THE SECOND UPRISING AT LAON AND ITS AFTERMATH, 1295–98*

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The commune at Laon, the constitution of which had been set down by Louis VI in a charter dated 26 August 1128.1 was, like other French communes, often known as the ‘peace’. Despite the establishment of the commune, who kept the peace at Laon, and who punished offenders against the peace, continued to be issues of fundamental importance, and, indeed, to many churchmen the very term commune signified disruption and violence. Louis’s charter clearly confirmed rather than initiated a communal movement. The first insurrection at Laon, the most bloody of the French communal revolts, which broke out on 25 April 1112 and which has achieved fame largely because of a detailed account given by Guibert de Nogent.2 followed an attempted communal pact. The uprising was marked by shouts of ‘Communia! Communia!’ and resulted in the brutal murder of Gaudry, bishop of Laon. Intense bitterness between the citizens and the church of Laon had been a major element in the emergence of the commune. And the bitterness lived on. Memory of the first insurrection was still in the minds of churchmen in 1295, when ‘Communia! Communia!’ was once again heard on the streets of Laon. The second uprising at Laon, which took place on Saturday and Sunday, 26 and 27 February 1295, has received, by contrast, very little attention.3 As a riot it was less dramatic

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1 A. Giry, Documents sur les relations de la royauté avec les villes en France de 1180 à 1314 (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1885), 14–19.
than its predecessor, more an affray than an insurrection. But it developed rapidly into a *cause célèbre*. The disturbances were not simply of local significance. The rising of the commune— for that is how the affray was portrayed—became a political matter for the newly appointed pope, Boniface VIII, and for the king of France, Philip the Fair: a sub-plot in the first stage of a Franco-papal dispute which was concerned in the main in 1295–97 with clerical taxation.

There are several accounts of the disturbances at Laon in late February 1295. While they are largely independent of each other, they are in no way contradictory. A notarial act (A) briefly records the dean of Laon’s recital of the events before the king on 6 March. 4 Two differently worded accounts (B and C) survive in undated letters from Robert de Torote, Bishop of Laon from 1286 to 1297. 5 A letter dated 5 May addressed to the pope from the cathedral churches of the province of Reims (D) described the affray and pleaded for papal assistance in the punishment of those responsible for the sacrilegious acts. 6 A similar but textually distinct account (E) is given in three papal letters, dated 30 August, sent to the king and to the Archbishop of Reims and the bishops and cathedral chapters of the province, and to the papal executors, the archdeacons of Orleans and Troyes, 7 and the same story was also repeated in a later papal bull. 8 Finally, the incidents are related in the decree (F) of the *parlement* of Paris which, in the name of the king, suppressed the work of the officials of the commune of Laon in March 1296. 9 These accounts can be brought together to provide a detailed narrative.

186, pp. 1249-72) is missing (loss pre-dates foliation of MS); Dom Bugniatre’s summary (BN, Pic. 190) suggests that Varoqueaux knew of no significant evidence that is now lost. Discussion in Saint-Denis, ‘Laon du xi° au xv° siècle’, is not based on new research.

4 BN, Pic. 284, no. 22 (original act from archive of dean and chapter of Laon).

5 BN, Lat. 4042, fo. 128v (B) provides first part of a letter to the pope almost certainly from the bishop. The bishop’s second letter (C), addressed to all priests of the city, survives in a formulary of the archbishop’s court: ed. P.-J. Varin, Archives législatives de la ville de Reims, i (Collection de documents inédits, Paris, 1840), 289–91 and T. M. J. Gousset, *Les actes de la province ecclésiastique de Reims* (Reims, 1842–44), ii. 436–7.


8 *Reg. Boniface*, no. 1533, and below, n. 28.

9 Exists in multiple copies, some noted in Giry, *Documents*, no. LIII.
On Saturday, 26 February (B and D) two noble men-at-arms (armigeri nobiles) of the diocese of Laon, John de Faucoucourt and John de Lanzous, who were in no way tainted by crime (D), had a fierce argument with the sub-mayor of the city, John de Semilly (C), which led to one of them punching the sub-mayor on the jaw and both of them being beaten up in the sub-mayor's home by his domestic servants (E). The two men were fearful of the reaction of the people of Laon and fled for safety to the cathedral. A clerk, Peter de Faucoucourt, brother of John, came to keep them company. They withdrew to a seemingly secure part of the church and at their request were assigned a place in the vaulted belfry (C and E) – no doubt in the tower abutting the west side of the south transept – where they spent the night. Meanwhile, on the Saturday and through the night and the early day-time of the Sunday, the citizens of Laon, furious against the cathedral, took careful counsel on the matter (D). During Saturday night and Sunday morning they surrounded the church and its cloister with a large guard; but the men-at-arms and the clerk did not leave the church (C). At the ninth hour, that is in mid-afternoon, the gates of the city were closed and the bells of the commune rang out. The citizens gathered in the streets chanting 'Communia! Communia!' (E and F) and, while nones was being celebrated in the cathedral, some of the jurés (jurati: sworn counsellors) and other powerful citizens responsible for governing the commune, along with a large body of men, some of whom were armed, invaded the church (D). They overcame the king's guard which had been specially placed in the church (A), and the divine office had to be abandoned as the attackers with great difficulty broke down the bolted doors to the belfry. Although they were opposed by the dean and chapter and by messengers of the king and of the cathedral treasurer (E and C), they dragged the men-at-arms and the clerk from their refuge, wounding them abominably and polluting many parts of the church with their blood, and thus violating the church and wickedly infringing its liberty and immunity (C). With their swords raised, chanting loudly, and followed by a large crowd, they dragged their captives by the hair and feet through the streets, beating them as they went. Having reached the house of the sub-mayor, where the initial dispute had taken place, they forced them to stand up, and there in front of the house the three men were ferociously attacked by anyone in the crowd who wished to join in. They were beaten up, pelted with stones, and wounded with sticks, knives, and swords (C, D and E). John and Peter de Faucoucourt were abandoned half-dead in the street, but John de Lanzous was put in the common gaol with notorious criminals where he continued to be persecuted, by the cutting of his tendons and his feet (scissis nervis et pedibus) (C). After a few days he died.

But what precisely was the offence of these men whom the citizens

\[10\] Names in Reg. Boniface, no. 2358 (below, n. 31), and Appendix.
of Laon so violently attacked? On this crucial matter the impressive array of official accounts is completely silent. Riots and rebellions against royal officials who were implementing unpopular financial policies were a common feature of the period, witness notably the riot at Rouen in 1292 concerning the imposition of a sales-tax or maltôte, but there is no indication that the tension at Laon was caused by the increased royal demands. The problems there arose mainly, if not entirely, from the deep hostility between the prosperous bourgeois community and both the bishop, to whom the mayor and officials of the commune swore allegiance, and also the solidly opulent and increasingly autonomous cathedral chapter. There were many jurisdictional conflicts through the century, including the 1290s. In June 1294 the mayor and jurés had been condemned by the king’s parlement because they had put in gaol a choral clerk of the cathedral, and between November 1294 and January 1295 a case was heard in parlement between the commune and the cathedral church, whose detailed complaints have survived in a letter of the bailli (bailiff) of Vermandois. The violence of late February probably resulted from these disputes. Urban tensions in many parts of Europe were often directly associated with ecclesiastical lordship. But the background to the affray cannot be our concern here. The dramatic events of 1295 rapidly developed into a political issue which highlighted and exacerbated the tense relations of king and pope.

The dean and chapter closed the cathedral, ceased from divine service and transferred the eucharist to another place (E) – apparently Bruyères, seven km to the south-east. The dean, Milo de Semur, with three canons, then travelled to Paris, and on 6 March at the Louvre, in the presence of many of the king’s council, informed the king of what had taken place (A). He made it clear that he was not acting on the mandate of the chapter of Laon and not making a formal accusation against anyone or instigating any kind of legal proceedings. His intention was simply to ensure that the king knew the truth and would not be deceived by false accusations. The churchmen were apparently intent upon dealing with the sacrilegious acts in their own way. Even so, the king cannot fail to have been deeply concerned, and as a result of information supplied by the dean and chapter he was to set up an inquiry. It was, however, a full twelve months after the affray that its results were to be issued (F).

13 Giry, Documents, no. L1.
14 BN, Pic. 284, no. 21.
15 AD Aisne, G1850, fos. 319v–321v.
The first action taken against the rebellious citizens appears to have been the excommunication of the ringleaders by the Official of the church of Laon. The bishop’s letter to the priests of the city (C) must have followed soon after. He declared that the deeds that had been perpetrated were so notorious and so heinous that they must be judged to have been the actions not simply of individual citizens but also of the whole community: for there had been a multitude of offenders, the bells of the commune had been rung, the gates of the city had been closed, there had been a public shouting of ‘Communia!’, one of the men-at-arms had been put in the common gaol, and the leading men of the community, who must have known what was happening, did nothing to prevent it. Indeed most of them were aiders and abettors. The bishop ordered the priests to summon the mayor, jurés, and community of Laon (majorem, juratos, et communitatem ville Laudunensis) to appear before him to hear his judgement upon them. A proctor of the community duly appeared before him, and in a further letter the bishop placed an interdict upon the community of Laon, condemning it to make amends to the church of Laon while reserving to his own judgement the extent of the amends.

While there was apparently no direct move to seek the assistance of the king, pleas for support were certainly sent to the pope. Only the first part of the bishop’s letter to Boniface VIII has survived (B), and the terms of his request are thus not known. The most important appeal came, no doubt, from the Dean and Chapter of Laon, though the nature of their petition has to be inferred from the papal letters that ensued. In a letter dated 5 May the cathedral chapters of the province of Reims (the chapters of Reims, Soissons, Beauvais, Cambrai, Noyon, Amiens, Arras, Châlons-sur-Marne, Tournai, Thérouanne, and Senlis) also pleaded with the pope, in the strongest possible terms (D). They pointed out that they and all the other churches of France could have much to fear from evil and hostile laymen (infести laici) if such damnable presumption remained unpunished; and the king (laicalis potestas) was seemingly in no hurry to punish the offenders. They asked Boniface to protect them and punish the villains. Their letter firmly set down what was a common contemporary and canonical model – the clergy on the one hand and the hostile laity, associated unavoidably with the royal power, on the other hand; it was to be the model with which Boniface’s famous declaration on taxation of February 1296 began: ‘Clericis laicos infestos’. The hostility of the laity, as perceived by some churchmen, had a wider context than royal taxation. The pope had no doubt learned from many quarters of the events at Laon, a major centre of papal as well as royal patronage. The cathedral treasurer was a cardinal, Peter Peregrasso da Milano, one of whose representatives had

17. Varin, Archives de Reims, i. 291–2.
been present at the time of the violation of the church (E). Peter died in
the summer of 1295 and the pope immediately appointed one of his own
nephews, Cardinal Francesco Gaetani, as treasurer of Laon.\textsuperscript{19} Laon’s
crisis was a matter of immediate importance in the papal curia.

Boniface VIII took action in a series of letters dated at Anagni on
30 August.\textsuperscript{20} In a bull which ended with the challenging statement that
the pope was prepared to proceed both spiritually and temporally
against the commune of Laon and certain individuals of the commune,
Boniface appointed the archdeacons of Orleans and Troyes as executors
of his mandates. By this bull the pope, as we shall see, set in motion
legal proceedings against the perpetrators of the attack. His action was
designed to support, but must in fact have superseded, the bishop’s
initiatives. In addition, Boniface wrote to all the suffragan bishops and
cathedral chapters of the province requesting that they help the church
of Laon to obtain satisfaction. And he also wrote in stinging terms to the
king, stating that Philip was so bound up with a great variety of
activities that were distracting him that the abominable transgressions
of the citizens of Laon were being ignored without any sign of the kind
of correction which the king ought to administer. One distraction was,
no doubt, the war against England. Boniface declared that the king
should assist the dean and chapter, with its new treasurer, by giving
support to any present or future ecclesiastical proceedings and sen­tences.
Recollecting that the commune had been granted to the citizens
by Louis VI and noting that the shouting of ‘Communia! Communia!’
was reminiscent of the famous revolt of the early twelfth century, when
the bishop of Laon had been murdered, the pope went on to argue that
the citizens should be deprived for ever of their commune. Twice he
referred ironically to the fact that the commune was commonly known
as the ‘peace’, noting that it subverted the cathedral in both its spiritual
and its temporal activities (spiritualia impedit et temporalia subvertit).
The pope’s outburst is startling, partly because the church of Laon had
not appealed, immediately at least, to the king for his aid. In attacking
the king’s lack of control over the commune perhaps Boniface was
saying what local churchmen felt unable to say.

A further papal letter which was issued in the autumn (‘Seductor
Humani’ of 13 November 1295), and which survives in a copy in a Laon
cartulary,\textsuperscript{21} gives an early indication of the difficulties which Boniface
was to face in securing the implementation of the sentences imposed by
the Church. It was addressed to the Bishop of Soissons after represen­
tations made by the Archbishop of Reims and his suffragans. The pope
had been informed that the Official of Laon had excommunicated the
perpetrators of the affray and that the bishop had placed an interdict on

\textsuperscript{19} H. Millet, \textit{Les chanoines du chapitre cathédral de Laon, 1272–1412} (Collection de l’Ecole
Française de Rome, 56, 1982), 442.
\textsuperscript{20} Above, n.7.
\textsuperscript{21} AD Aisne, G2, fos. 86v–87r.
the community and excommunicated the mayor and jurés, but he was saddened to learn that the Franciscans and some others in the city and diocese of Laon were ignoring these sentences and receiving the excommunicated men for divine worship and for burial. The pope ordered the Bishop of Soissons to warn the Franciscans, and every other church of whatever order, even if it was a royal chapel (etiamsi capella regalis forét), studiously to observe the interdict.

The papal deputies, the archdeacons of Orleans and Troyes, acted in November by ordering the publication of the mandate of 30 August. They addressed their letters of execution to all the prelates and clergy of France, from archbishops down to parish clergy. But specific action was needed in Laon itself, where the publication of the papal decisions, reinforcing the interdict and excommunications, took place on 6 December in the Benedictine abbey of St John at Laon. It was performed by John called le Fuselier, presbyter curatus of St George’s Laon and Dean of Christianity of Laon, in the presence of a large gathering which included the local abbots of Prémontré, St Martin Laon, St Vincent Laon, St-Nicolas-aux-Bois, and Nogent-sous-Coucy; the dean of the cathedral, Milo de Semur, and many canons; Hugh de Bisuntio, Official of Laon; and Gerard de Moliniat, the mayor, with many jurés and échevins (scabini: magistrates) of the commune. The papal executors declared that Laon was under an interdict which must be strictly observed; the commune and its leaders and officials were to exercise no control or jurisdiction until they had guaranteed that they would obey papal mandates; and in the meantime none of the members of the commune (singulares persone de dicto communi), their sons or kinsmen (nepotes), could receive clerical orders, obtain a benefice, or exercise public office. All those who had been involved in the violation of ecclesiastical immunity, and those who had aided and abetted them, were denounced as excommunicated, to be shunned by everyone. A general excommunication was recognized, however, as insufficient, and two procedures were adopted for identifying and bringing to justice the guilty parties. In the first place, twenty-two named citizens of Laon had been singled out as the ringleaders (including the sub-mayor, John de Semilly) and these were summoned to appear personally before the pope within three months of their citation, along with a proctor of the commune. John le Fuselier also ordered the aiders and abettors to appear at Auxerre on 23 January 1296 and noted finally that the pope would otherwise proceed spiritualiter et temporaliter against the commune and each member of the

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22 For what follows see the Dean of Christianity’s original letter addressed to the papal executors and dated 6 December 1295 (AN, L733 no. 80), and copy of the Official of Laon’s letter addressed to all ecclesiastics of the city and diocese dated 10 December 1295 in AD Aisne, G1850, fos. 317r–318r and thence in BN, Duchesne 78, fos. 97r–98r. Cf. Reg. Boniface, no. 1533 (below, n. 28).

23 For churches and monasteries of Laon see A. Saint-Denis, L’Hôtel-Dieu de Laon, 1150–1300 (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1983), map facing 12.
commune. John then went to the houses of the twenty-two named culprits and the houses of the commune (domos communis) and of Gerard the mayor, and cited them to appear before the pope within three months. Four days later the Official of Laon ordered the deans, priests and clergy of the city and diocese of Laon to promulgate all the foregoing denunciations and citations in sermons at mass on Sundays and on feast days.

The aiders and abettors had been summoned to appear in the cathedral of Auxerre on 23 January. Auxerre is some 240 km from Laon, and the citizens of Laon would have had to have been penitent indeed to make the journey. One citizen of Laon, John called Lifel or Lebel, did appear on his own behalf and as a proctor for the men of the city of Laon and of the surrounding villages of Vaux, Ardon, Leuilly, Semilly, Champleu, and St Marcel, but left after an argument with William de Chaylleyo, the canon of Auxerre who had been authorized to act. William therefore proceeded to the excommunication of all those who had given aid and favour to the perpetrators of the affray and had failed to appear, from which excommunication they could not be absolved except by special papal mandate. Clearly the papal attempt to proceed judicially against the citizens of Laon was running into serious problems.

The papal actions may, however, have helped to force the king's hand. At any rate, it is soon clear that the king was determined to resolve the difficulties by his own authority and without reliance upon ecclesiastical sanctions. The situation at Laon seems to have been further exacerbated by the activities of the king's prévôt (reeve), who had been citing the bishop's men – his justices, servants, and tenants – to appear in the king's court at Laon. Responding to the bishop's complaint, which was bolstered by the mediating payment of 4,000 livres tournois, Philip reaffirmed in February 1296 the customary liberties of the bishop, protecting him and his men from the courts of the prévôt of Laon and the baili of Vermandois, though not of course from the king's parlement.25 This concession shows that the king was intent upon protecting the interests of his church at Laon. On the specific matter of the affray he had ordered an inquiry to be carried out at Laon by two knights, Peter de Sarginis and John Choisel, as a result of which, by the judgement of his parlement, he declared in March 1296 that the citizens involved in the attack on the cathedral church, the mayor, jurés, and échevins had all been found notoriously guilty. They were forbidden to exercise any communal rights.26 The king's act, or

26 Above, n. 9.
rather the act of his *parlement*, has been interpreted as the suppression of the commune of Laon, but perhaps it was intended as essentially a judgement against the rebellious individuals. Each was deprived forever of any authority associated with the commune. The effect, certainly, was the cessation of all communal activities. The king reserved to himself the right to punish the guilty parties and to fine the community of Laon. There the matter for the moment rested. In due course he was to commission four of his trusted officials, including Pierre Flotte, to determine the appropriate penalties, but for almost a further twelve months the papal interdict on the city and ban upon the commune and its officials were in practice reinforced by the royal judgement. The reasons given for the royal declaration were the same as those given for the papal interdict: the king, like the pope, would not tolerate the attack upon the liberty of the church at Laon. King and pope were in agreement concerning the guilt of the men of Laon, but they were dealing with the problem in their own separate ways. The incident had become a test case: which one of them was the most effective and rightful defender of the church at Laon?

Further evidence demonstrates that the papal sanctions were very far from effective. Following representations made to him by two canons of Laon, Boniface attempted to give greater effect to the interdict and excommunications in a letter dated 5 January 1297. We learn that a certain Geoffrey de Bayliiaco, claiming to be the legally constituted proctor of the men of the city of Laon and of the surrounding villages of Vaux, Ardon, Semilly, Champleu, and St Marcel, had appeared before the pope putting on a show of contrition and acknowledging the terms of the king’s sentence against the members of the commune. But since he had not wished to offer proper satisfaction for the excommunicated men whom he represented, the pope still considered them all to be contumacious. Not one of those who had been personally summoned before him had appeared. The men of Laon remained obdurate. They had attended services in churches outside the city; until the king had suppressed the activities of the commune they had continued to exercise jurisdiction in contravention of the papal prohibition; the sentences of interdict and excommunication were held in contempt; the bodies of some of their dead, and notably the body of one of the named perpetrators of the affray, Thomas de Collegiis, had been buried, with the accustomed exequies, in the cemeteries of churches both in Laon itself and in the diocese; and the dean and chapter, treated like aliens, were suffering great inconvenience and expense. The pope, therefore, reaffirmed his earlier mandates, noting – in terms which approached a formal confirmation – the continuing suspension of communal activities by the

27 Dreux de la Charite and Felix de Troyes (for whom see Millet, *Les chanonnes*, 94, 511, 513).
28 Original is BN, Pic. 284, no. 32, registered at Rome (*Reg. Boniface*, no. 1533) and first part copied into AI) Aisne, G1850, fos. 324v–325v.
king. Indeed, he declared that the men of Laon were in no position (inhabitables et non capaces) to obtain the restitution of the commune, and stressed that their earlier enmity towards the church of Laon resulting in the murder of the bishop was far from forgotten. He granted an indulgence to anyone in debt to the city and men of Laon, decreed that no citizen of Laon or his descendants could be appointed without special papal permission to any office in the church of Laon, from that of bishop downwards, and ordered the exhumation of the bodies of all the excommunicates who had been buried in church cemeteries. The executors of these new papal mandates were the abbots of St Martin and St Vincent and the prior of St John, all of Laon, who on 4 May 1297 duly, if somewhat tardily, instructed all the rectors of churches in the city and diocese of Laon to act accordingly. 29

But the king had continued to take independent action. The suspension of communal activities was brought to an end on 9 February 1297 by the restoration to the town of the office of échevin. 30 The royal judgement on the guilty had yet to be determined. Even so, it is very soon clear that the king was taking the initiative in resolving the dispute. After all the flurried activity of the pope and his agents, it was Philip and his agents who became the effective peace-makers. In the first place, the king, aside from the crisis at Laon, achieved a remarkable degree of political conciliation with the pope in the summer of 1297. Especially notable was the papal climbdown on clerical taxation at the end of July. The canonization of Louis IX was to follow on 11 August. A significant element in this brief but striking Franco-papal entente was Boniface's concession to Philip concerning Laon, in a letter dated 8 August 1297. 31 Although there is no indication that the excommunicated citizens of Laon had shown any desire to respond to the Church's demands for penitence, the pope, having been petitioned by Philip, granted to the Archbishop of Rouen, the Bishop of Auxerre, and the Abbot of St Denis the powers to rescind the interdict and relax the penalties imposed on the citizens, having first ensured that satisfaction was done to the clerk, Peter de Faucoucourt, to the church of Laon, and to the treasurer of the church, for the offences committed against them. We hear nothing more of this papal requirement of satisfaction. The pope, who had threatened to act spiritually and temporally against the offenders, had given way to royal authority. It was by the authority of the king's judges, clerical and lay, that reconciliation between the church of Laon and the citizens was to be achieved.

The penances to be performed by the community were confirmed by the king in a mandate of March 1298, 32 and the dramatic occasion of

29 BN, Pic. 262, fos. 183v–184v
30 Giry, Documents, no. LIV.
31 Reg. Boniface, no. 2358; copies in BN, Pic. 262, fo. 185v–v, Pic. 267, fo. 5v and Duchesne 78, fos. 98v–99v.
32 See Appendix.
their performance no doubt followed soon after. The occasion was the return of the dean and chapter and the re-opening of the cathedral. Four men, two churchmen and two laymen, each one notably active in royal government, had been commissioned to bring the parties to a peaceful settlement: Theobald de Pouancé, Bishop of Dol, William de Crépy, a canon of St Quentin and Keeper of the Seal, Hugh de Bouville, a royal chamberlain, and the famous Pierre Flotte. They achieved accord by the following agreement: on the first day of divine service in the cathedral one hundred named members of the commune, with bare feet and bare heads, dressed in copes without belts, were to process two by two behind the cross-bearers and canons and clergy of the town from the foot of the hill on which the town stands up to the cathedral; three of the hundred were each to carry in their arms a wax figure, twenty pounds in weight, from the gate of St Martin to the high altar of the cathedral, where they were to offer them to the dean and chapter as a sign of restitution for the three men who had been attacked in the church. The mayor and jurés of the town thus made a gift to the dean and chapter of wax weighing sixty pounds. The mayor, jurés, and commune were to pay to the dean and chapter a thousand livres tournois for a chapel to be established in the church, perpetually endowed with an annual income of thirty livres tournois and in the gift of the dean and chapter, and also two thousand livres tournois to the dean and chapter for the expenses which they had suffered and a further three thousand livres tournois to the treasurer, Cardinal Francesco Gaetani; they were to live in peace with the brothers Peter and John de Faucoucourt and their family and supporters; and the damages which each side claimed against the other were to be null and void. After this the sentences imposed by the pope were to be rescinded by the Bishop of Laon and the pope’s delegates. The king ordered his bailli of Vermandois to execute this ordinance. It was a royal ordinance which directly concerned the spiritual authority of the Church. The Crown had acted as final protector of the church of Laon and had determined when and how the ultimate spiritual sanctions of the Church – the sanctions of interdict and excommunication – were made effective, and when and how the culprits were brought to judgement.

The fundamental issue in the Franco-papal crisis of these years was the nature and degree of papal authority within the French realm. The extent of Philip’s success in his conflict with Boniface VIII in 1296 and 1297 is illustrated afresh by the Laon affair. The pope had attempted, by his own declaration, to deprive the communal officials of their authority to act, but he had certainly not succeeded in intervening temporaliter, as he had threatened. On the other hand, it could well be argued that the king had acted spiritualiter. The royally imposed penances of 1298 brought to a close the immediate issues raised by the

33 For references to all four see Strayer, *Philip the Fair*. 
affray of February 1295. But the deep-seated tension between church and commune could not be so easily healed, for the canons of Laon wanted, there can be no doubt, nothing short of the complete suppression of the commune. It is no surprise to discover that in March 1301, after the renewal, with increased bitterness, of Philip's conflict with Boniface, the pope intervened once more in an attempt to defend the bishop and the dean and chapter of Laon against grave injuries which he claimed had been perpetrated against them by the citizens of Laon. The spiritual/temporal issues which were embroiling king and pope were of a different order from the issues of local control which embroiled the citizens and clergy of Laon. Even so, they affected, and reflected, each other. The Franco-papal dispute was not just a matter of high politics and of the fractious relations of two extremely determined political leaders. The status of the ecclesia Gallicana, and the processes of peace-keeping within the realm, were at stake. The riot at Laon had led to a series of papal and royal responses which had wide significance for the authority of the French king over the French Church: the interventions of Philip the Fair, in this matter as in others, had thoroughly overshadowed the fulminations and elaborate proceedings of the potestas spiritualis.

APPENDIX:
THE PENANCES IMPOSED ON THE CITIZENS OF LAON BY THE KING, MARCH 1298

The following text is based upon a vidimus of August 1323, AN L733 no. 82 (A), collated with a copy in a Laon cartulary, AD Aisne G2 fos. 90r–91r (B), with variants noted from a seventeenth-century copy in BN Picardie 267 fo. 5r-v (C). Most small variations of spelling have been disregarded. Capitalization, punctuation and some slight standardization of spelling (as ‘maire’ in preference to the equally common ‘maieur’ and ‘chapitre’ in preference to ‘chapistre’) are the editor’s. A central section of this text was edited from B and C, without note of variant readings, in Giry, Documents, 149 n. 2.

Philippe par la grace de dieu roy de France a tous ceux qui ces presentes lettres verront salut. Nous faisons assavoir que nos ames et feals levesque de Dol, maistre Guillaume de Crespi coutre de Saint Quentin, Pierre Flote, et Hue de Bouvile chevalier sur les descors et contens meus entre nostre ame et feal levesqe, et nos ames le doien, le tresorier, et le chapitre de leglise de Laon, Pierre de Foucaucourt clerc et Jehan son frere lain dune part, le maire les iures et la commune de Laon dautre, pour ce que contre la franchise et limmunite de leglise de Laon les diz freres et un autre homme furent par force et par violence trait hors de la dite eglise par aucun de celle communes et disoient que au temps de lors ce avoit este fait de commune, et sur toutes iniures et violences faites des diz freres et de leurs aidans a aucun de ceux de la commune et a

34 Reg. Boniface, no. 4010.
35 foiaux (B).
36 foial (B).
37 leglise for la dite eglise (A and C).
38 daucuns (A) and et aucuns (C) for a aucuns.
39 omit a (C).
leur aidans et de ceux de la commune aus diz freres, ordenerent de lacort des parties et de nostre auctorite traitie diligent avant eu sur ce et firent pais entre les parties, la quelle ordenance et pais il prononcierent en nostre court en la maniere qui ci desouz est escripte, faite toutoie protestacion de par les diz evesque doien tresorier et chapitre devant ceste pais et ordenance et apres qu'il tous jours ont mis hors de ceste pais et ordenance le jugie que il ont sicsom il dient seele de nostre seel contre les diz maire jures et commune de Laon, par le quel il furent prive de commune de cors et de college et de tout droit, qui y puett a tous jours si comme il disoient, du quel jugie il ne sentirent de riens partir, ains requisrent en lieu et en temps que il leur soit tenu et garde. Et les diz maire et jures firent protestacion de maintenir leur commune et leur estat et de proposer leur bones resons en lieu et en temps que le dit jugie se il fu ne leur doi pas nuire. La fourme de l'ordenance et de la pais desus dite eusuit en ceste maniere. Nous Thebaut evesques de Dol, maistre Guillaume de Crespi coutre de Saint Quentin, Pierre Flote, et Hue de Bouvile chevalers, ne entendons riens ordener ou prononcer du jugie desus dit se il fu pur lune partie ne pour lauter contre lune partie ne contre lauter, mais sur les autres contens tant seulement ordenons et prononcons que la premiere journnee que le diz doien et chapitre entrentront en la dite eglise de Laon pour le service dieu faire, cent personnes de la dite commune de Laon nus pies, en cotes sans ceintures, les chies nus, sans chaperons et sans coiffes, iront dui et dui apres ceux qui porteront les croix devant les chanoines et le clerge de la vile en procession et monront du pie de la montaigne de Laon, et dileques iront a la procession en ceste maniere jusques en leglise desus dite. Derechies que trois personnes prises es dictes cent porteron trois figures de cire, chacun une figure entre ses bras du poit de vint livres de cire au poit de Laon, lesqueles il prendront a la porte Saint Martin et les porteront jusques devant le grant autel de la dite eglise, et illeges les offerront en signe de faire restitution a leglise de trois hommes qui contre limmunitie et la franchise de leglise dessus dite par force et par violence furent de celle eglise hors trait, et seront les dites figures au doien et au chapitre pour en faire leur volente. Et aveques ce les diz maire et jures rendront aus diz doien et chapitre soissante livres de cire au poit de Laon. Les noms des cent personnes et des trois qui porteront les figures nous envoions au baillif de Vermendois sous le contreseel nostre signeur le roy. Derechies li dit maire jures et commune seront tenus de faire une chapele en la dite eglise au leur propre et de la douer de trente livres tournois de rente annuel et perpetuel, pour lesquelles achater et la dite chapele faire il paieront aus diz doien et chapitre mil livres tournois, et sera de la presentacion et de la collacion du doien et du chapitre de plein droit. Derechies que les diz maire jures et commune paieront et donront a l'eglise de Laon ou pour en faire leur volente pour les grands despons et missions qui ont este fais pour loccasion des diz debas et contens en plusieurs manieres. Derechies que li devant desus dit maire jures et commune donront et paieront a reverent pere monsigneur Franchiske Gaitan diacre cardinal, tresorier de la dite eglise, qui a la juridicion en la dite eglise, si comme len dit, trois mil livres tournois. Derechies que Pierre de Foucaucourt clerc

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40 omit avant (A).
41 furent (A and C).
42 omit et ordenance (B).
43 ipuet (A) for y puet.
44 a tous jours . . . partir missing (C).
45 sans centures et sans cottes (C).
46 duy et duy (B), dhuy et dhuy (C).
47 en procession missing (C).
48 Deus missing (C).
49 omit ou (A and C).
50 celle for la dite (A).
51 trois missing (C).
52 chevalieret in error (C).
et Jehan son frère lui et tuit cils leur linage et leur aidans seront et demorront en bonne et loial pais envers les diz maire jures et commune et chacune singuliere personne dicelle et leur aidans, et aussi le dit maire jures et commune et les personnes singulieres dicelles demorront en bonne pais envers les diz freres et les leurs et leurs aidans. Derechief que du meffait que les diz freres disoient qui leur avoit este fait, et des domages que les diz maire jures et communnes disoient que les diz freres leur avoient faits, les dites personnes et leurs aidans demorront delivres li un vers lautre et seront et demorront en tel point comme se les dites injures et domages neussent onques este faites. Et toutes ces injures et domages nous ordonmons que il soient nules. Et ces choses dessus dites faites et acomplies, tuit le entredit et li excummeniemenes et peines mises de lauctorite nostre tres saint pere lapostole et de levesque de Laon es personnes des diz maire jures et la commune et es singuleres personnes dicelle et des villes voisines de leurs enfans et de leurs hoirs seront ostees du tout en tout par levesque de Laon tant comme ali en appartient et par les juges ace donnez de par nostre tres saint pere lapostole selons la teneur du pouoir que il leur en adonne et du pouoir qui nous est baillies et commis des parties dessus dites. Aus choses dessus dites ferment tenir et acomplir les devant dites parties par nostre dit ou ordonance condampnons. Et se il avoit es choses dessus dites aucune occurre ou aucune doute, nous par nostre ordenance retenons a esclarcir loccurce et a declarer la doute, a la quel pais et ordenance les dites parties obeirent de leur volente et la voudrent louerent et approuverent. Et nous de nostre auctorite roial par la teneur de ces lettres mandons au baillif de Vermendois que ceste pais et ordenance face fermement tenir et garder et la mette a execucion tant comme alui appartendra, et en tesmoin de ces choses ala requeste des parties avons fait mettre nostre seel a ces presentes lettres. Donne a Paris ou mois de mars lan de grace mil cc quatrevins et dist sept. [March 1298]