

only be had to it by steps. At its eastern part, there was an altar consecrated to the worship of that Lady, which had within it the head of the blessed virgin Austroberta.¹⁸ When the priest performed the Divine mysteries at this altar he had his face turned to the east, towards the people who stood below. Behind him to the west, was the pontifical chair constructed with handsome workmanship, and of large stones and cement; and far removed from the Lord's table, being contiguous to the wall of the church which embraced the entire area of the building. And this was the plan of the church of Canterbury. These things we have shortly described, in order that the men of the present and future generations, when they find them mentioned in the writings of old, and perceive that the existing things do not coincide with their narratives, may know that all these old things have passed away, and that new ones have taken their place. For after the innumerable vicissitudes which this church underwent, the whole was finally consumed in our own days by fire as we have above related.¹⁹

THE EMPIRE

After the death of Louis the Pious in 840, the Carolingian Empire deteriorated quickly. Its breakdown was hastened by the raids of Vikings, Hungarians, and Moslems, who destroyed the cities and monasteries of Gaul and Germany. One of the regions least affected by the general turmoil was Saxony, whose Duke Henry was made King of Germany in 919. He was followed by his son Otto the Great, who was crowned Emperor by Pope John XII in 962. The Saxon emperors had a lofty concept of their office and comported themselves with a formality foreign to the manners of Charlemagne. This is particularly true of Otto II,²⁰ who married a Byzantine princess, and of their son Otto III,²¹ and his cousin Henry II.²² To judge by their austere yet elegant portraits, their splendid jewels, and their generous patronage, the new imperial family expressed the dignity of their office with rare style. Their comportment made a deep impression in Italy, where the imperial faction hoped for a new restoration of Roman power and ceremonial. The description of the emperor's robes in the Book of the Golden City of Rome, which is believed to have been written in Rome about 1030, reproduces many dubious traditions but at least in part seems to be based on firsthand knowledge. It records, for example,

¹⁸ St. Austroberta, abbess of Pavilly near Rouen (b. 630, d. 704).

¹⁹ Eadmer, *De reliquiis S. Audoeni*, trans. R. Willis, *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral* (London: Longmans and Co., 1845), pp. 9-12.

²⁰ Otto II, German emperor (973-83).

²¹ Otto III, German emperor (983-1002).

²² Henry II, German emperor (1002-24).

that the Emperor wore, for his coronation, cloak adorned with the signs of the zodiac, a fact which is also known from other sources.

Imperial Robes and Insignia

We come now to the garments of the emperor and in the first place to the cloak. The cloak is a garment which is worn sideways and which is not sewn but held by golden clasps. The toga is round with its great fold bulging and, so to speak, overflowing. Coming from the right it is slung over the left shoulder, as can be seen in pictures and statues, which we call togaed statues. The Emperor and the Romans wore the toga in times of peace but in times of war they wore the cloak. The proper measure of a toga is six ells. The emperor's trabea²³ is a kind of toga, purple and scarlet in color, which the emperors should wear during processions. Romulus²⁴ first invented it as a garment to distinguish kings. It is called trabea because it elevates the emperor and in past and future raises him to more lofty heights of honour and designates him as the sole ruler of all. The cloak of the emperor is a precious garment of scarlet, purple, and gold. It is a garment of war and it is because of future wars that the emperor wears it. The cloak resembles a "cyclas";²⁵ it is round and interwoven with purple.

The emperor should wear a shirt of very fine and white linen with a golden ornament. The golden border around its hem is one ell wide.

He should also have a scarlet tunic,²⁶ adorned with gold, gems and precious pearls at the shoulders, around the neck, the hem and the wrists, with 72 little bells and as many pomegranates around the hem.

The belt or girdle of the emperor should be made from gold and precious stones, with 72 little bells, shaped like pomegranate flowers and a subcinctorium²⁷ made in the same fashion. And on each end of the girdle a golden circle adorned with precious stones and pearls, having around its rim the motto: "Rome the head of the universe holds the reins of the orb of the world." In the middle of the circle should be a representation of the three regions of the world: Asia, Africa, Europe.

The dalmatic²⁸ of the emperor is interwoven with gold, with golden eagles and pearls in front and back and with 365 little golden bells attached to it.

²³ The trabea in late antique and medieval times was a narrow strip of fabric, similar to the priest's stole.

²⁴ Romulus, the mythical founder of Rome.

²⁵ The cyclas was a state garment for women with a wide border around its hem.

²⁶ The tunic hemmed with bells and pomegranates may have been modeled on garments worn by Aaron and his sons (Exod. 28: 33; 39: 44).

²⁷ A strip of cloth hanging from the belt, still a part of the papal costume.

²⁸ The dalmatic, an overtunic reaching down to the knees, is still part of the liturgical dress worn by the deacon and subdeacon during high mass.

The emperor's epiloricum²⁹ should be made with eagles and pearls in front and back.

The golden mantle of the emperor should have a golden zodiac, made from pearls and precious stones. On its fringes should sit 365 little golden bells shaped like pomegranate flowers and as many pomegranates.

He should also have golden stockings with four eagles made from pearls. The straps of the stockings should be of gold and precious stones and pearls, having 24 little golden bells made in the shape of pomegranate flowers.

The emperor's shoes should be made of gold, pearls and precious stones, on which should be fashioned eagles and lions and dragons.³⁰

The pallium and the mitre of the emperor. The emperor should have a pallium around his neck, and a mitre on his head, and also a golden necklace, armbands, bracelets and rings.

... The gloves of the sole ruler should be made from the brightest gold having Romulus and Scipio³¹ pictured with gold and gems and precious stones on one glove and Julius³² and Octavian³³ on the other.³⁴

Benzo of Alba to Henry IV: The Imperial Procession

Benzo of Alba, who wrote in the second half of the eleventh century, was another Italian of the imperial faction. His description of the Emperor's coronation is tinged with nostalgia. Dedicated to Henry IV,³⁵ it was written at the height of the investiture controversy and before Henry's late and schismatical coronation in 1089. His description contains details which seem to be derived from the ceremonial of earlier coronations, especially Henry III's in 1046. As an ardent admirer of the Saxon emperors he may have informed himself also about the particulars of previous coronations.

The procession of the Roman emperor is celebrated in this fashion: before him is carried the holy cross with the wood of the true cross and the lance of St. Maurice. Thereafter follow the ranks of bishops, abbots, priests, and innumerable clerics. ... Then the king, clad in the long linen

²⁹ A garment worn above the armor.

³⁰ Probably an allusion to Psalm 90: 13: "And thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon."

³¹ Probably Scipio Africanus Maior, Roman general and statesman (b. 236, d. 184 B.C.).

³² Gaius Julius Caesar.

³³ C. Octavius Augustus.

³⁴ *Graphia auree urbis Romae*, III, ed. P. E. Schramm, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio* (Leipzig-Berlin: G. B. Teubner, 1929), II, 68.

³⁵ Henry IV, German emperor (1065-1106). During his reign the investiture controversy reached its climax, and Henry, excommunicated by Pope Gregory VII, set up the antipope Clement III, who crowned him Roman Emperor in 1089.

tunic, studded with gold and gems of wonderful workmanship, awe-inspiring in golden shoes, girt with a sword, wearing the gold-embroidered cloak made of a golden fleece, the imperial garment, having his hands sheathed in linen gloves with the pontifical ring, his head glorified by the imperial diadem.

Carrying in his left hand the golden apple which signifies the rule over all kingdoms, in his right, the imperial scepter like Julius,³⁶ Octavian³⁷ and Tiberius³⁸ supported on one side by the Pope and on the other side by the archbishop of Milan, with dukes, markgraves and counts on both sides, and rows of other princes.

No human tongue can describe like honour and glory.

Thus the emperor walks in procession. ... After a short interval, the emperor changes into a green cloak with a white mitre over which sits the crown of the patricius,³⁹ and so he goes to vespers.⁴⁰

Imperial Largesse

The Saxon emperors as well as their successors made rich gifts to churches and monasteries throughout the Empire and also beyond its boundaries. These gifts consisted often of goldsmith work, jewelry, illuminated manuscripts, or costly garments. They were often objects which had either been used or commissioned by the emperor. Many of them bore the imprint of imperial taste. The workshops favoured by Otto III and Henry II were much influenced by Byzantine models of the late tenth century, a period which must also have shaped the personal style of Otto II and Otto III, as well as the ceremonies of their courts. Costly, personal and distinctive, such gifts were well suited to suggest a special link of loyalty between donor and recipient.

Leo of Ostia: Henry II's Gifts to Monte Cassino

Henry II visited Monte Cassino in 1022 in order to secure the election of an abbot favorable to the imperial party. He was successful, and in return showered the abbey with generous gifts. Among them was a

³⁶ Gaius Julius Caesar.

³⁷ C. Octavius Augustus.

³⁸ Tiberius, Roman Emperor (19-37), Augustus' stepson and successor.

³⁹ Patricius, originally a personal title, first bestowed by Constantine the Great. Charlemagne, his father, and his grandfather received the title from the Pope. It was revived by Otto III (983-1002).

⁴⁰ *Benzonis episcopi ad Henricum IV*, I, 9, ed. K. Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores in Folio*, XI (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1854), 602.

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