

TAMÁS NÓTÁRI*

***Translatio imperii*—Thoughts on Continuity of Empires in European Political Traditions**

I. The myth of world epochs in Antique

The symbolic description of the large epochs of the world following each other appears first, in European literature, in the didactic epic, that is, instructive poem, entitled *Erga kai hēmerai* (*Works and Days*) of Hesiod, who lived approximately between 740 and 670 BC,¹ in which he divides world history into five large epochs—it should be noted: without allocating them to any specific empires.² People of the golden age lived life similar to gods;³ the world was governed by Kronos together with those living on the Olympos.⁴ After that, Zeus created man of the silver age: the childhood of the members of this *genos* lasted one

* Dr habil., Ph.D., Research Fellow, Institute for Legal Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, H–1014 Budapest, Országház u. 30, Associate Professor, Károli Gáspár University Faculty of Law and Political Science, Department of Roman Law, H–1042 Budapest, Viola u. 2–4.
E-mail: tamasnotari@yahoo.de

¹ On Hesiod's *Erga kai hēmerai* see Steitz, A.: *Die Werke und Tage des Hesiodos nach ihrer Composition geprüft und erklärt*. Leipzig, 1869; Kirchhoff, A.: *Hesiodos' Mahnlieder an Perses*. Berlin, 1889; Hays, H. M.: *Notes on the Works and Days of Hesiod*. Chicago, 1918; Buzio, C.: *Esiodo nel mondo Greco*. Milano, 1938; Krafft, F.: *Vergleichende Untersuchungen zu Homer und Hesiod*. Göttingen, 1963; Troxler, H.: *Sprache und Wortschatz Hesiods*. Zürich, 1964; Blusch, J.: *Formen und Inhalt von Hesiods individuellem Denken*. Bonn, 1970; Edwards, G. P.: *The Language of Hesiod in its Traditional Context*. Oxford, 1971; Bona Quaglia, L.: *Gli "Erga" di Esiodo*. Torino, 1973; Neitzel, H.: *Homer-Rezeption bei Hesiod*. Bonn, 1975; Pucci, P.: *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*. Baltimore, 1977; Rowe, J. C.: *Essential Hesiod*. Bristol, 1978; Lamberton, R.: *Hesiod*. New Haven, 1988; Hamilton, R.: *The Architecture of Hesiodic Poetry*. Baltimore, 1989. See also Paulson, J.: *Index Hesiodicus*. Lund, 1890 (reprint: Hildesheim 1970); Hofinger, M.: *Lexicon Hesiodicum cum indice inverso*. Leiden, 1975; Minton, W. W.: *Concordance to Hesiodic Corpus*. Leiden, 1976.

² On legal philosophy in Hesiod's oeuvre see Fontenrose, J.: Work, Justice, and Hesiod's five Ages. *Classical Philology*, 69 (1974), 1–16; Reitzenstein, R.: Altgriechische Theologie und ihre Quellen. *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg IV*, 1924–1925, 1–19; Gagarin, M.: Dikē in the "Works and Days". *Classical Philology*, 68 (1973), 81–94; Palmer, L. R.: The Indo-European Origins of Greek Justice. *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 49 (1950); Gagarin, M.: Dikē in the Archaic Greek Thought. *Classical Philology*, 69 (1974), 186–197; Nótári, T.: Hesiod und die Anfänge der Rechtsphilosophie. *Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestinensis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae-Sectio Iuridica*, 47 (2006), 341–361.

³ Hesiod, *Erga* 109–126.

⁴ On the myth of ages in Hesiod's *Works and Days* see Accame, S.: L'invocazione alla Musa e la „Verità” in Omero e in Esiodo. *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica*, 91 (1963), 257–281; Erbse, H.: Die Funktion des Rechtsgedankens in Hesiods *Erga*. *Hermes*, 121 (1993), 12–28; Munding, H.: Die böse und die gute Eris. *Gymnasium*, 67 (1960), 409. sqq.; Kühn, J.: Eris und Dikē. *Würzburger Jahrbücher*, 2 (1947), 259–294; Friedländer, P.: Prometheus–Pandora und die Weltalter bei Hesiod. In: *Studien zur antiken Literatur und Kunst*. Berlin, 1969, 65–67; von Fritz, K.: Pandora, Prometheus, and the Myth of the Ages. *Review of Religion*, 11 (1947), 227–260.

hundred years, during this time they were brought up by their mother, however, after having crossed the border of adolescence they lived for a very short time only.⁵ Having destroyed the people of the silver age Zeus created a new *genos* of copper, which Zeus did not need to destroy because they destroyed each other.⁶ Here, the line of ages characterised by metals discontinues since Zeus created the divine order of heroes fighting in Thebes and under Troy. After introducing the age of *hēroi*,⁷ Hesiod continues the enumeration of epochs marked by the line of poorer and poorer metals. He divides the iron age into two phases, the first one is his own age,⁸ the second phase will come in the future when Zeus will wipe out this race, too; Hesiod makes the description of the latter age palpable by apocalyptic motifs—for example, by the image of children coming to the world with grey hair.⁹

All this has seemed to be necessary to tell us here because authors of the Middle Ages were quite well-versed in classical literature and their thinking was affected to a great extent by the epoch myth emerging in several forms in Greek and Roman literature, sometimes interwoven with political motifs (let us think of Augustus's golden age mentioned by Vergil).¹⁰ The eschatological narrative, already about empires, which can be read in the

⁵ Hesiod, *Erga* 127–142.

⁶ Hesiod, *Erga* 143–155.

⁷ Hesiod, *Erga* 156–173.

⁸ Hesiod, *Erga* 174–177.

⁹ Hesiod, *Erga* 178–201.

¹⁰ On the political context of Vergil's *Aeneid* and the tendencies of legitimization of the Principate see Heinze, R.: *Virgils epische Technik*. Leipzig, 1915; Bailey, C.: *Religion in Virgil*. Oxford, 1935; Büchner, K.: *Der Schicksalsgedanke bei Vergil*. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1945; Brown, E. L.: *Numeri Vergiliani: Studies in Eclogues and Georgics*. Brussels, 1963; Boyancé, P.: *La religion de Vergil*. Paris, 1963; Otis, B.: *Virgil. A Study in Civilized Poetry*. Oxford, 1963; Commager, S. (ed.): *Virgil—A Collection of Critical Essays*. New York, 1966; Segal, C. P.: *Aeternum per saecula nomen, the golden bough and the tragedy of history, I–II. Arion*, 4 (1965), 615–657; 5 (1966), 34–72; Wallace-Hadrill, A.: The Golden Age and Sin in Augustan Ideology. *Past and Present*, 95 (1982), 19–36; Kühn, W.: *Götterszenen bei Virgil*. Heidelberg, 1971; Pötscher, W.: *Vergil und die göttlichen Mächte. Aspekte seiner Weltanschauung*. Hildesheim–New York, 1977; Monti, R. C.: *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid. Roman Social and Political Values in the Epic*. Leiden, 1981; Williams, G.: *Technique and Ideas in the Aeneid*. New Haven–London, 1983; Hardie, Ph. R.: *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium*. Oxford, 1986; Wiltshire, S. F.: *Public and Private in Vergil's Aeneid*. Amherst, 1989; Zetzel, J. E. G.: *Romane Memento: Justice and Judgement in Aeneid 6. Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 119 (1989), 263–284; Kennedy, D.: “Augustan” and “Anti-Augustan”. Reflections on Terms of Reference. In: Powell, A. (ed.): *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus*. Bristol, 1992, 26–58; Ziolkowski, Th.: *Virgil and the moderns*. Princeton, 1993; Gurval, R. A.: *Actium and Augustus: the politics and emotions of civil war*. Ann Arbor, 1995; Boyle, A. J. (ed.): *Roman Epic*. London–New York, 1993; Wifstrand Schiebe, M.: *Vergil und die Tradition von den römischen Urkönigen*. Wiesbaden, 1997; Zwierlein, O.: *Die Ovid- und Vergil-Revision in tiberischer Zeit, I*. Berlin–New York, 1999; Giebel, M.: *Vergil*. Reinbek, 1999; Grimal, P.: *Vergil. Biographie*. Düsseldorf–Zürich, 2000; Tarrant, R.: *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*. Cambridge, 2001; Perkell, Ch.: The Golden Age and Its Contradictions in the Poetry of Vergil. *Vergilius*, 48 (2002), 3–39; Adler, E.: *Vergil's empire: political thought in the Aeneid*. Maryland, 2003; Syed, Y.: *Virgil's Aeneid and the Roman Self: Subject and Nation in Literary Discourse*. Ann Arbor, 2005; Holzberg, N.: *Vergil. Der Dichter und sein Werk*. München, 2006; von Albrecht, M.: *Vergil. Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis. Eine Einführung*. Heidelberg, 2006; Reed, J. D.: *Virgil's gaze: nation and poetry in the Aeneid*. Princeton, 2007.

Bible, in the *Book of Daniel*, endowed with specific political content by Christian authors and Church Fathers, also constituted one of the principles of medieval theory of the state.¹¹

II. The system of empires in the Old Testament

In the *Book of Daniel*, Nebuchadnezzar II,¹² king of Babylon saw a statue in his dream, whose head was of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and sides of brass, legs of iron and clay. One of the prisoners, Daniel interpreted the dream: the metals making up the statue mean four consecutive empires, the divided, partly strong and partly unstable condition of the last empire is implied by the legs of the statue being partly of iron, partly of clay.¹³

The decline characterised by the line of poorer and poorer metals is in harmony with Hesiod's *Erga kai hémerai* ages, and it is only seemingly contradictory that while Hesiod considers his own age iron age, Daniel names Nebuchadnezzar's age goldenage since the *Book of Daniel* was created in the 2nd century BC, so, he brings up Nebuchadnezzar's rule as an idealised epoch of bygone days. As a matter of fact, as these texts cannot be directly deduced from each other, we can presume more of a common source in their background.¹⁴

¹¹ On the influence of Hesiod on Ancient and Medieval literature see von Fritz, K.–Kirk, G. S.–Verdenius, W. J. et al.: *Hésiode et son influence*. Vandoevres–Genf, 1962.

¹² On Nebuchadnezzar see Tabouis, G. R.–Hanotiaux, G.: *Nebuchadnezzar*. New York, 1931; Wiseman, D. J.: *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon: Schweich lectures in biblical Archaeology*. Oxford, 1991; Janssen, E.: *Juda in der Exilszeit*. Göttingen, 1956; Jursa, M.: *Die Babylonier*. München, 2004; Edzard, D.-O.: *Geschichte Mesopotamiens*. München, 2003; Sals, U.: *Die Biographie der "Hure Babylon"*. Tübingen, 2004; Wullen, M. (Hrsg.): *Babylon. Mythos und Wahrheit, I–II*. München, 2008.

¹³ Daniel 2, 31–45. On Daniel's Book see Haevenrich, H. A. Ch.: *Kommentar über das Buch Daniel*. Hamburg, 1832; Charles, R. H.: *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. Oxford, 1929; Porteous, N. W.: *Das Danielbuch*. Göttingen, 1962; Collins, J. J.: *The Apocalyptic Visions of the Book of Daniel*. Missoula, 1977; Ginsberg, H. L.: *Studies in Daniel*. New York, 1949; Collins, J. J.: *Daniel–A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. Minneapolis, 1993; Koch, K.: *Deuterokanonische Zusätze zum Danielbuch*. Neukirchen–Vluys, 1987; van den Woude, A. S. (ed.): *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*. Leuven, 1993; Koch, K.: *Die Reiche der Welt und der kommende Menschensohn. Studien zum Danielbuch*. Neukirchen–Vluys, 1995; Yarbrow Collins, A.: *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism*. Leiden, 1996; Collins, J. J.–Flint, P. W. (eds): *The Book of Daniel. Composition and Reception, I–II*. Leiden, 2001.

¹⁴ On the sources and the impact of the *Book of Daniel* see Baldry, C. H.: Who Invented the Golden Age? *Classical Quarterly*, 46 (1952), 83–92; Collins, J. J.: Current Issues in the Study of Daniel. In: Collins–Flint (eds): *The Book of Daniel. op. cit.* I. 1–15; van Henten, J. W.: Daniel 3 and 6 in the Early Christian Literature. In: Collins–Flint (eds): *The Book of Daniel. op. cit.* I. 149–170; Koch, K.: *Europa, Rom und der Kaiser vor dem Hintergrund von zwei Jahrtausenden Rezeption des Buches Daniel*. Göttingen, 1997; Kratz, R. G.: *Translatio Imperii. Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld*. Neukirchen–Vluxn, 1987; Eshel, E.: Possible Sources of the Book of Daniel. In: Collins–Flint (eds): *The Book of Daniel. op. cit.* II. 387–394; Rowland, Ch.: The Book of Daniel and the Radical Critique of the Empire. An Essay in Apocalyptic Hermeneutics. In: Collins–Flint (eds): *The Book of Daniel. op. cit.* II. 447–467; Oelsner, J.: Kontinuität und Wandel in Gesellschaft und Kultur Babyloniens in hellenistischer Zeit. *Klio*, 60 (1978), 101–116; Tcherikover, V.: *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*. New York, 1975.

III. The line of empires and the thought of *translatio imperii* in ancient Rome

In his work entitled *Apologeticum* written at the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (which responds to the arguments brought up by pagans against Christians and tries to refute that Christians endanger the existence of the state of Rome), Tertullian formulates a peculiar concept of the theory of the state regarding the thought of *translatio imperii*.¹⁵ All this took place because the arguments claimed that Christians, by not respecting Roman gods, committed *crimen laesae maiestatis*¹⁶ and, drawing gods' anger, thrust the whole empire into destruction.¹⁷ Tertullian emphasises that Christians are loyal subjects of the empire since they pray for the emperor and the empire,¹⁸ accepting Apostle Paul's statement (written to the Corinthians) that all power comes from god (*omnis potestas a Deo*).¹⁹ The wish attached to the permanence of the empire by Christians is an honest aspiration—Tertullian stresses—as termination of the Roman Empire would bring along the coming of the end of the world.²⁰ That is, in his work he creates a kind of political theology based on the ideology of survival of the empire and the chain of consecutive empires. He expounds the content of what can be read in the *Book of Daniel*,²¹ and he identifies the last one from among the four consecutive great empires with Rome. To this he connects what is described in Apostle John's *Apocalypse*, which asserts that the end of the world will be preceded by the fall of the great empire, "Babylon", which breaks the Antichrist free of his chains.²² That is, he presents the fact that Rome as the last one possesses *regnum* (i.e. domination of the world, which can be possessed at one time only by one empire) as the criterion of its survival, the survival of the world. By that he as it were turns emperor Augustus's "*Roma est aeterna*" ideology around; at the same time, in the mirror of its own religious beliefs,

¹⁵ On Tertullian see Beck, A.: *Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian: eine Studie zur frühen Kirchenrechtsgeschichte*. Halle, 1930; Roberts, R. E.: *The Theology of Tertullian*. London, 1924; Stirnimann, J. K.: *Die Praescriptio Tertullians im Lichte des Römischen Rechts und der Theologie*. Freiburg, 1949; Lehmann, P.: Tertullian im Mittelalter. *Hermes*, 87 (1959), 231–246; Fredouille, J.-C.: *Tertullien et la conversion de la culture antique*. Paris, 1972; Barnes, T. D.: *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study*. Oxford, 1985; Ecker, G.: *Orator Christianus. Untersuchungen zur Argumentationskunst in Tertullians Apologeticum*. Stuttgart, 1993; Osborn, E.: *Tertullian. First Theologian of the West*. Cambridge, 1997; Adkin, N.: Tertullian and Jerome Again. *Symbolae Osloenses*, 72 (1997), 155–163; Randazzo, S.: Per la storia del diritto associativo tardoclassico: la testimonianza di Tertulliano. In: *Atti dell'Accademia Romanistica Constantiniana 15*. Napoli, 2005, 95–105.

¹⁶ Bauman, R. A.: *The Crimen Maiestatis in the Roman Republic and the Augustan Principate*. Johannesburg, 1967; Keaveney, A.–Madden, J. A.: The Crimen Maiestatis under Caligula: the evidence of Dio Cassius. *Classical Quarterly*, 48 (1998), 216–220; Fleissner, D.: *Die rechtshistorische Entwicklung des crimen laesae maiestatis mit einem Ausblick auf seine Nachwirkungen im geltenden österreichischen Strafrecht*. Diss. Wien, 2008; Frýdek, M.: Crimen maiestatis. In: *Československé trestní právo v proměnách věku*. Brno, 2009, 22–34.

¹⁷ Tertullianus, *Apologeticum* 1, 4. sqq.; 2, 8. sqq.

¹⁸ Tertullianus, *Apologeticum* 39, 2.

¹⁹ Paulus, *Ad Corinthos* 1, 3, 11.

²⁰ Tertullianus, *Apologeticum* 32, 1. sqq.

²¹ Daniel 2, 31. sqq.; 7, 1. sqq.

²² Iohannes, *Acocalypsis* 17. 9.

highly appreciates the Roman Empire since he provides it with a role in the history of salvation.²³

For lack of space, it is not possible to touch upon all the places where the ideology of *translatio imperii* occurs in Roman literature; therefore, I highlight two examples only. Iustin, who wrote the summary of Pompeius Trogus's *Philippica* at the turn of the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, unambiguously speaks about four empires, that is, the Assyrian, Persian and Macedonian (Alexander the Great's) empire is followed, as it were as the crowning of history, by the Roman Empire.²⁴ Impact, much larger than by Iustinus, was produced on the empire-philosophy of the Middle Ages and through that the modern age by the translator of the *Vulgata*, Hieronymus of Stridon,²⁵ who in his comments on the *Book of Daniel* associated the above-mentioned empires with clear historical-political content: that is, he considered Rome the crowning of world history after Babylon, Persia and Greece (Hellas), and connected the fall of Rome with the coming of the end of the world. It was owing to Hieronymus's immeasurably great impact, among others, that both in the west and the east for more than one thousand years several state formations had striven to prove their legal and organic continuity with the Roman Empire, and make it the basis of their power ideology.²⁶

²³ Suerbaum, W.: *Vom antiken zum frühmittelalterlichen Staatsbegriff: Über Verwendung und Bedeutung von res publica, regnum, imperium und status von Cicero bis Jordanis*. Münster, 1961, 112. sqq.; Kölmel, W.: *Regimen Cristianum. Weg und Ergebnisse des Gewaltenverhältnisses und des Gewaltenverständnisses (8. bis zum 14. Jahrhundert)*. Berlin, 1970, 35. sq.; Strobel, K.: *Das Imperium Romanum im '3. Jahrhundert'. Modell einer historischen Krise?* Stuttgart, 1993, 88. sqq.; Bähnk, W.: *Von der Notwendigkeits des Leidens: die Theologie des Martyriums bei Tertullian*. Hamburg, 2001, 40. sqq.

²⁴ On Iustin and Pompeius Trogus see Ferrero, L.: *Struttura e Metodo dell' Epitome del Guistino*. Torino, 1957; Seel, O.: *Die Praefatio des Pompeius Trogus*. Erlangen, 1955; Alonso-Núñez, J. M.: An Augustan Word-History. The *Historiae Philippicae* of Pompeius Trogus. *Greece and Rome*, 34 (1987) 1, 56–72; Idem: Drei Autoren von Geschichtsabrissen der römischen Kaiserzeit: Florus, Iustinus, Orosius. *Latomus*, 54 (1995), 346–359; Idem: *La Historia Universal de Pompeyo Trogo*. Madrid, 1992; Richter, H.-D.: *Untersuchungen zur hellenistischen Historiographie. Die Vorlagen des Pompeius Trogus für die Darstellung des nachalexandrinischen hellenistischen Geschichte (Iust. 13–40)*. Frankfurt, 1987; Syme, R.: The Date Justin and the Discovery of Trogus. *Historia*, 37 (1988), 358–371; Yardeli, J. C.: *Justin and Pompeius Trogus. A Study of the Language of Justin's Epitome of Trogus*. Toronto, 2003.

²⁵ Fremantle, H. W.: *The Principle Works of St. Jerome*. London, 1893; Grützmacher, G.: *Hieronymus. Eine biographische Studie zur alten Kirchengeschichte, I–III*. Leipzig, 1901–1918; Cavallera, F.: *Saint Jérôme. Sa vie et son oeuvre, I–II*. Paris, 1922; Feder, A.: *Studien zum Schriftstellerkatalog des heiligen Hieronymus*. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1927; Eiswith, R.: *Hieronymus' Stellung zur Literatur und Kunst*. Wiesbaden, 1955; Wiesen, D. S.: *Saint Jerome as a Satyrst. A Study in Christian Latin Thought and Letters*. Ithaca, 1964; Kelly, J. N. D.: *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies*. London, 1975; Rebenich, S.: *Hieronymus und sein Kreis*. Stuttgart, 1992; Rebenich, S.: *Jerome*. London–New York, 2002; Fürst, A.: *Hieronymus. Askese und Wissenschaft in der Spätantike*. Freiburg–Basel–Wien, 2003; Hale Williams, M.: *The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the making of Christian Scholarship*. Chicago, 2006.

²⁶ Quirin, H.: *Einführung in das Studium der mittelalterlichen Geschichte*. Stuttgart, 1991, 49; Goetz, W.: *Translatio imperii. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkens und politischen Theorien im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*. Tübingen, 1958, 17–36.

IV. The thought of *translatio imperii* in Eastern Europe—Constantinople/Byzantium as Second Rome, and Moscow as Third Rome

Byzantium (Byzantion) was founded cca. 660 BC by settlers of Megara, and its name was given after its first mythic ruler, king Byzas (according to the myth, after the son of the god of the sea, Poseion and Creossa). Throughout the Roman rule it enjoyed the status of free city, however, it obtained significance in world history in the 4th century AD when emperor Constantinus decided to found a second capital.²⁷ After some cogitation, he chose Byzantium—actually, Thessaloniki, Sardica (the present Sofia) and Troy could have been also taken into consideration: it would have supported Troy that according to the legend the Romans came from Troy.²⁸ The city was consecrated on 11 May 330: the consecrated Konstantinoupolis, that is, “the City of Constantine” officially became the “new Rome” (*nea Rhōmē*) and “second Rome” (*deutera Rhōmē*).²⁹ Reference to the empire by the name “Byzantium” is actually the intellectual product of the modern age; the inhabitants of the empire considered themselves Romans (*Rhōmaioi*), and their ruler was *basileus tōn Rhōmaiōn*, so his country was “the Roman Empire” itself.³⁰ The thought of Constantinople

²⁷ From the recent literature on Constantine see Vogt, J.: *Constantin der Große und sein Jahrhundert*. München, 1960; Barnes, T. D.: *Constantine and Eusebius*. Cambridge, 1981; Weiß, P.: Die Vision Constantins. In: Bleicken, J. (Hrsg.): *Colloquium aus Anlass des 80. Geburtstages von Alfred Heuß*. Kallmünz, 1993, 143–169; Bringmann, K.: Die konstantinische Wende. Zum Verhältnis von politischer und religiöser Motivation. *Historische Zeitschrift*, 260 (1995), 21–47; Clauss, M.: *Konstantin der Große und seine Zeit*. München, 1996; Bleckmann, B.: *Konstantin der Große*. Reinbek, 1996; Mühlenberg, E. (Hrsg.): *Die Konstantinische Wende*. Gütersloh, 1998; Odahl, Ch. M.: *Constantine and the Christian Empire*. London, 2004; Brandt, H.: *Konstantin der Große. Der erste christliche Kaiser*. München, 2006; Girardet, K. M.: *Die konstantinische Wende*. Darmstadt, 2006; Herrmann-Otto, E.: *Konstantin der Große*. Darmstadt, 2007; Lenski, N. (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*. Cambridge, 2006; Schlange-Schöningen, H. (Hrsg.): *Konstantin und das Christentum*. Darmstadt, 2007; van Dam, R.: *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*. Cambridge 2007; Veyne, P.: *Als unsere Welt christlich wurde. Aufstieg einer Sekte zur Weltmacht*. München, 2008; Girardet, K. M.: *Der Kaiser und sein Gott. Das Christentum im Denken und in der Religionspolitik Konstantins des Großen*. Berlin–New York, 2010.

²⁸ Erskine, A.: *Troy between Greece and Rome: local tradition and imperial power*. Oxford–New York, 2001.

²⁹ Gibbon, E.: *The History of the Decline and Fall of Roman Empire, I–VIII*. Oxford, 1827. II. 34. sq.; Browning, R.: *The Byzantine Empire*. London–New York, 1980; Gregory, T. E.: *A History of Byzantium*. New York, 2009, 63. sq.

³⁰ On the ideological basis of the Byzantine State see Bury, J. B.: *The Constitution of the Later Roman Empire*. London, 1909; Hungaer, H.: *Prooimion. Elemente der byzantinischen Kaiseridee in den Arengen der Urkunden*. Wien, 1964; Ahrweiler, H.: *L’idéologie politique de l’Empire byzantin*. Paris, 1975; Ostrogrosky, G.: *Zur byzantinischen Geschichte. Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*. Darmstadt, 1973; Hunger, H. (Hrsg.): *Das byzantinische Herrscherbild*. Darmstadt, 1975; Anastos, M. V.: Vox populi voluntas Dei and the Election of the Byzantine Emperor. In: *Studies in Byzantine Intellectual History, III*. London, 1979; Simon, D.: Princeps legibus solutus. Die Stellung des byzantinischen Kaisers zum Gesetz. In: Nörr, D.–Simon, D. (Hrsg.): *Gedächtnisschrift für Wolfgang Kunkel*. Frankfurt am Main, 1984, 449–492; Čičurov, I.: Gesetz und Gerechtigkeit in den byzantinischen Fürstenspiegeln des 6.–9. Jahrhunderts. In: Burgmann, L.–Fögen, M. Th.–Schminck, A. (Hrsg.): *Cupido legum*. Frankfurt am Main, 1985; Cheynet, J.-C.: *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)*. Paris, 1990; Fögen, M. Th.: Das politische Denken der Byzantiner. In: Fetscher, I.–Münkler, H. (Hrsg.): *Pipers Handbuch der politischen Ideen, II*. München–Zürich, 1993, 41–85; Haldon, J.: *Das byzantinische Reich. Geschichte und Kultur eines Jahrtausends*. Düsseldorf, 2002.

being a “*New Rome*” is from first to last present in Byzantine ideology, the most important legitimisation sources include the 3rd canon of the second general council (“*The honorary priority after the bishop of Rome shall be given to the bishop of Constantinople since it is the new Rome.*”) and the 28th canon of the fourth general council (“*We too shall resolve and vote for the same on the privileges of the most sacred Church of the same Constantinople, New Rome; because the fathers justly granted privileges to the throne of the old Rome as that city ruled.*”).

The investigation of the theory of *Moscow as “Third Rome”* clearly reveals that the thought of “*Third Rome*” did not appear in the official ideology through the title of tsar used by Ivan III first in 1473 (one year after he married Sophia Palaiologa, niece of the emperor of Byzantium, through his representative, in the presence of Pope Sixtus IV in Rome). This was formulated first by Filofei, a monk of Pskov, between 1522 and 1524, in his letter written to Mihail Grigoryevich: “*I would have you know, my god-loving lord, that all Christian tsardom has come to its end, and has been united in our ruler’s sole tsardom in accordance with the books of the prophets, that is, in the Russian tsardom: since two Romes have fallen, the third one still exists, and there will be no fourth Rome*”.³¹ In Moscow, a metropolitan was elected for the first time in 1448, however, it became the seat of the *patriarchate* only in 1589 and that is how the Patriarch of Moscow became, in accordance with the so-called *Constitutional Charter* adopted at the synod of that time, the fifth in the order of patriarchs. And, albeit, the “*Third Rome*” theory was not accepted by orthodox canon law, it lived all the more vividly in the realm of state ideology and folk belief, and produced significant impact up to 1917.³²

V. The thought of *renovatio imperii* in Western Europe—*Sacrum Romanum Imperium*

Charlemagne, through being crowned emperor on 23th December 800, raised *Imperium Romanum* from the dead (*renovatio imperii*) also on the level of official ideology, and, at the same time, disputed that the *basileus* had the right of continuity of the Roman Empire.³³

³¹ See also van den Bercken, W.: *Holy Russia and Christian Europe. East and West in the Religious Ideology of Russia*. London, 1999, 146. sqq.

³² On the idea of Moscow as the third Rome see Lettenbauer, W.: *Moskau das dritte Rom. Zur Geschichte einer politischen Theorie*. München, 1961; Meyendorff, J.: *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia. A Study on Byzantino-Russian Relations in the Fourteenth Century*. New York, 1989; Idem: *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow. Historical and Theological Studies*. New York, 1996; Marshall, P.: *Moscow, the Third Rome: the Origins and Transformations of a “Pivotal Moment”*. *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 49 (2001), 61–86.

³³ From the recent literature on Charlemagne see Abel, S.–Simson, B.: *Jahrbücher des Fränkischen Reiches unter Karl dem Großen, I–II*. Berlin, 1969; Braunfels, W. et al. (Hrsg.): *Karl der Große. Lebenswerk und Nachleben I–IV*. Düsseldorf, 1967; Langston, A. L.–Buck, J. O. (eds): *Pedigrees of Some of the Emperor Charlemagne’s Descendants*. Baltimore, 1974; Epperlein, S.: *Karl der Große. Eine Biographie*. Berlin, 1982; Butzer, P. L. et al. (Hrsg.): *Karl der Große und sein Nachwirken. 1200 Jahre Kultur und Wissenschaft in Europa, I–II*. Brepols, 1997; Kerner, M.: *Karl der Große. Entschleierung eines Mythos*. Köln, 2000; Godman, P.–Jarnut, J.–Johaneček, P. (Hrsg.): *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung. Das Epos “Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa” und der Papstbesuch von 799*. Berlin, 2002; Schieffer, R.: *Die Karolinger*. Stuttgart, 2006; Sypek, J.: *Becoming Charlemagne: Europe, Baghdad, and The Empires of A.D. 800*. New York, 2006; Barbero, A.: *Charlemagne: Father of a Continent*. Berkeley, 2004; McKitterick, R.: *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity*. Cambridge, 2008; Becher, M.: *Karl der Große*. München, 2007. On the imperialistic politics of

In his letter to Pope Leo III, in which he warns the pope to engage a pious conduct of life, Charlemagne clearly reveals the king's and the pope's tasks and the division of the tasks: the ruler is obliged to protect the Church of Christ from the attacks and destruction of pagans by arms, and to strengthen the Catholic faith; the pope's duty is to support the king's acts by hands raised to god, just as Moses, in order to ensure him victory over the enemies of the name of Christ.³⁴ Thereby, the foundations of the "two swords theory"³⁵ made complete by Pope Bonifatius VIII in 1300 have been laid, and, simultaneously, the emperor's imperialistic demands have been acknowledged.³⁶

Otto I (936–973), after he came to power, was called the greatest among European kings by a Saxon chronicler of the period. Otto laid claim to obtaining Italy and Rome and thereby the emperor's crown; all the more because he believed that through his victory over the Hungarians and the successes of the Slavic mission he as "the defeater of heathen barbarians, disseminator of Christianity and defender of the church" was entitled to emperor's dignity. The ceremony of crowning him emperor took place on 2nd February 962 in Rome. From that time, German kings could obtain emperor's title if they went to Rome for being crowned (that is, only German kings could become emperor but not all German kings became emperor). Otto I was aware of the actual scope and limits of his emperor's power: he called himself "the emperor of the Romans and Franks". His grandson, Otto III,

Charlemagne see Nótári, T.: *Bavarian Historiography in Early Medieval Bavaria*. Passau, 2010, 57. sqq.; Idem: An Early-Medieval Show Trial–Tasilo III's Dethronement. In: Beck Varela, L.–Gutiérrez Vega, P.–Spinosa, A. (eds): *Crossing Legal Cultures*. München, 2009, 141–158; Wolfram, H.: *Die Geburt Mitteleuropas. Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung*. 378–907. Wien, 1987, 208. sqq.; Classen, P.: *Karl der Große, das Papsttum und Byzanz. Die Begründung des karolingischen Kaisertums*. Sigmaringen, 1985; Hageneder, O.: Das 'crimen maiestatis', der Prozeß gegen die Attentäter Papst Leos III. und die Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen. In: Mordek, H. (Hrsg.): *Aus Kirche und Reich. Festschrift für F. Kempf zu seinem 75. Geburtstag*. Sigmaringen, 1983, 54–79; Schieffer, R.: Arn von Salzburg und die Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen. In: Dopsch, H.–Freund, S.–Schmid, A. (Hrsg.): *Bayern und Italien. Politik, Kultur, Kommunikation (8.–15. Jahrhundert)*. Festschrift für K. Reindel zum 75. Geburtstag. München, 2001, 104–121.

³⁴ Alcuinus, *epistula* 93. *Nostrum est: secundum auxilium divinae pietatis sanctam undique Christi ecclesiam ab incursu paganorum et ab infidelium devastatione armis defendere foris, et intus catholicae fidei agnitione munire. Vestrum est, sanctissime pater: elevatis ad Deum cum Moyse manibus nostram adjuvare militiam, quatenus vobis intercedentibus Deo ductore et datore populus christianus super inimicos sui sancti nominis ubique semper habeat victoriam, et nomen domini nostri Iesu Christi toto clarificetur in orbe.*

³⁵ Cf. Lucas, *Evangelium* 22, 36. sqq.

³⁶ Cf. Levison, W.: Die mittelalterliche Lehre von den beiden Schwertern. *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 9 (1952), 14–42; Hoffmann, H.: Die beiden Schwerter im hohen Mittelalter. *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 20 (1964), 78–114. On Pope Boniface VIII see Wood, Ch. T.: *Phillip the Fair and Boniface VIII: State vs Papacy*. New York, 1967; Schmidt, T.: *Der Bonifaz-Prozeß. Verfahren der Papstanklage zur Zeit Bonifaz' VIII. und Clemens' V.* Köln–Wien, 1989; Coste, J. (ed.): *Boniface VIII en procès. Articles d'accusation et dépositions des témoins (1303–1311)*. Rome, 1995; Paravicini Bagliani, A.: *Boniface VIII. Un pape hérétique?* Paris, 2003; Matheus, M.–Klinkhammer, L. (Hrsg.): *Eigenbild im Konflikt. Krisensituationen des Papsttums zwischen Gregor VII. und Benedikt XV.* Darmstadt, 2009.

upon the impact and suggestion of his educator and friend, the greatest scientist of the age, the French Gerbert d'Aurillac³⁷ (later Pope Sylvester II) announced the program of "renewing the Roman empire" (*renovatio imperii Romanorum*). As a matter of fact, he thought of the empire of Christian emperors, first of all, of Constantine the Great and Charlemagne, and Christian mission played a central part in his concept.³⁸ He expressed this by adding the title "the slave of Jesus Christ" (*servus Iesu Christi*) and later "the slave of the apostles" (*servus apostolorum*) to the emperor's title. The finishing stroke was given to the merely formally existing *Sacrum Romanum Imperium* by the battle at Austerlitz. On 6 August 1806 Franz I resigned from the emperor's title.³⁹ (We need to add that the name used in literature for *Sacrum Romanum Imperium*, the "German-Roman Empire" is unhistorical because it is the translation of "*Heiliges Römisches Reich deutscher Nation*", which had never become an official name.)

Otto Frisingensis, in his work entitled *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*, written in the mid-12th century, wanted to continue Augustinus's work entitled *De civitate Dei*. The work focuses on the line of empires following each other (*translatio imperii*), which moves consistently from east to west as time passes (Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Germans), and prevails within Europe too (Rome, Byzantium, Charlemagne's Empire, the Langobard Empire, the *Sacrum Romanum Imperium*). The crowning of these empires is Otto's Holy Roman Empire, which must survive until the end of the world.⁴⁰

³⁷ On Gerbert d'Aurillac see Eichengrün, F.: *Gerbert (Silvester II.) als Persönlichkeit*. Leipzig-Berlin, 1928; Joubert, M.: *Gerbert-Sylvestre. Il premier pape français*. Aurillac, 1938; Darlington, O. G.: Gerbert, the Teacher. *The American Historical Review*, 52 (1947) 3, 456–476; Werner, K. F.: Zur Überlieferung der Briefe Gerberts von Aurillac. *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 17 (1961), 91–144; Kosztolnyik, Z. J.: The Relations of Four Eleventh-Century Hungarian Kings with Rome in the Light of Papal Letters. *Church History* 46 (1977) 1, 33–47; Riché, P.: *Gerbert d'Aurillac. Le Pape de l'An Mil*. Paris, 1987.

³⁸ From the recent literature on the idea of *renovatio imperii* see Granucci, S. R.: *Renovatio Imperii Romanorum*. San Francisco, 1970; Althoff, G.: *Otto III*. Darmstadt, 1997; Görich, K.: *Otto III. Romanus Saxonicus et Italicus. Kaiserliche Rompolitik und sächsische Historiographie*. Sigmaringen, 1993; Schramm, P. E.: *Kaiser Rom und Renovatio. Studien zur Geschichte des römischen Erneuerungsgedankens vom Ende des karolingischen Reiches bis zum Investiturstreit, I–II*. Darmstadt, 1984; Warner, D. A.: Ideals and Action in the reign of Otto III. *Journal of Medieval History*, 25 (1998) 1, 1–18.

³⁹ See also Freiherr von Aretin, K. O.: *Das Alte Reich 1648–1806, I–III*. Stuttgart, 1993–1997; Diestelkamp, B.: *Recht und Gericht im Heiligen Römischen Reich*. Frankfurt am Main, 1999; Schnettger, M. (Hrsg.): *Imperium Romanum–irregulare corpus–Teutscher Reichs-Staat. Das Alte Reich im Verständnis der Zeitgenossen und der Historiographie*. Mainz, 2002; Schmidt, G.: *Geschichte des Alten Reiches. Staat und Nation in der Frühen Neuzeit 1495–1806*. München, 1999; Hartmann, P. C.: *Das Heilige Römische Reich deutscher Nation in der Neuzeit 1486–1806*. Stuttgart, 2005. Gotthard, A.: *Das Alte Reich 1495–1806*. Darmstadt, 2003; Stollberg-Rilinger, B.: *Das Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation. Vom Ende des Mittelalters bis 1806*. München, 2009.

⁴⁰ From the further literature on Otto Frisingensis see Mierow, Ch. Chr.: Bishop Otto of Freising: Historian and Man. *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 80 (1949), 393–402; Fischer, J. A. (Hrsg.): *Otto von Freising. Gedenkgabe zu seinem 800. Todesjahr*. Freising, 1958; Goetz, H.-W.: *Das Geschichtsbild Ottos von Freising. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Vorstellungswelt und zur Geschichte des 12. Jahrhunderts*. Köln-Wien, 1984; Glaser, H.: Bischof Otto von Freising (1138–1158). In: Schwaiger, G. (Hrsg.): *Christenleben im Wandel der Zeit I*. München, 1987, 56–79; Kirchner-Feyerabend, C.: *Otto von Freising als Diözesan- und Reichsbischof*.

VI. An example of denial of continuity—official rejection of the name *Third Reich*

It is a general delusion that the “Third Reich” (*Drittes Reich*) was the official name of Germany, after Nazis seized power, strongly urged by the party and state propaganda machinery, too. It is less known that Hitler always had strong reservations against this term, although before the NSDAP took over (*Machtergreifung* or *Machtübernahme*), what is more, in the period following it, it undoubtedly proved to be a useful, highly powerful propagandistic phrase.⁴¹ However, the decree issued by the propaganda ministry of the German press on 10th June 1939 expressly prohibited the official use of the phrase “Third Reich”. In accordance with this decree, the official name of Germany—which is a so-called *völkischer Staat*,⁴² that is, a state based on the race idea (*Rassenidee*)—is “Great German Empire” (*Großdeutsches Reich*). A circular issued by the propaganda ministry (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*) of the German press years later, on 21st March 1942 orders—most probably following the pattern of “Empire” used by the British—that the official name of the “new Germany” in the future shall be simply: “Empire” (*Reich*). The aim of the name “*Reich*” is to document to the public of the world the closed state unity of the territories that belong to the “new Germany”. The same regulation restricts the application of the word “*Reich*” to Germany, stressing that there is only one “Empire” and it is Germany.

The “Third Reich” as an empire compared to historical precedents, ancestors, marked with a “serial number” was not compatible with the imperialistic self-awareness of national socialism, which considered itself the crowning of German history. In historical terms, the “First Empire” means the Holy Roman Empire (*Sacrum Romanum Imperium*) founded in 962, which existed until 1806. The “Second Empire” was founded, more exactly proclaimed on 18th January 1871 in the hall of mirrors in the Palace of Versailles and existed until November 1918. In German philosophical and political thinking, the idea of the “Third

Frankfurt am Main, 1990; Deutinger, R.: Engel oder Wolf? Otto von Freising in den geistigen Auseinandersetzungen seiner Zeit. In: Dietl, C.–Helschinger, D. (Hrsg.): *Ars und Scientia im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit. Ergebnisse interdisziplinärer Forschung. Georg Wieland zum 65. Geburtstag*. Tübingen–Basel, 2002, 31–46; Arnold, A.: Otto von Freising. In: Wurst, J.–Langheiter, A. (Hrsg.): *Monachia*. München, 2005. 75. sqq.; Deutinger, R.: Das Privilegium minus, Otto von Freising und der Verfassungswandel des 12. Jahrhunderts. In: Schmid, P.–Wanderwitz, H. (Hrsg.): *Die Geburt Österreichs. 850 Jahre Privilegium minus*. Regensburg, 2007, 179–199.

⁴¹ See Hamza, G.: Die Idee des “Dritten Reichs” im deutschen philosophischen und politischen Denken im 20. Jahrhundert. *Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestinensis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae, Sectio Iuridica*, 38 (1997), 11–22; Idem: Die Idee des “Dritten Reichs” im deutschen philosophischen und politischen Denken des 20. Jahrhunderts. *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung, Germanistische Abteilung*, 118 (2001) 321–336; Idem: The Idea of the “Third Reich” in the German Legal, Philosophical and Political Thinking in the 20th Century. *Acta Iuridica Hungarica*, 42 (2001) 1–2, 91–101; Neurohr, J. F.: *Der Mythos vom Dritten Reich. Zur Geistgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus*. München, 1957; Glum, Fr.: *Der Nationalsozialismus. Werden und Vergehen*. München, 1962; Kershaw, I.: *Hitlers Macht. Das Profil der NS-Herrschaft*. München, 1992; Fritsche, K.: *Politische Romantik und Gegenrevolution. Fluchtwege in der Krise der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft: Das Beispiel des “Tat”-Kreises*. Frankfurt am Main, 1976.

⁴² On this topic in the contemporary literature see Nicolai, H.: *Der Staat im nationalsozialistischen Weltbild*. Leipzig, 1933; Huber, E. R.: *Verfassungsrecht des Großdeutschen Reiches*. Hamburg, 1939.

Reich” can be traced back to deep roots.⁴³ It can be identified as early as in Fichte. The idea of the “Third Reich” was given a highly great part, often central significance in conservative cultural philosophy, primarily in Arthur Moeller van den Bruck’s works.⁴⁴ The national socialist regime clearly distanced itself from the idea of the “Third Reich” for historical and philosophical reasons already in the late thirties. In Germany, eventually, the view hallmarked by the name of Hans F. K. Günther, Richard Walter Darré and Alfred Rosenberg, who laid or intended to lay *Führerprinzip* on theoretical bases, became the official ideology of the national socialist Germany, in which the idea of the “Third Empire” was given no role.⁴⁵

More in-depth analysis would be needed for accurately processing the ideology, which would demonstrate how the imperial ambitions of the modern age (for example, Spain, the British Empire and the United States of America) fit into the ideology of *translatio imperii*—upon the termination of the religious background of this thought, by replacing it with a kind of cultural mission legitimacy. In my paper, I could, of course, highlight only a few points from the history of the ideology of *translatio imperii*; an overall analysis of the subject would call for an independent monograph.

⁴³ Dempf, A.: *Sacrum Imperium. Geschichts- und Staatphilosophie des Mittelalters und der politischen Renaissance*. Wien, 1929; von Mutius, G.: *Die drei Reiche. Ein Versuch philosophischer Besinnung*. Berlin, 1920; Schmitt, C.: Der Begriff des Politischen. *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 58 (1927) 1, 1–33.

⁴⁴ Moeller van den Bruck, A.: *Das dritte Reich*. Berlin, 1923.

⁴⁵ Mayer, D.: *Grundlagen des nationalsozialistischen Rechtssystems. Führerprinzip, Sonderrecht, Einheitspartei*. Stuttgart–Berlin–Köln–Mainz, 1987; Scheiner, U.: Die neuere Entwicklung des Rechtsstaates. In: *Staatstheorie und Staatsrecht*. Berlin, 1978, 205. sq.; Neumann, F.: *Behemoth. Struktur und Praxis des Nationalsozialismus 1933–1944*. Frankfurt am Main, 1988, 171. sqq.; Funke, M.: *Starker oder schwacher Diktator. Hitlers Herrschaft und die Deutschen. Ein Essay*. Düsseldorf, 1989, 85.