

The only (partial) exception is Bernward of Hildesheim, whose biographer Thangmar does indeed describe him as „trained as a court scribe“ (*aulicus scriba doctus*). Yet Thangmar is copying a private charter here – one which survived in single-sheet form into the nineteenth century – so the wording is not his. Furthermore, Thangmar does not depict Bernward copying or composing diplomas as bishop; rather, this is a task in which he had previously been trained. This is probably no coincidence. For the scribe who has been identified as Bernward’s notarial alias, Hildibald A, ceases to operate upon his promotion⁴³. And one of the most distinctive features of Hildibald A’s hand is that he never fully mastered the diplomatic minuscule demanded by such documents. Bernward’s case thus proves that leading churchmen could indeed be charter scribes, but provides little evidence that they routinely were. If anything, it may suggest the reverse: that most bishops – and even leading chaplains – were unaccustomed to such work.

Our most detailed contemporary description of diploma production, furnished by Thietmar of Merseburg, is of particular interest in this regard. At the start of Book 3, Thietmar discusses the pious donations of Otto II, including those to his own see of Merseburg. Thietmar’s primary motive is to strengthen his own hand in ongoing efforts to restore Merseburg’s patrimony, following the dissolution of the see in 981 and its restoration in 1004. And the main privilege mentioned in favour of the bishopric, a grant of forest rights between the Saale and Mulde, is one Thietmar himself had forged on the basis

ti lectio 7, ed. by Bernhard VOGEL (MGH SS rer. Germ. 73, 2001) p. 160 f. Note, however, the implication that Wolfgang of Regensburg may have been involved in charter drafting in Otloh’s later *Vita*: *Vita s. Wolfkangi* c. 29, ed. by Georg WAITZ (MGH SS 4, 1841) p. 538 l. 30–33, 40 f.: *Sed quoniam Poemia provincia sub Ratisponensis ecclesiae parrochia extitit, peragi non potuit, nisi ipsius antistitis praesidio. Unde rex, legatione missa ad episcopum, petiit, ut acceptis pro parrochia praediis, in Poemia sibi liceret episcopatum efficere ... Cumque tempus peragendi concambii venisset, tanta favit alacritate, ut ipse privilegium componeret.*

43) Thangmar, *Vita Bernwardi episcopi Hildesheimensis* c. 51, ed. by Georg Heinrich PERTZ (MGH SS 4, 1841) p. 779f.; *Urkundenbuch des Hochstifts Hildesheim und seiner Bischöfe* 1: Bis 1221, hg. von Karl JANICKE (1896) no. 62. For Bernward’s identification with Hildibald A: SCHUFFELS, Bernward in der Königskanzlei (as n. 27). Closer examination of Bernward’s suspected autograph with the last attested diploma of HA confirms the possibility (and perhaps even likelihood) of hand identity; given the large span of time and differences in script, however, absolute certainty is impossible: Hildesheim, Dom- und Diözesanmuseum, Inv. DS 18, fol. 231v; Düsseldorf, Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen, Stift Vilich, Urk. 2a (= D O III 32).