

Crusades, could be begun, the Emperor died, at the age of twenty-eight, leaving as his successor a child of four.

The work of governing and defending the Empire ^{OTTO III.} had been too great for Otto II., and during the ⁹⁸³⁻¹⁰⁰² minority of Otto III. the imperial power was still further weakened. He was only fifteen when he took the reins of government into his own hands, but he pursued a policy quite his own. Educated by Churchmen and his Greek mother, he was filled with religious enthusiasm and love for the past. Not content with his father's policy of uniting more closely Italy and Germany, Otto III. dreamed of restoring the ancient greatness of Rome and making it once more the capital of the world. He put to death a second Crescentius who had made himself master of Rome, and built an imperial palace on the Aventine. By his appointments to the Papacy, first of his cousin Bruno, and then of his tutor Gerbert, the most learned man of the age, he did much to restore the dignity of the office. By his love for Italy and his imitation of the court ceremonial of Constantinople, he did much to alienate his German subjects. But in the midst of his lofty ambitions and visionary schemes he was seized with a sudden illness, and died at the early age of twenty-two. With Otto III., "the wonder of the world," as he was called by the monkish historians, the dynasty came to an end.

Henry II. (of Bavaria), who was elected as Otto's ^{HENRY II.} successor, pursued an entirely different policy. His ¹⁰⁰³⁻¹⁰²⁴ interests were centred in Germany, and his time was largely taken up with wars against Poland, where a strong Slavic power had been established. He too left