

King Philippe II of France



Born: 21 Aug 1165 Paris, FRA
 Married: 1 Nov 1179 Isabelle of Hainhault
 Died: 14 July 1223 Yvelines, FRA
 Parents: King Louis VII & Adela of Champagne

Philip II Augustus (French: *Philippe Auguste*) (21 August 1165 – 14 July 1223) was the King of France from 1180 until his death. A member of the House of Capet, Philip Augustus was born at Gonesse in the Val-d'Oise, the son of Louis VII and his third wife, Adela of Champagne. He was originally nicknamed *Dieudonné* — the God-given — as he was the first son of Louis VII late in his father's life.

Philip was one of the most successful medieval French monarchs in expanding the royal demesne and the influence of the monarchy. He broke up the great Angevin Empire and defeated a coalition of his rivals (Flemish and English) at the Battle of Bouvines in 1214. He reorganized the government, bringing financial stability to the country and thus making possible a sharp increase in prosperity. His reign was popular with ordinary people because he checked the power of the nobles and passed some of it on to the growing middle class.

Early years

In declining health, Louis VII had him crowned and anointed at Rheims by the Archbishop William Whitehands on 1 November 1179. He was married on 28 April 1180 to Isabelle of Hainaut, who brought the County of Artois as her dowry. His father died on 20 September.

Consolidation of royal demesne

While the royal demesne had increased under Philip I and Louis VI, under Louis VII it had diminished slightly. In April 1182, Philip expelled all Jews from the demesne and confiscated their goods.

Philip's eldest son, Louis, was born on 5 September 1187 and inherited Artois in 1190, when Isabelle, his mother, died.

Wars with his vassals

In 1181, Philip began a war with the Count of Flanders, Philip of Alsace. Philip managed to counter the ambitions of the count by breaking his alliances with Henry I, Duke of Brabant, and Philip of Heinsberg, Archbishop of Cologne. In July 1185, the Treaty of Boves confirmed to the king the possession of the Vermandois, Artois, and Amiénois.

In 1184, Stephen I of Sancerre and his Brabançon mercenaries ravaged the Orléanais. Philip defeated him with the aid of the Confrères de la Paix.

War with Henry II

Philip also began to war with the Henry II of England, who was also Count of Anjou and Duke of Aquitaine in France. Two years of combat (1186–1188) followed, but the situation remained unchanged. Philip initially allied with Henry's young sons, Richard and John, who were in rebellion against their father. However, news of the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin, followed quickly by the death of Henry, diverted attention from the Franco-English war.

Philip was close friends with all of Henry's sons and he used them to foment rebellion against their father, but turned against both Richard and John after their respective accessions to the throne. With Henry the Young King and Geoffrey of Brittany he maintained friendship until their deaths. Indeed, at the funeral of Geoffrey, he was so overcome with grief that he had to be forcibly restrained from casting himself into the grave.

War with John Lackland

In May 1200, Philip signed the Treaty of Le Goulet with Richard's successor John. The treaty was meant to bring peace to Normandy by settling the issue of the boundaries of the duchy and the terms of John's vassalage for it and Anjou, Maine, and Touraine. John agreed to heavy terms, but Philip in turn recognised John as king, formally abandoning Arthur I of Brittany, whom he had thitherto supported, and recognised John's suzerainty over the Duchy of Brittany. To seal the treaty, a marriage between Blanche of Castile, John's niece, and Louis the Lion, Philip's son, was contracted.

This did not stop the war, however. In 1202, disaffected patrons petitioned the French king to summon John to answer their charges and, when the English king refused, Philip dispossessed him of his French lands. Within two years, most of Normandy and the Angevin lands, including much of Aquitaine, had been conquered. The war, called the "War of Bouvines," continued for the next decade until Philip won a decisive victory at Bouvines (1214) over a coalition of forces that included the Emperor Otto IV and Ferdinand, Count of Flanders.

Third Crusade

Philip went on the Third Crusade with Richard I of England (1189–99) and the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick I Barbarossa (1189–1192). His army left Vézelay on July 1, 1190. At first the French and English crusaders traveled together, but the armies split at Lyons, as King Richard I decided to go by sea, and Philip took the overland route through the Alps to Genoa. The French and English armies were reunited in Messina, where they wintered together. On March 30, 1191 the French set sail for the Holy Land, where they launched several assaults on Acre before King Richard I arrived (see Siege of Acre). By the time Acre surrendered on July 12, Philip was severely ill with dysentery which reduced his crusading zeal. More importantly, the siege resulted in the death of Philip of Alsace, who held the county of Vermandois proper; an event that threatened to derail the Treaty of Gisors which Philip had signed orchestrated to isolate the Champagne faction. Philip decided to return to France to settle the issue of succession in Flanders, a decision that displeased King Richard I, who said, "It is a shame and a disgrace on my lord if he goes away without having finished the business that brought him hither. But still, if he finds himself in bad health, or is afraid lest he should die here, his will be done." So on July 31, 1191 the French army of 10,000 men (along with 5,000 silver marks to pay the soldiers) remained in Outremer under the command of Hugh III, duke of Burgundy. Philip and his cousin Peter of Courtenay, count of Nevers, made their way to Genoa and from there returned to France. This decision to return was also fuelled by the realization that with Richard campaigning in the Holy Land, English possessions in northern France (Normandy) would be open for attack. After Richard's delayed return home after the Third Crusade, war between England and France would ensue over possession of English-controlled territories in modern-day France.

Marital problems

After Isabelle's early death in childbirth, in 1190, Philip decided to marry again. On August 15, 1193 he married Ingeborg (1175–1236), daughter of King Valdemar I of Denmark (1157–82). She was renamed Isambour, and Stephan of Dornik described her as "*very kind, young of age but old of wisdom.*" For some unknown reason, Philip was repelled by her, and he refused to allow her to be crowned Queen. Ingeborg protested at this treatment; his response was to confine her to a convent. He then asked Pope Celestine III for an annulment on the grounds of non-consummation. Philip had not reckoned with Ingeborg, however; she insisted that the marriage *had* been consummated, and that she was his wife and the rightful Queen of France. The Franco-Danish churchman William of Paris intervened on the side of Ingeborg, drawing up a genealogy of the Danish kings to disprove the alleged impediment of consanguinity.

In the meantime Philip had sought a new bride. Initially agreement had been reached for him to marry Marguerite, daughter of William I, Count of Geneva, but the young bride's journey to Paris was interrupted by Thomas I of Savoy, who kidnapped Philip's intended new queen and married her instead, claiming that Philip was already bound in marriage. Philip finally achieved a third marriage, on May 7, 1196, to Agnes of Merania from Dalmatia (c. 1180 – July 29, 1201). Their children were:

1. Marie (1198 – October 15, 1224)
2. Philippe Hurepel (1200–1234), Count of Clermont and eventually, by marriage, Count of Boulogne

Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) declared Philip Augustus's marriage to Agnes of Merania null and void, as he was still married to Ingeborg. He ordered the King to part from Agnès; when he did not, the Pope placed France under an interdict in 1199. This continued until September 7, 1200. Due to pressure from the Pope and from Ingeborg's brother, King Valdemar II of Denmark (1202–41), Philip finally took Ingeborg back as his Queen in 1213.

Last years

Understandably, he turned a deaf ear when the Pope asked him to do something about the heretics in the Languedoc. When Innocent III called for a crusade against the Albigensians or Cathars, in 1208, Philip did nothing to support it, but neither did he hinder it. The war against the Cathars did not end until 1244, when finally their last strongholds were captured. The fruits of it, namely the submission of the south of France to the crown, were to be reaped by Philip's son, Louis VIII, and grandson, Louis IX.

Philip II Augustus would play a significant role in one of the greatest centuries of innovation in construction and in education. With Paris as his capital, he had the main thoroughfares paved, built a central market, Les Halles, continued the construction begun in 1163 of the Gothic Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral, constructed the Louvre as a fortress and gave a charter to the University of Paris in 1200. Under his guidance, Paris became the first city of teachers the medieval world had known. In 1224, the French poet Henry d'Andeli wrote of the great wine tasting competition that Philip II Augustus commissioned The Battle of the Wines.

Philip II Augustus died July 14, 1223 at Mantes and was interred in Saint Denis Basilica. Philip's son by Isabelle de Hainaut, Louis VIII, was his successor.

Information from online research at: Ancestry.com