

SUMMARY

The Holy Roman Empire was put together in the eastern lands that were once part of Charlemagne's empire. In 962, Otto I, with papal support, assumed the imperial title and began to extend control over the empire. Otto's successors slowly strengthened their position against powerful dukes. However, the alliance that Otto had formed with the Church did not last as emperors and popes became embroiled in bitter power struggles. In the 11th century, the Holy Roman emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII clashed in the investiture controversy. The struggle was not settled until 1122 with the Concordat of Worms, which gave the Church control over the selection of bishops.

The Hohenstaufen emperors became deeply involved in Italy, and their efforts to extend their control over the peninsula dragged them into wars with the cities of the north and with the papacy. Although Frederick II consolidated his power in southern Italy, he did so at the expense of his German lands. After his death, Germany was fragmented and remained so until the 19th century.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Describe the growth of the Holy Roman Empire from the 10th to the 13th centuries. Using a map of medieval Europe and a modern political map of Europe, name the present-day countries that were once part of the Holy Roman Empire.
- 2 How did the personalities of Henry IV and Gregory VII influence the investiture struggle? What were the central issues of this struggle? How was the struggle eventually resolved?
- 3 Why did Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick II each fail to develop a strong German state?
- 4 What reasons account for the decline of the Holy Roman Empire after 1250? Despite the decline, why do you think the empire continued to exist until the early 19th century?
- 5 Do you think that Voltaire's 18th century judgment of the Holy Roman Empire as "neither holy, Roman, nor an empire" was true in the 13th century? Explain.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Which books might analyze Frederick II's conflict with the papacy?

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