

## **Abstract: Theories of Kingship in the Song of Lewes**

Scholars have long acknowledged the importance of the 1264 Song of Lewes as a glimpse into contemporary justifications for the baronial rebellion led by Simon Montfort against Henry III in the Second Barons' War (1264-7). However, while some historians have included this text in studies of thirteenth-century English political theory, little work to date has focused on the Song and its particular theoretical influences; in fact, Charles Kingsford's 1890 text remains the most recent English translation. As a result, the subtleties of the text's political arguments have gone overlooked, while historians far too often reduce the Second Barons' War to a clash between the wills of Henry III and Simon de Montfort. Reading the Song in light of writings by predecessors and near-contemporaries John of Salisbury, Henry Bracton, Adam Marsh, and Thomas Aquinas, I analyze the works' similarities and differences regarding practices of kings and justifications for rebellion, including oath-keeping, reliance on counsel, presence of foreigners, and administration of justice. I find that the Song largely draws on this existing body of knowledge, with the author in many places referencing established norms of kingship to defend the baronial opposition to Henry III, though the text in no place wholly reflects one sole influence. This examination of the Song sheds new light on the philosophical and theological justifications for the Second Barons' War and suggests that this critical period in English history was neither spontaneous nor isolated, but rather, deeply embedded in medieval political thought.