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# Destriers

by Elizabeth Chadwick

**D**estrier. A warhorse and valuable. It was ridden into battle and at tourneys but was not used for general riding purposes. Its name is supposed to come from the idea that either it led from the right hoof when galloping down a tiltyard run and turning, or that it was led from the right. There has been debate. Generally a destrier was a stallion, although I don't doubt that there some geldings and mares among the mix. The size of a destrier in the period I write about (late 11th to 13th centuries) was around fifteen hands high. This is according to equine historian Ann Hyland. It would look something like a modern Welsh Cob or quarter horse, or Frisian, or the Villanos type of Spanish Andalusian. The idea was to have a strong, stocky animal that was lively in movement, could live on poor rations if it had to, and that was capable of short, sharp bursts of speed - the shock charge i.e. it had to have the same straits as a good steer roping horse today and be strong enough to bear the weight of a mounted, mail-clad knight without sagging in the middle. Historian Matthew Bennet has also compared the destrier of this period with the stronger types of Morgan Horse. Cart horses they certainly weren't, as Medieval illustrations prove. You quite often come across destriers as gifts in the pipe rolls of the period, where they are referred to by the macho sounding Latin title of Equo or Equus. In 1208 Henry de Fontibus gave King John a Lombard destrier as a gift in order that he might take the daughter of Henry FitzHervey to wife. (The great roll of the Pipe for the tenth year of King John.)

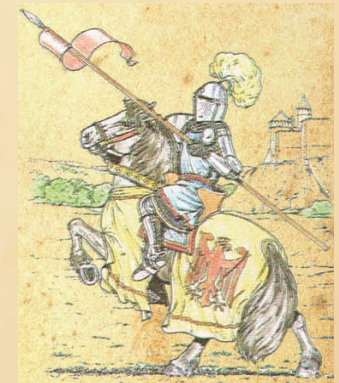
*Reprinted with special permission from Elizabeth Chadwick.*

## Elizabeth writes of William Marshal & his war horse, Blancart...

**S**oon after his knighting, William was involved in fighting the French in Normandy, at Drincourt, where he acquitted himself well, but lost his new warhorse when it was killed under him. Although he fought out of his skin during the battle, he was not street wise and neglected to take ransoms or prizes from the men he downed. Thus at the debriefing, he found himself mocked for his impoverishment, even while being voted the most doughty fighter.

William learned swiftly from this encounter and from that day forth set out to win ransom prizes at every tourney and battle he attended. He obtained another warhorse from his lord, although initially there was a problem. The new animal was unrideable because it had something wrong with its mouth and whenever the bridle pulled on that part, it went wild. William thought about this and adjusted the bridle so that it would not hurt the horse and from that moment, found himself with a very fine destrier indeed. We even know that this horse was called Blancart – which suggests it was of a white colour. The incident itself, reveals that William knew horses well and was intelligent enough to think things through for himself.

*Reprinted with special permission from Elizabeth Chadwick.*



**Knight and his war horse**

*Elizabeth Chadwick lives near Nottingham with her husband and two sons. She is the author of 18 historical novels, with The Greatest Knight, The Unsung Story of the Queen's Champion being her latest release in the United States. Please go to [www.elizabethchadwick.com](http://www.elizabethchadwick.com) to view Elizabeth's complete list of books.*



# Entertainment

## Medieval Style

by Dr. Michael Eglin

PhD in Composition

**F**ew women in history attained the level of power and influence, both political and artistic, that was known to Eleanor of Aquitaine. Eleanor was born to William X, Count of Poitiers and Duke of Aquitaine and Aenor de Chatelleraut. Her grandfather, William IX, is considered to be the first troubadour, a composer of lyric poetry who dealt mainly with themes of love and chivalry. Often, the subject of a verse would be a most wholesome (and utterly fictitious) woman whose breathtaking beauty was surpassed only by her virtue, wisdom, and temperance. Here we see an example of William IX's troubadour verse from the 12th century:

Joyous in love, I make my aim  
forever deeper in Joy to be.

The perfect Joy's the goal for me:  
so the most perfect lady I claim.

I've caught her eyes. All must exclaim:  
the loveliest heard or seen is she.

You know I'd never base my fame  
on brags. If ever we're to see  
a flowering Joy, this Joy, burst free,  
should bear such fruit no man can name,  
lifting among the others a flame  
that brightens in obscurity.

Whereas the minstrel or the jongleur (juggler) were known as minor servants and performers of other's works, the title of troubadour was only

given to those of noble birth who exercised their poetic and musical talents throughout the land without thought of compensation. These traveling poet-musicians were the primary source of news to towns, bringing word of the goings on in the country via verse and song. They were the elite and educated stars of their time, promulgating a new style of art, while simultaneously acting as a modern-day reporter. While the subject matter of many of their earlier verses focused on Platonic love, their personal conduct frequently fell short of their literary and musical ideals. An oft-quoted anonymous biographer from the 13th century stated the following concerning Eleanor's grandfather: [He] was one of the most courtly men in the world and one of the greatest deceivers of women. He was a fine knight at arms, liberal in his womanizing, and a fine composer and singer of songs. He traveled much through the world, seducing women. While Eleanor did not continue her grandfather's lyrical pursuits herself, her court was consistently full of visiting troubadours. Her patronage of this new secular art form, entirely in the vernacular rather than the traditional Latin or Greek, allowed the works of the troubadours to flourish first in Southern France, and then to spread northwards, eventually crossing the channel and having a lasting impact on the trouveres of England (northern variation of the troubadour with less religious influence), in Italy through the writings of Dante, and in Germany with the Minnesingers. Other notable troubadours throughout Europe at this time included Bernard de Ventadour, Folquet de Marseilles, and the master of the political verse, Bertrand de Born. De Born is most widely remembered from his depiction in Dante's Divine Comedy, where he is made to dwell in the 8th circle of Hell, wandering around while carrying his severed head. This illustration is largely due to de Born's political verses, or sirventes, dealing with Henry the Young's unsuccessful rebellion against his father, and his mocking of King Richard's later hesitation in participating in the Third Crusade. He is portrayed as an agitator, and one who endlessly sows discord and schism.

*Continued on page 20*

A 13th century illustration from the E Codex of the Cantigas de Santa Maria during the reign of Alfonso X, King of Castile





# Eleanor of Aquitaine

by Traci E. Hall

**E**leanor is a fascinating subject. Captivating. Mysterious. Powerful. Maternal—a vixen. A beautiful manipulator. A woman who kept her head despite the intrigue. Queen of France as well as Queen of England, she is best known as Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Born in 1122, Eleanor's family had more land and vassals than the king of France. While they swore allegiance to their king, the Aquitanians were a powerful entity without him, as he well knew. When the sickly King Louis VI received word of Duke William X's surprise death, he immediately sent his sixteen-year old son, Prince Louis, to marry the fifteen-year old Duchess Eleanor before anyone else grabbed the prize. This ensured the loyalty of the Aquitanian vassals, and greatly enriched the royal coffers. Eleanor's beauty was a bonus.

Almost immediately after the wedding, Louis the Fat died. The newlyweds traveled hastily to Paris as King and Queen. Eleanor's Aquitaine was brilliant with arts, song and dance – Paris, in depressing contrast, gloomy and overcrowded. Women were subservient and dull. She'd been raised to use her head for more than wimple holding. Thanks to her upbringing, Eleanor was able to stand her ground within the ancestral castle, adding hygiene and style instead of meekly accepting the status quo. Ordering clean rushes and inviting singers to entertain so upset the Dowager Queen that she left the castle, leaving Louis alone to fall more in love with his charming, strong-willed wife.

Eleanor seems to have thrived in the face of opposition. She rode astride. Read. Wrote. Listened and advised Louis in matters of state. In 1147, when Abbot Bernard asked for crusaders to save Edessa from the Turks, Eleanor plopped to her knees right next to Louis, pledging her Aquitanian vassals for the cause. Some believe she gathered a few of her ladies and dressed in white tunics and red plumes to ride back and forth on the hill behind the Abbot—generating more fervor—and more volunteers!

Eleanor and Louis wanted different things from the crusade. She wanted adventure, while he wanted redemption. Each was disappointed. The crusade was a failure, ending with a miserable queen in search of a divorce, which Louis wouldn't grant. Some blamed Eleanor and her extravagance, but all knew the king had the military experience of a monk. Since Louis had been yanked from the monastery to rule when his older brother was suddenly killed, his lack of blood lust made sense. Religion brought comfort, so he turned to the church, shutting Eleanor from his confidences. She was miserable.

After their second child in fourteen years was born, another girl, Eleanor heard whispers that their royal union was cursed. Fine by her—she just wanted out. After much manipulation and intrigue, she finally got her divorce on the grounds of being too closely related (fourth cousins) in 1152. The Duchy of Aquitaine remained hers. While most women in that time would have been sent to a convent in shame, she went and married the powerful young Duke of Normandy, Henry. Eleanor was over ten years his senior, but Henry didn't care. They were similar in their zest for life. And through Henry's mother, it was possible Eleanor could one day be Queen of England. Louis felt betrayed by the wife he still loved when he heard the news she'd wed his enemy. Normandy and Aquitaine combined made a formidable foe.

Eleanor had outwitted Louis, but she learned that Henry was not so malleable. Hot tempered, he was passion personified. She dreamed of a future where they would rule England together. Henry left her in Portiers, pregnant but busy creating the court she'd always wanted. Minstrels and poets helped spread Eleanor's ideals of chivalry.

Henry returned from England, the throne in the bag. Eleanor, the 'cursed' queen, gave him the first of many sons.

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**Eleanor of Aquitaine  
buried at Fontevrault in 1204**



# Lady-in-Waiting to Elizabeth I

by Amanda McCabe

When Elizabeth I became Queen of England in 1558, she inherited from her half-sister Queen Mary a war and religion-torn country on the verge of bankruptcy, a nation “reinforced only in its conviction of feminine unfitness to rule” (quote from Elizabeth I by Anne Somerset). It was an unpromising beginning, but Elizabeth was a brilliant politician, and she understood that what England needed was sparkle and pageantry. A majestic Court, with herself as its shining star and her ladies as her foils, would be her backdrop for a renewed and empowered England. Not all of her ladies were content to be mere background, though—and most of them didn’t care to emulate Elizabeth in her famous virginity.

By 1558, the structure of the Royal Household had become very elaborate, with a definite hierarchy of service. There were the heights—the Ladies of the Bedchamber; the middle—the Ladies of the Privy Chamber; and the lowest (but still pretty good), the Ladies of the Presence Chamber. The latter seem to have had no set duties except to attend on the Queen when she wanted to impress someone, such as a foreign ambassador. The six unmarried Maids of Honor went with the Queen on her morning walks and to church services, clad in the regulation white and silver. When the Queen took the throne, her old nursery maid Blanche Parry was named Chief Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber, while a Mistress Elizabeth Eglington had the unenviable task of shepherding the Maids of Honor.

Obtaining a place at Court was very difficult, with fierce competition whenever a position came open. It was especially tough in Elizabeth’s time, as hers was the only household. (When there was a King and a Queen, and presumably royal children, there were many more households with more attendants required). In return for their services, the ladies received modest stipends. Privy Chamber ladies got 34 pounds a year, while the Maids of Honor received 40 (as they were usually of very high

families). In addition, the Court was responsible for their room and board while they were on duty, and they had a lively social life and a measure of influence they wouldn’t have otherwise.

Not that life was all banquets and strolls in the garden! Elizabeth was a very strict employer. Ladies couldn’t be absent from Court without the Queen’s permission, which was hard to obtain (she was very possessive). She also liked to berate her ladies, “her sarcastic tongue and withering wit...combined to render her an object of terror to her apprehensive attendants” (quote from Elizabeth I by Anne Somerset). She also sometimes threw things at them in a fit of Tudor temper, which couldn’t have been much fun!

The housing was not the most luxurious. The Maids of Honor lived in one dorm-style room, and a palace could only be lived in for a short time before the stench of so many inhabitants became overwhelming. Several of the Queen’s ladies defied her by indulging in love affairs with her courtiers, and some (like her cousins Katherine Gray and Arbella Stuart) paid for it with stints in the Tower.

Despite all those drawbacks, the life of a lady-in-waiting gave upper class women an opportunity they could find nowhere else. They were at the very center of power in Renaissance England at a pivotal moment in history. All the intrigue and glamour also makes it a terrific backdrop for novels!

**Lettice Knollys**  
**Countess of Essex & Leicester**  
**Lady-in-Waiting to**  
**Elizabeth I**  
**Queen of England**



Amanda McCabe’s *The Winter Queen*, a tale of royal plots, intrigue, passion, and Christmas festivities at the Court of Elizabeth I in 1564, introduces you to Rosamund, a lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth I. You can read more about the book and find more historical research information [www.ammandamccabe.com](http://www.ammandamccabe.com).

To  
Go  
A-

# Viking

by Michelle Styles

In 793AD medieval Europe was hit by a bolt from the blue, an event that had as wide an impact as the 9/11 attacks did in our world. The event was the Lindisfarne raid. Simon of Durham wrote: “And they came to the church of Lindisfarne, laid everything waste with grievous plundering, trampled the holy places with polluted feet, dug up altars and seized all the treasures of the holy church.”

The raid on Lindisfarne came to be considered an attack on civilization itself, basically because Lindisfarne was a major center of Christian learning. The Viking Age had begun and no longer did monks sleep soundly in their beds. The Vikings, with their swift ships and fierce warrior culture, were the dominant problem of European nations until 6pm on Saturday, 14 October 1066 when William the Conqueror defeated Harold Godwinsson (the grandson of a Viking) at Hastings and the Normans—their Viking culture changed by 150 years of feudal rule in France—gained control of England. Harold had, three weeks earlier, foiled the last major attempt at foreign expansion from a Viking ruler from Scandinavia by defeating King Haraldur Sigurdsson of Norway at Stamford Bridge in Northumbria.

However, between English place-names (anything ending in by, or streets with gate, for example), various major Irish towns and the founding of Iceland, the legacy of the Viking era remains. The image of the Viking warrior also serves as a unifying symbol for Scandinavian identity, particularly for those who emigrated from the Scandinavian countries to the New World in the 19th and 20th centuries.

But is the common view of blood thirsty raiders wearing horned helmets with little or no culture intent on rape and plunder the correct one?

As one of the last pagan peoples of Europe, the Vikings were held out to be demons and the cause of much misery for the Christian monks who were the chroniclers of the period. After all, the Vikings had the temerity not to respect the church and did regularly sack churches taking the gold

and other objects. This was particularly true of the Viking experience in the West where they did not have a strong infrastructure or things to trade other than slaves. In the East, in Byzantium, the Vikings were far more peaceable traders and eventually formed the core of the Varangian guard—an elite troop of soldiers within the Byzantine army. There are also some contemporary Muslim sources who may, or may not, be accurate chroniclers. For example, Ibn Fadlan wrote an account in the year 921AD of his trade mission to the Rus (today known as Russia) in the Middle Volga region.

As the Vikings mostly wrote in runes and had an oral tradition, there is little primary source documentation except for the Icelandic sagas. Perhaps unique in mythology, the Norse gods knew their fate and which ones would survive the coming destruction of the world and which ones would not. But these sagas were written after the Christianization of the Nordic region and in some ways reflect this late medieval culture rather than the earlier culture.

In the early 19th century, these sagas were rediscovered and inspired authors and artists such as Wagner to create a whole new Viking mythology complete with horned helmets. There is no evidence that Vikings ever fought in horned helmets. All helmets discovered thus far are singularly lacking in horns!

Norse literature with its family feuds and tales of daring-do does have broad appeal. The Laxdaela saga written sometime around 1245AD was aimed at women and features a captive Irish princess, a loyal wife and one of the most interesting characters in medieval literature, Guthrun. Guthrun is a four times married beauty who eventually becomes a nun.

The other main sources have been various archaeological excavations. However the best preserved sources have been the Viking ships found in the Oslo region in the late 19th century. In particular, the Oseburg ship with its wealth of wooden objects. The ship dates from the

*Continued on page 21*



Vikings walking the oars  
The movie, *The Vikings*, with Kirk Douglas has a fantastic scene of the men walking the oars.



## And the Saints go Marching...

by Denise Domning

### Martinmas and Late Autumn Chores

St. Martin of Tours, born about 316 AD, is known for his generosity and charity. As a young Roman soldier he sliced his cloak in half and shared it with a freezing beggar at the gates of Amiens. That night Jesus appeared to him wearing the missing half of his cloak. Although he remained a soldier for years, he ends his life as a religious hermit. After being granted sainthood, he becomes the patron saint of beggars, geese, horses, hotel and inn keepers, as well as alcoholics, both recovering and current.

Martinmas, or the mass of St. Martin, occurs on November 11 which just so happens to be an ancient Roman feast day celebrating Bacchus.

In medieval times, and surely in Roman days as well, November was a month of slaughter, as food, meat in this case, was processed and preserved against the coming winter. Hogs—lean, coarse-haired creatures—that had been fattening as best they could on fallen acorns since October were now slaughtered. In towns, that would mean driving them to the Shambles, the area where the butchers kept their shops. In villages, a shed sufficed as long as it was outfitted with enough bowls and barrels to catch the bits and pieces. Nothing went to waste. Blood became blood pudding, bones became tools, the intestines because sausage casing. Oh, and don't forget the pig's bladder for the all-important boy's toy: a ball.

For much of the Middle Ages November was also the month for planting beans and garlic, both staples that no peasant or lord could do without. Books of husbandry suggested getting those all important seeds

and starts before St. Edmund's Day, November 20th.

I leave you with this food for thought: Northern Europeans ate so much garlic that when Crusaders passed through Constantinople the Turkish natives held their noses, complaining of the prevalent stench!



**St Martins of Tours cutting his coat in half and sharing it with a freezing beggar.**

*Denise Domning's first medieval romance, Winter's Heat, received the Romantic Times award for Best First Historical Novel in 1994. Spring's Fury, Autumn's Flame, A Love for All Seasons were respectively nominated by Romantic Times for Best Medieval Novel in 1995, 1996 and 1997. Her first Elizabethan novel, Lady in Waiting, was recommended by Publisher's Weekly as well written and researched, with an accurate portrayal of Elizabeth I. Denise is currently co-authoring an autobiography with Monica Sarli about her life entitled No Regrets.*



# Richard the Lionheart

## King of England

1189 ~ 1199

by Linda Abel

**K**eeper of the Realm yet rarely at home.

Richard Plantagenet became Richard I of England in 1189. England saw him for only seven months of his 10-year reign yet Richard managed to capture their hearts and their patronage even though England's people paid dearly for what he saw as his right and their privilege.

By the Grace of God, King of the English, Duke of the Normandy, Gascony and Aquitaine, Count of Anjou and Nantes, Lord of Ireland and Cyprus and Overlord of Brittany... these are but a few of the titles Richard held. Even before his accession to the throne he was known as Richard the Lionheart or Cœur de Lion in recognition of his great military skills. One might think that being King of England would mean the most to him but from all indication, it didn't. He was known to have said that England was "cold and always raining" and during his fund raising for his crusades, he was heard to declare "I would have sold London if I could find a buyer!". Like most of the nobility of England, Richard didn't speak English and saw no reason to learn it.

Richard was the third son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. Having two older brothers left little room for him to become king but destiny had other plans and once he was next in line to the throne, he refused to forgo the position. His father held the throne up for grabs between Richard and his two younger brothers. Heated quarrels and deathly battles were fought in the name of accession but upon Henry's death, Richard wore the crown. One of his first acts as king was to send William Marshal to free his lady mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine from the imprisonment she had endured for sixteen years at the hands of her husband Henry, and make her his regent. At age 52 Eleanor was healthier and more knowledgeable about ruling a country than most men of her time.

A tall man for his times at six feet four inches, Richard was athletic, well educated and wrote music. He had red hair, gray eyes and a love for fine clothes. 1191 saw him married to Berengaria of Navarre who was eleven years his elder. This was a match purely for political gain and Berengaria became his much neglected wife. There was no issue from the marriage.

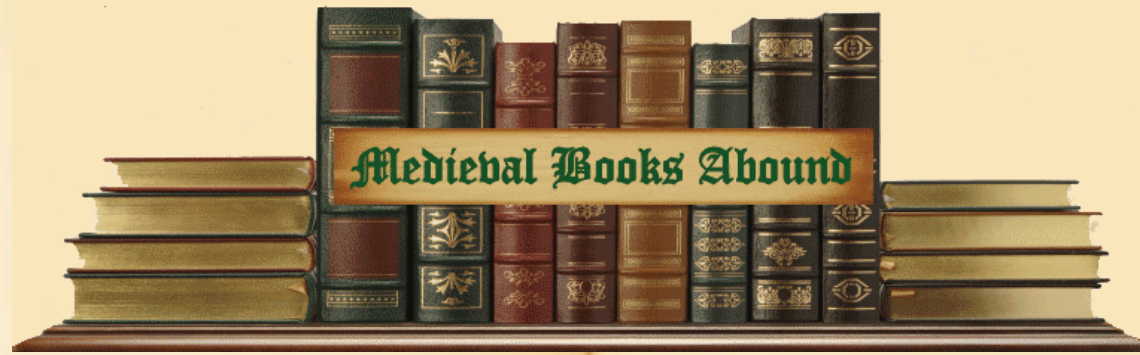
In 1192 Richard and Saladin arrived at an agreement and a three year truce was observed to allow Christians access to and presence in Jerusalem. On his way back to England he was captured and held for ransom by Leopold V, Duke of Austria. Early in 1193, the Duke handed Richard over to Henry VI, Holy Roman Emperor. Eleanor traveled to Germany to personally negotiate his ransom. Once again the people and churches of England were taxed heavily in order to secure Richard's ransom of 150,000 marks (3-plus times the annual income for the English crown at that time). At the same time John, Richard's younger brother and King Philip of France offered 80,000 marks for Emperor Henry to hold Richard prisoner until Michaelmas 1194. This offer was refused and on 4 February 1194 Richard was released where upon Philip sent a message to John saying "Look to yourself, the devil is loose."

Richard and his knights journeyed to Chalus in spring 1199 to claim a horde of Roman treasure that was discovered by a peasant when ploughing his field. While directing a siege of the castle on the 26th of March, a crossbow was fired by an archer from the battlements hitting Richard in his left shoulder. In an attempt to remove the bolt, the shaft broke leaving the iron head in Richard's flesh. An unskilled surgeon succeeded in removing the arrow head but the wound had been compromised and gangrene set in. Upon the fall of the castle Richard had the archer brought to him. Knowing that death was a surety, Richard declared to the archer "Live on, and by my bounty behold the light of day." He was even given a hundred



**Richard the Lionheart**  
**King of England**

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## November / December 2009 Releases

### Historical Romances

*A Storm of Passion* by Terri Brisbin  
Medieval Scotland  
(Brava ♦ 12/09)

*Castles in the Air* by Christina Dodd  
1166 England  
(Avon ♦ 11/09) reissue

*Taming the Beast* by Heather Grothaus  
1103 England  
(Zebra ♦ 11/09)

*Beauty's Curse* by Traci E. Hall  
1193 England  
(Medallion Press ♦ 11/09)

*Knight of Pleasure* by Margaret Mallory  
1400's England & France  
(Forever ♦ 12/09)

*The Winter Queen* by Amanda McCabe  
Elizabethan England  
(Harlequin ♦ 11/09)

*Silver Silence* by Joy Nash  
Dark Ages Britain  
(Love Spell ♦ 11/09)

*The Dragon and The Rose* by Gini Rifkin  
1100 England  
(Wild Rose ♦ 11/09)

*Traveling Light* by Diana Rubino  
1485 England & present day  
(Brava ♦ 12/09) Time Travel

*Desiring the Highlander* by Michele Sinclair  
1300's Scottish Borders  
(Zebra ♦ 12/09)

*The Viking's Captive Princess* by Michelle Styles  
796 Scandinavia  
(Harlequin ♦ 12/09)

*Runaway Lady, Conquering Lord*  
by Carol Townend  
11th century Brittany  
(Harlequin ♦ 11/09)

### Historical Fiction

*Sand Daughter* by Sarah Bryant  
1100 Middle East  
(Berkley ♦ 11/09)

*The Queen's Mistake* by Diane Haegar  
1540 England  
(NAL♦ 11/09)

*The King's Daughter* by Sandra Worth  
1540 England  
(Penguin ♦ 12/2008)

*Winner in the historical fiction category of the National Best Books of 2009 Award*

### Medieval Mysteries

*Murder for Christ's Mass* by Maureen Ash  
1100's England  
(Penguin ♦ 12/09)

*The Red Velvet Turnshoe* by Cassandra Clark  
1384 England & Rome  
(Minotaur ♦ 12/09)

*The Templar Magician* by Paul Doherty  
1152 England  
(Headline Book Publ ♦ 11/09)

*A Play of Treachery* by Margaret Frazer  
1400's England & France  
(Penguin ♦ 12/09)

In love, they seemed unstoppable, and by 1154, she once again wore a crown.

She and Henry brought order to a war torn country. Eleanor traveled at Henry's side, having found her match in the energy department. At ease on horseback, she also liked the finer things, importing rich red wines and silk. She ruled justly in Henry's absence, and could move an entire castle within hours at his call. Despite all the hardships of being a king and queen in medieval times, Eleanor stood by her man for fourteen years – until he fell out of love with her, and in love with another. Eleanor was truly hurt by his defection. She left England for her beloved Aquitaine, determined to prove she didn't need a husband. As Duchess, she chose to rule with her son, Richard, instead of Henry. Always her favorite, Richard was the embodiment of the perfect knight. With her eldest daughter, Countess Marie, she taught the youth about courtly love – a theme so popular it traveled through the continent. She also supported her sons' rebellion against their father, King Henry. With her help, the ungrateful man had conquered lands, but he shared nothing with his children. Gave no respect to her. Eleanor went to her ex, King Louis, asking for his support. Of course, he gave it. He owed Henry a mortal blow.

Henry refused to believe his sons would rebel and he listened to his advisors, who laid all the blame at Eleanor's feet. Angry with his wife, Henry set a trap and captured an escaping, mail-clad Eleanor. He took her as a prisoner back to England. She was confined for the next fifteen years, until his death. Released at the age of sixty-seven, Eleanor wasn't ready to put up her toes and sing Alleluia. She retained her political acumen, and easily accepted the mantle of power in Richard's stead, until he could be crowned king. She ensured that he was popular by performing acts of justice in his name – Eleanor knew how to rule. When Richard left England for crusade, Eleanor went in search of a bride for the unmarried king. She was almost seventy when she crossed the Alps in winter to bring his fiancé, Berengaria of Navarre, to Sicily. She stayed four days and returned home. It was Eleanor who raised the money to pay Richard's ransom, and it was Eleanor who foiled John's plot to take the throne. The woman finally got a chance to rest after she and Richard shared a coronation, cementing his rule in England. She retired – as a guest – at the Abbey of Fontevrault. A few

years later she traveled over a hundred miles to reach her favorite son's side. He died in her arms, naming John as heir to England. At seventy-seven, Eleanor had a king to make. Despite her guidance, John lost Normandy and Anjou to the French.

Eleanor died at the age of eighty-two, a queen of all queens.

*Traci Hall is currently working on a series about Eleanor and her female companions on crusade. There isn't a lot written about Eleanor specifically—we don't know what color hair or eyes she had, we just know that she was considered a great beauty. Depending on who is telling the story, she is a temptress or as pious as a nun. One thing stays true, Eleanor is a woman of great intrigue, making her a perfect romantic heroine! Eleanor is featured in Beauty's Curse Traci's 11/09 historical romance. Please visit Traci at [www.traciehall.com](http://www.traciehall.com).*

Eleanor of Aquitaine may be more readily known for her vast political influence over France and England during the High Middle Ages, her role in the Second Crusade, her torrid marriage to Henry II, and the indelible mark she left on the future of England's monarchy, most notably via her son John I. However, the breadth of her patronage of both literature and music in France, and later, England, had a profound and lasting effect that shaped the musical history of the entire continent for centuries.

*Michael Eglin holds degrees in piano and composition from the State University of New York-Fredonia School of Music and from the University of California at Santa Barbara. In 2008 he was awarded a PhD in Composition. He has studied with such composers as Donald Bohlen, Joel Feigin, and Bill Kraft, and Early music with Alejandro Planchart. Active as a conductor, organist, singer and composer. Eglin presently teaches at Santa Barbara City College, serves as Director of Music and Organist at El Montecito Presbyterian Church and is the former Artistic Director of the men's vocal octet, Adelfos Ensemble. He resides in Santa Barbara with his wife Sarah and three children. His choral works are published through Santa Barbara Music Publishing. He is currently the Composer in Residence and Assistant Director for the Santa Barbara Quire of Voyces. Please visit Michael at [www.michaeleglin.com](http://www.michaeleglin.com).*

early Viking period and thus we know a great deal more about this period than the later periods where most of the evidence is from the trading settlements.

From all the evidence, it is possible to determine that the Vikings were exceptionally skilled at boat building and seamanship. They used thin pieces of iolite to create a sun compass and were therefore able to sail across oceans. Much of the raiding and expansion into foreign countries was a result of population pressure and consolidation of power in their home land. Later in the period, the Vikings suffered from poor harvests and were forced to take to their boats as much of the wealth was dependent on foreign adventuring. One result of the independent thinking is that the Scandinavian countries boast some of the oldest parliaments. The Althing—the national parliament of Iceland—dates from around 930AD.

The typical image of the Viking women is they stayed at home to look after the farm while their husbands, sons or brothers went out on expeditions to trade or raid, in other words, viking. There is a certain truth to this view as there is very little evidence that women did go on raids, despite several sagas being written about warrior women. However, women's graves have been found in most Viking settlements and the Oseburg ship burial contained two female skeletons. Mostly women were involved in the necessary women's work of cooking and clothing which included making the cloth for the sails. Women also appear on the sidelines of sagas as they cheer men on or provide a reason for men to go to war or out raiding. Viking women could inherit wealth through their children. However, they could also divorce quite easily. Indeed, several of the sagas turn on the fact that women divorced their husbands.

If this article has piqued your interest in the Viking period, Magnus Magnusson's *The Vikings* provides a good overview of the period. If you are interested in Viking women try Judith Jesch's *Women in the Viking Age*. The Prose and Poetic Edda as well as the other Icelandic sagas such as *The Laxdaela* have strongly influenced authors such as Tolkien and Wagner.

*Continued on page 22*

*Michelle Styles' latest historical romance about the early Viking period, The Viking's Captive Princess is a 12/09 release from Harlequin Historical. Michelle has written ten other books for Harlequin Historical, including two other Viking set romances: Taken by the Viking and Viking Warrior, Unwilling Wife. She is currently working on an early Victorian romance for Harlequin Historical. Please visit Michelle at [www.michellestyles.co.uk](http://www.michellestyles.co.uk)*

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**Continued from page 14, Richard the Lionheart, King of England**

shillings. Richard's last chivalrous act proved fruitless as the archer was flayed alive and hanged.

On the 6th of April 1199, Richard the Lionheart died in the arms of his Lady mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Many voiced his death as "the Lion by the Ant was slain." His remains were divided with his brain being buried at Charroux Abbey in Poitou, his heart buried at Rouen in Normandy and the rest of his body at Fontevrault Abbey in Anjou at the feet of his father.

The cry went out "The King is dead, long live King John" and England got what they had fought so hard to prevent, a land ruled by a tyrant.

*Linda Abel is the publisher, editor and your faithful Scribe of The Medieval Chronicle. She is also co-published in mystery and self published in non-fiction with books on the medieval period. She would love hearing from you. Please contact her at [Scribe@TheMedievalChronicle.com](mailto:Scribe@TheMedievalChronicle.com).*