had no vassals of their own. Instead of relying on nobles and knights as agents of his
government, Otto and his successors relied on the Church, especially bishops, abbots,
and abbesses. As Otto extended his authority over the other tribal duchies, he made the
clergy of these regions into loyal supporters of the emperor. They were well born and
well educated; they were likely to be less self-interested than were lay nobles (who had
legitimate children whose interests and inheritances had to be protected); they often
owed their appointments to Otto’s influence; and they held estates from Otto for which
they had to render military service. They were, in short, ideal royal officials: loyal, com-
petent, and devoted to the success of the emperor.

Map 5.5  The Holy Roman Empire, 962  When Otto I was crowned emperor
in 962, he controlled not only the traditional five tribal duchies of East Francia but
also a variety of border states (or “marches”) and several associated states, such as
the Kingdom of Burgundy. Before he died, he expanded his territory still more,
pushing so far into the Italian peninsula that his authority extended to Rome and
beyond.