

Otto I, Duke of Saxony

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Otto (or **Oddo**) (c. 851 – 30 November 912), called **the Illustrious** (*der Erlauchte*) by later authors, was the Duke of Saxony from 880 to his death.

He was father of Henry the Fowler and grandfather of Otto the Great. He also was father-in-law of Zwentibold, Carolingian King of Lotharingia.

Life

He was the younger son of Duke Liudolf of Saxony and his wife Oda of Billung, and succeeded his brother Bruno as duke after the latter's death in battle in 880.^[1] His family, named after his father, is called the Liudolfing, after the accession of his grandson Emperor Otto I also the Ottonian dynasty.

By a charter of King Louis the Younger to Gandersheim Abbey dated 26 January 877, the *pago Suththuringa* (region of South Thuringia) is described as *in comitatu Ottonis* (in Otto's county). In a charter of 28 January 897, Otto is described as *marchio* and the *pago Eichesfelden* (Eichsfeld) is now found to be within his county (march). He was also the lay abbot of Hersfeld Abbey in 908. He was described as *magni ducis Oddonis* (great duke Otto) by Widukind of Corvey when describing the marriage of his sister, Liutgard, to King Louis.

Otto rarely left Saxony. He was a regional prince and his overlords, Louis the Younger and Emperor Arnulf of Carinthia, with both of whom he was on good terms, rarely interfered in Saxony. In Saxony, Otto was king in practice and he established himself as tributary ruler over the neighbouring Slav tribes, such as the Daleminzi.

According to Widukind of Corvey, Otto was offered the kingship of East Francia after the death of Louis the Child in 911, but did not accept it on account of his advanced age, instead suggesting Conrad of Franconia. The truthfulness of this report is considered doubtful.^[2]

Otto's wife was Hathui of Babenberg (Hedwiga, †903), daughter of Henry of Franconia. Otto was and is buried in the church of Gandersheim Abbey. He had two sons, Thankmar and Liudolf, who predeceased him, but his third son Henry succeeded him as duke of Saxony and was later elected king. His daughter Oda married the Carolingian King Zwentibold of Lotharingia.

Notes

- A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (fl. 960): Contextual and Interpretive Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes, (Brill, 2013), 229.
- Reuter, 135; "calls it "panegyric rather than history."

Otto I, Duke of Saxony



Otto I Dux, *Chronica Sancti Pantaleonis*, Cologne, about 1237

Spouse(s)	Hathui of Babenberg
Issue	Thankmar Liudolf Henry the Fowler Oda
Noble family	Liudolfing
Father	Liudolf, Duke of Saxony
Mother	Oda of Billung
Born	c. 851
Died	30 November 912

Sources

- *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (fl. 960): Contextual and Interpretive Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes, Brill, 2013.
- Reuter, Timothy. *Germany in the Early Middle Ages 800–1056*. New York: Longman, 1991.

Otto I, Duke of Saxony Liudolfing		
Born: c. 851 Died: 30 November 912		
Regnal titles		
Preceded by Bruno	Duke of Saxony 880–912	Succeeded by Henry I

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