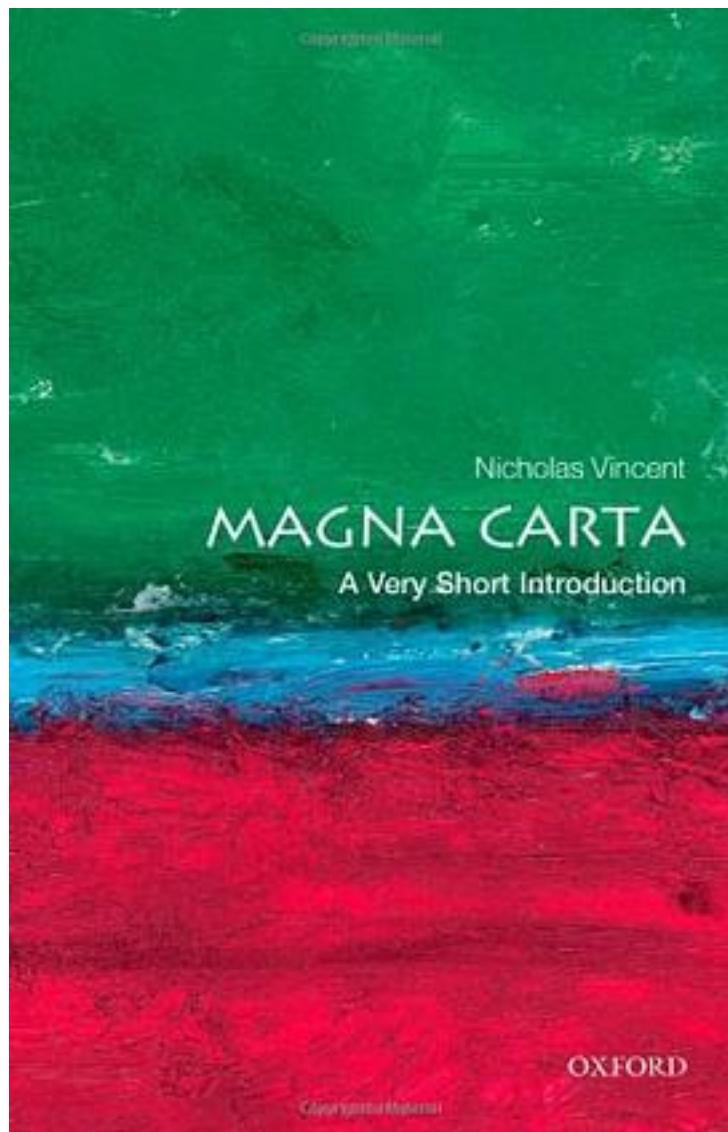


Magna Carta



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Magna Carta is the name later given to a document signed by King John of England under pressure from the barons and other notables of England in the summer of 1215 at a meadow called Runnymede, on the Thames between London and Windsor. This remarkable document resulted from an aristocratic rebellion against the crown, sparked by King John's abusive use of his customary rights as ruler of England. Though the rebellion began with the barons' success was ensured by John's alienation of the church and the rising merchant class, symbolized by the City of London. With the advent of Magna Carta, royal power fell under written secular law and individual liberties were codified. Representative government, common law, and key trial rights such as habeas corpus grew out of these landmark documents. But remarkable as the original agreement was, it acquired its elevated position in the legal and constitutional history of England as much from what men thought it said as from what its provisions actually contained. Thematic chapters help readers differentiate fact from fiction regarding this pivotal charter in political history. Furthermore, the pivotal roles played by the Church, the landed barons, and the emerging merchants in England's towns in extracting the concessions from the crown are discussed in broad, yet detailed, strokes. Chapters on Magna Carta's profound influence on common law and the development of representative government follow. Fifteen biographies of key figures like Henry II, Pope Innocent III, William the Conqueror and Eleanor of Aquitaine enhance the narrative chapters, as do the extensive extracts of the Coronation Oath of Henry I, Magna Cartas of 1215 and 1225, the Charter of the Forest of 1225, and the final Confirmation of the Charters from 1297. Glossary, annotated timeline, maps, bibliography, and index are included.

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