

King Louis IX of France - Personal Life and Leadership Success

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ABSTRACT

In the Memoirs of the Crusades, rather than representing King Louis as an authoritative figure, the text provides readers an opportunity to dive deeper into the King's daily life incidents. It reveals the other side of King Louis's unapproachable life through combinations of vivid and detailed descriptions of the incidents in his life. The King's two qualities including his willingness to sacrifice along with his philanthropic contributions all shined through his journey as a king. As a devout Catholic, he pursues equality and fraternity. In this paper, all two qualities of King Louis IX will be discussed along with his faith. The paper will also discuss the connection between King Louis IX's leadership success and his personal life.

Keywords: *Jean de Joinville, King Louis IX, religious, God*

1. INTRODUCTION

Jean de Joinville was born in May 1224 [1], he was a chronicler who was famous for writing the biography of Louis IX of France. Joinville played a pivotal role as King Louis IX's adviser. He was born into a French noble family from Champagne. Like other nobles, he received a good education as a teen. After his father's death, he was appointed as seneschal of Champagne. In 1241, Jean de Joinville first made his way to the court of King Louis IX. When Louis IX decided to launch the seventh crusade, he became the King's adviser and chancellor [2]. However, King Louis IX failed, and both of them were captured and imprisoned. They were released after the concession of Damietta. Ascribed to the common experience that Louis IX and Joinville both had, he was able to win more of the King's trust. As the King's close adviser, Joinville influenced the King's decisions in many ways. He persuaded the King to stay in the Holy Land instead of returning to France. The four years they spent together in the Holy lands again brought Jean de Joinville closer to Louis IX. He was able to develop a strong relationship with the King, which contributed to his writing of the biography of Louis IX. In 1270, despite the failure of the seventh crusade, Louis IX decided to launch another crusade. However, Jean de Joinville, who disagreed with the King's decision, refused to accompany him [3]. It is partly because of the previous failures that had shaken his confidence, and partly because of the belief that a King's primary duty was to

serve the people and the country, that Joinville refused to accompany the King. The disastrous consequence of the eighth crusade proved his decision was correct, King Louis IX himself passed away from illness on August 25, 1270, in Tunis. Jean de Joinville was able to live up to see Louis IX's canonization.

The wife of Phillip IV of France asked Jean de Joinville to write a biography for Saint Louis. As a knight who didn't pay much attention to politics, his writings contained many detailed descriptions of emotions and emphasized less the impact of politics. Jean de Joinville focused more on humanism, and in his writings, Louis IX was not only an authoritative figure but also a man with subtle and refined sensibilities. The memoir was not completed even after the death of Jean de Navarre. Jean de Joinville presented the biography of Saint Louis to Jeanne de Navarre's son, Louis the Quarreller. Unfortunately, the original writing was nowhere to be found. The modernized version was later published in 1547 [1].

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE TEXT

During the 13th century France, France was expanded and centralized. During Phillip II's reign, the kingdom welcomed its great expansion. Phillip II had also set an example for later monarchical rulers. During Louis IX's reign [4], he brought the French monarchical system to a higher level. He spread royal control to every region of France. France welcomed its golden era. As a Roman

Catholic, Louis IX believed that he was appointed by God to rule the country. To reach God's expectation, he dedicated a lot of effort to maximize the benefits and rights of his people. He launched several crusades and produced many social reforms. King Louis IX also ended many long-term conflicts such as the Albigensian revolts. Even though Louis IX led France to prosperity, however, he also failed to launch successful crusades. During his reign, Saint Louis IX launched two crusades. The first one is the Seventh Crusade. The Seventh Crusade to the Holy Land during 1248 to 1254. Due to the difficult

weather conditions, the crusade become extremely hard to continue. King Louis IX and his army lost the key Battle of Al Mansurah and got captured. In 1267, along with his sons, Louis IX launched the eight crusades to Tunisia. However, many armies fell ill due to dysentery. Even the King himself passed away in August 1270. The French honored the King's personality more than his military journey. Louis IX was highly esteemed by his people. Later in 1297, King Louis IX was declared a Saint.



Figure 1 the figure of *Jean de Joinville* [5],

2.1 Summary of the Content

Jean de Joinville, who spent six years accompanying King Louis IX to overseas crusades, began the memoir with descriptions of the King's characters and teachings that he personally experienced. Each King's quality is discussed individually through divided sections [1]. Based on the descriptions of Jean de Joinville, Louis IX was a wise man who loves God deeply and serves his people with all his heart. He described the King as a man who never lies or speaks evil behind others' backs. Once, Joinville and Master Robert were whispering to each other on the dining table, the King told them to speak out if the discussion they were having can give everyone pleasure and stop whispering if it can't. The King's love of his people and God was shown through the act of washing the feet of the poor. The King was disappointed at Joinville because he refused to wash the feet of the

poor due to the frightfulness of becoming sick. The King believed that Joinville's decision disobeyed God's order. Joinville also described the King as someone who sees mortal sin as bigger than body pain. Louis IX asked whether Joinville wants to commit a mortal sin or to become a leper. Joinville chose to commit a mortal sin. The King was extremely disappointed at Joinville for damaging the purity of the soul. The King accused Joinville of answering that way, he believed that body pain can't be compared to mortal sin.

King Louis IX was a king who pays more attention to the obedience of the royal members rather than following social rules. Joinville described a situation when the King called him to sit beside him, he was scared because he didn't want to disobey any social rules. The King blamed him for not obeying him. Louis IX was also a King who had high emotional intelligence and knew how to handle relationships. Once, Master Robert accused Joinville of

clothing himself fancier and seated in a higher place than the King. King Louis pretended to side with Master Robert, however, later, he told Joinville that he was just pretending, he thought Joinville's cloth was perfectly fine. Thus, Louis IX didn't offend either of them.

King Louis IX was also a king who pursued peace

[1]. Regarding all the unsupportive voices in his council, Louis IX still decided to make a peace agreement with England. This agreement also caused France to lose some of their territories. The King claims that there should be no wars between "relatives".



Figure 2 the biography of Louis IX of France

2.2 Terminology

Taffeta: Type of silk that has a crisp and smooth texture.

La Rochelle: A coastal city in France. During the 12th century, it had become a popular spot for trading.

Albigenses: People from the Catharistic sect of France, seen as heretics. They were flourishing during 12-13th century France. They need to obey very harsh and strict social and moral rules.

Montfort: Noble house in Medieval France, extinct during the 14th century.

Requiem: A mass for the dead.

Christendom: The Christian World

Tartan: Cloth consisted of crisscrossed bands in different colors.

Hyères: A French town on the Mediterranean coast.

2.3 Interpretation of the Text

King Louis IX's religious belief plays a pivotal role during his reign. Religion penetrates through all aspects of his life. It emboldened him to face challenges. When returning from an island, King Louis IX and his crew got stuck in the middle of the sea. Many mariners on the boat were mentally beaten, and their confidence was shaken. The King called Jean de Joinville to come over to have a conversation. The King teaches him that the challenge they currently face is God's warning, he says: "Seneschal God has just showed us a portion of His great power"[1]. Growing up in a religious family, and as a loyal Catholic, he sees challenges as fate, as God's warning. In order to improve the situation they are facing, the King suggests to remove "anything displeasing to God" in "their hearts and bodies", so that the "Lord will give us blessings in

this world” [1]. The King’s unshakeable faith helps him to deal with difficult accidents. In comparison to the mariners who are mentally shakened, the King shows his leadership through encouraging others. Jean de Joinville described the King as someone who is able to turn disadvantages into advantages. The King’s pursuit of equality is also reflected here. The decision to tell Jean de Joinville to come over and have a personal conversation is a sign that he sees Jean de Joinville as someone who is at an equal position as him. The King is willing to share his personal thoughts with his companions. Different from other monarchical kings, he doesn’t not put himself in a privileged position. Instead, King Louis sees himself and other people as servants of God. This can be shown in the comparisons the King makes when discussing the consequence of ignoring God’s warning: “He will deal with the good lord deals with his wicked servant” [1]. King Louis IX compared God to a good lord, and humans to servants. In the King’s perspective, God is supreme, God has control over everything. This can also be a proof of the King’s strong faith.

King Louis’s pursuit of fraternity is revealed through his love for the poor and belief in the minor significance of body pain. The King shows his great love for the poor as he asks why Jean de Joinville wouldn’t wash the feet of the peasants. The King is disappointed at Joinville for disobeying the command, he says: “So I pray you, for the love of the God first, and then for the love of me, that you accustom yourself to wash the feet of poor” [1]. King Louis IX’s universal love can be seen through this action. As a religious King, he learns the importance of philanthropy. As a loyal follower of God, he pays little regard to social status, he commands all his followers to show their universal love. Notably, as was previously mentioned, the King puts God above all matters shows up again here. The way Louis IX represents God’s command first, reveals the loyalty of the King. Also, the act of washing the poor’s feet is also a sign that King Louis IX aims to build an equal society since it breaks the traditional social framework.

3. CONCLUSION

King Louis is an extremely religious leader, his loyalty to God assists him to rule his country to prosperity. In comparison to other Kings in history, King Louis IX is a ruler with the people. He cares deeply about his country and is willing to devote time and effort. Even though he is one of the very earliest monarchical rulers, he still shows great care for his people and still puts God in the first place. King Louis IX’s qualities are surely indispensable to his leadership success. Because of his strong faith, he is able to recognize the disadvantages of society and is willing to improve the situation. Other than the qualities mentioned above, King Louis IX aims to bring justice and his careful arrangements both

contributed to his leadership success. Thus, he is the only French King who became a Saint.

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