

(1362-1370) attempted to take the chair back to Rome (1367) but returned to France after troubles with the Roman populace. However Urban VI (1378-1389) did return to Rome. The cardinals who had originally elected him were miffed and ordered him deposed as they elected Clement VII (1378-1394) to take his place. Urban staged an election in Rome and continued to call himself pope with the result that for the next several years there was a pope in France and one in Italy all claiming to be head of the church.

A third claimant entered the contest in 1408 when the council of Pisa rejected all the present popes and instituted a new one. The matter was not resolved, the council did not have sufficient support with the people of the Empire. Thus there were three popes all claiming to have the right from Peter to run the church. Eventually the three claimants were John XXIII, Benedict XII, and Gregory XII. The confusion was such that Sigismund of Austria, current holder of the imperial throne (or soon to be the official holder) convened a council at Constance in 1415. In the following year all the claimants were removed from office...although some resisted it until their deaths. Nevertheless the Council dropped 'em all and elected Martin V as the new and universally recognized pontiff. The council accomplished a lot..and a lot of bad things, as well, and did it by having a system of voting that gave a vote to each nation...not to each delegate. It decided it would be a good idea to have a council every ten years to keep an eye on the papacy...and I must say the popes worked hard to overcome that... and did.

If you enjoy classical fiction, Umberto Eco's *THE NAME OF THE ROSE* is written against the background of this time and is not only excellent reading but will fortify you with a lot of good historical stuff as well

VI.2.b. Crusades

The Crusades

The Crusades were far more political and societal than Christian. In fact, the performance of the Crusaders would do much to fan the hatred of Islam in coming decades and would do much harm to the Jews of Europe. But they are a basic fact of history that cannot be overlooked and here are the major factors in them: