

on some fronts, Huschner has overreached, it is only to be expected. Works of great insight are rarely free from blemishes, as Sickel's own œuvre attests. On a host of subjects, from recipient influence to scribal agency, Huschner is right, and even where he is not, he has done us all a huge favour in questioning received wisdom. At the same time, it is important to test Huschner's bolder theses. And if this article may seem like an extended game of academic nit picking, it is because there are indeed nits to be picked. It makes a difference whether LF was Liudprand; it matters if Odilo of Cluny was Heribert D. If we are to build on Huschner's foundations, we must make sure these are solid. In many cases, they are; but in some, they are not.

Where this leaves us with the „chancery“ is a good question. Huschner is probably right to eschew the term, which all too easily assumes institutionalization and routine royal service, and we would do well to follow him in preferring the more flexible designations „court“ and „court notary“. Huschner's picture of devolved and varied charter production sits well with more recent work on Carolingian diplomatic, which has shown that great consistency can be achieved without a regular body of scribes in royal service. In the tenth century, too, the ability to produce diplomas was not the preserve of a small cadre of court clerks, but rather found quite widely across Germany and northern Italy. Equally welcome is Huschner's emphasis on the contribution of these draftsman-scribes to the texts they produced. Even if most of these figures were not bishops, they were far from insignificant players, and as work on Gottschalk, Wibald and the Archpoet reveals, they could make a decisive contribution to court culture and ideology.

Under the Ottonians, it seems that there existed a pool of draftsman-scribes of varying degrees of experience and expertise, on whom rulers drew in an *ad hoc* manner as they travelled from palace to palace. The common denominator was physical presence at or proximity to court: when present, any experienced scribe might be called upon to play a part in charter production, and the same scribes were typically called on more than once, even in the case of local or recipient notaries. The most active of these figures were those present at court much of the time; they were evidently in some form of more regular royal service. Such service need not, however, have been exclusive or permanent. Others appear more periodically, either when the court happened to be passing by or when they travelled to court to represent local interests. Charter production and the royal itinerary thus intersected in more ways than even Eckhard Müller-Mertens realized: not only do patterns