. In: *EP*, vol. 7, pp. 263–267.

24 Kennedy 2004, p. 80.

25 Hawting, Gerald R.: *The First Dynasty of Islam. The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661–750*. Routledge: London / New York 2000, pp. 49–51.



revolt. Especially after Mu‘āwiya b. Yazīd’s childless death, ‘Abdullāh was able to gather most provinces under his caliphate. Yet a cousin of Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān – Marwān b. al-Ḥakam – kept on resisting in Syria and declared his caliphate. It was only Marwān’s son and successor ‘Abd al-Malik who was able finally to vanquish ‘Abdullāh b. az-Zubayr’s caliphate.<sup>26</sup>

‘Abd al-Malik incidentally is the first caliph whose historical existence is supported by material evidence. During his rule, the Umayyād Caliphate stood in direct confrontation with the Byzantine Empire in Palestine and Syria. This led to the development of a symbolic language of power mimicking the Byzantines. ‘Abd al-Malik started building religious landmarks like the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem as symbols of power. He furthermore introduced distinctively Islamic coins showing the Islamic profession of faith in opposition to the Christian Byzantine currency.<sup>27</sup> While the expansion of the caliphate had slowed in the years of civil strife, the revived Umayyāds were able to expand in Northern Africa, Northern India, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and crossed the Mediterranean to conquer much of the Iberian Peninsula in early 8<sup>th</sup> century. There were even attempts to take the Byzantine capital of Constantinople.<sup>28</sup>

The Marwanid Umayyāds were able to keep their line of succession rather homogeneous, having four sons of ‘Abd al-Malik as well as a nephew – the widely revered ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz –, as successive caliphs through much of the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. When the next generation came to power in 743, cousins turned on each other resulting in civil strife and a number of short-lived caliphs.<sup>29</sup> While Marwān b. Muḥammad, a grandson of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, was able to wrest control of the caliphate from the line of ‘Abd al-Malik, the infighting had weakened the Umayyāds to the point that they were swept away by a Hashemite revolt in 750, losing caliphal power and in most cases their lives to the ‘Abbāsīd leaders of the Hashemites. The revolt was in no small part linked to the inequality between Arabs from the centre of the polity and the non-Arab Muslims – the

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26 Hawting 2000, pp. 47–49; Kennedy 2004, pp. 90–98.

27 Barach, Jere L.: “Signs of Sovereignty. The Shahāda, Qur’anic Verses, and the Coinage of Abd al-Malik”. *Muqarnas* 27, 2010, pp. 1–30.

28 Kennedy 2004, p. 106.

29 Hawting, Gerald R.: “Umayyads”. In: *EI<sup>2</sup>*, vol. 10, pp. 840–847.

*mawālī*.<sup>30</sup> One of the grandsons of ‘Abd al-Malik – ‘Abd ar-Rahmān b. Hāšim – survived the upheaval and was able to escape the ‘Abbāsīd onslaught and sought refuge in Northern Africa, likely because of his maternal relation to Berber tribes. He later on crossed over to the Iberian Peninsula and established the long-lasting Emirate of Cordoba.<sup>31</sup>

As Umayyād power was perceptible on four continents – from the Iberian Peninsula in Europe to Northern Africa, the Middle-East and Central Asia, finally reaching northern parts of the Indian subcontinent – it is geographically indispensable to define the Umayyād Caliphate as an empire – and according to Münkler’s terminology as a *Weltreich*. It was clearly expansive and consisted of different economic regions as well as multiple ethnicities. Excluding the final period under Marwan II, the Marwānid Umayyāds ruled from Damascus. The dynasty had used preceding administrative structures of Byzantine and Sassanid origin from its beginning, with ‘Abd al-Malik starting a process of stronger centralization.<sup>32</sup> The status of the non-Arab *mawālī* arguably shows a centre-periphery dichotomy. Dynastical stability is evident from the fact that the ruling dynasty was in its fourth generation when it was finally toppled.

### c) The ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate

The ‘Abbāsīd revolt against the Umayyāds was one of many uprisings against Umayyād control, yet unlike multiple failed revolts, the ‘Abbāsīds succeeded by combining two disenfranchised groups: the pro-Hashemite – by then largely Shiite – camp and non-Arab Muslims who were disadvantaged during Umayyād rule, which had strongly favoured Arab Muslims. The ‘Abbāsīds themselves were Hashemites, descending from the Prophet’s paternal uncle ‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭalib, mostly through the widely revered ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās.<sup>33</sup> While exact circumstances remain murky, it is evident that a close associate of the ‘Abbāsīd family – Abū Muslim – gathered mostly non-Arab troops in the eastern province of Ḥurāsān in the

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30 Hämeen-Antilla 2014, pp. 547, 551.

31 Lévi-Provençal, Évariste: “‘Abd al-Rahmān”. In: *EP*, vol. 1, pp. 81–84.

32 Hawting 2000, p. 35; Kennedy 2004, pp. 99, 110; Hämeen-Antilla 2014, pp. 543–549.

33 Kennedy 2004, pp. 114–116, 123–125.

late 740s to oppose the Umayyāds.<sup>34</sup> After a quick succession of military victories and the inclusion of the Iraqi remnants of various Shiite rebellions in the 740s, the ‘Abbāsīd troops were able to topple the Umayyāds in Syria in 750. As early as October 749, the first ‘Abbāsīd caliph – a great-grandson of ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās, ‘Abdullāh b. Muḥammad, better known by his title as-Şaffāḥ – was proclaimed, holding the Friday sermon in the mosque of the ‘Alīd stronghold Kūfa.<sup>35</sup> With the exception of the Iberian Peninsula where the Umayyāds began their rule in 756, the ‘Abbāsīds were able to gain all territory of the Umayyād Caliphate. The centre of gravity moved east from Damascus to Iraq, where the second ‘Abbāsīd caliph – taking the title al-Manşūr – began building a new capital that was to become Baġdād. Before, he had secured his claim against his uncle ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Alī, against the commander of the Ḥurasān troops Abū Muslim, and against a Shiite rebellion.<sup>36</sup>

The ‘Abbāsīds prospered for the remainder of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, passing the caliphate from father to son, establishing relations with far away polities like the Carolingians, and making Iraq a centre of religion, culture and science. Kennedy considers the early ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate “more centralized than the Umayyād especially in the fiscal administration”.<sup>37</sup> The ‘Abbāsīds introduced the post of *wazīr* (vizier) – first minister – to help in governing their territory. It is telling that this post was not occupied by an Arab during this height of ‘Abbāsīd power, but by members of the Persian Barmaqīd family.<sup>38</sup> Only after the fall of this family from power during the reign of the arguably best known ‘Abbāsīd Hārūn ar-Rašīd, the empire began to decline. Outlying provinces in Central Asia and Northern Africa began to assert their autonomy, only nominally accepting the caliph as their overlord. Furthermore, Hārūn ar-Rašīd was the last ‘Abbāsīd to seriously challenge

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34 Bennison, Amira K.: *The Great Caliphs. The Golden Age of the ‘Abbasid Empire*. Yale University Press: New Haven / London 2009, pp. 24–25.

35 Kennedy 2004, p. 127.

36 Bennison 2009, pp. 26–27; Kennedy, Hugh: “Al-Manşūr”. In: *EI<sup>2</sup>*, vol. 6, pp. 427–428.

37 Kennedy 2004, p. 132.

38 Zaman, Muhammad Qasim et al.: “Wazīr”. In: *EJ<sup>2</sup>*, vol. 11, pp. 185–197.

Byzantium. After his death in 809, his sons al-Ma'mūn and al-Amīn began the first in a long line of 'Abbāsīd civil wars.<sup>39</sup>

Al-Ma'mūn's brother and successor al-Musta'mīn, who switched the capital to Samarrā', was able to re-establish a strong central state based on the power of Turkish military slaves who went on to become a major power-brokering elite in the years to come.<sup>40</sup> The power of this new elite soon eclipsed caliphal powers as clearly seen in the tumultuous decade known as the "Anarchy of Samarra" (861–870), in which a quick succession of 'Abbāsīd caliphs were no more than playthings of competing Turkish military factions.<sup>41</sup> The weakening of 'Abbāsīd central power favoured the development of all but in name independent regional dynasties, among others the Aḡlabids of Northern Africa, the Būyids of Iran and the Ḥamdānids of Syria in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. While this process was intermediately halted during the reign of al-Mu'taḏīd and his son al-Muktafī, the latter's death in 908 heralded the irreversible decline of the 'Abbāsīds.<sup>42</sup>

His young brother al-Muqtaḏīr was made caliph by the various brokers at court, using him as a puppet. The rising power of such elites was institutionalized in 936 with the creation of a new post. The *amīr al-umarā'*<sup>43</sup> was a supreme commander of caliphal troops who held most of the real power. When the Shiite Būyids of Iran acquired this post for their dynasty in 945, the 'Abbāsīds had finally become mere figureheads of an empire that did not have actual political control over its provinces outside its core region of Iraq.<sup>44</sup>

It was during this period of decline that a powerful counter-caliphate arose. The Shiite Fāṭimīd dynasty established itself in Northern Africa in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, as will be discussed in detail below. The Fāṭimīd danger in Northern Africa led the Umayyāds of Cordoba to rename their rule by also declaring a caliphate in order to counter Fāṭimīd ambitions in 929, yet their claim was largely confined to the Iberian Peninsula and collapsed in

39 Kennedy 2004, p. 147.

40 Bennison 2009, pp. 36–37.

41 Kennedy 2004, pp. 169–170.

42 Ibid., pp. 185–186.

43 Floor, Willem: "Amīr al-umarā'". In: *EF<sup>3</sup>*, consulted online on 10 July 2016.

44 Bennison 2009, pp. 42–43.

1031.<sup>45</sup> The dominance of a Shiite caliphate in the west and a Shiite dynasty controlling the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate is known as the Shiite century.<sup>46</sup> It was brought to an end by a Sunni Turkish dynasty – the Seljuks – removing the weakened Būyīds from Baǧdād in 1055 and placing it under the command of their leader Toǧril. Most of the traditional heartland of the caliphate in Iraq was now directly controlled by the Seljuks.<sup>47</sup> Yet the nominal suzerainty of the caliph was still upheld because the Seljuk leaders did not adopt the title caliph themselves, but were awarded the title of *sulṭān* [one who wields power]. This in some ways echoed the difference between emperor and pope in medieval Europe, although it was an entirely different concept.<sup>48</sup> Before the Seljuks, this title had been used to denote local rulers, now the title denoted the most powerful ruler of the Muslim world.

Seljuk power reached its peak during the rule of Malik Šāh I, when they controlled regions from Central Asia in the east to Anatolia in the west. After Malik Šāh’s death in 1092, power struggles between Seljuk princes led to a weakening of the dynasty.<sup>49</sup> This initiated the last revival of ‘Abbāsīd power, mostly in the Iraq region. Especially noteworthy is the reign of al-Muqtafī, who ruled from 1136–1160 and was the first ‘Abbāsīd virtually independent of the Seljuks.<sup>50</sup> The ‘Abbāsīd revival reached its peak during the reign of al-Nāšīr, who controlled wide parts of Iraq and Persia after asserting himself against the waning power of the Seljuks.<sup>51</sup> The ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate was finally destroyed in 1258 when the Mongols of Hulagu Khan sacked Baǧdād. While a branch line of the ‘Abbāsīds still used the caliph

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45 Molina, Luis: “Umayyads in Spain”. In: *EP*, vol. 10, pp. 847–853. On the ‘Umayyāds of Cordoba and their caliphate as well as this caliphate’s impact on Christian rulers in Spain cf. Drews, Wolfram: “Imperiale Herrschaft an der Peripherie? Hegemonialstreben und politische Konkurrenz zwischen christlichen und islamischen Herrschern im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen ‘Westen’”. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 46, 2012, pp. 1–39.

46 Bennison 2009, pp. 39–43.

47 Bosworth, Clifford E. et al.: “Salǧūkids”. In: *EP*, vol. 13, pp. 936–978; Kennedy 2004, pp. 311–312.

48 Kraemers, Johannes H. / Bosworth, Clifford E.: “Sulṭān. 1. In early Islamic Usage and in the Central Lands of Islam”. In: *EP*, vol. 9, pp. 849–851.

49 Bosworth et al. 1995, p. 942.

50 Zetterstéen, Karl V. / Bosworth, Clifford E.: “al-Muqtafī”. In: *EP*, vol. 7, p. 543.

51 Bennison 2009, pp. 52–53.

title in Egypt, they were completely dependent on their Mamlūk hosts and their caliphate – known as shadow caliphate – was not widely accepted. The shadow caliphate ceased to exist when the Ottomans took Cairo in 1517, the last ‘Abbāsīd caliph died in 1543.<sup>52</sup>

When applying Münkler’s definition to the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate, we have to refer to the early period of the 8<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. We may define the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate as a continuation of the previous caliphates through dynastical change as the ‘Abbāsīds from their ‘Irāqī base ruled over a territory comparable to the Umayyād Caliphate, excluding the Iberian Peninsula, while including parts of Central Asia. Especially the fiscal setup was fairly centralized, likely even more so than it had been during the Umayyād period. A dichotomy between centre and periphery is difficult to find. The ethnic makeup of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate was even more diverse than it had been before, having Arab elites surpassed by Persians, who in turn were surpassed by Turks. Surviving these power struggles for hundreds of years clearly proves dynastical stability. The early ‘Abbāsīds were definitely expansive and did not accept other polities as their equals. The extensively discussed diplomatic correspondence with the Carolingians is not found in Arabic sources – their absence bearing witness to the grade of importance allotted to the instance.<sup>53</sup> Likewise the ‘Abbāsīds knew that there was a large and powerful polity in China, but their worlds did not overlap.<sup>54</sup>

Yet when ‘Abbāsīd political power declined, other polities were on par with or even exceeded ‘Abbāsīd influence, thereby ending a period of caliphal empire(s) spanning from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. Still most of these polities, like the Seljuks, still acknowledged the ‘Abbāsīd caliph as suzerain. The same holds true for most provincial dynasties – by case of example the Sultanate of Delhi asked for ‘Abbāsīd consent for their rule over Northern India in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, long after the zenith of ‘Abbāsīd power.<sup>55</sup> When

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52 Lewis, Bernard: “‘Abbāsīds”. In: *EP*, vol. 1, pp. 15–23.

53 Concerning this episode cf. Borgolte, Michael: *Der Gesandtenaustausch der Karolinger mit den Abbasiden und mit den Patriarchen von Jerusalem*. Arbeo-Gesellschaft: Munich 1976; cf. Kennedy 2004, p. 146.

54 Kennedy 2004, pp. 120–121.

55 Abd Elrahman, Mohamed Nasr: “The Relations between the Sultans of Delhi and the Abbasid Caliphate. A Study on the Political Thought of Sultans of

the ‘Abbāsids lost the Islamic West from Northern Africa to Egypt to the hostile counter-caliphate of the Fāṭimids, any claim to empire became theoretical. The Fāṭimid and ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate both claimed major parts of the preceding caliphates, therefore having overlapping zones of influence. Two empires in the same region according to Münkler are not truly empires in the sense of *Weltreich*, but only qualify as *Großreich*.

#### d) The Fāṭimid Caliphate

The Fāṭimid dynasty emerged from Shiite rebellion in Northern Africa in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The rebellion was based on the teachings from within the Ismā‘īlī subgroup that were actively propagated from the Syrian town of Salamiyya, starting in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The Ismā‘īlīs had split with other Shiite groups on the question of who should spiritually lead the community after the death of Ğa‘far aṣ-Ṣādiq – great grand-son of ‘Alī – in 765. Ismā‘īlī proselytization was quite successful on the fringes of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate, establishing strongholds in Yemen, Central Asia and even reaching the Indian region of Sindh. The Yemeni branch was decisive in setting up the Fāṭimid Caliphate by dispatching the preacher Abū ‘Abdullāh aṣ-Ṣī‘ī to Northern Africa late in the ninth century, where he converted the Kutāma Berbers to Ismā‘īlism. At the turn of the century a man of obscure background – so obscure that even his name has been a matter of scientific debate<sup>56</sup> – claimed descent from Ğa‘far aṣ-Ṣādiq and announced himself the new leader of the Ismā‘īlīs.

This seems to have led to a schism within the group that forced the claimant to vacate Salamiyya. The claimant sought refuge with the community in North Africa. When the preacher Abū ‘Abdullāh and his new converts had been able to vanquish local dynasties, the claimant now known as ‘Ubayd Allāh was proclaimed caliph as al-Maḥdī in 910 in the former Aḡlabīd capital of Raqqāda. Having secured what is modern day Tunisia and parts

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Delhi. 602–816 AH / 1210–1414 AD (in Arabic: Al-‘Alaḡāt bayn salāṭīn Dilhī wa-l-ḡulafā al-‘Abbāsiyya. Dirāsa fi-l-fikr as-siyāsī li-salāṭīn Dilhī. 602–816h / 1210–1414 m)”. *Al-Maḡla at-tārīḡiyya al-Misriyya* 47, 2011, pp. 7–28.

56 Brett, Michael: *The Rise of the Fatimids. The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Fourth Century of the Hijra, Tenth Century CE*. Brill: Leiden / Boston – Cologne 2001, pp. 30–31.

of Morocco, the first Fāṭimid had a truly global following as Ismā‘īlī enclaves from Yemen to India acknowledged him as caliph.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore the expansionist doctrine of the Fāṭimids manifested itself in expeditions to Sicily and Egypt, the former while successful being the opening salvo to a long back and forth with Byzantium as enemy.<sup>58</sup> In Ifrīqiyya itself the nascent Fāṭimid Caliphate had to contend with rebellions from rivalling Berber and Arab tribes and dynasties often additionally fuelled by sectarian differences.<sup>59</sup> Besides, the caliph had to put down a rebellion from within his own Ismā‘īlī community. The Kutāma tribe led by the preacher Abū ‘Abdullāh rose up in 911. After the preacher had been killed, the Kutāma were reintegrated and became a major elite group within the caliphate that was ruled centrally from the newly established city of al-Maḥdiyya.<sup>60</sup> The situation of the Fāṭimids stagnated for nearly half a century – often troubled by Berber rebellions – until the great grandson of al-Maḥdī, al-Mu‘izz, was finally able to expand the caliphate eastwards and conquered Egypt in 969. The holy cities of Mecca and Medina soon accepted his suzerainty and his troops were able to occupy parts of the Levant.<sup>61</sup> Al-Mu‘izz shifted the Fāṭimid centre to Egypt, where he inherited a well-functioning bureaucracy and had a new capital built – Cairo.<sup>62</sup>

The geographical shift also led to a change of elites: al-‘Azīz – son and successor to al-Mu‘izz – turned from the Kutāma warriors to Turkish military freemen and slaves.<sup>63</sup> During his reign late in the tenth century, the Fāṭimid Caliphate reached its geographic peak – having its suzerainty accepted from “the Atlantic to the Red Sea, in the Ḥidjāz [including Mecca and Medina], in the Yemen [...] in Syria and even for a time as far as Mosul [in Northern Iraq]”<sup>64</sup>. Al-‘Azīz also tried to establish himself as the sole caliph of the Muslim world through negotiations with Shiite power brokers

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57 Kennedy 2004, pp. 313–314.

58 Halm, Heinz: *Die Kalifen von Kairo. Die Fatimiden in Ägypten 973–1074*. Beck: Munich 2003, pp. 147, 182; Brett 2001, p. 142.

59 *Ibid.*, pp. 139–141.

60 Kennedy 2004, p. 314.

61 Halm 2003, pp. 98–99, 113–116.

62 Kennedy 2004, pp. 316–319.

63 *Ibid.*, pp. 322–323.

64 Canard, Marius: “Fāṭimids”. In: *EP*, vol. 2, pp. 850–862.



in Iraq, but did not succeed as the Fāṭimids' descent from Ğa'far aṣ-Ṣādiq was widely called into question.<sup>65</sup>

The son of al-'Azīz – arguably the best known Fāṭimid – al-Ḥākīm came to power in 996. While best known for having the Church of the Holy Sepulchre demolished, Kennedy labels his whole rule a “reign of terror”.<sup>66</sup> One may consider the reign of al-Hakim the beginning of the decline of the Fāṭimid Caliphate. While there had already been signs of slowly waning influence in Northern Africa and Sicily<sup>67</sup>, al-Ḥākīm did have military successes in Syria. His disappearance in 1021 led to the first religious split in the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī community, with some members believing him to return. Al-Ḥākīm had also been the first minor to be declared caliph – a practice that led to court intrigues between members of the Fāṭimid family, the Ismā'īlī bureaucracy and military leaders.<sup>68</sup> While al-Ḥākīm's grandson al-Mustaṣṣir was in control of Egypt only, he was in a stable position and seems to have restarted the global proselytization in the Islamic East. After gaining allegiances as far as Northern Iraq, his ambitions were soon thwarted by the new Sunni power brokers – the Seljuks. Al-Mustaṣṣir was furthermore the first in a line of caliphs who had to contend for power with military leaders and bureaucrats. The military commander Nāṣir ad-Dawla rebelled against al-Mustaṣṣir and was able to gain the capital. He even intended to return Egypt to 'Abbāsīd suzerainty before he was killed.<sup>69</sup>

In the aftermath al-Mustaṣṣir was forced to delegate powers. Badr al-Ġamālī – leader of the Fāṭimid troops in Syria – became the first *wazīr al-sayf* (minister of the sword), an event described by Halm as the end of the Fāṭimid Caliphate.<sup>70</sup> The importance of the post became clear when al-Afḍal – Badr al-Ġamālī's son and successor – changed the succession line after al-Mustaṣṣir's death to the younger son who was enthroned caliph as

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65 Id.: “al-'Azīz Bi'llāh”. In: *EP*, vol. 1, pp. 823–825; cf. Halm 2003, pp. 158–160 for the controversy concerning 'Alīd descent.

66 Kennedy 2004, p. 333.

67 Halm 2003, pp. 370–380.

68 Kennedy 2004, p. 327.

69 Gibb, Hamilton A. R. / Kraus, Paul: “al-Mustaṣṣir”. In: *EP*, vol. 7, pp. 729–732; Kennedy 2004, pp. 337–339.

70 Halm 2003, pp. 419–420.

al-Must‘alī.<sup>71</sup> The new caliph’s older brother Nizār was killed in the ensuing revolt leading to a new split within the Ismā‘īlī community, those in the east rejecting the ruling line of Cairo, giving rise to the Assassins who were to kill al-Must‘alī’s successor al-Āmir.<sup>72</sup> The Crusades permanently banished the Fāṭimids from the Levant and further weakened the caliphate that was by now continuously preoccupied with internal power struggles around progressively powerless caliphs. The real power lay with the *wazīr as-sayf*, who was by the 1130s invested with a monarchical title – *al-malik* (king).<sup>73</sup> In the 1160s Egypt was ripe for the taking. Crusaders and the pro-‘Abbāsīd Zengid dynasty vied for control with a positive outcome for the Zengids. The Fāṭimid Caliphate was abolished in 1171 after more than 250 years. The exact circumstances will be discussed below.

The dynastical aspect of Münkler’s definition of empires is clearly fulfilled by the long reign of the Fāṭimids and included rise, decline and a very limited resurgence. The caliphate did also rule a number of distinct regions and ethnicities though their direct rule was mostly confined to Northern Africa including Egypt.<sup>74</sup> But the Fāṭimids were rather flexible in dealings with Byzantium, being intent on cooperating against the common enemy<sup>75</sup> – the ‘Abbāsīds, who were a rival empire within the Fāṭimid sphere of influence. One may argue that the Fāṭimid Caliphate was for a short amount of time an empire in Münkler’s sense as the ‘Abbāsīds were in steep decline in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries to the point that the Fāṭimids were near to gain acceptance in the ‘Abbāsīd centre of ‘Irāq twice. Right from the beginning of their rule, the Fāṭimids declared their intent to rule over all Muslims by proclaiming the caliphate. Their caliphate did not come into being “in a fit of absence of the mind”. It was a planned process to wrest control of the Muslim world from the Sunni ‘Abbāsīds. Alas, compared to

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71 Gibb, Hamilton A. R.: “al-Musta‘lī bi ‘llāh”. In: *EP*, vol. 7, p. 725; Lev, Yaacov: *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt*. Brill: Leiden et al 1991, pp. 55–56.

72 Ibid.; Halm, Heinz: “Fāṭimids”. In: *EP*<sup>3</sup>, consulted online on 11 July 2016.

73 Ibid.; Halm 2003, p. 130; Lev 1991, pp. 47–48.

74 Cf. Halm 2014, pp. 560–561, who enumerates large parts of the Maghreb, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Sicily, Yemen and the Holy Places as well as outposts in Iraq, Iran, Central Asia and India concerning geographic expansion, and Arabs, Greeks, Turks, Armenians and Black Africans concerning ethnicities.

75 Halm 2003, pp. 99–104.

the early ‘Abbāsids or the Umayyāds, the Fāṭimids never ruled a majority of the Muslim population it claimed to preside over. While the setup of the Fāṭimid Caliphate was therefore clearly imperial, it would be a far stretch to call their polity an empire in Münkler’s sense.

## Summary

The mere idea of a Caliphate – suzerainty over all regions under Muslim control – is nothing but imperial after the rapid expansion of the Islamic polity in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Thereafter a single entity ruling over all Muslims by default included numerous ethnicities, economic regions and a vast territory. This polity was for at least two centuries expansive to the utmost, not accepting its non-Muslim adversaries as equals. In fact one of the caliph’s duties as per Sunni consensus was to confront non-Muslim enemies on the battlefield. As Kennedy subsumes “rather than peace interrupted by occasional conflict, the normal pattern was seen to be conflict interrupted by the occasional, temporary truce (*hudna*). True peace (*ṣulḥ*) could only come when the enemy surrendered and accepted Islam or tributary status.”<sup>76</sup>

As for internal policy, the caliphate was absolute in so far as there could be one caliph only at a given moment. Counter-caliphates were usually put down, peaceful coexistence with another Muslim caliph was not considered an option, obedience to the caliph obligatory and rebellion punishable by death.<sup>77</sup> For at least two centuries, a succession of caliphs from different dynasties ruled over the Muslim world from their respective capital cities until imperial power waned with the decline of the ‘Abbāsids and the rise of the Fāṭimids in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Both dynasties even built new cities as centres of their respective caliphates. The history of both caliphates shows the innovation of new offices or titles for the real holders of political power after the decline of central power. With regard to political power neither late ‘Abbāsids nor Fāṭimids stood up to their predecessors, which does not match Münkler’s definition of empire.

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<sup>76</sup> Kennedy 2004, p. 120.

<sup>77</sup> Black, Anthony: *The History of Islamic Political Thought. From the Prophet to the Present*. Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh 2011, pp. 18–19.

The new situation gave rise to new political theory on the caliph's role in society. According to Black, the 11<sup>th</sup>-century scholar al-Māwardī restated the “Caliph-Sultan relationship” in a way that made “rulers technically dependent upon the Caliph’s approval for their legitimacy.”<sup>78</sup> Accordingly, the weak caliphal dynasties were still paid obeisance by historical actors holding political power, no matter whether they were in the direct vicinity of the caliph or a world away. At the same time upholding the caliphal habitus through ritual underlines that later ‘Abbāsids and Fāṭimids were polities with imperial ambition, and while this ambition in both cases stayed unfulfilled, continued obeisance shows the social acceptance of the caliphate. Symbolic communication seems to be a major aspect of the matter at hand and will be discussed in the following chapters in order to supplement Münkler’s rather contemporary definition of empire from a medievalist point of view.

#### 4. Symbolic communication and rituals

European medieval studies established the notion that communication during the Middle Ages differed from modern communication in so far as symbolic communication was the dominant form of communication. Symbolic communication is defined as communication that uses signs with a defined meaning or information.<sup>79</sup> A special case within symbolic communication is the ritual, being a complex form of symbolic communication. Rituals are defined as a „human sequence of actions that is characterized by standardization of the external form, repetition, performativity and representational form” that have “building effect on social structure”.<sup>80</sup> The question of how the caliphates expressed suzerainty and in how far this relates to actual imperial policies concerns the social structure of medieval Islamic society. “Building effect” in essence means that the execution of a ritual defines and

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78 Ibid., p. 89.

79 Althoff, Gerd: “Zur Bedeutung symbolischer Kommunikation für das Verständnis des Mittelalters”. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 31, 1997, pp. 370–389, p. 373.

80 Stollberg-Rilinger, Barbara: *Rituale. Vom vormodernen Europe bis zur Gegenwart*. (Historische Einführungen 16). Campus: Frankfurt am Main / New York 2013, p. 9.

confirms the hierarchy or relation between the participants of the ritual as well as their rights and duties.<sup>81</sup>

According to Althoff, rituals could symbolize “peace and friendship, subordination and super ordination, familiarity, grace or willingness to serve” and “were not confined to the present but included a promise for the future”.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, rituals were understood to have a binding character upon the participants. If the ritual was not performed as customary by one side, this often foreshadowed arising conflicts.<sup>83</sup> Of special interest to this study are monarchical rituals, which is hardly surprising as “nearly all rituals in pre-modern societies were closely linked to political order that in turn was closely linked to the social, legal, religious and economic order.”<sup>84</sup> Monarchical rituals are the prototype of such rituals. According to Stollberg-Rilinger, monarchical rituals became important in instances of monarchical instability, namely the moment of succession, and were used to bridge this instable moment, manufacturing continuity – whether real or imagined.<sup>85</sup>

The imagined continuity of suzerainty is of utmost importance in the context of medieval Islamic rule. While the political power of the ‘Abbāsīd and Fāṭimid dynasties soon veined, both closely stuck to the notion of imperial suzerainty through rituals that were understood as being closely linked to caliphal power. The ‘Abbāsīd contemporary al-Ġazālī described the three major caliphal rituals of his time as follows: “The sultan [...] owes allegiance to the *imām* (*bay‘a*) and grants him his prerogatives, that is, he mentions the caliph’s name in the address (*khuṭba*) during the public Friday prayers and mints coins bearing the name of the reigning caliph (*sikka*).”<sup>86</sup> These rituals as well as the ritual of *hil‘a* will be explained in the following paragraphs.

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81 Althoff, Gerd: “Spielregeln symbolischer Kommunikation und das Problem der Ambiguität”. In: Stollberg-Rilinger, Barbara et al. (eds.): *Alles nur symbolisch? Bilanz und Perspektiven der Erforschung symbolischer Kommunikation*. (Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne). Böhlau: Cologne / Weimar / Vienna 2013, pp. 35–51, here pp. 36–37.

82 Althoff 1997, p. 374.

83 Id. 2013, p. 38.

84 Stollberg-Rilinger 2013, pp. 86–87.

85 Ibid., pp. 90–91.

86 Quoted after Rosenthal, Erwin I. J.: *Political Theory in Medieval Islam*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1958, p. 43.

a) *Bay'a*

*Bay'a* is defined by Tyan as “an Arabic term denoting, in a very broad sense, the act by which a certain number of persons, acting individually or collectively, recognise the authority of another person.”<sup>87</sup> Originally the ritual included the participants to clutch hands. In the case of the caliph, it is the oath of allegiance to the ruler, either reaffirming the *status quo ante* in a ritual of obeisance or being a ritual of election, thereby investing a new caliph. The ritual was either given in private by the political and military elite at court [*bay'at al-hāṣṣa*] or proclaimed publically thereby including the populace in the ritual [*bay'at al-āmma*] and repeated in the different provinces. The *bay'a* to the caliph was binding and life-long, harbouring religious sentiments as pledging to the ruler and obeying him became equivalent to pledging to God.<sup>88</sup> Whereas Marsham has convincingly shown that this is especially the case for the *bay'a* given to the Prophet Muḥammad<sup>89</sup>, Tyan believes that “the binding effect is reinforced by the religious character which the *bay'a* acquired from early 'Abbāsīd times.”<sup>90</sup> The 'Abbāsīds closely stuck to this ritual, even demanding the pledge by clutching the hands. They also tried to stabilize their line of succession by having members of the ruling family and the elite pledging to the designated successor to the caliph.<sup>91</sup> The Fāṭimīds in turn sometimes practiced a major separation between *bay'at al-hāṣṣa* and *bay'at al-āmma*; an interesting example is al-'Azīz who received the oath of allegiance in private in December 975, while the public proclamation only happened about half a year later. Like the 'Abbāsīds, the Fāṭimīds tried to stabilize succession by pledges to the heir apparent.<sup>92</sup>

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87 Tyan, Emile: “Bay'a”. In: *EP*, vol. 1, p. 1113.

88 Ibid.

89 Marsham, Andrew: *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy. Accession and Succession in the First Muslim Empire*. Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh 2009, pp. 40–57, especially p. 55.

90 Tyan 1960, p. 1113.

91 Drews, Wolfram: *Die Karolinger und die Abbasiden von Bagdad. Legitimationsstrategien frühmittelalterlicher Herrscherdynastien im transkulturellen Vergleich*. (Europa im Mittelalter. Abhandlungen und Beiträge zur historischen Komparatistik 12). Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2009, pp. 98–99.

92 Oesterle, Jenny Rahel: *Kalifat und Königtum. Herrschaftsrepräsentation der Fatimiden, Ottonen und der frühen Salier an religiösen Hochfesten*. (Sym-

b) *Ḥuṭba*

*Ḥuṭba* or sermon denotes the delivering of speeches to the male Muslim population before the mandatory Friday prayers in the mosque or after the feast prayers at the feast ground. According to Islamic tradition, the Rāšidūn caliphs continued the practice of the Prophet Muḥammad to personally preach on these occasions, emphasizing their religious leadership of the community during its most important communal ritual.<sup>93</sup> While the practice of preaching in person was not always observed by caliphs throughout Islamic history, the *ḥuṭba* remained vitally important as a monarchical ritual “for the Friday sermon customarily included mention of the name of the ruler as a token of his legitimacy”<sup>94</sup> where the attendees were supposed to supplicate for the ruler. The allegiance of a region or city was usually expressed by this ritual while “failure to mention his name could amount to an act of rebellion.”<sup>95</sup> As shown above, both ‘Abbāsids and Fāṭimids used the Friday *ḥuṭba* to announce the advent of the new dynasty.<sup>96</sup> Especially in Fāṭimid custom, the sermon was used to establish dynastical stability by presenting the new caliph to the populace as Friday or feast preacher, or with a view to strengthening the position of the heir apparent.<sup>97</sup>

c) *Sikka*

*Sikka* is the right to have coins minted, respectively the ruler’s right to have his name imprinted on coins during later stages. Unlike the rituals mentioned above, *sikka* is not associated with Muḥammad or the Rāšidūn

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bolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne). Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 2009, p. 107.

93 Wensinck, Arent J.: “Khuṭba”. In: *EP*, vol. 5, pp. 74–75.

94 Berkey, Jonathan P.: *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East*. (Publications on the Near East). University of Washington Press: Seattle / London 2001, p. 12.

95 Ibid.

96 Drews, Wolfram et al.: *Monarchische Herrschaftsformen der Vormoderne in transkultureller Perspektive*. (Europa im Mittelalter. Abhandlungen und Beiträge zur historischen Komparatistik 26). De Gruyter: Berlin / Boston 2015, pp. 311–313.

97 Oesterle 2009, pp. 108–110.

Caliphate, but is a later innovation.<sup>98</sup> While there are early Islamic coins featuring the names of rulers or local governors, the Umayyād coinage reform of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (died 705) favoured gold and silver coins without a ruler’s name.<sup>99</sup> This changed during ‘Abbāsīd rule when imprinting the caliph’s name on coins became the norm. Intended succession was also often expressed by the ‘Abbāsīds through imprinting the heir apparent’s name on coins. After the decline of ‘Abbāsīd power, local rulers kept the ruling caliph’s name on their coins supplementing it with their own. Coinage is therefore a visible marker for opposition especially after taking into account that “when dynasties arose in deliberate defiance of or enmity to the ‘Abbāsīds, as was the case with the Spanish Umayyāds and the Fāṭimīds of North Africa and Egypt, their coinage was a completely independent one, with their own names only inscribed on the coins.”<sup>100</sup>

#### d) *Ḥil’ā*

*Ḥil’ā* means a robe of honour. Honouring a guest, friend or acquaintance by gifting him with clothes is an ancient Mediterranean custom. During the Middle Ages the act often meant a present given “by rulers to subjects whom they wished to reward or to single out for distinction.”<sup>101</sup> The political character of this ritual was again an innovation of the ‘Abbāsīds, who used the giving of robes as a ritual of investiture either to give a person a new post or to demonstrate acceptance of a ruler’s dominion over a certain city or region. In the latter case the robe was accompanied by a written diploma [*manšūr*]. The Fāṭimīds applied the ritual in comparable ways (see below). What makes this particular ritual monarchical is the understanding that “the symbolical act of the formal bestowal of robes implied the acceptance of the ruler’s authority.”<sup>102</sup>

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98 Bosworth, Clifford E. et al: “Sikka”. In: *EP*, vol. 9, pp. 591–600.

99 Barach 2010, pp. 1–7.

100 Bosworth et al 1997, p. 592.

101 Stillmann, Norman A: “Ḥil’ā”. In: *EP*, vol. 5, p. 6.

102 Marsham 2009, p. 197.



## Summary

Both caliphates, as has been shown in chapter two, collected oaths of allegiance which entailed coinage rights and supplications in the Friday sermon from regions far out of their actual political control, thus having a number of practically independent, immensely powerful rulers accepting them as their ultimate overlords. These all but in name independent rulers often mimicked the caliphal rituals by inserting their own names after the caliph's in *ḥutba* and on coins. Having introduced the concepts of symbolic communication and rituals as well as the most important monarchical rituals in medieval Islam, the importance of these rituals will be tested in a case study on one of the most famous medieval Muslim rulers – Saladin – who rose to power during the final stages of the 'Abbāsīd-Fāṭimid conflict.

## 5. Saladin

As per the argumentation above, Saladin found himself in a rather awkward position between two caliphates – the 'Abbāsīds and the Fāṭimids – in mid-12<sup>th</sup> century. It will be discussed how Saladin behaved in this complicated imperial context, while special attention is paid to rituals. Did the formal acceptance of suzerainty have any political implications? To gain a balanced view on Saladin's actions, two contemporary sources from widely differing points of view – Bahā' ad-Dīn Ibn Šaddād<sup>103</sup> having a positive portrayal of the ruler, Ibn al-Aṭīr<sup>104</sup> being rather critical – are consulted.

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103 On the stance of Ibn Šaddād cf. Shayyal, Gamal el-Din el-: "Ibn Shaddād". In: *EP*, vol. 2, pp. 933–934; Lev, Yaacov: *Saladin in Egypt*. (The Medieval Mediterranean 21). Brill: Leiden / Boston / Cologne 199, pp. 33–36; for the reader's convenience the page numbers point to the English translation of the source – Richards, Donald S. (transl.): *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin or al-Nawādir al-Sulṭāniyya wa'l-Maḥāsīn al-Yūsufiyya by Bahā' ad-Dīn Ibn Shaddād*. (Crusade Texts in Translation 7). Ashgate: Aldershot / Burlington 2007; the author has used Čamāl ad-Dīn aš-Šiyāl (ed.): *An-nawādir as-sulṭāniyya wa-l-maḥāsīn al-wa-l-maḥāsīn al-yūsufiyya. Sirat Šalāḥ ad-Dīn. Bahā' ad-Dīn Ibn Šaddād*. Maktabat al-ḥanḡī: Cairo 1994. English translations were adjusted by the author as per the Arabic edition, the corresponding page numbers of the Arabic text appear in brackets.

104 On the stance of Ibn al-Aṭīr cf. Rosenthal, Franz: "Ibn al-Aṭīr". In: *EP*, vol. 2, pp. 724–725; Lev 1999, pp. 36–41; for the reader's convenience the

### a) A family in service of the Zengids

Following is a short introduction to Saladin's early life and his family's relation to the Zengids in whose service Saladin began his career. Yūsuf – not yet bearing the *laqab* Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn – was born in 1137/1138 as the son of Ayyūb b. Ṣāḏī – a local notable of Kurdish descent who was governing a region around Tikrīt in the second generation as a dependant of the Seljuk governor Buhriz.<sup>105</sup> The relation between Ayyūb and his brother Širkūh to the Zengids reached back to an ill begotten attempt of 'Imād ad-Dīn Zengī to fight against the Seljuks. Ayyūb and Širkūh were able to facilitate the Zengid's retreat.<sup>106</sup> 'Imād ad-Dīn was the *atabek* of Mosul – officially a post given to him by the Seljuks. The title *atabek* – father of a prince – meant that 'Imād ad-Dīn had the task to govern a certain territory in the name of a Seljuk prince and to teach this prince the art of ruling. Yet 'Imād ad-Dīn was the first Zengid to be virtually independent from the Seljuks.<sup>107</sup> In 1137/8 Ayyūb and Širkūh had to flee as the latter had killed a man. They called in the mentioned favour with 'Imād ad-Dīn. Nağm ad-Dīn Ayyūb was made governor of Ba'albik while Širkūh went on to govern Himş – both towns being in modern day Syria. After the death of 'Imād ad-Dīn, Assad ad-Dīn Širkūh stayed in the service of Zengī's son Nūr ad-Dīn and became his most trusted military leader, while Nağm ad-Dīn Ayyūb took service in Dam-

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page numbers point to the English translation of the source – Richards, Donald S. (transl.): *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh*, vol. 2: *The Years 541–589 / 1146–1193. The Age of Nur al-Din and Saladin*. (Crusade Texts in Translation 15). Ashgate: Aldershot / Burlington 2007; the author has used Muhammad Yūsuf ad-Duqāq (ed.): *Ibn al-Aṭīr, al-Kāmil fī-t-tā'rikh*, vols. 9 and 10. Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya: Beirut 2002 / 2003. English quotations were taken from the English translations and adjusted by the author as per the Arabic edition, with the corresponding page numbers of the Arabic text appearing in brackets.

105 Eddé, Anne-Marie / Todd, Jane Marie (transl.): *Saladin*. Belknap Press: Cambridge, Mass. / London 2011, p. 16.

106 Ibn al-Athir, pp. 175–176 (vol. 10, p. 16).

107 Gibb, Hamilton A. R.: "Zengi and the Fall of Edessa". In: Balwin, Marshall (ed.): *A History of the Crusades, vol. 1: The first Hundred Years*. University of Wisconsin Press: Madison 1969, pp. 449–463; Levanoni, Amalia: "Atābak (Atabeg)". In: *EI<sup>3</sup>*, consulted online on 11 July 2016.

ascus. When Nūr ad-Dīn took Damascus relatively peacefully in 1154, this was at least partly thanks to the negotiations between the two brothers.<sup>108</sup>

Saladin came into Zengid service around the late 1150s as a bureaucrat in Damascus.<sup>109</sup> He began his military career as a subordinate to his paternal uncle Asad ad-Dīn Širkūh and participated in the three military expeditions to Egypt commandeered by the latter in 1164, 1167 and 1169. At least at the outset Nūr ad-Dīn's involvement into the affairs of Egypt was rather reluctant. In 1163 the ousted *wazīr* Šāwar took refuge at the Damascene court. Šāwar convinced Nūr ad-Dīn to militarily support his claim on the vizierate whereby Saladin got involved in a complex power struggle for the control of Egypt between the Fātimid caliph al-ʿAḍid li-Dīn Allāh, Šāwar himself, the Zengids and the Crusaders.<sup>110</sup>

In 1164 Nūr ad-Dīn consented to send Assad ad-Dīn Širkūh to Egypt with a large contingent of troops to reinstate Šāwar under the condition that high tribute was going to be paid – Ibn al-Aḫḫār mentions one third of Egypt's revenue.<sup>111</sup> While Šāwar was in fact reinstated, he reneged on the agreement allying with the Crusaders and forced the Zengid troops to withdraw. After another failed expedition in 1167, Assad ad-Dīn Širkūh was finally able to establish Zengid control over Egypt in 1169 and took over the vizierate from Šāwar, who was subsequently executed. Saladin distinguished himself during these campaigns as a capable military commander and became the right hand of his uncle. When Širkūh died shortly after the conquest of Egypt in 1168, it was Saladin who became *wazīr*.<sup>112</sup>

## b) Saladin's beginnings in Egypt

According to Ibn al-Aḫḫār, Saladin's rise to power was in no way engineered by the young man himself. He had been reluctant to accompany his uncle

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108 Ibn al-Athir, p. 176 (vol. 10, p. 16).

109 Eddé 2011, p. 23.

110 For a detailed discussion of the threeway struggle see Köhler, Michael: *Allianzen und Verträge zwischen fränkischen und islamischen Herrschern im Vorderen Orient. Eine Studie über das zwischenstaatliche Zusammenleben vom 12. bis ins 13. Jahrhundert.* (Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients. N.F. 12). De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 1991, pp. 244–268.

111 Ibn al-Athir, pp. 144 (vol. 9, pp. 465–467).

112 Eddé 2011, pp. 26–35.

on the third and final expedition to Egypt, allegedly saying: “By God, if I was to be given the possession [*mulk*] of Egypt, I would not go there. I have endured in Alexandria [meaning a siege during the second failed expedition] and elsewhere what I will never forget.”<sup>113</sup> Ibn Šaddād gives the same account in a slightly different wording having Saladin say: “I was the most unwilling of men to go out [*akrah an-nās li-l-ḥurūġ*] on this occasion.”<sup>114</sup> While this remark sounds as if made up from retrospective – including Saladin’s later role in Egypt – it seems to have been the Fāṭimid caliph al-‘Āḍid who propelled Saladin to power. He gave him the robes of vizierate and let him take the title *al-Malik al-Nāṣir* underlining his role as Fāṭimid vizier, likely believing him to be the weakest and most impressionable of the deceased Širkūh’s lieutenants.<sup>115</sup> Ibn Šaddād glosses over the exact circumstances by simply stating that “command was delegated [*fuwwiḍa al-amr*] to the *sultān* [meaning Saladin]”.<sup>116</sup> Lev notes that the written appointment of Saladin includes the prerequisite of him accepting the ‘Alīd lineage of the Fāṭimids and the legitimacy of their caliphate.<sup>117</sup>

To Nūr ad-Dīn, Saladin was nothing but the commander of his troops in Egypt though, as is evident by the letters written to Saladin by his overlord. Nūr ad-Dīn in these letters refuses to even mention Saladin’s new gained office of vizierate but calls him *amīr isfahsālār* – commander of the troops. The letters furthermore included symbolic communication by being signed not by name, but by motto, thus clearly denoting that Nūr ad-Dīn considered Saladin his subordinate, as Richards argues.<sup>118</sup> This is not surprising at all when considering that Nūr ad-Dīn did not accept the Fāṭimids as the legitimate caliphs. From the beginning of his rule he had tried to establish himself as a major supporter of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate. Saladin was now a

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113 Ibn al-Athir, p. 177 (vol 10, p. 17).

114 Ibn Shaddād, p. 43 (p. 79).

115 Ibn al-Athir, p. 177 (vol 10, pp. 16–18); cf. Eddé 2011, pp. 36–37.

116 Ibn Shaddād, p. 45 (p. 81).

117 Lev 1999, pp. 67–69; Lev also notes that the vizierate is given to Saladin and his heirs, making the post hereditary, something he believes did not arise out of the wishes of the Fāṭimid caliph, but marks the defection of the Egyptian bureaucracy, cf. p. 76.

118 Ibn al-Athir, p. 178 (vol. 10, p. 17), cf. Richards’ annotation and Eddé 2011, p. 39.

double-hatted operative, at the same time being vizier for the Fāṭimids and subordinate military commander for the most powerful Levantine partisan of the ‘Abbāsids.

Returning to the situation in Egypt, the rivalling lieutenants in Egypt were appeased – and likely bribed – to comply with the new order. Saladin clearly tried to establish himself by getting close relatives into positions of power in Egypt. He had to contend with a serious rebellion by the old Sudanese military elite and Crusader attacks in 1169. According to Ibn al-Aṭīr the latter danger was only averted thanks to military aid by Nūr ad-Dīn and financial support by al-‘Āḍid.<sup>119</sup> While nominally subordinate to the Shiite al-‘Āḍid, Saladin seems to have grown ever more independent after the fateful year of 1169, starting to suppress Shiism and furthering the role of the *šāfi‘ī* school of Sunni jurisprudence that was not only the predominant school in Egypt, but also as the school of law he himself followed.<sup>120</sup>

### c) Saladin between two caliphs

The rising star of Saladin troubled Nūr ad-Dīn according to Ibn Šaddād who mentions that fearing the rising power of the family of Širkūh, Nūr ad-Dīn took away control of the important Syrian city of Ḥimṣ from “Assad ad-Dīn’s lieutenants [nawāb]”.<sup>121</sup> This notion is not found with Ibn al-Aṭīr. While it is strange that Nūr ad-Dīn would have allowed his soldiers to acknowledge the Fāṭimid caliph, he seems to not have objected until the year 1171, when according to Ibn al-Aṭīr, Nūr ad-Dīn wrote to Saladin ordering him to establish the Friday sermon in the name of the ‘Abbāsid caliph al-Mustaḍī’. Al-Mustaḍī’ was quite new to the office, his father al-Mustangīd having died in 1170.<sup>122</sup> One may assume that Nūr ad-Dīn’s wish may have been linked to either trying to win favour with al-Mustaḍī’ or that it was based on a request by the mentioned caliph.<sup>123</sup> A third poss-

119 Ibn al-Athir, pp. 183–184 (vol. 10, pp. 22–23).

120 Ibid., p. 194 (vol 10, pp. 31–32); Ibn Shaddād, p. 45 (p. 81); cf. Lev 1999, p. 85.

121 Ibn Shaddād, p. 45 (p. 81).

122 Zetterstéen, Karl V.: “al-Mustaḍī’”. In: *EP*, vol. 7, p. 707.

123 Cf. Lev 1999, p. 85; the personal ambition of al-Mustaḍī’ may be visible in the phrasing Ibn al-Aṭīr uses when describing the letter *al-ḥuṭba al-mustaḍī’ iyya*; cf. Ibn al-Athir, p. 196 (vol 10, p. 33).

ible motivation for Nūr ad-Dīn may have been that Saladin had gained a power base independent from Nūr ad-Dīn by being vizier of the Fāṭimids. By abolishing this dynasty, legitimacy bestowed upon Saladin through the office of vizier would evaporate. In fact Ibn al-Aṭīr mentions that Saladin did not want to stop mentioning the Fāṭimid caliph during Friday prayers as he “wanted al-‘Āḍid to be with him, so that if Nūr ad-Dīn came against him, he could resist, relying on him [al-‘Āḍid] and the Egyptians [*imṭana‘a bihi wa bi-abli Miṣra ‘alayhi*].”<sup>124</sup> Ibn Šaddād glosses over the episode and simply states that al-‘Āḍid’s death led Saladin to change the sermon to the ‘Abbāsīd caliph.<sup>125</sup> As Eddé notes, this act symbolized the transfer of allegiance from the Fāṭimids to the ‘Abbāsīd.<sup>126</sup>

The strong position that Saladin had gained vis-à-vis the Fāṭimids enabled him to do away with the old dynasty without any problem, showing that the Egyptian caliph had been the suzerain in name only. Yet the version Ibn al-Aṭīr tells us makes sense in so far as Saladin had no motive for abolishing the dynasty. It seems that it was impossible for him to oppose Nūr ad-Dīn’s wishes in this regard, likely due to pro-Zengid sentiments within his base of power. On a Friday in the month of September 1171, Egypt returned to ‘Abbāsīd custom.<sup>127</sup> This was well received in Baghdad, the caliph sent robes of honour to Nūr ad-Dīn and Saladin – a major honour bestowed by ‘Abbāsīd caliphs to their subordinates, again emphasizing the new allegiance of Egypt to the Sunni caliph.<sup>128</sup>

#### d) Tensions between Nūr ad-Dīn and Saladin

While united in being honoured by the caliph, Nūr ad-Dīn and Saladin moved away from each other rather quickly. In late 1171 a campaign by Saladin against the Franks prompted an offensive by Nur ad-Din. According to Ibn al-Aṭīr, Saladin cancelled his advance after being advised that Nūr

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124 Ibn al-Athir, p. 196 (vol 10, p. 33).

125 Ibn Shaddād, pp. 47–48 (p. 86); while both sources speak of the natural death of the caliph, Lev mentions accounts of murder or suicide as a result of a coup by Saladin; Lev 199, p. 82–84.

126 Eddé 2011, p. 47.

127 Cf. Eddé 2011, p. 49 for different dates.

128 Ibn al-Athir, p. 198 (vol. 10, pp. 34–35).

ad-Dīn would enter Egypt if not for the buffer territories under Frankish rule.<sup>129</sup> Both sides are portrayed as ready for battle by Ibn al-Aṭīr with Nūr ad-Dīn being “resolved to fall upon Egypt and to banish [*iḥrāḡīhi* ‘*anhā*] him [Saladin].”<sup>130</sup> Saladin as per this source gathered a council – possibly best described as council of war – where open rebellion against the nominal ruler Nūr ad-Dīn was discussed. Saladin’s father Naḡm ad-Dīn Ayyūb allegedly spoke against this course of action and dismissed the councillors only to tell his son that the best course of action would be to lie low and publicly oppose rebellious speech.<sup>131</sup> Ibn Šaddād, however, paints a different picture. Here it is Saladin who is opposed to rebellion, allegedly saying to Ibn Šaddād personally:

We had heard that Nūr ad-Dīn would perhaps move towards us in the lands of Egypt. Several of our comrades advised that he should be openly resisted [*yukāšif wa yuḥālif*] and allegiance to him should be renounced [*‘ašābu*] and that his army should be met in battle to repel it if his move became a reality. I alone disagreed with them, urging that it was not allowed [*lā yaḡūz*] to say anything like that.<sup>132</sup>

Ibn al-Aṭīr’s account is likely a pro-Zengid spin on this quote of Ibn Šaddād, including made up scenes. It seems very unlikely that Ibn al-Aṭīr would have come to know about private discussions between Saladin and his father. The main take away from the two accounts is that the differences between Nūr ad-Dīn and Saladin had come to a boiling point. Yet actual confrontations did not happen. Both leaders seem to have busied themselves with other, more urgent problems while continuing monarchical rituals as if Saladin was still the most obedient servant of Nūr ad-Dīn.

### e) Ayyūbid expansion and stabilization

According to Ibn al-Aṭīr Saladin was preparing for a military encounter with Nūr ad-Dīn by trying to establish fall-back positions.<sup>133</sup> In late 1172

129 Ibid., pp. 198–199 (vol. 10, pp. 35–36).

130 Ibid., p. 199 (vol. 10, p. 36).

131 Ibid., pp. 199–200 (vol. 10, p. 36).

132 Ibn Šaddād, p. 49 (p. 86).

133 Lev considers the Ayyūbid expansion as continuation of Fāṭimid policies within the traditional Egyptian sphere of influence, aiming at economic and political advantages, cf. Lev 1999, pp. 97–101.

Saladin's brother Šams ad-Dawla Tūrānšāh tried to conquer Nubia. According to Ibn al-Aṭīr this came to pass as

Saladin and his family knew that Nūr ad-Dīn was resolved to enter Egypt, so they agreed that they would seize [*yatamalakūn*] either Nubia or Yemen, so that, if Nūr ad-Dīn came against them, they would confront and resist him and, if they were strong enough to stop him, they would remain in Egypt, but if they were incapable of stopping him, they would take to the sea and enter the lands they had conquered.<sup>134</sup>

Yet the expedition was not met with the intended success. Ibn Šaddād does not even mention the episode. In 1173 Ibn al-Aṭīr reports on a mutual offensive of Nūr ad-Dīn and Saladin aiming to take Kerak and meant to repair the damages done to the relationship between the two men. Saladin again bolted from a personal meeting as “he and all his family were fearful of Nūr ad-Dīn” and “all knew that, if the two met, his [Saladin's] dismissal [*ʿazluhu*] would be easy for Nūr ad-Dīn.”<sup>135</sup> Ibn Šaddād mentions in passing that Saladin “took to field against Kerak”.<sup>136</sup>

In early 1174 Saladin's brother Šams ad-Dawla embarked on another campaign, this time to Yemen. Ibn al-Aṭīr's version claims the same motivation as quoted above for Šams ad-Dawla's invasion of Nubia. But Ibn Šaddād claims that Saladin

considered the strength of his troops, the large number of his brothers and the strength of their valour. He had heard that in Yemen a man had taken control [*istawla*] and seized the local fortresses and that he had his own name proclaimed in the Friday ḥuṭba. He was known as ʿAbd an-Nabī b. Mahdī. [...] So he [Saladin] decided to dispatch his eldest brother [...] to Yemen.<sup>137</sup>

Ibn al-Aṭīr acknowledges that the successful Ayyūbid invasion re-established the ʿAbbāsīd *ḥuṭba* in Yemen, but in his view Saladin had only used this as a pretext to get Nūr ad-Dīn's “permission” [*istʿaḍanu Nūr ad-Dīn*].<sup>138</sup> While now established in Yemen, Ayyūbid hold on Egypt was endangered. Remnants of the pro-Fāṭimid camp plotted rebellion and Nūr ad-Dīn had

134 Ibn al-Athir, p. 210 (vol. 10, p. 45).

135 Ibid., p. 214 (vol. 10, p. 49).

136 Ibn Shaddād, p. 48 (p. 86).

137 Ibid., pp. 48–49 (pp. 87–88).

138 Ibn al-Athir, pp. 217–218 (vol. 10, pp. 52–53). He also relates that Nūr ad-Dīn was mentioned during Friday prayers in Yemen, cf. p. 222 (vol. 10, p. 56).



finally resolved to take action and remove his unruly subordinate from power in Egypt. Nūr ad-Dīn was not to set foot to Egypt as he died in 1174 after a severe illness, removing the Zengid danger for Saladin.<sup>139</sup>

#### f) The culmination of Saladin's rise to power

The ruler left behind a young boy, Ismā'īl, who succeeded his father taking the title *al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ*, as Ibn Šaddād mentions in a single sentence.<sup>140</sup> Ibn al-Aṭīr on the other hand mentions that the commanders of Nūr ad-Dīn's army swore allegiance, as did the people of Syria and Saladin himself, who according to this account made the *ḥuṭba* in Ismā'īl's name and struck the coins in his name thereby accepting the boy as his superior, even explicitly affirming this to al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl by sending the struck coins and informing him of the allegiance of Egypt to the young ruler.<sup>141</sup> The boy's rule was far from stable though. Different military leaders vied for power in Syria and his paternal cousin Sayf ad-Dīn Ġāzī invaded his territory. According to Ibn al-Aṭīr Saladin wrote to Syria claiming a wish to confront Sayf ad-Dīn and admonishing the Syrian commanders for having monopolized access to al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ.<sup>142</sup> It is likely that a direct intervention by Saladin was stopped by trouble in Egypt, namely a pro-Fāṭimid rebellion that is described by Ibn Šaddād and a crusader attack on Alexandria.<sup>143</sup> As Eddé notes in a different context, problems of legitimacy might have played a role in Saladin's planning, too.<sup>144</sup> Ibn al-Aṭīr mentions Saladin's wish to "gain access to Syria to conquer the country" in context of a Frankish attack on the Syrian city of Bānyās. Negotiations between the Franks and the Zengids had led to a withdrawal after the latter had threatened to call

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139 Ibid., pp. 218–222 (vol. 10, pp. 53–55).

140 Ibn Shaddād, p. 49 (p. 88).

141 Ibn al-Athir, pp. 223–224 (vol. 10, p. 58). There seems to be no material proof for Saladin actually striking coins in al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ's name. The only coins bearing his name as per Balog were all struck later on in Damascus, cf. Balog, Paul: *The Coinage of the Ayyūbids*. (Royal Numismatic Society 12). Royal Numismatic Society: London 1980, pp. 60–61.

142 Ibn al-Athir, pp. 223–224 (vol. 10, p. 58).

143 Ibn Shaddād, pp. 49–50 (pp. 89–92); Ibn al-Athir, pp. 229–231 (vol. 10, pp. 63–65).

144 Eddé 2011, p. 72.

for Saladin's help. Saladin now claimed interest in fighting the Franks in Syria.<sup>145</sup> It is likely that Ibn al-Aṭīr relates the common Zengid perception of Saladin here; the tables had turned, so to say. Now the Zengids considered the Franks a necessary buffer territory.

After the power struggle between different Syrian *umarā'* (military leaders) came to head in late 1174, Saladin was finally able to make his entry into the Syrian arena. When Sa'd ad-Dīn Kumūštakīn – former ruler governor of Mosul – established himself in Aleppo and gained sole control of al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl, the ruler of Damascus Šams ad-Dīn b. al-Muqaddam felt threatened and invited Saladin to Damascus.<sup>146</sup> Saladin quickly established control over large parts of Syria, including the major cities of Ḥamā and Ḥimṣ “proclaiming his loyalty [*tā'atuhu*] to al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ b. Nūr ad-Dīn”<sup>147</sup> justifying his Syrian campaign as a deterrent against the Mosul branch of the Zengids in the east and the Franks in the west.<sup>148</sup> Successively he besieged Aleppo, where his liege lord resisted him fiercely. After having to abandon the first siege because of Frankish attacks, Saladin was able to meet out a decisive blow against the Zengids by defeating the army of the Mosul Zengids in 1175. This victory soon led to a second siege of Aleppo that was concluded by negotiations. The two sides agreed to the *status quo ante*. Interestingly, Ibn Šaddād never mentions that Saladin fought against his liege lord al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ in his description of these events.<sup>149</sup>

Ibn al-Aṭīr says that Saladin “stopped the *ḥuṭba* for al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ b. Nūr ad-Dīn and removed his name from the coinage of his land [*qata'a ḥuṭbat al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ b. Nūr ad-Dīn wa azāla ismahu 'an as-sikka*]” now and “received investiture robes [*ḥil'a*] by the Caliph” some days later.<sup>150</sup> It seems as if Ibn al-Aṭīr misconstrued the order of events here. Richards annotates in his edition of al-Kāmil that according to the historian Ibn Abī Tayy', the treaty of Aleppo included al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ's right to *ḥuṭba* and

145 Ibn al-Athir, pp. 225–226 (vol. 10, p. 60).

146 Ibn Shaddād, p. 51 (pp. 92–93); Ibn al-Athir, pp. 231–232 (vol. 10, pp. 65–66).

147 Ibn al-Athir, p. 233 (vol. 10, p. 67).

148 Ibid., pp. 233–234 (vol. 10, pp. 66–68).

149 Ibn Shaddād, pp. 51–53 (pp. 92–96); Ibn al-Athir, pp. 233–236 (vol. 10, pp. 67–70).

150 Ibn al-Athir, p. 236 (vol. 10, pp. 69–70).

coinage in all the lands Saladin controlled.<sup>151</sup> The accounts are reconciled by a reading of events as per Möhring, namely that the caliphal investiture with *hil'a* and *mansūr* led to Saladin dropping the *ḥuṭba* in al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl's name and replacing it with his own name in sermon and coinage.<sup>152</sup> This would make sense as Saladin had clamoured for caliphal investiture, assuring the caliph of his obeisance.<sup>153</sup> To quote Eddé: “he still lacked ‘authority’ [...], which only the caliph, the representative of divine authority on earth, could confer upon him.”<sup>154</sup> According to Lev

Caliphal investiture was viewed differently by the two main segments of the society whose support and recognition Saladin sought. For the Kurdish-Turkish military class caliphal investiture had apparently a restricted significance only, but it carried far greater weight with the civilian elite, who served the ruler, and with the general populace.<sup>155</sup>

While the conflict between Saladin and the Zengids still manifested itself in open battles during the following years until the death of al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ, the event as described by Ibn al-Aṭīr clearly signals Saladin's independence through monarchical ritual – a change that was in all likelihood built on the symbolical capital of the caliphal investiture.

## Summary

Monarchical rituals played a decisive role in shaping the relations between historical actors in 12<sup>th</sup>-century medieval Islam. The case study has shown that caliphs and other rulers strictly kept to a ritual protocol, the rules of the game established by powerful predecessors. The caliphs were not necessarily in the political or military position to actually enforce the suzerainty that was expressed by ritual. This study illuminates a special case showing Saladin between two opposing claims of suzerainty.

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151 Ibid., cf. the first annotation.

152 Möhring, Hannes: *Saladin. Der Sultan und seine Zeit 1138–1193*. Beck: Munich 2005, pp. 61–62. The first coins showing Saladin as ruler in his own right are dated to the year 570 which ended in mid-1175, thus confirming the account of Ibn al-Aṭīr, cf. Balog 1980, pp. 62–63.

153 Eddé 2011, pp. 90–93; cf. Lev 1999, pp. 101–105.

154 Eddé 2011, p. 90.

155 Lev 1999, p. 105.

The Fāṭimid caliph invested Saladin as *wazīr* with a robe, while Nūr ad-Dīn never addressed Saladin with this new title. The first or at least one of the first matters of contention between Nūr ad-Dīn and Saladin was the *ḥuṭba* in Egypt, the former clamouring for the ‘Abbāsids. The importance of this ritual in an imperial context is further underlined by the Yemen expedition launched by the Ayyūbids, allegedly to re-establish ‘Abbāsīd suzerainty that had been challenged. The actual motive for the expedition is called into question by Ibn al-Aṭīr, however, who assumes that it was a pretence meant to persuade Nūr ad-Dīn in favour of the expedition. Both interpretations have in common that historical actors consider the ‘Abbāsīd *ḥuṭba* important enough to wage war. The legitimising effect of caliphal authority is finally attested by Saladin’s rise to independence. While Saladin had been unruly and outright disobedient during the final years of Nūr ad-Dīn’s life and waged war upon Nūr ad-Dīn’s son, he did not drop the pretence of subordination to the Zengids through ritual until he gained caliphal approval through investiture with robes of honour and diplomas for the lands he had seized. Only through this imperial ritual did Saladin gain independence from his Zengid overlords, proving that monarchical legitimacy was bestowed by a militarily and politically weak caliph through symbolical acts.

## 6. Conclusion

It has been established that the early caliphates of medieval Islam were empires (or one empire) according to Münkler’s definition. This changed in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. ‘Abbāsīds and Fāṭimīds vied for nominal suzerainty over the Muslim world while not actually being powerful actors. The Fāṭimīd rise coincided with an ‘Abbāsīd decline that was so severe that when following Münkler’s definition, neither of them can be described as actual global empire. During their respective lows, both ‘Abbāsīds and Fāṭimīds at best controlled nothing more than their immediate seats of power, namely Iraq and Egypt.

Interestingly their ritual importance was still global. As has been shown, both dynasties collected claims of allegiance from Northern Africa to India. These rituals – as lined out in the case of Saladin – had a legitimacy building effect and were thereby of actual political influence. To quote Lev:

“The Caliph was regarded as the supreme leader of the Muslims, who held ultimate power to invest regional leaders, like Nur al-Din and Saladin, with legal authority.”<sup>156</sup>

While political influence was not directed by the caliphates and does not equal actual political power, this clearly shows that historical actors still saw benefit in the role of the caliph as overall leader of the Muslim community. All actors actively pretended that caliphal authority was supreme over local rulers throughout the Muslim world and the overall leader of the *umma* – the imagined community of all Muslims. I therefore propose the terms imagined or pretended suzerainty to describe this interesting phenomena. The importance of rituals and symbolic communication during the Islamic classic in my opinion necessitates the inclusion of these theories in any definition of empires. Leaving them out of studying pre-modern empires – as is evidently the case with Münkler, who bases his theories mainly on cases from antiquity and contemporary history – means ignoring one of the most important ways of communicating imperial power during the medieval period.

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156 Lev 1999, p. 105.



Tobias Hoffmann (Münster)

## Von verlorenen Hufeisen und brennenden Nüssen – Über Konflikte im Rahmen des „diplomatischen“ Zeremoniells des byzantinischen Kaiserhofes\*

„Für den Lateiner war es sichtlich schwer, die Byzantiner *nicht* der Arroganz zu bezichtigen, taten diese doch alles, um als die Ersten der Welt aufzutreten.“<sup>1</sup> So lautet das Urteil des Byzantinisten Peter Schreiner, dem man auch zahlreiche Stellungnahmen byzantinischer Autoren zur Seite stellen könnte, die die „westliche“ Absage an die byzantinische Auffassung ihrerseits als Ausdruck von Arroganz deuteten, als ein hochmütiges Streben nach etwas, das ihnen nicht zustand.<sup>2</sup> Ausdruck fand diese „Arroganz“ der Byzantiner nicht zuletzt in dem Zeremoniell, das anlässlich des Besuches auswärtiger

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\* Ich möchte mich hiermit herzlich bei den Herausgebern dieses Bandes für die Möglichkeit bedanken, in diesem Rahmen beitragen zu dürfen.

1 Schreiner, Peter: „Byzanz und der Westen: Die gegenseitige Betrachtungsweise in der Literatur des 12. Jahrhunderts“. In: Haverkamp, Alfred (Hrsg.): Friedrich Barbarossa. Handlungsspielräume und Wirkungsweisen des staufischen Kaisers. (Vorträge und Forschungen / Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für Mittelalterliche Geschichte 40). Jan Thorbecke: Sigmaringen 1992, S. 551–580, hier S. 559.

2 Vgl. z. B. Rentschler, Michael: „Griechische Kultur und Byzanz im Urteil westlicher Autoren des 10. Jahrhunderts“. *Saeculum* 29, 1978, S. 324–355; Id.: „Griechische Kultur und Byzanz im Urteil westlicher Autoren des 11. Jahrhunderts“. *Saeculum* 31, 1980, S. 112–156; Luchterhandt, Manfred: „Stolz und Vorurteil. Der Westen und die byzantinische Hofkultur im Frühmittelalter“. In: Bauer, Franz Alto (Hrsg.): *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft. Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen, Gestalt und Zeremoniell*. (Byzas 5). Ege Yayınları: Istanbul 2006, S. 171–211; Staubach, Nikolaus: „Graecae Gloriam. Die Rezeption des Griechischen als Element spätkarolingisch-frühottonischer Hofkultur“. In: Euw, Anton von / Schreiner, Peter (Hrsg.): *Kaiserin Theophanu. Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends. Gedenkschrift des Kölner Schnütgen-Museums zum 1000. Todesjahr der Kaiserin*. 2 Bde. Das Museum: Köln 1991, Bd. 1, S. 343–368; Schreiner 1992, S. 559–560.

Gäste Anwendung fand.<sup>3</sup> Es handelte sich um ein ausgesprochen politisches Ereignis, bei welchem Vorstellungen in sinnhaft erlebbare Formen transformiert wurden, um eines der wichtigsten Medien kaiserlicher Repräsentation. Das Hofzeremoniell machte das Selbstverständnis des byzantinischen Reiches und ihres Kaisers sinnlich wahrnehmbar, zugleich traf es Aussagen über die Wahrnehmung des Fremden bzw. machte das Verhältnis des Kaisers zum Besucher oder dessen Auftraggeber auf vielfältige symbolische Weise öffentlich. Hier bestand ein erhebliches Konfliktpotential, das zu zahlreichen Auseinandersetzungen führte, v. a. dann, wenn die Differenz zwischen Selbst- und Fremdverständnis als Diskrepanz empfunden wurde. Viele der überlieferten Konflikte, die häufig als Symptome eines angeblichen Unverständnisses des byzantinischen Zeremoniells oder gar byzantinischer Kultur gedeutet worden sind, lassen sich auf diese problembehaftete, zur Wahrnehmung gebrachte Differenz zwischen Selbst- und Fremdverständnis zurückführen.<sup>4</sup>

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- 3 Zum „diplomatischen“ Zeremoniell Tinnefeld, Franz: „Ceremonies for Foreign Ambassadors at the Court of Byzantium and their Political Background“. *Byzantinische Forschungen* 19, 1993, S. 193–213; Nerlich, Daniel: *Diplomatische Gesandtschaften zwischen Ost- und Westkaisern 756–1002*. (Geist und Werk der Zeiten 62). Peter Lang: Frankfurt a. M. et al. 1999, S. 150–160; Treitinger, Otto: *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell. Vom oströmischen Staats- und Reichsgedanken*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 1956, S. 197–202; Bauer, Franz Alto: „Potentieller Besitz. Geschenke im Rahmen des byzantinischen Kaiserzeremoniells“. In: Id. (Hrsg.): *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft. Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen, Gestalt und Zeremoniell*. (Byzas 5). Ege Yayınları: Istanbul 2006, S. 135–169; Anca, Alexandru Ștefan: *Herrschaftliche Repräsentation und kaiserliches Selbstverständnis. Berührung der westlichen mit der byzantinischen Welt in der Zeit der ersten Kreuzzüge*. (Symbolische Kommunikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme. Schriftenreihe des Sonderforschungsbereichs 496, 31). Rhema: Münster 2010, S. 94–114; Lee, Douglas / Shepard, Jonathan: „A Double Life: Placing the Peri Presbeon“. *Byzantinoslavica. Revue internationale des Études Byzantines* 52, 1991, S. 15–39.
- 4 Vgl. am Beispiel Liutprands von Cremona Hoffmann, Tobias: „Diplomatie in der Krise. Liutprand von Cremona am Hofe Nikephoros II. Phokas“. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 43, 2009, S. 113–178; vgl. dagegen v. a. Rentschler, Michael: *Liutprand von Cremona. Eine Studie zum ost-westlichen Kulturgefälle im Mittelalter*. Klostermann: Frankfurt a. M. 1981; Menzel, Viktor: *Deutsches Gesandtschaftswesen im Mittelalter*. Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover 1892,



Im Folgenden möchte ich anhand einiger ausgewählter Quellen des Früh- und Hochmittelalters „westlicher“ Provenienz einige typische Konflikte herausarbeiten, die das byzantinische Hofzeremoniell als ein Medium kaiserlicher Repräsentation bei Besuchen auswärtiger „diplomatischer“ Gäste mit sich brachte. Dabei soll im Speziellen der Frage nachgegangen werden, welche spezifischen Sequenzen des Zeremoniells aus welchen Gründen zu Auseinandersetzungen führten, und wie diese (literarisch) bewältigt wurden.

Beginnen möchte ich mit einer Sammlung von Anekdoten, die bis ins späte Mittelalter hinein über einen Aufenthalt des Normannenherzogs Robert I. in Konstantinopel kursierte.<sup>5</sup> Sie erscheint unter anderem im „Roman de Rou“ des Dichters Wace, einer Quelle, welche im ausklingenden 12. Jahrhundert die Geschichte der normannischen Herrscher von Rollo bis ins Jahr 1171 erzählt. Es wird angenommen, dass Heinrich II. von England dieses Werk in Auftrag gab oder es zumindest inspirierte. Es handelt sich um eine Schrift, die in einem höfischen Umfeld gelesen und vorgetragen werden sollte, was für das Folgende nicht unwichtig sein wird.<sup>6</sup>

Bereits bei seiner Ankunft in Konstantinopel, so beginnt der Dichter Wace, habe der Normannenherzog Eindruck zu schinden versucht, indem er seinem Reittier goldene Hufeisen anbringen ließ und seinen Männern befahl, die Hufeisen nicht aufzuheben, wenn sie abfielen, was Wace offenkundig voraussetzt. Die Quintessenz dieser Anekdote lässt der Autor unausgesprochen. Sie ist allzu offensichtlich: Der Herzog wollte auf diese Weise demonstrieren, wie vermögend er war, so vermögend, dass er es sich leisten konnte, goldene Hufeisen einfach liegen zu lassen.<sup>7</sup> Die Anekdote nimmt

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S. 122 bezeichnet Liudprand als einen der „unfähigsten Diplomaten der deutschen Geschichte, wo nicht den schlechtesten Diplomaten von allen“.

- 5 Dass diese Anekdoten auf einem nur fingierten Zusammentreffen basierten, ist für diese Untersuchung unerheblich. Wie Elisabeth von Hout gezeigt hat, ist Robert wahrscheinlich nie in Konstantinopel gewesen; vgl. Hout, Elisabeth van: „Normandy and Byzantium in the Eleventh Century“. *Byzantion. Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines* 55, 1985, S. 544–559.
- 6 Vgl. *The History of the Norman People. Wace's Roman de Rou*, hrsg. und übers. Burgess, Glyn S. The Boydell Press: Woodbridge 2004, S. xi–xxvi.
- 7 *Le Roman de Rou de Wace*, hrsg. von Holden, A.J. 3 Bde. (Société des anciens textes français). A.& J. Picard: Paris 1970, Bd. 1, S. 275, vv. 3059–3068: *Par la terre l'empereür / se fist conduire a grant honur; / a la mule ke il chevauchout, / a la plus chiere ke il menout, / fist d'or les quatre piez ferrer, / puis fist a ses baruns*

offenkundig Bezug auf eine Sequenz des Zeremoniells beim Empfang hoher auswärtiger Gäste: das feierliche Einreiten durch das Goldene Tor. Es war das erste Ereignis, das Besucher mit dem außergewöhnlichen Reichtum des Kaisers konfrontierte und beeindrucken sollte.<sup>8</sup> Robert gelang es mithin in der Darstellung des Dichters die beabsichtigte Wirkung des Zeremoniells umzukehren. Der Herzog täuscht einen Reichtum vor, der nicht gegeben ist, was durch den Befehl, die Hufeisen liegen zu lassen, deutlich wird.

Wace gibt noch weitere Ereignisse wieder, die sich dem Empfang durch den Kaiser anschlossen. Als der Kaiser Robert zu Gesprächen in seinen Palast lud, wurden ihm und seinen Männern keine Sitzplätze zugewiesen. Dies widerspricht nicht dem in Konstantinopel üblichen Zeremoniell. Es war nicht unüblich, dass auswärtigen Besuchern bei der Audienz kein Sitzplatz zugewiesen wurde. Zwar war man am byzantinischen Kaiserhof grundsätzlich zu Konzessionen fähig und bereit, wenn die politische Konstellation dies opportun erscheinen ließ. Jedoch blieb der Anspruch des Vorranges des byzantinischen Kaisers stets wahrnehmbar. So musste selbst der französische König Ludwig VIII. bei einem Besuch der Hauptstadt des Kaiserreiches mit einem niedrigeren Hocker vorliebnehmen, während sein Gastgeber auf seinem Thron saß, um nur ein Beispiel zu nennen.<sup>9</sup> Eine Differenz musste sichtbar bleiben.

In der Wahrnehmung Roberts war dessen ungeachtet das Verbot des Sitzens problematisch, denn es gab ein Verhältnis symbolisch wieder, das aus seiner Perspektive herabwürdigend wirkte. Wace zufolge meisterten der Herzog und seine Männer dieses Problem, indem sie sich selbst Sitzmöglichkeiten schufen: Sie nahmen auf ihren Mänteln Platz. Als sie sich erhoben,

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*veer / ke quant il ors des piez charreit / que mar nul d'els le reprendreit. / Par Constantinoble passa / ed ad l'enpereür turna.*

- 8 *Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris de ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae libri duo*, hrsg. von Riske, Johann J. 2 Bde. (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae 7). Weber: Bonn 1830, Bd. 1, 89, S. 402.
- 9 *Ioannis Cinnami Epitome Rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, hrsg. von Meineke, August. (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae). Weber: Bonn 1836, S. 82–83. Auf einem niedrigen Sitz nahm ebenfalls Balduin III. von Jerusalem Platz; *Willelmi Tyrensis Archiepiscopi Chronicon*, hrsg. von Huygens, Robert B.C. (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 63 A). Brepols: Turnhout 1986, 18, 24, S. 846. Vgl. Treitinger 1956, S. 95–96, 201.

ließen sie ihre Mäntel liegen und als man sie darauf ansprach, warum sie diese nicht aufhoben, reagierte der Herzog schlagfertig: „Ich pflege meinen Sitz nicht mit mir zu tragen.“<sup>10</sup> Im Anschluss daran machte Robert seinen Männern noch wertvollere Mäntel zum Geschenk, so Wace, der damit die Tugend der Freigebigkeit des Normannenherzogs hervorhebt.<sup>11</sup> Genüsslich führt Wace die Reaktion des Kaisers aus, bewies diese doch, welchen Eindruck die urbane Wendigkeit des Normannen machte. Er habe den Kaiser so sehr beeindruckt, dass dieser die Sitte der Normannen in das Hofzeremoniell inkorporierte: „Aufgrund der Vornehmheit der Normannen, die aus ihren Mänteln Bänke herstellten, ließ der Kaiser überall in seinem Palast Bänke und Sitze aufstellen; zuvor saß jeder, der im Palast sitzen wollte, auf dem Boden.“<sup>12</sup> Man könnte an dieser Stelle die Frage aufwerfen, ob Wace an dieser Stelle Staunen, Gelächter oder vielleicht beides hervorzurufen beabsichtigte. Ein größeres Lob für Robert als dieser erdichtete Kulturtransfer lässt sich jedenfalls kaum artikulieren.

Konfliktpotentiale hielt ebenfalls das Zeremoniell des Schenkens bereit, achtete man am byzantinischen Kaiserhof doch darauf, die Vorrangstellung des Kaisers auch bei diesem Zeremoniell demonstrativ zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Dem byzantinischen Selbstverständnis entsprechend, hebt Treitinger hervor, betrachtete man Geschenke auswärtiger Gäste am Konstantinopolitaner Hof theoretisch nicht als Geschenke, sondern als Tribute, Geschenke des Kaisers dagegen als Gnadenerweise, die ganz dem Belieben des Kaisers oblagen.<sup>13</sup> Dies war freilich eine Verzerrung der „Wirklichkeit“ – auch der Kaiser musste schenken –, doch es war eine Vorstellung,

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10 Roman de Rou, 3, S. 275, vv. 3069–3080: *Endementres ke a lui parla, / a la guise ki esteit la / sun mantel jus a terre mist, / tut desfublez desus s'asist; / al partir, quant, ne deigna. / Un des Grieus le vit defublé, / sun mantel li ad relevé, / dist li que sun mantel preïst / e a sun col le rependist; / e il respundi par noblei: / "Je ne port pas mun banc od mei."*

11 Ibid., S. 276, vv. 3081–3086: *Chascun des Normanz autresi / sun mantel a terre guerpi, / si cum li ducs l'out fait si firent, / lur manteals el paleis guerpirent; / e li ducs lur duna manteals / asez plus riches e plus beals.*

12 Ibid., vv. 3115–3120: *Pur la noblece des Normanz, / qui de lur manteals firent bancz, / fist l'enpere el paleis faire / bancs e sieges environ l'eire; / ainz cel tens a terre seeient / ki el paleis seeir voleient.*

13 Treitinger 1956, S. 202; vgl. zum Ritual des Schenkens am Konstantinopolitaner Hof Bauer 2006; Anca 2010, S. 94–114.

die auf das Schenkungszeremoniell einwirkte. Dieses sorgte nicht nur dafür, dass sich der Kaiser durch die Qualität der Geschenke als höherrangig auszeichnete, sondern verpflichtete sogar die Gäste, um die Übergabe eines Geschenkes zu bitten, was ein stark hierarchisches Verhältnis zum Ausdruck brachte. Dass dies für auswärtige Besucher problematisch sein konnte, offenbaren zahlreiche Konflikte, die im Kontext des Geschenkaustauschs überliefert sind. Dieser problematische Charakter von Geschenken gibt sich auch im „Roman de Rou“ zu erkennen.

Als der Kaiser befahl, dem Gast eine große Summe Geldes zur Verfügung zu stellen, „um ihn zu ehren“, lehnte der Herzog dies ab. Die Annahme des Geldes hätte signalisiert, dass Robert dessen bedurfte, weshalb er das Geschenk nicht annehmen wollte. Die versuchte „Ehrung“ wäre in Roberts Sicht einer Ehrverletzung gleichgekommen. Er erwiderte daher, er habe genügend Geld, das er ausgeben könne. Während seiner Pilgerreise wolle er lediglich sein eigenes Geld ausgeben, doch wenn er auf seiner Heimreise wieder Station in Konstantinopel machte, wäre er bereit, Vorräte und andere Dinge anzunehmen.<sup>14</sup> Robert umschiffte also klug eine weitere Klippe.

Den Abschluss der Anekdotensammlung bildet eine weitere Anekdote, die wohl abermals auf eine im lateinischen Westen als herabwürdigend betrachtete Praxis des „diplomatischen“ Protokolls zurückzuführen ist, nämlich auf die Einschränkung der Bewegungsfreiheit auswärtiger Gäste. Sie sollte offenkundig in erster Linie dem Schutz der Gäste dienen, aber zugleich auch Spionage vorbeugen.<sup>15</sup> In „westlichen“ Quellen wird diese

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14 Roman de Rou, 3, S. 276, vv. 3088–3098: *e l'emperere ad cumandé, / tant cum il iert en la cité / ke il ait del suen a grant plenté, / kar il le voleit honorer. / Mais li ducs ne volt graanter, / ne volt mie sun cunrei prendre, / asez a, ceo dist, a despendre; / tant cum propre vivre voleit, / mais al retur, se il veniet, / mais al retur, se il veneit, / cunrei e el del suen prendreit.* Bei den hier genannten Geschenken könnte es sich um eine Art Apanage handeln, die an auswärtige Besucher zwecks Versorgung gezahlt wurde. Liudprand von Cremona erwähnt *stipendia*, die ihm vorenthalten wurden, angeblich, um ihm zuzusetzen; Liudprandi Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana. In: *Liudprandus Cremonensis opera omnia*, hrsg. von Chiesa, Paolo. (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 156). Brepols: Turnhout 2001, S. 187–218, 34, S. 201.

15 Die Gewährung eines freien Zugangs zur Stadt wurde umgekehrt als ein besonderes Privileg verliehen; vgl. Lee / Shepard 1991, S. 32.

Praxis mehrfach moniert.<sup>16</sup> Die Assoziation eines Gefängnisses drängte sich auf. Liudprand von Cremona ging sogar so weit, seinen Aufenthalt in dem „wasserlose[n], offene[n] Haus“, in dem er als Gesandter Ottos des Großen untergebracht war, mit Worten zu beschreiben, die ihn in die Nähe eines Märtyrers rückten.<sup>17</sup>

Diese Abschottung auswärtiger Gäste wird ebenfalls im „Roman de Rou“ thematisiert. Wace führt aus, dass Robert verboten worden sei, in der Stadt Einkäufe zu tätigen. Dies habe ihn in eine bedrohliche Lage geführt, da er des Feuerholzes entbehrte, um damit Nahrung zuzubereiten. Jedoch wusste sich der Herzog wiederum aus dieser Situation befreien. Er umging das Verbot, indem er Nüsse sammeln ließ und diese anstatt des Feuerholzes zum Entfachen des Feuers nutzte. Die Reaktion des Kaisers offenbart resümierend die Darstellungsabsicht des Dichters. Als er von der pfiffigen Umgehung des Verbotes erfuhr, habe der Kaiser huldvoll gelacht, Robert als *mult ducs curteis* gelobt und ihm all seine Wünsche zu erfüllen versprochen.<sup>18</sup> Wace charakterisiert Robert – einen Vorfahren Heinrichs II. – als

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16 Notker von St. Gallen, *Gesta Karoli Magni imperatoris*, hrsg. von Haefele, Hans. (MGH rer. Germ. NS. 12). Weidmannsche Buchhandlung: Berlin 1959, 2, 6, S. 53; *Amalarii Versus marini*, hrsg. von Dümmler, Ernst. (MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini 1). Weidmannsche Buchhandlung: Berlin 1881, S. 426–428, S. 427, vv. 37–47.

17 Liudprandi Relatio, 2, S. 187; 46, S. 207.

18 Roman de Rou, 3, S. 276, vv. 3099–3112: *E l'enperere fist crier / e partut as marchiez veer, / ke il ne truvast busche ne fust / dunc sun mangier quire peüst; / e li ducs ad fait achater / tutes les nuiz ke il pot truver, / tut en fist quire sun mangier, / e sil fist quire sun mangier, / e sil fist faire plus plenier / e plus riche ke il ne soleit, / pur busche qui li faileit. / Li enperiere asez s'en rist / e a ses genz en riant dist, / si cum il parlout en gregeis, / ke mult esteit li ducs curteis [...]. Burgess, Glyn S.: Mockery, Insults and Humour in Wace' Roman de Rou. In: Billy, Dominique / Buckley, Ann (Hrsg.): *Études de langue et de littérature médiévales, offertes à Peter T. Ricketts à l'occasion de son 70<sup>ème</sup> anniversaire*. Brepols: Turnhout 2005, S. 17–26, hier S. 23. Zum huldvollen Lachen sowie anderen Formen des Lachens in vergleichbaren Zusammenhängen Althoff, Gerd: „Vom Lächeln zum Verlachen“. In: Röcke, Werner / Velten, Hans Rudolf (Hrsg.): *Lachgemeinschaften. Kulturelle Inszenierungen und soziale Wirkungen von Gelächter im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*. (Trends in Medieval Philology 4). De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 2005, S. 3–16.*

einen idealen Höfling, der sich mittels einer urbanen Wendigkeit sämtlichen Hindernissen ausweichend das Ansehen des Kaisers verdient.

Ein anderer Akzent wird in einer früheren Version der Anekdotensammlung, der sog. Redactio B der „Gesta Normannorum ducum“ des Wilhelm von Jumièges, gesetzt, die in das beginnende 12. Jahrhundert datiert wird.<sup>19</sup> Im Vergleich zur Version des Wace zeichnet die der Redactio B ein stärker konfliktiver Charakter aus, der die Konfrontation zwischen Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung stärker betont und damit sichtbar macht, was Wace voraussetzt, aber sicher auch voraussetzen kann.

Die Redactio B bringt ebenfalls die Anekdote vom verlorenen Hufeisen, fügt ihr aber einen Aspekt hinzu. Demnach habe Robert das Abfallen der Hufeisen bewusst inszeniert, um damit dem Vorwurf der Habgier der Gallos entgegenzuwirken, ein Vorwurf, den man in Konstantinopel für alle „Barbaren“ gelten ließ.<sup>20</sup> Bei Wace ist lediglich angedeutet, dass das Abfallen der Hufeisen beabsichtigt war. Zudem unterlässt es die Redactio B nicht, die bei Wace lediglich unterstellte Wirkung dieser List auszuführen. Die Griechen hätten sich sehr gewundert, wie ein Volk, das früher nach Gold gierte, diesem nun keine Bedeutung, ja sogar Verachtung entgegenbringe.<sup>21</sup>

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19 William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum ducum*. In: *The Gesta Normannorum ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, hrsg. von Hout, Elisabeth van. 2 Bde. (Oxford Medieval Texts). Clarendon Press / Oxford University Press: Oxford / New York 1992–1995, Bd. 1, lxi–lxv.

20 Reinsch, Diether R.: „Ausländer und Byzantiner im Werk der Anna Komnene“. *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 8, 1989, S. 257–274, hier S. 270; Lechner, Kilian: „Byzanz und die Barbaren“. *Saeculum* 6, 1955, S. 292–306, hier S. 294; Schmitt, Oliver J.: „Das Normannenbild im Geschichtswerk des Niketas Choniates“. *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 47, 1997, S. 157–177, bes. S. 168.

21 William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, Bd. 2, 6, 11, S. 83: *Appropinquans autem urbi Constantinopolitane, constituit ut mula, cui insidebat, pro ferramentis pedum, quibus antea uti solita erat, tunc aureis uteretur, neque quisquam suorum coligere presumeret, quando eadem mula ipsa eadem ferramenta aurea suis pedibus excuteret, ut Greci, qui prius Gallos cupidos auri vocare soliti erant, nullam in suis avaritie occasionem penitus invenire possent. Mirabantur quippe Greci et valde mutuo inter se loquebantur, quomodo gens, que prius rapere et furari consueta erat alius seu alterius gentis aurum, tunc ita sponte desereret et despiceret proprium*. Weitere Varianten dieser Anekdote sind aufgelistet bei Paris, Gaston: „Sur un épisode d’Aimeri de Narbonne“. *Romania* 9, 1880, S. 515–546.

Das Problem des Stehens vor dem Kaiser löst Robert in dieser Version auf eine provokative Weise, indem er sich unaufgefordert neben den Kaiser setzt. Von daraus entstehenden Konflikten mit dem Kaiser, die bei einem solch eklatanten Bruch des Zeremoniells zu erwarten wären, ist freilich nicht die Rede.

Auch die Nuss-Episode besitzt in dieser Quelle einen stärker konfrontativen Charakter. Während Wace keine Gründe für das vom Kaiser erlassene Kaufverbot nennt, stellt dieses nach der Redactio B eine Revanchehandlung des Kaisers für die beleidigende Zurückweisung seiner Geschenke durch Robert dar. Der Kaiser habe auf diese Weise seinen Gast dazu zwingen wollen, bittend an ihn heranzutreten und damit zugleich seine Unterordnung anzuerkennen.<sup>22</sup> Dies hatte Robert durch das Ablehnen der kaiserlichen Geschenke noch zuvor vermieden. Hier wird der rang- bzw. vorrangbestimmende, potentiell ehrmindernde Charakter des Geschenkes und des Zeremoniells, das die Übergabe von Geschenken regelte, klar herausgearbeitet. Um den ihn entehrenden Eindruck zu vermeiden, auf diese Geschenke angewiesen zu sein, habe er demütig (*humiliter*) die Geschenke für seine Person zurückgewiesen und sie stattdessen an seine Männer verteilt.<sup>23</sup> Neben Reichtum wird hier zudem die *largitas* Roberts, die Freigebigkeit des Herzogs, herausgehoben.

Ein weiterer Aspekt, der bei Wace keine Rolle spielt, tritt v. a. bei der Nuss-Episode hervor. Neben aristokratischem Ehrbewusstsein tritt in der Version der Redactio B noch die *pietas* Roberts hervor, die Bezug auf das Ziel der Reise nimmt, deretwegen Robert in Konstantinopel Station gemacht habe: eine Pilgerreise nach Jerusalem. Die *sagacitas* Roberts, welche diesen einen Ausweg finden lässt, dient der bevorstehenden Jerusalemreise

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- 22 William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, Bd. 2, 6, 11, S. 83: [...] *imperator iussit ministris ut tamdiu sibi se suis necessaria ministrarentur, quamdiu in civitate illa manere voluisset. Sed sullimitas tanti ducis, mendicitatis et et inopie notam precavens, concupiscibilia quoque vasa noluit. Hoc ab imperatore audito, in sui contemptum retorsit, et hac de causa illis emptiones et vendiciones civitatis prohibuit, ut sic, penuria coacti, suum tandem viderentur expetere suffragium.*
- 23 *Ibid.*, S. 82: [...] *imperator iussit ministris ut tamdiu sibi de suis necessaria ministrarentur, quamdiu in civitate illa manere voluisset. Sed sullimitas tanti ducis, mendicitatis et inopie notam precavens, sibi suisque oblata humiliter suscipere renuit; aurem vestes preciosas, concupiscibilia quoque vasa noluit.*

und damit einem frommen Zweck. Die Reaktion des Kaisers macht die gewandelte Perspektive deutlich. Dieser habe das Verbot, Einkäufe zu erledigen, *pietate motus* aufgehoben.<sup>24</sup>

Viele der bereits genannten Anekdoten werden auch mit einem Aufenthalt Sigurd I. Magnussons in Konstantinopel in Zusammenhang gebracht.<sup>25</sup> Sie stehen der Anekdotensammlung des Dichters Wace näher als jener der Redactio B. Sigurds Aufenthalt in der Hauptstadt des byzantinischen Reiches ist anders als der des Normannenherzogs Robert gut bezeugt. Gleichwohl dürfte es sich bei den in diesem Rahmen geschilderten Anekdoten ebenfalls um Fiktionen handeln, die den Zweck hatten, Aussagen über die Bedeutung Sigurds zu treffen, die diesem zum Ruhm gereichten. Die früheste schriftliche Fixierung zuvor mündlich tradiertter Erzählungen findet sich in der „Morkinskinna“, einer Sagasammlung aus dem 13. Jahrhundert.

Auch hier wird die Hufeisenepisode erzählt. Die Quelle stilisiert den Moment des Einreitens Sigurds geradezu zu einem Wettbewerb beider Herrscher, den natürlich Sigurd für sich entscheidet. Der List Sigurds werden Vorbereitungen des Kaisers gegenübergestellt, die dem Zweck dienen sollen, den Gast zu beeindrucken. Der Kaiser habe befohlen, die von Sigurd zurückzulegende Strecke prächtig auszustatten, während Sigurd seinen Männern aufgetragen habe, sich von den Dingen, denen sie begegnen würden, nicht beeindrucken zu lassen. Dem Pferd Sigurds wurden ebenfalls goldene Hufeisen angepasst, eines aber so lose, dass es abfallen musste.<sup>26</sup>

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24 Ibid., S. 84: *Quod postquam imperator comperit, pietate motus, illis copiam venendi et emendi concessit, dicens Francos omni industria esse peritos, nec sagacitati eorum quemlibet posse debere obviare.*

25 Vgl. zu Folgendem Hill, Joyce: „Burning Walnuts: An International Motif in the Kings' Sagas“. In: Anlezark, Daniel (Hrsg.): *Myths, Legends, and Heroes: Essays on Old Norse and Old English Literature in Honour of John McKinnell*. (Toronto Old Norse and Icelandic Studies). University of Toronto Press: Toronto / Buffalo 2011, S. 188–205; Kalinke, Marianne E.: „Sigurðar saga Jörsalafara: The Fictionalization of Fact in Morkinskinna“. *Scandinavian Studies* 56 (2), 1984, S. 152–167, bes. S. 157–159.

26 *Morkinskinna, the earliest Icelandic chronicle of the Norwegian kings (1030–1157)*, hrsg. von Andersson, Theodore / Gade, Kari Ellen. (Islandica 51). Cornell University Press: Ithaca, New York et al. 2000, 61, S. 323: „Emperor Kirjalax [Alexios] had heard of King Sigurdr and he had the gate of Constantinople that is called Gullvarta opened. That is the gate through which the



Da es Kaiser Alexios nicht gelang, Sigurd durch den feierlichen Empfang zu beeindrucken, versuchte er es ein weiteres Mal, indem er den König im Vorfeld eines Mahles mit dessen Männern mit Geschenken konfrontierte. Wiederum handelt es sich um eine bereits bekannte Anekdote. Sie erscheint allerdings in einer deutlich gesteigerten Form. Die Konfrontation mit Geschenken geschah nämlich plötzlich, wie die „Morkinskinna“ berichtet, damit Sigurd dieses Mal keine Vorbereitungsmaßnahmen treffen konnte. Es war eine List, mittels derer der Gast zum Staunen, zur Anerkennung des Vorrangs des byzantinischen Kaisers gezwungen werden sollte. Doch der Überrumpelungsversuch misslang. Sigurd sah die Geschenke nicht einmal an, verteilte sie vielmehr, seine eigene Freigebigkeit bezeugend, umgehend unter seinen Männern.<sup>27</sup> Ausdrücklich wird hervorgehoben, dass das Verhalten den Kaiser, der durch einen Boten davon erfuhr, überaus beeindruckt habe. Doch nicht nur die Tatsache, dass Sigurd die Geschenke nahezu ignorierte, habe den Kaiser beeindruckt, sondern auch der Umstand, dass er es nicht einmal für notwendig gehalten habe, sich dafür zu bedanken. Hier könnte man vielleicht eine Anspielung auf das byzantinische Zeremoniell erkennen, welches die Eminenz des Kaisers auch dadurch betonte, dass die Interaktion mit ihm hauptsächlich durch hohe Beamte erfolgte, der Kaiser möglichst passiv blieb. Sigurd müsse so reich sein, dass er derartige Geschenke nicht nur als gewöhnlich, sondern lediglich als obligatorisch empfand und sie eines Dankes nicht bedurften – so die Logik der Geschichte.<sup>28</sup>

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emperor rides when he has been away on campaign for a long time and has won a victory. The emperor had precious fabrics spread on the streets from Gullvarta to Laktjanir [Blachernenpalast], the emperor's grandest residence. King Sigurdr told his men to ride boldly into the city and pay no attention to all the novelties [...] they saw. They acted accordingly. [...] We are told that King Sigurdr had his horse shod with gold before riding into the city and arranged that one shoe would come off on the street and that none of his men should take any notice.“

27 Ibid., 61, S. 323: „King Sigurdr's men were now seated in the hall, and the drinking was about to begin. At the moment two of Emperor Kirjalax's messengers entered the hall carrying between them great bags of gold and silver. They said that the emperor had sent this to King Sigurdr. He did not deign to look at the treasure but told his men to divide it among themselves.“

28 Ibid., 62, S. 323: „The messengers returned and reported to the emperor. He said: ‚This king must be immensely rich and powerful since he finds no need to take an interest in such gifts or to convey words of acknowledgement.‘“

Von Sigurds Verhalten herausgefordert schickte der Kaiser ein weiteres Mal einen Diener mit Geschenken an den König ab, nun mit Gold gefüllten Truhen. Doch fiel die Reaktion Sigurds abermals nicht anders aus als zuvor. Sigurd befahl seinen Männern, den Schatz unter sich aufzuteilen.<sup>29</sup> Die Verwunderung des Kaisers, den sein Bote wiederum über die Reaktion Sigurds in Kenntnis setzte, war nun so groß, behauptet die „Morkinskinna“, dass er verwundert das Verhalten des Königs zu deuten versuchte und an der Wirksamkeit seines *splendor* zweifelte. Ein drittes Mal steigerte Alexios den Wert seiner Geschenke und schickte den Boten damit zu Sigurd. Das dritte Arsenal an Geschenken beinhaltete neben Truhen mit Gold auch zwei goldene Ringe.<sup>30</sup> Nun erst habe Sigurd sich dazu bereitgefunden, einen Teil des Schatzes an sich zu nehmen. Die Art, wie er es tat, legt dem Leser nahe, dass die Ablehnungen der Geschenke zuvor für die byzantinische Seite nicht nur durch das Nicht-Anblicken und das Fehlen von Dankesworten herausfordernd wirkte, sondern auch dadurch, dass Sigurd bei der versuchten Geschenkübergabe sitzen blieb. Nun, bei dem dritten Versuch des Kaisers, stand er auf und nahm die beiden Goldringe und bedankte sich in einer Weise, die dem vermeintlich immensen Reichtum Sigurds eine für den Kaiser verblüffende Tugend hinzufügte: Er bedankte sich nämlich auf Griechisch und demonstrierte damit ein Maß an Bildung, das man „Barbaren“ gemeinhin nicht zutraute. Die Truhe voller Gold überließ er wiederum seinen Männern.<sup>31</sup>

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29 Ibid.: „He then told them to go with large tubs full of gold. They went and came before King Sigurdr again, announcing that the emperor had sent him this money. He replied: ‚This is a large amount of money. You should divide it among yourselves, men.‘“

30 Ibid.: „The messengers returned and told the emperor. He said: ‚There are two possible interpretations of this king. Either he is wealthier and more powerful than other kings, or he is not as wise as it becomes a king to be. Go now a third time and take him the reddest gold and fill these tubs to overflowing.‘ And the emperor laid two great golden rings on top.“

31 Ibid.: „The messengers set out and came before King Sigurdr. They told him that the emperor had sent him this treasure. King Sigurdr stood up, took the rings, and drew them on his arms. Then he made a speech in Greek and thanked the emperor with fair words for his generosity. He courteously distributed the treasure among his men and was greatly honored for this by the emperor.“

Noch ein weiteres Mal blieb Sigurd in Anbetracht des ihm angebotenen Reichtums versteinert: Als ihn der Kaiser vor die Wahl stellte, entweder zu Zirkusspielen im Hippodrom eingeladen zu werden oder eine solche Menge an Gold zu erhalten, wie die Ausrichtung der Spiele kostete, wählte Sigurd den Besuch des Hippodroms.<sup>32</sup> Der Kaiser musste einsehen, dass seine Vorurteile nicht zutrafen. Sigurd erwies sich als ihm ebenbürtig. Sigurds Ansehen wird – ebenso wie das Roberts – abschließend kommentierend durch die Reaktion des Kaisers vor Augen geführt. Die Aufhebung der Differenz zwischen Kaiser und Gast wird in der „Morkinskinna“ durch eine Sigurd zukommende Ehrung dokumentiert: Er durfte auf demselben erhöhten Sitz Platz nehmen, auf dem der Kaiser saß.<sup>33</sup>

Insbesondere im Zuge des sog. Zweikaiserproblems trat die Differenz zwischen Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung provozierend deutlich zutage. Die byzantinischen Kaiser ließen keine Zweifel daran gelten, dass sie die einzig legitimen Nachfolger der antiken römischen Kaiser waren, während ihren westlichen Pendanten allenfalls ein Kaisertitel zweiten Ranges zugestanden wurde.<sup>34</sup> Diese Auffassung verlieh solchen Situationen Brisanz, in denen sich das Verhältnis von Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung symbolisch artikuliert, also insbesondere im Rahmen des „diplomatischen“ Zeremoniells. Eindrücklich veranschaulicht wird dies in einer Anekdote der „Historia Mediolanensium“ des Mailänders Landulf. Dieser berichtet, dass auch Arnulf von Mailand, der als Gesandter nach Konstantinopel gereist war, um eine Ehe zwischen Otto III. und einer byzantinischen Prinzessin zustande zu bringen, sein Pferd mit goldenen Hufeisen versehen habe,

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32 Ibid., S. 324: „King Sigurdr remained there for a time, and once Emperor Kirjalax sent men to ask whether he would rather have six skippond of red gold or whether he preferred to have the emperor organize the games that he was accustomed to stage at the hippodrome. King Sigudr chose the games. The emperor’s messengers told King Sigurdr that the games cost the emperor no less than the gold.“

33 Ibid., 62, S. 324: „After that it was customary for the emperor and King Sigurdr to occupy the same elevated seating.“

34 Grundlegend Ohnsorge, Werner: *Das Zweikaiserproblem im früheren Mittelalter. Die Bedeutung des byzantinischen Reiches für die Entwicklung der Staatsidee in Europa*. A. Lax: Hildesheim 1947.

bevor er feierlich in die Stadt einritt.<sup>35</sup> Bezeichnenderweise ist in diesem Zusammenhang nicht von einer Täuschung die Rede. Nachdem Arnulf ehrenvoll empfangen worden war und er sich in einem Quartier außerhalb der Palastanlage erholt hatte, habe er sein Pferd mit einer Decke belegen und mit silbernen Nägeln goldene Hufeisen anlegen lassen und damit für großes Aufsehen und Bewunderung gesorgt.<sup>36</sup> Es handelte sich nicht um irgendein Pferd, sondern um ein Geschenk seines Kaisers, wie Landulf vielsagend hinzufügt. Was hier noch angedeutet ist, führt Landulf anschließend aus. Er hebt hervor, Arnulf habe *ad honorem Romani imperii, excellentiae atque magnificentiae regis Ottonis, totiusque Italiae* gehandelt. Nicht nur Arnulfs Ansehen, auch das seines Kaisers steht auf dem Spiel, weshalb die Bewunderung, welche Arnulf widerfährt, auch auf Otto zurückfällt.

Nicht allein der prunkvolle Einritt Arnulfs habe für Aufsehen gesorgt, behauptet Landulf. Auch die prunkvolle Ausstattung seiner Begleiter durch Otto habe Eindruck gemacht. Dies zeigte sich darin, dass Arnulf von nun an eine privilegierte Behandlung genoss. So sei ihm als Einzigem die Auszeichnung zuteil geworden, während einer Audienz beim Kaiser Platz zu nehmen und dies, obwohl, wie es ausdrücklich heißt: *ante praesentiam*

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35 Vgl. Ciggaar, Krijnie E.: *Western Travellers to Constantinople. The West and Byzantium, 962–1204: Cultural and Political Relations*. (The Medieval Mediterranean Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400–1453, 10). E.J. Brill: Leiden et al. 1996, S. 214–215; Eickhoff, Ekkehard: *Kaiser Otto III. Die erste Jahrtausendwende und die Entfaltung Europas*. Klett-Cotta: Stuttgart 1999, S. 350–351; Mystakides, Basileios A.: *Byzantinisch-deutsche Beziehungen zur Zeit der Ottonen*. A. Müller: Stuttgart 1891, S. 68–69; Schramm, Percy Ernst: „Kaiser, Basileus und Papst in der Zeit der Ottonen“. *Historische Zeitschrift* 129, 1924, S. 424–475, hier S. 474.

36 *Landulfi Historia Mediolanensis*, hrsg. von Bethmann, Ludwig C. / Wattenbach, Wilhelm. (MGH SS 10). Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover 1848, 2, 18, S. 55–56: *At Arnulfus omnibus affluens divitiis, cum in curiam Constantinopolitanam receptus tamen honorifice ab imperatore admirabilique militum ac clericorum exercitu stipatus venisset, per aliquos dies moratus, et cum suis omnibus ex longo itinere ac labore fatigatis recreatus, equum imperialem, quem Otto imperator Romanus sibi ad huius laboris solamen donaverat, substrato pallio admirabili, ferris aureis et clavis argenteis pedum ungulis abasis curiose aptari fecit. Igitur huius rei fama per palatia regis incunctanter volante, rem milites palatini inauditam audientes, universi coram imperatore more solito astantes, vehementer admirati sunt.*

*imperatore sedere non licet.*<sup>37</sup> Er durfte sich überdies lange mit dem Kaiser mittels eines Dolmetschers unterhalten. Der Umgang mit Arnulf und das Staunen des byzantinischen Hofes sollen das Ansehen des Mailänders und auch Ottos belegen. Beides ist miteinander verbunden.

Abgesehen vom Reichtum war auch die griechische *sapientia* im „Westen“ geradezu sprichwörtlich. Griechische Bildung stellte eine Zierde dar, mit der man sich zu schmücken strebte, und mit der die Byzantiner etwa im Kontext des bereits angesprochenen Zweikaiserproblems zu wuchern verstanden. Notker von St. Gallen bringt in seiner „Gesta Karoli Magni“ eine Episode, die genau in diesen Kontext zu stellen ist. Als eine Bühne der Bewältigung fungierte dabei wiederum das byzantinische Hofzeremoniell. Die Episode handelt von einem Eklat, der sich während eines Gastmahles ereignete, dessen Ursache ein Gesandter Karls des Großen war.<sup>38</sup> Als der Gesandte während des Mahles einen Fisch auf seinem Teller umdrehte, so Notker, verstieß er gegen eine Vorschrift, die für ihn das Todesurteil bedeutete. Es habe nämlich die Vorschrift gegolten: „dass niemand am Tisch des Königs (*regis*), kein Einheimischer und kein Fremder, ein Tier oder ein Stück eines solchen auf die andere Seite drehen, sondern nur so wie es ihm vorgelegt worden war, von oben herab essen dürfe.“<sup>39</sup> Der Gesandte, der das Verbot nicht kannte, drehte den Fisch um und provozierte damit einen

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37 Ibid., S. 56: *Tandem cum Arnulfus archiepiscopus a magno ducatu militum stipatus, quos pellibus martulinis aut cibelinis, aut renonibus variis et hermelinis ornaverat, quibus imperator mirifice eum imbuerat, ab imperatore de filia eius esset securus, et ipse ante faciem eius solus, astantibus multis episcopis et aliis summae magnaeque dignitatis, quibus ante praesentiam imperatoris sedere non licet, super cicotergitronum sederet, multis per interpretem rebus sermocinatis, quod intus Arnulfus erat foris apparuit.*

38 Zur Nachwirkung dieser Anekdote Schneider, Johannes: „Die Geschichte vom gewendeten Fisch. Beobachtungen zur mittellateinischen Tradition eines literarischen Motivs“. In: Authenrieth, Johanne / Brunhölzl, Franz (Hrsg.): *Festschrift Bernhard Bischoff zu seinem 65. Geburtstag dargebracht von Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern*. Hiersemann: Stuttgart 1971, S. 218–225.

39 Notker von St. Gallen, *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 5, S. 54: [...] *ut nullus in mensa regis indigena sive advena aliquod animal vel corpus animalis in partem aliam converteret, sed ita tantum, ut positum erat, de superiori parte meducaret*. Übersetzung zitiert nach Notker von St. Gallen, *Taten Karls*, übers. von Haefele, Hans. (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters 7, 3). Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 1960, S. 321–427, hier S. 381.

Eklat.<sup>40</sup> Mit Bedauern stellte der Kaiser den Bruch des Zeremoniells fest, erklärte jedoch, sich nicht darüber hinwegsetzen zu können. Lediglich eine Bitte werde er ihm noch gewähren, so diese nicht das Geschenk des Lebens beinhalte.<sup>41</sup> Der fränkische Gesandte ersann daraufhin folgende List: „Dies eine fordere ich vor meinem Tode, dass jeder, der mich den Fisch umdrehen sah, sein Augenlicht verlieren soll.“<sup>42</sup> Niemand wollte nun das Vergehen des Gesandten gesehen haben und da es keine Zeugen gab, entkam er schließlich seinem Schicksal:

Entsetzt über eine solche Forderung schwor der König bei Christus, er habe es selbst nicht gesehen, sondern sich auf die Erzählenden verlassen. Hierauf begann sich die Königin also zu entschuldigen [...] Dann kamen die übrigen Großen, jeder bestrebt, vor dem andern seinen Kopf aus der Schlinge zu ziehen, und versuchten, der eine beim Schlüsselträger des Himmels, der andere bei dem Lehrer der Heiden, die übrigen bei der Macht der Engel und bei den Scharen aller Heiligen sich durch schreckliche Eide von dieser Schuld zu lösen.<sup>43</sup>

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40 Notker von St. Gallen, *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 5, S. 54: *Allatus est autem piscis fluvialis et pigmentis infusus, in disco positus. Cumque hospes idem, consuetudinis illius ignarus, piscem illum in partem alteram giraret, exurgentes omnes dixerunt ad regem: ‚Domine, ita estis inhonorati sicut numquam anteriores vestri‘.*

41 Ibid.: *At ille ingemiscens dixit ad legatum illum: ‚Obstare non possum istis, quin morti continuo tradaris. Aliud pete, quodcumque volueris, et complebo‘. Tunc parumper deliberans cunctis audientibus in hæc verba prorupit: ‚Obsecro, domine imperator, ut secundum promissionem vestram concedatis mihi unam petitionem parvulam‘. Et rex ait: ‚Postula quodcumque volueris, et impetrabis, præter quod contra legem Grecorum vitam tibi concedere non possum‘.*

42 Ibid.: *‘Hoc’, inquit, ‘unum moriturus flagito: ut quicumque me piscem illum girare conspexit, oculorum lumine privetur’.* Übersetzung zitiert nach Notker von St. Gallen, *Taten Karls*, S. 383.

43 Notker von St. Gallen, *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 5, S. 54–55: *Obstupefactus rex ad talem conditionem iuravit per Christum, quod ipse hoc non videret, sed tantum narrantibus crederet. Deinde regina ita se cepit excusare: ‚Per lætificam theotocon sanctam Mariam, ego illud non adverti‘. Post reliqui proceres, alius ante alium, tali se periculo exuere cupientes, hic per clavigerum celi, ille per doctorem gentium, reliqui per virtutes angelicas sanctorumque omnium turbas ab hac se noxa terribilibus sacramentis absolvere conabantur.* Übersetzung zitiert nach Notker von St. Gallen, *Taten Karls*, S. 383. Zum Motiv der listigen (letzten) Bitte etwa Hattenhauer, Hans: „Der gefälschte Eid“. In: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, München 16.-19. September 1986.* (MGH Schriften 33, 1–5). Hahnsche Buchhandlung 1988–1990, Bd. 2, S. 661–689; Garnier, Claudia: *Die Kultur der Bitte: Herr-*

Auf diese Weise habe der „kluge Spross des Frankenlandes“ (*sapiens ille Francigena*) das eitle und kluge Hellas überwunden und sei siegreich in die Heimat zurückgekehrt.<sup>44</sup> Die sprichwörtliche Klugheit der Griechen wird hier ausdrücklich erwähnt und anekdotisch bewältigt. Diese Erzählung nimmt noch weitere Aspekte aufs Korn, wie die Bereitschaft allzu leichten Schwörens, die von mehreren „westlichen“ Autoren moniert und beklagt wurde.<sup>45</sup> Der Gastgeber scheint in Notkers Darstellung zudem gefangen in einer „übersteigerten Courtoisie“<sup>46</sup>, in einem ins Lächerliche verzerrten Zeremoniell, dessen Gegenbild das schlichtere, authentischere Leben am karolingischen Hof darstellt. Eine allzu starke Rolle der byzantinischen Großen, d. h. umgekehrt eine schwache Position des Kaisers, wird in dieser Anekdote ebenfalls angesprochen: Die Großen sind es nach Notker, die das Verbot des Umdrehens der Speisen festlegen, nicht der Kaiser! Zu dieser Karrikatur gesellt sich schließlich die Feststellung eines trügerischen, hier buchstäblich oberflächigen Reichtums. Auch Speisen und Getränken bei öffentlichen Mählern kam eine repräsentative Bedeutung zu, weshalb die Kritik an den bei öffentlichen Gastmählern aufgetischten Speisen und Getränken eine politische Dimension besaß.<sup>47</sup>

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*schaft und Kommunikation im mittelalterlichen Reich.* (Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne). Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 2008, S. 84–88; Althoff, Gerd: „Zur Bedeutung symbolischer Kommunikation für das Verständnis des Mittelalters“. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 31, 1997, S. 370–389, hier S. 375–378.

44 Notker von St. Gallen, *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 6, S. 53, 55. Übersetzung zitiert nach Notker von St. Gallen, *Taten Karls*, S. 381.

45 Liudprandi Relatio, 30–35, S. 200–202; *Odo of Deuil: De profectioe Ludovici VII in orientem*, hrsg. von Berry, Virginia Gingerick. (Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies 42). Columbia University Press: New York 1948, 3, S. 56.

46 Schneider 1971, S. 219.

47 Hoffmann 2009, S. 175–177. Ein von Schneider 1971, S. 219 Anm. 7, vorsichtig ins Spiel gebrachter Zusammenhang mit persischer Fischsymbolik, nach der der Fisch ein Symbol legitimer Herrschaft darstellte, ist in Anbetracht der von ihm vermuteten orientalischen Herkunft der Anekdote reizvoll, wenngleich spekulativ. Denn es ist fraglich, ob man bei Notker die Kenntnis der Bedeutung der Fischsymbolik voraussetzen kann und auch ob dieser dieses Wissen bei seinen Lesern voraussetzen konnte. Zu repräsentativen Gastmählern in Konstantinopel Tinnfeld 1993, S. 204–207; Leuven, Karl-Heinz: „Festmähler beim Basileus“. In: Altenburg, Detlev et al. (Hrsg.): *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter*.

Notker lässt dieser Anekdote eine weitere Folgen, deren Absicht es offenkundig war, eine als beleidigend empfundene Behandlung karolingischer Gesandter, Heito von Basel und Hugo von Tours, zu rächen. Man habe sie lange hingehalten, unwürdig behandelt und auf sehr abgelegene Orte verteilt, echauffiert sich Notker. Schließlich seien sie mit großem Schaden an ihrem Schiff und ihrer Habe zurückgekehrt.<sup>48</sup> Dieser Umgang mit den Gesandten wird von Notker als Beleidigung Karls gewertet und diesem Umstand verdankt sich das Bedürfnis, die Beleidigung mit gleicher Münze heimzuzahlen.<sup>49</sup>

Als aus Konstantinopel eine Gegengesandtschaft eintraf, befahl Karl auf Ratschlag Heitos und Hugos, dass man die Gesandten quer durch die Alpen und wegloses Gelände führte, sodass sie erschöpft und ausgezehrt bei ihm erschienen. So erzählt es Notker. Dann ließ man sie nacheinander den Hofbeamten vorführen. Immer wieder warfen sich die Gesandten den Hofbeamten zu Füßen, in der Annahme, es handele sich um Karl selbst, immer wieder wurden sie rüde zurückgewiesen, ehe sie schließlich auf den Kaiser trafen, der in einer pittoresk beschriebenen Szene sich buchstäblich und damit auch im übertragenen Sinne auf Bischof Heito stützte, also genau dem, dem man, so die fränkische Lesart, in Konstantinopel so beleidigend begegnet war.<sup>50</sup>

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*Paderborner Symposion des Mediävistenverbandes.* Jan Thorbecke: Sigmaringen 1991, S. 87–94.

48 Notker von St. Gallen, *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 6, S. 55: *Post annos autem aliquot direxit illuc indefessus Karolis quendam episcopum praecellentissimum mente et corpore virum, adiucto ei comite nobilissimo duce Hugone. Qui diutissimi protracti tandem ad praesentiam regis perducti et indigne cum magno navis et rerum dispendio redierunt.*

49 Dazu zuletzt Althoff, Gerd / Meier, Christel: *Ironie im Mittelalter. Hermeneutik – Dichtung – Politik.* Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 2011, S. 128–129; Bauer 2006, S. 146.

50 Notker von St. Gallen, *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 6, S. 55–56: *Non post multum autem direxit idem rex legatarios suos ad gloriosissimum Karolum. Forte vero contigit, ut tunc idem episcopus cum duce praefato apud imperatorem fuissent. Nuntiatius igitur legatis venturis dederunt consilium sapientissimo Karolo, ut circum ducerentur per Alpes et in via, donec attritis omnibus et consumptis, ingenti penuria confecti ad conspectum illius venire cogentur. Cumque venissent, fecit idem episcopus vel socius eius comitem stabuli in medio subiectorum throno suorum sublimi considerare, ut nequaquam alius quam imperator credi potuisset. Quem ut legati viderunt, corruentes in terras adorare voluerunt. Sed a ministris repulsi ad anteriora progredi sunt compulsi. Quo cum venirent, viden-*



Da stand nun der ruhmreiche Karl an einem hellen Fenster, strahlend wie die Sonne beim Aufgang, geschmückt mit Gold und Edelsteinen, gestützt auf Heito [...]. Rings um ihn standen wie eine Heerschar des Himmels seine drei jungen Söhne, die schon Mitherrscher geworden waren, die Töchter mit ihrer Mutter, ebenso durch Klugheit und Schönheit geziert wie durch Geschmeide, die Bischöfe unvergleichlich an Gestalt und Tugend, und die Äbte, ausgezeichnet durch Adel und Ehrwürdigkeit. Dazu die Herzöge, so wie einst Josua im Lager von Gilgal erschien, und die Kriegsleute gleich denen, welche die Syrer und Assyrer aus Samaria verjagten, sodass David, wenn er unter ihnen gewesen wäre, mit Recht gesungen hätte: „Die Könige der Erde und alle Völker, die Fürsten und alle Richter der Welt, Jünglinge und Jungfrauen, Alte und Junge, sollen den Namen des Herrn preisen (Ps. 148,11 f.).<sup>51</sup>

Von diesen Eindrücken überwältigt, fielen die Gesandten zu Boden. Nachdem der Kaiser ihnen tröstenden Zuspruch gebend aufhalf, sanken sie abermals zu Boden, als sie den „einst verachteten und verstoßenen Heito in solchen Ehren sahen“, ehe Karl versicherte, ihnen kein Leid zuzufügen.<sup>52</sup>

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*tes comitem palatii in medio procerum concionantem, imperatorem suspicati, terratenus sunt prostrati. Cumque et inde colaphis propellerentur dicentibus qui aderant: ‚Non hic est imperator‘, in ulteriora progressi et inuenientes magistrum mensę regię cum ministris ornatissimis, putantes imperatorem devoluti sunt in humum. Indeque repulsi reppererunt in consistorio cubicularios imperatoris circa magistrum suum, de quo non videretur dubium, quin ille princeps posset esse mortalium. Qui cum se, quod non erat, abnegaret, pollicebatur tamen, quod cum primoribus palatii moliretur, quatenus, si fieri potuisset, in praesentiam imperatoris augustissimi pervenire deberent. Tunc ex latere cesaris directi sunt, qui eos honorifice introducerent.*

- 51 Ibid., S. 56–57: *Stabat autem gloriosissimus regum Karolus iuxta fenestram lucidissimam, radians sicut sol in ortu suo, gemmis et auro conspicuus, innixus super Heittonem; hoc quippe nomen erat episcopi ad Constantinopolim quondam destinati. In cuius undique circuitu consistebat instar militię celestis, tres videlicet iuvenes filii eius, iam regni participes effecti, filięque cum matre non minus sapientia vel pulchritudine quam monilibus ornate, pontifices forma et virtutibus incomparabiles, praestantissimique nobilitate simul et sanctitate abbates, duces vero tales, qualis quondam apparuit Iosue in castris Galgale, exercitus vero talis, qualis de Samaria Siros cum Assiriis effugavit; ut si David medius esset, hæc non inmerito praecinuisset: Reges terrę et omnes populi, principes et omnes iudices terrę, iuvenes et virgines, senes cum iunioribus laudent nomen Domini!* Übersetzung zitiert nach Notker von St. Gallen, Taten Karls, S. 385.
- 52 Notker von St. Gallen, Gesta Karoli, 2, 6, S. 57: *Tunc consternati missi Grecorum deficiente spiritu et consilio perduto muti et exanimis in pavementum deciderunt. Quos benignissimus imperator elevatos consolatoriis allocutionibus*

Die Byzantiner werden in dieser Darstellung mit ihren eigenen Waffen geschlagen, um Karls Größe anzuerkennen, die man in der Art, wie man dessen Gesandte empfing, vermissen ließ. Der Schilderung lässt sich wohl entnehmen, dass abgesehen von der Verzögerung des Empfanges und der räumlichen Trennung der Gesandten eine Sequenz des Gesandtschaftszeremoniells als anmaßend betrachtet wurde, nämlich der Fußfall, die Proskynese, welche auswärtige Besucher zu leisten hatten. Diese war es, welche den Hochmut des byzantinischen Kaisers aus „westlicher“ Perspektive besonders stark artikulierte, da sie den Kaiser in eine unziemliche Nähe zu Gott brachte.<sup>53</sup>

Die Differenz zwischen Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung gibt sich nicht weniger deutlich in der abschließend zu behandelnden Quelle, dem sog. Gesandtschaftsbericht des Cremoneser Bischofs Liudprand zu erkennen. Liudprand, der in Konstantinopel mit Kaiser Nikephoros II. Phokas vergeblich um eine Ehe Ottos II. mit einer byzantinischen Prinzessin verhandelt hatte, schildert in seinem Werk eine Reihe an Konflikten, die sich an dem von Nikephoros bestrittenen kaiserlichen Anspruch Ottos entzündeten.<sup>54</sup> Bereits ein ranghoher byzantinischer Beamter soll ihm bei einer ersten Begegnung deutlich gemacht haben, dass man in seinem Herrn und Auftraggeber lediglich einen König und keinen Kaiser erkenne.<sup>55</sup> Damit begann ein

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*animare conatus est. Tandem itaque recreato spiritu cum exosum quondam et abiectum a se Heitonem in tali gloria vidissent, iterum pavefacti tamdiu volutabantur humi, donec eis rex per regem celorum iuraret nihil se illis mali in nullo aliquo facturum.* Übersetzung zitiert nach Notker von St. Gallen, Taten Karls, S. 385.

53 Vgl. Magdalino, Paul: „Wie das Bild des Basileus in Westeuropa genutzt wurde: um 1147“. In: Jussen, Bernhard (Hrsg.): *Die Macht des Königs. Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit*. Beck: München 2005, S. 179–189, hier S. 184; zu kirchlicher Kritik an diesem Ritual Alföldi, Andreas: *Die monarchische Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreiche*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 1970, S. 74–79; Treitinger 1956, S. 89. Zu Formen und Anwendungsbereichen der Proskynese im byzantinischen Hofzeremoniell *ibid.*, S. 84–90.

54 Vgl. Hoffmann 2009.

55 Liudprandi Relatio, 2, S. 187–188: *Octavo autem Idus, sabbatho primo dierum pentecostes, antre fratris eius Leonis coropalati et logethetae praesentiam sum deductus, ubi de imperiali vestro nomine magnus sumus contentione fatigati.*

Spießroutenlauf, den der Gesandte nach eigener Aussage monatelang zu erdulden hatte. Immer wieder versuchten der Kaiser und seine Großen dem Gesandten kundzutun, wie lächerlich doch der Anspruch Ottos sei, und immer wieder tritt Liudprand den Gegenbeweis an, unter anderen auch, indem er dem Leser vor Augen führt, wie wenig das Bild vom sagenhaften *splendor* des byzantinischen Reiches den „tatsächlichen“ Begebenheiten entsprach.

Er gibt dabei Eindrücke von jenen Ereignissen wieder, die nicht zuletzt einem repräsentativen Zweck dienten. Dazu zählten etwa die zahlreichen Gastmähler, zu denen man ihn lud. Hatte Liudprand noch rückblickend auf einen früheren Besuch Konstantinopels, damals noch im Auftrag Berengars, den außerordentlichen *splendor* bestaunt,<sup>56</sup> führte er nun Klage gegen das vermeintlich ekelhafte, von widerlicher Sauce übergossene Essen und den angeblich ungenießbaren Wein.<sup>57</sup> Ähnliches gilt für seine Bemerkungen über den Besuch eines Tierparks – ebenfalls ein Ereignis, das zu dem Arsenal an Mitteln zählte, mit denen man in Konstantinopel Gästen den Glanz des Reiches vor Augen führen sollte.<sup>58</sup> Er sei zwar recht groß, gestand Liudprand ein, dafür jedoch keineswegs anmutig.<sup>59</sup> Die Geschenke, die man ihm im Falle eines Einlenkens zu geben versprach – Wildesel – bezeichnet er als wertlos.<sup>60</sup> Auch die

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*Ipsae enim vos non imperatorem, id est βασιλέα, sua lingua, sed ob indignationem ῥήγα, id est regem, nostra vocabat.*

- 56 Liudprandi Antapodosis. In: *Liudprandus Cremonensis opera omnia*, hrsg. von Chiesa, Paolo. (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 156). Brepols: Turnhout 2001, S. 3–150, 6, 7–9, S. 148–149.
- 57 Liudprandi Relatio, 11, S. 192: [...] *coena, turpi satis et obscena, ebroirum more oleo delibuta alioque quodam deterrimo piscium liquore* [...]. Vgl. *ibid.*, 1, S. 187; 20, S. 196.
- 58 Ševčenko, Nancy P.: „Wild Animals in the Byzantine Park“. In: Littlewood, Antony R. et al. (Hrsg.): *Byzantine Garden Culture*. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection: Washington D.C. 2002, S. 69–86.
- 59 Liudprandi Relatio, 37, S. 203: *Ductus itaque in perivolium satis magnum, montuosum, fruticosum, minime amoenum* [...].
- 60 *Ibid.*, 38, S. 203: *Sed, mihi credite, domini mei augusti, confrater et coepiscopus meus dominus Antonius potest non inferiores dare, ut commercia testantur quae fiunt Cremonae, atque ipsi non onagri, sed domestici, non vacui, sed onerati procedunt*. Vgl. dazu Hoffmann 2009, S. 168–169.

Prozessionen, die er miterlebte, dürfte man sich wesentlich prachtvoller vorzustellen haben, als es Liudprands Karikatur zu entnehmen ist.<sup>61</sup> Dass die Gewänder Ottos und seiner Großen viel prächtiger waren als die der Griechen, wie er an einer Stelle behauptet, darf man bezweifeln, selbst wenn man konzedierte, dass es sich dabei um Gewänder handelte, deren Alter sinntragend war.<sup>62</sup>

Die unterschiedlichen Positionen bezüglich des Kaisertums Ottos drückten sich Liudprand zufolge auch der Sitzordnung aus. Dabei soll es zu Konflikten zwischen ihm und seinem Gastgeber gekommen sein. Bereits den 14. Sitzplatz nach dem Kaiser beim feierlichen Pfingstmahl empfand der Gesandte als eine Zurücksetzung, ohne dies explizit zu begründen. Augenscheinlich ist der Grund jedoch in der differierenden Wahrnehmung Ottos zu sehen, die bei einem weiteren Gastmahl Liudprand zum Handeln zwang. Anlass war die Bevorzugung eines bulgarischen Emissärs, der aufgrund der großen Bedeutung des Bulgarenherrschers eine besondere Privilegierung erfuhr.<sup>63</sup> Er stand zudem im Range eines Patricius, was diesen, so belehrte man den ottonischen Bischof, zusätzlich gegenüber Liudprand hervorhob. Dennoch verließ Liudprand aus Protest die Tafel, da seine Zurücksetzung eine Beleidigung Ottos darstellte, wie er ausdrücklich hervorhebt.<sup>64</sup> Liudprands Überlieferungsinteresse liegt allerdings nicht darin, die Differenzen in der Wahrnehmung darzulegen, sondern die Auffassung der Byzantiner zugleich als falsch zu erweisen. Dies gilt nicht zuletzt auch

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61 Ibid., 9–10, S. 191; 23, S. 197.

62 Ibid., 9, S. 191.

63 Es wird auf Schriftstücke Bezug genommen, in welchen die privilegierte Stellung bulgarischer Gesandter festgehalten wurde, *ibid.*, 19, S. 195: *Cum Christophori filiam Petrus Bulgarorum vasileus coniugem duceret, symphona, id est consonantia, scripta iuramento firmata sunt, ut omnium gentium apostolis, id est nuntiis, penes nos Bulgarorum apostoli praeponantur, honorentur, diligentur.*

64 *Ibid.*: *Cumque post naeniarum garrulitatem et missarum celebrationem ad mensam invitaremur, in citeriori mensae margine, quae erat sine latitudine longa, Bulgarorum nuntium, Ungarico more tonsum, aenea catena cinctum et – ut mens mihi suggerit – catechumenum, mihi praeponit, ad vestram plane, domini mei augusti, contumeliam. In vobis contemptus, in vobis spretus, in vobis abiectus; sed gratias ago domino Iesu Christo, cui vos servitis omni spiritu vestro, quod habitus sum pro nomine vestro dignus contumeliam pati. Verum, domini mei, meam considerans, sed vestram iniuriam, mensam reliqui.*

für die Bevorzugung des Bulgaren, dessen Äußeres – er trug eine Eisenkette um den Hals, war auf ungarische Weise geschoren und überdies nur ein Katechumene – den von Liudprand konstatierten Absturz des Reiches von früherer Größe hinlänglich dokumentierte. Der ottonische Gesandte lässt seine Gegner zu Wort kommen, die seine Eindrücke bestätigen: Gewiss sei der Bulgare „geschoren“ und „ungewaschen“ und trage eine Eisenkette, dennoch sei eine Bevorzugung Liudprands in Anbetracht der höheren Würde des bulgarischen Gesandten und der hohen Wertschätzung des Bulgarenherrschers – er trug in dieser Zeit den Titel eines Kaisers (*βασιλεύς Βουλγαρίας*) – nicht statthaft.<sup>65</sup>

Diese letzte Auseinandersetzung Liudprands mit den byzantinischen Hofbeamten macht den Kern der Konflikte, die in dieser Studie behandelt wurden, noch einmal sehr deutlich. Das byzantinische Hofzeremoniell machte als Medium kaiserlicher Repräsentation Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung auf vielfältige Weise wahrnehmbar und hielt auswärtigen Besuchern somit den Spiegel vor. Dies bereitete den Boden für zahlreiche Anekdoten, deren Absicht es war, (konkurrierende) Aussagen über Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung zu treffen, Differenzen der Wahrnehmungen mit List und Humor zu bewältigen, argumentativ als irrig zu erweisen oder auch nur Zuhörer oder Leser zu unterhalten. Sie lassen ihre Protagonisten vor allem in jenen Eigenschaften glänzen, für die die byzantinischen Kaiser bzw. die Byzantiner als vorbildlich galten (Reichtum, Bildung, Klugheit, List). Es handelt sich um Eigenschaften, über die man im „Westen“ nicht in gleichem Maße verfügte oder zu verfügen schien, wie sie in Byzanz gegeben waren, ein Umstand, der den oftmals bewältigenden Charakter der Anekdoten hervorhebt. Dass diese Anekdoten, wie aufgezeigt werden sollte, in konkreten, als problematisch betrachteten Praktiken des „diplomatischen“ Zeremoniells wurzelten oder sich auf sie bezogen, wurde offenbar schnell vergessen. Doch war dies für ihre Überlieferung nicht

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65 Ibid., S. 195–196: *Bulgarorum ille apostolus, quamquam (ut dicis et verum est) tonsus, illotus et catena aenea cinctis sit, patricius tamen est, cui episcopum praepone, Francorum praesertim, nefas decernimus, iudicamus [...]*. Vgl. zum bulgarischen Kaisertum Dölger, Franz: „Der Bulgarenherrscher als geistlicher Sohn des byzantinischen Kaisers“. In: Id. (Hrsg.): *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt. Ausgewählte Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 1964, S. 183–196.

hinderlich. Die Anekdoten waren auch ohne dieses Wissen verständlich und dies erst war eine Voraussetzung dafür, weshalb diese durch die Zeit wandern und immer wieder verwendet werden konnten. Sie bezeugen damit zugleich die Langlebigkeit einer komplexen, aber pointierten Sprache, die transkulturell verständlich war.

Roland Scheel (Göttingen)

## Byzantium – Rome – Denmark – Iceland: Dealing with Imperial Concepts in the North

There are no Scandinavian emperors. With the exception of Knud the Great, no Scandinavian ruler ever called himself *imperator*, *basileus* or *keisari*. When Knud did so in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, he inscribed himself into an Anglo-Saxon tradition by calling himself *basileus Anglorum* or *basileus* in eight of his charters.<sup>1</sup> The imperial title of *basileus* had emerged in Byzantium in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century and was first adopted by King Athelstan in 935, obviously reflecting his rule over other kings in a unified English realm.<sup>2</sup> This concept of an English *imperium* reaches even further back in time to the decades around 700 A.D., when the abbot Adomnán of Iona called St

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- 1 Sawyer, Peter H.: *Anglo-Saxon Charters. An Annotated List and Bibliography*. (Royal Historical Society. Guides and Handbooks 8). Offices of the Royal Historical Society: London 1968, nos. 956, 959, 961, 963, 964, 971, 972, 977. Sawyer 989 and 990 contain the title but are most probably spurious and therefore excluded.
  - 2 On the styles containing *basileus* in English charters, see Snook, Ben: *The Anglo-Saxon Chancery. The History, Language and Production of Anglo-Saxon Charters from Alfred to Edgar*. (Anglo-Saxon Studies 28). Boydell & Brewer: Woodbridge 2015, pp. 74–76, 156, 164, 189–191; Kleinschmidt, Harald: “Die Titulaturen englischer Könige im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert”. In: Wolfram, Herwig / Scharer, Anton (eds.): *Intitulatio III. Lateinische Herrschertitulaturen vom 7. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert*. (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung. Ergänzungsband 29). Böhlau: Vienna / Cologne / Graz 1988, pp. 75–129, here pp. 89–98. The Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England (PASE) (retrieved 09/05/2015, from [http://www.pase.ac.uk/pdb?dosp=VIEW\\_RECORDS&st=OFFICE&value=157&level=1&lbl=Basileus](http://www.pase.ac.uk/pdb?dosp=VIEW_RECORDS&st=OFFICE&value=157&level=1&lbl=Basileus)) notes eight kings using the title *basileus* in their charters: Æthelstan, Edmund, Eadred, Eadwig, Edgar the Peaceful, Æthelred the Unready, Knud, Edward the Confessor. The according styles in copies / forgeries of charters of Cenwealh II of Wessex (7<sup>th</sup> century) and Alfred the Great are obviously influenced by those from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest charters of Æthelstan containing the title are actually from A.D. 931, but their authenticity is considered dubious.

Oswald *totius Britanniae imperator*.<sup>3</sup> Similar titles and concepts of such regional, non-Roman empires are also to be found in other regions beyond the Carolingian sphere during the early middle ages, for instance in the Iberian Peninsula and in Bulgaria.<sup>4</sup> Even inside the former Carolingian Empire, the late West Frankish Carolingians and the Capetians used or were ascribed imperial titles in order to assert their legitimacy against increasingly powerful Ottonian emperors, both in charters and historiography.<sup>5</sup>

There may consequently have been different reasons for conceptualising one's own rule as imperial, even if it was neither directly nor indirectly connected to Rome and the Roman Empire. The mixture of Roman titles such as *imperator* or *augustus* with the Byzantine *basileus* in all these regions indicates, however, that early medieval rulers sought for the Roman prestige which these titles carried, be it of Rhomaeon or Carolingian origin. Different explanations may also be valid in Knud's case: the most obvious reason for calling himself *basileus* was that he wanted to be viewed as a legitimate successor to earlier kings of England; Æthelred had used the title frequently.<sup>6</sup> Knud's consequent adoption of imperial symbols, also in

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- 3 Anderson, Alan Orr / Anderson, Marjorie Ogilvie (eds.): *Adomnan's Life of Columba*. Nelson: London et al. 1961, pp. 200–210.
  - 4 Folz, Robert: *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century*. Harper and Row: New York / Evanston 1969, pp. 40–41, 53–58; Canning, Joseph: *A History of Medieval Political Thought, 300–1450*. Routledge: London et al. 1996, pp. 79–81; Drews, Wolfram: "Politische Theorie und imperiale Konzepte". In: Ertl, Thomas (ed.): *Europas Aufstieg. Eine Spurensuche im späten Mittelalter*. (Expansion. Interaktion. Akkulturation. Globalhistorische Skizzen 23). Mandelbaum-Verlag: Vienna 2013, pp. 34–62, here pp. 36–45.
  - 5 Schneidmüller, Bernd: *Karolingische Tradition und frühes französisches Königtum. Untersuchungen zur Herrschaftslegitimation der westfränkisch-französischen Monarchie im 10. Jahrhundert*. (Frankfurter Historische Abhandlungen 22). Steiner: Wiesbaden 1979, esp. pp. 186–193; Drews, pp. 43–44.
  - 6 PASE (see note 2) counts 53 charters. Kleinschmidt, pp. 79–84, 89–98 assumes that there was no chancery in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, and that styles containing *basileus* were developed by recipients in the monasteries of Abingdon, Winchester and Worcester during the 10<sup>th</sup> century; these monasteries were interested in underlining the kings' power. Snook, however, argues convincingly in favour of the existence of a chancery and the conscious political use of titles by the kings (*ibid.*, pp. 1–27, 190–194). Cf. also Folz, pp. 41–44.



his coinage, was probably further enhanced by connections to the Salian court;<sup>7</sup> he himself had been present at the coronation of Conrad II in 1027.<sup>8</sup> A third factor for Knud's choice of title was undoubtedly constituted by connections between England and the Byzantine Empire, especially since Knud adopted only the Byzantine title, although his predecessors also used the Latin *imperator*.<sup>9</sup> These connections are illustrated, for instance, by Byzantine lead seals from the 11<sup>th</sup> century found in England, the attested presence of "Greeks" in written texts, the rapid spreading of the Legend of the Seven Sleepers, the circulation of Byzantine objects<sup>10</sup> and the fact that the Norman conquest triggered a surprisingly spontaneous emigration to Byzantium among English warriors.<sup>11</sup> Even Athelstan's first use of the title

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- 7 Lawson, Michael Kenneth: *Cnut. The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century*. Longman: London et al. 1993, pp. 137, 144–145; Abrams, Lesley: "The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia". *Anglo-Saxon England* 24, 1995, pp. 213–249, here p. 228; Bolton, Timothy: *The Empire of Cnut the Great. Conquest and the Consolidation of Power in Northern Europe in the Early Eleventh Century*. (The Northern World 40). Brill: Leiden / Boston 2009, pp. 303–307. These connections also furthered interest in classical and local mythology (cf. Tyler, Elizabeth M.: "Trojans in Anglo-Saxon England: Precedent without Descent". *The Review of English Studies* 65, 2014, pp. 10–20).
- 8 See Waßenhoven, Dominik: *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa (1000–1250). Untersuchungen zu Mobilität und Kulturtransfer auf prosopographischer Grundlage*. (Europa im Mittelalter 8). Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2006, pp. 221–222 for a list of relevant sources.
- 9 Cf. Kleinschmidt, pp. 99–103.
- 10 Lapidge, Michael: "Byzantium, Rome and England in the early Middle Ages". In: *Roma fra Oriente e Occidente*. (Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 49). Centro: Spoleto 2002, pp. 363–400; Shepard, Jonathan: "From the Bosphorus to the British Isles. The Way from the Greeks to the Varangians". In: Jackson, Tatjana N. (ed.): *Transkontinental'nye i lokal'nye puti kak sotsiokul'turnyi fenomen. Pamiati Igoria Sergeevicha Chichurova*. (Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy 2009). Indrik: Moscow 2010, pp. 15–42, here pp. 23–42; Ciggaar, Krijnie N.: "England and Byzantium on the Eve of the Norman Conquest. The Reign of Edward the Confessor". *Anglo-Norman Studies* 5, 1982, pp. 78–96, esp. pp. 80–92. For Byzantine lead seals found in England, see Cheynet, Jean-Claude: "Les sceaux Byzantins de Londres". *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 8, 2003, pp. 85–100.
- 11 See Godfrey, John: "The Defeated Anglo-Saxons take Service with the Eastern Emperor". In: Brown, R. Allen (ed.): *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on*

*Basileus Anglorum* was probably due to the presence of Byzantines and the prestige of English-Byzantine connections. Thus, the English tradition which Knud employed had Byzantine roots itself. The concept of “empire” certainly possessed a Byzantine aura, even if it was informed by Carolingian, Ottonian or Salian models.<sup>12</sup>

It may therefore be surprising to the modern historian that Knud only used this imperial title with connection to his rule over England; styles like *totius Anglorum basileus ceterarumque nationum in circuitu degentium regens atque gubernans* are perfect imitations of those to be found among his predecessors.<sup>13</sup> When Knud explicitly relates to his rule over both England and the Nordic countries, which he deliberately exaggerates, he uses styles like *rex totius Anglię et Denemarchię et Norreganorum et partis Swavorum*.<sup>14</sup> We are therefore confronted with the paradox that when Knud’s chancery describes his North Sea realm as a sphere of expanding dominance, the semantics do not suggest that it was thought of as *imperialis*: what was dubbed his “North Sea empire” by modern scholars<sup>15</sup> – and actually conforms to contemporary definitions of what constitutes imperial rule<sup>16</sup> – never was one from the point of view of Knud’s surroundings. Contrary to Edward the Confessor, Knud’s Scandinavian successors did

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*Anglo-Norman Studies* 1, 1978. The Boydell Press: Ipswich 1979, pp. 63–74; Ciggaar, Krijnie N.: “L’émigration anglaise à Byzance après 1066. Un nouveau texte en latin sur les Varangues à Constantinople”. *Revue des études byzantines* 32, 1974, pp. 301–342, esp. pp. 305–309; Shepard, Jonathan: “Another New England? Anglo-Saxon Settlement on the Black Sea”. *Byzantine Studies* 1, 1974, pp. 18–39.

12 Cf. Folz, pp. 61–74.

13 The example is from Sawyer 961 (A.D. 1024). Cf. for instance Æthelstan (Sawyer 441, A.D. 938) and Æthelred (Sawyer 851, A.D. 983); Snook, p. 75; Kleinschmidt, pp. 96–97.

14 In a letter by Knud to the people: Liebermann, Felix (ed.): *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* 1. *Text und Übersetzung*. Max Niemeyer: Halle (Saale) 1903, pp. 276–277, here p. 276.

15 Sawyer, Peter H.: “Cnut’s Scandinavian Empire”. In: Rumble, Alexander R. (ed.): *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway*. Leicester University Press: London et al. 1994, pp. 10–26; Bolton, pp. 289–307.

16 Cf. Münkler, Herfried: *Imperien: Die Logik der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten*. Rowohlt: Berlin 2005, pp. 15–21.

not adopt the title of *basileus*, even though they felt entitled to conquer and rule England by inheritance.<sup>17</sup>

Neither did later historiographers conceptualise Knud as an emperor or his rule as imperial – with one exception: the Danish historiographer Svend Aggesen developed the idea of an ancient Danish *imperium* in the 1180s. The concept was then adopted by Saxo Grammaticus. However, Knud himself is not viewed as an emperor in these texts, and Svend’s presentation of his alleged dominance over Europe shows little resemblance to his actual sphere of power more than 150 years ago.<sup>18</sup> The “Baltic Sea Empire” of Valdemar II in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>19</sup> was just as little called an “empire” as was the simultaneously developing Norwegian dominance over the North Atlantic, and when a Scandinavian king got the chance to become king of the Romans and prospective emperor, this did not seem to be attractive: when Pope Gregory IX offered King Erik Plovpenning of Denmark his help to be elected after Frederick II had been excommunicated, the king declined.<sup>20</sup> It does therefore not come as a surprise that not even the Kal-

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- 17 See the story of the emigration of Anglo-Saxon noblemen to Denmark in Chibnall, Marjorie (ed.): *The Ecclesiastical History of Ordericus Vitalis* [*Orderici Vitalis Historia æcclesiastica*] 2. *Books III and IV*. Clarendon Press: Oxford 1969, IV, pp. 202–204, the motivation for St. Knud’s attempted conquest of England in Ælnoth’s chronicle, ch. 11 (Gertz, Martin Clarentius [ed.]: *Vite sanctorum Danorum*. Gad: Copenhagen 1908–1912, pp. 96–97) and Saxo’s lamentation over the loss of England to the Danes (Friis-Jensen, Karsten / Zeeberg, Peter [eds.]: *Saxo Grammaticus: Gesta Danorum. Danmarkshistorien*. 2 volumes. Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab & Gads Forlag: Copenhagen 2005, [in the following GD] 10,21,6).
- 18 Svend Aggesen: *Brevis historia Daciae*, ch. 9: Gertz, Martin Clarentius (ed.): *Scriptores minores historiae Danicae mediæ ævi* 1. Gad: Copenhagen 1917–1918, pp. 120–122; *Lex Castrensis*, ch. 1: *ibid.*, p. 66. The concept will be treated in a later part of this article.
- 19 Cf. Skyum-Nielsen, Niels: *Kvinde og slave*. (Danmarkshistorie uden retouche 3). Munksgaard: Copenhagen 1971, pp. 276–287; Riis, Thomas: *Das mittelalterliche dänische Ostseeimperium*. (Studien zur Geschichte des Ostseeraumes 4). Odense University Press: Odense 2003; Bysted, Ane Lise et al.: *Jerusalem in the North. Denmark and the Baltic Crusades, 1100–1522*. (Outremer. Studies in the Crusades and the Latin East 1). Brepols: Turnhout 2012, pp. 85–89, 303.
- 20 Skyum-Nielsen, Niels (ed.): *Diplomatarium Danicum*. 1. *række*, 7. *bind*. 1238–1249. Reitzel: Copenhagen 1990, no. 25, pp. 24–26: Archdeacon Albrecht Behaim, who was in Bavaria at the time, writes to Pope Gregory in

mar Union triggered an imperial reflex, although it was viewed as a phase of Danish imperialism both in Norway and in Sweden in modern national history.<sup>21</sup> There is only one visible consequence of this hegemony of the Danish monarchs with respect to their titles: Christoffer III of Denmark is called *archirex* in the context of his coronation in Ribe in 1443.<sup>22</sup> As a consequence, one does not get closer to an “empire” in the North than Danish ideas of an ancient Nordic *imperium* without emperors at the close of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

This applies if one chooses a semantic point of view which focuses on the lexical field of “empire”, i.e. the usage of words and their co-occurrences as well as their specific narrative and social context in different texts. The benefits of this analytical focus lie in the fact that an imperial status of certain political actions or constellations is not ascribed by the researcher, but that we only treat as “imperial” what was also labelled as such by medieval authors. Thus, the reconstruction of a concept is based upon a transparent text corpus rather than on impressions from selected texts chosen by a scholar,

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June 1239 that he hopes Erik, whose father King Valdemar II was still alive then, will be elected king of the Romans. The plan to have Erik elected is corroborated by the “Vita Ethelgeri abbatis” from Mariëngaarde in Frisia and by the “Chronica Alberici monachi Trium fontium” (see *ibid.*). Cf. the similar plan to have Hákon IV of Norway elected after Frederick’s deposal in 1245 (note 169).

- 21 See for instance Enemark, Poul: *Fra Kalmarbrev til Stockholms blodbad. Den nordiske trestatsunionens epoke 1397–1521*. Nordisk Ministerråd: Copenhagen / Lund 1979, pp. 147–151; Larsson, Lars-Olof: *Kalmarunionens tid. Från drottning Margareta till Kristian II*. Prisma: Stockholm 2003, pp. 21–23; Bagge, Sverre / Mykland, Knut: *Norge i dansketiden 1380–1814*. Cappelen: Oslo 1987, pp. 8–9; Pryser, Tore: *Norsk historie 1814–1860. Frå standssamfunn mot klassesamfunn*. (Samlagetets Norsk historie 800–2000 4). Det Norske Samlaget: Oslo 2012, pp. 195–198.
- 22 Skyum-Nielsen, Niels: “Ærkekonge og ærkebiskop. Nye træk i dansk kirkehistorie 1376–1536”. *Scandia* 23, 1955–1957, pp. 1–101, here pp. 1–3, 42–49; Hoffmann, Erich: “Coronation and Coronation Ordines in Medieval Scandinavia”. In: Bak, János M. (ed.): *Coronations. Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*. University of California Press: Berkeley et al. 1990, pp. 125–151, here pp. 132, 135–136. It is probable that the title as well as certain details of the coronation ceremony contain a conscious imitation of the emperors or Roman kings, as Christoffer was the grandson of the Wittelsbach King Ruprecht.

who is necessarily guided by her or his background knowledge.<sup>23</sup> An overview over the instances of words containing “empire” or “imperial” in Old Norse and Latin texts from Scandinavia and their contexts thus constitutes the semantic basis of the analysis. Since medieval Scandinavian perspectives upon empires and being emperor are rather those of outsiders, it provides hints as to how ideas of imperial rule were received and conceptualised in the Nordic countries and reveals different Scandinavian attitudes towards imperial claims of universal rule, their roots in language – Latin versus vernacular – and their change over time, including the *Zweikaiserproblem*, which had existed since Charlemagne’s coronation.

### The semantics of *keisari*, *imperator* and *imperium*

Following the entries in the “Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog” provided by the Arnamagnæan Commission in Copenhagen, which covers the whole corpus of Old Norse prose texts until the first printed Bible translation in Icelandic from 1540, there are 142 instances of words containing the root *keisar-* in altogether 63 texts, covering every genre from referential and fictional to encyclopaedic and legal texts.<sup>24</sup> The simplex *keisari* and the feminine form *keisar(a)inna* appear 79 times in 43 texts. Approximately one third of these instances relate to ancient Roman emperors or their wives in translations of classical martyr histories (*Heilagra manna sögur*

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23 Cf. Reichardt, Rolf: “Historische Semantik zwischen lexikométrie und New Cultural History”. In: Id. (ed.): *Aufklärung und Historische Semantik. Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zur westeuropäischen Kulturgeschichte*. (Zeitschrift für historische Forschung. Beihefte 21). Duncker & Humblot: Berlin 1998, pp. 7–28; Jussen, Bernhard: “Ordo zwischen Ideengeschichte und Lexikometrie. Vorarbeiten an einem Hilfsmittel mediävistischer Begriffsgeschichte”. In: Schneidmüller, Bernd / Weinfurter, Stefan (eds.): *Ordnungskonfigurationen im hohen Mittelalter*. (Vorträge und Forschungen 64). Jan Thorbecke Verlag: Ostfildern 2006, pp. 227–256, here pp. 239–244; Geelhaar, Tim: *Christianitas. Eine Wortgeschichte von der Spätantike bis zum Mittelalter*. (Historische Semantik 24). Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen 2015, pp. 26–31.

24 See Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog (ONP), retrieved 18/06/2015, from [dataonp.ad.sc.ku.dk/wordlist\\_d\\_menu.html](http://dataonp.ad.sc.ku.dk/wordlist_d_menu.html). The count is based upon the list of occurrences, double entries resulting from repetitions in editions of different manuscripts containing versions of one text were eliminated. Medical treatises containing *keisari* as part of plant names were also excluded.

and homilies), where also the adjective *keisarligr* (< *imperialis*) is to be found,<sup>25</sup> or in historiographical texts which treat Roman history, mostly annals or encyclopaedic texts. The term *keisari* furthermore occurs five times in courtly fiction (Translated or Original *Riddarasögur*), which also knows “Saxon” emperors, and five times in legal texts or discourses on law like King Sverri’s “Speech against the bishops”, always representing the source of “secular” power. Snorri Sturluson explains the distinction in rank between the emperor and other rulers in his *Prose Edda*, confirming that his contemporaries were familiar with the concept of universal rule. The biggest group, however, is represented by references to medieval emperors in historiography and hagiography with 31 occurrences (44 %). Most of these are to be found in annals, just like *imperatores* in Latin annals from Denmark, in the “*Veraldar saga*”, an Icelandic World Chronicle, and other historiographical texts which use emperors’ ruling years for the dating of events in the North.

There are only seven historiographical narratives which describe interactions between Scandinavians and *keisarar*: in the “*Hungrvaka*”, a chronicle of the diocese of Skálholt, Ísleifr Gizurarson, the first Icelandic bishop, is told to have met and befriended Henry III in 1056 and to have given him a polar bear as a gift.<sup>26</sup> Kings’ sagas from the 13<sup>th</sup> century tell us about the later king Haraldr inn harðárði, who spends some years in Byzantine military service,<sup>27</sup> about meetings between the crusader king Sigurðr Jórsalafari

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25 The adjective occurs five times in the whole corpus, four times in classical hagiography and once in the Old Norse Version of the “*Life of Thomas Becket*”.

26 *Hungrvaka*, ch. 2: Ásdís Egilsdóttir (ed.): *Biskupa sögur II. Hungrvaka. Þorláks saga byskups in elzta. Jarsteinabók Þorláks byskups in forna. Þorláks saga byskups yngri. Jarsteinarbók Þorláks byskups önnur. Þorláks saga byskups C. Þorláks saga byskups E. Páls saga byskups. Ísleifs þátrr bykups. Latínubrot um Þorlák bykup.* (Íslenzk Fornrit 16). Hið íslenzka fonritafélag: Reykjavík 2002, p. 7.

27 Ármann Jakobsson / Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (eds.): *Morkinskinna*. (Íslenzk Fornrit 23–24). Hið íslenzka fonritafélag: Reykjavík 2011, vol. 1, ch. 11–15, pp. 88–117; Ágrip af Nóreagskonunga sǫgum, ch. 51: Bjarni Einarsson (ed.): *Ágrip af Nóreagskonunga sǫgum. Fagrskinna – Nóreags konunga tal*. (Íslenzk Fornrit 29). Hið íslenzka fonritafélag: Reykjavík 1985, pp. 228–237; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.): *Snorri Sturluson: Heimskringla*. (Íslenzk Fornrit 26–28).

of Norway and the Byzantine as well as the Roman emperor,<sup>28</sup> and a little later also about the encounters between king Erik Ejegod of Denmark and the emperors.<sup>29</sup> “Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar” mentions the exchange of envoys and a meeting between Emperor Frederick II and Hákon of Norway.<sup>30</sup> Other sagas tend to focus on earlier times: “Þorvalds þáttur víðförla I” tells us about the journey of an early Icelandic Christian to Jerusalem and Byzantium, where he meets the emperor;<sup>31</sup> in another version, both Þorvaldr and king Óláfr Tryggvason of Norway meet Otto III in Eastern Europe.<sup>32</sup> Seen from this point of view, the occurrence of emperors may be interpreted as part of the indispensable European or Christian framework of Old Norse historiography as well as legal theory. Emperors remain in the background, albeit constantly, but they are usually not located in the centre of attention; encounters are at best described briefly, even if they serve to add prestige to the protagonist’s story. If one looks for exceptions, they will only be found in Constantinople. The only historical interactions between Scandinavians and emperors described in detail are those between the two crusader kings and Alexios I Komnenos. One may add the extensive narrative about the dealings of Anglo-Saxon emigrants with Alexios in “Játvarðar saga”, a

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Hið íslenska fonritafélag: Reykjavík 1941–1951, vol. 3, Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar ch. 3–15, pp. 71–94.

- 28 Morkinskinna, vol. 2, ch. 68–70, pp. 95–100; Ágrip, ch. 90–91, p. 319–320; *Heimskringla*, vol. 3, Magnússona saga ch. 12–13, pp. 252–254.
- 29 Knýtlinga saga, ch. 81: Bjarni Guðnason (ed.): *Danakonunga sögur. Skjöldunga saga. Knýtlinga saga. Ágrip af sögu Danakonunga*. (Íslenzk Fornrit 35). Hið íslenska fonritafélag: Reykjavík 1982, pp. 235–238.
- 30 Þorleifur Hauksson / Sverrir Jakobsson / Ulset, Tor (eds.): *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar II. Magnúss saga lagabætis*. (Íslenzk Fornrit 32). Hið íslenska fonritafélag: Reykjavík 2013, ch. 178, p. 9, ch. 210, p. 38–40, ch. 284, p. 118, ch. 324, pp. 158–159.
- 31 Þorvalds þáttur víðförla I, ch. 10: Sigurgeir Steingrímsson / Ólafur Halldórsson / Foote, Peter (eds.): *Biskupa sögur I. Síðari hluti – sögutextar. Kristni saga. Kristni þættir: Þorvalds þáttur víðförla I. Þorvalds þáttur víðförla II. Stefnis þáttur Þorgilssonar. Af Pangbrandi. Af Þiðranda ok Dísunum. Kristniþöð Pangbrands. Þír þættir. Kristnitakan. Jóns saga ins helga. Gísls þáttur Illugasonar. Sæmundar þáttur*. (Íslenzk Fornrit 15, 2). Hið íslenska fonritafélag: Reykjavík 2003, pp. 88–89.
- 32 Þorvalds þáttur víðförla II, ch. 4: *ibid.*, pp. 98–100.

14<sup>th</sup> century Old Norse version of a story told in various Anglo-Norman sources.<sup>33</sup>

Table 1: Instances of the word *keisari* in Old Norse Prose texts

Historiography and hagiography: ancient world	Historiography and hagiography: middle ages		Fictional texts		Legal / normative discourse	Other titles for Byzantine rulers
	Western	Byzantine	Western / unspecified	Byzantine		
33	22	9	4	3	8	45

So far, statistics only reveal one aspect of Norse attitudes towards empires and emperors. On the one hand, Western Emperors as well as their ancient predecessors are always present, albeit in the background. They are virtually never of vital interest to stories themselves, contrary to their Byzantine counterparts in certain cases. This phenomenon is on the other hand not visible in statistics, which seems to be the result of the varying titles applied to Byzantine emperors. They are also called *stólkonungr* (“throneking”), *Grikkjakeisari*, *Miklagarðskeisari* (“emperor of the Great City”), *Miklagarðskonungr* (one instance), *Garðskonungr* (“king of the city”, seven times) or *Grikkjakonungr*<sup>34</sup> in altogether 28 texts.<sup>35</sup>

33 *Játvarðar saga*, ch. 7–8; Guðbrandur Vigfússon (ed.): *Icelandic Sagas and Other Historical Documents Relating to the Settlements and Descents of the Northmen on the British Isles 1. Orkneyinga Saga and Magnus Saga with Appendices*. (Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi scriptores, or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages [Rolls Series] 88,1). Her Majesty’s Stationery Office: London 1887, pp. 397–400. On the text and its models, see esp. Fell, Christine E.: “The Icelandic Saga of Edward the Confessor. Its Version of the Anglo-Saxon Emigration to Byzantium”. *Anglo-Saxon England* 3, 1973, pp. 179–196; Ciggaar 1974.

34 Rulers from ancient Greece like Alexander the Great or Agamemnon may also go under the title “King of the Greeks”. Therefore, “Alexanders saga”, “Gyðinga saga” and “Rómverja saga” (each with one instance) are excluded from the statistics above.

35 The ONP (note 24) does not have the entries “Miklagarðskonungr”, “Miklagarðskeisari” and “Garðskonungr”; neither does Fritzner’s *Ordbog over Det*



Table 2: Instances of the alternative titles of Byzantine rulers in Old Norse Prose texts

Stólkonungr	Miklagarðs-keisari	Miklagarðskonungr / Garðskonungr	Grikkjakeisari / Girkjakeisari	Grikkjakonungr / Girkjakonungr
16	3	8	1	17

These represent basically the same corpus as above, but include Íslendinga-sögur and a larger number of the Original Riddarasögur.<sup>36</sup> These titles are not always used coherently in one text: they appear side by side with *keisari* and may also vary in the manuscript tradition. If these instances are included into the count, the scale is clearly tipped in favour of the Byzantine rulers: they appear 57 times in Old Norse texts as opposed to 34 instances of western *keisarar*.<sup>37</sup> This nevertheless does not alter the fact that the word *keisari* is the only one applied to Charlemagne and his successors and is statistically much more likely to mean them rather than the emperors at the Bosphorus. Obviously and rather unsurprisingly, Norwegian and Icelandic authors had developed their view of a split Roman heritage in accordance with post-Carolingian models. It will therefore be worthwhile to go into detail and ask when and why certain texts prefer to call the Byzantine ruler *keisari*, too, and if that choice carries a political message.

### Compounds containing *keisari*

Before proceeding to Latin sources, however, compounds containing *keisari* as a determiner prove to be quite revealing. 23 of these are documented,<sup>38</sup> they are to be found 66 times in Old Norse Prose texts. One may divide them into three groups: they either mean a) things owned or made by the

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gamle norske sprog, with the exception of “Garðskonungr”. The count is based on what I could find by looking through indexes.

36 There are ten relevant Original Riddarasögur: “Bærings saga”, “Kiralax saga”, “Konráðs saga keisarasonar”, “Dámusta saga”, “Sigurðar saga turnara”, “Gibbons saga”, “Nítiða saga”, “Vilhjálm saga sjóðs”, “Jarlmanns saga ok Hermanns”, “Sigrgrarðs saga ok Valbrands”.

37 Included in the count are historiography, hagiography, fiction and law, but no texts which relate to the ancient world.

38 The count is again based on ONP (see note 24), excluding double counts there.

emperor or imperial activities, e.g. *keisarahöll*, *keisaragarðr* (the emperors' hall / palace), *keisaralið* (the imperial army) or *keisaravígsla* (the emperor's unction); they designate b) the emperor's relatives, or they describe c) the status of being emperor and his sphere of power, e.g. *keisaranafn* (< *nomen imperialis*), *keisaradómr* (cf. German *Kaisertum*), *keisaraveldi* (empire). Despite the predilection of Old Norse for compounds, none of these occur frequently, with the exception of *keisaradómr* in the context of world history (18 times). It is usually "held" or "taken" by different Roman or Western Emperors, employing the idea of a continually existing Roman world empire, but it can also "fall down", as is the case after Frederick II's death.<sup>39</sup> The other important group is constituted by the emperor's relatives, mostly sons (8 times), daughters (8 times)<sup>40</sup> and sisters (3 times). It is remarkable that the latter appear exclusively in courtly fiction from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, with only one exception. "Morkinskinna" quotes two *lausavísur* of King Magnús berfœttr of Norway to Maktildr, an alleged *keisaradóttir*, employing concepts of courtly love.<sup>41</sup> While the emperors' sons in *Riddarasögur* mostly come from "Saxony",<sup>42</sup> the daughters and sisters nearly all live at a fictitious Byzantine court. Bridal quest romance became extremely popular in Iceland from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and usually the hero goes to Constantinople in order to prove his vigour.<sup>43</sup>

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39 *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, ch. 324, p. 159.

40 *Keisaradóttir* appears seven times, one time a daughter is called *keisarabarn*.

41 *Morkinskinna*, ch. 62, pp. 60–62; cf. the edition of the stanzas by Kari Ellen Gade. In: Clunies Ross, Margaret (ed.): *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2. Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2,1*. Brepols: Turnhout 2009, pp. 387–389. The other instances of *keisaradóttir* are to be found in "Karlamagnús saga", "Dámusta saga" and "Dínuss saga drambláta".

42 This is the case in six instances from three texts from the 14<sup>th</sup> century: "Klári saga", "Konráðs saga keisarasonar", "Rémundar saga keisarasonar".

43 Cf. van Nahl, Astrid: *Originale Riddarasögur als Teil altnordischer Sagaliteratur*. (Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe 1: Deutsche Sprache und Literatur 447). Lang: Frankfurt am Main et al. 1981, pp. 99–110, 155; Kalinke, Marianne E.: *Bridal Quest Romance in Medieval Iceland*. (Islandica 46). Cornell University Press: Ithaca / London 1990, esp. pp. 25–65; Barnes, Geraldine: *The Bookish Riddarasögur. Writing Romance in Late Medieval Iceland*. (The Viking Collection 21). University Press of Southern Denmark: Odense 2014, pp. 151–181.

These heroes help to save Byzantium from its heathen enemies, befriend the emperors, marry their daughters and sometimes even inherit imperial rule.<sup>44</sup> The settings often combine an imagination of classical antiquity with conflict schemes from the crusades, where Byzantium is both the centre and the eastern outpost of the Christian world.<sup>45</sup> Rome is mostly unimportant in these contexts, and the dominance of a Byzantine background in the occurrences of imperial relatives serves to illustrate that Old Norse stories about emperors and empire are as a rule located in the East. This phenomenon will have to be analysed against the background of the varying imperial titles described above.

### *Imperium and imperator*

Latin sources from Denmark and Norway pose different problems; not only do we lack an up-to-date lexicon with finding aids, let alone a database including all the relevant texts, but the classical meanings of *imperium* as “command / order”, “the authority to issue orders” and “personal rule” respectively make things difficult. Only statistics of co-occurrences in the sentences in question would provide a solid ground for semantic interpretation of all the hits. Since we do not, for now, possess reliable electronic versions of the edited texts in question, except for the “Gesta Danorum”, a manual search in a manageable corpus was the only way to gather information.<sup>46</sup> As a consequence of the semantic ambiguity, most of the hun-

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44 These aspects are to be found in “Bærings saga”, “Konráðs saga keisarasonar”, “Sigurðar saga turnara”, “Gibbons saga”, “Vilhjálmss saga sjóðs”, “Jarlamanns saga ok Hermanns” and “Sigrgarðs saga ok Valbrands”.

45 Cf. for instance Kålund, Christian (ed.): *Kirialax saga*. (Samfund til Udgivelse af gammel nordisk Litteratur 43). Samfund til Udgivelse af gammel nordisk Litteratur: Copenhagen 1917, esp. pp. 64–67, which combines a pilgrimage of the Greek protagonist to the Holy Land with stories about the Migration Period. The idea of Byzantium as a frontier is in the background of all the stories named above.

46 Editions used are Storm, Gustav (ed.): *Monumenta historica Norvegiæ. Latinske Kildeskrifter til Norges Historie i Middelalderen*. Bøgger: Kristiania 1880; Gertz, Martin Clarentius (ed.): *Scriptores minores historiae Danicae mediæ ævi*. 3 volumes. Gad: Copenhagen 1917–1922; *Vitæ sanctorum Danorum*; Ekrem, Inger / Boje Mortensen, Lars / Fisher, Peter (eds.): *Historia Norwegie*. Museum Tusulanum Press: Copenhagen 2003. The “Compendium Saxonis” (contained in

dreds of instances of *imperium* are without relevance, because they relate to the personal rule of single kings in the North; in the “Gesta Danorum” this is the case in 154 of altogether 167 occurrences. While the Old Norse compounds *keisaradómr*, *keisararíki*, *keisaravald* and *keisaraveldi* offer a clear “imperial” meaning without the necessity of further definition, one has to look at the semantic context of *imperium*. A typical grey zone is found in narratives where kings from the North submit other countries to their *imperium* (*subiugare* / *subiacere*), as is the case several times in Saxo’s “Gesta Danorum”<sup>47</sup> and also in the “Historia Norwegie”, where the Jarls of Mœrir extend their rule over parts of England, Scotland and Ireland.<sup>48</sup> As these *imperia* do not appear to be thought of as political structures beyond the personal military success of one ruler, they consequently do not distinguish themselves from any other form of personal *imperium*. If one takes the *Imperium Romanum* and the underlying idea of a fourth World Empire as a reference, however, similar constructions of an *imperium Danicum*, *imperium Danorum* or an *imperium gentis nostrae* emerge.<sup>49</sup> Surprisingly enough, none of these constructions is to be found in Norwegian texts,

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*Scriptores minores*, vol. 2) is excluded, as it is a retelling of the “Gesta Danorum”. The “Gesta Danorum” were searched with the help of the application “Historical Semantics Corpus Management” (HSCM, see [hscm.hucompute.org](http://hscm.hucompute.org), retrieved 30/06/2015); an easy access version is to be found under [comphistsem.org](http://comphistsem.org) (retrieved 30/06/2015). It is based upon an automatic lemmatisation of digital texts in TEI format and offers inter alia statistical analyses of the words used and co-occurrence-analyses of specific terms and phrases. In our case, the analysis is based upon the electronic version of Olrik, Jørgen / Ræder, Hans (eds.): *Saxonis Gesta Danorum*. Levin & Munksgaard: Copenhagen 1931–1957 by the Kongelige Bibliotek in Copenhagen (retrieved 27/06/2015, from <http://wayback-01.kb.dk/wayback/20100504154321/http://www2.kb.dk/elib/lit/dan/saxo/lat/or.dsr/index.htm>). The relevant passages have been checked with the printed edition Friis-Jensen / Zeeberg 2005. Quotations and book as well as chapter numbers refer to the latter edition.

47 See for instance GD 2,6,1. Cf. the instances listed in note 51.

48 *Historia Norwegie*, VI,8, p. 66.

49 These do admittedly not always imply an imperial concept; cf. *imperium Danicum* in GD 3,3,1, where it is unified with the *imperium Sueticum*. A similar construction is to be found in GD 8,5,2.

whereas Danish authors also refer to an *imperium Graecorum*.<sup>50</sup> They deal frequently with the “Roman empire” (*Imperium Romanum*) and sometimes view their own realm as a potential victim of vassalitic subjection, sometimes as a parallel imperial structure which “adds” other realms to its own sphere (*regna imperio adicere / afferre*).<sup>51</sup> Obviously, the direct neighbours of Roman emperors invested much more thought into their imperial status – or its absence – than did Norwegian historiographers in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This applies first and foremost to conflicts in the Valdemarian Age, when Saxo directly and Svend Aggesen indirectly discuss the limits of Roman imperial power. Their stories will be dealt with in detail later on.

Contrary to the use of *imperium*, the association between the term *imperator* and Rome is stable and exclusive in Latin texts from the North. No other rulers are ever called *imperatores*. One is therefore surprised by the fact that any distinction in title between rulers of the First and Second Rome is absent. Except for two instances, neither Danish nor Norwegian authors ever call the Byzantine emperor *rex Graecorum* or similar,<sup>52</sup> leaving us with the impression that the vernacular terminology regarding imperial concepts in Icelandic texts actually shows a greater proximity to continental Latin than Saxo, Svend Aggesen and Theodoricus monachus. Byzantine *basileis* do admittedly not appear too often in Danish historiography: the sources gathered in the edition *Scriptores minores historiae Danicae medii aevi* mention Western Emperors 33 times in eleven contexts, only one of which relates to rulers of Constantinople, in this case to the Latin emperors Balduin and Henry of Flanders (*imperatores Constantinopolitani*), who were descendants of St Knud of Denmark.<sup>53</sup> The situation in the “Gesta Danorum” is a little different: Saxo calls emperors both *imperator* (28

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50 Cf. Svend Aggesen’s *Lex Castrensis*, ch. 1 (*Scriptores minores*, vol. 1, p. 66) and his *Brevis historia*, ch. 9 (*ibid.*, p. 120).

51 GD 5,8,6; 5,10,12; 5,13,3; 10,2,1.

52 Saxo calls the Byzantine ruler *rex Bizantii* in one special context (note 54). The “*Historia de profectioe Danorum in Hierosolymam*” relates the dealings of Danish crusaders in Constantinople on their way back to the North and speaks of a *rex Grece* (ch. 25: Gertz, Martinus Clarentius (ed.): *Scriptores minores historiae Danicae medii aevi*, vol. 2. Gad: Copenhagen 1918–1920, p. 490).

53 Vilhelm of Æbelholt: *Genealogia regum Danorum* (*Scriptores minores*, vol. 1, p. 183).

times) and *cæsar* (69 times). The only Eastern Emperors to appear are Constantine IX, who remains an anonymous *rex* in the context of Haraldr inn harðráði's leaving of Byzantium,<sup>54</sup> and Alexios Komnenos, who is visited by King Erik Ejegod in 1103, before he dies in Cyprus on his way to Jerusalem. Alexios is consequently called *imperator* eleven times in an elaborate narrative of his dealings with the Danish king.<sup>55</sup> Nowhere else is the title used this frequently. The "Compendium Saxonis", an abridged retelling of the "Gesta Danorum" in a more straightforward Latin from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, even strengthens this impression.<sup>56</sup>

The occurrences in Norwegian texts are even more striking: if not for Theodoricus, Western Emperors would be virtually absent. One obvious reason for this is that there were fewer interactions between emperors and Norwegian kings. Furthermore, early Latin texts from Norway are not particularly interested in universal history, in contrast, for instance, to the Icelandic "Veraldar saga". Theodoricus mentions only the alleged Christianisation of Denmark by Otto II, *christianissimus imperator*.<sup>57</sup> Other references to Roman emperors result from his typological interpretation of Norwegian history; they are to be found in his frequent excursions, which serve to illustrate parallels between Norwegian and ancient or Frankish history.<sup>58</sup> Here, we come across Jovian, *christianissimus imperator*, who did not want to rule over a heathen people, just like Óláfr Tryggvason, and other ancient emperors like Augustus and Constantine the Great. Also, the fight of the early Byzantine emperors against the Huns is mentioned.

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54 GD 11,3,1.

55 GD 12,7,1–6.

56 The term *imperator* occurs 40 times in 14 different contexts, whereas *caesar* is not used. The only Byzantine context is Erik Ejegod's crusade, where Alexios is called "emperor" 8 times.

57 *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*, ch. 5 (*Monumenta historica Norvegiæ*, p. 11). Otto I is also mentioned in order to date the life of St Sunniva: *Acta Sanctorum in Selio* (*ibid.*, p. 147).

58 On this historiographical technique, see Bagge, Sverre: "Theodoricus Monachus – Clerical Historiography in Twelfth Century Norway". *Scandinavian Journal of History* 14, 1989, pp. 113–134, here pp. 117–123; Scheel, Roland: *Lateineuropa und der Norden. Die Geschichtsschreibung des 12. Jahrhunderts in Dänemark, Island und Norwegen*. (Frankfurter Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge 6). trafo: Berlin 2012, pp. 158–176, 221–222.

Charlemagne serves as the ideal ruler in two contexts.<sup>59</sup> The only *imperatores* with direct connections to Norwegian rulers, however, are from the East: in Theodoricus, the interactions between Haraldr inn harðráði and the *imperator* are described briefly,<sup>60</sup> and different hagiographical texts about St Olav of Norway mention the basileis' involvement in the miracles performed by the saint among the Varangians in Byzantium.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the only emperors to show up in hagiographical and liturgical texts about the national saint until the end of the Middle Ages are the Byzantine ones.

Summing up the impressions gathered from rather dry statistics and first occasional glances at narrative contexts of the different instances, one may state that Scandinavian interest in the Eastern Emperors is remarkable. One would have expected a clearer dominance of the Romano-German Empire. After all, Scandinavian texts are well-known to follow models from Central and Western Europe both in historiographical and fictional courtly genres, not to mention the transfer of Latin as a standard language in Denmark and Norway. It is even more remarkable that the interest in and the stability of the association between the Byzantine ruler and the imperial title cannot be described as a vernacular phenomenon. As could only be shown through quantitative analysis, the imperial nature of Byzantine rule is even clearer in Scandinavian Latin than in Old Norse texts; only the latter adapt alternative, at least potentially diminishing titles like *Grikkjakonungr* (< *rex Graecorum*), which in turn reflect the usage in Latin texts from Western Europe. Furthermore, the fact that Latin historiography mentions emperors

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59 Jovian: ch. 8 (*Monumenta historica Norvegiæ*, pp. 15–16), Augustus: ch. 32 (*ibid.*, p. 64–65), Constantine: ch. 13 (*ibid.*, p. 23), Huns: ch. 17 (*ibid.*, pp. 31–34), Charlemagne: ch. 23 and 30 (*ibid.*, pp. 46–48 and 59–60).

60 *Ibid.*, ch. 28, p. 57.

61 Metcalfe, Frederick (ed.): *Passio et Miracula Beati Olavi. Edited from a Twelfth-Century Manuscript in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford*. Clarendon Press: Oxford 1881, pp. 76–78; Indrebø, Gustav (ed.): *Gamal norsk homiliebok. Cod. AM 619 4°*. Dybwad: Oslo 1931, p. 114; Heinrichs, Anne (ed.): *Olafs saga hins helga. Die "Legendarische Saga" über Olaf den Heiligen Hs. Delagard. saml. nr. 8II*. (Germanische Bibliothek. Reihe 4, Texte. Neue Folge 7). Winter: Heidelberg 1982, ch. 92, pp. 212–214; Chase, Martin (ed.): "Einnarr Skúlason: Geisli" In: Clunies Ross, Margaret (ed.): *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 7. Poetry on Christian Subjects 1: The Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. Brepols: Turnhout 2007, stanzas 43–56, pp. 48–53.

does not automatically imply that vernacular texts do so, too: when Theodoricus monachus mentions an *imperator* in the context of King Harold's youth, the vernacular "Ágrip af Nóregs konunga sǫgum", which is largely an Old Norse adaptation of Theodoricus' chronicle, shortens the passage extremely.<sup>62</sup> "Knýtlinga saga", which is obviously based upon the account of the "Gesta Danorum", but also on "Morkinskinna's" story of King Sigurðr in Byzantium, turns the *imperator* Alexios from the "Gesta Danorum" and the *keisari* from the "Morkinskinna" into a *Girkjakonungr*.<sup>63</sup> The time in which a text was written also played a role in the choice of titles.

### The Translation of Empire and its semantic renouncement

It could be argued that the concentration on details like titles for some rulers far away leads to over-interpretation, and that most of the Scandinavian authors neither knew about nor cared for empires or the problem that some people thought there should theoretically only be one. This is not the case, however, at least not from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. "Veraldar saga", an Icelandic world chronicle finished between the 1150s and 1190, describes the restauration of the Roman Empire in the West as follows:<sup>64</sup>

*A dogvm þessa keisara [Leon IV to Michael II Psellos] gengv Langbarþar ok margar þiðir adrar yfir Rvmveria riki. þeir beiddv opt keisara þa er varo i Miclagardi ser lidveizlo. En þeir mato eigi Rvmveriom at lidi verþa fyrir þvi at þeir hofdv sva mikit vandræði at travt mattv þeir hallda sinv riki fyrir heidnvm þiodvm er a hendr þeim gengv þvi sidr mattv þeir odrvm at lidi koma. þadan fra sottv þeir travst þeirra hofdingja er fyrir nordan fiall varo a Fraclandi ok siþan er Pipinvs tok konvngdom yfir Rvmveriom at vilia Stephani pafa þa hurfo Rvmveriar vndan Miclagardz konvngom. haufvm ver þadan engar sanligar saugvr siþan Rvmveriar hurfo vndan þeim. siþan kallaz hvarr þeirra odrum meiri stolkonvngv i Miklagardi ok keisari a Saxlandi.*

In the days of these emperors [Leo IV to Michael II], the Lombards and many other peoples came over the realm of the Romans. They often asked the Emperors who sat in Miklagarðr for help. But they could not help the Romans because they had great trouble themselves in defending their own realm against the heathen peoples who attacked them. From that time on, the Romans sought the help of

62 Ágrip af Nóregs konunga sǫgum, ch. 33, p. 44.

63 Knýtlinga saga, ch. 81 (*Danakonunga sǫgur*, pp. 236–238).

64 Jakob Benediktsson (ed.): *Veraldar saga*. (Samfund til Udgivelse af gammel nordisk Litteratur 61). Luno: Copenhagen 1944, pp. 69–70.; translation by R. S.



the magnates who were north of the mountains in *Frakkland*, and later, when Pippin took the kingdom over the Romans according to the will of Pope Stephanus, the Romans turned away from the Kings of Miklagarðr. Ever since each of them has rather called himself *stólkonungr* – throne-king – in Miklagarðr, and *keisari* in Saxland.

This is a perfectly clear explanation of the *translatio imperii*, followed by a shift of focus towards the Western Emperors. The idea that the *Imperium Romanum* was revived and continued by the successors of Charlemagne had become increasingly influential since the time of Otto II. Around 1100, the idea of the four World Empires was systematically connected to the “Romano-German” empire in world chronicles, thus turning a *renovatio*, which allowed for two Roman emperors like in Late Antiquity, into a *translatio*.<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that Adam of Bremen around 1075 was one of the earliest historiographers to express this thought.<sup>66</sup> As a result of clerical networks in the archdiocese and the fact that Adam’s work contained relevant material, his “*Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*” were known at least in Iceland and Denmark around 1130.<sup>67</sup> Although his idea of a translation of empire may have been one of the sources for the “*Veraldar saga*”, there must have been a more extensive world chronicle

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65 Cf. Goetz, Werner: *Translatio Imperii. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkens und der politischen Theorien im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*. Mohr: Tübingen 1958, pp. 79–93, 104–137; Folz, pp. 104–118; Drews, p. 43. “*Veraldar saga*” also contains comments on the first five of the six *aetates mundi*, which employ models of thought known from the church fathers and the Victorines (*Veraldar saga*, pp. 79–86; cf. *ibid.*, pp. XXXIX–XL; Marchand, James W.: “The Allegories in the Old Norse *Veraldar saga*”. *Michigan Germanic Studies* 1, 1975, pp. 109–118; Scheel, pp. 148–149.).

66 Schmeidler, Bernhard (ed.): *Adam von Bremen: Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte [Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum]*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi [2]). Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover / Leipzig 1917, 1,10, p. 11.

67 Cf. the extensive use of Adam’s text in “*Chronicon Roskildense*” (*Scriptores minores*, vol. 1, esp. pp. 14–20) and the use of his work for the dating of the conversion of Iceland in Ari Þorgilsson’s “*Íslendingabók*” (Christensen, Aksel E.: “Om kronologien i Aris *Íslendingabók* og dens lån fra Adam af Bremen”. In: Brøndum-Nielsen, Johannes (ed.): *Nordiske studier. Festskrift til Chr. Westergård-Nielsen på 65-årsdagen den 24. november 1975*. Rosenkilde og Bagger: Copenhagen 1975, pp. 23–24).

in the background, most probably by Sigebert of Gembloux.<sup>68</sup> Be this as it may; no possible Latin source we know of connects the translation with a concrete new title for the successors of Constantine. Sigebert writes: *immutato ordine regnorum, immutandus est etiam ordo titulorum*.<sup>69</sup> This is duly implemented in the “Veraldar saga”.

The Icelandic chronicler managed to combine up-to-date world history with older, specifically Scandinavian cultural knowledge. The emerging picture is clear: the Byzantines failed to protect the Romans, albeit for reasons they cannot be held responsible for. The information is friendly towards the Byzantines and carefully picked from the sources in this regard. Not only in Sigebert’s text, but virtually in all world chronicles, the reasons for the translation of empire are either iconoclasm or the fact that there was no male emperor in the year of Charlemagne’s coronation, or both. “Veraldar saga” drops this information and simply states that the basileis were otherwise engaged. As a result, the imperial title rests with the Western Emperors, while the Byzantines adopted another title which seems to explain itself. As one can read a little earlier in the chronicle, Constantine the Great

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68 Bethmann, D. (ed.): “Chronica Sigeberti Gemblacensis a. 381–1111”. In: Pertz, Georg Heinrich (ed.): *Chronica et annales aevi Salici*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores (in Folio) 6). Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover 1843, pp. 300–374, here pp. 333–336, esp. p. 336. Sigebert’s chronicle is rather detailed about the Byzantine rulers’ troubles with their neighbours, and especially the sentence: *Romani, qui ab imperatore Constantinopolitano iamdiu desciverant* [...] (ibid., p. 336, A.D. 801) is mirrored in the expression *Rómveriar hurfu undan þeim*. (“The Romans turned away from them.”). Cf. also Waitz, G. (ed.): “Ekkehardi chronicon universale ad a. 1106”. In: *MGH SS 6*, pp. 33–231, here pp. 169, 175. The editor of “Veraldar saga” was convinced that the text is based upon a lost compilation of Latin sources. This has been doubted in the last years. Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir: “Um aldir alda. Veraldarsögur miðalda og íslenskar aldartölur”. *Ritið* 3, 2005, pp. 111–133, here p. 125; Würth, Stefanie: “Die mittelalterliche Übersetzung im Spannungsfeld von lateinischsprachiger und volkssprachiger Literaturproduktion. Das Beispiel der Veraldar saga”. In: Johanterwage, Vera / Würth, Stefanie (eds.): *Übersetzen im skandinavischen Mittelalter*. (Studia mediaevalia septentrionalia 14). Fassbaender: Vienna 2007, pp. 11–32, here pp. 19–20; Scheel, pp. 144–149), and the observations above point strongly into an independent handling of different sources by the author of the saga.

69 *MGH SS 6*, p. 336 (A.D. 801).

had moved the Roman imperial throne – *keisara stóll* – to Constantinople, hence *stólkonungr*.<sup>70</sup> The Byzantine rulers had been and still are sitting on the ancient imperial Roman throne. This etymology is probably historically incorrect, as the term was rather borrowed from Eastern Slavonic *stol’nji kn’az’* in earlier times, when it denoted the ruler of Kiev.<sup>71</sup> However, this has no consequences for our case. It was understood as explained in the “*Veraldar saga*”: while the empire had been transferred to the Frankish and Saxon rulers, the Byzantines remained heirs to ancient Roman places, symbols and traditions. “*Veraldar saga*” mentions the throne, Hagia Sophia and the Codex Iustinianus.

Although the narrative follows the Romano-German model and explicitly suggests a descent in rank, it refrains from blaming Irene and the last members of the Isaurian dynasty. In addition, the title of *stólkonungr* associated with Byzantium possessed and retained an imperial connotation and a powerful sound to Icelandic and Norwegian ears. In Snorri Sturluson’s Edda, it is listed among the poetic synonyms for Christ, the king of kings, and it was also used this way in “*Maríu saga*”.<sup>72</sup> What we see here is the mobilisation and integration of knowledge from oral tradition. Since the emergence of Rus’, the development of the way “from the Varangians to the Greeks” and especially since the early pilgrimages of Scandinavian kings to Jerusalem and Byzantium, Constantinople had become the most important Mediterranean destination for Scandinavians.<sup>73</sup> Pilgrims and

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70 *Veraldar saga*, p. 59.

71 Stender-Petersen, Adolf: “Études Varègues V,2. La théorie de l’origine Varègue de la byline russe”. *Classica et mediaevalia* 8, 1946–1947, pp. 121–138, here p. 128.

72 Finnur Jónsson (ed.): *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*. Gyldendal: Copenhagen 1931, Skáldskaparmál ch. 65, p. 158–159; Unger, Carl R. (ed.): *Mariu saga. Legender om Jomfru Maria og hendes Jertegn*. Brøgger & Christie: Christiania 1871, p. 1086 (*stólkonungr Jesus*).

73 This was already stated by Blöndal, Sigfús: *Væringjasaga. Saga norræna, rússneskra og enskra hersveita í þjónustu Miklagarðskeisara á miðöldum*. Ísafoldarprentsmiðja: Reykjavík 1954; cf. the English version Blöndal, Sigfús: *The Varangians of Byzantium. An Aspect of Byzantine Military History Translated, Revised and Rewritten by Benedikt S. Benedikz*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge et al. 1978, pp. 122–166; Ellis Davidson, Hilda Roderick: *The - Viking Road to Byzantium*. Allen & Unwin: London 1976; Zeitler, Rudolf

mercenaries would meet compatriots in the “Great City” and Byzantine garrisons; they could expect to be employed in the Byzantine army and to return home with money and prestige. Consequently, it had become common knowledge that “Greece” and the City with its many relics and imperial tradition were at the same time a centre of the Christian sphere as well as a defender of the frontier against “heathens” in the East. This is clearly expressed by *kenningar* in Skaldic poetry from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when a skald compared Knud the Great’s (imperial?) rule to God’s rule in heaven, expressing the contemporary idea of the *basileus Anglorum* as a *vicarius Christi*.<sup>74</sup> The Skaldic circumlocution for “God” is “protector of Greece” (*gætir Grikklands*). This *kenning* was very probably considered to be flattering enough to save the poet’s neck;<sup>75</sup> it belongs to a refrain (*stef*) which Þórarinn loftunga, the skald in question, had been forced to add by the king on the threat of death: the first, plainer version of his panegyric had been considered an insult to a ruler of Knud’s rank.<sup>76</sup> Some decades later, another skald prayed for the late Haraldr inn harðráði to the “Guardian of the Greeks and the Rus’” (*Grikkja vörðr ok Garða*).<sup>77</sup> While this is an expression of the same idea as above, another quite obvious motivation for the choice is the parallel to Harold’s own biography. Before his return to Norway, he and his men had themselves served among the troops of Jaroslav the Wise and afterwards in Byzantium.<sup>78</sup> Even though this mate-

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(ed.): *Les pays du Nord et Byzance (Scandinavie et Byzance). Actes du colloque nordique et international de byzantinologie. Tenu à Upsal 20–22 avril 1979*. Almqvist & Wiksell: Uppsala 1981; Piltz, Elisabeth (ed.): *Bysans och Norden. Akta för Nordiska forskarkursen i bysantinsk konvetenskap 1986*. Almqvist & Wiksell: Uppsala 1989. One should add that Rome was of course an important destination especially for bishops and clergymen. Saga narratives, however, do not treat those journeys with equal interest.

74 Townend, Matthew (ed.): Þórarinn loftunga: Höfuðlausn. In: Whaley, Diana (ed.): *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 1. Poetry from the Kings’ Sagas 1,2*. Brepols: Turnhout 2012, stanza 1, pp. 850–851. Cf. Bolton, pp. 291–292.

75 Hence the name of the poem: *Höfuðlausn* means “release of the head”.

76 *Heimskringla*, vol. 2, pp. 307–308.

77 Whaley, Diana (ed.): “Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson: Haraldsdrápa”. In: Clunies Ross 2009, stanza 17, p. 279–280.

78 For a list of sources, see Waßenhoven, p. 202.

rial is far too thin to deduce any form of “orthodox influence”, it becomes clear that the learned historiographers of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries could draw upon a set of semantic associations. Also the idea of a “throne-lord” (*stólþengill*) in Byzantium can be traced back to Skaldic poetry from the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>79</sup>

On the other hand, there was no traditional distinction in rank between emperors and other rulers; the word *keisari* is absent from Eddaic poetry and occurs only twice in skaldic stanzas about kings from the North: Knud the Great is called *kærr keisara* – dear to the emperor – meaning Conrad II whom he had met in Rome in 1027.<sup>80</sup> In the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a skald calls Henry IV, whom Erik Ejegod of Denmark had met in 1102, *ríkr keisari* (powerful emperor) and *César*.<sup>81</sup> It is symptomatic that there is no exclusive poetic synonym for emperors in the Skaldic corpus. Snorri Sturluson, who catalogues skaldic circumlocutions and synonyms in his Edda, ranks emperors as the highest rulers in the world. He ascribes to them the heiti *allvaldr* (“all-ruler”), but it is not exclusively used for emperors and was applied to kings and jarls, too.<sup>82</sup> One of the rulers called *allvaldr* in Skaldic Poetry is Alexios Komnenos, the Byzantine Emperor, in the context of his meeting with King Erik of Denmark in 1103.<sup>83</sup> We may infer from this, firstly, that the idea of a special imperial rank was not established in the North before 1100 and, secondly, that the Byzantine rulers enjoyed a special prestige well before this time. After all, Snorri lists the title *Grikkjakonungr* (“king of the Greeks”) among *kennings* for God himself. Although his example reflects the language use of the 11<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>84</sup> calling the basileus *Grikkjakonungr* need not necessarily have implied a statement

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79 Whaley, Diana (ed.): “Þjóðólfr Arnórsson: Sexstefja”. In: Clunies Ross 2009, stanza 7, pp. 118–119.

80 Townend, Matthew (ed.): “Sigvatr Þórðarson: Knútsdrápa”. In: Whaley 2012, stanza 10, pp. 661–662. Four other occurrences of *keisari* are to be found in Skaldic poems about classical hagiography.

81 Carroll, Jayne (ed.): “Markús Skeggjason: Eiríksdrápa”. In: Clunies Ross 2009, stanza 24, pp. 453–454.

82 *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, Skáldskaparmál 80, p. 179.

83 Markús Skeggjason: Eiríksdrápa (note 81, here stanza 28, p. 457–458).

84 *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, Skáldskaparmál 65, pp. 158–159, esp. stanza 275 (also Whaley, Diana (ed.): “Arnórr jarlaskáld: Haraldsdrápa [around / after 1066]”. In: Clunies Ross 2009, stanza 17, pp. 279–280.).

about a non-imperial status in later times. Answers will only be possible by looking at the contexts.

Yet, we cannot deny that the Scandinavian authors definitely knew the Western ideas of translation of empire. There are 13 textual witnesses of “Veraldar saga” – a lot by Icelandic measures – and many more manuscripts containing encyclopaedic material on the same basis.<sup>85</sup> We can also find the idea of *translatio imperii* in Denmark, for instance in manuscripts of the “Annales Lundenses” under A.D. 768, the beginning of Charlemagne’s rule: *hic transit imperium Romanorum ad reges Francie*.<sup>86</sup> The annalists from Lund used material from German world chronicles, albeit transferred via English or Norman manuscripts, and material from the “Anglo-Saxon Chronicle”.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, all our Scandinavian authors followed Romano-German ideas of translation. The sources for both Danish and Icelandic world history must furthermore somehow be connected to texts like the “Vita Willibrordi” by Thiofrid of Echternach from 1103/04 or the “Echternach chronicle” from 1191. They all include Charlemagne’s father Pippin into the process of translation, which begins with his coronation as “King of the Romans” in the “Veraldar saga”, and is finished with his death in 768 in the “Annales Lundenses”.<sup>88</sup> One may wonder why Scandinavian

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85 Cf. *Veraldar saga*, pp. V–XXXV. For a broader view on universal history in Iceland, cf. Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2005 and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir: “The World and Its Ages”. In: Williams, Gareth / Bibire, Paul (eds.): *Sagas, Saints and Settlements*. (The Northern World 11). Brill: Leiden 2004, pp. 1–7.

86 Jørgensen, Ellen (ed.): *Annales Danici medii ævi*. Gad: Copenhagen 1920, p. 51. The event seems to be important to the scribes or the compiler of the annals, as it marks the beginning of the more recent annalistic part, which combines Danish and universal history. It follows directly after the inserted “Chronicon Lethrense”, which treats the history of Danish kings in mythological prehistory.

87 *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6, 12–13; Leegaard Knudsen, Anders: “Interessen for den danske fortid omkring 1300. En middelalderlig dansk nationalisme”. *Historisk tidskrift [DK]* 100, 2000, pp. 1–34, here pp. 5–7.

88 Weiland, L. (ed.): “Ex Vita S. Willibrordi auctore Thiofridi abate”. In: Pertz, Georg Heinrich (ed.): *Chronica ævi Suevici*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores (in Folio) 23). Hahnische Buchhandlung: Hannover 1874, pp. 23–30, here pp. 24–25.; *Chronicon Epternacense auctore Theoderico monacho*. In: *Ibid.*, pp. 38–64, here p. 38. Cf. Goetz, p. 130. *Veraldar saga*, p. 70; “Annales Lundenses” (Jørgensen, p. 51) has the translation before King Pippin’s death.

historiographers chose to follow the eschatological interpretation of the Roman Empire, as alternatives were certainly available, for instance the interpretation in Hugh of Fleury's "Historia ecclesiastica". It plays down the idea that Charlemagne's empire was universal and thus taken away from the Byzantines.<sup>89</sup> This idea of two regional empires in the East and the West negates the eschatological relevance of the Roman World Empire, as illustrated especially by Otto of Freising,<sup>90</sup> and fits neatly within the development of political thought. It was adopted by several historiographers during the 12<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>91</sup> but not in Scandinavia. The concept of translation of empire analysed so far is consistent with Danish historiographers' use of *Imperium Romanum*. It may be inferred from this that when Scandinavian historiographers and authors of other texts ignored the problem of two emperors, they did so deliberately and probably for a reason.

### *Rex imperio dignus – rex imperator in regno suo*

In the case of Denmark, the attitude towards imperial concepts of universal rule and the logic behind the use of imperial titles is quite obvious. The explanation lies in the relationship between the Danish kings and the Romano-German emperors during the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Internal conflicts had

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Connections between Echternach, its surroundings and Iceland in the 12<sup>th</sup> century are plausible: "Rómverja saga" uses a version of Sallust which is found in an 11<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript from Echternach (Hofmann, Dietrich: "Accessus ad Lucanum. Zur Neubestimmung des Verhältnisses zwischen Rómverja saga und Veraldar saga". In: Simek, Rudolf (ed.): *Sagnaskemmtun. Studies in Honour of Hermann Pálsson on his 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday 26<sup>th</sup> May 1986*. (Philologica Germanica 8). Böhlau: Vienna et al. 1986, pp. 121–151, here p. 149), and the veneration of the apostle Matthew in Trier spread rapidly to Iceland in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (van der Toorn-Piebenga, Gryte Anne: "De Ijslandse bewerkingen van de legende over de apostel Mattias". *Tijdschrift voor Skandinavistiek* 22, 2001, pp. 91–108).

89 Mégier, Elisabeth: "Karl der Große, das römische Reich und die Kirche in franko-normannischer Sicht: der Standpunkt Hugos von Fleury". In: Ead.: *Christliche Weltgeschichte im 12. Jahrhundert: Themen, Variationen und Kontraste. Untersuchungen zu Hugo von Fleury, Ordericus Vitalis und Otto von Freising*. (Beihefte zur Mediävistik 13). Lang: Frankfurt am Main et al. 2010, pp. 325–331.

90 Goetz, pp. 111–125; Folz, pp. 114–118.

91 Goetz, pp. 136–137; cf. Drews, pp. 45–48. See also below, note 106.

opened the door to imperial influence since 1131, when Magnus, the son of King Niels, had murdered his cousin Knud Lavard. His intention was most probably to avoid Knud's election as king after the prospective death of his father, King Niels.<sup>92</sup> What he accomplished instead was the veneration of Knud as a martyr, the mobilisation of a strong opposition and the start of a feud during which Magnus himself and his father died and which involved Lothair of Supplinburg, by then still only Roman king. He had been closely related to Knud Lavard and now prepared for war against King Niels and his murderous son Magnus. The Danish king was forced to pay a large fine and to leave hostages, and, more importantly, Magnus had to swear an oath of fealty (*hominium*).<sup>93</sup> After Lothair's stay in Italy and his coronation as emperor, Magnus had to come to Halberstadt in 1134 where he bore the imperial sword in the Easter ceremonies and was crowned in Lothair's presence – the first coronation of a Danish king we know of.<sup>94</sup> Although lately doubt has been cast on the relevance of feudo-vassalitic concepts and their application in the interpretation of early 12<sup>th</sup> century politics, this very case points strongly to the establishment of a vassalitic dependence.<sup>95</sup>

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92 For the history of the internal Danish conflicts between 1131 and 1134, see Fenger, Ole: *Kirker rejses alle vegne: 1050–1250*. (Gyldendals og Politikens Danmarkshistorie 4). Gyldendal: Copenhagen 2002, pp. 72–76; Hermanson, Lars: *Släkt, vänner och makt. En studie av elitens politiska kultur i 1100-talets Danmark*. (Avhandlingar från Historiska Institutionen i Göteborg 24). Historiska Institutionen: Gothenburg 2000, pp. 88–138.

93 Schmeidler, Bernhard (ed.): *Helmolds Slavenchronik*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi [32]). Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover 1937, ch. 49–50, pp. 96–100. Cf. Böhmer, J. F./Petke, Wolfgang (eds.): *Regesta imperii IV. Erste Abteilung: Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Lothar III. und Konrad III. Erster Teil: Lothar III. 1125 (1075)-1137*. Böhlau: Cologne / Weimar / Vienna 1994, nos. 284–286, pp. 181–183.

94 Waitz, Georg (ed.): “Annalista Saxo a. 1114–1163”. In: *MGH SS* 6, pp. 542–777, here A.D. 1134, p. 768; “Annales Magdeburgenses a. 1–1188”. In: Pertz, Georg Heinrich (ed.): *Annales aevi Suevici*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores (in Folio) 16). Hannover 1859, A.D. 1134, p. 184. Cf. Böhmer / Petke, no. 392, pp. 247–248.

95 Auge, Oliver: “Hominium, tributum, feudum. Zu den Anfängen des Lehnswesens im Nordosten des Reiches bis 1250”. In: Dendorfer, Jürgen / Deutinger, Roman (eds.): *Das Lehnswesen im Hochmittelalter. Forschungskonstrukte –*



However, his coronation did Magnus not help too much: a little later at Pentecost 1134, the king and his entourage were killed by an attack of Knud Lavard's half-brother Erik when they had just landed in Scania. The old King Niels fled, but was killed in Schleswig a little later by citizens who had sworn loyalty to Knud Lavard. Juicily enough, Saxon knights on horseback had taken part in the attack on Niels and Magnus;<sup>96</sup> it may be suggested that Lothair double-crossed Magnus, who had proved to be disloyal.<sup>97</sup>

The new king Erik Emune was obviously a friend of the emperor and his policy towards Denmark. From 1135 onwards, when his envoys were received by Lothair in Magdeburg,<sup>98</sup> Erik's charters give both the years of Erik and Lothair as rulers, and the "Chronicon Roskildense" criticises Erik heavily for his church policy and the fact that he in all aspects behaved like an emperor or the emperor, who probably considered himself to be

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*Quellenbefunde – Deutungsrelevanz.* (Mittelalter-Forschungen 34). Jan Thorbecke Verlag: Ostfildern 2010, pp. 195–215, here pp. 197–207 demonstrates that the occurrence of the term *hominium* in Henry the Lion's dealing with Wendish princes at the same time does not imply the handover of a *beneficium* and the establishment of "vassalitic" duties. For a broader view on the subject, cf. Deutinger, Roman: "Das hochmittelalterliche Lehnswesen: Ergebnisse und Perspektiven". In: Dendorfer / Deutinger, pp. 463–473, here pp. 465–467; Patzold, Steffen: *Das Lehnswesen*. Beck: Munich 2012, pp. 71–86. While the alleged legal clearness of the rituals described above may be doubted, the substantiation of some form of dependence cannot. From the perspective of the later 12<sup>th</sup> century, both parties recognise feudo-vassalitic implications. Saxo does not report the dealings at Halberstadt, but has Magnus become a *miles Imperii* in the context of Lothair's first intervention in 1131 (GD 13,8,6).

96 Their identity and number (300) are given in the "Annales S. Petri Erphesfurtensis" (Heebøll-Holm, Thomas Kristian: "Priscorum quippe curialium, qui et nunc militari censetur nomine. Riddere i Danmark i 1100-tallet". In: *Historisk tidsskrift [DK]* 109, 2009, pp. 21–69, here p. 43).

97 Gelting, Michael H.: "Da Eskil ville være ærkebiskop af Roskilde. Roskildekrøniken, Liber daticus Lundensis og det danske ærkesædes ophævelse 1133–1138". In: Carelli, Peter / Hermanson, Lars / Sanders, Hanne (eds.): *Ett annat 1100-tal. Individ, kollektiv och kulturella mönster i medeltidens Danmark*. (Centrum för Danmarksstudier 3). Makadam: Gothenburg / Stockholm 2004, p. 189.

98 Annalista Saxo (note 94), A.D. 1135, p. 769.

his liege.<sup>99</sup> The role of overlord, arbitrator and protector also fell to later emperors: Erik Emune had been killed in 1137, and after an interlude, the conflict between the descendants of Knud Lavard and Magnus arose again. The years between 1146 and 1157 saw two and then three kings fighting for control over Denmark, and it was Frederick Barbarossa who decided how the power should be distributed between the competitors in 1152.<sup>100</sup> He did so in favour of Svend, who was his *amicus* and *comiles*.<sup>101</sup> Frederick's solution did not last, but what Valdemar the Great inherited when he won the conflict in 1157 was a problematic dependency on Frederick. He had to follow him into the papal schism of 1157 and gained the chance to emancipate himself from this dependency not until after the death of the anti-pope Victor IV in 1164 and after Frederick had got into trouble.<sup>102</sup>

From this situation onwards until the beginning of the next century, we see a well-known, growing anti-imperial sentiment in Danish historiography.<sup>103</sup> In 1182, Knud IV denied Frederick the oath of fealty. This emanci-

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99 Chronicon Roskildense, ch. 18 (*Scriptores minores*, vol.1, p. 31). Cf. Scheel, pp. 53, 62–63.

100 Waitz, Georg (ed.): *Otonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. imperatoris*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi [46]). Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover / Leipzig 1912, II,5, pp. 105–106; GD 14,8,1–2. Cf. Böhmer, J. F. / Oppl, Ferdinand / Mayr, Hubert (eds.): *Regesta imperii IV. Ältere Staufer. Zweite Abteilung: Die Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Friedrich I. 1152 (1122)–1190. 1. Lieferung 1152 (1122)–1158*. Böhlau: Vienna / Cologne / Graz 1980, no. 88, p. 22; Engels, Odilo: “Friedrich Barbarossa und Dänemark”. In: Haverkamp, Alfred (ed.): *Friedrich Barbarossa. Handlungsspielräume und Wirkungsweisen des staufischen Kaisers*. (Vorträge und Forschungen 40). Jan Thorbecke Verlag: Sigmaringen 1992, pp. 353–385. With regard to the conflicts in Denmark, cf. Hermanson, pp. 209–232; Fenger, pp. 126–160.

101 GD 14,8,1.

102 Qvistgaard Hansen, Jørgen: “Pavestrid og europæisk storpolitik 1159–1170”. *Historisk tidsskrift [DK]* 12(3), 1969, pp. 369–430; Engels, esp. pp. 375–379; Leegaard Knudsen, Anders: “Absalon and Danish Policy towards the Holy Roman Empire”. In: Friis-Jensen, Karsten / Skovgaard-Petersen, Inge (eds.): *Archbishop Absalon of Lund and his World*. Roskilde Museum: Roskilde 2000, pp. 21–35, here pp. 24–25, 29–35.

103 Cf. Leegaard Knudsen; Groh, Martin: “Das Deutschenbild in den historischen Büchern der Gesta Danorum”. In: Nyberg, Tore (ed.): *Saxo and the Baltic Region. A Symposium*. (University of Southern Denmark Studies in History and

pation is accompanied by the emergence of the above-mentioned Danish, Nordic imperium as a third entity besides the Greek and Roman one in the distant heroic past. The idea is fully developed in Svend Aggesen's "Brevis historia regum Daciae" from between 1185 and 1188, where Knud the Great's realm borders on *Graecorum imperium*. Not only is Knud the ruler of a third huge imperium:<sup>104</sup>

*Mortuo Suenone filius eius Canutus in regno successit, quem et Senem cognominabat. Hic regni sui terminos mire uirtutis potentia dilatauit. Nam ab ultima Tyle usque ad Grecorum ferme imperium uirtute multiplici circumiacentia regna suo aggregauit imperio. Quippe Hyberniam, Angliam, Galliam, Italiam, Longobardiam, Teotoniam, Noruagiam, Slauiam cum Samia satis eleganter subiugauit.*

He also has to help his son-in-law, the Emperor Henry III, who cannot get an insurrection of the Romans under control.<sup>105</sup> Knud is superior to the emperor, just as Danish kings and queens in former times had been. Svend Aggesen not only presents us with another story of the defence of the Danish *honor regni* against greedy Roman-German emperors, but also with the idea *Rex imperator in regno suo*.<sup>106</sup> It is Thyra, the last heathen queen of Denmark, whom Otto the Great tries to force to become his concubine. Her answer after some proofs of her superior wits and playing upon Otto's imperial self-image is that her sovereignty inside her own realm is just as great as Otto's in his. By inventing this story, Svend manages to turn the history of imperial-Danish interactions into its opposite: it is a female heathen ruler and not a Christian male who refutes any imperial claims on Denmark. Svend cleverly and carefully constructs a subversion of the

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Social Sciences 275). Odense University Press: Odense 2004, pp. 143–160; Foerster, Thomas: *Vergleich und Identität. Selbst- und Fremddeutung im Norden des hochmittelalterlichen Europa*. (Europa im Mittelalter 14). Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2009, pp. 121–134.

104 Brevis historia regum Dacie, ch. 9 (*Scriptores minores*, vol. 1), pp. 120–122; cf. also Svend's *Lex Castrensis* (*ibid.*, p. 66).

105 Brevis historia, ch. 9 (*Scriptores minores*, vol. 1), p. 122.

106 The following story is found in Brevis historia, ch. 5–6 (*Scriptores minores*, vol. 1, pp. 106–114). Svend illustrates the principle of equal sovereignty before it was formulated that way just after 1200 (cf. Grewe, Wilhelm G. (ed.): *Fontes historiae iuris gentium. Quellen zur Geschichte des Völkerrechts 1. 1380 v. Chr.-1493*. De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 1995, pp. 427, 432–436; Canning, pp. 124–125). For an interpretation, cf. Scheel, pp. 96–103.

existing historical narrative. What one would have expected instead of his story is a mention of Otto II's campaign to Jutland, the fact that he was the godfather of Svend Tveskæg and / or a narrative of the missionary Poppo. He was allegedly sent by Otto I or Otto II – depending on the respective historiographical tradition.<sup>107</sup> Earlier Danish sources and also the “Annals of Lund” tell either one, two or all three stories, and also Theodoricus monachus has Otto II christianise Denmark, just as in the “Veraldar saga” and several kings' sagas.<sup>108</sup> Adam of Bremen and some Scandinavian sources even mention the fact that Louis the Pious was the godfather of the Danish King Harald klak.<sup>109</sup> There was therefore ample evidence for beneficial imperial intervention in Denmark, especially with regard to the Christian faith. Not only does Svend conceal this, he actually elaborates the idea of universal imperial rule just to put it to ridicule in the case of Otto, whom Queen Thyra mockingly calls the “tamer of so many peoples' ferocities”,<sup>110</sup> before she tells his envoys very clearly that his power is restricted to his own realm. Svend's refutation of a universal empire is built upon a con-

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107 Widukind (Hirsch, Paul (ed.): *Die Sachsen-geschichte des Widukind von Korvei*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi [60]). Hahnsche Buchhandlung: Hannover 1935, ch. 65, p. 140–141) and Thietmar of Merseburg (Holtzmann, Robert (ed.): *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung*. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, Nova series 9). Weidmannsche Buchhandlung: Berlin 1935, ch. 14, pp. 53–54.) connect Poppo's ordeal to Otto I and Harald Blåtand, Adam (Schmeidler 1917, 2,35, pp. 95–94) dates it to Otto II's time. Cf. Gelting, Michael H.: “Poppo's Ordeal. Courtier Bishops and the Success of Christianization at the Turn of the First Millennium”. *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 6, 2010, pp. 101–133.

108 Theodoricus monachus: *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*, ch. 5 (*Monumenta historica Norvegiæ*, pp. 11–12). The information is also included in Odd's “Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar”, “Fagrskinna”, “Heimskringla” and “Knýtlinga saga” (Schmidt, Hans-Joachim: *Studien zum Kaisertum und den deutschen Kaisern in den nordischen Quellen bis zum Ausgang des 13. Jahrhunderts*. Doctoral thesis: Frankfurt am Main 1973, pp. 100–113, esp. pp. 106–108).

109 Adam (Schmeidler 1917, 1,15, p. 21); *Chronicon Roskildense*, ch. 1 (*Scriptores minores*, vol. 1, p. 14); *Chronicon Lethrense*, ch. 2 (*ibid.*, p. 44–45).

110 [...] *tot gentium feritates suo subiugavit imperio*, [...] (*ibid.*, p. 112).

frontation of the idea of a Roman World Empire and current legal theory in historical fiction.

Saxo Grammaticus develops these ideas further and moves the dispute from Svend's stories about a distant past to the Valdemarian Age. The "Gesta Danorum" also tell us about confrontations between Danes and "Saxons" in the distant past, highlighting Danish superiority (*imperium Danorum*).<sup>111</sup> Saxo also adopts Svend's description of Knud the Great's huge empire, but multiplies it at the same time. Taken altogether, what might be called a Danish *imperium* occurs 13 times, seven times before Charlemagne and six times afterwards. The early, mythological instances contain the lordship over the "East", i.e. Eastern Europe between Byzantium and the Baltic (*Orientis imperium*), the subjection of Sweden (*Danorum imperio Suetica subiaceret*)<sup>112</sup> and King Frode Fredegod's huge empire at the time of Christ's birth. Saxo's depiction of Frode's rule over twenty other kingdoms is consciously modelled upon and chronologically paralleled to the *Pax Augusta*.<sup>113</sup> Twice we find the formula *Frothonis imperio adicere*,<sup>114</sup> and his ever growing, pacified sphere of influence is called *imperium Danicum* which other rulers and peoples cannot withstand;<sup>115</sup> it stretches to the last corner of the world.<sup>116</sup> There is no doubt: Frode is the ruler of the (Nordic) world, a second Augustus. Later on, in the time of King Gorm and his son Gøtrik, Saxo speaks of an *imperium gentis nostrae* over the Saxons, just before Charlemagne's conquest of Saxony due to sheer luck, i.e. the mighty Gøtrik's unexpected death.<sup>117</sup>

In Harold Bluetooth's time, the "Gesta Danorum" seem to suggest a Danish thalassocracy after the conquest of Wendish territory: the ferocious

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111 *In Saxones vero [...] adeo Danorum insoluit imperium [...]* (GD 6,5,18).

112 *Orientis imperium*: GD 2,1,8; Sweden: GD 2,6,1.

113 Skovgaard-Petersen, Inge: *Da tidernes herre var nær. Studier i Saxos historiesyn*. Den danske historiske forening: Copenhagen 1987, pp. 34, 39–40; Leegaard Knudsen 2000, p. 27. Cf. the beginning of GD 5,12,0, where Saxo uses the phrase *pax per omnes gentes reficere*. The twenty kingdoms are mentioned in GD 5,8,6.

114 GD 5,8,6; 5,10,2.

115 GD 5,13,1: [...] *ii soli, ceteris obsequentibus, Danicum detrectare viderentur imperium*.

116 GD 5,13,3: *imperio ipsius ultimos humanarum rerum terminos adiecisset*.

117 GD 8,16,5–8.

warfare of Harold's fleet on the *Oceanus septentrionalis* from different naval bases like Jónsborg is considered more important for the *Imperium Danicum* than campaigns on land.<sup>118</sup> Knud the Great's North Sea realm is not treated as an empire until its decline: the election of King Magnús the Good in Norway after Knuds's death and Edward's succession to Harthacnut are viewed as secessions from a Danish empire, a fact Saxo bemoans: *ea nox parvulo temporis momento vetustam Danorum dominationem diuque maiorum virtute elaboratum finivit imperium*.<sup>119</sup> One finds, however, the prospect of a new imperial sphere, namely the *Danorum imperium Sclaviæ sempiternum*, as it is called in the context of the Danish conquests south of the Baltic Sea in 1162<sup>120</sup> and in fact mirrored in Danish royal titles since Knud VI.<sup>121</sup>

Saxo's theoretical discourse about empire is also to be found in the last three books of the "Gesta Danorum", i.e. in most recent history.<sup>122</sup> This is also mirrored in the sharply increasing number of instances of the term *Imperium Romanum*.<sup>123</sup> Three key aspects of interaction are Valdemar's at-

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118 GD 10,2,1.

119 GD 10,21,6.

120 GD 14,30,7: *Igitur, ne Walogastum, eodem exemplo desertum quo captum, post discessum suum hostibus redderetur, præsertim Danos, si eo fruerentur, sempiternum Sclaviæ imperium habituros existimans, Absalonem, Burisium Suenonemque, tunc Arusii pontificatu insignem, eius municipes efficere statuit, quibus et filium Christophorum sociavit, quo plus a ceteris in auxilio suo fiducia reponeretur.*

121 A *terminus post quem* for the title *Danorum Slauorumque rex* is given by a charter from 21 October 1194 (Christensen, C. A. / Nielsen, Herluf / Weibull, Lauritz (eds.): *Diplomatarium Danicum. 1. række, 3. bind. Diplomer 1170–1199 & Epistolæ abbatis Willelmi de Paraclito*. Reitzel: Copenhagen 1976–1977, no. 201, pp. 314–315).

122 The discourse begins with the year 1162, the same year when the Danes secure their *imperium Sclaviæ sempiternum*.

123 The *Imperium Romanum* is mentioned explicitly seven times (14,17,15; 14,28,14; 14,28,16; 15,5,6; 15,5,7; 16,3,3; 16,4,4); not included are the many references to the *imperium* without the adjective *Romanum*. On Saxo's use of world chronicles and his view of the Roman Empire in general, cf. Skovgaard-Petersen 1987, esp. pp. 196–203; Friis-Jensen, Karsten: "Saxo Grammaticus's Study of the Roman Historiographers and His Vision of History". In: Santini, Carlo (ed.): *Saxo Grammaticus tra storiografia e letteratura*. (I convegno di Classiconorrena 1). Il Calamo: Roma 1992, pp. 61–81.

tendance of the Imperial Diet at Saint-Jean-de-Losne and Laon in 1162, the meeting of the rulers in Lübeck in 1181 and Knud IV's rejection of vassalitic status in 1182. We find the same themes as in Svend Aggesen's story: ridiculing the emperor and refuting imperial rule. In Valdemar's case, the meetings with Frederick allow for a direct comparison of the two rulers – much to Frederick's disfavour: not only is he portrayed as a tricky hypocrite, but also as rather unworthy of the imperial crown he bears. When Valdemar arrives at the crowded imperial camp in Lübeck in 1181, there is no appropriate order at the emperor's table. He picks a seat, careful not to make a show of himself, but all the surrounding noblemen marvel at his sight and consider him to be *imperio dignus*; compared to him, the emperor appears like a homunculus or *regulus*.<sup>124</sup> Despite his humble conduct, Valdemar's imperial qualities cannot be concealed.

In the context of Knud IV's rejection of vassalitic subordination, it is archbishop Absalon, the late Valdemar's close friend, Knud's teacher and actually the real hero in the “Gesta Danorum”, who answers to Siegfried III of Weimar-Orlamünde, Frederick's envoy, in the same way Svend Aggesen has Thyra answer Otto the Great: Knud's rule over Denmark is equal to Frederick's over the *Imperium Romanum*.<sup>125</sup> When Siegfried, at the same time King Valdemar's son-in-law, insists on Knud's subordination on the emperor's behalf, the archbishop points out one major difference between Thuringia, Siegfried's homeland, and Denmark: the former will succumb to the emperor's force at any time, the latter will not.<sup>126</sup> By this speech, Absalon corrects a “mistake” in history, as Frederick had practically tricked Valdemar into accepting him as his liege in 1162.<sup>127</sup>

As a consequence, we find the same paradoxical construction in Saxo: the Romano-German realm is always called *Imperium Romanum* and the idea that Charlemagne justly conquered and ruled for instance Saxony – if

124 GD 15,5,7.

125 The discussion: GD 16,3,1–16,3,3, Absalon's statement in 16,3,3: *Proinde Syfridum nosse debere Kanuto Cæsarique æquum regnandi ius esse neque minore cum libertate hunc Danici regni quam illum Romani imperii gubernacula continere.*

126 GD 16,3,4.

127 Valdemar's trick in 1162: 14,28,14–16. Cf. Leegaard Knudsen 2000, pp. 29–35.

only due to the Danes' absence – is also present. Nevertheless, the emperor's arguments in favour of his universal rule are refuted. Accepting them would mean to “sell the nation's inherited freedom” (*haereditaria patriae libertas venditere*), as Saxo calls the vassalitic subordination of the Wendish lords Bogislav and Casimir.<sup>128</sup> One motivation for this dualism might be that the Danish historiographers needed the imperial bogeyman in order to underline his heroic defeat. But at the same time, albeit in different historical contexts, Svend and Saxo are applying the concept of imperial rule to Danish kings, too. They are therefore in a precarious situation. If Saxo deals with the idea of an *imperium gentis nostrae*, one may argue that a consequent application of for instance Hugh of Fleury's or the papal curia's concept of empires as simple, regional realms was impossible, although it certainly was available. While it would have supplied the Danish writers with political arguments against the emperor, it would at the same time have counteracted the current position of the Danish kings in the Baltic. The latter had developed markedly between the finalisation of Svend Aggesen's chronicle and the “Gesta Danorum”.<sup>129</sup> As a result, only the historical, eschatological argument for imperial rule is rendered mute: empires have to be conquered with just cause, like the *Imperium Danicum* in Frode's time and again in the Valdemarian Age. Thus, Saxo unifies two lines of argument: firstly, events from mythological history validate the current status typologically, like in Svend's chronicle. Secondly, discipline and bravery, two properties frequently stressed in the Danes as opposed to German turgidity, luxury and effeminacy, constitute its foundations both in the past and the present. The latter argument contains a fine and surely intended irony because Otto of Freising has Frederick answer something similar to the Romans who offer to acclaim him emperor: Barbarossa declines, because he already possesses

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128 GD 15,1,11.

129 Both chronicles end in 1185, but Saxo's foreword stresses the Danish expansion after this date, for instance the fact that Valdemar II penetrated the *Imperium Romanum* (GD Praefatio 1,6). On the Danish expansion, see Riis and Villads Jensen, Kurt: *Korstog ved verdens yderste rand. Danmark og Portugal ca. 1000 til ca. 1250*. Odense 2011, esp. pp. 186–198, 437–447; Lind, John H. et al.: *Danske korstog. Krig og mission i Østersøen*. Høst & Søn: Copenhagen 2004, pp. 160–188, 199–231.



imperial status through his predecessors' might and valour.<sup>130</sup> The “Gesta Danorum” invert the argument and use it against the claims of the rather unimpressive *regulus* who calls himself Roman emperor and relies upon his predecessors' accomplishments. Danish supremacy over all the other surrounding *nationes* is a recurrent topic also in mythological prehistory, where kings like Frode Fredegod conquer a huge *imperium*.

## Scandinavians and Byzantine Emperors

Byzantium and the Eastern Empire are part of this scheme. Saxo suggests a parallel development of Denmark and Greece in ancient times, because the Nordic Gods are actually humans from *Bizantium*, and the Danish sphere of power expands to the Greek border.<sup>131</sup> This favourable connection is maintained in later history, again employing a typological pattern.<sup>132</sup> On his crusade, King Erik Ejegod travels to Constantinople via Rus', i.e. along the old route already used by Odin and once governed by King Frode.<sup>133</sup>

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130 *Gesta Friderici* (Waitz, II,30, p. 137).

131 GD 1,7,1; 3,4,1–15 (*Bizantium*) and GD 5,8,8; 9,4,20–35 (Danish rule over Eastern Europe).

132 Skovgaard-Petersen, Inge: “The Way to Byzantium. A Study in the First Three Books of Saxo’s History of Denmark”. In: Friis-Jensen, Karsten (ed.): *Saxo Grammaticus. A Medieval Author between Norse and Latin Culture*. Museum Tusulanum Press: Copenhagen 1981, pp. 121–133. The following results are partly taken from my doctoral dissertation *Skandinavien und Byzanz. Bedingungen und Konsequenzen mittelalterlicher Kulturbeziehungen*. (Historische Semantik 23). Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen 2015, esp. pp. 392–676.

133 GD 12,7,1. The itinerary is unlikely. More well-informed and earlier sources have Erik travel via Rome (Bergsagel, John (ed.): *The Offices and Masses of St. Knud Lavard († 1131)* (Kiel, Univ. Lib. MS S.H. 8 A.8<sup>o</sup>). *Reproduced in Facsimile, Transcribed and Edited. Volume 2: Edition. With an Essay on the Historical Background by Thomas Riis*. Institute of Medieval Music: Copenhagen / Ottawa 2010, p. 190). One may therefore presume that Saxo wanted to view Erik’s crusade as a postfiguration of older connections (cf. Kværndrup, Sigurd: “The Composition of the Gesta Danorum and the Place of Geographic Relations in its Worldview”. In: Nyberg, Tore (ed.): *Saxo and the Baltic region. A Symposium*. (University of Southern Denmark Studies in History and Social Sciences 275). Odense University Press: Odense 2004, pp. 23–37, here p. 34).

Saxo carefully shapes the encounter between the Danish king and the *imperator*, as Alexios is called eleven times, as a meeting between dear friends who are equals.<sup>134</sup> When the Danish crusader army appears before the gates of the city, Alexios Komnenos is at first afraid that his Scandinavian bodyguards, known to the current reader as “Varangians”, would defect to their compatriots and plunder Constantinople. His spy, however, overhears that King Erik exhorts his men and the Varangians to show absolute loyalty towards the Byzantines and to fight bravely for their emperor: Erik “supplied Greece with the fealty of the Danes”, as Saxo puts it.<sup>135</sup> One may sense a tone of voluntary subordination to the Eastern Emperor. The king therefore does something which Frederick Barbarossa later on explicitly asks for – and is duly denied. Erik’s conduct leads to a splendid reception; Alexios is deeply impressed. Consequently, Erik is able to avoid the typically asymmetrical gift-giving which is a part of Byzantine diplomacy. This means that he like other barbarians is overwhelmed by a huge gift, containing gold, a splinter of the True Cross, and a silken cloak. Usually, the guest is not able to give an equal gift in return, but has to accept that he is indebted to the emperor. Erik, nevertheless, has foreseen this and brought a “barbarian gift” (*barbarum munus*), something exotic the emperor had not possessed yet.<sup>136</sup> In the end, Erik has managed to impress Alexios so much that the emperor questions the alleged superior wisdom of the Greeks. He has two pictures painted of the king, one in standing and one in sitting posture, in order to document his impressive stature – a variation of the *topos* already known from the meeting between Valdemar and Frederick. In addition, the palace where Erik was hosted has remained uninhabited ever since.

While some details of this story are informed by a Skaldic poem about Erik, most of them are doubtlessly invented. But they are well invented, all the same. Saxo knows what usually happens when Western strangers are confronted with the Eastern Empire and describes Erik’s encounter with Alexios as an exception.<sup>137</sup> The experience is also absolutely different from

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134 Here and in the following GD 12,7,1–6.

135 [...] *Danorum fidem Gręcię conciliauit.* (GD 12,7,2).

136 GD 12,7,5.

137 On the Byzantine treatment of Barbarian lords in Constantinople, cf. Anca, Alexandru Stefan: *Herrschaftliche Repräsentation und kaiserliches Selbstver-*

meetings between Danish kings and Roman emperors. Not only does Erik offer Alexios what his counterparts are constantly denied, the characters of the emperors also differ markedly. Alexios appears to be careful and proud, yet honest, friendly, generous and capable of self-criticism. On the other side of the coin, nothing good comes of getting involved with people like Frederick. There is always a hidden agenda, and his conduct alternates between hypocrisy and high-handedness. Danish kings always move on thin ice in their dealings with the *Imperium Romanum*, whereas harmony and friendship characterise Danish-Byzantine relations. This is still the case when “Gesta Danorum’s” narrative ends in 1185 after the Danish victory over Bogislav of Pomerania. The good tidings lead to a splendid feast among the Danish noblemen in Byzantine service.<sup>138</sup>

The model of Scandinavian-imperial interactions from the “Gesta Danorum” is also employed in the kings’ sagas, with the marked difference that meetings with Western Emperors are never described in detail. We are therefore not presented with two equally elaborate impressions in Old Norse texts, but the good image of Byzantine emperors is extremely similar to Saxo’s, especially in sagas finished around the same time as the “Gesta Danorum”. In many respects, the encounter between King Sigurðr Jórsalafari and Alexios in 1110 may be described as the counterpart of the meeting with the Danish king. Actually, Sigurðr does not visit Byzantium on his way to Jerusalem, but arrives with his fleet after a successful meeting with King Baldwin of Jerusalem and his conquest of Sidon. “Morkinskinna”, the oldest of the sagas of Norwegian kings, finished between 1217 and 1222, stresses the differences between Erik and Sigurðr and compares them ex-

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*ständnis. Berührung der westlichen mit der byzantinischen Welt in der Zeit der ersten Kreuzzüge.* (Symbolische Kommunikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme 31). Rhema: Münster 2010, pp. 103–113, 173–196; Shepard, Jonathan: “Byzantine Diplomacy, A.D. 800–1204. Means and Ends”. In: Shepard, Jonathan/Franklin, Simon (eds.): *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990.* (Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Publications 1). Variorum: Aldershot 1992, pp. 41–71, here pp. 51–71; Haldon, John F.: “‘Blood and Ink’. Some Observations on Byzantine Attitudes towards Warfare and Diplomacy”. In: Shepard / Franklin, pp. 281–294.

138 GD 16,5,11.

plicity in its remarkably lengthy account.<sup>139</sup> While Alexios in the beginning is unsure about Erik's intentions, Sigurðr is received with great honours, but Alexios nurtures doubts concerning his courtly manners. Sigurðr is therefore careful not to let himself be overwhelmed by the pomp and fuss on the occasion of his arrival. He and his men ride from the Golden Gate to the Blachernai Palace on silk cloths covering the street, and once arrived at the palace, Sigurðr refuses to accept the imperial gifts brought before him twice before they are up to his taste and his expectations. As soon as he is satisfied, however, he answers in perfect Greek. The result is the same as in Saxo: the Scandinavian ruler is able to impress Alexios and is consequently treated as his friend and equal, although the author of "Morkinskinna" characterises his protagonist in a different way. While King Erik impresses as an intimidatingly huge, yet humble and trustworthy man, Sigurðr is more of a snob, versed in courtly manners.

This is partly due to the authors' preferences: Saxo stresses qualities like asceticism, bravery and humility in the Danes,<sup>140</sup> while the unknown author of "Morkinskinna" is more open to courtly culture,<sup>141</sup> something Saxo associates with effeminate Germans. On the other hand, Sigurð's accomplishments in Byzantium are directly compared to Erik's and found to be more impressive. Firstly, Erik obtained a splinter of the True Cross from Alexios, but Sigurðr from the King of Jerusalem. The latter relic is considered more worthy, because only the part of the cross kept in Jerusalem had been soaked with the Lord's blood.<sup>142</sup> At the end of his visit in Constantinople, the emperor offers Sigurðr either a second gift of gold or games in the hippodrome. The amount of gold is identical to the one mentioned in a Skaldic stanza about Erik, not Sigurðr. As Sigurðr already gained a lot of booty in the Holy Land, he is not forced to take the gold like Erik,

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139 *Morkinskinna*, ch. 68–70, vol. 2, pp. 95–100.

140 Skovgaard-Petersen 1987, p. 170; Johannesson, Kurt: *Saxo Grammaticus. Komposition och världs bild i Gesta Danorum*. (Lychnos 31). Almqvist & Wiksell International: Stockholm 1978, pp. 329–333.

141 Ármann Jakobsson: *Staður í nýjum heimi. Konungasagan Morkinskinna*. Háskólaútgáfan: Reykjavík 2002, pp. 191–218.

142 *Morkinskinna*, ch. 66, vol. 2, pp. 87–93. The stanza about Erik of Denmark is cited in *Knýtlinga saga (Danakonunga sögur*, ch. 81, p. 237). It is from Márkús Skeggjason's "Eiríksdrápa" (as note 81, here stanza 28, pp. 457–458).

which “Morkinskinna” stresses.<sup>143</sup> Instead, he makes the courtlier choice and enjoys the games before he departs and leaves his ships and the greater part of his men behind in Byzantine service. Like Erik, Sigurðr leaves a “Barbarian gift”, namely the artfully carved heads from his ships, which are mounted upon the roof of a church in the city.<sup>144</sup> We are thus presented with two versions of a similar relationship, based upon friendship, equality and a specific reciprocity. Scandinavian kings supply the emperor with soldiers and exotic gifts, while the emperor grants them prestige and money.

There is no doubt that this host and lord over the world’s richest city actually is an emperor. “Morkinskinna” continuously calls Alexios *keisari* or – more rarely – *stólkonungr*. The same applies to “Fagrskinna” and Snorri Sturluson’s “Heimskringla”. They use the text of “Morkinskinna”, although they shorten it drastically, mostly omitting motifs adopted from courtly literature.<sup>145</sup> By comparison, the Romano-German emperors are uninteresting. In “Morkinskinna” and “Heimskringla”, Sigurðr allegedly meets Lothair of Supplinburg on his way back North.<sup>146</sup> Not only is Henry V confused with his successor; “Morkinskinna” devotes less than three lines to the description of the meeting in Swabia. Lothair is furthermore called *keisari af Rómaborg* when Alexios is just the *keisari*. While Lothair’s title is consistent with the idea of *translatio imperii*, it should also be stressed that when the early kings’ sagas speak of the *keisari* or *stólkonungr*, they usually mean the Byzantine ruler, just as early Latin texts from Norway when they mention the *imperator*. In other words: the Romano-German emperor needs a defining attribute, the Byzantine does not.

Admittedly, our Old Norse texts were written under different political circumstances than the “Gesta Danorum” or Svend Aggesen’s chronicle. As we have seen, encyclopaedic texts from Iceland and also Theodoricus monachus adopt stories of imperial victories over the Danes, whereas narrative Danish sources do not. Nevertheless, only one early bishops’ saga

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143 *Morkinskinna*, ch. 69, vol. 2, pp. 97–98.

144 *Ibid.*, ch. 70, vol. 2, pp. 98–99. The gift is already found in Theodoricus monachus, ch. 33, pp. 65–66.

145 *Fagrskinna*, ch. 90, pp. 319–320. (partly defective); *Heimskringla*, vol. 3, Magnússon saga ch. 12–13, pp. 252–254.

146 *Morkinskinna*, ch. 70, p. 99; *Heimskringla*, vol. 3, Magnússon saga ch. 13, p. 254.

stresses a close acquaintance between the first Icelandic bishop and Emperor Henry III in order to enhance the former's prestige.<sup>147</sup> In the other cases, the imperial friend is located in Constantinople, both in Danish and Icelandic tradition. Both narrative traditions, intertwined as they most probably are, draw heavily on literary motifs. This is especially clear in the case of "Morkinskinna's" account. Most of King Sigurð's proofs of courtly behaviour are to be found in earlier Latin sources about rulers from the West in Byzantium, which again stresses the impression that the author's knowledge about details from oral tradition was just as thin as Saxo's. For instance, Sigurð's horse throws a golden shoe just as the king had planned, and due to a lack of firewood, he uses walnuts instead at the occasion of a feast for his host, a trick which had already worked for Duke Robert in the "Gesta Normannorum ducum" in 1035.<sup>148</sup> However, the Western models for "Morkinskinna" develop a totally different picture of Western-Byzantine interactions. If they are not openly hostile, the picture of the Byzantine rulers is at least ambivalent. In the case of Sigurð's crusade, we possess a much older account by William of Malmesbury. While it shares the basic facts with "Morkinskinna", it suggests that Alexios did not actually lavishly furnish the king with gifts but wanted to deprive him of the gold he had obtained in Outremer. In William's version, Sigurðr tricks Alex-

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147 "Hungrvaka", a chronicle of the bishopric Skálholt (around A.D. 1200) tells the story that Ísleifr, the first Icelandic bishop, met and befriended Henry III in Germany on his way to his consecration in Rome in 1055 (ch. 2, in Ásdís Egilsdóttir, pp. 27–28). The account is not based on facts, as Henry III was in Italy by that time (Köhne, Roland: "Wirklichkeit und Fiktion in den mittelalterlichen Nachrichten über Ísleif Gizurarson". *Skandinavistik* 17(1), 1987, pp. 24–30, here p. 27–28).

148 Van Houts, Elisabeth (ed.): *The Gesta Normannorum ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni 2. Books V–VIII*. Clarendon Press: Oxford 1995, pp. 83–85. Cf. Vries, Jan de: "Normannisches Lehngut in den isländischen Königssagas". *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 47, 1931, pp. 51–79, here pp. 67–73; White, Paul A.: *Non-native Sources for the Scandinavian Kings' sagas*. Routledge: New York et al. 2005, pp. 108–109; Hill, Joyce: "Burning Walnuts: An International Motif in the Kings' Sagas". In: Anlezark, Daniel (ed.): *Myths, Legends, and Heroes. Essays on Old Norse Literature in Honour of John McKinnel*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto et al. 2011, pp. 188–205, here pp. 195–202.

ios and escapes from Constantinople with his treasures.<sup>149</sup> The two versions are thus diametrically opposed, and that is the usual case when it comes to the pictures of Byzantium and its emperors – even though Scandinavian authors pick motifs from other Western texts, which in turn stresses their decision to portray the emperors in a favourable light.

What remains is the question in which contexts and why other, more “Western” titles for the Byzantine emperors like *Grikkjakonungr* emerge. The kings’ sagas and “Gesta Danorum” do indeed seem to suggest a conscious use, as the aforementioned title also appears, albeit in a different, earlier context. Haraldr inn harðráði served in Byzantium between ca 1034 and 1043 after the defeat and death of his half-brother Óláfr Haraldsson in Norway. His story deviates from the pattern described above, as he is the only member of a royal family ever to be described as a recipient of orders and to be treated unjustly in this context.<sup>150</sup> To be precise, the conflict arising at the end of his service is not the emperor’s fault to begin with. Harald’s troubles start when he and his Varangians are joined together with the Byzantine army under the command of a certain *Gyrgir*, obviously meaning Georgios Maniakes. “Morkinskinna”, but also the related younger sagas present the ongoing quarrel between the two leaders like a series of contests between two Scandinavians in a Scandinavian environment, i.e. in front of their respective followers. In reality, such behaviour by a foreign mercenary was unthinkable. The hierarchical structure placed Maniakes far above barbarian warlords. Ahistorical as the narrative is, it shows Haraldr to be the superior in wit

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149 Mynors, R. A. B. / Thomson, R. M. / Winterbottom, M. (eds.): *William of Malmesbury: Gesta regum anglorum. The History of the English Kings 1*. Clarendon Press: Oxford 1998, V,409, p. 740.

150 *Morkinskinna*, ch. 11–15, vol. 1, pp. 88–117. Research literature on Haraldr in Byzantine service is both abundant and problematic, as Byzantine and Scandinavian sources contradict themselves in certain important details. Cf. for instance Blöndal 1978, pp. 54–102; Ciggaar, Krijnie N.: “Visitors from North-western Europe to Byzantium. Vernacular Sources: Problems and Perspectives”. *Proceedings of the British Academy* 132, 2007, pp. 123–155; Shepard, Jonathan: “Middle Byzantine Military Culture, Harald Hardrada and Tall Stories”. In: Gvozdetkaja, Natalja Yu et al. (eds.): *Stanzas of Friendship. Studies in Honour of Tatjana N. Jackson*. Dmitry Pozharskiy University: Moscow 2011, pp. 473–482.

and bravery and leaves Maniakes behind with a damaged reputation and a serious grudge. The latter duly coins this into partly false accusations: Haraldr had allegedly misappropriated booty. Empress Zoe, who herself has amorous interests in the foreigner, voices suspicions about a hidden affair with the empress' niece Maria, a person Byzantine sources do not mention. The affair is never uncovered due to the lovers' resourcefulness, although the ruler has traps set for the lovers. In the end, however, the calumnies prevail, and the Norwegian prince and his men are cast in a special prison, which is inhabited by a huge, poisonous snake. It is needless to say what happens next. As a result, Haraldr combines different great heroes in his character: he is both a second Tristan and a second Sigurd.

The "King of the Greeks", on the other hand, is punished for his poor judgement: Haraldr attacks him in his bed chamber and gauges out his eyes, thus avenging his dishonour before he leaves.<sup>151</sup> Trying to reconcile this story with Byzantine sources without cutting it into small pieces seems to be a hopeless business. The only Byzantine source which mentions Haraldr indicates some sort of disagreement between him and Constantine IX, who was not blinded, and mentions Harald's escape.<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, the logics of the fictitious story itself are clear, and so is the use of the title: only in this context do historiographical sources from before ca 1250 call the Byzantine ruler *Grikkjakonungr*. This phenomenon is even to be found in Saxo, who also tells a version of Harald's conflicts in which the hero slays a dragon, is subsequently pardoned and does not blind the emperor: here, the Byzantine ruler is also called *rex*, as opposed to Alexios a few books later.<sup>153</sup> Sources which as a rule address the basileus as "emperor" do not do so with Constantine IX, the only Byzantine ruler ever to treat a Scandinavian unjustly.

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151 *Morkinskinna*, ch. 15, pp. 112–113. The passage even contains two Skaldic stanzas which go back to Harald's personal account and corroborate the fact that he boasted of such a deed.

152 Litavrin, Gennadij G. (ed.): *Kekaumen: Sovety i rasskazy* [*Kekaumenos: Consilia et narrationes*]. *Poučenie vizantijskogo polkovodca XI veka*. Aletejja: Sankt-Petersburg 2003 v; § 81, pp. 298–300.

153 GD 11,3,1.



## The Semantics of Byzantium

One may therefore deduce a seemingly conscious and byzantinophile use of imperial titles, which coincides with favourable and rather ample representations of the Eastern Empire and its court. This use of titles does not remain stable for much longer than the earlier decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century; as already mentioned, later Kings' Sagas like "Knýtlinga saga" or Sagas of Icelanders with their many Varangian episodes show a greater variation. Nevertheless, the picture of the two empires, mirrored in the use of titles and the adaptation of the *translatio imperii*, was formed in the decades between the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and ca 1230. The careful representation of Scandinavian rulers' conduct at the Byzantine court in the "Gesta Danorum" and the Kings' Sagas as well as the impression of close and frequent contacts were obviously influenced by eyewitness knowledge of the last generations of Scandinavians in Byzantine service, as they were also noticed by the conquerors of the Fourth Crusade. There were probably even Scandinavians in the service of the Latin Emperors.<sup>154</sup> The picture derived from this cultural relation would remain stable in Scandinavian literature for centuries to come. Not only do *Íslendingasögur* like "Laxdæla saga" or "Grettis saga" send their heroes to Byzantium to earn fame and honour in imperial service; Byzantium also serves as a stage for a large number of late medieval bridal quest romances. These original *Riddarasögur* are considered fairly conventional in comparison to other courtly romances from continental Europe, as they employ a modular technique of combining different standard motifs,<sup>155</sup> but one of their distinctive features is the representation of Byzantium.

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154 One Miracle Catalogue of St Þorlákr Þórhallsson, Bishop of Skálholt, mentions a miracle performed in Byzantium among the Varangians in the Latin Empire around 1206. The original Latin *vita* was written in 1199 and translated immediately into Old Norse. The miracle catalogue in question was written between 1200 and 1211 (Jarteinabók Þorláks byskups önnur, in: Ásdís Egilsdóttir, pp. 236–237). Cf. Ciggaar, Krijnie N.: "St. Thorlac's in Constantinople, Built by a Flemish Emperor". *Byzantion* 49, 1979, pp. 428–446.

155 Cf. Glauser, Jürg: *Isländische Märchensagas. Studien zur Prosaliteratur im spätmittelalterlichen Island*. (Beiträge zur nordischen Philologie 12). Helbing und Lichtenhahn: Basel / Frankfurt am Main 1983, pp. 101–128, 158–160.

This differs radically from the impression usually found in texts from continental Europe. These generally show a characteristic ambivalence in their depiction of Byzantium. They admire Byzantine wealth and show at the same time their contempt for “Greek” perfidy and effeminacy.<sup>156</sup> Such models were definitely available in the North, as is demonstrated by the *Riddarasögur* which were translated from French Romance at King Hákon IV’s court from about 1226 onwards.<sup>157</sup> A good example is “Karlagnús saga”, a collection of Old Norse translations from the “Cycle du roi” and Pseudo-Turpin’s chronicle from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Especially the translation of the “Pèlerinage de Charlemagne”, originally from the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, illustrates this typical Western, competitive view of the Byzantine emperors: the whole reason for Charlemagne’s crusade is a statement of his wife that Hugon of Byzantium is a more kingly king than the mighty Charles himself.<sup>158</sup> After visiting Outremer, the returning pilgrims are received splendidly in Constantinople in the king’s hall with its many wonderful devices.<sup>159</sup> King Hugon orders the Franks’ conversations

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- 156 Cf. Ebels-Hoving, Bunna: *Byzantium in Westerse Ogen 1096–1204*. Van Gorcum: Assen 1971, esp. pp. 260–269; Ducellier, Alain: “Une mythologie urbaine: Constantinople vue d’Occident au Moyen Âge”. *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Moyen Âge, temps modernes* 96, 1984, pp. 405–424; Petrinis, Fedra: *Sailing to Byzantium: The Byzantine Exotic in Medieval French Literature*. (doctoral thesis): New York 2004, pp. 215–231. The stereotype of the “perfidious Greek” with its ancient roots is treated by Hunger, Herbert: *Graeculus perfidus – Ἰταλὸς Ἰταμὸς. Il senso dell’alterità nei rapporti greco-romani ed italo-bizantini*. (Unione Internazionale degli Istituti di Archeologia, Storia e Storia dell’Arte in Roma. Conferenze 4). Unione Internazionale [...] in Roma: Rome 1987. The different attitude in Old Norse romance is also stressed by Barnes 2014, pp. 147–151.
- 157 Cf. Glauser, Jürg: “Romance (Translated Riddarasögur)”. In: McTurk, Rory (ed.): *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*. Blackwell: Oxford et al. 2005, pp. 382–387; Barnes, Geraldine: “The ‘Discourse of Counsel’ and the ‘Translated’ *Riddarasögur*”. In: Quinn, Judy / Heslop, Kate / Wills, Tarrin (eds.): *Learning and Understanding in the Old Norse World. Essays in Honour of Margaret Clunies Ross*. (Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 18). Brepols: Turnhout 2007, pp. 375–397.
- 158 Loth, Agnete / Patron-Godefroit, Annette / Skårup, Povl (eds.): *Karlagnús saga. Branches I, III, VII et IX*. Reitzel: Copenhagen 1980, ch. 1, pp. 234–236.
- 159 Here and in the following *ibid.*, ch. 4–16, pp. 250–300.

to be listened in, who according to their custom boast with the feats they think they can accomplish in Byzantium. These include Charlemagne cutting down Hugon's best fighter, Olivier, sleeping with his daughter, Roland blowing off the emperor's beard and clothes, Bishop Turpin diverting a river and flooding the city, Oddgeirr inn danski (Ogier le Danois) pulling down the entire hall and so forth. In his wrath, Hugon forces the Franks either to carry out these feats or to die. With God's help, however, the Franks manage to carry out some of their boasts, leaving Hugon in shock and awe. In the end, Hugon accepts Charlemagne as his liege.<sup>160</sup> Thus, Frankish superiority is demonstrated with the help of God, Charlemagne is the kingliest ruler on earth, and the queen's statement from the beginning of the story is rendered mute.

The same attitude towards Byzantium is to be found in Western bridal quest stories such as the "König Rother", also from the 12<sup>th</sup> century: he is courting the daughter of Constantinus, ruler of the "Greeks", but her father tries everything in his power to stop Rother. He conforms to the stereotype of the perfidious Greek, while at the same time lacking in wit, military prowess and self-control, in short: he thinks of himself as superior, but is shown to be the Westerner's inferior in every single respect. Therefore, he has to consent to the marriage after Rother saved Byzantium in a fight against the heathens.<sup>161</sup>

The essence from these stories is quite clear. In order to establish peaceful coexistence, the arrogant and hostile Greeks have to be bullied into accepting Western superiority. Interconnections between these texts and crusader chronicles like the "Gesta Dei per Francos" – and thus between collective memory from the crusades and courtly literature – are undeniable. It is precisely here where the sagas differ.<sup>162</sup> In the numerous Old Norse bridal quests, Byzantine rulers are viewed as friends, even if the narrative pattern is very similar to that of for instance "König Rother". In "Bærings saga" from the

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160 Ibid., ch. 16, p. 296. The formula is *giorunzt ek þinn maðr* ("I make myself your man.").

161 Bennewitz, Ingrid / Koll, Beatrix (eds.): *König Rother. Mittelhochdeutscher Text und neuhochdeutsche Übersetzung von Peter K. Stein*. Reclam: Stuttgart 2000, esp. pp. 44–58, 92–110, 220–256, 338–356.

162 Cf. here and in the following also Barnes 2014, pp. 92–97, 158–181.

early 14<sup>th</sup> century, an exiled Prince from Holstein meets and befriends the *Grikklandskeisari* Emanuel at the French court in Paris.<sup>163</sup> Bæringr, who was the only one able to beat the emperor's best knight, follows the Byzantines to Constantinople, which they find besieged by heathen enemies. After he managed to kill all the leaders of the invaders and their army was beaten, he is offered the hand of Emanuel's daughter in marriage. The marriage is postponed to a later date, since Bæringr first wants to reconquer his father's lands in Saxonia, Holstein and Frisia. He is not given trouble by the "Greeks", but actually by the Western Emperor's daughter, who tries to seduce him without success and subsequently makes mischief between her father and Bæringr. In the end, however, Bæringr prevails with Byzantine help; he is able to take revenge on his father's enemies, to establish peace with the Western Emperor, whom he later succeeds, and to marry the Byzantine princess Vindemia. In the case of "Bærings saga", the turning point of his fortune as an exile is his meeting with Emanuel of Byzantium. He is the one to support the young prince in his aspirations, while the Westerner plays the part of the suspicious, dangerous host. It is even possible that the "perfidious Greek" himself is the protagonist of a bridal quest story, as is the case with "Dámusta saga", also from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>164</sup> Dámusti is the son of a "Greek" nobleman, and he actually kills King Jón of Saxony who asked for the hand of Gratiana, the daughter of emperor Katalaktus. The latter bears the same name as Michael IV Katalaktus, the emperor who received Haraldr Sigurðarson in the Kings' Sagas. Dámusti's deed certainly was a grievous crime, although it was committed with the "wise men's" approval, and he is punished immediately through Gratiana's alleged death. Afterwards, the desperate protagonist is told by the Mother of God to visit Gratiana's grave and to free her from imprisonment by a monster, which had put her into a death-like sleep. Dámusti and Gratiana marry and have a son, who later on manages to repulse the

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163 "Bærings saga". In: Cederschiöld, Gustaf (ed.): *Fornsögur Suðurlanda. Isländska bearbetningar af främmande romaner från medeltiden. Magus saga jarls, Konraðs saga, Bærings saga, Flovents saga, Bevers saga*. Fr. Berlings boktryckeri och stilgjuteri: Lund 1884, pp. 85–123, here esp. ch. 13–18, pp. 95–102 and ch. 31–32, pp. 118–122.

164 "Dámusta saga". In: Tan-Haverhorst, Louisa Fredrika (ed.): *Þjalar Jóns saga. Dámusta saga 1. Teksten*. Willink & Zoon: Haarlem 1939, pp. 48–108, here esp. ch. 1, pp. 48–50, ch. 4–6, pp. 58–69, ch. 17–18, pp. 104–107.

Saxon avengers of the murdered King Jón. Thus, the “perfidious Greek” is the winner of the story, something utterly unthinkable from a continental perspective. Some years later, the couple decides to separate and end their lives as hermits in repentance for their sins.

If we search for interconnections between these Norse stories and collective memory, we have to return to the early Kings’ Sagas. Descriptions of Constantinople, as they are to be found in many Original *Riddarasögur*, like “Dámusta saga”, usually go back to “Morkinskinna” or similar texts. Even if descriptions are derived from Western tradition like in “Kirjalax saga”, which uses “Karlagnús saga’s” depiction of the imperial palace and its splendour,<sup>165</sup> the conflicting orientation of “Eastern” and “Western” figures is never adopted, and no city in the West is ever described in such detail as *Miklagarðr*. The best friend abroad in Old Norse Romance is the Byzantine ruler. The same applies to earlier Sagas of Icelanders. Usually, they only mention trips abroad or follow a major figure briefly into Byzantine exile, especially when an avenger follows the migrant who had committed a killing at home. The only exception is “Grettis saga”, again from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Here, Þorsteinn drómundr, Gretti’s half-brother, follows Gretti’s killer to Constantinople, where he takes revenge and is subsequently arrested.<sup>166</sup> After being released from prison with the help of Spes, a Byzantine noblewoman, he starts an affair with her. The model for this elaborate *Spesar þáttur* inside the story with its reminiscence to Tristan and Isolde is quite clearly “Morkinskinna’s” account of Haraldr Sigurðarson in Byzantium; his synchronous stay in the city is also mentioned explicitly. After a divorce, Þorsteinn and Spes return to the North. Later on, just like Dámusti and Gratiana, they separate and live as hermits to repent for their unjust treatment of Spes’ husband.

Our examples should serve to illustrate that Byzantium and its rulers fulfil an important function in late medieval Norse texts from different genres. Although many motifs are derived from continental models, the representation of Byzantium goes back to *Konungasögur* from the early 13<sup>th</sup>

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165 *Kirjalax saga*, pp. 86–87. Cf. *Karlagnús saga*, pp. 254–256.

166 Here and in the following, Guðni Jónsson (ed.): *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar. Bandamanna saga. Odds þáttur Ófeiggssonar*. (Íslenzk Fornrit 7). Hið íslenzka fornritafélag: Reykjavík 1936, pp. 1–290, here ch. 86–90, pp. 271–286.

century, when witnesses to the relations were still alive. This fact suggests a deliberate choice, just as is the case with the earlier choice of titles in the context of common Western European knowledge. Byzantium and its semantics are a key element in Scandinavian attitudes towards empires and imperial conflicts as well as Scandinavian self-representations under different circumstances, which can be shown through both statistical and narratological analysis. The key period for this was the decades around the year 1200. In the case of Denmark, the phenomenon is easily explained by the political situation. In Norway and Iceland, the stressing of good relations with Constantinople may be related to the search for prestige in the struggle between different political factions.

## Conclusion

It is indisputable that Byzantium and its rulers possessed an aura in Old Norse literature which the West and Charlemagne's successors could not in the least keep up with. At best, medieval Western emperors and their courts, relevant as they are for universal history, are rather uninteresting, at worst, they are viewed as both hostile and ultimately inferior. This split in Scandinavian attitude towards emperors and empires, just as the specific way of naming them, may be described as the result of different factors working at different times: on the one hand, concepts of universal imperial rule became increasingly unpopular all over Europe. Not only were neighbouring communities hostile to the idea by implication, as is to be seen in the case of Danish elites, but educated Scandinavians could watch the ever widening gap between political theory and reality. This disenchantment with imperial splendour, as it is still visible for instance in "Hungrvaka", is not only clear in Svend Aggesen's and Saxo's mockery of the imperial self-image, but even more lucid in "Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar", which was written around 1264/65. The Norwegian king is portrayed as a friend of Frederick II, but the saga is well-informed about the fact that "the empire fell down" after his death, as Sturla Þórðarson puts it.<sup>167</sup> In addition to this, a story about a Norwegian legation

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167 Hákonar saga, ch. 324, vol. 2, p. 159: *En eftir hann fell niðr keisaradómrrinn, svá at engi hefir verit síðan, þar til er þessi bók var saman sett [...].* "But after him, the empire fell down, so that no-one has been [crowned emperor] since, until this book was compiled".

to Denmark and Saxony in 1260 in the later part of the saga mentions that seven German rulers elect the Romano-German king, making it one of the earliest references to their number and hinting at a later date of composition than the earlier parts of the text.<sup>168</sup> This kind of notoriously instable rule was not what Hákon strived for. Matthew Paris, who had been to Norway in 1247–1248, mentions that Pope Innocent IV offered Hákon to crown him emperor after Frederick had been declared as dethroned in 1245. Hákon declined, just as the Danish king Erik Plovpenning had apparently done in 1239.<sup>169</sup> Not only did he maintain good relations to the Staufien party and was obviously informed about the political mess in the empire; his model was France, its courtly culture, which found its way into Old Norse literature under his rule, and hereditary monarchy, which he managed to introduce in 1260.<sup>170</sup> As time advanced, the western empire lost more and more of its nimbus and its justification, which was also due to an increase of papal claims to universal power.<sup>171</sup> This may be one reason for the Danish kings in the Calmar Union to abstain from imperial self-representation. The same is valid for Sweden as an imperial power after the Thirty Years War: when Karl XII was hailed as *imperator Scandinaviae* in a panegyric by Magnus

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- 168 Hákonar saga, ch. 364, vol. 2, p. 210. The passage is not contained in the oldest text witnesses (Wolf, Armin: “Die ‘sieben Männer, die den Kaiser wählen sollten’. Neues zur Datierung der Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar”. In: Stolleis, Michael (ed.): *Die Bedeutung der Wörter. Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte. Festschrift für Sten Gagnér zum 70. Geburtstag*. Beck: Munich 1991, pp. 565–578, here pp. 572–574). As German sources do not mention the number of seven electors before 1275, Wolf (ibid., pp. 575–578) suggests that this part of the saga was written around the same time and that Sturla Þórðarson, the Icelandic author, was informed about the fact by Ingibjörg, King Hákon’s widow.
- 169 Richards Luard, Henry (ed.): *Matthæi Parisiensis monachi Sancti Albani Chronica majora 5*. (Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores [Rolls Series] 57,5). Her Majesty’s Stationery Office: London 1880, p. 201. For Erik Plovpenning, see note 20.
- 170 Helle, Knut: *Norge blir en stat, 1130–1319*. (Handbok i Norges historie 3). Universitetsforlaget: Bergen / Oslo / Tromsø 1974, pp. 81–87.
- 171 Cf. Miethke, Jürgen: “Politisches Denken und monarchische Theorie. Das Kaisertum als supranationale Institution im späteren Mittelalter”. In: Ehlers, Joachim (ed.): *Ansätze und Diskontinuität deutscher Nationsbildung im Mittelalter*. (Nationes 8). Sigmaringen 1989, pp. 121–144; Drews, pp. 48–62.

Rönnow in 1706, the theoretical claim to overlordship over the neighbouring countries was exploited in Danish propaganda and even used as *casus belli* against Sweden in the Great Northern War. Rönnow got into serious trouble at home.<sup>172</sup> Such imagery was obviously uncalled for.

On the other side of the coin, the emperors at the Bosphorus enjoyed great popularity in the North from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the Middle Ages. Obviously, their remote location and the marvels of Constantinople contributed to their ongoing success in all kinds of narratives. Yet, there must be another reason. In the end, the Byzantine Empire had “fallen down” in 1204 just like the Staufen Empire some decades later, although no Scandinavian source ever mentions this defeat, which also meant a loss of face to the city’s Scandinavian defendants. Initially, however, an integral element of Byzantine foreign politics seems to be responsible for friendly Scandinavian attitudes towards the “Greeks” and the repeated decision of different authors not to adopt the typical “Western” view on empires. Instead of trying to enforce universal imperial rule, the Byzantines had developed a highly successful method of employing their cultural heritage and their wealth in order to exert control: this special form of *soft power*,<sup>173</sup> as it is understood and described in the stories of the Nordic crusader kings, secured the acceptance of a vague overlordship and the inflow of military manpower by granting money and imperial prestige to barbarians abroad. The Romano-German Emperors and their court had nothing of the sort to offer. In our Scandinavian case, Byzantine *soft power* proved to be the most important, and perhaps, the most successful imperial concept of the Middle Ages.

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172 Dahlberg, Elena: “Reusing Horace”. In: Steiner-Weber, Astrid (ed.): *Acta conventus neo-latini Upsaliensis. Proceedings of the Fourteenth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies (Uppsala 2009)*. Brill: Leiden / Boston 2012, pp. 329–338, here pp. 329–331. The poem is cited on pp. 330–331. It bore the title *Hercules Genuinus Carolus Duodecimus Magnae Scandinaviae Imperator*.

173 Cf. Shepard, Jonathan: “Trouble-shooters and Men-on-the-Spot. The Emperor’s Dealings with Outsiders”. In: *Le relazioni internazionali nell’Alto Medioevo*. (Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo). Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo: Spoleto 2011, pp. 691–733, here p. 722–723; Magdalino, Paul: *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1993, p. 105.



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## Intoxication with Virtuality. French Princes and Aegean Titles

In July 1383 James of Baux died. He was the last titular emperor of Constantinople and left his title to Louis I, Duke of Anjou, the unfortunate pretender to the throne of Naples. Louis – despite papal support – never succeeded to assert his claims to Naples and died in Southern Italy the year after.<sup>1</sup> But if he had been more successful, he perhaps would have used the title.

Over the last hundred years, there had been many French speaking princes in Southern Italy who held the title “Emperor of Constantinople”. Apart from only holding the title, they tried to realize concrete political claims “in the East”:<sup>2</sup> James of Baux, for example, fought together with the Navarrese Company for the Principality of Achaea.<sup>3</sup> His uncle, Robert II of Taranto, travelled to Corfu probably in order to conquer the Aegean World. Robert’s father, Philip I of Taranto, planned insistently though not success-

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- 1 Valois, Noël: “L’expédition et la mort de Louis Ier d’Anjou en Italie (1382–1384)”. *Revue des questions historiques* 55 (NS 11), 1894, pp. 84–153; de Mérindol, Christian: *Le roi René et la seconde maison d’Anjou. Emblématique art histoire. Léopard d’Or*: Paris 1987, pp. 25–37. See for the European context: Autrand, Françoise: *Charles VI. le sage*. Fayard: Paris 1995.
  - 2 See in general Dade, Erwin: *Versuche zur Wiedererrichtung der lateinischen Herrschaft in Konstantinopel im Rahmen der abendländischen Politik 1261 bis etwa 1310*. Fromann: Jena 1938; Jostkleigrew, Georg: “heres imperii Constantinopolitani – frater regis Franciae – defensor populi christiani. Zur Deutung konkurrierender Legitimationskonstruktionen im Umfeld der französischen Mittelmeerpolitik des frühen 14. Jahrhunderts”. In: Brandt, Hartwin / Köhler, Katrin / Siewert, Ulrike (eds.): *Genealogisches Bewusstsein als Legitimation. Inter- und intragenerationelle Auseinandersetzungen sowie die Bedeutung von Verwandtschaft bei Amtswechseln*. University of Bamberg Press: Bamberg 2010, pp. 167–192
  - 3 Lock, Peter: *The Franks in the Aegean, 1204–1500*. Longman: New York 1995, pp. 67, 133–134; Setton, Kenneth M.: *Catalan Domination of Athens 1311–1380*. Revised edition. Variorum: London 1975, pp. 99, 118, 127–132.

fully to restore the throne of Constantinople.<sup>4</sup> Philips father-in-law, Charles of Valois, married Catherine of Courtenay, the heiress to the title “Emperor of Constantinople”. Charles tried to conquer the city with the help of the Catalan Company after he had planned the expedition thoroughly, but he never succeeded either.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from holding the rank of “Emperor of Constantinople”, all these plans to conquer the East were legitimized by further titles held by the aspirants, among them “Prince of Achaëa”<sup>6</sup> or “Lord of the Kingdom

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- 4 Andreas Kieseletter: “Filippo I d’Angiò, imperatore nominale di Costantinopoli”. In: Bartoccini, Fiorella (ed.): *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 47 (Ferrero-Filonardi). Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana: Rome 1997, pp. 717–723; Topping, Peter: “The Morea, 1311–1364”. In: Hazard, Harry W. (ed.): *A History of the Crusades, vol. 3: The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia: 1975, pp. 104–140, esp. pp. 106–117; cf. also there the article of Geanakoplos, Deno: “Byzantium and the Crusades, 1354–1453”, pp. 27–68; Nicol, Donald MacGillivray: *The Despotate of Epiros 1267–1479. A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1984, pp. 44–82.
- 5 Petit, Joseph: *Charles de Valois (1270–1325)*. Paris 1900, esp. pp. 106–115; Housley, Norman: *The Later Crusades. 1274–1580. From Lyons to Alcazar*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 1992, pp. 53–56; Laiou, Angeliki E.: *Constantinople and the Latins. The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1282–1328*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge (Mass.) 1972, pp. 129–130, 200–242; See for the context Shneidman, Jerome Lee: *The Rise of the Aragonese-Catalan Empire, 1200–1350*, 2. vols. New York University Press: New York: 1970; Hillgarth, J. N.: *The Problem of a Catalan Mediterranean Empire, 1229–1327*. Longman: London 1975.
- 6 For Achaëa see von Löhneysen, Wolfgang: *Mistra. Griechenlands Schicksal im Mittelalter. Morea unter Franken, Byzantinern und Osmanen*. Prestel: Munich 1977, pp. 18–67; Jacobi, David: “The Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Frankish States in Greece”. In: Abulafia, David (ed.): *The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 5: c. 1198-c. 1300*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1999, pp. 525–542; Bon, Antoine: *La Morée franque. Recherches historiques, topographiques et archéologiques sur la principauté d’Achaïe*. De Boccard: Paris 1969; Longnon, Jean: “The Frankish States in Greece, 1204–1311”. In: Wolff, Robert Lee / Hazard, Harry W (eds.): *A History of the Crusades, vol. 2: The Later Crusades, 1189–1311*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia 1969, pp. 234–275; Topping, “The Morea, 1311–1364” 1975; Topping, Peter: “The Morea, 1364–1460”. In: Hazard, Harry W. (ed.): *A History of the Cru-*

of Albania”<sup>7</sup>. Still, these titles were only stepping stones on the way to Constantinople. The title “Emperor of Constantinople” was regarded as a culmination of all “Eastern titles” and therefore useful for young and ambitious men who strove to establish their own reign. These titles – and especially the title “Emperor of Constantinople” – had some characteristics in common: firstly, they were “new titles” or ranks – not “old titles” like “French king” or “Roman king”. These Aegean titles had once been established by conquerors (by participants of the Fourth Crusade resp. by Charles of Anjou), which combined traditional elements of their Western political world with their new surroundings in the Balkans or the Aegean World.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, these titles were connected with “virtual” dominions – “virtual” in the sense of Luhmann, which means not fictional but possible.<sup>9</sup> These titles could legitimate further political action or expansion but one could also just hold the titles without any “realized” ambition: you could

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sades, vol. 3: *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia 1975, pp. 141–166.

- 7 For the kingdom of Albania cf. Abulafia, David: “Intercultural Contacts in the Medieval Mediterranean”. In: Arbel, Benjamin (ed.): *Intercultural Contacts in the Medieval Mediterranean*. Cass: London 1996, pp. 1–13; Ducellier, Alain: “Albania, Serbia and Bulgaria”. In: Abulafia, David (ed.): *The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 5: c. 1198-c. 1300*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1999, pp. 779–795; Fine, John van Antwerp: *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor 1994; Lala, Etleva: *Regnum Albaniae, the Papal Curia, and the Western Visions of a Borderline Nobility*. CEU eTD Collection: Budapest 2008.
- 8 Burkhardt, Stefan: *Mediterranes Kaisertum und imperiale Ordnungen. Das lateinische Kaiserreich von Konstantinopel*. (Europa im Mittelalter 25). Akademie Verlag / De Gruyter: Berlin / Boston 2014, pp. 205–216.
- 9 Virtuality in the sense of Luhmann is “eng verbunden bis bedeutungsgleich mit dem Möglichen (...). Luhmanns Medium ist ein virtuelles Davor und Während. Es ist zugleich virtuell und Möglichkeitsbereitstellend, denn ‘aktuell kann nur sein, was auch möglich ist.’ Was aktuell ist, geht jedoch von etwas Virtuellem aus, in welchem die Möglichkeit eben jener Aktualität angelegt ist. In jener Aktualität, in der Form, wird die vorausgegangene Virtualität wahrnehmbar”, vgl. Völker, Clara: *Mobile Medien. Zur Genealogie des Mobilfunks und zur Ideengeschichte von Virtualität*. (Kultur und Medientheorie). Transcript-Verlag: Bielefeld 2010, p. 299; Luhmann, Niklas: *Die Kunst der Gesellschaft*. Suhrkamp: Frankfurt a.M. 1995, p. 174.

just be “Prince of Achaëa” without ruling the Peloponnese or without any ambition to conquer the Aegean world.

But what had these claims to do with Southern Italy? And why did an only nominal title make so many South-Italian princes go towards East? The answer follows from the Fourth Crusade and the conquest of Constantinople: the leaders of the Fourth Crusade had planned to reach *Outremer* using ships hired from the Venetians. In order to finance this, they agreed to capture Constantinople for the Byzantine prince Alexios IV. After the first conquest of the city, Alexios IV was murdered and his successor Alexios V refused to pay the crusaders. Consequently, the crusaders conquered Constantinople again in 1204 and plundered the city.<sup>10</sup>

The old Byzantine Empire broke into four parts: the Greek empires of Nicaea, Trebizond and Epirus, and the dominions ruled by the Latins. The latter were divided into realms directly ruled by the Latin emperor and by his vassal fiefs: the Kingdom of Thessalonica under Boniface of Montferrat, the Principality of Achaëa, the Duchy of Athens and the Duchy of the Archipelago. Although further duchies had been projected, they never came into being. Beyond that, former Byzantine towns and regions such as Crete were now dominated by the Venetians. The crusaders were convinced of the importance of enthroning a Latin emperor.<sup>11</sup>

The Latin emperors had to deal with difficulties inherited from the Byzantine Empire, notably political instability, strong centrifugal tendencies,

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10 Burkhardt, *Mediterranes Kaisertum* 2014; Jacoby, David: *Latin Romania and the Mediterranean*. Aldershot: Ashgate 2001; Madden, Thomas (ed.): *The Fourth Crusade. Event, Aftermath, and Perceptions. Papers From the Sixth Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East, Istanbul, Turkey, 25–29 August 2004*. (Papers from the ... conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East 6 / Crusades-Subsidia 2). Ashgate: Aldershot / Burlington 2008; Aalst, Victoria D. van / Ciggaar, Krijnie N. (eds.): *The Latin Empire. Some Contributions*. Bredius: Hernen 1990; Tricht, Filip van: *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium: The Empire of Constantinople (1204–1228)*. Brill: Leiden 2011.

11 Burkhardt, Stefan: “Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in the Latin Empire of Constantinople”. In: Beihammer, Alexander / Constantinou Stavroula / Parani, Maria (eds.): *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean. Comparative Perspectives*. (The Medieval Mediterranean 98). Brill: Leiden / Boston 2013, pp. 277–290, here: 277–284.

and declining revenues. Therefore, the Latin Empire heavily depended on financial and military aid from Western Europe. It was pushed hard by the Bulgarians, the Greeks of Nicaea and of Epirus. For more than 30 years following, changing coalitions of the Latin, Bulgarian and Nicaean empires allied with or opposed each other, leading to the contraction of Latin rule until only the city of Constantinople was left in the hands of Emperor Baldwin II.<sup>12</sup> Finally, in 1261 Constantinople was captured by the army of the Nicaean emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos. After this, Latin-dominated states survived only in the Peloponnese, such as the Duchy of Athens. Baldwin II and his son went to Southern Italy, transferring their title “emperor” and their claims to the Latin Empire – as we will see – to the Anjou king Charles I of Naples and his successors.<sup>13</sup>

From 1261 onwards, the emperor of Constantinople was an emperor without empire. Does this mean that the Italian princes mentioned above had been intoxicated with a seductive, but vain promise? In my contribution I will try to answer this question and to explain the dynamics of an “intoxication with virtuality”. I will firstly present my own understanding of empires resp. imperial communities. Secondly, I will analyze the situation in the Balkans, in Southern Italy and the Aegean world in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and take a closer look at the biography of Charles of Anjou. Against this background I will finally try to judge the politics of the South-Italian princes towards the Aegean world.

What are the distinct features of an empire and of imperial rule? There are many possible definitions and indicators and many theories on empires. The German historian Hans-Heinrich Nolte enumerates the following seven attributes that define an ideal empire: 1. in general, a hierarchical system governed by a monarchic apex; 2. a close cooperation between church and crown; 3. a comprehensive bureaucracy; 4. an administration increasingly based on written records; 5. centrally raised taxes; 6. a diversity of provinces; and 7. marginal participation of the subjects.<sup>14</sup>

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12 Ibid., pp. 285–290.

13 Lock 1995, pp. 66–67.

14 Nolte, Hans-Heinrich: *Imperien. Eine vergleichende Studie*. Wochenschau Verlag: Schwalbach 2008, p. 14.

I would add two more characteristics to this list: 1. Extension in quantity: an empire must cover a vast area incorporating many nations. The imperial idea is often connected with the notion of proclaiming dominance over the world or, more precisely, of representing a world on its own. 2. The quality of imperial rule may differ: from direct administration by magistrates to the indirect rule of vassals or more or less symbolic tributes. Hence, imperial reign, in some cases, may be restricted to a virtual sphere.<sup>15</sup>

What elements are necessary to maintain an empire? ‘Active factors’ that play a crucial role are strong military forces, a joint legal system, administrators or magistrates and taxes or tributes to refinance the public organization. However, ‘passive factors’ are of great importance, too. The elite groups of the periphery strive after the model represented by an apparently mighty centre, spread through coins, charters, law books and splendidly dressed office holders.<sup>16</sup> This ‘mimicry’ has been an important starting point for postcolonial studies, such as the most influential works of Homi Bhabha.<sup>17</sup>

The “personal factor” may be even more important for all pre-modern and especial medieval forms of empires. I suggested rather focusing on analyzing the personal elements of empires than on political entities. I therefore re-introduced the concept “imperiale Ordnungen”,<sup>18</sup> which might be translated as “imperial communities”. This concept or approach enables us to analyze the continuous interdependence of imperial ideas or knowledge of empires and the contemporary situation of individuals or groups ruling over vast areas.<sup>19</sup>

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15 Burkhardt, *Mediterranes Kaisertum* 2014, pp. 213–216.

16 Burkhardt, Stefan: “Sicily’s Imperial Heritage”. In: Burkhardt, Stefan / Foerster, Thomas (eds.): *Norman Tradition and Transcultural Heritage: Exchange of Cultures in the ‘Norman’ Peripheries of Medieval Europe*. Ashgate: Farnham 2013, pp. 149–160, here: p. 151.

17 Bhabha, Homi K.: *The Location of Culture*. Routledge: London 2010, pp. 121–131.

18 See for the original use of the expression Münckler, Herfried: *Imperien. Die Logik der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten*. Rowohlt: Berlin 2006.

19 See for another attempt to conceptualize the personal dimension of empires: Bates, David: *The Normans and Empire. The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford during Hilary Term 2010*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 2013.

Imperial communities are in some way the personal networks of empires. They can be defined by: 1. the possibility of their leaders to threaten to use military, economic or sacral power; 2. great wealth; 3. sea power; 4. control over resources in a vast area; 5. a wide horizon of political and economic relations; 6., and resulting from 4 and 5, the core aim of the community, namely: hegemony in a vast area.<sup>20</sup> One characteristic feature of imperial communities is their hierarchical organization and a strong integrative power via the high estimation of their members towards their leader; the imperial community could bask in the sun of a gilded monarch being immediate to God and to no one else. Members of these imperial communities would therefore – besides their own economic interests and their interest in keeping their position – try to support the monarch and to keep up the hierarchical structures, even in the case that the empire itself – considered as territorial unity – had vanished.<sup>21</sup> The personal network will remain much longer.

In this case, the figure of the titular emperor, titular king or titular prince – in some cases with a whole “government in exile” – could maintain claims to rule in the lost territory for the former elite. These titles and claims were inheritable via agnatic or cognatic succession – a fact which insured that a certain imperial community could survive over several decades. These “virtual” imperial communities could even become more integrated if the descendants of the holders of a virtual title were marrying each other, thereby accumulating titles and claims. This made even a virtual title valuable for ambitious princes who tried to gain their own realm or for those who wanted to enhance their rank. These aspirants draw upon the members of the former imperial community.

One of these virtual titles was “King of Thessalonica”.<sup>22</sup> But how did this title come into being and how did it become a “virtual title”? In order to answer these questions, we have to go a little bit further back in history

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20 Burkhardt, *Mediterranes Kaisertum* 2014, pp. 217–223.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 205–216, 241–255.

22 See for the kingdom of Thessalonica Pokorny, Rudolf: “Der territoriale Umfang des lateinischen Königreiches Thessaloniki”. *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 62, 2006, pp. 537–606; Wellas, Michael Basilius: *Das westliche Kaiserreich und das lateinische Königreich Thessalonike*. Basilopoulos: Athens 1987.

and cast a glance at Byzantine-Hungarian relations in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The Kingdom of Hungary belonged to the surrounding “belt” of the Byzantine Empire. In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, intensified contacts between the Byzantine emperors and the Hungarian rulers were established and the relations quickly became closer.<sup>23</sup> The interrelations were, however, not always harmonious: in Byzantine eyes, Hungary was an important client state. Consequently, Byzantine diplomats tried to support those candidates for the Hungarian throne whom they thought to be the most loyal ones. Armed conflicts between Hungarian and Byzantine forces resulted from this policy.<sup>24</sup>

Certainly, Byzantine emperors never attempted to conquer Hungary. But in the 12<sup>th</sup> century tensions increased during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Manuel Komnenos. Manuel attempted to strengthen his control over the Croatian and Dalmatian area as well as over the Hungarian kingdom by making the younger brother of King Stephen III, Béla, his close ally. Manuel called Béla to his court, promised him his daughter Maria (later wife of Reiner of Montferrat) and gave him the rank *despotés*. After the death of Stephen III in 1172, Béla was – without a Byzantine spouse – sent back to Hungary and became King Béla III. As Béla intended to maintain a close coalition with the Byzantine Empire, he arranged a marriage between his daughter Margaret / Maria and Isaac II Angelos in 1186.<sup>25</sup> She should – as wife of Boniface of Montferrat – later become the queen of Thessalonica.

Around 1200, the son of Béla – Emeric I (1196–1204) – expanded the Hungarian influence over former Byzantine territory and clashed with Venice on Zara, which had been acquired by his father. The conquest of

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23 See in general Curta, Florin: *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages. 500–1250*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2006, pp. 111–247; Shepard, Jonathan: “Byzantium and the Steppe-Nomads: The Hungarian Dimension”. In: Prinzing, Günter / Salamon, Maciej (eds.): *Byzanz und Ostmitteleuropa 950–1453. Beiträge zu einer table-ronde des XIX International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Copenhagen 1996*. Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 1999, pp. 55–83.

24 Makk, Ferenc: *The Árpáds and the Comneni: Political Relations between Hungary and Byzantium in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century*. Akadémiai Kiadó és Nyomda Vállalat: Budapest 1989, p. 10.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 79–124; see in general Varga, Gábor: *Ungarn und das Reich vom 10. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert. Das Herrscherhaus der Árpáden zwischen Anlehnung und Emanzipation*. Verlag Ungarisches Institut: Munich 2003.



Zara by the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade combined several strands: after the capture of Constantinople, Boniface of Montferrat became king of Thessalonica and married the already mentioned Margaret / Maria of Hungary. Isaac II had died in 1204 and so Margaret / Maria was as his widow holding some claims to the throne of Constantinople. After 1204 Boniface and Margaret seemed to have established diplomatic contacts with the Hungarian king and received military support. The Hungarian king Emeric and Boniface fought together against the Bulgarian king Kalojan. They complained to pope Innocent III that Kalojan had taken Margaret's dowry.<sup>26</sup>

After Emeric's death his brother Andrew II prevailed over Emeric's son and his wife Constance of Aragon and became Hungarian king. For the next years, Andrew concentrated his ambitions on the Russian principality of Galicia. Meanwhile, in 1205, the Bulgarian forces overwhelmed the Latins in the battle of Adrianople and killed the Latin emperor Baldwin; two years later, Boniface, too, was killed in a Bulgarian ambush. Around 1214 the situation had changed: the new Latin emperor Henry, the new Bulgarian emperor Boril, and King Andrew of Hungary searched for an alliance: Henry married the cousin of Boril (Mary) and Andrew married the niece of Henry (Yolanda de Courtenay) shortly after his famous first wife Gertrude of Merania had been killed.<sup>27</sup>

Margaret of Thessalonica seems to have played an important part in negotiating these marriages. Her realm, the kingdom of Thessalonica, was under pressure: after the death of her husband Boniface, a group of Lombard nobles under the regent Oberto II of Biandrate tried to replace Boniface's and Margaret's son Demetrius with Boniface's elder son William VI of Montferrat.<sup>28</sup>

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26 Prinzing, Günter: *Die Bedeutung Bulgariens und Serbiens in den Jahren 1204–1219 im Zusammenhang mit der Entstehung und Entwicklung der byzantinischen Teilstaaten nach der Einnahme Konstantinopels infolge des 4. Kreuzzuges* (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 12). Institut für Byzantinistik und Neugriechische Philologie der Universität: Munich 1972, pp. 25–35.

27 Van Tricht 2011, pp. 388–396 and in general pp. 409–421.

28 Gerland, Ernst: *Geschichte des lateinischen Kaiserreiches von Konstantinopel, Teil 1: Geschichte der Kaiser Balduin I. und Heinrich, 1204–1216*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 1966, repr. of Homburg v. d. Höhe 1905, pp. 117, 161–190.

Obviously these nobles were discontented with the policy of Boniface and Margaret – especially with their tolerant policy towards the Greek population. The so called Lombard Rebellion of 1209 was soon put down by Emperor Henry. The kingdom of Thessalonica, however, was soon captured by Byzantine forces. After being expelled from his kingdom by Theodore Komnenos Dukas, Demetrius fled to the court of Emperor Frederick II in Italy.<sup>29</sup> He died 1230 after ceding his title “King of Thessalonica” to Frederick – a title established by the military force of the Fourth Crusade and carrying the virtual power of a coalition of the Byzantine and Hungarian imperial communities and legitimizing the claims to the throne of Constantinople. What was Frederick’s interest in this title?

In Southern Italy the Normans had become a disruptive factor in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>30</sup> Conquering the whole peninsula of Southern Italy and Sicily, the Norman kings got involved in severe conflicts with the Byzantines, the Roman emperors and the popes. But besides these conflicts, all three imperial powers from time to time tried to come to terms with the Normans by “personal” means of vassalage, the donation of ranks and marriages.<sup>31</sup> The Sicilian kings themselves increasingly turned into members

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29 Wellas 1987, pp. 113–120.

30 Reuter, Timothy: “Vom Parvenü zum Bündnispartner. Das Königreich Sizilien in der abendländischen Politik des 12. Jahrhunderts”. In: Kölzer, Theo (ed.): *Die Staufer im Süden. Sizilien und das Reich*. Thorbecke: Sigmaringen 1996, pp. 43–56; Deér, József: *Papsttum und Normannen. Untersuchungen zu ihren lebensrechtlichen und kirchenpolitischen Beziehungen*. (Studien und Quellen zur Welt Kaiser Friedrichs II. 1). Böhlau: Cologne / Graz 1972; Burkhardt, Stefan / Foerster, Thomas (eds.): *Norman Tradition and Transcultural Heritage. Exchanges of Cultures in the Norman Peripheries of Medieval Europe*. Ashgate: Farnham 2014.

31 Tramontana, Salvatore: “Popolazione, distribuzione della terra e classe sociali nella Sicilia di Ruggero il Gran Conte”. In: *Ruggero il Gran Conte e l’inizio dello Stato normanno. Relazioni e comunicazioni nelle seconde giornate normanno-sveve (Bari, maggio 1975)*. (Fonti e studi del Corpus membranarum Italicarum 12). Il Centro di Ricerca: Rome 1977, pp. 213–270, here: pp. 216–239; Drell, Joanna H.: *Kinship and Conquest. Family Strategies in the Principality of Salerno during the Norman period. 1077–1194*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca 2002; Loud, Graham A.: *The Age of Robert Guiscard. Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest*. Longman: Harlow / Munich 2000.

of the European “royal society” as *advocati papae* and ideal crusaders.<sup>32</sup> After the foundation of the Kingdom of Sicily, marriages provided the wider integration of the Normans into the European high nobility and the contact with the Sicilian realm to Europe. The wife of King Roger II, Elvira, was the daughter of Alfonso VI of León and Castile, the *imperator totius hispaniae*.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the chronicler Kinnamos reports that Roger demanded from the Basileus a princess for one of his sons, and to be of equal rank as the Basileus.<sup>34</sup>

But this was perhaps not enough: many of the Normans’ campaigns – especially the one led by Robert Guiscard – strove for the heart of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>35</sup> All of Robert’s royal successors as rulers of Southern Italy – up to Charles I of Anjou – are said to have planned to conquer Constantinople.<sup>36</sup> But the activities of the Norman imperial community did not primarily strive for a new rank of their leader. With their conquest of Southern Italy, the Normans had also acquired certain junctions of the trans-Mediterranean network of trade.<sup>37</sup> These networks were very stable

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32 Reuter 1996.

33 Reilly, Bernard F.: *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VI. 1065–1109*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey 1988, pp. 103–104.

34 John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, (trans.) Charles M. Brandt. Columbia University Press: New York 1976, lib. 3, c. 2, pp. 75–76.

35 Theotokis, Georgios: *The Norman Campaigns in the Balkans. 1081–1108*. Boydell Press: Woodbridge 2014.

36 Houben, Hubert: *Roger II. von Sizilien. Herrscher zwischen Orient und Okzident*. (Gestalten des Mittelalters und der Renaissance). 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 2010, pp. 89–91; Hunger, Herbert (ed.): *Die Normannen in Thessalonike. Die Eroberung von Thessalonike durch die Normannen (1185 n. Chr.) in der Augenzeugenschilderung des Bischofs Eustathios*. (Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber 3). Styria: Graz / Cologne 1955; Schlichte, Annkristin: *Der “gute” König. Wilhelm II. von Sizilien (1166–1189)*. (Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 110). Niemeyer: Tübingen 2005, pp. 293–301.

37 Abulafia, David: “The Merchants of Messina: Levant Trade and Domestic Economy”. *Papers of the British School at Rome* 54, 1986, pp. 196–212; Gertwagen, Ruth / Jeffreys, Elizabeth (eds.): *Shipping, Trade and Crusade in the Medieval Mediterranean. Studies in Honour of John Pryor*. Ashgate: Farnham 2012; Goldberg, Jessica L.: *Institutions and Geographies of Trade in the Medieval Mediterranean. The Business World of the Maghribi Traders*. (Cambridge

and survived – with some changes – almost all political and religious upheavals in the Mediterranean world.<sup>38</sup> For the Normans, as for almost all other rulers, trade and taxes were of great importance because they provided the wealth needed for war, for the living expenses of the noble elite and for a magnificent representation of the king integrating the imperial community of Southern Italy.

Wealth played a pivotal role in maintaining military force: the mercenary troops of Norman Sicily exceeded feudal papal and imperial forces. The Normans commanded strong forces they had at their disposal for a longer time than their adversaries, which proved to be one of the main stabilising factors of Norman rule. The mighty Norman fleet as one of the deciding factors of Norman power was also very expensive.<sup>39</sup> Economic and trade relations also influenced the Norman expansion.

The ways of trade prefigured the streets of war.<sup>40</sup> This does not mean that the aims of Norman or almost any “Western” expansion in the Middle-Ages generally were of territorial nature. This is the main difference from all cases of imperialism in 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>41</sup> In the Middle Ages, much more

Studies in Economic History). Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2012; Stuckey, Jace (ed.): *Eastern Mediterranean Frontier of Latin Christendom*. Ashgate: Farnham 2014.

- 38 This does of course not mean that trade relations did not change over time. See Houben, Roger 2010, p. 14.
- 39 See Bennett, Matthew: “Norman Naval Activity in the Mediterranean c. 1060-c. 1108”. In: Strickland, Matthew (ed.): *Anglo-Norman Warfare. Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Military Organization and Warfare*. Boydell Press: Woodbridge 1992, pp. 41–58; France, John: “The Normans and Crusading”. In: Abels, Richard / Bachrach, Bernard S. (eds.): *The Normans and their Adversaries at War. Essays in Memory of C. Warren Hollister*. Boydell Press: Woodbridge 2001, pp. 87–101; Stanton, Charles D.: *Norman Naval Operations in the Mediterranean*. Boydell Press: Woodbridge 2011; Theotokis 2014.
- 40 Abulafia, David: “The Norman Kingdom of Africa and the Norman Expeditions to Majorca and the Muslim Mediterranean”. *Anglo-Norman Studies. Proceedings of the Battle Conference 7, 1984/1985*, pp. 26–49. See also DeNava, Ludovica (ed.): *Alexandri Telesini Abbatis Ystoria Rogerii Regis Sicilie Calabrie atque Apulie*. (Fonti per la storia d’Italia 112). Istituto Storico Italiano: Rome 1991, lib. I, c. 4, p. 8.
- 41 Mommsen, Wolfgang J.: *Imperialismustheorien. Ein Überblick über die neueren Imperialismusinterpretationen*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen 1987.

emphasis was put on regions, islands or cities characterized by great wealth (e.g. from wheat or silk) or important resources (like gold, iron, alum); their central position in-between trans-Mediterranean routes also played a role.<sup>42</sup> Medieval empires were trade-post empires. The medieval seaborne imperial communities were first and foremost looking for prey.<sup>43</sup> A second aim of expansion might have been of religious or ideal nature (like the conquest for the Holy Land).<sup>44</sup> But crusades aiming at Palestine or other Muslim countries had almost never – besides the First Crusade – resulted in “new dominions”. Far from that! Many crusades aiming at the Holy Land had been very expensive and could only be afforded by communities which were already very wealthy and wanted to ornate themselves with the palm leaves of crusaders.<sup>45</sup>

Economic interests could also limit the risk of military interventions: hence, this must be considered as the background for the anecdote describing Roger’s II rude response to a request to initiate war with northern Africa.<sup>46</sup> In addition, mediators between different worlds crossed the

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42 Braudel, Fernand: *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols. University of California Press: Los Angeles / London 1995; Purcell, Nicholas: “The Boundless Sea of Unlikeness? On Defining the Mediterranean”. *Mediterranean Historical Review* 18, 2003, pp. 9–29; Horden, Peregrine / Purcell, Nicholas: *The Corrupting Sea. A Study of Mediterranean History*. 9<sup>th</sup> edition. Blackwell: Oxford 2008; Abulafia, David: *The Great Sea. A Human History of the Mediterranean*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 2013, pp. XXIII–XXXI; Horden, Peregrine / Kinoshita, Sharon (eds.): *A Companion to Mediterranean History*. Wiley Blackwell: Chichester, West Sussex 2014; Ptak, Roderich: *Die Maritime Seidenstraße. Küstenräume, Seefahrt und Handel in vorkolonialer Zeit*. Beck: Munich 2007, pp. 9–13.

43 Abulafia David: “Thalassocracies”. In: Horden / Kinoshita 2014, pp. 139–153.

44 See for later times: Schein, Sylvia: *Fideles Crucis. The Papacy, the West, and the Recovery of the Holy Land, 1274–1314*. Clarendon: Oxford 1991; Setton, Kenneth M.: *The Papacy and the Levant, vol. 1: The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*. (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 114). American Philosophical Society: Philadelphia 1976.

45 Flori, Jean: “Culture chevaleresque et Quatrième Croisade: quelques réflexions sur les motivations des croisés”. In: Ortalli, Gherardo / Ravegnani, Giorgio / Schreiner, Peter (eds.): *Quarta Crociata. Venezia – Bisanzio – Impero Latino*, vol 1. Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti: Venice 2006, pp. 371–387.

46 Houben, Roger, 2010, p. 19.

borders along the lines of travel and commerce, introducing information and knowledge from all over the Mediterranean. The Norman policy of pragmatic tolerance is to be localised within the wider context of these developments.<sup>47</sup> The Norman realm was not some sort of home of the *terreur du monde*, but rather an empire keeping peace and enabling exchange. In the case of the Western military operations in the Mediterranean resp. Aegean in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries things might have been more complicated. At this time a set of virtual titles of former realms existed that not only legitimized military efforts, but rather demanded from the members of an imperial community to help their leaders to reinstall the “government in exile” in their former dominions.

The turn of the tide came with the arrival of the Hohenstaufen dynasty in Southern Italy. Henry VI and Frederick II after some struggles took over the leading position inside the imperial community of the Norman realm and with this position also the administrative and military apparatus, the fleet and the dominance over certain junctions of the trans-Mediterranean trade-network.<sup>48</sup> The connections between the Sicilian-Hohenstaufen elite of Southern Italy, the elite of the Byzantine Empire and the Muslim realms remained tense. The attitude of Frederick II towards the papal aims – a new crusade to “free the Holy Land” and support for the Latin Empire – was conflicting: besides supporting the crusader-states strongly, he tried to come

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47 Houben Hubert: “Religious Toleration in the South Italian Peninsula during the Norman and Staufen Periods”. In: Loud, Graham A. / Metcalf, Alex (eds.): *The Society of Norman Italy*. (The Medieval Mediterranean 38). Brill: Leiden / Boston / Cologne 2002, pp. 319–339.

48 Foerster, Thomas: *Conquest and Political Culture: The Hohenstaufen in Sicily and the Capetians in Normandy, c. 1185–1215*, forthcoming; Cohn, Willy: *Die Geschichte der sizilischen Flotte unter der Regierung Konrads IV. und Manfreds (1250–1266)*. (Abhandlungen zur Verkehrs- und Seegeschichte 9). Curtius: Berlin 1920; Cohn, Willy: *Die Geschichte der sizilischen Flotte unter der Regierung Friedrichs II. (1197–1250)*. Priebatsch: Wroclaw 1926; Meier-Welcker, Hans: *Das Militärwesen Kaiser Friedrichs II. Landesverteidigung, Heer und Flotte im sizilischen “Modellstaat”*. *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 17, 1975, pp. 9–48; Kamp, Norbert: “Vom Kämmerer zum Sekretären. Wirtschaftsreformen und Finanzverwaltung im staufischen Königreich Sizilien”. In: Fleckenstein, Josef (ed.): *Probleme um Friedrich II.* (Vorträge und Forschungen 16). Thorbecke: Sigmaringen 1974, pp. 43–92.

to terms with Sultan Al Kamil.<sup>49</sup> He also showed some sympathy for the Nicaean emperor, a foe of the Latin emperor. The acquisition of the title of “King of Thessalonica” mentioned above might have been an attempt to establish a base for realizing old aims of the Normans in the Aegean world.<sup>50</sup> If Frederick had not been involved in a destructing war against the Lombard league and the popes, he might have developed these starts. After Frederick’s death in 1250 the popes looked for a new King of Sicily, a king who wanted to put all resources of the imperial community of Southern Italy into the realization of the papal aims. One of these candidates was Charles of Anjou.

Born in 1226, Charles was the youngest son of King Louis VIII of France. In France Charles was invested with appanages that had been only recently acquired by the French king: Provence, Anjou and Maine.<sup>51</sup> Afterwards Charles unsuccessfully tried to acquire the County of Hainaut in the War of The Flemish Succession in the 1250s.<sup>52</sup> His hunger for land was not yet satisfied. Over the years Charles became a specialist in planning conquests politically and realizing them militarily.

Charles got also in touch with the Mediterranean world and its special ideas of emperors as he joined his brother Louis IX in the Seventh Crusade.<sup>53</sup> Crusades were of great importance for broadening the horizon of political communities and single persons. Going on crusade helped the participat-

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49 Neumann, Ronald: “Untersuchungen zu dem Heer Kaiser Friedrichs II. beim Kreuzzug von 1228/29”. *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 54, 1995, pp. 1–30; Hiestand, Rudolf: “Friedrich II. und der Kreuzzug”. In: Esch, Arnold / Kamp, Norbert (eds.): *Friedrich II. Tagung des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom im Gedenkjahr 1994*. (Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 85). Niemeyer: Tübingen 1996, pp. 128–149; Hechelhammer, Bodo: *Kreuzzug und Herrschaft unter Friedrich II. Handlungsspielräume von Kreuzzugspolitik (1215–1230)*. (Mittelalter-Forschungen 13). Thorbecke: Ostfildern 2004.

50 See above, n. 29.

51 Dunbabin, Jean: *Charles I of Anjou. Power, Kingship and State-making in thirteenth-century Europe*. Longman: London 1998, pp. 1–54.

52 Herde, Peter: *Karl I. von Anjou*. (Urban-Taschenbücher 305). Kohlhammer: Stuttgart 1979, pp. 35–36.

53 Borghese, Gian Luca: *Carlo I d’Angiò e il mediterraneo. Politica, diplomazia e commercio internazionale prima dei vespri*. (Collection de l’École française de Rome 411). École française de Rome: Rome 2008, pp. 51–71.

ing nobles to gain insight into geographical factors, economic conditions and possibilities to make money and into the infrastructure necessary to transport a great amount of men, horses, weapons and food via sea. And crusades allowed them to acquire the knowledge of the legitimating and supporting potential of the popes for almost any kind of warfare.<sup>54</sup>

Certainly, Charles also got to know about the Mediterranean empire of Frederick II. He met the Latin emperor of Constantinople, Baldwin II, in Damiette.<sup>55</sup> Afterwards he argued with the city of Marseille, which he wanted to integrate into his reign.<sup>56</sup> In this conflict, Marseille joined the city of Pisa in the strange election of Alfonso X of Castile as the new Roman emperor: by this election both cities tried to preserve their freedom. In his struggle with the city of Marseille Charles certainly learned that the Mediterranean was not as strict as the Northern European world when it came to the control of imperial rank.<sup>57</sup>

The imperial quality of the virtual titles connecting Western and Southern Europe with the Aegean world helps us to understand the fascination of the French princes eager to obtain them. Especially in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries the insidious and subliminal decrease of power of the Byzantine Empire enabled certain Western princes and their followers to seize the gilded traditions of the Byzantine imperial community as well as elements of its symbolic communication. This was the case in Sicily, where the Normans imitated the rituals and symbols of the Byzantine emperor.<sup>58</sup> It was also the case in Constantinople in 1204, when a Flemish count was elected to be successor of the Byzantine emperors. In the case of Sicily, an imperial community arose which controlled large parts of the Mediterranean

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54 See for the Papal-Angevin Alliance: Housley, Norman: *The Italian Crusades. The Papal-Angevin Alliance and the Crusades against Christian Lay Powers, 1254–1343*. Clarendon Press: Oxford 1982.

55 See Hendrickx, Benjamin: “Régestes des empereurs latins de Constantinople (1204–1261/1272)”. *Byzantina* 14, 1988, pp. 7–221, here: no. 254, p. 158 for Baldwin II being 1249 in Damiette.

56 Kiesewetter, Andreas: “Karl II. von Anjou, Neapel und Marseille”. In: Isabelle Bonnot (ed.): *Marseille et ses rois de Naples. La diagonale angevine, 1265–1382*. Edisud: Aix-en-Provence 1988, pp. 61–75.

57 See for the Mediterranean traditions of emperors and empires in general Burkhardt, *Mediterranes Kaisertum* 2014.

58 Burkhardt, “Sicily’s Imperial Heritage” 2013.



during the Norman and Hohenstaufen period. In the case of the Latin Empire, however, the imperial community was only half-pint, more title than empire.<sup>59</sup> Charles I of Anjou played an important part in combining both traditions.

After Frederick's death, the imperial community of Sicily did not disappear. The legitimacy of Manfred, the illegitimate son of Frederick II, was disputed.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, Manfred was able to follow his father's policy against papal intentions: during the papal attempts to depose him, Manfred came into contact with Peter III of Aragon. In 1262 Peter married Manfred's and Helena's daughter, Constantia. With this marriage Peter could once legitimate his landing in Sicily following the Sicilian Vespere and his attempts to conquer the whole Angevin reign in Southern Italy.<sup>61</sup>

Manfred was also strongly involved in the problems of the Peloponnese: together with the Prince of Achaea, William II of Villehardouin, Manfred was allied with Michael II Angelos, the ruler of the Despotate of Epirus, which at this time included not only Epirus in northwestern Greece but also the western part of Greek Macedonia and Thessaly and parts of western Greece.<sup>62</sup> Manfred married Michael's daughter, Helena Angelina Doukaina, and with the dowry he acquired the rights for Dyrrhachium and the is-

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59 Burkhardt, *Mediterranes Kaisertum* 2014, pp. 234–377.

60 Friedl, Christian: "Herrschaftskonzeption bei König Manfred. Staufisches Ideal und Scheitern der realpolitischen Ansätze". In: Engels, David / Geis, Lioba / Kleu, Michael (eds.): *Zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit. Herrschaft auf Sizilien von der Antike bis zum Spätmittelalter*. Steiner: Stuttgart 2010, pp. 325–336; Brantl, Markus: "Kanzlei und Verwaltung unter König Manfred. Das Mandat. Mit einem Anhang ungedruckter Mandate". *Archiv für Diplomatik* 41, 1995, pp. 339–363; Bergmann, Arnold: *König Manfred von Sizilien. Seine Geschichte vom Tode Urbans IV. bis zur Schlacht bei Benevent 1264–1266*. Heidelberg 1909.

61 Schadek, Hans: "Tunis oder Sizilien? Die Ziele der aragonischen Mittelmeerpolitik unter Peter III. von Aragon". *Spanische Forschungen* 1. 28, 1975, pp. 335–349.

62 Berg, Beverly: "Manfred of Sicily and the Greek East". *Byzantina* 14, 1988, pp. 263–289. See also in general Prinzing, Günter: "In Search of Diasporas in the Byzantine 'Successor State' of Epirus (c. 1210–1267)". In: Christ, Georg et. al. (eds.): *Union in Separation. Diasporic Groups and Identities in the Eastern Mediterranean (1100–1800)*. (Viella Historical Research 1). Viella: Rome 2015, pp. 123–136.

land of Corfu.<sup>63</sup> The coalition of Michael, Manfred and William tried to re-conquer Thessalonica from Niacean forces, but the coalition was soon after beaten by Nicaean forces in the Battle of Pelagonia 1259.<sup>64</sup> Two years after this battle, Constantinople was seized by Nicaean forces, and the Latin emperor Baldwin II fled to Negroponte.<sup>65</sup> The Byzantine recapture of Constantinople led the popes to the conviction that Sicily was not only to be considered the main base for a new crusade – as it had been under Frederick II. Sicily should rather first be the main base for the recapture of Constantinople and then, only together with Constantinople, it would be the main base for a new crusade (under French leadership).<sup>66</sup>

This leads us to the important role of the papacy in the Mediterranean. In the late 11<sup>th</sup> century the papacy was on its way to becoming an important Mediterranean power. The papacy had been founded in the slipstream of the late antique Roman Empire. It then maneuvered into the inter-imperial space between the Frankish and Byzantine Empires and rose with the es-

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63 Nicol, Donald M.: *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1972, pp. 23–42; Geanakoplos, Deno John: “Greco-Latin Relations on the Eve of the Byzantine Restoration: The Battle of Pelagonia-1259”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 7, 1953, pp. 99–141, here: pp. 103–104.

64 Mihajlovski, Robert: “The Battle of Pelagonia, 1259. A New Look at the March Routes and Topography”. *Byzantinoslavica* 64, 2006, pp. 275–284; Wirth, Peter: “Von der Schlacht von Pelagonia bis zur Wiedereroberung Konstantinopels”. *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 55, 1962, pp. 30–37; Longnon, Jean: “La bataille de Pélagonia en 1259”. *Journal des Savants* 3, 1955, pp. 136–138; Geanakoplos, “Greco-Latin Relations” 1953.

65 Geanakoplos, Deno John: “The Byzantine Recovery of Constantinople from the Latins in 1261. A Chrysobull of Michael VIII Palaeologus in Favor of Hagia Sophia”. In: Geanakoplos, Deno John (ed.): *Constantinople and the West. Essays on the late Byzantine (Palaeologan) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman churches*. University of Wisconsin Press: Madison (Wis.) 1989, pp. 173–188; Macrides, Ruth J.: “The new Constantine and the new Constantinople – 1261?”. *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 6, 1980, pp. 13–41.

66 Dunbabin, Jean: *The French in the Kingdom of Sicily. 1266–1305*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2011, p. 23. See for Manfred’s attempts to come to terms with the papacy (via Baldwin II) Wolff, Robert Lee: “Mortgage and Redemption of an Emperor’s Son: Castile and the Latin Empire of Constantinople”. *Speculum* 29, 1, 1954, pp. 45–84, here pp. 65–67.

establishment of the Western Roman Empire.<sup>67</sup> The density of the interconnections between the papacy and Byzantium changed over time. For a long time the maritime connectivity between Constantinople, Ravenna and Rome helped the papacy to survive the storms of the Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. But with the Arab expansion some of the trans-Mediterranean connections had been interrupted. With the arrival of the Normans in Southern Italy and the crusades, the popes were involved in the problems of the Mediterranean world.<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, as a result of the Gregorian reform in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the popes with their claims to far-reaching competences over the national churches of Europe considered emperors and kings of Western Europe *ratione peccati* as office holders to be under their spiritual control, but the popes also began to consider some of the European kings as direct vassals to the seat of St. Peter.<sup>69</sup> Hence, from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with the papacy there was a third power – beside the Western Roman and the Byzantine emperor – that claimed to legitimate and to control royal rule. An important point in the papal scheme of evaluation was if the Christian monarchs were willing to listen to the papal admonitions, to fulfill the papal will, to fight against heretics and to go crusading.

Manfred was failing in all points. The mentioned papal arguments concerning the position of Sicily as the stepping stone for a new crusade convinced Louis IX, too, to give up his opposition against the disposal of the Hohenstaufen in Sicily. For two years, pope Urban IV negotiated with Manfred about his possible support regarding the recapture of Constan-

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67 Whalen, Brett Edward: *The Medieval Papacy*. (European History in Perspective). Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2014.

68 Cf. Burkhardt, Stefan: “Petrus super aquas maris incessit. Das Papsttum in der mittelalterlichen mediterranen Welt”. In: Schneidmüller, Bernd et. al. (eds.): *Die Päpste. Amt und Herrschaft in Antike, Mittelalter und Renaissance*. (Die Päpste 1). Schnell & Steiner: Regensburg 2016, pp. 299–316 and Burkhardt, Stefan: “Between Empires. Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages”. In: Jaritz, Gerhard / Szende, Katalin (eds.): *Medieval East Central Europe in a Comparative Perspective. From Frontier Zones to Lands in Focus*. Taylor & Francis Ltd: Abington / New York 2016, pp. 47–61.

69 See the contributions in Schimmelpfennig, Bernhard: *Das Papsttum. Von der Antike bis zur Renaissance*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 2009.

tinople. Parallel, however, Urban negotiated with Charles of Anjou about the conditions of substituting Manfred. These negotiations and Charles' war against Manfred were successful.<sup>70</sup>

For the pope, Charles was a very capable but also dangerous candidate. He was keen to rule his own realm, and though in many points his political aims corresponded with the aims of the curia, he was not willing to subordinate his power completely to papal supremacy. Charles' intentions apparently were to take over all the power and all the honors of the Hohenstaufen and to become an adequate leader of the imperial community of Sicily.<sup>71</sup>

He not only was appointed senator of Rome but was also crowned king of Sicily in St. Peter's Church, perhaps with an *ordo* normally used to crown emperors.<sup>72</sup> The imperial community of Sicily partly accepted Charles, but the composition of this imperial community changed: more and more French officials came to Southern Italy with Charles. This new imperial community took over some of the traditional aims of Norman resp. Hohenstaufen time and combined them with the aims of French-speaking nobles of the Mediterranean.<sup>73</sup>

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70 Berg, Beverly: "Manfred of Sicily and Urban IV: Negotiations of 1262". *Medieval Studies* 55, 1993, pp. 111–136.

71 Dunbabin, Jean: "Creating an Image for a New Kingship: Charles I of Anjou, King of the Regno". In: Bolton, Brenda M. / Meek, Christine E. (eds.): *Aspects of Power and Authority in the Middle Ages*. (International Medieval Research 14). Brepols: Turnhout 2007, pp. 23–31.

72 Burkhardt, *Mediterranes Kaisertum* 2014, pp. 122–123.

73 See for the financial and military potential of this community: Percy, William Armstrong: *The Revenues of the Kingdom of Sicily under Charles I of Anjou, 1266–1285, and their Relationship to the Vespers*. Diss. Princeton University 1964; Göbbels, Joachim: *Das Militärwesen im Königreich Sizilien zur Zeit Karls I. von Anjou 1265–1285*. (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 29). Hiersemann: Stuttgart 1984; Pryor, John H.: "The Galleys of Charles I of Anjou, King of Sicily: ca. 1269–84". *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 24, 1993, pp. 33–103; Pryor, John H.: "Soldiers of Fortune in the Fleets of Charles I of Anjou, King of Sicily, ca. 1265–85". In: France, John (ed.): *Mercenaries and Paid Men. Proceedings of a Conference Held at the University of Wales, Swansea, 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> July 2005*. Brill: Leiden / Boston 2008, pp. 119–142; Dunbabin, Jean: "The Household and Entourage of Charles I of Anjou, King of the Regno, 1266–85". *Historical Research* 77, 2004, pp. 313–336; Dourou-

This new imperial community of Southern Italy was keen to rule over Dalmatia, the Peloponnese, Northern Africa, some of the islands of the Levant, the kingdom of Jerusalem and probably Constantinople.<sup>74</sup> Then, after the conquest of Constantinople in 1261 Baldwin II, the former Latin emperor of Constantinople, came to Southern Italy. For him, Charles of Anjou was the central figure in his hope to recapture Constantinople. Baldwin had been desperately and often fruitlessly looking for support for a new military campaign. Even in the years before 1261, Baldwin had travelled around the courts of Europe trying to collect money and help for his dominion.<sup>75</sup>

In 1267, Baldwin and Charles concluded the treaty of Viterbo to recapture Constantinople together: Charles should directly obtain Albania and Corfu and he should become suzerain over Achaea and over most of the Aegean islands – traditional Norman and Hohenstaufen aims. Furthermore, he should receive one third of the conquered land. Charles himself only had to equip 2000 knights for the war against Byzantium. Constantinople itself should be reserved for Baldwin. Baldwin's only son Philip of Courtenay had to marry Beatrice, Charles' daughter. If they both would die without heirs, their rights would return to Charles himself.<sup>76</sup>

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Eliopoulou, Maria: "Les 'Etrangers latins' en Romanie angevine sous Charles Ier (1266–85)". *Byzantinoslavica* 59, 1998, pp. 65–70.

74 Boehm, Laetitia: "De Karlingis imperator Karolus, princeps totius Europae. Zur Orientpolitik Karls I. von Anjou". *Historisches Jahrbuch* 88, 1968, pp. 1–35; Nicol, Donald MacGillivray: "The Relations of Charles of Anjou with Nikephoros of Epiros". *Byzantinische Forschungen* 4, 1972, pp. 170–194; Dunbabin, Jean: "Charles I of Anjou and the Development of Medieval Political Ideas". *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 45, 2001, pp. 110–126; for later times see: Housley, Norman J.: "Charles II of Naples and the Kingdom of Jerusalem". *Byzantion* 54, 1984, pp. 527–535; Chrissis, Nikolas G.: *Crusading in Frankish Greece. A Study of Byzantine-Western Relations and Attitudes, 1204–1282*. (Medieval Church Studies 22). Brepols: Turnhout 2012, pp. 179–249.

75 See Wolff 1954.

76 Buchon, Jean Alexandre C.: *Recherches et matériaux pour servir à une histoire de la domination Française aux 13e, 14e et 15e siècles dans les provinces demembrées de l'empire Grec à la suite de la 4e Croisade, vol. 1: Eclaircissements historiques, généalogiques et numismatiques sur la principauté française de Morée*. Batignolles-Monceaux: Paris 1840, pp. 30–37.

This pact, however, was not only concluded between Baldwin and Charles. Among the contracting parties was also the Prince of Achaea, William II Villehardouin. So in a way, the remains of the imperial community of the Latin Empire joined the connection as well, or rather they had worked for the signing of the treaty. The Franks in the Aegean accepted Charles as their feudal lord to save their estates. Further regulations said that Charles' son Philip should marry William's daughter, Isabella of Villehardouin. Philip later took the title of "King of Thessalonica". Again, at a very important point for the history of the relations between East and West, this title appears. But how had this title come to Philip? The complexity of the lines of title holders shows to some degree the different connections between the Mediterranean communities and the attempts of the Angevins to hold control over the Frankish Aegean world.

As we have mentioned, Frederick II had acquired the title "King of Thessalonica" from Demetrius. In 1239 Frederick gave the title to Bonifatius II of Montferrat (son of William VI). After the death of Bonifatius, the title came to his son William VII. William gave this title as dowry to his daughter Yolande when she was marrying the Byzantine emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos. With its return to Byzantium, this "Western line of virtuality" had finished.<sup>77</sup> But there were other lines of virtuality concerning the kingdom of Thessalonica: the Latin emperor Baldwin II had also sold the title "King of Thessalonica" to Hugh IV, duke of Burgundy<sup>78</sup> (the rights of the Montferrat were seen as null and void because they came from Frederick, a disposed emperor and condemned heretic). The title was transmitted over decades in the family of the dukes of Burgundy up to Hugh V. Hugh V exchanged the title for the heritage of his brother Louis of Burgundy. Louis himself was also "Prince of Achaea": he married in 1313 Matilda of Hainaut, the daughter of Isabella of Villardouin. The marriage was intended to unite the Angevin and Burgundian houses and perhaps to concentrate the virtual Aegean titles in one hand.<sup>79</sup>

There was a third line of virtuality: in 1274 Philipp of Anjou was granted the title of "King of Thessalonica". This third "kingship" followed from

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77 Lock 1995, p. 67.

78 Wolff 1954, pp. 67–68; Lock 1995, p. 67.

79 Topping, "The Morea 1311–1364" 1975.

the treaty of Viterbo. In this treaty it was agreed upon that the donation of Thessalonica to Hugh (second “line of virtuality”) was only valid if Hugh would support Baldwin and his heir, Philip of Courtenay, in recuperating Constantinople. In the case that Hugh would fail, the kingdom should go to Charles I and his heirs. So in 1274 Philip of Courtenay, the heir of Baldwin II, gave the title to Philip of Anjou.<sup>80</sup>

After the early death of Philipp of Anjou in 1277 the whole area formerly claimed by the Latin emperor was theoretically in the hands of Charles of Anjou and his heirs: he held the titles of “King of Thessalonica” and was heir to the title of “Prince of Achaea” (after the death of William of Villehardouin). Charles was leader of two imperial communities, united in his person to form a new imperial community: the community of Sicily and the community of the former Latin empire.<sup>81</sup>

The realization of Charles’ claims and the territorial expansion into the Aegean did, however, not really work: Charles succeeded in some way to redirect the Eighth Crusade to Tunis, whose lords had been vassals to Norman and Hohenstaufen kings and emperors over centuries. Charles evidently did not want to have his brother’s crusade near Constantinople, but what was more important: the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Palaiologus cleverly propagated the union of the Greek and the Latin church and so the pope prohibited all attempts to recapture Constantinople. It was only from 1280 onwards that Charles tried to realize his claims concerning Constantinople: as Martin IV was well-disposed towards Charles, he allowed a new crusade against the Byzantine emperor in order to recapture Constantinople. Furthermore, as William II Villehardouin had died in 1278, Charles was now – as mentioned above – Prince of Achaea. Venice promised support and so Charles could probably assemble 400 ships and

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80 In the treaty of Viterbo Charles I said to Baldwin II: *Ad hec, si forsan illi duo [Hugh and his son] cum quibus aliquas conventiones habetis super regno Thessalonicensi, in earumdem conventionum observatione defecerint, vultis et consentis quòd ipsum regnum Thessalonicense, omne dominium et quelibet jura quecumque in eodem regno Thessalonicensi habetis vel habere debetis, nos nostrique in predicto regno heredes, in casum predictum, plenissimè, si voluerimus, habeamus in predictâ nostrâ tertiâ computandâ* (Buchon 1840, p. 34).

81 See Gill, Joseph: *Byzantium and the Papacy 1198–1400*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick (New Jersey) 1979, p. 177.

around 27.000 men. The Sicilian Vespers, however, prevented Charles from attacking Constantinople.<sup>82</sup>

But the claims were maintained: the title “Emperor of Constantinople”, inherited by the daughter of Philip of Courtenay, Catherine, along with the titles “Prince of Achaea”, “King of Thessalonica” and “Lord of the Kingdom of Albania” contained the legitimating potential for the expansion of an imperial community. This imperial community – as we have seen – consisted now of members who shared manifold knowledge and various ideas of ruling over vast areas: traditions of Norman and Hohenstaufen Sicily combined with traditions of the Aegean realm and of the French kingdom. The hegemony in the Mediterranean world, which this community, bound together by the leadership of Charles I, possessed from 1266 till 1282, made it possible to conquer or collect titles that legitimated and decorated the imperial rule of its leader, Charles of Anjou.

After the death of Charles the titles were split between different branches of the Capetian dynasty and other French-speaking dynasties. The most important title “Prince of Achaea” was for example held by Charles II, his sons Philip I of Taranto and King Robert I of Sicily and also by Robert of Taranto, Philip II of Taranto and finally James of Baux. This title was often combined with the even more respected title “Emperor of Constantinople” as it was the case with Philip I of Taranto, Robert of Taranto, Philipp II of Taranto and James of Baux.<sup>83</sup>

These titles had not only been panoplies or hollow words: they were containers of legitimating potential and traditions for ruling the Aegean world, they ornated their holders with a high rank and a potentially important role in the history of salvation, connecting them closely to the popes. With these titles “affinities of engagement and marriage” were established, within the French-speaking nobility, but also between the French, Spanish, Italian and Hungarian nobles and more generally between the Western world and

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82 Chrissis 2012, pp. 179–249; Dunbabin, Charles I 1998, pp. 89–98.

83 Topping, “The Morea, 1311–1364” 1975; Id.: “The Morea, 1364–1460” 1975. See for the multiple intentions and problems under Charles II of Sicily: Kiesewetter, Andreas: *Die Anfänge der Regierung König Karls II. von Anjou (1278–1295). Das Königreich Neapel, die Grafschaft Provence und der Mittelmeerraum zu Ausgang des 13. Jahrhunderts.* (Historische Studien 451). Matthesen Verlag: Husum 1999, pp. 338–370.



Byzantium. These titles were the symbolic summit of a whole “mountain range” of personal networks spreading over countries and continents, over dynastic and language boundaries; they integrated and stabilized these imperial communities (e.g. via matrimony) and made them capable of acting. For the members of the imperial communities in exile, these titles symbolized and held forth wealth and territories which could be achieved if they supported their holder.

The princes mentioned above were – like their ancestor Charles of Anjou – trying to find their own estate and to realize their inherited claims. The possibilities and tensions within the imperial communities determined at which point and how successful these princes were realizing their plans. There was however a great, deadly danger: being member of an imperial community could intoxicate you with virtuality.



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## Imperiale Konzepte in der mittelalterlichen Historiographie Polens vom 12. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert

Als ich die Einladung bekam, über imperiale Konzepte der Historiographie im polnischen Mittelalter zu reden,<sup>1</sup> war ich mir zunächst nicht ganz sicher, ob ich nicht die berühmte Nadel im Heuhaufen suchen müsste. Von diesem vorschnellen Urteil bin ich vollkommen abgerückt. Es ist in der polnischen Historiographie – die Hagiographie wird ausgenommen, weil diese den hiesigen Rahmen doch sprengen würde<sup>2</sup> – wirklich einiges zu finden, was ich im Folgenden vorstellen möchte.

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- 1 Der Artikel basiert auf einem Vortrag in einer größeren Sektion auf dem International Medieval Congress 2014 in Leeds. – Die hier verwendeten Abkürzungen / Siglen für die verwendeten Chroniken in chronologischer Abfolge sind: **Gallus, Chron.** = *Galli Anonymi cronicae et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, hrsg. von Maleczynski, Karol. (Monumenta Poloniae Historica N.S. 2). Polska Akademia Umiejętności: Krakau 1952; **Gallus/Polens Anfänge** = *Polens Anfänge – Gallus Anonymus: Chronik und Taten der Herzöge und Fürsten von Polen*, übers., eingel. und erkl. von Bujnoch, Josef. (Slavische Geschichtsschreiber 10). Styria: Graz et al. 1978.; **Vinc., CP** = [Vincent Kadłubek] *Chronica Polonorum Mistrza Wincentego Zwanego Kadłubka*, hrsg. von Plezia, Marian. (MPH NS 11). PWN: Krakau 1994; **Vinc. Chronik** = *Die Chronik der Polen des Magisters Vincentius*, hrsg. von Mühle, Eduard. (FSGA 48). WBG: Darmstadt 2014; **Chron. Pol.-Sil.** = [*Chronicon Polono-Silesiacum*] *Chronica Polonorum* (Kronika Polska), hrsg. von Ćwikliński, Ludwik. (MPH III). o.V. Lwów 1878, S. 578–656; **Chron. Pol. mai.** = *Chronica Poloniae maioris*, hrsg. von Kürbis, Brygida. (MPH SN t. 8). PWN: Warschau 1970; **Chron. Dzirs.** = *Chronica Dzirsuae*, hrsg. von Pawłowski, Krzysztof. (MHP NS XV). Nakł. Polskiej Akad. Umiejętności: Krakau 2013; **CPP** = [*Chronica Principum Poloniae*] *Kronika książąt polskich*, hrsg. von Węclewski, Zygmunt. (MPH t. III). Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich: Lwów 1878, S. 423–578; **Długosz Annales** = *Długossii Iohannis, Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae, Libri XII*. Polska Akad. Umiejętności: Warschau 1964–2005.
  - 2 Obgleich diese zum Teil auch politisch aufgeladen war, hätte die Berücksichtigung der hagiographischen Quellen eine eigene Studie erfordert. Die wichtigen hagiographischen Werke findet man bei David, Pierre: *Les sources de l'histoire*

Es sei zunächst betont, dass es selbstverständlich um Vorstellungen der Geschichtsschreiber geht,<sup>3</sup> die nicht deckungsgleich mit der politischen Realität des polnischen Mittelalters sind. Über diese Vorstellungen lassen sich allerdings bekanntlich viele Aussagen über das Selbstverständnis einer gegebenen Gruppe, hier der polnischen Eliten, machen.

Zu Beginn soll in groben Zügen die polnische Geschichte speziell in Bezug auf das Thema skizziert werden: Im ostmitteleuropäischen Raum nahm Polen eine exponierte Stellung ein. Besonders im Spätmittelalter handelte es sich um ein großes multiethnisches Herrschaftsgelände mit ca. drei Millionen Einwohnern. Im Hochmittelalter geht man (vor der ersten polnisch-litauischen Union von 1386) von ca. 1,5 Millionen Einwohnern aus.<sup>4</sup> – Die meiste Zeit seit der Taufe Mieszkos I. im Jahr 966, die normalerweise als Eintrittsdatum Polens in die europäische Geschichte angesehen wird, war Polen ein Herzogtum (*ducatus, regnum*); nur vereinzelt und auch meist nur kurz trugen seine Fürsten den Titel eines Königs (*rex*), nämlich: Bolesław I., Mieszko II., Bolesław II., Przemysł II. Bis ca. 1320 war das polnische Fürstentum immer wieder existenzbedrohenden äußeren und inneren Gefährdungen ausgesetzt und unterlag seit 1138 (teils auch schon

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*de Pologne à l'époque des Piasts (963–1386)*. Les Belles lettres: Paris 1934; moderner auf Polnisch: Drelicharz, Wojciech: *Idea zjednoczenia królestwa w średniowiecznym dziejopisarstwie polskim* [Die Idee der Vereinigung des Königreichs in der mittelalterlichen polnischen Historiographie]. Towarzystwo Naukowego Societas Vistulana: Krakau 2012.

- 3 Dieser Begriff wurde für die Historiographie, obgleich schon zuvor vorhanden, maßgeblich geprägt durch Goetz, Hans-Werner: „Vorstellungsgeschichte. Menschliche Vorstellungen und Meinungen als Dimension der Vergangenheit. Bemerkungen zu einem jüngeren Arbeitsfeld der Geschichtswissenschaft als Beitrag zu einer Methodik der Quellenauswertung“. *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 61, 1979, S. 253–271 [ND: Ders.: *Vorstellungsgeschichte. Gesammelte Schriften zu Wahrnehmungen, Deutungen und Vorstellungen im Mittelalter*, hrsg. von Aurast, Anna et al. Verlag Dr. Dieter Winkler: Bochum 2007, S. 3–17]. Nochmals konzise zusammengefasst und mit weiterer Forschungsliteratur: Ders.: *Gott und die Welt. Religiöse Vorstellungen des frühen und hohen Mittelalters. Teil 1, Band 1: Das Gottesbild*. (Orbis mediaevalis. Vorstellungswelten des Mittelalters 13). De Gruyter: Berlin 2011, S. 15–30.
- 4 Rhode, Gotthold: *Geschichte Polens. Ein Überblick*. WBG: Darmstadt 1980, S. 20.

zuvor) zentrifugalen Teilungstendenzen, die von den regionalen piastischen Teilfürsten ausgingen.<sup>5</sup>

Mit dem seit 1295 und dann besonders seit 1320 wiedererstarkten Polen fielen gleich zwei Großregionen als relativ selbständig aus dem polnischen Herrschaftsverband heraus: Masowien und Schlesien. Dort herrschten weiterhin bis in die Frühe Neuzeit Zweige der piastischen Dynastie, während die Piasten im eigentlichen Polen mit dem Tod Kasimirs III. (1370) im Mannesstamm ausstarben und wenig später (seit 1385/86) von den Jagiellonen beerbt wurden. Von einem ausgedehnten Reich, das unserem Verständnis eines Imperiums nahekommt, kann eigentlich *realiter* erst mit den verschiedenen polnisch-litauischen Unionen in der Zeit seit dem späten 14. Jahrhundert gesprochen werden. Das 16. Jahrhundert, in welchem Polen-Litauen zeitweise die ganze ostmitteleuropäische Großregion dominierte, wird nicht umsonst in der polnischen Geschichtsforschung als das ‚goldene Zeitalter‘ angesehen.<sup>6</sup>

Einige wichtige Eigenheiten des hoch- und spätmittelalterlichen Polen seien noch kurz angesprochen: (a) Der Zuzug besonders deutscher Siedler in die großen Städte (Krakau, Breslau),<sup>7</sup> besonders in Schlesien auch aufs Land, ab dem frühen 13. Jahrhundert veränderte die ethnische Zusammensetzung nachhaltig – die Eigenentwicklung Schlesiens bis in die Neuzeit ist mit dieser Veränderung stark verbunden.<sup>8</sup> (b) Der polnische kleinere Adel (*szlachta*) bildete nicht erst seit dem *liberum veto* der Frühen Neuzeit ein wichtiges Element im polnischen Herrschaftsverband, sondern bereits seit dem späten 14. Jahrhundert (im Kaschauer Privileg 1374 und durch das berühmte *neminem captivabimus* 1433 etc.). (c) Die direkte Nachbarschaft zum römisch-deutschen Reich beeinflusste Polen während seiner gesamten

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5 Mühle, Eduard: *Die Piasten. Polen im Mittelalter*. C.H. Beck: München 2011.

6 Vgl. Bömelburg, Hans-Jürgen / Kizik, Edmund: *WBG Deutsch-Polnische Geschichte – Frühe Neuzeit: Altes Reich und Alte Republik. Deutsch-polnische Beziehungen und Verflechtungen 1500–1806*. Bd. II. WBG: Darmstadt 2014.

7 Vgl. die verschiedenen Beiträge im Sammelband: Mühle, Eduard (Hrsg.): *Rechtstadtgründungen im mittelalterlichen Polen*. (Städteforschung A 81). Böhlau: Köln 2011.

8 Rüter, Andreas: *Region und Identität: Schlesien und das Reich im späten Mittelalter*. (Neue Forschungen zur Schlesiens Geschichte 20). Böhlau: Köln 2010, S. 203–211.

Geschichte sehr. Obgleich es nicht wie Böhmen über Lehnseide an das Reich gebunden war, waren doch besonders in den ersten 200 Jahren ab dem 10. Jahrhundert immer wieder Tendenzen vom Reich ausgegangen, Polen in eine Abhängigkeit und ständige Tributpflicht zu zwingen.<sup>9</sup>

Die angesprochenen Zerfallsgefahren und äußeren Risiken standen den polnischen Eliten sicherlich deutlich vor Augen. Man mühte sich daher in den historiographischen Werken besonders um einen Einheitsgedanken, den man entweder über den Personenkult der polnischen Heiligen (angefangen mit den Heiligen Adalbert und Stanislaus, die beide sehr schnell heiliggesprochen wurden)<sup>10</sup> oder aber über die konstruierte (glorreiche) gemeinsame Früh- und Vorgeschichte zu manifestieren suchte. Dabei wurden die ersten historisch nachgewiesenen Fürsten (Mieszko I., Bolesław I. der Tapfere) meist in die Vorgeschichte einbezogen. Obgleich diese historischen Fürsten real existierten, muss dem modernen Rezipienten doch deutlich vor Augen stehen, dass diese Herrscher von dem ersten und zweiten Chronisten Polens – Gallus und Vincent –, und in Folge von allen weiteren Chronisten, sehr stark konstruiert und inszeniert wurden. *Pars pro toto* kann hier die Erzählung über die Gnesenfahrt von Otto III. und das Zusammentreffen mit Bolesław III. genannt werden;<sup>11</sup> Thietmar von Merseburg, ein Reichsbischof und Zeitgenosse der beiden Herrscher, berichtet 1018 nur kurz über diese Zusammenkunft,<sup>12</sup> während Gallus rund hundert Jahre später ausgiebig darüber zu erzählen weiß und ganz sicher vieles dabei erfunden hat oder zumindest stark übertreibt.

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- 9 Hierfür die verschiedenen Beiträge in: Wünsch, Thomas (Hrsg.): *Das Reich und Polen: Parallelen, Interaktionen und Formen der Akkulturation im hohen und späten Mittelalter*. (Vorträge und Forschungen 59). Thorbecke: Ostfildern 2003.
- 10 Pauk, Marcin: „Eine Dynastie oder mehrere? Herrschaft und ihre Legitimation in der politischen Kultur Polens (12.-13. Jahrhundert)“. In: Vercamer, Grischa / Wólkiewicz, Ewa (Hrsg.): *Legitimation und Identitätsbildung bei Fürstendynastien in Polen und dem Reich im Spiegel schriftlicher Quellen (12.-15. Jahrhundert)*. Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 2016, S. 29–55, hier: S. 35, 37–44.
- 11 Siehe die verschiedenen Beiträge in: Borgolte, Michael (Hrsg.): *Polen und Deutschland vor 1000 Jahren. Die Berliner Tagung über den „Akt von Gnesen“*. (Europa im Mittelalter 5). Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2002.
- 12 *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg*, hrsg. von Holtzmann, Robert. (MGH. Script. rer. Germ. N. S. 9). Weidmann: Berlin 1935, IV, 45, S. 183–184.

Oggleich der historisch nachweisbare Einfluss der piastischen Fürsten in der Großregion Ostmitteleuropas – gegenüber den Kiewer Rus‘, den Böhmen, den Ungarn, den baltischen und prußischen Stämmen – nicht als gering eingeschätzt werden darf, scheint es auf den ersten Blick unpassend, von einem *imperium* zu sprechen. Offenbar haben die polnischen Chronisten dies ähnlich gesehen, da sich nur für die historisch schwer zu fassende Vor- und Frühzeit, bis Anfang des 11. Jahrhunderts, imperiales Vokabular in den historiographischen Werken festmachen lassen. Stichprobenartig habe ich spätere, für Polen einschneidende Ereignisse überprüft, die sich als historische Grundpfeiler für imperiale Anleihen angeboten hätten.<sup>13</sup> Durchgehend in der polnischen Historiographie ist bei diesen wichtigen Daten eben gerade keine Rede von Imperien oder imperialen Bestrebungen Polens. Letztlich muss man für die historische Bezugszeit in den Chroniken dann doch erkennen, dass die Erhöhung zum König für die polnischen Fürsten bereits ein bedeutender Schritt war. Viel eher als über einen potentiellen polnischen *imperator* wird also darüber gehandelt, ob sich ein polnischer Fürst überhaupt für die Königswürde eignet oder eben nicht (*dyademate regio insignitus* oder *dyademate regio insignitus minime*).<sup>14</sup> Wahrscheinlich hätte man sich für die spätere Zeit (ab dem 12. Jahrhundert) als Geschichtsschreiber doch zu sehr exponiert, vielleicht sogar lächerlich gemacht, wenn man seinen Lesern mit imperialen Vergleichen gekommen wäre.

Es ist also somit die Konstruktion der polnischen Vor- und Frühgeschichte, auf die wir uns hier zu konzentrieren haben. Die polnische Chronistik (abgesehen von einigen Annalen und hagiographischen Werken) ist im Grunde genommen recht übersichtlich:

- Gallus Anonymus, *Chronica et Gesta Ducum sive Principum Polonorum* (1113–1116)
- Vincentius (Vincent) Kadłubek, *Chronica Polonorum*, (appr. 1204)

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13 So z.B. die Heiligsprechung des Krakauer Bischofs Stanislaus 1253 oder die Erhebung Herzog Przemysł II. 1295 zum König von Polen, beispielsweise in der Chron. Pol. Mai., worin keine Rede von imperialen Konzepten ist, weder bei der Heiligsprechung Stanislaws (S. 99–101) noch beim Tod Przemysł I. (oggleich dort eine lange Lobesrede erfolgt, S. 108).

14 Chron. Pol. Mai. jeweils für 1033 (S. 18) und 1076/79 (S. 21).

- Cronica Petri comitis Poloniae das sogenannte: Carmen Mauri (zwischen 1153–1163)
- Ungarisch-Polnische Chronik (ca. 1221–34)
- **Chronica Polonorum / Chronicon Polono-Silesiacum (um 1280) (wahrscheinlich Engelbert von Lubiąż)**
- **Chronica Poloniae Maioris (Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts) (angenommene Autorenschaft: Godziśław Baczko / Jan von Czarnków)**
- **Chronica Dzirsvae (Kronika Dzierzwy oder Mierzwy im Polnischen) (am Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts)**
- Joannis de Czarnkow, Chronicon Polonorum (Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts)
- **Peter von Byczyna, Chronica Principum Polonie (1382–86)**
- **Jan Długosz, Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae, Libri XII (1455–1480)**

Die gekennzeichneten Werke wurden für diesen Artikel herangezogen, während die Auswertung der anderen Werke für das Thema irrelevant ist, da dort keine Vorgeschichte erzählt wird.

Bei den zu besprechenden Werken handelt es sich interessanterweise jeweils um Auftragsarbeiten:<sup>15</sup> Gallus und Vincent betreffen dabei noch

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15 Vgl. Kersken, Norbert: *Geschichtsschreibung im Europa der nationes. Nationalgeschichtliche Gesamtdarstellungen im Mittelalter*. (Münstersche historische Forschungen 8). Böhlau: Marburg 1995, S. 564–565. Gallus – Bolesław III.; Vincenz Kadłubek – Kasimir II.; Chronicon Polono-Silesiacum — Heinrich IV. Probus; Großpolnische Chronik – Przemysł II.; Dzierzwa-Chronik – Władysław Łokietek; *Chronica principum Polonie* – Ludwig I. von Brieg. Jedoch lassen sich diese Chroniken auch noch unterteilen: Gallus schreibt erklärtermaßen (Prohemium 6) Fürsten- und Dynastiegeschichte; das „Chronicon Polono-Silesiacum“ und die „Chronica principum Polonie“ konzentrieren sich vor allem in ihren selbständigen Teilen auf die genealogischen Zusammenhänge der schlesischen Fürsten. Auch die anderen drei Geschichtswerke haben die polnischen Herzöge und Könige im Mittelpunkt – bei Vincent allerdings ergänzt um die Vorgeschichte (hier sind auch wieder „Fürsten“ im Mittelpunkt – die heroische Vergangenheit aber des polnischen Volkes wird dadurch betont: eine lechitische Reichsideologie entwickelt). Noch weiter geht der unbekannte Krakauer Franziskaner Anfang des 14. Jahrhunderts: er weiß nicht nur von Kämpfen um die Heimat (wie schon Vincent), sondern verfasst als originäre Ergänzung eine Erklärung der Herkunft seines Volkes – eine *origo gentis*. Das Volk steht im Mittelpunkt



ganz Polen, während die späteren Werke eben im Namen eines Teilfürsten (Großpolen, Kleinpolen mit Krakau, Schlesien) verfasst wurden. Vom Umfang deutlich heraus fällt das monumentale Werk von Jan Długosz aus der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts. Gerade diesem Werk ist eigen, dass es nicht mehr herrschaftliches Auftragswerk war, sondern durch den Vorgesetzten von Jan Długosz, Bischof Zbigniew Oleśnicki von Krakau, inspiriert wurde – hier ist ein deutlicher Unterschied zu den Vorgängern zu sehen.

Wie lässt sich nun sinnvoll vorgehen? Sammelt man einfach Stellen, bei denen von *imperium* und eben nicht von *ducatus*, *regnum* oder *res publica* die Rede ist? Letztlich gibt es davon aber doch recht viel. Die Durchsicht dieser Stellen hat ergeben – und das sei schon hier festgehalten –, dass es für alle polnischen Chronisten selbstverständlich war (außer für Gallus, der erst mit Piast im späten 9. Jahrhundert einsetzte), das antike oder vorhistorische Fürstentum der Polen als *imperium Polonorum*<sup>16</sup> zu bezeichnen. Es sei aber auch darauf hingewiesen, dass die Vokabel *imperium* selbstverständlich zweideutig ist und sowohl (a) in der Bedeutung „Herrschaft“ oder „Befehlsgewalt“, (b) als auch „Königtum“ und „Fürstentum“ (wobei bei dieser doch zu fragen ist, warum ein Autor nicht *ducatus* oder *regnum* verwendet, sondern *imperium*) auftreten kann.<sup>17</sup> Findet man daher eine Stelle wie die, in der Lestek III. das *imperium* seines Vaters erbt,<sup>18</sup> so kann diese unterschiedlich interpretiert werden – er erbt die Herrschaft und/oder er erbt das Herrschaftsgebiet. Hingewiesen sei weiterhin darauf, dass – mit einer Ausnahme – kein direkter Titel *imperator* von den Chronisten benutzt wird, sondern eben immer unpersönlich von *imperium* die Rede ist. Die eine Ausnahme betrifft Vincent Kadłubek (und ihm folgen die späteren

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und nicht die Herkunft der Dynastie. Auch die Großpolnische Chronik geht so vor: Sowohl der Slaven-Exkurs im Prolog als auch die Bemerkungen über den ursprünglich herrschaftslosen Zustand vor der Zeit Kraks sprachen dafür, diese drei Chroniken „als um volksgeschichtliche Elemente erweiterte Dynastiegeschichtsschreibung“ (Kersken 1995, S. 565.) zu beschreiben.

16 Beispielsweise Vincent, CP I, 9, S. 14; Chro. Dzirs., S. 12.

17 Siehe die Einträge zu „Imperium“ im *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, im *Georges-LDHW* sowie im *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*.

18 CPP, S. 434.

Chronisten) – er nennt eine abstrakte *imperatrix Poloniae*,<sup>19</sup> welche die Ansprüche auf Tribut von Alexander dem Großen zurückweist. Damit sind ganz allgemein das Land Polen bzw. die Polen an sich gemeint.

Ohnehin fiel bei der Durchsicht des Materials zur Vorgeschichte auf, wie sehr die späteren Autoren von Gallus und Vincent abhängig waren. Selbst Długosz orientiert sich vollständig an Vincent, auch wenn er etwas blumiger berichtet und stärkere geographische Exkurse einführt. Seit der Großpolnischen Chronik vom Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts, also gut 100 Jahre nach Vincent, wird die Vorgeschichte abermals nach hinten verschoben und setzt dann bereits bei Noah und Japhet und dessen Nachfahren Lech (dem Urvater der Polen) an.<sup>20</sup>

Daher scheint es zielführender, anstatt das gesamte gesammelte Material hier auszubreiten, (a) Gallus und Vincent eingehend zu besprechen, (b) Abweichungen in den übrigen Chroniken zu thematisieren und (c) am Ende einige Diskurse zur polnischen Vorgeschichte und zu den imperialen Vorstellungen zu formulieren. Bei diesen Diskursen handelt es sich dann um allgemeine Tendenzen, die sich bei allen polnischen Geschichtsschreibern über die Jahrhunderte wiederholen und die damit auf ein speziell polnisch ausgeprägtes Imperiums-Konzept verweisen.

Als erstes jedoch müssen wir uns fragen, was ein Imperium ausmacht und wie das mittelalterliche Polen in diese moderne Definitionen hineinpassen könnte. Nach Herfried Münkler sind Imperien „Garanten und Schöpfer einer Ordnung“ – sie kennen keine gleichberechtigten Nachbarn und lehnen jede hegemoniale Gleichheit ab.<sup>21</sup> Mit Michael Mann unterscheidet Münkler vier Quellen der Macht (militärische, politische, ökonomische und ideologische Macht) und sieht besonders beim römischen Imperium den Übergang (die „augusteische Schwelle“, wie Michael Doyle es genannt hat)<sup>22</sup> von einer militärischen Gemeinschaft zu einer kulturell-ideologischen mit hoher Strahlkraft. Die mittelalterliche Fortsetzung ist nicht mehr so klar erkennbar – das römisch-deutsche Kaisertum bleibt lange Zeit diffus. Der

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19 CPI, 9, S. 15.

20 Kersken 1995, S. 532.

21 Münkler, Herfried: *Imperien. Die Logik der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten*. Rowohlt: Berlin 2005, S. 7, 18.

22 Doyle Michael: *Empires*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca et al. 1986, S. 93.

Kaiser unterschied sich in seinem Rechtsanspruch kaum vom König. Seine Macht war im Früh- und Hochmittelalter selten näher umschrieben. Als dieses aber schließlich gefordert wurde, kam das Kaisertum in Konflikt mit den umliegenden Königen.<sup>23</sup> Daher führte das hochmittelalterliche Konzept des *rex imperator in regno suo*<sup>24</sup> zur „Diffusion imperialer Traditionen in den europäischen Monarchien.“<sup>25</sup> Andersherum kann anhand der Titel von englischen und spanischen Königen (*imperator, imperium, augustus, basileus*) gut nachgewiesen werden, dass das politische Selbstverständnis hier sehr unabhängig ausgeprägt war.<sup>26</sup>

Derartige Titel wurden also mit einer großen Selbstverständlichkeit gebraucht und niemand störte sich scheinbar daran. Die Sakralität des Kaisertums findet sich bei den französischen und englischen Königen (durch die Heilungskraft) wieder. Die Selbstfindung und die referentielle Identifikation des römisch-deutschen Kaisertums – gerade im Zusammenspiel und Konflikt mit dem Papsttum<sup>27</sup> – sollte das gesamte Mittelalter anhalten. Dem

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- 23 Ubl, Karl: „Herrschaft“. In: Melville, Gerd et al. (Hrsg.): *Enzyklopädie des Mittelalters*, Bd. 1. WBG: Darmstadt 2008, S. 9–44, hier: S. 23.
- 24 Miethke, Jürgen: „Politisches Denken und monarchische Theorie. Das Kaisertum als supranationale Institution im späteren Mittelalter“. In: Ehlers, Joachim (Hrsg.): *Ansätze und Diskontinuität deutscher Nationsbildung im Mittelalter*. (Nationes 8). Thorbecke: Sigmaringen 1988, S. 121–144, hier: S. 127.
- 25 Drews, Wolfram: „Politische Theorie und imperiale Konzepte“. In: Ertl, Thomas (Hrsg.): *Europas Aufstieg: Eine Spurensuche im späten Mittelalter*. Mandelbaum: Wien 2013, S. 34–62, hier: S. 47.
- 26 Ibid., S. 40–41. Siehe zum angelsächsischen Basileus-Titel auch den Beitrag von Torben Gebhardt in diesem Band.
- 27 Als Resultat der Arbeit von Körntgen, Ludger: *Königsherrschaft und Gottes Gnade: Zu Kontext und Funktion sakraler Vorstellungen in Historiographie und Bildzeugnissen der ottonisch-frühsalischen Zeit*. (Orbis mediaevalis. Vorstellungswelten des Mittelalters 2). Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2001, muss dieser Konflikt anders gesehen werden: Der Antagonismus Papsttum-Kaisertum wurde so gar nicht gesehen. Vielmehr hat besonders Rudolf Schieffer herausgearbeitet, dass der Papst in dieser Machtposition neu vom Episkopat wahrgenommen wurde, der sakrale und von Gott gegebene König-Kaiser jedoch nicht. (Körntgen 2001, S. 450) – Wie mittlerweile in der Forschung akzeptiert ist, hat der Papst selbst den sakralen Charakter des deutschen Königs akzeptiert, was aber länger nicht so gesehen wurde. Antikes Kaiserrecht (ibid., S. 453–454) wurde von den Saliern zunächst rechtspraktisch eingesetzt. Erst in einem zweiten Schritt

frühmittelalterlichen Anspruch des *unus imperator in orbe*<sup>28</sup> oder auch des *dominus mundi*-Konzepts wurde – wir haben es schon oben bei den Titeln der Spanier und Franzosen gesehen – von den anderen europäischen Herrschern nicht entsprochen.<sup>29</sup> Andererseits gab es selbstverständlich das Verständnis der *translatio imperii* oder auch die Zwei-Schwerter-Lehre, die den ‚einen‘ römischen Kaiser hervorhoben. Besonders unter den Ottonen und Saliern äußerte sich solch ein Verständnis machtpolitisch darin, dass die deutschen Kaiser Päpste einsetzten. Auch setzten die deutschen Herrscher hier und da Könige ein (Böhmen 1085, 1158, 1198; Polen [umstritten] 1000; Zypern und Kleinarmenien 1195) und generierten daraus eine imperiale Oberherrschaft.<sup>30</sup> Dies gelang ihnen aber nur in Gebieten (und auch nur zeitweise), in denen die deutschen Kaiser ganz konkret machtpolitisch und militärisch überlegen waren. Es wurde eben keine *pax theutonica* (in Anspielung an eine *pax romana*) flächenwirksam aufgebaut. Wenn nord-östliche Nachbarn des mittelalterlichen römisch-deutschen Reichs zeitweise tributabhängig waren oder auch den Kaiser um Beistand ersuchten, so hatte das meist konkrete machtpolitische Gründe, und eigentlich kam das römisch-deutsche Reich nicht über eine von Ulrich Menzel kürzlich als zweite, schlechter bezeichnete Variante bezüglich der Definition eines Imperiums hinweg.<sup>31</sup>

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und stark unter den Staufern wurde das Kaiserrecht als Legitimationsargument gegenüber dem Papsttum eingebracht.

- 28 Kölmel Wilhelm: *Regimen christianum. Weg und Ergebnisse des Gewaltverhältnisses und des Gewaltverständnisses (8.-14. Jahrhundert)*. De Gruyter: Berlin 1970, S. 62, 146–151.
- 29 Hierzu auch Baszkiewicz, Jan: *Myśl polityczna wieków średnich* [Politisches Gedankengut im Mittelalter]. Wydawnictwo Poznańskie: Posen <sup>3</sup>2009, S. 243–247, der ebenfalls darauf hinweist, dass das System des Imperiums (*cesarstwo*) in der Zeit der Krise des deutsch-römischen Reiches auch von anderen in Beschlag genommen wurde. Vgl. ferner Miethke 1988, S. 126; Ders.: *Politiktheorie im Mittelalter. Von Thomas von Aquin bis Wilhelm von Ockham*. UTB: Tübingen 2008, S. 13; Holtzmann, Robert: „Weltherrschaftsgedanke und die Souveränität der europäischen Staaten“. *Historische Zeitschrift* 159, 1939, S. 251–264.
- 30 Ubl 2008, S. 25.
- 31 Menzel, Ulrich: *Die Ordnung der Welt: Imperium oder Hegemonie in der Hierarchie der Staatenwelt*. Suhrkamp Verlag: Berlin 2015, S. 44, unterscheidet zwischen positiven (pazifizierenden, partizipierenden) und negativen (tributären) Varianten: „Variante eins ist das friedensstiftende Imperium im Sinne der Pax

Die oben angesprochenen Konzepte wurden, so lässt sich summieren, kaum als allseits bindend angesehen, sondern waren eher ein theoretischer Unterbau, um die eigenen Interessen durchzusetzen.<sup>32</sup> Das Verständnis der hochmittelalterlichen Intellektuellen und meinungsbildenden Eliten teilte sich einerseits in ein recht steifes theoretisch-ideologisch aufgeladenes Bild eines Kaisers und eines imperium (selbstverständlich propagiert v. a. von Intellektuellen des römisch-deutschen Reichs) und andererseits in das Bild einer real gelebten Ordnung, welche wesentlich stärker auf Gleichrangigkeit der europäischen Könige beruhte – zumindest „Alteuropas“, um mit Oskar Halecki zu sprechen, der davon das nord-östliche „Neueuropa“ unterscheidet, das erst spät, im 9./10. Jahrhundert, in die römisch-christlich geprägte Kultursphäre des südlichen und westlichen Europas eintrat.<sup>33</sup>

Was letztlich an sehr konkreten Rechten dem Kaiser im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter blieb, wurde von Lupold von Bebenburg im „Tractatus de iuribus regni et imperii Romani“ (um 1340) formuliert. Daraus resultiert, dass der römisch-deutsche König vor der Krönung durch den Papst zum

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Romana, Pax Mongolica oder Pax Britannica. Trotz Eroberung, trotz Herrschaft, trotz Tributeleistung kann die Mitgliedschaft im Imperium attraktiv sein, weil das Imperium Clubgüter offeriert wie die Vorteile des römischen Bürgerrechts, die Sicherheit und Infrastruktur auf den Karawanenwegen der zentralasiatischen Seidenstraße oder die zivilisatorischen Leistungen der britischen Kolonialherrschaft, die sich z. B. in der Funktion des Englischen als lingua franca geäußert haben. [...] Die radikale Variante [also die zweite Variante!] des Imperiums ist die rein tributäre. Die Herrschaft über andere wird errichtet, um diese auszubeuten und dadurch den eigenen Machtapparat und Repräsentationsaufwand zu unterhalten.“

- 32 Drews 2013, S. 36–37. Goetz, Werner: „Die Theorie der Translatio Imperii und die Spaltung der Christenheit“. In: Meier-Walser, Reinhard et al. (Hrsg.): *Der europäische Gedanke – Hintergrund und Finalität*. Hans Seidel Stiftung: München 2000, S. 25–33. Weiterhin: Ubl 2008, S. 25: „Erst viel später und unter dem Einfluß der Wissenschaft vom römischen Recht wagte es Heinrich VII. Anfang des 14. Jahrhunderts, in einem Brief an den französischen König eine Überordnung des Kaisers geltend zu machen.“
- 33 Siehe für diese Definition ausführlich: Kersken, Norbert: „Mittelalterliche Geschichtsentwürfe in Alt- und Neueuropa“. In: Wenta, Jarosław (Hrsg.): *Die Geschichtsschreibung in Mitteleuropa. Projekte und Forschungsprobleme*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikolaja Kopernika: Toruń 1999, S. 111–134, hier: S. 111–113.

Kaiser, durch die Wahl der deutschen Fürsten berechtigt war, in Deutschland, Burgund und Italien zu herrschen. Damit herrschte er immerhin über drei *regna* – vereint unter seinem „Königtum“ (Kaisertum). Von diesem theoretischen Ansatz Lupolds war es dann nur noch ein Katzensprung zu dem zeitgleich umgesetzten *licet iuris* (1338) bzw. der Goldenen Bulle (1356), welche genau diese Rechte konkret rechtlich festlegten.

Zurückkehrend zu den Definitionen Herfried Münklers und Ulrich Menzels, dürfte es im mittelalterlichen Europa überhaupt keine Imperien gegeben haben, da selbst das römisch-deutsche Reich seine zumindest westlichen Nachbarn wie Frankreich und England lange Zeit als gleichberechtigt anerkannt hat bzw. anerkennen musste und noch nicht einmal hegemoniale Macht ausüben konnte. Ein Klientelstaatswesen wie im antiken römischen Reich wäre für das mittelalterliche Pendant völlig undenkbar gewesen. Was tun? Mit der Commonwealth-Theorie von Garth Fowden<sup>34</sup> könnte man für das europäische Mittelalter immerhin argumentieren, dass der antike imperiale Gedanke auf alle europäischen, mittelalterlichen Reiche übergegangen war: Sie standen relativ gleichberechtigt nebeneinander – zusammengehalten durch die ideologisch-kulturelle Form des Christentums sowie durch die Anerkennung des Papstes als oberstem geistlichen Führer. Das Reformpapsttum und der Investiturstreit führten auf die Dauer zu einer Schwächung des Kaisertums, da die mit dem Reich konkurrierenden Könige sich immer an den Papst als Schiedsrichter wenden konnten. Es war also eine ausgesprochene *checks-and-balance*-Politik, die bemerkenswerterweise über Jahrhunderte ohne größere militärische Konflikte oder Auslöschung eines Fürstentums auskam. Hervorzuheben ist dabei, dass es sich um eine imperiale christliche Wertegemeinschaft in Europa handelt, in welche nach und nach alle *regna* und *principes* durch die von ihnen vorgenommene Christianisierung eintraten bzw. integriert wurden. Taten sie das nicht, verschwanden sie meist als Entitäten.<sup>35</sup>

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34 „[...] a group of politically discrete but related polities collectively distinguishable from other polities or commonwealths by a shared culture and history.“ – Fowden, Garth: *Empire to Commonwealth. Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity*. Princeton University Press: Princeton 1993, S. 169.

35 Strzelczyk, Jerzy, *Zapomniane narody Europy* [Die vergessenen Nationen Europas]. Wydawnictwo Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich: Breslau 2006.

Diese bis ins Spätmittelalter gewachsene Wertegemeinschaft ließ es ‚gemeinschaftlich‘ nicht zu, von außen oder innen erobert zu werden. Es verbot sich für christliche *regna* geradezu, andere christliche *regna* gänzlich zu erobern. So galt zwar weiterhin nominell der imperiale Anspruch des Reichs, aber praktisch konnte dieser gar nicht durchgesetzt werden. Jedes *regnum* entwickelte seinen eigenen, internen Verwaltungs- und Rechtsaufbau besonders im Hochmittelalter und so konnte das römisch-deutsche Reich eigentlich nur verlieren. Im Sinne dieser *realiter* gelebten Gleichberechtigung konnten sich Historiographen und Ideengeber der einzelnen *regna* (eben auch Polen) durchaus bemühen, eigene ‚imperiale‘ Geschichten zu formulieren, um mit der tatsächlich ja vorhandenen ideologischen Tradition und Reputation des *Imperium Romanum* zu konkurrieren. Wie sah dies konkret in Polen aus?

(a.) Gallus und Vincent, die ersten beiden Chronisten Polens, sollen in den folgenden Ausführungen im Mittelpunkt stehen:

Gallus ist ein anonym geliebener Autor, der sich selbst *peregrinus* und *exul* nennt und somit definitiv nicht aus Polen kam.<sup>36</sup> Seine Herkunft wurde früh mit Frankreich in Verbindung gebracht, daher sein in der Forschung geläufiger Name: *Gallus Anonymus*. Er schrieb um 1116, noch in einem anderen

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36 Grundlage sind immer noch die Forschungen von Plezia, Marian: *Kronika Galla na tle Historiografii XII Wieku* [Die Chronik von Gallus vor dem Hintergrund der Historiographie des 12. Jahrhunderts]. Nakl. Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności: Krakau 1947; Ders.: „Wstęp“ [Einleitung]. In: Grodecki, Roman (Hrsg.): *Anonim tzu, Gall, Kronika Polska*. Wydawnictwo V Ossolineum: Breslau 1982, S. III–LXXXIII. In den letzten Jahren hat eine lebhaftere Forschung zu Gallus Anonymus stattgefunden, einen Überblick hierzu bieten: Mühle, Eduard: „Cronicae et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum. Neue Forschungen zum so genannten Gallus Anonymus“. *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 66,2, 2009, S. 459–496 (hier die wichtigsten Forschungsarbeiten) sowie Ders.: „Neue Vorschläge zur Herkunft des Gallus Anonymus und zur Deutung seiner Chronik“. *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 60,2, 2011, S. 269–285, und Kersken 1995, S. 491–499. Zwei nicht-polnischsprachige, informative Sammelbände sind entstanden: Althoff, Gerd (Hrsg.): „Die Chronik des Gallus Anonymus im Kontext zeitgenössischer Narrativität“. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 43, 2009, [als Schwerpunktheft], S. 293–478.; Stopka, Krzysztof (Hrsg.): *Gallus Anonymus and his Chronicle in the Context of Twelfth-Century Historiography from the Perspective of the Latest Research*. PAU: Krakau 2010.

Geiste als die späteren Chronisten, da sein Ausgangspunkt die Dynastie der Piasten und nicht eine allgemeine Geschichte der Polen ist. Die Chronik muss hier unter diesem Gesichtspunkt näher betrachtet werden:

Zunächst fällt auf, dass die Herkunftssage noch deutlich eingeschränkt ist: Gallus beginnt zunächst mit einer Landesbeschreibung, wobei er erst die *Polonia* beschreibt, dann aber die gesamte *terra Sclavonica*, zu der Polen für ihn gehört (*ab aquilone Polonia septemtrionalis pars est Sclauonie*).<sup>37</sup> Diese Großregion zeichne sich durch Waldreichtum, gute Äcker, Fleisch-, Fisch- und Honigreichtum usw. aus und sei hierin den Nachbarn deutlich vorzuziehen. Obgleich es von diesen oftmals überfallen wurde, gelang es niemandem, die *terra Sclavonica* zu erobern und zu unterwerfen.<sup>38</sup> Diese Sichtweise oder Konstruktion kann man als *imperialen* slawischen Großverband sehen, zu dem auch Polen (hier noch) gleichberechtigt (und nicht hegemonial) neben den anderen slawischen Nachbarn gehört.

Unmittelbar folgt in der Chronik die Herkunftsgeschichte der Piasten.<sup>39</sup> Es ist von einem „Ackermann“ und „armen Bauern“ (*arator, rusticus pauper*) „Pazt“ (Piast) mit seiner Frau „Repca“ die Rede – ziemlich wahrscheinlich handelt es sich um sprechende Namen aus dem bäuerlichen Milieu (pol. *paść* = „füttern, weiden“<sup>40</sup>; pol. *rzepa* = „Rübe“) –, welche in Gnesen am selben Tag wie der polnische Fürst das Haarschurfest ihres Sohnes feierten. Zwei unangekündigt auftauchende Fremde werden zunächst vom Festmahl des Fürsten Popiel abgewiesen und landen durch Zufall (*forte fortuna*) bei Pazt, der sie trotz seiner evidenten Armut aufnimmt. Auf wundersame Weise füllen sich die Becher und Teller der Festgäste des armen Bauern immer wieder und im Laufe des Festes ist sich nicht einmal der amtierende Fürst Popiel zu schade, bei seinem Untergebenen zu speisen.<sup>41</sup> Dieser Pazt, oder

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37 Gallus, Chron., Prohemium, S. 7.

38 Ibid., S. 8.

39 Ibid., I, 1, S. 10–11.

40 Vgl. Banaszkiwicz, Jacek: *Podanie o Piaście i Popielu* [Die Sage über Piast und Popiel]. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN: Warschau 2010, S. 102.

41 Ibid., S. 60–103, bes. S. 66, sieht in dieser Szene mit Georges Dumézil eine dreifache Funktion der Geschichte: 1. Piast erweist sich als gastlich. Er versorgt später sogar den amtierenden Fürsten Popiel, dem eigentlich die Funktion der Gastlichkeit zukommen sollte. 2. Es wird die wichtige und heilige Zeremonie der Haarschur seines Sohnes gefeiert. Indem die Fremden bei dieser Zeremonie bei



später Piast, gilt als Gründervater der Piasten. Von seinem Sohn Siemowit (*Semouith*) wird berichtet, dass er durch den „König der Könige“ und „Herzog der Herzöge“<sup>42</sup> (also von Gott) zum *Polonie ducem* ernannt wurde.

Hier kann ein Sprung nach vorne gemacht werden; die folgenden piastischen Herzöge Lestik (Leszek) und Semimizl (Siemomysl) führten die Politik der ersten Piasten fort und, unter dem vierten Piasten Mieszko I., wurde Polen schließlich christlich. Aber erst unter dessen Sohn, also dem Ururenkel von Piast, Boleslaw I. Chrobry, setzte eine beispiellose Erfolgsgeschichte ein: Boleslaw eroberte laut Gallus das böhmische Prag, baute sich dort einen Herzogssitz und machte die Stadt zur Erzdiözese seiner Bistümer. Er unterwarf die Böhmen, Mähren, Ungarn und setzte sich gegen die Sachsen durch.<sup>43</sup> Neben vielen anderen Völkern, die er zermalmte (*sub pedibus conculeasse*), brachte er Regionen der elbslawischen Völker (Sclencia), Pommern und das Prußenland in seine Gewalt und christianisierte diese Gebiete. Ein eigenes Kapitel wird der Eroberung Kiews gewidmet: Der ruthenische Großfürst Jaroslaw I. der Weise floh feige, als er erfuhr, dass der polnische Fürst sich mit großer Heeresmacht nährte. Boleslaw schlug bei Ankunft sein Schwert in die goldene Pforte Kiews und kündigte seinen Kriegern gleichzeitig an, in der Nacht die Tochter des geflohenen Großfürsten ebenso anzugehen, also zu vergewaltigen, und so die Unterwerfung der Ruthenen gänzlich zu manifestieren.<sup>44</sup>

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Piast und nicht bei Popiel sind, wird bereits eine Entscheidung für den künftigen Herzog getroffen. 3. Die wunderbare Vervielfältigung des Essens und Trinkens macht die Fremden zu Magiern oder Wahrsagern für die verheißungsvolle Zukunft Polens unter den Piasten.

42 *Rex regum* [...] *dux ducum*, Gallus, Chron. I, S. 12.

43 *Ibid.*, I, 6, S. 16–17.

44 *Ibid.*, I, 7, S. 25: *Sicut, inquit, in hac hora aurea porta civitatis ab isto ense percussitur* [er hatte sein Schwert in das goldene Tor von Kiew gestoßen als Zeichen seines Sieges und der Unterwerfung der Ruthenen], *sic in nocte sequenti soror regis ignavissimi mihi dari prohibita corrumpetur; nec tamen Boleslao thoro maritali, sed concubinali singulari vice tantum coniungetur, quatinus hoc facti nostri generis iniuria vidicetur, et Ruthenis ad dedecus et ad ignominiam imputetur*. Boleslaw symbolisierte also seinen Sieg über die Ruthenen zweifach: einerseits über sein eingeschlagenes Schwert in der Goldenen Pforte und andererseits über die Vergewaltigung (anders kann es kaum genannt werden) der Tochter

Der Ruhm des polnischen Fürsten war schließlich durch all diese Taten derart groß, dass der römisch-deutsche Kaiser Otto III. ihn kennenlernen wollte. Das Überraschende dabei ist: Es war der Kaiser, der nach Gnesen zog und nicht umgekehrt Bolesław, der ins Reich geladen wurde. Was Otto III. dort sah, überstieg alle Vorstellungen, die ihm zuvor zugetragen wurden.<sup>45</sup> Nachdem sich Otto mit den Seinen beratschlagt hatte, vollzog er eine (symbolische) Krönung Bolesławs III., indem er ihm sein *imperiale diadema* aufsetzte.<sup>46</sup> Er nahm, so Gallus, das kaiserliche Diadem von seinem eigenen Kopf – nicht wie bei der böhmischen Krönung von

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des ruthenischen Großfürsten, der dem polnischen Herzog zuvor seine Tochter nicht zur Ehefrau geben wollte.

45 Ibid., I, 6, S. 19: *Per coronam imperii mei, maiora sunt que video, quam fama percepi.*

46 Hier ist nicht der Platz dieses Ereignis, welches eine zentrale Bedeutung in der polnischen Geschichte hat, eingehend zu besprechen. Dies habe ich aber an anderer Stelle bereits getan: Vercamer, Grischa: „Der Akt von Gnesen – ein misslungenes Ritual oder höchste Machtdemonstration Boleslaw I. Chrobryś um 1000?“. In: Paron, Aleksander et al. (Hrsg.): *Potestas et communitas. Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu Wesen und Darstellung von Herrschaftsverhältnissen im Mittelalter östlich der Elbe*. Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN: Warschau / Breslau 2010, S. 89–110. Nur so viel sei gesagt, dass die Frage, ob eine rechtmäßige Krönung zum König stattgefunden hat oder nicht, eigentlich nicht entschieden werden kann. Wichtiger scheint die Tatsache, dass es unter Bolesław I. keine (bekannten) Aufstände oder Adelsrevolten gegeben hat (wie anschließend unter Mieszko II.). Seine Herrschaft muss also als konsolidiert und solide bezeichnet werden; hierzu hat eine vor den Eliten vorgenommene symbolische Krönung sicherlich sehr stark beigetragen. Bolesław war damit nicht mehr nur der Fürst aus Großpolen, der kleinpolnische und schlesische Stämme (im Laufe der 990er Jahre) unterworfen hatte, sondern er war ihr „König“. Am Ende seines Lebens 1025 hat sich Bolesław selbst nochmals bestätigend zum König gekrönt, vgl. *Die Annales Quedlinburgenses*, hrsg. von Giese, Martina. (MGH Script. rer. Germ. 72). Hahn: Hannover 2004, a. 1025, S. 578. Sicherlich hing das mit dem Tod Heinrichs II. (1024) zusammen, aber andererseits wollte er offenbar seinem Sohn und Nachfolger Mieszko II. einen „königlichen“ Start ermöglichen. Vgl. jüngst: Jaros, Sven: „... sicut in libro de passione martiris potest propensius inveniri. Die vermeintliche Quelle und der politische Kontext der Darstellung des ‚Aktes von Gnesen‘ bei Gallus Anonymus“. *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 62, 2013, S. 555–580, welcher den Akt von Gnesen vor allem in seiner kirchenpolitisch-religiösen Bedeutung (Gnesen wurde zum Erzbistum erhoben) sehen möchte und damit Roman Michałowski folgt.

1085, als Heinrich IV. Vratislav II. eine (angefertigte) Königskrone aufsetzte.<sup>47</sup> Dennoch konnte es sich in Gnesen nicht ganz um eine spontane Szene handeln, da der Kaiser offenbar als Geschenk eine Kopie der Mauritius-Lanze mitbrachte, die vorher angefertigt sein musste.<sup>48</sup> Bolesław III. wurde von Otto III. bei Gallus nicht nur zum König gemacht (*in regem ab imperatore tam gloriose sublimatus*), sondern auch *frater* und *cooperator imperii* genannt.<sup>49</sup> Das dann von Bolesław organisierte dreitägige Fest wurde *regaliter* und *imperialiter* ausgerichtet. Der Kaiser wurde schließlich mit Gold und Kleinoden überschüttet und zog zufrieden nach Hause – dies alles geschah aber dem Kaiser zu Ehren und nicht als Lehntribut oder als Unterwürfigkeitssymbol (*et imperatori pro honore, non pro principali munere*).<sup>50</sup> Gallus nennt im weiteren Verlauf alle Herr-

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47 Žemlička, Josef: „Vratislav II., Fs. und Kg. v. Böhmen“. In: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 10 Bde. Metzler: Stuttgart 1977–1999, Bd. 8, Sp. 1873–1874. Zur konkreten Krönung: \*42. Mainz, St. Alban 1085 Mai. 4–10 (?), in: *Bohemia-Moravia Pontificia sive repertorium privilegiorum et litterarum a Romanis Pontificibus ante annum MCLXXXVIII. Bohemiae et Moraviae ecclesiis monasteriis civitatibus singulisque personis concessorum. Diocesis Pragensis et Olomucensis*, bearb. von Könighaus, Waldemar. (Regesta Pontificum Romanorum. Germania Pontificia V/3, Provincia Maguntinensis VII). Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen 2011, S. 51–52.

48 Fried, Johannes: *Otto III. und Bolesław Chrobry. Das Widmungsbild des Aachener Evangeliers, der ‚Akt von Gnesen‘ und das frühe polnische und ungarische Königtum*. Franz Steiner Verlag: Stuttgart 2001, S. 135–136; Dalewski, Zbigniew: „Die Heilige Lanze und die polnischen Insignien“. In: Wiczorek, Alfred et al. (Hrsg.): *Europas Mitte um 1000, Bd. 2: Beiträge zur Geschichte, Kunst und Archäologie*. Theiss: Stuttgart 2000, S. 907–911.

49 Gallus, Chron. I, 6, S. 20. Zu den auf dem Akt von Gnesen verwendeten Titeln siehe: Michałowski, Roman: „Relacja Galla Anonima o Zjeździe Gnieźnienskim. Problem wiarygodności [Der Bericht des Gallus Anonymus über den Akt von Gnesen. Ein Problem der Glaubhaftigkeit]“. In: Trelińska, Barbara (Hrsg.): *Tekst źródła. Krytyka. Interpretacja*. Wydawnictwo DiG: Warschau 2005, S. 57–64, hier: S. 61–62; Jasiński Tomasz: „Tytułatura Bolesława Chrobrego na Zjeździe Gnieźnienskim [Die Titulatur Bolesław Chrobrys auf dem Akt von Gnesen]“. In: Derwich, Marek et al. (Hrsg.): *Memoriae amici et magistri. Studia historyczne poświęcone pamięci Prof. Wacława Kony (1919–1999)*. Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego: Breslau 2001, S. 23–31.

50 Gallus, Chron. I, 6, S. 21.

scherattribute, die eine gute und gerechte Herrschaft ausmachten.<sup>51</sup> Es würde zu weit führen, diese hier aufzuführen, daher nur stichpunktartig: Bolesław I. war den Armen ein Beschützer, er war für alle Untertanen da, er baute Kirchen und seine eigene Verwaltung aus, er war ein sehr gerechter Richter und nahm den umliegenden Heiden, die er zum Glauben führte, keine Tribute ab (um sie nicht abzuschrecken). Als Bolesław schließlich starb, schreibt Gallus, dass er an Reichtum und an Militär jedem anderem König überlegen war.<sup>52</sup>

Wir müssen kurz innehalten und zum Leitthema des Beitrags zurückzukehren, also zu den imperialen Ideen, die Herfried Münkler mit den Kategorien von Michael Mann, das sogenannte IMEP-Model, also Ideologie, Militär, Ökonomie und Politik, verbunden hatte: Bolesław I. verfügte über ein Reich, welches militärisch perfekt funktionierte (die Truppenzahlen aus den jeweiligen Regionen werden sogar konkret in Zahlen angegeben),<sup>53</sup> wirtschaftlich prosperierte, von außen mit hohem Respekt behandelt wurde, von innen durch Ordnung und Stabilität beeindruckte. Weiterhin wurde der Fürst von seinen Untertanen geliebt – und zwar von allen Schichten. In diesem Sinne kann man hier von einem piastischen *imperium* bei Gallus sprechen. Gallus unterstreicht dies auch durch einen direkten Vergleich zum römisch-deutschen Reich:

*O magna discretio magnaque perfectio Boleslavi! Qui personam in iudicio non servabat, qui populum tanta justitia gubernabat, qui honorem ecclesiae ac statum terrae in summo culmine retinebat. Justitia nimirum et aequitate ad hanc Boleslavus gloriam et dignitatem ascendit, quibus virtutibus initio potentia Romanorum et imperium excrevit.*<sup>54</sup>

Bolesław (und sein Reich) verfügten also über dieselben Eigenschaften und Tugenden, welche anfangs auch die Macht der Römer ausgemacht hatte und durch welche ihr Reich gewachsen war. Mit der Beschreibung Bolesławs I. befinden wir uns allerdings in der Chronik von Gallus auf dem absoluten Höhepunkt. Es ist Piotr Oliński zuzustimmen, der die Rolle Bolesławs I.

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51 Ibid., I, 9, S. 26–27; S. 30–39.

52 Ibid., I, 16, S. 35: *Rex Boleslauus divitiis probisque militibus, ut dictum est, plus quam rex alius habundaret.*

53 Ibid., I, 8, S. 25.

54 Ibid., I, 9, S. 27.

in der Chronik von Gallus als Vorbild und Mahnung für den amtierenden Herzog Bolesław III. sah.<sup>55</sup>

Die Herkunft des Gallus ist nicht bekannt, was bereits oben erwähnt wurde, aber die Forschung ist sich darüber einig, dass er hochgebildet gewesen sein muss und im westlichen Europa herumgekommen ist. Er schrieb sicherlich unter dem Eindruck der zeitgenössischen Geschehnisse: zunächst 1111, als Heinrich V. Papst Paschalis II. gefangen nahm, und später 1115, als die Sachsen (die Nachbarn Polens) sich unter Lothar von Supplinburg in der Schlacht am Welfesholz vom Kaiser losmachten und die norddeutsche Großregion dem Reich auf unabsehbare Zeit verloren ging. Dabei litt das Ansehen des deutschen Kaisertums ganz erheblich.<sup>56</sup> Es mag also, dies möchte ich nur zu bedenken geben, unter diesen Umständen gar nicht so attraktiv gewesen sein, Bolesław I. direkt als einen *imperator* anzusprechen.

Der bei Gallus zumindest als stark ‚hegemonial‘ zu bezeichnende Anspruch Polens in der Region Ostmitteleuropa zeigt sich später auch noch bei Bolesław II., der 1076 zum polnischen König gekrönt wurde, aber bereits 1079 aus Polen fliehen musste, da er Stanisław, den Krakauer

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55 Oliński Piotr: „Am Hof Boleslaw Schiefmunds. Die Chronik des Gallus Anonymus“. In: Schieffer, Rudolf / Wenta, Jaroslaw (Hrsg.): *Die Hofgeschichtsschreibung im mittelalterlichen Europa. Projekte und Forschungsprobleme*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika: Toruń 2006, S. 93–105, hier: S. 103. Verwiesen sei auf meine Habilitationsschrift (*Vorstellungen von guter und schlechter Herrschaftsausübung in England, Polen und dem Reich im Spiegel der Historiographie des 12./13. Jahrhunderts* [wird momentan, Frühjahr 2017, zum Druck vorbereitet]), welche besonders den Aspekt der verkappten Herrscherkritik bezüglich des Gallus gegenwärtigen polnischen Herzogs Bolesławs III. und der Überhöhung des längst toten, legendären Bolesławs I. bespricht. Dieser Aspekt wurde bislang in der polnischen Forschung so nicht gesehen.

56 Schneidmüller, Bernd: „1111 – Das Kaisertum Heinrichs V. als europäisches Ereignis“. In: Historisches Museum der Pfalz (Hrsg.): *Die Salier. Macht im Wandel. Ausstellungskatalog*. Minerva: München 2011, S. 36–45, hier S. 42: „Wie kaum ein Kaiser vor ihm geriet Heinrich V. [seit 1111] in einen Deutungsstreit, der ihn zwischen Himmel und Hölle hin und her riss. Ein Streitgedicht über die Gefangenschaft Paschalis‘ II. verglich ihn mit Herodes und Nero, nannte ihn einen Fahnenträger des Antichrist sowie einen Skorpion aus dem Norden und fragte das ‚armselige‘ Deutschland: ‚Welcher Wahnsinn hat dich erfasst?‘“.

Bischof, töten ließ.<sup>57</sup> Gallus erzählt anekdotenhaft dessen arroganten persönlichen Umgang mit dem ruthenischen Großfürsten und dem ungarischen König.<sup>58</sup> Beide Fürsten wurden von Bolesław – das muss hinzugefügt werden – zuvor eingesetzt bzw. kamen durch dessen Hilfe an die Macht. Dennoch zeigt sich besonders bei dem ungarischen Beispiel deutlich der Hochmut des polnischen Königs, der den dortigen König mit Missachtung und Arroganz behandelte, obgleich er dort Hilfe und Unterstützung fand. Diese beiden Beispiele zeigen gut die generelle Attitüde der polnischen Fürsten, sich als Hegemon der Region östlich des Reichs zu verstehen.

Der zeitgenössische Fürst des Autors, Bolesław III., wird seltsamerweise nicht annähernd so vielschichtig (und imperial) beschrieben wie Bolesław I.<sup>59</sup> Dem Urenkel des ersten Bolesław kommen andere Attribute zu: Sohn des

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57 Vgl. zu diesem Herrscher: Powierski, Jan: *Kryzys rządów Bolesława Szczodrego. Polityka i jej odzwierciedlenie w literaturze średniowiecznej* [Die Krise der Regierung Bolesławs II. Seine Politik und die Widerspiegelung in der mittelalterlichen Literatur]. Marpress: Danzig 1992.

58 Gallus, Chron., I, 23, S. 49. Isjaslaw bat Bolesław um einen öffentlichen Bruderkuss in Kiew. Statt ihm diesen zu verweigern, ließ der Pole sich das geplante öffentliche Treffen teuer bezahlen und als es schließlich zum Kuss kommen sollte und der Ruthene schon vom Pferd abgestiegen war, blieb Bolesław II. auf seinem Pferd sitzen, griff den Bart von Isjaslaw und riss diesen unter Lächeln zu sich heran und gab ihm den teuer erkauften (Bruder-)Kuss. Er demonstrierte auf diese Weise *par excellence* seine Überlegenheit. Noch hochmütiger (*vanitas*) zeigte sich Bolesław II. gegenüber Ladislaus I., der seine Jugend in Polen verbracht hatte und mit Hilfe Bolesławs II. wieder an die Macht gekommen war. Als Bolesław II. 1079 aus Polen zu ihm, dem amtierenden ungarischen König, floh, kam es zu einer ähnlichen Szene wie in Kiew: Bolesław kam als *fugitivus* nach Ungarn, war aber zu stolz vom Pferd zu steigen, obgleich ihm der ungarische König schon die Referenz erwies und ihm entgegenritt. Daher stieg als erstes der Ungar (*vir humilis*) ab und kam ihm entgegen, aber *Bolezlauus humilitatem regis mansueti non respexit, sed in pestifere fastum superbie cor erexit*, Gallus, Chron. I, 28, S. 54.

59 Dies ist ein Fakt, welcher einiges über die Haltung des Autors zum Herzog aussagt. In der polnischen Forschung wird aber grundsätzlich die Darstellung Bolesławs III. kaum als problematisch oder kritisch gewertet, zuletzt: Rosik, Stanisław: *Bolesław III.* Chronicon: Breslau 2013. Es ist hier von Kritik des Chronisten nichts zu finden.

Mars, Triumphator, brüllender Löwe (*leo rugiens*).<sup>60</sup> Auch er unterwarf die Böhmen und besiegte die Ungarn und Ruthenen. Damit kam ihm eine Hegemonenrolle in Ostmitteleuropa zu, und dennoch wird er von Gallus nur „Fürst des Nordens“ (*dux septentrionalis*)<sup>61</sup> genannt. Besonders im Mittelpunkt stehen seine Kämpfe mit den Pomeranen (1102–1106, 1119/20), die er schließlich auch unterwirft. Erst bei der längeren Beschreibung eines Kriegszugs Heinrichs V. 1109 gegen Polen<sup>62</sup> kommen dann doch Tendenzen beim Autor auf, Polen dem römisch-deutschen Reich gleichzusetzen oder es sogar darüber zu erheben. König Heinrich V. – er wird von Gallus fälschlicherweise als „Kaiser“ bezeichnet – schrieb einen Brief an Boleslaw III. und verlangte überfällige Steuern von diesem. Er drohte mit einem Feldzug gegen Polen, falls der Pole nicht zahlen wolle – dabei trat er äußerst anmaßend und hochmütig auf. Der vermeintlich deutsche Brief (er ist fiktiv) wird von Gallus komplett inseriert. Bolesław III. wies umgehend die deutschen Forderungen zurück: „Wenn du Krieg finden willst, wirst du ihn finden.“<sup>63</sup>

Es folgt eine längere Kampfbeschreibung, während der von den einfachen deutschen Kriegern, mit zunehmenden Misserfolgen in Polen, die Taten Boleslaws besungen werden. Adelige (*virii nobiles et discreti*) hörten diese Gesänge und urteilten, dass Gott mit Boleslaw sein müsse, wenn schon die eigenen Krieger derart singen. Heinrich V. sah es daher bald als unvermeidlich an, Boleslaw um Frieden zu bitten und schrieb ihm, dass der Pole doch wenigstens 300 Mark Tribut geben solle; dann würde er abziehen. Aber Boleslaw war mittlerweile unnachgiebiger geworden und antwortete dem deutschen König, dass „dieser kommen und gehen könne, wie es ihm gefiele, aber er würde keinen Groschen in Polen finden. Lieber wolle er [Bolesław] sofort die Freiheit des Fürstentums Polen verlieren, als friedlich

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60 Im Lobgedicht auf Boleslaw III. Gallus, Chron., Epilog zum dritten Buch, S. 123–126; *ibid.*, III, 12, S. 140.

61 *Ibid.*, III, 14, S. 141 (wiederholt sich aber auch anderswo).

62 *Ibid.*, III, S. 129–141.

63 *Ibid.*, III, 2, S. 130. *Bellum invenies, si bellaris*. Gleichzeitig erwähnt Bolesław III. aber auch, dass – wenn der Kaiser freundlich gefragt hätte – er ihm sehr gerne mit *auxilium* und *consilium* zur Seite gestanden hätte, wie es auch seinen Vorfahren schon getan hatten.

mit solch einer Schande zu leben.“<sup>64</sup> Hier kommt der oben angesprochene *rex imperator in suo regno* stark zum Vorschein, den Gallus ganz offenbar auch für Boleslaw als Herzog in Anspruch nahm.

Auch der zweite polnische Chronist, Vincent Kadłubek, dem die späteren Autoren in der Konstruktion der Vorgeschichte und somit auch Konstruktion der imperialen Anleihen folgten, soll hier etwas ausführlicher besprochen werden. Kurz zu dessen Leben: Vincent wurde um 1150 in adlige Verhältnisse hineingeboren und starb 1223.<sup>65</sup> Er studierte als wohl

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64 Ibid., III, S. 141. *Vestre cesaree potestati ire consistit vel redire, sed apud me tamen pro timore vel condicione nec ullum poteris vilem obulum invenire. Malo enim ad horam regnum Polonie salva libertate perdere, quam semper pacifice cum infamia retinere. [...] Et quoniam superbe libertatem antiquam Polonie subigere cogitavit.*

65 Kürbis, Brygida: „Einleitung“. In: *Vinc. Kronika*, 1996, S. IVff.; Dies.: Art. „Kadłubek Wincenty“ [Art.: ‚Vincent‘]. In: *Słownik Starożytności Słowiańskich*, Bd. 2. Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich: Breslau et al. 1964, S. 349–350. Die polnische Literatur zu Magister Vincent ist kaum überschaubar, und hier können nur die wichtigsten Werke zitiert werden, die (besonders das *Onus Athlanteum*) über detaillierte Bibliographien zu Vincent verfügen: Dąbrowka, Andrzej / Wojtowicz, Witold: *Onus Athlanteum. Studia nad Kroniką biskupa Wincentego*. IBL Wydawnictwo: Warschau 2009 – ein umfassender Sammelband, der eine ausführliche Forschungsbibliografie zu Magister Vincent aufweist; abgesehen davon seien noch folgende wichtige Konferenzbände angeführt: „Mistrz Wincenty Kadłubek pierwszy uczony polski w 750-lecie śmierci. Sympozjum naukowe zorganizowane w Poznaniu staraniem PTPN i PTH w dniach 23 i 24 listopada 1973 roku“ [Magister Vincent Kadłubek, der erste polnische Gelehrte, zum 750. Todestag. Wissenschaftliche Konferenz, organisiert in Posen durch die Posener Gesellschaft der Freunde der Wissenschaften und die Polnische Historische Gesellschaft am 23. und 24. November 1973]. *Studia Źródłoznawcze* 20, 1976; Prokop, Krzysztof R.: *Mistrz Wincenty Kadłubek. Człowiek i dzieło, pośmiertny kult i legenda. Materiały sesji naukowej – Kraków 10 marca 2000* [Magister Vincent Kadłubek. Mensch und Werk, postumer Kult und Legende. Materialien einer Konferenz – Krakau, 10. März 2000]. PAU: Krakau 2001; Starzyński, Marcin / Zdanek, Maciej (Hrsg.): *Cistercium Mater Nostra. Tradycja – historia – kultura II-2* [Cistercium Mater Nostra. Tradition – Geschichte – Kultur]. Towarzystwo Naukowe Societas Vistulana: Krakau 2008; grundlegend weiterhin: Balzer, Oswald, *Studium o Kadłubku. Pisma pośmiertne* [Studie zu Kadłubek. Postum veröffentlichte Schriften], Bde. 1–2. Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie: Lwów 1934/1935; grundlegend sind darüber hinaus die Forschungen von Marian Plezia, die gesammelt zugänglich sind:



einer der ersten Polen in Paris und / oder Bologna. Danach war er an der Hofkanzlei von Kasimir II.,<sup>66</sup> der bereits am 5. Mai 1194 starb, tätig. Besonders der Titel *Vincent magister* hat der polnischen Forschung vielerlei Anregung zur Interpretation gegeben.<sup>67</sup> So könnte es sich sowohl um einen Lehrtitel an der Krakauer Domschule handeln – wie Adam von Bremen auch als *magister scholarum* an der Bremer Klosterschule tätig war – als auch tatsächlich um einen akademischen Titel, den Vincent aus Frankreich oder Italien mitbrachte. Die letzte Möglichkeit wird als wahrscheinlicher angesehen.<sup>68</sup>

Irgendwann nach 1191, vielleicht erst nach dem Tode Kasimirs (1194), wurde Vincent Propst am Marienstift in Sandomir und war von 1208–1218 Bischof von Krakau. Als Bischof war er an einigen piastischen Fürsten-

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Plezia, Marian: *Scripta minora. Łacina średniowieczna i Wincenty Kadłubek* [„Scripta minora“]. Das mittelalterliche Latein und Vincent Kadłubek], hrsg. von Weysenhoff-Brożkowska, Krystyna / Turkowska, Danuta. DWN: Krakau 2001; Lis, Artur: *Spory wokół biografii mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka*. Wydawnictwo KUL: Lublin 2013. Dem deutschen Leser sei die aktuelle Zusammenfassung zu Leben und Forschung von/zu Vincent von Mühle, Eduard: „Einleitung“. In: *Vinc. Chronik*, 2015, S. 13–86, empfohlen.

66 Balzer 1934, Bd. 1, S. 87 und 93, kommt zu dem Schluss, dass die Werke Vincents das intellektuelle Milieu von Paris atmen. Kętrzyński, Stanisław: „Ze studyów nad Gerwazym z Tilbury (Mistrz Wincenty i Gerwazy – Provinciale Gervasianum)“. In: *Rozprawy (Polskiej) Akademii Umiejętności, Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny* 46, 1903, S. 160–163, hält es dagegen für sehr wahrscheinlich, dass Vincent in Bologna Gervasius von Tilbury kennen gelernt hat. Grodecki, Roman: *Mistrz Wincenty Kadłubek, biskup krakowski: Zarys biograficzny*. Druk W.L. Anczyca i Spółki: Krakau 1923, S. 13 und 18, geht wiederum davon aus, dass er schon seit 1183 in der Kanzlei von Kasimir dem Gerechten tätig war und sein Studium mit Unterbrechungen geführt hat. Ein endgültiger Nachweis dürfte sich in dieser Sache nicht erbringen lassen.

67 Zusammenfassend: Kürbis 1996, S. XIX.

68 Ursache hierfür ist der Umstand, dass in späteren Erwähnungen der Titel *magister* bestehen bleibt, was mit dem Ende seiner Arbeit an der Domschule (Mitte der 1190er Jahre) wohl nicht mehr der Fall hätte sein müssen. Andererseits lassen sich vor Vincent in den polnischen Quellen eine Reihe von anderen „Schulmeistern“ finden, die sich nur auf die Lehrtätigkeit zurückführen lassen, vgl. Kürbis 1996, S. XXI. Angesichts der Tatsache, dass Vincent mit seiner gelehrten Chronik zu dieser Zeit im Fürstentum Polen völlig allein dasteht, hat dieses Argument nur verminderten Wert.

treffen zwischen 1210–1214 beteiligt und nahm auch am IV. Laterankonzil in Rom teil. 1218 legte er allerdings sein Amt nieder und zog sich in das Zisterzienserkloster Jędrzejów zurück, wo er 1223, starb.

Sein Werk, die „*Chronica Polonorum*“, vermutlich Anfang des 13. Jahrhunderts beendet,<sup>69</sup> ist in einem sehr guten Latein mit vielen Zitaten und Anspielungen auf die antike und biblische Geschichte und Philosophie verfasst und spiegelt den hohen Bildungsstand des Autors<sup>70</sup> und dessen Kenntnisse des römischen Rechts<sup>71</sup> wider. Zu den potentiellen Auftraggebern bzw. Initiatoren können Fürst Kasimir II.<sup>72</sup>, aber daneben auch hochstehende

69 Die Ansichten in der Forschung über die Abfassungszeit gehen weit auseinander und reichen über einen langen Schreibprozess, der in den späten 1160er Jahren begann, bis zu der Hypothese, dass es sich um ein Alterswerk handelt, welches Vincent ab 1218 in klösterlicher Abgeschiedenheit schrieb, vgl. Mühle, Eduard: „Einleitung“. In: *Vinc. Chronik*, S. 39–42.

70 Kürbis Brygida: „Pisarze i czytelnicy w Polsce XII i XIII wieku [Autoren und Rezipienten in Polen im 12./13. Jahrhundert]“. In: Gieysztor, Aleksander (Hrsg.): *Polska dzielnicowa i zjednoczona: państwo, społeczeństwo, kultura*. Wiedza Powszechna: Warschau 1972, S. 173, macht darauf aufmerksam, dass die bislang Ivo Odrowąż, dem Nachfolger Vincents auf dem Krakauer Bischofsamt, zugeschriebene reichhaltige Bibliothek auch Vincent gehört haben könnte.

71 Zuletzt zeigte Sondel, Janusz: „Wincenty zw. Kadłubkiem jako apologeta prawa rzymskiego [V. als Verteidiger des römischen Rechts]“. In: *Onus Atlanteum* 2009, S. 91–109, den wesentlich größeren Einfluss des römischen Rechts gegenüber dem einheimischen Recht bei Vincent auf.

72 Die Forschung ist sich hier nicht einig: Kürbis 1996, S. XXIX, ist aufgrund zweier Zitate aus dem Werk davon überzeugt, dass Vincent von Kasimir den Auftrag bekam, während Bieniak, Janusz: „Jak Wincenty rozumiał i przedstawiał ustrój państwa polskiego [Wie V. das polnische Staatssystem verstanden und vorgestellt hat]“. In: *Onus Atlanteum* 2009, S. 39–46, bes. S. 43 den Bischof von Krakau, Matthäus (1142–66), als Inspirator für die Chronik sieht. Skibiński, Edward: „Walka o władzę w kronice Mistrza Wincentego. Mieszko Stary i Kazimirz Sprawiedliwy [Kampf um die Herrschaft in der Chron. des Mag. V. – Mieszko der Alte und Kasimir der Gerechte]“. In: *Onus Atlanteum* 2009, S. 46–56, sieht allerdings entgegen Bieniak und mit Kürbis ganz eindeutig den moralischen Vorzug Kasimirs vor Mieszko dem Alten, der zwar in der Chronik längere Auftritte hat und auch gelobt wird, dessen Fähigkeiten aber im Grunde von außen durch das Schicksal (*fortuna*) an ihn herangetragen wurden. In den Diskussionsbeiträgen zwischen Bieniak und Skibiński (*ibid.*, S. 58–59) werden die beiden Positionen nochmals deutlich gemacht, wobei Bieniak betont, dass es ihm vor allem darum geht, zu unterstreichen, dass das Werk nicht in

Geistliche (Peter, Erzbischof von Gnesen) gezählt werden. Die zum Teil recht kryptische Leseweise seiner Chronik, die viele Interpretationen ermöglicht, wird im eingehenden Kapitel zum vierten Buch von ihm selbst erklärt: Zeitgeschichte zu schreiben sei schwierig, da man sich dadurch unweigerlich der Kritik durch die Mächtigen aussetzt.<sup>73</sup> Vincent hatte also offenbar Positionierungsprobleme bzw. schlichtweg Befürchtungen, zeitgenössische Angehörige der Eliten zu verärgern oder vor den Kopf zu stoßen.

Das ganze erste und Teile des zweiten Buches sind der Konstruktion der Vorgeschichte gewidmet. Man muss dabei zunächst feststellen, dass Vincent diese mehrheitlich erfand oder zumindest verschiedene mündliche Sagen zu einem Narrativ verdichtete.<sup>74</sup> Mit Gallus hatte er, wir erinnern uns,

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einem Stück entstanden ist und daher auch unter unterschiedlichen politischen Einflüssen fortgeschrieben wurde. Für das vierte Buch habe nach Bieniak Kasimir starke Verantwortung übernommen, aber in den ersten Büchern gebe es verschiedene Passagen, die deutlich von einer offiziellen Geschichtsschreibung zugunsten Kasimirs abweichen. Schon etwas früher hierzu: Skibiński, Edward: „Mieszko czy Kazimierz? W sprawie sporu o inspiratora Mistrza Wincentego [Mieszko oder Kasimir? In der Streitsache um den Inspirator von V.]“. In: Dobosz, Józef / Strzelczyk, Jerzy (Hrsg.): *Nil superfluum esse. Prace z dziejów średniowiecza ofiarowane Profesor Jadwidze Krzyżaniakowej*. Instytut Historii UAM: Posen 1999, S. 167–174.

73 „Ich werde allzu sehr in die Enge getrieben und habe doch nicht die Hoffnung, in dieser Aufgabe kein Missfallen zu erregen. Denn hier zieht die Wahrheit den Hass auf sich, da droht Zorn durch Strafe. [...] Wenn ich aber irgendetwas, sei es aus Begünstigung oder aus Furcht, von dem Zufließenden heimlich unterdrücke, werde ich dem Brenneisen des Steuerbetruges nicht entkommen [...]“ (Vinc, Chronik, S. 299) – *Artor, inquit, nimis nec ulla mihi est hac in re desperatione displicendi: nam hinc ueritas odium parit, inde indignatio minatur supplicium [...] Quodsi aliquid aut favore aut metu ex contingentibus furtim suppressero, fraudati census non effugio cauterium.* – Vinc., CP IV, S. 129–130.

74 Die polnische Forschung geht von einer mündlichen Tradition aus, welche Vincent in sein Werk integrierte. Vgl. zusammenfassend: Żmudzki, Paweł: „Spór o analizę strukturalną podań i mitów dotyczących ‚Początku‘ Polski (na marginesie książek Jacka Banaszkiewicza i Czesława Deptuły) [Der Streit um eine Strukturanalyse der Erzählungen und Mythen zu den ‚Anfängen‘ Polens (Randbemerkungen zu den Büchern von Jacek Banaszkiewicz und Czesław Deptuła)]“. *Przegląd Historyczny* 93, 2002, S. 451–471. Kritisch ist natürlich dabei zu fragen, warum nicht schon Gallus diese Mythen genutzt bzw. integriert hat?

erst ab Popiel und Piast eine Vorlage. Vincent hatte, und dies ist äußerst wichtig, einen völlig anderen Fokus als Gallus, da für ihn die *res publica*<sup>75</sup> und die *patria* Polens im Mittelpunkt standen. Die Eliten wurden bei ihm zu *senatores*, die sich im *sacer senatus* versammelten.<sup>76</sup> Das Konzept von Gallus bezüglich der Piasten als *domini naturales* wurde dabei aufgegeben. Die Idoneität, die sich für Vincent aus verschiedenen Herrschereigenschaften zusammensetzte – die Eignung also, das Land zu führen und zu regieren – stand an vorderster Stelle und das Recht des Erstgeborenen auf die Gesamtherrschaft war damit nicht angeboren.<sup>77</sup> Vincent baute künstliche Dynastiebrüche in seine Vorgeschichte ein, um zu betonen, dass die Polen notfalls als Volk auch ohne Herrscher überleben konnten, falls sich jener als Tyrann herausstellen sollte und dann abgesetzt gehöre.<sup>78</sup>

Schauen wir uns nun die verschiedenen Stellen zu imperialen Vorstellungen bei Vincent an: Krak versucht auf einer nicht näher beschriebenen Versammlung die Polen zu vereinen, da ihnen innere Machtkämpfe drohten:

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75 Mądrowska, Ewa A.: „Polska jako „patrimonium“, „regnum“ i „res publica“ w Kronice Mistrza Wincentego Od liryki do retoryki [Polen als „patrimonium“, „regnum“ und „res publica“ in der Chronik von Vincent Kadłubek. Von der Lyrik zur Rhetorik]“. In: Kadulska, Irena (Hrsg.): *W kregu słowa, literatury i kultury. Prace ofiarowane Jadwidze i Edmundowi Kotarskim*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego: Danzig 2004, S. 41–46; für eine Untersuchung zum frühen Mittelalter bis Jordanes siehe: Suerbaum, Werner: *Vom antiken zum frühmittelalterlichen Staatsbegriff. Über Verwendung und Bedeutung von res publica, regnum, imperium und status von Cicero bis Jordanis*. Aschendorff: Münster <sup>3</sup>1977.

76 Mühle, Eduard: „Einleitung“. In: *Vinc. Chronik*, S. 55.

77 Gawlas, Sławomir, „Das Problem der Fürstenmacht zur Zeit von Vincentius Kadłubek“. In: Kersken, Norbert / Vercamer, Grischa (Hrsg.): *Macht und Spiegel der Macht. Herrschaft in Europa im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert vor dem Hintergrund der Chronistik*. Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 2013, S. 273–308, hier: S. 285–287.

78 Selbstverständlich verarbeitete der Autor in der Vorgeschichte die problematische Gegenwart Polens um 1200. Zu der Konzeption des Autors habe ich mich schon anderswo umfassend geäußert: Vercamer, Grischa: „Die Herkunftsgeschichte der Piasten als politisches Konzept der Gegenwart des Chronisten Vinzenz Kadłubek (1150–1223)“. In: Andenna, Cristina / Melville, Gert (Hrsg.): *Idoneität – Genealogie – Legitimation. Begründung und Akzeptanz von dynastischer Herrschaft im Mittelalter*. Böhlau: Köln et al. 2015, S. 367–385.

*Ait: ridiculum esse pecus mutilum, hominem acephalum; idem esse corpus exanimem, sine luce lampadem, mundum sine sole, quod sine rege imperium [...] se non regem set regni socium pollicetur, si se deligant.*<sup>79</sup>

„Ein Reich (*imperium*) ohne König sei genauso lächerlich wie eine Lampe ohne Licht, die Erde ohne Sonne“ usw. Anschließend wird er von allen als König „begrüßt“ (*rex ab omnibus consalutatur*), möchte aber selbst nur als *socius regni* angesprochen werden. Als der Sohn dieses ersten polnischen Königs nachfolgen sollte, da er den Drachen im Wawel erfolgreich erschlagen hat, können wir lesen:

*Sic iunior Graccus paterno succedit imperio [...], set diutius fratricidio fuit sordidus quam imperio insignis. Nam paulo post dolo deprehenso piaculi deputatur supplicio, exilii perpetuitate dampnatus.*<sup>80</sup>

Bis dahin handelt es sich also nur um das Reich (*imperium*), das auch in anderen Kontexten als Königreich oder Fürstentum gelesen werden kann (siehe oben). Wie bei Gallus, scheint aber die imperiale Idee besonders im Umgang mit allseits anerkannten Vertretern anderer Imperien (hier dem mazedonischen Großreich unter Alexander und dem *Imperium Romanum* unter Julius Cäsar sowie dem römisch-deutschen Reich unter den deutschen Kaisern) hervorstechen. Als Alexander der Große Tribute durch Abgesandte von Polen forderte, wurde er auf grobe Weise abgewiesen – die Legaten wurden getötet, ihre Haut abgezogen und die Leichen wurden mit Gold und Algen ausgestopft und zurückgeschickt.<sup>81</sup> In dem Brief an Alexander, unpersönlich von einer *imperatrix Polonia* gesendet, schreiben die Lechiten (also die polnischen Stämme), dass jemand, der sich „selbst nicht beherrschen könne, nicht herrschen solle“ (*Male aliis imperat, qui sibimet imperare non didicit*). Die Begierde Alexanders sei unerträglich und die Polen würden sich ihm keinesfalls beugen. Sie definierten sich eben nicht über Reichtümer, sondern über die Tapferkeit des Geistes und die Härte des Körpers (*animi virtute, corporis duritia non opibus censer*).<sup>82</sup> Die Gesandten hätten sie trotzdem gastfreundlich empfangen und ihnen – das ist schon sehr sarkastisch – kleine Geschenke mitgegeben (in Form des

79 Vinc., CP I, 5, S. 9; Vinc., Chron. I, 5, S. 97.

80 Vinc., CP I, 5, S. 11.

81 Ibid., I, 9, S. 14.

82 Ibid., I, 9, S. 15.

Goldes in ihren toten Körpern). Alexander zog daraufhin wutentbrannt und mit großem Heer gegen die Lechiten, wurde von diesen aber mit einem Trick – in den Bergen aufgestellte Helme und Rüstungen, die in der Sonne reflektierten, gaukelten Alexanders Heer unzählige Gegner vor – in die Flucht geschlagen.<sup>83</sup> In einem im Anschluss daran vom Autor eingeflochtenen erfundenen Briefwechsel zwischen Alexander und Aristoteles gab Alexander gegenüber dem Philosophen mit der Unterwerfung der Lechiten an. Aristoteles, wohlwissend um die wahre Geschichte, mahnte Alexander zur Wahrheit und zeigte ihm gleichzeitig an, dass Alexanders Ruf erheblich unter der Niederlage gegen die Lechiten gelitten habe und die Macht seines *imperium* erheblich wackele.<sup>84</sup>

Zuvor schon hatten die *Lemanni* (mit *Alemanni* gleichzusetzen, also die „Deutschen“) bereits Bekanntschaft mit den Polen gemacht: Ein vorgeschichtlicher, nicht näher benannter deutscher Tyrann – eine für Vincent historische Vorlage war der Feldzug Friedrich Barbarossas 1157 nach Polen gewesen<sup>85</sup> – zog nach Polen. Das deutsche Heer ließ sich von der polnischen Königin Wanda, der Tochter Kraks, quasi wie von einem „Sonnenstrahl“ blenden; niemand wollte mehr kämpfen angesichts dieser übernatürlichen Majestät. Der deutsche Tyrann beging sogar Selbstmord, um seinen Untertanen nicht im Weg zu stehen, und empfahl diesen, sich Wanda zu unterwer-

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83 Ibid., I, 9, S. 16.

84 Ibid., I, 10, S. 17: *Ex quo enim tributum ignominie tuorum infusum est intestinis, ex quo Lechiticos expertus es argiraspiclas, tui rutilantia solis apud multos deferbuit; immo tui uisum est imperii nutasse diadema.*

85 Ibid., I, 7, S. 12: *Vnde quidam Lemannorum tyrannus, dum proposito huius gentis populande grassaretur, dum quasi uacans rapere molitur imperium, inaudita quadam uirtute prius uincitur quam armis. Omnis enim exercitus eius mox ut reginam ex aduerso uidit, uelut quodam solis radio repente percellitur. Omnes uelut quodam iussu numinis animos hostiles exuti a prelio diuertunt, asserunt sacrilegium a se declinari non prelium, non hominem se uereri, set transhumanam in homine reuereri maiestatem. Quorum rex, incertum est amoris an indignationis an utriusque saucius languore, ait: ‚Wanda mari, Wanda terre, aeri Wanda imperet, diis immortalibus Wanda pro suis uictimet! Et ego pro uobis omnibus, proceres, sollempnem inferis hostiam deuoueo, ut tam uestra quam uestrarum successionum perpetuitas sub femineo consenescat imperio.‘ Dixit et exerto incumbens mucroni expirat uitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub auras.*

fen.<sup>86</sup> Hier ist im Übrigen wieder *imperium* eher als „Herrschaft“ gebraucht (*sub femineo [...] imperio*). Letztlich geht es aber bei dieser Passage, wie bei der vorhergehenden, darum, dass sich der höchste Repräsentant eines historisch verbürgten *imperium* der polnischen Herrscherin unterwarf (und sich sogar umbrachte). Er erkannte ihre „Herrschaft“ als die bessere an.

Dennoch starb auch sie bald und hinterließ keinen Erben, da sie die Ehelosigkeit der Ehe vorgezogen hatte: „Nach ihr lahmt das Reich lange ohne König“ ([...] *post ipsam sine rege claudicauit imperium*). Hier scheint mir „Reich“ die richtige Übersetzung, da „Herrschaft“ als Wort normalerweise mit einer konkreten Person verbunden ist.

Auch Julius Cäsar musste in drei erfolglosen Schlachten die Schlagkraft und den Widerstand der Polen kennenlernen.<sup>87</sup> Er versuchte schließlich, die Polen durch die vermittelte Ehe seiner Schwester Julia mit dem polnischen Fürsten Lestek III. an sich zu binden. Der römische Senat warf dem Imperator danach vor, dass er mit dieser Eheverbindung das römische Reich einengen würde, da er seiner Schwester als Mitgift Bayern gegeben hatte. Cäsar versuchte diese Mitgift auf niederträchtige Weise wieder rückgängig zu machen, worauf der polnische Fürst die Schwester von Cäsar verstieß. Das gemeinsame Kind, Popiel I., blieb allerdings in Polen. Diese Ansippung ist nun unter zwei Aspekten interessant: 1. Militärisch kann Cäsar den Polen nicht beikommen, also erkennt er ihre Gleichrangigkeit durch die Verbindung des polnischen Fürsten mit seiner Schwester an. 2. Die römische Ansippung, die in anderen Herkunftsgeschichten zum Standard gehört und äußerst wichtig erscheint,<sup>88</sup> ist hier nur eine vorübergehende und kurze Episode. Vor allem, und dies muss zu denken geben, findet sie für eine Dynastie in Polen statt, welche kurz darauf im Mannesstamm ausstarb.

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86 Zwar hat auch der neue Kaiser Friedrich Barbarossa 1157 noch einen Kriegszug nach Polen unternommen und wieder formal in der Gegend von Krzyszkowo bei Posen die Unterwerfung von Bolesław IV. angenommen; aber insgesamt muss der von der deutschen Kanzlei als klarer Sieg gewertete Zug eher als fauler Kompromiss gewertet werden, und Friedrich musste sich damit begnügen, seinen eigenen *honor* in der Außendarstellung wieder einigermaßen hergestellt zu haben, vgl. Görlich, Knut: *Friedrich Barbarossa*. C.H. Beck: München 2011, S. 264–265.

87 Vinc., CP, I, 16/17, S. 22–23.

88 Anton, Hubert H. et al.: „Origo Gentis“. In: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, Bd. 22. De Gruyter: Berlin / New York 2003, S. 174–210.

Aber immerhin waren die Popieliden – und mit ihnen Polen – mit dem Sohn Lesteks und Julias, also Popiel I., auf dem Höhepunkt ihrer Macht angekommen. Vincent führt aus: *Cuius [Popiel I.] nutu non Slauie dumtaxat monarchia, set etiam finitimorum gubernata sunt imperia.*<sup>89</sup> Die Begrifflichkeit *monarchia Slavie* ist äußerst interessant, da beide Termini nur dieses eine Mal bei Vincent auftreten. Worauf bezieht sich die *Slavia*? Bei Gallus war noch von der *terra Sclavonica* die Rede (siehe weiter oben), welche sich auf alle slawischen Gebiete bezog, was auch hier nahe zu liegen scheint. Der Terminus *monarchia* wiederum tritt auch in der einige Jahrzehnte später ausgestellten Kulmer Handfeste (1232/33/51) auf (*monarchia imperii*) und stellt für die Forschung ein Kennzeichen dafür dar, dass es sich um eine Empfängerurkunde handelt (die Begrifflichkeiten könnten also von den polnischen Herzögen kommen).<sup>90</sup> Ein kurzer Scan auf der Webseite der DMGH in der zeitlich nicht weit entfernten „Historia sive Chronica de duabus civitatibus“ (1143–1146) belehrt uns darüber, dass Otto von Freising *monarchia* nur im Kontext von Imperien (also das Reich Alexanders und Rom) verwendete. Es liegt nahe, auch für die *monarchia Slavie* von Vincent einen imperialen Bezug zu vermuten. Hinzu kommt, dass auch alle umliegenden Imperien der Nachbarn durch Popiel I. regiert werden.

Hier und da sind nun bei Vincent noch weitere Stellen für ein *imperium* zu finden, die aber alle letztlich zweideutig sind und gleichzeitig auch als „Herrschaft / Befehlsgewalt“ ausgelegt werden können.<sup>91</sup> Eine Stelle sei noch herausgehoben, die auch in diesem Zusammenhang schon bei Gallus wichtig ist: Nachdem Boleslaus III. sich gegen Heinrich V. behauptet hatte, der 1109 in Polen eingefallen war, setzte er den Herzog von Böhmen ein (Soběslav I.). Die „Deutschen“ (*Lemanni*) waren sehr zornig auf den polnischen Fürsten, da er in den benachbarten Königreichen nach Gutdünken

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89 Vinc., CP I, 17, S. 23.

90 Hierzu: Van Eickels, Klaus / Brüsck, Tania (Hrsg.): *Kaiser Friedrich II. Leben und Persönlichkeit in Quellen des Mittelalters*. Artemis & Winkler: Düsseldorf 2000, S. 139 ff.

91 Vinc., CP II, 3, S. 32; II, 10, S. 39; II, 18, S. 52; III, 18, S. 105; III, 20, S. 107; III, 28, S. 120; IV, 7, S. 147; IV, 10, S. 151; IV, 12, S. 152.



Fürsten einsetzte und sich so kaiserliche Würden anmaßte.<sup>92</sup> Der Autor fährt fort:

Und schon hatte er beinahe alle benachbarten Königreiche seiner Herrschaft unterworfen, schon auch die weiteren Nachbarn sowohl durch das Wohlwollen seiner Gunst als auch eine gewisse Ehrfurcht des Staunens verpflichtet, so dass es kaum einen Ort gab, den Bolesławs Name nicht erreicht hätte, an dem er nicht wie eine göttliche Macht verehrt worden wäre.<sup>93</sup>

Besonders die „göttliche Macht“ (*numen*) ist hier ein starkes Wort, welches Bolesławs Herrschaft im imperialen Sinne manifestiert.

(b.) Damit gehen wir zu den spätmittelalterlichen Chroniken über, die besonders Vincent in den meisten Punkten der Vorgeschichte folgen. Hier sollen nur die Punkte angesprochen werden, die abweichen oder die sogar noch hinzukommen:

Im „Chronicon Polono-Silesiacum“ (oder auch „Chronica Polonorum“)<sup>94</sup> wird die Vorgeschichte nur kurz beschrieben: Die Gallier beherrschen den einen Teil Europas und die Polen (Lechiten) den anderen östlichen – man hatte sich darüber geeinigt; die einzelnen europäischen Regionen werden genau vom Autor aufgeführt. Zwei hegemoniale Mächte haben also ihre Grenzen im gegenseitigen Einvernehmen abgesteckt.<sup>95</sup> Da sich die Gallier, die nun mit den Deutschen gleichgesetzt werden, *id est Germani*, nicht an die Verabredungen hielten, gab es Krieg und die Polen wählten Krak

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92 Ibid., III, 20, S. 107: *Quod illi apud Lemannos plurimum conflavit inuidie, quod imperatoriam sibi indicaret quasi maiestatem, cum in regnis contiguus arbitrato proprio quos mallet deiceret potenter, quos mallet potenter sublimaret.*

93 Ibid.; Vinc., Chron. III, 20, S. 259. *Et iam pene cuncta finitimorum regna suo coniecerat imperio, iam enim transfinitimos uel gratie serenitate uel quadam stuporis reuerentia deuinxerat, ut qua uix Boleslai nomen attigisset, numen eius coleretur.*

94 Über die Abfassungszeit gibt es zwei Meinungen: Die ältere datiert den ersten Titel um 1285, den zweiten Teil um 1300, wobei zum Teil von zwei Autoren ausgegangen wird. Die jüngere Meinung sieht in der Chronik das Werk eines Autors, der in den 80er Jahren des 13. Jahrhunderts schrieb. Der Autor äußert keine kirchlichen oder klösterlichen Tendenzen (entgegen Vincent Kadłubek); zudem fällt auf, dass er den monarchischen Ambitionen Heinrich IV. Probus sehr positiv gegenübersteht. Vgl. ausführlich zur Forschungsgeschichte: Drelicharz 2012, S. 199–212.

95 Chron. Pol.-Sil., S. 606.

(Graccus) zu ihrem Fürsten, der die Gallier zurückschlug. Danach folgt die Vorgeschichte nach dem Schema von Vincent.

In der „Chronica Poloniae Maioris“ (Großpolnische Chronik), die mehr oder minder zur gleichen Zeit abgefasst wurde,<sup>96</sup> wird die Vorgeschichte nochmals stärker ausgebaut: Pannonien ist die *mater et origo omnium Slavonicarum nacionum* (dann folgen die Namenszuordnungen der slawischen Völker). Die Pannonier kommen von Jano, dem Enkel von Japhet. Bei ihnen wird der Fürst *Pan* genannt. Der erste *princeps* hieß Nemroch, der die Menschen (seine Brüder) unterwarf. Von einem Pan kamen drei Brüder: *primogenitus Lech*, *alter Rus*, *tercius Czech* – der Erstgeborene ist also Lech. Daher kommen die drei *regna* der Polen, Ruthenen und Tschechen (oder auch Böhmen genannt), *quorum maioritas semper apud Lechitas et dominium ac tocius superioritatis imperii* lag.<sup>97</sup> Von Nemroch, dem (mehr oder minder) ersten pannonischen Fürsten wird noch gesagt, dass er nicht nur seine slawischen Brüder unterwarf, *sed toti mundo servitutis legem indixit*.<sup>98</sup> Nun kommt eine interessante Umgestaltung der bisherigen Feindschaft zu den Deutschen: Die Slawen und Teutonen sind nämlich Brüder: *Scire autem dignum est, quod Slawi et Theutunici a duobus germanis Japet nepotibus Jano et Kuss dicuntur ortum habuisse [...]*.<sup>99</sup>

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96 Es handelt sich um einen Text, der unter Verwendung von Materialien von Bischof Boguchwał II. von Posen (1242–1253) anlässlich der Krönung von Przemysł II. am 26.7.1295 zum König von Polen 1295/96 wahrscheinlich in Gnesen und möglicherweise von dem Posener Kustos Godziszlaw Baszko niedergeschrieben wurde; dieser Text erfuhr im 14. Jahrhundert einige Interpolationen (den Slawen-Abschnitt im Prolog sowie Teile der Kapitel 4 und 8), als deren Autor Andreas von Schwerin († 1356) oder Janko von Czarnków vermutet worden sind. Diese Ansicht wird von Brygida Kürbis begründet und von der polnischen Mediävistik weitgehend akzeptiert. Andere Forscher (zuletzt v. a. Derwich) halten das Werk als Ganzes für eine Kompilation aus der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts, als deren Verfasser Janko von Czarnków benannt worden ist, wofür sich zuletzt in einer eindringlichen Argumentation Marek Derwich ausgesprochen hat, vgl. Kersken 1995, S. 529 ff., Drelicharz 2009, S. 458 ff.

97 Chron. Pol. mai., Prolog, S. 5.

98 Ibid., S. 5.

99 Ibid., S. 6.

Es folgt der Hinweis, dass die Teutonen und Slawen wie zwei Bullen denselben Pflug ziehen (*duo boves simul iuncti trahendo aratrum seu plaustrum incedunt [...] nec aliqua gens in mundo est sibi tam communis et familiaris veluti Slavi et Theutonici*). Als die Hunnen nach Pannonien kamen und sich mit einem Teil der Slawen mischten – daraus wurden dann die Ungarn –, zog Lech mit seinem Stamm weg und ließ sich in Polen nieder („nistete sich ein“ – daher Gnesen, pol. *gniazdo*). Daher wolle er nun im Folgenden über die Geschichte der *reges principes atque duces ac multiplicacionem eorundem tocius regni Polonie seu Lechitarum latissimi imperii* berichten, die er in vielen Quellen – er zählt sie unbestimmt auf – gefunden hat. Ein „Königreich“ der Polen wird mit einem *imperium* der Lechiten gleichgesetzt. Während der Regierungszeit eines biblischen Königs, Assuer (Buch Ester) – vermutlich ist Xerxes, der Sohn von Darius gemeint – als Gallien (das römische Reich) in viele Königreiche und Provinzen geteilt war, duldeten die Lechiten keinen König über sich, sondern wurden durch einen zwölfköpfigen Ältestenrat verwaltet.<sup>100</sup> Nun geht die Geschichte gewohnt mit Krak und Wanda weiter.

Weiter ausgebaut erscheint in der Großpolnischen Chronik also die frühere Vorgeschichte: Eine slawische Großfamilie lebte in Pannonien, die ein Imperium hatte und sich von dem biblischen Sohn Noahs, Japhet herführte. Die Lechiten waren dabei die ersten unter den Slawen. Als die Hunnen einfielen, wanderten die Lechiten ab und ließen sich in Gnesen nieder. Sie lebten lange Zeit frei unter der Führung eines Ältestenrates.

In der Chronik von Dzirsva<sup>101</sup>, die zwischen 1288 und 1320 entstand und auch auf eine Wiedervereinigung der polnischen Teilreiche

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100 Ibid., S. 8: [...] *Lechite qui nullum regem seu principem inter se tanquam fratres et ab uno patre ortum habentes habere consueverant, sed tantum duodecim discreiores et locupletiores ex se eligebant, qui questiones inter se emergentes diffiniebant et rem publicam gubernabant, nulla tributa se invita servicia ab aliquo exigentes et Gallorum [der Römer] impetum formidantes, quendam virum strenuissimum nomine Crak cuius [...] in eorum capitaneum, seu duces exercitus [...] unanimiter elegerunt.*

101 Sie war lange Zeit einem gewissen Dzierzwa oder Mierzwa zugeschrieben (daneben könnten auch noch *Chronius* oder *Thronius* oder ein magister *Vincentius* in Frage kommen, die in den mittelalterlichen Exzerpten der Chronik genannt werden). Die Chronik erscheint in den verschiedenen Kopien unter verschiedenen Titeln: „*Chronica Polonorum*“, „*Chronica Polonorum anna-*

hinarbeitet, erscheinen die bisherigen vorgeschichtlichen Aspekte hier und da noch ein wenig ausgebaut: Wandalus, der Sohn von *Negno*, der in einer langen Abfolge von Namen auf Noah und Japhet zurückgeführt wird,<sup>102</sup> hatte viele Kinder, die über Generationen mehr als ein Viertel Europas besaßen (*per regiones et regna semen suum multiplicando possederunt*). Über die lange Reihe von Ahnen geschieht also, fast schon beiläufig, eine Ansippung an Rom (über Numa Pompilius, den zweiten sagenhaften König von Rom). Es kommt dann unter den Söhnen von Wandalus zur Landesaufteilung.<sup>103</sup> Es entsteht eine riesige Region, wobei Polen als größte Region und als Mutter der anderen fungiert – auch werden die Wandalen, also die Nachkommen von Wandalus, als Polen bezeichnet (*Wandalus, a quo Wandalite, qui nunc Poloni dicuntur*). Der Logik folgend, waren die Polen letztlich die Urväter aller slawischen Völker.<sup>104</sup> Von Wandalus – auf der zeitlichen Ebene des biblischen Josef, Sohn Jakobs – bis zu den persischen Königen Darius und Xerxes hatte Polen keine Könige oder Fürsten.

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lis“, „Cronica pollonialis“ und auch „Cronicae Vinciencianae recapitulatio brevis“. Wir wissen also nicht, wie das Original hieß. Die Chronik ist aus inhaltlichen Gründen wohl im Krakauer Raum angefertigt worden und lässt sich dort mit einem franziskanischen Hintergrund verbinden; das Begräbnis von Boleslaw dem Schamhaften in der Krakauer Kirche der Franziskaner sowie die Erwähnung des Todes von Franziskus sprechen dafür. Aus unbekanntem Gründen wurde das Werk aber schon 1288 abgebrochen. Es könnte ab dieser Zeit geschrieben worden sein – die Forschung geht von einem Zeitraum von 1288–1320 aus. Auch in dieser Chronik ist das Ziel die Überwindung der politischen Aufteilung Polens in Teilfürstentümer und die Wiederherstellung einer politischen Zentralgewalt. Für eine Zusammenfassung der neueren Forschung und eine Verortung der Chronik vgl. die Einleitung zur Neuausgabe, in: Chron. Dzirs., S. V–VII.

102 *Iawan, Philira, Alan, Anchises, Eneas, Ascanius, Numa Pamphilius, Reasilva, Alanus* (der als erstes Europa betrat), *Negno*, vgl. Chron. Dzirs., S. 1–2.

103 Chron. Dzirs., S. 2–3: *Russiam usque ad orientem, Poloniam maximam terrarum et matrem, Pomeraniam, Seleuciam, Cassubiam, Sarbiam, quae nunc Saxonia dicitur, Bohemiam, Moraviam, Stiriam, Carinthima et Slavoniam: quae nunc Dalmacia dicitur; Chrowatiam, Pannoniam, quae nunc Ungaria dicitur, Bulgariam et alias quam plures, quarum multitududo propter prolixitatem subticetur.*

104 Vgl. auch Kersken 1995, S. 529.

Es folgt die gleiche Geschichte der Landnahme der Gallier in ganz Europa, wie wir sie schon im „Chronicon Polono-Silesiacum“ vernommen haben: 300.000 Gallier (wahlweise Franken, Deutsche) zogen los und unterwarfen sich Europa. Mit den Polen wurden allerdings Verträge gemacht und Europa wird beidseitig in eine westliche und östliche Sphäre aufgeteilt. Der Rest der Vorgeschichte folgt nach dem bekannten Schema. Für Popiel I. schreibt auch der anonyme Autor (und übernimmt dies fast wortwörtlich von Vincent Kadłubek), dass dieser nicht nur die gesamtshawische Monarchie, sondern auch die angrenzenden Reiche regiere / kontrolliere (*Scloviae duntaxat monarchia, sed eciam finitimorum gubernatorum sumit imperia*).<sup>105</sup>

Mit Peter von Bitschen und der „Chronica Principum Polonie“ (1382–1386) machen wir zeitlich einen fast 100-jährigen Sprung nach vorne.<sup>106</sup> Es handelt sich dabei um einen Kanoniker an der Kollegiatskirche St. Hedwig in Brieg, der im Auftrag von Herzog Ludwig I. von Brieg († 1398) und Ruprecht von Liegnitz († 1409) schrieb, und die besseren (im männlichen Stamm) Anrechte der schlesischen Piasten vor Hedwig, der Tochter von Ludwig von Anjou, für den polnischen Thron beweisen wollte. Dieser Autor lehnte sich im Übrigen wieder stärker an Gallus als an Vincent für seine vorgeschichtlichen Partien an und spricht sich explizit für die Zugehörigkeit Schlesiens zu Polen aus.<sup>107</sup> Die frühe Vorgeschichte folgt dennoch natürlich den Vorgaben Vincents und der Chroniken aus dem Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts, da Gallus davon ja nichts schrieb. Hierin ist als einzige Abweichung zu verzeichnen, dass Wanda einfach ohne Erben starb und kein deutscher Invasor / Tyrann sich mehr ob ihrer sichtlichen Überlegenheit aufopferte und seinen Landsleuten empfahl,

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105 Chron. Dzirs., S. 15.

106 Gut zusammenfassend: Patze, Hans: „Mäzene der Landesgeschichtsschreibung im späten Mittelalter“. In: Ders. (Hrsg.): *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewußtsein im Spätmittelalter*. (Vorträge und Forschungen 31). Thorbecke: Sigmaringen 1987, S. 331–370, hier: S. 359–363.

107 Detailliert: Heck, Roman: „Akcenty społeczne i moralizatorskie w Kronice Książat polskich. [Gesellschaftliche und moralisierende Aspekte in der Chronik der polnischen Fürsten]“. In: *Cultus et Cognitionis. Studia z Dziejów średniowiecznej Kultury*. Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe: Warschau 1976, S. 181–192.

sich ihrer Herrschaft zu unterstellen.<sup>108</sup> Dies hatte pragmatische Gründe, da Schlesien einerseits über die letzten beiden Jahrhunderte der Zeit vor Bitschen sehr deutsch geprägt war und andererseits auch ganz konkret unter böhmischer, luxemburgischer Kontrolle stand. Hier erscheint eine eingeschränkte imperiale Sicht vorzuliegen: Auch hier können Alexander und Cäsar nichts gegen die Polen ausrichten und die Gallier (Franken) teilten Europa zwischen sich und den Polen auf, aber die Vokabel *imperium* kommt nur einmal vor.<sup>109</sup> Für alle bisherigen Chroniken muss man feststellen, dass die Vorgeschichten durchaus imperiale Charakterzüge der Polen aufweist; diese bleiben aber immer im Militärischen, Herrschaftlichen verhaftet und gehen über typische Eroberungsgeschichten nicht recht hinaus. Die kulturelle Ausgestaltung erfolgt aber erst für die Herrschaft von Boleslaw Chrobry, für den eine imperiale Zuweisung nicht mehr so einfach ist.

Zuletzt stehen noch die umfangreichen „Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae“ (1455–1480) des Jan Długosz aus.<sup>110</sup> Die ersten beiden Bücher der Annalen beschäftigen sich ausgiebig mit der Vorgeschichte. Ihm kann man eigentlich nicht unterstellen, dass er bewusst eine imperiale Vergangenheit für Polen aufzubauen versuchte, aber wiederholt weist er auf die göttliche Vorsehung als Herrscher und Lenker Polens hin und somit auf die Unabhängigkeit und Freiheit von anderen Reichen.<sup>111</sup> Die Urgeschichte

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108 Die Wanda-Geschichte in: CPP, S. 431.

109 Mit dem Tod von Wanda: *Hec Wanda, omnia spernens connubia, sine prole decessit; post cuius obitum nonnullis temporibus claudicavit imperium Wandalorum* (ibid.).

110 Kürbis, Brygida: „Johannes Dlugosz als Geschichtsschreiber“. In: Patze 1987, S. 483–496. Aktueller auch: Drelicharz 2012, S. 418 ff.

111 Borkowska Urszula: *Trześci ideowe w dziełach Jana Długosza, Kościół i świat poza Kościołem* [Ideeninhalte in den Werken von Jan Długosz. Kirche und Welt außerhalb der Kirche]. Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL: Lublin 1983, S. 102–106. Miesko I. wird als Apostel der Polen dargestellt (Długosz Annales I, S. 193: *Ad plures vicos, oppida et villagia personale fecit aggressus et tam adultos quam infantes, ares iuxta ac feminas, aquis regeneracionis innovat [...] et ablutos in fide firmat [...]*). Auch bei Długosz ist Boleslaw I. der Vorzeige-Herrscher schlechthin. Allerdings ist die Rolle von Adalbert als dessen Lehrer und Mahner nicht mehr so ausdrücklich wie noch bei Vincent Kadłubek.

der Polen erscheint hier nochmals etwas modifiziert und es wird deutlich, dass Długosz sich mühte, die Polen gleichberechtigt neben die westlichen, tonangebenden Königreiche zu stellen. Japhet hatte drei Söhne: *Isicion, Armenon, Negno*. Der erste Sohn hatte wiederum vier Söhne: *Francus, Romanus, Momaurus et Britto*; der zweite Sohn Armenon hatte fünf Söhne: *Sochus, Walgothus, Cebidus, Burgundus, Longobardus*. Der dritte Sohn Nagno hatte vier Söhne: *Vandalus, a quo Vandali dicti sunt, qui nunc Poloni dicuntur [...] Thargus, [...] Saxo, [...] Bogorus*.<sup>112</sup> Die Wandalen / Polen reihen sich hier, obgleich wieder später die *Polonia* als *maxima terrarum*<sup>113</sup> der anderen slawischen Völker auftaucht, doch einigermaßen deutlich hinter den vermeintlichen Begründern der westeuropäischen Völker (Römer, Franken, Briten usw.) ein, da sie erst dem dritten und jüngsten Sohn von Japhet entstammten. Deutlich ausgebaut erscheint die Geschichte mit Pannonien als der Urheimat der Slawen, aus welcher Lech und Czech schließlich auszogen und Polen und Böhmen begründeten.<sup>114</sup> Später hätten die Völker vom Süden der Alpen (Pannonien) bis zum Schwarzen Meer lange Zeit den Befehlen der polnischen Herrscher gehorcht, was auch antike Historiker bestätigt hätten.<sup>115</sup>

Des Weiteren herrschten die polnischen Fürsten über weite Teile Germaniens, Dänemarks, Schwedens, Norwegens und anderer Länder.<sup>116</sup> Sie seien sogar die Begründer von Hamburg, Magdeburg, Brandenburg, Lüneburg, Schleswig, Lübeck und einigen anderen norddeutschen Städten gewesen. Später wurden diese polnischen Stämme germanisiert und nannten sich Sachsen.<sup>117</sup> Auch erwähnt der Chronist, dass Odoaker, welcher

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112 Długosz, *Annales* I, S. 68–69.

113 *Ibid.*, S. 69.

114 *Ibid.*, S. 70–73. Rus ist übrigens erst ein Enkel von Lech und begründete später Ruthenien. Die hegemoniale Vorherrschaft über die ruthenischen Fürstentümer ist damit für Długosz begründbar, vgl. *ibid.*, S. 87.

115 *Ibid.*: [...] *Polonorum tamen principum per longas etates et successiones regebantur et parebant imperio*. Hierfür führt er u. a. Ptolemäus mit einem erfundenen Zitat an, dass die Polen auch die Bulgaren und die Bewohner der römischen Provinz Moesia beherrscht hätten.

116 *Ibid.*, S. 87–88.

117 *Ibid.*, S. 117 und 143–144.

im Jahr 476 bekanntlich Romulus Augustus absetzte und selbst König von Italien wurde, ein Ruthene war (also einer den Polen untergebenen Ethnie entstammte). Ebenso seien die Götter der Lechiten mit den griechischen übereinstimmend.<sup>118</sup> An dieser Stelle ist im Übrigen deutlich von einem *imperium Lechitarum* die Rede.<sup>119</sup> Bereits in vermeintlich historischen Zeiten kann Semovit, der Sohn von Piast, die Gebiete von den Germanen, Pannoniern (Ungarn) und Pruthenen zurückerobern, welche unter Popiel II. verlorengegangen waren.<sup>120</sup> Ansonsten verläuft die Vorgeschichte bei Długosz nach den Vorlagen, obgleich Długosz besonders geographisch erklärend deutlich mehr Material gesammelt und aufbereitet hat.

(c.) Angesichts des hier ausgebreiteten Materials erscheint es mir am geschicktesten und besten, bestimmte Charakterzüge der imperialen Ideen in Polen in den Chroniken in Form von Diskursen zu formulieren, die sich über 400 Jahre (von Gallus bis Jan Długosz) wiederholen.

## 1. Diskurs der Herkunft.<sup>121</sup>

Die Herkunft der Polen hat zwei grundsätzlich verschiedene Ansätze: a) Mal handelt es sich um ein uraltes Volk, welches gleichberechtigt-unabhängig neben den bekannten antik-biblichen Imperien steht; b) mal handelt es sich (besonders in den späteren Chroniken) um ein zwar unabhängiges Volk, welches aber auf biblische (Japhet), gepaart mit später trojanisch-römischen (Anchises, Eneas) Wurzeln zurückblicken kann.

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118 Ibid., S. 106–108.

119 Ibid., S. 107: *Et quoniam imperium Lechitarum in regione vastissimas silvas et nemora [...]*.

120 Ibid., S. 166.

121 Vgl. auch Kersken 1995, S. 553 ff.



## 2. Diskurs des ‚Pan-Slawismus‘<sup>122</sup> und des Hegemonie-Anspruchs der Polen:

Polen war im Verband der slawischen *regna* die antike Anführerin.<sup>123</sup>

a) Mal handelte es sich um den hegemonialen Anspruch auf die gesamte östliche Hälfte von Europa und b) mal um das größte Gebiet innerhalb der slawischen Reiche – quasi die ‚Mutter‘, neben den *regna* der slawischen ‚Kinder‘. In den ersten beiden Chroniken (Gallus und Vincent) haben die Polen immer schon in der heutigen Region Polen gesessen und in den späteren Chroniken ab dem späten 13. Jahrhundert findet eine Landnahme (im Rahmen der Völkerwanderung statt), da die Polen sich gezwungenermaßen von dem größeren slawischen Urstamm in Pannonien (ungarische Ebene) abzweigten. Interessanterweise ist dieser ‚Pan-Slawismus‘ also schon im hohen und späten Mittelalter in den polnischen Chroniken vorhanden. Ein interessantes Phänomen, da er bekanntlich in der neusten Geschichte besonders des 19./20. Jahrhundert eine bedeutsame Rolle spielen sollte.

## 3. Diskurs der passiven und reagierenden Herrschaftsausbreitung:

Die Lechiten, Wandalen oder Polen (ein und derselbe Terminus für die gleiche Volksgruppe in der Vorgeschichte) werden bei der Eroberung von anderen *regna*, welche sie reihenweise unterwerfen, nicht etwa durch das „Streben nach Herrschaft“ angetrieben, sondern es ist allein der „Mut im Kampf“,<sup>124</sup> welcher ihnen diese vielen Reiche einbringt. Oftmals kommt

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122 Diese Begrifflichkeit entstammt selbstverständlich dem 19. Jahrhundert; dennoch ist verblüffend, mit welcher Ähnlichkeit sie bei den mittelalterlichen Historiographen verwendet wird. Vgl. für die moderne Entwicklung: Karl, Lars / Skordos, Adamantios: „Panslawismus“. In: Europäische Geschichte Online, hrsg. vom Institut für Europäische Geschichte (Mainz). 2013 (Zugriff am: 1.7.2016 unter [http://ieg-ego.eu/de/threads/transnationale-bewegungen-und-organisationen/pan-ideologien/lars-karl-adamantios-skordos-panslawismus/?searchterm=panslawismus&set\\_language=de](http://ieg-ego.eu/de/threads/transnationale-bewegungen-und-organisationen/pan-ideologien/lars-karl-adamantios-skordos-panslawismus/?searchterm=panslawismus&set_language=de)).

123 Chron. Polon. Mai., S. 4: [...] *primogentus Lech, alter Rus, tercius Czech* [...] *quorum maioritas semper apud Lechitas et dominum ac tocius superioritatis imperii* [...].

124 CPP, S. 429: [...] *non dominandi ambicio, non res habendi urgebat libido sed robor animositatis in regnorum exterorum acquirendis dominiis plurimum exercebat* [...].

beim Leser zudem der Eindruck auf, dass sie – wie beispielsweise durch die Dänen – zunächst provoziert (also angegriffen) wurden und dann zwangsläufig reagieren mussten. Quintessenz: Es handelte sich bei den Polen eigentlich um ein ‚friedliebendes‘ Volk, welches andere Königreiche und Fürstentümer nur zum eigenen Schutze unterwarf.

#### 4. Diskurs des Freiheitsgedankens:

Eine lange und zeitlich völlig unbestimmte Zeit vor und dann auch wieder nach der ersten mythischen polnischen Herrscherdynastie um Krak I. und Wanda kommen die Polen ohne Herrscher aus.<sup>125</sup> Sie existierten in Anlehnung an das Römische Reich als *res publica* (es wird von *senatores*, *sacer senatus* u. ä.m. gesprochen) und die polnische Gesellschaft scheint davon, so wird es jedenfalls suggeriert, nur zu profitieren. Genau in diesen herrscherlosen Perioden wird des Öfteren von *imperium* geschrieben. Insgesamt werden bei Vincent, und in Folge auch bei den anderen Autoren, drei bzw. vier vorgeschichtliche Dynastien komponiert (entweder aus mündlich tradierten Legenden oder komplett erfunden), die aufgrund von Herrscher- verfehlungen ihrer letzten Mitglieder entweder durch eigenes Zutun oder durch das polnische Volk ihres Amtes enthoben werden.<sup>126</sup>

Dieser Freiheitsgedanke ist essentiell und sicherlich auch exzeptionell für die polnische Chronistik in Europa. Man erfand, um die gemeinschaftliche Regierung und Freiheit aller Polen zu unterstreichen, künstliche Dynastiebrüche, was auf Kosten des bis 1370 die Fürsten stellenden Geschlechts der Piasten gehen musste – ihr dynastischer Stammbaum lässt sich nur bis Piast, dem einfachen Ackermann aus Gnesen (bei Długosz Kruschwitz), zurückverfolgen und eben nicht bis Eneas oder Caesar. Nicht ganz unwichtig in diesem Zusammenhang ist die Tatsache, dass eine Teilschuld am Versagen der Popieliden, des letzten legendären polnischen Fürstengeschlechts vor den Piasten, nicht mehr unmittelbar – wie noch bei Gallus – mit dem ersten piastischen Herrscher (Piast) zusammengebracht werden konnte, sondern seit Vincent Kadłubek scheiterten die Popieliden bereits vor der Herrschaftsübernahme von Piast, um jeglichem Verdacht der Usurpation

125 Vinc., CP I,8, S. 13: [...] *post ipsam* [Wanda] *sine rege claudicauit imperium*.

126 Vgl. ausführlich zu diesem Phänomen: Vercamer 2015, S. 367–385.

durch den Stammvater Piast entgegenzuwirken.<sup>127</sup> Die berühmte Mäuse-Legende wird in diesem Zusammenhang bei Vincent erheblich anders interpretiert: Popiel II. hatte seine ihn eigentlich alle unterstützenden Oheime heimtückisch umbringen lassen und besiegelt dadurch ebenso sein eigenes Schicksal, da aus den toten Verwandten Mäuse herauskamen, die Popiel und seine Familie schließlich auffraßen.<sup>128</sup>

Nimmt man all diese Beobachtungen zusammen, so lässt sich konstatieren, dass die polnischen Chronisten offenbar lieber einem Freiheitsgedanken ‚aller Polen‘ (im eingeschränkten mittelalterlichen Sinne, also v. a. die Eliten betreffend) folgten, als dem meist in anderen europäischen Chroniken zu beobachtenden Versuch, den Stammbaum der herrschenden Dynastie soweit wie möglich nach hinten zu erweitern. Die Botschaft ist nicht zu übersehen: Die Polen würden bei schlechter Herrschaft auch gut ohne Herrscher auskommen.<sup>129</sup> Zum Beispiel werden die Ansprüche von Alexander dem Großen von einer unpersönlich konstruierten *imperatrix Polonia* in einer herrscherlosen Zeit zurückgewiesen<sup>130</sup> und eben nicht von einem greifbaren und namentlich bekannten polnischen Herrscher. Das führt zu einem erstaunlichen Befund: Das polnische Volk allein ist der Träger des antiken *imperium Polonorum* und nicht die Fürsten.

## 5. Diskurs der herrscherlichen Demut und Einfachheit:

Sicherlich zusammenhängend mit dem gerade angesprochenen Freiheits-Diskurs, spielen derartige Eigenschaften bei einem Herrscher eine sehr große Rolle für das Selbstverständnis im polnischen Fürstentum. Selbst wenn man von einem ‚antiken Imperium‘ der Polen sprechen kann, welches einem in den Chroniken unmissverständlich entgegentritt, so charakterisiert sich dieses stark über den Topos der Einfachheit und Demut der einzelnen Herr-

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127 Cron. Pol.-Sil., S. 615: Der Sohn Julius Popiel tötet die Onkel und damit: *Sic patrie syderibus extinctis omne Lechitarum decus contabuit* [schwinden].

128 Vinc., CP, I, 19–20, S. 26–29.

129 Ibid., I, 9, S. 14: *Huius quoque rei publice administratio humilibus nonnumquam et incertis cessit personis, nulla prorsus uel uulgi uel procerum sugillante inuidia, utpote quorum gloriosis etiam hodie gloriari delectet insignibus.*

130 Ibid.: Ein Brief der Polen an Alexander: *Regi regum Alexandro imperatrix Polonia.*

scher.<sup>131</sup> Als Beispiel sei genannt, dass Lestek II. trotz größter Macht – er hatte das große Heer Alexanders des Großen militärisch in einen Hinterhalt gelockt und geschlagen – immer wieder bei dem Gang zum Thron sein bauerlich-armes Gewand anzog und erst beim Thron selbst in sein herrschaftliches Ornat wechselte.<sup>132</sup> Ein weiteres Beispiel: Als Popiel II. ein großes Fest feierte, kamen zwei mittellose fremde Wanderer zu ihm und baten um Speis und Trank. Da er ihnen dies nicht gewährte, gerieten sie durch Zufall an den Ackermann Piast, der sie – obgleich selbst völlig mittellos – einließ und sie bewirtete. Der Sohn Piasts, Siemovit, sollte schließlich der zukünftige Herrscher Polens und vieler zusätzlicher Reiche werden. Er machte nicht nur das wett, was durch die Ignoranz Popiels II. verloren ging – so urteilt der Chronist –, sondern unterwarf auch noch weitere „Herrschaften“.<sup>133</sup> In der späteren Chronistik werden diese zunächst namenslosen „Fremden“ zu zwei Aposteln (Johannes und Paulus)<sup>134</sup> aufgewertet und greifbar gemacht. Bemerkenswerterweise wiederholt sich dieser Topos der Demut und Bescheidenheit später teilweise bei den zeitgenössischen polnischen Herrschern und kann daher als polnisches Charakteristikum (vielleicht auch slawisches: bei Cosmas taucht er ebenfalls auf) in den Chroniken angesehen werden.

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131 Chron. Dzirs., S. 8: [...] *huius autem rei publicae administratio humilibus nonnumquam et incertis cessit personis nulla prorsus vel vulgi vel [...]*.

132 Vinc., CP I, 15, S. 21: *Quotiens namque regalibus eum insigniri regia, ut assolet, poposcisset dignitas, originarie non immemor condicionis in habitu sordido prius orchestram conscendit, regalium ornatum scabello pedum suppressens, subinde regiis decussatus insignibus scabello insedit, illis extreme paupertatis panniculis in supremo orchestre suggestu reuerentissime collocatis.*

133 Chron. Pol.-Sil., S. 615–616: *Hic suis suffultus meritis prius magister efficitur militum, tandem principali fungitur maiestate et non eas solum, quas Pompiliana ignavia deseruerat naciones, revocavit, sed et alias suo coniecit imperio, quibus decanos, quindecimagenos, centuriones, collegiones, tribunos, chiliarchos, et magistros militum, urbim prefectos, presides omnesque potestates instituit.*

134 Długosz, Annales, S. 160.

## 6. Diskurs der Zurückweisung ‚imperialer Aggressoren‘:<sup>135</sup>

Dieser Diskurs kommt immer wieder vor: Die Gallier (die Rede ist von 300.000 Mann) sahen in den Polen einen ebenbürtigen Gegner bzw. Partner und teilten daher Europa mit diesen unter sich auf, indem sie einen Pakt eingingen. Alexander der Große wurde mit einer Deutlichkeit von den Polen zurückgewiesen, die sicherlich einzigartig ist – die mazedonischen Botschafter werden mit Algen und Gold ausgestopft und mit dem Kommentar zurückgeschickt, „dass niemand herrschen sollte, der sich nicht selbst beherrschen kann.“<sup>136</sup> Auch Cäsar bzw. die Römer konnten die Polen nicht militärisch schlagen. Um das Problem dennoch zu lösen, gab er dem polnischen König Lestek III. seine Schwester Julia zur Frau. Die Römer ärgerten sich darüber, dass Cäsar die Polen wie Gleichgestellte behandelte. Der dann geborene Sohn Julias und Lesteks, Popiel, regierte schließlich nicht nur über die *monarchia Sclaviae*, sondern nahm auch die *imperia* der angrenzenden Reiche (*finitimorum gubernatorum sumit imperia*) ein.<sup>137</sup>

Hier wird von den polnischen Historiographen eine klare Botschaft transportiert: Die Polen gehörten im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter nicht mehr zu den ‚big players‘ Europas – weder per Titel noch per Landesgröße konnte dies von den Chronisten beansprucht werden. In dieser Situation war es wichtig aufzuzeigen, dass dies nicht immer so war. In der Vergangenheit konnte die Eroberungswut der großen Imperien wie der Mazedonier, Römer, Franken und auch der Deutschen zurückgewiesen werden,<sup>138</sup> wodurch sich die Polen gegenüber den antiken und frühmittelalterlichen Imperien mindestens als ebenbürtig sehen konnten.

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135 Zusammenhängend mit Diskurs „passive Ausbreitung“ weiter oben.

136 Vinc., CP I, 9, S. 14: Der bereits erwähnte Brief der Polen an Alexander: *Regi regum Alexandro imperatrix Polonia. Male aliis imperat, qui sibimet imperare non didicit.*

137 Ibid., I, 17, S. 23: [...] *monarchia Sclaviae, sed etiam finitimorum gubernatorum sumit imperia.*

138 Chron. Miersz. S. 170: *Wanda mari, Wanda terrae, aeri Wanda imperet! Diis immortalibus Wanda pro suis victimet, et ego pro vobis o mei proceres.*

## 7. Der Diskurs der Staatsgründung:

Der erste namentlich bekannte Herrscher Krak wird durch eine Versammlung (*contio*) aller Polen (natürlich nur der Eliten) zum Fürsten gewählt. Er verspricht ihnen, die Geschäfte mehr als ein *socius* denn als ein *imperator* des Reiches zu führen. Dennoch urteilt er: ein *imperium sine rege* sei wie die Erde ohne Sonne (*mundus sine sole*).<sup>139</sup> Man könnte hier die These aufstellen (ohne dass dieser hier nachgegangen werden kann), dass in der *socius*-Idee der Schlüssel dafür zu sehen ist, warum die polnischen Chroniken zwar von *imperium* sprechen, aber eben nicht von einem polnischen *imperator*. Hier wären unter Umständen weitere semantische Studien zur negativen Konnotation des Titels *imperator* im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter behilflich.<sup>140</sup> Jedenfalls werden von Krak nach seiner rechtmäßigen Wahl durch alle Polen Rechte schriftlich fixiert und bereits bei Vincent folgt gleich auf diese Stelle, dass Polen seit dieser Zeit eine einheitliche Verfassung hatte – eine wichtige Grundlage für eine etablierte Herrschaft.<sup>141</sup> Die späteren Chronisten folgen dieser Episode ausnahmslos.

## 8. Diskurs des Namens:

Krakau (die wichtigste polnische Stadt im Mittelalter) bekam seinen Namen von Krak, dem ersten polnischen Fürsten. Die Polen (auch Wandalen genannt) und die Weichsel, also der zentrale und größte Fluss des Landes, hatten wiederum ihren Namen von der Tochter Kraks, Wanda oder von Wandalus, einem Nachkommen von Japhet. Wanda erbt das *imperium* des Vaters Krak. Die Polen nahmen keinen Anstoß daran, von einer Frau regiert zu werden – eine gewisse Parallele ist zu Cosmas und

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139 Vinc. I, 5, S. 9: *Ait: ridiculum esse [...] mundum sine sole, quod sine rege imperium [...] Sed non regem set regni socium pollicetur, si se deligant.*

140 Dies könnte über das an der Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Universität in Frankfurt/Main angesiedelte Projekt: Computational Historical Semantics (<http://www.comphistsem.org/>) vorgenommen werden.

141 Vinc., I, 5, 9: *Proinde rex [Graccus] ab omnibus consalutatur; iura instituit, leges promulgat. Sic ergo nostri civilis iuris nata est conceptio, seu concepta natiuitas.*

der dort erwähnten Lubussa, der sagenhaften ersten Herrscherin Böhmens, zu erkennen.<sup>142</sup>

### Fazit:

Im Sinne von Ulrich Menzel<sup>143</sup> müsste Polen vorgestellungsgeschichtlich, wie wir es bei den Historiographen des polnischen Mittelalters vorfinden, als Imperium gelten: Erstens nahm Polen aufgrund seiner überlieferten Geschichte und seiner militärischen Stärke eine imperiale Stellung gegenüber den meisten seiner Nachbarn ein, und zweitens wird Polen als unabhängig (also nicht tributpflichtig) vom römisch-deutschen Reich dargestellt. Es konnte somit (wie Frankreich auch) als Imperium im nicht-nominellen Sinne gelten, während das *Imperium Romanum* dieses *expressis verbis* war.

Die polnischen Historiographen wollten offenbar, und der Befund überrascht durchaus ein wenig, ideengeschichtlich tatsächlich eine antike imperiale Vergangenheit im kollektiven Gedächtnis der Polen evozieren und zementieren. Diese Vergangenheitskonstruktion kennzeichnet sich durch bestimmte Diskurse: Pan-Slawismus, abwehrende Reaktion auf äußere historisch bekannte imperiale Aggressoren usw. Als Tendenz ist dabei ebenfalls erkennbar geworden, dass bestimmte Topoi von den Historiographen bedient wurden – Eroberung, militärische Fähigkeit –, andere dabei aber zurückstehen oder nur äußerst kurze Erwähnung finden. Dies muss besonders für die kulturelle und ‚ideologische‘ Entfaltung Polens gelten.

Angesichts der Tatsache, dass die Christianisierung Polens unumstößlich mit dem Jahr 966 auch schon damals verbunden war, konnte man den vorgeschichtlichen Herrschern letztlich keine christlichen Eigenschaften und somit kulturell einigende Wirkung andichten. Die von Michael Doyle definierte augusteische Schwelle – also von einer Militär- und Unterdrückungsmacht hin zu einer kulturell-ideologischen Macht, von der auch die unterworfenen Klienten profitierten – kann für Polen folglich höchstens, und das eigentlich auch nur sehr eingeschränkt, für die Beschreibung Bo-

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142 *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, hrsg. von Berthold Bretholz. (MGH Script. rer. Germ. N.S. 2). Hahn: Hannover 1923, S. 1–241, hier: I, S. 11–13.

143 Menzel 2015, S. 29–64 (umfassende theoretische Bemerkungen zu „Imperium“).

leslaws I. (erstmalig bei Gallus) beansprucht werden.<sup>144</sup> Bei diesem historisch bereits bekannten und in den Nachbarländern nicht unbedingt beliebten Herrscher mussten die Geschichtsschreiber aber umso zurückhaltender mit einer Imperienzuschreibung umgehen, um sich selbst nicht komplett unglaubwürdig zu machen.

Insgesamt steht das Ziel der Historiographen umso deutlicher vor Augen: Die glorreiche und größtenteils vergessene Geschichte der Polen innerhalb des *imperium Polonorum* müsse von den gegenwärtigen polnischen Eliten wieder gesehen werden. Das polnische Fürstentum konnte zwar in der jüngeren Geschichte nicht mit dem übermächtigen Nachbarn, dem römisch-deutschen Reich, konkurrieren, stand diesem dafür aber zumindest in der Vorgeschichte völlig gleichberechtigt gegenüber.

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144 Gall, Chron. 1, 9, S. 27: *O magna discretio magnaque perfectio Boleslavi! qui personam in iudicio non servabat, qui populum tanta justitia gubernabat, qui honorem ecclesiae ac statum terrae in summo culmine retinebat. Justitia nimirum et aequitate ad hanc Boleslavus gloriam et dignitatem ascendit, quibus virtutibus initio potentia Romanorum et imperium excrevit.*



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