

the Sickelian edifice remained in place. Partly, this is a tribute to the subtlety of Sickel's original teachings. Though he may have exaggerated the importance of the chancery, Sickel had always acknowledged the role recipients had to play alongside this; moreover, he was right to note that many diplomas of the tenth century were produced by the same draftsmen and scribes – often figures in some sort of royal service. The main reason Sickel stood unchallenged, however, is that scholarly attention now shifted decisively away from the diplomas of the Ottonians to those of their Salian and (in particular) Staufer successors, which had yet to be edited. Since there could be little doubt that a chancery of sorts existed in these years, there was no need to continue tilting at windmills.

Hints of further revisionism can, nevertheless, be detected in a few works of these years. Pride of place belongs to Heinrich Fichtenau's article of 1964 on the forgeries of Pilgrim of Passau. In this, the great Austrian diplomatist – then head of Sickel's old academic home, the Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung (Institute for Austrian Historical Research) – not only identified Bishop Pilgrim with the draftsman-scribe Willigis C, who had been responsible for a set of famous forgeries in Passau's favour, but also argued that other leading churchmen of the era might lie behind the anonymous „chancery notaries“ first identified by Sickel and his team. In particular, Fichtenau suggested that Hildibald B, one of the most active and influential scribes of the 980s, may have been none other than the imperial chancellor Hildibald of Worms, an identification subsequently adopted by Johannes Fried (apparently on Fichtenau's authority)<sup>7</sup>. Along somewhat different lines, in the 1990s Peter Rück and Hagen Keller championed a view of sovereign *acta* as visual and symbolic objects, as essential elements in the projection of royal authority and communication between rulers and their subjects. From this perspective, the chancery was less an institution than a loose set of practices, best judged by its effects upon the recipients and the wider public<sup>8</sup>. By and

---

7) Heinrich FICHTEAU, Zu den Urkundenfälschungen Pilgrims von Passau, in: Mitteilungen des oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs 8 (1964) p. 81–100; Johannes FRIED, Der Weg in die Geschichte. Die Ursprünge Deutschlands bis 1024 (1994) p. 568, 571. On Fichtenau: Urkunden – Schriften – Lebensordnungen. Neue Beiträge zur Mediävistik, hg. von Andreas SCHWARCZ / Katharina KASKA (2015).

8) Peter RÜCK, Die Urkunde als Kunstwerk, in: Kaiserin Theophanu. Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends, hg. von Anton VON EUW / Peter SCHREINER, 2 vols. (1991), 2, p. 311–334; Hagen KELLER, Zu den Siegeln der Karolinger und der Ottonen. Urkunden als Hoheitszeichen