

Anastasia Brakhman
Berrenrather Str. 409
50937 Cologne
Germany
Tel.: (+49)176/668-457-99
Email: anabrakhman@gmail.com

Dear Madam or Sir,

Hereby I would like to apply for participation in the Graduate School, held from 1 to 6 October 2012 in Moscow. I am a PhD student at the Ruhr-University Bochum and I am working on a PhD project on early medieval history and its communicative potential. For detailed summary of the project, see the letter enclosed with this email. I would be very happy to put up for a discussion at the international level both the already obtained results of my research and further prospects of the project. If you need any further information concerning my project or curriculum vitae, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address mentioned above.

Yours sincerely,

Anastasia Brakhman

Abstract of the PhD project:

Outsiders and 'Insiders' in the Early Medieval Historiography: Literary Communication at the Carolingian and Ottonian Courts.

Based on the early medieval historiography the following PhD research aims to investigate two fundamental questions: (1) Could a literary text have been regarded as means of communication, i. e. as conscious conveyance of certain statements with intended social impact? (2) How did the intention and orientation of an author affect the form and narration of the text?

This suggested instrumentalisation of a literary work is defined in the present PhD project as literary communication. The project starts with a focus on the communication of literate outsider, i.e. author who had no or very limited access to the target audience during the drafting of his text. Thus the following questions should be answered: How does the educated outsider deal with literary work and the historiographical discourse of his time? What aims does he pursue? What possibilities are opened for him as a *littérateur*? In what ways does he try to achieve them? Therefore, more general questions are raised: On the communication of a learned author with a political and cultural milieu that is partly alien to him, on the process of integration and the relation to the recipients. Relying on the exemplified analysis, the consequences that these special circumstances of text formation led to should be distinct, as well as similarities and

distinctions between an ‘outsider’ and ‘local’ contemporary authors (the last are specified in a modernizing way as ‘insiders’) concerning the usage of literature for establishing of communication.

The result of this research should represent then a basis for a diachronic comparison; hence it should probably be possible to develop common and/or specific features of literary behavior of the outsider within the historiographical discourse of the early middle ages.

It should be noted that the analysis of the early medieval historiography can only operate with one side of a communicative exchange, i.e. that of the author, while the opinion or reaction of his recipients cannot be revealed due to the missing sources. Literary communication within the frameworks of the early medieval historiography appears then to us always as a textual communication.

The statement of problems and questions as described above leads to the following outline of the PhD research:

1. The outsider at the Ottonian court: literary communication of Liudprand of Cremona

- 1.1. Liudprands biography and work: Designing of literary communication
- 1.2. Self-representation of the author and his social demands in *Antapodosis*
- 1.3. The circles of recipients and communicative levels of the *Antapodosis*
- 1.4. Literary communication of Liudprand of Cremona: conclusions

2. Authors, texts and discourses: Comparisons

- 2.1. The ‘insider’ at the Ottonian court: *Res gestae saxonicae* of Widukind of Corvey
- 2.2. The outsider at the Carolingian court: *Historia Langobardorum* of Paulus Diaconus

As a case study for the research of the communication of the literate outsider, I have chosen the Œuvre and the biography of Italian cleric Liudprand, acting in the middle of 10th century at the court of Otto the Great. After the breaking off with his earlier master, king Berengar II of Italy, Liudprand left the Italian kingdom and went to the court of Otto I (not later than 953). Up to his death (between 970 and 973) he remained in service of the Saxon ruler and was entrusted with different tasks - presumably as a court notary,¹ according his own report also as a translator and an envoy - including two diplomatic missions to the imperial court in Constantinople. By the second Italian campaign of Otto I, Liudprand was appointed bishop of Cremona (961/962). During the almost twenty years of his service Liudprand wrote at least four texts - two historiographical (*Antapodosis* and *Liber de Ottone Rege*), a sermon (*Homelia Paschalis*) and a diplomatic report (*Legatio on imperatorem Constantinopolitanum Nicephorum Phocam*). Liudprands texts, written in different stages of his career, have proved to be a viable example of

¹ According to the assumption of W. Huschner, *Transalpine Kommunikation im Mittelalter*. 3 Bde., 2003. Bd. II, S. 558-84. Kritisch dazu: H. Hoffmann, *Notare, Kanzler und Bischöfe*, in: *DA* 61 (2005), pp. 103-59, esp. pp. 468-71.

the literary communication. The earliest and the most extensive of the Liudprands works, *Antapodosis* has shown itself as especially lucrative for the central question of the project - literary behavior of the outsider towards the social group whose acceptance he aspires; hence it has been put in the centre of the research. The later texts of Liudprand explain the change of his communicative behavior after acceptance by the aspired social group.

The in-depth analysis of Liudprands texts (the first, already completed part of the research) has revealed a close connection between the biography of the author, the events he had taken part in, and his literary work. This can be summarized as follows: Liudprand has always created his texts with the aim to make his social advancement possible or to keep the position obtained. For this purpose the author chose each time consciously a specific circle of the recipients that seemed promising to him, and a communicative strategy that was devised accordingly. The author put in account not only his personal position but also the current political situation as well as the cultural background of his recipients. Moreover, the wide range of strategies of literary behavior which the author applied depending on intention and target public was specified: Liudprand saw his texts – this is the intermediate result of the research - as important means of social advancement, as an effective way to reach those recipients, on whom, from his point of view, his career depended.

The analysis of the works of Liudprand of Cremona allowed furthermore to reveal a number of characterizing features of literary communication of an educated outsider; these features should represent basic points of synchronous and diachronic comparison in the second part of the research. Among the most important of them following should be mentioned: (1) fundamental orientation of the author to the ruler and the court,² while the actual (or pragmatic) recipient of the work should be most likely of a clerical origin;³ (2) apparently exaggerated forms in which the author expresses his loyalty towards the recipients that indicates his unsafe position at the court; (3) literary work as a letter of application - depending on a situation, the author points more or less emphatically on his abilities and skills; (4) the transfer of knowledge as one of the main intentions of a text and aspirations of the author for a special position as the adviser of the king.

On the synchronous level of comparative analysis, the *Res gestae saxonicae* Widukinds of Corvey will be considered. The text stands closely to Liudprands *Antapodosis* not only in terms of chronology but also in terms of its form and extent as well as some possible similarities regarding intentions and target audiences. It should be noted that the question, whether Widukind

² The rulers court is understood as a circle of high-ranking decision makers of clerical and lay origin, whose proximity to the king and therefore ability to influence upon the issues of the Empire made them an aspired audience for the historiographers, discussed in this project.

³ In the case of Liudprands *Antapodosis* – archbishop Wilhelm of Mainz

can really be considered as a ‘local’ author (and ‘insider’), remains open.⁴ However, the distinction between the social statuses of both authors becomes clear already at superficial examination: As a member of a Saxon monastery, Corvey Widukind occupied a firm position within the social framework of the Ottonian Empire, while Liudprand's connection to any institute of north alpine origin cannot be testified at the time of writing of the *Antapodosis*. Furthermore, the usage of Widukind's text for the purposes of *memoria* in the monastery of Quedlinburg, closely related to the Ottonian dynasty, as well as for instruction of princess Mathilda points on his (certainly, not too narrow) relation with the court.

For the diachronic comparison the *Historia Langobardorum* of Paulus Diaconus was chosen. It is not only the comparable form and extent of both texts that are taken into consideration but also some similarities in the biographies of the authors, both well-educated Italian clerics at the courts of the north alpine kings, Otto I and Pippin of Italy.⁵ A further argument for the comparing analysis of literary communication in *Antapodosis* and *Historia Langobardorum* is the main subject that both works have in common, namely the history of Italy. Behind it, one may assume the transfer of knowledge as one of the central *causae scribendi* of these Italian authors. Concerning the social status of Paulus Diaconus one would suppose - after the recent publication of Walter Pohl⁶ - that Paulus was not an outsider fully conscious of his outsider status in one or another social group (in Italian kingdom as well as in Frankish Empire), but also an author who obviously dealt with this ‘outsider’ position in a different way than Liudprand. The communicative situations of the both texts, however, remain comparable: the Italian literate and the court of (East) Frankish ruler soon after the conquest of the kingdom of Italy.

The second part of the PhD research should thereby specify, on the one hand, similarities and distinctions in literary communication of the two contemporaneous authors who wrote their works under similar cultural conditions, while occupying different social positions; on the other hand, in the diachronic comparison some stereotypical features of literary behavior of the literate outsider should be established.

Finally, the presented PhD project should contribute to not only a better understanding of individual authors and their motives, but also throw some new light on the creative potential of

⁴ For instance, Ludger Körntgen points clearly, that the *Res gestae saxonicae* should initially represent „die Interessen des gar nicht eng mit den Otonen verbundenen Klosters Corvey“ towards Otto I. Cit.: L. Körntgen, Königsherrschaft und Gottes Gnade. Zur Kontext und Funktion sakraler Vorstellungen in Historiographie und Bildzeugnissen der ottonisch-frühsalischen Zeit. 2001, p. 86; also: pp. 91f., 96f., 100.

⁵ Contrary to the earlier works of Paulus, such as *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*, that had been composed at the court of Charlemagne, the *Historia Langobardorum* was presumably designed for Pippin of Italy and his court: R. McKitterick, Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum* and the Franks, in: Dies., History and Memory in the Carolingian World (2006), pp. 60-83, esp. pp. 70f. and 82.

⁶ W. Pohl, Paul Deacon – between *sacri* and *marsupia*, in: R. Corradini et al. (Ed.), Ego trouble. 2010, pp. 111-123, esp. pp. 122f..

early medieval historiography, on its social position as well as on the cultural background, the interests and knowledge of the dominating elites.