

CHWNE Module 4 Lesson 4

**Catherine de Medici,
Henry III (1551-1589)**

**Francois, Duke of Alencon and
Henry III of Navarre (Henry IV)**



In **1574** after **Charles IX** died, Catherine's next-in-line son, **Henry Duke of Anjou** (her favourite son) came to the throne as **King Henry III**.

It is said that Catherine called him '**Precious Eyes**' and lavished affection on him, much to the chagrin of his siblings.



Henry Duke of Anjou

King Henry III.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_III_of_France#/media/File:Anjou_1570louvre.jpg



King Henry III ruled from 1574 -1589 (15 years).
He had inherited a kingdom of divided loyalties.

- there was a **faction led by the Catholic Henry Duke of Guise** (supported by Spain and the Pope),
- there was the **Protestant faction** led by the remaining Protestant nobility, (supported by England and the Dutch),



- and there was **the Malcontents** - a mixed bag of Protestant and Catholic aristocrats who **championed tolerance for the Protestants** and called for the end of the Wars of Religion.



- a faction led by the Catholic Henry Duke of Guise
- a Protestant faction
- the Malcontents - championed tolerance for the Protestants



Just as the **Malcontents** believed in toleration of the **Protestants**, **King Henry III** wanted a monarchy marked by tolerance for Protestantism - he showed this by his willingness to sign the Protestant-friendly **Edict of Beaulieu** proposed by his brother **Francois of Alencon**.

Francis of Alençon



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis,_Duke_of_Anjou#/media/File:Fd'Alen%C3%A7on.jpg



This was in opposition to the old absolutist position held by the French monarchy and his father, **King Henry II**, who believed that the king's religion should be forced on his subjects.



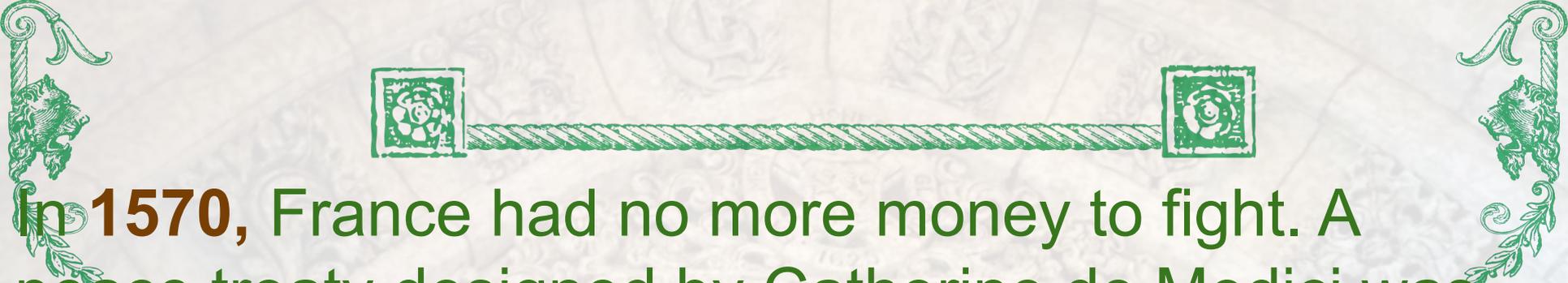
The influential **Guise brothers**, friends and supporters of **Henry II**, were instrumental in sparking **The Wars of Religion** after Henry II died and while Catherine ruled as regent.

Their alarm at the softer approach of Henry III led them to form the **Catholic Leagues**.



Remember the timeline: 1568-1572

- In 1568, Jeanne d'Albret had taken her two children, Henry III of Navarre and his sister Catherine de Bourbon, to the safety of La Rochelle when the fiercest war broke out against the Protestants.



In **1570**, France had no more money to fight. A peace treaty designed by Catherine de Medici was signed at **St Germain en Laye**. In it,

- Protestants gained control of **four fortified cities** for two years. (**La Rochelle, Cognac, Montauban and La Charite**).



- Protestants were granted **freedom of worship** and **freedom to hold public office** again.
- **Jeanne d'Albret** had to give up her son **Henry III of Navarre** in a marriage to **Marguerite of Valois** (Catherine's daughter) as a trade-off.

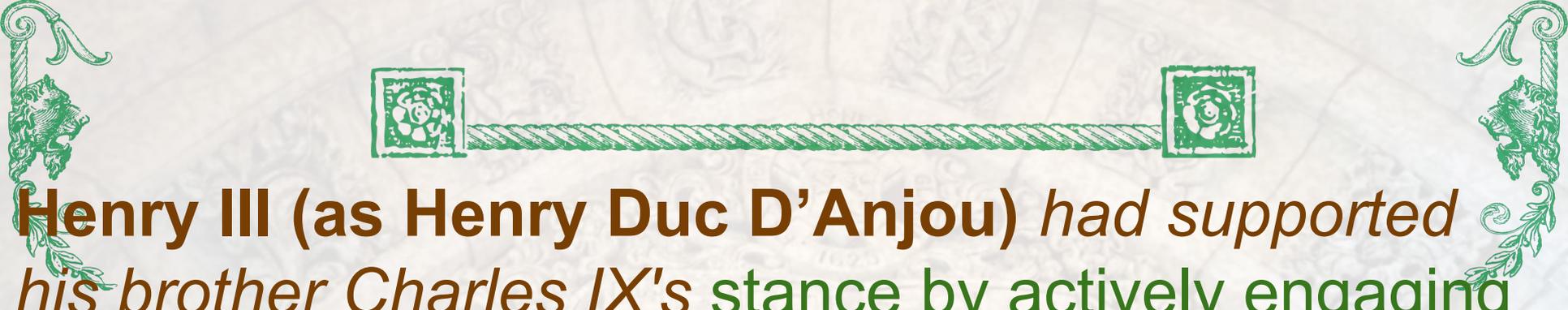


- After much negotiation throughout 1570, the **August 1570 St Germain en Laye Treaty** was signed by **Charles IX** for the Catholics and **Gaspard de Coligny** for the Protestants.
- Even though the Catholics had won two battles, **the Protestants still controlled La Rochelle and much of the southwest region of France.**



The year 1572 was pivotal:

- In **spring of 1572**, Jeanne D'Albret died.
- In **summer of 1572**, Henry III of Navarre married Marguerite of Valois.
- In **summer of 1572**, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre began a killing spree that continued into the **fall of 1572**. Protestants flocked to the city of La Rochelle for safety.



Henry III (as Henry Duc D'Anjou) *had supported his brother Charles IX's* stance by actively engaging in the wars against the Protestants.

He had previously supported Charles IX in fighting successfully in the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour in **1569**.

Charles IX was strongly influenced by Catherine and the Guise brothers.



In **1573** (after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre), Henry III, *in support of his brother **Charles IX***, had led the military assault on La Rochelle.

He hastily (?) negotiated a peace treaty in **June of 1573**, after he was approached during the siege by the Lithuanian ambassador to be their king.



There was a sizeable Protestant minority in Lithuania.

He was expected to demonstrate tolerance to Protestants in that nation.

Henry III, as Duc D'Anjou, was crowned King of Poland/Lithuania in 1573.



In 1574, on the death of **Charles IX**, Catherine begged Henry (Duc D'Anjou) to come back to France, telling him that his country needed him.

He abdicated the Polish/Lithuanian throne in favour of the French throne.



In February of 1575, He was crowned **Henry III**
King of France.

He married **Louise Duchess of**
Lorraine-Vaudemont the day after his coronation.
They failed to produce heirs.



He was the only son of Catherine's to ascend the throne as an adult (18 years old)

Even though he was healthier, it is said that he displayed inconsistent effort in managing the government, such as hiding from his state duties and engaging in acts of Catholic piety (pilgrimages and self-flagellation).



Catherine was unable to control Henry III as she did her other sons.

She played a lesser role in his government than previously.

In effect, Catherine ruled as his **Chief Executive and diplomat**, roaming around the countryside enforcing his laws and heading off wars.



In **May of 1576**, (one year after he came to the throne) **Francois Duke of Alencon**, Henry's youngest brother, allied himself with the **Malcontents** against Henry's crown.

Their armies besieged Paris. Francois negotiated **The Edict of Beaulieu**, in **May 1576**.



This **Edict of Beaulieu**, gave sweeping concessions and rights to the Protestants. These concessions/rights included:

- The **right to public worship** of their religion **throughout France** except at the court and in Paris.



- The **official name** of their religion was the **religion prétendue réformée** ("supposed reformed religion")
- They had the right to **build and own churches.**
- They had the right to **hold consistories and synods.**
- They had the right to **occupy eight fortified towns.**



- They were to be given **equal representations** of Protestants and Catholics sitting on eight of the **local tribunals of Parlements**.
- The families who suffered **loss from the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre** were to be financially compensated, and **returned to their positions of prominence**.



This edict spawned **The Catholic League**, led by **Henry Duke of Guise** and other Catholics who wanted to defend their religion.

They protested the fact that **an official name was granted to the Protestant organization**, and they thought that these **concessions were excessive**.



Seven days later, Henry III showed his support for his brother **Francois of Alencon** by calling a special meeting of the Parlement (*lit de justice*) to sign and ratify the Protestant-supporting **Edict of Beaulieu**.



This contrasted sharply with former policies set by **Henry II** and **Charles IX**.

By **December 1576**, the local government of **Blois** rebelled against the edict, sparking another outbreak of war *led unsuccessfully by Henry III of Navarre*.

In **1577**, a treaty was signed as the first step in another edict, this time the **Edict of Poitiers**.



Many of the concessions granted in the Edict of Beaulieu were rescinded with the Edict of Poitiers.

Protestants were **still free to practice their religion in specific towns** - in towns currently occupied, and in towns where Protestantism was practiced before the outbreak of war.



In 1578, Catherine travelled to the south of France for 18 months, pacifying the Huguenots' leaders with face-to-face meetings.

On her return to Paris, she was greeted as a hero as her efforts at unity were recognized.



Leading Catholics, led by the Duke of Guise, were appalled by Catherine's efforts to appease the Huguenots with the **1577 Edict of Poitiers**.

They doubled their efforts (which begun after **The Edict of Beaulieu**, in **May 1576**) at forming Leagues to protect their religion,



By **1579**, (5 years into his rein) Catherine warned Henry III that he was on the eve of a revolt.

Catherine advised him to compromise to save his life and live to fight another day.

In **1584**, **Francois Duke of Alencon died**, ending the support of the nobility for Protestantism.



This death of a presumptive heir also triggered **Henry Duke of Guise's** declaration as **leader of The Catholic League.**

Because of Henry III's lack of an heir, **Henry III of Navarre** automatically became presumptive heir.



Both **King Henry III of France** and **Henry III of Navarre (later King Henry IV of France)** were direct descendants from sons of **King Louis IX**, and cousins.

Henry III was the grandson of **Francis I**, while **Henry III of Navarre/Henry IV** was the grandson of **Marguerite of Navarre**, who was sister to Francis I.



Henry Duke of Guise marshalled all the Catholic princes, priests and nobles to sign a secret treaty with Spain, **The Treaty of Joinville**, to ‘**wage war on the heretics**’.

This move in **1584** was a strategic attempt to block Henry of Navarre from becoming a French Protestant King of France.



Under this Treaty of Joinville

- Spain promised to give the Catholic League **\$50,000 crowns per member** to wage war.
- **Charles de Bourbon (Cardinal of Lorraine)** was recognized as the rightful heir to the throne.



- Charles de Bourbon promised that when he eventually ascended the throne, he would reconfirm the treaty Henry II had made with Spain (**The Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis**).
- **The only religion to be tolerated was Catholicism.** Those refusing to convert would be exterminated.



- The decrees of **The Council of Trent** from the Roman Catholic Church would be enforced.
- All areas in the Netherlands which the **'heretics'** had given to France would be returned to Spain.



The effect of **The Treaty of Joinville** was basically to **cancel all previous edicts**, reverting to the conditions that existed before the **French Wars of Religion** began so that:

- **all religious and political concessions would be revoked.**



- **all subjects had to convert** to Catholicism or risk expulsion from France
- **all 'heretics' would be dismissed from official office**
- **all ministers of any other religion would be banned**



When the **Treaty of Joinville of 1584** became known in England, **Queen Elizabeth** saw it as a threat if France and Spain joined forces with the Catholics in her kingdom against her.

In 1585, Elizabeth decided to help the Protestants of the **Netherlands** who were rebelling against Spanish rule.



It is said that this triggered the war between Britain and Spain, resulting in the **sinking of the Spanish Armada in 1588.**

The Catholic League took control of many cities in Northern France, prompting **Henry III to declare himself Leader of the League - in an attempt to control it.**



But in **1585**, Henry III was pressured to sign the **Treaty of Nemours**, with the Catholic League.

He gave in to all of the League's demands, including paying their troops.

Effectively, **the Guises were in control of France** instead of the King.



Then he went into hiding, supposedly to fast and pray, leaving Catherine to sort out the mess.

He had lost control of his country.

He could not help his ally, the British, in the face of the approaching war with Spain.



In **1587**, England chose to financially support **Henry of Navarre, rather than Henry III**, in this final war in the French Wars of Religion.

This was a move against the Catholic League.

Henry of Navarre also received support from the German princes who marched into France to help ‘the Huguenots’.



They were defeated and The League marched on to Paris.

Also in 1587, Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded by Queen Elizabeth 1.

This did not help the tensions as the **Catholic vs Protestant** backlash exploded all across Europe.



Spain prepared to invade England, while The League took control of northern cities in France to prepare ports for the Spanish Armada.

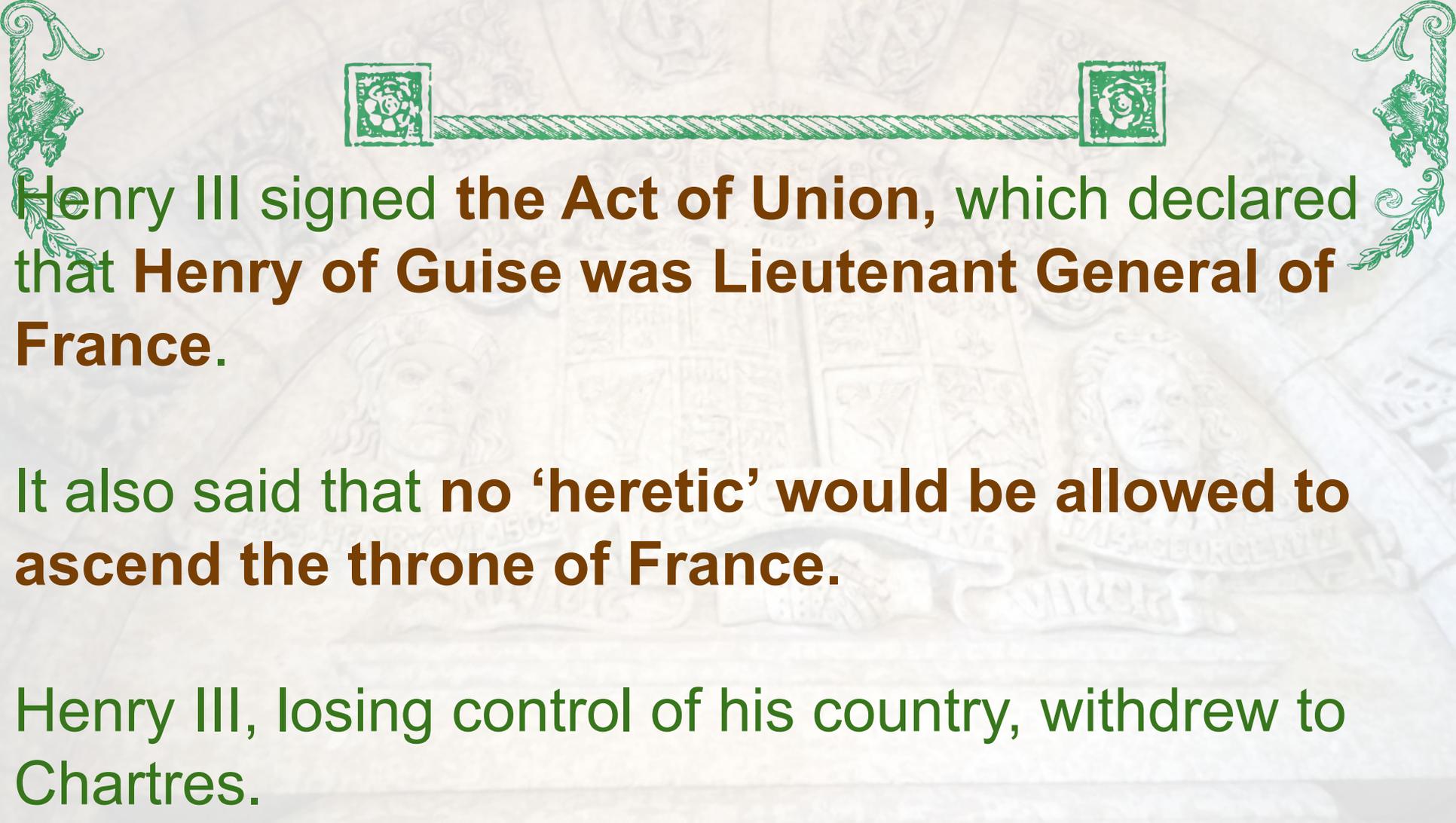
In **May 1588**, Henry of Guise took control of Paris supported by the inhabitants of the city, Spain and the Pope.



Henry III was given no choice but to go to war against the League.

King Henry III hired **Swiss troops** to help him defend Paris, but the Parisians said they were only taking orders from the Duke of Guise.

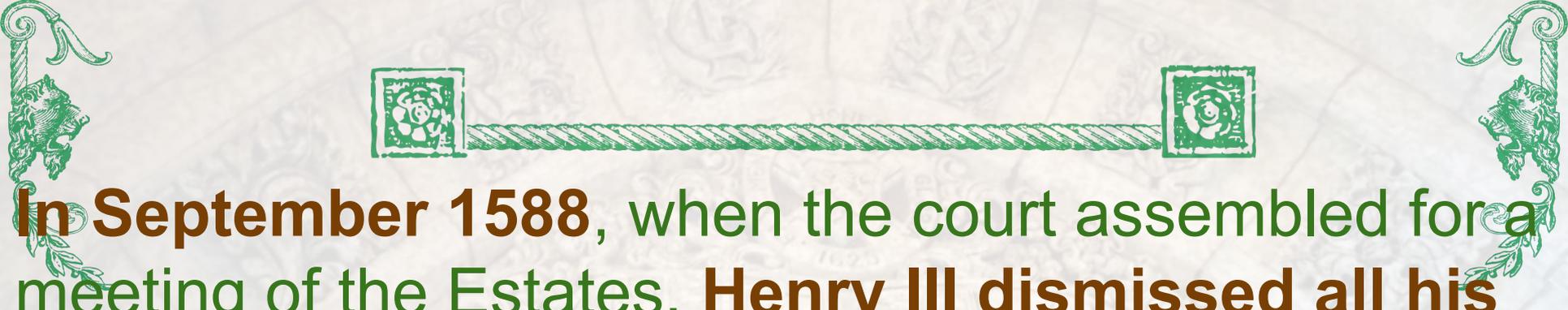
In 1588, King Henry III was forced to accept the terms of the Duke of Guise - **The Act of Union.**



Henry III signed **the Act of Union**, which declared that **Henry of Guise was Lieutenant General of France**.

It also said that no **'heretic'** would be allowed to **ascend the throne of France**.

Henry III, losing control of his country, withdrew to Chartres.



In September 1588, when the court assembled for a meeting of the Estates, **Henry III dismissed all his ministers without warning**. This ended Catherine's days of power.

Catherine was absent due to illness. In her absence, he praised and thanked her for her service to him as mother and to the state.



In **December of 1588**, Henry III invited Henry Duke of Guise to meet with him at the **Chateau de Blois**.

As Henry Duke of Guise entered the King's chamber, his most trusted bodyguards '**The Forty-Five**' all plunged their knives into the Duke.

He died at the foot of Henry's bed.



At the same time, **eight members of the Guise family, including the Cardinal**, were rounded up and hacked to death in the palace dungeon.

Henry III thus eliminated all opposition to his throne.



He immediately went into Catherine's chamber and admitted to killing the Duke, with the explanation that he only did what was going to be done to him.

The brother of the murdered Guises, **Charles of Guise**, became the new leader of The League and entered Paris, declaring war against the King.



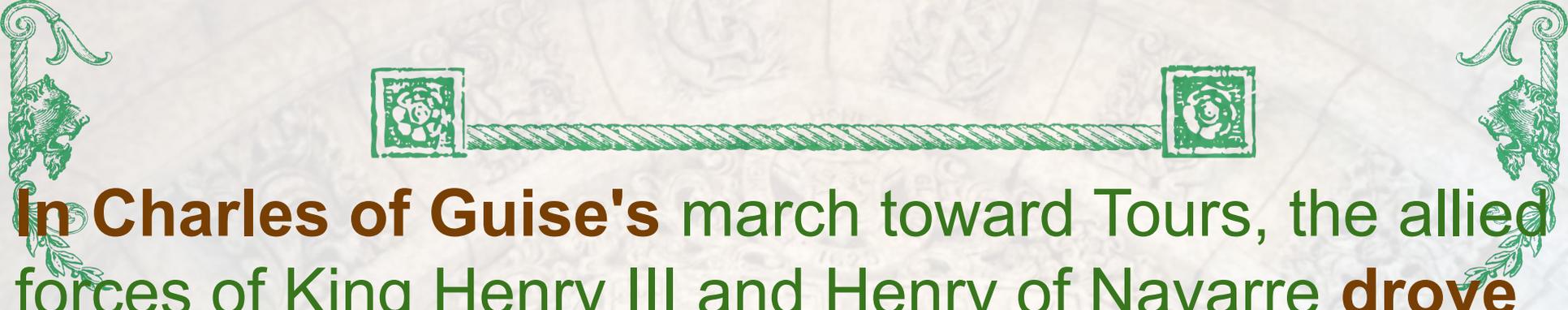
The **Parlement** also issued murder charges against King Henry III.

Henry III then set up his **Parlement of Tours** with his faithful supporters and Henry III of Navarre, with the intent of taking back Paris.



Map showing the proximity of Tours and Paris.

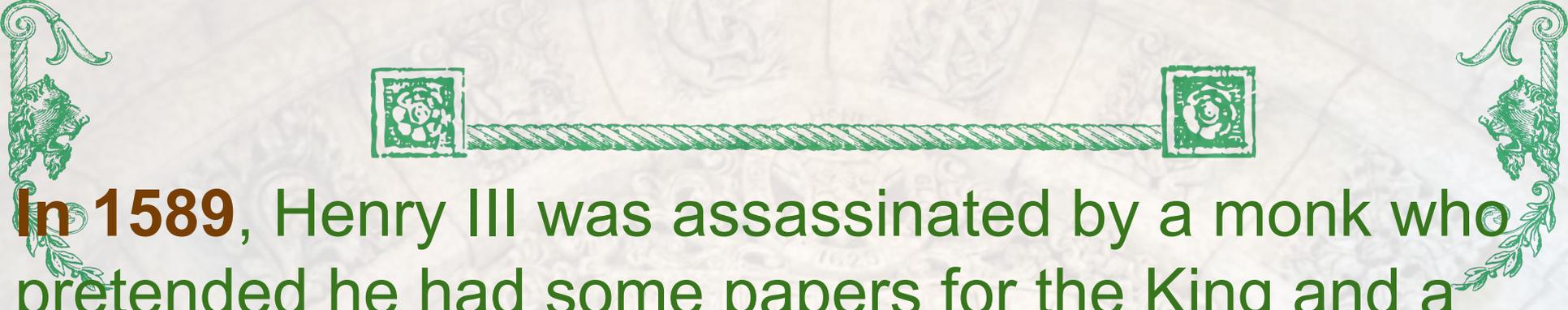
By Superbenjamin - This file was derived from: France location map-Regions and departements-2015.svg, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=46044757>



In **Charles of Guise's** march toward Tours, the allied forces of King Henry III and Henry of Navarre **drove them back to Paris**, laying siege to Paris.

The **German armies also reentered** northern France.

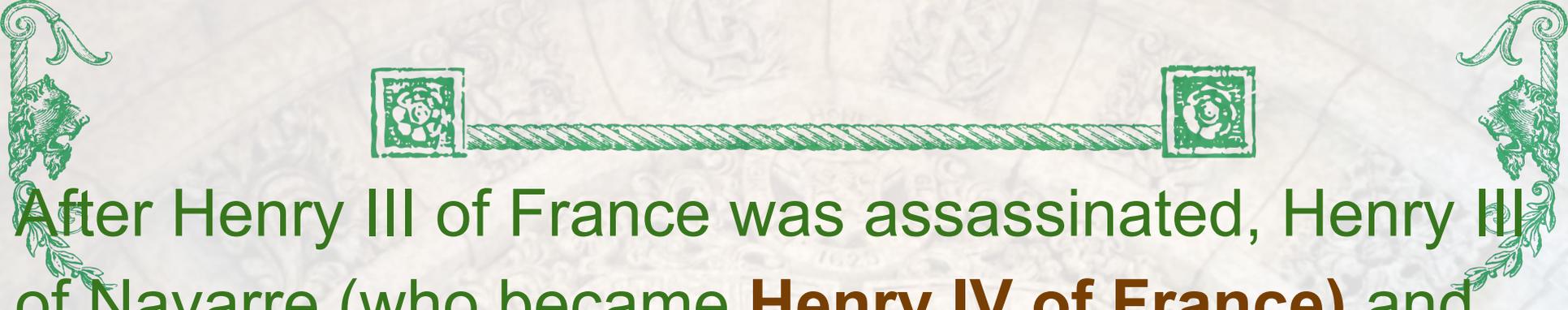
Three armies (the Germans, Henry III and Henry of Navarre) closed in on Paris, to the doom of the League.



In 1589, Henry III was assassinated by a monk who pretended he had some papers for the King and a private message.

On drawing close to whisper in the King's ears, he drove a knife into his abdomen, killing him.

The monk was immediately executed on the spot by the King's guards.



After Henry III of France was assassinated, Henry III of Navarre (who became **Henry IV of France**) and those faithful to him continued to meet at Tours from **1589 until 1594.**

This Parlement was known as **The King's Parlement** as opposed to the Catholic League's Parlement.



King Henry IV (of Navarre) literally had no contenders for the French throne, since Charles de Bourbon had already been eliminated by King Henry III.



After four more years of fighting, Henry IV converted to Catholicism to bring peace to his realm.

Charles of Guise, brother of the murdered Guises, made peace with Henry IV after he converted, ending the Wars of Religion.