The Council of Vienne
1311-12

The Papacy slipped further under secular influence mostly due to its entanglement with kings and emperors. Boniface VIII, pope from 1294 to 1303, was particularly aggressive, anointing some leaders and bringing others down. He issued the famous Bull, 'Unam Sanctum', claiming supremacy over spiritual as well as temporal powers. The Bull's closing sentence stated that every creature should be subject to the Roman Pontiff! Boniface's bitter embroilment with King Philip IV of France would greatly affect *The Council of Vienne* even after Boniface's death. Benedict XI followed Boniface and was peace loving and scholarly. He tried conciliation with the strong temporal leaders who took advantage of him, especially Philip. The problems fell to Pope Clement V

Pope Clement V

King Philip IV of France

Clement appeased King Philip on several fronts. The Papal coronation was in Lyons and he resided at Avignon instead of Rome. He named ten new cardinals, nine being French. Philip pushed for a *general council* to condemn Boniface. The prospect of condemning a dead pope was terrifying to the curia and Clement delayed calling the *council* but at a price. He was induced to formally praise Philip and then collaborated with him to suppress the Knights Templar in order to reduce Philips' debts. Away from France, Clement took a forceful stance not unlike Boniface. Finally, Clement relented and called a *general council* to be held at *Vienne*.

The pope gave *The Council of Vienne* three main tasks:
Deal with the Knights Templar, Aid for the Holy Land, and Reform.
Philip's influence affected the *Council* in dealing with its tasks:

Knights Templar →
- Contrary to Philip's contention, did <u>not</u> find them heretical.
- At Philip's insistence, ordered their suppression.
- Their properties and wealth were put under a separate entity.

The Holy Land →
- Philip IV promised to begin the Crusade within six years.
- Set a church-wide tithe for six years for the crusade.

Reforms →
- Made efforts to resolve disputes among orders.
- Outlawed the largely unorganized Beguines and Beghards.
- Warned against inquisitional excesses.

Evangelization →
- Ordered teaching of Oriental languages to aid efforts.

Practical results of *Vienne*

The leader and several members of the Knights Templar were burned at the stake by Philip IV. The tithes gathered were used by Philip in a war against Flanders. The crusade never took place.