

Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte

Herausgegeben vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris

(Institut historique allemand)

Band 23/1 (1996)

DOI: 10.11588/fr.1996.1.59724

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Anton SCHARER, Georg SCHEIBELREITER (ed.), *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, Wien, München (Oldenbourg) 1994, 544 p. (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, 32).

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in early medieval historiography, and ›Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter‹ is the latest and most erudite contribution to the burgeoning literature on the subject. This volume, comprising twenty papers in German and eight in English, has its origins in a conference held in Zwettl in 1993. From among the contributions collected here, twenty-four papers and the conclusion (by Patrick Geary) were presented at the actual conference, and four (those of Anton, Collins, Dumville and Wolfram), were commissioned especially for this volume. As the editors state at their concise introduction, they have tried to cover as varied a selection of themes and sources as possible, and indeed, they have managed to assemble an impressive collection of essays which brings together different subject areas as well as research techniques.

It is impossible within the confines of a short review to do justice to the various contents of this rich collection, and it is inevitable, invidious as it may be, but to list in brief the various papers, and to select only a few issues for further comment. It is, after all, the reviewer's *licentia*.

›Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter‹ duly opens with a paper by Herwig WOLFRAM on what he terms ›an historiographical dilemma‹. After a short analysis of the filtration of information which the anonymous author of the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* practised, Wolfram pursues to examine how the ›historian's craft‹ was perceived and understood by early medieval authors and their contemporaries. Following Wolfram extremely learned (as always) opening, Georg SCHEIBELREITER discusses the interrelations and influences between myth and historical fact, and Arnold ANGENENDT stresses the importance of religious and theological perceptions for the study of early medieval historiography.

The subsequent papers are all concerned with individual authors or representative genres, and thus provide an illustrative panorama of early medieval historiography. Hans-Werner GOETZ tackles the concept of time and its importance in Carolingian historiography, and argues that this concept of time (*Zeitbewußtsein*) is part and parcel of a broader Carolingian perception of history (*Geschichtsbewußtsein*). Brigitte MERTA discusses law and propaganda in Carolingian charters (mainly those drew on behalf of monasteries), and points to the abundant historical information that can be gathered from such ›funktionalen Quellen‹. Wilfried HARTMANN examines the representation of Church councils in the historical narratives of the Carolingian period. Marc VAN UYTFANGHE describes hagiography as a special genre, in between legend, biography and history; Walter BERSCHIN studies some aspects of the use and influence of classical models in the composition of early medieval biographies; and Fritz LOSEK studies the use and function of anecdotes in the historical writings of the early Middle Ages. Reinhold KAISER's paper discusses the *Gesta episcoporum* as an historiographical genre, and Hans Hubert ANTON re-examines Walter Goffart's interpretation of the so-called *origines gentium*. Two paper concentrate on the broader context for the production of historical narratives. Anton SCHARER well documented paper analyses the writing of history at the court of Alfred the Great, while Janet NELSON's brilliant paper concentrates on the writing of history at the courts of Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald, and offers some illuminating observations on the nature and purpose of history in the Carolingian court. In her splendid paper, Rosamond MCKITTERICK tackles the question of audience for Latin historiography by analysing the manuscript evidence. According to her, by studying the form and the context in which historical works have survived (i.e. the manuscript tradition and the problem of dissemination), one can get a fuller and more coherent picture of the purpose and the audience both on and after the initial production. McKitterick manages to demonstrate this point masterfully with reference to a variety of historical texts from Antiquity and the early Middle-Ages. Like the manuscript evidence, which scholars tend to ignore, liturgy is often neglected by historians as well. Thus, Christian HANNICK's paper ›Liturgie und Geschichtsschrei-

bung« is an extremely important contribution which demonstrates the importance of the liturgical evidence for the study of any given society. Although Hannick concentrates on the Byzantine liturgy, his paper gives a rare glimpse of the richness of the liturgical evidence, and the way it can be used to promote our understanding of the early Middle-Ages.

The rest of the papers refers more specifically to one or two early medieval narrators. Both Giselle DE NIE and Martin HEINZELMANN discuss the historical narrative of Gregory of Tours. While the former tries to define the role of the ›invisible spiritual reality‹ in Gregory's world, the latter concentrates on Gregory ›the theologian‹ and his perception of the Franks. Ian WOOD suggests, very convincingly, a new context for the production and dissemination of Fredegard's Chronicle, arguing that it is, probably, the supreme political tract of the 660s. Walter POHL subjects Paul the Deacon to some long overdue re-examination, and offers what is by far the best study currently available on Paul the Deacon and his historical narrative. Johann WEISSENSTEINER's thought-provoking paper discusses the relationship between Jordanes and Cassiodorus. Although more is needed to prove his case unequivocally, it is certainly the best explanation given to date, far more convincing than Walter Goffart's. Andreas SCHWARCZ studies the textual transmission of Victor of Vita's *Historia persecutionis Africanae provinciae*, and provides an exhaustive list of the manuscripts. Roger COLLINS examines Isidore of Seville's *Historia Gothorum*, and suggests that parts of its shorter version relies heavily on the lost work of Maximus of Zaragoza. Henry MAYR-HARTING discusses the patristic thinking and its importance in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*. David DUMVILLE discusses the Welsh *Historia Britonum*; Brigit SAWYER discusses Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum*; Rajko BRATOZ discusses Eugippius' *Vita Severini*; Hans-Henning KORTÜM discusses the Chronicle of Regino of Prüm; and Wolfgang EGGERT analyses the use of the terms ›Franks‹ and ›Saxons‹ by Notker and Widukind.

There are some famous names here, and many excellent papers, full of stimulating and thought-provoking ideas. Yet, it seems that the ›Hero‹ of this volume (although *in absentiam*) is Walter Goffart. His name and his book – *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800)* (Princeton, 1988) – were often evoked in many of the papers mentioned above. Goffart's treatment and understanding of Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon are criticised by many contributors, more often than not with a just cause. Funnily enough, as Patrick GEARY points out, ›each seems to have found Goffart much more convincing when discussing something other than his own particular speciality‹ (p. 540). Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that Goffart's ›Narrators of Barbarian History‹ had introduced the discussion of early medieval historiography into a new phase. As Ian Wood notes, ›however much one may or may not agree with the detail of Goffart's case studies of Barbarian historiography, there can be no doubt that they have provided a set models for approaching the historical narratives of the Dark Ages‹ (p. 589). Controversial as it may be, Walter Goffart's ›The Narrators of Barbarian History‹ changed dramatically the study of early medieval historiography, and influenced the questions we asked and the answers we look for. Indeed Goffart's long shadow reached into many corners, and many of his critics in this volume prove it. Nevertheless, as this volume demonstrates, criticising Goffart is not just a mere trend among historians of the early Middle-Ages. The various papers in ›Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter‹ make us re-think many of Goffart's interpretations, and many of them offer some extremely convincing alternatives.

To sum up, ›Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter‹ is a rich feast of scholarship, full of new material and perspectives of great value for the study of early medieval historiography. Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter's skilful editing has produced a remarkably coherent collection that would be an obligatory reading for anyone interested in early medieval historiography, and the only shortcoming I can point out is the lack of a comprehensive index. All in all, this collection deserves a very warm welcome indeed.

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