

King Louis Capet VI of France

Pg 1/2



Born: 1 Dec 1081 - Paris, Paris, Ile-de-France, France

Married: Adélaïde de Maurienne

Died: 1 Aug 1137 - Chateau, Paris, Ile-de-France, France

Parents: King Philip I & Bertha of Holland

Louis VI (1 December 1081 – 1 August 1137), called **the Fat** (French: *le Gros*), was King of France from 1108 until his death (1137). Chronicles called him "roi de Saint-Denis". The first member of the House of Capet to make a lasting contribution to the centralizing institutions of royal power,^[1] Louis was born in Paris, the son of Philip I and his first wife, Bertha of Holland. Almost all of his twenty-nine-year reign was spent fighting either the "robber barons" who plagued Paris or the Norman kings of England for their continental possession of Normandy. Nonetheless, Louis VI managed to reinforce his power considerably and became one of the first strong kings of France since the division of the Carolingian Empire. His biography by his constant advisor Abbot Suger of Saint Denis renders him a fully-rounded character to the historian, unlike most of his predecessors.

In his youth, Louis fought the duke of Normandy, Robert Curthose, and the lords of the royal demesne, the Île de France. He became close to Suger, who became his adviser. He succeeded his father on Philip's death on 29 July 1108. Louis's half-brother prevented him from reaching Rheims and so he was crowned on 3 August in the cathedral of Orléans by Daimbert, Archbishop of Sens. The archbishop of Reims, Ralph the Green, sent envoys to challenge the validity of the coronation and anointing, but to no avail.

On Palm Sunday 1115, Louis was present in Amiens to support the bishop and inhabitants of the city in their conflict with Enguerrand I of Coucy, one of his vassals, who refused to recognize the granting of a charter of communal privileges. Louis came with an army to help the citizens to besiege Castillon (the fortress dominating the city, from which Enguerrand was making punitive expeditions). At the siege, the king took an arrow to his hauberk, but the castle, considered impregnable, fell after two years.

Louis VI died on 1 August 1137, at the castle of Béthisy-Saint-Pierre, nearby Senlis and Compiègne, of dysentery caused by his excesses, which had made him obese. He was interred in Saint Denis Basilica. He was succeeded on the throne by his son Louis VII, called "the Younger," who had originally wanted to be a monk.

Marriages and children

He married in 1104: 1) Lucienne de Rochefort — the marriage was annulled.

- Their child:
- 1) Isabelle (c.1105 – before 1175), married (ca 1119) William of Vermandois, seigneur of Chaumont

He married in 1115: 2) Adélaïde de Maurienne (1092–1154)

- Their children:
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- Philip (1116 – 13 October 1131), King of France (1129–31), not to be confused with his brother of the same name; died from a fall from a horse.
- Louis VII (1120 – 18 September 1180), King of France
- Henry (1121–75), archbishop of Reims
- Hugues (born ca 1122
- Robert (ca 1123 – 11 October 1188), count of Dreux
- Constance (ca 1124 – 16 August 1176), married first Eustace IV, count of Boulogne and then Raymond V of Toulouse.
 - Philip (1125–61), bishop of Paris. not to be confused with his his elder brother.
 - Peter of France (ca 1125–83), married Elizabeth, lady of Courtenay

More information:

The fifth Capetian king of France, Louis VI was a giant of a man, proud of his physical strength and courage in battle. In 1100 he was associated in active rule with his vice-ridden father, King Philip I. At the urging of friends and bishops he finally married, when 35 years old, a niece of Pope Callistus II, Adelaïde of Maurienne, who gave him six sons and three daughters, thus assuring the succession in the Capetian family.

Like his father, Louis was determined to become master of the royal domain - limited at the time to the île-de-France, the Laonais, and the Orléanais - by fighting the rebellious nobility in it. Louis led his knights into the thick of battle unmindful of his responsibility as king. Circumstances favored the king: the greater nobles in the fiefs surrounding the royal domain were so preoccupied with organizing their own fiefs into strong independent feudal states that they did not interfere with the King's efforts. Yet when Henry V of Germany sought to invade France, knights of the great independent lay lords rallied to the king in such numbers as to oblige Henry V to withdraw. Louis was thus recognized as the defender of all of France.

The King lived on good terms with the clergy. He freed bishoprics and the abbeys from the grip of predatory lords, endowed them generously, encouraged Church reform, and made an alliance with the papacy; but also he knew how to defend the Crown from clerical encroachments and what he considered royal rights. The clergy cooperated because they saw in a strong monarchy the best hope for peace in a disorderly feudal world.

Avaricious when short of money, Louis did not hesitate to sell justice, town charters, and privileges to the highest bidder. At court Louis permitted himself to be surrounded by venal counselors and listened too readily to their self-interested advice. However, during the last 5 years of his reign his principal adviser was the wise Suger, Abbot of St-Denis, who wrote the first substantial biography of a Capetian king.

Louis became as heavy as his father from overeating and so obese by the time he was 46 that he could not mount his horse. He lamented his fate: "How miserable is my condition never to be able to enjoy both my experience and strength. If I had only known when young what I do now and could do now when old what I could do when young, I would have overcome many empires." He died of dysentery at 56, wearing the habit of a monk while lying in ashes on a carpet. His advice to his son Louis VII as he lay dying was, according to Suger: "Protect the clergy, the poor and the fatherless. Do justice to every man."

Information from online research at: Ancestry.com