

The *Reichskirche*, Clerical Mobility and the Making of the Ottonian World: The Case of Saint Wolfgang of Regensburg (c.934-994)

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In his 1982 article »The ›imperial church system‹ of the Ottonian and Salian rulers: a reconsideration«, Timothy Reuter challenged a conception of the »imperial church« as a coherent, consciously wielded instrument of royal control. Noting instances of local resistance or collaboration or royal apathy, he argued for a more *ad hoc* and decentered conception of the relationship between secular power and the church. While this reorientation was valuable in many ways and has been pursued in subsequent scholarship, such an approach neglected the elements of social and cultural connection that connected the diverse regions of the empire. Using the career of the late Ottonian bishop Wolfgang of Regensburg (972-994), this article will examine the role of clerical movement across the German Empire and within discrete regions as an essential mechanism to create and maintain connectivity and coherence. Much attention has been paid to the royal *Hofkapelle* as the dominant context for the creation of a shared ethos, ideology and loyalties to king and colleagues. A close analysis of Wolfgang's *vita*, however, suggests that each episcopal court and cathedral school offered similar opportunities to cultivate shared identities and knowledge and to create strands of social networks that helped to bind the disparate regions of the empire together. Wolfgang's life also bears witness to the role of mobility in creating shared identity at the local level as well, signaling that mobility could contribute not only to the cultural cohesion of the empire across regions but also help to equip localities with at least the essentials of an »imagined community«, whether of empire or diocese. In this way, the essay suggests that, though Reuter's reservations about the *Reichskirche* as a system of royal control remain valid, it retains value when understood as a *Kulturgebiet* or rather, as a set of discrete *Kulturgebiete* that could begin to form, at various moments through the movement of individual prelates as they advanced their careers, pursued their duties and brought their knowledge and connections, a more comprehensive community.

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Over forty years ago, the historian of medieval Germany Timothy Reuter offered scholars of the Ottonian and Salian Empire an incisive and subtle critique of the idea of the *Reichskirchensystem*,¹ as it had been elaborated by earlier scholars like Otto Köhler,² Leo Santifaller,³ Auer⁴ and especially Josef Fleckenstein in his exhaustive treatment of the royal chancery *Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige*.⁵ Interested in understanding the nature of royal government, these scholars had observed in the *diplomata*, the itineraries and the narrative texts of the period the intense involvement of the Ottonian and Salian kings in the development of the ecclesiastical power through the concession of properties and rights as well as guarantees of protection (*Schutz*) and immunity from surrounding secular and ecclesiastical jurisdictions. These grants, in turn, made these ecclesiastical institutions providers of military and economic resources critical to a king's ability to govern.⁶ Noting moments in which kings intervened in the nomination of the leaders of these monasteries and churches by supporting or proposing a candidate who often had close ties to the royal court and the palace chapel, these scholars concluded that the Ottonian and Salian kings, having devolved critical aspects of their jurisdiction and resources to these institutions, had necessarily to control their leadership and to create mechanisms to exploit these institutions for their own purposes.⁷

For Reuter, such interpretations significantly overvalued the power, the organization and the strategic planning of the king and his advisors. At the same time, they tended to undervalue significantly the independence and the wishes of local churches and monasteries, the moments of rupture between these »men of the king« and the king himself and the complexity of clerical and monastic identity, to say nothing of the aspirations and actions of all the historical actors in any given situation. In essence, Reuter challenged a model of relations between king and church that was too top down, too mechanical, too limited in its consideration of agency, and too narrow in its representation of motives.⁸

In its own day, Reuter's multi-dimensional critique achieved an essential methodological objective: it encouraged, and indeed insisted, that historians of church and empire in Ottonian and Salian Germany not assume the directionality and nature of control and interest when examining relations between church and king but instead look at each set of relationships on its own terms and as a dynamic mix of actions and attitudes that could contain elements of control, collaboration, resistance and apathy and evolved as the micro- and macro-historical circumstances changed.

1 Reuter, The »imperial church system«.

2 Köhler, *Das Bild*, and Köhler, *Zur ottonisch-salischen Reichskirche*.

3 Santifaller, *Zur Geschichte*.

4 Auer, *Der Kriegsdienst*, and Auer, *Der Kriegsdienst 2*.

5 Fleckenstein, *Die Hofkapelle*.

6 For example, Brühl, *Fodrum*. See also Leyser, *Ottonian government*.

7 Hovering in the background of these studies is the driving question of what factors made the issue of royal investiture so important and why did the German kings expend such resources, time and energy in their involvements with Rome. The logic of the *Reichskirche* as a tool of governance explains why the king needs to control not only the individual office holders themselves but also the top of their institutional hierarchy, the pope.

8 Reuter, The »imperial church system«, 330-352.

Since his seminal critique, scholars have continued to transform the understanding of the episcopate within the German Empire (as well as in Europe more broadly) through interdisciplinary studies of individual bishops and dioceses as well as more synthetic studies focused on interregional connections, networks within and across dioceses and collective political interests.⁹ Indeed, in this focus on the social and personal webs as well as cultural exchanges that extended across landscapes in the tenth and eleventh centuries, these studies have developed an important counterbalance to Reuter's strong emphasis on local interests and agendas and demonstrated the important role of cultural exchange (including religious reform as well as literary and artistic culture). Such shared social networks and shared cultural sensibilities created kinds of connectivity among the episcopate that allowed its members to form a kind of »imagined community«, sharing assumptions, languages and histories that rendered them capable of action and collaboration, even as their interests and ambitions could also lead to competition and dissension.¹⁰

This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the socio-cultural dimension of the Ottonian and Salian *Reichskirche* through a heightened focus on the theme of mobility, both spatial and professional. Mobility was one of the formative processes that wove together individuals and institutions, local and regional landscapes, by creating webs of human contacts through which ideals, ideas, customs, objects and values could be exchanged.¹¹ It is important to note, however, that the mobility of interest here is not simply movement per se but, as geographer Tim Cresswell has insisted, »movement with meaning«, that is, movement shaped and propelled by ideas and purposes.¹² In the case of the German Empire, movement through physical space often gained its meaning from the possibility of positive movement through social or institutional hierarchies that came with it – people moved geographically in order to advance institutionally and socially.

9 The literature on the episcopate within the German Empire is vast and has explored practically every facet of episcopal life and action in studies focused on individuals, regions and the empire as a whole. For recent and extremely clear analyses of the arc of episcopal studies, see Bihrer, *Vom ›Reichsbischof‹ zum ›Diözesanbischof‹*, 21-55, and *idem*, *Bishop and Diocese 1-20*, as well as Reuter's essential study, *A Europe of bishops* 17-38.

10 Reuter, *The ›imperial church system‹*, 345. On the ›imagined community‹ as a way of understanding the nation-state, see the foundational treatment in Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-8, where the communicative technologies of the map, the newspaper, and the museum play a crucial role in creating a shared sense of identity. There have been several valuable studies that seek to understand the episcopacy as an ›imagined community‹ or in terms of shared culture. See Hoffmann, *Politik und Kultur im ottonischen Reichskirchensystem*; Zielinski, *Die Reichsepiskopat*; Schieffer, *Gruppenbindung*; Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 19-48; Schubert, *Der Reichsepiskopat*; Voigt, *Das ottonisch-salische Reichskirchensystem*; and other studies cited in Bihrer, *Vom ›Reichsbischof‹ zum ›Diözesanbischof‹*, 33-40.

11 The literature on mobility and mobilities is vast and growing exponentially. For a recent orientation to this emerging interdisciplinary field, see Adey, *Mobility*. Contributing to the understanding of mobility in this study have been Urry, *Mobility and proximity*; *idem*, *Les systèmes de la mobilité*; and *idem* *Mobilities*; as well as Cresswell, *On the Move*, 1-24. Unfortunately, contemporary scholars of mobility as a sociological practice or geographical phenomenon neglect or dramatically underestimate the level and variety of mobility in the medieval period. For an example of this tendency, see Cresswell, *On the Move*, 9-15.

12 Discussed in Adey, *Mobility*, 62-69.

Occurring at different scales and among, and sometimes between, institutional and social status levels, these mobilities crisscrossed the space of empire with patterns of intention and created intersecting webs of human affection, collaboration, obligation, and ambition.¹³ Furthermore, as the late sociologist John Urry has emphasized, the phenomenon of »co-presence« – the availability of persons (and their treasuries of social and cultural experience and knowledge) to each other – should be understood as a prime driver of movement, because physical presence satisfies a range of important and felt interpersonal and social needs and obligations, though in practice this »co-presence« can be achieved both directly and virtually.¹⁴ Finally, of particular importance in considering mobility in the context of the German *Reichskirche*, the formative processes catalyzed or sustained by mobility did not work to create connection and coherence in only one direction, i.e. the mobility of the clergy gave a coherence to the empire which the church itself did not require. Rather both ecclesiastical and imperial spaces remained in flux: their coherence was being made and unmade as a result of the specific consequences of particular meaningful movements (or their absence).

To explore this conception of the *Reichskirche* and the role of clerical mobility in its creation and maintenance, this essay will use the life of one Ottonian bishop, Wolfgang of Regensburg (c.934-994), as a case study highlighting the distinct kinds of meaningful movement present in his career and some of their important effects. Indeed, his *vita* offers a detailed portrait of the ways in which Wolfgang pursued an ecclesiastical career defined by various kinds of mobility – between cathedral schools, from cathedral to royal court, within episcopal chapters, on the road as a missionary, on the road through the empire, as well as within his own diocese. At each stage, with each journey, these movements created networks of people and acquisitions and exchanges of experience and cultural knowledge. At the same time, Wolfgang's movements and their consequences could and did provoke tensions, at least initially: mobility, in other words, needed to be carefully managed to unite rather than fragment. But when it was so managed, these movements helped to create among the bishops of diverse dioceses a more coherent collective that could act as a counterweight to the centrifugal tendencies of the Ottonian and Salian empires.¹⁵

The author of Wolfgang's *vita* was Otloh, a monk of Sankt Emmeram in Regensburg, a prolific and important writer of the Salian era and one whose own mobile life would have made him uniquely sensitive, and perhaps sympathetic, to Wolfgang's.

13 Although the study of mobility is well established in medieval studies, scholars have generally focused this work on migration, material culture, trade, mission, pilgrimage (to holy sites or universities), especially in the later Middle Ages. The recent Mendola conference *Spazio e Mobilità nella ›Societas Christiana‹. Spazio, Identità, Alterità (secoli X-XIII)* offers an important set of studies but ones that focused primarily on space rather than movement. See, however, the introductory essay by Nicholangelo D'Acunto, *Spazio e mobilità*. Evidence for the growing importance of mobility studies for medievalists may be seen, for example, in the recent volume entirely dedicated to sources bearing witness to mobility in the Byzantine world, Rapp and Preiser-Kapeller (eds.), *Mobility and Migration*

14 Urry, *Mobility and proximity*, 259-265. For Urry's analysis, virtual co-presence is achieved through modern digital technologies, but it seems legitimate not only to include earlier communicative technologies, human and material (for example, messengers and letters), as vectors of co-presence, but also to recognize in the medieval cult of saints' relics precocious and ongoing experiments in creating co-presence across time, space and immanent and transcendent realities.

15 On the complex, often conflict rich, politics of Ottonian Germany, see the classic study Leyser, *Rule and Conflict*, and Reuter, *A Europe of bishops*; Bihrer, *Vom ›Reichsbischof‹ zum ›Diözesanbischof‹*.

Born around 1010 in Freising to a Bavarian family, Otloh received his early literary training at the monastery of Tegernsee. When his talents as a scribe were noted, he was sent to the monastery of Hersfeld in Franconia. He then occupied positions in the households of the bishops of Würzburg and Freising. When he was in his twenties, a bitter conflict led him to renounce an ecclesiastical career and pursue the monastic life at St Emmeram. Thirty years later, a conflict with the local bishop led him to relocate to the monastery of Fulda, whence five years later he returned to Sankt Emmeram, where he died in 1079.¹⁶ Over the course of this monastic career, Otloh served not only as an accomplished scribe but also as the prolific author of a corpus of works in varied genres that demonstrated his knowledge of classical and patristic texts. In addition to the more autobiographical writings such as his fascinating *Dialogue on his temptations, varied fortune, and writings* and his *Book of visions*, he composed works of moral and spiritual instruction such as his *Book of proverbs*, *On the spiritual path*, *On spiritual teaching*, and *Admonitions for clerics and laypeople*, as well as historical works like his account of the translation of the relics of the blessed Dionysius to Regensburg and the lives of holy bishops, abbots, and missionaries from the Carolingian and Ottonian period such as the Anglo-Saxon missionary and Bishop Boniface (c.675-754), Abbot Alto of Altomünster (died c.760), as well as his near contemporary Wolfgang, who had ruled as bishop of Regensburg from 972 to 994 and played an important role in the reform of Otloh's monastery of Sankt Emmeram.¹⁷ Although the timing and specific circumstances of Otloh's composition remain uncertain, internal evidence indicates that he wrote about the saint between 1037 and Wolfgang's elevation and canonization by Pope Leo IX in 1052, a period that coincided with a period of heightened tension with Bishop Gebhard III of Regensburg (1036-1060).¹⁸ Of course, he had not known the bishop personally (he was too young) and could talk with only a few monks who had been alive during the bishop's life, but he could and did make use of the account of Wolfgang written by Arnold, a monk of Sankt Emmeram, who would have had much more contact with people who knew the holy bishop.¹⁹ In the preface to the *Life*, Otloh clarified that his was not an entirely original composition but depended on already existing material that preserved the stories of contemporaries who knew the saint and also some reports by the saint himself. He supplemented and transformed these into a more elegant narrative better suited to the merit of the subject.

16 Goez, *Otloh von Sankt Emmeram*, 168-178 and 508-509. For a comprehensive study of Otloh's life and career, see Schauwecker, *Otloh von St. Emmeram*.

17 For Otloh's writings in general, see Schauwecker, *Otloh von St. Emmeram*, the insightful observations of Stanchi, *Fondare una tradizione*, and the listing in the introduction to Otloh, *Vita*, ed. Waitz, 521-525. Although studies of Otloh are numerous, they focus almost exclusively on his more autobiographical *Liber visionum* and *Dialogus de tentationibus* and have largely ignored his pastoral, theological, and hagiographical or historical works. Otloh's life of Wolfgang survives in autograph and a number of near-contemporary manuscripts as well as late medieval copies. For the manuscripts, see the listing on MIRABILE. Archivio digitale della cultura medievale, accessed on 18 June 2024: <https://www.mirabileweb.it/author/othlo-sancti-emmerammi-ratisponensis-monachus-n-10/19496>. See also Weinberger, *Abraham von Freising*, *Pilgrim von Passau*, *Wolfgang von Regensburg*, 16 note 90.

18 Otloh, *Vita*, ed. Waitz, 524. On Gebhard III and tensions with Sankt Emmeram, see Janner, *Geschichte der Bischöfe I*, 509-511 and Stanchi, *Fondare una tradizione*, 412-416. Otloh's life of Wolfgang seems therefore to have been part of the monastery's efforts to achieve greater independence from episcopal authority.

19 Arnold, *De miraculis* and *De memoria*. On Arnold, and both Otloh's and Arnold's discussions, see Weinberger, *Abraham von Freising*, *Pilgrim von Passau*, *Wolfgang von Regensburg*.

As a consequence, the *Life* not only offers elements of biography and hagiography, but also conveys the importance that Otloh attributed to certain elements of the saint's narrative. Among these key features, mobility occupied a central position, with Wolfgang's own movements connecting persons and institutions at the level of the empire, the region and the diocese. At the same time, his own mobility became a »cultural vector« distributing secular and religious knowledge and experience across space and populations.

From the beginning of Wolfgang's *vita*, Otloh shows how mobility was a central element in the identity of the saint. Born in the region of Swabia, this son of two religious parents of moderate wealth and status received the name »Wolfgang«, which he came to interpret as »walking wolf«. ²⁰ Intellectually precocious as a child, he studied at the monastery of Reichenau, where he met Henry, the brother of Poppo I of Hennenburg, the bishop of Würzburg (941-961) in Franconia. ²¹ Having befriended Wolfgang, Henry invited him to relocate to the cathedral school of that diocese, where a scholar named Stephen of Novara had recently arrived. ²² Wolfgang did so, but soon, according to Otloh, the clarity and intelligence of the young Wolfgang's explanations created tensions and such jealousy that the Italian master refused to teach him. In response, Wolfgang considered abandoning the world and entering a monastery, but his friend Henry persuaded him to remain in the clergy. Then, in 956, Henry was elected archbishop of Trier in Lotharingia and immediately invited Wolfgang to occupy a teaching position within his cathedral school. ²³

When Henry died a few years later while travelling with King Otto I in Rome, the king's brother Bruno, archbishop of Cologne, tried to incorporate Wolfgang into his own clergy, promising positions of great responsibility. Wolfgang refused and returned home instead, where he was received »like a new Ulysses«, a clear indication that for his hagiographer Otloh, movement had been a defining feature of his autobiography up to this moment. ²⁴ Within his first thirty years, he had become connected to four major centers of learned culture and ecclesiastical power – Reichenau, Würzburg, Trier and Cologne – in three different regions (Swabia, Franconia, Lotharingia), and through his movements and their interpersonal and cultural dimensions, he had created an informal, but efficacious, personal network which cut across social, institutional and geographical spheres.

20 Otloh, *Vita* 2, ed. Waitz, 527.

21 Otloh, *Vita* 4-5, ed. Waitz, 528.

22 Beyond this mention, almost nothing is known of this Stephen of Novara, though a manuscript (Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.p.th.f. 6) attributed to him survives. His career is dated c.951-985. Far better known and studied is Stephen's near contemporary, Gunzo of Novara. On his career and the larger cultural movement that he represented, see now Justin C. Lake, »Bad speech corrupts good morals«.

23 Otloh, *Vita* 7-8, ed. Waitz, 528-529.

24 Otloh, *Vita* 10, ed. Waitz, 529: *At ille domum veniens, ab omnibus cognatis et amicis amabiliter est susceptus, obviamque habuit, ut ita dicam, Syrenes velut alter Ulyxes.*

This Ulysses, however, did not stop travelling. For, although he intended to become a monk at the nearby monastery of Einsiedeln and had entered the community, another prelate on the road, Bishop Ulrich of Augsburg, discovered his talent and invited him to undertake a mission on the southeast frontier of the empire. At this point in his narrative, Otloh highlighted the tensions that this kind and degree of mobility could provoke in the minds of contemporaries and its potential ability to jeopardize the religiosity of the saint.²⁵ For in the middle of his internal debate over whether to accept the bishop of Augsburg's assignment, Wolfgang received a divine vision of St Otmar (to whom he had been praying) in which the saint authorized him, and indeed commanded him, to follow Ulrich's counsel and go into exile to undertake this mission.²⁶ Having received approval from God, Wolfgang next obtained it from his abbot, signaling clearly that legitimate, beneficial mobility was movement that not only had good purpose but the proper authorization from one's superiors.²⁷

This fact was immediately reinforced when Wolfgang arrived in the East to preach the faith in the region of Pannonia. Unknown in this territory, his presence immediately troubled the nearby episcopal authority, Bishop Pilgrim of Passau: was this fellow who preached and begged a *girovagus* of mobile morality and heretical belief or a »domestic« in the house of the faith?²⁸

Once his orthodoxy was verified and his piety and wisdom observed, however, Pilgrim became his new advocate. Pilgrim immediately activated his own connections with the local secular power to make a joint appeal to the emperor, Otto II, requesting his support for the election of Wolfgang to the see of Regensburg, which was vacant at the time. Otto approved this choice and sent a legation to the citizens and clergy of the city to encourage them to elect Wolfgang to the see. Once elected, Wolfgang then had to visit Frankfurt to celebrate Christmas with the emperor and, one may imagine, to affirm with a direct, personal bond – established by »co-presence« at a charged ritual moment – his relationship with the young emperor.²⁹

Of this moment in the career of the saint, Otloh created an image filled with almost frenetic human movement, of persons in circulation within and across provinces to communicate and witness and thereby create awareness and support. In this regard, the election of Wolfgang as bishop of Regensburg emerges from the evidence of Otloh's narrative as a specific consequence of the diverse mobilities of various persons who came to be involved with one another either deliberately or by accident and as the result of preexisting and invisible protocols and networks that could be activated in order to realize a concrete objective. Furthermore, the narrative makes clear how this process itself reinforced existing links or generated new relationships between people and places.

25 The monk who left the cloister without purpose and permission risked violating sacred vows and becoming a *gyrovagus*, that category of monk most condemned by Benedict in his *Rule* (c.1). On this, see Semmler, »Peregrinatio«. Similarly, since the early church (e.g. Council of Nicea, canons 15 and 16), canon law sought to limit clerical mobility across diocesan boundaries both to improve clerical discipline, clarify authority and eliminate the grounds for ecclesiastical strife.

26 Otloh, *Vita* 11, ed. Waitz, 530.

27 Otloh, *Vita* 13, ed. Waitz, 530: *Huius rei gratia abbatis sui licenti monasterium et non monachum deserens ...*

28 Otloh, *Vita* 14, ed. Waitz, 531: *Quo commorationis tempore idem episcopus optime usus, utpote qui erat sagacitate omnimoda plenus, iuxta quod apostolus docet: Probate spiritus si ex Deo sint (I John 4.1), clandestina et manifesta divini servitii observatione ac assidua sacrae scripturae indagatione satis probavit, hunc quem susceperat peregrinum non esse gyrovagum sed stabilem verae fidei domesticum.*

29 Otloh, *Vita* 14, ed. Waitz, 531.

Another facet of mobility's role as a constitutive force within the *Reichskirche* emerges when Otloh described Wolfgang's efforts as bishop to restore the monastery of Sankt Emmeram that had long been without an abbot and, as a consequence, as Otloh states, without a well-ordered monastic life. To confront these problems, the bishop did not try to use local institutions as models or to maintain local custom (much to the displeasure of his clergy)³⁰ but instead turned to an institution – the monastery of St Maximin – that he had come to know during his sojourn in Trier as a member of the cathedral clergy of Archbishop Henry. Furthermore, he invited a monk named Ramuold, whom he had worked with personally in the *familia of the cathedral*, to become abbot of the reformed congregation and to effect improvements.³¹ Accompanied by Wolfgang's own improvements to Sankt Emmeram's material resources, the arrival of the new abbot with his new customs, Otloh concluded, had a positive effect on the monastic life, an improvement that was sustained as long as Ramuold or his disciples lived or were in control. When they were no longer there, when this transregional cultural and institutional influence was no longer sustained by Wolfgang and his Lotharingian colleagues in this Bavarian diocese, the condition of the monks collapsed.³² Encountering a particular crisis in monastic life within his diocese, Wolfgang mobilized both the knowledge and the personal connections which he had accumulated through his own mobility in the first phase of his career to enact major institutional change with distant resources. His movements through various provinces and institutional contexts had, in essence, enlarged his mental horizon and thereby allowed him to confront local problems with solutions – models and personnel – that were empire-wide. The meaningful movements of Wolfgang, in other words, created wide social and institutional networks that could be activated to facilitate the exchange of information, models of action, ritual and celebration and talented personnel. They also facilitated collaborations between institutions and regions by means of persons who once studied and worked together.

His example could be multiplied. Before being elected bishop of Paderborn (1009-1036), Meinwerk, born in Utrecht, studied in Halberstadt where he had as a classmate Henry, the son of the duke of Bavaria and later king and emperor. From there he moved on to join the cathedral clergy at Hildesheim, whence he was called to become a royal chaplain at the palace in Goslar »in order that, by God's ordination, he who was so sought after from farther afield might become known more widely.«³³ At the royal court, he became known to many, especially the king, so that when the bishopric of Paderborn fell vacant, Meinwerk was already a trusted figure known to both king and community.³⁴ As bishop, Meinwerk remained in motion, whether in participating in church dedications with other prelates and nobles or in military expeditions,³⁵ building, expressing and maintaining his connections.

30 Otloh, *Vita* 16, ed. Waitz, 532.

31 Otloh, *Vita*, ed. Waitz 15, 532: *Quae scilicet omnia sanctus praesul dolens et emendare volens, misit ad Treverense monasterium, in quo beatus Maximinius corporaliter requiescit, et inde quendam in regulari disciplina strenuum, nomine Ramuoldum, advocavit, qui quondam sub Heinricho archiepiscopo eius concapellanus fuit.*

32 Otloh, *Vita*, ed. Waitz 17, 534: *Idem quoque de sancti Emmerammi monachis fas est dicere, quousque abbatem Ramuoldum, quem ipse praefecit illis, contigit praeesse. Post eius vero discessum illorumque quos ipse instituerat, tunc, peccatis exigentibus, sicut quondam Ioseph mortuo filii Israel dura servitute carnali in Aegypto comprimebantur, ita et sancti Emmerammi coenobitae, multis pseudopraepositis succedentibus, omnimoda spiritalis vitae destructione contriti sunt.*

33 *Das Leben* 3 and 5, ed. Tenckhoff, 6-8: ... *ut Deo ordinante innotesceret longius qui longius expetendus erat ...*

34 *Das Leben* 9, ed. Tenckhoff, 15.

35 *Das Leben*, ed. Tenckhoff, passim (for dedications) and *Das Leben* 21, 27 (for his first Italian expedition as bishop).

Decades later, Benno, the future bishop of Osnabrück (1068-1088), would have a similarly mobile early career that supplied him with experiences, connections and reputation that he later employed to navigate the complex political currents of the Saxon Wars and the conflict with the reform papacy. Born in Swabia to pious parents, he was sent to the cathedral school in Strasbourg as well as Reichenau for training in letters. At Strasbourg he came to the notice of the great men of the region, including the bishop, with whom he traveled to Jerusalem. He then moved to the newly restored school at Speyer, where he gained further renown, before moving on to Goslar to participate in the emperor Henry III's development of that site, for Benno was already known for his skills in management and architecture. Bishop Azelin of Hildesheim then recruited him to become a master in his cathedral school and a member of his own clergy, and as such, he accompanied the bishop on an expedition into Hungary, where he distinguished himself for his ingenuity for procuring needed resources. Entrusted with additional administrative responsibilities as well as charge of the building program in Hildesheim, Benno was recruited by Anno of Cologne but after a time returned to Hildesheim. From there he was eventually advanced to the see of Osnabrück, though his movement as a part of expeditions, to join assemblies and as a result of exile did not cease.³⁶ Like Wolfgang's, Benno's movements served not only to connect him with different kinds of knowledge and experience and then allow him to redeploy it in the service of others, it also fostered the creation of his own social network based upon actual real-world interactions and the webs of virtual association created by reputation. Indeed, Benno's networks, though concentrated within Saxony, extended into Lotharingia, Swabia, and south to Rome, pulling together diverse regions and communities through his person. Furthermore, as with Wolfgang's career, episcopal sees were as important as the royal/imperial *Hofkapelle* in catalyzing these connections.³⁷

In this respect, Joseph Fleckenstein was absolutely correct: the *Hofkapelle* was vital to the empire, not because all of its members acted as servants of the king or emperor, carrying out his will, but because in that institutional context, its members came to know each other, they learned to work together, and they sometimes came to share certain perspectives, attitudes and working methods. Furthermore, through curial business, they came to know leaders across the empire. At the same time, as Wolfgang's career shows, there were other centers, episcopal (such as Hildesheim and Mainz) and monastic (such as Reichenau), where similar developments occurred, sometimes in complementary or identical ways and sometimes in distinct ones. The mobility of individual persons placed these centers of formation and identity in dialogue with each other but also, potentially, in tension – the movement of persons, in other words, embodied the movement of ideas and practices and brought cultural contexts often separated by days, weeks, or months of travelling into simultaneous conversation through the co-presence of their proxies.

36 Norbert, *Vita* 1-11, ed. Bresslau, 2-14.

37 Similar examples, drawn from both bishops and abbots, could be multiplied for the Ottonian and Salian periods, because of the close association between movement through space and advancement within institutional hierarchies. A focused study on this dimension of episcopal and abbatial hagiography would be desirable.

If the *vita* of Wolfgang offers many examples of transregional or even imperial mobility, it also presents another important kind of mobility that can be overlooked all too easily: local mobility within a defined zone – the diocese – full of different people and institutions, even if they are also similar in many respects and perhaps exist within the same administrative or jurisdictional structures. When he arrived, Wolfgang found a diocese, as Otloh recounts, fragmented in its monastic life and in its clerical and sacramental order. To confront and remedy these situations, accurate information and first-hand acquaintance with the individuals in charge was needed. Therefore, Wolfgang began his episcopal tenure by visiting all the monasteries in Regensburg for purposes of prayer, to be sure, but also, as Otloh says, »to investigate how the divine office was conducted in that place.«³⁸ In this way, the bishop obtained precise, »real time« information while at the same time forming personal connections with the religious in these houses in a context of honor and reverence.³⁹

Wolfgang did the same thing with his rural priests (*sacerdotes pagenses*), visiting their churches, investigating the validity of their sacraments, and discovering what tools of pastoral care – books, vestments, sacred vessels – they were missing. In the area of preaching he offered a demanding personal example, travelling through the entire diocese to preach. His own mobility had powerful effects, according to Otloh: the people became so accustomed to attending the churches that on feast days the custodians never had a break.⁴⁰

Otloh used such actions to create for his readers the image of Christian instruction and spiritual care done right – Wolfgang was the »good pastor« *par excellence*.⁴¹ Yet his movement seems to have been central in realizing this role. He was always in motion within his diocese. Meeting different people in different places within the area under his episcopal jurisdiction created not only a direct awareness of the people who constituted his clergy and of his lay congregation and their challenges, but also, through his sustained personal presence itself, social threads which could form, over time, a web, a fabric through which information and resources could be transmitted and government could be realized.

A miracle story told towards the end of Otloh's *vita* illustrates this complex process of social and interpersonal weaving and the important place that mobility and its consequences could have in the minds of contemporaries. Having arrived in the small *vicus* of Egilolfshheim for a pastoral visit, Wolfgang ordered his messenger to inform all the people of the district who needed confirmation to assemble the following day.

38 Otloh, *Vita* 17, ed. Waitz, 533: *Solebat namque praedictus praesul tam nocturnis quam diurnis horis universa coenobia in urbe posita saepius adire, ibique et orandi causa, simul et explorandi, quomodo Deo divinum servitium illic ageretur, aliquandiu commanere.*

39 Here it is worth noting the ritual significance of Wolfgang visiting each monastery. On the one hand, he, as bishop, is coming to the monastic house and thus doing honor to the brethren or sisters there and to their saints. On the other, the arrival of the bishop within the monastery, especially when he stayed there, might well have provoked tensions over the legitimacy of episcopal oversight. Otloh makes no mention, however, of conflict surrounding Wolfgang's visits.

40 Otloh, *Vita* 19, ed. Waitz, 535: *... discretus cultor Dei nequaquam exteriora omisit providere; sed sicu urbanis et coenobitis documenta dedit, ita etiam totam perlustrans suam diocesim, cunctos salutiferae praedicationis ordore adpersit. Quapropter cum missarum sollemnia celebrasset ex more, in tantum plebem assuefecit ecclesias frequentare ut per dies sollemnes vix domi remanere viderentur custodes.*

41 Stanchi, *Fondare una tradizione* makes this point particularly well.

The messenger was eager to fulfill his task but found – to his shock and chagrin – that his horse had been stolen.

Profoundly sad and mournful, he did not know what he was going to do. For love and fear were both compelling him to fulfill [Wolfgang's] commands swiftly but he had no way of fulfilling them: for he had no hope of acquiring another horse nor was he strong enough to walk fast enough to be able to fulfill the legation assigned to him on foot. Furthermore, the ground, completely soaked by rain, offered unpleasant routes to the walker. Amidst troubles of this sort, he hesitated for some time over what he would do but, in the end, he took strength in the Lord and chose to fulfill [Wolfgang's] commands on foot.⁴²

As he made his way along the muddy roads, he invoked God's aid so that he might fulfill the desired legation. Suddenly, he encountered a horse, saddled and ready for a rider, standing alone, as if waiting for him. Mounting the mysterious horse, he completed his mission, which in turn helped Wolfgang achieve his pastoral goals. Further inquiry never revealed the source of this miraculous mobility, but Otloh recognized the divine hand at work: »From this affair the legate and others thought about how much grace God granted to the holy bishop Wolfgang, who was able to help those invoking him even when absent.«⁴³ Not only did this miracle attest to Wolfgang's status as a holy man, it showed the way in which various forms of mobility and mobile agents – all functioning well – were essential to Wolfgang's pastoral ambitions within his diocese and that God, far from being disinterested in the logistics of mobility, stood ready to assist roadside.

This fabric that Wolfgang worked to create and strengthen through his pastoral visits and associated social interactions was never stable but began to unravel in the absence of meaningful movement and maintenance. The fibers were not steel cables of control but the more delicate fibers of connection, communication and familiarity. To be effective in the mobilization of persons and in the collaborations of governance, they needed to be renewed by the periodic presence or by Urry's »co-presence«, in some form: a visit, a stay, a shared rite, and even a letter which could serve to evoke, in its content as well as in the human process of its transmission, the individuals who comprised the network of persons that had already been formed by friendship, collaboration, and conversation.⁴⁴

Almost forty years ago, the late Timothy Reuter rightly observed that the *Reichskirche* was not a consciously designed system that gave secular leaders a stable and defined system of control through religious institutions. He was also right to note that relations between an Ottonian or Salian king or emperor and any given bishopric or monastery were subject to many contingencies: acts of obedience, accommodation, resistance, independence, and apathy. In other words, the *Reichskirche* was not a machine for governance with the *Hofkapelle* or curia as its production sites. Yet, in its comprehensiveness, his interpretation risked losing sight of the way in which the empire as a contiguous and relatively secure geographic zone promoted the movement of people through space.

42 Otloh, *Vita* 31, ed. Waitz, 539.

43 Otloh, *Vita* 31, ed. Waitz, 539.

44 *Vita Burchardi Episcopi* 8, 435. The *vita* of Burchard of Worms (1000-1025) offers a vivid example of the ruin that could occur as a result of a bishop's – in this case, Burchard's brother's – long physical absence from the diocese on royal expeditions and at court. Yet such »absence« could also be realized through neglect and immobility.

Likewise, the secular and ecclesiastical institutions and tasks of this world (such as councils and expeditions) provided structures through which individuals moved on account of ambition or duty. All of these movements had the potential to create networks of friends and collaborators that could in turn become conduits for the exchanges of information, ideas, values and models, exchanges that resisted the often centrifugal tendencies of elites and regions. In the centrality of meaningful movement in its diverse practical, conceptual and institutional forms, the life of Wolfgang of Regensburg, as recounted first by Arnold,⁴⁵ then by Otloh, suggests that sustained and careful consideration of mobility offers a productive way of approaching the church in the German Empire that can explain the connections, the collaborations between regions and secular and religious institutions, and the continuities of thought and aesthetic culture that have long been noted. At the same time, precisely because of mobility's dynamic character and its role as a remedy for absence and a generator of connection, it provides a powerful means to see and better understand the circumstances, actions and relationships that guarded against or promoted uncertainty, failure and fragility in relations between and within regions, groups, institutions and individuals.

45 Arnold, *De memoria*, includes many of the key stages in Wolfgang's career arc, which Otloh then elaborates, edits, or reorders.

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 SRG Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum
 SS Scriptores in folio
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