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978-0-521-19346-7 - Episcopal Power and Ecclesiastical Reform in the German Empire: Tithes, Lordship, and Community, 950–1150

John Eldevik

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*BISHOPS, POWER, AND MEDIEVAL SOCIETY:  
A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

In his *Annals*, eleventh-century chronicler Lampert of Hersfeld describes a contentious scene at a royal assembly held in the town of Erfurt in 1073 in which the archbishop of Mainz, Siegfried I, demanded that the monasteries of Hersfeld and Fulda render tithes from churches within their domains to the diocesan church.<sup>1</sup> The abbots of the two monasteries – jealously guarding long-standing papal and royal immunities – refused to acknowledge the bishop’s rights, but, under pressure from King Henry IV, offered to partition their tithes with the bishop according to canonical custom. The bishop flatly refused, saying that while previous bishops had been indulgent on this matter, as though giving milk to children, he would now demand that they receive the solid food of ecclesiastical discipline and pay their tithes.<sup>2</sup> After a bitter debate, the bishop and the abbots each finally conceded some ground and reached an agreement wherein the parish tithes would be divided equally. Following the agreement with the monasteries, a number of lay lords in Thuringia also conceded tithes from their estates to the archbishop.

The so-called Thuringian tithes dispute actually persisted for a long time after this. The monasteries and the Thuringians eventually reneged on their promises and what little Siegfried had hoped to gain was lost in the Saxon uprising of 1074 – which Lampert for his part alleges was instigated in no small part by the bishop and the king’s attempt to extract tithes

<sup>1</sup> Lampert of Hersfeld, *Annales*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SRG, 38 (Hannover, 1894), pp. 141–4.

<sup>2</sup> Lampert, *Annales*, p. 143. ‘... scilicet precessores suos sua aetate pro suo prbitratu aecclesiae Dei moderatos fuisse, eosque rudibus in fide auditoribus et pene adhuc neophitis lac potum dedisse, non escam, et sapient dispensation multa indulsisse, quae processu temporis, dum in fide convaluissent, successorum suorum industria resecuri vellent. Se autem iam adulta vel pocius senescente aecclesia spiritualia comparare spiritualibus, nec iam parvulis lac, sed perfectis solidum cibum ministrare atque a filiis aecclesiae leges aecclesiasticas exigere’. The allusion to milk and spiritual food is from 1 Corinthians 2:13.

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in the region.<sup>3</sup> Well into the twelfth century, the archbishops of Mainz faced stiff resistance in collecting tithes around Erfurt. The unfolding of this conflict, the journey from indulgence to strenuousness by the bishops of Mainz, and the clash of customary norms and new legal discipline are part of a larger story about the reordering of European society in the eleventh century as old ideas about legitimate authority were challenged by new claims to power and the imperatives of reform.<sup>4</sup> Bishops across the German empire in the later eleventh century, not only in Mainz, were increasingly intent on exercising their authority in new ways that focused in particular on the tighter control of landed resources, such as the tithe. To do so, they came into conflict with entrenched monastic and aristocratic interests that had previously held tithes on good terms from bishops, but also wished to assert more exclusive rights over them.

This book is an attempt to understand changing perceptions of order, lordship, and community in the German empire between the tenth and twelfth centuries and the role bishops played in a period that many historians have observed marked a critical transition in the development of European society, economy, and culture.<sup>5</sup> To do so, it examines various types of interaction, conflict, and negotiation between the episcopacy, laity, and monastic institutions in the dioceses of Mainz, Salzburg, and Lucca between roughly 950 and 1150. My observations are gleaned primarily from a detailed analysis of one issue in particular, the ecclesiastical tithe, that I argue is of singular importance in unpacking social, economic, and political relationships between a diocesan church and the leading families, institutions, and communities it served. The humdrum details of the medieval tithing regime may seem an odd point of departure for asking questions about something as complex and weighty as episcopal lordship or social change across such a large swathe of time and geography. As I aim to show, however, a creative study of this ostensibly mundane aspect of episcopal administration renders a surprisingly rich picture of the social landscape of a region and the contours of interest and authority that defined it. My assertion is that around the year 1050, the nature of episcopal authority and bishops' perceptions of their relationship to land and people underwent a profound change that shaped the nascent ecclesiastical reform movement and transformed the nature

<sup>3</sup> Lampert, *Annales*, p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> John Eldevik, 'Episcopal Lordship and the Politics of Submitting Tithes in Medieval Germany: The Thuringian Tithe Dispute in Social Context', *Viator* 33 (2003), pp. 40–56.

<sup>5</sup> R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, c. 970–1215* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2000); Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994); Robert S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950–1350* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976).

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of the episcopacy and bishops' relationship with the larger society. As I explain in the chapters that follow, isolating the precise factors driving this change is a complicated venture, but I hope that the overall work can further illuminate recent discussions in medieval historiography about social and religious change in the eleventh century.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXTS: BISHOPS, POWER,  
AND SOCIETY AROUND THE YEAR 1000

Social and political change in post-Carolingian Europe has been one of the more contested topics in medieval history studies over the past several decades. The main point of departure has been the legacy of Georges Duby's famous study of the Mâconnais region of Burgundy.<sup>6</sup> In it, Duby posited a dramatic collapse of post-Carolingian 'public order' – which he defined largely in terms of courts and assemblies convened by a count – in the late tenth and early eleventh century in Western Europe, accompanied by the rise of a new social order dominated, often violently, by petty castellans who imposed their authority on the surrounding countryside. Duby's thinking about social change resonated with that of a contemporary German scholar, Karl Schmid, whose research on monastic commemorative literature in southern Germany led him to conclude that during the first half of the eleventh century, aristocratic families dramatically reoriented their genealogical identities, converging on newly conceived patrilineages rather than broader, cognatic kin groups.<sup>7</sup> Landmark regional studies of other areas in Europe and the Mediterranean from the 1970s onwards appeared to paint a similar picture of significant social and economic change, though others, most notably Dominique Barthélemy in his research on the Vendômois, suggested fundamental continuities.<sup>8</sup> As

<sup>6</sup> Georges Duby, *La société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région mâconnaise* (Paris, A. Colin, 1953); Stephen D. White, 'Tenth-Century Courts at Mâcon and the Perils of Structuralist History: Re-reading Burgundian Judicial Institutions', in *Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture*, ed. Warren C. Brown and Piotr Górecki (Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2003), 37–68; R. I. Moore, 'Duby's Eleventh Century', *History* 69 (1984), pp. 36–49. See too Jean-François Lemarignier, 'La dislocation du "pagus" et le problème des "consuetudines" (Xe–XIe siècles)', in *Mélanges d'Histoire du Moyen Âge pour Louis Halphen* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1951), pp. 401–10.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Schmid, 'Über die Struktur des Adels im früheren Mittelalter', *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 19 (1959), pp. 1–23; Karl Schmid, 'Zur Problematik von Familie, Sippe, und Geschlecht: Haus und Dynastie beim mittelalterlichen Adel', *Zeitschrift für Geschichte des Oberrheins* 105 (1957), pp. 1–62; John B. Freed, *The Counts of Falkenstein: Noble Self-Consciousness in Twelfth-Century Germany*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 74: 6 (Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1984), pp. 1–8; Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Those of My Blood: Constructing Noble Families in Medieval Francia* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Pierre Bonnassie, *La Catalogne du milieu du Xe à la fin du XIe siècle: croissance et mutations d'une société*, Publications de l'Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail : Série A, 23; 29 (Toulouse, Association

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Barthélemy's ideas began to gain ground against the so-called mutationist thesis in the early 1990s, American medievalist Thomas N. Bisson sparked a major debate when he asserted in a series of articles that the feudal mutation imagined by Duby – and called into question by Barthélemy – was not merely a change in the exercise of justice, but a revolution in the exercise of lordship more broadly: the rise of a new political order based on the violent imposition of control over land and people by the castellan class.<sup>9</sup> In a more recent elaboration of his ideas, Bisson has argued that the experience with chaotic castellan violence in the tenth and eleventh centuries across Europe was the primary impetus for the creation of the governing institutions of the high medieval royal state (courts, parliaments, etc.) and other political achievements we associate with the so-called Renaissance of the Twelfth Century.<sup>10</sup>

One of the respondents to Bisson's thesis about lordship and power in the high Middle Ages was the late Timothy Reuter, who noted that questions about the origins of banal lordship and the feudal revolution were products of the peculiarly Franco-centric gaze of French and Anglophone medieval studies. East of the Rhine, in German lands, the chronology and contexts of social and political change were quite different.<sup>11</sup> There was no dramatic collapse of royal rule or public order (kings had little control over counts and local lords to begin with) and the rise of territorial, seigneurial lordships was a feature of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Recent Anglophone scholarship on the post-Carolingian period in Western Europe has both illuminated and further complicated the mutationist thesis about justice, kinship, and social change in the early eleventh century. In regional studies based largely on the records of important monastic institutions, historians like Matthew Innes, Marios Costambeys, Richard Barton, Hans Hummer, and Robert Berkhofer have shown that stark delineations between public order and

des publications de l'Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1975–6); Pierre Toubert, *Les Structures du Latium Médiévale* (Rome, École Française de Rome, 1973); Guy Bois, *The Transformation of the Year 1000: The Village of Lournand from Antiquity to Feudalism*, translated by Jean Birrell (Manchester, UK, St. Martin's Press, 1992); Dominique Barthélemy, *La société dans le comté de Vendôme de l'an mil au 14<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, Fayard, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Thomas N. Bisson, 'The "Feudal Revolution"', *Past and Present* 142 (1994), pp. 6–42; Thomas N. Bisson, 'Medieval Lordship', *Speculum* 70 (1995), pp. 743–59; Dominique Barthélemy, 'Debate: The Feudal Revolution', *Past and Present* 152 (1996), pp. 196–205; Stephen D. White, 'Debate: The Feudal Revolution', *Past and Present* 142 (1996), pp. 206–23; Timothy Reuter, 'The Medieval Nobility in Twentieth-Century Historiography', in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (London and New York, Routledge, 1997), pp. 177–201; Chris Wickham, 'Debate: The Feudal Revolution', *Past and Present* 155 (1997), pp. 196–208.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Reuter, 'Medieval Nobility', pp. 189–92.

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private lordship in the early Middle Ages were not always as clear as we might think – even during the Carolingian period – and that focusing on the construction and mediation of power relations through processes of dispute resolution, monastic patronage, and the adopting of new administrative strategies allows for a more nuanced contextualization of violence, feuds, and other phenomena typically viewed as signaling a major crisis in a society.<sup>12</sup>

While these studies and others like them have come to varying conclusions about degrees of continuity and change in this period – indeed, underscoring such variation has been an important contribution – they have done so by relying principally on sources generated by, and focused on, monastic institutions.<sup>13</sup> This does not in any way undercut their conclusions, and given that monasteries produced the great bulk of surviving texts of any kind for this period, they remain the principal source of our evidence. On the other hand, bishops and the institution of the episcopacy have remained relatively underdeveloped subjects in recent medieval social history. In one of his last published essays, Timothy Reuter suggested that a broadly conceived history of the episcopacy could open important new vistas onto many of the changes in Western European society in the decades around the first millennium.<sup>14</sup> Reuter pointed to the numerous ways bishops in the eleventh century established themselves as leaders within their dioceses, creating out of spiritual and secular lordships a unique kind of charismatic, non-royal rulership that shaped medieval society in profound ways throughout the Middle Ages. In this prescient article, Reuter synthesized a number of ideas and perspectives on bishops that had been taking shape in newer monographic and edited studies, but that had not really been made to speak to each other or to other issues in the field in a coherent way. In contrast to kings, counts, and castellans (or even monks), bishops are seemingly everywhere, yet nowhere in current histories of the tenth and eleventh centuries. While larger surveys of the period discuss bishops to one degree or another, there have been until recently comparatively few works treating the

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley 400–1000* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000); Marios Costambeys, *Power and Patronage in Early Medieval Italy: Local Society, Italian Politics and the Abbey of Farfá, c.700–900* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008) Richard E. Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine, c.890–1160* (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, NY, Boydell & Brewer, 2004); Hans Hummer, *Politics and Power in the Early Middle Ages: Alsace and the Frankish Realm, 600–1000* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006); Robert F. Berkhofer, *Day of Reckoning: Power and Accountability in Medieval France* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Barbara Rosenwein et al., 'Monks and their Enemies', *Speculum* 66:4 (1991), pp. 764–96.

<sup>14</sup> Timothy Reuter, 'Nobles and Others: the Social and Cultural Expression of Power Relations in the Middle Ages', in *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, NY, Boydell & Brewer, 2000), pp. 85–98.

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episcopacy, or even individual bishops, as a discrete subject between 950 and 1150.<sup>15</sup> Stephen Fanning's 1988 study of the life and times of bishop Hubert of Angers (1006–46) probably comes closest as an attempt to situate a bishop in a social world and reflect upon its significance for understanding a period of feudal change.<sup>16</sup> More recently, Anna Trumbore Jones has examined the bishops of a specific region over time – in this case, Aquitaine from the later ninth to the mid-eleventh century – in order to map the evolving intersections of episcopal and lordly power there in the post-Carolingian period.<sup>17</sup> A comparable study on an early medieval German diocese was not forthcoming until the appearance of Giuseppe Albertoni's book on episcopal lordship and local society in tenth- and eleventh-century Tyrol that offered a precedent – setting new evaluation and interpretation of the *Traditionsbuch* of the bishops of Säben–Brixen.<sup>18</sup> Albertoni describes the creation of an episcopal domain straddling the Alps in southern Tyrol over the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries and how its maintenance required the bishops to appropriate new forms of economic administration as well as lordship. The bishops' demand for administrative and military service to maintain this lordship contributed to a significant reordering of the region's politics, which then came to an abrupt end during the War of Investitures.

A number of medievalists working on Italy, however, represented strongly among David Herlihy's students, have produced studies of bishops and their diocesan communities which rely on a variety of comparative

<sup>15</sup> Michel Parisse, 'Les évêques et la noblesse: continuité et retournement (XIe–XIIe siècles)', in *Chiesa e mondo feudale nei secoli x-xii. Atti della diocesima settimana internazionale di studio Mendola, 24–28 agosto 1992* (Milan, Vita e Pensiero, 1995), pp. 61–85; *The Bishop Re-Formed: Studies in Episcopal Culture and Power in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. John Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2007); Mary Frances Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, NY, Boydell & Brewer, 2007); Rosamond McKitterick, 'The Church', in *NCMH*, vol. III, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 130–62 is a good general overview of the period.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Fanning, *A Bishop and his World before the Gregorian Reform: Hubert of Angers 1006–1047*, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 78:1 (Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1988). Fanning, writing just prior to the outbreak of the great disputes on the feudal mutation, for the most part appropriates the traditional model of the decline of public order and the rise of feudal lordship in the early eleventh century to frame his study. Compare to Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration: The Role of the Bishop in Twelfth Century Auxerre* (Cambridge, Medieval Academy of America, 1979).

<sup>17</sup> Anna Trumbore Jones, *Noble Lord, Good Shepherd: Episcopal Power and Piety in Aquitaine, 877–1050* (Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Giuseppe Albertoni, *Die Herrschaft des Bischofs: Macht und Gesellschaft zwischen Etsch und Inn im Mittelalter (9.-11. Jahrhundert)* (Bolzano, Athesia, 2003); Two other important studies of episcopal power in German lands, but with somewhat different focal points, include Georg Jenal, *Erzbischof Anno II von Köln (1056–75) und sein politisches Wirken*, *MGM*, 8 (Stuttgart, Anton Hiersemann, 1974); Benjamin Arnold, *Princes and Territories in Medieval Germany* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991).



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source analyses to flesh out not only the social, political, and economic dimensions of the bishop's office, but also particular aspects of the local society in which the bishop operated.<sup>19</sup> One advantage of works like these, as well as Fanning's work on Hubert of Angers and Albertoni's work on Säben-Brixen, is that they were able to use the episcopacy as an entry point onto a broader social history of a region, typically defined by the diocese and lands under the control of the bishop and his family. The office of the bishop served as a critical nexus for numerous interests that could be traced through gifts and exchanges of land, liturgical commemoration, and literary artefacts. Unfortunately, studies focusing on a particular bishop or a particular diocese are also restricted in size and scope and necessarily limit the conclusions one can draw about phenomena over larger areas or periods.

While many aspects of episcopal history in the German empire have been treated within the framework of regional social history, or *Landesgeschichte*, the subject of the episcopacy in a comparative context has been viewed typically within other registers of political, institutional, and cultural history, particularly the paradigm of the imperial church system. In its classic form, articulated by scholars like Leo Santifaller and Josef Fleckenstein, the idea of an imperial church system served as a way of framing the episcopacy between the tenth and twelfth centuries (and far beyond in some cases) as an institution situated between the structures of the monarchy and the aristocracy.<sup>20</sup> Following the death of Louis the Child, the last Carolingian ruler in the east, and the rise of the newly independent and assertive regional duchies, interventions in the episcopate – particularly the process of appointing and investing bishops in their sees – became the primary means by which the new Ottonian emperors exerted control over the church and enhanced their own authority as monarchs. By further offering bishops (and abbots) immunities for their

<sup>19</sup> E.g. George W. Dameron, *Episcopal Power and Florentine Society 1000–1320* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1991); Maureen Miller, *The Formation of a Medieval Church: Ecclesiastical Change in Verona, 950–1150* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993); Steven Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Although he was not a student of Herlihy, I would also add to this list the work of Duane Osheim, particularly *An Italian Lordship: The bishopric of Lucca in the Late Middle Ages* (Los Angeles and Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977).

<sup>20</sup> A retrospective overview of the key literature, and the history of the concept, is provided by Oskar Köhler, 'Die ottonische Reichskirche: Ein Forschungsbericht', in *Adel und Kirche. Gerd Tellenbach zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Josef Fleckenstein and Karl Schmid (Freiburg, Herder, 1968), pp. 141–204. See too Leo Santifaller, *Zur Geschichte des ottonisch-salischen Reichskirchensystems*, Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Kl., 229: 1 (Vienna, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1954); Josef Fleckenstein, 'Problematik und Gestalt der ottonisch-salischen Reichskirche', in *Kirche und Reich vor dem Investiturstreit*, ed. Karl Schmid (Sigmaringen, Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1985), pp. 83–98.

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domains, and combining these privileges with secular offices and military obligations, the German emperors effectively appropriated the church as a branch of the royal state and deployed its resources as a counterbalance against the interests of the regional nobility throughout their realm. Then, according to the traditional model, the reforms of Gregory VII and the papacy's final victory over the institution of royal investiture of bishops in 1122 effectively broke the link between royal and episcopal power, setting the church on a path independent from that of the secular state.

Even as this appears to map rather well onto a narrative about discontinuities between the Carolingian and Ottonian period popularized in the debates about feudalism and the rise of castellan lordship, it has been recognized for some time now that this construct had a number of weaknesses. While Ottonian bishops were certainly closely involved with royal affairs, it is not certain that this can be characterized in the terms of a rationalized system that seamlessly wove together the functions of royal and ecclesiastical administration.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, as recent research by Mayake de Jong, Boris Bigott, and Monika Suchan has shown, bishops had been well integrated into royal government beginning in the ninth century, since at least the reign of Louis the Pious, if not earlier.<sup>22</sup> Roland Pauler concluded in his study of the Italian episcopate in the Ottonian period that the tenth century was characterized by continuity more than change; the German emperors pursued what might be called a *laissez-faire* approach to Italy (outside Rome) and did not actively intervene in diocesan politics the way they did in German lands.<sup>23</sup> Steffen Patzold's recent study of the Frankish episcopate in the early Middle Ages has

<sup>21</sup> Some important critiques include Timothy Reuter, 'The 'Imperial Church System' of the Ottonian and Salian Rulers: A Reconsideration', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33:3 (1982), pp. 347–74; Eugenio Dupré-Theseider, 'Vescovi e città nell'Italia precomunale', in *Italia Sacra*, vol. 5, *Vescovi e Diocesi in Italia nel Medioevo*. Atti del 2. Convegno di Storia della Chiesa in Italia (Padua, Antenore, 1964), pp. 55–109, esp. pp. 92–5; Rudolf Schieffer, 'Der geschichtliche Ort der ottonisch-salischen Reichskirchenpolitik', *Vorträge der Nordrhein-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Geisteswissenschaften*, G 352, (Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> Boris Bigott, *Ludwig der Deutsche und die Reichskirche im Ostfränkischen Reich (826–876)* (Husum, Matthiesen Verlag, 2002); Monika Suchan, 'Kirchenpolitik des Königs oder Königspolitik der Kirche? Zum Verhältnis Ludwigs des Frommen und des Episkopates während der Herrschaftskrisen um 830', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 111:1 (2000), pp. 1–27. On church-state relations in the Carolingian period more generally, especially in the early ninth century, see Mayake de Jong, 'Sacrum palatium et ecclesia. L'autorité religieuse royale sous les Carolingiens (790–840)', *Annales H.S.S.* 58 (2003), pp. 1243–69; eadem, 'Ecclesia and the Early Medieval Polity', in *Staat im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, and Helmut Reimitz, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters*, 11 (Vienna, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), pp. 113–32; eadem, 'The State of the Church: Ecclesia and Early Medieval State Formation', in *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat – Europäische Perspektiven*, ed. Walter Pohl and Veronika Wieser, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters*, 16 (Vienna, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), pp. 241–54.

<sup>23</sup> Roland Pauler, *Das Regnum Italiae in ottonischer Zeit: Markgrafen, Grafen und Bischöfe als politische Kräfte* (Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1982).



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also emphasized that to understand the position and significance of the bishop in his contemporary society, it is necessary to look at a fuller range of activities and representations beyond those which explicitly concern their official duties or competencies.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, one of the central insights of Patzold's work was to problematize not only the analytical categories used to study bishops in the past, but also the somewhat anachronistic distinction between ideas about secular versus spiritual authority. As Monika Suchan's recent article suggests about bishops and kings in the ninth century, it is just as possible to speak of an ecclesiastical imperial system as an imperial church system.<sup>25</sup>

While episcopal and royal politics were interwoven at various levels, the careers of most bishops, even those closely attached to the royal court and the trans-regional nobility, tended to be far more enmeshed in the dynamics of local and regional politics over the broader span of their careers.<sup>26</sup> As chancellors, special legates, or military commanders, bishops were indeed expected to bear the banner of imperial sovereignty. But the overlapping of their functions in those specific contexts and the structuring of their relationships to other groups and institutions within their dioceses should not be taken for granted without further qualification. When not acting in the context of royal government, bishops were pastors and regional potentates with command over a vast array of human and material resources.<sup>27</sup> Burchard of Worms' extensive efforts to assemble a practical manual of canon law for his diocese, or to codify rules governing conflict and administration within the episcopal *familia*, for example, give some idea of the range of issues facing a bishop in the eleventh century.<sup>28</sup>

While we cannot lose sight of the importance of royal – indeed, public – power in relation to the German and Italian episcopate in the early Middle Ages, it is equally important that we approach the problem of episcopal administration with as few programmatic assumptions as possible. The figure of the bishop was a multivalent one and while

<sup>24</sup> Steffen Patzold, *Episcopus. Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankenreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts*, *Mittelalter-Forschungen*, 25 (Sigmaringen, Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Suchan, 'Königspolitik der Kirche', pp. 1–27.

<sup>26</sup> The tensions between the political obligations of many imperial bishops and local governance are illustrated by John Nightingale, 'Bishop Gerard of Toul (963–94) and Attitudes to Episcopal Office', in *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages*. Essays presented to Karl Leyser, ed. Timothy Reuter (London and Rio Grande, Hambledon Press, 1992), pp. 41–62.

<sup>27</sup> McKitterick, 'The Church', pp. 143–7.

<sup>28</sup> Compare Heinrich Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century: Mentalities and Social Orders*, translated by Patrick J. Geary (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 121–3. See too Greta Austin, 'Jurisprudence in the Service of Pastoral Care: The *Decretum* of Burchard of Worms', *Speculum* 79 (2004), pp. 929–59, who observes that Burchard's canon law collection was designed primarily to aid in the education of priests and the day-to-day pastoral care duties of a diligent clergy.

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rendering a complete picture of the bishop or the episcopate is not possible, a substantial amount can be learned about bishops and how they related to changes in the broader society by beginning with a more bottom-up approach to the issue. This does not mean simply a close study of episcopal land lordship or fiscality using the traditional sources of social history, such as a cartulary or inventory. Instead, I want to understand bishops and their construction of lordship and power in far broader terms, and thus require not a particular source, but a particular practice to focus on. In the following section, I shall draw the preceding discussion of the historiography of the imperial episcopacy into a more detailed contextualization of the social history of the episcopacy, as well as the categories of analysis used here.

## CONCEPTUAL CONTEXTS: POWER AND THE TITHE

Comparing forms of episcopal activity and administration of the tithe in the Middle Rhine, Tuscany, and Bavaria requires crossing and triangulating between a number of methodological and thematic boundaries. The Italian historiography on what was once referred to as *Il secolo di ferro*, particularly in the peninsula north of Rome, has generally embraced the idea of the Carolingian state coming to an end in the early tenth century and being replaced by smaller centres of seigneurial power, particularly those dominated by bishops.<sup>29</sup> The world of the German lands north of the Alps in the tenth century has been construed quite differently, however, making both the idea of feudal mutation and the sudden emergence of banal lordship a less useful analytical framework – if it is even at all appropriate elsewhere.<sup>30</sup> The king remained a central figure in the eastern Frankish kingdom, but scholars have long recognized that inter-personal relations mediated by customary norms, rather than trans-personal institutions, defined public order.<sup>31</sup> Over the past twenty years,

<sup>29</sup> *Il secolo di ferro: mito e realtà del secolo X*, *Settimane di Studio*, 38 (Spoleto, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1991); Giovanni Tabacco, *The Struggle for Power in Medieval Italy*, translated by Rosalind Brown Jensen (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 151–69; Giuseppe Sergi, 'Le istituzioni politiche del secolo XI: trasformazioni dell'apparato pubblico e nuove forme di potere', in *Il Secolo XI: una svolta?* ed. Cinzio Violante and Johannes Fried (Bologna, Società editrice il Mulino, 1993), pp. 73–95. A good overview of the pertinent historiography is in Giovanni Tabacco, *Dai re ai signori. Forme di trasmissione del potere nel Medioevo* (Turin, Bollati Boringhieri, 2000). A recent critical reassessment – based on sources from Farfa in central Italy – is Costambeys' *Power and Patronage*. For an examination of ecclesiastical institutions in this period, see Miller, *Formation of a Medieval Church*, pp. 73–95.

<sup>30</sup> Reuter, 'Medieval Nobility', pp. 187–91.

<sup>31</sup> Hans-Werner Goetz, *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewusstsein im hohen Mittelalter* (Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1999), pp. 174–85; Helmut Beumann, 'Zur Entwicklung transpersonaler Staatsvorstellung', in *Das Königstum: seine geistigen und rechtlichen Grundlagen. Mainaavorträge 1954*, *Vorträge und Forschungen*, 3 (Sigmaringen, Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1954), pp. 185–224.