

King Henry III of England



Born: 1 October 1207 Winchester Castle, ENG

Married: Eleanor of Provence

Died: 16 Nov 1272 ENG

Parents: King John I of England & Isabella Angouleme

Henry III (1 October 1207 – 16 November 1272) was the son and successor of John "Lackland" as King of England, reigning for fifty-six years from 1216 to his death. Mediaeval English monarchs did not use numbers after their names, and his contemporaries knew him as Henry of Winchester. He was the first child king in England since the reign of Ethelred the Unready. Despite his long reign, his personal accomplishments were slim and he was a political and military failure. England, however, prospered during his century and his greatest monument is Westminster, which he made the seat of his government and where he expanded the abbey as a shrine to Edward the Confessor.

He assumed the crown under the regency of the popular William Marshal, but the England he inherited had undergone several drastic changes in the reign of his father. He spent much of his reign fighting the barons over the Magna Carta^[citation needed] and the royal rights, and was eventually forced to call the first "parliament" in 1264. He was also unsuccessful on the Continent, where he endeavoured to re-establish English control over Normandy, Anjou, and Aquitaine.

Coronation

Henry III was born in 1207 at Winchester Castle. He was the son of King John and Isabella of Angoulême. After his father's death in 1216, Henry, who was nine at the time, was hastily crowned in Gloucester Cathedral; he was the first child monarch since the Norman invasion of England in 1066. The coronation was a simple affair, attended by only a handful of noblemen and three bishops. None of his father's executors was present, and in the absence of a crown a simple golden band was placed on the young boy's head, not by the Archbishop of Canterbury (who was at this time supporting Prince Louis of France, the newly-proclaimed king of England) but rather by the Bishop of Gloucester. In 1220, a second coronation was ordered by Pope Honorius III who did not consider that the first had been carried out in accordance with church rites. This occurred on 17 May 1220 in Westminster Abbey.^[1]

Under John's rule, the barons had supported an invasion by Prince Louis because they disliked the way that John had ruled the country. However, they quickly saw that the young prince was a safer option. Henry's regents immediately declared their intention to rule by Magna Carta, which they proceeded to do during Henry's minority. Magna Carta was reissued in 1217 as a sign of goodwill to the barons and the country was ruled by regents until 1227.

Attitudes and beliefs during his reign

Henry III of England - Illustration from Cassell's History of England - Century Edition - published circa 1902

As Henry reached maturity he was keen to restore royal authority, looking towards the autocratic model of the French monarchy^[citation needed]. Henry married Eleanor of Provence and he promoted

many of his French relatives to higher positions of power and wealth. For instance, one Poitevin, Peter des Riveaux, held the offices of Treasurer of the Household, Keeper of the King's Wardrobe, Lord Privy Seal, and the sheriffdoms of twenty-one English counties simultaneously. Henry's tendency to govern for long periods with no publicly-appointed ministers who could be held accountable for their actions and decisions did not make matters any easier. Many English barons came to see his method of governing as foreign.

Henry was much taken with the cult of the Anglo-Saxon saint king Edward the Confessor who had been canonised in 1161. Told that St Edward dressed austere, Henry took to doing the same and wearing only the simplest of robes. He had a mural of the saint painted in his bedchamber for inspiration before and after sleep and even named his eldest son Edward. Henry designated Westminster, where St Edward had founded the abbey, as the fixed seat of power in England and Westminster Hall duly became the greatest ceremonial space of the kingdom, where the council of nobles also met. Henry appointed French architects from Rheims to renovate Westminster Abbey in the Gothic style. Work began, at great expense, in 1245. The centrepiece of Henry's renovated abbey was to be a shrine to Edward the Confessor. It was finished in 1269 and the saint's relics were then installed.

Henry was known for his anti-Jewish decrees, such as a decree compelling them to wear a special "badge of shame" in the form of the Two Tablets. Henry was extremely pious and his journeys were often delayed by his insistence on hearing Mass several times a day. He took so long to arrive on a visit to the French court that his brother-in-law, King Louis IX of France, banned priests from Henry's route. On one occasion, as related by Roger of Wendover, when King Henry met with papal prelates, he said, "*If (the prelates) knew how much I, in my reverence of God, am afraid of them and how unwilling I am to offend them, they would trample on me as on an old and worn-out shoe.*"

Criticisms

Henry's advancement of foreign favourites, notably his wife's Savoyard uncles and his own Lusignan half-siblings, was unpopular with his subjects and barons. He was also extravagant and avaricious; when his first child, Prince Edward, was born, Henry demanded that Londoners bring him rich gifts to celebrate. He even sent back gifts that did not please him. Matthew Paris reports that some said, "*God gave us this child, but the king sells him to us.*"

Henry III lands in Aquitaine, from a later (15th century) illumination. (Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr. 2829, folio 18)

[edit] Wars and rebellions

In 1244, when the Scots threatened to invade England, King Henry III visited York Castle and ordered it rebuilt in stone. The work commenced in 1245, and took some 20 to 25 years to complete. The builders crowned the existing moat with a stone keep, known as the King's Tower.

Henry's reign came to be marked by civil strife as the English barons, led by Simon de Montfort, demanded more say in the running of the kingdom. French-born de Montfort had originally been one of the foreign upstarts so loathed by many as Henry's foreign councillors; after he married Henry's sister Eleanor, without consulting Henry, a feud developed between the two. Their relationship reached a crisis in the 1250s when de Montfort was brought up on spurious charges for actions he took as lieutenant of Gascony, the last remaining Plantagenet land across the English Channel. He was acquitted by the Peers of the realm, much to the King's displeasure.

Henry also became embroiled in funding a war in Sicily on behalf of the Pope in return for a title for his second son Edmund, a state of affairs that made many barons fearful that Henry was following in the footsteps of his father, King John, and needed to be kept in check, too. De Montfort became leader of those who wanted to reassert Magna Carta and force the king to surrender more power to the baronial council. In 1258, seven leading barons forced Henry to agree to the Provisions of Oxford, which effectively abolished the absolutist Anglo-Norman monarchy, giving power to a

council of fifteen barons to deal with the business of government and providing for a thrice-yearly meeting of parliament to monitor their performance. Henry was forced to take part in the swearing of a collective oath to the Provisions of Oxford.

In the following years, those supporting de Montfort and those supporting the king grew more and more polarised. Henry obtained a papal bull in 1262 exempting him from his oath and both sides began to raise armies. The Royalists were led by Prince Edward, Henry's eldest son. Civil war, known as the Second Barons' War, followed.

The charismatic de Montfort and his forces had captured most of southeastern England by 1263, and at the Battle of Lewes on 14 May 1264, Henry was defeated and taken prisoner by de Montfort's army. While Henry was reduced to being a figurehead king, de Montfort broadened representation to include each county of England and many important towns—that is, to groups beyond the nobility. Henry and Edward continued under house arrest. The short period that followed was the closest England was to come to complete abolition of the monarchy until the Commonwealth period of 1649–1660 and many of the barons who had initially supported de Montfort began to suspect that he had gone too far with his reforming zeal.

The tomb of King Henry III in Westminster Abbey, London

But only fifteen months later Prince Edward had escaped captivity (having been freed by his cousin Roger Mortimer) to lead the royalists into battle again and he turned the tables on de Montfort at the Battle of Evesham in 1265. Following this victory savage retribution was exacted on the rebels.

Death

Henry's reign ended when he died in 1272, after which he was succeeded by his son, Edward I. His body was laid, temporarily, in the tomb of Edward the Confessor while his own sarcophagus was constructed in Westminster Abbey.

Appearance

According to Nicholas Trevet, Henry was a thickset man of medium height with a narrow forehead and a drooping left eyelid (inherited by his son, Edward I).

Marriage and children

Married on 14 January 1236, Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury, Kent, to Eleanor of Provence, with at least five children born:

1. Edward I (b. 17 January 1239 - d. 8 July 1307)
2. Margaret (b. 29 September 1240 - d. 26 February 1275), married King Alexander III of Scotland
3. Beatrice (b. 25 June 1242 - d. 24 March 1275), married to John II, Duke of Brittany
4. Edmund (16 January 1245 - d. 5 June 1296)
5. Katharine (b. 25 November 1253 - d. 3 May 1257), deafness was discovered at age 2. [1]

Another daughter, Matilda, is found only in the Hayles abbey chronicle, alongside such other fictitious children as a son named William for King John, and a bastard son named John for King Edward I. Matilda's existence is doubtful, at best. For further details, see Margaret Howell, *The Children of King Henry III and Eleanor of Provence* (1992).

Personal details

- His Royal Motto was *qui non dat quod habet non accipit ille quod optat* (He who does not give what he has, does not receive what he wants).

- His favorite wine was made with the Loire Valley red wine grape Pineau d'Aunis which Henry first introduced to England in the thirteenth century. ^[2]
- He built a Royal Palace in the town of Cippenham, Slough, Berkshire named "Cippenham Moat".
- In 1266, Henry III of England granted the Lübeck and Hamburg Hansa a charter for operations in England, which contributed to the emergence of the Hanseatic League.

Information from online research at: Ancestry.com

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_III_of_England

HENRY III

1216-1272



THE COAT OF ARMS OF HENRY III

HENRY III WAS ONLY NINE at his accession in 1216, and during his minority England was ruled wisely by two Regents. In 1227 Henry took over the government himself, and years of misrule followed. After he married Eleanor of Provence in 1236, many foreigners obtained leading positions in the government. This provoked an angry response from the English barons, led by Simon de Montfort, and civil war eventually broke out. In 1265 de Montfort summoned the first English parliament but the barons soon quarrelled among themselves. Henry's son, Prince Edward, defeated de Montfort and the King reassumed control of the government until his death in 1272.

👑 HENRY III

- ◆ **Born** Winchester, 1 Oct 1207, first son of John and Isabella.
- ◆ **Acceded** 28 Oct 1216
- ◆ **Crowned** Gloucester Cathedral, 28 Oct 1216
- ◆ **Westminster Abbey**, 17 May 1220.
- ◆ **Married** Eleanor of Provence, 14 Jan 1236
- ◆ **9 children.**
- ◆ **Died** Westminster, 16 Nov 1272.

THE REGENCY

Before his death, John willed that his nine-year-old son Henry should have as his Regent William the Marshal, Earl of Pembroke. A wise counsellor, William managed the government of England with Hubert de Burgh until his death in 1219, leaving de Burgh as sole Regent. Henry later dismissed de Burgh, despite years of loyal service, on a trumped-up charge of treason, and decided to rule with the help of French advisers.



WILLIAM THE MARSHAL

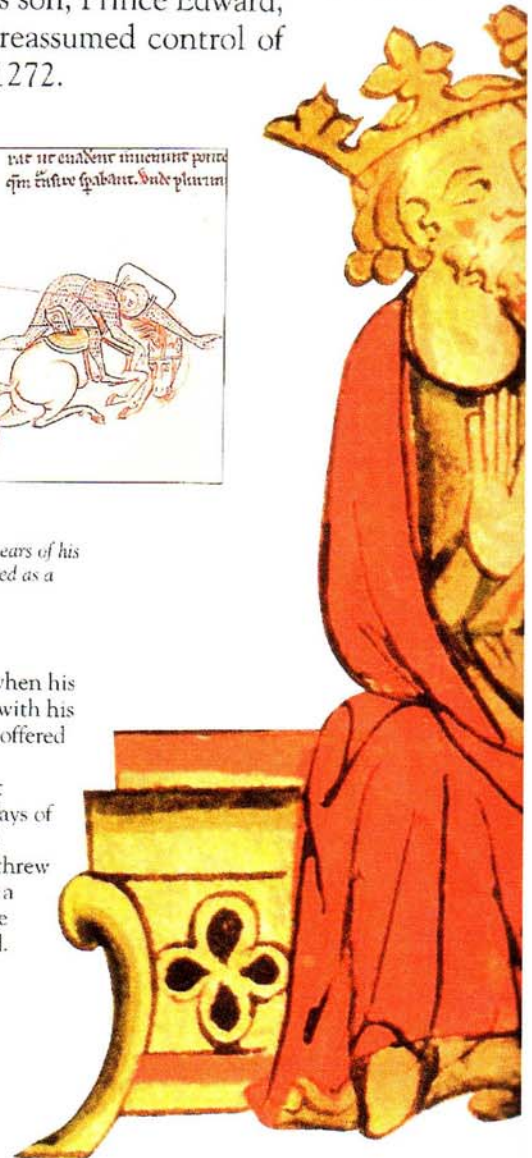
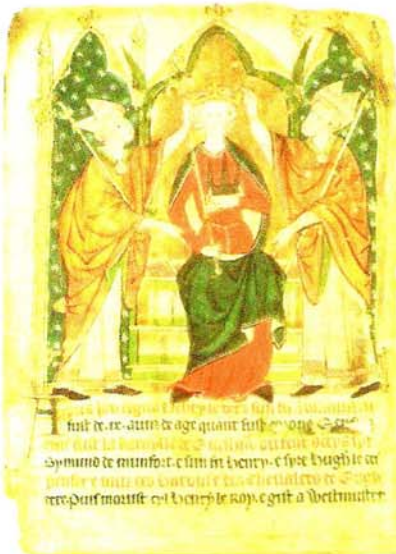
Regent for Henry III for the first three years of his reign, William the Marshal was renowned as a fearless warrior and knight (above).

THE CORONATION

Prince Henry was in Gloucester when his father, John, died during the war with his barons in 1216. The rebel barons offered the throne to Louis, Dauphin of France, but Henry was crowned at Gloucester Cathedral within 10 days of his father's death. The speed with which the coronation took place threw the barons into disarray, and after a series of defeats at the hands of the King's forces their revolt collapsed.

MAKESHIFT CEREMONY

This contemporary illustration shows Henry being crowned with his mother's gold chaplet in a makeshift ceremony at Gloucester Cathedral in October 1216. He was crowned again formally in Westminster Abbey in May 1220.



THE STATE OF ENGLAND

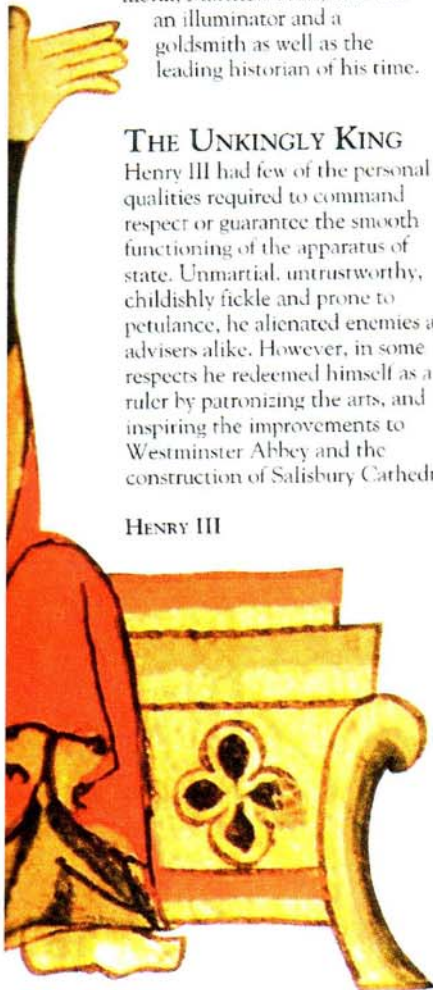
Despite a long period of misrule and extravagance, Henry III presided over an age of great advance in ecclesiastical and educational building, scholarship and artistic achievement. The first three colleges were established at the University of Oxford, which had been founded in the late 12th century, while at Cambridge University, founded in 1209 during the reign of John, foreign students were encouraged to make their homes there. In the monasteries, the skills of writing and illustrating chronicles were developed, and delicate drawings and graceful lettering came into fashion. The leader of this new style was the scholar-monk, Matthew Paris, who was

an illuminator and a goldsmith as well as the leading historian of his time.

THE UNKINGLY KING

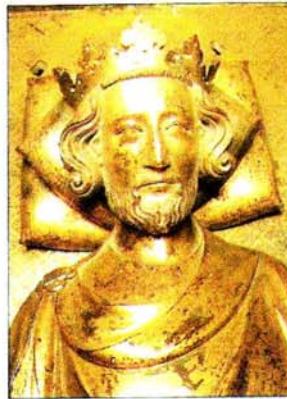
Henry III had few of the personal qualities required to command respect or guarantee the smooth functioning of the apparatus of state. Unmartial, untrustworthy, childishly fickle and prone to petulance, he alienated enemies and advisers alike. However, in some respects he redeemed himself as a ruler by patronizing the arts, and inspiring the improvements to Westminster Abbey and the construction of Salisbury Cathedral.

HENRY III



HENRY'S REALM

The map of England above comes from the *Chronica Majora*, a history of the world from the beginning of time written by Matthew Paris.



A PEACEFUL END

Despite all the difficulties he faced during his reign, notably from the English barons, Henry died in 1272 leaving behind a kingdom that was prosperous, united and prepared to accept the rule of his son, Edward I. Henry's effigy on his tomb in Westminster Abbey is shown above.

EVENTS OF THE REIGN 1216 – 1272

- ◆ 1216 Henry III is crowned King of England at the age of nine upon the death of his father, John. England is temporarily ruled by two regents, William the Marshal and Hubert de Burgh.
- ◆ 1217 A French force attempting to claim the English throne for Louis, Dauphin of France, is defeated at Lincoln, and a French fleet is repelled off Sandwich in Kent.
- ◆ 1217 The Treaty of Lambeth establishes peace between France, the English barons and supporters of Henry.
- ◆ 1219 William the Marshal dies.
- ◆ 1222 Hubert de Burgh puts down an insurrection in Oxford supporting the French king Louis VIII's claim to the throne.
- ◆ 1227 Henry takes full control of the government of England, but retains Hubert de Burgh as his principal adviser.
- ◆ 1232 Peter des Riveaux is appointed Treasurer of England and Hubert de Burgh is dismissed.
- ◆ 1233 Anger at the increasing influence of Peter des Riveaux and Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, provokes a rebellion led by Richard Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, son of William.
- ◆ 1234 The Marshal rebellion is defeated and Henry dismisses Peter des Riveaux, and confines Peter des Roches to purely spiritual affairs.
- ◆ 1236 Henry marries Eleanor of Provence and three of her uncles become ministers in England.
- ◆ 1238 Simon de Montfort marries Henry's sister, Eleanor.
- ◆ 1258 The English barons, led by de Montfort, rebel against Henry's misgovernment. After meeting at Oxford, they present a list of grievances to Henry, who signs the Provisions of Oxford, which limit royal power.
- ◆ 1261 Henry repudiates the Provisions of Oxford.
- ◆ 1264 The Baron's War breaks out and Henry is defeated by de Montfort at Lewes.
- ◆ 1265 De Montfort summons the first English Parliament, which consists of lords, bishops, knights, and burgesses representing the towns.
- ◆ 1265 Some of the barons break their alliance with de Montfort and, led by Edward, Henry's son, kill him at the Battle of Evesham.
- ◆ 1272 Henry III dies in the Palace of Westminster.

King Henry III (d. 1272)

He was the son of [King John](#) whom he succeeded as a boy in 1216; he was first crowned a Gloucester, and four years later at Westminster Abbey itself. Henry was responsible for rebuilding the Abbey and almost all of the building west of Henry VIII chapel belongs to this reign. He built a shrine to Edward the Confessor to which the king's body was translated in 1269. Henry was originally buried before the high altar in a grave which had been that of Edward the Confessor but nineteen years later translated to the present tomb which was built by his son, Edward I. His heart was buried at Fontevraud but there is no monument there.

The King's tomb consists of a Purbeck Marble base of two stages, into the sides of which are set slabs of Italian porphyry; it was inlaid with mosaic gilded and brightly coloured with tesserae of red and green porphyry, marble and glass, much of which have been stolen. On the side of the tomb nearest the Confessor's shrine are arched recesses which may have contained relics of the saint.

The effigy is of gilded cast bronze and was made by *Master William Torel*, who also made that of Queen Eleanor. The face would seem to be an idealized likeness of the King. His head lies on a double cushion on which are decorated, as is the top of the tomb, with lions of England. The gable is now missing. An iron grille - by *Master Henry of Lewes* - once protected the tomb and the wooden canopy was once gilded and painted.

The original Norman-French inscription around the edge of the tomb remains and in translation reads: *'Here lies Henry, sometime King of England, Lord of Ireland and Duke of Aquitaine, the son of King John, sometime King of England: on whom God may have mercy. Amen.'*

