

Olli Winter 2017: England in the High Medieval Period

The following will provide those interested with a schedule of the topic to be covered each week along with a brief description. Please email me if you have any further questions. The text used is once again Roberts, Roberts, and Bisson: History of England, vol. 1 Prehistory to 1714, Fifth Edition.

January 24: Henry II and the "Angevin Empire". textbook, chapter 5

We'll consider the reign of one of England's best known and greatest kings, along with his queen Eleanor and friend and archbishop Thomas Becket. We shall follow the growth of his French 'empire' and the significance innovations he made to English royal administration and law.

January 31: The Sons, Richard the Lion Heart and John Lackland, textbook, chapter 5

In this session, we shall consider the two successors whose reigns complete the twelfth century and take us in the thirteenth. Although we shall note the splendid life of the great crusader, we shall be primarily be concerned with the reign of his unpleasant younger brother, so very important. We have much to consider, including the loss of most of the Angevin empire, as well as the serious conflict with the Papacy and most important, the dispute with the nobility which will bring about Magna Carta.

February 7: Henry III and the birth of Parliament, textbook chapter 6

Although less known than both his father and son, Henry III had a long (1216-1272) and highly significant reign in terms of constitutional development. During this period, as we shall, England will experience the first effort of an idealistic usurper to seize authority and maintain constitutional government. While unsuccessful, Simon de Montfort will be considered with respect to the development of representative institutions in England and their future.

February 14: Edward I, textbook chapter 6

Known perhaps too well for his part in the movie Braveheart, Edward I was indeed a great warrior and one determined to rule over as much of the continental British Isles as possible, regardless of cost or loss of life. While we will certainly find much of interest, we shall consider his contributions to the evolution of both English law and government.

February 21: Edward II, textbook chapter 7

As we shall see, this ruler is often viewed as the worst of the worse rulers. We shall discuss his historical reputation, his issues and problems with others, both in England and France, and with his own wife, Isabella, the so-called she-wolf of France.

February 28: Edward III, textbook chapter 7

We shall have the opportunity in discussing this long reign (1327-1377) to consider several of the most interesting aspects of late medieval English history: the long first part of the Hundred Years War as well as the outbreak of the bubonic plague (Black Death) during the 1340s and beyond. Additionally, we shall also consider the evolution in this period of Parliament, both as an institution and as a constitutional authority.

March 7: Richard II, textbook chapter 7

Our last session shall be given over to a description of the reign (1377-1399) of England's most troubled monarch, the last Plantagenet ruler Richard II. To be considered along with the famous Peasant's Revolt will be the inability of this King to accept the reality of Parliament's authority along with the power plays of members of his own family and this monarch's fall.

February 28

March 7