

over the city, for it placed the full weight of the emperor's authority behind them; significantly, the charter did not mention the territorial and jurisdictional rights of Turin's bishop, or those of the commune.

7. *The Advent of the House of Savoy.*

These successes were rapidly canceled out by the death of Frederick II in 1250, which plunged the Ghibelline party into disarray. Because of Pope Innocent IV's hostility no new emperor was elected to succeed Frederick, and the imperial throne remained vacant until 1273. The Ghibelline party in northern Italy fragmented, as leadership devolved to a number of warring local magnates. Meanwhile Innocent IV and his successors wreaked implacable vengeance on Frederick's descendants, the last of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. The pope declared Frederick's son King Manfred of Sicily deposed, and granted the rights over his kingdom to Charles of Anjou, a younger brother of Louis IX of France. In 1266 Charles defeated and killed Manfred, and two years later defeated Frederick II's grandson Conradin, who made a last desperate attempt to reconquer the kingdom of Sicily. With Charles of Anjou's help the popes had destroyed the "viper's brood" of the Hohenstaufen, and throughout Italy the Guelph cause triumphed.

The dramatic events in southern Italy produced immediate repercussions in Piedmont. On the news of the emperor's death Thomas II of Savoy moved quickly to occupy Turin, on the basis of the charter Frederick II had recently granted him. But he did not manage to hold the city. He therefore pursued his aim by changing sides, abandoning the imperial cause and aligning himself with Innocent IV. To cement this new relationship he arranged to marry the pope's niece, and in return the pope issued a charter of his own confirming Thomas's lordship over the city. Savoyard claims to the lordship of Turin had now been endorsed by both of the supreme authorities in western Christendom. Thomas's adroit maneuvers would have assured his dominance over Turin and its territory, but for the alarm they provoked among the other lords and communes, who were seeking the same prize. The city of Asti took the lead in thwarting him; in 1252 it formed a league with a number of local lords, and the cities of Chieri and Turin, to block his advance. In the resultant fighting Thomas was defeated in November 1255 and captured by the Turinese. They held him in close captivity, and constrained him to renounce his claims to rule their city, along with the places he held in the surrounding district.