

Consolidating French Monarchial Power through Theocratic Kingship

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When studying western Medieval Europe, one finds rather complicated political structures resulting from the feudal society which developed. The strong uniform state structures of the later Middle Ages were nonexistent, and lords and princes wielded a majority of the political power. The medieval rulers of modern nations such as France, England, and Germany all reacted uniquely to this complex environment resulting in different political arrangements within each region. The Capetian kings of France came to power around 937 C.E. They inherited minimal amounts of land, hardly any authority, and a continuous struggle to retain their title. A strong relationship with the Christian church along with the practice of theocratic kingship was one way that the Capetians slowly began to increase their power and control. The increasing supremacy of the French monarchy from the eleventh century through the thirteenth century was intricately tied to the ideas of theocratic kingship. This theocratic kingship allowed for a close relationship between the king and the church creating the opportunity to augment monarchial power through religious associations. Unfortunately this connection also created a struggle over superiority between church and state resulting in numerous conflicts and fractures.

Historical Background

The Capetians were struggling to consolidate power and grow their territory at the beginning of the 11th century. For this reason, they depended on their relations with the church to help them consolidate power: "when Hugh Capet became king, he and his successors had to develop feudal monarchy from a royal demesne that had dwindled in size to less than the province of the Ile-de-France."¹ This means that the king of France held little land outside the areas surrounding Paris. Not only were they struggling to keep this small amount

of land, but they also faced issues of political legitimacy, political authority, and very powerful princes and counts. All of these issues conflicted with their main goal of creating a government in which the king was the central supreme power.

While early Capetians continually attempted to reach this goal, the first significant improvements came under Louis VI and his close friend Abbot Suger.² This relationship represented the king's increasingly close connection with the church. The Capetians had already begun to rely heavily on bishops for economic and military support in attempts to establish sovereignty and supremacy. These church officials supported the kings because many preferred monarchial influence over the dominance of numerous different powerful lords.³ These relationships, like Suger's and Louis VI's, also benefited from the fact that the Capetian rulers tended to take both religion and their religious roles seriously. This is made evident in their theocratic rule.

This paper will not discuss all the Capetians rulers, but will focus mainly on Philip I (1060-1081), Louis VI (1108-1137), Louis VII (1137-1180), and Philip Augustus (1180-1223). It is important to realize that these Capetian rulers were not solely theocratic rulers. Many historians note the importance of these religious aspects of their rule, but some of the kings did not always take religion as seriously as others. There were many secular roles and other governmental duties that did not pertain to or benefit from theocratic kingship; however, the theocratic kingship in France during this period inherently increased the power of the French monarchy by allowing the kings to participate in the ecclesiastical realm as an important figurehead of religious power and importance. Nevertheless it should be remembered that even though their power increases through this religious relationship, by the end of Philip Augustus' reign the French monarchy

still does not have complete control of all French lands and it is in no means an absolute monarchy.

Theocratic Kingship in Medieval France

Before delving into examples of how religion and the church helped increase monarchical power, one needs an understanding of what defined theocratic kingship, what religious responsibilities and roles the king held as a result, and also how coronations played a part in this theory of divine rule. In theory, those who enacted a theocratic kingship claimed that the right to rule came from a concession of power by God to the chosen monarch. It was by the grace of God that a king ruled and this grace alone determined a ruler's success or failure. This is why a king was considered God's vicariate on earth.⁴ This concept provided the basis for the French kings to claim that their power was derived directly from God. This meant that the king assumed numerous religious roles which affected both his private life and political decisions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Since the king's power flowed from God, the question of who the king was in relation to God became prevalent. Many explained this connection through the concept of the king being the royal vicariate, or the person authorized to rule in God's name on earth. As royal vicariate, the king's subjects included both clergy and laity which, allowed for the monarchs to rule over both secular and religious issues and ultimately allowed for the connections between monarch and church to develop further.⁵ Manegold of Lautenbach, a Benedictine monk from southern Germany wrote a piece on tyrannical kings around 1085 which suggested that it was acceptable to deny a king power if he acted against this divine power. While his goal was to elevate the pope's eminence, Manegold's piece still exemplify ideas concerning the divine nature of a king's power; "just as the royal dignity and power surpasses all earthly powers, so too the man appointed to exercise it should not be base and infamous but should excel others in wisdom, justice, and piety."⁶ Manegold's writings depict how being God's vicar meant the king had the ability and duty to act in a manner mimicking God's greatness and power since he was the embodiment of God's power on earth.

However, this role as vicariate did not make a king divine; "no one portrayed medieval Christian kings then or later as divine personages wielding any

miraculous power of their own. It was instead the belief that they could tap holy power more readily than others through prayer and the invocation of the divine name which distinguished them."⁷ This is important because these kings were not deities or divine, but still high above the average person when it came to spiritual connections. The monk Guibert of Nogent wrote around 1125; his writings created the idea that since a king's power came from God, kings had the power to perform miracles. He then discusses healing miracles performed by Louis VI.⁸ Kings alone had God on their side, and they could prove it through these "miracles." Guibert was a cleric like Manegold, yet despite their differences in opinion over the positive nature of the King's divine power, both acknowledge its importance and prevalence. This power from God is what set kings apart from the rest.

The power of royal vicariate also led kings to take on responsibilities beyond the secular realm. They were supposed to act as models of Christ and Christian living as well as take on the unique role of defender and supporter of the church, "very naturally this Christ-imitating king was pictured and expounded also as the mediator between heaven and earth..." He was a mediator between God and man, government and the people, as well as between the clergy and the people.⁹ Abbot Suger, Louis VI's close friend and confidant, was a huge proponent of the king as a Christian figurehead. He claimed that the French king was supposed to bring to life the image and spirit of God. As such, the French king also had the sacred duty to forcibly put down any persons who attempted to subvert his power or the churches power.¹⁰ This is clearly supported in *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*, in which Suger depicts the good deeds of Louis VI during his reign. Suger wrote: "kings put down insolent tyrants whenever they see them inciting wars, taking pleasure in endless plunder, persecuting poor, and destroying churches."¹¹ He also continually refers to Louis VI's piety and his generous gifts and good Christian deeds. Suger shows Louis VI as modeling a Christian lifestyle and practicing his role as vicar by defending God's churches, protecting the poor, and even putting down tyrants who ruled against God's people and power.

Coronations

Another key aspect of this donation of divine power is how the power transferred to the king. For French kings, the transference of divine power

was a mixture of inheritance and their coronation rights. Their divine capacity acquired through birth was strengthened by the divine endowment acquired through royal coronations and allowed for the idea of theocratic kingship to flourish.¹² Royal coronations or consecrations gradually became less secular, and more associated with sacred ideas and notions. Even the liturgy of the coronations became less secular as it created the king as a figure who was above his subjects, yet understood both worlds. This emphasized the king's religious role as mediator between the clergy and the people.¹³ This is especially true for early Capetian rule when royal power was weakest and relied heavily on the coronation right to solidify and legitimize their monarchical power.

The Coronations Rite of Reims offers insight which supports the above claims. The source discusses the numerous ecclesiastical dignitaries who needed to be present at the coronation, the important symbols such as oil and the crown, and also the importance of the location being a Cathedral.¹⁴ The presence of ecclesiastics shows how important the church and clergy were to validating coronations. Their importance of these dignitaries is also reflected in the description of Philip Augustus' coronation. Philip Augustus' father asked for the blessing of the bishops and archbishops to allow his son to become his heir. Next, Philip Augustus "assembled the archbishops, bishops and all the barons of his land and was crowned at Rheims by the reverend William, archbishop of Rheims, cardinal priest of St. Sabina and legate of the apostolic see, the king's uncle."¹⁵ Here Philip's coronation lends support to the necessity of bishops and archbishops discussed in *Coronations Rite of Reims*. In addition to the significant religious dignitaries, coronations were taking place in buildings often referred to as the house of God. Cathedrals offered a great visual of the greatness and power of God which, was being passed down to the king. These primary source examples show how the increase of religious importance in kings' coronations allowed for the church and monarch to strengthen their relationship in a way that almost made the two interdependent on one another. The interdependence of the two is a result of the monarchy's theocratic kingship which ultimately tied them to the church. The king's reliance on the relationship resulting from their theocratic rule allowed the French kings to increase their royal power.

Increased French Monarchical Power through Theocratic Rule

The early Capetians, Hugh Capet, Robert the Pious, and Philip I, laid the foundations for their successors to rule through the above mentioned theocratic kingship; however they failed to take full advantage of the opportunities it offered their own reigns. It was not until Louis VI and Abbot Suger in the early twelfth century that the French monarchy truly began to realize the potential of their close relationship to the church. From Louis VI through Philip Augustus, the French kings began to utilize their role as supporter, defender, and mediator for the church more effectively. By participating more actively in these roles the kings gained even more importance in the church. Just as Suger hoped, the power of the king became intricately linked to the power of the church. As one increased in prestige, the other also benefited.

Visual Representations

One manner in which the Capetians were able to increase their prestige was through religious symbolism and art. Artists and craftsmen were valuable assets to kings on multiple levels. These persons were able to create gifts and donations, which would be appropriate for the king to give, but also they created visual representations of the king which represented his power and his closeness to God. These images became vital to advancing a king's power and legitimacy.¹⁶ These displays took many forms; some, such as the king's seal, served practical purposes and others, such as the cathedrals, a more artistic eminence.

A king's seal was an important indicator of his power and importance. The symbolism and iconography of a seal were a concrete image of the king and his government. For example, "because of the seal's iconographic significance, it put forth, in a fashion similar to coinage, a representative image of the royal power, with its symbols evoking the particular nature of that power."¹⁷ Any message sent by the king or commissioned by the king would bear his seal; in essence he could reveal his power to lords outside of his control or rulers of other territories. Louis VII altered his seal, most likely with the assistance of Suger, in a style that increased his political power and religious significance (fig. 1a). The throne was altered to resemble the throne of Dagobert in an attempt to strengthen the connection between the monarchy and monastery of St. Denis and ultimately the monarchy and the church.¹⁸ On

was still to increase the king's power. The fact that he left half as treasure would benefit his successor by strengthening the relationship between his descendants and the church. One also sees Philip relinquish lands to churches in Rigord's chronicle. After defending the churches against the duke of Burgundy, he granted the lands back to the churches instead of a lord so that they would have more control, and so would he.³⁰ Both Louis VI and Philip Augustus showed the king as a supporter of the church, meaning they were performing their religious responsibilities associated with their theocratic rule, and as a result increasing their favor within the church.

Defenders of the Church

Defending the Church was another key role assumed by the Capetian kings. Louis VI took his role as defender of the church seriously. He not only protected churches which fell under his jurisdiction, but also protected churches beyond Lesser France which gained him pockets of political support outside his very limited territory. On numerous occasions Louis VI fought secular forces threatening churches.³¹ This fierce protection of the church and its believers is supported, yet exaggerated, in Abbot Suger's works. His *Deeds of Louis the Fat* especially focuses on creating the image of Louis VI as a defender of the church: "a renowned and spirited defender of his father's kingdom," Louis VI made sure the churches prospered and searched for peace for the ecclesiastics, the workers, and the poor of society.³² In fact, numerous times throughout the work, Suger portrays Louis VI defending churches. One instance is when he protects the church at Orleans from the Lord Leo.³³ This notion of the king as defender of the church gave him more power by creating him as a military force that would be able to protect and defend his people. Also it showed him as a martial leader with morals; a leader who would defend the pious, poor, and helpless of society, emphasizing his Christ-like nature.

Louis VII also made sure to emphasize the role of defender of the church: "when French churches needed protection against local lords, Louis VII was their first choice – and he usually responded, often with positive results. A number of lay lords in regions where royal power had previously been ineffective also now preferred to seek protection from the king."³⁴ The royal power was becoming more consolidated and strong. The role of defender of the church showed the kings' strength and ability,

and also drew the interest of certain secular rulers. Louis VII also continued the interdependence of French monarchs and Popes by remaining the main sanctuary or retreat for the Pope during problems with the emperor or the Romans.³⁵ This relationship with the papacy is not unique to Louis VII, but is a significant indicator of the increasing power and importance of the French monarchs. Not only were they protecting French churches, but also the Pope, the figurehead for the Christian world. This does not mean that French monarchs did not have conflicts with the church or pope; however, the reliance of the pope on French kings created a unique situation in France.

This increase of strength is especially evident under Philip Augustus: "the role of protector of churches against lay threats was probably more effectively executed under Philip than any of his predecessors, since his power was considerably greater and wider. Philip now operated, for examples, in Cahors, Limoges, and Clermont."³⁶ According to the deeds of Philip Augustus' life, Philip enacted this role of defender of the church numerous times in his first year against Hèbes VI of Charenton, Humbert III of Beaujeu, and the count of Chalon who were mistreating the churches in their areas. The chronicle explains that, "as soon as the king heard the plaint of the religious men; he lit with Gods zeal for the defense of the churches and the liberty of the clergy."³⁷ In another instance in the fifth year of his rule, Philip Augustus also defended the churches against the Duke of Burgundy who was unjustly burdening the churches.³⁸ Under Philip Augustus, one sees more territory protected by the king and more churches relying on the king for protection. Lords are losing power to the French monarch as he consolidated his power, in large part through these expeditions to protect the church from lay threats. The role of defender of the church clearly increased not only consolidation of land, but also support from the church which, would encourage support from certain laity in those lands.

Royal Sees and Ecclesiastical Chroniclers

Certain churches and monasteries were considered 'royal' indicating a close relationship with the king, though "in theory all churches were royal but in practice various princes and lords held secular authority over a see."³⁹ Because of this issue royal churches were ones where the king's power was effective and able to exercise control. Under Louis VII numerous southern churches became royal

the seal the throne seems to be X shaped, resembling Dagobert's throne that was renovated by Suger (fig. 1b).¹⁹ Suger explains that St. Denis possessed the throne of Dagobert which was used by all French kings when their nobles swore homage.²⁰ It holds importance because Dagobert was a Christian King who founded St. Denis. Showing a connection to Dagobert on his seal exemplified Louis VII's Christian role and secular power to anyone who saw his seal.

Despite this change, Louis VII's seal retained the scepter, crown, and throne which not only exalted the king as a strong secular power but also "radiated the authority of a divinely chosen ruler."²¹ These symbols were acknowledged as sacred, and their continuing presence on the seal is important to establishing Louis VII as a legitimate religious ruler. The seal ultimately represented his power over his territory and his subjects. It also emphasized the fact that he was chosen by God to rule. All of these would be revealed to any person handling the royal seal.

Cathedrals offered another way for kings to visually express and solidify their power. "Since in the king's own person the sacred and the secular were closely intertwined, and the temporal and nontemporal miraculously came together, that joy was not only of this world. The art of Cathedrals culminated in the celebration of a God incarnate."²² The *Royal Portal* of Chartres Cathedral was completed around 1145 and offers a good example of this relationship. The middle section of Chartres' *Royal Portal* is the most important to increasing and depicting the royal power. The middle tympanum shows Christ in Majesty (Fig. 2).²³ Christ in majesty was important since "the theologians who created Gothic art pictured Christ not as an infant but a king, the sovereign of the world."²⁴ Christ is sitting on a throne surrounded by the four evangelists that emphasizes his royal position but also that his power was connected to God, just as a king's power was from God. This also supports the idea that a king should be acting 'Christ-like', emulating the supreme ruler from which he derives power.

Another key visual representation of the power flowing from God is the two angels holding the crown over Christ's head. Jesus' power is from heaven and is divine, just like the king's power. In addition, in the early 1100s the crown had become a solid imperishable representation of the king's power in France. His rule was not temporary but a timeless symbol of the beginnings of a real kingdom.²⁵ Holding up this portion of the tympanum

are statues of the kings and queens of the Old Testament. The importance of this is that these kings and queens stand as supports and protection for the Christ above them. This visualizes the concept of kings as protectors and supporters of the church, and also portrays monarchs as the foundation on which the church rests. All of these are important roles that a king derives from his theocratic kingship became important tools used to increase power and recognition.

Supporters of the Church

Along with the seal and portal, political actions and decisions were also vital to supporting the king depicted in the images. Gifts and donations by kings were one way to strengthen the relationship between the king and church, and also a way to increase a king's influence and power within the church. By offering gifts and money kings fulfilled their role as supporter of the church and were able to connect their names and reigns to important events such as the building of cathedrals or improvement and renovations of abbeys and monasteries. Both Louis VI and Philip Augustus offer helpful examples on the relevance of these gifts and donations to increasing kingly prestige.

Louis VI and Abbot Suger had a close relationship that allowed them to mutually grow power for one another. For example, "one sign of its [St. Denis'] close tie to the monarchy is that the abbey became the repository of various pieces of regalia that symbolized the king's authority."²⁶ This elevated St. Denis to the status of royal abbey and linked the fate of the monarchy to the abbey's religious success. Abbot Suger explains how along with these royal gifts of kingship, Louis VI also gave other goods to help fund the building of St. Denis: "the illustrious King himself offering of his own accord emeralds....invited us to complete the work in glorious fashion."²⁷ While Suger may have exaggerated the greatness of Louis VI, there is fact underneath the flattery. Similar to donations today, the king gained influence in the church and his name became linked to a powerful abbey as a person who supported and sustained the abbey.

Philip Augustus also presented gifts to the church. Before going on crusade, Philip drew up a will that left "half his treasure to the poor and the churches."²⁸ He also left an annual pension for La Victorie to allow for immediate building of the church.²⁹ While some criticize that his will only benefitted the church after his death, the intention

affiliates. In 1031 only sixteen sees were royal; by Louis VII's rule the number had risen to twenty-six sees.⁴⁰ The king's role as defender of the church ultimately helped him to acquire more political secular footholds as he defended them against lay forces. As he protected these churches, he was able to expand his political power and consolidate more power in their sees. Royal churches became vital to expressing the monarchy's increasing power. The authority of the King became not only effective in these areas, but also the power and prestige of the specific see became intertwined in the king's prominence and elevating his status in these areas through the individual churches power. Otto Von Simson references this idea when he talks about Chartres Cathedral in the mid-twelfth century. Chartres was seen as a royal capital and residence: "the munificence of the Capetian kings toward Notre Dame Chartres was designed to underscore and enhance the importance of the basilica as a royal cathedral."⁴¹ Chartres was the wealthiest and largest province at this time.⁴² The king's connection to and influence within such a powerful area and Church greatly increased his prestige and eminence surrounding lands. When merchants or pilgrims came to Chartres they would see this royal cathedral and great city associated with French monarchy and they could carry home the news about the French king's wealthy and grand cathedral city.

The close connections kings formed due to their divine power and religious roles allowed them access to well-educated, literate clerics who could write about their lives. These writings ultimately had the ability to increase a king's reputation, legitimacy, and legacy. During Louis VI's rule, monarchical power desperately needed solidified and Suger's writings reflect this need. He explains that his goal was to recount "with our pen his zealous care for the churches of God and his wonderful valor in administering affairs of the kingdom."⁴³ He clearly states that he is attempting to explain the good deeds of Louis which is why there are very few failures or mistakes recorded by Suger. Suger's writings allowed St. Denis to become the "cornerstone of royal policy" and source "of that idea of the Christian monarch."⁴⁴ These are both vital concepts about the king which became intricately tied to the church through a Christian recording of Louis VI's deeds. Philip Augustus also employed the use of these religious scholars when he commissioned Rigord de St. Denis and Guillaume le Breton to write about his deeds which glorified

the French monarchy. As a result ideology and bias are rampant in the works.⁴⁵ While they are biased, the works still reflect how these religious scholars were at the disposal of the French monarchs because of their relationship. Also it shows how these works could increase the monarchies power and importance.

Influence over Church Appointments

Influence over church appointments was another way in which French kings were able to consolidate more power over lands and within the church. Issues over investiture were not clear in France during the times of the Capetians and problems arose from time to time but they appear miniscule compared to the investiture problems of England and Germany.⁴⁶ The issue over investiture was lessened by the fact that French kings, around the time of Louis VII's rule, began to allow free elections to bishoprics and abbeys as long as they informed the king and waited for approval before taking their appointment. This eased some tensions over investiture, and also allowed a king's influence in elections to grow as the monarchy's power grew.⁴⁷ The kings' right to nominate and confirm the bishops to royal sees was a major aid to his increasing power since those bishops would swear loyalty to him.⁴⁸ Yet, "detailed analysis of the witness lists to royal charters shows that bishops and lay magnates were gradually replaced by the king's relatives and knights."⁴⁹ For example, in the *Deeds of Philip Augustus*, the archbishop of Rheims is Philip Augustus' uncle.⁵⁰ While there may not have always been direct appointments, the king's support and consent of appointments increased the likelihood of him getting his candidates elected. This is supported by the fact that a minimum of six of fourteen bishops elected to royal sees from 1191-1200 had obvious connections to Philip Augustus.⁵¹ While these positions are not directly appointed by the king, the king's influence and confirmations seem to have considerable impact on who was elected.

Conflicts between King and Church

Up to this point the relationship between the Capetian kings and the church seems quite amicable, a symbiotic relationship which benefited everyone; however, while the Capetians held religion in great esteem and benefited greatly from their theocratic rule and close relationship to the church, they were not immune to quarreling with the church. In fact, most of them had numerous disagreements with the

church over a multitude of issues; "the seamy side of this theocratic function was that it was always more or less exposed to ecclesiastical and especially papal attacks. Greatly strengthened by the monarchic measures, the uncomfortable fact remains that because of their largely ecclesiastical background they opened up the field to the intervention by the ecclesiastical authorities themselves."⁵² This idea explains why, despite interdependent relations controversy still developed. The King was able to use the church to increase his power, and in many cases, the church was willing to help, until the church or king wished to demonstrate control or disagreed with the other.

Issues over ecclesiastical appointments

Gregory VII in his "Dictate of the Pope" asserted "a right to nullify the obligations of subjects' fealty to "wicked men," an exclusive right to depose and reinstate bishops, and a right to go well beyond even the radical measure of excommunicating rulers by deposing emperors from their worldly station."⁵³ Then in a letter from he wrote to Hermann of Metz in 1081, he explains the legitimacy of his harsh measures: "if any king... shall disregard this decree of ours and act contrary to it, he shall be deprived of his power and his office and shall learn that he stands condemned at the bar of God for the wrong that he has done."⁵⁴ His ideas about increasing church supremacy would continue to grow and would lead to many controversies with monarchs and ecclesiastics grappling for ultimate power.

Examples of controversy can be drawn from almost every reign during the Capetians' time in power. Louis VI disagreed with the appointment of the archbishop of Reims by the Pope and refused to have his coronations at Reims as a result. He also forced the Bishop Stephen of Senlis to seek refuge with Cistercian monks, because Louis VI so vehemently disapproved of him.⁵⁵ Louis VII clashed twice early on with the pope over elections. His first was a refusal to acknowledge the election to Langres. His second conflict over the Peter de la Chatre resulted in a papal interdict over all lands where the king resided.⁵⁶ These examples from Louis VI and Louis VII show that these controversies were not always the pope rejecting royal actions, but sometimes the king rejecting the elected bishops. These rejections by the king show the monarchy's growing power. While they may not be supreme in the land, they felt secure enough to dismiss certain

church actions. This shows how controversies in any respect to the church led to problems in all areas of the monarch-church relationship. These predicaments show how personal opinions and actions impacted the power kings were growing in religious areas such as ecclesiastical appointments.

Issues over Marriage

French kings seemed to suffer more from their personal issues than other problems. One of the reoccurring personal issues which negatively impacted the monarchical power was the abuse of marriage by Capetian kings, especially Philip I and Philip Augustus. Philip I was one of the early Capetian rulers who for many historians seemed to explicitly abuse the king's relationship to the church to the detriment of his rule, legacy, and memory. While some note that his impious character may be exaggerated, Philip did conflict with the church, most prominently in regard to what many believed to be a bigamous and incestuous marriage.⁵⁷ The issue of Philip's marriage was that he repudiated his wife Bertha and took Bertrade, the wife of Fulk le Rechin, who was also his cousin. Philip's marriage debacle resulted in him being excommunicated in 1095, 1096, and 1099. The territories under Philip's control were also placed under interdict in 1097.⁵⁸ This example reveals how relations between the church and monarch were not always easy and that conflicts easily arose when the church believed a king had overstepped his boundaries as monarch. His actions and personal life negatively affected the religious life throughout his realm and significantly decreased his Christ image and religious importance and influence.

Philip I's marriage issue already placed him in bad favor with the Pope, and this reputation carries over in many writings about Philip. Abbot Suger writes about the end of Philip I's reign in his *Deeds of Louis the Fat*. Partially to increase Louis VI's pious nature, Suger writes harshly regarding Philip saying, "He indulged himself too much and did not take care of either his kingdom or the health of his body..."⁵⁹ He also calls him a criminal impious ruler, clearly showing how badly Suger believed Philip's actions fractured the church-monarch relationship. This may have been one of the reasons Suger and Louis VI tried to work so hard to reestablish the church-monarch relationship, and why they felt it was so important. Above one sees how this theocratic rule could help the French kings consolidate and grow their power, yet Philip I's predicament shows that

they risked these advancements by upsetting the balance of the relationship.

Philip Augustus reigned almost 100 years after Philip I; however he also disturbed the relationship between the monarchy and king with his marital issues during the late twelfth early thirteenth centuries. Philip Augustus was extremely concerned about having an heir and because of this he placed great significance on his marriages. His first wife died leaving him a sick son. Philip Augustus married Ingeborg, a Danish princess, yet he repudiated her the day after their wedding night. Ingeborg refused to leave, but this did not stop Philip from marrying again after receiving an annulment from a church council of his supporters.⁶⁰ This complicated marriage issue created quite a rift in the French church and resulted in the Interdict of 1200 from Pope Innocent III stating: "let all the churches be closed; let no one be admitted to them, except to baptize infants.... We permit Mass to be celebrated once a week, on Friday, early in the morning, to consecrate the host for the use of the sick, but only one clerk is to be admitted to assist the priest." The interdict also forbade burials in holy ground by the people.⁶¹ This interdict affected all peoples under Philip Augustus' control, and John Baldwin explains that according to numerous French chronicles it caused a lot of suffering and displeasure.⁶² These Capetian rulers were consolidating land and establishing supremacy over more people, and their personal issues and decisions began to have more of an impact on those that they ruled.

Yet Philip Augustus' dilemma shows another issue regarding church relations with the king. Discussed above is how the king was able to confirm elections, rally support for candidates, and also increase the number of supporters he had in ecclesiastical positions. This led to fracturing within the French church as certain bishops followed the interdict but others ignored it. Thirteen bishops remained loyal to the king despite the danger of suspension. Most of these were bishops with the closest ties to the king, such as familial relations, or those who occupied royal sees. In addition to these bishops, two monasteries, one of which was St. Denis, denied the papal interdict.⁶³ This support from these ecclesiastics shows how Suger's desire to create a strong king with close ties within the church was becoming more of a reality. Philip Augustus' marriage issue showed how the king could conflict with the pope, yet not completely lose religious support or prestige. Philip Augustus had more

centralized and concrete power than Philip I which allowed him not to be as tainted by his marriage issue. It also showed how conflicts hurt not only the relationship between church and state, but also within the church itself as ecclesiastical persons became more involved in politics through the king.

Conclusion

The French kings' employment and belief in theocratic kingship allowed for close connections to form between the kings and the church. The fact that kings received power directly from God gave them special roles that ultimately stretched their political power into the religious realm. Most of the Capetian rulers took their religious roles seriously; they did not just use their connection to the church for political advancement but truly believed it was their responsibility and right to influence and rule within the church and to benefit from the power and influence of the church. However, these kings did not act on their own. Religious clergy members, such as Suger, realized how the church could help these kings and also benefit from the relationship. This connection unfortunately was also easily tested through controversies such as ecclesiastical appointments and irreligious marriages. These problems not only caused fractures between the king and church, but also within the church as certain ecclesiastics were more loyal to the theocratic king than the pope. Yet despite these controversies, the Capetian's theocratic rule was truly a beneficial belief and practice. Their generally amicable relations with certain ecclesiastics and churches created the chance to gain territory, consolidate power, as well as increase their prominence and recognition in the secular realm.

Appendix



Figure 1a: Louis VII Royal Seal

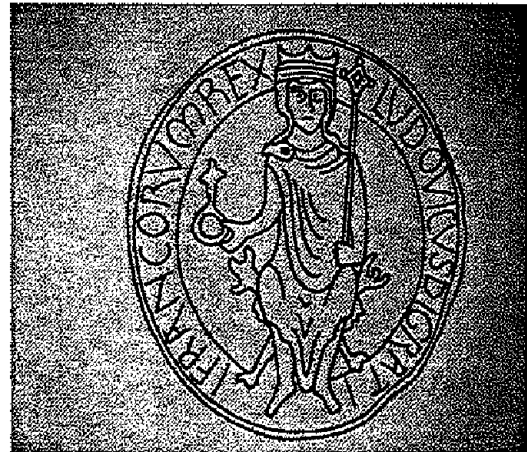


Figure 1b. Louis VII Royal Seal "X"



Figure 2(Royal Portal, Chartres Cathedral)

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