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Paris from the early Middle Ages to Louis XIV: an immersive experience

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Short presentation (2') – I will pop (easy) questions throughout the presentation.

Film 0:00 – 0:09

Like many other cities, Paris was born on the banks of a river, on a small island that is now in its center: the cleverly-named “Île de la Cité”. This is where our journey begins.

The Origins of the city: from the Celts to the 15th c.

Film 0:10 – 0:38

The history of Paris as we know it started with the Celt tribe of the Parisii:

What did their name evolve into?

The Parisii settled on the island and built their oppidum there. It was a very small village enclosed with wooden walls, like most celts oppida, and its location on the island offered a perfect protection from assaults from the outside.

Film 0:39 – 0:48

After the Roman conquest in 52 BC, the oppidum was replaced by a gallo-roman city.

Do you know its name? It is the same as one of the 5 star-hotels in Paris: Lutecia.

Like any other roman city, Lutecia was organized along 2 main axis: the cardo (N-S) and the Decumanus (E –W). These remained very important through time, and are still visible today.

The cardo is now the rue Saint-Jacques, on the side of which you can still find the *thermes*, the main street going then North to the Île de la Cité and the Pont Notre-Dame (to which we will come back).

Can you spot the *thermes*? It is the building with a blue square in the center.

The Decumanus is basically the rue Soufflot, crossing the Cardo on Mont Lucoticus (Montagne Sainte Geneviève, where the Pantheon now stands).

Film 0:49 – 1:14

Like any other important Roman city it had a forum with a temple in its center and a basilica.

What was a basilica in Roman times? A common place to discuss public matters and gather commercial activities, a structure that was reused to hold mass when Christianity became the official religion of the Empire (especially during the Byzantine period).

Film 1:14 – 1:40

Like any important Roman city there were also arenas, that are still visible today on the left bank of the Seine.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, barbaric tribes arriving from the East came in successive waves, including the Huns. According to the Parisian legend, their leader was stopped in front of the city walls by a young shepheress called Genevieve, who then became the patron Saint of Paris. Do you know how the leader of the Huns was called? Attila.

In the late 5th c. the founder of the 1st “French” dynasty, Clovis, chose Paris as the capital of his realm, the realm of the Franks (later giving their name to the country).

During the reign of the next dynasty, the Carolingians, Paris was abandoned as the capital was moved to other cities (like Aachen, now in Germany).

The only stable structure for the next centuries is Church, and in Paris the only strong element that remains until the 10th c. is the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, on the left bank.

Until the year 1000 the right bank was a vast and uninhabitable swamp.

During the 9th century, the Vikings ravage the region several times. They come to the North Western shore in successive raids, going deeper and deeper inland along the River Seine, until the King decided to give them a piece of his realm.

This region kept this part of History in its name. Do you know which region it is? Normandy.

It was not until 987 that Paris became again the capital of a little kingdom, under the reign of the first Capetians.

Paris under the first Capetians

Thanks to the presence of the King and its court the town underwent an urban and commercial Renaissance during the 11th and 12th centuries and once again began to expand on both banks.

Do you remember what remained from the early Middle Ages on the left bank? St-Germain

Film 1:40 – 1:41: PRESS READ THEN PAUSE AGAIN IMMEDIATELY

Under the reign of Philip Augustus (1180-1223), the city went through many changes that allowed it to become an important economical center, with a growing population that would feel secure settling back within its walls.

Economical development:

To allow the population to grow Philip Augustus created public fountains, a large public market (Les Halles, still the commercial heart of Paris) and for the first time had the main streets paved, a major improvement for public health!

The population grew, as well as the commercial strength of the city, based on the activity of its “Guild of the Water Merchants”¹. They traded goods coming from the fairs in Champagne (then the most important in Europe), cloth from Flanders, even exotic pieces arriving through the Seine from the Atlantic Ocean. Their council, soon represented by the provost of merchants, installed itself in the ancestor of the current Town Hall in the 14th century (a building that would directly open on the “place de grève”, the main harbor in the center of Paris.

Film 1:41 – 1:49:

Look at this picture of the Place de Grève. Do you think it shows the 12th c. state? Why?

Film 1:50 – 1:54

This Guild of the Water Merchants will prove very important for the history of Paris, as the city’s coat of arm still shows. **Do you understand its motto?**

Film 1:55 – 2:14

It is in this period that a marked difference developed between:

- **the right bank** with commercial activities (like the market of Les Halles)
- **the Île de la Cité**, the seat of political and religious power

¹ The Guilds were associations of artisans or merchants who control the practice of their craft in a particular town. The earliest types of guild were formed as confraternities of tradesmen, and their rise is directly linked, in many cities, to the emergence of Universities (Paris, Bologna, Oxford).

- **the left bank** as the intellectual district, with the University (do you know its name?)
Note on the modern map the difference the city under Philip Augustus and today.

Film 2:15 – 5:08

The Île de la Cité : on the eastern side of the island, the building of Notre-Dame started in 1165. Note in the movie how the constructions develop on both sides of the Seine. By the end of the construction (under the reign of Jean II) the streets around the main square are paved. Also look at the structure of the houses, we will come back to it in a minute. We are here in 1350, we will go back in time a little...

SWITCH TO MOVIE ONLINE ABOUT THE SAINTE CHAPELLE

<http://paris.3ds.com/fr-sainte-chapelle.html> Play it until the end

On the western side of the island stood the royal palace since the 5th c. (on the site of a former Roman palace). It was rebuilt by the first Capetians, but the main development happened under the reign of Saint Louis (1240s) with the construction of the Sainte Chapelle.

Note on the images the silhouette of Notre Dame in the back and the gardens in front of the Logis du Roi: high luxury in such a crowded space!

The structure of the palace evolved through time, especially in the beginning of the 14th century, under the reign of Philip the Fair. On the images you might have recognized the towers of the Conciergerie and the Clock Tower, that are still visible today.

As we moved towards the Rue de la Barillerie (1'18), you may notice that the streets are not paved, and that shops are gathered against the walls of the royal palace. They also occupied the ground floors of most houses, built in timber framing, which allowed the upper floors to spread over the street, a practice due to the fact that taxes were calculated depending on the ground surface of the house.

Good side: it kept rain from falling on pedestrians...Downside? Fires spread easily...

As we get a higher view over the island and the banks of the Seine (2'39), the camera shows the **left bank**, the “intellectual district”.

Its story began in the early 12th century, when dissident masters from the island moved there to teach in barns of the Mount Saint Genevieve (still the seat of most cultural institutions in Paris). Their teaching was quite successful: a century later the area counted 60 colleges, of which the most famous was the one founded by Robert de Sorbon: the Sorbonne. This made Paris one of the largest intellectual centers in medieval Christendom.

These evolutions stimulated the growth of the population, from 80,000 inhabitants in the 13th century (that was already making Paris the largest city in Christian Europe) to 200,000 inhabitants in 1328!

To secure this large population, strong walls had to be built.

Back to film 5:09 – 5:22

Securing the city:

The process actually started in 1190. Before leaving the capital to participate to the 3rd Crusade (with Richard “Lion Heart” of England) Philippe Augustus secured the city by building a strong system of fortifications around it.

The city is enclosed in a high wall, reinforced upstream outside the walls by the fortress of the Louvre.

Why was it reinforced upstream and not downstream? To defend it in case attackers would come through the river.

Who could the attackers be at that time? Not so much the Vikings as the English (the Western half of today's France is then ruled by the King of England): always put thing back in context to understand them.

Back to film 5:23 – 5:45

The most famous element of the fortress was the “large tower of the Louvre” (it was then the largest in the whole realm). It was a dissuasive piece of architecture with a twin sister on the left bank, the Tower of Nesle, that allowed to draw a chain between them, as in the battle of the Blackwater in *Game of Thrones*.

But of course these defensive devices could not go against the economical interests of the city, so the walls were pieced by doors, opening on roads where the “faubourgs” (suburbs) developed, eventually becoming part of the enlarged city.

This development was stopped during the first half of the 14th century by a series of events:

- the 1310s were marked by famine (certain cities in Flanders lose up to 10% of their population), a raise of taxes and inflation,
- 1/3 of the entire population of Europe died during the Black Plague (1348-49),
- As the Hundred Year's War started (1337-1453), the city revolted against the dauphin (future Charles V) under the direction of Provost of Merchants, Etienne Marcel in 1358.

Peace returned under the reign of **Charles V** (1364-1380). The city grew again and new walls were built on the right bank to include the urbanized suburbs.

Back to film 5:46 – 6:00

The Louvre is now enclosed within the walls, and loses its defensive functions to become a royal residence. The defensive function then goes to new structures: the Tower of Bois on the West side and the Tower of Billy and the Bastille on the East side.

See the location of the site and the space occupied by the city under Charles V on a modern map.

Back to film 6:00 – 6:29

As the Louvre becomes a royal residence, its appearance and inner organization evolve. New wings and terraces are added, a chapel is built as well as the Library Tower to accommodate the king's library (ancestor of the French National Library).

The main element of this evolution, is the famous “Gand Vis” (great spiral staircase) designed by Raymond du Temple.

We can still see the foundations of this building under the modern Louvre, and its original state in pictures, like the illumination of October in the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*.

N.B.: The Louvre becomes a royal residence, but it is not the only one, not even in Paris where the King's main residence is the Hôtel Saint Pol (a few kilometers East). Under the reign of Louis XI and Charles VIII royal castles are built in the Loire valley where King and court reside.

Why did the kings flee from Paris?

During the 1st half of the 15th c, the Hundred Years War is raging, turning into a civil war, and the capital is even taken by English troops in 1420. In 1429 the King of England rules over the Northern half of France, including Paris that is occupied until 1436. After this the city retains a suspicious tint for the French King, and just like Louis 14 later he will prefer to rule from a quieter place. **Where will Louis 14 go? Versailles.**

The city will not regain its status as the capital until the reign of Francis I in the next century.

Renaissance Paris: Louvre, Pont-Neuf and Place des Vosges.

In the second half of the 15th century the kingdom is unified again. Peace and prosperity return, and new innovations from Italy start being integrated into architecture as you saw in class.

Can you give me examples? Castles in the Loire Valley, Château de Gaillon in Normandy.

Under the reign of the first Valois, Paris once again shined thanks to the development of print, the work of numerous poets and humanists (the most eminent of whom taught at the new College of France, that is still an essential intellectual and scientific institution in France).

Many members of these intellectual milieus were sensitive to the ideas conveyed by the Reformation, but the King and a vast majority of Parisians were not. And in 1534 another civil war started, this time a religious one.

This explains that when Catherine de' Medici commissioned the Tuileries in 1563-64, she had it built outside of the city walls to facilitate an eventual escape to Saint-Germain-en-Laye...

The religious troubles grew, culminating in Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572. And in order to enter the city and be crowned, in 1593 Henri IV has to abjure his Protestant faith: "Paris is worth a mass".

As peace returns to the city, Henri IV has to restore the economy and revive the capital's aura.

To stimulate commerce, he imports artists like tapestry makers from Flanders, to avoid capitals from fleeing (something his grandson, Louis XIV, will later develop with the Royal Manufacture of the Gobelins).

To stimulate science and the cultural radiance of the capital, he creates new institutions: the Jardin des Plantes (not just a "plant garden" but a place to study Nature in the widest sense of the world), the Académie Française (to normalize the language and facilitate communication of ideas), the Royal Press (to spread knowledge).

And to modernize the capital and stimulate economy, he starts major urban constructions (like FDR in the 1930s).

1. The Louvre

Back to film 6:30 – 6:54

Henry 4 began by connecting the Tuileries (built for his 1st mother-in-law, Catherine de' Medici) to the Louvre. To do this, 2 structures were built: the small gallery and the Gallery along the water, a protected corridor built from 1595 to 1610 for his 2nd wife, Marie de' Medici (inspired by the one built by Vasari in Florence between the Palazzo Vecchio and Pitti Palace).

Henri 4 also launched his "grand design," which would form the base of the square courtyard of the Louvre (multiplying its surface by 4) and favor the extension of fancy neighborhoods towards the west on the Right bank, where they still are.

Film 6:55 – 7:34

The city grew again, new neighborhoods replaced the countryside in the faubourg of Saint Honoré (right bank), on the Ile Saint-Louis, in the Marais, and in the faubourg of Saint-Germain (left bank). Major personalities had new palaces built there, like Marie de' Medici with the Palais du Luxembourg (left bank) and the Prime Minister Richelieu with the Palais Cardinal (now the Palais Royal, on the right bank).

Do you know who Richelieu was? Think about the 3 musketeers.

Film 7:35 – 7:45

Due to this growth, the fortifications on the right bank are moved North: the wall of the General Farmers (in charge of collecting taxes on any merchandise entering the city).

These fortifications will disappear during the 19th c., replaced by the **Grands Boulevards** that will be a major axis for the development of Paris under the direction of Haussmann.

Film 7:46 – 8:02

Going back to the Louvre, the “Grand Design” conceived by Henri 4 will be pursued by his son Louis 13 (with Lemercier), and his grandson Louis 14.

In 1660 Louis 14 asks Le Vau to finish the demolition of the medieval castle and to clear the square courtyard (so that he can have a modern housing in Paris, protected from the assaults of Parisians who during the Fronde – a civil rebellion against Royalty – invaded his apartments).

Film 8:03 – 8:15

Louis 14 also makes the Eastern entrance the main entrance of the castle, and to magnify it requests a façade from the greatest architect of the time, Bernini, who passed through Paris in 1665. But Bernini’s project, too “Italian,” too “Baroque”, was never followed. Instead, Louis 14 commissions members of the Royal Academy, Le Vau, Le Brun, and Perrault, to create a project (very classical, close to the one we can now see in Versailles, facing the gardens). The façade is built 1667-1670 but then, like François Ie before him, the king has lost interest in the project as work on his new castle progressed, and eventually in 1682 the King moves to Versailles with his court and the entire administration of the realm (even leaving the new gallery without roofs...:

Film 8:16 – 8:22

Let them ask about the buildings in the center of the Square Courtyard? Plan Turgot: 1734-39

Film 8:22 – 8:52

We will now leave the Louvre, walking pass the church Saint-Germain l’Auxerrois (which bells gave the starting signal for the massacre of Saint Bartholomew’s Day in 1572 ; it is also the church where Molière got married in 1662).

Film 8:53 – 9:15

As we walk along the Seine, we can see that the intervention of Henri IV were not limited to the Louvre. He led a politics of great works in order to embellish the city with a breadth never seen previously in Paris (imitating the principles of urbanism that had been put in place in Italy in the 15th century).

Under his reign the Town Hall was completed and many urban projects took place that definitely changed the face of the city, introducing new types of bridges (the Pont Neuf), new urban walkways (“sightseeing” docks) and new types of squares (geometric and homogenous) that can still be seen today.

2. The Pont Neuf

Film 9:16 – 9:37

The first of the urban projects developed by Henri 4 was the Pont Neuf (1578-1607), which was the first bridge without houses to be constructed in Paris.

Film 9:38 – 9:40

As a comparison, look at these images of the Pont Notre-Dame, that links the Île de la Cité to the Quai de Gesvres, near the Town Hall. These houses, that could be rented to merchants or private individuals, would make the construction of such a costly enterprise profitable (a principle which would be used again for the Place Royale in the 16th c, the Place Vendôme in the 17th c, and the Rue de Rivoli in the 19th c).

Film 9:41 – 9:44

As this bridge was clear of house, for the first time the Parisians could cross the Seine while looking at the view. Everything was made for them to enjoy it: they could walk on 4-steps high sidewalks to be protected from the dense circulation of carriages and enjoy the boutiques installed in the half-moons areas that you may have noticed on the sides.

Film 9:45 – 9:59

Halfway through the bridge, an equestrian statue of Henry IV was installed after his death. It was not exactly the one we see today:

The horse had been given to Marie de' Medici by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo II, after the death of Henri IV (though its transportation to Paris did not go smoothly: it sunk on the way and had to be fished out a year later).

On the corners of the pedestal Louis XIII added sculptures of enchained slaves in 1635, symbolizing the submission of foreign powers to the King.

The statue was destroyed during the Revolution and "replaced" by Louis XVIII, using material that resulted from the melting of Napoleons' statues. In the belly of the horse were also placed some historical arte facts that are now in the "iron cabinet" of the National Archives.

Film 10:00 – 10:15

The construction of the Pont Neuf was part of a bigger operation. This operation included the transformation of the Western part of the island into a triangular area to create a garden and a theatrical new square conceived as a "promenoir" (a walking area, to see and be seen).

Film 10:16 – 10:25

This square, the **Place Dauphine**, is sided by houses that were all built by private investors who could buy the lots but then had to build houses following the model given by the King's Prime Minister, Sully.

This actually took place a little later (1607-1615), following the "brick and stone" model given by the **Place Royale**, that we will see in a few minutes.

Film 10:26 – 10:36

Why are there so many police cars? Remember that on the island was the royal palace, and that the King had special functions including giving justice. Well, the Palais de Justice is still there.

3. The Marais

Film 10:37 – 11:00

We are now moving to an area a bit more to the East, that is globally still in its 16th -17th c. state. What is the history of this area?

When Charles V constructed the new walls in the 14th century, he doubled the surface of the city on the right bank, encircling the Louvre to the West and closing the new area with the new Fortress of the Bastille to the East. As we saw the wall was pierced by 7 doors, the main on this side being the Porte Saint Antoine.

On this new space, reclaimed from swamps thanks to the clearing work of religious order, lords were able to build country houses, followed by the king. Charles V did not like the old palace of the Cité, with 5,000 people milling about, no architectural unity, not well secured. He thus constructed a series of *hôtels particuliers* (including the Hôtel Saint Pol to the east of Paris, to facilitate an eventual escape towards Vincennes in the case of an English invasion).

Film 11:01 – 11:08

Great vassals, like the archbishop of France whose hôtel still exists (the hôtel Forney) followed the move. But it was above all with the creation of the Place Royale in 1605 that the Marais became THE fashionable neighborhood of Paris. Aristocrates and magistrates settled around the square, covering the former site of the Hôtel Saint-Pol with trendy hotels along newly opened streets (that hardly changed since).

The popularity of the area began to sink when Marie de' Medici's installation at the Luxembourg in 1625 reversed the polarity of the city to the profit of the faubourgs of Saint Honoré and Saint Germain (on the left bank), and after the court's installation in Versailles under Louis XIV, the Marais was progressively abandoned to industrial activities (in the 19th-early 20th c it was a poor neighborhood, hosting mainly immigrants especially Jewish families).

Film 11:09 – 11:16

The change occurred with the passing of new Heritage Protection laws in 1964 by André Malraux: the area has been rehabilitated and is now – again – one of the trendiest and most expensive in Paris.

N.B. Since most of the area is still in its 17th c. state, it can give you an idea of what life in a modern and trendy neighborhood was back then.

Getting to your place:

Finding your way could be difficult. First of all, until Louis XIII the outline of the streets follows the former medieval paths and is thus very sinuous. Second of all, until 1729 the names of the streets were not written on the walls (one could locate himself thanks to shop signs, coats of arms on important houses, churches).

Don't hope to get a cab either: most streets are too narrow for cars, so carriages are rare until the 17th century and the opening of wider avenues. Only the Rue Saint Antoine, leading to the Porte Saint-Antoine, had the same width as it does today (about 70 feet). It was then considered as an unusually large avenue, and for this reason it was chosen as a popular walking spot and the site of popular celebrations (competitions, tournaments, carnivals, triumphal entries → it's actually where Henri II died...)

So you will have to walk, but careful then: there are no sidewalks until 1805 and since the streets are not paved, they are quite muddy. This is also due to the lack of sewer system (you empty your potty trough the window).

*Still about **hygiene**: until the 19th c. water was a central problem in Paris. Fountains were rare and with little flow. At the time of the Revolution, each Parisian had only 1 liter of water daily: private and public hygiene were thus quite limited.*

***Security** was not high either. The streets were quite shady as the upper levels of the houses tended to rejoin, and there were few public lights. Under Philip the Fair (around 1300) the city had only 3 lights at night: under the vault of the Châtelet, on the Tower of Nesle and at the Cemetery of the Innocents. When insecurity was too high, bourgeois mansions were requested to place candles behind 1st floor windows, and in 1662 Louis XIV adopted a “mobile” lighting scheme (“torch bearers for rent” you could find at certain intersections) but it was not always available. So in 1667 the authorities asked each street to be lit by lanterns with candles at each end and in their middle. This system grew during the 18th century: in 1702 the Place Dauphine was lit by 8 lanterns and was 1 of the 1^{sts} areas so well lit up in Paris. Problem with candles: they provide little light and thus public lighting remained very limited until the spread of gas lighting in 1829.*

In spite of these charming details, at the beginning of the 17th c. the Marais was considered a fancy area where fashionable hotels were built, including the Hôtel de Sully.

3a. The Hôtel de Sully

Film 11:17 – 11:38

In 1624 the controller of finances (equivalent of the Secretary of the Treasury), Mesme Gallet, united 20 parcels of land to build a hotel. This was rather exceptional given the price of the lots then, but the space only allowed him to built about half of the current hotel (the “street side” of it). The part behind (garden and 3rd house) was added later on.

Film 11:39 – 12:01

The ensemble was conceived according to the classical scenography of reception.

When guest arrive, everything is made to impress them:

- the service court is hidden behind the coach storage area (on the left) to keep the circulation of servants out of the court of honor.

- when the guests enter the main wing, they proceed through rooms that open onto the next in the classical enfilade (the main room is on the ground floor, but important guests would be led to the “private” apartments on the 1st floor with an antechamber, chamber, cabinet, and wardrobe, marking a progression of honor as one moved forward into these more and more private rooms).

Also, don’t look for the bedrooms or bathrooms on the floor plan: at that time the rooms are still multifunctional. Specialization comes later: the dining room appears in 1660 at Vaux-le-Vicomte.

Film BACK TO 11:41 AND PAUSE IT

The elevation is clearly visible on the façade, with 2 levels separated by a band. Weirdly enough, it reuses models of previous decades, including the errors in the articulation of the angles (with the windows). The central door is compacted to allow an opening above it that lifts up the staircase, still located at the center of the wing like 70 years earlier.

Can you give me examples of central staircases and why they were put there? Loire Valley.

What happens to the staircase latter on? It is moved to the end of the wing.

Film 11:42 – 12:14

This damages the axial symmetry of the building, and above all the inner circulation... Also it is still a ramp-on-ramp stairway, with a central wall going up to the summit and the flights of stairs engaged in blind walls, while at Cheverny (1624) these walls are already open. And François Mansart even attempts to use stereotomy to create a stairway without a central support at that same time!

Film 12:15 – 12:20

The decoration of this façade, like the rest, is rather old fashioned. The vertical axis is accentuated by chains of bossage (rustication), that unify the elevation up to the cornice, with a very rich décor (rolled-up leather, acanthus leaves, shells) concentrated on the highest parts (the dormer windows, or lucarnes). Again we are still in the tradition of the chateau of the Loire Valley a century before.

There are also sculptures of the 4 seasons inspired by the ones made by Jean Goujon for the Hôtel Carnavalet (c. 1550), along with sculptures of the 4 elements on the side wings.

Film 12:21 – 12:49

When you get to the garden and look back, there is a symmetry problem because there was no space to built a wing on the left side. So to keep the staircase on the central axis, a screen wall was erected as a “trompe-l’oeil” (literally, to trick the eye) in order to mask the gable of the next building and regularize the space, magnifying the path from the courtyard to the garden.

This immense private garden was composed of flowerbeds of continually flowering shrubs in an embroidery pattern, made to be viewed from the apartments on the first floor (flowers then were really expensive, only the king could have some in his gardens).

In 1634 Sully, the former Prime Minister of Henry IV, bought this hotel, giving it his name.

He had then became an extravagant old man who loved to overdress and wear outdated jewels, go to the Place Royale and show off. He thought that the existing hotels were too small, so he bought the one located at the back of the garden, which allowed him to create a special passage leading directly to the square to show his bling...

Film 12:50 – 12:58

3b. The Place des Vosges

PLAY FILM AND PAUSE IT IMMEDIATELY AT 12:59

Birdseye view : where is the Hotel de Sully? Why is it shaped like that?

On the former site of a horse market, Henri IV had considered constructing a silk spinning workshop (in his move to stimulate economy) but since Paris had neither a prominent place nor an intersection that could serve for festivities and promenades, he changed his mind.

In 1605, he followed the proposition of Androuet du Cerceau and created a public place for royal festivities (not a square as it is now). The space would be surrounded by a series of pavilions, built on lots that would be sold as concessions to entrepreneurs and private landlords. The north part of the place – the less prestigious one - would thus see a succession of bourgeois and master artisans settle in before the elite were attracted to this space (as will occur later at the Place des Victoires).

The king's architects organized the space in 36 pavilions (9x4) with 2 axes: North/South, East/West. The place was opened to circulation and thus regulated the urban space around it in the manner of the *cardo/decumanus* system of the ancient Romans.

Film 13:00 – 13:27

The organization of the façades has the same regulatory goal: they all had to be similar, only roofs and chimneys show the actual limits of the houses (something that with Haussmann will become systematic). The model for that was the southern Pavilion, called “Pavilion of the King” (though he never actually lived there). It was the 1st to be constructed, completed in 1608.

Film 13:28 – 13:42

This pavilion distinguished itself by its triumphal arch with 5 bays plus the pediments on the first floor. This gives the building a greater dignity, as the others have only architectonics as décor. It dominates the rest of the place and imposes a hierarchy to space, although here the King dominated with benevolence and without crushing the people (to the contrary of Versailles).

The other pavilions have 4 bays - 4 arches, 4 high windows - and on the 1st floor strips of stone follow the verticals of the pilasters and the windows. Between these strips we see bricks. This type of construction is called the “brick and stone” style, in which the supporting elements are built in stone and the brick is used as a type of filling partition. Note that until 1830, brick was very expensive, so some people copied the theme by erecting walls with painted rubble...

The smaller pavilions constitute a system of double wings flanking the central pavilion (the King's), a system that will be taken up around 1630 by Lemercier at the Louvre.

The suite of arcades of the ground floor also forms a covered gallery, a popular walking area like the Pont-Neuf, the Place Dauphine... With these constructions appears the principle of using squares to organize urban space and to impose the mark of power (used again under Louis XIV).

Henri IV, assassinated in 1610, never saw the completion of the square. It was inaugurated from April 5th to the 7th, 1612 on the occasion of the double marriage of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria and of the king's sister, Elisabeth of France, with the crown prince of Spain, the future Philip IV. From then on the place became a destination site for “celebrities” like Sully, Richelieu, the Precieuses, Madame de Sévigné, Bossuet, Pascal, Descartes, Victor Hugo, Rachel, Théophile Gauthier, Alphonse Daudet... and more recently, Natalie Portman.

Play Film to the end

To take this further:

About the Regency of Catherine de' Medici and the last Valois: *La Reine Margot*, Patrice Chéreau (1994)

About the childhood of Louis XIV and The Fronde: *Louis, Enfant-Roi*, by Roger Planchon (1993)

If you want to hear what Paris sounded like in the 15th century: *Les Cris de Paris* (the Shouting of Paris) by Clément Janequin.