

BERNARD SAISSET AND THE FRANCO-PAPAL RIFT OF DECEMBER 1301 ⁽¹⁾

Sane ad audientiam: its nature and significance

It is a surprising fact that the reasons for the bitter dissension between Pope Boniface VIII and Philip the Fair of France, which broke out in December 1301, and, more specifically, the part played in that rupture by the royal assault upon Bernard Saisset, bishop of Pamiers, have yet to be analysed in depth. It seems certain that Pierre Dupuy had not himself included material relating to the case of Bernard Saisset in his planned *Histoire du différend*, which remains the most important collection of texts for the study of the crisis. At least, the texts concerning the case are not in the manuscript of the *Histoire* that was prepared for the printers. ⁽²⁾ The set of documents about Saisset as published in 1655, four years or so after Dupuy's death, ⁽³⁾ were added to the initial collection and printed as a last section of the volume. ⁽⁴⁾ As a result of these added texts, it has become abundantly clear that study of the Saisset case is essential for an understanding of the dramatic rift between pope and king. The texts concerning Saisset are very remarkable in their detail, but they contain as edited many errors, and we now know that they can be supplemented by other extant

(1) The author gratefully acknowledges that the initial preparatory work from which this article has developed was undertaken during his tenure of a British Academy Readership. The article has benefited from the comments and criticisms of Julien Théry, Maître de conférences d'histoire at the Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier III.

(2) *Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris*, [hereafter BNF] *Fr. 4909-4910*. Here can be found a number of original documents taken from the 'coffre Boniface' now of the *Archives Nationales, Paris*, [hereafter AN] that is *J478-J492*, and not returned, as noted also in J. COSTE, *Boniface VIII en procès*, Rome, 1995, p. xxix.

(3) Dupuy died towards the end of 1651: *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, 20 vol., Paris, 1933-, t. 12, p. 597.

(4) [P. DUPUY] *Histoire du différend d'entre le pape Boniface et Philippe le Bel roy de France*, Paris, 1655, p. 621-662 (mostly from AN, J336).