

MAGDEBURG AND ITS NEIGHBOURS IN THE LIFETIME OF ST. ADALBERT

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The great Slav uprising of 983 marked an important change in Magdeburg's relations with its eastern Slav neighbours. Up to this point, there had been a certain continuity from when Magdeburg was first mentioned as a frontier settlement in 805 to the institution of the Magdeburg archbishopric in 968. That Magdeburg looked indeed far out to the east, is best illustrated by the contacts that were established with the Kievan princess Olga. Thus was caused the journey to the Kievan Rus by Adalbert, who would in due course become archbishop of Magdeburg, and this journey, with one staging-post being Libice, was a turning point in the life of Adalbert, who at that time received the sacrament of confirmation. In the direct vicinity of Magdeburg, not only armed conflict, but also close, even personal relations between the Ottonian Emperors and Saxon nobility and members of the Slav elites existed before 983. The development of an ecclesiastical organisation and of marches on the border had begun in 948. This was brought to an end, at least as far

as the territory east of the Elbe river is concerned, by the uprising of 983, in which the tribal coalition led by the Lutizen played a decisive part. Emperor Otto III and his Polish partners, Mieszko I and Bolesław Chrobry, fought vigorously against the Lutizen, who obviously tolerated a parallel, one might say competitive, development of heathen and Christian cults. But this common policy, which culminated in the Emperor's pilgrimage to the grave of St. Adalbert at Gniezno (Gnesen), was abruptly terminated by the alliance between Henry II and the Lutizen in 1003.