

Charles I of Anjou

Power, Kingship and
State-Making in
Thirteenth-Century Europe

Jean Dunbabin

The Medieval World



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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Charles I of Anjou (1226/7?-85) was one of the great conquerors of the medieval period. The youngest son of King Louis VIII of France (1223-26), he skilfully utilized and created a whole series of opportunities which made him for a short period one of the most powerful rulers in Europe. From 1246 count of Anjou and Maine as a result of the generosity of his elder brother, King Louis IX of France (St Louis), and count of Provence as a result of his marriage to the heiress of the county, he accepted in 1263 the papal invitation to take over the kingdom of Sicily. Between 1263 and 1268 he conquered the kingdom and destroyed the descendants of the Hohenstaufen Frederick II. By papal grant imperial vicar of Tuscany as well as ruler of the southern part of the Italian peninsula, he set out to revitalize the traditional Mediterranean role of the Norman and Hohenstaufen kings, buying the title of king of Jerusalem in 1277 and seeking to expand his power across the Adriatic at the expense of the Byzantine empire. In 1281 he was preparing to try to conquer Constantinople, but in 1282 a major rebellion in Palermo precipitated the loss of the island of Sicily to the king of Aragon and a series of military defeats.

Contemporary views of Charles's career were diverse and modern scholars have reached very different verdicts. Deeds such as the execution of the young Corradin have unsurprisingly generated a reputation for callous cruelty, and the scale of the Sicilian Vespers and of the taxation which preceded it have been ascribed to arrogance and misjudgement. This verdict gains further strength from the fact that some of Charles's lands had been lost before his death, and the rest were endangered. By skilfully analysing the admixture

of contextual forces and personality which made Charles's career, Jean Dunbabin demonstrates that such a conclusion, while not being entirely misplaced, is a considerable oversimplification. A younger son, driven to seek his own fortune, he succeeded in doing so on an astonishing scale. Invited to conquer the kingdom of Sicily by the papacy, he was henceforth the instrument of papal policy and the inheritor of the complex political, economic, religious and cultural world of the Hohenstaufen kings. Dr Dunbabin points out that while personal ambition was undoubtedly a part of Charles's make-up, his activities coincided not only with papal aspirations, but also with the religious ideal of crusading. Charles's motives for conquering the kingdom of Sicily were complex, as his initial reluctance to become embroiled in the scheme suggests. The Charles who emerges in this book is a ruler of quite prodigious efficiency and one sensitive to the responsibilities demanded by idealized thirteenth-century kingship; a man of immense practical abilities, an adventurer who was also a realist, and a principled ruler, who at the same time did not flinch from cruelty in raising the money necessary for his schemes. Although he refused to consult his subjects on taxation, Charles tried to ensure that justice was equitably administered and that the complaints of his subjects were heard. Consequently he was not an unpopular ruler in most of his territories. His final defeat was less the product of *folie de grandeur* than of overstretching his resources in the interests of securing peace in his eastern lands.

A scholar who has written extensively on the intellectual and cultural history of the later Middle Ages and on Capetian France, Jean Dunbabin is very well qualified to assess all aspects of Charles's career. The resulting book is a splendid addition to the Medieval World series, not only because it reassesses the career of a major figure, but because it illuminates so many features of the political and religious world of thirteenth-century Europe and because of its acute appraisal of the framework of ideas and influences which shaped Charles of Anjou's career.

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NOTE ON NAMES

I have used the English forms for popes and members of royal families. I have also called the future saint Thomas Aquinas OP, to distinguish him from his cousin Tommaso d'Aquino, count of Acerra. Otherwise I have attempted to show the nationalities of the people to whom I refer by using the French, Occitan or Italian forms.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- Bouches du Rhône* *Inventaire-sommaire des archives départementales antérieures à 1790; Bouches du Rhône*, ed. M. Blancard, *Archives civiles série B* (Paris 1865)
- del Re* *Cronisti e Scrittori sucroni napoletani*, ed. G. del Re, 2 vols (Naples 1868)
- LTC* *Les Layettes du Trésor des Chartes*, ed. A. Teulet, J. de Laborde, E. Berger and H.F. Delaborde, 5 vols (Paris 1863–1909)
- Nuova cronica* Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, ed. G. Porta (Parma 1990)
- Paladino* Bartomoleo di Neocastro, *Historia Sicule 1250–1293*, ed. G. Paladino, *RIS* n.s. xiii, part 3 (Bologna 1921)
- RCA* *I Registri della Cancelleria angioina*, ed. R. Filangieri et al. (Naples 1950–81)
- Reg. Inn IV* *Les Registres d'Innocent IV*, ed. E. Berger
- Reg. UIV* *Les Registres d'Urban IV*, ed. J. Guiraud
- Reg. CIV* *Les Registres de Clement IV*, ed. E. Jordan
- Reg. GX* *Les Registres de Gregoire X et Jean XXII*, ed. J. Guiraud and E. Cadier
- Reg. NIII* *Les Registres de Nicolas III*, ed. J. Gay
- Reg. MIV* *Les Registres de Martin IV*, ed. membres de l'Ecole française de Rome

All papal registers in the series
Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises
d'Athènes et de Rome, published
in Paris

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>TNA</i>	<i>Thesaurus novus anecdotorum</i> , ed. E. Martène and O. Durand, i and ii (reprint Farnborough 1968)
<i>BAR</i>	<i>British Archaeological Reports</i>
<i>CRAIBL</i>	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>MGH SS</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica; Scriptores</i>
<i>MGH SS Rer. Ger.</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica; Scriptores rerum Germanicarum</i>
<i>QFAIAB</i>	<i>Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken</i>
<i>RIS Muratori</i>	<i>Rerum Italicarum Scriptores</i> , ed. L.A. Muratori
<i>RIS n.s.</i>	<i>Rerum Italicarum Scriptores</i> , new series
<i>RHF</i>	<i>Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France</i> , ed. M. Bouquet et al. (Paris 1738–1904)

PART 1
THE MAN

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Chapter 1

THE PRINCE

Charles I of Anjou, king of Sicily and later of Jerusalem, duke of Apulia, prince of Capua, count of Provence, Anjou and Maine, sometime senator of Rome and imperial vicar of Tuscany, was the most colourful figure in thirteenth-century Europe. A strange combination of the opportunistic self-aggrandizer and the idealistic Christian leader, he has throughout the centuries continued to excite interest and conflicting opinion. Although he left behind him abundant records of his administrative acts, his motivation remains contentious, his personality enigmatic. Yet it is impossible to discuss thirteenth-century European history without coming up against him in context after context. In his own time, he was a colossus, admired, feared and hated in almost equal amounts.

The youngest brother of King Louis IX of France, Charles (and his elder brothers to a lesser extent) departed conspicuously from the pattern that had been customary for siblings of Capetian monarchs. Up till this point, the accidents of birth had controlled the destinies of such younger sons as had not inherited the throne. They were disposed of by their fathers without pomp and circumstance to suitably modest roles among the lords of France. But Charles's father, Louis VIII, amazed by the good fortune that had recently befallen his line as a consequence of Philip Augustus's conquest of the Angevin empire and his own expansion in the south, determined that his younger sons should inherit some at least of this wealth. He created apanages for Robert, John and Alphonse, so that they might hold their heads high as princes. For Charles, however, probably born posthumously, King Louis laid down a clerical career. During his childhood

and early youth, Charles had no expectations – a fact that perhaps accounts for his subsequent determination to take what he could. He owed his only elevation in France, to the counties of Anjou and Maine, to his brother Louis's kindness; Louis IX chose to bestow what had been the apanage of his now dead brother John on Charles shortly after he knighted him in 1246.

Charles's career was a dazzling one. In January 1246, in the teeth of much opposition from rivals, he married the heiress of the county of Provence, and took over rule in that disturbed but potentially wealthy county. In 1248 he accompanied all his brothers on Louis IX's first crusade, was captured with Louis and Alphonse at Mansourrah, was ransomed, and returned to France with Alphonse to run the kingdom during Louis's prolonged absence. In 1253 he was drawn into claiming the county of Hainault to oblige the countess of Flanders. Though on Louis's return home in 1254 he returned the county to its Avesnes lord, he gained money and some form of lordship in Hainault to compensate him. For the next decade, he concentrated on suppressing rebellion in Provence, extending his own authority over those to whom comital lordship was a novelty, and intervening in neighbouring Piedmont, a channel to Lombardy.

In 1263 Charles was prevailed upon by the French pope Urban IV to accept the throne of Sicily and southern Italy as a papal fief. In 1265 the count of Anjou set out to win this prize from Manfred, the illegitimate son of the Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen, who had established himself in his father's seat. On 6 January 1266 Charles and his wife Beatrice were crowned in Rome by five cardinals (the pope explained his absence in Viterbo by fear of what the Romans might do to him). The coronation was an epoch-making event, in papal as well as Italian history. On 26 February 1266 Charles won the battle of Benevento, Manfred and many of his supporters were killed, and the kingdom of Sicily (the Regno) became Angevin. However, the arrival on the scene of the young Corradin, only surviving legitimate grandson of Frederick II, in the autumn of 1267 threatened to destroy Charles's achievement. It took another battle, that of Tagliacozzo on 23 August 1268, for the kingdom to be secured for Charles. He rubbed in his victory by summoning Corradin and one of his closest friends before his

court, finding them guilty of treason, and on 29 October 1268 executing them (a deed that made him accursed in Ghibelline circles for centuries, and that caused dismay even among his own supporters).

Charles's arrival in Italy, his brief tenure of the senatorship of Rome from 1263 to 1267, and his two victories had a major impact on Italian politics. Clement IV made him first keeper of the peace and then imperial vicar of Tuscany. Over most of Tuscany, the towns came under the control of Guelfs, nominally papal allies, often identified with the popular party. Of these towns the most important was Florence. Florentine political and financial assistance to Charles and his successors until 1343 was a defining feature of later medieval Italian history. In the short term the alliance assisted the pope in controlling rebellion in the Papal States. In Lombardy, although the Guelfs were initially strengthened by Charles's appearance, there were always opponents ready to fight the Ghibelline cause. The papal accord with the new king of the Romans, Rudolph of Habsburg, in 1274 threatened Charles's position there, and the Angevin army failed to impose his lordship on the populace.

As king of Sicily and count of Provence, Charles inevitably played a major role in Mediterranean politics. He exploited Louis IX's second crusade in 1270 to reassert the traditional Norman lordship over the Muslim emir of Tunis. In 1277, after negotiations instigated by Pope Gregory X, he bought the title to the kingdom of Jerusalem from Maria of Antioch. But his chief concern lay on the Adriatic coast and in Achaia, the Latin colony established in Greece in 1204, which had not been lost to the Greeks in 1261 after the reconquest of Constantinople. As soon as he was secure in the Regno, he set about building up Angevin power around Durazzo and assisting Guillaume, prince of Achaia, to hold off the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Paleologus and his army in Greece. He married his second son Philip to Prince Guillaume's daughter, thereby acquiring influence over all the Frankish settlers still remaining in Greece. Much of the central Adriatic coast around Durazzo reluctantly recognized his lordship. But in his attempt to consolidate his power across Greece he faced stiff and increasingly successful opposition from Michael Paleologus, opposition that encouraged him to contemplate an all-out attack on Constantinople

in the name of his son-in-law, Philippe de Courtenay, titular Latin emperor.

In 1281 Charles was preparing the largest expedition he had ever undertaken with the aim of capturing Constantinople. He had spent the intervening years building up alliances across the Mediterranean. But so too had his enemies, led by Peter of Aragon, whose wife Constance was the daughter of Manfred. As the Aragonese, the Byzantines and the Italian Ghibellines plotted to unseat the Angevin, a major rebellion broke out in Palermo against the taxation the king was imposing to pay for his campaign. The Sicilian Vespers began in March 1282. The war inaugurated by the rebellion was to last till 1302 and to have repercussions well beyond that. In September 1282 Peter was proclaimed king of Sicily in Palermo.

From March 1282 until his death on 7 January 1285, Charles was entirely taken up with trying to defend what he still kept of the Regno and to retake what he had lost. For the first time, the luck that had been so conspicuously on his side was deserting him. When he died, his navy had been twice defeated by the Aragonese, his eldest son and heir Charles of Salerno was in a Catalan prison, and southern Italy was under attack. It looked as though all he had achieved since 1265 was about to be lost.

As it happened, it was not all lost. Angevin monarchs retained the kingdom of Sicily until 1435. But from 1282 onwards, that kingdom consisted only of southern Italy; the island of Sicily was lost for good, and with it, the king's capacity to intervene in Mediterranean politics was severely limited. Charles's successors were interesting and odd rulers, but none of them possessed anything like the power that he had enjoyed.

The rest of this book will be concerned with the detail of Charles's extraordinary career and with his government and court. For the moment it is worth reflecting that, although the scale of his achievements made him unique in Europe, Charles was simply the most successful of a number of younger sons of royal families who, in the middle years of the thirteenth century, determined to break out of the rather dull careers envisaged for them by their families, and make their mark on the wider world. Richard of Cornwall in England, Frederick of Aragon and Henry of Castille (of

whom the latter two were to play their part in the drama of Charles's life) had much in common with their Angevin contemporary. All were motivated by a feeling that they had inherited a capacity for leadership which they ought to exploit. All valued military skill as a means of gaining power. And all sought imposing titles with which to clothe their ambitions.

Of the four younger sons named, Henry of Castille was left empty-handed, having failed to win the throne of Sardinia which he coveted and been deprived of his senatorship of Rome in 1268 by his support of Corradin against Charles; he spent many years in a gaol within the Regno. Frederick of Aragon was the least ambitious, being contented with rule over the island of Sicily between 1296 and 1337. Richard of Cornwall acquired the title of emperor in 1261, but not the authority, and had nothing but his English lands to hand on to his son. Only Charles of Anjou obtained hereditary power in a great kingdom, which he used as a base for expansion in the Mediterranean. For contemporaries, he was the archetype of the Machiavellian new prince.

Giovanni Villani summed up the common view among Charles's admirers:

This Charles was the most feared and redoubtable lord, and the most valiant in arms, and of the most lofty designs, of all the kings of the house of France from Charles the Great to his own day, and the one who most exalted the church of Rome; and he would have done more if, at the end of his life, fortune had not turned against him.¹

On the other hand, his enemies did not hesitate to call him a usurper, a tyrant, and even Antichrist himself.²

From a twentieth-century perspective, the fascination of Charles of Anjou's career lies at least partly in the tension between thought and action evident there. He was led to effect the conquest of the Regno, which totally changed his life, by adherence to a programme drawn up by canon lawyers at the papal curia. His function was to eradicate the evil regime of the Hohenstaufen and to inaugurate the reign

1. *Nuova cronica*, p. 558.

2. Paladino, p. 10.

of righteousness in what had been their realm. It was hardly surprising that eschatological expectations gathered around his head.³ While the canon lawyers who remained *hors de combat* were frequently critical of what he did, he found himself facing dilemmas of which they had never dreamed. As an experiment in giving concrete form to a political theory, Charles's rule of the Regno was a failure. Success would not have been possible.

Yet his failure was not dishonourable. What he established acquired a surprising degree of permanence in southern Italy, if not in Sicily. Ironically, given the criticism aimed at him, Angevin justice came to be admired across the western world. The Angevin court became the cradle of many cultural developments of significance in the Italian renaissance; the historical fashion of excluding Charles from all credit for these has just begun to be questioned.⁴ Many of the financial and courtly practices Charles inaugurated soon came to be imitated in France and even in England. If he is judged by the same criteria as most late thirteenth-century kings are judged, Charles was a very influential figure with at least some claim to greatness. He was no more aggressive than Edward I of England, no more avaricious than Philip IV of France, and his achievements were more interesting than either of these.

3. M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study of Joachimism* (Oxford 1969), pp. 75, 321.
4. P.L. de Castris, *Arte di corte nella Napoli angioina* (Florence 1986), p. 129. S. Asperti, *Carlo I d'Angiò e i trovatori. Componenti 'provenzali' e angioine nella tradizione manoscritta della lirica trobadorica* (Ravenna 1995).

THE CAPETIAN

Charles was born into a tight-knit family whose self-image and ways of thinking had a decisive impact on him throughout his life. Though he was to spend most of his adult days far from home, he remained till his deathbed a clear product of his early environment. He consciously proclaimed this by keeping as his emblem the Capetian gold lilies on a blue background, and by using the title 'son of the king of France' both in his early charters and on some Provençal coins.¹ His relations recognized his sentiments after his death by sending his heart for burial at St Jacques in Paris.²

Charles's parents, Louis VIII of France and Blanche of Castille, had been affianced as part of an endeavour to stabilize relations between the Capetians and the Angevins (Blanche was the niece of King John of England) after Philip Augustus's recognition of John as duke of Normandy in the treaty of Le Goulet in 1200. Despite the rapid failure of the alliance to achieve its political objective (Philip Augustus conquered Normandy from John in 1204), it seems to have been a successful marriage as these things were reckoned at that time. It was certainly fruitful, and fruitful in the correct way: Blanche bore Louis six or seven sons and at least one daughter. She lent her cooperation to her husband's attempt to become king of England in 1216. She encouraged him in his southern campaigns. And her devotion to his memory after his early death in 1226 suggests that there was also some tenderness there.

1. A. Dieudonné, *Manuel de numismatique françaises. Vol IV: Monnaies féodales françaises* (Paris 1936), p. 340; R. Sternfeld, *Karl von Anjou als Graf der Provence* (Berlin 1888), pp. 267, 268.
2. M. Camera, *Annali delle due Sicilie* (Naples 1842), p. 352.

Charles was the youngest, probably the seventh, son of this family (the eldest, Philip, had died in 1218). There is uncertainty about his birth date. He may have been born in March 1227, after his father's death in November 1226.³ Alternatively he may either have been the second son born to the royal couple in 1226, or the child christened Stephen recorded as born to the royal couple earlier that year.⁴ If the last was the case, then at some stage the boy changed his name from one clearly chosen with a clerical career in mind to the name by which he is known to us from his late teens onwards. Since the fifth son Philip Dagobert did not survive infancy, and nor did Stephen if he was not Charles, Charles became the only son born to Blanche after her husband had assumed the throne of France. According to Matthew Paris (not an infallible source for matters French) the young prince was inclined to give himself airs as one 'born in the purple'.⁵

In later life, Charles was to make much of the name he shared with Charlemagne; it seemed a matter of good omen to one so devoted to the acquisition of great titles. But an imperial career will not have been in his mother's mind when she gave him the name (if indeed she was responsible), because Louis VIII in his will had laid down that his fifth and all subsequent sons were to enter the Church (*LTC* ii, 1710). Charles was not an obvious name to choose for a future bishop. Nor had the name occurred before in the Capetian family. But no Capetian had had so many sons before. All the obvious family names had been exhausted. Perhaps the appellation in which he was to see such appropriate symbolism came to him more by default than by design. The alternative is that it was not his baptismal name, but one which he chose in the course of his childhood.

In thirteenth-century France, royal children were often on the move, travelling from manor to manor, usually within the Ile de France. Much later in his life, Charles was to record the powerful influence of his mother on the upbringing of

3. For this see G. Sivéry, *Blanche de Castille* (Paris 1990), p. 118.

4. See P. Herde, *Karl I von Anjou* (Stuttgart 1979), p. 25.

5. M. Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard (London 1883), iv, p. 546. His porphyrogenitus state was also commented on by Adam de la Halle in *C'est du roi de Sezile, Oeuvres complètes*, ed. E. Coussemaeker (Geneva reprint 1970), p. 285.

all her sons and daughters.⁶ Joinville's life of St Louis reveals her to us as pious, forceful and competent.⁷ She lent her strength of purpose to her sons, perhaps particularly to her youngest. But she will have been much occupied in the years of Charles's infancy with matters of state. He and his sister Isabelle, who was two years older than him, probably did not see her very frequently. They were looked after by nurses, in the charge of a trusted knight.

Manuals concerned with the upbringing of aristocratic boys usually cited seven as the appropriate age for a boy to leave the care of women and take his place in a male environment. In practice, the age varied; in the case of a child with no father, it is likely to have been rather later. But at some time around 1234 or 1235, Charles will have been put into the care of one of his brothers. There was a gap of seven years between Charles and Alphonse, his nearest male sibling, eleven years divided Charles from Robert, and thirteen from his illustrious brother Louis. When first heard of in the records in 1237, Charles was at Robert's court; by 1241 he had moved to that of Alphonse, to whom he was to be close until the latter's death in 1271. At what point it was decided that he was not to follow his father's wishes and enter the Church cannot be determined. It must, however, have been before 1242, when he went with his brothers on a campaign against the count of La Marche, the ally of Henry III, king of England and claimant to the lands once held by King John in France.

We know nothing of the education enjoyed by the young prince; but whoever was responsible for introducing him to the military arts will have found a pupil of great potential. Charles was to be a notable warrior. He was also well grounded in grammar and rhetoric; in adulthood he wrote love poems in French which he set to music, and was sufficiently competent in Latin to be critical of others' performances. His intellectual training showed in the uncommon interest he later took in medical science and in law. Like all his brothers, he was brought up in a deeply Christian

6. Count Riant, 'Déposition de Charles d'Anjou pour la canonisation de Saint Louis', *Notes et documents publiés pour la Société de l'histoire de France* 335 (1894), pp. 155-76.

7. Joinville, *La Vie de saint Louis*, ed. N. Corbett (Sherbrooke, Quebec 1977), pp. 103, 105, 210.

environment, and taught to understand the doctrines of his faith in so far as it was appropriate for a layman. The resources of the Paris area were clearly well up to the task of equipping a young prince in all the skills on which he was later to draw.

Charles's young mentors Robert and Alphonse were facing a challenge: how to deal with their great apanages, for which there were no precedents. Louis VIII's will of June 1225 had established his sons Robert, John and Alphonse as princes.⁸ Robert was, when adult, to receive Artois, the county that had been his mother's dowry, John was to have Anjou and Maine, and Alphonse the county of Poitou, all three counties recently taken from King John. Jean Richard has argued that Louis's motive in making such liberal allowance for two of his younger sons within the lands conquered from King John was to ensure that there was a Capetian around whom local loyalties could focus, in order to wipe out memories of Angevin rule in the area.⁹ In addition, the king will have faced the usual dilemma of how to protect the inheritance rights of his eldest son while also providing his other offspring with lands suitable to their standing. His solution – similar to that invented by the Angevin Henry II – was possible only for those who had recently made substantial acquisitions of land and wealth.

King Louis's brothers, therefore, found themselves created the equals of the five great feudatories of France, the counts of Flanders and Champagne, and the dukes of Aquitaine, Burgundy and Brittany. Robert acquired Artois in 1237, Alphonse Poitou in 1241. In tackling their responsibilities they were assisted by men trained in the royal court, and encouraged to imitate the methods of government developed in Paris. Artois and Poitou, though not absorbed within the royal demesne, were governed in very similar ways.

The fate of Anjou and Maine was less straightforward. In 1227 Blanche of Castille had arranged that her son John should marry the duke of Brittany's daughter and that, until the wedding occurred, Duke Pierre should control Angers,

8. *LTC* ii, 1710. On this see A.W. Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France: Studies on Familial Order and the State* (Cambridge, Mass. 1981), pp. 161–92.

9. J. Richard, *Saint Louis: roi d'une France féodale, soutien de la Terre sainte* (Paris 1983), p. 134.

Le Mans, Baugé and Beaufort-en-Vallée. This arrangement was not sufficient to keep Pierre loyal; in 1229 he allied with the young Henry III of England. The young Louis IX promptly set about recovering by force the four towns that had been bestowed on the rebel. The death of John in 1232 made his task rather easier. By the time Pierre and Henry III were finally defeated in 1234, Anjou and most of Maine were apparently on the way to becoming part of the royal demesne; in that year Louis granted Le Mans as a wedding gift to his new wife Margaret of Savoy (*LTC* iii, 4617). Such an enlargement of the crown's holdings was perfectly compatible with Louis VIII's will, which gave no instruction as to what should happen to the apanages of his third or fourth sons if they died early.

The counties were administered by royal servants until, in August 1246, Louis IX (after consulting Robert and Alphonse) bestowed them on Charles, having knighted him at Melun in May. By then, through a very fortunate marriage in January 1246 to Beatrice, heiress of Provence, Charles was already count of Provence. From now onwards, he held substantial lands and rights, both in the empire (Provence was imperial territory) and in the kingdom of France. It was a dazzling change of fortune for a hitherto landless younger son.

King Louis had been notably generous. Perhaps the decision that Charles should become count of Anjou had been made before the chance of the marriage arose, and Louis thought it inexpedient to change his mind once his brother had acquired Provence. On the other hand, the king may have anticipated positive benefits to the kingdom from his gift. The energetic young Charles might be counted on to oppose any attempt at reconquest by the English, and to undermine any surviving Breton influence in the area. Besides, Louis clearly did not regard his brothers as potential rivals; if he had done so, he would not have encouraged Alphonse to expand beyond his core county of Poitou to take the Limousin under his authority; nor would he have planned Alphonse's marriage to the daughter of the count of Toulouse, a marriage which in 1249 brought him the huge county of Toulouse and part of the old marquisate of Provence to add to his already substantial holdings. In this case Louis must have been confident that he could exercise

his authority over his sibling when need be. The same was probably true for Charles, whose lands within France were far smaller than Alphonse's.

Nevertheless, the enfeoffment of 1246 was a substantial endowment at the expense of the royal demesne. Joinville, in his famous *Life of St Louis*, tells how Louis had celebrated John's knighting by holding a splendid banquet in the huge hall at Saumur, built by Henry II especially for public displays of this kind.¹⁰ Louis was therefore far from indifferent to the regal amenities of the county of Anjou. He had spent substantial sums at Angers, building the huge castle there and extending the city walls. He had reorganized the administration and increased the revenues of the counties. He could not but feel some sadness in parting with them. His wife's apparent unwillingness to give up Le Mans was a problem for him. She did not cede all her rights there before 1260, which indicates her extreme reluctance to favour her brother-in-law at her own expense (*LTC* iii, 4617).

From the end of 1246, therefore, Charles had the resources and position to begin to make his mark on western Europe by demanding the recognition of his rights, real or pretended, in every sphere. Although he continued to feel grateful to Louis for his vital assistance to his career, there was frequently an element of tension in his relations with his eldest surviving brother. Louis's position marked him out as one who must be obeyed; Charles by temperament was one to whom obedience came hard. Louis sometimes complained of Charles's insensitivity. Joinville painted a vivid picture of the king's sudden fury on discovering, as he sailed away defeated from Egypt in 1250 and in mourning for the death of his brother Robert, that Charles, far from attempting to comfort him, was playing dice with a friend.¹¹ Given the temperamental differences between them, occasional signs of strain after 1246 were only to be expected.

Yet historians have been prone to exaggerate them. It is alleged that Louis forced Charles to surrender the county of Hainault, which Marguerite, countess of Flanders had conferred on him in 1253. Louis is usually portrayed as reluctant to endorse the papal plan of sending Charles to conquer

10. Joinville, *La Vie de saint Louis*, p. 103

11. *Ibid.*, p. 167.