

CHAPTER
8
SECTION 2

Section Summary
THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE CHURCH

During the Middle Ages, popes and the Church spread their influence across Europe. European rulers, too, grew more powerful. However, this increase in power often resulted in conflict.

Rulers of the Holy Roman Empire, which extended from Germany to Italy, often confronted the pope over the appointment of Church officials. **Pope Gregory VII** wanted the Church free from lay (non-church) control. To do this he banned **lay investiture**, in which the emperor rather than the pope named and installed bishops. However, Holy Roman Emperor **Henry IV** said that bishops held royal lands under his control, so he had the right to appoint them. In 1076 the pope excommunicated him and threatened to crown a new emperor. Henry was forced to humble himself to the pope as a sinner, and Gregory forgave him. Later, Henry led an army to Rome, sending Gregory into exile. Fifty years later, the Concordat of Worms was accepted, giving popes sole power to invest bishops with religious authority and emperors the right to invest them with lands.

Power struggles over land also occurred during the 1100s and 1200s. Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I, called **Frederick Barbarossa** or “Red Beard,” fought but failed to capture wealthy northern Italian cities. Instead, he arranged for his son to marry the heiress to Sicily and southern Italy, expanding his control there. His grandson, Frederick II, also sought but failed to control northern Italy. Ultimately, the Holy Roman Empire broke up into separate feudal states, while southern Italy went through centuries of chaos.

By the 1200s, the Church reached its peak of power. In 1198, **Pope Innocent III** took office and claimed supremacy over all other rulers. He excommunicated the English and French kings, and placed their kingdoms under interdict, barring people from religious sacraments. He also launched a holy war against heretics in southern France, killing tens of thousands. After Innocent’s death, popes continued to claim supremacy, but they were challenged by the monarchs’ growing power. In the late 1200s, France’s Philip IV successfully challenged the pope on the issue of taxing the clergy. Philip then went on to engineer the election of a French pope.

Review Questions

1. What did Pope Gregory VII want?

2. What did Innocent III claim?

READING CHECK

What agreement ended power struggles between Holy Roman emperors and popes over lay investiture?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *confronted* mean in the underlined sentence? *Confronted* is made from three word parts: the prefix *con-* means “together”; *front* means “the part of something that is facing forward”; *-ed* is a suffix that indicates past tense. Use these word-part clues to help you figure out the meaning of *confronted*.

READING SKILL

Understand Effects Was the Concordat of Worms a cause or effect of the power struggles between popes and rulers?
