

## Les Trois Femmes du roi Philippe II Auguste (Capet)



**Isabelle d'Hainaut**

**En premier:** Philippe a épousé la jeune **Isabelle d'Hainaut** . Hainaut se trouve dans le sud de Belgique. Philippe et Isabelle se sont mariés quand il avait 15 ans, et elle avait 10 ans.

By the age of 14, Philippe was ready to *répudier* Isabelle, because she had not given him any children (of course, she was so young, she probably couldn't yet get pregnant!). But, she fought this, and they remained married. By the age of 17, she finally ended up *en couches*... giving birth to a son (whom they named **Louis**... he eventually became **Roi Louis VIII** [ the 8<sup>th</sup> ] ).

Two years later, Isabelle gave birth to twin sons. However, the birth was difficult, and she died the next day, and the twins died three days later.

For a good while, Roi Philippe saw no reason to remarry, and refused to do so. He went off on Crusade. His advisors, however, wanted him to re-marry, so that he would have another son, as a "spare" ("an heir, and a spare"), because having only one son was not a stable situation... if something happened to young Louis, there would be no heir .



**Agnès de Méran**

Philippe started a relationship, however, with **Agnès de Méran** , a German princess. But, she was deemed unsuitable as a wife for the King of France (because she didn't have a desirable enough *dot* , I believe) and so he did not pursue marriage with her... but, he did continue a relationship with her, including having at least two children.

During this time, King Philippe's advisors were looking for a more suitable royal match for him, and they decided on **Ingeborg of Denmark**, the sister of the King of Denmark.

As time went on, Philippe resisted marriage to Ingeborg. He was happy with things the way they were, and enjoyed his relationship with Agnès de Méran. However, over time, with pressure from his advisors, he accepted marriage to Ingeborg, and she was brought to France for the wedding. Philippe was not too pleased, when he met her, but he agreed to have the wedding. After the wedding night, however, he completely lost interest in her, and refused to spend any more time with her... instead, he continued his relationship with Agnès de Méran.



Let's imagine this to be:  
**Ingeborg of Danemark**  
**(Isambour de Danemark)**

Ingeborg became very unhappy, because Philippe had basically married her, and abandoned her to a castle, to live by herself, and have no family or life with a husband. He had no intention of carrying on a marriage with her, and continued, instead, his relationship and family life with Agnès de Méran.

Ingeborg wrote to her brother, King of Denmark, to complain bitterly about her situation. Her brother intervened, sending a messenger to Philippe, with a letter stating, in no uncertain terms, that his behavior was completely unacceptable, and that he was obligated to a life with Ingeborg... he insisted that Philippe change his behavior, and take up a normal married life with Ingeborg.

Well... Philippe absolutely refused. Who was the King of Denmark, to be giving HIM orders, he said. Denmark was an unimportant *royaume*, to Philippe, so he ignored the adamant request of the king of Denmark.

All of this went on and on. Back and forth. Philippe was determined to have his way, and ignore Ingeborg, and her brother. So, the King of Denmark finally turned to the Pope with his anger about the situation. The Pope agreed with the King of Denmark, and immediately sent Philippe a message, informing him that, by decree of the church, he must, without delay, return to Ingeborg, and take up a married life with her. The Pope, of course, was higher up than a King, so... even though King Philippe Auguste Capet was a very powerful king in Europe, the Pope was the head of the Catholic church of all of Europe, and, therefore, one step higher than any king. Still... Philippe refused to budge on the issue. In fact, in 1196, Philippe actually had a French marriage ceremony performed, to make Agnès his wife (despite still being married to Ingeborg, in the eyes of the church).

The Pope sent a more threatening message, and, this time, warned that he would excommunicate Philippe, if he did not give in, leave Agnès, and return to a married life with Ingeborg. Now... excommunication from the church, meant being barred as a member of the Catholic church, in general. Anyone excommunicated from the church, could never go to heaven, because he would be banned from forgiveness of sins, and from holy anointing at death, and any children would be considered illegitimate. Philippe decided that he did not care!

Well... the Pope was very serious. By excommunicating Philippe (who was the head of the church, in France), the Pope also declared that all of the people of France (all!) were now excommunicated, as well... they were all going to hell. No children would be baptised, no deaths blessed, no cemeteries blessed, no sins forgiven, no churches open... in fact, churches were chained and locked all over France. This final step by the Pope finally convinced Philippe that he had no choice, and he gave in, reluctantly, and without any desire in his heart to have a life with Ingeborg. The Pope stripped Agnès of her title as wife of Philippe, and she died, in 1201, heartbroken...however, shortly thereafter, the Pope did declare that her children with Philippe, were to be considered legitimate heirs (though their older brother, Louis... son of Isabelle of Hainaut... was the next in line to be king, and the only one of the children who did become King of France).

Philippe died in 1226, and on his death bed, he did request of his son, Louis, that poor Ingeborg be treated well, and given a good life, now that he would be gone. This was granted, and she died, in 1238, in better circumstances than she had ever lived while her husband was alive.