

## **How inevitable was the loss of Normandy?**

Those Historians, who argue that the disaster of 1204 was not all John's fault, have concentrated their arguments on the fact that Normandy was slipping from Angevin control before John came to the throne and that not even Richard could have stopped the process.

### **WHY?**

- The dukes of Normandy, once they became kings of England after 1066, always put England before Normandy
- Henry II had started a whole series of administrative & financial measures in England which were used in Normandy as well – known as 'Angevin Despotism' (because of the associated heavy taxes and harsh laws passed on their subjects without consent)
- It seemed as though older Norman customs were being ignored
- Gerald of Wales described the anger felt by many Normans
- Gerald also describes how, under Philip Augustus, Paris became a centre of art & learning – deliberate attempt to foster a cultural & political feeling for 'France'
- There is an argument that the Angevin Empire had no structural unity and would never have survived as a combination of various territories
- Normans resented the continual warfare between the Capetians & Angevins – especially the financial cost they were expected to bear. Normandy was already in debt in 1194 (crusade & Richard's ransom) & when fighting resumed in 1194 in Normandy, more taxation to meet the costs
- Richard I is often blamed for leaving John with a weak inheritance
- There was a feeling in Normandy that the war could not be won and so it was more sensible to come to terms with Philip
- There are those who argue that by the time John came to the throne, Philip was in a much stronger financial position