

of an authentic privilege. We must, therefore, treat his remarks with due caution. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that Thietmar accurately reflects contemporary norms of diploma production, since his artifice depends on verisimilitude. More to the point, his most detailed description is of the emperor's confirmation of Magdeburg's right of free episcopal election. This relates to an authentic diploma, which survives to this day in its original format, and Thietmar writes as a sometime Magdeburg student. In this connection, he recalls how „by imperial decree, and in the presence of Archbishop Adalbert [of Magdeburg]“ the emperor had issued the privilege, which was also confirmed by the gift of a *de luxe* book bearing a gold portrait of Otto II and his wife Theophanu. The donation was then celebrated by a Mass led by Adalbert and attended by the emperor, in which the archbishop read aloud and displayed the new diploma, right after the Gospel readings and the sermon. At this point, Adalbert threatened any who might infringe its terms with excommunication, after which all present enthusiastically shouted *Amen, fiat, fiat!* This is all most impressive. But what is notably absent is any mention of the scribe, who according to Huschner was none other than the imperial chancellor, Hildibald of Worms (i.e. Hildibald B). Hildibald's absence is all the more notable when we consider that all of the other players mentioned here – the emperor, empress and archbishop – are mentioned in the resulting diploma⁴⁴.

All of these objections might be overlooked, were there unambiguous palaeographical evidence in favour of Huschner's identifications. Yet it is precisely here that his arguments face their greatest obstacles. Only a relatively small number of his identifications rest on palaeographical evidence, and many of these prove problematic on closer inspection (as we shall see). The more general problem is that our corpus of established episcopal autographs is itself remarkably small.

44) Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* III 1, ed. by Robert HOLTZMANN (MGH SS rer. Germ. N.S. 9, 1935) p. 96–99, with KELLER, *Ottonische Königsherrschaft* (as n. 11) p. 157 f. Thietmar's forgery is D O II 90, Merseburg, Domstiftsarchiv, Urk. 1, on which: Helmut LIPPELT, Thietmar von Merseburg. Reichsbischof und Chronist (1973) p. 89–115; Wolfgang HUSCHNER, *Echt, gefälscht oder verloren? Die Verzeichnung von Urkunden in Thietmars Chronik*, in: Thietmars Welt (as n. 25) p. 130–147. The (authentic) Magdeburg diploma is D O II 207, Magdeburg, Landesarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, U 1, I 47. Cf. Dietrich CLAUDE, *Geschichte des Erzbistums Magdeburg bis in das 12. Jahrhundert*, 2 vols. (Mitteldeutsche Forschungen 67, 1972–1975), 1 (1972) p. 131 f.; SCHULMEYER-AHL, *Anfang vom Ende* (as n. 17) p. 276 f.