MEDIEVAL MONARCHY IN ACTION

The German Empire from Henry I to Henry IV

Boyd H. Hill Jr

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PREFACE

This book might equally well have been subtitled 'The German *Emperors* from Henry I to Henry IV', for it concentrates on what these rulers did. My orientation is admittedly very old-fashioned and calls for some explanation. M. I. Finley has rightly criticized those modern histories of Rome which 'proceed through each reign in turn, from Augustus on, centring the account on the emperors themselves, their acts and their qualities, distinguishing and judging. Which of them, if any, merits such concentrated attention is rarely asked. Given a king, historians and their readers alike become mesmerized.'[1]

My main purpose in collecting these sources was to present certain documents of the tenth and eleventh centuries which had not appeared before in English – the royal and imperial diplomas of that period.[2] To be sure, the deeds of the Saxon and Salian dynasties yield information about economics, social classes, and institutions, but most of all they tell what the emperors were doing. I do not claim that these diplomas tell *everything* they did, and still less that everything they did (even if derivable from the documents) would constitute the 'history' of the German empire, but I think that *anything* they did officially is significant for the topic. I hasten to add that the diplomas are not all of equal significance. Some are simple grants of land which could be multiplied many times over in every reign. Others are unique, like the *Ottonianum*, which has received special attention from historians because of what it tells us about papal–imperial relations.

Even a small collection of diplomas, such as the one that follows, reveals the diversity of the problems which the emperors faced, though not necessarily what they actually accomplished. I have tried to include diplomas which deal with every geographical part of the empire as well as with every reign from Henry I to Henry IV. I have also included

[1] 'A Profitable Empire', *The New York Review of Books*, 29 January 1970, p. 52.

[2] To my knowledge, not more than five of those in my collection have appeared before in English.

documents which are not, strictly speaking, diplomas, though they are published in the *Monumenta* series called *Diplomatum regum et imperatorum Germaniae*, such as epistles and *placita*, the records of court trials at which the emperor presided. My problem was not what to include but what to leave out, for the inclusion of any diploma of a German emperor could probably be rationalized in a collection of this sort. In addition to the diplomas, I have included certain non-diplomatic sources which have a direct bearing on the activities of the emperors. I do not pretend that my choice is not an arbitrary one, but I hope that it is none the less useful as an introduction to the period.

For those who read German there is now an excellent collection of sources, beginning with the Franks and going up to the fall of Constantinople, in *Geschichte in Quellen*, II, *Mittelalter*, ed. Wolfgang Lautemann, Munich, 1970. It contains more than 700 selections with the greatest variety of literary genres, some of which are not represented in my collection: for instance, monastic annals, saints' lives, and papal registers. The scope of my book is much narrower, and I have leaned towards complete documents rather than excerpts.

Unless otherwise indicated, the translations are my own. I have not really translated the diplomas in this volume into English but rather into a diplomatic language that can be readily understood by native speakers of English but which does not actually exist as a spoken dialect. Undoubtedly the style of the finished product could have been much improved if I had taken the license to convert the Latin phraseology into current popular idiom, but I felt that this would do too much violence to the historical content. My aim is not to make tenth-century texts palatable to twentieth-century readers: their own interest in the subject matter must do that for them. I have sought rather to present literal translations that will give students a close approximation to the diplomas, but I have not spared them the effort of energetic study of the material.

Eugene Nida, a proponent of free translation of ancient texts, suggests that the very subject matter of past civilizations can be translated into terms that will make immediate sense to modern readers. As an example he cites J. B. Phillips's rendering of Romans 16:16, 'greet one another with a holy kiss', as 'give one another a hearty handshake all around'.[3] This translation is 'dynamic' and 'natural' and has now become the vogue. 'A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture; it does not insist that

[3] *Toward a Science of Translating*, Leiden, 1964, p. 160.

he understand the cultural patterns of the source-language context in order to comprehend the message'.[4]

I believe that this approach, though doubtless successful in luring unsophisticated peoples into reading the message of the Gospels, represents a falsification of the source. It would be more helpful to the student of history to offer a literal rendering and to supply whatever footnotes are needed by way of explanation. This is what I have tried to do, and in this I am not alone. E. H. Warmington in his translation of Old Latin inscriptions has reproduced the jargon of ancient laws so that the result sounds like legal English, an appropriate vehicle for the subject and one that is familiar to the reader.[5] This pedantic adherence to the original also seems to characterize most translations of English constitutional documents that I have seen. How would one put the following into modern parlance so that the content is immediately comprehensible to a student of the 1970s?

'In assizes of darrein presentment, and in the plea of *Quare impedit* of churches vacant, the day shall be given from fifteen days to fifteen days, or from three weeks to three weeks, according as the place may be far or near.'[6]

One would have to turn to paraphrase, yet copious notes would still be required to explain the content. If I am following in the path of Stubbs, then so much the better. The current fashion lies in another direction, but I think it cannot be proved that free paraphrase gives any real sense of the style of the original. It merely lulls the student into the mistaken assumption that medieval history is easy. The Latin of the diplomas tends to be flatfooted, formulaic, and sometimes syntactically tortured, just as our own laws often are because of the need to cover all possible contingencies and loopholes. Hopefully the content will capture the imagination of the student even if the style does not. Most of the narrative sources are, by contrast, highly entertaining.

I wish to express my warmest thanks to the following scholars for their helpful suggestions: Professor Frederick Behrends, Dr Karl Brunner, Dr Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke, Professor Gerhart Ladner, Professor

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 159. Nida is not dogmatic about dynamic equivalence; he is merely enthusiastic. He points out that this is only one of several ways to execute acceptable translations. Another example of the type of idiomatic translation he favours is the following: 'The phrase "uncircumcised of heart" (Acts 7:51) must, of course, be radically altered in a number of receptor languages, as it has been in Cakchiquel, "with your hearts unprepared" ' (*ibid.*, p. 220).

[5] *Remains of Old Latin*, IV, *Archaic Inscriptions*, London, 1959.

[6] 'The Provisions of the Barons or of Westminster, October 1259', trans. William Stubbs, in *Select Documents of English Constitutional History*, ed. George Burton Adams and H. Morse Stephens, New York, 1910, p. 65.

Arthur J. Slavin, Professor Herwig Wolfram; and to the members of my seminar: Mr Charles Clark, Dr Lynn Hallgren, Professor C. E. Licka, Mr Louis Lumaghi, and Mr Gerald Snyder. I must also acknowledge with thanks the permission of Professor Mary Bernardine Bergman, O.S.B., to use extracts from her translation of the *Gesta Ottonis*; that of Columbia University Press for extracts from Harriet Pratt Lattin, *The Letters of Gerbert*; Theodor E. Mommsen and Karl F. Morrison, *Imperial Lives and Letters of The Eleventh Century;* Francis J. Tschan, *History of The Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen* and *The Chronicle of The Slavs*; that of Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd for extracts from F. A. Wright, *The Works of Liudprand of Cremona.* Detailed references appear at the appropriate places.

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INTRODUCTION

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Everyone seems to agree as to who the German emperors were even when they are not so sure as to the nature of the empire which they sought to govern. Historians have been able to catalogue their deeds and accomplishments, but they have not always succeeded in telling why they did what they did. Although we shall mention some of these 'why' questions that have baffled historians, we do not pretend to answer them. Yet to exclude them altogether on the grounds that they cannot be answered would be to leave the intellectual mortar out of the historical edifice.[1] It is often the 'why' question that attracts the historian to a particular period or problem. Only the unusually detached reader of a mystery novel is content to know how the murderer carried out his crime without also asking why he did it. Likewise, in our courts the question of motive is taken into account in the judging of criminals: it is considered more heinous to premeditate a murder than to run down a man by mistake with an automobile, though the results are the same for the deceased. To be sure, we cannot know with certainty what was in the criminal's mind at the time of the murder, and still less can we know about the mind of a king who has been dead for a thousand years.

Even when the sources tell us why the king did something, we would be foolish to take the statement at face value. Perhaps the chronicler had an axe to grind. Maybe he was simply currying favour. Or perhaps (worst of all) the king himself did not really understand his own motives any more than we can always understand our own. Nevertheless, we shall repeat certain of the 'why' questions which historians have raised about the Saxons and Salians, because they are interesting even if unanswerable, and they are a part of the historiography of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

[1] Since David Hackett Fischer has so thoroughly and amusingly discredited the asking of 'why' questions, an apologia would seem to be in order. See *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*, New York, 1970, pp. 14–15.

The first of these 'why' questions is: Why did Henry the Fowler refuse to be anointed? As the successful duke of Saxony, Henry had been recommended by his predecessor, Conrad I of Franconia, and he was designated king of the Germans in May 919 when the Frankish and Saxon nobles met at Fritzlar. Henry accepted the kingdom but declined to be anointed by a clerical official. This was in sharp contrast to his predecessor: Conrad's accession at Forchheim on 10 November 911 was legitimized with holy oil applied by clerical hands. In Walter Ullmann's opinion, 'Conrad's lack of blood charisma had to be compensated by the charisma of grace'.[2] Since Conrad's connection to the Carolingian dynasty which preceded him was a tenuous one, the necessary magic of the coronation ceremony was supplied by holy oil.

Henry, on the other hand, rejected the oil and thereby also rejected the clergy as the agent that made him a real king. Carl Erdmann has conjectured that this was deliberate, that Henry meant to contrast most sharply with the practices of Conrad, an unfortunate ruler who was heavily dependent upon his clerical advisers.[3] Henry also broke with tradition when he dispensed with a royal chapel. The chapel, which included the chancery, normally produced the documents which the king would have occasion to issue. Inasmuch as the royal chapel was a Carolingian invention and had been taken over by Conrad I, the lack of a chapel at Henry's court has been interpreted as another sign that he wished to inaugurate a purely secular reign.[4] Henry assumed Conrad's regalia but did not take over his archchaplain, Archbishop Pilgrim of Salzburg, nor his chancellor, Bishop Solomon of Constance. Pilgrim was excluded because his territory, Bavaria, lay outside the new king's jurisdiction. Solomon, however, seems to have been rejected on political grounds: he was the most powerful representative of the politics of Conrad, and that is what Henry wanted to break away from.[5] The only member of Conrad's chapel taken over by Henry was the notary Simon, and apparently the king added no new notaries for six years.[6] Henry did not issue a diploma for almost a year after taking office, and in that first diploma

[2] *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (The Birkbeck Lectures, 1968–9), London, 1969, p. 127.

[3] 'Der ungesalbte König', *Deutches Archiv für die Erforschung des Mittelalters*, II (1938), 311–40.

[4] Josef Fleckenstein, *Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige*, II, *Die Hofkapelle im Rahmen der ottonisch-salischen Reichskirche*, Stuttgart, 1966, 3. Fleckenstein goes on to show that the break with tradition may not have been so radical after all. Similarly Geoffrey Barraclough argues that Henry's refusal of anointment has been over-emphasized: it was not necessarily an anticlerical declaration but merely showed his independence in general. See *Mediaeval Germany 911–1250*, *Essays by German Historians*, I, *Introduction*, Oxford, 1948, 36.

[5] Fleckenstein, *Hofkapelle*, II, 5.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

(Doc. 1) Simon the notary was named, but no archchaplain.[7] When Henry finally did get around to appointing an archchaplain (and by definition he thereby established a royal chapel), he chose the man from whom he had refused to receive holy oil, Archbishop Heriger of Mainz. Therefore, while Henry broke with tradition in refusing anointment, he later resumed the traditional practice of having a royal archchaplain, with the inevitable prestige for the Church that this office entailed. Although the archchaplain did not reside at court, one can assume that he was involved in the king's business.[8]

Although Henry refused anointment and delayed the establishment of a royal chapel, his reign was not entirely marked by eccentric behaviour. He was only too willing to receive the kingdom which Conrad had offered him, the kingdom of the East Franks. 'Henry I, on his elevation to the throne, ceases to be a Saxon and passes under Frankish law, adopts the traditions and takes over the powers of the Frankish kings, becomes a Frank.'[9] This Frankish kingdom, the *regnum Theutonicorum*, consisted of the eastern part of the old Carolingian empire, though Henry did not automatically obtain control over the whole territory. The act of succession conferred upon him the title of king but scarcely enlarged his realm beyond the confines of Saxony. The Frankish nobles were present and acquiesced in the choice of Henry as Conrad's successor, but their duke, Eberhard, remained virtually independent of the new king. The duchies of Bavaria and Swabia did not even send representatives to the royal ceremony.

The duchies had begun as administrative units under Charlemagne, and these units were based on tribal divisions. As Charles pushed out east in the wake of his predecessors, the old tribes were absorbed, and the duchies were immediately placed under the rule of men loyal to Charles, for the most part Frankish nobles attached to the court. Often the rulers of these duchies would come in time to identify with the people they led, a perfectly natural process, but this is not to say that the dukes inherited an organic relationship with their subjects through ancient blood ties.

The power of the duchies varied according to the personality of the duke and the amount of loyalty he could command from his local fighting nobles. In the tenth century the dukes were frequently embroiled in revolts against the monarch, yet they often belonged to the

[7] The name of the archchaplain, Archbishop Heriger of Mainz, was added later, but Heriger is not given the title of archchaplain in this document.

[8] It might be mentioned that the royal chaplains also had the duty of guarding the relics in the king's possession and of holding divine services at court. But we are more interested in the chancery, a subdivision of the chapel, which supervised the drafting of documents.

[9] Barraclough, *Mediaeval Germany*, I, 48.

royal family themselves. Hence the power to revolt depended on more than the mere possession of a territorial base. When a rebellion against the king is led by a man who is both the duke of Bavaria and the monarch's brother, it is difficult to say which of these relationships is the more important at a time when kinship ties and family feuds were often the springboard for acts that otherwise seem purely political.

In the thirteenth century the territorial princes did rise up and frustrate the German kings, but one of the reasons for their success is the fact that the rulers of the tenth and eleventh centuries had already solved the problem of the duchies and had moved on to the larger goals of imperial power. During the era of the Saxons and Salians the dukes schemed and often revolted, but they did not succeed in permanently appropriating regalian rights. Not until the time of Henry V, the last of the Salians (1106–25), did the ambition of the dukes begin systematically to weaken the monarch's hold upon Germany.

By skilful manœuvring Henry I was able to extract the acknowledgement of his sovereignty from Burchard, duke of Swabia and Duke Arnulf 'the Bad' of Bavaria. Then he turned to the acquisition of Lotharingia, which had been invaded by the French king Charles the Simple in 920. Henry was in no way entitled to Lotharingia, for by the Treaty of Verdun in 843 it had been accorded independent status. Nevertheless, he wanted to add it to his realm. Rather than fight the French king, he struck a bargain on 7 November 921 aboard a boat anchored in the Rhine. Henry did not acquire the territory of the Lotharingians, but he did extort recognition of himself as king of the East Franks, a significant accomplishment.

He followed it up with military and matrimonial pressure: in 923 and 924 Henry took his army into Lotharingia to fight Rudolf of Burgundy who was (like himself) encroaching upon the hapless duchy. The resident duke, Giselbert, who like a cat always landed on his feet, had come to terms with Rudolf, but when bottled up at Zülpich by Henry, he had no choice but to recognize the Saxon king. In 928 Giselbert cemented his ties with the Saxon dynasty by marrying Henry's daughter Gerberga.

Henry was equally concerned with Swabia because of its historical ties to Burgundy and Italy. Though he established his claim to royal lands in Swabia within a year after coming to power, he could not wrest control of the Swabian Church from Duke Burchard. When Burchard died in 926, Henry was at last in a position to influence Swabian affairs, and this he did by appointing as the new duke a Frank named Herman, a cousin of Duke Eberhard of Franconia.[10] By this appointment the duchy of Swabia lost its independence and came under

[10] Martin Lintzel, 'Heinrich I. und das Herzogtum Schwaben', *Ausgewählte Schriften*, II, Berlin, 1961, 77.

the control of the Saxon king. The new situation is revealed in the royal diplomas that began to be issued for the Swabian Church. In August of 926, Henry freed from serfdom a priest named Baldmunt who was resident at a Swabian monastery (Doc. 2). 'In the earliest times, the ministers in private churches were predominantly bondmen of the lord: anything they earned during their lifetime, therefore, went to swell the *peculium* – that is, the property invested in the domanial church – anything they left at the time of death was acquired wholly or partially by the lord.'[11] But unfree priests ceased to be the rule after the eighth century. However, once a free clergy was the rule, they came to inherit the movable property of the church which was not used for divine services. Since the lord did not wish to see any of his own private chapel property acquired by his clerk, he would sometimes have one of his serfs ordained priest, even though this practice was proscribed by the Church.

A few months later Henry granted a piece of property to the bishop of Chur (3 November 926), also in Swabia, and confirmed the rights of the abbey of St Gall (4 November 926). Three of the Swabian bishops attended the synod of Erfurt in 932, whereas only one of them had attended the synod which Henry had convened in Coblenz in 922 at a time when Burchard still controlled the Swabian clergy. The Bavarian prelates were totally absent from the synod of Erfurt, and this lack of participation reflects how Henry's influence was non-existent in Bavaria. Yet he was apparently on good terms with the Bavarian Duke Arnulf, for we find Arnulf's name as intercessor on behalf of the priest Baldmunt mentioned above. Martin Lintzel suggests that Arnulf may not have been averse to Henry's influence in Swabia, for that would prevent Henry from turning his attention to Italy where Arnulf had ambitions himself.[12]

Henry was not as lucky on the northern and eastern frontiers of his kingdom as he was on the west and south. The Danes, the Slavs, and the Hungarians were making almost continual raids across his borders. These bold and skilful barbarians required strong defensive measures if Henry was to maintain his kingdom intact. Two of his major accomplishments can be attributed to the threat of invaders – the building up of the army and the establishment of fortified towns.

In 924, according to the Saxon historian Widukind of Corvey, the Hungarians 'made such a slaughter in those days and burned so many monasteries that we have decided to pass over our calamities in silence

[11] Ulrich Stutz, 'The Proprietary Church as an Element of Mediaeval Germanic Ecclesiastical Law', in *Mediaeval Germany*, II, trans. Barraclough, Oxford, 1948, 52.

[12] Lintzel, 'Heinrich I.', p. 83.

rather than to enumerate them with words'.[13] But he did record the doleful fact that the king was forced to shut himself up in the fortress of Werla for protection, 'because he did not trust an army that was rude and unaccustomed to open war against so cruel a tribe'.[14] Luckily a Hungarian prince was taken captive by the Saxons, and in exchange for his return Henry demanded peace for nine years. In the interim he built up the army and fortified his towns so as to be prepared for future onslaughts from the east.

The fortress of Werla with its massive ramparts is an example of the structural plan that Henry was to adopt throughout Saxony.[15] However, the older view that he alone was responsible for the spread of fortified towns in Saxony has given way in the light of archaeological evidence to the conclusion that he merely adopted a style of architecture and town planning that was already in existence and put it to good advantage.[16] Henry may deserve the nickname of 'city-builder' which later writers awarded him, but only for his energy, not for his originality.

Widukind tells us how Henry organized the population during the truce with the Hungarians. He had eight out of nine men work the fields while the ninth stayed in the fortified area and managed the housing for the others. All councils and gatherings were to be held within the towns, and the citizens were disciplined to practice during peace time the skills they might need in time of war.

The result of Henry's spartan tactics was that the Saxons were so hardened to conditions of warfare that the king did not hesitate to turn his defensive policy to one of the offensive, and in the winter of 928 he invaded the territory of the Slavic Wends, capturing the town of Brandenburg. He went on to fight the Dalemintzi, a Slavic tribe on the lower Elbe, and established the fortress of Meissen as an eastern outpost. Finally, he attempted to subdue the Bohemians, who were allies of the Wends and therefore enemies of the Germans. With Duke Arnulf of Bavaria as his ally, Henry marched on Prague, ready to fight. But the reigning duke, Wenceslas, surrendered without a battle and received his

[13] *Rerum gestarum Saxonicarum Libri tres*, ed. G. Waitz *et al.*, 5th edn, Hanover, 1935, p. 45.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] A great deal has been written about castle Werla, which is located near the Harz mountains on the bank of the river Oker, about 8 miles north-north-east of the town of Goslar. The best and most recent treatment of the remains of Werla from an archaeological point of view is that of Hermann Schroller, 'Die Ausgrabung der Pfalz Werla und ihre Probleme', in *Deutsche Königspfalzen*, II, Göttingen, 1965, 140–9, with a magnificent map (facing p. 148) and aerial photos of the site (facing p. 144).

[16] Herbert Jankuhn, '"Heinrichsburgen" und Königspfalzen', *Deutsche Königspfalzen*, II, 67. Apparently such burgs were built from the end of the eighth to the beginning of the eleventh century and were not confined to Saxony.

country back as a fief of the German crown. Bohemia was now legally under Saxon control and had to pay a yearly tribute to Henry.

The Slavs, however, were no more inclined to remain subdued than were the Saxons when Charles the Great had attempted to crush them more than a century before. Henry, like Charles, insisted that the barbarians not only pay a yearly tribute but that they accept Christianity as well. It was the Hungarians, though, who were Henry's greatest rivals and enemies, for it was they who exacted tribute from the Saxon king, not the other way round, and in 933 the nine years' truce was up. Henry did not pay the expected tribute this time, and the Hungarians invaded his kingdom. A great battle took place near Merseburg on the river Unstrut on 15 March 933 (the location, which is named Riade by Widukind, has only been tentatively identified). After years of careful planning against these demons on horseback, Henry was ready to overwhelm them, and that is what he did. The Hungarians were beaten and fled back to their own territory. Henry kept the tribute that he had been accustomed to pay them and turned it over instead to the Church where it was to be doled out to the poor.

Widukind says that as a result of this victory Henry was hailed by the army as father of his country, lord, and *imperator*. The word *imperator* meant originally a successful general, but it later came to mean 'emperor'. It seems certain that in this context it meant only field commander, but the same word was used of Henry's son Otto the Great when he subdued the Hungarians at the even more important battle of Lechfeld in 955. Since Otto actually did bear the title of emperor after the year 962, it is tempting to read some of the majesty of the term back into the acclamation by the army in 955. But in the case of Henry in 933 such an attribution would be dubious. It must be remembered that although Henry accepted Conrad's crown and became king of the Germans, he refused both anointment and coronation. Still less does he seem to have had imperial ambitions. Though he was planning a trip to Rome at the time of his death in 936, there is no reason to suppose he meant to go there to receive the crown of the Roman Empire.

After the resounding defeat of the Hungarians at Riade, Henry deserved a rest, but the very next year, 934, the Danes attacked along the northern borders of his kingdom. This was nothing new: the Danes and Saxons were ancient enemies. Only when threatened by Charles the Great had they made common cause, for then they were defending their pagan religion as well as their traditional independence.[17] The Annals of Corvey tell us simply that in 934 Henry conquered the Danes. Widukind reports that since the king had subdued everyone else around him, he

[17] Georg Waitz, *Jahrbücher des deutschen Reichs unter König Heinrich I.*, 4th edn, Darmstadt, 1963, p. 159.

set out against the Danes, who were harassing the Frisian coast with acts of piracy; after imposing tribute on them, he compelled their king to receive baptism.

Adam of Bremen, whose chronicle of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen was composed in the 1070s, has a fuller and more colourful account of the Danish invasion. Though he was not an eye-witness, his story is worth repeating:

'Over the Danes there ruled at that time Harthacanute Gorm, a savage worm, I say, and not moderately hostile to the Christian people. He set about completely to destroy Christianity in Denmark, driving the priests of God from its bounds and also torturing very many of them to death.

'But then King Henry, who feared God even from his boyhood and placed all trust in His mercy, triumphed over the Hungarians in many and mighty battles. Likewise he struck down the Bohemians and the Sorbs [i.e. the Wends], who had been subdued by other kings, and the other Slavic peoples, with such force in one great encounter [Lenzen, 929] that the rest – and just a few were left – of their own accord promised the king that they would pay tribute, and God that they would be Christians.

'Then he invaded Denmark with an army and in the first battle so thoroughly terrified King Gorm that the latter pledged himself to obey his commands and, as a suppliant, sued for peace. The victorious Henry then set the bounds of the kingdom at Schleswig, which is now called Haddeby, appointed a margrave, and ordered a colony of Saxons to settle there. All these facts, related by a certain Danish bishop, a prudent man, we transmit to our Church as faithfully as we have truthfully received them.

'When our most blessed archbishop Unni saw that the door of the faith had been opened to the gentiles, he gave thanks to God for the salvation of the pagans, and more especially because the mission of the Church of Hamburg, long neglected on account of the adverse times, had with the help of God's mercy and through the valor of King Henry been given occasion and opportunity for its work.'[18]

Although Adam's version is impressionistic (for example, Haddeby and Schleswig are by no means identical), it reveals what the northern clerics thought Henry had done for the Church, and that was considerable. The Saxon king is praised over and over for his strong dynamic leadership in the face of powerful enemies. It was in the sealing of the borders and the extension of the frontiers that Henry built a sturdy foundation upon which his gifted son Otto could build.

[18] Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. Francis J. Tschan, New York, 1959, pp. 49–50.

2

The Reign of Otto I (936-973)

Before Henry died he had designated his son Otto as his successor.[1] Though Otto lived scarcely longer than his father (Henry lived to the age of sixty, Otto to sixty-two), he had a much longer reign, coming to power at the age of twenty-four. Unlike his father, Otto arranged an impressive coronation at Aachen, the church built by Charles the Great, which Widukind calls 'the place of universal election' (Doc. 3). The ceremony was attended by four dukes and three archbishops, together with a large crowd of spectators.

As Widukind describes it, the great German nobles first gave their hands to Otto, promising him fealty, and thereby 'made him king according to their custom'. This preliminary ceremony took place in the portico of the church and was a purely secular affair. Then Otto proceeded into the church to receive the crown. As we see from the words of Archbishop Hildibert of Mainz, the election was already accomplished and involved only the princes. It was up to the audience within the church to approve or disapprove the choice. Of course, they noisily approved – unanimously, according to Widukind – and Archbishop Hildibert proceeded to confer the regalia upon the new king – sword, bracelets, cloak, sceptre and staff. Then Otto was anointed and crowned by Hildibert and Wikfried, archbishop of Cologne. After ascending the throne, the king heard mass, and the company adjourned to the palace, about a block away from the church, on the site of the present Aachen town-hall.

The coronation banquet that took place in the palace was arranged in such a way that Otto's major rivals in Germany symbolically served the new king: Duke Giselbert of Lotharingia was chamberlain; Duke

[1] Otto's elder half-brother Thankmar was excluded as illegitimate because his mother Hatheburg, a Wend, had vowed to take the veil upon the death of her first husband. The marriage was annulled and Henry then married Matilda. She would have preferred that her younger son, Henry, succeed to the throne, for he had been born after his father became king, but the elder son Otto was the choice of Henry himself.