Royal Rulership
in the Tenth and Early Eleventh Centuries:
German and Italian Approaches in Dialogue

by Stefano Manganaro

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Reti Medievali

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Over the last few decades, German and Italian scholarships in the field of medieval constitutional history widened their traditional differences in research approach, as the studies on royal rulership (*Königsherrschaft*) in the tenth and early eleventh centuries seem to reveal. These studies define the subject of this article, which aims at raising awareness of the need to once again increase German-Italian cooperation. In this respect, the present essay briefly deals with selected issues and problems that are differently tackled by German and Italian scholarly traditions, and subsequently outlines four promising research paths for investigating royal rulership and kingship in the tenth and early eleventh centuries by means of an in-depth exchange between the two historiographies. These four new proposals concern macro-themes such as space, time, power-sharing practices, and the circulation of political models by making use of hostages.

Negli ultimi decenni la medievistica tedesca e quella italiana di ambito politico-istituzionale sembrano aver approfondito le loro tradizionali differenze metodologiche, come si osserva soprattutto negli studi sul potere regio (*Königsherrschaft*) nei secoli X-XI. Questi studi definiscono l'oggetto del presente articolo. Con l'auspicio di contribuire al rilancio di un proficuo dialogo italo-tedesco, il saggio offre dapprima una breve – e certo non esaustiva – riflessione storiografica, a partire da una selezione di temi e di problemi che sono generalmente affrontati in modo diverso dai medievisti tedeschi e italiani; successivamente sono presentate quattro nuove piste di ricerca, potenzialmente sviluppabili sulla scorta di un più intenso scambio tra le due storiografie, che ovviamente coinvolge la comunità medievistica internazionale nel suo complesso. Queste nuove proposte toccano i macro-temi dello spazio, del tempo, delle pratiche di condivisione del potere (*sharing-power practices*) e della circolazione di modelli politici tramite gli ostaggi.

MiddleAges; 10th-11th Centuries; Roman-Germanic Empire; Royal rulership; *Königsherrschaft*; new research perspectives; German-Italian dialogue.

Medioevo; secoli X-XI; impero romano-germanico; potere regio; *Königsherrschaft*; nuove prospettive di ricerca; dialogo italo-tedesco.

Scholarly approaches to medieval constitutional history have changed significantly over the last decades, reshaping research perspectives, questions, and methods. These new ways of dealing with rulership and political institutions have been widely accepted by the international community of medievalists, although differently adapted and re-elaborated by the various national historiographies. In the current scenario, German and Italian medieval scholarships, although having developed along similar lines for most of the twentieth century, appear to have widened the differences in their research interests and methods, moving rather far apart.

The aim of this essay is to stress the need to foster scholarly exchanges and cooperation between German and Italian medievalists. In this sense, the present article focuses on the nature and the practices of royal rulership (*Königsherrschaft*) in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, pointing to this subject matter as a common field of interest that could potentially revitalize cooperation between German and Italian scholars. Thus, the historical context of the following considerations is mostly defined by the Roman-Germanic Empire in the Ottonian period (936-1024), comprising the *regnum Italicum*, the region of Lotharingia, and the north-alpine kingdom (Franconia, Saxony, Bavaria, and Swabia), only later known as *regnum Teutonicum*.

This essay is structured in three sections. The first outlines royal rulership during the tenth and early eleventh centuries, providing a few details on the distinguishing features of the Ottonian legal and political order. The second section provides an overview of current relations between German and Italian scholarships on the Middle Ages, and examines some specific issues that are usually tackled in different ways by these two scholarly traditions. The third section deals with new particularly promising research perspectives, focusing on four macro-themes related to understanding royal rulership, which would particularly benefit from a closer dialogue between German and Italian medievalists.

1. *Royal rulership in the tenth and early eleventh centuries*

Over the last thirty-five years, scholars have radically reconsidered royal rulership (*Königsherrschaft*) in the tenth and early eleventh centuries[1]. The Ottonians were itinerant, elective, and sacral kings. They ruled by consensus, according to the fortunate phrase *konsensuale Herrschaft* coined by Bernd Schneidmüller[2]. At that time, power was negotiated and shared more than imposed and exercised. Kings did not rule just according to their own will, but through constant negotiations with other political actors, like bishops,

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[1] For an overview on medieval rulership, see Büttner, *Königsherrschaft*, which also provides a useful clarification of the German concept of *Herrschaft*, *ibidem*, pp. 3-4. More specifically, concerning the studies on Ottonian kingship and rulership, see Keller, *Die internationale*.

[2] Schneidmüller, *Konsensuale Herrschaft*. See also Sergi, *Forme e compiti*.

abbots, and lay aristocracies. Such a number of political actors defined a wide and complex arena of governance, whose internal balance did not lie on pre-established schemes and procedures, but was expected to be empirically achieved from time to time. In this context, the main function of the Ottonian kings, who moved constantly throughout their territories, was to integrate the other political players, all locally based, into the wider transregional framework defined by the kingdom[3]. This applied to both Ottonian kingdoms, situated north and south of the Alps, which were interconnected with one another, each having its own peculiarities[4]. The intensity of royal rulership in the various regions and areas was uneven, thus it is not surprising that the geopolitical morphology of both Ottonian kingdoms was polycentric rather than centralized, and dynamic more than static[5]. Moreover, the marginal role played by positive law, the absence of a unique centre of control, and the weakness of administrative structures[6] made "multinormativity" become a hallmark of this legal regime[7]. The durable stability of these kingdoms was largely ensured by "intangible resources" – such as sacral kingship, oaths, and brotherhoods of prayer – that became visible through rituals, performative actions, and symbolic communication[8]. These resources were however integrated by the *Reichskirche*[9] and a loose network of royal districts administered by officials as well as strengthened by the longstanding memory

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[3] Concerning this prominent integrative function, see Schneider, *Das Königtum*; Keller, *Die Investitur*; Weinfurter, *Zur "Funktion"*; Huschner, *Der ottonische Kaiserhof*. For royal itinerancy, see Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship*; Kränzle, *Der abwesende König*; Ehlers, *Having the King*.

[4] Huschner, *Transalpine Kommunikation*; Huschner, *Influenze*; D'Acunto, *Die weltlichen Kooperationspartner*; Roach, *The Ottonians*.

[5] Alvermann, *Königsherrschaft*; Müller-Mertens, *Verfassung*; Keller, *Ottonische Königsherrschaft*; D'Acunto, Nostrum Italicum Regnum.

[6] On Ottonian political practices and methods for governing, see Leyser, *Ottonian Government*; Keller, *Reichsorganisation*; Reuter, *The Making*; Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship*; Althoff, *Spielregeln*; Keller, *Ottonische Königsherrschaft*; Althoff, *Die Ottonen*; Manganaro, *Protezione*. These studies generally assume that the Ottonian administrative tools were weaker than those adopted by the Carolingian rulers. This discontinuity between the Carolingian and Ottonian periods has however been excluded by two alternative theses, which contrast each other as well as the one previously mentioned. On the one hand, skepticism on the deterioration of Carolingian administrative structures in the Ottonian period is expressed by Bachrach, *Exercise*; Bachrach, Inquistio. On the other hand, some scholars exclude the existence of an administrative apparatus also in the Carolingian era, as asserted by Innes, *State*. For a discussion, see Wangerin, *The Governance*. In this debate, a peculiar position is held by Nitschke, *Karolinger und Ottonen*.

[7] On the notion of "multinormativity", see Duve, *European Legal History*; Duve, *Was ist "Multinormativität"?*.

[8] With different nuances, see Maccarrone, *Il sovrano*; Wollasch, *Kaiser*; Cantarella, *La rivoluzione*; Prodi, *Il sacramento*, pp. 63-104; Leyser, *Ritual*; Keller, *Die Investitur*; Weinfurter, *Sakralkönigtum*; Althoff, *Spielregeln*; Keller, *Ottonische Herrschersiegel*; Schieffer, Mediator; Keller, *Ritual*; Körntgen, *Königsherrschaft*; Cantarella, *Le basi*; Weinfurter, *Heinrich II.*; Althoff, *Die Macht*; Keller, *Hulderweis*; Erkens, *Herrschersakralität*, pp. 156-189; Wagner, *Die liturgische Gegenwart*; Drews, *Der Dortmunder Totenbund*; Figurski, *Das sakramentale Herrscherbild*. See also *Institutionalität und Symbolisierung*.

[9] Santifaller, *Zur Geschichte*, with corrections suggested by Reuter, *The "Imperial Church System"*; Vogtherr, *Die Reichsabteien*; Huschner, *Die ottonisch-salische Reichskirche*.

of the kingdom in terms of *res publica* which the ecclesiastical culture had preserved and transmitted particularly in Italy[10].

The scenario depicted so far explains why the Ottonian period and society have recently provided a suitable case study to pose fundamental questions, such as "what was law in the Early and High Middle Ages?", as Martin Pilch did in his recent work *Der Rahmen der Rechtsgewohnheiten*, offering his contribution to a prolonged and still heated debate on the nature of early medieval legal regime[11]. Another fundamental question could be "what were medieval political institutions?", or, more precisely, to what extent and in what way is it appropriate to use the concept of "institution" for Ottonian kingdoms[12]? These kingdoms were empirical and dynamic entities, lacking even a clear definition of themselves (for example, as anticipated, the phrase *regnum Teutonicum* only started being used in the middle of the eleventh century[13]). Their long-lasting existence had been particularly threatened, since the so-called "king's second body" – namely the notion of a transpersonal, abstract and everlasting kingdom – had not been completely elaborated yet[14].

2. *German and Italian research perspectives in comparison*

2.1. *The* Sonderforschungsbereich *n. 537: a recent German-Italian cooperation*

A particularly suitable starting point for comparing German and Italian research perspectives on constitutional history could be provided precisely by the aforementioned question concerning the nature of medieval political institutions. This was the underlying core question of the *Sonderforschungsbereich* n. 537, entitled *Institutionalität und Geschicklichkeit* (*Institutionality and Historicity*), which ended in 2008. This *Sonderforschungsbereich* was

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[10] Fumagalli, *Vescovi e conti*; Pauler, *Das* Regnum; Tabacco, *Sperimentazioni*; D'Acunto, Nostrum Italicum Regnum. See also Wickham, *The Inheritance*.

[11] Pilch, *Der Rahmen*. On Pilch's work, see «Rechtsgeschichte - Legal History. Zeitschrift des Max-Planck-Instituts für europäische Rechtsgeschichte», 17 (2010). Concerning the debate on the nature of medieval law, see Heirbaut, *An Unknown Treasure*.

[12] From different – but not divergent – perspectives, see Tabacco, *Lo studio*; Melville, *Fu "istituzionale"*.

[13] Müller-Mertens, Regnum Teutonicum.

[14] The "king's second body" refers to Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (on Ottonian-Salian kingship, see pp. 42-86). On the medieval process of transpersonalization of royal power, which seems to have reached a mature stage only in the post-Ottonian period, see Beumann, *Zur Entwicklung*. It is however worth recalling that a heated debate amongst German scholars has arisen over the vitality of a transpersonal notion of royal power possibly conveyed by definitions such as *res publica* and *regnum*, without reaching consensus. This discussion mainly focuses on the Carolingian period, but it is useful also for investigating post-Carolingian kingdoms and their political culture. For an emphatic negation of any transpersonalization in the Carolingian period, see Fried, *Der karolingische Herrschaftsverband*, whereas a diametrically opposed position has been held by Goetz, Regnum. On this debate, see Jarnut, *Anmerkungen*.

mainly managed by the School of Dresden gravitating around Gert Melville, but also several Italian medievalists joined or cooperated with this research group. The major cooperation, which continued also after the end of this *Sonderforschungsbereich*, was established with Giancarlo Andenna, Nicolangelo D'Acunto, and Guido Cariboni, based at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan.

Rejecting any positivistic and essentialist view of institutions, the *Sonderforschungsbereich* n. 537 proposed a new perspective for understanding and investigating medieval institutions, which should no longer be seen as coherent structures of political, social, and religious organizations, but as dynamic processes. This research group analyzed medieval institutions as the outcome of a continuous and ongoing process of dynamic stabilization. According to this view, every social aggregate may be understood as an "institution" provided it can last and reproduce itself over time through periodical processes that ensure its own enduring stabilization[15]. Although this way of dealing with medieval institutions has been used to investigate religious orders, it seems possible – and fruitful – to adopt it also for studying kingdoms in the Early and High Middle Ages[16].

2.2. *Divergent approaches: three relevant issues addressed differently by German and Italian scholarly traditions*

The *Sonderforschungsbereich* n. 537 provides an example of German-Italian cooperation that was rather common during the second half of the twentieth century, but that has almost become an exception over the last twenty years. In order to understand this trend, it is useful to consider some divergent approaches characterizing the two scholarly traditions in medieval studies. By taking a closer look at constitutional history, one can easily highlight three main issues revealing obstacles preventing a fruitful dialogue. These issues concern the study and interpretation of rituals and symbolic communication, lordship and local powers, people and space.

2.2.1. *Rituals and symbolic communication*

Starting from the 1980s, ethnology and legal anthropology have deeply shaped and changed our image of medieval life. The study of Ottonian ruler-

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[15] Melville, *Institutionen*; *Institutionalität und Symbolisierung*; Melville, *Nuove tendenze*; *Das Sichtbare und das Unsichtbare*; C. Andenna, *Processi*. See also *Charisma und religiöse Gemeinschaften*; Regulae – Consuetudines – Statuta; *Pensiero e sperimentazioni*; *Dinamiche istituzionali*; Cariboni, *Il nostro ordine*; *Religiosità e civiltà*. On the sociological theory underpinning this line of research, see Rehberg, *Symbolische Ordnungen*.
[16] See D'Acunto, *Farfa*; D'Acunto, *Da Canossa*.

ship lies exactly at the heart of this paradigm shift. Rituals, symbolic communication and other performative actions, the relevance of orality, and the full legitimacy of extra-judicial means of conflict resolution provided powerful heuristic tools for grasping the reality of early and high medieval politics. This has shed light on the "otherness" of a world that differs significantly from Late Antiquity as well as from Western modernity. Both the "cultural turn" and the "performative turn" played a determining role in encouraging new research methodologies[17].

In this field the contribution of German – and also American – medievalists such as Gerd Althoff and Geoffrey Koziol has been crucial[18]. By contrast, French and Italian medievalists have generally remained cold to this new paradigm, as they preferred to be tied to what could be called a "mono-disciplinary" approach to constitutional history[19].

2.2.2. *Lordship and local powers*

Italian historiography has pointed out the need, and even the urgency, to make conceptual distinctions among different kinds of lordship that can be reconstructed in the "small worlds" of the High Middle Ages. On the contrary, these distinctions did not seem of much relevance to most German scholars, at least until recent times.

The main distinction concerns, on the one hand, lordship over landholdings and their dependents and, on the other hand, lordship over a more complex area, empirically created by the presence of a factor generating political space (such as a castle corresponding to a fortified manorial centre, village, or proprietary church) and not completely coinciding with the landholdings of the lord; this latter area was an assemblage of land, including part of the lord's landholdings, but also several landholdings belonging to other owners. The first kind of lordship – the one over the lord's scattered landholdings and their dependents – was due to rights of ownership, whereas the second kind of lordship – the one over a more compact area surrounding a castle and shaped by the castle itself – was due to rights of command and jurisdiction. The first one was a lordship over peasants who were "economic dependents". The second one was a lordship over peasants who were "political subjects". Italian and French scholarships conceptually separate these two kinds of lordship. In regard to this issue, the legacy of Georges Duby must be recalled[20] as well

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[17] Vollrath, *Das Mittelalter*; Althoff, *Zur Bedeutung*; *Formen und Funktionen*; *Geschichtswissenschaft und "performative turn"*; Weinfurter, *Das Ritual*; Althoff, *Rituale*; Stollberg-Rilinger, *Verfassungsgeschichte*; Schneidmüller, *Verklärte Macht*.
[18] Koziol, *Begging Pardon*; Althoff, *Spielregeln*; Althoff, *Die Macht*. See also Warner, *Ritual*.
[19] Buc, *The Dangers*; Isabella, *Rituali*.
[20] Duby, *La société*. See also Barthélemy, *L'ordre*.

as Giovanni Tabacco and Giuseppe Sergi from the School of Turin[21] along with Cinzio Violante from the School of Pisa[22]. In order to make the distinction possible, these scholars use the following two different concepts: *seigneurie foncière / signoria fondiaria*, on the one hand, and *seigneurie banale / signoria territoriale*, on the other hand. By contrast, the German scholarship usually adopts one all-embracing concept – *Grundherrschaft* – where all distinctions disappear[23].

The Ottonian period provides a useful point of view on these political and social phenomena, although their full development took place in a later timeframe. During the tenth and early eleventh centuries, the two forms of lordship previously mentioned began to coexist one alongside the other, but without completely overlapping. Moreover, this change met a further shift that simultaneously took place in the same period, namely the transformation of counties (*comitatus*). The counties were local administrative circumscriptions that the Franks had created by imitation of ecclesiastical dioceses, which then spread throughout Europe during the Carolingian period. The Carolingians entrusted these royal circumscriptions to their officials by means of a delegation of powers. However, during the post-Carolingian period the counties began to lose their meaning as royal administrative spaces related to delegated officials. As a result, in the late tenth century several aristocratic families appear to have been highly involved in all three processes that have been previously mentioned. This means that these families were simultaneously (1) lords (mostly in an economic sense) over their own scattered landholdings, (2) lords (mostly in a jurisdictional sense) over a new compact seigneurial area that they had shaped without any royal delegation of power, and (3) king's officials who were managing the administration of a county that was however changing its nature, by turning from a royal district to a political space instrumental for the seigneurial rise of the official's family. It is therefore possible to distinguish three, qualitatively different, kinds of power over people and land, each of them creating a peculiar spatial pattern that only partially overlapped with the other two[24].

Undoubtedly, if words and concepts are available to make such a distinction, it is possible to perceive the nuances of the fragmentation of power and rights that started to emerge during the Ottonian period and, as anticipated, shaped the distinguishing features of European political dynamics only in

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[21] Tabacco, *Egemonie*; Sergi, *Lo sviluppo*; Sergi, *Le istituzioni*; Sergi, *I confini*; Provero, *L'Italia*; Tabacco, *Dai re ai signori*; Fiore, *Signori*; Sergi, *Gerarchie*.
[22] Violante, *La signoria "territoriale"*; Violante, *La signoria rurale*; *La signoria rurale in Italia*.
[23] *Strukturen der Grundherrschaft*; *Grundherrschaft und bäuerliche Gesellschaft*. On the emergence and use of the notion of *Grundherrschaft*, see Schreiner, *«Grundherrschaft»*. For a criticism of this notion, see Pelz, *Signoria*.
[24] Toubert, *Les structures*; Settia, *Castelli*; *Formazione e struttura* (I); Sergi, *Le istituzioni*; Sergi, *I confini*; *Formazione e struttura* (II); Sergi, *La territorialità*.

the late eleventh century[25]. This is also relevant to studying royal rulership, since the efforts of the kings to shape a royal spatial configuration from above interplayed with the local spatial patterns arising from below.

2.2.3. *People and space*

The emphasis that has just been placed on different kinds of spaces leads to analyze the third issue, which concerns "people" and "space". German and Italian scholarly traditions paid different attention to people and space, and in particular to the personal and the territorial dimensions of politics and power. Once again, the Ottonian period proves to be a remarkable case study.

From the prosopographical studies of the School of Freiburg, dating from the late 1950s onwards[26], up to the investigations on kinship, friendships, and *pacta* carried out by the School of Münster in the 1980s and 1990s[27], German scholarship has identified the key to understanding early medieval order and royal rulership in the function performed by personal bonds. A further development of these studies originates in the enquiries on political and social *élites*, conducted mostly by French medievalists[28]. By contrast, Italian scholarship has emphasized the spatial dimension of medieval powers according to a consolidated tradition, originating from pioneering works accomplished by Pietro Vaccari and Giovanni de Vergottini in the 1920s[29] and strongly revitalized as from the 1970s. These two different perspectives, however, seem to be complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Both are indeed necessary, and both have some weaknesses. German studies on personal bonds risk underestimating the spatial implications of political phenomena, whereas Italian studies on power and spatiality may sometimes appear affected by the long-lasting influence of legal positivism and the *étatist* approach of the so-called "history of administration".

In order to overcome this deadlock, research perspectives somehow linked to the "spatial turn" could represent an interesting way of merging the strengths of the different scholarly traditions. In this respect, a good example can be found in the research programme on Legal Spaces (*Rechtsräume*), recently developed at the Max-Planck-Institut für europäische Re-

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[25] On the pivotal role played by the *seigneurie banale / signoria territoriale* in the post-Ottonian period, see Wickham, *La signoria rurale*; Collavini, *I signori rurali*; Fiore, *Il mutamento signorile*; Fiore, *Refiguring Local Power*.
[26] Tellenbach, *Zur Bedeutung*; Hlawitschka, *Franken*; Schmid, Wollasch, Societas; *Prosopographie als Sozialgeschichte?*; Schmid, *Gebetsgedenken*; *Person und Gemeinschaft*.
[27] Althoff, *Adels- und Königsfamilien*; Althoff, *Der frieden-, bündnis- und gemeinschaftstiftende Charakter*; Althoff, *Verwandte*; Althoff, Amicitiae.
[28] To name a few examples, see *La royauté et les élites*; *Les élites*; *Théories et pratiques*; *Die Interaktion*.
[29] Vaccari, *La territorialità*; de Vergottini, *Origini*.

chtsgeschichte in Frankfurt am Main[30]. This programme fully recognizes the relevance of the spatial dimension, but, at the same time, it rejects any positivistic assumptions. By doing so, the complex interactions across different spatial configurations can be analyzed without adopting the simplified view of centre-periphery relationships that is peculiar to modern state administration. This is particularly relevant for the Ottonian kingdoms, since these political entities could be described as "immense peripheries" with a king-in-motion as the "mobile centre" defining a continuously variable and highly dynamic political geography.

3. *Promising research paths for investigating royal rulership in the 10th-early 11th centuries and the revitalization of German-Italian dialogue*

After this overview concerning a few differences in the German and Italian research traditions, let me now single out four promising lines of enquiries that could shed new light on crucial aspects of royal rulership in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, reviving a mutual dialogue between German and Italian medievalists. This dialogue is obviously intended in its broadest sense to involve medievalists of all academic affiliations and nationalities, but privileging methods and questions that are mainly related to German and Italian historiographies. Each of the four proposals provided here is related to one of the following macro-themes: "space", "time", "power-sharing practices", "hostageship and circulation (to be understood as "translation") of political models".

Some of these studies have already started, others might be developed in the near future. Two of the four lines of research ("space" and "power-sharing practices") could rest on well-established investigations that both German and Italian scholars, along with other medievalists, have already carried out. One line of enquiry ("time") mainly stems from a kind of research interest that is particularly cultivated by German academics, whilst the latter ("hostageship and circulation of political models") identifies a field of investigation where neither German nor Italian medieval studies have flourished so far.

3.1. *Space*

The first macro-theme, which is "space", focuses on the specific relationship between borders and monasteries in the Ottonian period. As well known, in the Early and High Middle Ages there were no straight border lines,

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[30] Ehlers, *Rechtsräume*. Concerning the recent attention that German scholarship is paying to the notions of space and spatiality, see also *Raumkonzepte*.

but rather border areas[31]. This does not mean, however, that "linear spaces" did not exist. In his book *Die Integration Sachsens in das fränkische Reich*, Caspar Ehlers identified what he called the «line of the external royal abbeys» («die Linie der äußeren Reichsabteien»)[32]. Ehlers showed that sixteen royal abbeys were deployed along a major west-east route crossing through Saxony in the Carolingian and Ottonian period. Each abbey was situated about a day's walk away from one another. No other royal abbeys were established north or east from this line; this explains the definition "line of the external royal abbeys". "External", however, does not mean that this line marked the external border of the kingdom. It rather marked two internal borders. On the one hand, this line defined a royal core area, as shown by the journeys made by the itinerant kings in this region. On the other hand, it strengthened the ecclesiastical division of space, since it overlapped both the lower boundary of the northern Saxon dioceses and the higher boundary of the southern Saxon dioceses.

Such a line with its peculiar features was probably unique within the Ottonian Empire. However, somewhat similar lines could be retraced in other regions. For example, in Tuscany a line of monasteries can be reconstructed, connecting five foundations that the Margrave Hugh of Tuscany established or rebuilt at the end of the tenth century, in order to achieve spiritual as well as political goals, namely salvation of his soul, administration of scattered fiscal lands, and control over the bundle of roads leading to Rome. This is a well-known case study that had previously been investigated by Wilhelm Kurze and, more recently, reconsidered by Andrea Puglia as well as Paolo Tomei[33]. Moreover, some ongoing and open enquiries, undertaken by scholars such as Umberto Longo and Tersilio Leggio cooperating within a working group based at Farfa Abbey, might identify a line connecting four monasteries – or five, if one adds a further one highlighted by Levi Roach – located at about a day's walk from one another in strategic places within the south-eastern border area dividing the *regnum Italicum* from the *Patrimonium beati Petri*[34].

All these case studies show how "linear spaces" could shape a sacral geography performing several functions – first and foremost liturgy, of course, but also various tasks related to communication routes, fiscal lands, and ecclesiastical borders. However, some questions remain open. How did these "sacred lines" interplay with other kinds of spaces that were simultaneously present in the areas the lines themselves went through, such as the royal ad-

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[31] See Sergi, *La Valle*; *Grenzräume*; *Southern Italy*.
[32] Ehlers, *Die Integration*, pp. 201-210 (p. 205).
[33] Kurze, *Scritti*; Puglia, *Vecchi e nuovi interrogativi*; Tomei, *Da Cassino*.
[34] On St. Mary in Farfa, see *L'abbazia altomedievale*; on St. Michael the Archangel on the Mount Tancia, see Canella, Longo, *Dinamiche*; on St. Salvator Major in Rieti and St. Mary in Pozzaglia, see Leggio, *Dalle prepositure*; on St. Michael the Archangel and St. Adalbert in Subiaco, see Roach, *Emperor*, p. 87. On institutional implications of ecclesiastical and monastic spaces in Central Italy, see Longo, *La dimensione*.

ministrative districts, ecclesiastical dioceses, and empirical seigneurial areas created by local aristocracies? Did these "monastic lines" integrate, replace or come into collision with those spaces when intersecting them? In this respect, could it be possible not only to draw a bi-dimensional map of the area a certain line went through, but to display for each hub along this line the multiple spatial configuration resulting from the interplay between the line and the simultaneous presence of different political, ecclesiastical, and legal spaces? This shift from a bi-dimensional to a multi-dimensional representation of space can be a promising research path.

3.2. *Time*

The following considerations on "time" do not concern such a macro-theme in general and abstract terms, as it seems to happen within the context of the so-called "temporal turn"[35]. This scholarly trend in the humanities and social sciences has been greeted by historians with skepticism, since what it claims appears to be vague, and also the methodological and conceptual premises have still not been adequately defined so far. Hence, the interest in time and temporality should be understood in a more focused way, namely in relation with questions concerning how medieval societies perceived time, calculated time, and – most importantly – tried to cope with time.

German medievalists were pioneers in posing this kind of question and making attempts to provide answers, starting from the relevant study on law and time of the legal historian Hermann Krause in the late 1950s[36] and Arno Borst's work on the ordering of time published in 1990[37]. Moreover, the process of transpersonalization creating the intellectual body of the state from the physical body of the king provided a further crucial issue to reflect upon time with regard to the interplay between theology, anthropology, and politics in the Middle Ages and, more generally, in the history of Western civilization[38]. Time perception and historical consciousness have become the objects of a large array of studies, first of all those of Hans-Werner Goetz[39], and similar issues have also been widely analyzed by Anglophone, French, Spanish, and Italian medievalists[40].

More recently, interest in time and temporality has gained momentum on the basis of old and new premises. In some cases, historical studies have been enriched by transdisciplinary dialogue involving the masterful contri-

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[35] See Fögen, *Vom Raum*; Hassan, *Globalization*.
[36] Krause, *Dauer*. See also Dilcher, *Der Gedanke*.
[37] Borst, Computus.
[38] Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*.
[39] *Hochmittelalterliches Geschichtsbewußtsein*; Goetz, *Geschichtsschreibung*.
[40] To mention a few examples, see *The Perception of the Past*; *The Uses of the Past*; *Medieval Concepts of the Past*; McKitterick, *History*; *Il moderno*; Aurell, *Authoring*.

butions on time by Karl Löwith, Reinhard Koselleck, and Norbert Elias[41].
German academics are proving to be particularly receptive (and responsive)
to these suggestions. Evidence of this is provided by the establishment of the
International Consortium for Research in the Humanities *Fate, Freedom and
Prognostication*, based at the Erlangen-Nürnberg Universität. This research
centre aims at investigating ideas and techniques with regard to coping with
individual and collective futures through comparison between the European
Middle Ages and extra-European pre-modern societies like China[42]. Within
the context of legal history, moreover, Andreas Thier is carrying out a long-
term research project on law and time under the assumption that time can-
not be taken as a Newtonian objective entity[43]. It is also significant that the
last congress organized by the Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für mittelalterliche
Geschichte on Reichenau Island in October 2018 dealt with the following top-
ic: *Die Zukunft im Mittelalter. Zeitkonzepte und Planungsstrategien*. Outside
Germany, these issues have not enjoyed much attention. As far as I am con-
cerned, I have made a personal contribution to raise a new interest in time
and temporality in Italy, investigating the religious, cultural, and political
implications of the idea of *stabilitas regni* in the Ottonian period, which ex-
pressed the fundamental aspiration of the kings to keep their kingdom stable
over time and despite the flow of time[44]. In short, some German and Italian
initiatives are currently showing increasing attention to time and especially
the future, being a topic that has remained at the fringes of scholarly debate
so far, with the exception of studies on eschatology, apocalypticism, and mil-
lenarianism. Time, and especially the future, are the subjects that are about
to be discussed with regard to a possibly new and promising research path.

Time could be understood as "contingency", a concept that is nowadays
at the centre of a transdisciplinary debate involving political scientists, soci-
ologists, historians, philosophers, and economists[45]. "Coping with time" ba-
sically means "coping with contingency". It would therefore be appropriate
to undertake an investigation of the different attitudes of rulers and other
political actors towards time as the dimension of uncertainty and contingen-
cy. The main questions could be the following: did medieval rulers passively
accept or rather harness (or try to harness) the uncertainty of their present
and future? Were these rulers used to organizing their own political action
within a temporal perspective, implementing plans and strategies for their
present and future, in order to make their own will durably prevail over other

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[41] Löwith, *Meaning*; Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*; Elias, *Über die Zeit*.
[42] < https://www.ikgf.uni-erlangen.de/ >. Here I provide some publications linked to this re-
search centre, as follows: *Mantik, Schicksal und Freiheit*; *Die mantischen Künste*; *Unterwegs*;
Mittelalterliche Zukunftsgestaltung; *Longevity*.
[43] Thier, *Time*.
[44] Manganaro, Stabilitas regni.
[45] Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*; *Kontingenz*; Greven, *Kontingenz*; Holzinger, *Kontingenz*; *Poli-
tik und Kontingenz*; Esposito, *Die Präsenz*; *Unterwegs*; *Die Ungewissheit des Zükünftigen*;
Ermöglichen und Verhindern.

actors' will as well as over unpredictable contingencies? Or, rather, were these rulers simply used to reacting to immediate political contingencies without a plan and an enduring political vision? In short, did medieval rulers conceive their political action within a short-, a medium-, or a long-term perspective?

It is likely that these questions do not make much sense from a modern understanding of rulership. Legal, economic, and political regimes of the modern world share the general view that actions should be planned, contingency should be reduced, and the future should be turned into a predictable time as much as possible. Nevertheless, such a way of thinking cannot be taken for granted when one analyzes other cultures and civilizations, including also the Early and High Middle Ages.

Once again, Ottonian rulership represents an interesting case study. All experts in the Ottonian period agree that Saxon rulers used to carry out daily business without sophisticated designs and plans. This means that the Ottonians usually adapted their political behavior to changing circumstances and empirical evaluations. Particular evidence of this is given by royal charters, since Wolfgang Huschner has definitively demonstrated that these privileges were generally "obtained" by the recipients rather than "granted" by the Ottonians. In most cases, the recipients – and not the kings – took the political initiative that led to the production of these charters and strongly influenced the legal contents, the written text, and the symbolic features of these documents[46]. At the same time, there is evidence that the Ottonians sometimes made projects, planned their actions, and successfully implemented strategies to reach their own long-term goals[47]. If one matches these two different pieces of information, it might be argued that the Ottonians carried out daily business as the "rule" and planned strategies for their present and future as an "exception". This assessment on Ottonian governance is convincing and perfectly fits the interpretation of their political action in terms of «constatazione correttiva»[48]. At the same time, this cannot completely clarify the basic attitude of the Ottonian rulers towards the future and its uncertainty in the political arena.

In order to understand that, the attitudes of the kings with regard to coping with time, the future, and its contingencies should be analyzed as an issue related to the different forms of political rationality. An investigation on the capabilities or inability of medieval rulers in planning their actions is basically an investigation on the peculiar type of rationality that could be attributed to medieval rulers. Rationality is far from being univocal, indeed. Already

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[46] Huschner, *Transalpine Kommunikation*; Huschner, *Die ottonische Kanzlei*.
[47] See, for example, *Otto der Große* (establishment of the archbishopric of Magdeburg by Otto I); Hehl, *Merseburg* (establishment, suppression, and re-establishment of the bishopric of Merseburg by Otto I, Otto II, and Henry II); Hehl, *Aachen* (failed Otto III's project to establish the bishopric of Aachen); Schneidmüller, *1007* (establishment of the bishopric of Bamberg by Henry II); *La diocesi di Bobbio* (establishment of the bishopric of Bobbio by Henry II).
[48] Sergi, *Il regno*, p. 30.

Max Weber had distinguished four types of rationality (practical, theoretical, substantive, and formal), each of them generating a specific kind of social action[49]. More recently, the (alleged) dominant role played by instrumental rationality has been questioned[50], political rationality has become a research theme in connection with institutional mechanisms[51], and several social scientists from various perspectives have begun to analyze the co-existence of different patterns of reasoning in a same historical context[52]. Ultimately, medieval culture itself included "multiple rationalities"[53]. However, proper understanding and description of the types of rationality shaping medieval rulership are currently missing. Investigating as to what extent medieval rulers managed time and its contingencies through immediate short-term actions or strategic long-term plans can strongly contribute to filling that gap.

3.3. *Power-sharing practices*

The third macro-theme can be defined by the following phrase: "power-sharing practices". Starting from Jürgen Hannig's book on *consensus fidelium* (1982) and, even more, from the aforementioned essay by Bernd Schneidmüller on *konsensuale Herrschaft* (2000)[54], consensus has been identified as the core feature of medieval rulership. Thus, over the years, consensual rule, consensus-building practices, and consensus decision-making have become the main subjects of a large array of medieval studies. Amongst others, the German investigations on consensus, conflict, and competition of Steffen Patzold[55] and Roman Deutinger[56] should be mentioned as well as the recent conference of the Konstanzer Arbeitskreis entitled *Recht und Konsens im frühen Mittelalter*, whose proceedings were edited by Verena Epp and Christoph Meyer[57]. In Italy Maria Pia Alberzoni together with Roberto Lambertini recently fostered enquiries on royal consensus[58], while Giuseppe Sergi and Alfredo Lucioni brought to light the network of local powers supporting Arduin of Ivrea and his anti-Ottonian leadership[59], an issue also tackled by

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[49] Kalberg, *Max Weber's Types*.
[50] Boudon, *La rationalité*.
[51] *Die Rationalität*.
[52] See, for example, the discussion in Avgerou, *Information* (chapter *Multiple situated rationalities*); Demeulenaere, *Esistono più tipi di razionalità?*; McGrath, *The Territories*.
[53] On the co-existence of different rationalities within the context of Ottonian legal and political culture, see Bougard, *Rationalité*. In a broader sense, multiple rationalities clearly emerged in medieval culture after the epistemological shift of the twelfth century, see Chenu, *La théologie*.
[54] Hannig, Consensus; Schneidmüller, *Konsensuale Herrschaft*. See also Schneidmüller, *Konsens*; Schneidmüller, *Gerechtigkeit*.
[55] Patzold, *Konflikte*; Patzold, *Konsens*; Patzold, Consensus.
[56] Deutinger, *Königsherrschaft*, pp. 225-272.
[57] *Recht und Konsens*.
[58] *Autorità e consenso*.
[59] Lucioni, *Re Arduino*; Sergi, *Arduino*.

the British scholar Levi Roach[60]. It is also worth recalling a number of studies carried out by Paolo Cammarosano, Vito Loré, Simone Collavini, and Giacomo Vignodelli on the *regnum Italicum* during the long neglected post-Carolingian and pre-Ottonian period (888-962). These studies deal with fiscal lands as assets to generate political consensus and focus on the major role played by local aristocracies in electing weak kings, who, nevertheless, strengthened the association between the Italian royal title and the right to be crowned as *imperator augustus*[61]. Also the joint German-Italian initiative called *Italia Regia* has undertaken enquiries dealing with consensus, as evidenced in research on documentary sources that mirror the integration of a strategic region of *regnum Italicum* like Tuscany into the Ottonian-Salian Empire[62].

It could obviously be possible to investigate medieval rulership from other perspectives that are complementary to one defined by consensus. In this respect, a potential perspective could be given by the notions of "fragmentation of power and rights" and, strictly related to that, "power-sharing practices".

Here, it is worth mentioning the studies of the Italian legal historian Paolo Grossi. According to his view, "royal rulership" certainly existed in the Early and High Middle Ages, but not the "state", since several actors – and not only the king – simultaneously exercised rights of jurisdiction within a context characterized by political and legal pluralism[63]. Similarly, "ownership" also existed at that time, but the notion of ownership as *ius excludendi omnes alios* did not, since several owners simultaneously had ownership rights over the same good[64]. Modern state and modern ownership rights arose from similar processes of accumulation and consolidation of power, by collecting the bundles of rights that had been shared up to then by several actors and transferring them as a whole to only one actor (the monarch and the formal owner, respectively). By contrast, in the Early and High Middle Ages power and rights were usually fragmented. As a consequence, the prevailing dynamics could be described as "power-sharing practices". An example of these practices can be offered by current investigations on royal and papal protection in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.

Royal and papal protections were legal privileges granted by kings and popes to abbots and bishops[65]. The sources define them with the Latin terms *tuitio*, *mundiburdium*, and *defensio*, but only vaguely explain the contents of these privileges. The idea of protection itself is quite elusive and discretional. This idea implied neither a vertical, nor a horizontal, but rather an asymmetrical relationship between the protector and his protected person. Such an

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[60] Roach, *The Legacy*.
[61] Cammarosano, *Nobili*; Vignodelli, *Il filo*; *Il patrimonio delle regine*; Loré, *Monasteri*; Vignodelli, *La competizione*; Bianchi, Collavini, *Public estates*; *Beni pubblici*.
[62] *Europäische Herrscher*.
[63] Grossi, *L'ordine*; Grossi, *Un diritto*.
[64] Grossi, *Le situazioni*; Grossi, *La proprietà*.
[65] Johrendt, *Papsttum*; Johrendt, *La protezione*; Manganaro, *Protezione*; Manganaro, *I mundeburdi*.

asymmetry was not clearly defined and was highly variable from time to time. Thus, the relationship of protection could result in a large spectrum of outcomes, covering all possible nuances between the following borderline cases: complete control and domination of the protector over his protected subject, on the one hand, and the ability of the protected person to strongly influence and even overcome his protector, on the other hand. In all the cases, medieval privileges of protection implied gaining patronage rights over the landholdings of the protected subject. When the latter was an abbot or a bishop and the privilege of protection was the royal *mundiburdium*, this patronage implied that the king and the abbot/bishop under protection shared the management of monastic/ecclesiastical landholdings enriched by jurisdictional rights. Royal rulership in the tenth and early eleventh centuries usually adopted this and other sharing-power practices.

What can be considered promising is a line of research that programmatically aims at dealing with "sharing-power practices". This brings about two consequences. First, one should collect the sharing-power practices that have been already investigated – which are many – but without having been defined and understood through this interpretative category. Secondly, one should carry out new investigations on the still unknown practices of this kind. This way, a number of medieval political and legal practices would appear under a new light, gathered together according to a new epistemic criterion. The use of the notion of "power-sharing practices" could not only improve our understanding of medieval rulership, but also facilitate diachronic comparisons with other historical contexts, namely with modern and post-modern times.

Sharing-power practices as well as processes of power consolidation always coexist, as evidenced also in medieval societies[66]. It is nevertheless possible to point out specific historical contexts where some prevail over others. In this respect, if one assumes that the modern state could basically be considered as the outcome of (obviously nonlinear and not teleologically-oriented) processes of collection, accumulation, and consolidation of power and rights that, up to the eighteenth century, had been exercised by a large number of political actors[67], what could be said about post-modern processes that are currently overcoming nation-state structures? What processes might one then consider to be prevailing? Are they processes of fragmentation of power and rights, that call into question the state level of power from below (local communities, municipalities, regional or transregional entities), or

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[66] On the general process of *Verdichtung* characterizing late medieval Europe, see Moraw, *Von offener Verfassung*. Concerning the processes of power consolidation undertaken by the Italian *Comuni*, see for example Varanini, *L'organizzazione*; Grillo, *L'ordine*. Regarding the debate on whether medieval Italian *Comuni* could represent an institutional model for the later development of statehood or not, see Vallerani, *Modelli*.

[67] This could be assumed despite some reservations concerning not only the quality of this institutional process, which followed a crooked line without any theleology, but also the effectiveness of the outcome, since, even in modern times, a fully consolidated and sovereign state remained more an objective than a political and institutional reality. On this point, see Risse, *Limited Statehood*.

could they rather be seen as processes of further accumulation of power and rights, that call into question the state level of power from above (supranational state, global organizations)? The *Sonderforschungsbereich* n. 700, entitled *Governance in Räumen begrenzter Staatlichkeit* (*Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood*), which ended in December 2017, aimed at comparing medieval political orders with post-modern ones, as seen in the recent book *Mittelalterliches Regieren in der Moderne oder modernes Regieren im Mittelalter?*, written by the German scholars Stefan Esders and Gunnar Folke Schuppert[68]. It is likely that the notion of power-sharing practice could offer a new and useful criterion to make this kind of comparison possible, that is, to better identify analogies and differences between pre-modern and post-modern orders, between pre-state and post-state forms of governance.

3.4. *Hostageship and circulation (to be understood as "translation") of political models*

Recent research faced the issue of "violence" in the Late Middle Ages, posing the following question: what did a medieval society consider and perceive as violence? This is the core issue of the monograph *Gewalt in Wort und Tat. Praktiken und Narrative im spätmittelalterlichen Frankenreich*, written by the German medievalist Christoph Mauntel[69]. This kind of question reflects the ambiguity of categories and concepts that, at a first glance, appear univocal and clear. This ambiguity could be embedded in medieval sources as well as in the observer's mind, namely in the implicit assumptions of the one who analyzes those sources.

In my view, such a methodological problem recalls Otto Brunner's old, but always valid teachings that warned historians against using modern concepts to describe medieval societies[70]. In this respect, a further notion that is awaiting future clarification is hostageship. Apart from some recent studies by Anglophone scholars[71], medieval hostageship has not received much attention so far. German and Italian medievalists only very occasionally focused their enquiries on this issue[72] and it is precisely for this reason that hostageship could potentially define a new field of research for both scholarships. German and Italian scholars might therefore work together in a shared research perspective, whilst maintaining their own peculiarities. This chance seems to be all the more welcome as the scarcity of studies on medieval hostageship contrasts with the significant role that hostages played as mediators in agreement and conflict resolution practices.

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[68] Esders, Schuppert, *Mittelalterliches Regieren*.
[69] Mauntel, *Gewalt*.
[70] Brunner, *Sozialgeschichte*, pp. 5-9. See also Koselleck, *Einleitung*.
[71] *Hostages*; *Medieval Hostageship*.
[72] See Ligato, *La croce*.

Early and high medieval hostages were usually high-ranking people who remained under constraint for a certain period of time, during which they were treated with honour. Hostageship covered a wider spectrum of cases, situations, and conditions than what one could expect moving from the current meaning of this notion. Also the legal status of being a hostage is controversial and should be contextualized within the legal regime of the tenth and early eleventh centuries. This legal regime was penance-oriented rather than punishment-oriented, since it was not based on the harshness of the law and it adopted a negotiating mentality up to the point of admitting, for example, legal processes where the judge himself was one of the parties in question[73]. In such a peculiar legal context, medieval hostageship could have offered a practice for replacing stricter measures, like detention and imprisonment, that were basically unfeasible. Furthermore, hostageship must be considered as a relevant means for managing political conflicts and diplomatic relations. All these legal, diplomatic, and political aspects should therefore be taken into consideration to investigate medieval hostageship, but there is more. Since medieval hostages were often high-ranking people coming from "foreign" regions and other cultures, for example Byzantium, hostageship had also relevant anthropological and cultural implications with regard to the circulation of ideas and practices. Hostages, as a matter of fact, often acted as "cultural brokers"[74].

What is currently missing – and strongly promising – is therefore a research that investigates if and how medieval hostages facilitated the circulation of models and forms of rulership through Europe and beyond. If proved to have taken place, such a circulation should not be analyzed as a mere "transfer", but rather as a "translation". In fact, the ideas, practices, and forms of knowledge involved in cultural phenomena of this kind do not simply move from one place to another, but are subjected to a translation process. First, they are identified, decontextualized, displaced, and then recontextualized, reimplanted, and domesticated[75].

Conclusion

This essay attempts to highlight the importance of a closer dialogue between German and Italian scholars dealing with constitutional history. In order to increase this kind of awareness, a detailed analysis of the main issues usually tackled in different ways by these two scholarships should be carried out. As this essay has started to reveal, a full analysis would probably demon-

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[73] Weinfurter, *Herrschaft*, pp. 58-74; Bougard, *La justice*; Althoff, *Spielregeln*; Keller, *Die Idee*; Chiodi, *Roma*.
[74] *Cultural Brokers*.
[75] Bassnett, *The Translation Turn*; Burke, *Translating Knowledge*; Duve, *European Legal History*.

strate that some research approaches, perceived as divergent, could be combined and adapted to each other, thus resulting as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. In this respect, the establishment of German and Italian working groups could give a decisive contribution, as already within the context of the aforementioned *Sonderforschungsbereich* n. 537 and *Italia Regia*. In addition, it is also worth recalling the well-established role played by the Deutsches Historisches Institut (DHI) in Rome[76]. Further similar academic initiatives should increase in number. In this respect, a better balance between the initiatives organized and hosted in Germany and those organized and hosted in Italy would be advisable. If that happened, several innovative perspectives could be elaborated, focusing on innovative research topics and developing original methods.

While awaiting new structured and organized academic initiatives fostering cooperation between German and Italian constitutional medievalists, this essay has identified four potential research issues and approaches that could refine the interpretation of royal rulership in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.

The first issue deals with space and spatiality, and the approach suggested here focuses on the opportunity to move from a bi-dimensional to a multi-dimensional representation of space, in order to draw the spatial configuration of areas where "linear space" intersected and interplayed with political, ecclesiastical, and legal spaces. The second issue refers to time and temporality, and the approach suggested here intends to analyze differentiated attitudes of kings with regard to coping with time – and especially the future –, in order to detect types and forms of political rationality that could be ascribed to medieval rulers. The third issue concerns power-sharing practices as peculiar early and high medieval means of governance, and the approach suggested here aims at tackling these practices in diachronic comparison with other historical contexts characterized by a limited statehood, in order to identify analogies and differences between pre-modern and post-modern orders. The fourth issue deals with early and high medieval hostageship, and the approach suggested here promotes the investigation of the role played by hostages in the circulation of political models, which should be understood as translation processes. These four research paths might hopefully draw the attention of the international community of medievalists, inspiring German and Italian scholars to turn their different research interests and methodologies into productive and mutual cooperation.

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[76] Here I provide a selection of current research projects carried out at the DHI-Rome, as follows: *The Coasts of the* Patrimonium Petri *as Hybrid Space* as well as *Fluid Borders. Early Medieval Southern Italy in the Interplay between Competing Religious and Political Powers (9th-early 10th centuries)*, both conducted by Kordula Wolf; *The Holy Spirit Hospital in Rome as the centre of a hospital system of European importance*, conducted by Andreas Rehberg; *Old Rulers of the Middle Ages: Kings, Doges and Popes. A Contribution to Gerontological Medieval Studies*, conducted by Christian Alexander Neumann.

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Stefano Manganaro
Max-Planck-Institut für europäische Rechtsgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main
stefano.manganaro@sns.it