

Japan Academy Prize to:

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for *Die Anfänge der deutschen Geschichte—
Das mittelalterliche Römische Reich und das
ethnische Werden der Deutschen*



Outline of the work:

As its subtitle indicates, Prof. Akihiro Misagawa's *Die Anfänge der deutschen Geschichte—Das mittelalterliche Römische Reich und das ethnische Werden der Deutschen* (The Beginning of German History: The Medieval Roman Empire and the “German” Ethnogenesis) [Tokyo: Sobunsha, 2013] investigates the question of when the ethnic group that would be known as Germans began to recognize themselves as such and also allowed others to refer to them as Germans. To undertake this task, Prof. Misagawa examines many different types of reputable historical documents such as Annals, Chronicles, Royal diplomas, Papal charters, and Poetry verses. By comparing and checking a diverse set of documents against each other, drawing inferences, or combining them into a coherent argument, he succeeds in creating a *magnum opus* for the scientific field in our country.

This masterpiece text is divided in three parts and composed of 13 chapters including an introduction and a conclusion. In part one, titled “The beginning of German History from a political and constitutional history approach”, Prof. Misagawa discusses a scientific trend in favor of innovations on and reviews of basic historical concepts among the German medievalists in the 1980s. He notes that within this paradigmatic shift, Karl Ferdinand Werner's *Regna* theory must be taken up. This theory sought the creation of the administrative district of *Regna* in accordance with the tribal territory of peoples such as the Saxon, the Thuringians and the Bavarians in the Carolingian Empire, from which each tribal peoples developed the foundation from which each tribal peoples developed into ethnic groups (*Gens*) and political entities. Prof. Misagawa has formulated the problem of his text following this line of historical interpretation: to demonstrate the historical process of the creation of a co-consciousness belonging to a single ethnic group known as the “Germans (the *Teutons*)” among the above-mentioned *gens* groups. To do this, the author places the 843 Treaty of Verdun, when the Carolingian Empire was divided for the first time, as the outset of German History.

In the following chapters, Prof. Misagawa concentrates his argument on the questions of the semantic meaning of the *lingua teutonica* and of the *teutonici* who used that language in various categories of documents originating from the 10th and 11th centuries concluding that the *lingua theodisca* that was more often used in the historical sources signified not the “*lingua teutonici* (German langue)” but simply the “language of the folk”. At the time of the imperial coronation of Otto I in 962, the German kingdom had not yet been borne.

Part two, entitled “The German and the kingdom of Germans”, inquires, first, into the historical vicissitude of the reigns from Otto I until Otto III, and, second, into the historical settings in which the term *teutonicus* appeared as an appellation applied to the Germans. It was Liutprand, the Bishop of Cremona, who first used the term *teutonici* in the sense of the German people in his redaction of an imperial diploma in 965. Thus the use of the word *teutonici* to indicate the German people began in Lombard Italy and before long was

propagated north, beyond the Alps, where it underwent a quiet fermentation allowing the concept of the Germans to emerge. This phenomenon can be witnessed in the writings left by Bruno, a monk in the Querfurt monastery. The analysis of the work of Bruno, carried out by Prof. Misagawa with a fine touch is a highlight of this book.

While the Carolingians at most observed Italy as a “sub-kingdom”, the Ottonians aimed at the unification of the two kingdoms extending on both sides of the Alps. This trend toward unification was even further accentuated during the reign of Otto III, who remotely tried to control Germany from Italy, and thus reversed the power relationship between the two political entities in favor of the southern kingdom. This political tendency gave birth to and bolstered the “*teutonici*”-identity among the peoples beyond the Alps.

Titled “Germans carrying the Roman Empire on their shoulders”, part three discusses the political and moral influences resulting from a shift of priorities in the Ottonian politics. Prof. Misagawa examines “the Song of Anno” written during the first phase of so-called the Struggle of Investiture and composed in the Middle-High German, by an anonymous monk in Cologne, as a piece of evidence that represents the Germans’ intensified ethnic consciousness. It is important to note that “*diutischi* man (a teutonic man)” appears in this retrospective song as a collectivity that collaborates with Caesar in a military campaign: the Teutons’ “debut” as an ethnic entity. The Act of Worms Convention (1122) that proclaimed the end of the Struggle of Investiture, the term “the German Kingdom (*Regnum Teutonicum*)” which had been avoided by successive generations of the German kings, appeared. Around the middle of the 12th century, Otto von Freising in his historical work “*Chronica*” an expression “the Roman Empire of the Germans”, brought to completion the “beginning of German History” as a result of logical connecting of the State and its ethnic constituents.

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In the importance of the subject it treats, in the quasi-exhaustive nature of the list of source materials as well as secondary works referred to, in the author’s thorough and graceful Japanese literary style and in the development of solid arguments using multi-layered logic, Prof. Misagawa has composed a nearly perfect text. It may be said that historical study of Germany in Japan has reached a new and higher stage through the appearance of this book.