Church History

Of Popes and Kings

Issues: relationship between church and state; the origin of authority in human society; lay investiture

Story of Pope Gregory VII and Henry IV

The dilemma of church lands and fiefs: the pope needed to control who was in charge of these territories so that he could ensure that they would be loyal and cooperative with him; the emperor needed to control their appointment to ensure their loyalty to and cooperation with him

Came to a head in the late 1000s between Henry IV, emperor of Germany, and Gregory VII, powerful pope of the Catholic Church

* Henry deposed a bishop who was unpopular because of his insistence on clerical celibacy and replaced him
* Greg ordered him to appear in Rome by so and so or he would be excommunicated and condemned to hell
* Henry gathered some German lords for a council and they denounced the pope, saying that he had not been appointed legitimately
* Gregory’s interdict against Henry: “… (Kuiper 110)
* Henry tries to hold out but his support begins to erode
* He finally travels by foot to Italy where he meets the pope at a castle in Canossa
* He waits in the snow for three days before he is admitted to the pope
* He kisses the pope’s toe and is granted a pardon by Gregory
* Later Henry returns with an army and forces the pope to flee from Rome and another pope is elected to replace him