

John XII (955-964)

Elected pope when only 16 as a result of a bribe by his father on his deathbed, he was at best a miserable person of weak morals and no spiritual leanings. But in this political section he is important due to his forging of the more technical arrangement of the Holy Roman Empire with Otto I of Germany. It came early in 964 when the pope placated Otto with the diadem although when he tried to placate another barbarous foe with the same gift, Otto was no longer happy. John is important only for this act and I have oversimplified it greatly in these notes. He is too much symbolical of what was wrong with the papacy in this period. It is against the background of his ministry many catholic scholars assert if the papacy were not of God, these men would have ended it. Strange logic unless you are in the Textus Receptus circle.

V.l.e

Holy
Roman
Empire

The Holy Roman Empire

We have noted the formation of this body in an earlier section. It is the second major step in the mediaeval development of the Vatican political power. The idea, as noted, is that all the countries loyal to the faith practiced in Rome will be banded together to give support to the church in its quest to take the Gospel to the world. The governments would support church programs, prevent aggressive warfare, and militate against things that would otherwise upset spiritual life. There was no physical union or amalgamation of national policies but a moral and spiritual union in the interest of the church and its work.

The countries involved would elect one of their leaders to be the responsible person for guiding the affairs of the nations as they affected the church. This "emperor" would have no direct control of member countries save for the one from which he came and where, presumably, he was the titled ruler. But he could call all of the member countries to aid in a work, to fight a war, etc. The position carried great prestige and great potential but little else. The church would consecrate the designated party and would call on all countries true to the faith to help and uphold the emperor as needed. In theory the church gave the morale and divine benediction while the nations provided the muscle.