



SARDEGNA SPEAKS ENGLISH
LINEA DI INTERVENTO 1
REALIZZAZIONE DI PROGETTI PER L'APPRENDIMENTO DELL'INGLESE
ATTRAVERSO LA METODOLOGIA CLIL

Liceo Scientifico "Europa Unita" – Porto Torres



Lesson 2: THE CAPETIANS




When the Carolingians died out in 987 AD, the lords of France met to choose a new king. They chose a man named Hugh Capet (hyoo ka-PAY). Hugh Capet was picked for being weak, so the lords could do whatever they wanted and the king wouldn't be able to do anything about it. His successors, also didn't have much power. Some of the lords in their kingdoms controlled more land than the kings did, and were more powerful. Mainly the Capetians succeeded because they lived a long time and always had sons to succeed them, so there were not many opportunities to place any other king on the throne.

Meanwhile, the French lords tried to govern their own provinces, more or less independently. Some did better than others, but gradually the lords figured out a good system. They got some cash income for themselves through charging tolls on roads, charging fees for establishing markets and fairs, and from selling what their tenants grew on their own land. They required and enforced regular military service from their vassals. By 1100, most of France was peaceful and rich, even without the power of the king. Some lords were even strong enough to be attacking other places. The dukes of Normandy conquered England in 1066, and sent some younger sons to take over southern Italy about the same time. The great lords of France were almost entirely independent of the king, who had very little power outside his own land around Paris

But in the 1100's AD the Capetian kings began to get more power. Louis the Fat (LEW-ee) (1108-1137) managed to get his own land around Paris firmly under his own control. He became known as a king who took care of the poor people, and so he got the support of the Church. To help him, the Church gave him the Abbot Suger (SOOJ-ay) as an advisor. Suger was very smart and was very helpful to King Louis. Even the strong lords of France began to ask King Louis to lead them in battle (against Henry V of Germany) or to judge important court cases.

Louis the Fat's son, who was also named Louis (a lot of French kings were named Louis!), married the daughter of one of these strong lords. Her name was Eleanor, and she ruled Aquitaine, which covers most of southern France. In this way Louis and Eleanor formed a much more powerful kingdom. But Louis VII was only sixteen when he became king, and Eleanor was only fifteen. They were too young to really use the power they had. And when they went on the Second Crusade, they got into a fight with each other. Louis suspected Eleanor of seeing other

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men. They never really got along after that. In 1152, when Louis was thirty-one, he divorced Eleanor for flirting with Henry of Anjou and lost control of Aquitaine. But his power increased anyway: more and more, the lords brought their arguments to Louis for him to settle them, instead of starting wars against each other. And more and more, Louis spoke for France when other countries were involved.

Louis VII's son, Philippe Auguste, was much more ambitious and smarter than his father. Philippe came to the throne in 1180 AD, when he was only fourteen years old. He began well by marrying a woman who brought a rich part of France called Artois as her dowry, so he had more power and more money than his father had. Then Philippe encouraged Richard and John of England to fight against their father, Henry, so as to weaken England's hold on French territory in Normandy and Aquitaine. Philippe went on the Third Crusade, in 1188 (when he was 22), but came home early to continue pushing the English out of France. Richard's early death made this much easier, because John Lackland was not a good soldier. By the time Philippe died in 1223, at the age of 61, he had created a loyal civil service which administered and oversaw every province of his kingdom, all over France.

His descendant Louis IX was so religious that he became a saint after he died, and he is usually called St. Louis. He built a famous chapel in Paris called the Sainte Chapelle. He succeeded in getting everyone to love him, and convinced pretty much everyone in France that it was always better to follow the king. St. Louis went on two crusades, the Seventh Crusade and the Eighth Crusade, both of which were failures. He died in Tunis on the Eighth Crusade in 1270, probably of dysentery.

St. Louis' descendants were not as well loved as he was. They put in more and more taxes, and were not as concerned with justice. But the French people still wanted to follow their kings, Louis's son Philippe III (1270-1285) and his grandson Philippe IV (1285-1314), who built the Conciergerie. The lords could never unite against the king as they did in England, and if they could not unite the alternative to the kings was civil war, which nobody wanted.

Philippe IV had three sons, Louis X (1314-1316), Philippe V (1316-1322), and Charles IV (1322-1328), but they all died young without leaving sons of their own. All three men had daughters, but the French lords refused to accept a woman as their queen, or even the sons of these women, Philippe IV's grandsons through their mothers. Instead, they chose one of Charles' cousins, Philippe of Valois, to be the next king. He was a grandson of Philippe IV, but through his father. The king of England, Edward III, was also a grandson of Philippe IV through his mother, and he said he had as much right to the throne as Philippe of Valois did. When Edward attacked France to enforce his right to the throne, the Hundred Years' War began.