

These brief notes on the Roman Pontiffs are intended to give the student a guide as to whom they were and what their most immediate relationship to the reformation was. For better characterization of the popes see Farrow: THE PAGEANT OF THE POPES, written from a very loyal Romanist viewpoint.

The Germanic States and Papal Authority

II.3.b
The Germanic
States

This is complicated because the term "Germany" is used anachronistically. The Germanic territory consisted of three basic components after this pattern:

Some territories were assigned to the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire either by inheritance or possession through mergers and leagues. These territories were under the Austrian Hapsburgs and were thought of as imperial possessions although some of their residents did not think of it in that way.

Other territories were marked by individual rule with a king of their own. These were generally quite free in other allegiances although bound to the emperor in the general idea of the government of the Empire. The rulers were often "Electors", persons who had a vote in the next imperial election.

And finally there were the free cities where the mayor was virtually king. These were marked with a fierce attitude of independence on the part of the populace and such cities often exercised a will of their own in most things and often formed the pivotal point for political actions and decisions.

It is safe to say that in all these groupings, the Teutonic spirit of independent action and initiative with a general willingness to be dissuaded from a conceived action (sometimes called stubbornness) were very pronounced. It is one of the decisive factors in understanding the difficulty that existed with regard to subduing the reformation leadership and thrust.

In political theory the whole of the Germanic territory was governed by the Reichstag..a loosely woven sort of territorial parliament of the Teutonic rulers. After 1500 this body was growing in power