

The Salian Century

Main Currents in an Age of Transition

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Translated by Barbara M. Bowlus

Foreword by Charles R. Bowlus

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Contents

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Frontispiece: Genealogical table of the Salian dynasty in the *Chronicle of Ekkehard of Aura*. (Havelberger version, now in the Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Cod. lat. 965, fol. 81v) probably based on an earlier version in the Recensio II of 1106/1107.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Foreword | ix |
| <i>Charles R. Bowlus</i> | |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter 1. Origins and Lordship of the Salian Dynasty | 5 |
| Chapter 2. The Dynamic Beginnings of the New Royal Dynasty | 18 |
| Chapter 3. Royal Prerogatives and Authority Under Conrad II | 44 |
| Chapter 4. Realm and Society in Transition | 61 |
| Chapter 5. Henry III: The Emperor of Peace and His Critics | 85 |
| Chapter 6. The Coup: The Princes' Concern for the Realm | 112 |
| Chapter 7. Henry IV: King, Tyrant, or Antichrist | 131 |
| Chapter 8. Princes as Heads of the Polity | 159 |
| Concluding Remarks | 180 |
| Appendix: Genealogy of the Salian Dynasty | 183 |
| List of Abbreviations | 187 |
| Notes | 189 |
| Bibliography | 199 |
| Index | 221 |

his grandiose plans came to nothing. A Wendish uprising in 1066 caused the collapse of the ecclesiastical organization in the Obodrite realm to the east, and the bishoprics of Oldenburg, Ratzenburg, and Mecklenburg, which would have become part of Adalbert's metropolitan superstructure, were now beyond the reach of the Church for a long time to come.

Adalbert's far-flung and overly ambitious projects, no doubt, depended heavily on the cooperation by the king and the pope, without their support, based on a close bond and common goals, the archbishop could not hope to be successful. Adalbert reportedly boasted that he had only two overlords, the pope and the king,³¹ and, we might add that he would have needed the assistance of both to realize his ambitions. His political concept was hardly concerned with the overall welfare of the realm, but focused almost exclusively on the royal power that sustained him. Adalbert could easily win the young king's favor with this attitude since it boosted Henry IV's self-confidence and stood in sharp contrast to Anno II of Cologne's demeanor whom the royal youth detested. Compared to Anno's concept of the princes' collective responsibility for the welfare of the realm, Adalbert's explicit emphasis on a personal bond with the king seems considerably more archaic. Inevitably, the princes accused the archbishop of Hamburg of selfish and high-handed behavior. Eventually, they were so infuriated with him that in January 1066, in a surprise move and contrary to the king's will, they joined forces and expelled the arrogant outsider from the royal court. This unexpected blow also served as a warning to the young king that his personal interests and sympathies were not to be satisfied at the expense of the common good, the welfare of the realm.

7

Henry IV: King, Tyrant, or Antichrist

A SOLEMN KNIGHTING CEREMONY at Worms on 29 March 1065, the Tuesday after Easter, marked Henry IV's initiation to adulthood (at age fifteen). Godfrey the Bearded, who in the same year became duke of Lower Lotharingia, participated in the rite as shield-bearer. Despite the fact that he had been furiously persecuted by Henry III over a period of many years, Godfrey had never shunned his responsibilities toward the realm and its welfare while simultaneously maintaining close ties to the reform papacy. Now at this crucial juncture he reached out to the young king to inaugurate a new beginning. However, Henry IV had long since developed his own idea of royal authority, an idea that was molded by the Salian dynasty's special tradition of kingship. Young Henry, furthermore, was even more prone to impulsive actions than his predecessors, as an account by Lampert of Hersfeld indicates. No sooner had he been invested with his knightly armor than he is allegedly purported to move against Archbishop Anno II of Cologne who, after Kaiserswerth, had taken him under his tutelage and had subjected him to a compulsory education in the virtues of being a good and just king (*bonum iustumque*).¹ "Half-cocked he would have moved against him, had the empress' timely intervention not placated the looming storm."²

Henry IV won such wildly divergent appraisals from his contemporaries that it is difficult to grasp his personality even today.³ The grand expansion and reconstruction of the cathedral of Speyer between 1080 and 1102/1106 show clearly that he was in tune with the intellectual and artistic currents of his time. We further learn from the *Vita* of Bishop Otto of Bamberg (1102–1139) that Henry IV could read, write, and understand as well as interpret Latin texts: "The emperor was so well versed in the written word that he could read and understand documents without assis-

tance, no matter from whom they had come to him."⁴ In the description of Henry IV's life, written around 1106—probably by Bishop Erlung of Würzburg (1105–1121)—we find the following account:

He possessed great intellectual powers and insights, and when the princes wavered in their judgment concerning legal matters or an imperial policy, he himself swiftly untangled the knot and explained to them, as if he were drawing from a secret well of wisdom, which approach was more just and useful. Attentively he listened to the voices around him while saying little himself. He did not burst out with his own opinion prematurely, but wanted to hear what others had to say. When his eyes looked piercingly into someone's face, he detected that man's innermost feelings and saw, as if he were looking with the eyes of a lynx, whether this person bore hatred or love in his heart. It also seems praiseworthy to me that he was the tallest in the circle of princes.

But the *Vita* also states: "Whoever rose up against him and his authority willfully was so cruelly struck down that traces of his royal punishment are visible among the offender's descendants to this very day. Thus, he preserved his own power as well as the future welfare of the realm; for men should learn to abstain from disturbing the peace and from devastating the realm with armed violence."⁵

Henry IV's opponents, of course, painted a different picture. Bruno's *Book of the Saxon War*, which probably originated shortly after 1081 and was possibly written by the chancellor of the anti-king Hermann of Salm (1081–1088), reported that Henry IV, as a young boy, already had puffed himself up with royal conceit. The account then continues that he had abandoned the path of virtue as an adolescent and had listened to the advice of Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen who, himself "bloated with pride," encouraged him to do "whatever his heart desired."⁶ Henry supposedly had two or three women at the time; he had beautiful young maidens forcefully brought to him, only to pass them on to his ministerials. When he wanted to get rid of his wife Bertha of Savoy, three years after their marriage in 1066, he induced an associate to tempt her with adultery. But Bertha caught on to the foul scheme and gave her husband, lurking in the background, such a thrashing with chair legs and sticks that he had to stay in bed for almost a month.⁷ In 1094 Henry ordered his second wife, the Russian princess Praxedis, whom he had wed in 1088, incarcerated in Verona after she had become involved in serious intrigues against him. Following her liberation by Matilda of Tuscany, Praxedis spread the wildest accusations about her imperial husband in the camp of Pope Urban II (1088–1099). These allegations must be taken with a grain of salt, however,

since they were launched at a time when Henry IV's detractors already perceived him as the incarnation of all evil and as the personification of the Antichrist. Godless acts and unnatural deeds were the very essence of evil men; they belonged to a general topology of evil.⁸

While many of the preceding comments are unquestionably partisan in nature, it can clearly be shown that Henry IV did not maintain close ties to the high aristocracy (except for his relationship with Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen) but rather sought his confidants among the lesser nobility, in comital circles, among prelates and chaplains in his vicinity, and among his own ministerials. Individuals from these groups, despised by his enemies, were the king's "intimate friends" (*amici, familiares*) and counselors (*consiliarii, consultores*). The relationship between Henry IV and his *familiares* must have been based on a special sense of bonding and mutual obligation as indicated by the inclusion of these men in the prayer memorials for the king's salvation.⁹ In sum, his demeanor toward his associates projects a picture of rare constancy and trust.

A fairly accurate picture of Henry IV's physical appearance has come down to us. When his sarcophagus was opened on 25 August 1900, an untouched, perfectly preserved skeleton was revealed, permitting a close reconstruction of his frame and even his facial features. Based on the evidence, Henry must have been a sturdy man of perfect build and considerable height, at least six feet tall.

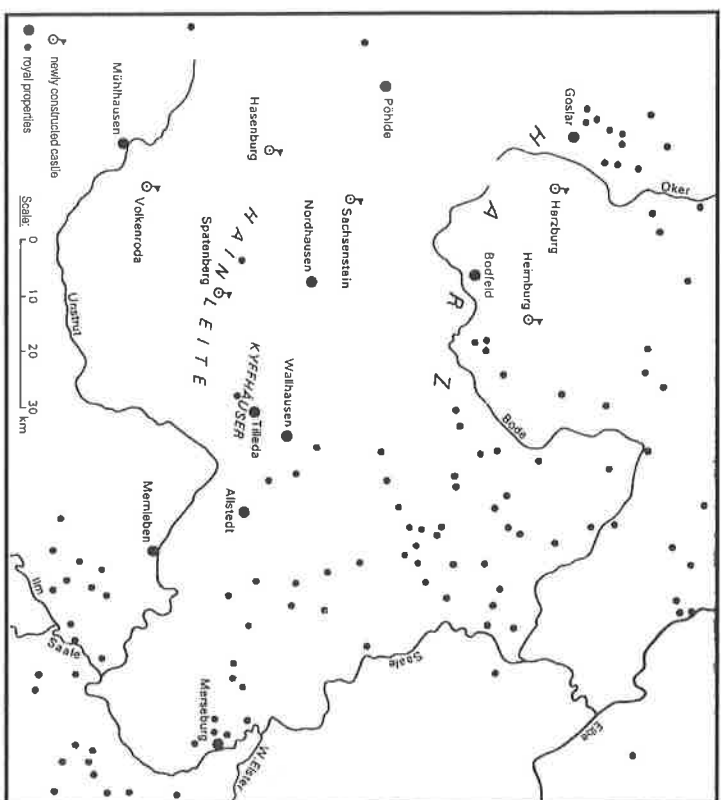
No residues indicating disease or illness can be found. The perfect curving of his cranium, including the temples, and the remarkable absence of bones with superfluous seams point, among other things, toward an undisturbed, robust constitution from birth on. An arched chest, broad shoulders, narrow loins, and energetic, well shaped bones in the long extremities, especially in the arms and hands, insinuate the frame of a slender, stalwart, almost athletic male, adept and well-versed in all skills expected of a knight. Virility paired with a touch of feminine charm graces his countenance. The large cranium, the delicately shaped forehead, the energetically protruding brow, and the characteristically elongated, aristocratic nose give the sharply chiseled, narrow face an energetic look which is further accented by a martial moustache. The large, receptive eyes, a finely shaped mouth, and an almost delicate chin provide his expression with a certain softness and rare beauty.¹⁰

When Henry IV became king in his own right in 1065, his vigorous and energetic appearance was paralleled by his determined actions. One of his first moves involved an unusually large transaction in which he transferred twelve royal monasteries and canopies to various ecclesiastical and secular princes.¹¹ The king was apparently trying to win these magnates' tacit ap-

proval for the uncompromising and autocratic royal policies he was planning to pursue.¹² Shortly thereafter, in an unprecedented demonstration of power, he initiated a systematic and ruthless move against Saxony. From Lampert of Hersfeld's *Annals* and Bruno's *Book of the Saxon War* we learn that he ordered the construction of massive fortifications in strategic locations around the Harz mountains, in the very heart of Saxony. All of these fortresses were so-called *Hohenburgen* (literally "high castles") (fig. 34). Built on exposed mountain spurs or at the edge of inaccessible cliffs, they constituted a radical departure from the design of traditional Saxon strongholds. The way their defenses were set up was also quite different; the castle of Sachsenstein on the southern rim of the Harz mountains, for example, featured a large round tower in the center of an enclosed courtyard and two towers flanking the entrance gate.¹³ None of these massive royal fortifications were garrisoned by Thuringians or Saxons, though, nor were they conferred as fiefs; all of them remained at the direct disposition of the king and were manned by "foreign" ministerials, predominantly from Swabia. This permanent military presence thus served as a guarantor for royal authority in Saxony.

The mightiest of these castles was the Harzburg, located east of Goslar.¹⁴ Although conceived as a royal residence, its character differed sharply from the open design of the palace in Goslar. Perched on a high ridge, the Harzburg with its impregnable fortifications could only be reached over a very precarious mountain path. This twin fortress, containing a smaller and a larger castle complex, was secured by a system of moats and massive ramparts that had been designed in conformity with the latest fortification technology. The western portion of the castle contained a canopy where the imperial insignia and royal treasures were kept when the king was in residence. Henry IV had the remains of his brother Conrad (d. 1055) transferred to the collegiate church on the Harzburg and also buried his infant son Henry (d. 1071) there.¹⁵ These actions may have been an attempt to establish yet another dynastic burial site, underscoring the residential character of this new Salian stronghold.

What was the purpose of these massive fortresses? A large complex of fiscal lands already existed at the northern edge of the Harz mountains, and Henry III, as we have seen, created an important center in this region when he enlarged and embellished the palace at Goslar. Many scholars have held the opinion that after 1065 Henry IV mainly strove to retrieve royal estates and sovereign rights that had been alienated by powerful nobles during Agnes's regency (*Reminikationspolitik*) and that this was the



34. Fortifications in the Harz region and in Thuringia, built during the rulership of Henry IV (Deutsche Geschichte, Bd. 2, Berlin-Ost 1983, p. 20).

main reason for his focus on Saxony. Although this point of view cannot be discounted, systematic studies¹⁶ have demonstrated that the loss of fiscal lands during the regency years was relatively small. Furthermore, there is no indication whatsoever that such losses had been more substantial in the Harz area of Saxony and Thuringia than elsewhere. The concept of revindication, therefore, hardly provides a satisfactory answer for the Salian king's unprecedented demonstration of power in this region.

In contrast, these fortifications and strongholds must be seen as part of a comprehensive effort to permeate this region with royal authority and to expand and solidify the king's territorial and political power. The existing fiscal lands evidently provided an excellent base for this purpose, allowing royal officials to accelerate the development of an efficient administrative system. For instance, we encounter Prefect Bodo of Goslar as head of

an apparently newly constituted royal advocacy. In addition, royal clients (*clientes*) now frequently appear in the sources, such as royal ministerials and people from the lesser nobility; none of them, however, are rooted in Saxony but most stem from Swabia. "For the king loved these people [the Swabians] in particular; and he promoted many of them, men of low birth and almost without ancestry, to the highest offices and elevated them to the first rank at court." Thus we read in Lampert of Hersfeld's report for the year 1073. These men appear as mintmasters or mining supervisors, as foresters or palatial officials; and in this region, with its rich deposits of iron and silver, they organized the royal domination ever more effectively.

During this period the administrators of the royal fortresses in Saxony became progressively more aggressive. Lampert of Hersfeld reports for the year 1073:

Since their provisions were insufficient, the king gave them [the royal officials] permission to procure booty from neighboring villages and crop lands, as if they were in enemy territory. The inhabitants of this region were forced to furnish their own work force to build castles, assemble construction materials, and provide services from the sweat of their brow like slaves. . . . The garrisons made daily sallies, pillaged whatever they could find in the fields and villages, extracted unbearable fees and taxes from forest and crop lands, and confiscated whole herds of cattle, ostensibly as tithes.¹⁷

The Saxon sources tell of many atrocities committed by these royal garrisons, composed of insolent and pugnacious young men. They also tell of countless commemorative stones that supposedly were erected along the road from Goslar to the Harzburg, covering a distance of almost two miles, to honor the large number of Goslar residents who had been slain. The sources further mention the abuse of Saxon women and the confiscation of properties belonging to persons who had dared to protest. Many of these allegations must be considered with caution, however, for the image of the evil adversary was definitely designed to conjure up the idea of evil a priori. Still, these Saxon accounts betray a fundamental outrage over the king's presumptuous actions which were considered not only arbitrary and unjust but also flagrant violations of time-honored Saxon liberties.

The Saxons complained bitterly that the king directed his vindictive campaign exclusively against them: "While the people (*gens*) in other parts of the realm were left alone and all of them were hardly disturbed, the king selected us [the Saxons] in particular to subject us to the 'threshing of iron carts,' as the prophet says. Once he [the king] had entered our region, he

strayed on and first robbed us of our heritage and then of our freedom. Disregarding our birthright, he slew us with the yoke of bitter servitude."¹⁸ Although Henry IV's focus on Saxony might have been motivated by his desire to benefit from the unusually dense cluster of fiscal properties in this region, the bitter struggle that ensued must have had much deeper roots. It seems that the king was intent on subjugating a duly constituted society that had a proud tradition of tying social status and privilege to consensual decisions and hereditary rights.¹⁹ No other society—save the Frisians—displayed a stronger sense of personal, inalienable legal status and of a collectively determined consensus than the Saxons. Customary rights and liberties thus formed the twin pillars of the Saxon people's sense of justice and, to a degree, these were also embraced by their neighbors, the Thuringians.

Typical, for example, was the defiant stance of Magnus Billung, the son and successor (1073/74–1106) of the Saxon Duke Otto. When the king had him incarcerated in 1071 and demanded that he renounce forever his duchy and the rest of his rightfully inherited possessions (*hereditario iure*) if he wanted to be set free, Magnus Billung was shaken. This demand violated the very essence of his sense of justice and he purportedly declared that he would rather languish in prison and die by all manner of torture and torment than officially yield his inherited rights. Henry IV, on the other hand, consciously sought to break up the traditional bonds between hereditary powers and high office and, in particular, to reestablish the purely administrative character of the comital office. Significant changes may be observed in Saxony during this period, indicating the "tightening of royal authority over the appointment of officials, the rounding out of comital territories, and the establishment of a more hierarchical social structure."²⁰ Especially north of the Harz mountains the Salian monarch attempted to implement a far-reaching reorganization. This move, which included the redistribution of comital offices to royal administrators, proved particularly injurious to the Saxons' sense of justice.²¹

A comment in Lampert of Hersfeld's *Annals* for 1073 is very revealing in this context: "The king decided to pursue a monstrous course, a course none of his predecessors had ever attempted: namely to reduce all Saxons and Thuringians to servitude" (*in servitium redigere*). In the eyes of the Saxons, Henry IV's acts and decisions seemed to represent a programmatic effort to destroy their independence. Initially, the young king almost certainly took his lead from Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen when he moved against the Saxons. As previously mentioned, Adalbert's fiercest rival, the Saxon duke Magnus Billung, had created an

ever-expanding power base there, and the archbishop hoped to gain further advantages in this region through the king's assistance. Several sources report that Henry IV ordered the construction of the impregnable mountain fortresses in the Harz region at Adalbert's recommendation. Bishop Benno II of Osnabrück (1068–1088) may also have played a leading role in these endeavors, as indicated in his *Vita*. He came from a ministerial family in Swabia, attended school at Strasbourg and the monastery of Reichenau, and later became a teacher at the cathedral school of Speyer and at the canonry of Saints Simon and Jude in Goslar. Subsequently, he was appointed to the post of provost at Hildesheim and eventually attained the prestigious office of *vicarominus* for the archdiocese of Cologne under Archbishop Anno II. The *vicarominus* was the chief administrator and manager of the metropolitan see's vast land holdings. Finally, at age forty-eight, he was elevated to the episcopal dignity of Osnabrück. Benno, an unusually gifted man, had without question a distinguished career in ecclesiastical and royal service. Later, he proved his talents as an architect and master builder during the expansion and reconstruction of the cathedral at Speyer. But even much earlier, in the late 1060s and 1070s, the king supposedly put Benno, "a genius in the art of stone masonry," in charge of "overseeing the expedient implementation of his construction projects" in Saxony.²² Just as his colleague in Hamburg-Bremen, he had a personal interest in strengthening the episcopal authority in Saxony; and the similarities between the Harzburg and his own episcopal fortifications at the Lburg are probably no accident. No doubt, the king had prominent advisers who were ardent advocates of royal politics in Saxony. Nevertheless, the dramatic developments and dynamics that led to the "Saxon Wars" can only be understood in a much broader context. Beginning in the early eleventh century, the kings had become ever more insistent that a centralized, hierarchical command structure throughout the realm was a royal prerogative; it was this principle that fueled Henry IV's showdown with the Saxons. Comparable to Conrad II's confrontation with Duke Ernest of Swabia and to Henry III's unbending stance toward Duke Godfrey the Bearded, Henry IV now set out to demonstrate his power by demanding unconditional recognition of his supreme royal authority. Yet he no longer directed his action against an individual rival or a group of adversaries, but rather against a divergent constitutional principle *per se*, against a principle that was the embodiment of the Saxon people.

To be sure, the means that the king employed to underscore his royal authority were hardly innovative, for the practice of organizing and de-

playing administrative and military units of servile origin and of erecting castles on lofty mountain perches had long since been adopted by nobles and bishops alike. Indeed, closer scrutiny reveals that the aristocracy was in many ways ahead of the king in this process. The transformation of the traditional order into new hierarchical structures became ever more evident in the latter part of the eleventh century and affected the administration of every lordship. These general developments often came into direct conflict with royal ambitions, especially in Saxony, where Henry IV felt compelled to move against the heavily fortified strongholds of such defiant nobles as Margrave Dedi's castles at Reichlingen and Burgscheidungen (1069) and Otto of Northeim's castles at Hanstein and Desenberg (1070). No doubt, the newly constructed royal fortresses in the Harz mountains imposed severe limitations on the ability of Saxon magnates to expand their own lordships; in their eyes the king was a ruthless competitor who unfairly exploited his royal position to his own advantage.

A major clash was in the offing. The causes leading up to this confrontation were manifold, but obviously included the changing patterns within the lordships, as well as the king's heightened claims to absolute authority (*Beyföhrerschaft*). These conditions made it inevitable that the struggle in Saxony would eventually entangle the entire body politic, for the principal issue in this stand-off was the position and function of the king within the realm. Otto of Northeim (d. 1083), a Saxon who was duke of Bavaria, recognized the nature of these problems at an early stage and, therefore, was the first among the magnates who experienced harsh treatment at the hands of Henry IV. In 1070, based on rather dubious proceedings, Otto was stripped of the Bavarian duchy, which then was awarded to Welf IV. This prince had not shown any compunction about chasing away his wife, Ethelinda, his predecessor's daughter, to become duke of Bavaria. Otto of Northeim, on his part, refused to comply with a royal order to participate in a duel with his accuser, a notorious scoundrel, when the king denied him safe passage. Consequently, he was sentenced to death in absentia for high treason (*crimen maiestatis*). Northeim subsequently assumed the leadership of the Saxon resistance, which grew steadily and was joined by such eminent Saxon bishops as Burchard II of Halberstadt (1059–1088), Werner of Magdeburg (1063–1078), and Hezilo of Hildesheim (1054–1079). The protest movement further enjoyed the support of Margrave Udo II of the Nordmark (d. 1082), Margrave Dedi of Niederlausitz (d. 1075), and Maganus Billung (d. 1106).

In 1073 major preparations were underway for a general uprising

against the king. The Saxons demanded that the Salian fortresses be immediately dismantled. In his *Book of the Saxon War*, Bruno assigns the following speech to Otto of Norheim:

Valiant warriors! . . . The injuries and indignities that our king has perpetrated against each and every one of you over a long time are grave and unbearable. But what else he intends to do, should God the Almighty allow it, will be even more frightful. . . . Are you, valiant men, willing to suffer all of this? Is it not better to fall in battle than to lose a miserable and shameful life in the disgraceful service of such scornful people? Not even servants that have been purchased for money will bear the unjust demands of their masters, yet you who were born free will suffer patiently this servitude? As Christians you may perhaps shy away from violating the oath that you have sworn to your king. All right, but you swore your oath to the king. As long as he was my king, I kept the oath I had sworn to him. However, when he ceased to be a king, he was no longer the person to whom I had pledged my loyalty. I take up arms, not against the king but against the unlawful robber of my liberty, not against the fatherland (*patria*) but for the fatherland and for the liberty that no man will give up except with his life; I ask you to do the same.²³

This speech was, of course, not worded as it appears in Bruno's text, but it shows vividly how the notion had spread that Henry IV was no longer a king but rather a tyrant. In 1074 Lampert of Hersfeld mentions for the first time a concrete plan of action evolving from this situation. He writes: "After consulting with the remaining imperial princes, a consensus emerged to seek a ruler for the gravely endangered realm who would meet with the approval of everyone."²⁴ Shortly thereafter the Saxons supposedly urged Otto of Norheim "to assume the royal power over them." The "Salian king" who, during Conrad II's reign, had been the integrating force within the realm and who had provided unity and stability through his person, now became a liability to peace and unity. Under the leadership of the archbishops of Cologne and Mainz, the princes repeatedly attempted to negotiate and arbitrate between the two camps. However, the pressure to reach a decision kept mounting and, in the process, some magnates kept switching sides; among these were Rudolf of Rheinfelden, Duke of Swabia (1057–1079), Duke Berthold of Carinthia (1061–1077), and Godfrey the Hunchback of Lower Lotharingia (1069–1076). At a peace assembly at Gerstungen in 1074, the king, in the presence of fifteen bishops, seemed almost willing to yield to the demands of his "sworn opponents" (*sacramento obstricti*) and to give up his castles. But when it became known a short time later that Saxon peasants had looted and desecrated the Salian grave sites on the Harzburg, many princes disapproved of this scandal-

ous deed and felt obliged to return to the king's camp. As a consequence, Henry IV commanded a sizable following when he called for the decisive battle against the Saxons in 1075.

It was the biggest battle ever fought between constituents of the realm within the confines of the East Frankish/German kingdom. The royal army assembled in the vicinity of Hersfeld early in June 1075. The host was so enormous, according to Lampert of Hersfeld, that "within human memory, no larger, more valiant, and militarily better equipped army had ever been raised for any battle on German soil. All the prominent personages in the realm, including bishops, dukes, and counts, ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries, were gathered here to direct their strength and power toward this war. No one was missing, unless he had been excused because of an urgent or compelling reason."²⁵ Royal scouts reported that the Saxon forces and their allies were hardly any weaker in numbers and arms and that the rest of their equipment seemed even superior; they also were extremely well supplied with auxiliary gear and provisions. A civil war of monstrous proportions was in the offing. The entire kingdom was drawn into this power struggle, and although superficially a showdown between the king and the Saxons, it was in essence fought over the Salian ruler's determination to impose his autocratic command structure throughout the realm.

The horrifying clash finally occurred on 9 June 1075, near Homburg on the Unstrut River. Once again on the king's side, Duke Rudolf of Swabia and his men led the royal army's attack directly from the marching column and, by doing so, surprised the Saxons who barely managed to array themselves for battle. A bloody carnage ensued, claiming many victims from the ranks of the magnates but above all wreaking havoc among the Saxon foot soldiers who were slaughtered like cattle. At sunset the king had achieved total victory; he was triumphant. When the Saxon princes submitted to Henry IV's mercy on 25 October 1075, his power seemed boundless and his authority in the realm permanently secured.

His victory, however, was deceptive, for probing questions regarding the position of the kingship vis-à-vis the realm had come to the fore during the first decade of Henry IV's reign. What was the ruler's function within the body politic in view of the changing role and self-perception of ecclesiastical and secular lords? The Salian period had reached a "turning point."²⁶ How could a king preserve peace and justice when his authority was increasingly challenged in large parts of the realm? Yet according to Henry IV's idea of kingship, adversaries and insurgents had to be subdued by force because the prestige of both ruler and realm were at stake.

Even though both ecclesiastical and secular leaders soon recognized that the king's deeply held convictions were ultimately directed against their personal interests, most were still willing to follow him in 1075 since their identity and princely authority depended on the recognition by and obedience of their own subjects. The Saxon peasants' willful destruction of the Salian grave sites on the Harzburg deeply troubled the powerful elite; and since this act of lawlessness occurred in the same year as the uprising of the citizens of Cologne, which was put down by Archbishop Anno II, their assistance in a rigorous crackdown seemed justified. Soon after the victory at the Unstrut River, though, the princes had second thoughts and began wondering whether their participation had actually furthered the realm and thus their own cause (*minimo rei publicae emolumento*, Lampert of Hersfeld). Their fight for the king did not seem to enhance the realm any longer. This realization basically sealed the verdict against Henry IV and his tyrannical rule long before the reform papacy's wrath descended upon him.

Henry IV
 need elected
 aristocrats
 custom

These considerations lead to the conclusion that the princes' election of Rudolf of Rheinfelden as anti-king in 1077 had been initiated much earlier and should not simply be understood as a consequence of Pope Gregory VII's deposition of Henry IV in 1076. Although some decisions may have been expedited through the king's excommunication, the anti-king was actually elected without the pope's permission. In spite of the presence of papal legates, the princes proceeded with their plan contrary to the papal will. They drew their strength from other sources: Lampert of Hersfeld lets Otto of Norheim utter these crucial words: "Thus is the difference between a king and a tyrant: a tyrant resorts to force and cruelty to extort obedience from unwilling participants; a king, on the other hand, guides his subjects according to the rights and customs of their ancestors and makes arrangements for the tasks at hand."²⁷ The people longed for a king who, according to *their* concept of justice and order, would act as an impartial and disinterested arbitrator in settling strife and discord throughout the realm and they elected Rudolf to be such a "just king, ruler and protector for the entire realm" (*in iustum regem, rectorem, et defensionem totius regni*).²⁸ Henry IV, in contrast, had been pursuing royal practices that were aimed at restructuring the realm in strictly hierarchical terms. Consequently, he emphasized his overall royal dominion and derived his sacrosanct authority from his position as God's vicar on earth and from the legitimacy of his dynastic claims. He thus followed closely in his father's footsteps and seemed oblivious to the fact that the social and political developments within the realm had reached a point where people were no longer willing to tolerate his pretensions.

Above all, the nobles sought to eradicate the Salians' claim to the establishment of a divinely ordained, everlasting kingship that was inseparable from their dynasty. The belief that the continued existence of the kingship within one and the same dynasty was beneficial and necessary for the realm's stability was now superseded by the idea that imperial unity could best be preserved if the princes freely elected the leader whom they deemed most suitable to rule. Royal elevation by election had always been an option, of course, but if the reigning king had sons, the very presence and power of a royal bloodline (*stirps regia*) determined the decision-making process; and the Salians had consciously cultivated this force. In the wake of increasing pressures by the Church to fill vacant ecclesiastical offices by means of free, canonical elections, Henry IV's opponents adopted similar principles when they elevated the anti-king in Forchheim on 15 March 1077. The princes who had assembled there included the southern German dukes Rudolf of Swabia (of Rheinfelden), Welf IV of Bavaria, and Berthold of Carinthia, as well as the archbishops Siegfried of Mainz, Gebhard of Salzburg, and Werner of Magdeburg. There was further a delegation of papal legates in attendance. In Bruno's *Book of the Saxon War* we find the following comments: "And it was approved by all and confirmed by the authority of the pope that royal power shall no longer fall to anyone through inheritance, as had been the custom. The son of a king, no matter how worthy, should become king in his own right through a spontaneous election rather than through rights of succession. But if a king's son is not worthy or if the people do not want him, it should be in the people's power to elevate to the kingship any person they want to choose."²⁹ By electing an anti-king, the princes established a new constitutional principle that was based on *their* understanding of their role within the realm and that stood in sharp contrast to the Salian ruler's concept of kingship.

The idea of choosing the king in a free and open election had considerable appeal and, as shall be seen, had a major impact on the way the kingship was transferred to Henry V, the last Salian king. But this principle, ardently supported by the bishops, gained special momentum at the royal elevation of 1125. Although Duke Frederick II of Swabia insisted on his right to succession because of his mother Agnes's Salian bloodline, the forces that favored a free election prevailed. King Henry IV, due to his luck on the battlefield, had managed to fend off this ominous menace to the Salian dynasty. On 15 October 1080 after several initial skirmishes, the king and Rudolf of Rheinfelden faced each other for the decisive battle on the Elster River. Although Rudolf's army was victorious under the able

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leadership of Otto of Northheim, the anti-king lost his right hand in battle and succumbed to his injuries on the following day. Many contemporaries viewed his fate as a manifestation of divine justice and, accordingly, Henry IV's *Vita* reads: "This was an important lesson that no one shall rise up against his lord. For Rudolf, through the loss of his right hand, received the just due for his perjury, as he had not hesitated to break the oath of fealty that he had sworn to his lord and king; and as if he had not received enough mortal wounds, his punishment was administered on this particular limb in order to make his guilt manifest in the way he was punished."³⁰ Nevertheless, the struggle between Henry IV and his adversaries had not yet come to an end, but continued in various degrees of violence clear to the end of his reign.

Many scholars have dealt with the developments that led to the confrontation between the Church and the Salian king in the 1070s. Contrary to his father, Henry IV spent little time cultivating his relationships with the church reformers, a fact that has been interpreted as incompetence. However, we need to consider that the way the reformers viewed the principles of hierarchical order had already undergone significant changes during the regency of the Empress Agnes and that, in their eyes, the king had long since lost his place of preeminence within the Church. Their concern for the salvation of human souls, their efforts on behalf of improved pastoral care, and their earnest pursuit of Christ's instructions to bishops and priests called for a higher authority. Divine law, in their view, manifested itself in canon law, that is in the decisions of the Church councils, the writings of the Church Fathers, and the papal decrees. Conciliar resolutions and papal decrees thus possessed universal validity; yet in those cases where ecclesiastical regulations contained contradictions, papal decisions would take precedence over any other authority. That is, in any case, how Peter Damian, the eminent theological scholar, had interpreted these matters; and from there he went on to conclude that that unconditional obedience to the pontiff was a *conditio sine qua non*. The Church's redemptive mission could ultimately only be fulfilled through strict obedience to the apostolic see.

Guided by this principle, Pope Leo IX already had developed a previously unprecedented ecclesiastical and political activism, interfering freely in ecclesiastical, political, and jurisdictional matters of individual churches and bishops. The pontiff's highest authority within the universal church and the obedience that it commanded came into play for the first time during his tenure. Leo's circle of reformers included the young Hilde-

brand who, through the power of his personality, was probably the most ardent promoter of ecclesiastical renovation.³¹ Born between 1020 and 1025, probably in Soana in southern Tuscany, he had taken his vows in the Roman monastery of Saint Mary's on the Aventine in Rome where he had absorbed the spiritual legacy of the great monastic reforms. Before long Hildebrand became one of the closest advisers to the reform papacy. Under Pope Nicholas II (1058–1061) his influence gained so much currency that a popular saying affirmed: "Hildebrand feeds his Nicholas in the Lateran like a donkey in his stall." At the Lateran synod of 1059, he advocated radical clerical reform and demanded that the Church return to the simple life of the *ecclesia primitiva*, in other words, to the original Church as it had been established by Christ and his disciples or, to put it more accurately, to an "original" Christian community as conceived in the mind of eleventh-century reformers. Hildebrand's decisive nature and extraordinary sense of mission did not escape Peter Damian's attention who comments in a letter: "He comes at me like a furious north wind with a tempestuous breath."³²

Hildebrand, taking the name Gregory VII, was elevated to the papacy in 1073, although, as his enemies later would allege, not entirely according to regulations. His pontificate was probably the most significant in all of papal history. He continued the fight against simony and nicolatism with unmitigated severity and ordered the bishops to implement his instructions. Prohibition of priestly marriages had a long canonical tradition, but it rarely had been enforced below the episcopal level. Gregory now issued strict orders "that, according to canon law, priests were prohibited from having wives, that those who were married must dismiss their wives or would be removed from office, and that heretofore absolutely no one could be admitted to the priesthood who was unwilling to profess permanent abstinence and celibacy."³³ The pope made sure that the new rules were widely disseminated. But when Archbishop Siegfried of Mainz durably passed these instructions on to his suffragans at a provincial synod in Erfurt in 1074, he ran into a storm of protests and had to recognize "that it would take great pains to eradicate such established traditions as the cohabitation of priests with women."³⁴ Indeed, the pontiff's rebukes and directives as well as his demand for unconditional obedience initially seemed unbearable to the imperial bishops. The essence of this sentiment is summed up in a frequently quoted sentence from a letter which Archbishop Liemar of Hamburg-Bremen (1072–1101) sent to Bishop Hezilo of Hildesheim in the winter of 1074/75: "This dangerous man [Gregory VII] is trying to order bishops around at will, as if they were stewards, and if

they do not carry out everything exactly [as ordered], they are summoned to Rome, or they are simply suspended from their office without judicial recourse.”³⁵ Soon an image of Hildebrand “casting about the flames of hell” took root within the realm.

Initially, Gregory VII exhibited amazing patience toward Henry IV. He sent the king a series of admonitions, rebuking him for his personal conduct, his decisions in filling episcopal vacancies, or his handling of individual bishops. The situation became aggravated, however, when Henry refused to yield to the pope’s wishes in a dispute over a new metropolitan for Milan and when Gregory felt compelled to banish five of the king’s councilors from the Lenten synod in spring 1075. Subsequently, the pope raised serious charges against the king. A papal letter, dated 8 December 1075, begins with the ominous lines: “Bishop Gregory, servant of the servants of God, sends King Henry greetings and apostolic blessings, provided that he [the king] obey the pope as behooves a Christian king.”³⁶ The writ then continues:

You should show more respect to the head of the Church. If you indeed belong to the Lord’s sheep, you are actually bound over to him [the pope] through the word and power of the Lord. He [the pope] will then lead you to pasture, as Christ has commanded him. Peter lead my sheep to pasture! . . . Since we, as holder of his seat and his apostolic office . . . through God’s will, represent his power, in reality it is he, Christ himself, who receives whatever communication, written or oral, you convey to us! . . . Therefore, you should take care that your words and messages to us contain no willful disobedience since you would not deny due reverence to us but to God the Almighty!

This wording was unequivocal: Christ himself acted and judged through the pope alone, thus depriving the king of any direct access to and communion with God.

Such notions were outrageous and totally foreign to Henry IV’s thinking. When at the beginning of 1076 the papal epistle reached the royal court in Worms, where numerous bishops had assembled, the king was easily persuaded to support their refusal to follow the pope’s instructions. Although the papal letter was hardly the decisive factor in the bishops’ defiant response to the Holy See,³⁷ it once more, for one last fleeting moment, revived the idea at Worms that king and bishops were united by a common cause. Henry IV, bolstered by his victory over the Saxons, felt called upon to put the pope in his place and to emphasize his own role as protector of the realm and as defender of the bishops who seemed threatened by papal servitude. Summarizing their grievances, the twenty-six bishops sought to justify their disobedience in a letter on 24 January 1076. They stated that

Gregory had introduced outrageous innovations in the Church, had suppressed the bishops, had deprived the episcopal office of its dignity, and had usurped unseemly authority over them. They went so far as to say: “None of us will recognize you as pope in the future” (*tu quoque nulli nostrum amodo eris apostolicus*).³⁸ Henry IV, correspondingly, alleged in his own reply that Gregory had not only shown disdain for the king’s inherited regal dignity, but had not shied away either from laying hands on the venerable bishops and, contrary to divine and human justice, had offended them with arrogant insults and wicked abuse. He, Henry, concurred with the bishops’ conclusions and hereby ordered the pope to step down from his throne.³⁹ The king thus met his obligation of protecting the episcopal *libertas*; in fact, had he not done so, he would have undermined his own authority. In 1076 he had no alternative but to support his bishops’ actions.

Nevertheless, it soon became evident that Henry IV’s move had triggered a bitter struggle for the highest rank on earth, a struggle in which the king was bound to lose. For when Gregory VII responded with the excommunication of Henry IV at the Lenten synod in February 1076, it was immediately decided that the pontiff’s argumentation had greater force. The pope justified his action with long-standing ecclesiastical traditions, particularly with the tenet that “the highest ecclesiastical office cannot be judged by anybody” (*prima sedes a nemini iudicatur*). Originating in the sixth century, this papal claim was paired with the conviction that whoever disagreed with the Roman Church, founded by Saint Peter, was by definition a heretic.⁴⁰ The pope cleverly couched his sentence of excommunication in form of a prayer to Saint Peter, the prince of the apostles:

I therefore believe that you in your grace—and not because of my good works—wish for the Christian community, which is especially entrusted to you, to show obedience to me because it is equally entrusted to me as your deputy; and I believe that God, for your sake, has granted me power to bind and absolve in heaven and on earth. In this firm conviction, for the glory and protection of your Church, in the name of God the Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, by force of your power and authority, I thus deprive King Henry, Emperor Henry’s son, who rose up against your Church with unprecedented arrogance, of his regal lordship over Germany and Italy; and I absolve all Christians from the oath they have sworn to him or might swear to him in the future, and I deny him the honor of serving as king heretofore. . . . And since he has spurned to obey as a Christian should and has not returned to God, whom he has abandoned, I, as your deputy, strike him with the scourge of God’s curse.⁴¹

These words had a very different ring than the pronouncements of the king and the bishops. Arising from the depth of conviction, this invocation re-

ferred to the highest level of responsibility for Christendom and spoke of the exclusive truth of God's laws; its compelling sense of mission swept away any objections and reservations that might have been voiced against the pope's supreme authority on earth. Even an oath of fealty to the king was now superseded by papal decisions, an issue that sparked great controversy and fueled heated discussions in the polemical writings of the late eleventh century.⁴² Gregory's authoritarian claims completely undermined the legal position of the king and his supporters and caused the court historian (Petrus) Crassus in his *Defense of Henry IV*, 1083/84, to conjure up the vision of a human race that had "strayed so far from loyalty, justice, and truthfulness and all the other virtues that serve the salvation of the soul that it [mankind] was either unfamiliar with these values, or, if it was aware of them, despised them."⁴³ For the reformers, in contrast, the divine truth as represented by the pope had become the sole measure and guiding principle in all matters.

Gregory VII's deposition and banishment of the king stirred up deep emotions among his contemporaries; for such an event had been unthinkable before this time. Its traumatic effects were graphically summarized by the reformer Bonzio di Surti in 1085/86: "When the message of the king's banishment reached the people, our whole Roman universe began shaking."⁴⁴ Now everyone became aware that their world order had undergone a radical change. Now it also became evident that the joint effort of the king and the bishops at Worms was no longer viable. Before long many of the ecclesiastical princes sought a reconciliation with the pope, a second group sat on the sidelines waiting, and only a small core of supporters remained loyal to the king. Scholars have repeatedly expressed amazement over the bishops' hasty desertion of Henry IV and have sought explanations.⁴⁵ It seems that the king had not always had the right touch in selecting his bishops and that several of them lacked character and stature.

The underlying reasons for the bishops' behavior, however, must be sought in the fact that principles similar to those used to justify the pope's supremacy increasingly determined the hierarchical and spiritual views of the episcopal office. Moreover, bishops could hardly challenge the idea that spiritual matters should always take precedence over secular ones. Consequently, the bishops did not hesitate long before they recognized the preeminence and supreme authority of the pope; his exalted position, after all, paralleled their own concept of the new order. Scholarly studies have shown that the Gregorian church reform ultimately enhanced the principles of a hierarchical episcopate.⁴⁶ Although the special papal pro-

tection granted to reformed monasteries (*libertas Romana*) at the expense of episcopal jurisdiction seems to contradict this analysis, it has been demonstrated that such measures were directed mostly against bishops who had rejected the authoritative claims of the reform papacy. By and large it became clear, though, that appeals to the primal authority of the pope (*auctoritas Sancti Petri*) could also become a powerful instrument for the bishops in the administration of their episcopal offices.

By the summer of 1076 Henry IV had been abandoned by all but a small core of his supporters. In mid-October, while the king was waiting in Oppenheim, an assembly of princes convened at Trebur just across the Rhine to deliberate about the further fate of the realm and the banished monarch. Finally, they informed him that if he wanted to reclaim his crown, he had to gain absolution from his ban prior to the anniversary of his excommunication. Once again decisive pressure on the part of the princes forced the Salian king's hand and compelled him to journey to Canossa in the winter of 1076/77. There, on the northern slopes of the Apennine mountains, Pope Gregory was a guest in the castle of Countess Matilda of Tuscany. After a treacherous crossing over the ice-coated Mont Cenis pass, in the western Alps, Henry appeared in penitent garb and barefoot at the interior castle gate of Canossa on 25 January 1077. He began his public penitence with bitter tears and persisted for three days until the pope's resistance had been broken. Gregory VII personally described these events in a letter to the German princes: "He did not desist from imploring the assistance and consolation of the apostolic mercy under tears until he had generated such compassion and pity among all those who were present on his behalf; and many showed amazement at the unusual harshness of our conviction. Some even complained that we did not represent the firm hand of apostolic justice but rather the cruelty of licentious tyranny."⁴⁷ Even Matilda of Tuscany advocated for him (fig. 35). Thus the pope finally absolved Henry from his banishment and once again received him into the community of the Church.

How should this penitent journey to Canossa be interpreted? Did it really represent the submission of the highest secular power to the supreme spiritual authority? Did it actually signify the precedence of the papacy over the kingship? It is unlikely that any such thoughts had crossed the mind of Henry IV! For him the whole exercise was primarily a shrewd tactical maneuver to forestall a potential showdown with the princes, just as it is related in his *Vita* of 1106: "When Henry recognized the extent of his



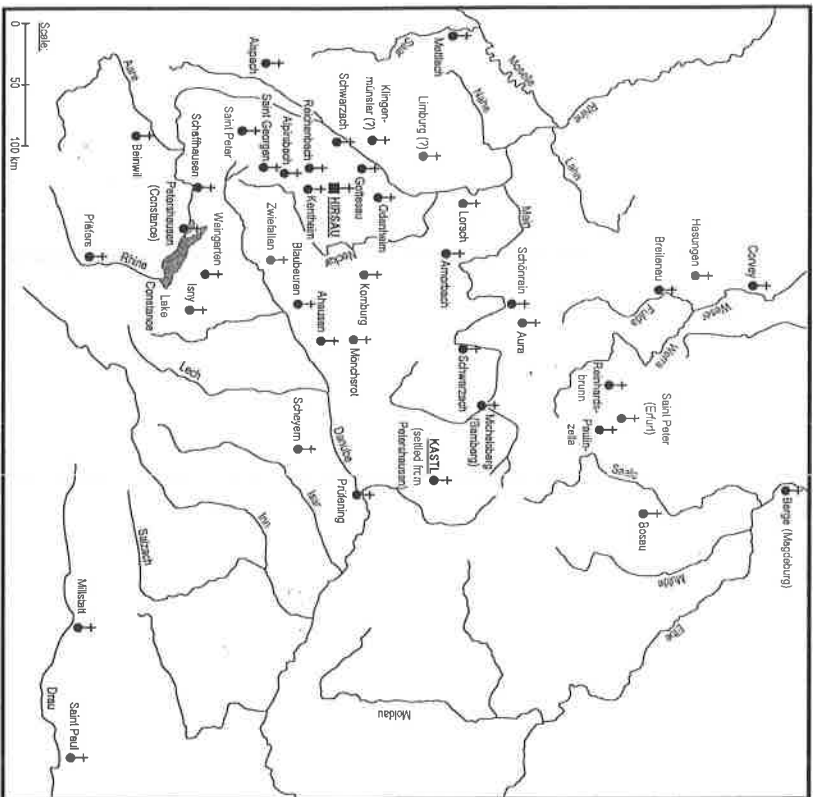
171. Diercke, *Via Mithridis*, Rom, Bildwerke 1, unten

35. Henry IV kneeling in front of Matilda of Tuscany in Canossa, pleading for her mediation in his dispute with Pope Gregory VII (to the left Abbot Hugh of Cluny) (Rome, Bibl. Vat. Lat. 4922, fol. 49).

troubles, he secretly conceived a crafty plan. Suddenly and unexpectedly he departed to meet the pope half-way and thus achieved two things in one: he received absolution from the banishment and, through his active interference, prevented the threatening prospect of the pope's meeting with his adversaries.⁴⁸ Recent scholarship has come to similar conclusions and has shown that Henry IV, even in his act of submission, did not at any time "recognize the pope's denial of his kingship or the dissolution of the oath of fealty for those who owed him loyalty."⁴⁹ At that time he further insisted on the royal prerogative that would allow him to swear an oath by proxy.⁵⁰ Politically, however, the real menace for Henry came from the antagonistic princes, who obviously were no longer willing to recognize his kingship, regardless of the fact that he had been absolved from his banishment. Rather, as previously mentioned, on 15 March 1077 the imperial magnates proceeded to elect an anti-king.

After years of strife and struggle, Henry IV eventually prevailed militarily against his adversaries in the kingship and against his nemesis Pope Gregory VII. Hermann of Salm from the house of Luxembourg (d. 1088), the second anti-king, elected in 1081, was never very viable. Gregory on his part damaged his prestige when he renewed the banishment of the Salian king in 1080 and prophesied that the latter would come to a bad end before the feast of Saint Peter Enchained on 1 August of that year. Then he went even further, asking for his own expulsion from the Holy See should his prophecy not come true. This arrogant demeanor persuaded many German bishops to participate in the election of an (anti-)pope at a synod in Brixen in June 1080. They chose Wibert, who had been archbishop of Ravenna since 1072; he assumed the name Clement III. This name established a link to Clement II, the pontiff who had been elevated by Henry III in 1046 to lead the papacy out of its troubles. It was from the hands of Clement III that Henry IV and his wife Bertha accepted the imperial crown in a Roman ceremony on Easter Sunday 1084 while Gregory VII was ensconced behind the stout walls of Castel Sant' Angelo. As soon as the German host had departed, Gregory requested assistance from the Norman prince Robert Guiscard. The Normans arrived promptly; however, they wrought such terrible devastation on Rome on 28 May 1084 that the reform pope was no longer safe in his own city. He followed Robert Guiscard to Salerno, where he died a year later on 25 May 1085.

But in spite of his successes, the Salian king could not prevent the ideas and mental attitudes of the Gregorian reform from spreading. Bishops such as Altmann of Passau (1065–1091), Gebhard of Salzburg (1060–



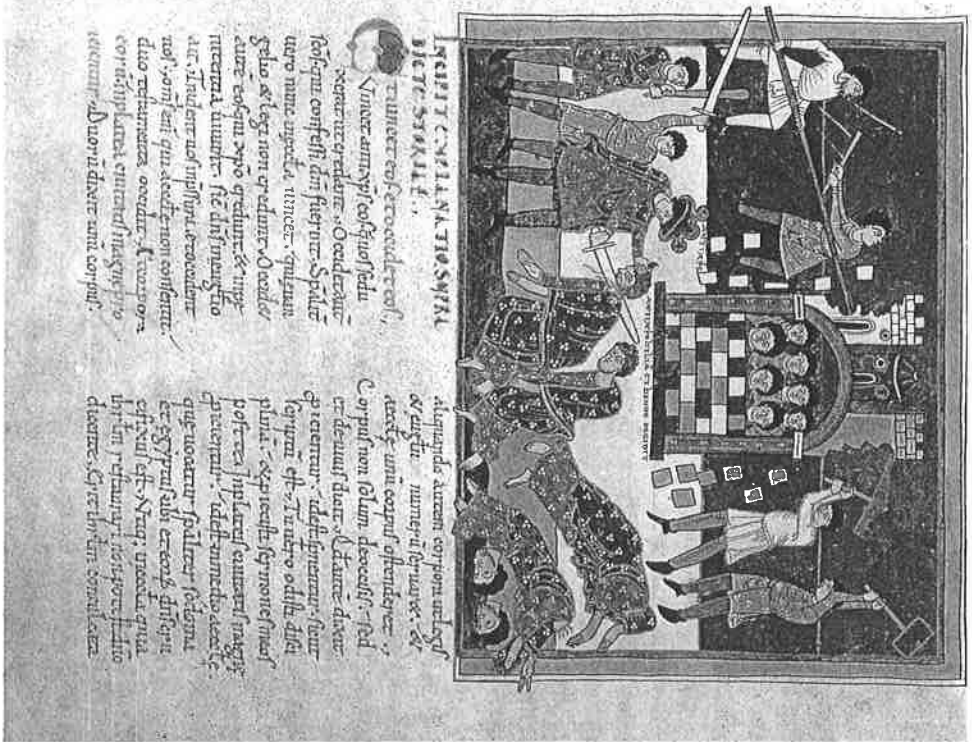
36. Monasteries reformed under the direct leadership of Hirsau (Deutsche Geschichte, Bd. 2, Berlin-Ost 1983, p. 53).

1088), or Burchard II of Halberstadt (1059–1088) were active supporters and promoters of clerical and monastic reforms. In addition, this movement found fertile ground among the ranks of the nobility and soon led to a close alliance between the princely opposition and the church reformers, especially in Swabia and Saxony. The forces of resistance were thus doubled, and aimed their efforts at the secular tyrant as well as the enemy of God and the Church: the Antichrist. Especially the latest monastic reform that had emanated from Cluny spread like wildfire all over southwestern Germany, establishing important centers at Hirsau (1076/79) (fig. 36) and Saint Blaise (1072). Although Henry IV had not opposed this move-

ment initially, it now increasingly turned its venom against him and his followers. The king's time-honored function as the ultimate protector of life and liberty was blatantly disregarded when the reformed monasteries turned to the pope for their protection (*libertas Romana*) and transferred the authority over their affairs to Saint Peter's in Rome (*traditio Romana*). This is a further example of the changing nature of authority during this period. Acceptance of the *libertas Romana* meant that these monasteries were no longer in need of any lay support, not even that of the king. Indeed, he was actually on the verge of losing his traditional right of appointing advocates for monastic communities. These conflicts between the Salian camp and the reform movement were interpreted as harbingers of coming endtimes; for as Gregory VII wrote to his faithful: "The closer we come to the time of the Antichrist, the more he will engage in a life and death struggle to extinguish the Christian religion."⁵¹ Images of the Antichrist roaming the globe with a deadly sword and tearing down churches became a common feature (fig. 37). The nobles who were sympathetic to the reform emerged as its self-styled protectors. Being deeply touched by the salutary truth of the Gregorian movement, these men saw themselves as the *militia sancti Petri*. In cooperation with the bishops, they remained the king's confirmed adversaries to the bitter end and in 1104, as we shall see, ultimately initiated the final downfall of King Henry IV.

The confrontation with the Gregorian reformers who, through their attacks on the idea of a divinely instituted kingship and their challenges to a dynastic right of succession, shook the foundation of the Salian concept of royal authority, forced Henry IV to find new ways of defending his legitimacy. As early as 1076 the king felt compelled to compose a propagandistic letter, charging that the pontiff had dared to deprive him of the power, duly bestowed on him by God, as if he, Henry, had received his kingship from the pope and as if the regal and imperial lordship lay in the pope's and not in God's hands.⁵² Writing to the cardinals in 1082, Henry IV calls the pope's pronouncement a blasphemous presumption, adding: "God chose us to be king from the cradle!"⁵³

The concept of a direct, divinely ordained mandate constituted the core of the ideological justification for the Salian kingship.⁵⁴ Gottschalk of Aachen, who wrote numerous documents and letters for Henry IV, played an important role in this respect. He later became provost of the chapter house at Saint Mary's in Aachen and eventually entered the monastery of Klingenstein on the Haardt River. Especially between 1070 and 1085 he was actively involved at court and introduced Pope Gelasius I's (492–496)



37. The fury of the Antichrist (Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS Lat. 8878, fol. 155).

doctrine of the two swords in defense of the Salian ideal of regal authority. When the disciples handed Christ two swords in his decisive hour, he said: "This will do."⁵⁵ According to his will, therefore, a spiritual and a secular sword should exist side by side on this earth. Even if greater dignity may be assigned to the spiritual power, the secular one is in principle equal in rank.

In the past the doctrine of the two swords had been used to support the papal position, but had now been given up by Gregory VII and his promoters. They preferred different imagery, such as sun and moon, gold and lead, and soul and body, to illustrate the preeminence of the spiritual power (*sacerdotium*) over the secular lordship (*regnum*). Gottschalk charges that the papal representatives wanted to replace the two swords with one and, consequently, subordinate the secular power to the spiritual authority.⁵⁶

It is noteworthy, though, that the Salian court used the doctrine of the two swords especially to emphasize the realm's autonomous standing vis-à-vis the Church, indicating that the concept of a unity embodied in the emperor as supreme protector could no longer be sustained. A pro-imperial propaganda tract written in the monastery of Hersfeld between 1091 and 1093, the *Book Concerning the Preservation of Ecclesiastical Unity*,⁵⁷ also assigns the Church to the spiritual domain. It states that Saint Peter was only empowered to bind and absolve in regard to sins and that the old order, instituted by God, could only be reestablished if the Church focused on its pastoral duties and left the secular order to the royal power. The two domains were thus delimited by their functions. But this argumentation did not really indicate an adherence to an unmodified universal order on the part of the Salian camp, as scholars have sometimes maintained. For Henry III's ideal of a realm of peace on earth, mandated by royal decree and encompassing both Church and secular polity, had long since been abandoned.

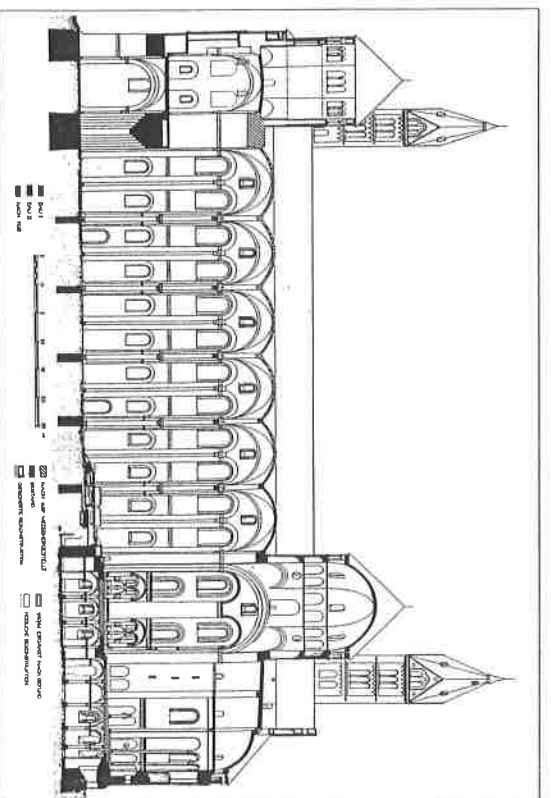
A further step toward the delineation between spiritual and worldly powers consisted of an attempt to emphasize the traditional rights of the secular rulers. The linkage to Roman imperial tradition was of crucial importance in this context: the realm (*regnum*) was seen as the continuity of renewal of the ancient Roman empire.⁵⁸ It is hardly accidental that chroniclers and annalists around this time began enumerating the emperors from Caesar Augustus clear through the Salians and that the title *rex Romanorum* appears much more frequently under Henry IV than previously. Henry V eventually used this title on a regular basis to counteract the rather pejorative and limiting designation *rex Teutonicorum* ("King of the Germans") preferred by the reform papacy.⁵⁹ Once again the *Book Concerning the Preservation of Ecclesiastical Unity* may serve to illustrate this point. The author states that Constantine, by moving his residence to Constantinople, had physically separated the secular from the spiritual power since the papacy remained in Rome. This move not only resulted in the temporal preeminence of the empire over the papacy but also in the fundamental prece-

dence of the Roman emperors and their successors over the Church. The power (*potestas*) of the Roman emperors, consequently, emanated from a different source and was completely independent from the Church.

In 1081 in a letter addressed to the Romans, Henry IV also raises the idea of a hereditary imperial office that would be sanctioned by the citizens of Rome. After crushing his toughest enemies, so it reads, Henry would come to the Romans "in order to receive from your hands and with your consent and favorable approval the hereditary dignity that is due to us."⁶⁰ In his *Defense of King Henry IV* (1083/84), (Petrus) Crassus, the court historian, developed even more compelling arguments to prove the legitimacy of Salian hereditary claims. Besides considering canon law, he relies primarily on Roman law and quotes from the *Codex Justinianus* and the *Institutes*. He claims that the hereditary right of kingship was already encoded in the Roman law. The king could not be deprived of it any more than a private person could be legally denied his customary rights—an argument that skillfully alluded to the strong sense of hereditary privileges among the Saxons. He further posited that the hereditary succession in the kingship was divinely ordained and therefore also rooted in canon law.

Like the focal rays in a burning glass, the various pursuits of legitimacy converged on the Salian cathedral church at Speyer. Around 1076 Henry IV started paying renewed attention to that city and the burial church of his ancestors. In the 1080s he made numerous substantial grants to the church of Saint Mary's. In addition to the Salian monasteries of Limburg on the Hardt River and Saint Lambrecht, which had been transferred to the episcopal church in 1065, Speyer now acquired control over the monasteries of Kaufungen and Hornbach, the house of canonesses at Eschwege and the priory of Naumburg; it was further granted estates in the Upper Rhine region, in the Remstal, in the Nahégau, and in Saxony, as well as counties in the Speyergau and on the right side of the Rhine in the area around Forchheim. In the charters where these donations were recorded, Henry IV never neglected to refer to the memory of his forebears, to Conrad II and his wife Gisela, as well as to Henry III, and occasionally to the latter's wife Agnes who had died in Rome on 14 December 1077. Except for Agnes, they were all buried in the cathedral at Speyer, and in Henry's eyes it was they who, through the will of God, mediated his legitimate claim to the kingship. The presence of his ancestors in the Salian burial site at Speyer became a legal precedent to justify his right to rule.

The king's position as a ruler who had been installed directly by God—without intercession of the clergy or mediation by the pope—was



38. Longitudinal reconstruction of the imperial cathedral at Speyer under Henry IV (Edifice II) (D. Von Winterfeld).

to find its reflection in the cathedral of Speyer as well. Over a period of roughly twenty years, from circa 1080 to 1102/1106, the entire eastern section of the church was torn down and reconstructed. Initially Bishop Benno II of Osnabrück (1068–1088) was in charge of this gigantic building project; from 1097–1102 the royal chaplain Otto, the later bishop of Bamberg (1102–1139), supervised its completion.⁶¹ The special shape and size of the Salian burial site no longer played the central role in the newly constructed cathedral but rather its splendor and magnificent appearance. Everything was changed to achieve the desired effect. Unprecedented technical skills were employed to restructure the walls, provide every space with vaulted ceilings, and decorate all horizontal lines with elaborately ornamented ledges. The heavy stone walls were broken up into elegant arches and arcades. Dwarf galleries, an architectural novelty consisting of rows of miniature arcades, were becoming popular in the Rhineland in that period. However, it was in Speyer where these elegant arcades were first used as a unifying device. Wrapped around the entire upper tier of the cathedral, they provided the gigantic edifice with a rare measure of proportion and harmony.

Hence originated the famous structure, sometimes called Speyer II, the imperial cathedral of Henry IV, which “more than any works of the old kings merits praise and admiration.”⁶² Its sheer size and physical beauty filled the world with amazement. This unique and magnificent cathedral, “our special and holy church at Speyer” (*nostra specialis sancta Spirensis ecclesia*),⁶³ towered above all other churches; none could measure up to it. The elements of Roman architecture combined with the purplish-red masonry works were unmistakable hallmarks of an imperial church of the highest order.

In addition to using his ancestral grave site to legitimize his rule and to bear witness to the impact of divine ordination on his royal and imperial office, Henry IV was also motivated by his deep-seated piety and the concern for his own salvation. Like his grandfather Conrad II in 1024, he commended his fate to the protection of the Virgin Mary, the patron saint of Speyer. He revered Mary above all the other saints and in his charters he calls her *sancta sanctorum* and the “Queen of Angels.”⁶⁴ In 1080, prior to the decisive battle against the anti-king Rudolf of Rheinfelden, he placed his life in the hands of the Holy Virgin and endowed her with two important Salian estates in Waiblingen and Wimerbach. In the arena of the respective diploma he justifies his donation as follows: “Although we honor the virtues of all saints, we must especially implore the protection of the Virgin Mary who is ever constant and whose advocacy alone has swayed the Lord over heaven and earth to show mercy to all believers.”⁶⁵ This text clearly indicates that Henry IV lived with the conviction that only the Holy Virgin could establish the crucial link between God and the king. The cathedral at Speyer with its Salian burial site and with Mary as its patron saint served now, as never before, not only as a demonstrative symbol but also as an anchor for the legitimacy and the continuance of the Salian dynasty’s royal and imperial lordship as well as the personal salvation of Henry IV (fig. 38). From this point of view, legitimate kings could only come from the dynasty that was directly linked to *this* church.

8

Princes as Heads of the Polity

ON 12 DECEMBER 1104, Henry V, eighteen years old and already designated as his father’s successor, abandoned Henry IV in the middle of preparations for a Saxon campaign and journeyed south to Bavaria. There he joined a group of rebellious magnates assembled in Regensburg and celebrated Christmas with them.¹ According to the *Vita Heinrici IV*, the dissidents manipulated him with skillful arguments and persuasive innuendo. They told young Henry they could not understand how he could put up with such a harsh father (*quod tamen durum patrem pati posset*); by bearing his tyranny so obediently, he in fact made himself indistinguishable from a lowly servant. If he were planning to wait until his father’s death to assume his kingship, someone would surely preempt him; and such a rival could count on many helpers because of the ill-will and hatred that had accumulated against his father. On the other hand, he could be assured of everyone’s vote if he did not hesitate to exercise power over the kingdom now which, after all, had already been transferred to him. Such a move was especially necessary because his father lay under excommunication and had been banished by the church and rejected by the imperial princes long ago.²

Henry V then agreed to assume the leadership of the grumbling princes. The following year, 1105, both father and son began mobilizing their forces, but no decisive encounter ensued. Then Henry V resorted to a ruse: he came to meet his father feigning remorse and willingness to seek reconciliation. Thereupon the emperor reportedly embraced his son in tears and dismissed his army. As father and son were riding toward Mainz, Henry V supposedly suggested to the emperor that it might be wise if he sought refuge in the castle of Böckelheim on the Nahe River since a large force of Bavarians and Swabians had assembled in Mainz and might pose a great danger to him. Meanwhile he, the son, would proceed

