

Website summary



THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE A SUMMARY The German-based Holy Roman Empire (official *sacrum romanum imperium*) existed as a political organization over Europe from 10th to the 19th century. It came to being as the Charlemagne's Empire was rescued at the brink of destruction by Otto I the Great in 962. It was a Limited Elective Monarchy as the office of the Emperor was not patrimonial and he could not rule out the role of the lords (Imperial Diet) in making crucial decisions concerning the states. Some of the primary documents in its constitution were: rights of the holy and divine Rulers, loss of papal control over election of the emperor, and peace treaties of Westphalia.

The Emperor was always an honorable man, who was never to inherit the throne. He started off with an oath called *Wahlkapitulation*, and ended either in death, resignation or removal of the Emperor. And he had priority over every Christian King. During a reign, the next ruler was called King of Romans. In case of the Emperor being unfit and no King of Romans, two Imperial Vicars had the ultimate authority.

The Emperor had both a real and fake household consisting of the High Offices of the Empire. He had jurisdiction over a lot of aspects but had his limitations. Powers exercised by the Emperor alone, were called *Jura Reservata*. The title of Emperor was first used on Christmas Day 800, and was finalized in 812 by Byzantium. The title, Kings of Romans eventually lost charm and was later known as German King or Imperator.

The Reichstag was the law-making committee of the Empire. It composed of: the Electoral Council, Council of Princes, and Council of Imperial Cities. State of the Empire was a member of the Reichstag. The owners of the land concerning to a State equally shared its vote in the Reichstag. Under certain

circumstances, a land could stop being a State of the Empire. Different States had the right to become united with others. At first the vote belonged to the landlord, but later, only certain families had the right to vote.

Elector Princes were responsible for selection of the Emperor, headed by the archbishop of Mainz, who dominated all Princes. Electors cast their vote personally, allowed others to do it, or sent an electoral body for the purpose. This was usually done within a month of the Emperor's death. And the chosen Emperor was crowned by the three divine princes.

The 2nd body of Reichstag composed of Princes, who voted individually, and Lords, who voted collectively. In the later years, very few Princes were given the right to vote at the Reichstag. On the other hand, the Imperial Cities took part in crucial decisions but were left out in a lot of areas.

The Imperial Chamber Court was made for small crimes but eventually became the chief court. It only ruled over members of its own committee. On the other hand, the Aulic Council handled problems of the State. Religious decisions however were taken to the Reichstag.

The Empire was divided either by status of land, or caste of people, and the overall size of the Empire changed variably with the passage of time; its political structure was divided into Sovereignty, Immediate and Mediate Status, and Knights of the Empire.

In 1792, French Revolution and European War caused the downfall of the Holy Roman Empire. Some States went under the rule of Napoleon and soon the whole Empire was in disarray. On 12 July 1806, the State Members officially divided from the Empire under the contract of the Treaty, and so ended The Holy Roman Empire.

Work Cited

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