One cold December in the fourteenth century, the royal provost of Paris hanged Jean Parvi as a murderer. The bishop of Paris protested, complaining to the Parlement of Paris. The bishop maintained that the provost had disregarded the fact that Jean had been found innocent by an ecclesiastical court. Worse, he had ignored canon law and the privileges granted to clergy, exempting them from capital punishment and leaving them in the jurisdiction of the Church. The provost replied that under interrogation Jean had confessed to the murder and that he neither claimed to be a cleric nor wore the tonsure or a habit. Parlement faced a serious dilemma. The bishop's charge that the provost had overstepped his authority could not be dismissed, but the case rested on little more than hearsay. The bishop could provide as much evidence of Jean's clerical status as he desired, but none of it mattered if Jean's position had not been clear at the time of his arrest and trial. As a solution, Parlement ordered a unique investigation: Jean's corpse was disinterred and the barbers of Paris examined the head for any signs of a tonsure. Finding none, Parlement decided not to begin a trial against the provost.1

This anecdote highlights the tricky position the court was in vis-à-vis the Church. On the one hand, this case neatly combines all roles clerics could play in a judicial drama: victim, criminal, and rival jurisdiction. On the other, it is a case of the secular and

1 Archives Nationales, Paris [hereafter AN], Registres Criminel de Parlement de Paris, X2a8, §2, 23 December 1371, fols. 268r–70v.
ecclesiastical jurisdictions coming into conflict. Time and again, the men of Parlement interacted with members of the clergy as the former pursued crimes of lese majesty.\(^2\) Not all of these encounters were antagonistic, nor did the clergy only appear in the records as a rival authority. There were times when the court's pursuit of crime meant it encountered ecclesiastics as supplicants seeking remedy for wrongs received and as suspects in crimes as diverse as forgery and rebellion.\(^3\) Through an exploration of cases of lese majesty tried by the Parlement of Paris under King Philip VI Valois (r. 1328–1350), this article analyzes how the court negotiated the challenges presented by bishops, abbots, and members of the clergy generally, and how, for the clergy themselves, relinquishing rights to the secular court was an effective and ultimately advantageous bargaining mechanism.

Lese majesty was both a tool and a crime. Judicially and politically, it served as a tool in the growth of the Parlement of Paris, in the centralization of law and jurisdiction, and in the advancement of the king's sovereignty. In the process, Parlement routinely came into conflict with the various municipal, seigneurial, and ecclesiastical jurisdictions that were loath to cede their rights to the growing royal administration. The ability to wield justice and to be seen wielding it was an indisputable demonstration of both power and authority. The king could usually handle seigneurial and municipal challenges. When the challenger was the Church, however, Philip had to adopt a more conciliatory, even if not deferential, approach, regardless of the nature of the offense.\(^4\) As a crime, lese majesty is perhaps best understood as a network of offenses. The more crimes the king could claim were treasonous, the greater the extent of the king's power and authority. According to contemporary judicial and

\(^2\) While clerics did sit in Parlement, they were excluded from criminal procedures, hence from the majority of cases of lese majesty.

\(^3\) Both of which constituted crimes of lese majesty as understood in the first half of the fourteenth century.

political theorists, only the king or his court had cognizance over such offenses, and by the beginning of the fifteenth century royal decrees established that exclusive right beyond a doubt.\(^5\) These crimes, therefore, provided the justification necessary to counter jurisdictional challenges.\(^6\) Yet because clergy had their own courts and law code, the tensions with ecclesiastical jurisdictions were the most pronounced and required the greatest care and creativity to overcome.

As the only sovereign court whose decisions, while independent of the king, often directly affected the monarchy, Parlement's authority to act vastly expanded, but two matters remained unresolved: establishing what constituted lese majesty, and the political approach of the *rex christianissimus*. Under Philip VI, lese majesty was only beginning to be defined and deployed as inextricably bound to the late medieval idea of sovereignty. Until the thirteenth century, the only sovereign, secular ruler was the Holy Roman Emperor. As the French king grew to be the most powerful prince in Europe, however, he was more capable of a de facto manifestation of sovereignty than the emperor. Debate broke out in learned circles as to whether a *king* could be sovereign in any right.\(^7\) Without sovereignty, a ruler lacked majesty and could not suffer the old Roman imperial offense of *crimen laesae maiestatis*. In 1271, William Durandus used the phrase "*rex Franciae est princeps in regno suo* (the king of France is prince in his own domain)" in his *Speculum Judiciale*.\(^8\) Durandus' dictum, variously formulated, had many


\(^7\) For a classic overview of this debate, see Walter Ullmann, "The Development of the Medieval Idea of Sovereignty," *The English Historical Review* 64, no. 250 (1949): 1–33.

\(^8\) Guilelmus Durandus, *Speculum Judiciale* (Basel, 1563), Pars iv, partic. iii, *Per Venerabilem*. 
consequences. In foreign relations, it articulated independence for the French king in affairs with the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope. Domestically, sovereignty bestowed upon the king plenitudo potestatis (fullness of power), with the result that all within the realm were deemed subjects of the king and bound to him as such.\(^9\) Durandus himself argued—and the French monarchy embraced—the idea that the French king was a sovereign lord in his own domain; therefore, crimen laesae maiestatis, from which lese majesty largely derived, could be committed against him.

Lese majesty was the quintessential crime. It towered over other offenses in severity because of the magnitude of its impact. Unlike a standard felony such as arson, a high crime of lese majesty targeted the society as a whole and the ruler himself.\(^10\) The French expression of royal sovereignty incorporated the authority to rule on lese majesty. To have crimes of lese majesty committed against the king of France and for him to be able to demonstrate cognizance of and competent jurisdiction over said crimes provided proof that the French king was the one bearing the majesty—thus, Philip and his line were the rightful kings of France, not Edward in England. Only a Valois had the requisite justice to seek amends and to punish the malefactor. Lese majesty therefore played a vital function in articulating French sovereignty and legitimacy in the midst of a dynastic war.

As lese majesty had never had a definitive list of offenses, the incorporation of new crimes was a matter of interpretation and judicial prosecution. This made the expansion of royal authority through the prosecution of criminal activity a contentious process. Treating lese majesty as a special case had numerous repercussions. For instance, it naturally followed that no ordinary court could be competent to try cases that were in themselves extraordinary, and certainly municipal and

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seigneurial courts lacked the necessary scope and purview to examine crimes touching the entire society, let alone crimes concerning the king. Ecclesiastical courts could argue that they possessed the scope, but they were still missing the ability to judge and punish secular offenses. The court that did have rights over these cases had to itself have no superior—in other words, to try cases concerning the sovereign lord, the court too had to be sovereign. By Philip VI's reign, none challenged the idea that only the king or the Parlement of Paris could try cases that had the king as victim.  

Even when a type of crime had been identified as lese majesty and fell to Parlement, enforcing the rights of the court could be difficult in a country troubled by war, plague, and competing law codes, even before a lay lord or bishop became involved. Sometimes the court would grant local jurisdictions the right to hear particular crimes, as it did with homicide in 1341, thus further muddying the waters. Moreover, the court could be reluctant to come down hard on some types of lese majesty, due to political circumstances. The government's desire to extend royal jurisdiction, therefore, did not happen in a vacuum or without resistance. There were other powers present in society with whom the court had to negotiate; the compromises and decisions made in the matters of law and jurisdiction in this larger social context influenced how successful the expansion could be.  

The fact that lese majesty lacked solid definitions and had almost no judicial precedent meant that it could be—and indeed was—used by these different groups, including the Church. This could pose a real problem for

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11 Perrot, Les cas royaux, 277; Jones, "Bons Bretons et Bons Francoys," 98.

12 Lese majesty expanded from treason to include kidnapping and homicide, among other offenses. The growth came as a response to the changing nature of French kingship, the emergence of the idea of the State, and the articulation of the public good.


the court, as the expansion of judicial authority necessitated the ability of Parlement to advance its position as the court of first instance, to claim cognizance of any case about royal rights or privileges, and to maintain the ability for anyone to appeal a lower court's decision. Ultimately, the issue of lese majesty was left unresolved by the end of Philip's reign. Over the course of his twenty-two-year reign, however, Parlement established a procedure of claiming crimes as lese majesty through the use of court orders and precedent.

The French kings had long considered themselves defenders of the faith, rex christianissimus, and had since the twelfth century sought to buttress this claim through political and legal action. In 1112, Louis VI believed that it was the primary duty of the clergy to intercede with God and the saints for the peace of Christendom; their prayers and sermons were to be the first defense in keeping men moral and law-abiding. Should these intercessions fail, however, Louis decreed that it was the place of the king and his men to rectify wrongdoing and pacify the land with the sword. For this Capetian, the royal sword served to buttress and enforce the ideals of the Church by punishing the unrepentant. Simultaneously, Louis relegated the clergy to a secondary position politically, for by freeing the priests of all cares but prayer, he relieved them of secular (especially political) authority at the same time. By 1226, the king's power over the Church had grown considerably. After the minority of Louis IX, it experienced no major challenges and, on the whole, became an acknowledged political and legal fact for the duration of the thirteenth century. By the opening decades of the fourteenth

century, the king’s legal position as defender of the Church had become so engrained that a sermon on the occasion of the Flemish war could equate the peace of the Church with that of the king, rather than the king’s peace with the peace of the Church as in the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{18} Such a sermon imposed a heavy burden not merely on the parishioners, but on the clergy to uphold the will of the king. One could not be a good and faithful Christian and do otherwise. Moreover, the fourteenth century brought with it the idea that the king was the representative of the common good. On this basis, the king could interfere in and overrule lay and ecclesiastical courts.\textsuperscript{19} All of these political developments fed into the king’s—and so into Parlement’s—legal ability to assert authority in criminal cases involving clergymen.

By examining instances when the court interacted with clergy as victims, criminals, and competing jurisdictions, the remainder of this article will show how Parlement used specific legal tools and lese majesty to exert its influence over one of the most cohesive obstacles to a centralized legal authority. Parlement used a combination of incentives and coercive threats to bring the ecclesiastical authorities into line. These tales of judicial conflict are not meant to suggest that Parlement was hostile to the Church. Nor were the sides always clearly defined as Parlement versus Church. The sovereign justice of the court provided distinct advantages to ecclesiastics. We should therefore understand these exchanges in a larger context: one in which the king was new to the throne and fending off challenges to his legitimacy; one in which Parlement was a recently independent institution sitting at the center of a gradually expanding administrative bureaucracy; and one in which an old idea—les majesty—was finding new life as a means of ensuring that legitimacy and expanding the government’s reach.

\textsuperscript{18} Jonathan Sumption, \textit{The Hundred Years War: Trial by Battle} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 23.
I begin with jurisdiction as this was the over-riding factor in any interaction between Parlement and an ecclesiastic. Not all interactions between the two were antagonistic. The criminal registers of Parlement are filled with instances of the court remitting a cleric to his bishop for punishment, of the pardons granted by ecclesiastical courts being honored in Paris, and even of clergy offering Parlement prison space to house criminals during trial. Yet these cordial relations did not preclude a note of skepticism on the part of Parlement. In 1349, Parlement ordered that one Pierre Mollet, *homme de corps* of the monks of Saint-Faron de Meaux, be rendered to the care of the Châtelet, the royal prison in Paris. He had been set to be paroled for the homicide (a crime of lese majesty) of which he stood accused, as the monks had absolved him. But the local royal prosecutor protested, arguing that the absolution was venal and an abuse of justice on the part of the monks.\(^{20}\) Their motives being suspect as they were Pierre's lords, Parlement annulled the monks' judgment and summoned Pierre before the court. In this case, the court's ability to see its wishes carried out was relatively easy: Pierre was being held in a royal prison in Provins under the care of the bailiff of Troyes; transferring the prisoner required little more than a letter of command.

Unfortunately for Parlement, not all prisoners it desired to question were in secular cells, and not all ecclesiastics were willing to relinquish their hold over a suspect. The ecclesiastical court was most recalcitrant when the person in question was thought to have clerical status while Parlement was most insistent on its claim when the case involved lese majesty. Thus, in the early 1340s, the court became adamant that the suspect Berenger Dalmacii, wanted for murder, be brought before it. Dalmacii had been a layman at the time of his crime, according to the testimony of ten witnesses, but, because he later claimed clerical status, the bishop of Maguelonne refused to release him to Parlement's custody.\(^ {21}\) This left the dilemma of how Parlement

\(^{20}\) AN, *Registres Criminel*, X2a5, §2, 23 May 1349, fol. 162v.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., X2a4, §2, 25 June 1343, fol. 164r–v.
could reassert its rights in the case. Very occasionally, the high court directly ordered its commissioners to arrest people in churches, but never to break into ecclesiastical prisons to retrieve a prisoner. Instead, Parlement relied on its ability to seize the temporal privileges of a bishop or abbot. Depending on the circumstances, these privileges could refer either to the land the bishop held as a fief of the king or to his ability to wield secular justice and authority. Either seizure could have devastating consequences as it economically and politically crippled the targeted clergy. In one instance, an entire monastery, lacking any other means of support, abandoned its divine office and resorted to begging until remedy was given. In the dispute over the murderer Dalmacii and the bishop of Maguelonne, Parlement forced the handover of the suspect by seizing the bishop's temporal authority. Dalmacii was to be delivered to the court's commissioners, and the bishop was to surrender the letters of his office, thereby making certain that the bishop's jurisdiction remained solely in the realm of the sacred until such time as the king or court deemed it appropriate to relent.

These seizures of privileges were used—or at least threatened—in numerous instances and almost always when a bishop or abbot refused to comply with a request from Parlement. In one notable instance, Parlement applied it as a forerunner of punishment. In fact, without it, the court would not have been able to pursue its case at all. The archbishop of Toulouse complained to Parlement in 1335 that the fiscal advocate in the seneschalsy of Perigord and Quercy had exceeded his powers by seizing the archbishop's temporal privileges. The advocate replied that the step had been necessary, as the archbishopric's lawyers were suspected of rebellion against the king. Parlement agreed with the fiscal advocate.

22 Ibid., X2a4, §2, 14 September 1341, fol. 48r.
23 Ibid., X2a3, §2, 26 June 1332, fol. 155r. Break-ins did happen, but they were always a decision of the local officer and considered an abuse of office by the Parlement.
24 Ibid., X2a5, §3, 8 April 1349, fols. 162v–163r.
25 Ibid., X2a3, §2, 16 October 1335, fols. 38v–39r.
There was too much risk that the archbishop, if in possession of his judicial authority, would shield his men from prosecution. The court not only decreed a punishment for the malicious lawyers, but ordered that all the books of the court of the archbishop be confiscated and examined for evidence of inquests and other deeds contrary to the rights of the king. Without a tool that forced the clergy to submit to secular jurisdiction, the court would have been unable to effectively defend the king's majesty. Notably, Parlement did not distinguish between the case of murder and that of rebellion. Both offenses constituted lese majesty and as such demanded that Parlement alone try the case. The high court's consistency helped ensure that the threat of seizure routinely guaranteed compliance.

Parlement's aggressive assertion of dominance was at odds with the traditions of the thirteenth century that envisioned secular law as an aid to and a support for men of the Church. Secular law owed a great deal to canon lawyers and their rescuing Roman law. The procedural handbooks on which the secular court relied had been written by Church canonists as well as civil jurists. Philippe de Beaumanoir, who redacted the customary code for the region of Beauvais in the late twelfth century, articulated the idea of the secular arm defending the Church, specifically in terms of real property: "And there is no reason why secular justice should not help those who hold the property of Holy Church to defend and safeguard their temporal possessions, so that offenders may not do them harm or violence." Beaumanoir's formulation privileged physical property and envisioned secular involvement in ecclesiastical affairs primarily in land disputes. His view that secular law would only intervene in matters of land resulted from a conception of a divided society. Matters concerning ecclesiastics rightly remained the provenance of Church authorities unless a layman was involved—and even then Beaumanoir's formulation

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posed the layman as perpetrator. Beaumanoir was observant and surely knew of events that contradicted this separation. But in the 1280s there remained the fact that there was no way to clearly limit royal involvement if the mere participation in an offense (as criminal or as victim) was considered a valid reason for the lay court to become involved. Ecclesiastical jurisdiction was far more circumscribed than Beaumanoir implied, not least because proving clerical status was not always easy, which the story of Jean Parvi shows. The secular court could, theoretically, declare all culprits and victims laymen until proven otherwise, effectively destroying the ecclesiastical authority except in the most internal of affairs.

The Church was not being paranoid. In France, kings had long been trying to reduce its power. As rex christianissimus, the French king claimed the mantle of its protector. Beginning in the thirteenth century with Louis IX, such protection came at a price. Proceeding slowly at first, the king began to claim more and more authority over the workings of the French Church. In exchange, it received the king's favor and the special protection of his royal safeguard. When Philip VI came to the throne in 1328, he wielded the safeguard adeptly to exert his influence. It placed a designated person or place directly under the king's jurisdiction. Any crime committed against an individual holding it was an attack on the king and drew certain reprisal. Nearly all ecclesiastics and religious houses held royal safeguards under Philip.  

For a group of people whose idealized function was more to pray than to fight, the protection afforded by the safeguard was invaluable. Yet it, too, came at a price. As it placed the recipient directly under the king's jurisdiction, it gave Parlement jurisdiction over all crimes committed against ecclesiastics or their houses. Under the Capetians, all this had been true in theory, but the registers of the last five kings show that they took relatively little interest in pursuing violations of the safeguard. Philip VI's reign marks a deliberate shift in policy. This in part had to do with Philip's precarious position as a new

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27 AN, *Registres Criminel*, X2a5, §2, 4 April 1349, fol. 163r.
monarch who hoped to found a dynasty even as his ascension to the throne was continuously contested. Exercising royal prerogatives and authority was a means of demonstrating his rightful kingship. Lese majesty was therefore a handy tool, and prosecuting violations of the safeguard was a particularly symbolic way of asserting sovereignty. While Philip certainly encouraged these prosecutions, it was Parlement that drove the policy forward. Its relatively new independence gave the court access to a segment of the population otherwise largely free from its laws and judgments. The ecclesiastical courts and bishops did not always appreciate the degree to which king and Parlement meant to maintain their rights in any matter involving the royal safeguard. While many non-ecclesiastics received the royal safeguard but still fell victim to crime, Parlement's registers record that only ecclesiastical jurisdictions had to be reminded that the king's court alone was competent to hear those cases. The advancement of the idea of lese majesty picked away at ecclesiastical claims. 28

Parlement did not simply rely on grave infractions to justify its suzerainty over the Church; the emergent and potent concept of the public good supplied ample reason and was itself a product of canonistic writings. Thus, Henry of Segusio (d. 1271) expanded on Pope Innocent III's statement that, "[i]n the interest of public utility, crimes should not remain unpunished." 29 In his view, notorious crimes justified prosecution at the expense of private interests, 30 and the prosecution had to be public to be true justice. He also argued that witness testimony should be compelled. Other canonists, and even Pope Innocent IV, agreed that notorious crimes could not go uninvestigated or unpunished, but they softened some of Henry's stridency, suggesting that there could be virtue in not divulging another's crime and stating that

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28 Perrot, Les cas royaux, 126.
30 Ibid., 583.
notoriety had to be proven along with the guilt of the accused.\footnote{Ibid., 583.} Even with Innocent IV's more circumspect handling of the issues, the practical result was an increase in the judge's discretionary power, which trickled down from the ecclesiastical courts into the secular. Justice's necessary relationship with publicity meant that permitting churchmen to settle an affair in-house, when crime by its nature affected the entire community, was inconsistent with the needs of justice. Nor could a monastery claim that its disputes were inherently private or enclosed within its precincts, for, as the practices of houses such as Cluny had shown, the Church had an indelible impact on the people, including the lay population. Therefore, any criminality within ecclesiastical jurisdiction had an inevitable impact on the public. As a corollary, Parlement's sovereign jurisdiction over particular crimes and its role as the guarantor of the king's justice—and thus the common good—gave it full authority to intervene in Church affairs.

Parlement's emergent strength was not wholly disadvantageous for the clergy. For those who were victims of crimes, looking to Parlement for redress had definite benefits. The royal court had the administrative and physically coercive power to enforce justice. Such power mattered, as many of the attacks against ecclesiastics involved an assault by a large number of individuals or powerful local lords. For instance, in 1348 nearly five hundred men, calling themselves "arreatares clericorum" (those who arrest the clergy), invaded the various towns under the lordship of the bishop of Angers and there proceeded to wound, mutilate, and kill the priests, clerics, and other inhabitants.\footnote{Paris, AN, Registres Criminel, X2a5, §3, 14 April 1348, fol. 115r–v.} In 1334, the lords of Doazit and Cauna instigated acts of brigandage against the abbot of Saint-Sever.\footnote{Ibid., X2a3, 11 September 1335, fol. 31.} In 1350, forty men-at-arms broke into the preceptory of the Hôpital d'Edmont-l'Abbaye.\footnote{Ibid., X2a5, §4, 20 January 1350, fol. 177r–v.} The pattern is clear: Parlement

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\footnote{Ibid., 583.}
\footnote{Paris, AN, Registres Criminel, X2a5, §3, 14 April 1348, fol. 115r–v.}
\footnote{Ibid., X2a3, 11 September 1335, fol. 31.}
\footnote{Ibid., X2a5, §4, 20 January 1350, fol. 177r–v.}
never desired these attacks, but they gave the court a particular advantage. Out of necessity, even desperation, clergy turned to the royal court for aid. The fact that all these monasteries and clerics bore the royal safeguard meant that Parlement not only could intervene, but was the only court competent to do so. Acts of arson and theft did not amount to lese majesty, but once the safeguard had been violated, the king's honor had been assaulted. The violence against members of the clergy incidentally increased the power of the king's court. More royal commissioners were sent to the troubled regions; precedent was set. This, in turn, gave Parlement a greater sense of authority when it came time to handle the clergy as a rival jurisdiction.

The attacks suffered by ecclesiastics at the hands of laymen were rarely a manifestation of senseless violence, but a symptom of the clergy's trouble wielding its own authority. As a rule, monasteries were not attacked by angry mobs because of a theological dispute, nor do the registers support a reading of the violence as anticlericalism. An individual thief might target a church as a lucrative mark, and a lone curé might be killed for his harshness, but an assault against an entire population of ecclesiastics always had its basis in secular affairs. Where nobles were involved, the bone of contention was consistently land. The clergy, however, were not merely large landholders; they functioned in certain places as secular lords. Armed uprisings by commoners occurred because their lord—a given monastery or bishop—had failed to respond to their grievances or was suspected of corruption. The following example demonstrates how the inability or unwillingness of a prior to rule his jurisdiction created the unrest in his lands that led to an acute need for royal help.

In 1345, the prior of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem in Aquitaine complained that the inhabitants of Beauvais had participated in rebellions and conspiracies against him and the monks, thus violating the royal safeguard. According to the prior, the inhabitants had created their own mayor and sergeant

35 Ibid., X2a4, §2, 19 and 20 October 1334, fol. 206r–v.
and had proceeded to levy a tax. The townsfolk acknowledged that they had taken justice into their own hands, but they denied that they had gone so far as to establish their own municipal government to remove themselves from the Hospital's jurisdiction. Rather, they insisted that one of the brothers led a dissolute life, including abducting local women to service his lust. Yet when they brought their accusation to the prior, he refused to hear them out, let alone redress their grievance. Out of frustration, not rebellion, they hurled rocks at the house, in the process mortally wounding a monk. The prior felt he had little recourse but to Parlement; the inhabitants had rebelled against their lord, and only the secular court could quell the situation effectively. Moreover, because of the claim that the prior was covering up the misdeeds of one of his monks, Parlement's involvement removed the stigma of bias from the decision. At the same time, relying upon the court put the question of the lascivious monk in the hands of Parlement as well. Ultimately, it was for the prior to discipline the brother, but the Hospital lost political face in the exchange, as later cases repeatedly demonstrate.36

The case also illustrates how ecclesiastical affairs were part of the common good, for it was a member of the monastery who first created a disturbance, and the prior's blindness to the problem only exacerbated the injury done to the community. The criminal activity of ecclesiastics supplied one more means for Parlement to claim suzerainty in the interests of both royal justice and the public good. While sometimes a complaint about an ecclesiastical lord's failure to administer justice prompted action, when the offense was clearly one of lese majesty, Parlement always imposed its jurisdiction. Repeatedly, it resisted remitting the offending clerics to their bishops. The bishops, for their part, tried to claim their rights—even when it was discovered that a suspect's clerical status had been faked. At times clerics wore lay dress when committing an infraction37 or

36 Ibid., X2a5, §1–2, 4 June 1346, fol. 18v.
37 Ibid., X2a4, §1, 3 April 1337, fol. 211r.
when appearing in court, but they later claimed ecclesiastical status; at times a criminal claimed he was a cleric from the beginning, but bore no outward markers to prove it; and then there was the case of the apostate who engaged in various crimes of lese majesty. With all these conflicting claims, the court had to sift through and determine status before handing a suspect over to the ecclesiastical court for punishment commensurate with his station, because Parlement sought to retain a firm hold on all subjects of the realm. Any royal officer who held someone claiming to be a cleric was to consult first with the king's prosecutor. It was Parlement, not the Church, that would determine clerical status. Decisions of this nature could greatly anger the bishops and abbots. The indignation and offense the bishop of Paris expressed over the provost's handling of Jean Parvi was not unusual. Such judicial reach was ambitious, not always successful, often resented, but a logical extension of Parlement's claim to be the ultimate court of appeal and a continuation of the monarchal trajectory begun under Saint Louis.

I want to conclude with the idea that Parlement's growing suzerainty and enforcement of lese majesty were advantageous for the clergy—and that it was recognized as such at the time. Thus far, all the cases examined have provided the royal court with a natural "in": There was always a secular criminal or victim. Nevertheless, there were times when both victim and criminal were ecclesiastics, and, rather than seeking resolution in an ecclesiastical court, they brought their suit before Parlement for judgment. They did so when a group of monks were attacked by clerics, when a bishop was imprisoned and then threatened by an officer of the ecclesiastical court, when the bishop of Luçon attacked and imprisoned the archdeacon of Luçon and the

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38 Ibid., X2a5, §5, 6 April 1346, fol. 10v.
39 Ibid., X2a4, §3, April 1343, fol. 99v.
40 Ibid., X2a5, §2, 2 May 1348, fol. 116v.
41 Ibid., X2a3, 6 June 1335, fols. 16r–17.
42 Ibid., X2a5, §1, 23 April 1350, fol. 187r.
43 Ibid., X2a5, §2, 27 February 1350, fol. 179v.
abbot of Angles, and when the bishop of Limoges besieged the canons of Eymoutiers for six days in their own church. Parlement had the power to exact justice in what were for all intents and purposes Church matters. Even two monks—the abbot of Saint Riquier and one of the brothers—chose Parlement when their dispute over a piece of land became violent. Seeking arbitration in Parlement was the surest way for both parties to come to a mutually agreeable resolution, and it was a court they could both trust to be equitable. It meant submission to the rules and procedures of the court, which limited those codes of law that could be used in its courtroom, including canon law. But, in a case where violence was escalating, Parlement's ability to render and enforce a verdict was worth the trade-off its jurisdiction entailed.

Just as the clergy could benefit from ceding rights to Parlement, the reverse could also occasionally be true. Crimes of lese majesty were rarely simple, and at times their complexity invited the aid of the Church in the form of great churchmen who served on the civil side of Parlement—the bishops of Arras and Paris, the abbots of Cluny, Saint Denis, and Corbie, the Grand Prior of France. Three times during Philip's reign the royal court sought the aid of these ecclesiastics. Once was in a case involving sodomy, which for most of the fourteenth century was thought equally as much a religious offense as a secular crime. Another was a case of attempted regicide in which the means to kill was the summoning of the devil. The final instance involved a traitor, complicit in many heinous deeds, who had committed sacrilege. Although in the last two examples the culprits were clerics (two were monks, one the pope's chaplain), they remained in the custody of Parlement. The abbots and bishops were invited to advise on the gravity and repercussions of their crimes. Only the bishop of Paris stepped outside this advisory capacity to pronounce sentence, and he did so not as a member of Parlement or the French Church, but as a commissioner for the pope.

44 Ibid., X2a5, §4, 5 February 1349, fol. 159r.
45 Ibid., X2a5, §1, 4 March 1349, fol. 164v.
judging the pope's chaplain. Clerical involvement gave Parlement needed insight on occult crimes that teetered between the religious and secular realms, and it prevented potentially troublesome political fallout with foreign sovereigns.

The churchmen of France and the Parlement of Paris continually renegotiated their relationship. Both sides had too much at stake to risk permanently alienating the other, but neither was prepared to permit cultural and political developments advantageous to their positions slip by. When it came to the crimes of lese majesty, Parlement and king were quick to use the opportunities they presented to expand royal jurisdiction and centralize the judiciary. At a time of dynastic uncertainty, it gave the court the ability to defend the king's majesty, which was none other than law, justice, and the safety of the kingdom and its people. Individually, monasteries and bishoprics lost out in this process as their temporal rights were easily nullified by Parlement. As a whole, however, the French Church gained security from the fact that while the royal safeguard subjected them to royal control, it also promised royal protection—a valuable commodity as the Hundred Years' War raged—and that protection was only possible through expansion and centralization. When Parlement ordered Jean Parvi’s corpse to be exhumed, it was primarily acting to soothe the tensions that could arise when two powerful institutions came into conflict. It was also, however, ultimately proving beyond doubt that anyone could have recourse to its judgment and that all subjects, living and dead, tonsured and non, came under its purview.