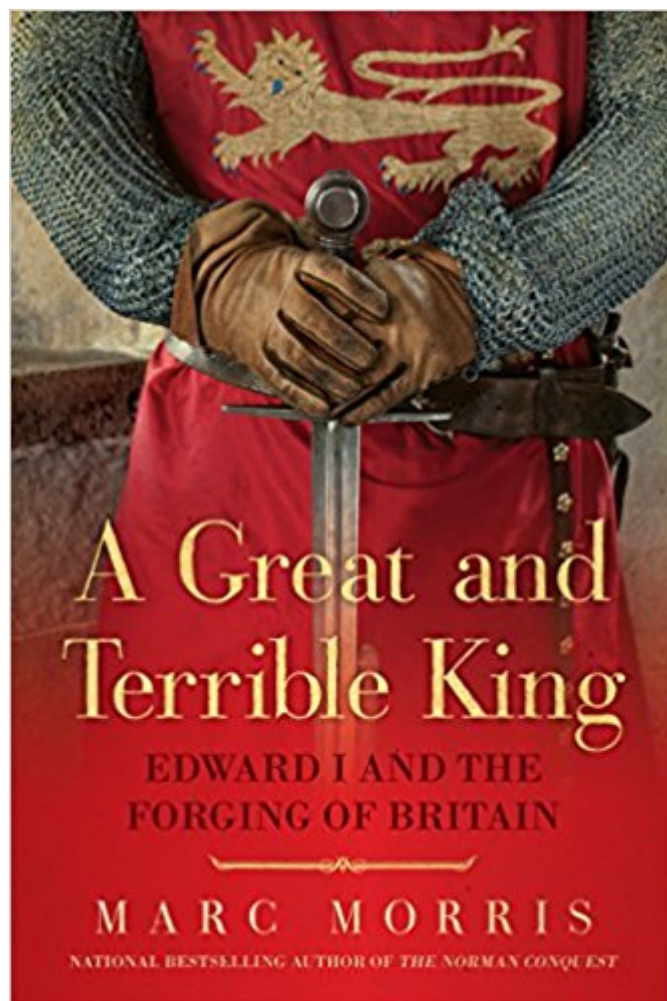


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A Great And Terrible King: Edward I And The Forging Of Britain



Synopsis

The first major biography of a truly formidable king, whose reign was one of the most dramatic and important of the entire Middle Ages, leading to war and conquest on an unprecedented scale. Edward I is familiar to millions as "Longshanks," conqueror of Scotland and nemesis of Sir William Wallace (in "Braveheart"). Yet this story forms only the final chapter of the king's action-packed life. Earlier, Edward had defeated and killed the famous Simon de Montfort in battle; travelled to the Holy Land; conquered Wales, extinguishing forever its native rulers and constructing a magnificent chain of castles. He raised the greatest armies of the Middle Ages and summoned the largest parliaments; notoriously, he expelled all the Jews from his kingdom. The longest-lived of England's medieval kings, he fathered fifteen children with his first wife, Eleanor of Castile, and, after her death, he erected the Eleanor Crosses—the grandest funeral monuments ever fashioned for an English monarch. In this book, Marc Morris examines afresh the forces that drove Edward throughout his relentless career: his character, his Christian faith, and his sense of England's destiny—a sense shaped in particular by the tales of the legendary King Arthur. He also explores the competing reasons that led Edward's opponents (including Robert Bruce) to resist him. The result is a sweeping story, immaculately researched yet compellingly told, and a vivid picture of medieval Britain at the moment when its future was decided. 16 pages of color and B&W photographs

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Customer Reviews

“A painstakingly researched and highly readable account. Vivid details and an engaging

narrative style bring the man and his period to life. Highly recommended for scholars and generalists alike interested in the Middle Ages. — Library Journal (starred review) — “Enhanced with color and b&w photos, a list of abbreviations, chapter notes, a bibliography, Family Trees, and a comprehensive index, A Great And Terrible King is an extraordinary read and highly recommended for both community and academic library collections. — Midwest Book Review — “Morris (The Norman Conquest) expertly puts Edward’s achievements, such as the Model Parliament, into historical context while laying bare and making interesting the king’s struggles. Descriptions of Edward waging war in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and even Gascony maintain a level of excitement as Morris cleverly builds anticipation, never dropping a narrative thread. — Publishers Weekly — “A splendid example of the genre. An excellent, readable account of his reign. — The Literary Review — “Morris does a splendid job of distinguishing England, Scotland and Wales in geographic, topographic, political and cultural terms. His descriptions of battles, political shenanigans and betrayals are as clear as a bell and his enthusiasm for his subject helps to make this biography something of a page turner. — The Providence Journal — “Uncommonly good. Edward was a remarkable man, and a great king. Marc Morris does him justice. It’s compelling stuff. — Allan Massie, bestselling author of ‘The Royal Stuarts’ — “An informative and easily digestible account of the life of an important if often unattractive medieval monarch. — Booklist — “Richly contextual treatment of a pivotal Medieval English monarch. An elucidating biography. — Kirkus — “Marc Morris is historical biography’s newest star. — The Bookseller — “The title of Marc Morris’s book is apt. No king of England had a greater impact on the peoples of Britain than Edward I. Morris has succeeded in writing a book for today. — The Times Literary Supplement

The first popular biography of Edward I in a generation by a major new historian. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Mel Gibson make Edward I famous in America. Braveheart, a lot-of-fun movie, is about Edward and his hapless son, as well as William Wallace and his fight for Scottish independence. The scope here is considerably larger and Wallace does not get all that much page space. Edward was tough, not always fair, sometimes seemingly bloodthirsty, stunningly selfish --but a very effective monarch in terms of creating a kingdom, suppressing rivals and building international alliances. He unified

Wales and kept Scotland within English rule, mostly. He was very good at depleting the treasury too, suggesting that nation building is not an inexpensive enterprise. While 'Braveheart' indelibly made Edward ("Longshanks") look like Patrick McGoohan in my imagination, the scope of A Great and Terrible King is much more, as well as more thorough and remains consistently interesting. It was inspiring enough to make me look around for other authors covering the same time period with less success than I hoped. . Those were busy times, when "nation hood" sort of became a thing, and when an English king could, very reasonably, assume that a substantial swath of France belonged to him as well. The inability of Edward II (son and heir) to keep it together supports the Great Man theory of evaluating history (a view I don't entirely hold). I read this book perhaps 6-8 months ago and am certainly failing to note some important moments, but for me to still remember so much of the man and his wars and wives is an endorsement of the effectiveness of the author. An interesting and engaging read throughout.

Quite possibly the greatest king of England that ever lived. Great anecdotes of life in the 14th century, to even an explanation of how King Arthur came about are precisely detailed. I loved this well assembled history lesson of A Great and Terrible King.

A great read, Edward's turbulent life is almost like a fictional story! Edward is my favourite English king and he certainly is renowned for being both great and successful but terrible and cruel. Marc Morris is a great non-fiction author. Well done for the best medieval royal biography I've read!

Excellent. This shows that Longshanks wasn't quite the bad guy "Braveheart" portrays him as. Though he wasn't perhaps mr friendly either.

OK, so I'm only half way through it, but finding it very readable for a straight history book. The author tied up several loose ends for me. I never quite understood why an English king held so much property in France. I never understood the relationship of the king to Llewellyn of Wales. I never knew just how powerful the Marcher Lords were. Mr. Morris cleared up all of that for me. Look forward to the rest of the book. If you have just a casual interest in 13th century English history, I highly recommend this book.

This biography touches on many issues critical to the foundation of England in the middle ages and beyond, including the conquest of Wales, the struggle to conquer Scotland, the Crusades, the

relationship with the Catholic Church, and the expulsion of the Jews. Morris does an impressive job of relating the myriad of obstacles facing the English monarchy, including financial constrictions and the ever present rebellious nobles. This is an evenhanded and fascinating portrayal of an eventful reign.

A fascinating review of England's King Edward 1 (nicknamed Longshanks). For those who know him only through the movie "Braveheart," this would be an educational volume. He had real strengths--but also weaknesses. His father, Henry III, was pretty critical of his son and tended to keep him on a short leash. And Edward was strong-willed, not making things better. Edward did serve with his father in military campaigns and showed promise--and courage. But his father was not terribly effective and often served in a reactive mode. This book speaks to Edward's life course--including his kingship. Here is someone who was often involved in military campaigns--Wales, Scotland, Gascony (England's land in France), a Crusade, and in England itself. He was often a good military leader--but sometimes he faced ruin (as one expedition in Gascony). He could often, as king, work with Parliament in a productive manner--but, at other times when he needed financing for war--he butted heads with his nobles and clergy and knights. We learn of his private life, his relations with wife and his children. His son, to become Edward II, was not his father and had some weaknesses. We also come to understand Scottish politics--Robert Bruce, William Wallace, and so on. The book has a hard eyed view on Edward I's weaknesses and his strengths (although the conclusion tends to underplay some of his problematic actions). In the end, we get, from my limited background in this period of history, a good sense of Longshanks.

Doctor Morris writes an interesting and thorough book about Edward I. He describes his good and bad attributes and seems to take a neutral position and let the facts determine my opinion of Edward. His style of writing is easy to follow but the book appeals to the reader with a background in English history as well as the newcomer to the period. I can recommend this book without reservation.

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