



32. The Holy Roman Empire

With the coronation of Charlemagne, not only did the Roman Empire re-emerged on the surface of the diluvial waters of the barbarian invasions, but also the title of *Imperator*, which designated the head of the Roman military initiatic organization. As already mentioned in the preceding chapters, Augustus was the founder of the Empire. Under his direction, the initiatic structure of the *equites* was conveniently laid over the former Republican institutions with the purpose of preserving them. Thus, the head of the chivalry initiatic hierarchy directly assumed *ad interim* the supreme power of the State, which the exterior political institutions were no longer able to exercise¹.



1. The Holy Roman Empire at the death of Charlemagne

The office of *Imperator* then passed down in an inconspicuous guise within the initiatic military organizations of Roman or Gallo-Roman patrician descent and the Senate of the city of Rome. But on the Christmas night of 800, the *Imperator* came out into the open to take control of the barbarian Christianity and to superimpose the Holy Roman Empire² to the Frankish and Lombard Kingdoms, to the Saxon, Avarian, Galician, Asturian, Scottish Princedoms and to other domains, unifying different temporal institutions into a universal monarchy.

In ancient Roman tradition, the term *Regnum* designated the sacred organization of the Republic³. The *Regnum*, although limited within a specific territory, was considered unique and universal, extending

¹ The complete ignorance concerning the nature of initiation has prevented modern and contemporary historians from understanding the true significance of this process. By examining the foundation of the Augustan and the Carolingian Empires on the basis of their profane conceptions and prejudices, they regard these historical developments as "coups d'état" or "institution of dictatorships", reducing events of universal scope to the extent of their petty mentality and erudition. For them, in fact, the operative continuity of the previous magistracies remains unexplainable and in blatant contradiction with the establishment of what they mistakenly identify as violations of the modern concept of the "rule of law".

² For completely incomprehensible reasons, the medievalist historians have attributed this official definition of the Christian Empire only to the Imperial dynasty of Saxony (962-1024). Other French and Italian historians, especially in an anti-German nationalistic sense, have preferred to call it "Germanic Empire" or "Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation", in order to reduce its universalistic scope. In truth, this last definition appears for the first time during the reign of Maximilian I (1459-1519), without ever becoming however the official name of the Empire (Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, Volume 1, Oxford, University of Oxford Pubs., 2002, p.17). Its abrogation in 1806 requested by Napoleon, who had just emerged from the ashes of the French Revolution, was officially the end of the Holy Roman Empire founded by Charlemagne (James Bryce, *Il Sacro Romano Impero*, Paolo Mazzeranghi (ed.), Crotone, D'Ettoris Ed., 2017 (1 ed. : The Holy Roman Empire, London, Macmillan Ed., 1864), page 204). In reality the name "Empire of the Germanic Nation" must be referred not to the State, but to the secret military initiatic organization which provided its external form. In fact, this was a confraternity of soldiers (lat. *militēs*) whose initiates were "re-born brothers" (lat. *natione germani*).

³ In Latin, *Res publica* never assumed the modern sense of "republic" as an egalitarian elective regime, the sad result of bourgeois revolutions. *Res publica*, the public matter, indicated the sacred concept of the State understood as the domain of exoterism, independently of its monarchical, aristocratic or democratic form of government. On the contrary, *Res abscondita* (the secret matter) meant esoterism, the domain of the mystic initiations.



the spiritual benefits of the cosmic order guaranteed by it to the most remote corners of the Earth. The *Regnum* was the direct heir of the Realm of Saturn, the King of the Golden Age (*Satya yuga*). With the establishment of the consular government, the title of *Rex* was reduced to its simple ritual function (*Rex sacrorum*), annulling all other sacred and temporal powers that originally came with it. In this way, in the traditional functions of the *Patricius Romanus* began to arise the distinction between the sacred and the "profane" powers, a tendency that with the passage of the centuries invariably diminished the charismatic and spiritual characteristics of the Patriciate in favor of the temporal ones.



2. The eagle, symbol of the Roman Empire and of the Holy Roman Empire

The territorial expansion of Rome, together with the weakening of the role of the *Rex sacrorum*, made evident the existence of a multiplicity of kingdoms that came to federate under the Roman rule. It was almost as if the primordial *Regnum* had shattered into a multitude of monarchies that, without any universal function, were instead keeping each other within bounds. With the Empire, Augustus restored the universality of the *Regnum*. The same happened when the Holy Roman Empire was founded. Thus, the Empire, in Western civilization, was always propelled by a sense of restoration of the primordial Kingdom following the crushing caused by the tribulations of the Iron Age (*Kali yuga*)¹.



3. The Pope makes an act of submission to the Emperor

The coronation ritual of Charlemagne ended with the act of submission of the Pope. In this way the Pope assumed the role of religious consecrator of the Emperor, privilege of his priestly status, declaring at the same time his submission to the Empire. In turn, the Emperor assumed the role of protector, guarantor of the faith and supreme judge of the Church, putting at the same time faith in the Pope as

¹ Obviously, what we are exposing here deals with the Empire in its traditional meaning (as in India is with the Universal Kingdom of *Cakravartin*) and not with its modern caricatures, such as the Napoleonic empires, let alone the shameless usurpations of this title made by the kings of England ("Empire" of the Indies), of Prussia ("Empire" of Germany) and of Italy ("Empire" of Abyssinia), among others. Finally, we will not waste time in differentiating the traditional *Imperium* from its liberal, fascist or communist parodies, namely the French, British, Japanese, Soviet, American and Chinese colonial imperialism, which consist of violent territorial expansion with the sole purpose of exploiting economically weaker and smaller nations.



ritualist. As *Protector Fidei* (protector of religion), Charles played his function as a warrior who defended Christianity from the Arian barbarians, from the followers of the Germanic and Avarian shamanism, and from the Islamic aggression. As guarantor of the faith, he intervened to defend the Christian doctrine from distortions and heresies. It was he who took the correct stand in the Iconoclastic controversy, even against the confused opinion of Leo III. It was he who intervened in support of the doctrine of the *Filioque* in the Nicene Creed¹, overcoming the Pope's incapacity to take any theological position. Like Constantine before him and his contemporary *Basileis* of Byzantium, he convened and presided over the bishop's councils. It was he who, as the supreme justice, judged, punished or absolved Popes, bishops, priests and lay people accused of transgressions, crimes and heresy, carrying on the mission of correction of the clergy and of the re-Christianization of Europe undertaken by St. Boniface. He was scrupulous and loyal to his universal function.



4. Charlemagne imposes the dogm of the "Filioque" to the Pope

The Pope, in turn, ritually guaranteed the sacredness of Christendom and of the Empire. However, the bishop of Rome took advantage of the rebirth of the Western Roman Empire to break the bond of dependence on the Byzantine Emperor² that he had maintained until then. But even more, he took advantage of the situation to distance himself from the Greek bishops of the Eastern Empire, whom until then he had to regard as his peers, if not even superior to him in wisdom. In fact, in Latin Europe, the Pope, with the excuse that his see was the charismatic capital of the Roman Empire, had already placed the bishops and archbishops of Italy, Gaul, Germany, Britain and Spain in a state of subjection. In this way the "Petrine primacy" was definitively sanctioned. However, even before the *Restauratio Imperii* (Empire restoration), the Papal Court had already circulated the so-called *Donation of Constantine*, that forged document that legitimized the birth of a Papal State, in which the superiority of the Pope of Rome over all Christian ecclesiastical hierarchies and even over the very Emperor was falsely affirmed. Therefore, the declaration of the Pope's subjection to Charlemagne could not be considered sincere³. In fact, in the early years of the 9th century the Papal Court secretly began to

¹ We will return later on the doctrinal differences between the Latin Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church.

² Until Leo III, all the elected and acclaimed Popes had to wait for the confirmation from the *Basileus* before being consecrated. From Charlemagne onwards, the right of veto (*Jus Exclusivae*) on the papal election became prerogative of the Holy Roman Emperor, a privilege that later passed down to his last historical heir, the Emperor of Austria. This privilege disappeared with the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the First World War. See Ambrogio Piazzoni, *Storia delle elezioni pontificie*, Ed. Piemme, 2003.

³ This deplorable behavior can be explained by the generally low social origins of the Popes of that period, often unworthily raised to a status of great prestige and power. Moreover, in the period between St. Gregory the Great (590-604 and Leo III (795-816) we count with only one monk elected pope: St. Zechariah (741-752). Very little if we consider that in this interval 32 popes succeeded each other (Claudio Rendina, *I Papi, storia e segreti*, Rome, Newton Compton ed., 1984, pp. 219-222). We must not forget the general conditions of corruption and ignorance combined with thirst for power and wealth of the secular priests of that period. Moreover, only in the monastic circles was the transmission of priestly initiation maintained. Throughout the High Middle Ages in the ancient territories of the Western Empire, monks and the exterior clergy maintained strained relations, being the secular priests and their highest hierarchies incapable of understanding what the esotericism



circulate other false documents, fraudulently dated to previous centuries, known as *Decretales*¹. In these documents it was insinuated that the Imperial Authority depended exclusively on the Papal consecration, therefore the Pope had to be considered superior to the Emperor. In the same way that the Pope could consecrate Emperor a King, so could also deconsecrate him with the excommunication. But until Charles was alive these claims remained prudently concealed. They began to spread slowly only with his successors, who certainly did not show the same determination and interior strength of Charlemagne.



5. The false Donation of Constantine and a Decretalis

Finally, Charles began to shape the social constitution of his Empire by modeling it on the structure of the initiatic organization of which he was the Grandmaster (lat. *Imperator*, sskr. *mahāsvāmī*). With him and his successors the Empire assumed a new administrative configuration that went down in history with the name of Feudalism.

Gian Giuseppe Filippi

consisted of. This also explains the future poor relations between Emperors and Popes. The former, in fact, were expressions of initiatic organizations, whereas the latter, when they were not monks, generally did not even know what initiation was.

¹ H.C. Lea, *Le origini del Potere Temporale dei Papi*, Livorno, Bastogi Ed., 1976 (I ed. Mendrisio 1915), pp. 60-83.