Emperors and Popes

Maranatha Chapel
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Ascendancy of the Church Over State

Remember those Byzantine and Imperial Rome mosaics showing the Emperor appointing the Bishops?

German Relief Showing Bishop Crowning Princes

Sicilian Fresco depicting Christ crowning a Norman King
Pope Gregory I (c. 540-604)

• known as Gregory the Great; Pope (590-604 AD) and doctor of the church.
• the greatest of all the medieval popes.
• A Roman patrician, by age 30 he had attained the office of prefect, Rome's highest civil office.
• He then built several monasteries and served as a papal representative before being elected pope in 590 AD.
• He became the architect of the medieval papacy.
Gregory Greatly Strengthens Papacy

• In 598 he won temporary peace with the Lombards.
• Eager to convert pagan peoples, Gregory sent Augustine of Canterbury on a mission to England (596).
• Under Gregory, Gothic Arian Spain (see Arianism) became reconciled with Rome.
• laid the basis for the Papal States.
• strong opponent of slavery
• extended tolerance to Jews
• wrote the Pastoral Rule, a guide for church government.
• His extensive recodification of the liturgy and chant led to his name being given to Gregorian chant.

"I, albeit unworthy, have been set up in command of the Church."

Pope Gregory I
Charlemagne, Crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III, 800 AD

“To Charles, the most pious, crowned Augustus by God, to the great peace-making Emperor, long life and victory.”

Charlemagne's motto

*Renavatio romani imperi* (Revival of the Roman Empire)
The Clergy 1000-1300

- Bishops were often feudal vassals of and owed their jobs to laymen
- Clergy Appointments not on merit
- **Nepotism**
- **Simony**: purchase of church offices
- **Nicolaitism**: clergy sometimes married or had concubines
Lay Investiture

- Bishops were often feudal vassals of laymen and were appointed by them
- Bishoprics typically included vast tracts of land and great wealth.
- Bishops often had their own armies!

Henry IV and Abbot of Cluny ask help from Matilda
Investiture Controversy
Schism of 1054: Final Break with East

- 1054 Pope Leo IX and the patriarch of Constantinople, excommunicated each other, an event that marked the final break between the two churches.
- Reasons:
  - the “filoque” –
  - Pope’s claim to be supreme bishop
  - clerical celibacy
  - Leavened vs unleavened bread
  - limitation of the right of confirmation to the bishop.
  - geographic jurisdictional disputes between Rome and Constantinople.
- After the Schism, things were somewhat more friendly until destruction and sacrilege of Constantinople in 1204
- Attempts at reconciliation were made by Council of Lyons (1274), Council of Florence (1438-9), but rejected by East
Emperor Henry IV (r. 1056-1106)

- Needed to be able to appoint bishops to keep his power
- Needed Episcopal troops to govern
- Challenged right of pope to interfere in German church
- Deposed incompetent pope
- Demonstrated power of emperor over pope
- Henry IV continued to associate with bishops excommunicated by the pope for simony
- Henry continued to try to appoint bishops
God’s Two Arms: Royalty and Papacy

We believe...the apostolic and royal dignities excel all others in this world, and that Almighty God has apportioned his governance between them...Yet according to the difference between the greater and the less, the Christian religion has so disposed that after God the royal power shall be governed by the care and authority of the apostolic see. ...If I am to represent you in the great judgment day...do consider whether you should not...render obedience to me.

Pope Gregory VII, 1080 Letter to William the Conqueror

- a representation of God with the pope and the emperor
- Whose authority is hereby greatest?
The College of Cardinals 1059

• 1059 College of Cardinals became only body able to choose pope
• Prevented pope from being appointed and controlled by laymen
• Duties include electing the pope, acting as his principal counselors, and aiding in governing the Roman Catholic church. Cardinals serve as officers of the Roman Curia, bishops of major dioceses, and papal envoys.
• Cardinals are successors of the bishops of the sees just outside Rome and of the patriarchal sees of the Eastern Catholic Church. Cardinal priests are the bishops of important sees around the world and are the most numerous order of cardinals.
• A red biretta and ring are symbolic of the office.
Pope Gregory VII On the State of the Church in 1075

- "The Eastern Church has fallen away from the Faith and is now assailed on every side by infidels. Wherever I turn my eyes-to the west, to the north, or to the south—I find everywhere bishops who have obtained their office in an irregular way, whose lives and conversation are strangely at variance with their sacred calling; who go through their duties not for the love of Christ but from motives of worldly gain. There are no longer princes who set God’s honor before their own selfish ends, or who allow justice to stand in the way of their ambition. . . .And those among whom I live—Romans, Lombards, and Normans—are, as I have often told them, worse than Jews or Pagans"

Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand) (r. 1073-1085)

- Was civilian administrator of city of Rome
- Denied that kings had right to appoint church officials
- Held to Theocracy, temporal and spiritual power on earth under the Pope, God’s “vice regent”! Kings submit to will of pope
- 1066 approved the invasion of England by William the Conqueror
- **Dictates of Pope:**
  - Church owed foundation to “God alone.”
  - Pope was “alone to be called universal”.
  - Pope had power over all Bishops/Patriarchs.
  - Pope’s feet to be kissed by all Princes.
  - Pope had power to “depose emperors”.
  - Church of Rome had never erred and never would.
1079 Celibacy of Priests Required by Gregory VII

- Clerical celibacy was essentially unknown in the earliest church,
- 1079 celibacy of priesthood declared by Pope Gregory VII
- Byproduct of Investiture Controversy. By making priests and bishops celibate there was no possibility of their positions becoming hereditary, requiring repeated appointments by Rome.
- It also caused the properties and estates of the clergy to become church property.
- required thousands of wives be disposed of.

Pope Gregory VII
Pope Innocent III: 
History’s Most Powerful Pope 
(r. 1198-1216)

• 1202: pope Innocent III claims extensive papal power—believed he was “The Vicar of Christ”

• Used power of papacy to intimidate kings and emperors through Interdicts.

• Deposed King John (1199-1216) of England and forced him to become his vassal.

• King of France becomes vassal

• Holy Roman Emperor deposed

• 1204: Condones capture of Constantinople by Crusaders in Fourth Crusade

• 1215 Convenes 4th Lateran Council
Pope Innocent III’s Delusions of Grandeur

“The successor of Peter, is the Vicar of Christ: he has been established as a mediator between God and man, below God, but beyond man; less than God but more than man; who shall judge all and be judged by no one.”
Innocent III:
On Church-State Relations

The Papacy is like the sun, while kings are like the moon. As the moon receives its light from the sun, so kings derive their powers from the Pope.
Innocent’s Political Weapons: Interdict

- Described as a “national ecclesiastical lockout”
- In a sacramentalist/sacerdotalist setting, closing the churches had devastating impact.
- Suspended all public worship
- Withdrawal of all sacraments, nationwide, except for baptism and extreme unction (last rights)
- Innocent used Interdicts successfully 85 times!

Note Gargoyles
Emperor Frederick Barbarossa: Emperors vs. Popes Round 2 (r. 1152-1190)

- Challenged pope and lost
- Goal: Conquer Northern Italy and use money gained to raise troops in Germany
- Use troops to intimidate nobles in Germany
- Popes did not want a powerful emperor right next door
- Popes forged an alliance of Italians against Frederick
- 1176 Battle of Legnano: Frederick lost, gave up plan
Was Emperor Frederick II the Antichrist?

• The rivalry between the popes and the emperors culminated in the 1240s when Pope Innocent IV waged "total war"—a war of both swords and words—against emperor Frederick II.

• Innocent and his supporters branded Frederick the **Antichrist**.

"What other Antichrist should we await, when as is evident in his works, he is already come in the person of Frederick? He is the author of every crime, stained by every cruelty, and he has invaded the patrimony of Christ seeking to destroy it with aid."  Innocent IV

“The Apocalypse”
Concordant of Worms 1122

- (1122) Compromise between Pope Calixtus II and Emperor Henry V (r.1106-25) to settle the Investiture Controversy, reached at Worms, Germany.
- Emperors could not appoint bishops
- Emperors could be present at elections
- Bishops had to swear fealty for any feudal lands held
- It marked the end of the first phase of conflict between Rome and the Holy Roman Empire and made a clear distinction between the spiritual side of a prelate's office and his position as a landed magnate and vassal of the crown.
- Bishops and abbots were to be chosen by the clergy, but the emperor was to decide contested elections.
- Those selected were to be invested first with the powers and privileges of their office as vassal (granted by the emperor) and then with their ecclesiastical powers and lands (granted by church authority).
• Archbishop of Canterbury (1162-70).
• Resistant to the Gregorian reform movement that asserted the autonomy of the church, Henry hoped to reinforce royal control of the church by appointing Becket as archbishop of Canterbury in 1162.
• Becket, however, embraced his new duties devoutly and opposed royal power in the church, especially proclaiming the right of offending clerics to be tried in ecclesiastical courts.
• The king issued the Constitutions of Clarendon (1164) listing royal rights over the church, and he summoned the archbishop to trial.
• Becket fled to France and remained in exile until 1170, when he returned to Canterbury and was murdered in the cathedral by four of Henry's knights.
• His tomb became a site of pilgrimage, and he was canonized in 1173.
King Henry’s Councils of Clarendon (1164)

- Sixteen articles issued by King Henry II defining church-state relations in England.
- provoked the famous quarrel between Henry and St. Thomas Becket.
  1. all revenues from vacant sees and monasteries reverted to the king
  2. King would fill vacant church offices
  3. Priests charged with serious crimes were to be tried in secular courts.
- Becket's martyrdom in 1170 forced Henry to moderate his attack on the clergy, but he did not repudiate the constitutions.
King Philip II of France (r. 1180-1223) vs. Boniface

- 1301 Philip claimed right to try clergy in royal courts
- Boniface VII thought he still had the power of Gregory VII and Innocent III
- Boniface retaliated by forbidding taxes for church, war
- 1302 *Unum Sanctum*
- Edward collected taxes anyway, Philip stopped sending Pope taxes
- Boniface issued bull of excommunication and interdict
- Phillip imprisoned Boniface and beat him to near death.
- Boniface died in prison 1303
- After the death of Boniface, it was clear that the governments of Europe had no intention of recognizing papal authority as absolute.
Pope Boniface VIII, 1294-1303

- Member of Roman nobility.
- Legalistic approach to power & privileges
- 1301 *Ascolta, fili*: ‘Listen, son,’ Boniface argued that no layman can try a cleric
- Boniface was one of the Popes put in Hell by Dante, who wrote the *Inferno* only a few years after Boniface's death.
Edward I of England (r. 1272-1307)
Bishops in Parliament

• Edward continued to increase royal authority in England
• Parliament: Called by Edward in 1295, this meeting of nobles, bishops and wealthy townsfolk would become one of the most important political institutions in England
Papal Critics: William of Ockham (c. 1285-1349)

- Popes could err in spiritual interpretation
- Heretical popes could be removed from office
- Strongly Influenced Martin Luther
- Power of the pope is limited by the freedom of Christians that is established by the gospel and the natural law.
- Legitimate and in keeping with the gospel to side with the empire against the papacy
- Ockham called for a college of popes to rule the church and claimed that Christ was the only head of the church.
- Ockham entirely rejected papal authority in temporal matters.
Popes vs. Emperors: Round 1

- Gregory accused Emperor Henry IV of Simony in appointing the archbishop of Milan and “summoned” Henry to Rome to explain his conduct.
- Instead, Henry convened a synod in 1076 which denounced Gregory as a usurper and unfit to be Pope and renounced obedience to the Pope.
- 1076 Pope Gregory excommunicated Henry IV and absolved his subjects of obedience to him.
- German nobles revolted against Henry.
- 1077: To restore order, Henry stood in the snow at Canossa for three days while doing penance.
- Pope forgave Henry, Henry returned to Germany to put down revolt.
- 1080-1084 Conflict between Henry and Gregory, Henry drove Pope Gregory into exile.
- Henry I of England renounced lay investiture (1106) in return for the guarantee that homage would be paid to the king before consecration.

Gregory forgave him and said, “We loosed the chain of anathema and...received him...into the lap of the Holy Mother Church.”
1302--Papal bull "Unam sanctum"

- *Unam Sanctam*, ‘One Holy,’
- Most powerful statement of powers of imperial Papacy
  - The two swords: (Luke 22:38)
  - Both temporal and spiritual power are under control of the Pope
  - necessary for salvation that every human being be subject to the Roman Pope.

Boniface VIII
The Babylonian Captivity (1309-1377)

- 1305 Clement V elected Pope through the efforts of Philip IV of France
- He was archbishop of Bordeaux when elected, and he had never been to Rome
- 1309 Clement V moved the Papal capital to Avignon where the Papacy fell under French control
- 7 successive Popes were French and didn’t return to Rome
- Papacy remained in Avignon for 70 years, hence the “Babylonian Captivity.”
End of Avignon Papacy

• Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) was a major player in returning the Papacy from Avignon to Rome, urging the Pope to take this step. She was an advisor to the next Pope, Urban VI. She left several writings, including the Dialogue.

• Responding to great public pressure, Gregory XI returned to Rome in 1377.

• Died in Rome.
Babylonian Captivity: Effects

- The city of Rome deteriorated
- The name of Avignon was a synonym for corruption and bad morals.
- Weakness of Papacy
- Papacy Dominated by French, decreasing Papal prestige
- Immorality and avarice in Papacy Criticism of Papacy increased
- Cardinals began to play a stronger role in church government.

Petrarch: “Avignon was a sewer where all the filth of the universe gathered, a place where no pity dwells, no charity, no faith, where whoever is the worse is promoted, God is despised, money worshipped, the laws trodden underfoot and good men ridiculed.”
Wealthy Italian Families Make Papacy Their Personal Possession

- The Italian families of Borgia and de Medici became influential in the election of Popes and in some cases became the Popes.

“... Lord desires not the death of the sinner, but that he may live ... and pay”
The Great Schism (1378-1417)

• After Gregory died, the cardinals in Rome elected an Italian Pope: Pope Urban VI (r. 1378-1389)
• The French cardinals responded by electing a French Pope: Clement VII (r. 1378-1394)
• From 1378 to 1409 there were two Popes at all times.
• Expenses of 2 Popes led to greater need for money
• The two popes at once excommunicated each other and put the rival supporters and entire countries under interdicts.
Questions to Consider

• Did any good at all come out of the merger of Church and State? Can any good ever come of it?
• What are the logical consequences of believing that you receive grace from sacraments and only from one official source?
• If sacramentalism and sacerdotalism were true, how would you understand the mutual excommunications of the Eastern and Western churches?