

medieval diplomatic¹ which, among other things, standardized the method, devised by Sickel, of counterchecking collation by dictation of the script against the original.

Dümmler died in harness in 1902; a few weeks before his death Mommsen, now 85, had retired from his editorial work. Strangely and unfortunately, Dümmler's death gave rise to another contretemps similar to and even more disastrous than that of 1886. This time the government was smartly off the mark and forestalled independent action by appointing Holder-Egger as *locum tenens* pending the election of a president; this *fait accompli* was accepted, and the presentation of names deferred till 1903. Once again opinion was sharply divided. To some Bresslau seemed to have a strong claim, by reason of his great services to the *Monumenta* and his vivacious and likeable personality. He was, however, a Jew, and had never been *persona grata* in Berlin. Holder-Egger, on the other hand, though unrivalled as an editor, was neither a scholar of width nor a leader of men, and old Mommsen, active as ever though on the verge of the grave, was against him. After much complicated manœuvring, in a badly arranged vote for first preference Holder-Egger alone came out with a clear majority. As the Minister had asked for three names at least, it was decided to add three unlikely and even recalcitrant candidates in order to force in Holder-Egger; this deprived Bresslau of any chances he might have had on a straight vote, and he felt the blow deeply. Nor in fact did the trick come off. The government, who would have none of Holder-Egger, held up the appointment and decided to reorganize the *Monumenta* once again as a state-controlled institute, directed, if need be, by an administrator who was not a medievalist. Delays and hitches of all kinds supervened, and for four years the *Monumenta* lay in the doldrums. This delay accentuated the weakness and the fissiparous tendencies of the fabric; editors delayed, prevaricated and defaulted; individual scholars indulged their taste for luxuriant indices and apparatus; a number of bad choices were made, both of texts to edit and of editors to do the work; some faulty editions appeared, especially in the *Laws*, and were mangled by the critical wolves, some of them in the sheep's clothing of Monumentists. Without an effective head there was a real danger that all the channels of movement would silt up; to use another

¹ His *Handbuch d. Urkundenlehre* was first published in 1889.