

# HIS101-28Medieval France©October 28, 1999

Raymond J. Jirran

## A. *Introduction*

Just as Chambers moves from place to place, within a particular time-frame, so do these lectures focus on the same place, observing changes as they occur from time to time. The Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries were eras of change and development in Western Europe. Much as the student lacks precedent to cope with some of the changes now demanded, so did Twelfth Century people have to develop new methods of dealing with life. The course goal for this topic is **to evaluate the role of the middle classes in medieval France** according to a criteria of the people, places, and times involved and the degree of certitude warranted.

## B. *Unification*

Fernand Braudel<sup>1</sup> is noted for observing that history moves at varying speeds, depending on the depth of movement under consideration. Geographic movement underlies all other movement. The reason for bringing this up is because Braudel had France as his main focus. Braudel died in 1985, maintaining that much more than geographic circumstance brought Gaul into the polity known as France.<sup>2</sup>

After 800 A.D., the rise of commerce very gradually brought a new political organization. In the resulting "new monarchy," the king succeeded in practically overcoming the challenge of the feudal nobility. The development of new monarchies was much more rapid in Western than Eastern Europe. The Atlantic Ocean lured entrepreneurs toward new profit from the new trade routes to the wealth of Asia and America. France serves well as an illustration.

French unification was characterized by seven "C's". Centrality (1) enabled French kings to hold their property in a unified geographic area around Paris. Continuity (2) meant that from 987 to 1789 only three families sat on the throne of France. Capability (3) meant that there was always a son who was capable of being a ruler. Consecration (4) of the eldest son of the king, or dauphin (do' fen), meant that God was on his side. The Church (5) supported the king. Crown (6) and town--the king supported the town. Correctness (7)--the French kings were very proper, e.g. the French king, Philip Augustus (1180-1223) called King John of England to court, as was correct according to feudal law. John refused to come, so, beginning in 1204, there was a war, which lasted ten years.

Philip and John struggled until the battle of Bouvines, which the French won in 1214. In regard to crown and town, Philip Augustus, the burger king, founded about eighty towns himself, rather than put the towns in a position where they would rebel. By directly providing protection which should have come through the lords, the king disrupted feudal protection. The towns also disrupted military power because the rising middle classes could pay for soldiers who would fight for money rather than feudal loyalty alone.

Philip Augustus deserves special attention because, while he ruled in the Middle Ages, he was a modern king, that is, a good organizer and a good diplomat. To the French monarchy, he gave three instruments of rule: (1) officials who would follow orders, (2) a unified monetary system, and (3) soldiers. In order to progress from a feudal to a national regime, it was necessary to rebuild the

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central power, which Philip Augustus did. Philip Augustus set up provincial bailiffs in their bailiwicks, who three times a year were required to render accounts in Paris. The strength of Philip is demonstrated by the fact that Philip Augustus raised revenues from 19,000 pounds per year to 1200 pounds per day. Under the former feudal regime, taxes had a personal character, as did all other services. Under Philip Augustus, however, taxes began to be rendered according to a more modern and efficient system.

Because the Jews were politically impotent, how the monarchy treated the Jews was less clouded by political tactics than how others were treated. This means that public policy is shown most clearly in public policy toward Jews, as distinct from foreign enemies, cities, or the church hierarchy. At the time of Philip Augustus, Jews lived throughout France. The French national policy toward Jews reflected how the state-system throughout Western Europe was developing.<sup>3</sup>

Jews were brought in line through the following tactics: restrictive legislation, forced taxation, seizure of debts, appropriation of property, conversion, and outright expulsion. Expulsion took place under Philip the Fair in 1306.<sup>4</sup> Capetian rule ended in 1328 with the death of Charles IV. The Capetians were succeeded by a collateral branch of the family, the Valois.<sup>5</sup>

## **C. Expansion**

The last king to mention, as France began making the transition into modern times, is Charles VII, who ruled from 1422 until 1461. Charles, aided by the girl from Orleans (oar lay' on), Saint Joan of Arc, was strengthened to take the crown. Orleans was rescued in 1429 and the position of Charles was comparatively secure. In the process of his long term, Charles gained from the middle classes the sole right to control troops and the right to have a small, but adequate, tax forever. This meant that the king of France was constitutionally much stronger than the king of England.

## **D. Conclusion**

The advantages arising from the middle classes proceeded slowly but surely toward French unification. The advantages of moral uprightness were further considered in the section on expansion. Marriage will be seen below. Advantages of middle classes willing and skillfully able to follow orders are important in the development and effectiveness of the middle classes in France. Students are reminded that the course goal for this topic is to evaluate the role of the middle classes in medieval France according to a criteria of the people, places, and times involved and the degree of certitude warranted.

Supplement

## **E. Conclusion (continued)**

The incompatible inseparables in this lecture are those (1) between the supremacy of the territorial state as the "natural" unit of human endeavor and the claim of the church to govern human souls and (2) between violence and law. The very reason for struggle was tension evolving from letting truth, rather than politics, decide the matters. Politically, the territorial state won out over both the church and violence.

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## **F. Expansion (continued)**

Though the professor likes to tease that Joan of Arc was a transvestite Saint, Joan was not trying to hide her identity. Scholars look to transvestites for a sense of how people regarded gender identity. During the Middle Ages many women sought God by renouncing their roles as women and living as men.<sup>6</sup>

Joan of Arc was martyred for refusing to abandon her male attire. The issue was more about power than identity. There is a fictional myth about a Pope Joan who bore a child in a papal procession. This myth was concocted by anti-papal parties for political purposes. The issue was more about power than identity.<sup>7</sup>

The function of fiction is to reveal attitudes more readily than non-fiction. In medieval fictional accounts of cross dressing, women temporarily dress as men in order to return to the established social order of acting as wives. Scholars debate whether social perception or biological determination determines gender identity.<sup>8</sup>

While the professor regards gender identity as emanating from both biology and social perception, the professor is very aware that his female students are far more comfortable dealing with his dealing with social perceptions than biology. Perhaps that means women do not like the difference. Surely to call a young boy a sissy is more disconcerting than calling a young girl a tomboy.

## **G. Marriage**

Marriage is treated throughout these lectures.

See Topic 2, Introduction (August 10, 1999), footnote 7;

Topic 4, Mesopotamia (October 9, 1999), page 6 lines 2, 5-7, 17, page 7 line 14;

Topic 5, Egypt (June 27, 1999), page 1 line 15, page 8, line 37;

Topic 6, Palestine (June 10, 1999), Section H. From Egypt to the Bible 1. Marriage, pages 4-6;

Topic 11, The Roman Empire (October 20, 1999), page 9, line 15;

Topic 18, Byzantium (October 5, 1999), page 3 line 23, page 4 line 39;

Topic 20, William (October 18, 1999), Section G. Marriage page 3.

Topic 23, Mary (August 9, 1999), page 2, line 37; Section I., pages 5-6, page 6, line 11;

Topic 24, Middle Ages (October 10, 1999), page 5 line 31;

Topic 28, Demography (October 17, 1999), footnote 26;

The above references should be in reasonable synchronization with this October 20, 1999 rendition. The following topics are about to be revised. If the date on the topics about to be revised are not what is here, then the reference by page and line may be correct, may be an approximation, may not exist.

Topic 33, Protestantism (June 22, 1992), page 2 lines 1, 5, 6, 7, 10, Section I., pages 4-7 is entirely devoted to this subject and was one of the original reasons Dr. Jirran did the research to identify where marriage is mentioned in these lectures.

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Topic 34, Catholicism (June 22, 1992), page 1 line 13.

Topic 37, Modern Europe (June 20, 1992), page 1 line 17; page 3 line 31;

Aristocratic styles of marriage gave way to more exogamous (less incestuous) and stable marriages, beginning about 1100, with a quarrel over the marriages of Philip I. Marriage came to be prohibited up to seventh cousins. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 reduced the impediment to about third cousins, about where it stands now. During this period, marriage became more properly associated with a solemn wedding, rather than simple betrothal. Fornication, e.g. during a separation caused by crusading, did not thereby break up the marriage bond.<sup>9</sup>

A good example of how dynasties were tied together almost solely by the ruling dynasty through marriage is found in the realm of the Hapsburg family. From the text, the student can sense how, in war and diplomacy, the dynastic ruler and his circle of nobles and bureaucrats were imbued with team spirit. But the different peoples in the state had relatively little sense of unity or patriotism or of common national effort and ambitions. This helps explain the importance of ruling dynasties. Women were treated much as prizes of war. Betrothal agreements between families were part of general negotiating. So significant was betrothal that down to the Council of Trent (1545-1563) betrothal was the actual contract of canon, or church, law.

During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries powerful kings in France and Spain manipulated papally sanctioned control over patronage to convert the monarchy into the effective head of the Church in their kingdoms. Over the next two hundred years, however, the growth of nationalism subtly shifted the locus of absolute authority from the person of the monarch to the institution of the state. The state now theoretically embodied the will of the nation. These intellectual forces combined to produce a new concept of sovereignty, defined as unitary, unlimited authority over society.<sup>10</sup>

The power of the state over society has, in many ways, desacramentalized and loosened the bonds of marriage to the point of the present disarray in the meaning of marriage vows. The state has practically forced the church to permit divorce and remarriage. The state makes it easy to marry; painful to divorce. As women gained more autonomy, marriage became more of a relationship between equals than ever before. This new equality is at the root of the disarray in which past marriage customs now find themselves. At least that is how the facts seem to make sense to the professor.

## **H. Conclusion**

In this topic the student has considered French Unification, Expansion, and Marriage. The incompatible inseparables at work here are between violence and law. The truth issue is between feudal and modern economics as feudal politics yields to modern politics because of the truth of economic changes.

Comments on the Seventh Edition of Chambers, pages 0370-0391

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In the opinion of the professor, Chambers is the most scholarly textbook on the market. Chambers well represents mainstream thinking in the history profession. The professor, however, disagrees in many significant ways with mainstream thinking. Some of these disagreements are set forth above and others in the following comments.

Page Column  
Paragraph  
Line

0371 1 3 10-13 ". . . the Avignon papacy . . . sold ecclesiastical appointments . . ."

In Topic Twenty-five, Demography, the professor wrote, "0342  
2 2 7 ". . . Avignon . . ."

The professor has seen research indicating that there is a historical bias against the finances of the Avignon Papacy. While the professor has not tried to locate that article ??, the professor is hesitant to accept what Chambers writes here at face value.

0371 2 1 1-2 ". . . remissions of sin known as indulgences."

Chambers is confused in his theology. On page 416, column 1, paragraph 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> last line, Chambers writes, ". . . indulgences, remissions of the temporal punishment for sin . . ." On page 438, column 2, paragraph 1, line 8-10, Chambers writes, "Indulgences released sinners from a certain period of punishment in purgatory before they went on to heaven.

An indulgence is the remission of temporal punishment due to sin, in response to certain prayers or good works. Canons 992-997.<sup>11</sup>

0371 2 1 3<sup>rd</sup> last ". . . 1336 . . ."

See page 374 to find that Philip declared Edward's fiefs forfeit in 1337.

0374 1 2 3-4 ". . . ordinary homage . . . liege homage."

The box on page 376 mentions simple homage at 1329. The professor regards simple homage as a more accurate term than ordinary homage.

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Liege homage as an institution developed in France and Lotharingia to create new bonds with binding force identical with that of homage done to the first liege lord. In the Twelfth Century an individual in France or Lotharingia (modern Lorraine)<sup>12</sup> might be the liege man of several lords. Earlier, there could only have been one liege lord.

0374 1 2 4<sup>th</sup> last". . . 1337 . . . "

See page 371 to find that the English monarchy never collected or spent more than £30,000 per year before 1336.

0379 1 2 12 ". . . (see map 11.3). . . "

"Map 11.3 The Spread of Printing before 1500" is on page 364. Also relevant and closer is "Map 11.4 The Hundred Years' War" on page 375. The latter map does not label the Rhone River.

0379 2 3 5-6 ". . . the papacy governed the area around Rome . . . "

"Map 11.6 The Italian States in 1454" reveals that "around Rome" stretches from half-way to Naples in the southwest to within fifty miles of Venice in the northeast.

0380 1 2 9 ". . . Spoleto, Nocera . . . "

Neither Spoleto nor Nocera appear on Map 11.6 The Italian States in 1454 on page 383. Spoleto is at 42.44N 12.44 E, just southwest of Assisi.

There are three Noceras: Nocera Inferiore, eight miles south of Naples; Nocera Tirinese, in the toe of the boot; Nocera Umbra east-northeast of Assisi.<sup>13</sup>

0381 caption "Venice Arsenal"

On page 537 is a caption for "Engraving of *A Dutch Shipyard*. Whether it was the Venetians the Dutch surpassed in the Seventeenth Century, the professor does not know. The Venetians were supreme in 1400, as described on pages 381-382 .

0382 "Map 11.5 The Venetian Empire in the 1400s"

Trebizond is on the southeastern shore of the Black Sea, near the margin of the page. The diligent student may recall that Trebizond is

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mentioned on page 206, column 2, paragraph 2, line 6 and in Topic 18--  
Byzantium.

0384 2 3 3<sup>rd</sup> last to last  
". . . many Eastern Christians preferred Turkish rule to submission to  
the hated Westerners."

The above merits comparison with page 385, "Often a Christian sect  
preferred the rule of the tolerant Ottomans to that of a rival Christian  
sect." In other words not only did the Greeks prefer the Turks to the  
Latins, but the Latins also preferred the Turks to the Greeks.

0385 2 4 6-8 See immediately above.

## Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup>Fernand Braudel is mentioned in the July 26, 1991 rendition of the Supplement to Topic Two on page 9, footnote 27 and page 16, footnote 38.

<sup>2</sup>David H. Pinkney, review of Fernand Braudel, The Identity of France. Volume 1, History and Environment, translated by Sian Reynolds, in The American Historical Review, Vol. 96, No. 4 (October 1991), pages 1201-1202.

<sup>3</sup>Roger S. Kohn, review of William Chester Jordan, The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians in The American Historical Review, Vol. 96, No. 1 (February 1991), page 151.

<sup>4</sup>Roger S. Kohn, review of William Chester Jordan, The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians in The American Historical Review, Vol. 96, No. 1 (February 1991), page 151.

<sup>5</sup>The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), page 137.

<sup>6</sup>Joyce E. Salisbury, review of Valerie R. Hotchkiss, *Clothes make the man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe*, in The American Historical Review, Vol. 103, No. 3 (June 1998), page 867.

<sup>7</sup>Joyce E. Salisbury, review of Valerie R. Hotchkiss, *Clothes make the man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe*, in The American Historical Review, Vol. 103, No. 3 (June 1998), page 867.

<sup>8</sup>Joyce E. Salisbury, review of Valerie R. Hotchkiss, *Clothes make the man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe*, in The American Historical Review, Vol. 103, No. 3 (June 1998), page 867.

<sup>9</sup>Michael M. Sheehan, review of Georges Duby, Two Models from Twelfth-Century France, in The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 66, No. 4 (October 1980), p. 649.

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<sup>10</sup>James H. Lee, "Bishop Clemente Munguia and Clerical Resistance to the Mexican Reform, 1855-1857," The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 66, No. 2 (July 1980), p. 377.

<sup>11</sup> *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, Richard P. McBrien, General Editor (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995), page 662.

<sup>12</sup> *The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia: Third Edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), page 506.

<sup>13</sup> *The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World*, Leon E. Seltzer (ed.), (Morningside Heights, New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), page ??.

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