

Rigord of St-Denis on the Fall and Rise of Ingeborg of Denmark wife (?) of Philip Augustus

Rigord, Deeds of Philip Augustus, trans. W.L. North from the edition of H. Françoise Delaborde. Paris: Libraire Renouard 1882, pp. 124-25; 135; 147-148; 149.

§92 At this time (1193) King Philip sent the venerable man Stephen, bishop of Noyon, to Canute, king of the Danes, asking and entreating that he deign to send him one of his sisters whom he would take as his legitimate wife. When this was learned, Canute, king of the Danes, graciously agreed and handed his most beautiful sister Ingeborg, a holy child adorned with good habits, over to the legates of the king of France and honored them with gifts. Once they had received license to leave, they entrusted themselves to the wind and waves and came to Amiens, where King Philip arrived in the greatest joy together with bishops and the princes of the realm. He make the long desired Ingeborg his legitimate wife and had her crowned queen of the French. But amazingly, on that very day, at the instigation of the Devil, the king himself, as is reported, was hampered by the wicked acts of sorcerers and the wife whom he had so long desired, he began to consider odious. After a few days had passed, the line of consanguinity was traced by the bishops and barons and a marriage of this sort was annulled by ecclesiastical judgment. But Queen Ingeborg refused to return to Denmark and decided instead to remain in the region of Gaul in religious houses. For she preferred to preserve her conjugal continence with prayers for the rest of her life than stain the pact of her first marriage when joined to another. But because a marriage of this sort was said to have been unjustly dissolved, the Roman pontiff Celestine¹ sent legates to France in response to the Danes' complaint, namely Melior, a cardinal priest, and Cencius, a subdeacon. When they arrived in Paris, they summoned a council of all the archbishops and bishops as well as abbots of the entire realm during which they discussed restoring the marriage between King Philip and his wife Ingeborg.² But because dogs who have been made mute are not able to bark and also fear for their skins,³ they did not bring anything to completion.

§112 In this year [1196] and this month [June] King Philip took as wife a woman named Maria, the daughter of the duke of Merania and Bohemia and marquis of Istria.⁴

§131[at the council of Dijon in 1199] To the heap of all this evil, he shut Ingeborg, his legitimate wife, the holy queen, a woman adorned with every good habit and virtue and deprived of the solace of all of her own people, up in his castle at Étampes.

§133 In the year of the Lord 1201, on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin,⁵ Octavian, bishop of Ostia and Velletri, came as legate into France. Through his admonitions, the lord king received his wife Ingeborg somewhat back into his grace and for a time separated from himself the woman who had been introduced in her stead.

Then a council was summoned by Octavian and John, cardinal priest of Saint Paul, legates of the

¹ Pope Celestine III (1191-1198).

² This council occurred on 7 May 1196.

³ Echoing Isaiah 56:10.

⁴ This woman's real name was Agnes.

⁵ September 8.

apostolic see, in the month of April at which King Philip was present along with the archbishops, bishops, and princes of the entire realm. For fifteen days they discussed the marriage of Queen Ingeborg and whether to confirm or dissolve it. After the many and varied disputations of the legal experts, the king, bored by the long delay, left the cardinals and bishops there and left with his wife Ingeborg early in the morning, without saying their goodbyes. By way of messengers he sent word to them that he had taken his wife with him as his own and did not wish to be separated from her. When this was heard, the council was dissolved, and the cardinals and bishops who had assembled to perform the divorce were left stupefied. Then John of Saint Paul departed with great embarrassment. Octavian, however, remained in France, and thus King Philip on this occasion escaped the grasp of the Romans.