CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE INVESTITURE QUESTION (1058–1122)

Introduction

Although entitled the ‘Investiture Contest’, the issue of investiture was actually a topic of controversy only in the early and late parts of the Contest.¹ Brooke once remarked that ‘one contest ended in 1106 and another, a different one, began.’² Overshadowed by other reforming issues such as the battle against simony and married priests on the one hand, and suffering from the fierce struggle between the king and the pope regarding the issue of excommunication on the other, the question of investiture only emerged with force in the late period (1099–1122). Why was this? The freedom of the church was conceptualised early on in terms of independence from the imperial church system, so the investiture arrangement was perhaps the most important legal means for keeping the church within secular confines.³ Simony was acknowledged as being encouraged by the investiture arrangement early in the debate. Still, it took half a century of public discussion before the question was addressed in any great detail. A chronological overview serves to illustrate this point.

Humbert of Silva-Candida (c. 1058) was the only early writer to directly address the question of investiture. In the mid-period, investiture was only a secondary issue in the writings of Wenrich of Trier (c. 1080), Manegold of Lautenbach (c. 1084), Anselm of Lucca (c. 1084), Guido of Ferrara (c. 1086), and Deusdedit (1097). The exceptions to this general lack of interest are the writings of Ivo of Chartres, who produced an early solution to the problem (1097), and the false investiture privileges

² Brooke 1939: 5.
³ The idea of a unified Ottonian-Salian imperial church system has been widely attacked in recent years: it was no institutionalised system in the technical sense, and the cooperation was not limited to the Ottonian and Salian dynasties. See above, 1. The structural changes in the public sphere during the Investiture Contest.
that may have been produced by the royal chancery in the mid-1080s. In addition to Ivo, it is usually Guido who has been credited with initiating a new approach to the question, since he laid the foundation for the legal approach in the late-period discussions involving Sigebert of Gembloux (1103), Hugh of Fleury (1102–1105), the De investitura episcoporum (1109), Rangerius of Lucca (1110), the Orthodoxa defensio imperialis (1111), Bruno of Segni (1111), Placidus of Nonantula (1111), the Disputatio vel defensio Paschalis papae (c. 1116), Geoffrey of Vendôme (1119), and Hesso of Reims (1119).

Previous scholarship has offered quite a few tentative answers to why this was so. According to one view, the prohibition of lay investiture at the Roman synod in 1078 is the key, the ramifications of this only becoming apparent in the late period. Another view considers the late-period discussion to be a result of a pressing need to resolve the schism which had shaken the very foundations of Christianity for half a century. Thus, the question of investiture is thought to have re-emerged as the central issue in the late period because of its implications for the relationship between the two powers involved in the struggle. My own tentative answer shifts the focus to the growth in public discussion in the mid-period: in short, the discussion of the late period can be explained in terms of the transposition of the meta-theoretical aim of conflict solution into a discourse in which textualisation and intellectualisation led to an approach characterised by legal-formal abstraction. Nevertheless, this explanation does not rule out the importance of the stricter papal policy towards lay investiture in the 1080s, and the felt need for reconciliation in the period of transition in the 1090s. What it offers, however, is an opportunity to address not only the process of public-sphere formation and the effectuation of the ‘logic of public debate’ over a period of close to a century, but also to investigate the real effects of the public discussion.

1. The early- and mid-period discussions

The early-period discussion was heavily circumscribed by the question of simony (Guido of Arezzo, Peter Damian). Not even the only writer to consider systematically the relationship of the church to the secular power, the author of the De ordinando pontifice, took the time to discuss investiture. Perhaps this is not surprising since the official position with