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# Boniface VIII and Philip IV: Conflict Between Church and State

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Senior Seminar  
(HST 499W)

June 6, 2008

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During the middle ages there were conflicts between church and state. From 1294-1303 Boniface VIII and Philip the IV, king of France had such an issue. The issue between the two men was of external and internal authority beginning in 1296 when Boniface asked all secular rulers to ask his permission first before taxing clergy in their lands. Neither Philip nor Boniface wanted to be controlled by the other, and they both wanted to have control over their realm, which is where the problem existed. Philip's realm is France, but the realm of Boniface consists of churches around the world and clergy, and all Christians, all of which happen to be in France as well as other parts of the world. It is for this reason that Boniface VIII has been criticized for an attempt to gain power and influence over secular rulers at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century; During Boniface VIII papacy, 1294-1303, he used the conflict with Philip, King of France, to expand the power of the Church, and protect the Church from secular rulers' influence.

Both, Philip King of France, and Boniface VIII felt that the other was attempting to gain control over their territory. Most of the primary sources are papal bulls that show Boniface was expanding on the power of the church and by doing so protecting the church. A papal bull is a papal proclamation, or a declaration from the pope to all of Christendom, secular ruler and commoner alike, which is to inform them all of a new church law. There is a difference of opinion concerning what Boniface VIII was truly doing by sending the bulls to Philip. Some historians feel Boniface VIII asserted dominance over Philip with the decrees of the bulls, and in doing so over all secular rulers. Others believe Philip put the Church in its rightful place, under the power of the

state, or secular rulers. The one common denominator is that the conflict was about power, and neither one wanted to lose their power over the masses.

The key to finding out the truth lies in the bulls Boniface VIII sent to Philip, and declared to all of Christendom. Each bull that Boniface VIII sent was a response to something that Philip did. The first bull Boniface decrees, Clericis Laicos, was the response from Boniface VIII to Philip for taxing the Church lands in France, which marked the beginning of the problem between the Church and France. The consequences of Clericis Laicos lead to the next bull that Boniface sent, Esti de Statu, in the following year 1297. This bull was more or less a concession from Boniface to Philip as a sign of good faith, where Boniface gives secular rulers some decision making abilities on taxing the churches. Boniface VIII was also dealing with some internal problems during 1297 as well, which posed more of a threat to the church and his papacy than Philip did. The next bull is a different bull than the two previous bulls sent by Boniface, it is a private bull called Ausculta Fili sent in 1301. This bull is a personal message sent only to Philip where Boniface tries to show concern for Philip, and some of the advice he receives. The last bull to be decreed was Unam Sanctam in 1302, and it was with this bull more controversy arose surrounding the true intentions of Boniface. There is another primary source that will be discussed but it is not a papal bull, it is charges of heresy brought upon Boniface VIII by Philip who instructed William of Plasains, a royal minister who was apart of Philip's court, to write up formal charges against Boniface. The charges of heresy, sent in 1303, led to Philip sending William de Nogaret, Philip's Royal minister, and mercenaries to go and arrest Boniface VIII.

What is just as important is looking at what caused the need for the bulls. So, it is important to begin before the bull Clericis Laicos was sent, and in doing so it will be clear that Boniface VIII has been treated unfairly by historians, and was not attempting to overpower all secular rulers, but simply protecting the Church.

In 1296 Philip IV of France, and Edward I of England were about to go to war over the duchy of Gascony. Both were in need of funds and an additional source of money would be to tax the clergy in their lands. However, “Ecclesiastical law insisted that secular rulers should not tax ecclesiastical revenues without clerical consent.”<sup>1</sup> Boniface VIII could not allow this taxation to go on any further because neither Edward or Philip had asked permission and Boniface VIII had hoped that by cutting off a good part of these funds that the war would end.

In 1296 Boniface VIII issued the bull Clericis Laicos. In Brian Tierney’s book *The Crisis of Church and State 1050-1300* he provides a translated copy of the bull. The bull begins by stating, “That laymen have been very hostile to the clergy antiquity relates; and it is clearly proved by the experiences of the present time.”<sup>2</sup> Boniface continues on by backing what he says and also begins to expand on the existing law, “we regret to say, some prelates of the churches and ecclesiastical persons, fearing where there should be no fear, seeking a temporary peace, fearing more to offend the temporal majesty than the eternal, acquiesce in such abuses, not so much rashly as improvidently, without obtaining

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<sup>1</sup> R.W. Southern, *Western Society and The Church in the Middle Ages*, (Grand Rapids, Mich: Erdmans, 1970), pg. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State 1050-1300*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964), pg. 175.

authority or license from the Apostolic See.”<sup>3</sup>This bull was a reminder to the King of France, but even more importantly to all secular rulers, that secular rulers must first obtain the right from the clergy to tax the clergy in the secular rulers’ realm, and furthermore that some of the clergy in these realms are fearful of what may happen to them if they do not pay. As the bull clearly states the secular rulers must now receive papal authority to begin taxing the clergy in their lands. The bull also issues warning to “any prelates and ecclesiastical persons...who shall pay or promise or agree to pay to lay persons...without the authority of the same see: And also whatsoever emperors, kings, or princes, dukes, earls, or barons, powers, captains, or officials, or rectors...who shall impose, exact, or receive...by this same should incur sentence of excommunication.”<sup>4</sup> The bull is clear that Boniface VIII will also lay down the consequence of excommunication to anyone who does not follow this reinforced law, which includes secular rulers and even ecclesiastical persons. However, according to T.S.R. Boase, “it was not as aggressive a move as is often represented.”<sup>5</sup> There is nothing to say to the contrary, that Boniface VIII showed any aggression when he decreed the bull.

Philip IV did not like this arrangement set up by Boniface at all for he thought, along with his advisors, that it was infringing on temporal matters. “As for spiritual matters...he [Philip] was inclined...humbly to receive the warnings of the Holy See as a

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<sup>3</sup> Tierney, pg 175.

<sup>4</sup> Tierney, pg. 176.

<sup>5</sup> T.S.R. Boase, *Boniface VIII*, (London, Constable, 1933), pg. 138.

true son of the church.”<sup>6</sup> Philip probably considered the “warning” but as stated previously Philip saw this as a temporal affair and, in response to this temporal matter as he saw it, stopped the export of gold and silver, or any other form of currency from France. This reaction by Philip cut off revenue to the papacy in Rome. The papacy relied heavily on the monetary gain that came from France. The Pope held out as long as he could but the amount of money the papacy was losing was too much and finally Boniface gave into the Philip.

In 1297 Boniface VIII issued another bull, the Etsi de Statu. Again from the book by Brian Tierney, he provides a translated copy of the bull, which states, “that if some dangerous emergency should threaten the aforesaid King or his successors in connection with the general or particular defense of the realm, the above mentioned decree shall by no means extend to such a case of necessity.”<sup>7</sup> This bull gave the secular rulers the ability to tax the churches in their land in cases of emergency without papal authority. The bull went one step further by stating “a state of necessity may be left to the consciences of the aforesaid king and his successors.”<sup>8</sup> The bull was clearly stating the secular rulers would now decide when a state of emergency was. For Philip, a victory had just been won.

At the same time that Boniface was trying to smooth things out with Philip, Boniface was also dealing with the Colona Cardinals. The Colona family had members that were apart of the church, and had influence within the church as well being apart of

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<sup>6</sup> Edgar Boutaric, “The Importance of Italian Affairs” In *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII: state v. papacy* ed. By C.T. Wood, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), pg. 31.

<sup>7</sup> Tierney, pg 178.

<sup>8</sup> Tierney, pg. 179.

the College of Cardinals. The issue the Colona had with Boniface began shortly after he was elected pope. Before Boniface was elected pope, the previous pope Celestine V had abdicated the papacy leaving it empty. So the Colona voted for Benedict Gaetani, who became Boniface VIII, who also had some good relations with another family the Orsini who also voted for him. Boniface was on good terms with the Colona, but “Something in that first year of his rule changed their attitude towards him and made them the centre of all...discontent.”<sup>9</sup> According to Boase Boniface was showing more favor upon the Orsini, which no source clearly provided why. What ever the reason the Colona were obviously betrayed and in 1296 the Colona had been in correspondence with Philip and his court, which would mean Philip was supporting their actions, and at the same time still holding exports from leaving. The Colona decided to challenge the appointment of Boniface VIII to pope. Celestine V had abdicated the papacy, which had never been done before so the Colona first brought up this argument in a legal setting. The College of Paris discussed the issue of abdicating the papacy heavily, but to no avail for the Colona. The Colona then battled Boniface VIII until 1299, but again Boniface VIII managed a victory, and took some of the Colona’s land and poured salt over the ground, which would make the ground unable to grow crops. Boniface might have allowed secular rulers to decide when a state of emergency is and then go forward and tax the church, but he still managed to protect the church from any outside influence.

The problem is not who is right in this case, the question is what is right. The King of France and the King of England were both at war against one another. Boniface

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<sup>9</sup> Boase, pg. 164.



simply found a way to cut off some of these funds. Also, Church law clearly stated that permission must be asked of to tax church lands. In this case Pope Boniface VIII was not at all out of line by telling Philip, or any other secular ruler, to ask for permission, while at the same time explaining the consequences, which would end in excommunication.

The bull itself was not aimed directly at Philip but all secular rulers, for the bull never mentioned a ruler by name, and it also made a warning towards any ecclesiastical persons. It would appear that Philip was the only one with a problem, because he was the only one who did in anything in response. “His quarrel [Philip’s] with Boniface VIII was to establish the limits of the pope’s authority and keep it in just bounds.”<sup>10</sup> It is clear that Philip was the one who wanted complete control, and not Boniface. Philip refused to listen or comply with the bull, and he made the following protest, “That the temporal government of his kingdom pertained to him alone, that he did not recognize any superior in this matter, that he would never submit to any living soul in this regard.”<sup>11</sup> This clearly shows the state of mind of Philip, and this statement shows his disregard for the church hierarchy, which is a problem for a “true son of the Church.”<sup>12</sup> Boniface was making sure clergy along with secular rulers followed the laws of the church as it pertains towards spiritual, or church, affairs.

Boniface VIII was attempting to regain some papal authority, by simply enforcing what was already law, and the decree of the bull Clericis Laicos or any other bull is completely within the pope’s rights. “Elsewhere the taxing of the clergy was left largely

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<sup>10</sup> Boutaric, pg29.

<sup>11</sup> Boutaric, pg31.

<sup>12</sup> Boutaric, pg. 31.

to Boniface.”<sup>13</sup> It is clear that Philip was adamant in showing how much power he had, and he was willing to do anything to control the church. Boniface VIII however had not shown all his power and it will be seen through papal doctrine of final sovereignty which “is not yet the one issue proclaimed above all others.”<sup>14</sup> This we will see during the second struggle between these two men with the bull Unam Sanctam.

After Philip stopped the export of materials the church was losing money. Boniface VIII gave into Philip and issued a new bull Etsi de Statu in 1297 a year after the bull Clericis Laicos, declaring that the king could tax the clergy at will if a declaration of emergency was made involving the defense of the realm, but it was up to the King and not the Pope when that state of emergency existed. To show even more affection Boniface canonized Louis IX, Philip’s Grandfather, in 1297. It would seem that Philip had beaten the Church, and earned an enjoyable victory. At the same time Boniface was dealing with Philip and his holding of exportation of goods, Boniface was also dealing with the family Colona. Boniface VIII had a choice to make; one, continue holding out with Philip, or two, end the feud with Philip and use the remaining money in the treasury to put an end to the Colona. The choice was made and Boniface VIII did wind up ending the campaign the Colona set against him in 1299, but it came with a price and as was stated before Philip won a victory over the church and the pope, and it did affect the pope by putting him in a somber state. The choice however is an interesting one. Boniface made a choice to protect the church from enemies who attempted to remove Boniface, and he did not continue his feud with Philip but ended it peacefully. Around the time that

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<sup>13</sup> Boase, pg. 154.

<sup>14</sup> Boase, pg. 142.

Boniface VIII had beaten the Colona he was growing ill. However, all that would change when the year 1300 came around.

In the year 1300, Boniface declared that year a year of Jubilee. This year was a welcomed one for Boniface having just dealt with the Colona and there attempt to dispose of him. In an article written by Philip Hughes “The Papacy Renews Its Strength” in *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII* ed. by C.T. Wood, Hughes wants to clarify that Boniface VIII was doing what was a God given right, concerning the Jubilee of 1300, and that his actions were justifiable so to preserve the integrity of his office. It was merely a way to show the strength of the church, and keep the strength but also rejuvenate his physical strength as well. However, in another article written by Felix Rocquain “Two Hostile Sovereigns at the Brink” he views the year of the Jubilee in a different light. He feels that by declaring 1300 a year of jubilee that in some way it re opens the wound between the two men, Philip and Boniface. There is a lack of primary source material concerning the year of jubilee, however this is a turning point for Boniface because it helps him to remember why he argued against Celestine V, and it also helps Boniface to remember his calling to be head of the church, and it is these two reasons that help refocus Boniface’s intentions of defending the church by strengthening it.

Hughes points out that it was the pilgrims, and not Boniface VIII, who were traveling to Rome that believed a man’s sins could be forgiven every one-hundred years by an act of Divine Mercy, but Boniface VIII’s opponents would argue that he created this idea in an attempt to gain power over all of Christendom and remind everyone he is above the secular rulers in the great hierarchy of the church. Hughes quotes Boniface

from a bull, there was no title of it, issued that year, “to all who, being truly penitent, and confessing their sins, shall reverently visit these Basilicas [of St. Peter and St. Paul] in the present year 1300...and in each succeeding hundredth year, not only a full and copious, but the most full pardon of all their sins.”<sup>15</sup> With the myth the pilgrims had and this proclamation by Boniface an estimated 200,000 pilgrims made it to Rome in that same year. Hughes also claims that the Jubilee of 1300 actually recalled to Boniface VIII’s first duty to be father and shepherd of all Christian souls, which meant that he must attend to any sheep in the flock, which would mean holding accountable even a king, if it were necessary. Before Boniface VIII became pope he made a case against Pope Celestine V that Celestine was too weak to defend the Church’s freedom against the secular rulers and that he bows to their will, however Boniface had the misfortune of also showing weakness to the secular rulers when he had given into Philip IV with the bull Esti de Statu, which gave the secular rulers the ability to tax the church in cases of emergency, and it also gave the secular rulers the decision when the state of emergency was. It was this revelation that Boniface realized he was not living up to the standards he held Celestine V to, and that he must take action to correct his wrong.

In Rocquain’s article he attempts to show that Boniface VIII was the reason for the quarrel to start up again, and Rocquain uses a letter written by Boniface VIII to help his point, “The Roman Pontiff, established by God above kings and kingdoms, is chief sovereign of the hierarchy in the Church Militant; seated on the throne of justice and

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<sup>15</sup> Philip Hughes, “The Papacy Renews Its Strength”, In *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII: state v. papacy*, ed. By Charles T. Wood, (Huntington, NY: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1976), pg. 54.

placed by his dignity above all mortals, he pronounces his sentences with a tranquil soul and scatters all evils with his glance”<sup>16</sup> However Rocquain gives no evidence of who Boniface sent this letter to or what the letter was pertaining to. Still, this view of Boniface’s thoughts mixed with a renewed strength of the church gives the impression to Rocquain that Boniface VIII was the instigator of the second part of the conflict between Philip and Boniface. However, Rocquain also writes that, “The quarrel began on the occasion of a legal action brought by the monarch against Bernard Saisset, bishop of Pamiers.”<sup>17</sup> Rocquain then mentions that under ecclesiastical law “no bishop could be judged by secular courts”<sup>18</sup> Even though Rocquain would like us to believe that Boniface VIII instigated the second quarrel with Philip it is clear that through Rocquain’s own proof Philip was the instigator by arresting and placing on trial the bishop of Pamiers, which means that Philip again concisely defied what was already church law.

In the year of the Jubilee, it would seem Boniface VIII was full of renewed strength remembering he must hold all men accountable for their sins, even secular rulers, and also not back down from them, which was his case against Celestine V. This is clearly seen from both Hughes and Rocquain. Both authors point out that Boniface VIII is arguing with Philip, but they both have different views on who started the conflict. For Rocquain Boniface started the conflict back up by merely having the jubilee in an attempt to show how much power the pope has over Christians of all lands. Hughes on

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<sup>16</sup> Felix Rocquain, “Two Hostile Sovereigns at the Brink”, In *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII: state v. papacy*, ed. Charles T. Wood, (Huntington, NY: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1976), pg. 42.

<sup>17</sup> Rocquain, pg. 42.

<sup>18</sup> Rocquain, pg. 49.

the other hand points out that it was not until the arrest of the bishop when the conflict started again, which would be Philip's doing. Boniface VIII's first duty as pope was the sole leader of the flock of Christendom and it would be up to him if they made it to heaven and not a king. Philip's taxation and usurpation of his jurisdiction was seen as sinful to Boniface and must not go unpunished. Boniface again decided to inform the church in France to stop paying taxes to the state. When Philip responded with an arrest of the Bishop of Pamiers shortly after Boniface's actions it is clear that Philip is attempting to show the power he thinks he has over spiritual matters, and also according to Hughes this scene is what put a break in the relationship between Rome and France.

This time of the jubilee and before the bull Ausculda Fili in 1301, was a tide changing time. Up to this point Boniface had suffered a loss that showed weakness of the pope and the church's power. This was an incredibly timed event for Boniface VIII to feel rejuvenated, and when Philip again overstepped his bounds by arresting the bishop and holding trial against him, Boniface VIII must once again hold Philip accountable for his illegal actions against the church.

After the Jubilee in 1300 Boniface VIII sends to Philip the Bull Ausculda Fili in 1301, which is a private bull sent only to the king of France, and was most likely read by his advisors as well. Boniface sent the bull in response to the arrest and trial of the Bishop of Pamiers, Bernard Saisset by Philip. It was already church law that Bishops could not be tried by a temporal court, but only by the pope himself. The Ausculda Fili "tells him [Philip] that his sins, as a catholic ruler oppressing the rights of the Church, are

notorious and a bad example to all Christendom.”<sup>19</sup> Boniface is simply telling Philip that he is defying the church and to do so is to defy God and his law. The bull also happens to restate what the bull Clericis Laicos stated, informing Philip that there is taxation going on that should not be happening, and that he is debasing coinage, the bull also is claiming that Philip’s advisors are oppressing his secular subjects. Boniface also advises Philip against his councilors because he fears that they may be leading Philip away from the church. Also the pope urges Philip to appear in a coming council where Boniface has already asked for the bishops in France to attend as well, but if he does not business will continue as usual. The bull is believed to have been burned before anyone else could have the opportunity to read the bull or make it public.

Brian Tierney, in *The Crisis of Church and State 1050-1300*, provides a translated copy of the bull, and the bull was more of a personal warning for the King of France from the advice he is receiving. “take into your heart the warning of holy mother church and be secure to act on it with good effect so that with a contrite heart you may reverently return to God from whom, as is known, you have turned away through negligence or evil council and conform yourself to His will and ours.”<sup>20</sup> The pope is concerned that Philip is being led astray from the church by his advisors, which is a big deal for Boniface VIII because he sees himself as the shepherd of the flock, which he remembered was his first duty as pope thanks in part to the jubilee of 1300, and to lose one of his sheep to influences from outside the church would mean Boniface is not doing his job as a protector of the church and of all Christians. This question of poor counseling for Philip

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<sup>19</sup> Hughes, pg. 56.

<sup>20</sup> Tierney, pg 185.

is a main theme in the bull Ausculda Fili. The main reason for sending this bull directly to Philip was because of the arrest of the Bishop of Pamiers by Philip. Boniface informs Philip that no one has the right to judge a man of the church. “You drag before your tribunal prelates and other clerics of your kingdom...you cause them to be detained and inquests to be held although no power over clerics or ecclesiastical persons is conceded to laymen.”<sup>21</sup> Boniface VIII was trying to inform Philip that he was being misled in guidance, and that it should have been known that the pope was the only one to judge clergy. In this case Philip is showing how he has authority over all matters. Two other passages from the bull Ausculda Fili drive home the point of who should be counseling the King. Boniface states that “God has set us over kings and kingdoms.”<sup>22</sup> This passage, as simple as it looks, pounds home the fact that the pope is the shepherd of the flock and he is above temporal powers because God has made it so. The next passage continues the same theme but a little stronger tone to it, “let no one persuade you that you have no superior...and whoever affirms it pertinaciously is convicted as an unbeliever and is outside the fold of the good shepherd.”<sup>23</sup> Boniface is trying to show Philip how much he cares for him by explaining to him that when it comes to matters of the church and clergy, the advice of the pope should be sought after, and that he, Philip, must be careful who’s advice he seeks because it might be a person who is a non believer and would try to lead him down the wrong path. Boniface cares about Philip’s soul otherwise he would not warn Philip with a personal message to him, and Boniface does not want to

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<sup>21</sup> Tierney, pg. 186.

<sup>22</sup> Tierney, pg. 186.

<sup>23</sup> Tierney, pg. 186.



see him fall away from the church, which can be seen by his concern for the advisors Philip has who are as he stated in the bull “outside the fold of the good shepherd.”<sup>24</sup> Those convincing Philip otherwise are non believers and mean nothing to Boniface, because again all he cares about is Philip and the rest of the Christians in France.

The bull is very forward mainly because it was a private bull that Boniface never made public, but it does not demand that Philip obey everything, just listen and talk out all the issues that had risen up until that time. Unfortunately the bull was burned, by who no one really knows, but the councilors of Philip put together forgeries of bulls that made it seem as if Boniface wanted complete control over temporal as well as spiritual matters. Also these forgeries made it very easy for Philip and his advisors to have all of France on his side. It is clear that Philip and his court were the ones looking for any reason to take advantage of the pope and gain more authority over the church, or in other words control both temporal and spiritual powers. It appears as well that Philip might have been feeling good about his chances to tell the church what he wanted done because he did before, with Clericis Laicos, and the church obeyed. This had been a main point against Boniface VIII, that he wanted control over both powers, but it simply was not the case. Boniface VIII was privately asking Philip to listen to reason, and talk with him so both men could come to an understanding, but it was Philip that continued and escalated the fight.

After the bull Ausculat Fili was sent to Philip, Boniface called a meeting including all bishops, monks, and all other clergymen of France to Rome. Philip denied

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<sup>24</sup> Tierney, pg. 186.

the clergy from going and less than half of the bishops of France attended the meeting in Rome. Boniface VIII responds back to Philip with his last bull Unam Sanctam in 1302. It should be noted that Boniface's intentions are not as clear as they have been with previous bulls. The main thought is the bull is aimed at secular rulers, which makes a great deal of sense but Tierney makes a case that Boniface was directing the bull towards the bishops of France who did not attend the meeting. The reasoning behind Tierney's opinion was the fact that more than half of the bishops of France did not obey the head of the church. This bull declares that the papal authority is stronger and higher than the temporal authority, and for bishops to not obey the highest authority in the church, demands Boniface to act.

T.S.R. Boase said this about the bull, "It is a careful statement of the claims of the papacy to final sovereignty, and bases the claim on the divine origin of that power."<sup>25</sup> The bull also explains the power of the church and the church hierarchy by discussing the two swords; the temporal sword and Spiritual sword. The secular rulers of the world, or the Kings and Queens, are the temporal sword and the Spiritual sword is the papacy, or the head of the Church. Jean Riviere explains in "Boniface's Theological Conservatism" that this about the two swords, "one is used by the Church, the other for the Church; that is, the temporal authority is in the hands of the princes, but always at the

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<sup>25</sup> T.S.R. Boase, "The Pope's Political Dynamite", In *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII: state v. papacy*, ed. By C.T. Wood, (Huntington, NY: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1976), pg. 56.

service of ecclesiastical authority and under its exalted direction.”<sup>26</sup> Boniface uses this in the bull to illustrate the hierarchy, “The one sword, however, must be under the other and the temporal authority subjected to the spiritual power.”<sup>27</sup> Boniface VIII opens the bull with this phrase, “[There is one holy Catholic and apostolic church that we are bound to recognize. Outside of it there is neither salvation nor pardon for sins.]”<sup>28</sup> Boniface VIII is not making any plans to compromise with Philip. He wants Philip to realize that without the church there is no supreme authority, or any other way to heaven for that matter. Boniface VIII is also saying there is not a way to a better life outside the church, and more importantly that there is only one church, and it must be followed. There is only one way to go to heaven and be saved and that is to be apart of the church. Those outside of the church have chosen to not be part of the flock, so the shepherd, in this case Boniface, is not responsible for those people.

The bull also explains that the pope has been given the right of “final sovereignty”<sup>29</sup> which was given to Christ and he gave that power to St. Peter and in doing so Christ gave the right to all the other popes that followed after St. Peter. The pope is and will always remain the Vicar of Christ. “Christ is continued in the person of his vicar: Boniface therefore returns to Peter, and to his successors, to strengthen him in his role as chief.”<sup>30</sup> Boniface is explaining that through St. Peter he was chosen by God to

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<sup>26</sup> Jean Riviere, “Boniface’s Theological Conservatism”, In *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII: state v. papacy*, ed. By C.T. Wood, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), pg.61.

<sup>27</sup> Riviere, pg. 61.

<sup>28</sup> Boase, pg. 57.

<sup>29</sup> Boase, pg. 56.

<sup>30</sup> Riviere, pg. 60.

lead the flock, and is in charge of making sure they make their way to heaven and hold those accountable for their sins, but what this also shows is the hierarchy of the church; God, then Christ, then Pope. The pope is connected to Christ, the head of the church, and this shows how much more powerful he is than any other leader in the world. In doing this it made him as powerful as Kings and Queens because they also had a divine right to rule, but showing a trail leading down from Christ would put the pope ahead of the secular rulers. Boniface wanted to make absolutely sure that his point came across, that the temporal power is beneath the spiritual power.

Boniface VIII faced consequences after issuing this decree of course, but what he said and how he said it really solidified his power, and nothing shows us better than this, “It is entirely necessary for salvation...to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.”<sup>31</sup> Boniface had already laid down that the spiritual sword was above the temporal sword in the hierarchy of the ecclesiastical law, and now he is reinforcing the implication that only through the pope are you able to make your way to heaven, you must be obedient to the church to find salvation.

In 1303 Philip responded with great authority by having Boniface brought up on charges of heresy. Philip put William de Nogaret in charge of the process, but had William of Plaisians write up the formal charges. William de Nogaret was the king's new minister, and William of Plaisians was a royal minister. As the charges were being written Philip sent de Nogaret to Rome on business, otherwise de Nogaret would have written the charges. The charges are in the book *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII: state*

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<sup>31</sup> Riviere, pg. 59.

v. *papacy* which is a translated copy of what William of Plaisians wrote. The charges show a wide variety of offenses Philip had towards Boniface. The numbers are in correspondence of the charge. 7. “He has often said that if nothing else could be done to humble the king and the French, he would ruin himself, the whole world, and the whole church.”<sup>32</sup> 10. “He has a private demon whose advice he follows in all things, and this is publicly known.”<sup>33</sup> 11. “He is a soothsayer who consults diviners and oracles. And all this is publicly known.”<sup>34</sup> 15. “He is a Sodomite and keeps concubines. And this is publicly known.”<sup>35</sup> 21. “Seeking to destroy the faith, he has long harbored an aversion against the king of France...because in France there is and ever was the splendor of the faith, the grand support and example of Christendom.”<sup>36</sup> 23. “It is notorious that the Holy Land has been lost as a result of his sins.”<sup>37</sup> 29. “It is notorious that he seeks not the salvation of souls, but their perdition.”<sup>38</sup> It was with these charges that William de Nogaret, with mercenaries; who was already in Rome went and arrested Boniface VIII. Not long after Nogaret seized Boniface he passed away in 1303 before he was put on trial. This was a very well calculated move on the part of Philip.

Boniface VIII was not aiming this bull at Philip, for no where in the bull does he specifically address Philip or any other secular ruler. He declares the bull, like all

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<sup>32</sup> William of Plaisians, “Charges of Heresy Against Boniface VIII”, In *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII: state v. papacy* ed. Charles T. Wood, (Huntington, NY: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1976), pg. 64.

<sup>33</sup> Plaisians, pg. 64.

<sup>34</sup> Plaisians, pg. 65.

<sup>35</sup> Plaisians, pg. 65.

<sup>36</sup> Plaisians, pg. 65.

<sup>37</sup> Plaisians, pg. 65.

<sup>38</sup> Plaisians, pg. 65.

previous bulls, to every secular ruler and all of Christendom. There is also the other possibility that Boniface VIII was not writing to Philip at all, or any secular ruler for that matter, but instead to the clergy that did not come to the meeting in Rome. The bishops who did not attend the meeting obeyed the King and not the pope, which goes against what the church stands for. The pope was trying to show these clergy men who they serve, God or Philip. For if it is Philip they have clearly lost their way, and if they believe it is God they serve then they must obey the pope in all matters for the temporal sword is there to be used by the Spiritual sword. “The pope may well have realized that the direct conflict in the commands that he and Philip had issued to the French prelates had in fact raised the issue of the unity of the church in a particularly serious fashion.”<sup>39</sup> Tierney’s explanation of the bull is the most logical explanation of the bull. Boniface VIII had just called a meeting and less than half of the French bishops had come, and it was shortly after this council that the bull was decreed by Boniface VIII. It is with the bull Unam Sanctam that Boniface was strengthening the church by making sure all clergy follow church law. It was just as important that he make very clearly what the hierarchy of the church is, which is why Boniface continually restates that the temporal sword is below the Spiritual sword.

The charges of heresy brought forth against Boniface do bring up questions. However there does not seem to be any evidence supporting these charges or the ones not mentioned here. It would appear in light of any evidence that these were conjured up so Philip and his ministers and other members of his court could have a legal leg to stand on

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<sup>39</sup> Tierney, pg. 183.

when they went to arrest Boniface. After William de Nogaret arrested Boniface they headed back to put him on trial, but Boniface died on the trip back in 1303.

It was, and is for future historians, imperative to analyze the bulls created by Boniface in any attempt to decide what Boniface was truly saying. Boniface VIII was protecting the church by expanding on the power the church already had. It is clear with the Clericis Laicos that Boniface wanted to make sure that the law was being followed and that he wanted secular rulers to ask his permission from that point forward. For Philip to strongly object to this bull does not make sense because Boniface only changed who you must ask permission of. Boniface in no way attempted to gain control over secular rulers by issuing this bull, he only wanted them to follow the law of the church if they wanted to tax the church in their lands. It was Boase who even stated that the bull was not as aggressive as it has been presented as being through history. Boniface was simply instructing secular rulers to ask his permission first before they tax the clergy.

When the bull Etsi de Statu was issued by Boniface, Philip saw this as a victory over the church, in fact in all the sources this was seen as a victory for Philip and a loss for Boniface. However it proves the point that Boniface was not attempting to gain control over secular matters otherwise he would have continued the stand off with Philip until he, Boniface, won. The decision proves that when Boniface decided to deal with the Colona, who were attempting to remove Boniface from the papacy, he was protecting the church. It was Edgar Boutaric that said that it was Philip who was establishing limits on the pope, which can be seen by Philip believing he gained a victory over the church and by doing so he could continue defying the church by continuing to tax, and in 1301

placed on trial a bishop which only a pope could judge a bishop. Boniface was simply establishing limits on those who tried to impose their will on the church, and in this case, specifically concerning the two bulls Clericis Laicos and Esti de Statu, the imposing will consisted of taxes.

After the troubling time dealing with Philip and his unwillingness to follow church law, and dealing with the Colona and their threat of taking the papacy from Boniface, the importance of the year of jubilee in 1300 helped to restore his faith. This does not mean that he lost his faith in God, but how he must handle those who feel above the law of the church. For during this year an estimated 200,000 pilgrims made their way to Rome to visit the Basilicas and have their sins forgiven. This had an impact on Boniface. It was Hughes who stated that the jubilee recalled to Boniface his duties as pope. He must be the leader of the flock, and that duty means to lead the flock in the right direction, and hold each one accountable for their sins. It was Philip who instigated the conflict between the two again; Hughes and Rocquain even agree that it was the arrest of the bishop of Pamiers that started the conflict up again. Yet Boniface is the one who is attempting to control all matters of the temporal and spiritual powers.

The difficulty with the bull Ausculat Fili is that it is a personal bull to Philip and because of that it does not come across as Boniface protecting the church directly. Philip at this time was a very powerful secular ruler, and Boniface knew that before the conflict began, so to challenge him in any way would be difficult. However, the church is only as strong as the power it wields. One of the church's powers is the power of the temporal sword it can wield. Boniface also knew that Philip was a devoted Catholic as he saw



himself as a “true son of the church”. Boniface concerned himself with Philip in this bull because of the advisor Philip had. Boniface felt that Philip was being misguided by his advisors, so Boniface had to intervene to make sure he was protecting a member of his flock, and by doing that Boniface was protecting the church and its power.

It is with the bull Unam Sanctam that most sources turn to show Boniface as attempting to gain control over secular rulers. It is defiantly true that Boniface describes in the bull how the temporal sword is beneath the Spiritual sword in all things, and that the temporal sword is there to be used when the Spiritual sword calls for it. Boniface also discusses the hierarchy of the church and how there is no other way to find salvation but through the church. It is Tierney that makes an excellent point that must be agreed with, that Boniface was actually referring to the bishops of France who did not attend the meeting he called because Philip forbid them to leave France. It was shortly after this meeting that Boniface sent the bull and it would make the most sense for him to be so aggressive in this bull because he might have been feeling worried that so many bishops would listen to a king and not the head of the church. Throughout this bull Boniface mentions many times in many ways the hierarchy of the church; as was stated earlier the temporal sword below the Spiritual sword, how through Christ the pope is the leader of the church, there is no way to salvation without the church, and because the pope is the Vicar of Christ he has “Final sovereignty”, and this final sovereignty was only given to the pope and no other. Even though Boniface is accused of attempting to overpower secular rulers he mentions none of them by name. Boniface might seem as if he wants complete authority over all matters, however he is more concerned that the church is

losing its way because his bishops are not listening to him. There is an old adage that says you are only as strong as your weakest link, and for Boniface to not have more than half of his bishops listen to him is a very weak link, and he needed to make sure very adamantly that he must be followed in all things spiritual.

The evidence presented Boniface VIII as being unfairly treated by those who disagree with him. The problem is some disagree with the authority of the Church which leads to a bias. Some of his critics are very tough on him, but easy on Philip the fair. One can argue that Philip should have known about the taxation needing acceptance of the clergy, but he knowingly failed to do so, and expected the Church to accept what he did. Saying that Boniface wanted more power is an unfair criticism considering that most if not all the secular rulers at that time were looking for ways to attain more power, for example Philip during this time one could argue that he was obtaining authority over the church. Keeping and maintaining power was all Boniface VIII was doing. Reminding Philip that the pope is the shepherd of the flock, which includes the secular rulers, was the way for Boniface VIII to maintain papal authority.

The other criticism would be about secular power versus temporal power, and whether or not they should have authority over one another, or basically should there be a separation between church and state. During that time however the Church was a massive influence over the world because of how many people they had in their ranks including secular rulers. With money comes taxes and that is where the problem lies. I again agree with the side of Boniface VIII and that he was simply protecting the Church

and standing up for himself by telling Philip that he has no right to tax the church without permission.

The last argument, that Boniface VIII has no right to tell the secular rulers what to do, but the secular rulers have a right to tell the spiritual power what to do. Again this is an unfair criticism, and I am in total agreement that what Boniface VIII did was just. This argument comes directly from those who believe that the Church has no part in temporal matters. I tend to think about the book by R.W. Southern. He believes there needs to be a balance between the two. Without the state the church will have an incredibly hard time passing the message to the followers of the church, and the church needs the secular rulers to protect all Christians and defend the church from its enemies.

Boniface has been criticized for an attempt to gain power and influence over secular rulers, which just is not true with the evidence presented. A case could be made that it was Philip who wanted complete control over both temporal and Spiritual powers. It is clear from the evidence that Boniface VIII used the conflict with Philip to achieve his true motives which were to expand the power of the Church, and protect the Church from secular rulers' influence.

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