

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

LECTURE 11 – RISE AND FALL OF PAPACY TO 1500

We'll start with a prayer from the period to be studied.

O blessed Lord, who has commanded us to love one another, grant us grace that having received your undeserved bounty, we may love everyone in you and for you. We implore your clemency for all; but especially for the friends whom your love has given to us. Love them, O fountain of love, and make them love you with all their heart, that they may will and speak and do those things only which are pleasing to you. Amen.

Anselm (1033-1109), Archbishop of Canterbury (1093-1109), who lived through a turbulent time in the ups-and-downs of the Papacy.

The rest of this page is an outline of this lecture.

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In preparation, read Cairns, 112-3, 150-52, 159-163, 179-185, 194-5, 202-10, 239-242, 260-7; Lion, see index 'papacy' on p. 686; Vos 48-58.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definitions of 'papacy'

The word 'pope' comes from the Greek *pappas* and the Latin *papa*, meaning 'father'; in lowercase, it is still used in the Orthodox Church for all priests. This was the position in the West until the C6 - *papa* = the fatherly care bestowed by all bishops on their flock. This lecture explores how and when the title Pope (capital 'P') came to be given exclusively to the head of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

The related word 'papacy' has three meanings: one, the time during which any individual Pope is in office, two, the succession of all the Popes, one after the other, down the ages, and three, more generally, the system of church government in which the Pope is the supreme head.

Why should those of us who are evangelical Protestants devote an entire lecture to this? Because for more than 1,000 years, the Pope dominated – or tried to dominate – both Church and State in what we now call Europe, and so shaped both the Church and the State in the West. We'll divide the years from c100 to c1500 into three phases.

First, c100 to c450, how the Bishop of Rome gained supremacy over other bishops. We saw, in Lecture 6, that about the year 250, Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, insisted that all bishops had equal authority, but gradually the Bishop of Rome became more and more equal than others in the West. We'll see, under main heading 2, how this came about between the years c100 to c450

The second phase, c800 to c1300, is at main heading 3. There is deliberately a gap between 450 and 800 because nothing of significance in the papacy occurred in these years. The power-struggle between popes and emperors, which lasted from c800 to c1300, began when the Pope crowned Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor in the year 800. We'll take our Topic, which is the life of Charlemagne, at this point.

The third phase, c1300 to 1417, at main heading 4, is about power struggles, not between popes and emperors but among rival claimants to the papacy. At one stage there were two rival popes for 70 years, and then there were three, all claiming to be the only true Pope. We'll see, near the end of the lecture, how the Emperor of Germany stepped in, deposed all three of them and appointed his own choice. That will take us to the year 1500. Shortly after that, the Protestant Reformation took place; what happened to the papacy after that will be taken up in Lecture 26.

There are so many legends and myths woven into the history of the papacy that it's difficult to study it objectively. We'll try to be as objective as possible in tracing how the concept of papacy emerged.

1.2 The Peter Tradition

Most are agreed that Peter preached in Rome and met his death there, c64 under the Emperor Nero, but it was 220 – that's over 150 years after Peter's death – before the then Bishop of Rome tried to bolster his status, against those who were criticising him, by claiming that Peter had been the first Bishop of Rome and that he was Peter's successor. However, two documents imply that there were, at first, no bishops in Rome. First, as we saw in Lecture 2, we have a letter written c96 to the church in Corinth by Clement, who was an elder in the church at Rome, and he told them he was (only) their fellow-leader.

Secondly, as we also saw in Lecture 2, when Ignatius of Antioch in Syria wrote to the church at Rome c115, there was apparently no single Bishop there for him to address. Not only was Peter not expressly named as ‘the first Bishop of Rome’ until the year 220, as mentioned above, but it was another thirty years after that before anyone suggested that Peter had ‘laid hands’ on a successor, before his death, and appointed him to a unique role in the Church. No Bishop of Rome claimed the title ‘Pope’ (capital P) until the year 384.

The Roman Catholic Church likes to see an unbroken chain from the Apostle Peter to the present Pope. Protestants dispute this, for the reasons just mentioned, but in fairness to Rome, they rely on the writings of Irenaeus, who was Bishop of Lyon (Lyons in modern France) about the year 180. Irenaeus was determined, as we saw when we looked at him in Lecture 4, to defeat heresy and one of his arguments was that there was an unbroken line of teaching from the apostles. He used the teaching in the church at Rome as an example.

The apostles in founding and building up this church handed over to Linus the oversight (*episcopatus*) of administering the church; Paul mentions this Linus in his letters to Timothy. (2 Tim 4:21.) And Anacletus succeeds him. After him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement obtains the episcopacy. ... Evaristus succeeds this Clement; and Alexander, Evaristus; and then Xystus was established as the sixth from the apostles. And after him Telesphorus, who bore witness (was martyred) most gloriously. And then Hyginus; afterwards Pius; after him Anicetus. And after Anicetus had been succeeded by Soter, Eleutherus now holds the episcopacy in the twelfth place from the apostles. In this order and by this succession *the tradition from the apostles in the church and the preaching of the truth has come all the way to us. And this is the fullest demonstration that it is one and the same life-giving faith that has been preserved in the church from the apostles till now and that has been handed down in truth.* (Italics mine)

Against the Heresies: Book Three, Chapter 3, sections 2 and 3.

Protestants say that means their teaching was handed down, not ‘apostolic succession’ in the sense of one person following the unique authority of his predecessor down through the ages. How, then, and why did the Bishop of Rome become known as the Pope (P)?

1.3 First claim to Roman authority rebuffed

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, resisted when Stephen, bishop of Rome 254-257, tried in 255 to force Roman views on the Church in Africa over re-baptism of the lapsed – Lecture 6, page 12. Stephen claimed – the first known appeal by Rome to Peter being ‘the rock on which the Church would be built’ (Matthew 16:18-19) – that Rome had supremacy, but Cyprian maintained that all bishops were equal. When the Early Church wanted a decision, it called a Council rather than asking one individual to pronounce on behalf of the entire Church. However, nine factors, listed on the next page, were working in favour of Rome.

1.4 Current viewpoints

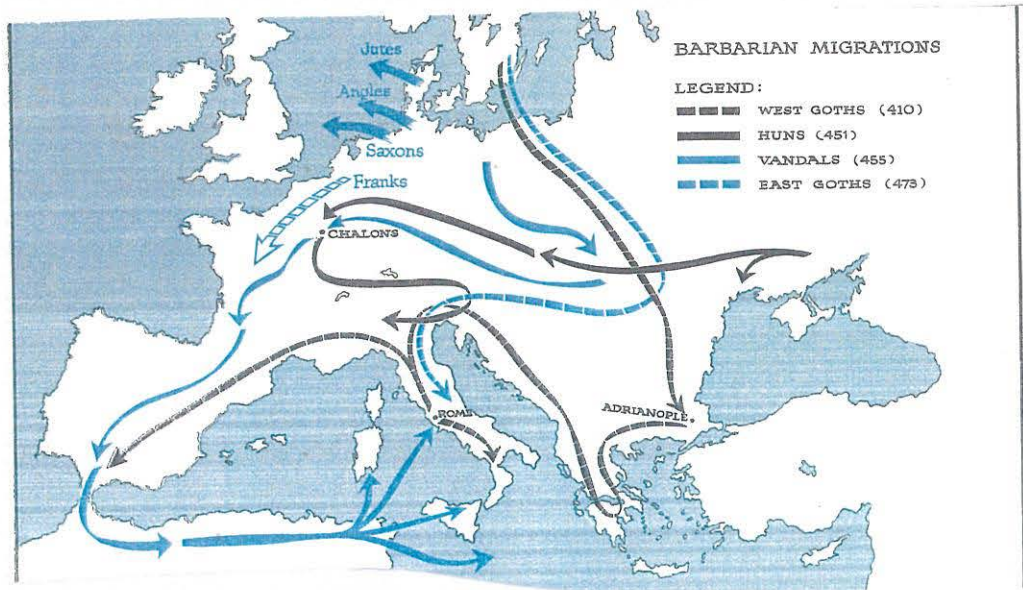
Roman Catholics see the Pope as the Vicar of Christ, having unique apostolic responsibilities and presiding over the only true Church; the Orthodox Church, based on Constantinople, see the pope in Rome as only one of several patriarchs, along with its own one; Protestants do not see the Pope as the divinely designated successor of the apostles. The remainder of this lecture charts how the concept of Papacy emerged.

2. SUPREMACY OF BISHOP OF ROME OVER OTHER BISHOPS – 100-450 (Cairns, 150-2, 159-63, 202-6)

2.1 Factors contributing to the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome

Factor	Result
MATTHEW 16:17-19	When Constantine moved the capital of Roman Empire to Constantinople in 330, the Church there began to claim, as Rome had done before, that it was premier church of the Empire, so the bishops of Rome had to insist that their authority did not depend on imperial favour or geographical factor, but on their succession to the apostle Peter. The Bishop of Rome Siricius (384-9) was the first to use title 'Pope' (in sense of capital 'P'), claiming that his 'decrees' had binding force on all since 'the care of all churches was committed to him'
APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION	The claim that Peter had 'laid hands' on a successor, and that his 'supreme authority' had been handed down through the bishops of Rome, was first made by Stephen in 254 and resisted by Cyprian (1.3 of these Notes).
MARTYRDOM, PETER + PAUL	With a rise in veneration of martyrs – see Lecture 6, page 11 – Rome gained prestige as site of deaths of both Peter and Paul. Persecution under Nero also gave Roman church special prominence by virtue of its suffering.
IMPERIAL FAVOUR	Constantine showered privileges on the Roman church, including a bishop's palace, a basilica over Peter's shrine and grants from the treasury; imperial favour rubbed off on the church at Rome. After Edict of Milan, emperors often sought advice on religious matters from bishops of Rome.
LANGUAGE	The Latin-speaking West, led by the bishop of Rome, was able to cut through knotty theological dilemmas that incapacitated Greek-speaking East, because Latin language did not express subtle shades of meaning that perplexed East.
LOCATION	Of the four patriarchal cities, only Rome was in the West; so the bishop of Rome exercised authority over the whole Western area.
BARBARIAN INVASIONS	Collapse of Western Empire, under barbarian invasions, left Church as major integrating force in society in Empire. See next page. (Lion, 184, 187-192)
MISSIONARY OUTREACH	(This and the next box are both after 450, but they were two of the factors in the continuing rise of papal power). Bishops of Rome, such as Gregory I, (540-604) encouraged missionary work among barbarian tribes, who then looked to Rome with great respect. The East was slower in evangelizing to the north and east of Constantinople – developed in Lectures 13 and 14.
MUSLIM CONQUEST	By 732 – Lecture 14 – the territories of the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem were captured by Islam, which also put continual pressure on Constantinople; all this increased the authority of the Roman bishop.

Supplement to section 'Barbarian invasions' on previous page.



When barbarian tribes who lived along north bank of Danube, just outside Roman Empire, spilled over Danube and into Roman territory, their able leader, Alaric, tried to negotiate with Emperor and then, frustrated, invaded Italy and sacked Rome on 24 August 410 - blackest day in Roman history. As Emperor and many leading citizens had withdrawn to Ravenna, remaining citizens of Rome looked for help - political help - to pope. He coped well with social, military and political problems of invasion, and this enhanced authority of papal office. Much of prestige of old civil power passed to bishop of Rome as head of Western Church.

When Vandals went on to conquer Roman Africa (see map), Africa had no leader of ability, so looked to pope for help and were grateful for his negotiating with invaders. They were fortunate, as was whole Church, that just at that point Leo I (Leo the Great, pope 440-61) became pope - details in Cairns, 152. All this further enhanced status in community of these Bishops of Rome.

Development of Episcopacy in the First Five Centuries

PERIOD	SOURCES	DESCRIPTION
1st century	New Testament	Elder-bishops and deacons in each church were under the supervision of the apostles.
Early 2nd century	Ignatius	Elders and bishops were differentiated. Each congregation was governed by bishop, elders, and deacons.
Late 2nd century	Irenaeus Tertullian	Diocesan bishops—a bishop now oversaw a group of congregations in a geographical area; they were thought to be successors of the apostles.
Mid-3rd century	Cyprian	Priesthood and sacrifice. Elders (presbyteros) come to be seen as sacrificing priests. Primacy of bishop of Rome was asserted.
Early 4th century	Council of Nicea	Metropolitan bishops (archbishops) by virtue of their location in population centers gained ascendancy over <i>chorepiscopi</i> (country bishops).
Late 4th century	Council of Constantinople	Patriarchs. Special honor was given to the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. Patriarch of Constantinople was given primacy next to the bishop of Rome.
Mid-5th century	Leo I Council of Chalcedon	The supremacy of Rome—Leo I claimed authority over the whole church on the basis of succession from Peter.

2.2 Church life in 600 compared with the New Testament Church

1. Priesthood

Priesthood of all believers had long since been replaced by ordained priests, with distinctive clerical vestments, who were now indispensable for Christians' approach to God – next para:

2. Confession to priest

From early on, confession of sin was essential for restoration to Church after a grievous fall. At first, it was made publicly in church, but as this fomented scandals, Pope Leo I (died 461) replaced it by private confession to a priest. Missionaries to Franks (modern France) c500 - Lecture 10, section 3 - found moral life so low that they encouraged them to come privately to confess their sins and to receive instruction. In theory, clergy extended forgiveness of Christ through powers conferred on Church from Apostle Peter, but in practice it was seen as clergy having power to forgive sin on completion of penance.

3. Lord's Supper (Cairns, 193; Lion, 265-6; Vos, 52)

Idea was growing that communion was more than just a memorial of Christ's death, but that in some way consecration of bread and wine by priest became a fresh sacrifice and changed elements into body and blood of Christ. Words of institution, 'Do this', were understood as 'Offer this'. However, in 600 there was no clear understanding of what this meant; it was 831 before doctrine of transubstantiation (as this is now known) was formulated – more details in Lecture 13. This was officially promulgated as doctrine of Roman Church in 1215.

4. Church buildings

With increase of wealth among Christians, and favour shown to them by State, church buildings became more and more ornate.

Altar at which priest offered sacrifice of body and blood of Christ was deemed so sacred that it was now railed off from nave of church, inaccessible to all but priests.

5. Incense

Burning of incense was at first only for fumigation of Christian buildings, but by 600 the smoke was seen as symbolizing prayers of faithful drifting up to heaven (Psalm 141:2, Revelation 5:8 and 8:3).

6. Purgatory (Vos, 52)

Idea gradually gained ground from c400 that souls could be purged of their sins by fire. Gregory the Great (died 604) favoured it, but it did not become official doctrine until 1439.

7. Prayers for dead and prayers to saints

These developed as belief in Purgatory increased. Saints were venerated, and idea grew that prayers could be addressed to them. Church recognized such prayers in 787.

8. Adoration of Mary

Council of Ephesus declared in 431 that Mary was *theotokos*, 'Mother of God', which led to Festivals like Annunciation being held in her honour on March 25; by 600, prayers were addressed to her.

9. Papal supremacy

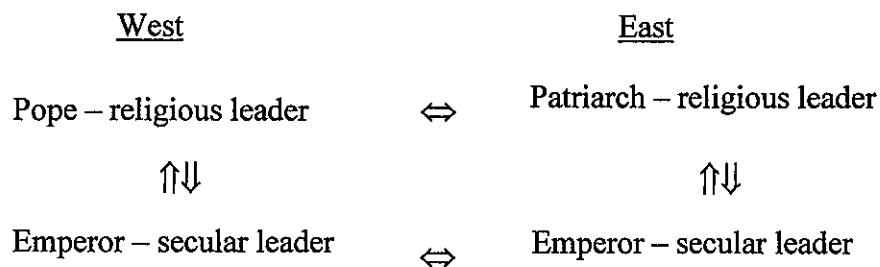
Bishop of Rome now claimed supremacy over whole Church, as described on page 4.

2.3 The Eastern Church's refusal to accept the primacy of the Bishop of Rome

The position in the West and in the East was crucially different at this time in respect of the relationship between Church and State leaders. On the map on the previous page, you'll see that there are no barbarian invasion routes through what we now call Turkey because the Emperor, who lived in Constantinople, concentrated his troops on defending the Eastern part of the Empire and he kept the leader of the Eastern Church, known as the Patriarch, firmly under his control, while the Bishop of Rome, with no civil leader to compete with him, grew stronger and stronger in every area of Western life.

Chrysostom in Constantinople (lecture 8) refused in 404 to obey the Eastern emperor, who then sent troops into the Church of Holy Wisdom during a baptismal service, seized Chrysostom and sent him into exile. This showed that no bishop in the Eastern empire could stand against the emperor in contrast to the West, where in 390, as we also saw in Lecture 8, Bishop Ambrose of Milan forced the Emperor Theodosius to do humiliating public penance for his severity in dealing with a sedition in Thessalonica. Ambrose insisted that 'The emperor is within the Church, not over it'. In short, the Bishops of Rome (who later became known as Popes) had great authority in the West, while the Emperors had the Patriarchs (leaders) of the Eastern Church under their thumbs.

The power struggle over many centuries between the West and the East, and the simultaneous power struggle between the religious leaders and the secular leaders in their respective areas, West and East, is summed up in this diagram.



Between 400 and 800 (when Charlemagne was crowned as Holy Roman Emperor, for which see the next page), there was no single, unifying, political figure in the West to compete with the Pope for leadership of the Western Church and State.

Vos has a good summary of C8 papal succession and its problems at pp. 56-8. Hanks, *Great Events*, 93-99, is good on Leo I ('the Great'), in the crucial years 440-461. Lane, 49-50, also on Leo.

TOPIC – CHARLEMAGNE – BIOGRAPHY (c747-814) – was taken at this point in the Lecture; here, it is printed at the end of the Notes for this Lecture.

The remainder of this lecture is concerned with (1) Popes and Emperors in the West manoeuvring, from 800 to 1300, to control each other and then, (2) with power struggles between rival Popes to 'own' the Papacy, from 1300 to 1417.

3. POWER-STRUGGLES BETWEEN POPES AND EMPERORS FROM 800-1300 and how this shaped European civilisation.

3.1 Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire

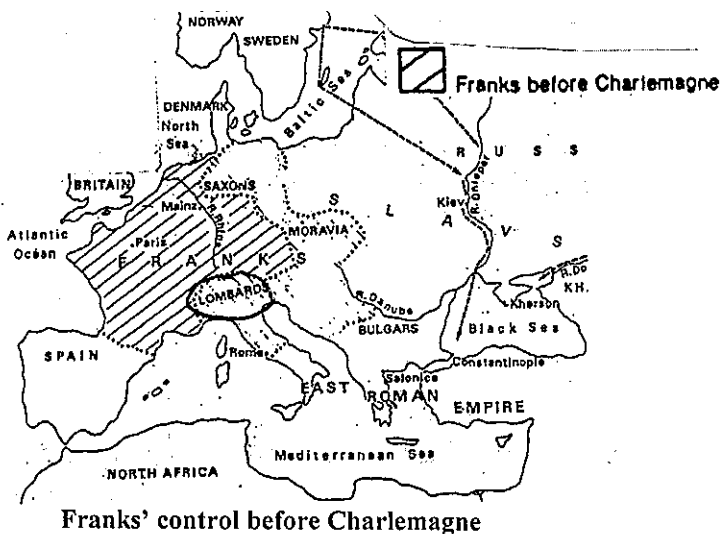
As Popes extended their influence northward through Europe, through missionary activity, they looked for support from kings and other secular rulers. A dramatic event on Christmas Day in the year 800 fundamentally changed Church/State relationships and started, as our title says: Power-Struggles between Popes and Emperors for the next 500 years.

A word of background to Christmas Day, 800. People known as Franks, roughly modern France (left map, below) had been nominally Christian for three hundred years – nominally, because when their king was converted, he told his people – ‘Meet me at the river tomorrow, to be baptised as Christians, or you will have your heads chopped off.’ Effective, perhaps, but hardly the foundation for devotional life.

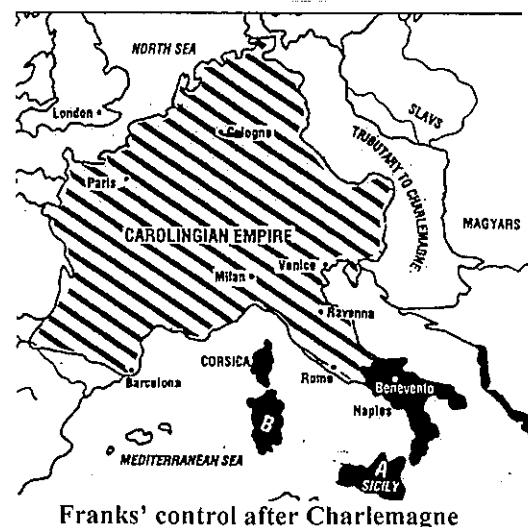
In 768, the king of the Franks was Charles, known as Charlemagne (*magne* from the Latin *magnus*, ‘the Great’, so *Charlemagne* = Charles the Great) - 7 feet tall, with long white hair; he loved hunting and music. For some time, the Lombards, whom you see on the map (a German tribe who had taken over the fertile land which we still call Lombardy, and who were always looking for more land) had been threatening Rome, so the Pope asked the Franks, who were loyal, orthodox Christians, for help. Charlemagne crossed the Alps into Italy with a great army, destroyed the Lombard kingdom and set Rome free. When he visited the city, he was bowled over by visiting the tombs of Peter and Paul and the splendid churches, and hearing the majestic worship. Twenty-five years later, the next Pope invited him back; when Charlemagne came again to Rome, for Christmas 800:

As the King rose from his knees at Mass, the Pope placed a crown upon his head, and the whole Roman people hailed him. ‘To Charles, be life and victory, crowned of God, great peace-bringing Emperor of the Romans’.

Charlemagne went on to conquer the largest area under the control of one person since the Roman Empire, a new Empire, covering much of modern Europe, known as the Holy Roman Empire, as on the right-hand map and the map overleaf.



Franks' control before Charlemagne



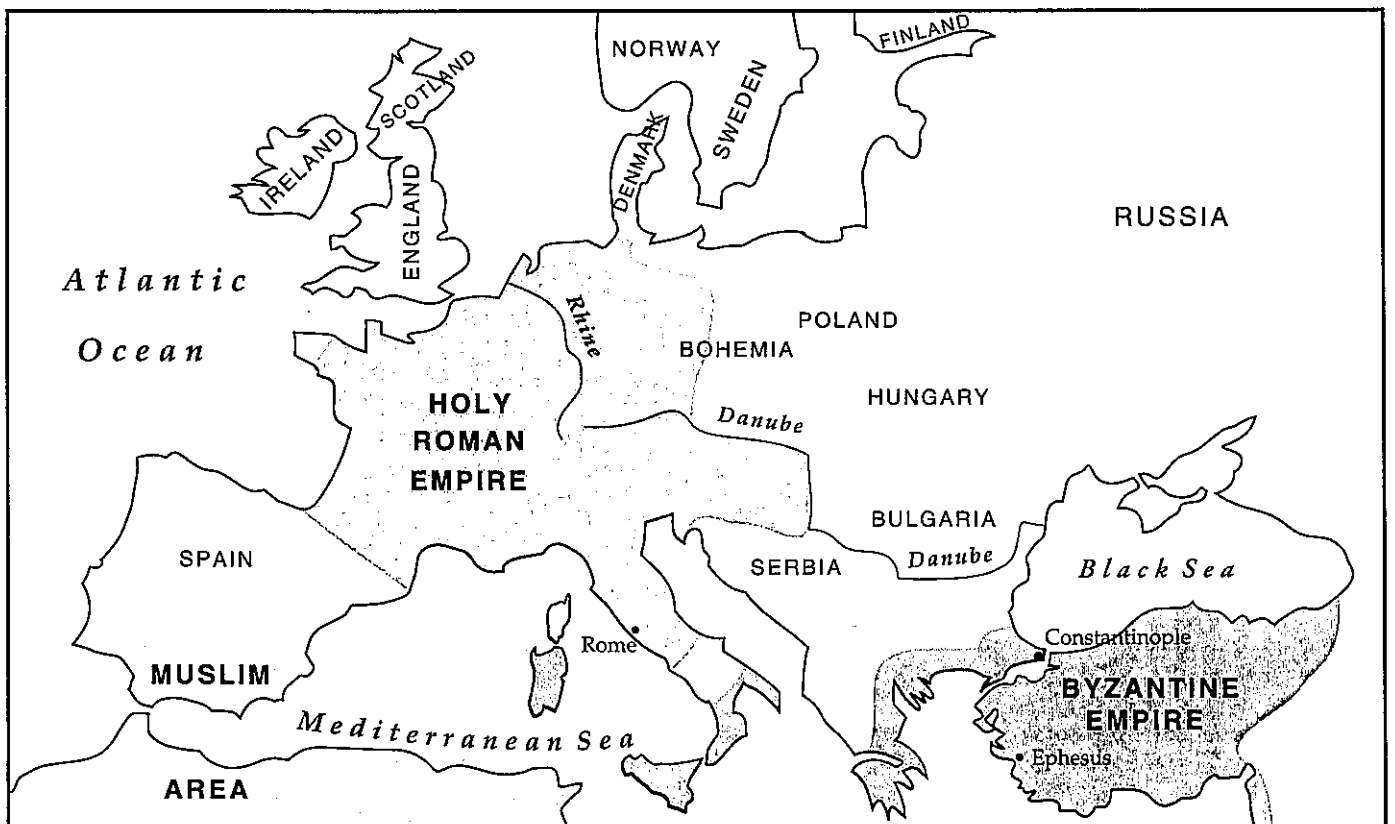
Franks' control after Charlemagne

Wherever Charlemagne conquered, he imposed Christianity. 'Imposed' is the word – as with his ancestor, those whom he vanquished had the choice of converting to Christianity or having their heads chopped off, so it was a fairly nominal Christianity, but Charlemagne was no fool; if the areas he conquered became nominally Christian, and accepted the authority of the Pope, they were less likely to stir up trouble and rebel against him.

So why was there tension between Charlemagne and the Pope? The Pope's idea in crowning Charlemagne was to give the message that if Popes could crown Emperors, Popes could equally well take their crowns away again, if the Emperors didn't obey the Pope. He thought that he was the top dog, but Charlemagne soon made clear he was the senior partner in the relationship. He regarded the Pope as nothing more than his spiritual advisor, and as Charlemagne himself put it:

The king's task is the effective strengthening, consolidating, propagating and preserving of the faith; the pope's task is to support the king in this duty, by praying for him like Moses with outstretched arms.

A powerful Emperor and a powerful Pope made an explosive relationship; we need to look briefly at the ups and downs of the relationship over the years that followed.



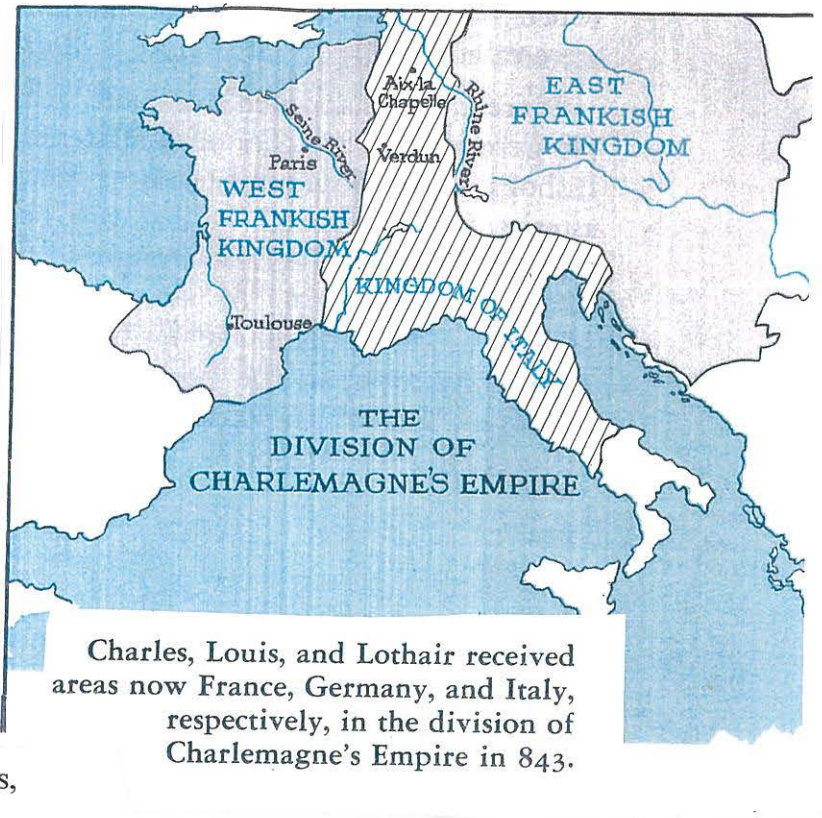
THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE, 800 – 1073

The Holy Roman Empire was an attempt by medieval political and religious leaders to connect their own rule with that of the Roman Empire, a system which still captured people's imagination. It was a vast region of loosely federated European territories, comprising the German-speaking peoples and North Italy, begun in 800 with the papal crowning of Charlemagne as emperor or, on an alternate view (because it declined after Charlemagne's death through his successors being weak and ineffective), when Otto the Great, king of Germany, went to Rome in 962 and forced the Pope to crown him Emperor. It lasted until 1806, when Napoleon persuaded the Emperor to renounce the title.

3.2 Papalism (the Church) strikes back against Imperialism (Emperors) (Cairns, 184-7)

Charlemagne's son governed Holy Roman Empire according to his father's ideals, but without his father's abilities. At end of his reign, Louis disastrously divided the Empire among his three sons, as on this map ----->

Further disintegration followed. The Popes thought this would give them an opportunity to take control of the Church again, but without a powerful emperor to protect them, Popes fell increasingly under control of the Roman nobility. By 900, the papacy had become incapable of offering any independent moral, spiritual or theological leadership to the Western Church. For the next 150 years, the papacy was a political pawn in the hands of the Roman aristocracy, who fought over who should 'own' it. These were dark days, but eventually the pendulum swung back, as we see next:



3.3 'The cleansing of the papacy' (Cairns 202-6; Lane 84-86)

In 1044, the people of Rome rebelled against the scandalously immoral Pope Benedict IX (1032-45). Sylvester III was made Pope in his place, but Benedict's political allies put him back into power. There were now two men, each calling himself the properly elected Pope. Benedict, tired of being Pope, sold the papacy to a third candidate, Gregory VI - then changed his mind and reclaimed the papacy. When the Holy Roman Emperor Henry III came to Rome in 1046, so that the Pope could crown him as Emperor, he found three rival popes, all claiming to be the Pope.

Henry III was a good king, good in his personal life, just and wise as a ruler, and a dedicated Christian reformer of Church and society. He called a synod, which deposed all three 'popes' and put a good German bishop on the papal throne, Clement II (1046-7) - this is known as 'the cleansing of the papacy'. Henry nominated the next three Popes, all from Germany. One of them, Gregory VII, was one of the great early medieval Popes; we should notice two things about him, at 3.4 and 3.5.

3.4 Papal decrees

In Gregory VII, (Pope from 1073 to 1085), the medieval papacy reached maturity. He changed the balance of power by introducing papal decrees (below). He was determined to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. He did not believe there could or should be two powers, spiritual and worldly. For him there was only one power: spiritual power = the Church, so, soon after becoming Pope, Gregory published statements which are known as *dictatus papae* ('papal decrees'), outlining his view of the papacy (next page.)

Some of Pope Gregory VII's (pope, 1073-85) *dictatus papae* ('papal decrees')

- That the Roman pontiff alone can by right be called universal.
- That he alone can depose and reinstate bishops.
- That his legate should take precedence over all bishops, even if he is of lower rank.
- That the pope may depose those who are absent.
- That he alone may use the imperial insignia.
- That all princes should kiss the feet of the pope alone.
- That his name alone should be recited in the churches.
- That he may depose emperors.
- That no chapter and no book shall be considered canonical without his authority.
- That his sentence ought to be retracted by nobody, and he alone can retract it.
- That no council may be called ecumenical without the pope's authority.
- That he may be judged by no man.
- That no man should condemn a man who is an appellant to the Apostolic Throne.
- That the more important cases of every church should be referred to that See.
- That the Roman Church has never made a mistake and never will.
- That the Roman pope is sanctified by the merits of Saint Peter.

Not all of these were new, but the tone was new in its self-confident assertiveness. Western Christianity began to speak of Christians on earth as the 'Church Militant', contrasted with those now in heaven as the 'Church Triumphant'. ('Militant' means 'fighting', 'engaged in war'.) Previously Christians on earth were seen as the 'Pilgrim Church' and those in heaven as the 'Church at Rest'. This change reflects the new world-conquering aggression of Gregory.

3.5 Showdown between Pope Gregory VII and the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV

Bishops were naturally loyal to whoever (Pope or Emperor) appointed them so, in the second of his decrees (above), Gregory set out that only he could do so. The German Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV (1065-1105), needed bishops who would be loyal to him, to control the troublesome knights and nobles in his kingdom, and so provocatively he appointed three new bishops – known as 'lay investiture'.

Gregory excommunicated Henry and released all Henry's German subjects from any obligation of loyalty to Henry. Faced with risk of losing his throne, Henry capitulated. With his wife and baby son, he crossed the Alps mountains with great difficulty in the depth of the winter of 1077 to entreat Gregory, who was staying in a castle at Canossa in Tuscany, to release him from the sentence of excommunication.

Henry knocked on the door – see the picture – but the Pope refused him admission. Henry stood there all day, in the snow, bareheaded, barefooted – that was the way a penitent had to dress to seek absolution for sin. When night came, he went away and came back the next morning – knocked – no answer; he stayed all day, no answer; he came back on the



Cairns, page 206

Henry IV. In a controversy over lay investiture, Henry was excommunicated by Pope Gregory VII, who also released Henry's subjects from having any allegiance to him. Henry crossed the Alps with his wife and baby to see the pope at Canossa, but he made Henry wait outside, barefoot in the snow, for three days.

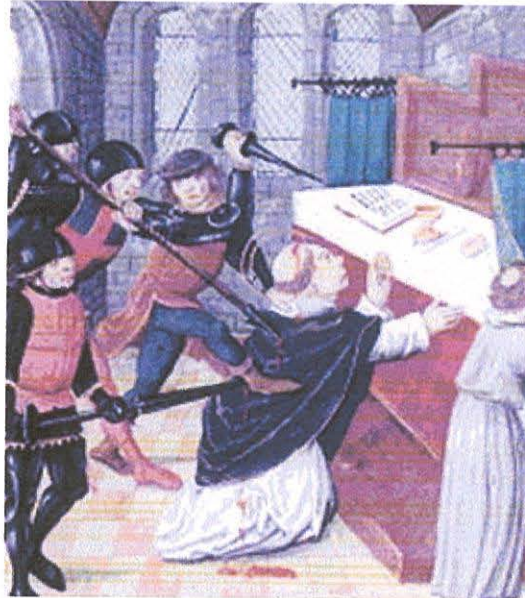
third morning, knocked – no answer until late in the afternoon, when this wizened old man, the Pope, let this tall powerful young man, Henry, into the castle, where Henry implored forgiveness.

Pope Gregory then released Henry from his sentence of excommunication, but the greatest ruler in Christendom had been humiliated by the Pope into submission to the Pope's will. (Cairns, 205-6; Lion, 261; Vos, 65-6)

And so it went on; we'll look briefly at Pope Alexander III, to illustrate the rise and rise of Popes bullying Kings, until it reached its pinnacle under Innocent III (3.7, below) and then suddenly went pear-shaped.

3.6 Thomas Becket (1118-70) (Lion, 290)

The confrontation between Pope Alexander III (Pope 1159-81) and King Henry II of England is the best-known to British people because of what happened in Canterbury Cathedral. This time the issue was who controlled the law courts because, and as well as the ordinary courts, controlled by the King, the Church had its own courts, which exclusively dealt with priests who broke the law of the land and generally treated its own very leniently. Henry was determined to make the



**"Who will rid me of this troublesome priest?"
King Henry II**

**"For the name of Jesus
and the protection of the
Church, I am ready to
embrace death."
St. Thomas Becket**

clergy subject to the civil courts. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket (1118-70), opposed him. In an outburst of rage, Henry said (see the caption beside the picture). Four knights took him at his word, went to Canterbury cathedral, and murdered Becket at the altar, smashing his skull open so that his brain spilled out. Shock-waves of horror went through Catholic Europe. People hailed Becket as a martyr and a saint. Pope Alexander forced Henry to do public penance and to give up his campaign against Church courts. Becket's tomb in Canterbury became one of most popular sites of pilgrimage from all over the Western world. The medieval State had lost another battle with the medieval Church.

3.7 Innocent III (Pope 1198-1216) (Cairns, 206-10; Lion, 262-7; Vos, 67-68)

The Pontificate of Innocent III was the most splendid of the medieval papacy, which reached its high noon. He not only ruled the Church, but he was a greater force in the secular politics of Europe than any emperor or national king. He claimed spiritual power over temporal power in famous language, such as:

Kings rule over their respective kingdoms, but Peter rules over the whole earth.

No king can reign rightly unless he serves Christ's vicar.

We'll see in a moment how he subdued King Philip of France, King John of England and the Holy Roman Emperor in Germany, but first let me pick up that word 'vicar' in the

second quote. Innocent was the first pope to make the title ‘vicar of Christ’ central to the claims of the papacy. We saw in Lecture 5 how Tertullian coined the phrase to describe the work of the Holy Spirit and we saw there (4.2) that the word ‘vicar’ has changed its meaning between then and now – now, a vicar is the senior clergyman in a parish, and his assistant is called the curate, but then, the senior man was known as the curate – having the ‘cure of souls’ – and his deputy was called his vicar. Previously, popes had claimed they were the ‘vicar of the apostle Peter’, exercising Peter’s apostolic authority, but Innocent boldly called himself the ‘vicar of Christ’ on Earth.

Three examples of Innocent’s power:

(1) In France, he intervened in the personal life of King Philip, who had been widowed and had then married a Danish princess, but soon lost interest in her and took a third wife. Innocent called on the king to return to his rightful wife; when Philip refused, the Pope placed France under ‘interdict’; this was the Pope’s great weapon – an interdict forbade all clergyman in the affected area to perform any of their functions (except funerals, and baptism for those in danger of death). People believed at that time that access to God was only through their local priest, so they were cut off from any spiritual help. King Philip quickly gave in, left his third wife and returned to his second.

(2) King John of England chose the bishop he wanted for the next Archbishop of Canterbury. Pope Innocent set aside John’s candidate and appointed his own, whom John refused to accept. The Pope threatened to ‘interdict’ England, but unlike Philip in France, John did not give in, at first, and swore he would expel all clergy from England if Innocent dared to do this. Innocent dared, and placed England under interdict in 1208. For four years England went without any Church services. Still John refused to submit. In 1212, Innocent used his ultimate weapon: he excommunicated John, so if John died, he died outside the Church; furthermore the Pope called on the other kings of Europe to invade England and to dethrone John. John then gave in; the Pope’s revenge was to take over England as his own personal property and to collect taxes from it.

(3) He also humiliated the Holy Roman Emperor in Germany. By clever political manoeuvring in 1212, he secured his own choice for the next Emperor in place of the one preferred by the outgoing Emperor and the German people. (Cairns, 208.)

3.8 Fourth Lateran Council of 1215

(Cairns, 209, 236; Lion, 263-6; Vos, 68; Hanks, *Great Events*, 143-149; Lane, 96)

Staying for a moment with Pope Innocent III, he convened a Council which was the high watermark of the medieval Papacy. He died in the following year and, as we’ll see next, the Papacy after him went rapidly downhill.

This was the Fourth Council to meet in the Lateran Palace in Rome, and the twelfth ‘ecumenical’ (‘empire-wide’) Council of the Church. It was the greatest of the medieval Councils, the pinnacle of the many achievements of Pope Innocent III, the greatest of the medieval popes. The Council was called ‘to reform the whole Church’.

Details are on the next page.

The Council was held in the Lateran Palace at Rome. This was the Pope’s residence for about a thousand years from 313 on. This is as it is now, substantially rebuilt after 1215.



Pope Innocent III had prepared for years to hold this Council. He presented seventy 'proposals' ('Canons'). Although 1,400 were present - 483 bishops, representing the Church, 900 abbots and priors representing the monasteries and the new 'mendicant' Orders (Lecture 12), and delegates from kings and princes - there was little discussion and it was all over in three weeks. We'll glance at just three of the Canons.

Canon One was an exposition of the Catholic Faith. After an orthodox statement regarding the trinity and creation, it went on:

There is one Universal Church of the faithful, outside of which there is absolutely no salvation. In which there is the same priest and sacrifice, Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine; the bread being changed (*transsubstantiatio*) by divine power into the body, and the wine into the blood, so that to realize the mystery of unity we may receive of Him what He has received of us.

Thus, for the first time, the doctrine of transubstantiation was declared the official doctrine of the Church. From this time onward, the Church declared that the elements of the Lord's Supper became the body and blood of the Lord.

Canon Three provided that erroneous beliefs concerning the doctrines of the Christian faith were now subject to punishment by civil authorities.

Canon Twenty-one required every member of the Church to confess to a priest once a year. In addition, all members were to partake of the Eucharist at Easter and confession was mandatory before the taking of the Eucharist. Failure to observe this canon resulted in being barred from entering a church during a person's lifetime and the denial of a Christian burial at death.

The importance of these Canons

Why should we look at three Canons that were enacted over eight hundred years ago? First, Canon One was the formal adoption of the teaching of the Catholic Church in reference to the Eucharist. Secondly, until 1215, the Church censured those who did not teach according to the rule of faith but such discipline was limited to admonishment and, ultimately, excommunication from fellowship. Now, by Canon Three, the secular authorities could inflict civil punishment on the heretic even to the point of putting an individual to death. Thirdly, Canon Twenty-one requiring confession to a priest at least once a year meant that sins were no longer confessed to God and, if an individual had wronged another person, they were to confess to the priest and, by implication, not required to confess the injury directly to the person wronged.

4. POWER-STRUGGLES AMONG POPES – 1300 to 1417

4.1 Reversal of papal fortunes

Innocent III's death in 1216 was followed by period of eclipse and finally disaster. There were many reasons for this – Vos, 72-74, succinctly gives seven – but the chief one was the rise of nationalism. As strong monarchs arose, they became jealous of the wealth and power that the Church held within their territory, and they wanted to be in charge. France grew in strength until King Philip (1285-1314) kidnapped and imprisoned the Pope in 1303. (Cairns, 210, 239). French nationalism as a political and anti-papal force had arrived on the European scene. That led to the next point, 4.2, on the next page.

4.2 Avignon captivity of the papacy (1309-77) (Cairns, 241; Lion, 332; Vos, 73)

Follow this on the chart below. Most of the popes until 1304 had been Italian, but when Benedict XI (2nd name of the chart) died, the powerful French king bullied the cardinals into appointing a Frenchman, Clement V (3rd name of the chart). He followed this up by bullying Clement, who was a weak personality, into moving the papal court to Avignon on the river Rhone, a long way from Rome – see the map on the next page. Despite the protests of the people of Rome, who said that the Pope should live in the Vatican, Clement never set foot in Rome once in his nine years as Pope. To make sure that the papacy stayed under his control, the French king packed the College of Cardinals, who (then as now) elected popes, with Frenchmen and the next six popes were French.

Those hostile to France referred to these nearly 70 years (1309-77) as ‘the Babylonian captivity of the Church’, after the seventy years the children of Israel spent in Babylon in Old Testament times, Jeremiah. 25.11; modern historians call it ‘Avignonesse captivity’.

THE LATE MEDIEVAL PAPACY		
Boniface VIII (1294-1303) Benedict XI (1303-4) Beginning of the Avignon papacy Clement V (1305-14) John XXII (1316-34) Benedict XII (1334-42) Clement VI (1342-52) Innocent VI (1352-62) Urban V (1362-70) Gregory XI (1370-78)		
THE GREAT SCHISM		
Roman popes Urban VI (1378-89) Boniface IX (1389-1404) Innocent VII (1404-6) Gregory XII (1406-15)	Pisan popes Alexander V (1409-10) John XXIII (1410-15)	Avignon popes Clement VII (1378-94) Benedict XIII (1394-1423)
COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE-REUNITES THE CHURCH, 1415-17		
The Renaissance papacy Martin V (1417-31) Eugene IV (1431-47) Nicholas V (1447-55) Calixtus III (1455-58) Pius II (1458-64) Paul II (1464-71) Sixtus IV (1471-84) Innocent VIII (1484-92) Alexander IV (1492-1503) Julius II (1503-13) Leo X (1513-21)		

4.3 Return to Rome (Lion, 333-4)

Gregory XI moved back to Rome in 1377, but died during the following year. The cardinals were divided. They were nearly all Frenchmen, and would gladly have gone back to Avignon, but the people of Rome were determined to keep the papacy in Rome and demanded an Italian pope. The mob shouted, ‘A Roman! A Roman!’ and, pressurised by this, the cardinals elected Urban VI (left-hand column), an Italian who wanted to liberate the papacy from French control. He lacked tact and soon had many enemies. The cardinals discussed how to correct their mistake in choosing him and 12 of the 16 cardinals declared the election was null because it had been carried out under threat of popular violence. The French majority then elected one of their own number as Pope Clement VII (right-hand column). He and his cardinals returned to Avignon and set up court there. Urban VI stayed in Rome, refusing to recognise that Clement VII existed. Urban appointed new cardinals in place of those who had deserted him.

So began the Great Schism, described on page 16; page 15 is for two pictures (only).

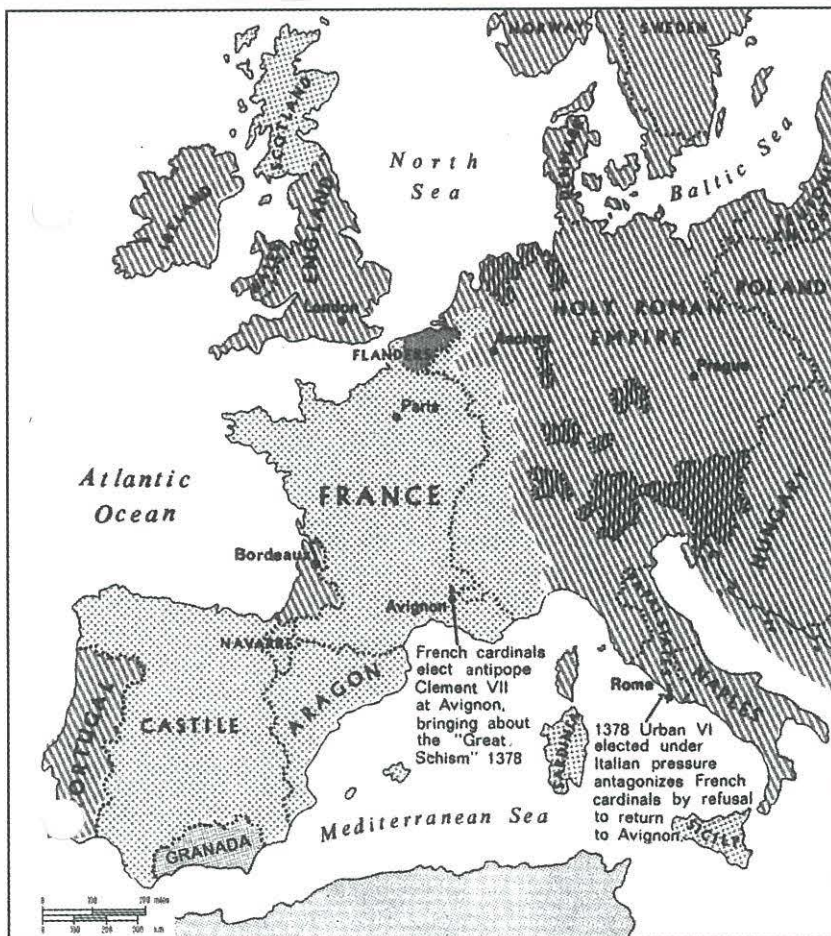
A picture of one aspect of the 'Babylonian Captivity', described on page 15.









THE PALACE OF THE POPES, AVIGNON

Pope Benedict XII spent a fortune building this fortress-like palace between 1334 and 1342, showing that he had abandoned any idea of moving back to Rome. Later, during the Great Schism of the West, it became the residence of the antipopes Clement VII and Benedict XIII.

'European' allegiances in the Great Schism, described on page 17.



-  Allegiance to Rome
-  Allegiance to Avignon
-  Neutral
-  Disputed
-  Conciliar obedience
-  Muslim territory

There is a similar map at Cairns, page 240, but note that the key to Cairns' map has 'Rome' and 'Muslim territory' the wrong way round.

4.4 The Great Schism (1378-1417) (Cairns, 240-1; Lion, 335; Vos, 74)

There were now two rival Popes, both elected by cardinals of the Church. They excommunicated each other. Since there was no higher authority in the Church above the Pope who had been elected by cardinals, there was no power that could choose between them. This rending asunder of the Catholic Church is known as the 'Great Schism' (not to be confused with the East-West schism of 1054). Catholic Europe was split down the middle – see the map on the previous page. The Pope in Rome was recognised, obviously, by most of Italy, by England (since she was at war with France), by most of Germany (who distrusted the French) and also by Scandinavia and Portugal. The Pope in Avignon was recognized by France, inevitably, by Spain, by southern Italy, by some parts of Germany and by Scotland, because England had gone other way. The ideal that the Church would be above national interests was made a mockery, as the Great Schism stirred up feelings of autonomy in the churches of Catholic nations, thus threatening the universal authority of the Papacy.

4.5 The answer to a divided papacy was found in 'conciliar movement' (rule by Council) (Cairns, 247-50; Lion, 335-8)

The Great Schism dragged on for nearly 40 years, until many sincere Churchmen felt that the only answer was to hold an Ecumenical Council of the whole Catholic Church and to make the papacy subject to the Council. They were called 'conciliarists' (from the Latin *concilium*, 'council'), and their efforts at reform are known as the 'conciliar movement'. Cairns gives details at 247-50. The Council of Pisa in 1409 deposed both rival popes, Gregory XII (in Rome) and Benedict XIII (in Avignon), and asserted that ecumenical Councils were superior to the papacy. The Council then elected a new pope, Alexander V (1409-10). See the middle column in the chart on page 14.

Unbelievably, no one had considered how to make the deposed popes resign, and both of them refused to do so. With the new pope added, there were now three. The situation after the Council of Pisa is illustrated in the map on the following page.

The scandal of Schism increased. Cairns, 247-50, outlines how Councils temporarily solved the problem.

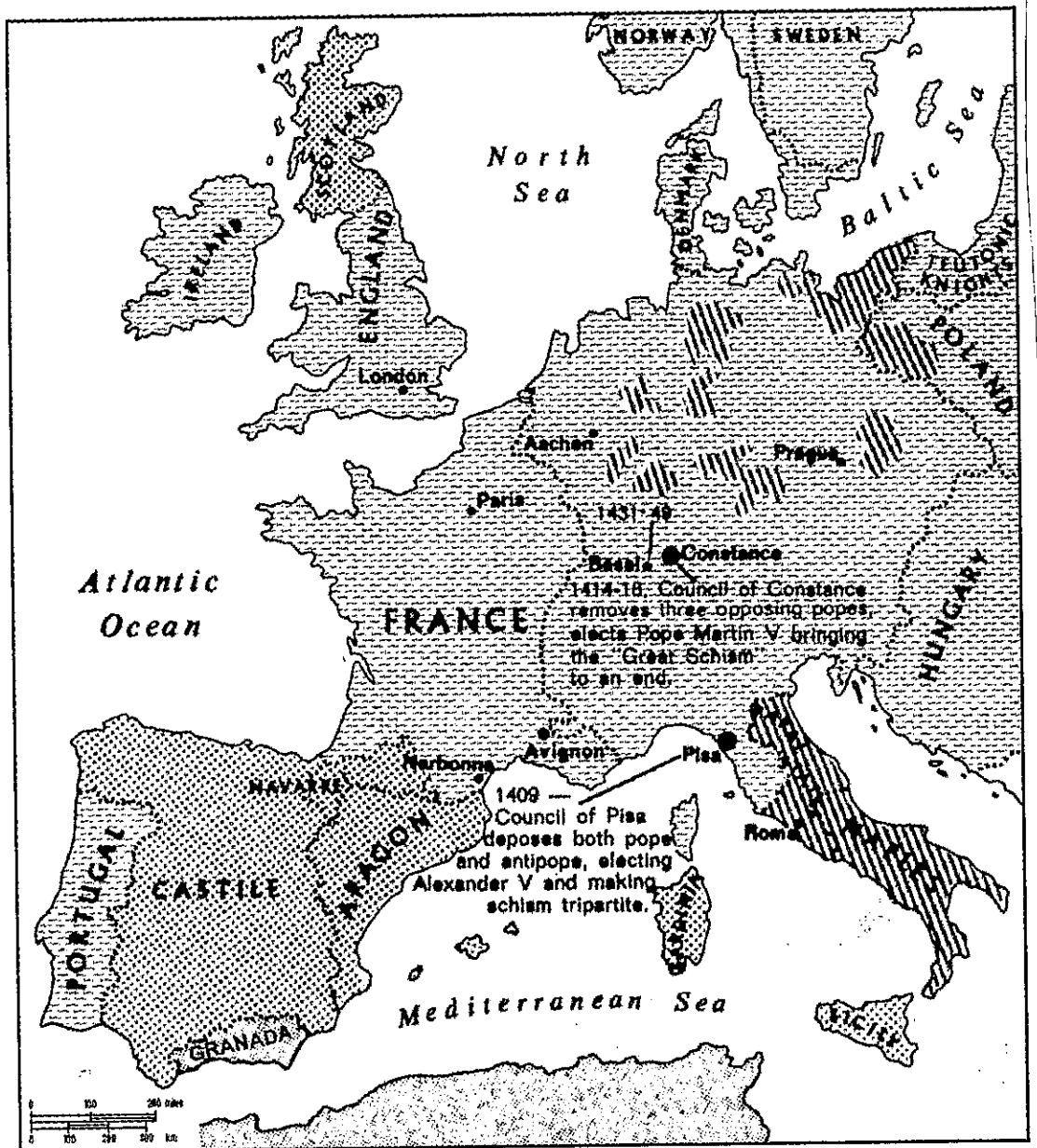
Ultimately, a Council held in Constance in Germany from 1414 to 1418 managed in 1417, under pressure from the German Holy Roman emperor, to depose all three rival popes and to elect a new one – see the last section of the chart on page 14. From then on, all Popes have lived in the Vatican in Rome.

4.6 The papacy c1500, that is just before the Protestant Reformation began in 1517

The Older view - that everything had been rotten for a thousand years and that it was suddenly put right at the Reformation.

The Modern view – that the Catholic Church provided reasonably well for religious needs, but did not do well in administrative, legal and moral matters. Many recognized that reform was needed, but they couldn't agree what to do, and since the Popes wouldn't and couldn't give a lead, the problems just got worse.

This will be taken up in Lectures 18 and 19.



DIVISIONS
AFTER THE
COUNCIL OF
PISA 1409

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

TOPIC FOR LECTURE 11 – CHARLEMAGNE – BIOGRAPHY (c747-814)

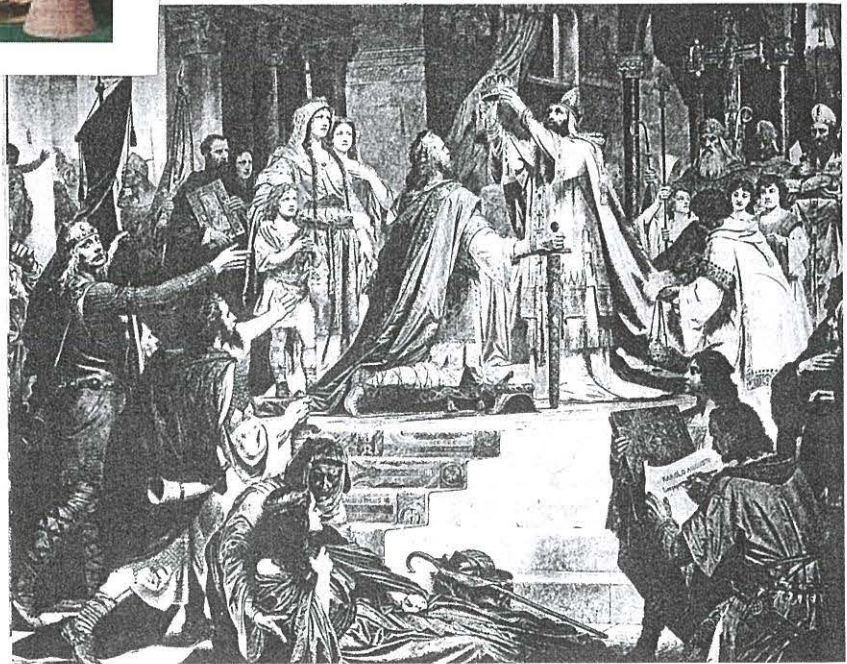
‘Charlemagne’ = Charles + Latin *magnus* ‘the Great’.

Please give us some biography about Charlemagne; the lecture will build on what you tell us and explore his influence on Western Christianity.

(Cairns, 180-82; Vos, 58-60; Hanks, *Great Events*, 69-75)



When Lombards in North Italy threatened the pope's territories in 773, the pope appealed to Charlemagne for help.



Ewing Galloway

Charlemagne Crowned Emperor by Leo III, A.D. 800

Picture from Cairns 181.

As the King rose from his knees at Mass, the Pope placed a crown on his head, and the whole Roman people hailed him. ‘To Charles, be life and victory, crowned of God, great peace-bringing Emperor of the Romans’.

Another depiction of the coronation is overleaf.

tu deloys deuant costentinnoble.
Si gence li secons liures de lestoue le güt
Roy challemaine.



Source: J. P. Castles / Artmaster / Bridgeman Art Library, London

The coronation of Charlemagne on Christmas Day 800, at St Peter's in Rome. Charlemagne was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III. This marked the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire.