Episode 11: The Birth of Parliament

In Western Christianity, much is said of the missionary campaigns of St. Paul and St. Peter. These missions are the focus of much of the content of the Bible's New Testament and set the foundation of the Christian Church. Another disciple of Jesus, famous for the story of his doubt of the Resurrection, was St. Thomas the Apostle. According to tradition, Thomas went east and established Christianity in Asia--as far as India and China. The Church of the East, sometimes referred to as Nestorian Christians, were a sizable group spanning vast geographies and peoples.

By the 12th Century, stories of a Christian king in the East named Prester John began to gain in popularity and spread throughout Europe. By the end of the century, the hope of Prester John coming from the east to assist Western Christians in their campaigns in the Holy Land increased due to the successes of Saladin.

The early years of the 13th Century saw the dawn of the 4th Crusade. Called by the powerful Pope Innocent III, the campaign relied heavily on the money and naval power of the Republic of Venice. However, the ruler of Venice, the "doge", a Venetian form of the Latin "dux" or English "duke", called for an attack on the city of Zara in modern-day Croatia and, at the time, part of the Kingdom of Hungary. This attack on a Christian kingdom was followed by an advance on Constantinople. The Fourth Crusade ended up sacking the Byzantine Empire and installing a Latin Emperor of Byzantium. Christians attacking Christians was not the intent of the campaign.

The Fifth Crusade followed in 1217 and resulted in nothing positive for the Christians against the Muslims. However, new tales of Prester John emerged. It was said that his son, or perhaps grandson, was advancing on Persia, conquering lands and poised to conquer the Muslims next. The story of a conquering army was, in fact, true; but, it was not a descendant of Prester John. It was Genghis Khan.

The Mongol Empire would seriously challenge the Muslim Caliphates in the Levant while also conquering across the Russian steppe into eastern Europe. The death of Genghis Khan in 1227 splintered the Mongols into different groups. The powers of Western Christianity would continue to seek alliances with the Mongols throughout the 13th Century in their attempts to reconquer the Holy Land.

Dates - 1225 to 1268

Over the course of the 13th Century, the kingdom of England experienced significant changes in the exercise of law, establishment of Parliament, and saw an increasing counter-balance in the power of the barons against the king. While the king still reigned supreme, the legacy of Magna Carta was consistently revisited as powerful lords aimed to keep the king away from absolute power. During most of the century, King Henry III reigned when his death culminated in a 56 year reign--unmatched until King George III in the 18th Century. As we'll see in today's episode, Henry III was not a particularly "strong" king and was even imprisoned by rebels at one point.

Today, we'll follow our usual course of English history through the traditional royal lens looking at Henry III, but we'll also dig a bit deeper into the broader nobility as we see how a wide array of characters helped establish parliamentary democracy in England. There would be no turning back from these events as centuries later, we'll eventually see a civil war where the king would be executed and replaced with a parliamentary republic.

1. Key provisions of the Magna Carta
    - As we noted in the last episode, the original Magna Carta was doomed to fail from the start due to the "Security Clause" which was breached in a manner of months leading to the First Barons' War. The Magna Carta would be reissued in 1217 and 1225 without this provision and a handful of other modifications. Before we get into our timeline of today's episode, we want to cover a summary of the clauses in the Magna Carta and review a few of the most important ones in political history in a bit more detail. As we will learn in today's episode the Magna Carta continued to be affirmed by the king on occasion. It was also fully re-issued again in 1297 (which we will cover next time) with nearly the same text as the 1225 version. So, it is the changes and content from the various iterations from 1215 until 1225 that are most interesting to study. Historian Richard Cassidy has created a nice breakdown of how the clauses of the charters can be summarized and mapped from version to version. We'll use his work to summarize.
    - The clauses break down into roughly the following categories: Church, Family & Property, Taxes & Service, Legal Matters, Local Government, Towns & Trade, Forest, Topical Issues, and, finally, Enforcement & Security.
        - Throughout each version, there is really just one clause that deals with the Church. Historians believe this was likely authored and heavily influenced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton. He was also probably very influential over all of the final text of the 1215 charter, but the contribution on "Clause 1" establishes the

religious liberty of the church and laid the foundation for the important principle of “freedom of religion” that influenced the American revolution and Bill of Rights. This is one of only three clauses that remain part of British law today and is worth quoting here in part:

- “First, that we have granted to God, and by this present charter have confirmed for us and our heirs in perpetuity, that the English Church shall be free, and shall have its rights undiminished, and its liberties unimpaired. That we wish this so to be observed, appears from the fact that of our own free will, before the outbreak of the present dispute between us and our barons, we granted and confirmed by charter the freedom of the Church's elections - a right reckoned to be of the greatest necessity and importance to it - and caused this to be confirmed by Pope Innocent III. This freedom we shall observe ourselves, and desire to be observed in good faith by our heirs in perpetuity.

- In the original version, clauses 2-11, 15, 26, 27, 32, 43, 46, and 60 (17 of 63 clauses) dealt with Family & Property. By the 1225 version, 14 of the 36 clauses remained in this category. This is really the heart of the Magna Carta and deals significantly with aspects of feudalism as it relates to marriage, debt, inheritance, and wardship. Most of these were revised or repealed in 1863, but the language around debt which prevented the crown from seizing land or property to satisfy a debt survived until revisions in 1969.
    - It’s important to not understate the importance and relevance of these clauses to the time. These are not the famous clauses that survive today, but these set a balance of power such that the king (and, importantly, a corrupt one like King John) is restrained in his ability to exploit his barons and their families.
- The 1215 version of Magna Carta had 4 clauses that dealt with Taxes & Service (with “Service” here, primarily being some form of service due to the king in lieu of or in addition to paying rents or taxes on land held). Now, interestingly, clause 14 essentially called for the king to call a council in order to set a new tax. This would create a precedent which we will see later in this episode for Parliament; however, the clause did not survive past the 1215 version. The surviving clauses seek to put a ceiling based on longstanding custom as to what constitutes rents and knight’s fees from land held.

- The next most prolific category in terms of content was Legal Matters, making up 14 of the original 62 and 9 of the 36 clauses in the 1225 version. Most of these clauses establish agreed upon practices for the operations of royal courts and their interaction with other local and baronial courts. However, the most famous clause of the Magna Carta also fits into this category as clauses 39 and 40 of the original and clause 29 of the 1225 version. This clause also remains British law today and cements the principle of habeas corpus. It reads:
    - No freeman is to be taken or imprisoned or disseised of his free tenement or of his liberties or free customs, or outlawed or exiled or in any way ruined, nor will we go against such a man or send against him save by lawful judgement of his peers or by the law of the land. To no-one will we sell or deny of delay right or justice."
- There are 3 clauses in the 1225 version and 7 in the original that deal with Local Government. These mostly concern what country authorities such as the sheriff, constable, and bailiffs are allowed to do.
- There are 5 original clauses and 4 of which remained in 1225 that deal with Towns & Trade. These give protections to merchants (including foreign merchants), establish uniform weights and measures, and acknowledge London's special status to "enjoy all its ancient liberties and free customs". In fact, while London is called out, it does specifically grant the same to other cities, boroughs, towns, and ports. This is the third and final clause of Magna Carta that still remains British law.
- There were 3 clauses in the 1215 Magna Carta dealing with the Forest. These were mostly removed in 1217 and added to a separate "Charter of the Forest" which would be reaffirmed along with the Magna Carta time and again over the years. The principle here was to roll back the lands that had been identified as Royal Forest from any time since the reign of Henry II. It also promises to abandon "all evil customs relating to forests" that had begun under the reign of King John.
- There are 8 clauses in the original version dealing with "Topical Issues". Most of these disappeared by 1217 as they were specific to the issues surrounding hostages, foreigners, mercenaries, Welsh lands, and such that were "current events" in 1215. By the 1225 version, there are no clauses which are classified as Topical Issues.
- We have already discussed the famous "Security Clause" which doomed the 1215 version and certainly did not persist in future

versions. However, by the 1217 version, a new clause regarding the "Saving of Liberties" emerged which continued into the 1225 version along with a grant of taxation of "a fifteenth" to the king. It's worth reading this clause in part as well as we wrap up our review of the contents of the Magna Carta. Here we read from the 1297 version:

- "All these aforesaid customs and liberties which we have granted to be held in our realm in so far as pertains to us are to be observed by all of our realm, both clergy and laity, in so far as pertains to them in respect to their own men. For this gift and grant of these liberties and of others contained in our charter over the liberties of the forest, the archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, earls, barons, knights, fee holders and all of our realm have given us a fifteenth part of all their movable goods. Moreover we grant to them for us and our heirs that neither we nor our heirs will seek anything by which the liberties contained in this charter might be infringed or damaged, and should anything be obtained from anyone against this it is to count for nothing and to be held as nothing."

2. The barons seeking to constrain the king will lead to the Provisions of Oxford, Provisions of Westminster, the Second Barons' War, the Statue of Marlborough, and more. As we prepare the events of the mid-1200s which lead to the flood of these various legal events, let's better understand the class structure of the time, and, more importantly, the leading barons who wield power for and against the king.
    - It is often remarked that the class structure in the Middle Ages can be summarized as: "those who worked, those who fought, and those who prayed." This is definitely an over-simplification, but it is helpful to frame the discussion. "Those who worked" would be, essentially, the peasants and merchant class who did not hold title to land as a baron and thus worked--generally as a vassal to a baron. "Those who fought" would be the baronial class who held land as a fief from the king. They would enjoy the income of their land, pay dues to the king, and would be responsible for supplying men-at-arms to fight on behalf of the king. As we noted in the last episode, this was sometimes avoided by paying scutage [*skoo-tidge*] and by this era was definitely getting more complex than simply "those who fought." Finally, we have "those who prayed" which would range from the bishops to the priests and include deacons, minor clergy, and those in monastic orders.
        - First off, at the top of "lords spiritual", we have the four archbishops of this time: the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, the Archbishop of Dublin, and the Archbishop of Bordeaux (which corresponded to the lands of Aquitaine, primarily Gascony, which

were retained by King Henry III after the losses sustained by King John in the early 1200s).

- Next, we have the bishops and abbots--the bishops being the head of a diocese (or bishopric) and abbots being the head of a monastery. There were 16 bishoprics and about a half dozen leading abbots from across England. As a reminder, the bishop typically held land as a tenant-in-chief like any other baron; the land itself was an ecclisiastical holding with a cathedral as its center instead of a castle.
- Moving to the "lords temporal", we have the earls. If you remember, an earldom is analogous to a county (led by a count) in French feudalism. An earl was the highest rank outside the immediate royal family (and, you'll recall that as sons come of age under a living king, they are usually granted the title of Count or Earl of some land). The earl was notionally the king's leading representative in the county, outranking the sheriff or justiciar, but the earl did not hold the entire county as a fief. The barons who held lands in a given county owed some deference to their earl but still paid direct homage to the king. The earl typically held multiple manors in his earldom but often owned manors in other counties as well. In England, there were 39 counties of which about half had an associated earldom. In addition, there were four counts in Gascony, the Earl of Pembroke which covered territory in Wales, and the Earl of Ulster which covered Ireland.
    - Quick side note… to try to put the feudal system in the modern context, I think the best way to imagine this would be if the CEOs of the most powerful companies were also the governors of their state and held the rank of general in the army. These are truly powerful individuals at the top of society. Remember, the economic system is still largely agricultural with those who work the land retaining only small amounts with wealth funneling up the system to the tenants-in-chief and, ultimately, the king.
- Beyond the most powerful barons, the earls, there are many additional barons.The number of these is a bit fluid, but there are around a couple hundred barons and unlanded lords throughout the domains of the king.

- The struggle between Henry III and the baronial opposition was made up of various factions with shifting loyalties. So, before we get to the barons, we do need to start with the king. You'll recall from our last episode that Henry III assumed the crown at the age of 9 in the midst of the First Barons' War under the regency of Earl William Marshal. When Marshal died, he passed the

regency to a three man panel. This led to some infighting and conflict, notably between Peter de Roches [*d'Rosh*] and Hubert de Burgh. Henry III took over formal control of his government in 1227 and invaded France in 1230 in an attempt to regain losses, but it failed quickly ending with Henry III agreeing to a truce with King Louis IX of France, the grandson of Philip II and son of Louis VIII who had only briefly ruled from 1223-1226, a few years after his failed attempt to conquer England in the First Barons' War. Henry III lacked strength in military affairs and did not travel throughout his kingdom as his Angevin and Norman ancestors had done. He developed a deep affinity to Edward the Confessor (almost treating him like a glorified father figure--recall, his father was King John, and he grew up with older advisors that usually worked for their own interest) and spent significant sums of money expanding Westminster Abbey. Henry desperately wanted the crown to be viewed with the dignity and respect he felt it should have, and this led to an increase in the ceremonial aspects of royalty. While wanting to restore this, he also tried to balance the power with the barony. He was viewed as having a weaker personality than what was expected of a king which made this balancing act make him appear even weaker often agreeing with whomever advised him most recently. He did not have any successful military campaigns to change that perception, and when he pledged to go on crusade, he delayed for years and years leading to more frustration from his potential supporters.

- Henry III married Eleanor of Provence [*pro-vahnce*] in 1236. She came from a noble French family--her father was Count of Provence, and her mother was the daughter of the Count of Savoy. Both Provence and Savoy are in modern-day southwestern France but were, at the time, part of the Holy Roman Empire as quasi-independent states. Eleanor's parents were quite the power couple in negotiating marriages. Eleanor had no brothers, but her three sisters married King Louis IX of France, Henry III's brother Richard who would later be elected King of the Germans, and Charles of Anjou who would eventually be King Charles of Sicily. Eleanor would bring with her to England an entourage of her relatives including two powerful uncles: Peter, who would be given the title Earl of Richmond, and Boniface, who became the Archbishop of Canterbury. The presence of her relatives at court, who would be called the Savoyards, became a point of growing contention for the native English lords.
- Henry III's mother also came into the picture of the dynamics of court. King John had married Isabella of Angouleme [*on-gyoo-lem*] in 1200. Shortly after the death of John and coronation of Henry, she returned to France and married Hugh of Lusignan [*loo-seeng-yon*]. The Lusignan family was from

Poitou which had been part of Aquitaine and was lost to the French by King John. We didn't cover this in the last episode, but John and Isabella had 5 children together. We have already mentioned the 2 sons, but they had 3 daughters who would marry the King of Scotland, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the son of William Marshal. However, Isablle and Hugh would have 9 children together leaving King Henry III with a large group of half-siblings in France. Isabella and Hugh tried to break their fealty to King Louis IX, but they were unsuccessful. Upon Isabella's death and with ongoing tension between the Lusignans and King Louis, King Henry III invited his half-siblings to make a new home in England. Their entourage would create another faction of foreigners at court that further irritated the native English lords.

- In 1239, Henry and Eleanor had their first child whom they named Edward. This was certainly an homage to Henry III's favorite predecessor, Edward the Confessor. This was a surprising choice of name as "Edward" had died out in usage amongst the nobility; it was like bringing back Ecghbert, Aethelstan, or Aethelwald. Edward was married in 1254 to Eleanor of Castille, the half-sister of King Alfonso X of Castille, when Henry III felt the threat of Spanish incursion in his lands in Gascony. With this political alliance, border tensions were quelled, and Edward added to his land holdings across Gascony, Ireland, Wales, and England. However, lieutenants were in place to manage nearly all of his lands leaving him with very little income of his own as he was coming of age. Edward had periods of influence in his childhood and teen years from the foreigners at court as well--first the Savoyards and then the Lusignans. By the 1250s, Edward was eager to be his own man much like the sons of Henry II.
- Now, before we get to the key events in the 1250s and 1260s, this is a good opportunity to get to know the powerful barons and families of England at the time. If you research deeper into any book or podcast covering this era, there is an array of characters that come about. So, much like understanding the key senators, governors, business leaders, and other influencers of today's politics, we want to do a cursory tour of the same in England. These names, families, and titles will continue to come in and out of our storyline going forward. And, after all, as a history of politics podcast, these men (and, it's mostly men at this time) often had large contributions to the development of politics in England.
    - We'll start with the Earldom of Chester. Chester is strategically located on the northeastern border of Wales and hence is referred to as a "march"--an old word for a border. This was a unique earldom having the classification of "County Palatinate" giving the Earl much more autonomy to rule compared to other earldoms. The initial grant

of this status was given by William the Conqueror who invested the title to a powerful Norman family led by his half-sister's son. The rule of Chester passed to a related family after the White Ship disaster and remained there with loyal supporters of the crown until Edward (son of the king who we were just talking about) was given the lands as Lord of Chester in 1254.

- The de Burgh family, almost certainly another Norman family, came from obscurity in the late 12th century. William de Burgh received grants of land in Ireland, and his descendants eventually held the title of Earl of Ulster. Their last name would evolve to "Burke"--the very common family surname that you have heard. They will come into play more in the next episodes. William's younger brother, Hubert, was one of King John's most loyal deputies serving as Chief Justiciar in the last couple years of his reign during the turmoil of the First Barons' War. He continued as Chief Justiciar and was a key player in the regency of Henry III with William Marshal and Peter de Roches. Hubert was married for about a month to King John's first wife and then married the sister of the King of Scotland. When Henry III gained control of the kingdom after coming of age, Hubert was given the title Earl of Kent. This was not hereditary, and he was the only person to hold this title during the 13th century.
- The de Bohun [*d'bowen*] is yet another family of Norman origin with a lineage tracing back to compatriots of William the Conqueror. The family sided with Empress Matilda during The Anarchy and was awarded the title Earl of Hereford under King Henry II. Herefordshire is another county on the Welsh Marches, and the de Bohuns were elevated to a hereditary position of Lord High Constable commanding the royal armies. The de Bohuns were opposed to King John in the First Barons' War but retained hereditary title over Hereford, Constable, and added Earl of Essex in 1239.
- The Bigod [*bigg-ed*] family also has its roots in the Norman Conquest after which the family was awarded lands in East Anglia--mostly in Norfolk and Suffolk. Hugh Bigod was named Earl of Norfolk in 1141 by Empress Matilda whom he supported for a while after previously supporting King Stephen. He then initially had favor with Henry II but supported the rebellion of Henry the Young King in the family feuds that we covered in Episode 10. His son Roger, was a key supporter of King Richard and was later sympathetic to the baronial cause against King John. His son, Hugh, married William Marshal's oldest daughter, and their descendants would then inherit the hereditary title "Marshal

of England" after all of William Marshal's male descendants died without issue in 1245. By the mid 1200s, the Bigod family included Roger, Earl of Norfolk and Marshal of England, and Hugh, who was the Chief Justiciar.
        - In the southeast of England, we have Surrey, home of the de Warenne family--yet another noble family that got its start with a Norman companion of William the Conqueror. The de Warennes were usually loyal royalists and one of the most prominent members of the family, Isabella, who held the title of Countess ruling Surrey in her own right for many years, married first the son of King Stephen and second the half-brother of King Henry II.
        - The next family is that of the de Clares. They, too, have Norman origins; however, their family line traces back to the early Dukes of Normandy. Richard de Clare, the 3rd Earl of Hertford (just north of London), married the grand-daugther of Richard, Earl of Gloucester, the illegitimate son of Henry I and half-brother of Empress Matilda who was a major player in her campaign during The Anarchy. This merged the two earldoms into the powerful family who subsequently held title to both Earl of Gloucester and Earl of Hertford--they generally sided on the sides of the barons against the power of the king. Robert FitzWalter, the leader of the rebel barons in the First Barons' War, was a member of the de Clare family descended from a younger brother of the main line.
        - Warwick Castle was the seat of the Earl of Warwick, situated somewhat in the center of England. This title was held by the Norman de Beaumont family since the times of William the Conqueror. The de Beaumonts were loyal to King John and would be on the royalist side of Henry III in the upcoming conflicts. The title would pass to the related de Beauchamp family in the later course of Henry III's reign who were strong allies of Lord Edward. In addition to the title Earl of Warwick, the de Beaumonts also held the title Earl of Leicester through another line of sons from the first de Beaumont. The 4th Earl of Leicester was a companion of Richard the Lionheart on the Third Crusade; he would be captured and imprisoned by King Philip II of France. The lands in Leicester would pass to his sisters with the earldom eventually passing to the children of his eldest sister's husband, Simon de Montfort.
    - We will stop there and return to Simon de Montfort in just a moment. There are a few other key families, but these are the most powerful and relevant at the moment. We'll introduce others as we go. Before we get to our main

storyline, it's helpful to call out how the primary political lines are beginning to take shape between factions generally loyal to the kings and those who tend to fall into opposition. This mostly falls on family lines. There are also a lot of marriage alliances that take place among the noble families. If you recall from our discussion on the contents of the Magna Carta, as direct vassals to the king, these families had to get permission directly from the king to arrange marriages--they also paid fees to get that done.

3. Now let's move into the political crisis of the mid 13th century in England.
    - We are going to start with the death of Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor, in 1250. Frederick II was the son of Henry VI and Constance who we met in Episode 10. Henry VI used the massive ransom he secured from England for the release of Richard the Lionheart to conquer Sicily and install his wife as the rightful queen and ruler. At this point, Henry VI's domain as the Holy Roman Emperor was huge. But, his early death created a succession crisis that put the powerful German princes into factions all while Pope Innocent III came into power. The absence of a Holy Roman Emperor allowed Innocent III's political ability to capitalize on the power vacuum and assert his ambition. There is a ton of great political intrigue in this whole story, but you'll have to go study that as further research. By 1220, Henry VI's son and designated heir, Frederick II, was finally coronated as the new Holy Roman Emperor. Just a few interesting notes about Frederick II:
        - He spoke six languages: German, Latin, French, Sicilian, Greek, and Arabic. He ruled the Holy Roman Empire from his power base in Sicily.
        - Historian Donald Detwiler wrote: "[He was] a man of extraordinary culture, energy, and ability – called by a contemporary chronicler stupor mundi (the wonder of the world), by Nietzsche the first European, and by many historians the first modern ruler – Frederick established in Sicily and southern Italy something very much like a modern, centrally governed kingdom with an efficient bureaucracy."
    - Once again upon Frederick II's death like his father before him, succession became an issue. He had been excommunicated by the Pope (multiple times) which opened up new elections for King of Germany (which was becoming synonymously called King of the Romans and used as the designate-elect to becoming Holy Roman Emperor). However, his other titles, including King of Sicily were separate and "up for grabs". As the pope was looking for alternatives to the Hohenstauffens (Frederick's family), he turned to King Henry III of England suggesting that his younger son, Edmund, would be a good candidate. The claim to the throne came by way of Frederick II taking Henry III's sister, Isabella, as his third wife in 1235. Thus, Edmund was a nephew by marriage to Frederick II and was as good as any other option for

the Pope. However, this weak claim to the throne would need to be backed up by military power and lots of money. And, that is what the pope asked for from Henry III.

- Henry did not have the money to make this happen. And the legacy of Magna Carta was strong enough at this point to make Henry realize that he needed to ask for the consent of the barons before he could impose a tax to raise the funds that he wanted. This came by way of what was beginning to be called Parliament.
- You would think that we could dedicate a whole episode to the birth of Parliament, but, in reality, it is a bit of a murky transition. The Anglo-Saxon era had the Witan (or Witenagemot) which we spoke briefly about in Episode 7. With Norman influence, this evolved into the Curia Regis--Latin for the "King's Court". These were both informal bodies whereby the king received counsel or advice from his key nobles. From the chaos of The Anarchy, to the absent rulers of Henry II and Richard, to the tyranny of John, the Curia Regis along with the Magna Carta put the rule of Henry III into a situation where he had to be increasingly more inclusive of his nobles to get stuff done. The word "parliament" comes from the French "parler" (to speak) and "parlement" (discussion). As early as the 1230's, Henry III was calling for "parlementum" from his nobles to formally gather beyond the Curia Regis to discuss matters of state. By the 1250s, it was acknowledged that a "parliament" was required to get stuff (well, at least taxation, done), and such meetings were occurring almost annually.
- We can now circle back and introduce Simon de Montfort who we briefly mentioned at the end of our tour of leading barons. He was the grandson of Robert de Beaumont, 3rd Earl of Leiscester. Upon the death of his uncle, another Robert de Beaumont, in 1204 there were no remaining male heirs. The title was inherited by Simon's wife. Simon was a Frenchman and participated in the Fourth Crusade which we discussed in our opening to this episode. He opposed the Venetian attack on Zara and returned home. He was then a successful leader of what is called the Albigensian Crusade. This crusade was called for by Innocent III to attack heretics in southern France. Meanwhile, King John confiscated de Montfort's English lands, took the revenues for himself, and put them under the oversight of the Earl of Chester. Simon de Montfort died in the Siege of Toulouse in 1218 leaving his sons Amaury and Simon as co-heirs to his vast lands in France and the disputed lands in England. The brothers came to an agreement with King Henry III in 1229 giving Amaury the lands in France and Simon the lands in England thus avoiding any notions of dual loyalty to both kings. Simon became one of Henry III's trusted nobles over the course of the 1230s

becoming one of Lord Edward's godfathers, and he ended up marrying the king's sister, Eleanor, in early 1238. The title Earl of Leicester was fully restored to him. But, things began to turn sour in 1239 when Simon named the king as a guarantor of personal debt without the king's permission.

- De Monfort went on crusade in what was to be known as the "Barons' Crusade" around 1240. He was in a contingent led by Richard of Cornwall. We need to introduce him as we skipped past him in the list of barons earlier. We did that because Richard was the younger brother of King Henry III, so he was a close relative of the royal family. Richard and Simon did not see much, if any, military action in this crusade, but they did help negotiate a peace settlement with the Muslims which returned the possessions of the Crusader States to their largest territory since Saladin captured Jerusalem in 1187. Both were recognized across Europe for their abilities. In 1248, de Monfort was given a post in Gascony to oversee the territory on behalf of Lord Edward. He was capable, though somewhat brutal, and this contributed to both de Montfort's power base and began to drive animosity between the Earl and the king's son.
- Now, we will fast-forward to Parliament of 1258 which was held in Oxford. Recall that many of the barons were dissatisfied with Henry III's influence from the outsiders--the Savoyards from his wife's family and the Luisignans (or Poitevins) from his mother's family--as well as his attempts to secure the kingdom of Sicily for his son Edmund. This was compounded by other factors including famine, Henry III's lack of going on Crusade despite pledging multiple times and raising money for it, his failed military campaigns in France, and his vast expenditures in support of his piety and near-worship of Edward the Confessor. The king was met with a surprise in Oxford as the barons forced him to accept a de facto coup d'etat turning over leadership of the kingdom to a council of 24 barons--12 appointed by the king and 12 by the barons. This council of 24 would then select a council of 15 who would run the government along with the king. The royal offices such as Chief Justiciar and Lord Chancellor would be elected by the council. Furthermore, it was established that Parliament would be called and meet three times a year. The reforms are known as the Provisions of Oxford.
- These provisions were confirmed and extended the following year, at the October Parliament of 1259--these are aptly named the Provisions of Westminster. The king brokered favor with Louis IX of France by formally acknowledging the loss of territory in France by the Treaty of Paris in 1259, and the pope gave Henry III a boost in 1261 when a papal bull annulled the Provisions of Oxford and Westminster. The baronial faction retreated a bit but began military action in 1263. With the country on the verge of all-out

civil war, the sides appealed arbitration to Louis IX who sided fully with King Henry III in the Mises [*meez*] of Amiens [*am-yen*] in 1264. Dissatisfied, Simon de Montfort and his most radical barons proceeded in all-out war known as the Second Barons' War.

- Now, military history is not our thing here, but we do need to hit the two major highlights of the Second Barons' War so that we can put them into the political context. We should also note that many English histories do not devote this much time, relatively speaking, to Henry III's reign. We are focusing on this snapshot of 40-50 years in this episode because it is really a major advancement in balancing political power between the king and his subjects while cementing the legacy of the spirit, if not the letter, of the Magna Carta.
- We can summarize the Second Barons' War with two key battles: the Battle of Lewes [*lewis*] and the Battle of Evesham.
    - The high point for the barons and Simon de Montfort comes with the Battle of Lewes in May of 1264. In this battle, the outnumbered rebels faced a direct battle against the royal forces and secured victory. King Henry III, Richard of Cornwall, and Lord Edward were all taken as prisoners of war. Henry was reduced to a puppet king under de Montfort's control as laid out in the Provisions of Oxford while Richard and Edward were held securely in a castle. A treaty, known as the Mises of Lewes is lost to history but sets the terms of the royal surrender.
    - Eventually, Lord Edward escapes and rallies his allies, notably the younger barons of the western counties. The rebel alliance has begun to weaken as many lords see de Montfort's actions while in power as self-serving and less revolutionary. Lord Edward leads his supporters into the next key battle, the Battle of Evesham, in the summer of 1265. The royalists are victorious and de Montfort is killed in the battle. He is unceremoniously dismembered as an example for other rebels.
    - In the aftermath, most of de Montfort's supporters ultimately find refuge in the castle at Kenilworth. King Henry's inclination and initial policy is that of retribution. But, guided by his son, who had shown some flexibility in his political leanings over the crisis of the last several years, the king does find compromise.
    - The Dictum of Kenilworth was issued in 1266 to attempt to finalize peace. The rebel barons were mostly forgiven. This was followed by the Statutes of Marlborough in 1267 which re-confirmed royal power but still acknowledged the Magna Carta and Charter of the Forest among many other provisions. There are a few items of these statutes

which still remain in force today making them the oldest statute laws in England.
    - Henry III would go on to rule until his death in 1272. He never went on crusade while his rival Louis IX went on both the Seventh and Eight Crusades. The French king died in 1270 while on crusade in north Africa. He was canonized as Saint Louis (yes, that St. Louis) in 1297.

In the next episode, we are going to pick up an array of hodgepodge topics that will help us set the scene for the next 100 years or so. We'll return to the timeline in the following episode where we will cover not one, not two, but three Kings Edward.

Reading List

Podcasts

- The British History Podcast - https://www.thebritishhistorypodcast.com/
- The History of England - https://thehistoryofengland.co.uk/

Video

The Plantagenets and the War of the Roses - https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFcX45Yl0E4pTNrKiWgiSETQr4DMT9IFc

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