



**DOMINION OF GOD**

Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages

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## Introduction

In the Gospels, Christ predicts to his disciples that the end of days is approaching and will bring about a great tribulation marked by war, pestilence, famine, and the appearance of false prophets.<sup>1</sup> He also declares that his message of salvation will be preached throughout the entire world and will reach all of its peoples before the consummation of history. Although this promised course of events did not come about as quickly as his followers were no doubt expecting, subsequent generations of believers continued to anticipate the eventual fulfillment of their messiah's words. Over the following centuries, a distinctly Christian apocalyptic scenario developed that included the universal spread of the Gospel before the coming of the false messiah, Antichrist, his persecution of the elect, and his ultimate defeat with Christ's victorious return in Final Judgment. The devil, so to speak, was in the details. The earliest Christians vigorously debated the nature of those Last Things, including the question of whether there would be a "millennial" age of peace and prosperity on earth before the end of time. One way or another, Christian believers ever since have had to contend with

this dual apocalyptic heritage of hope for the universal realization of their faith and dread of the suffering that awaited the faithful.<sup>2</sup>

During the Middle Ages, the Christian inhabitants of Europe added new layers to this contested vision for the outcome of history. Some of them predicted that the Roman papacy and its followers would reform the Western Church, ridding it of avarice and corruption, restore the wayward Christians of the Eastern Church to the catholic fold, and secure the holy places of Jerusalem from the dominion of the infidels. Coming on the heels of these marvelous changes, pagan peoples would convert and the Jews would finally enter into the Church. This worldwide transformation meant more than the spread of Christianity in fulfillment of Christ's prediction that there would be "one fold" and "one shepherd."<sup>3</sup> Rather, members of the Roman Church envisioned the expansion of a certain kind of Christian religious community—Christendom, the union of right-believing and right-practicing Christians assembled under Christ's deputy shepherds, the popes of Rome. Although the Kingdom of Heaven was declared to be not of this world, Christendom decidedly was. Restricted in the present to the borders of the Western or Latin Church, Christendom was thought by contemporaries to be limitless in its potential. It would, they believed, reach everywhere and everyone before the end of time.

Similar to "empire" and "nation," Christendom is a common term, but difficult to define with complete satisfaction. In reality, regional diversity and political fragmentation characterized the Christian territories of medieval Europe. The self-declared members of Christendom nevertheless viewed themselves as a people unified through their shared faith, their use of Latin as a sacred language, their mutual observance of religious rites, and their obedience to the Roman papacy. Simply put, Christendom formed the "whole society of Latin Christians and the lands they occupied."<sup>4</sup> Scholars of our own time view Christendom as a framework for cultural, religious, and social order. Looking back, they have labeled that union of Christian kingdoms and churches as (among other things) a "cultural community," a "religious community," a "socio-religious unity," and an "international culture."<sup>5</sup> Seen in this perspective, the premodern bonds of Christendom linger beneath the surface of modern Europe like

the hidden words on a palimpsest, inspiring and haunting those who seek to understand the role of Christianity in the formation of European, if not Western, civilization.<sup>6</sup>

This book examines Christendom and the promise of its worldwide realization within the historical imagination of the Roman Church from the eleventh through the fourteenth centuries. This period marked the formation, apogee, and decline of the so-called “papal monarchy,” an expression that captures the revolutionary claims of the medieval papacy to a position of spiritual and temporal supremacy over Christian society. Historians have generally focused their attention on the resulting clash between popes and emperors—a battle within Europe between the claimants of priestly authority and imperial power.<sup>7</sup> The Roman Church’s vision of sacerdotal world order, however, also reshaped Western Christian perspectives on outside peoples and places, above all their Byzantine and Islamic neighbors. The papacy and its clerical supporters, in large part to assert their claims of primacy within Europe, redefined their place in God’s plan for salvation, arguing that the Roman Church would assume a role of worldly leadership and pastoral dominion over rulers, churches, and communities everywhere as a prelude to the end of history.

Discussing medieval Christian “concepts of world unity,” Ernst Kantorowicz observed that a “united world was indispensable for achieving that state of perfection which, it was generally recognized, would be established just before time ends and doomsday dawns. Thus the medieval Myth of World Unity has a predominantly messianic or eschatological character.”<sup>8</sup> Christian eschatology, of course, did not simply relate to the future, but also depended upon a close reading of the past that informed the present and pointed toward events approaching on the horizon.<sup>9</sup> Christ’s Second Coming in Final Judgment could not be understood without grasping the reality of his first Incarnation in the flesh. The Incarnation revealed in the Christian New Testament, in turn, led one back into the mysteries of the Jewish scriptures, the Christian Old Testament that “spiritually” contained the promise of Christ’s divinity hidden within the “letter” of the Jewish Covenant. Those Hebrew holy writings recorded the course of history from the moment of creation and the lapse of hu-

mankind from God's grace that had set the wheel of temporal travails in motion. The unity of the world depended upon the unity of history, as revealed first and foremost through the mysteries of the Bible.<sup>10</sup>

Theology of history—the medieval equivalent to philosophy of history—provided members of the Roman Church with a sacral ideology, a basis for Rome's claims to speak for all believers, as well as peoples that had not yet accepted or heard the news of Christ. In recent years scholars have stressed the importance of historical thinking and writing for the formation of ethnic, national, and imperial identities, but they have yet to apply this insight to the notion of Christendom as an "imagined community" with a "usable" sense of history that determined its membership.<sup>11</sup> In this book I explore how Western Christians invoked historical schemes, narratives, prophecies, and apocalyptic scenarios to theorize the proper ordering of their world. Apocalyptic speculations are particularly instructive in this regard, since their fabricated nature is impossible to miss. Needless to say, history did not lead to the conclusions that Latin prophets, exegetes, and visionaries projected. This does not mean, however, that their interpretation of historical events is any less illuminating for our understanding of contemporary hopes, concerns, and actions. Politics informed the development of prophetic traditions, even as prophetic traditions influenced political realities. In short, politics and prophecy formed part of a "dialectical process."<sup>12</sup> If we overlook their interplay, privileging the former and disregarding the latter, we ignore a critical component of the way medieval Christians viewed themselves and their relationship with the outside world during an expansionary era of Europe's past.

It is widely recognized that the High Middle Ages formed an era of territorial growth and broadening horizons for Christian Europeans through their acts of conquest, crusading, settlement, and missionary activity across all of Europe's frontiers.<sup>13</sup> Leaving aside, for the moment, the Jewish communities that lived squarely within the territories of the Western Church, the borders of Christendom seem easiest to trace when set against the boundaries of lands where the inhabitants did not believe in Christianity (such as the Muslims) or did not practice their Christian faith in the same way as the followers of Rome (such as the Greek Christians of Byzantium). Certainly, the medieval expansion of Europe brought

members of the Roman Church into a more intimate and sometimes violent state of contact with religious “Others,” including Muslims and Greek Christians.<sup>14</sup> The crusades provide the best-known and most controversial example of Europe’s expansionary capacity during this period, whether the crusaders were seizing Jerusalem from Islamic control in 1099 or Constantinople from Byzantine hands in 1204. There was more to notions of Christendom, however, than the mentality of “us versus them.” Ambivalence characterized the idea of Christendom, which formed a limitless community of the faithful, a cosmic congregation, but also an earthly society of believers in the here-and-now. Christendom had borders and was universal. It could be spread by the righteous power of the sword or by the spiritual grace of God. Although contemporaries theorized Christian unity through sanctified violence directed against threatening outsiders, they also dreamed of an eschatological conversion, when the followers of Rome would restore schismatic Christian communities to the harmony of the faith and would spread Christianity among Jews, pagans, and infidels before the end of time. Within this apocalyptic ethnography, both Christian and non-Christian peoples had roles to play in the realization of history. The expectation of Christian world order relied—somewhat paradoxically—on mutually reinforcing languages of exclusion and inclusion, on the identification of God’s enemies and the promise of their ultimate redemption, or at least their opportunity to be redeemed.

In his ground-breaking work *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, Norman Cohn highlighted the revolutionary potential of premodern apocalypticism, especially radical millenarianism, which expected a thoroughgoing and often violent transformation of society to pave the way for the coming of God’s Kingdom.<sup>15</sup> The pursuit of Christendom, by contrast, engaged the historical and apocalyptic sensibilities of medieval Europe’s ecclesiastical elite, sometimes including popes themselves, who anticipated the ultimate triumph of their sacerdotal authority on the grandest of scales. Whatever setbacks they confronted (and there were many), the advocates for a new kind of Christian order in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries asserted their vision of historical reality in some dramatically meaningful ways. In certain cases, such as the crusades, seemingly abstract clerical ideas about God’s plan for salvation became a mat-

ter of life and death for Christians and non-Christians alike. During the period of their ascendancy, reforming popes and like-minded clergy crafted an imposing and formidable interpretation of history as a sacred process that conferred awesome privileges and responsibilities upon the priestly leadership of the Roman Church.

Even among the clerical elite, however, the eschatological promise of Christian renewal and expansion raised potentially troublesome questions. When exactly would these events happen? How and under whose agency? Just where would the changes in the present order of things stop? By the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, some of the most ardent proponents of a world united under the leadership of the Roman Church numbered among the most strident critics of contemporary mores and ecclesiastical institutions, including the papacy itself. Radicals, moderates, and conservatives alike invoked the providential design of history, calling for revolutionary change in current institutions, appealing for their modest reform, or celebrating their power in transcendental terms. In the multivalent symbolism of Latin apocalyptic thought, Rome might be the spiritual shepherd of an eschatological flock, but it could also represent the new “Babylon,” a source of greed, corruption, and hypocrisy. It is not a coincidence that one of the final apocalyptic thinkers examined in this book, John of Rupescissa, spent much of his life in a papal prison at Avignon, allowed to record his prophecies but kept on a short leash until he died in 1365.

With the well-known decline of papal prestige in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, accompanied by a temporary halt to Europe’s expansionary energies, the impulse of Christians to spread their faith did not disappear. Christian Europeans continued to envision the conversion of the world, including lands that their predecessors never even knew existed. Speculation about the purpose of history, however, began to move in some new directions. For one thing, rising sentiments of national identification relocated the drive to expand the Christian faith. Even popes began to recognize the fact that kings and their servants would assure the promised triumph of Christianity in new lands. Imperial ideologies of history—never absent from the medieval debates between popes and emperors—began to enjoy a new prominence, especially during Europe’s global expansion in the early modern era. Indeed, scholars of empire have



long recognized the continuities that bridged medieval and modern notions of imperial power and its universal claims, grounded in a sense of manifest destiny that stretched from the origins of Roman dominion to the age of overseas colonialism. What about Christendom and its worldwide realization? Did medieval prophecies of conversion anticipate the secular “civilizing mission” and other European claims to stand in the vanguard of historical progress? This is a vast and complex question. We can begin our search for answers by looking at the historical sensibilities that medieval Christians brought to bear on their own relationship with the outside world during an era that is commonly associated with the first expansion—if not the very making—of Europe.<sup>16</sup>



## Christendom and the Origins of Papal Monarchy

In 991, a council of Frankish clergymen assembled at the Church of Saint Basle near Reims to resolve a bitter dispute over the city's episcopal see that had begun three years earlier with the death of the previous archbishop, Adalberon. The king of West Francia, Hugh Capet (r. 987–996), had appointed a cleric named Arnulf to replace the deceased prelate.<sup>1</sup> By doing so, Hugh passed over Adalberon's preferred successor, Gerbert of Aurillac, a notable scholar at the cathedral school in Reims. Arnulf, however, was subsequently accused of conspiring with his uncle, Duke Charles of Lorraine, against the king, wrecking havoc in the diocese when he briefly surrendered control of the city to his relation. On these grounds, the assembled churchmen formally deposed Arnulf and elected Gerbert in his place. During the council, the archbishop of Orléans decried an attempt by Arnulf's supporters to appeal the case to Rome. His words were written down (no doubt to a large extent invented) by Gerbert himself when he codified the acts of the council a few years later. The archbishop, also named Arnulf, did not deny the Roman Church's special status as the final court of appeals, but he lamented that the worthy popes of the past had long since vanished, replaced in present times

by corrupt and unlearned successors. To whom exactly should one appeal, Arnulf asked, when “Antichrist sits in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God”?<sup>2</sup> The church of Rome, he continued, had lost its authority over the great churches of Alexandria and Antioch with the “fall of the empire” to the Muslims, not to mention the loss of other churches in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Constantinople had withdrawn from Roman jurisdiction, and much of Spain no longer recognized papal judgments. This state of affairs provided a clear sign that the “falling away” of kingdoms from the Roman Empire, long expected by Christians as a sign of Antichrist’s imminence (2 Thess. 2:3), referred “not just to peoples, but also to churches.”<sup>3</sup>

By invoking such apocalyptic imagery, Arnulf of Orléans and Gerbert of Aurillac offered a scathing indictment of the current Roman papacy and a grim prognosis for the future. To be sure, the Roman Church had its defenders. A few years later, the papal legate charged with investigating this case, Leo of Saint Boniface, retorted that those who slandered Rome in such a manner represented the real “Antichrists,” claiming somewhat weakly that legates from the churches of Egypt, Carthage, and Spain had in fact recently visited the Apostolic See.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, eight years after the council at Saint Basle, Gerbert’s own attitude toward the authority of Rome changed considerably when his former student and patron Emperor Otto III (r. 983–1002) appointed him pope. Assuming the name of Sylvester II (r. 999–1003), Gerbert eagerly supported the young imperial ruler’s aspirations for a “renovation” of the Christian Roman Empire. Deliberately cultivating the memory of past rulers such as the first Christian emperor, Constantine I (r. 306–337), and the first Carolingian emperor, Charlemagne (r. 768–814), Otto and Sylvester envisioned an age of restoration and expansion for both church and empire under the auspices of Otto’s sacral rule.<sup>5</sup> The times were propitious for such an endeavor, or at least they suggested that the approach of the new millennium would bring about a transformation in the existing condition of the faithful. Whether fearful about the rise of Antichrist or hopeful for an era of renewal before the end, contemporaries traded in the language of eschatological expectation with colorful anticipation. In any event, the world did soon end for Otto and Sylvester, who died in 1002 and 1003, respectively, taking their ephemeral vision of glorified Christian Roman Empire to their graves.<sup>6</sup>

Roughly seventy years later, another pope, Gregory VII (r. 1073–1085), formulated his own aspirations for the reform and renewal of Christian churches, peoples, and kingdoms. His ambitions, however, expressed themselves in some radically different ways from those of his papal predecessor around the year 1000. Gregory did not look for the young German emperor, Henry IV (r. 1056–1106), to take the lead in transforming, purifying, and extending the borders of the Christian faith. To the contrary, he believed that it was Henry’s place to support the Apostolic See of Rome in those very same endeavors. As Gregory queried on one occasion, “Who doubts that the priests of Christ are to be considered as fathers and masters of kings and princes and of all believers?”<sup>7</sup> Turning his gaze outward, the pope looked upon a world where the might of Christian princes was expanding into territories that had long suffered under the dominion of the infidels, recovering them for the patrimony of Saint Peter. Places such as Spain and Sicily once again recognized the authority and judgments of Rome. Looking eastward, Gregory realized that the ancient concord between the Latin and Greek Churches had faltered, but he confidently asserted that Constantinople would once again return to a state of harmony with Rome, just like a daughter looking to her mother. The pope was painfully aware that unbelievers threatened the Christians of the Greek Empire, doing the Devil’s work and slaughtering them “just like cattle.”<sup>8</sup> In 1074, he proposed an audacious solution to this sad state of affairs: The pope would lead an expedition of his Western followers to free the Eastern Church from bondage, pressing onward to Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup>

What had transpired between the papacies of Sylvester II and Gregory VII to bring about such a profound change in the papal conception of the Roman Church and its circumstances in the world? Modern historians use the catch-all term “reform” to describe this far-reaching transformation, a label which reflects the self-declared belief of eleventh-century “reformers” that the past provided a model for correcting perceived abuses and shortcomings in the present.<sup>10</sup> As is often the case with those who claim the mantle of reform, their goals involved a great deal of innovation. To secure the “liberty” (*libertas*) of the Church, that is, its freedom from secular interference, the reformers campaigned against simony and clerical marriage, common practices now redefined as heresies polluting the body of the faithful. Beyond these immediate ends, they eventually set their eyes on a greater prize—nothing less than a reordering of Christian soci-

ety by fully subordinating the power of temporal rulers to the bearers of priestly authority, with the bishops of Rome standing first and foremost among them. To secure these potentially disruptive goals within medieval Christian society, the papacy and its network of supporters formulated an innovative and provocative concept of Christendom as a universal community united under papal leadership and pastoral guidance. This basic principle revolutionized the way the leadership of the Roman Church viewed the properly ordered, right-believing assembly of peoples, churches, and kingdoms that recognized the papacy as governing the norms and practices of their faith, if not their lives.<sup>11</sup>

Even as the supporters of the papal reform fought to realize their vision of Christendom within the immediate bounds of the Western Church, they projected their dream of world order outward to encompass other Christian communities that were not properly obedient to Rome—at least not yet. Potentially speaking, the entire world formed a part of Christendom and by extension a papal patrimony, delegated by Christ to Saint Peter, and through Peter to his successors, the bishops of Rome. The current reality, of course, looked vastly different. No one was more aware of this uncomfortable disjuncture than the eleventh-century papacy and its partisans. In response, they began the process of trying to reconcile the difference between Christendom's present finitude and its universal potential. Central to that enterprise was a theology of history that projected the boundless authority of the Roman Church into the past, situated it firmly in the present, and hinted at its destiny in the future. God's will was timeless, but the bishops of Rome possessed historical prerogatives and obligations in the fulfillment of the divine plan on earth until its apocalyptic consummation. Indeed, by its very nature, the central question of the reform movement—how to properly order Christendom—was implicitly eschatological. A rightly organized, purified, and global Christian society moved one step closer to the transcendental realization of history. Pushed to extreme conclusions, the political theology of the reform papacy implied a collapsing of the boundary between secular and ecclesiastical governance, leaving the pope as the sole impresario of a unified world that portended the coming Kingdom of God.

To understand what was at stake in this reconfiguration of sacred history, we need to look back before the time of Gregory VII, farther back

even than the papacy of Leo IX (r. 1048–1054), the first Roman pontiff who openly pressed for a new kind of papal leadership over Christendom. The diffuse origins of a desire for the renewal of religious life dated back to the later tenth and early eleventh centuries, to the same era when a cleric like Gerbert of Aurillac could lament the historical decline of Roman authority. Above all, we need to consider the preexisting and often contentious parameters of belief in the Latin theological tradition regarding the knowable and unknowable nature of the divine plan for history, especially where imperial power was concerned. Since the patristic era in the fourth and fifth centuries, empire had played a prominent role in shaping the way Christians organized their views of the past, confronted the present, and grappled with the mysteries of the future. By the time of the papal reform, the notion of Christian imperial might possessed a historical pedigree that stretched back centuries, occupying a place of eminence in both legends and prophecies. Emperors embodied a long-standing form of Christian universalism that the nascent papal monarchy had somehow to co-opt or displace. If they were to establish their own historical credentials as providential agents, the popes of Rome had a great deal of catching up to do.

### Empire and Antichrist at the Dawn of the New Millennium

In 954, around the time that Gerbert of Aurillac was born, the Frankish Abbot Adso of Montier-en-Der dedicated a tract called *On the Birth and Time of Antichrist* to Gerberga, queen of King Louis IV (r. 936–954) of West Francia.<sup>12</sup> Although conservative in tone, his work suggested a growing concern with the approach of the “apocalyptic year” 1000. Drawing upon a rich if sometimes diffuse tradition of Christian thinking about the eschatological opponent of Christ, Adso crafted a concise and gripping account of the final days. Antichrist, he informed his readers, would be born among the Jews in Babylon, would come to Jerusalem, perform false miracles, and be received by the Jews as the true messiah.<sup>13</sup> Through guile and trickery, he would spread his message across the world, seducing many Christians to his cause, including kings and rulers, while persecuting those who refused to follow him. Adso described the arrival of the “two witnesses,” Elijah and Enoch, sent by God to sustain the faithful

through their preaching during Antichrist's three-and-a-half-year reign, when Elijah, Enoch, and many others would suffer martyrdom. Around this time, some of the Jews inspired by the two witnesses would finally turn to the Christian faith, fulfilling the promise of Saint Paul (Rom. 9:27; 11:25) that the "remnant of Israel" would convert before the "fullness of the Gentiles" entered into the Church. After Antichrist's defeat with the return of Christ, Final Judgment would not happen immediately. Following earlier exegetes, Adso allowed for a brief space of time before the end of the world, perhaps as a period of "rest" for the faithful or penance for those seduced by Antichrist.<sup>14</sup>

When would all of these things happen? Adso did not exactly say. His work, although compelling, did not imply that he believed himself to be living on the brink of immediate apocalyptic tribulations. Above all, he maintained that the persecution of Antichrist would not happen until the "falling away" of the kingdoms and peoples that lived under the dominion of the Roman Empire, "the restraining force" that held back the end of history. "Granted," Adso observed, "we see that the Roman Empire is for the most part destroyed, nevertheless, as long as the kings of the Franks last, who ought rightfully to hold Roman imperial power, the dignity of Roman rule will not totally perish, since it will stand in their kings."<sup>15</sup> Adso was far from the first Christian thinker to assert that the end of the Roman Empire and its division into a series of petty kingdoms would provide an unerring sign that the final days were drawing near. Before this happened, however, he believed that imperial power under Frankish auspices would in fact enjoy its greatest extent and days of glory. In his tract, Adso predicted the rise of a final emperor, the "greatest of all rulers," who would defeat the infidels, lay down his scepter and crown on the Mount of Olives, and bring about the "end and consummation of the Roman and Christian Empire" before the coming of Antichrist.<sup>16</sup>

Like many historians, exegetes, and theologians before him, Adso of Montier-en-Der exposed a contradiction that lay at the heart of the Christian historical imagination. After all, God's plan is ultimately unfathomable. As Christ admonishes his followers about the coming of the end, "Of that day and hour no one knows, not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone" (Matt. 24:36), or again, "It is not for you to know the times

or moments” (Acts 1:7). At the same time, Christians believed that they needed to pay a great deal of attention to the signs that might offer them a glimpse through the dark glass of God’s design for history. In this regard, patristic theologians had left an ambiguous legacy for later medieval thinkers, above all concerning the historical role and destiny of imperial power. For some early Christians, especially those who experienced firsthand the weight of Roman oppression and persecution, the bonds of empire had created an assembly of peoples and nations gathered for a single purpose: the Devil’s work of war, in direct contrast to the peaceful effort of the apostles to gather the peoples of the world together in Christ.<sup>17</sup> In the heady days after the conversion of Constantine to Christianity in the fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea argued by contrast that the Roman Empire had a critical role to play in the triumph and spread of the Church. It was not by coincidence, Eusebius declared, that Christ was born during the reign of Augustus, the first emperor, at a time when the far-reaching embrace of Roman dominion enabled the spread of Christ’s message. From this perspective, Constantine’s open patronage of the Christian faith and his creation of the imperial church formed a new stage in historical progress. Perhaps such enthusiasm was natural from the emperor’s biographer, but Eusebius hardly stood alone in his belief that the Roman Empire had a unique role to play in the fulfillment of history.<sup>18</sup>

Considerable room lay between the poles of demonizing empire and uncritically celebrating its virtues. According to Augustine of Hippo in the fifth century, the link between the fate of the Christian Church and the Roman Empire was far from straightforward. The development of Augustine’s “historical agnosticism,” his belief that the course of events after Christ could not be known as part of the divine plan, is well known.<sup>19</sup> Needless to say, in the turbulent times after the sack of Rome in the year 410, Augustine felt it safer to sever or qualify any ties that seemed to bind the fortunes of God’s eternal City from the mutability of the earthly one. In his mature works, he did everything possible to temper speculation about the providential meaning of observable historical developments. While he did not deny the expectation of Antichrist, Augustine adamantly declared that the future was largely unknowable; he equally insisted that the Book of Revelation should be read in a “spiritual” sense rather than as some sort of historical guidebook. In particular, he tackled the vexed



question of whether the “binding” of Satan for “one thousand years” (Rev. 20:2) promised a millennial era of peace and terrestrial prosperity. Such fantasies, he insisted, were fit for carnal-minded heretics. The binding of Satan had begun with Christ, and the thousand years symbolically referred to the remainder of time before the end of the world and the eternal Sabbath.<sup>20</sup>

In Augustine’s history of salvation, the destiny of the true Church was not limited to the borders of the Roman Empire or any other terrestrial institution. As Augustine observed on another occasion, the Bible made it clear that the Christian faith would spread among all peoples before the end of time, a process that had begun with the apostles and was still being carried out under the aegis of the Roman Empire. This extension of the Christian faith, he declared in response to a query about the topic, was far from complete. There remained numerous peoples outside the borders of the Roman world, some close to his own home in northern Africa, who had yet to hear the news of Christ; this suggested that the final days were not immediately at hand.<sup>21</sup> One of Augustine’s former students, Prosper of Aquitaine, declared in his fifth-century tract *On the Calling of All Peoples* that the grace of Christianity “would not be content” with the borders of the Roman world, adding that many people unconquered by Roman arms were already “subdued to the scepter of Christ.”<sup>22</sup> Prosper’s view of God’s universal fold was ambitious, inclusive, and freighted with eschatological anticipation. Recalling Paul’s instructions to pray “for all men” (1 Tim. 2:1), he informed his readers that this call to prayer included supplications:

. . . not only for the saints and those already reborn in Christ, but also for all the infidels and enemies of Christ’s cross, for all the worshippers of idols, for all of those who persecute Christ by attacking his members, for the Jews, whose blindness the light of the Gospel has not dispelled, and for the heretics and schismatics, who are sundered from the unity and love of the faith. Why did he seek this on their behalf, unless, after leaving behind their errors, they shall convert to the Lord, shall receive faith and love, and, freed from the shadows of their ignorance, shall come into the knowledge of truth?<sup>23</sup>

The fact remained, however, that the visible fortunes of imperial power seemed for many Christians to manifest the hidden movements of sacred history. In the Latin tradition, Augustine's contemporary Jerome helped to popularize the scheme of "world empires" based on the Book of Daniel, specifically Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the alloyed statue (Dan. 2: 31–45) and Daniel's dream of the four beasts emerging from the sea (Dan. 7:3–28).<sup>24</sup> The statue's head of gold, chest of silver, thighs of bronze, and legs of iron prophesied the progression of imperial power from the Babylonians to the Persians to the Macedonians and finally to the Romans (as did the four beasts). The "iron" empire of Rome (also represented by the fourth beast) would endure until the end of time, at which point it would be divided up into a series of petty kingdoms symbolized by the statue's mixed feet of iron and clay (as well as by the "ten horns" on the fourth beast). This fragmentation of empire set the stage for the arrival of Antichrist (symbolized by the fourth beast's "little horn" that emerged from the midst of the ten others). Although Jerome, like Augustine, tried to cool chiliastic speculations about the coming of a future Sabbath age, he believed that this process of decline had already begun during the barbarian incursions into the Roman Empire of his own day. On one occasion, Jerome declared that the spread of the Gospel was "already complete or would be completed within a brief time," implying that the end of history must be closer rather than farther away.<sup>25</sup>

Although patristic thinkers generally managed to temper the ardors of those who insisted upon millennial scenarios or a concrete date for the end, Christians continued to search for signs of the divine plan in the course of history. Certain events were far too momentous or calamitous to be ignored. In the famous Syriac work of the so-called Pseudo-Methodius, for example, the author declared that the seventh-century Muslim conquests of the Christian Roman Empire represented a just punishment by God against his sinful people and a harbinger of the apocalypse.<sup>26</sup> Removed from the eschatological coolness of the Latin tradition, this prophecy also promised that the faithful could look forward to the coming of a messiah-like ruler, whose "indignation and fury" would "blaze forth against those who deny the Lord Jesus Christ." This final "king of the Romans" would cast out the infidels, restore the splendor of the Church, convert unbelievers to the faith, and usher in an era of peace

before the conclusion of history.<sup>27</sup> From this time forward, the threat of Islam would occupy a prominent place in many Christian scenarios for the end-times.<sup>28</sup> Latin translations of the text were made as early as the eighth century. Although there is no clear evidence that Adso directly knew the Pseudo-Methodian tradition, his appropriation of the “Last World Emperor” role for the rulers of the Franks made perfect sense, given the belief of Frankish historians that the power of empire had been transferred to the Carolingians when Charlemagne assumed the imperial title in the year 800.<sup>29</sup>

Even before they claimed the imperial title, the Carolingians had seized upon the notion that their rule made them the “defenders” of Christ, responsible for the protection and dilatation of the Christian Church. As Charles declared in 796 to Pope Leo III (r. 795–816), it was Charles’s role to “defend by arms the holy Church of Christ from the attack of pagans and the devastation of infidels without, and to fortify the confession of the catholic faith within.” It was the pope’s role to pray for Charles’s victory over God’s enemies so that “the name of our Lord Jesus Christ might shine forth in the entire world.”<sup>30</sup> Acting like good Augustinians, ninth-century Carolingian theologians and exegetes for the most part avoided eschatological speculations about the consummation of history, reading the Book of Revelation in a spiritual rather than literal fashion. Nevertheless, they eagerly fostered a sense of manifest destiny around the role of the Franks in preserving the Church from heretics and spreading Christian imperial power among pagan peoples, both by the sword and by the missionary word.<sup>31</sup>

In the ninth century, the greatest challenge to such claims came from those “other” emperors, the Greek rulers of Constantinople, who possessed a direct claim to Christian imperial authority stretching back to Constantine himself. Carolingian-era thinkers found various ways to deal with this problem. Judging by his subsequent correspondence, Charlemagne was more than willing when it suited him to recognize the equal legitimacy of both the Eastern and Western Empires, which shared a duty to protect the “holy and unblemished catholic Church, spread throughout the world.”<sup>32</sup> Some chroniclers did not explicitly mention the Greek rulers when they celebrated Charles’s imperial coronation, while others declared that the dignity of empire had ceased among the Greeks because

a woman, Empress Irene (r. 797–802), had sat on the throne.<sup>33</sup> Still others associated the Byzantine Empire with the rise of “heresies” like iconoclasm and the rejection of the Roman Church’s spiritual authority. Writing around 870, the papal librarian Anastasius Bibliothecarius described the situation this way:

After the Roman emperors—who are now called Greek—became the promoters and supporters of various errors, not fearing to tear asunder the holy Church of Christ with assorted heresies, God tore asunder their empire and little by little they ceased to rule over the Western parts by the decree of heavenly judgment. They tried to pervert the Roman pontiffs with their wickedness, but did not succeed. On this account, suffering many punishments, they have now lost entirely their power over the West.<sup>34</sup>

Writing to Constantinople around the same time as Anastasius, the Carolingian Emperor Louis II (r. 855–875) made a similar argument that the heterodoxy of the Greeks had resulted in the collapse of their authority over the Western regions and the transferal of their imperial power to the Franks.<sup>35</sup> In the tenth century, much like the Carolingians before them, the Ottonian emperors continued to confront the Byzantine rulers as the principal competitors for their universal claims over the Christian Roman Empire. At times, this competition played into the imagining of future events. In 968, during the reign of Emperor Otto I (r. 936–973), the imperial legate Liudprand of Cremona described his encounter at Constantinople with some Greek prophecies, the so-called “Visions of Daniel.” Refuting a Greek prophecy that the “lion and the whelp” (the Byzantine emperor and the Franks) would destroy the “wild ass” (the Saracens), Liudprand offered his own interpretation of the text, namely that Otto I and his son (the lion and the whelp) would destroy the wild ass (the Byzantine emperor)!<sup>36</sup>

As we have already seen, Otto’s grandson, Otto III, deliberately styled himself the ruler of a renewed Christian Roman Empire. He did so with the eager assistance of Pope Sylvester II, whose name echoed that of the pontiff who—according to an apocryphal tradition—had baptized the first Christian emperor, Constantine. This act was enshrined in the

*Donation of Constantine*, a famous forgery that had first circulated in the so-called False or Isidorean decretals of the ninth century.<sup>37</sup> According to this tradition, by baptizing Constantine, Pope Sylvester I (r. 314–335) had cured him of leprosy. Out of gratitude, the emperor granted to the pope and his successors authority over Rome and the Western parts of the empire. Constantine also confirmed the Roman Church’s primacy over the other major sees of the ancient world, including Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and, anachronistically, Constantinople, while proclaiming that the bishops of Rome stood above earthly judgment. He then proceeded to transfer his imperial power to a new Eastern capital at Byzantium: “For it is not just that an earthly emperor wield power in that same place that the prince of bishops and head of the Christian religion was established by the emperor of heaven.”<sup>38</sup> Generations later, Liudprand of Cremona did not hesitate to echo the *Donation of Constantine* when he claimed that Constantine had in fact relinquished imperial power in the West; Otto III, however, was more skeptical about the document, recognizing, no doubt, the untoward power and prerogatives that it apparently bequeathed to the bishops of Rome.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, although Pope Sylvester II lent his support to the young German emperor, he possessed his own ambitions for the future of the Roman Church and its authority over the Christian world. In spring of the year 1000, for example, Sylvester displayed his vision of papal primacy in a letter addressed to the king of the newly converted Hungarians, Stephen I (r. 997–1038).<sup>40</sup> Opening with an invocation from the Book of Daniel stating that God “changes times and ages, takes away kingdoms and establishes them” (Dan. 2:21), the pontiff gave thanks to the Lord for raising up a king in “our times” like a new David to rule over Israel, the Hungarian people. Sylvester “granted” to Stephen and his heirs not only his crown, but also the blessings and the protection of the Apostolic See of Peter and Paul. In exchange, Stephen promised his obedience and reverence for the Roman Church, “which does not hold subjects as slaves, but receives all as sons.”<sup>41</sup> From one perspective, this maneuver complemented the Ottonian drive to expand the borders of the Christian faith into formerly pagan lands. At the same time, the creation of an intimate link between the first Christian ruler of the Hungarians and the spiritual authority of the papacy suggested a different direction: the dilatation of

Christian churches and kingdoms under the pastoral leadership of the pope rather than the emperor.

Sylvester II has been called the “pope of the year 1000.”<sup>42</sup> In the view of nineteenth-century historians, the turn of the new millennium inspired terror and despair among Christians, filling them with dread about the approaching apocalypse. Reacting to this overblown picture, subsequent generations of scholars largely downplayed the apocalyptic atmosphere of the era, even to the point of claiming that it did not exist at all. In recent years historians have charted a middle ground between those interpretive extremes, arguing that the muted apocalypticism of the Carolingian period gave way to a new sense of eschatological excitement during the decades surrounding the millennium (evident, for example, in Adso’s tract on Antichrist).<sup>43</sup> Contemporaries were far from paralyzed with fear, but they did show a heightened interest in the possibility that history would reach its climax or a new stage during their own times. Moreover, dread could always yield to hope for an age of renewal. According to one tenth-century witness, when the pagan Hungarians had made their first inroads into Christian territories, many believed that they were the apocalyptic peoples of Gog and Magog, predicted in the Book of Revelation.<sup>44</sup> As we just saw, however, within a short amount of time Pope Sylvester II could celebrate their new Christian leader as an obedient son of the Roman Church, whose duty was to assist with the propagation of Christianity.

Observing this change in the Hungarians, the monastic chronicler Rodulfus Glaber proclaimed that “they who formerly pillaged the Christians they came across and bore them off into miserable slavery, now welcome them like brothers and children.”<sup>45</sup> Glaber, who lived from 985 to 1047, captured the new mood of the millennium in his well-known chronicle. Although he offered no timetable for the end or concrete apocalyptic predictions, his historical eye fastened upon various signs—famine, plague, comets, war, infidel attacks, and more—to illustrate the eschatological perils and hopes of the time. Heresy in particular concerned him. Reporting on its growth in Italy, he observed that “all this accords with the prophecy of St John, who said that the Devil would be freed after a thousand years.”<sup>46</sup> Commenting on the increase of pilgrimages to the holy places of Jerusalem, Glaber opined that this new devotion possibly

signaled the approach of the “accused Antichrist who, according to divine testimony, is expected to appear at the end of the world,” at which time the faithful would rush to Jerusalem to oppose or serve him.<sup>47</sup> Glaber also hinted at marvelous changes for the better with the arrival of the millennium or again at the thousand-year mark of the Passion in 1033. He famously described the growth of ecclesiastical structures around the turn of the eleventh century, proclaiming that the world was “cladding itself everywhere in a white mantel of churches.”<sup>48</sup> At one point, Glaber evinced his belief that the Christian lands where he lived were favored by Christ, who faced west while he hung on the cross, with his right hand outstretched toward the north. The south and east, however, still teemed with infidels and barbarians. “God alone knows,” he mused, “why it is that men are more able to receive their own salvation in some parts of the world than in others.”<sup>49</sup> Over time, Glaber’s successors in the Roman Church would come to feel that they had found convincing answers to precisely that question.

### Reform, Orthodoxy, and Heretical Greeks

In 1024, Rodulfus Glaber recorded a particularly disturbing story about the Roman papacy and the Greek patriarch of Constantinople, who had attempted secretly to bribe the pope so that he would acknowledge Constantinople’s claims of universal authority over its own territories. This plan, he related, would have succeeded if not for the general outrage that erupted when its terms were finally exposed.<sup>50</sup> The irate Glaber transcribed a letter, attributed to his friend and patron, the monastic reformer William of Dijon, who admonished Pope John XIX (r. 1024–1032) as follows:

But a rumor has recently arisen concerning you, and the man who is not scandalized by it must know that he is far removed from the divine love. For although the power of the Roman Empire, which once ruled over the whole earth, is now divided in various areas under numerous scepters, the power of binding and loosing in heaven and earth is attached by inviolable gift to the office of St Peter. And we have said this so that you may perceive

that it is from nothing but vain glory that the Greeks have made these demands on you of which we have heard. For the future, we pray that you should behave as behooves a universal bishop, practicing with more ardor the correction and discipline of the holy and apostolic Church so that you may be worthy of eternal happiness in Christ.<sup>51</sup>

Fortunately, wiser counsels prevailed and the ambassadors from Constantinople were sent home without their prize.

This episode illustrated a deep-seated controversy in the eleventh-century Roman Church over the buying and selling of clerical offices and dignities. Even Pope John XIX, Glaber related with disapproval, had reached his own position through bribes. Indeed, the monk held simony largely responsible for the scourges—famine, plague, and war—that God had sent against his sinful people. Toward the close of his chronicle, Glaber praised Emperor Henry III (r. 1028–1056) who had dedicated himself to the eradication of simony, selecting a new pope, Gregory VI (r. 1045–1046), whose “good reputation served to reform the corruption of his predecessor,” Pope Benedict IX (r. 1032–1044).<sup>52</sup> Apparently, Glaber died around this time, or perhaps he could not bring himself to record the tangled events that followed, including Gregory VI’s forced resignation resulting from charges of simony against him, the short tenure of Pope Clement II (r. 1046–1047), the brief return of the deposed Pope Benedict IX (r. 1047–1048), and the even briefer papacy of Damasus II (r. 1048) before the election of Pope Leo IX in 1048.<sup>53</sup> Leo would prove to be the sort of pontiff that Glaber and others like him had undoubtedly dreamed of for years. Under this pope and his entourage, the somewhat diffuse currents of religious reform—which had originated primarily in monastic centers such as Cluny and Gorze—began to coalesce around the institution of the Roman papacy.<sup>54</sup> Leo’s denunciations of simony immediately made their mark among his contemporaries. How could they not, when the pope held a council in Reims in 1049, deposing several bishops for purchasing their offices?<sup>55</sup>

Glaber’s story about the ambitions of the Greek patriarch in 1024 foreshadowed another problem facing the “reform” papacy of the mid-eleventh century, namely its status relative to the Eastern Church of Con-



stantinople. During the course of his papacy, Leo showed himself equally ready to engage with challenges from this direction. The circumstances of his crisis with the Greeks are well known. In 1053, the pope's longtime companion Cardinal Bishop Humbert of Silva Candida handed him a letter which had been written by the archbishop of Ochrid in Macedonia. This polemical epistle, which Humbert translated from Greek into Latin, presented a scathing attack on Roman religious rites and habits, above all the Latin use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist, which the Greeks claimed was a form of Judaizing (that is, a literal adherence to the Jewish use of azymes for Passover).<sup>56</sup> Leo and Humbert also learned that the Greek patriarch, Michael Cerularius (r. 1043–1059), had closed a number of churches in Constantinople that worshipped in the Latin rite.<sup>57</sup> Working together, the pope, Humbert, and perhaps a few others drafted a number of letters to the Greek patriarch and Byzantine emperor, Constantine IX Monomachus (r. 1042–1055), refuting the accusations made against the Latin Church. The following summer, the pope dispatched a legation to Constantinople to resolve the dispute, including Humbert, Peter of Amalfi, and Frederick of Lorraine. After a series of bitter debates, Humbert and his companions deposited a bull on the high altar at Hagia Sophia on 16 July 1054, excommunicating Cerularius and his supporters, who followed suit with their own bull that anathematized the Roman legates.<sup>58</sup>

Few events in medieval history have been as misunderstood as the so-called Schism of 1054. Generations of scholars viewed the mutual excommunications of that year as causing the final and lasting breach between the Latin and Greek Churches. Confessional historians on both sides of the conflict continued to perpetuate myths and slanders about its key participants well into the twentieth century, when more even-handed treatments of the topic began to correct the “Black Legend” that surrounded the episode.<sup>59</sup> The interminable debate surrounding the origins of the schism has tended to obscure the meaning that the events of 1054 possessed for contemporaries, who had no idea that their actions would bear the false burden of dividing Christendom. In fact, somewhat ironically, Pope Leo and his cadre of supporters had precisely the opposite intention. Unity was their basic operating premise, albeit on terms that were dictated by Rome. Facing the Greek religious tradition, the reform papacy confronted one of the most serious rivals to its presumed right to

speaking unilaterally for the universal Church. The Latin response to that challenge formed the first ideological salvo in Rome's newly configured claims to govern the Christians of the world. Decades before the Investiture Controversy, more than forty years before the First Crusade, the crisis of 1054 revealed the papal vision of Christendom in action.<sup>60</sup>

The first letter of response to the Greek patriarch in 1053, drafted by Pope Leo and his circle, plainly captured this assertive posture:

We are not able to tolerate anyone whosoever, who sets himself out of pride against our Apostolic See and usurps its law, for whoever attempts to diminish or invalidate the privileges and authority of the Roman Church, schemes to overturn and destroy not just that one church, but all of Christendom.<sup>61</sup>

One imagines that this was precisely the sort of response to the Greeks that William of Dijon and others like him had been hoping for in 1024. How did the papacy justify this deliberate conflation of Christendom with the Apostolic See of Rome? The letter included lengthy excerpts from the *Donation of Constantine* to reinforce the idea that Constantine's transfer of empire from Rome to Constantinople was made out of respect for Rome's role in the governance of the universal Church. These selections confirmed that the emperor had set the Roman Church above the other patriarchal sees of the ancient world. In addition, the authors drew attention to the first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325, when (according to other spurious sources) the emperor had reiterated his surrender of Western imperial power to the bishops of Rome.<sup>62</sup>

In a second letter of complaint about the attack on the Roman rite, this one addressed to Emperor Constantine Monomachus, Leo and his circle stressed the first Constantine's munificence toward the bishops of Rome and pointed to him as the proper model for a pious ruler: "Therefore we exhort you," the epistle called upon the current ruler of Byzantium, "the great successor to the great Constantine by blood, name, and imperial power, also to be the imitator of his devotion toward the Apostolic See."<sup>63</sup> In this letter, the possibilities rather than the dangers of empire for the reform papacy were on display. In 1053, not long before Leo first heard news about the Greek attack on the Latin rite, the pope had led

his own troops into battle against the Normans, whose rising power in southern Italy threatened papal holdings and interests. The ensuing battle of Civitate, which resulted in Leo's defeat and capture, hardly favored his ambitions in the region. Smarting from this recent failure, Leo informed Constantine Monomachus that he expected aid from Emperor Henry III against the Normans at any moment, and called upon the Greek ruler to join him. Like the two arms of a body, Henry and Constantine Monomachus would defend the Church of Christ from its enemies and "relieve the shame of Christendom."<sup>64</sup>

Papal authority over Christendom, however, could never rest secure on imperial munificence. After all, what one emperor granted, another could take away. Since at least the fourth century, the popes of Rome had laid claim to their own ideology of universal authority through their apostolic succession from Saint Peter. The logic behind this argument was strikingly simple: Christ had deputized his chief Apostle Peter to establish his terrestrial church (Mt. 16:18), and Peter had deputized the bishops of Rome as his successors, thereby imparting to them a place of supremacy over other churches. Decades earlier, William of Dijon had invoked this very claim when he heard about the Greeks' illicit attempt to solicit from Rome privileges that did not belong to them. From this perspective, the Roman popes did not need Constantine or any other temporal ruler to tell them that they exercised spiritual authority and pastoral leadership over the Christians of the world.<sup>65</sup>

Starting in the 1050s, the advocates of reform made this assertion of apostolic primacy through Peter their mantra. Among other maneuvers, they began to repackage earlier sources of canon law (including forgeries and spurious passages) into easy-to-wield collections supporting their claims that the "sacrosanct and apostolic Roman Church" had obtained its privileges directly from Christ through Peter.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, papal circles reinvented Rome's past in order to distance the Roman Church from the city's pagan greatness and to associate its sanctity firmly with the blood of martyrs spilled in the holy city, above all Peter and Paul, whose remains formed a focal point of Christian devotion there. The martyrdom of those apostles during the persecution of Nero had transformed Rome from the "head of superstition" and ruler of pagan nations into the "head of sanctity" and ruler of Christian peoples—a fit dwelling for the princes of the Church, the bishops of Rome.<sup>67</sup>

These “Petrine” claims involved much more than Rome’s status of juridical primacy. To refute the Greek charge that the use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist constituted a form of Judaizing, Pope Leo and his circle pointed toward Peter rather than Constantine, arguing that the direct line of succession from Peter to the bishops of Rome guaranteed the orthodoxy of the Roman sacrifice against the heretics who were presently attacking it. In his life, ministry, and martyrdom, Peter had demonstrated his role as the foundation of the church. Against Peter, the “gates of hell,” that is, the arguments of heretics, could not prevail. As the Apostolic See, it was the role of Rome to defend the faithful and confound the illicit teachings of all heretics, everywhere they might appear. The defenders of the Roman rite argued that Peter had played a unique role in revealing the sacramental mysteries of the faith and removing the “burden of circumcision” and the “yoke” of the Jewish law from the Gentiles. In these terms, the Greek attack on azymes went much deeper than a point of contention over a simple difference in sacramental practice. It reached instead squarely into Christian theology of history, which argued that the Incarnation of Christ marked a transferal from the Old Testament law of the Jews to the New Covenant of the Christians. With the coming of Christ, the Jewish use of azymes for Passover had not been abrogated but rather had been transformed into the Christian sacrifice with unleavened bread. In contrast to the Latins, described as “Peter’s intimate disciples and the more devout followers of his teaching,” the Greeks had failed to understand the fundamental nature of the Christian sacraments.<sup>68</sup>

To make matters worse, the Greek Church had openly attacked the Latin rite and papal authority. The initial letter of response to the Byzantine patriarch implied that Michael Cerularius and his supporters were nothing less than “members of Antichrist,” some of the “many Antichrists” that the Bible predicted for the “final hour” (1 Jn. 2:18). This statement was not apocalyptic in an immediate sense; the letter cautiously asserted that the “final hour” in fact stretched “from the first coming of Savior to his Second Coming.”<sup>69</sup> This line of attack, however, aligned the Greek clergy with forces of evil that had opposed the catholic Church throughout history. The same epistle specifically associated the current Greek patriarch with infamous ancient heresiarchs of the Eastern Church, such as Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, and Eutychius, whose heresies had

been opposed by the first four ecumenical councils at Nicaea, Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451). Like a daughter who rejected her mother, Constantinople had exhibited a history of rebellion against Rome since the era of peace established by Constantine, when pagan persecutions had yielded to the internal threat of heresy. The current attack on the Latin rite, in this view, fit into a pattern of abuse.<sup>70</sup>

This strident invocation of the past suggested a far more serious problem than a minor point of liturgical difference between the Latin and Greek Churches (as modern scholars often present the azymes controversy).<sup>71</sup> For all of our modern talk of a “schism” between the followers of Rome and Constantinople, the term was not commonly applied to the situation during or immediately after 1054. Pope Leo’s biographer referred instead to the “heresy of the Leavenites, who assailed the holy Roman see, nay, the entire Latin and Western Church” for its use of azymes.<sup>72</sup> Another account by Panteleo of Amalfi declared that Michael Cerularius, better known as “a heresiarch rather than a patriarch,” had attacked the Roman Church by claiming that “the Greek sacrifice is better than the Latin, since they make an offering of leavened bread, and the Roman Church makes an offering of azymes, as it had learned from the apostles.”<sup>73</sup> Yet another anonymous tract composed shortly afterwards declared that the Greek patriarch and his partisans were worse than the Jews; the latter had killed Christ in ignorance about his true nature, while the Greek clergymen involved had attacked the body of Christ willingly.<sup>74</sup> So much for a minor point of liturgical difference!

This language of orthodoxy and heresy points us away from the notion of a long-term Latin-Greek schism toward other debates within the eleventh-century Roman Church over the sacraments and the unique position of Rome as the defender of catholic doctrine and proper religious practice. When the crisis with Constantinople erupted in 1053, the papacy was already involved in a controversy surrounding the Eucharistic teachings of Berengar of Tours. Historians of the schism between the Latins and Greeks rarely point out this simple but important fact.<sup>75</sup> Berengar questioned the still forming doctrine that the sacrificial bread and wine changed “substantially” during consecration while maintaining their outward appearance or “accidents.” The details of Berengar’s theology do not concern us, but the reaction of Rome to his teaching does. In 1050,

Leo IX condemned Berengar in absentia, an early example of the pope's eagerness to place the Apostolic See on the front lines of determining and defending orthodoxy. Condemned at Tours in 1054 and yet again at Rome in 1059, Berengar was compelled to take an oath rejecting his own teachings and confirming that the Eucharist after consecration was the "true body of Christ." In 1059, Pope Nicholas II (r. 1059–1061) called upon none other than Humbert of Silva Candida to formulate Berengar's self-condemnatory oath.<sup>76</sup>

If the papacy's refutation of Berengar and the Greek patriarch represented two sides of the same coin, the new currency of the land lay in the authority of Rome to monitor the borders of orthodoxy. The Eucharist was not the only sacramental fault-line in this new effort to draw borders around the right and wrong kind of Christians. Before and after Leo's death, the targeting of simony contributed to an unusual amount of concern over the validity of sacraments that were administered by "simoniacal" heretics, above all the rite of baptism. Turning for support to the Bible and the annals of ecclesiastical history, churchmen such as Humbert sought to clarify the boundaries around the catholic community by vociferously identifying its perceived enemies, including pagans, heretics, schismatics, Jews, and, arguably worst of all, "carnal" Christians who pretended to be members of the faith and dissimulated their perversity.<sup>77</sup> They were part of Antichrist's body, rather than the body of Christ, the true Church. A few years after his visit to Constantinople, Humbert of Silva Candida declared in his well-known *Three Books Against the Simoniacs* that clerics guilty of simony were "worse than pagans and Jews." The sacraments administered by them were a source of pollution that lacked the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, the "glue" that bound together the Church, the mystical "body of Christ." In a parody of catholic sacraments, which still shared some of their outer characteristics with the Jewish rites that had prefigured them, the sacraments of Antichrist's servants would continue to look like catholic ones, hiding their inner falsity. Looking into the future, Humbert predicted that the Devil would raise a "profane Trinity" against the faithful at the end of time, consisting of "Satan among the Gentiles, Antichrist among the Jews, and a pseudo-prophet among the heretics." That pseudo-prophet would present the worst threat of all, since he would trick otherwise pious believers into following him.<sup>78</sup>

Humbert, it is worth pointing out, did not harbor an irrational “hatred” of Greeks, as is sometimes supposed. In his books against simony, he was more than willing to praise the Greek Empire for its lack of that particular sin.<sup>79</sup> Rather, his strident rejection of the Greek polemics against Rome years earlier demonstrated a careful project to establish beyond any doubt that the Roman Church embodied the true leadership of the universal Christian community in all matters. Although 1054 did not cause the lasting schism between Latins and Greeks, it remains an important landmark in the papal concept of Christendom, above all the relationship between its Western and Eastern halves.<sup>80</sup> A new terrain had been marked out on the frontiers of belief between Latins and Greeks—an insistence that the doctrines, rites, and habits of the Roman Church were the superior ones, along with the complementary possibility that the leaders of the Greek religious tradition, if not the Greeks as a whole, were at best inferior and at worst heretical. Once exposed, that terrain would never disappear. To the contrary, projecting the proper relationship between Rome and the Eastern Church in the past, present, and future would come to occupy more and more attention from members of the Roman Church over the following decades and beyond.

### Imagining the “Gregorian” World Order

Pope Leo IX died before he heard about the results of the legation to Constantinople in 1054, but his ambitious ideology of papal authority persisted more or less unabated after him. Following his papacy, a series of subsequent pontiffs achieved substantial advancements in their cause of ecclesiastical reform, including the establishment of canonical papal elections by an assembly of cardinal bishops in 1059. By all accounts, however, the drive to reshape Christendom assumed a new stridency and pace under Gregory VII, elected pope in 1073. Rome, Gregory declared on more than one occasion, represented the “mother of all Christendom” and the “universal mother of all churches and peoples.”<sup>81</sup> These were not exactly new formulations in papal ideology, but he envisioned their significance with an unprecedented insistence on the superiority of priestly authority. The pope was explicit that the “law of the Roman pontiffs” was not limited to the lands formerly or presently commanded by the Roman emper-

ors.<sup>82</sup> Christendom under papal monarchy transcended the borders of empire. One need only glance at the so-called *Dictatus papae* to get a sense of Gregory's audacious and potentially disruptive formulation of papal primacy. Although not disseminated, this point-by-point "manifesto" written in 1075 (perhaps the outline of a never-completed canon law collection) reserved for the papacy the exclusive right to be called apostolic, the right to depose emperors, and absolute freedom from outside judgment. The *Dictatus papae* declared that anyone who did not recognize the authority of the Roman Church was a heretic, cut off from the community of the faithful. This platform did not just seek to elevate Rome's juridical status as the head of Christendom; the papacy stood as the defender and determiner of orthodoxy, deciding and enforcing what was correct in doctrine and liturgical practice.<sup>83</sup>

Whatever the limitations of his abilities to enforce his claims, Gregory demonstrated an unprecedented scope of concern for extending the influence of the Roman Church over alternate Christian traditions. In some instances he directed his attention close to home, investigating news of a supposed Armenian heretic at large in southern Italy, or informing the Greek clergy of Sardinia that they should reestablish the ancient connection between their island and the papacy by observing Roman customs.<sup>84</sup> In other cases, he looked farther afield. The pope saw it as his role to investigate, admonish, and encourage members of the Christian faith everywhere, or (as he put it in a letter to the Catholicus of Armenia) to weep when he heard about those who separated themselves from the body of the faithful and to congratulate those who remained in unity and harmony.<sup>85</sup> Looking toward Byzantium, Gregory kept diplomatic channels open with the Byzantine emperor, Michael VII (r. 1067–1078), communicating with him through his legates and letters about the need to "renew a state of concord" between the church of Rome and its "ancient daughter," Constantinople. Regardless of the precise locale in question, differences of rite and doctrine between Latins and non-Latin communities fell into the widening pastoral matrix of papal authority.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to his claims of leadership over "foreign" Christians, Gregory from the beginning of his papacy envisioned an active role for the see of Saint Peter in the battles taking place on the frontiers between believers and non-Christians. In this case, the pope tapped into another facet of



the reform movement that had its origins earlier in the tenth and eleventh centuries, namely a growing clerical comfort with the possibility of justified, if not sanctified, violence against both the internal and external foes of Christendom. Beginning at the Councils of Le Puy in 975 and Charroux in 989, local churchmen and laity in the fragmented kingdom of Francia had begun to respond to the violence of “predatory” lords by delimiting the space and time available for the legitimate use of armed force. Since the ground-breaking study of Carl Erdmann on the origins of the First Crusade, scholars have recognized that this movement—the so-called Peace and Truce of God—contributed to a wider shift in clerical attitudes toward violence.<sup>87</sup> In time, ecclesiastical thinkers began to envision the mirror-opposite of such predatory brigandage, namely, the use of formally sanctioned warfare to protect the Church. The development of this position was protracted and far from systematic, as theologians and canon lawyers drew upon patristic authorities to bolster arguments in favor of those who wielded their arms against the Church’s enemies both within, including heretics, schismatics, and violators of the peace, and without, above all pagans and infidels.<sup>88</sup>

By the mid-eleventh century, the papacy began to take a more active hand in directing violence for its own purposes. In 1053, as we have seen, Pope Leo IX displayed this change in attitude when he led his own troops into battle against Norman forces in southern Italy. Some clerics argued that the soldiers who fell there in the service of the pope were martyrs.<sup>89</sup> Just over a decade later, Pope Alexander II (r. 1061–1073) bestowed the papal banner upon Duke William of Normandy, as he prepared for his invasion of England to overthrow the “usurper” Harold Godwinson in 1066. Over the course of his own papacy, Gregory VII conferred the papal banner upon various rulers, including a former papal foe, the Norman leader Robert Guiscard, and Erlembald, a warrior who supported reformist interests in Milan. By fostering the idea that Christian laity could act as “soldiers of Saint Peter” against the enemies of the papacy, Gregory was not so much charting a new direction as channeling the notion that secular fighters had an important duty to fulfill in the service and defense of the Church.<sup>90</sup>

The reform movement also changed the theological significance of violence against the infidel world on Christendom’s frontiers. By the later

eleventh century, those frontiers were in flux, above all in regions such as Spain where Christendom butted up against Islamic lands. Fueled by sweeping demographic, economic, and political changes, princes such as Alfonso VI of León and Castile (r. 1065–1109) and Sancho IV of Navarre (r. 1054–1076) pushed against their southern boundaries in aggressive if somewhat piecemeal campaigns. Medieval contemporaries in the Roman Church framed this expansionary process with their own narratives of conquest. While the reformers struggled to realize their vision of a properly ordered world close to home, they also looked toward places that “properly” belonged to the patrimony of Rome, even if they were currently in the hands of the infidels. Channeling this recovery process, the proponents of papal monarchy crafted some of their most compelling narratives of history as a divinely ordained process that favored Western Christians, even while God laid special obligations on them.

Gregory’s predecessor, Pope Alexander II, had already tried his hand at fostering armed Christian action against Islamic Spain by promising the remission of sins for warriors en route to battle against the Saracens there.<sup>91</sup> Although few would now agree with the appraisal of Augustin Fliche that “the crusade started in the West, during the pontificate of Alexander II,” that pope’s contribution to events like the capture of Barbastro in 1064 spoke of an intensifying papal interest in rolling back the frontiers of belief between Christendom and the infidels.<sup>92</sup> Under Gregory VII, the papacy more forcefully and consistently projected its right to speak for those parts of the Christian world that had until quite recently remained beyond its reach, while encouraging further Christian action against the unbelievers. Gregory’s language of expansion was not ours. He did not speak of population growth and economic motivations, but rather of God’s plan for history and the destiny of Christendom.<sup>93</sup>

In his epistles to the rulers and churches of Spain, the pope explained both the recent expansion of Christian power in the region and, significantly, the ultimate responsibility of the papacy for these territories that were being “liberated” from the hands of the infidels. As Gregory styled things, the connection between the Apostolic See and Spain had originated in the earliest days of the Church, when Peter and Paul had dispatched their disciples to proselytize in that land, destroying idolatry, planting the seeds of the Christian faith, and eventually sanctifying it with

the blood of their martyrdom. From their foundations, the churches of Spain formed part of the “right and property” of the bishops of Rome, while a state of concord had existed between Spain and Rome in the celebration of the liturgy. As time passed, however, the Christians of the region were polluted and cut off from the Roman rite, first by heretical barbarian Goths and next by the invasion of the Saracens.

All of this was again changing, however, in what Gregory called “our times.” Through the mercy of God, under rulers like Alfonso and Sancho, the territories of Spain were being returned to Christian power, the infidel yoke cast off, and the liberty of the Spanish churches restored. This expansion of Christian power in Spain opened up a theater of opportunity for the Roman papacy to actualize the principles of the reform program and to demonstrate the exclusive privileges of the Apostolic See as the “universal mother of all churches and peoples.” It was the position of Rome to confirm the ancient rights and properties of the defunct churches that were being restored to the Christian faith. Gregory projected an image of the Spanish kings as properly deferential secular rulers who were carrying out God’s work, through their battles against the infidels and their role in extending the boundaries of what was, in effect, Saint Peter’s parish.<sup>94</sup> This process complemented the papal responsibility for ensuring orthodoxy in the rites and doctrines of non-Western Christian communities. Again following Pope Alexander II’s lead, Gregory insisted that the princes and bishops of Spain carry out the process of substituting the proper Roman liturgy for the “superstitious” rites of the “Mozarabes,” Christians who had lived under Islamic authority for centuries.<sup>95</sup> In this respect, we find a significant overlap in the papacy’s concern with monitoring non-Roman Christian communities and its support for armed aggression in infidel lands.<sup>96</sup> Gregory exhorted Alfonso VI, Sancho IV, the archbishop of Toledo, and others to recognize their lawful mother, the church of Rome, and to receive from Rome the proper forms of worship that should be spread through the recently captured lands of Spain. This was a duty that involved not innovation, but rather the restoration of earlier practices.

At other points, Gregory did not remain content to react to such expansion on the ground, but rather actively attempted to facilitate and direct the energies of those Christians who looked to Rome as the head of

their religious community. Addressing a band of Frankish warriors under Count Ebohus of Roucy bound for Spain in 1073, the pope promised special protection for the lands that the warriors seized from the hands of the pagans and reiterated his narrative of conquest and restoration. The kingdom of Spain, he informed them, had belonged since ancient times to the law and right of Rome, before being subject to bondage under the Saracens. Now it was being restored to the special protection of Saint Peter.<sup>97</sup> That process of restoration was not limited to Spain, but extended to other regions recently occupied by infidels that “properly” belonged to the patrimony of the Apostolic See. Writing in 1074 to confirm the rights and privileges of the monastery of Saint Mary on the island of Gorgona, Gregory proclaimed that the religious house there lay under the “special right” and “dominion” of Saint Peter until the island fell under the cruelty of the Saracens, who had banished Christian worship on the island until recent days when God allowed a restoration of their monastic community.<sup>98</sup> Around a decade later in a letter to Alcherius, the archbishop of Palermo, Gregory declared that it was his business to defend and strengthen churches everywhere, to eradicate errors, and to safeguard the Christian religion. This duty included the church of Sicily, formerly noble and famous, lost to the Saracens on account of Christian sins, but now restored to the Christian faith by the arms of the Norman duke, Roger.<sup>99</sup>

Ultimately, the papacy stood at the heart of an expanding Christendom. Fighting to recover Saint Peter’s patrimony, rulers in Spain and Sicily were helping the popes in the realization of God’s plan for history—not the other way around. Gregory displayed this ambitious view of papal responsibility for Christians everywhere with his “crusade plan” of 1074. The inhabitants of the Eastern Christian Empire, the pope declared to the faithful in the West, were suffering oppression and slaughter by the infidels. In a letter to Duke William of Burgundy, Gregory capitalized on the previous vows of allegiance and fidelity that William and other nobles had taken to Gregory’s predecessor, Alexander II, by calling on those “faithful men of Saint Peter” to aid the beleaguered Eastern Christians. In a letter to Henry IV, Gregory claimed that forty thousand troops had already heeded his call and expressed his desire to lead them against the “enemies of God,” pushing all the way to the “sepulcher of the Lord” in Jerusalem. Rallying Henry to this cause, the pope revealed another one of his hopes, namely that this effort to aid the “Christian people” and the

“Christian Empire” from the savageness of the pagan would help to restore the church of Constantinople, the Armenians, and all the Christians of the East to a state of concord with the Apostolic See.<sup>100</sup>

As is well known, this expedition failed to materialize. Soon afterward the entire project was lost in the din of Gregory’s developing confrontation with Henry IV. For something that never actually happened, however, this idea of an armed campaign to liberate the Eastern Church tells us a great deal about the changing papal vision of Christendom. When Gregory called for an expedition to march eastward in defense of the Greek Empire, his first order of business was to pacify the Normans of southern Italy, who were again threatening papal holdings in the area. Unlike Leo IX, Gregory did not style the Normans as “enemies” of Christ’s church or a “shame” to Christendom. They were to be shocked into submissiveness, not destroyed. The true enemies of Christendom were the non-believers outside the gates. This was not the last time that the papacy would call upon its nominal defenders within Christendom to take up arms against its external foes. By exhorting Christian soldiers as the sworn faithful of Saint Peter to defend their fellow believers in the Eastern Church, the pope equally demonstrated his belief that such an act of sanctioned violence would help to strengthen the proper bonds of communion and obedience between the Roman Church and those “outside” Christian communities.

Through his vision of concerted Christian action on an epic scale, the pope revealed a close linkage between the internal needs of the reform papacy and its broader ambitions in the world, including its relationship with the Eastern Church and a desire to recover the holy places of Jerusalem. These three related goals—internal reform, Christian unity, and opposition to the infidels—would inhabit the historical imagination of the Roman Church for centuries to come. For this reason, Gregory’s ambitions in 1074 stand as a landmark in the papal ideology of Christendom, set against the backdrop of a struggle to protect Christians against the onslaught of the infidels. By the same token, the fact that Gregory’s campaign failed to happen demonstrated the very real limitations of the papacy in achieving such goals, especially when the popes of Rome were struggling to defend their prerogatives from a more immediate threat, the German empire.

Indeed, by 1075 and 1076, the Gregorian agenda had led to open con-

flict between Gregory VII and Henry IV, whose clash over the investiture of bishops with the sacred symbols of their office is one of the better-known episodes in medieval European history. The dueling political theologies of the pope and emperor took shape in an outpouring of polemical letters and tracts that supported papal or imperial claims to a position of ultimate superiority in the governance of Christian society.<sup>101</sup> The Roman emperors, though celebrated for their role in the triumph of the Church after Constantine, had never entirely shed their disturbing reputation as a source of oppression against the faithful since the days of Nero (r. 54–68) and his persecution of the fledgling faith. In certain scenarios, Nero and his imperial heirs were themselves seen as a manifestation of Antichrist. From the perspective of the Roman Church, this adversarial relationship had not changed irrevocably with the conversion of Constantine. To be reminded of this uncomfortable fact, the catholic faithful needed only to recall the persecutions of the heretical Arian ruler Constantius (r. 337–361), the pagan Julian the Apostate (r. 361–363), and the iconoclast Constantine V (r. 743–775). Even if they were not the final Antichrist, such rulers manifested his evil and tyranny. When open conflict erupted between Pope Gregory VII and Henry IV, papal partisans positioned the German emperor in a long line of imperial persecutors who had attacked the faithful, in stark contrast with pious rulers of the past such as Constantine and Charlemagne, who had shown the proper deference to the bearers of priestly authority, above all to the bishops of Rome. From the reformers' perspective, one which they did not hesitate to disseminate, the problem was the failure of later imperial rulers to honor those obligations. Instead, the story of empire after the days of Charlemagne and his son Louis the Pious revealed growing abuse and the gradual erosion of the Church's liberty at the hands of temporal princes. It was that former pristine state of liberty that the reform papacy was claiming to restore through the assertion of its "ancient" privileges.

Not surprisingly, in this war of words, the empire struck back. Even pro-imperial polemics did not roundly deny the special privileges of the Apostolic See and its authority over other churches in different parts of the Christian world. In a tract written around 1084 about the current "discord" between the "pope and the king," the anonymous author offered a vision of ecclesiastical history strikingly similar to that of the reformers, citing (spurious) papal epistles that stressed the authority of the Roman

Church, the “head of Christendom,” over the Eastern Church. This imperial partisan asserted that Saints Peter and Paul had brought the Christian faith from its roots in the Eastern Church to the Western Church, thereby making Rome the head of the universal Church as Christ himself had intended.<sup>102</sup> Another pro-imperial tract, the *Book on How to Preserve the Unity of the Church*, agreed that Rome was “mother of all churches.” After Constantine had transferred his capital to Constantinople, the emperors of that city had fallen into heresy and attacked the catholic faith (presumably a reference to the Byzantine policy of iconoclasm). This onslaught led the bishops of Rome to seek assistance from the Frankish rulers Pepin and Charles, who defended the Roman Church from its enemies and rightfully assumed imperial power.<sup>103</sup> From this perspective, the current conflict between pope and emperor did not stem from imperial arrogance and abuse, but rather from the unprecedented attack by Gregory VII on the rightful privileges of the emperor to protect and adjudicate over the Roman Church in times of crisis.

As Gregory’s papacy progressed, his battle with Henry absorbed more and more of his attention, leading him and his supporters to wonder if the current discord in Christendom itself portended the end of history, or at least whether the papal conflict with the emperor manifested a deeper, eschatological battle between good and evil. In his own correspondence, Gregory did not hesitate to label his opponents “members of Antichrist,” including simoniacal bishops and the imperially sponsored “anti-pope,” Guibert of Ravenna, who claimed papal authority under the name of Clement III from 1084 to 1100. In many ways, this “Antichrist language” was calculated for rhetorical impact, not intended to convince readers that the Last Things were immediately at hand.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, Gregory strongly implied that the current struggles between the supporters of the papacy and the empire offered one sign of the apocalyptic troubles foretold by Christ in the Book of Matthew. His tone suggested that those who opposed the papacy were not just opponents of papal policies, but were aligned instead with eschatological forces of evil.<sup>105</sup>

The invocation of the future was not one-sided. Judging by manuscript evidence, there are tantalizing signs that the imperial apocalyptic tradition began to experience a certain amount of revitalization around this same time, above all in the prophecy of the Last World Emperor.<sup>106</sup> In addition to Pseudo-Methodius and Adso, an eleventh-century translation

of the so-called Tiburtine Sibyl, a prophetic tradition that originated in the fourth or fifth century, also contributed to this resurgence of interest in the destiny of the Christian Empire. Contemporaries had a variety of reasons to be fascinated by the Tiburtine Sibyl, including the apparent “prediction” of Christ’s coming by a pagan seer.<sup>107</sup> Its presentation of imperial power, however, was particularly eye-catching. In various redactions, the prophecy reinforced the promise of a final Roman ruler who would “lay waste to all the islands and cities of the pagans, destroy all their temples with their idols, and summon all of the pagans to baptism, erecting the cross of Christ in every temple.” At the same time, the prophecy proclaimed, “the Jews will convert to the Lord, and His tomb will be glorified by all.”<sup>108</sup>

Quite a job description. Around the mid-1080s, the imperial supporter Benzo of Alba testified to a contemporary belief that the young Henry IV was fated to recover the Holy Sepulcher and defeat the forces of paganism, a dramatic role that was suggestive of the deeds expected from the messianic Roman ruler.<sup>109</sup> At least one near-contemporary, Bishop Raynier of Florence, took this heightened sense of apocalyptic eschatology one step farther, announcing around the turn of the twelfth century that the historical Antichrist had already been born.<sup>110</sup> The reaction of pro-imperial bishops gathered at Ravenna is telling. In a letter rebuking Raynier, they categorically denied that the current schism in the Roman Church between rival popes was a sign of the end-times, and they reminded Raynier that patristic authorities refused to make clear predictions about the dating of Antichrist’s coming. Besides, according to apostolic testimony, the “Son of Perdition” would not appear until the absolute failure of the Roman Empire. Clearly, the assembled bishops asserted, this disintegration of empire had not yet come to pass. Given the apparently radical nature of Raynier’s claims, it seems more than likely that even papal supporters would have balked at such a claim that *the* Antichrist was at hand, even if they remained willing to denounce Henry as part of Antichrist’s evil.

In many ways, the edifice of Christendom erected in the eleventh century was a remarkable *trompe l’oeil*. Gregory VII, namesake of the Gregorian



reform, died in exile at Salerno, chased from Rome by imperial forces. The next influential pope to occupy the Apostolic See for any duration, Pope Urban II (r. 1088–1099), continued to be dogged by the anti-pope Guibert of Ravenna, even as the armies of what we now call the First Crusade were assembling. We should never make the mistake of believing that Rome's claims of unity under papal auspices were uncontested or anywhere close to fully realized. To the contrary, the papacy and like-minded clergy in the Western Church insisted upon the existence of Christendom with such creativity and vehemence precisely because of such conflicts, alternatives, and rivalries, not despite them. In large part, Christendom took shape in response to centrifugal forces and arguments, whether they came from Byzantium, the German empire, or others who opposed the reformers' effort to reconfigure the norms of their Christian society.

Although they could not have known it at the time, the advocates of papal monarchy had taken the first steps toward an innovative theology of history that would impact medieval Europe for the following three hundred years. At its opening stages, their effort was largely reactive and defensive, as seen in Pope Leo IX's declaration that whoever attacked the authority of the Roman Church in fact schemed "to destroy all of Christendom." As time passed, the papacy began to envision its role as a more active one, pushing against the frontiers of the infidel world. With the surprising success of the First Crusade under Pope Urban II, that effort to transform the circumstances of the universal Christian community would assume a compelling new dynamic, but the initial steps had already been taken. By placing the papacy at the center of Christendom, the advocates of papal monarchy in the eleventh century equally placed the bishops of Rome at the center of God's ongoing historical design for the Church on earth. A world unified under Rome would be a world that was one step closer to God's kingdom, even if the ultimate realization of that promise would have to wait until the world-to-come.