

***Liutpiriga Ducissa***  
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## ***Liutpiriga Ducissa*** **The eighth-century Tassilo Chalice** **and Liutpirc's Bavarian reign reconsidered**

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The eighth-century Tassilo Chalice is a well-known art object. Around its base is an inscription, *TASSILO DUX FORTIS + LIUTPIRC VIRGA REGALIS* identifying the chalice's donors. Tassilo's consort, Liutpirc, is well documented due to her status as a daughter of the last Lombard king, Desiderius, and the wife of the last Agilolfing duke of Bavaria, Tassilo, both of whom were eliminated by Charlemagne. Deeds in the Freising cartulary from Bavaria and Frankish documents indicate that Liutpirc bore the title "ducissa" and exercised considerable political influence which was manifested in support for her exiled brother, Adelgis. Liutpirc's status thus paralleled that of her sister, Adelperga, who was married to Arichis II, duke of Benevento. The date of Liutpirc's marriage to Tassilo are reevaluated, and it is suggested that their young son, Theodo, was elevated to ducal status in 777.

Early Middle Ages, Bavaria, Benevento, Liutpirc, Tassilo, Charlemagne, Tassilo Chalice, noble titles, marriage.

### ***1. Liutpirc and the Chalice***

Since the publication of Pauline Stafford's seminal, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, in 1983, our knowledge of early-medieval female rulers has increased substantially.<sup>1</sup> As Stafford noted, and, as Martina Hartmann has more recently emphasized, although the evidence for female royal consorts is even more scanty than the often fragmentary records for numerous male rulers, it is still substantial enough to allow meaningful inferences about the distinctive features of female rule deriving from the queen's gendered identity "within the central importance of family politics, household and lifecycle" in

<sup>1</sup> Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*. There is a recent and comprehensive reassessment of her work in Garver, Nash and Woodacre, "Pauline Stafford's *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers* Thirty-five Years On;" see also Nash, "Women and Power."

early-medieval political order.<sup>2</sup> However, when we consider rule at a ducal or comital level, women who may have exercised considerable political authority and bestowed valuable religious and artistic patronage are often known to us only as *uxor/coniux ducis*, and possibly even without a name. Only rarely can we specify the sources of their status and authority, or hear their own voices as they engage with rulership.<sup>3</sup> A partial exception to this anonymity is Liutpiric, the daughter of the last Langobard king, Desiderius (r. 757-74) and wife of Tassilo, last Agilolfing duke of Bavaria (r. 748-788/94). Not only do we have substantial written evidence for Liutpiric, but we also have a precious extant example of early-medieval metal artwork, the Tassilo Chalice, to which her name is affixed. We are thus able to form some impression of her – however imperfect – both as a ruler and as a patroness of art and religion. A recent publication on the chalice invites a reconsideration of Liutpiric and her reign.<sup>4</sup>

The chalice is a well-known art object and has been the subject of numerous specialist studies by art historians, church and political historians, archaeologists, liturgists and others. Most recently, the archaeologist, Egon Wamers, organized an inclusive and intensive interdisciplinary study of the chalice, and the results were published in a large collective volume in 2019. The chalice itself is a large eighth-century copper liturgical vessel highly decorated in Carolingian-Insular style which has been in the possession of the Upper Austrian monastery of Kremsmünster since at least the thirteenth or fourteenth century and probably much earlier.<sup>5</sup> It consists of a large cuppa with images of Christ and the four Evangelists with their emblems; a decorated middle portion or nodus; and a foot or base with four saints' images of which only the identities of Maria *Theotokos* and John the Baptist are generally agreed.<sup>6</sup> Around the base there is a continuous inscription in capital letters: "TASSILO DUX FORTIS + LIUTPIRC VIRGA REGALIS +" (Tassilo Mighty Duke + Liutpiric Royal Offshoot +) (Figs. 1 and 2).<sup>7</sup> This establishes the patronage of the chalice and may indicate that the chalice was donated to the monastery at its endowment by duke Tassilo in 777.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, in the Preface to the PB edition, XV. Hartmann, *Die Königin im frühen Mittelalter*, where Liutpiric is considered only as a royal daughter.

<sup>3</sup> A prominent Carolingian exception is the treatise on fidelity composed for her sons by Dhuoda, wife of Bernhard of Septimania, for which see Le Jan, "Dhuoda ou l'Opportunité du Discours Féminin."

<sup>4</sup> Wamers, ed., *Der Tassilo-Liutpiric-Kelch*; see now also the overview of Tassilo's ducal *thesaurus* by Wamers, "Tassilo, Liutpiric und die Schatzkunst," together with an extended catalogue entry there for the chalice, 231-36.

<sup>5</sup> There is a review of the chalice's provenance in Pötsch, "Schrift- und Bildzeugnisse."

<sup>6</sup> Identifications of the other two images now proposed as Thomas and Peter in Pötsch, "*Rota in medio rotae*", 351-3; cf. his summary, "Zum theologischen Konzept," 237-41.

<sup>7</sup> The term *virga*, although apposite, has attracted some attention as a possible mistake for *virgo*. For comment on the oddity of this inscription, see Hammer, *From 'Ducatus' to 'Regnum'*, 158-9.

<sup>8</sup> For the history of Kremsmünster, see now the extensive article, "Kremsmünster" by Pitschmann; Tassilo's reputation as a generous ecclesiastical patron has recently been reviewed critically by Deutinger, "Herzog Tassilo III. als Stifter," 30-1.



Figs. 1-2. *Tassilo-Liutpiric-Chalice*, Kremsmünster, Treasury of the Abbey (Photo: Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie [LEIZA]/ V. Iserhardt).

Moreover, the fact that the donor inscription is circular rather than hierarchical indicates an unusual parity between the duke and his consort. While the placement of Tassilo's name beneath the "Maestas Domini" image of Christ gives it certain prominence, this may not represent the original concept of the iconography which may have placed the images of Mary and John the Baptist below Christ and begun the inscription with Tassilo below John.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the stated attributes of their authority are, as we shall see, complementary and significant.

In the summary to his new volume, Egon Wamers noted regarding Tassilo's consort, Liutpiric, that "her thus far insufficiently-recognized importance is now redressed by renaming the chalice as the 'Tassilo-Liutpiric-Chalice'".<sup>10</sup> Besides the inscription itself, the main evidence cited for this partial reattribution is contained in the contribution to the volume by the historian

<sup>9</sup> Pötsch, "Rota in medio rotæ," 341-5, with Falttafel 2.

<sup>10</sup> Wamers, "Eine Synopse," 492: *Ihrer bislang zu gering geachteten Bedeutung wird jetzt mit der Umbenennung des Kelches in 'Tassilo-Liutpiric-Kelch' Rechnung getragen.*

and President of the Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Martina Hartmann, where written evidence for Liutpirc and her daughters is carefully reviewed but with the more reserved conclusion that “the role of Liutbirc [sic] on the side of Tassilo III is, in any event, very only very obscurely to be discerned.”<sup>11</sup> This is not surprising. It is, in fact, remarkable that we know as much as we do about Liutpirc. This is due to her importance as a daughter of the last Lango-bard king, Desiderius, as well as the wife of Charlemagne’s first cousin, duke Tassilo. Her position implicated her necessarily in Charlemagne’s forceful elimination of both rulers together with their families, and, indeed, much of the evidence cited by Hartmann reflects the virulent hostility of the Frankish sources which are the main surviving witnesses to those turbulent events and which freely employ personal vituperation against her.<sup>12</sup> There are, however, other sources, not considered by Hartmann, which allow us to see Liutpirc from a somewhat less prejudiced and quite different perspective.

## 2. Family and Memory

Like the chalice inscription, the initial memorial entries made in the Salzburg *Liber Vitae* by Bishop Virgil shortly before his death in November 784 are contemporary with Liutpirc and indicative of her importance in Tassilo’s Bavarian rule.<sup>13</sup> There, presented together in parallel on Ms. p. 10, are the *Ordo Regum Vivorum cum Coniugibus et Liberis* and the *Ordo Ducum Vivorum cum Coniugibus et Liberis* (Fig. 3). The first entry is headed by *Charlus rex* with his new wife, Fastrada (*Fastraat*), his four sons and his daughter, Hrodrud. The second entry next to it consists of Tassilo and Liutpirc (*Liutpirga*) with their son Theodo (*Deoto*) and daughters Cotani and Hrodrud.<sup>14</sup> Thus, these entries present the reigning Carolingian and Agilolfing families paired

<sup>11</sup> Hartmann, “Liutbirc und ihre Töchter,” 170: “die Rolle Liutbircs an der Seite Tassilos III... al-lerdings nur sehr undeutlich zu erkennen ist”. Historical circumstances are discussed in three other contributions to Wamers, ed., *Der Tassilo-Liutpirc-Kelch*: Becher, “Der Sturz Tassilo’s III. von Baiern: Einvierteljahrhundert Forschungsgeschichte”; Wolfram, “Die Kirchenpolitik der baierischen Agilolfinger im 8. Jahrhundert”; and Hartmann, “Überlegungen zur Bedeutung des Fürsten Tassilo”. See also the accounts in Hammer, *From ‘Ducatus’ to ‘Regnum’*, 137-200; and in Hammer, “Pipinus Rex: Pippin’s Plot of 792 and Bavaria” (see also below).

<sup>12</sup> Hartmann, “Liutbirc,” 164, n. 4, and Hammer, *From ‘Ducatus’ to ‘Regnum’*, 192-3, citing accounts in Pertz and Kurze, eds., *Annales Regni Francorum*, 80-2, Simson, ed., *Annales Mettenses Priores*, 75-7, and Einhardi *Vita Karoli Magni*, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Salzburg, Erzabtei St. Peter, Benediktinerstift, Archiv, Hs. A1; MGH, *Necr.* 2, 6-42 (Ms. 5-28), here: Ms. 10 and 20; digital images available at the *manuscripta.at* website. I have not been able to consult the reproduction of the manuscript published by Karl Forstner in the series *Codices Selecti* 51, Graz 1974; on Virgil’s closeness to Tassilo, Wolfram, “Kirchenpolitik,” 154-5. There is a thorough discussion of the structure of the *Liber Vitae* by Schmid, “Probleme der Erschließung des Salzburger Verbrüderungsbuches,” with a diagram on 188-9.

<sup>14</sup> After her undated death Liutpirc still had friends in Salzburg, since her name was added shortly after 788 to the prayer list for deceased dukes and their families in Salzburg’s confraternity register (Ms. 20), for which, see: Wolfram, *Tassilo III. Höchster Fürst und niedrigster Mönch*, 126; the Tassilo of the original entry there must be one of the two earlier ducal bearers of that name.



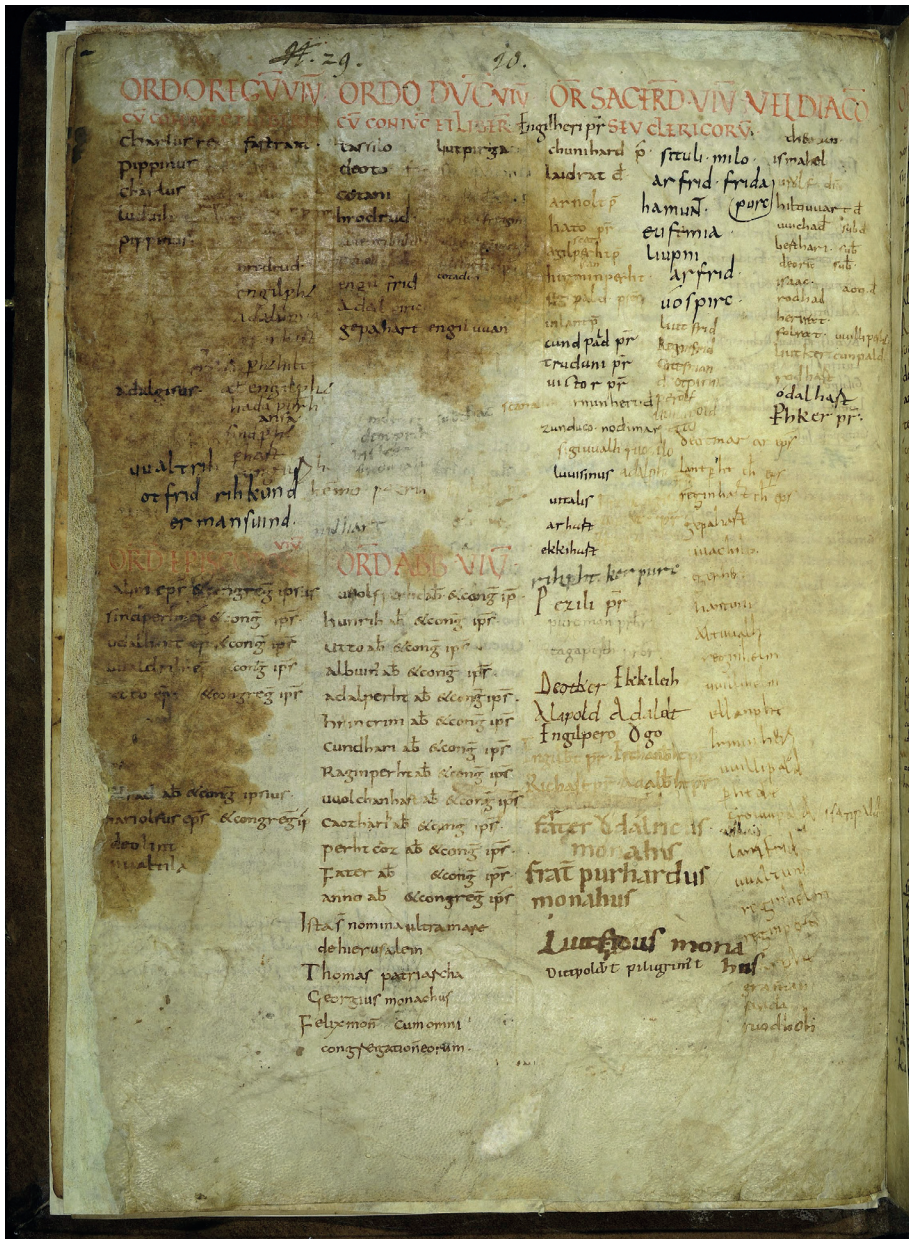


Fig. 3. *Liber Vitae*, 784, page with Living Kings and Dukes, Salzburg, Archive of St. Peter Abbey, Ms. A 1, p. 10 (© Archiv der Erzabtei St. Peter in Salzburg).

in unexceptionable dynastic form – appropriately since Charlemagne and Tassilo were first cousins, grandsons of Charles Martell who with his Bavarian *conjux* Swanahilt heads the list of deceased Carolingian kings on Ms. p. 20 (Fig. 4). Moreover, at the end of the entry for the living kings, we also find Adalgis (*Adalgisus*) and Ansa, Liutpiric's brother and mother, just as we find her father, Desiderius, directly following Charlemagne's unfortunate younger brother, Carloman (*Charlmannus*), under the entry for deceased kings. The inclusion of Liutpiric's family, particularly Adalgis, is more than mere filial piety and conventional liturgical remembrance. The Langobard *stirps regia*, deposed by Charlemagne in 774, was still honored ten years later in the Salzburg *Liber Vitae* as a continuing royal dynasty of which Liutpiric was, in the words of the chalice inscription, a *virga regalis*. The *Liber Vitae*'s entry is a startling assertion of continuing royal legitimacy and must be understood "from a political perspective almost as an anti-Carolingian provocation".<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, Liutpiric's brother, Adalgis, was not only alive but also a persistent threat at the very same time that the *Liber Vitae* was composed. Stefano Gasparri has drawn attention to five papal letters from Pope Hadrian I (s. 772-95) to Charlemagne between 775 and 788 which contain complaints about the *nefandissimus* Adalgis' efforts to regain territories in southern Italy with Byzantine and Beneventan support.<sup>16</sup> It is notable that mention of Arichis' threat ends in 788 directly after Charlemagne had taken decisive action against both Benevento and Bavaria and secured the heirs of both ducal dynasties, Grimoald and Theodo, as hostages. In a letter from early 788 Hadrian begins by congratulating Charlemagne on the subjection of Bavaria in 787 before turning to Arichis' treacherous efforts on Adalgis' behalf to undermine Frankish and papal authority in southern Italy with Byzantine assistance.<sup>17</sup> Hadrian was well informed on events in Bavaria, since two Bavarian envoys had come to Rome in 787 to seek Hadrian's assistance in mediating between Tassilo and Charlemagne. One of them was Arn, the new bishop of Salzburg (785), a Bavarian cleric who made an early career in western Francia and was a person of uncertain alliances who later certainly enjoyed Charlemagne's favor.<sup>18</sup> Arn would probably have been aware of the compromising entry in the *Liber Vitae* made by his predecessor, Virgil, and possibly of any Bavarian involvement with Benevento promoted by the ducal consorts and sisters, Adelperga in Benevento and Liutpiric in Bavaria. It is possibly in this regard that the charges against Liutpiric in the hostile Frankish sources – that she promoted

<sup>15</sup> Schmid, "Probleme," 187: *aus politischer Sicht... fast als anti-karolingische Provokation*.

<sup>16</sup> Gasparri, "The Fall of the Lombard Kingdom," 45-6; Latin text: Gundlach, ed., *Codex Carolinus*, Nrs 57, 64, 80, 83 and 84. There is now a complete English translation with introduction and comment which is based upon the surviving manuscript and follows its sequence of letters: Mc Kitterick, ed., *Codex Epistolaris Carolinus*, with corresponding Nrs 59, 64, 90, 88 and 86.

<sup>17</sup> Gundlach, ed., *Codex Carolinus*, Nr 83, 617; Mc Kitterick, ed., *Codex Epistolaris Carolinus*, Nr 88, 383.

<sup>18</sup> Wolfram, "Kirchenpolitik," 155-6: *Mit Virgils Nachfolger Arn (785-821) dürfte sich Tassilo schon wesentlich schwerer getan haben*; cf. Wilfried Hartmann, "Überlegungen," 178.







an alliance with the Avars – should be understood. The Bavarians shared an eastern border with Avaria, and the Avars were well positioned to intervene in northeastern Italy in support of Adalgis.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. *Property Deeds and Regnal Titles*

This connection between these two ducal sisters is reflected in the titulation of four early deeds preserved in the great property register or cartulary of the Bavarian cathedral church of Freising which allow further insight into Liutpirc's influence on internal Bavarian political matters. These four deeds are joined into an earlier and later pair.<sup>20</sup> The two earlier deeds are also contemporary with Liutpirc and concern a joint donation to Freising by two apparent brothers, Rihperht and Hunperht, in August 772.<sup>21</sup> This was a particularly important year for Tassilo and Liutpirc, since their young son, Theodo, had just been received in Italy by his grandfather, King Desiderius, and baptized and anointed on Whitsunday (17 May) in Rome by the new Pope Hadrian I.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, in that year Tassilo registered his only significant military victory when he annexed Carinthia.<sup>23</sup> On Tuesday, 8 September, the double Feast of Freising's patrons, St Mary (birth) and St Corbinian (death), the new cathedral at Freising may have been consecrated in the presence of Tassilo and Bishop Virgil of Salzburg.<sup>24</sup> It would have been appropriate to mark or anticipate these notable successes by a demonstrative show of loyalty, and the initial grant by Rihperht was made at Regensburg on 18 August *tam pro duce et ducisse quam pro genitore et genetrice et germanus atque germanas et prodecessores ex quorum labore iure nos in hereditatem contingebat*.<sup>25</sup> The use of the title, *ducissa* or *duchess* at this date, clearly with regard to Liutpirc, is extraordinary as a glance at the entries for *ducissa* in Niermeyer's *Lexicon Minus* or the *Mittelateinisches Wörterbuch* will show.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See especially Einhardi *Vita Karoli Magni*, 14.

<sup>20</sup> Bitterauf, ed., *Die Traditionen des Hochstifts Freising*, cited here as TF by document number and page. For the following, there is already a short discussion in Hammer, *From 'Ducatus' to 'Regnum'*, 156-7, which, to my knowledge, has not been superseded.

<sup>21</sup> TF 46, 74-5; comment in Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, 319-25.

<sup>22</sup> Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, 426-30.

<sup>23</sup> Hartmann, "Überlegungen," 181.

<sup>24</sup> TF 48, 76-77; Gairhos and Later, "Methodenkritisches zum Miteinander von Geschichtsforschung," 63-4.

<sup>25</sup> Rihperht's deed (TF 46a) dated 18 August at Regensburg lists Bishop Arbeo of Freising as the first witness, but on that same day Arbeo was witnessing another important donation at Kienberg, sixty miles south of Regensburg (TF 45b, 74). It is possible that Rihperht confirmed the Regensburg donation when he may have joined his brother at Freising on 28 August (TF 46b), but that is speculative. I take it that the *pro genitore et genetrice* are Rihperht's parents, but the donation by his brother in the following year (TF 63; see below) raises the question whether they are, rather, Tassilo's parents.

<sup>26</sup> Niermeyer, ed., *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, 474-5; *Mittelateinisches Wörterbuch* 3.1, col. 1014.

But there is a direct contemporary parallel. Liutpirc's sister, Adelperga, was married to Arichis II, the Duke of Benevento, who, with his older son, Romuald, died in the summer of 787 after submitting to Charlemagne and presenting hostages including his younger son, Grimoald. Already, in March 787, Charlemagne had confirmed to the cathedral church of Benevento its possessions and gifts from *regum quamque reginarum vel ducum atque ducissarum*.<sup>27</sup> Adelperga was clearly a resourceful woman. After her husband's demise, she took political control of Benevento and secured its continued independence under their son Grimoald who was returned by Charlemagne against papal advice.<sup>28</sup> Paul the Deacon had earlier worked under her patronage, and in 763 he composed a poem on the ages of the world which described her status together with that of Arichis in terms quite similar to the inscription on the chalice: *Principatum Beneventi d u c t o r e f o r t i s s i m o / Arechis regnante freto Superni auxilio / Adelperga cum tranquilla s t i r p e n a t a r e g i a*.<sup>29</sup> Translated to the chalice, the compact leonine hexameter of the chalice's inscription skillfully accommodates Paul the Deacon's ducal tribute within the limited space of the chalice's foot.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps, Liutpirc's Bavarian title was only a reflection of Langobard family rivalry.

But Rihperht's brother provides further evidence that the elevation of the ducal consort in Bavaria was older than Liutpirc. One year later, on 30 August 773, Hunperht, made a second and even more extravagant donation not only on behalf of Tassilo himself but also Tassilo's father, Duke Odilo (r. 736/7-48) and mother, Hiltrud: *tam pro domno Tassilonem venerabilem ducem qui mihi inspiratione divina hoc largitus est donare quod eius bone memorie Otilone genitore necnon et genetrice Hiltdrudae ad ultimum pro meis delictis, ut eorum intercessionibus pio apud domino veniam peccatorum mereamur accipere*...<sup>31</sup> The two brothers' pronounced concern for the ducal family may be an early reflex of the dynastic cult which we found fully articulated a dozen years later in the Salzburg *Liber Vitae* (above), and the startling elevation of the long-deceased duke (d. 748) and his consort (d. 754) to divine intercessors would indicate a very high view of the previous occu-

<sup>27</sup> Dopsch, ed., *DD Karol. 1*, Nr 156, 211. When Charlemagne confirmed Salzburg's properties in 790 after the removal of Tassilo, he used a similar formula with a possibly-significant omission: *regum aut reginarum seu ducum*.

<sup>28</sup> Gundlach, ed., *Codex Carolinus*, Nr 80 (Ms. 90) and cf. Nr 83 (Ms. 88). See the recent account by Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, 111-28; discussion also in Nelson, "Making a Difference," 177, 187-8; Hammer, *From 'Ducatus' to 'Regnum'*, 143-6. Liutpirc's toxic reputation with the Franks would have made a similar arrangement for Theodo impossible.

<sup>29</sup> Recent commentary with texts in Rinaldi, "Per 'Adelperga Pia'."

<sup>30</sup> Pötsch, "Rota in Medio Rotae", 345-8, who also interprets the inscription both as a possible anagram and a chronogram (for which, see also below). On the lettering itself, Fuchs, "Insulare Einflüsse," 316-20.

<sup>31</sup> TF 63, 90; Tassilo's regnal year is clearly entered in Cozroh's Freising manuscript as "XXVI" rather than "XXV"; if this is not a scribal error, this indicates that there was a significant memorial date in August.

pants of the ducal office.<sup>32</sup> In any event, the parallel provision here for Hiltrud suggests that she – a daughter of Charles Martell – may have shared in her husband’s ducal titlature as did Liutpirc who remains unmentioned in this deed.<sup>33</sup> Thus, in the eighth century under the Agilolfings, there is evidence that the Bavarian ducal consort could, indeed, bear the title *ducissa*. And this is likewise indicated in Bishop Arbeo of Freising’s (s. 764-83) contemporary life of St Corbinian where the harpy, Pilitrud, the wife of the earlier duke, Grimoald (r. ca 717-28), is also referred to as *ducissa*.<sup>34</sup> One wonders whether Arbeo’s unfavorable treatment of Pilitrud and Grimoald was also intended as an indirect criticism of Liutpirc and Tassilo with whom – as the next pair of evidences indicates – he evidently had a strained relationship.

Liutpirc’s importance and this distinctive Agilolfing titlature were later remembered under Carolingian rule in two other Freising deeds. The first is in the duplicate record of a court held in January 804 at the fiscal estate of Aibling where, in one version, Bishop Atto of Freising (s. 783/4-811) claimed properties for his bishopric from the monastery of Herrenchiemsee which – so the second version of the proceedings – had been alienated by *Tassilo dux atque Liutpriga uxor eius... propter invidiam quam habebant super Arbonem episcopum dicentes eum fideliozem esse domino Karolo regi et Francis quam illis*.<sup>35</sup> The two records of the court differ on many matters including the identities and disposition of the disputed properties, and Tassilo and Liutpirc are not mentioned in what seems to be the official version of the 804 record (TF 193a). But one of the properties, Berbling (*Perchwilling*/Mountain-Willing) occurs in an 816 Freising deed where it was returned to Freising after an abbot named Hephilo *iniuste tenuit et temporibus Liutpiriga ducissa ad monasterium illius in loco Awua [Herrenchiemsee] iuiuste conversum fuerat*.<sup>36</sup> Thus, only after an additional twelve years was the property *quod tunc ab iniquis domui sancta Mariae [Freising] abstractum fuerat*, finally reclaimed by the new Bishop Hitto (s. 811-35) *cum magno labore*.

There are several issues here. In the second version of the 804 record (TF 193b), both Tassilo and Liutpirc are jointly made responsible for the alienation of the properties, and the 816 deed does refer to Freising’s “enemies” (*iniquis*) in the plural. But in the 816 deed only Liutpirc is named, and, in the version

<sup>32</sup> Unless, of course, in the fractured Latin of the deed, the *eorum* refers to the previously mentioned patron saints *eorumque sociis quorum ibidem patrocinia venerantur*.

<sup>33</sup> For Odilo’s titlature see Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, 163-9. It is not clear how Hiltrud relates to the *Hiltrudis ducissa* who occurs in a 739 Weissenburg deed as wife of Liutfrid, Duke of Alsace, for which see Hammer, *From ‘Ducatus’ to ‘Regnum’*, 157, n. 88.

<sup>34</sup> *Arbeonis Episcopi Frisingensis Vita Sancti Corbiniani*, Caps. 29-30, 221-3; new edition with German translation: Brunhölzl, ed., *Vita Corbiniani. Bischof Arbeo von freising und die Lebensgeschichte des hl. Korbinian*, 138-40. The later Carolingian *Vita Retractata* (B) replaces *ducissa* oddly with *princeps* which indicates that the term was offensive; unfortunately, Brunhölzl does not comment on this in his discussion of B, 78-9.

<sup>35</sup> TF 193a, b, 182-85, here: TF 193b, 183, col. 2. For extended commentary see now Hammer, “Dilectissimus Filius Noster Pipinus Rex Longobardorum,” 212-9.

<sup>36</sup> TF 368, 313-4.



of the 804 record (TF 193b) which makes the charge of their *invidia* against Arbeo, Liutpirc is merely Tassilo's wife, *uxor eius*, whereas twelve years later in 816 she stands alone as *ducissa*. One explanation is that she alone was responsible for the alienation of Berbling, possibly recorded in a deed no-longer extant which titled her "ducissa" and which was introduced as evidence in this subsequent suit. It is notable that during the period of these two deeds, a special capitulary was promulgated for Bavaria which was intended to extend the period when cases (*iustitiae*) from the period of Tassilo or Liutpirc (*de temporibus Tassilonis seu Liutpirgae*) could still be tried by *missi nostri*.<sup>37</sup> Thus, like her ducal husband, Liutpirc had "epochal" importance, and there would have been no reason to include her name in this official Frankish decree unless she herself bore responsibility for some of the possible *iustitiae* which, as at Berbling, still needed to be settled. Both this capitulary and the deed from 816 are consistent with the early evidences from 772 and further indicate that Liutpirc exercised some authority independent of her husband. Thus, *ducissa* was not a mere courtesy title or meaningless honorific. Exactly what else this status may have entailed is a matter for speculation although the hostile Frankish sources indicate that her influence on Tassilo was considerable.<sup>38</sup> This conclusion significantly strengthens Wamers argument for the reattribution of the chalice.

#### 4. *Bride and Mother*

The issue which has engendered the most scholarly discussion regarding Liutpirc is the date of her marriage to Tassilo. This is not documented and has long been the subject of speculation. Since, as we saw, their son, Theodo, was baptized by the pope in 772, it is reasonable to assume that the marriage occurred sometime prior to that, and it is usually placed sometime between 763 and 770 based upon various general considerations of Frankish-Bavaria-Langobard-Papal relations.<sup>39</sup> We do not know of any earlier children than Theodo, but we do know that Tassilo returned from Italy in 769, and a marriage with one of King Desiderius' daughters may have been an item on his otherwise-

<sup>37</sup> Boretius, ed., *Capit.* 1, Nr 69: Capitulare Baiwaricum, 158-59, here: c. 8, 159; comment by Hartmann, "Liutbirc," 170. The capitulary is dated in the MGH to *circa a. 810?*

<sup>38</sup> Liutpirc would probably have had a court establishment (*Hofstaat*) similar to other female rulers and their daughters; for a short but suggestive discussion see Hartmann, *Die Königin*, 154-62 and 162-79. Wamers claims that *als 'Mit-Regentin' hatte sie [Liutpirc] formal die Oberaufsicht über die Finanzen und den Kämmerer inne* (Wamers, "Tassilo, Liutpirc und die Schatzkunst," 103), on analogy with later Frankish practice (p. 93), which may be correct but is without documentary basis.

<sup>39</sup> See the discussion of the date by Deutinger in the new edition of the *Handbuch der Bayerischen Geschichte* 1.1, 164-5; and the recent remarks by Gasparri, *Desiderio*, esp. 91 with note 33 on 210 which considers a date after Pippin's death. Hartmann provides a helpful chronology of Tassilo's diplomatic circumstances with comments ("Überlegungen," esp. 174-7).

unknown agenda.<sup>40</sup> A proposal for this later date argues that Liutpirc was the unnamed Langobard princess rejected by Charlemagne in 769/70 and that she married Tassilo soon thereafter.<sup>41</sup> Accordingly, Theodo was likely born in October 771 if not slightly earlier. But it has been argued quite recently that an earlier marriage date of 763 or 764 is preferable based upon Theodo's apparent participation at the endowment of Kremsmünster in late 777 which indicates that his birth occurred at least twelve years earlier to conform with the accepted Frankish legal age of majority.<sup>42</sup> Martina Hartmann is surely correct in stating that subsequent "research has not followed" the proposal for the later date.<sup>43</sup> Still, others have noted that it is "not completely excluded".<sup>44</sup>

This latest proposal for an earlier date of 763/4 depends on two propositions: first, the active presence of Theodo in the proceedings at Kremsmünster in 777, and, second, twelve as the earliest legally-permitted age for his participation in the donation ceremony. While we may be of different opinions about the rigid adherence by early-medieval rulers to generally-observed social, ecclesiastical and legal norms (see below), that issue becomes otiose without a reliable documentary basis. Put simply: Was Theodo present at Kremsmünster as a participant in 777? This is a straightforward question of credible historical documentation, but the answer is not simple because the original record for the foundation event at Kremsmünster no longer exists, and its content involves a modern reconstruction.

There are two medieval sources which offer information on what occurred at Kremsmünster in late 777. The first is Charlemagne's confirmation of the monastery's properties dated 3 January 791 which is clearly based upon an authentic endowment charter issued by Tassilo.<sup>45</sup> The second source is a purported "Stiftungsbrief" which survives in three copies dating between the mid-thirteenth century and 1302 and which is the only source for the date

<sup>40</sup> TF 34, 61-62: *Actum in Bauzono rediente de Italia in anno ducatus eius XXII*; comment in Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, 390-4.

<sup>41</sup> Hammer, *From 'Ducatus' to 'Regnum'*, Excursus 2: "Liutpirc's Wedding(s?)," 297-304.

<sup>42</sup> Wolfram, *Tassilo III*, 13, 28; Wolfram's argument is apparently accepted by Becher, "Sturz Tassilos," 136, with n. 36, who, nevertheless, prefers a date following King Pippin's death in 768 (*Um diese Zeit*). The age of majority at twelve is from Salic Law which, however, was not incorporated into the Bavarian Code; see below, for further discussion.

<sup>43</sup> Hartmann, "Liutbirc," 165, *Die Forschung ist Hammers These jedoch nicht gefolgt*; so, for example, Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, 83, following Nelson, "Making a Difference."

<sup>44</sup> Hartmann, "Überlegungen," 175: *Nicht völlig ausgeschlossen ist aber, dass diese Heirat in die Zeit zwischen 769 und Anfang 771 gehört und dass Liutpirc jene Desiderius-Tochter war, die eigentlich Karl den Großen heiraten sollte*. Another alternative for Charlemagne's repudiated bride has recently been proposed by Stoffella, "Chi ha sposato chi?," who posits a marriage in the summer of 770 between Charlemagne's younger and rival brother, Carloman, and Gerberga, a daughter of Desiderius, who then in 771 fled with her two small children (*parvulis*) to Italy after Carloman's death as reported in the highly-reliable *Annales Mettenses Priores* which is the only source for the name of Gerberga as Carloman's wife. Stoffella's argument is very involved, and it is difficult to reconcile with the clear information on Carloman, his wife and children, contained in Stephen III's two letters of 769-71 preserved in the *Codex Carolinus*, Nrs 45 and 47 (Ms. 48). In any event, I think the evidence for any royal Langobard Gerberga is very weak.

<sup>45</sup> Dopsch, ed., *DD Karol.* 1, Nr 169, 226-8.

777.<sup>46</sup> On the basis of these documents and his immense knowledge of both early-medieval diplomatic forms and history, Heinrich Fichtenau undertook a reconstruction of the original document.<sup>47</sup> Thus, it is based upon two sources, one authentic and contemporary, the other clearly a later “Verfälschung” which was redacted in several stages in the ninth and tenth centuries to assert the independence of the monastery against the diocese of Passau.<sup>48</sup>

What do these documents and their meticulous discussion by Fichtenau and subsequently by Herwig Wolfram tell us about Theodo? Theodo does not occur in Charlemagne’s confirmation charter which does, of course, reference Tassilo whose condemned status was the occasion for the confirmation. Theodo does, however, occur in the later, falsified document but in a very unusual way. There it is recorded that the grant of properties was made by Tassilo in his thirtieth ducal year (777) “*simulque dilectissimus filius meus Deoto anno etiam ducatus eius primo*”.<sup>49</sup> Fichtenau identified several diplomatic oddities and noted, evidently with surprise, “is Theodo already duke? Otherwise, we know nothing of this child’s joint rule... Suchlike certainly finds no parallels in other documents”.<sup>50</sup>

That is certainly correct. In fact, there is no authentic documentary reference to Theodo between his papal baptism in 772 and a Freising deed of 782 where Tassilo in his thirty-fifth year authorized (*decrevit fieri*) a grant by a man and his son to the monastery of Schäftlarn which *filius ipsius nobilissimus Theodo hanc traditionem probavit* with no reference to any separate ducal reign.<sup>51</sup> It is not clear why the *princeps clarissimus* Tassilo himself was involved in this transaction, since the property was the *propria hereditas* of the two donors. But the donation took place at the ducal manor of Neuching and evidently in the ducal presence. At that time, according to the later marriage date, Theodo may

<sup>46</sup> Printed with notes in Wolfram, “Die Gründungsurkunde von Kremsmünster,” 373-7: *anno ducatus meo tricesimo indictione prima*, which indicates a date after 1/24 September to fall within the first Indiction rather than the fifteenth.

<sup>47</sup> Fichtenau, “Die Urkunden Herzog Tassilos III.,” 97-9; reprinted in Wolfram, “Gründungsurkunde,” 377-8, together with Charlemagne’s confirmation charter, 378-9.

<sup>48</sup> Wolfram, 371-2; for Kremsmünster’s turbulent history during the tenth century as a ducal and then episcopal *Eigenkloster* see Pitschmann, “Kremsmünster,” 196-7. The somewhat-slippery difference between a *Verfälschung* and a *Fälschung* is that the former, a “falsification”, is based upon genuine document which is altered to achieve a certain end; a “forgery”, on the other hand, is made from whole cloth for a particular purpose. Ironically, a forged charter by Charlemagne in Kremsmünster’s favor was done under Bishop Pilgrim of Passau (s. 971-99; Dopsch, ed., *DD Karol.* 1, Nr 247, 348-50), who also engaged in numerous other forgeries, for which see Fichtenau, “Die Urkunden Herzog Tassilos III.,” 94-5, and Fichtenau, “Zu den Urkundenfälschungen Pilgrims von Passau,” 177, n. 81.

<sup>49</sup> Wolfram, “Gründungsurkunde,” 374.

<sup>50</sup> Fichtenau, “Die Urkunden Tassilos III.,” 88: *ist Theodo bereits Herzog? Wir Wissen sonst nichts von der Mitregentschaft dieses Kindes... Derlei findet in anderen Urkunden gewiß keine Parallelen.*

<sup>51</sup> TF 106, 122-3, from the Cozroh Codex; re-edited in Weisssthaner, ed., *Die Traditionen des Klosters Schäftlarn*, Nr 10, 14-5; the scribe was Leidrat, future bishop of Lyons, but now only a Freising deacon *iussus a principe summo Tassilone*; comment in Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, 366-7, where it is called a *Gründungsurkunde*.



have been eleven or possibly even twelve years old and likely then old enough to “inspect” (*probavit*) a legal document, that is, to approve its validity. Moreover, his precocious exercise of authority at Neuching may have been intended, like those by his Carolingian contemporaries, “to demonstrate [his] fitness” for rule.<sup>52</sup> But, after this single occurrence, we hear no more of Theodo until he was turned over as a hostage to Charlemagne in 787.

Nevertheless, despite Fichtenau’s well-founded skepticism, some elevation of Theodo’s official status in the thirtieth year of Tassilo’s ducal reign is conceivable.<sup>53</sup> It is difficult to imagine why (or how) the later Falsifier would gratuitously have invented such a singular claim with its precise indication of epoch as well as title. In fact, some elevated role for Theodo would fit well into the quasi-royal regime which Tassilo had been constructing for himself in Bavaria, evidently in competition with Pippin and Charlemagne.<sup>54</sup> In 754 Pope Stephan II had anointed Pippin’s sons – Tassilo’s first cousins – in a manner which “from a Roman perspective entitled the children to be addressed as *reges*”.<sup>55</sup> In view of Carolingian hostility towards himself and his consort, Tassilo would have had a concern for his own succession, and emulation of Langobard practice may also have played a role. In 759 King Desiderius had elevated Liutpir’s brother, Adalgis, to coregent. In 777, Adalgis was living in Byzantine exile, but, as we saw, he continued his efforts to regain his patrimony and his royal status as recognized in Bavaria. This parallel between Adalgis and Theodo underscores the continued importance of Liutpir’s influence and her Langobard royal status as presented so prominently on the chalice inscription.

We do not know what the specific occasion for such an extraordinary act in 777 might have been. The large number of illustrious ecclesiastics and officials apparently present at Kremsmünster does however suggest that the assembly there had other ducal business to transact than the endowment of the monastery. If we accept Theodo’s ducal elevation, then his age at Kremsmünster in the first year of his own *ducatus* is hardly relevant to the date of his parents’ wedding, since such status elevations of rulers were not limited to persons who met the Salic test of twelve years. Indeed, at age six or seven Theodo would have been older than his Carolingian cousins at their royal elevation in 754.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> See Becher’s discussion of Karlmann’s consent at age eleven to Pippin’s grant to Prüm in 762: “Neue Überlegungen zum Geburtsdatum Karls des Großen,” 56-7, which *sollte... die Tauglichkeit des elfjährigen Karlmann demonstrieren*.

<sup>53</sup> Fichtenau’s reservations were endorsed, *sicher mit recht*, with additional arguments by Wolfram (“Gründungsurkunde,” 370-1). So far as I know, the only modern historian to accept the claim was Joachim Jahn (*Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, 521), but without any supporting argument.

<sup>54</sup> For a complete review of Tassilo’s use of cultural *Herrschaftszeichen* to exalt his status see Hammer, *From ‘Ducatus’ to ‘Regnum’*, Part Four, 141-82.

<sup>55</sup> For Pippin and Charlemagne’s elevation of underage sons, see the discussion in Offergeld, *Reges Pueri*, 305-11, here 305: *eine Salbung, welche die Kinder aus römischer Sicht zur Anrede als reges berechtigte*.

<sup>56</sup> There is an extended discussion of *Volljährigkeit* and royal authority in Offergeld, *Reges Pueri*, located (unfortunately) in n. 19 on 305-6, engaging with Becher’s “Neue Überlegungen,” 54-9.

Perhaps for such considerations, Fichtenau felt some need to include Theodo's presence in his reconstructed document. He did this by adding to Tassilo's authentication clause with wording taken both from the falsification (here italicized) and with wording taken from the 782 Schäftlarn deed (here underlined): *simulque dilectissimus filius ipsius Theoto hanc traditionem probavit*. This diplomatic form is, thus, a conflation found in neither exemplar. That, however, does not demonstrate that it is wrong, only that it is a modern construct in Fichtenau's heuristic exercise. As such, it may be taken or rejected according to inclination in lieu of additional evidence. As Wolfram has pointed out, "Of course, one can discuss whether too many items in the falsified foundation charter were eliminated. Thus, one could conclude that the 40 *casatae* are Tassilonian while the joint rule of the ducal son, Theodo, was invented later".<sup>57</sup> But, however one decides, there is no compelling reason to suppose that age was a determinative factor for Theodo's participation in any capacity at Kremsmünster in 777.

### 5. Family, Gender and Dynastic Failure

If, as a result, the later date for Liutpir's marriage in 770/1 is reconsidered, it does not exclude any of the occasions which have been proposed for the chalice's creation such as the dedication of the new Salzburg cathedral in 774 or the foundation of Kremsmünster in 777. Wamers' volume provides no overall argumentation on that important issue although an extended study of the chalice's iconography may argue for its original dedication as a liturgical vessel to St Rupert of Salzburg in 781.<sup>58</sup> But the highly-unusual circumstances of the marriage which underlie the later dating alternative may have called for a demonstrative affirmation of the union which the chalice provides in a spectacular way. And the chalice's emphasis on Liutpir's royal status as *virga regalis* may indicate that it was fashioned before her elevation as *ducissa* by 772 as documented in the Freising deed.<sup>59</sup>

But the title *ducissa* and the honorific *virga regalis* are not exclusive. They represent complementary aspects of her clearly-extraordinary dual political identity as a ducal wife and a royal daughter. It is remarkable that the both

<sup>57</sup> Wolfram, *Gründungsurkunde*, 371: *Selbstverständlich kann man darüber diskutieren, ob nicht zu viele Punkte der verfälschten Gründungsurkunde ausgeschieden wurden. So könnte man annehmen, daß die 40 casatae tassilonisch sind, während die Mitregierung des Herzogssohns Theodo später erfunden wurde.* For the *quadragenta casatas aliunde adtractus* see Holter, "Die Gründung von Kremsmünster," 59; see also his conclusions about the falsification on 80.

<sup>58</sup> Pötsch, "Rota in Medio Rotae," 345-8; the excellent short discussion of the chalice in Wolfram, *Tassilo III*, 28-30, also seems to suggest a Salzburg dedication. Wamers himself provides quite a different, *architectonische*, interpretation of the chalice: Wamers, "Urbs caelestis."

<sup>59</sup> See the brief argument for the chalice as a wedding loving cup in Hammer, *From 'Ducatus' to 'Regnum'*, pp. 174-5.

chalice inscription and the entries in the Salzburg *Liber Vitae* present these distinct gendered roles as a parity. And the hostile Frankish sources, particularly Einhard, even suggest that the latter role as daughter clearly trumped the former as wife, causing Liutpiric to incite her husband against Charlemagne in revenge for the deposition of her family. The *Liber Vitae* and the deeds provide contemporary Bavarian evidence consistent with her political influence and agency in that reckless policy in support of her brother's claims which may also have been further inflamed by her experience as repudiated bride. In stark contrast to the success of her Beneventan sister, Adelperga, the failed opposition by Liutpiric and Tassilo to Charlemagne, in turn, frustrated any prospects for their son and heir, Theodo, and Liutpiric's own ambitions as dowager. In view of this, it is remarkable that the Tassilo-Liutpiric-Chalice somehow evaded the confiscation of the ducal treasure and the *damnatio memoriae* ordained by Charlemagne for Tassilo and his family. It thus survives as a lonely and melancholy artistic witness to the failed ambitions of both the husband and the wife who commissioned it.



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