

Perusing the Papal Pantry: The Fasting Practices of Pope Boniface VIII, 1299-1303

Morgan Stocks

History 194AII-BII

March 18, 2013

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank this year's senior thesis class for their criticisms and comments, as we all strived to produce the best thesis papers possible.

I thank Sarah Hanson and Kalina Yamboliev for their excellent translation services.

I would also like to thank Professor John Lee for his suggestions to improve my research and paper, as well as supervising a very productive and successful seminar.

Finally, I would like to thank Professor Carol Lansing, my thesis adviser. I appreciate the time she invested to help me on this journey. Her guidance was fundamental to my paper.

Thank You.

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Preface

During the Middle Ages, the consumption of food revolved around fasting and feasting. Fasting, especially during Lent, was an important form of penance within the Catholic Church. Even so, elites, clerics, and peasants discovered creative means to avoid fasting during Lent. I determine the extent to which this is true of popes, the leader and the supposed example for the Christian people. Specifically, I analyze the fasting practices of Pope Boniface VIII to understand the complex and often contradictory role of food in the Medieval Christianity.

In 2010, *Time Magazine* came out with a list of the “Top 10 Most Controversial Popes”.¹ Boniface, whose term lasted from 1294 to 1303, unsurprisingly made the list. Before he assumed the papacy, Boniface was already surrounded by scandal as he succeeded Celestine V, one of the very few popes to resign from office. But, the article in *Time* stated that it was due to his conflict with Philip IV of France, his avaricious desire to acquire wealth and land, and his declaration of papal supremacy which made him a controversial pope.²

Yet, this contemporary view only provides a one side of the notorious pontiff. Through analyzing his personal records, my research presents another perspective of Boniface as pope. Examining his household expenditures highlights that he conformed to religious doctrine regarding fasting. This evidence, along with looking at his infamous post-mortem trial, and his own thoughts on penance, proves that he was, at least in part, a law-abiding Christian.

¹ Clair Suddath, “Boniface VIII,” *Time.com*, April, 14, 2010, under “Top 10 Controversial Popes,” http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1981842_1981844_1981605,00.html (accessed February, 8, 2013).

² *Ibid.*

Chapter One: Fasting on a Feast

The Contradiction of Consuming Food in Medieval Europe

In *The English Medieval Feast*, William Mead imagined a scene from a medieval banquet: "A peacock selected as decoration for the feast was carefully flayed, roasted, once more dressed in his gorgeous plumage, and then toward the end of the feast brought ceremoniously with music to the table to be placed before the most valiant knight."¹ The image of a cooked and then stuffed large bird in a hall demonstrated the lavish feasts of medieval society. Mead continued to discuss the cultural significance of presenting the peacock to a knight, who then made wild and chivalric vows. Feasting transcended food, as it reflected the social hierarchy of the elite class. While this scene is fiction, it represents how the act of eating was just as cultural as it was a necessity to life.

Feasting in the Middle Ages centered on the creation of a spectacle, awe-inspiring to viewers. Between ordering the wine and meat to serve and planning the entertainment, preparation for these elaborate events could take months.² Particular emphasis focused on the visual scene and incorporation of the senses.³ The food, like the courtly entertainment, played a role in the performance, and was meant to overwhelm the guests visually. In laboring for the feast, cooks artistically transformed the food at these elite banquets through the use of color, texture, and shape. For example, saffron mixed with egg yolks colored a dish vibrant yellow.⁴ These details produced an other-worldly effect for the guests. The one sense missing from

¹ William Edward Mead, *The English Medieval Feast* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967), 143.

² Nichola Fletcher, *Charlemagne's Tablecloth: A Piquant History of Feasting* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 20.

³ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 60-61.

⁴ P.W. Hammond, *Food and Feast in Medieval England* (Sutton Publishing, 1993), 137.

descriptions of the feasts was taste. The cooks gave more care to the presentation of the dishes as opposed to their flavor. While the consumption of food took place at the feasts, the visual aspect of the food proved more important, as it played a larger role in the show.

Despite the attention paid to the presentation of these dishes and the party atmosphere, the motivations behind these feasts overshadowed the food. Among the lower classes, weddings and funerals as well as banquets held at the end of the plowing season compromised the majority of peasant festivities.⁵ These celebrations were minor relative to elite events. In contrast, nobles held feasts as part of elite culture and not occasional, small scale parties. Staging banquets signaled the host's level of wealth, status and power in the community. The daily consumption of a variety and expensive amount of food marked personal economic superiority. A public feast displayed this ability to society. More specifically, at feasts, this display of wealth and power was seen in the quantity of courses and quality of the food.

A more extravagant feast reflected a higher status of the host. Thus, the number of courses revealed the social importance of the event and the host. Sometimes nobles tried to outdo others in the number of courses to establish superiority in power.⁶ Social status determined the division of courses. The noblest person would be presented with all the dishes, the next rank down would get a little less and this pattern continued down the social ladder. Those of the highest status consumed the most exotic courses, while lesser guests ate fewer and less extravagant dishes.⁷

Similarly, the quality of the food established status, as the cost of ingredients revealed the wealth of the host. Principally, the choice of meat and its preparation separated elite feasting

⁵ Hammond, 39.

⁶ Fletcher, 29.

⁷ Hammond, 135.

from ordinary banquets. Meat occupied the central role at the feasts, as it was the primary ingredient that was transformed. For example, meats and fishes used to make jellies were considered high status dishes because of the degree of skill that it took to produce them.⁸ Serving roasted meat, ranging from the average pig and chicken to the exotic peacock, signified high social status because of the expense. Even when the lower classes had access to meat, they would boil it instead of roasting, indicating their lack of means to elevate the food into a more fanciful dish.⁹ While the spectacle was the perceived focus of these events, the attention to the quality and quantity of the dishes conveyed the centrality of the use of food to display wealth, status, and power at feasts.

Feasting was not the sole method through which food was seen in the Middle Ages. Bridget Ann Henisch proposed that the medieval year resembled a chessboard of black and white squares, with the year divided into fast and feasting days. Henisch stated that “a Church feast was ushered in by a period of fasting; a fast rewarded with not only a feast in this life but the hope of a celestial banquet in the next.”¹⁰ Fasts provided an outlet for people to complete penance for their sins, such as overindulgence in food and alcohol at feasts. Those attempting to attain a closer connection to God could pursue religious perfection through the developing the ability to resist human faults. Asceticism, especially associated with saintliness, included repressing the desire for food, a bodily weakness.¹¹

⁸ Melitta Weiss Adamson, ed., *Food in the Middle Ages* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 66.

⁹ Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, eds., *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1996), 179.

¹⁰ Bridget Ann Henisch, *Feast and Fast: Food in Medieval Society* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 28.

¹¹ Bynum, 2.

Beyond the clergy, there stood a long tradition of lay fasting in Christianity. In early Christian fasting practices, people abstained from certain foods entirely and limited themselves to a single meal.¹² This definition of fasting changed throughout the Middle Ages, as by the thirteenth century, fasting meant to abstain from meat and sometimes meat products. While not everyone obeyed this standard, fasting for penance had a place in every Christians' life.

Fasting practices centered on the abstinence from meat during Lent. The Church preached that consuming meat was linked to Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden.¹³ Man's failure to listen to God resulted in all earthen creatures considered to be impure and sinful. The absence of meat during Lent served as penance for humans' insolence toward God. However, fish escaped impurity caused by man by living in the water. Water, separated from Earth, possessed purifying abilities, such as in baptisms and the flood Noah experienced in the Bible.¹⁴ While consuming meat was forbidden, the prohibition covered other animal products less strictly, such as butter or milk.

People were supposed to practice fasting both in weekly routines and important religious holidays. Ordinary fasts took place on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.¹⁵ The observance of these ordinary fasts increased during the longest and most important fasts of year: Advent and Lent. People would fast during the Advent, or the four weeks preceding Christmas, the birth of Christ. Yet, Catholic doctrine placed the greatest emphasis on Lent, representing Jesus' fast of forty days in the wilderness. The Church expected the laity to substitute fish for meat in their diets during the entire forty days, but the rigor varied among class and region.

¹² Bynum, 37.

¹³ Hensich, 32-33.

¹⁴ Hensich, 33.

¹⁵ Hensich, 30.

Imagining the year as divided up into feasting and fasting days suggests that religiously proscribed fasting to counterbalance the custom of feasting. However, fasting contradicted and sometimes directly opposed the elite tradition of banqueting. Tensions were especially high when these two practices collided.

While seemingly clear cut, fasting was defined in a fluid and unclear manner, resulting in the difficulty of practicing abstinence from meat. For example, Bernard of Clairvaux, a French abbot of the Cistercian order, stated that fasting should also include abstaining from gossip and laziness.¹⁶ To Bernard, fasting should have been embraced all areas in which people sinned. Fasting in this sense could entail a holistic cleansing of the self and not limited to the consumption of food. This logic expanded fasting from a literal sense of abstaining from food into a more symbolic notion of expelling all sinful behavior.

In terms of food, fasting directly countered the sin of gluttony and therefore, gluttonous behavior during Lent should have been unacceptable as well. Gluttony, like fasting, held many definitions including drunkenness, consuming food with no purpose, and forgetfulness caused by overindulgence in eating and drinking. Other definitions derived from Gregory the Great included eating before the proper time to eat, and preparing food in too elevated a manner or with too much decoration.¹⁷ So, fasting should also include abstaining from these practices as well.

The definition of fasting was not the only unclear part of this religious practice. Paradoxes existed within Church doctrine regarding the general consumption of food. On one hand, eating and feasting were made sacred by the Bible, including the Last Supper, and

¹⁶ Bynum, 43.

¹⁷ Madeleine Pelner Cosman, *Fabulous Feasts: Medieval Cookery and Ceremony* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 120.

commemorated by the Church in the mass.¹⁸ But, Christianity also taught that earthly desires, such as food, needed to be separated from the spiritual. These worldly pursuits only corrupted the soul, just as the apple tempted Adam and Eve.

Moreover, the Church endorsed modifications to fasting, making the boundaries between fast and feast even more blurry. In the later Middle Ages, people could pay the Church to consume forbidden foods during Lent, such as butter. Rouen Cathedral in France was nicknamed “Butter Tower” because the money collected from this religiously ordained loophole helped construct it.¹⁹ Other loop holes liberalized substitutions for meat. The Church permitted consuming beaver tail because it resembled a fish, but the body of the beaver remained off limits.²⁰ Church authorities considered birds as animals except for the barnacle goose since it began life in a shell.²¹ These contradictions meant that people could find a way around meaningful fasting.

The laity proved to be extremely creative in devising solutions to the problem created by Lent. Before meat became obsolete in their Lenten diets, Christians overindulged right before the long fasting periods. Special dishes, like *pain perdu*, arose during this time as to use up all the forbidden delicacies such as eggs.²² Once Lent came, the desire for prohibited foods continued. Some found escapes in their fasting regime to lessen the impact on their lives. Alcohol consumption increased during this time because it did not break the fast but it did help ameliorate feelings of deprivation. The popular quote, “Fishes must swim,” associating the consumption of fish with the need to drink alcohol, embodied the mood produced by Lent.²³

¹⁸ Henisch, 2-3.

¹⁹ Henisch, 47.

²⁰ Henisch, 47.

²¹ Henisch, 47.

²² Henisch, 38.

²³ Henisch, 41-42.

Another example of people avoiding a full commitment to Lent was the purchase of luxury goods. Luxury foodstuffs increased in price because of the amplified demand during this time. The laity consumed luxury products, such as sweets and spices, which were used to liven up the food, while adhering to the fast.²⁴ Other means to subvert the rules of fasting using superfluous items included camouflaging the taste of the fish and creating imitations of prohibited foods. Cooks molded “eggs” from fish roe and used fish to produce a faux-bacon and ham.²⁵

One might think that the clergy would not only fast but embrace the meaning of this practice, but they too found resourceful ways to lessen the strain of Lent upon their diet. For the clergy, luxurious fare during feast days compensated for fasting.²⁶ The idea of compensation for fasting depreciated the significance of the sacrifice. Access to fish during Lent also increased the comfort of some clerics. The best known source of fish in England was the monastic fish pond.²⁷ These ponds progressed from simple stews to an elaborate infrastructure including water channels connected to rivers. It functioned both as a storage facility and as a fish farm. The scarcity of fish and the increase in prices meant that fish was a desirable commodity that not everyone had access to. Even though the Church deemed fish an acceptable alternative meat during Lent, the ability to consume large amounts of this protein defeated the sacrifice.

Not every Christian desired to subvert fasting. Some spiritual men and women fasted with extreme devoutness and rigidity. Some women were even recorded as fasting solely on the Eucharist.²⁸ Nevertheless, these women did not limit their fasting to Lent, and fall outside the

²⁴ Henisch, 41-42.

²⁵ Bynum, 41.

²⁶ Flandrin, 261.

²⁷ Hammond, 22-23.

²⁸ Bynum, 83.

practices of the majority. To the laity, fasting symbolically gestured to their duty to do penance for their sins but in reality, most did not fully embrace the principle behind fasting.

Scholars have shown that people regularly practiced a symbolic fasting rather than truly sacrificing to fully practice penance for their sins. Not only did the laity do this but the clergy as well. How far did this behavior extend? Did it extend to the upper echelons of the Church, those who in fact created Christian fasting policies? My paper investigates to what extent this was true of popes. One well documented pope was Boniface VIII, who was charged with refusing to fast during Lent in his infamous post-mortem trial. I analyze the household records of Pope Boniface VIII (1235-1303), preserved in the *Libri Rationum Camerae Bonifatii Papae VIII*, to examine his private bills for food consumption.

By comparing his personal expenditures, policies and actions throughout the year to the period of Lent, I determine that the Pope held himself to the same principles he imposed on his congregation. Not only did he adhere to this tradition, in some respects, his fasting practices surpassed those of the laity. I also refute the claim that he did not fast during Lent, a claim made through eye-witness testimony at his post-mortem trial. Additionally, I look at previous popes fasting practices as well as Boniface's own thoughts on penance. By looking at Boniface and his fasting practices, I explore the contradictions over the religious meanings of food during the Middle Ages as well as food's central role in, not only religious practices, but many layers of society.

Chapter Two: Scandal, Controversy, and Heresy, Oh My!

The Infamous Legacy of Pope Boniface VIII

Benedetto Caetani was born in 1235 in the town of Anagni. He studied Roman and Canon law in Bologna and went on to work with embassies as a member of the Roman Curia, the administrative body of the pope. In 1291, Benedetto Caetani was given the title of Cardinal Priest, putting him in close contact with the current pope, Celestine V. Celestine was elected during a time of great political struggle between two old Italian families: the Colonna and Orsini.²⁹ This conclave, or elective body of cardinals, split between these two families and failed to compromise on a pontiff until 1294, 2 years after the death of the previous pope, Nicholas IV. Peter of Morrone, who became Celestine V, was chosen, not for his bureaucratic background, but for his extreme piety. While he was an ascetic hermit and a very holy man, he lacked the ambitious, calculating personality of other thirteenth century popes and education, all of which Boniface possessed.

Because of his vast knowledge of the Catholic legal doctrine, Benedetto either persuaded Celestine V to abdicate his position as pope or simply informed of his right to relinquish his position. Another rumor surrounding Celestine's departure from office claimed that Boniface whispered to the current pope to resign through means of a pipe, as if from God, in order to push Celestine out of the papacy.³⁰ While the role Benedetto played in this remains unclear, in 1294, Celestine V abdicated and on December 24, the conclave elected Caetani as pope. Benedetto Caetani took on the papal name of Boniface VIII.

²⁹ Robert Brentano, *Rome Before Avignon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 142-143.

³⁰ Brentano, 140.

Some the actions he took as pope made him unpopular with his contemporaries. After Celestine released himself from office, Boniface, fearing that he might try to reclaim his title, ordered that the former pope be arrested.³¹ Celestine eventually died in his imprisonment in 1296. This produced rumors of a conspiracy to commit murder, which were used against Boniface at his trial.

Boniface was also known for his intolerable temperament. While he suffered from the “stones” or kidney stones which explained his hostilities, it only added to his bad reputation. For example, during Ash Wednesday in 1300, as Boniface distributed the ashes to the bishops in the curia, he threw ashes in the face of Archbishop of Genoa, a member of a faction against Boniface, while stating, “Ghibelline thou art and with the Ghibellines shall return to dust.”³²

Boniface’s papacy was not solely founded upon controversy and scandals. To mark the end of the thirteenth century, the pope called for the Holy Year or Jubilee. He stated that every hundred years there would be another celebration. To partake in the Jubilee, Christians embarked on a pilgrimage to Rome, specifically to the basilicas of Saint Peter and Paul.³³ The pope granted indulgence to any pilgrims who made this journey and confessed their sins. Pilgrims came by the thousands, from every part of Central and Western Europe.³⁴ According to F. Donald Logan, this act appears to not have other motive than to allow Christians to express their piety, exhibiting Boniface’s virtuous side.³⁵

However, Boniface remains most notable for the less pious actions of his papacy. During his term as pope, Boniface VIII experienced much familial strife, which forms a great part of his

³¹ F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Medieval Ages* (London: Routledge, 2002), 257.

³² Brentano, 141.

³³ Logan, 257.

³⁴ Logan, 257.

³⁵ Logan, 257.

historical reputation. Even before Boniface assumed the papacy, he worked to establish his family as dominant power in two provinces: Tuscan Patrimony and Campagna-Maritime.³⁶ The amount of money spent in purchasing land amounted to 500,000 florins, an equivalent to two years revenue of the apostolic camera, which Boniface declared came from money he earned before he became pope.³⁷ As the supreme religious leader in all of Europe, his involvement in secular affairs caused frictions with other powerful families. The Colonna family especially held grievances against the pope. During one incident in May 1297, later named the Colonna War, a relative of the Colonna family plundered papal treasures and Boniface, in return, commanded that the Colonna hand over three castles or fortresses.³⁸ Due to Boniface's harsh demand, the Colonna, together with the Spiritual Franciscans, claimed that Boniface was a false pope since he forced Celestine to abdicate his title. In later accusations, they charged him with simony, heresy and murdering the Pope.

Furthermore, the Pope remains most remembered for his personal and public battles with secular authority, especially the king of France. In 1296, Pope Boniface VIII wrote *Clericis Laicos*, in response to Edward I of England and Philip IV of France taxing the clergy to finance their wars. In this bull, Boniface claimed that the "the laity have always been hostile to the clergy" and that any ruler who taxed clergy without the pope's permission would be excommunicated.³⁹ As with the Colonna, this started a personal conflict with Philip the Fair. The

³⁶ T.S.R. Boase, *Boniface VIII* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1933), 159.

³⁷ Boase, 160.

³⁸ *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Detroit: Thomson/Gale; Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2003), s.vv. "Boniface VIII, Pope."

³⁹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Detroit: Thomson/Gale; Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2003), s.vv. "Boniface VIII, Pope."

French king, then, retaliated by prohibiting the exports of treasure and currency from France. Boniface supposedly retorted that he would rather die than surrender liberties of the church.⁴⁰

In 1302, again Boniface and Philip IV again battled over the primacy of power in Europe. After Philip overstepped papal authority by forbidding French clerics to attend the pope's council, Boniface issued *Unam Sanctam*. In this decree, Boniface declared the unity of church over national ties and the power of the pope included that ability to "institute and judge temporal kings," effectively raising him above all royalty.⁴¹ Boniface's assertion of papal supremacy eventually led to his demise.

Philip attempted to harm the Pope by assaulting his reputation. Guillaume de Nogaret, minister to Philip, charged Boniface with a series of accusations, similar to the ones the Colonna promulgated. They included unrightfully taking the papal office, heresy, blasphemy, murder, simony, and sodomy.⁴² The Catholic Encyclopedia asserted that after these statements, it was an "anticlimax to read that 'he does not fast on fast day.'"⁴³ In fact, refusing to fast was a serious claim since fasting was deeply connected to penance. Boniface drafted a bull to excommunicate Philip but before he could issue it, he was seized by Nogaret and his companions, including the Colonna, on September 7, 1303. Boniface died in Rome on the third day of his imprisonment.

After his death, Boniface's bones were literally put on trial for crimes of witchcraft, murder, deviant sexual behavior, and above all, heresy. He was also charged for not fasting during Lent. While a seemingly lesser crime, this was a serious statement against his piety.

⁴⁰ *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Detroit: Thomson/Gale; Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2003), s.vv. "Boniface VIII, Pope."

⁴¹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Detroit: Thomson/Gale; Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2003), s.vv. "Boniface VIII, Pope."

⁴² *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Detroit: Thomson/Gale; Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2003), s.vv. "Boniface VIII, Pope."

⁴³ *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Detroit: Thomson/Gale; Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2003), s.vv. "Boniface VIII, Pope."

Multiple eyewitnesses came forward to attest to Boniface consuming meat during this religious period. By looking at his personal records, it becomes clear that this was a false charge.

Chapter Three: For the Record

Libri Rationum and the Expenditures of Boniface and His Household

The *Libri Rationum* recorded all the expenses and revenues for Pope Boniface and his household for the years 1299-1300 and 1302-1303. From this source, Boniface's consumption of food and fasting practices can be uncovered. Before this document can be analyzed, its origins and composition must be studied in order to give context to the information it holds.

A Brief History of Papal Record-keeping

In the thirteenth century, the papal curia kept extensive collections of documents, including books, legal documents and special accounts. Unfortunately, papal records were plagued by the loss of documents, in part because they were often moved around, especially between Italy and France. Before an official library came to fruition, early papal documents were preserved in the *Scrinium Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae*, a cylindrical container that traveled along with the popes.⁴⁴ Almost all documentation prior to Innocent III (1198-1216) remains missing because of the frequent use of fragile papyrus and the transfer of papal writings. For Boniface's household, the years 1299-1300 and 1302-1303 are preserved in *Libri Rationum*, a financial record listing the revenues and expenditures. It is likely that records were kept for his entire term as pope, but only these registers survive. Therefore, these years alone are used to represent Boniface's expenditures for his entire term as pope.

⁴⁴ Jay Jackson, "Inventoried Treasures: The Vatican Archives Revealed," *American Libraries* 30, no. 11 (December 1999): 72.

After Boniface's death, the records of the thirteenth century curia were moved to Perugia, then to Assisi and finally to Avignon, France. While in Avignon, Pope John XXII (1316-1334) began to compile the first semblance of a papal library.⁴⁵ After the papacy returned to Rome, Pope Nicholas V (1447-1455) first made the Latin, Hebrew, and Greek manuscripts available to scholars for academic use.⁴⁶ Around this time, a formal library, complete with an official librarian, was created. Under Pope Paul V (1605-1621), this library became the Vatican Secret Archives.⁴⁷ The library continued to grow, but in 1809, when Napoleon invaded Rome, the Archives and all of the pope's writings were transferred to Paris.⁴⁸ These documents were returned to Rome between 1815 and 1817.⁴⁹ The papal records are presently safeguarded in the Vatican archives. But the loss of records previous to their preservation in a library has created gaps in the evidence of the lives of popes from the Middle Ages.

Boniface's expenditures and revenues of the papal curia or his personal court are revealed through careful examination of these two years out of his nine years as pope: 1299-1300 and 1302-1303. This information was collected in *Libri Rationum Camerae Bonifatii Papae VIII*, a record contemporary to Boniface.

One scholar, Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, used the *Libri Rationum* to discuss nutrition during the time of Boniface as well as to extrapolate the size of his court. Yet, no scholars have used this document to compare Boniface's fasting practices to his position on penance or the accusations made against him at his trial, both of which will be explored in later chapters.

⁴⁵ Vatican Library, "History," The Vatican Library, <http://www.vaticanlibrary.va/home.php?pag=storia&ling=eng> (accessed February 1, 2013).

⁴⁶ Vatican Library.

⁴⁷ Vatican Library.

⁴⁸ Jackson, 72.

⁴⁹ Jackson, 72.

Since detailed menus and recipes specific to Boniface and his household are not available, this source serves as the basis for comparing the pope's eating habits to his position on penance. This document only reveals a limited amount of information, and therefore, other sources are needed to fill in the holes of the record.

Banking in the Middle Ages

Since the organization of *Libri Rationum* centered on the use of revolving banking families, it is necessary to understand the development of banking in the Middle Ages. The necessity of record books, like *Libri Rationum*, came from the growth of the papal administration beginning with the late twelfth century.⁵⁰ The early Medieval Church had an uncomfortable relationship with the exchange of money. The Council of Arles (314), Nicaea (325), Lateran III (1179), and the Second Council of Lyon (1274) all prohibited usury, or profiting from lending money. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council permitted Jews to partake in this type of business, but Christians were still forbidden to practice money lending.⁵¹ However, by the late tenth century, Christians began to profit from commercial ventures and banks appeared in North and Central Italy.⁵² The issue of usury was circumvented through participating in the benefits or losses of ventures.⁵³

Early bankers were moneychangers, who held knowledge of money in circulation, determined the quality of coins and conducted currency exchanges.⁵⁴ In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the increase in economic activities led to the more frequent use of credit and a new

⁵⁰ W. E. Lunt. "The Financial System of the Medieval Papacy in the Light of Recent Literature," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 23, no. 2 (February, 1909): 261.

⁵¹ Peter Speed, ed., *Those Who Worked: An Anthology of Medieval Sources* (New York: Italic Press, 1997), 138.

⁵² Speed, 138.

⁵³ Andre Vauchez, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2000), 147.

⁵⁴ Vauchez, 146.

role for bankers.⁵⁵ As the economy grew, even the Church needed bankers. The formation of a financial branch of papal administration came directly out of the need to control increased income.⁵⁶ Papal revenue came from his position as Bishop of Rome, taxes from central Italy, and as landlord.⁵⁷ He was financing the Crusades during the first half of the thirteenth century which really propelled the creation of a strong and centralized fiscal department.⁵⁸ Due to the heightened importance of papal finance, the camera, fulfilling the duties of exchequer, became a position of great significance. This reflects not only a change in the financial organization of the Church, but Church hierarchy as well.⁵⁹

While the Church, in principle, remained wary of banking practices because of their close association with usury, popes engaged in these types of transactions to meet their needs and the needs of their household.⁶⁰ A contract, called a *depositum* or *accomendatio*, gave a financier or banker the use of capital. In exchange, they received a share of the profits of the business venture. They barely avoided technical usury.⁶¹ The bankers involved in papal finance were deemed *mercatores camerae*, or merchants of the chamber. Representatives of Italian bankers collected revenue, received deposits, and transferred them to Rome.⁶² The representatives of the banks were included in the papal household, revealing a strong link between bankers and the Church.⁶³ In addition to their presence in the curia, the bankers held branches in the main commercial centers of Europe.⁶⁴ Even when these financiers lived away from Italy, they still

⁵⁵ Edward English, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Medieval World* (New York, Facts on File, Inc., 2005), 89.

⁵⁶ Lunt, 261.

⁵⁷ Lunt, 273.

⁵⁸ Lunt, 261-262.

⁵⁹ Lunt, 262.

⁶⁰ English, 89.

⁶¹ Speed, 139.

⁶² Lunt, 269.

⁶³ Lunt, 270.

⁶⁴ Lunt, 270.

remained in close contact with the papal administrators. Bankers used monasteries as safe places to store money as it was transferred from the camera to the merchants, displaying the economic reciprocity and dependency between these two growing institutions.⁶⁵

Loans to princes, popes, or towns usually also came with perks, such as tax exemptions or the right to collect public revenues, establishing a papal system of patronage with bankers.⁶⁶ Financiers, who were in a close financial relationship with the chamberlain, and by extension the pope, received benefits such as protection in ecclesiastical court and also could serve in a diplomatic function on behalf of the pontiff.⁶⁷ However, even as popes of the thirteenth century took out more and more loans, the incoming revenues barely managed to cover all the expenses. Boniface especially faced fiscal restraints, as his feuds with European monarchs limited his monetary resources.⁶⁸ Despite the prohibition on usury, thirteenth century popes not only used but depended on bankers.

Defying Boundaries: Overcoming the Limitations of the Record

Understanding the banking system only fills in part of the gap left by this record. Using this record to reconstruct Boniface's consumption of foods is limited by the type of information it contains. These restrictions can be overcome through contextualizing the document with information from secondary and primary sources. First, the food cannot be tracked to individual people, and therefore the amount of food Boniface ate cannot be distinguished from his household. Food items were purchased on a weekly basis, showing that these types of food were

⁶⁵ Lunt, 270.

⁶⁶ Vauchez, 147.

⁶⁷ Lunt, 272.

⁶⁸ Lunt, 262-263

consumed regularly. Large sums were spent every week on different categories of food, far more than an individual could consume. Clearly many people were fed by these expenditures, including Boniface.

Second, the record only lists the monetary value and not the quantity of food purchased. By looking at prices for food of the time, estimations of the quantity of food which was purchased can be made. A source from a Florentine Hospital presents an estimation of prices from the end of the thirteenth century to the mid-fourteenth century. In 1293, only a year before Boniface took office, wine was priced between 4 and 5 pounds.⁶⁹ In 1325, the average price of chicken was at about 7 pence.⁷⁰ In 1335, wheat was valued at an average of about 18 pence per pint, while barley was about 11 and a half pence.⁷¹ As all food purchased for the household was bought using hundreds of pounds, food was obtained in bulk quantities.

Another source from England described prices of meat in more detail. In the late fourteenth century, a London Letter Book describing an ordinance for cooks, showed prices for premier meats and culinary services. A roasted capon, or hen, was priced at 6 deniers or pence, while the best roast pig was listed at 8 pence. A goose fetched 7 pence and a pheasant topped the list at 13 pence.⁷² While slightly later than Boniface, these numbers demonstrate the large quantity of food that could be purchased from the amounts spent by the pope's household, as meat was purchased using anywhere from 200 to over a 1000 monetary pounds.

For example, on January 30, 1299, the household spent 579 pounds and 6 pence on meat. The household purchased 138,966 pence worth of cooked meat for this week. Even though prices

⁶⁹ La Ronciere, 827.

⁷⁰ La Ronciere, 831.

⁷¹ Charles La Ronciere, *Prix et salaires a Florence au XIC^e siècle* (Paris: Ecole Francais de Rome, 1982), 821.

⁷² Speed, 172-173.

vary through time and region, the amount of money listed for the week on January 30th clearly purchased a great quantity of food.

Third, the records list the foods in broad categories, such as "pantry" and "meat," so the specific types of foods that were purchased cannot be determined. The record does not distinguish between breads, grains, types of meat, or types of wine, and consequently only gives a generalized diet of the pope. The manner in which foods were prepared was also not included since this record only kept track of food expenditures.

Even so, specifics of his diet are revealed. The Pope feasted in the same manner as the nobility. After his coronation, a lavish banquet was held in his honor. A man named Stefaneschi, a guest and witness to the feast, admired the amount of expensive wine and food, the embellished drinking containers, the jeweled serving dishes, and the exquisite tapestries hanging from the walls of the Lateran.⁷³ From this account, it is clear Boniface only consumed the finest ingredients, which would include roasted meats, white breads, spices, and high quality wine. Given the lavishness of this feast, the dishes served to the pope and his guests were probably prepared with the utmost fanfare and extravagance.

Even records of religious feasts show the consumption patterns of the Pope. Bugliani-Paravicini examined an Easter feast of 1299 in which the cardinals received one sheep and two lambs to share. On Christmas, the cardinals shared one pig and two rabbits as gifts.⁷⁴ Not only does this illuminate the types of meat present at Boniface's feasts, but that meat was given as gifts by the Pope, a food of great social value.

⁷³ E. R. Chamberlin, *The Bad Popes* (New York: New American Library, 1969), 96.

⁷⁴ Agostino Paravicini-Bugliani, *La cour des papes au XIII siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1995), 159.

By looking at the expenses for the almshouse of Saint-Peter, more detail about the variety of foods consumed during this time is revealed. The document, *Introitus et exitus*, shows the purchases for the almshouse under the term of Pope Nicholas III from June 1285 to May 1286. These foodstuffs provided for those maintaining the almshouse, and not for the poor. In these records, lamb, goat, and chicken were purchased. While meat was not purchased during Lent, fish was procured almost daily.⁷⁵ Vegetables, such as cabbage, fennel, turnips, and leeks were purchased based on seasonal availability.⁷⁶ Most interesting, this record listed spices, such as pepper, salt, saffron, mustard, and cumin.⁷⁷ Also, fats, like olive oil and lard were obtained.⁷⁸ The types of food consumed at the almshouse would parallel those consumed in the papal household, forming a more complete picture of the foods Boniface would have possibly consumed. Yet, the list of expenditures itself can only illustrate the amount of food Boniface's household spent in a regular week relative to Lent.

The Pope and His Household

But just who were the expenditures providing for? As pope, Boniface frequently traveled outside of Rome. During these years, Boniface and his court spent the winter half of the year at the Lateran Basilica in Rome and the summer half in Anagni, his home town.⁷⁹ Since he traveled with his household, the *Libri Rationum* recorded food that was provided for them as well as the pope. Using this source, Paravicini-Bagliani compiled a list of the people in Boniface's

⁷⁵ M. Prou, "Compte de la maison de l'aumone de Saint-Pierre de Rome," trans. by Sarah Hanson, *Le Moyen Age* 28, no. 19 (1915), 308.

⁷⁶ Prou, 312.

⁷⁷ Prou, 312.

⁷⁸ Alfio Cortonesi, "Le spese in victualibus della Domus Helemoisne Sancti Petri di Roma," trans. by Kalina Yamboliev, *Archeologia medieval*, no. 8 (1981): 210.

⁷⁹ Timothy Schmidt, *Libri Rationum Camerae Bonifatii Papae VIII* (Vatican City: The Vatican School of Paleography, 1984), ix.

household for the month of May in 1299, which shows the size of his court as well as the variety of professions present.

Paravicini-Bagliani found 190 people listed by occupation.⁸⁰ Some, such as clerics, confessors, chancellors, and bishops, served the court in a religious function. However, the clergy did not comprise the majority of the household. Most served in a secular role, including three doctors, two treasurers, and a tailor. Also part of the court, an appellate judge and several soldiers provided law and order. Food service people, such as several master cooks, two butchers, two bakers, and a fisherman, stood out on the list of people traveling with the pope. Since Paravinci-Bagliani showed, at least in part, who belonged to the household, who the expenditures provided for is more clear.

Paravicini-Bagliani also included the rations of food given to the papal staff, listed by occupation.⁸¹ This information came from the household of Pope Nicholas III (1277 -1280) and shows the way food was divided among the pope's household. This source parallels the distribution of food for Boniface's household since they are only about two decades apart. For this study, portions are defined as a standard size of food given to a single individual. The largest number of portions, 45, were given to servants, indicating 45 people belonged in this category. It also shows that the household fed a great number of support staff. Also in this distribution list are chaplains, officials, marshals, justices and porters, receiving portions sizes ranging from 25 to just one. The kitchen staff also received a food allowance of 10. Though this information does

⁸⁰ Agostino Paravicini-Bagliani, "La mobilita della corte papale nel secolo XIII," *Itineranza pontificia: la mobilita della curia papale nel lazio (secoli XII-XIII)* (Rome: Headquarters of the Borromini Institute, 2003), 33.

⁸¹ Paravinci-Bagliani, 55.

not indicate the size of the portion being given to each member of the household, it does demonstrate that most of the food was directed to the secular members.

Paravicini-Bagaliani's research also reveals the level of planning it took to distribute food to all members of the household. It seems a record was necessary, not only to record expenses, but to maintain order for such a large court, rendering organization essential in the operation of expenses for the papal curia.

Alfio Cortonesi tried approximate the amount of food these household members would have received. Using the almshouse expenditures, Cortonesi determined an estimate of the caloric intake for the people of Saint Peters. Calories taken in hovered around 3500 calories from bread alone, and overall approximated 5000 calories.⁸² While the number of calories remained high, they lacked calcium and vitamin D due to the lack of milk and other substitutes showing that calories do not equal balanced nutrition. While not information collected from the Boniface's curia, this provides a good estimate of the amount of food consumed by Boniface and his household.

Organization of Libri Rationum

The Catholic Church organized one of the first and best financial systems of the Middle Ages.⁸³ These financial records were a necessity to maintain the economic activities of a large institution. The records themselves had to be well organized to keep track of the immense quantity of money flowing in and out of the Church. The organization of the record is key not only to compare Lent and non-Lent entries, but also to determine the accuracy of this source.

⁸² Cortonesi, 212.

⁸³ Lunt, 251.

The papal treasurers organized the entries chronologically and also by banker. The papal curia employed three banking families: The Clarenti, the Mozzi, and the Spini. Inventories and payments rotated among these three families every week, totaling four to five rotations per month. This system remained consistent for both years and did not break pattern once. Each banking family corresponded with the papal treasurer regarding the expenditures, consisting of the weekly needs of the court, and the chamberlain, a fiscal administrator, concerning revenue.⁸⁴ The precision of these records, as well as the regularity of the entries, helps to establish that this source is reliable.

Another marker of accuracy was the consistency of the currency. The Librum or Livre (lbr.), Solidus (sol.) and Denier (den.) were used as the standard system of currency throughout the record. For the purpose of this study, pounds, shillings, and pence are used. The currency used in *Libri Rationum* dates back to the early Middle Ages. From the seventh century, the basic unit of currency was a silver penny or a denier, later standardized and produced by Charlemagne's administration. Twelve of these deniers equaled a shilling and twenty shillings, a pound.⁸⁵ Occasionally, a person was compensated in florins, a gold coin adopted in Florence and Genoa in the thirteenth century.⁸⁶ The value of money at this time was determined by its type and its legend, the metal used to forge it, its weight, established value and exchange rate.⁸⁷ Royalty, as well as towns, held the privilege of minting money. However, local powers determined circulation of coins and reliability of value.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Schmidt, ix.

⁸⁵ English, 187.

⁸⁶ English, 187.

⁸⁷ Vauchez, 328.

⁸⁸ English, 187.

The banking families recorded each expenditure entry in exactly the same manner, week to week. First, the name of the family in charge of recording was listed, along with the date. Second, the list of total expenses for foods was given and broken down by category. Food was categorized by meat and/or fish, the *panetaria* or the pantry and the *buticularia* or the buttery, also known as the wine storage.⁸⁹ Appendix A contains a complete list of the amounts spent in each of the categories each week. The record also showed the expense for horse feed which is not included in the Appendix.⁹⁰ Finally, the *Mandatum* or mandatory weekly expenses were listed in the record last. These ranged from payments to individuals for regular or one time services to goods purchased for the week. With this information, the eating habits of Boniface and his court can be examined.

From Feasting to Fasting: Comparing A Lent to Non-Lent Record

To show the difference in expenditures between a week of Lent and a regular week require a full comparison between two entries. This reveals the changes Boniface and his household made for Lent. I have used the weeks of March 6th and March 13th, which was the first week of Lent, in the year 1299.⁹¹ The Spini family conducted the business for the first week of March in 1299, which preceded Lent in this year. Under the food section, the cost of fish totaled 626 pounds 17 shillings and 2 pence, meat 405 pounds, the pantry items 319 pounds 16 shillings and 10 pence, and the winery 153 pounds 19 shillings and 8 pence. Other expenses for the week, or the *Mandatum*, follow. First, the recorders listed almsgiving by the papacy, both in money and

⁸⁹ Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, s.v. "buttery," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/buttery> (accessed March 4, 2013).

⁹⁰ The amount for horse feed is included with the total for each week in order to preserve the sum of all these categories as recorded in *Libri Rationum*.

⁹¹ Schmidt, 53-58.

in grain. The specific charities were not listed. Next, the record included the amount of food and wine expended by friends and family, totaling 78 pounds 14 shillings and 10 pence. Also listed in the section was payment for religious services, such as compensation for the Confessor and the Chancellor. The treasury paid 4 florins to Lord Arlotto for his unspecified duties at the Lateran. Another s entry shows that the chaplain Stephan Guercii received 24 shillings for his unspecified action during the Christmas time feast. The entries also included non-religious services, such as to Constantine and Johann Zotto for candles and incense.

For this week, there was also a lengthy entry on the purchase of luxury goods. The records show that the treasury paid a large sum of 683 pounds 12 shillings and 8 pence for the purchase of a wax representation of the Circumcision and Epiphany that was acquired in January, tapestries and silk cloth, pieces of red and white cloth for jackets and mantle cloths, and the silver embellishment to a headdress. This total is close to the amount of money spent on fish for an entire week. Additionally, there is a charge for the service of eight masters who worked on detailed Frisian embroideries for the Treasury. The total expenditure for the *Mandatum* section of the entry came to 2734 pounds 14 shillings and 8 pence.

The first full week of Lent followed, starting with March 13, 1299. The Clarenti oversaw this week's expenditures. This entry resembles the previous entry, indicating constancy in spending and therefore reliability. For this week, the cost of fish totaled 760 pounds and 3 shillings, the pantry items 289 pounds 11 pence, and the winery 137 pounds 10 shillings and 8 pence. Again, the *Mandatum* begins with the record for alms giving and followed by the expenses for family and friends (78 pounds 14 shillings 10 pence). The records show amounts

paid to the confessor, the chancellor, Constantine, and Johann Zotto during this period were comparable to the previous entries.

While the record maintained consistency in expenditures, there were variations between weeks. For example, in the week of March 13, three associations received money for 15 days in the amount of 55 florins. Also, a man named Jacobono received 54 shillings for 4 weeks of guarding the door of the papal chamber. These entries are not specific and do not reveal the purpose for these expenditures but they do show variety from the previous week, demonstrating that the needs of the papal household changed weekly. While most of the entries are systematized and formulaic, variations to the entries occur throughout the entire record.

The only noticeable difference between the two entries, discounting expected variation, was the absence of meat purchases during Lent. Meat was not listed throughout the period of Lent for both 1299 and 1302. This confirms that Pope Boniface VIII and his household fasted during Lent. However, this observation requires more statistical evidence to illustrate a complete picture of the difference of eating habits in the papal court between Lent and the rest of the year, taking specific monetary values into account

For the entire period of Lent for both 1299 and 1302, there was absolutely no purchase of meat for the papal household. During the first full week of Lent in 1299, the household spent 760 pounds, and 3 shillings on fish. For the whole week, the expenditures on fish fluctuate between 697 pounds and 11 shillings to 866 pounds 7 shillings and 3 pence. In the non-Lent week before, the household spent approximate total of 1081 pounds on both meat and fish. This figure is representative of all regular weeks. During Lent, animal protein consumption decreased by about

thirty percent. According to the record, the amount of spending for fish during Lent never equaled the amount of protein spent during the regular weeks for both years.

For most of the year, more money was always spent on meat than fish. The ratio between fish and meat varied anywhere from 1:2 to 1:11, indicating the fluctuating needs of the household. This demonstrates that the papal household ate well compared to the daily diet of peasants, as well as the ability to obtain meat and fish in a variety and substantial amount. Fish dominated the food costs on few occasions. The weeks between December 7 and December 21 in 1302 are the only exceptions as the amount of money spent towards fish was almost three times more than the meat.⁹² These dates correspond to Christmas and reflect the amount of food necessary for these winter feasts. The amount spent towards granary and wine remains consistent with minor variations, even during Lent. Due to their importance in the daily meals of any medieval person, it is not surprising that these numbers are fairly steady.⁹³ In contrast to Lent, the major increase in costs for foodstuffs occurred during late December. Christmas was a great celebration, accompanied by feasts and festivities. It is not surprising that the papal household purchased more supplies in order to partake in such merriment.

Analysis of Libri Rationum

According to the expenditures, Boniface and his household fasted during Lent simply because no meat was purchased during this period. However, abstaining from meat performed Lent in its most basic and literal sense. Fasting during Lent could range from this simple dietary

⁹² English, 255.

⁹³ English, 266-267.

modification to more extreme practices. It was common to abstain from all meat products, such as eggs and butter, as well as to maintain a more modest and restrained lifestyle.

The amount of money Boniface's household spent on fish during Lent never rose to the total amount of animal protein purchased throughout the year. Since the expenditures on the granary and wine remain consistent, the pope and his people reduced the overall food intake for this 40 day period. Thus, not only did the household abstain from eating meat, they additionally limited their eating habits, displaying more rigor than doctrine dictated. This could be a reflection of Boniface's tendency to obey all Catholic rituals with much severity.

Abstaining from meat was only the most basic component of the Lenten fast. Extremely pious individuals abstained from theatrical preparations, such as those presented at feasts, and use of expensive ingredients, such as spices, used to liven up the plain tastes of food during this time. Unfortunately, the record does not divulge the purchase of spices or the preparations of food, and therefore the pope's household's rigidity of fasting in this respect remains unknown.

The list of expenditures shows Boniface and his staff not only fasted, but to go beyond the minimum requirements. The record indicates that they did not supplement their diet with more grains, breads, or wine, as the peasants and aristocrats did. Even without knowing whether they used spices or fanciful preparations, it is clear that they took fasting with some degree of seriousness.

How Did Boniface's Fasting Compare?

Boniface fasted as a pope with plentiful resources. The diet of a peasant provides a comparison to contextualize Boniface's "sacrificial" display of penance. In 1291, a French

inventory conducted by the Monastery of St. Ouen recounted the daily diet of a laboring peasant. This account stated that a peasant “ploughs half an acre of fallow land, and for this he shall have bread and stew once a day.”⁹⁴ Bread remained the foundation of sustenance for the poor. The best possible bread was made with wheat but the most common was rye since it was easy to grow.⁹⁵ They especially baked “black bread,” made of three parts spelt and one part beans, and sometimes mixed with millet, chickpeas or chestnuts. If cereals ran out before more could be farmed, then they were left to scavenge for any remaining types of foods.⁹⁶ As the poor already consumed less than their wealthy counterparts, fasting was engrained into the peasant’s diet already. Skipping the evening meal was commonplace.⁹⁷

The peasant’s diet was primarily vegetarian because of its cost effectiveness. Soups, porridges, oats, vegetables, bread and sometimes fish and domestic birds provided the basis of food consumption for the poor.⁹⁸ If a peasant did not live by a water supply, fish was hard to come by. With better means of production, the consumption of meat, eggs and cheese increased, but not until the later Middle Ages. In the fourteenth century, a hierarchy of meats was established. Mutton was resigned as the meat of the poor and pork was the most consumed of the meats.⁹⁹ Even when the poor could afford meat, it was never roasted, as this preparation was only used by the nobility.

The rich and poor consumed some foods in common. Both the nobility and peasants consumed legumes, starchy and root vegetables, fruits and nuts, demonstrating significant cross

⁹⁴ Speed, 171.

⁹⁵ Vauchez, 558.

⁹⁶ Speed, 171.

⁹⁷ Vauchez, 558.

⁹⁸ Vauchez, 558.

⁹⁹ Vauchez, 558.

over between these two economic groups.¹⁰⁰ Medieval people, rich and poor alike drank wine, as it was considered to be strengthening, sanitary, and nutritious.¹⁰¹ It was the purchase of meat and the amount purchased which separated the rich from the poor nutritionally.

The diet of Boniface, even without meat, was still better than that of a peasant. The amount of food consumed by the papal curia was ample to feed the number Paravincini-Bagliani estimated in his research. Not only was food abundant, Boniface and his household had the ability to purchase meat, fish, grains, and wine on a weekly basis. The variety of nutritional groups that the record shows also demonstrates that the household was not as nutritionally deficient as peasants. This also establishes that Boniface fasted, despite his means to eat meat during Lent. While some peasants might have abstained from meat due to economic factors, Boniface's abstinence was a choice.

The Luxury of Being Pope

Keeping in line with dietary restrictions was not the only form of Lenten penance. Some, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, believed fasting should extend past the consumption of food into other areas of life, such as laziness. Using this logic, the purchase of luxury goods would be seen as overindulgence as well, and in discordance with the contrite spirit of Lent. According to the *Libri Rationum*, in the week of Lent, many luxury items were purchased. In this example, silver for a headdress and many types of cloth were purchased.

Under Boniface, the purchase of luxury goods during Lent comes as no shock. The Pope embodied extravagance. Boniface held a strong devotion to the arts, as he was a patron of many

¹⁰⁰ Vauchez, 558.

¹⁰¹ Vauchez, 558.

statues of himself.¹⁰² Unlike his predecessors, a record number of portrait statues were placed around the Lateran while Boniface was still in office.¹⁰³ Many were his own commissions, but others also patronized the creation of his image in order to curry favor with the Pope.¹⁰⁴ Arnolfo di Cambio sculpted the best-known image of a seated Boniface, which was placed in Florence rather than Rome.¹⁰⁵ Some of the most important moments of Boniface's term were commemorated in art. The artist Giotto painted Boniface declaring the Jubilee in 1300, the peak of Boniface's power.¹⁰⁶ Through great memorialization in sculpture and paintings, Boniface's facial description is one of the most well-known out of the popes prior to the Renaissance.¹⁰⁷

His desire for luxury did not end with material goods. Boniface acquired many landholdings during his term as pope. A series of properties belonging to the Caetani family stretched from Rome, going south to Caserta.¹⁰⁸ It was purchased with the equivalent of a quarter of the entire revenue that poured into the papal treasury during his time in power.¹⁰⁹ Boniface's taste for land made him enemy to the families he displaced, such as the Colonna.¹¹⁰ Those families were not the only ones hostile to Boniface's avarice. Jacopone of Todi, a supporter of Celestine, a Franciscan monk, and a poet, represented Boniface as the corruption of worldly pursuits within the Church.¹¹¹

Although the pope abstained from meat, the household only followed Lenten dietary restrictions. The purchase of luxury goods shows that, while maintaining a proper Lenten diet,

¹⁰² Chamberlin, 109.

¹⁰³ Chamberlin, 110.

¹⁰⁴ Chamberlin, 110.

¹⁰⁵ Chamberlin, 110.

¹⁰⁶ Chamberlin, 110.

¹⁰⁷ Chamberlin, 109.

¹⁰⁸ Chamberlin, 100.

¹⁰⁹ Chamberlin, 100.

¹¹⁰ Chamberlin, 100.

¹¹¹ Chamberlin, 101-102.

the evidence did not exhibit fasting beyond food consumption. In the last week of Lent, the record showed the household purchased luxury fabrics such as silk for the production of ecclesiastical dress and elaborate containers for holding a golden base to a cross.¹¹² These could have been purchased for use during the Easter feast and not during Lent. Even if Boniface and his household did purchase luxury items during Lent, they still fasted according to doctrine and in more rigorous way than the average Christian.

The Verdict

Boniface and his household fasted during Lent. Yet, this conclusion oversimplifies his behavior during this time. Looking at his eating habits compared to the peasant class as well as the purchase of luxury goods during Lent further complicates the idea that he fasted. Additionally, Boniface was accused of not fasting during Lent, making defining Boniface's fasting practices even more difficult.

¹¹² Schmidt, 72.

Chapter Four: Sticks and Bones

The Trial of the Deceased Boniface VIII

Seven years after his death, the trial of Boniface VIII commenced. In the months leading up to his trial, both religious and secular officials collected evidence pertaining to the deceased pope's actions in office. Philip IV of France, Boniface's enemy, orchestrated the attack on Boniface's character.¹¹³ Early evidence against the former pope started to accumulate in 1303, before his death. Philip's aide, Nogaret, compiled a list of charges which were read to an assembly at the Louvre Palace on May 12.¹¹⁴ These charges, portraying Boniface as the Anti-Christ, included consulting sorcerers, engaging in sexual sin, and murdering his predecessor, Pope Celestine V.¹¹⁵

The death of Boniface produced intense reactions. Immediately following his death, riots broke out in Rome.¹¹⁶ While the Caetani and Colonnas were embroiled in a bitter fight, the succeeding pope, Benedict XI (1303-1304) led proceedings which ended with the excommunication of William of Nogaret and members of the Colonna family.¹¹⁷ Had this been the conclusion to Boniface's legacy, he might be remembered differently. Yet, Benedict's death from poisoning and the next pope's close relation to the monarchy of France changed Boniface's legacy, as Philip and his aides finally got the opportunity to prosecute Boniface for his actions against the monarchy.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ T.S.R. Boase, *Boniface VIII* (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1933), 359.

¹¹⁴ Boase, 366.

¹¹⁵ F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2002), 262.

¹¹⁶ Claudio Rendina, *The Popes: Histories and Secrets*, trans. Paul D. McCusker (Santa Ana: Seven Locks Press, 2002), 364.

¹¹⁷ Rendina, 365.

¹¹⁸ Rendina, 366.

In 1310, Pope Clement V (1305-1314), reluctantly agreed to hear evidence against Boniface. He was charged with the only offense that could remove him in Church law: heresy.¹¹⁹ If he had been found guilty, his bones would have been removed from their burial site and his deeds while pope, invalidated.¹²⁰ According to T.S.R Boase, Boniface's heresies fell into two categories: rejection of the perpetual soul and disrespect of the Mass.¹²¹ After Philip abandoned his crusade to destroy Boniface's reputation, Clement gathered a council of cardinals, who determined Boniface had been a lawful pope, putting this matter and Boniface's bones to rest.¹²² While Boniface's legacy remained unblemished in respect to the Church, the accusations made against him, both before and after his death, marred his reputation.

Besides witchcraft, deviant sexual behavior, and murder, Nogaret charged Boniface with failing to fast.¹²³ This accusation carried on through to the actual trial in 1310. Moreover, rejection of the Eucharist, another charge against the Pope, unquestionably would prove Boniface a heretic. Yet, evidence from the *Libri Rationum* demonstrates that the pope and his household fasted during Lent by abstaining from meat. These records strongly suggest that Boniface kept at least one required religious fast.

People still accused Boniface not only of, not fasting, but insolently acting out against abstinence. In his 1306 memoirs, Cardinal Pietro of Colonna preserved one account of the pope.¹²⁴ Pietro, no enthusiast for Boniface, considered the Pope a wicked adversary of the Church.¹²⁵ He claimed that Boniface did not fast during Lent, consumed flesh without excuse of

¹¹⁹ Boase, 365, 359.

¹²⁰ Boase, 359.

¹²¹ Boase, 369.

¹²² Boase, 364.

¹²³ Logan, 262.

¹²⁴ Jean Coste, *Boniface VIII en proces: article d'accusation et de positions des te moins (1303-1311)* (L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1995), 247.

¹²⁵ Coste, 251.

sickness and allowed his family and members of the household to do the same.¹²⁶ This is an especially strong charge since Boniface was known to put his family endeavors above his role as pope.

In one incident, the cardinal recounted that magister Peter de Verulis, member of the Apostolic chamber, criticized Boniface for eating meat during Lent. In response, Boniface commanded him to be stripped of all his goods, deprived of all his benefits under penalty of imprisonment, and disbarred from the Roman Court.¹²⁷ Pietro of Colonna's title of cardinal not only gave great weight to his accusations but had placed him in a position to view the pope's behavior first hand. This seems to counter the evidence found in the Pope's household records.

The bias of this witness suggests a flaw in this accusation. The Colonna, including Cardinal Pietro, held deep animosity towards the Caetani family concerning perceived undeserved land acquisition. As pope, Boniface used his power against the Colonna, who dared to act against his family territory. In 1297, the Colonna seized Caetani family treasures in Ninfa, property held by Boniface's family.¹²⁸ The Pope ordered that the Colonna appear before him in an ecclesiastical tribunal. While the pope clearly abused his power, the bitter feelings of the Colonna carried throughout other aspects of Boniface's term. Boase considers Cardinal Pietro's accusation that the Pope partook in blasphemy, torture, and imprisonment "mainly unsubstantial exaggeration".¹²⁹

Furthermore, in 1308, Agostino Trionfo analyzed and refuted these statements of Cardinal Pietro in a defense of Boniface.¹³⁰ Trionfo's account provided contrary testimony and

¹²⁶ Coste, 153.

¹²⁷ Coste, 309.

¹²⁸ Boase, 170.

¹²⁹ Boase, 161, 169.

¹³⁰ Coste, 134.

established a record of Boniface's innocence. In one instance, someone claimed that Boniface declared that he would rather be an animal, such as a donkey or a dog, instead of being French. He went on to immediately say that he did not believe the French to have a soul.¹³¹ Trionfo stated that because these two statements were too dissimilar in their theological points, it is not possible the pope would have stated this. Thus, he discredits this testimony.

On August 3, 1310, the year of the official trial, Nogaret included more a more specific account of Boniface's disregard of fasting. In *Cum Iuxta Doctrinam*, the article of impeachments against the pope, some men testified that Boniface criticized the fasts honoring the Blessed Virgin and the Annunciation of the Virgin. The accusers, including his attendants and family, said that if they made these fasts, Boniface would excommunicate them.¹³² Boniface's court not only viewed the pope's actions in person but was immediately subject to his rule. Additionally, these statements could be convincing, since Boniface suffered from painful gallstones, which shortened his temper and made him intolerable at moments.¹³³ Yet Nogaret's close involvement in the feud between Boniface and Philip IV, as well as his role in the pope's post-mortem trial, signals that he may have gathered slanted testimony.

Finally, Florianus Ubertini, a 65 year old butcher from Todi who served the Pope occasionally, recounted his interaction with the pope.¹³⁴ On August 26, 1310, he testified to a commission of cardinals that Boniface purchased capons to give to his nephew during Lent.¹³⁵ Ubertini then said the pope invited him to dine with him on the capons. The butcher brought the violation to the attention of the Pope, stating that the salvation of the soul mandated no meat to

¹³¹ Coste, 145.

¹³² Coste, 610.

¹³³ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, (Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2003), s.vv. "Boniface VIII, Pope."

¹³⁴ Coste, 691.

¹³⁵ Coste, 687.

be consumed on Holy Days. The Pope responded that the butcher had as little of a soul as the capon before them. The witness answered that the Franciscans and Dominicans preached both the body and the soul would be raised during the resurrection of Christ and therefore the soul needed be saved. According to Ubertini, Boniface countered by stating that the men's bodies possessed the same ability to be resurrected as animals. Again, in this account, Boniface not only disregarded fasting but the resurrection of the soul. However, a butcher dining with the Pope would be an improbable occurrence because of the great disparity in their social standing, making this testimony weak.

The trial directly contradicts evidence from *Libri Rationum* that Boniface fasted. It could be conceivable that Boniface, the unscrupulous pope he was, had the treasurers modify the record to reflect that he did not eat meat during this time. There is no evidence against *Libri Rationum* and if his accusers had more powerful proof, unlike the shaky testimony above, they would have used it against him at trial. It is unclear if the accusers would have had access to these papal records or if they chose not to use them. This was, after all, a trial meant to condemn and not to exact justice. Ultimately, Boniface's trial shaped how he was remembered but not necessarily the manner in which he lived.

Chapter Five: Boniface and His Predecessors

Attitudes and Actions Concerning Penance and Fasting

The trial, while contradicting *Libri Rationum*, did not outright prove that he was not guilty of not fasting. Furthermore, Boniface's own view on penance and his actions reveal a more personal view of the Pope's fasting practices and more broadly, penance. Before much detail can be given on Boniface's position on penance, it is imperative to look at his predecessors to determine the views on penance and fasting, which existed as he came into office. For this comparison, Gregory I, Nicholas I, Gregory VII, Urban II, Innocent III and Celestine V were chosen for their specific actions or beliefs concerning penance and fasting. Boniface's outlook on penance is compared to these notable popes.

St. Gregory the Great, I (590-604)

Even though Gregory I was born into a noble family and received a first-rate education, he turned away from a life of luxury. He became dissatisfied with his position as the Prefect of Rome, a title holding great power.¹³⁶ Instead, he rejected his wealth and moved towards the monastic life under the Rule of Benedict, to escape the "political squalor of Rome."¹³⁷ Living as a Benedictine monk required limiting the consumption of food throughout the year, not just during Lent. According to the rule, "over-indulgence must be avoided... for there is nothing so opposed to the Christian character as over-indulgence."¹³⁸ Gregory went beyond the minimum

¹³⁶ Claudio Rendina, *The Popes: Histories and Secrets*, trans. Paul D. McCusker (Santa Ana: Seven Locks Press, 2002), 99.

¹³⁷ Rendina, 99.

¹³⁸ Saint Benedict, *Saint Benedict's Rule for Monasteries*, trans. Leonard J. Doyle (Collegeville, MN: Order of Saint Benedict, 1948), <http://www.osb.org/osbsitemap.html> (accessed January 1, 2013).

requirements and practiced more austerity than proscribed. During his time at St. Andrew, he took a vow of poverty, and undertook strict penance such as sleeping on the stone floor.¹³⁹ While his time spent in the monastic life was short, Gregory remained devout throughout his life.

Beyond his time at the monastery, Gregory continued this ascetic lifestyle. Throughout his life, Gregory led a life of prayer and solitude as well as fasted frequently.¹⁴⁰ His piety was not bounded by fasting. He used his own family's money to build monasteries, exchanging material riches for spiritual ones.¹⁴¹ Gregory's actions stand in stark opposition to Boniface, who used his capital to acquire more family land and used his papal power as leverage to do so.

In 590, Gregory became pope by a unanimous decision.¹⁴² Unlike Boniface, Gregory did not campaign for this position. He experienced sadness "due basically to his having to abandon definitively the life of solitude in the monastery..."¹⁴³ Although Gregory held no desire to take on this role, he used his new position to preach a pious message to the Christian community. On August 29, Gregory gave a sermon in which he asked all Christians to do penance and pray.¹⁴⁴ Gregory's message demonstrates the virtue which he brought to the papacy and the strong precedent he set concerning the piety of popes.

St. Nicholas I (858-867)

Another pope from aristocratic origins, Nicholas was elected as pope, despite his feelings of unworthiness.¹⁴⁵ These feelings soon dissipated. Similar to Boniface's assertion of papal

¹³⁹ Rendina, 99.

¹⁴⁰ Rendina, 99.

¹⁴¹ Rendina, 99.

¹⁴² Rendina, 100.

¹⁴³ Rendina, 102.

¹⁴⁴ Rendina, 101.

¹⁴⁵ Rendina, 190.

supremacy, Nicholas I “embodied the concept of a pope whom kings, emperors, bishops and priests had to obey.”¹⁴⁶ Despite his involvement in secular affairs, Nicholas actively used his position as Pope to spread Christianity through missions to other nations, bringing them under the religious authority of Rome.¹⁴⁷

In response to the inquiries of the King of Bulgaria, Nicholas drafted a code book intended to educate new Christians. His *Responsa* began with stating the “law of the Christians consists in faith and good works.”¹⁴⁸ While this provided a general overview of the Catholicism, he went further into detail, explicitly detailing fasting practices. He stated “on the days of fasting on which one should especially supplicate the Lord through abstinence and the lamentation of penance, one should completely abstain from meat.”¹⁴⁹ He declared that fasting should take place during Lent and the Pentecost, since “these are the fasts which the holy Roman Church received in antiquity and maintains.”¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, Nicholas encouraged those wishing to fast even more than required to do so, exhibiting his positive and even personal view of abstaining from meat.¹⁵¹ He even went so far as comparing the desire for meat during fasting times to the story of Adam and Eve. He stated “by tasting a mere apple that was forbidden, the first formed people were expelled from the pleasantness of paradise.”¹⁵²

Nicholas I believed strongly in fasting and stated that not doing so would be akin to disobeying God and turning away from salvation. For Nicholas to include fasting as an important

¹⁴⁶ Rendina, 191.

¹⁴⁷ Rendina, 194.

¹⁴⁸ Nicholas I, “The Response of Pope Nicholas I to the Questions of the Bulgars A.D. 866 (Letter 99),” trans. W.L. North, *Fordham University Internet Medieval Sourcebook* (October 1998). <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/basis/866nicholas-bulgar.asp> (accessed January 1, 2013).

¹⁴⁹ Nicholas I.

¹⁵⁰ Nicholas I.

¹⁵¹ Nicholas I.

¹⁵² Nicholas I.

part in a Christian's life, he must have considered abstaining from meat to be a vital part of this religion. His desire to keep the tradition of performing penance through fast shows this to be fundamental, for Nicholas, to being a good Christian.

Gregory VII (1073-1085)

Unlike Gregory I or Nicholas I, Gregory VII came from a peasant family.¹⁵³ Despite his common background, he received a religious education as a young boy and became a monk. After he left the monastery, Gregory went on to be an advisor for the four popes preceding him.¹⁵⁴ Initially, Gregory VII lacked the desire to take on the role of pontiff. Even so, he took on the continuing conflict between secular and religious powers. Once pope, he asserted the sovereignty of the pope through his work, *Dictatus papae*, and used this authority to excommunicate Henry IV, king of Germany.¹⁵⁵ It was over the issue of lay investiture, or secular officials designating religious offices, that Gregory VII made his mark as the bishop of Rome.

In the midst of the opposition to monarchs, Gregory VII remained focused on piety. According to the Bishop of Ferrar, Gregory kept monastic practices throughout his service as pope. The Bishop stated that "He ate only once in each day, he prolonged his fast into the evening."¹⁵⁶ This extremely limited consumption of food mirrors a monk's life, showing continuity in his devotion. The bishop continued to describe a feast in which Gregory also abstained from meat: "His table was graced with the most precious dishes and covered with the choicest food...amongst so many delicate dishes, while others feasted he nevertheless fed only

¹⁵³ Rendina, 268.

¹⁵⁴ Rendina, 269.

¹⁵⁵ Rendina, 270.

¹⁵⁶ H.E.J Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 663.

on wild herbs and vegetables served with chick-peas.”¹⁵⁷ The presence of meat at this table indicates that this banquet did not take place during Lent or another fasting season but the Pope chose to fast anyways. As pope, Gregory tackled secular officials and displayed the power of the pontiff, but as a Christian he fasted, demonstrating his spiritual devotion to God.

Urban II (1088-1099)

Not much was recorded of Urban’s behaviors regarding fasting. Yet, his outlook on penance can be found through his orchestration of the First Crusade. Pope Urban II, hailing from a family of knights, sought to reform the Catholic Church.¹⁵⁸ As part of a mission to unify the Christians across geographical boundaries, Urban led the First Crusade in order to take back the Holy Land from Muslim invaders.¹⁵⁹ On November 18, he spoke at Clermont to call Christians to make this pilgrimage. Those knights and nobility who embarked on this religious journey were granted special privileges. One incentive was the expectation of the forgiveness of sins. The crusades, like fasting, became a way to complete penance. Urban’s crusade use of penance as a method to accomplish his goals proved that he believed in the power of repentance. Even if ulterior motives existed, Christians could journeyed to the Holy Land in search of absolution of sin.

As the Crusades show, the performance of penance was crucial in Christianity. But even a pilgrimage did not release a Christian from fasting. In early synods, Urban confirmed that fasting should be practiced during the beginning of Lent, Pentecost, and in September and December.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Cowdrey, 663.

¹⁵⁸ Rendina, 276.

¹⁵⁹ Rendina, 278.

¹⁶⁰ Robert Somerville, *Pope Urban II's Council of Piacenza* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 113.

According to the records stemming from the abbey of St. Maixent, Pope Urban declared that all Christians should fast every Friday.¹⁶¹ Even though his actual fasting practices remain unclear, Urban upheld weekly fasting, as well as specific fasting holidays.

Innocent III (1198-1216)

Versed in law and theology, Innocent III restored papal authority through the belief that the supervision of spiritual realm superseded the secular affairs, which is similar to the conflict his predecessors faced.¹⁶² Unlike previous popes, political opposition to his power was not the only threat he perceived to exist during his term. Heretics, adhering to an ascetic spirituality, critiqued the Church and its corruptions.¹⁶³ Innocent struggled to keep new orders from “polluting” Catholic doctrine. Only the factions that existed under the official umbrella of the Church, such as the Franciscans, were tolerated.¹⁶⁴ Innocent’s recognition of the Franciscans showed he accepted some of their principles if kept within limits. The foundation of the Franciscan Order lay in prayer and the performance of penance by living in voluntary poverty.¹⁶⁵ Early Franciscans emphasized a meager diet. To consume food, these friars depend upon public charity. The Pope’s acknowledgement of this new order exhibited he at least tolerated this ascetic lifestyle.

Not only did Innocent struggle against new sects, he dealt with immorality in the clergy. Innocent attempted to reform the actions of the clergy, establishing especially stringent rules. The

¹⁶¹ Somerville, 113.

¹⁶² Rendina, 308-311.

¹⁶³ Rendina 314.

¹⁶⁴ Rendina 315.

¹⁶⁵ Rendina, 315.

Pope tried to curb the desire for wealth, believing it was the cause of the worst evils.¹⁶⁶ In a letter to the Bishop of Hereford, he decreed that “the patrimony of Christ ought to be divided equitably among those who have been admitted to his heritage and it is not proper that, while some are drunk with wealth, other are hungry and fasting.”¹⁶⁷ He compared those who were “drunk with wealth” to a model cleric who underwent fasting, showing resistance to greed. Here, Innocent chose fasting as a marker of piety, demonstrating that he held this practice in high regard.

St. Celestine V (1294)

While not known for his political shrewdness, St. Celestine V is remembered for his extremely pious life. Before becoming Pope, Celestine was a Benedictine monk, like Gregory the Great, and a hermit, known for his saintly miracles.¹⁶⁸ His election came after two years without a pope due to conflict caused by the Colonnas and Orsini.¹⁶⁹ To overcome this stalemate, the cardinals chose Celestine precisely because of his exceptional and unquestionable asceticism.

Celestine never gave up his remarkable dedication to spiritual purification. He constantly inflicted pain upon his body, such as wearing iron chains.¹⁷⁰ Throughout the year, he never ate more than what he needed to survive, consuming stale bread and sometimes forgoing bread for vegetables.¹⁷¹ During Lent, he remained in complete solitude and committed himself to prayer.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ Augustin Fliche, “The Advocate of Church Reform,” *Innocent II: Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 63.

¹⁶⁷ Fliche, 63.

¹⁶⁸ Rendina, 354.

¹⁶⁹ Rendina, 353.

¹⁷⁰ Horace K. Mann, *The Lives of Popes in the Middle Ages*, Vol. XVII (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1931), 270.

¹⁷¹ Mann, 270.

¹⁷² Philip Hughes, “Benedict Caetani: The Church’s Salvation,” *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII*, ed. Charles T. Wood (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), 17.

As part of his fast, he sometimes only ate twice a week and even then, only ate bread and water.¹⁷³ At feasts, Celestine ate vegetables without any spices or extravagance associated with medieval banquets, even though he had the opportunity to indulge in meats and other fine foods.¹⁷⁴

After resigning, Celestine ran back to his hermitage in the mountains. After searching and capturing Celestine, Boniface imprisoned the former pope and he died in captivity. Because his austerity was well known, Celestine became immortalized through the Church. Clement V, the two popes after Boniface, canonized Celestine as a “holy confessor,” transforming the former Pope from spiritual to saint.¹⁷⁵

Boniface VIII

These Popes clearly thought fasting to be essential to performing penance for sins and maintaining a Christian life. These attitudes towards fasting laid the foundations for the religious meanings of abstinence and fasting present in Boniface’s lifetime. He would have certainly known about official bulls from his time spent studying Catholic law, especially those of Gregory I and Innocent III.

The information on fasting from these comes from a mixture of official sources and secondary accounts of a pope’s personal practices. The most notable evidence about Boniface’s views on fasting, both personally and as pope, is the absence of any. In the trial, witness attested that Boniface ignored and belittled fasting practices, but these, as showed, were baseless. In truth, Boniface, too much consumed with church law and the politics of being pope, did not write

¹⁷³ Mann, 270.

¹⁷⁴ Mann, 270.

¹⁷⁵ Rendina, 357.

much concerning Catholic doctrine. Both *Clericos Laicos* and *Unam Sanctam* dealt with papal supremacy over secular authority, especially regarding the governance of clerics. They were not an exploration of Catholic theology. The absence of fasting from his official decrees does not prove he did not fast or believe fasting to be essential to leading a Christian life.

Boniface's term as pope was not without religious attention. In February of 1300, Boniface declared the Jubilee in which any pilgrim would receive indulgences for traveling to St. Peter and Paul in Rome.¹⁷⁶ In his bull, he granted "to all who, being truly penitent, and confessing their sins, shall reverently visit these Basilicas...the most full pardon of sin."¹⁷⁷ While piety remained the primary motivation, this was also a political message claiming supreme authority of the pope.¹⁷⁸ Even so, Boniface's choice to give indulgences to penitent pilgrims demonstrated his belief that contrition was critical to salvation and the Christian community.

Moreover, the Pope practiced almsgiving, or religious charity, displaying piety. During Boniface VIII and Benedict XI, between 25 and 50 of the city's poor received daily meals at the Lateran.¹⁷⁹ While 50 people seems like a low figure, *Libri Rationum* shows Boniface's almsgiving practices to be even greater. In the week of March 6, 1299, just before Lent, he gave 330 pounds and 106 rubles, a standard weight of measurement from the time, of grain to an unspecified almshouse.¹⁸⁰ On the week of March 27, in the middle of Lent, the record reported that approximately 803 pounds were given as alms as well as 297 rubles of grain.¹⁸¹ For comparison, Boniface's household spent about 852 pounds on fish this week. They donated

¹⁷⁶ Rendina, 360.

¹⁷⁷ Philip Hughes, "The Papacy Renews Its Strength," *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII*, ed. Charles T. Wood (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), 47.

¹⁷⁸ Rendina, 361.

¹⁷⁹ James J. Broadman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2009), 60.

¹⁸⁰ Schmidt, 54.

¹⁸¹ Schmidt, 63.

almost as much money as they consumed in protein. While almsgiving was year round, the amount of grain and money given increased throughout Lent. Boniface expanded his charity as he fasted during this holiday season.

Despite these exhibitions of piety, Boniface still suffered from being compared to previous, more devout popes. Boniface's religiosity cannot equal the ascetic piety of his immediate predecessor, Celestine, or other memorable popes, such as Gregory the Great. Boniface did not discuss any specifics on fasting, like Nicholas III. Coupled with his lack of attention to doctrinal debates, Boniface was perceived to be less motivated by spiritual concerns such as fasting. There are no accounts of Boniface performing extreme penance, like Gregory I or Gregory VII.

Boniface's practices parallels the papacy of Urban II. The Crusades and the Jubilee both understand the importance of performing penance for the good of the Christian community and individual. Urban's simplistic declarations concerning fasting do not equal the elaborate decrees of Nicholas I. Instead, they parallel the actions of Boniface, who simply fasted as his method of expressing his adherence to doctrine. Both Urban's statement and Boniface's actions reflect the minimum requirements that the Catholic doctrine described. Boniface was known for his extravagances, as his expenditures indicate. Yet, as *Libri Rationum* also showed, his actions belied his image. Through the action of fasting, he in fact revealed his piety.

Conclusion

From looking at all the evidence gathered, Boniface in fact fasted. The proof from *Libri Rationum* was overshadowed by the scandalous post-mortem trial and even previous popes' extreme piety. Yet, just the act of fasting and performing penance exposes his true piety and feelings towards personal obligation to the Church, demonstrating that personal actions and beliefs can contradict the perceived public image. While not a saint, this revelation displays a different side of Boniface, one contradictory to him as a greedy, temperamental, and extravagant pope. The fact that Boniface, one of the most controversial popes, fasted proves how central fasting and food were to medieval religion and society.

Boniface may have fasted in the most limited sense but the whole picture of his life and medieval society showed the difficulty in defining fasting. He fasted as proscribed, but he was fed better than most, as well as having access to meat during the rest of the year. He still possessed all the luxuries of life during the forty day period, such as purchasing large quantities of fish. It is only by putting Boniface's display of penance into a large context in which these complexities are revealed. As this investigation showed, there existed a multifaceted connection between food, feasting, and the Church.

From this research, we can draw more conclusions past determining whether or not Boniface fasted. While feasting and fasting seemed to be opposing modes of consumption, they in fact were less "black and white squares on a chess board," and more reflective of a sliding continuum between the two. Fasting and feasting belong in a gray area. Moreover, food played a multifaceted role in the Middle Ages. Just from this study alone, food was shaped by religious,

social, economic, and political factors, which contribute to the complexities of defining feasting and fasting.

Food, most evidently from this research, was channeled through a religious lens. It would seem that the attention paid to the diet by the Church, of not only the pope, but all Christians, revealed how food, fundamental for life, was channeled through a religious framework. Even the pope was controlled through this long standing Christian ritual. In this case, by looking at food through abstinence and prohibition, food is something to be controlled and not to nourish. Fasting was not just a simple means of expressing piety but giving your whole life over to the Church. Yet, even so, religion did not bar all from indulging during fasting times. So the Church's control only reached to a superficial level, and anything past this was an example of personal devotion to God and Christianity.

Thus, food as seen through a religious context, struggled with the social value placed on it. Just like fasting displayed Christian piety, feasting displayed social standing in the community. To society, food not only represented nutrition, but wealth and power. Boniface, while he fasted accordingly, also indulged in elaborate feasting, exhibiting the ability of these opposing modes of consumption to co-exist.

Additionally, food played an important role economically. From *Libri Rationum*, most of the expenditures of Boniface and his household centered around the purchase of food. The papal curia had to employ multiple banking families and expand their financial system in order to feed and provide for the growing household. Economics and social factors are overlapped, as prices for food dictated the purchasing power of the elite versus the peasant class.

Finally, food was political. At his trial for heresy, Boniface was accused of fasting. While this might have technically been a religious proceeding, the trial stemmed from political motives. Philip IV and especially his aide, Nogaret, used fasting as a means to defame the deceased pope and his crusade against secular authority. This trial functioned to establish the French monarchy as supreme over religious authority, and the accusers, in part, used food as a means to accomplish this.

Food can truly reflect all of the complexities of a culture. By looking at the diet of one pope, in one geographical place and time, religious, social, economic and even political factors collide, exposing the power of food. While a necessity to life, these elements work together to construct new meanings of food, for it is the purpose of food which determines its valuation in society. Boniface may have fasted, but it is the multidimensional aspect of food which truly divulges the relationship between medieval people and food.

Appendix A

Expenditures for Food: 1299-1300¹

| Mensis | Piscibus | Carnibus | Coquine | Panetaria | Buticularie |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Januarii: Clarenti Jan. 30 | 141.11.10 | 579.0.6. | 1057.8.4 | 301.2.3 | 151.3.5 |
| Februarii: Mozi Feb. 6 | 129.4 | 599. 9.2 | 1056.9.7 | 305.16. 7 | 158.13.9 |
| Februarii: Spine Feb. 13 | 142.11. 3 | 628.15.8 | 1090.19.2 | 281.10.2 | 136.10.2 |
| Februarii: Clarenti Feb. 20 | 202.11 | 724 | 1249.9.11 | 285.7.1 | 139. 17.6 |
| Februarii: Mozi Feb. 27 | 256.13.6 | 589.19 | 1194.13.10 | 284.11.6 | 141. 5.4 |
| Martii: Spine Mar. 1-6 | 626.17.2 | 405 | 1447.14.11 | 319.16.10 | 153. 19.8 |
| Martii: Clarenti Mar. 13 | 760.3 | - | 948.11 | 289.11 | 137. 10.8 |
| Martii: Mozi Mar. 20 | 791.8.7 | - | 996.5 | 303.8.9 | 204.12.3 |
| Martii: Spine Mar. 27 | 852.4.8 | - | 1050. 8.10 | 323. 4 | 164.5.10 |
| Aprilis: Clarenti Apr. 3 | 752.4.7 | - | 1007.18.1 | 350.8.2 | 135.4 |
| Aprilis: Mozi Apr. 10 | 697. 11 | - | 885.15 | 311. 3.10 | 96.8.10 |
| Aprilis: Spine Apr. 16-17 | 866.7.9 | - | 1121. 9.5 | 358.3.2 | 94.16.3 |

¹ Note: the monetary values of each entry are as follow; pound.shilling.pence. In entries where no shillings were used, a zero is used as a placeholder.

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Aprilis: Clarenti Apr. 19-24 | 232.6.3 | 787. 17.6 | 1361.19.4 | 516.16 | 368.2.8 |
| Maii: Mozi Mai 1 | 221.2.2 | 648.14.6 | 1387.6.8 | 358.7.2 | 159.13.11 |
| Maii: Spine Mai 8 | 308.9 | 652.18 | 1515. 3 | 479.9 | 418.5.8 |
| Maii: Clarenti Mai 15 | 165.19 | 632.15.6 | 1109.4 | 359.16 | 225.3.2 |
| Maii: Mozi Mai 22 | 149.11.4 | 561.18 | 1051.5.6 | 334.1.10 | 183.10 |
| Maii: Spine Mai 29 | 161.10 | 343. 12 | 809.15.8 | 298.13 | 226.2.2 |
| Junii: Clarenti Jun. 5 | 152.17 | 583.6 | 1053.17.2 | 316.18.4 | 179.2.10 |
| Junii: Mozi Jun. 12 | 161.1 | 585. 2.6 | 1034.5 | 241.16.6 | 188.18.4 |
| Junii: Spine Jun. 19 | 148.7 | 539.16 | 1024.16.2 | 219.1 | 165.10.4 |
| Junii: Clarenti Jun. 26 | 226.16.6 | 418.11 | 99.10.9 | 274.6.3 | 181.15.2 |
| Julii: Mozi Juli 3 | 141.19 | 589.1.6 | 1193.11.4 | 275.8 | 188.17.6 |
| Julii: Spine Juli 10 | 133 | 560.6 | 1044.13.6 | 222.7.7 | 173. 3 |
| Julii: Clarenti Juli 17 | 78.19 | 526.15 | 953.6.5 | 210.17.6 | 150.5.4 |
| Julii: Mozi Juli 24 | 80.1 | 496.19.6 | 901.9.7 | 192.3.3 | 153.1.6 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Julii: Spine Juli 31 | 113.4 | 484.2 | 887.14 | 204.15.8 | 174.1.4 |
| Augusti: Clarenti Aug. 7 | 69.13 | 456.16 | 857.2 | 201.18.8 | 172.18 |
| Augusti: Mozi Aug. 14 | 74.4 | 434 | 805.1.8 | 177.4.1 | 179 |
| Augusti: Spine Aug.21 | 160.7 | 645.3 | 1140.17 | 200.15.10 | 210.0.10 |
| Augusti: Clarenti Aug. 27-28 | 145.6.6 | 471.8.6 | 977.17.3 | 197.5.6 | 187.4.3 |
| Septembris: Mozi Sept. 4 | 169.13 | 220.18.6 | 872.7.8 | 138.4 | 170.13.4 |
| Septembris: Spine Sept. 11 | 94.14 | 176.1.6 | 712.14.4 | 115.16.9 | - |
| Septembris: Clarenti Sept. 18 | 108.6.6 | 135.16.6 | 637.13.6 | 106.1.2 | 162.1.2 |
| Spetembris: Mozi Sept.25 | 92 | 168.11 | 666.0.11 | 40.17.2 | - |
| Octobris: Spine Okt. 2 | 101.9 | 473.15.6 | 932.15.3 | 187.10.2 | 172.7.8 |
| Octobris: Clarenti Okt. 9 | 91.19 | 524.0.8 | 1000.4.8 | 179.17.6 | 152.11.10 |
| Octobris: Mozi Okt. 16 | 95.12.6 | 468.3 | 924.1.7 | 173.17.2 | 103.5.3 |
| Octobris: Spine Okt. 23 | 95.5 | 139.4.6 | 738.4.2 | 146.14 | - |
| Octobris: Clarenti Okt. 30 | 161.10 | 227.8 | 692.15.11 | 191.2.6 | 62.18.8 |

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| Novembris: Mozi Nov. 6 | 133 | 373.11 | 845.12.10 | 225.16.11 | 140.2.6 |
| Novembris: Spine Nov. 11-13 | 116.15 | 398.3.6 | 861.13.11 | 228.9.2 | 134.16.1 |
| Novembris: Clarenti Nov. 20 | 114.1 | 641.4.6 | 1149.1.8 | 239.14.6 | 141.14.6 |
| Novembris: Mozi Nov. 27 | 122.9 | 544.9 | 1007.1.11 | 226.2.2 | 115.10.10 |
| Decembris: Spine Dec. 4 | 153.4.6 | 539.5 | 1023.10.5 | 253.18.10 | 116.3 |
| Decembris: Clarenti Dec. 11 | 104.2.9 | 528.4 | 976.18 | 240.7.6 | 18.7.10 |
| Decembris: Mozi Dec. 18 | 174.1.6 | 551.12 | 1037.17.10 | 222.17.8 | 123.11.9 |
| Decembris: Spine Dec. 25 | 316.18.6 | 451.19 | 1128.10.11 | 265.7.4 | 131.12.8 |
| Decembris: Clarenti Dec. 25/ Jan. 23 | 53.12.6 | 975.19 | 1564.1.11 | 521.11 | 209.7.1 |
| Januarii: Mozi Jan. 8 | 103.2.6 | 805.17 | 1349.10.3 | 316.8.10 | 221.13.5 |
| Januarii: Spine Jan. 15 | 122.16 | 607.19 | 1064.13.9 | 218.16.8 | 120.0.10 |
| Januarii: Clarenti Jan. 22 | 123.4.4 | 669.18.6 | 1123.4.5 | 222.3.8 | 135.6.11 |

Expenditures for Food: 1302-1303

| Mensis | Piscibus | Carnibus | Coquine | Panetaria | Buticularie |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Januarii: Clarenti Jan. 26 | 147.14.6 | 849.3.11 | 1398.3.9 | 264.8.1 | 167.11.5 |
| Februarii: Mozi Feb. 2 | 133.14 | 753.2 | 1205.7.11 | 238.8.10 | 135.9.2 |
| Februarii: Spine Feb. 9 | 118.3.6 | 755.2.9 | 1207.17.10 | 240.16.6 | 145.9.10 |
| Februarii: Clarenti Feb. 16 | 136.3.6 | 824.14.9 | 1374.7.5 | 241.15.10 | 150 |
| Februarii: Mozi Feb. 23 | 132.5 | 865.18.6 | 1356.18.4 | 227.5.6 | 137.13.8 |
| Martii: Spine Mar. 2 | 137.3 | 904.17 | 1364.5.8 | 93.19.6 | 136.8.5 |
| Martii: Clarenti Mar. 6-9 | 497.3.8 | 593.8.4 | 1497.11.8 | 277.14.3 | 156.5.5 |
| Martii: Mozi Mar. 16 | 761.10.4 | - | 980.1.9 | 210.1.11 | 131.9.7 |
| Martii: Spine Mar. 23 | 727.6.6 | - | 937.7.2 | 187.13.6 | 137.5.11 |
| Martii: Clarenti Mar. 30 | 725.13.9 | - | 926.6.5 | 192.0.5 | 128.3.7 |
| Aprilis: Mozi Apr. 6 | 715.5 | - | 918.3.7 | 186.3.2 | 124.13 |
| Aprilis: Spine Apr. 13 | 729.8.2 | - | 940.4.2 | 179.17.6 | 128.15.10 |
| Aprilis: Clarenti Apr. 20 | 1110.1.1 | - | 1368.12.3 | 176.7.2 | 136.6.3 |

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| Aprilis Mozi Apr. 27 | 205.4.6 | 870.16 | 1378.16.6 | 424.3 | 156.7.9 |
| Mai: Spine Mai 4 | 132.6.8 | 769.2.6 | 1262.13.2 | 68.10 | 161.4 |
| Mai: Clarenti Mai 11 | 125.9.1 | 982.2.6 | 1624.6.7 | 221.14.2 | 171.18.6 |
| Mai: Mozi Mai 18 | 119.2 | 904.1.6 | 1609.13.9 | 375.5.6 | 250.1.8 |
| Mai: Spine Mai 25 | 117.11.9 | 648.14.6 | 1092.15.5 | 218.15.4 | 150.12.1 |
| Junii: Clarenti Jun. 1 | 117.10.6 | 455.5.10 | 921.14.1 | 237.15.6 | 141.4.8 |
| Junii: Mozi Jun. 8 | 119.9 | 667.4.8 | 1113.14.6 | 212.10.2 | 115.2.6 |
| Junii: Spine Jun. 15 | 173.17 | 706.16.8 | 1198.17.1 | 225.15.10 | 125.3.8 |
| Junii: Clarenti Jun. 22 | 127.12 | 646.17.2 | 1083.4.9 | 222.17.6 | 109.6.8 |
| Junii: Mozi Jun. 29 | 181.17.3 | 653.6.3 | 1141.19.7 | 237.2.9 | 123.13.4 |
| Julii: Spine Juli 6 | 111.1.2 | 630.9 | 1072.19.2 | 229.2.2 | 116.0.4 |
| Julii: Clarenti Juli 13 | 100.18 | 644.11.9 | 1068.11.3 | 223.11.8 | 161.19.7 |
| Julii: Mozi Juli 20 | 113.13.6 | 641.13 | 1080.11.1 | 218.3 | 104.14.7 |
| Julii: Spine Juli 27 | 159.8.10 | 612.7.9 | 1053.10.2 | 216.8 | 95.2.10 |

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| Augusti: Clarenti Aug. 3 | 130.2.4 | 626.5.2 | 1086.12 | 234.1.4 | 97.12.9 |
| Augusti: Mozi Aug. 10 | 182.18.6 | 602.7.6 | 1092.19.7 | 204.5.8 | 98.12.7 |
| Augusti: Spine Aug. 17 | 187.14 | 712.3 | 1190.15.11 | 227.19.3 | 109.9.6 |
| Augusti: Clarenti Aug. 24 | 106.11 | 694.4.4 | 1134.12 | 212.14.5 | 102.11.5 |
| Augusti: Mozi Aug. 31 | 121.17.6 | 710.7.3 | 1132.12.8 | 214.19.9 | 105.10 |
| Septembris: Spine Sept. 7 | 131.5.8 | 701.8.6 | 1131.6.10 | 230.12 | 121.12.1 |
| Septembris: Clarenti Sept. 14 | 133.16.6 | 801.17.6 | 1335.13.9 | 221.17.6 | 151.17.10 |
| Septembris: Mozi Sept. 21 | 212.13 | 471.11 | 936.6.2 | 209.16.8 | 153.19.1 |
| Septembris: Spine Sept. 28 | 115.16.6 | 652.9.6 | 1066.15.2 | 217.0.3 | 194.1.11 |
| Octobris: Clarenti Okt. 5 | 96.1 | 1134.8.3 | 1794.4.4 | 389.6.3 | 314.12.8 |
| Octobris: Mozi Okt. 12 | 162.10 | 776.18.2 | 1307.13.3 | 270.7 | 238.10 |
| Octobris: Spine Okt. 19 | 120.18.6 | 709.5.8 | 1284.10.10 | 181.14.8 | 197.2.3 |
| Octobris: Clarenti Okt. 26 | 114 | 722.7 | 1165.1 | 177.4.4 | 180.12 |
| Novembris: Mozi Nov. 2 | 195.4 | 736.19.3 | 1245.11.1 | 176.11 | 158.4.1 |

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|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|----------|
| Novembris: Spine Nov. 9 | 99.19.10 | 751.3.8 | 1178.16.10 | 183.17.2 | 132.17 |
| Novembris: Clarenti Nov. 16 | 106.15 | 768.11 | 1243.2.2 | 198.15.3 | 117.19.2 |
| Novembris: Mozi Nov. 23 | 113.15 | 750.13.4 | 1227.17.6 | 215.15.3 | 156.7.4 |
| Novembris: Spine Nov. 30 | 140.9.6 | 718.4 | 1153.6.11 | 194.5.6 | 142.10.1 |
| Decembris: Clarenti Dec. 7 | 358.12.10 | 193.1.11 | 964.19.7 | 200.9.11 | 130.9.6 |
| Decembris: Mozi Dec. 14 | 346.11.1 | 142.6.2 | 821.1.9 | 192.18 | 123.7 |
| Decembris: Spine Dec. 21 | 401.15.4 | 83.4.10 | 806.18 | 202.13.9 | 127.1 |
| Decembris: Clarenti Dec. 28 | 327.17.5 | 813.6.1 | 1522.16.1 | 551.16.10 | 190.4.9 |
| Januarii: Mozi Jan. 4 | 122.10 | 954.3.3 | 1385.7.11 | 223.3.10 | 170.16.6 |
| Januarii: Spine Jan. 11 | 110.5 | 780.8.3 | 1192.14.7 | 233.17.9 | 135.13.1 |
| Januarii: Clarenti Jan. 18 | 106.11 | 803.7.2 | 1218.5.3 | 230.18.4 | 128.8.2 |
| Januarii: Mozi Jan. 25 | 109.8 | 931.12.8 | 1399.7.9 | 230.17.5 | 141.2.3 |

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