

MAKERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE

ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE

Heroine of the Middle Ages



RACHEL KOESTLER-GRACK

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Heroine of the Middle Ages

Chaucer

Celebrated Poet and Author

Dante

Poet, Author, and Proud Florentine

Eleanor of Aquitaine

Heroine of the Middle Ages

Galileo

Renaissance Scientist and Astronomer

Machiavelli

Renaissance Political Analyst and Author

The Medicis

A Ruling Dynasty

Michelangelo

Painter, Sculptor, and Architect

Thomas More and His Struggles of Conscience

Queen Elizabeth and England's Golden Age

Leonardo da Vinci

Artist, Inventor, and Renaissance Man

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Rachel A. Koestler-Grack

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P h i l a d e l p h i a

COVER: Eleanor of Aquitaine. Tombs of the Plantagenet Kings.
Thirteenth-century abbey, Fontevrault, France.

CHELSEA HOUSE PUBLISHERS

VP, NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT Sally Cheney
DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION Kim Shinnars
CREATIVE MANAGER Takeshi Takahashi
MANUFACTURING MANAGER Diann Grasse

Staff for *Eleanor of Aquitaine*

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Lee Marcott
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Carla Greenberg
PRODUCTION EDITOR Noelle Nardone
COVER AND INTERIOR DESIGNER Keith Trego
LAYOUT 21st Century Publishing and Communications, Inc.

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a subsidiary of Hights Cross Communications.
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www.chelseahouse.com

First Printing

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Koestler-Grack, Rachel A., 1973–

Eleanor of Aquitaine: heroine of the Middle Ages/Rachel Koestler-Grack.
p. cm.—(Makers of the Middle Ages and Renaissance)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7910-8633-X

1. Eleanor, of Aquitaine, Queen, consort of Henry II, King of England, 1122?–1204—Juvenile literature. 2. Queens—Great Britain—Biography—Juvenile literature. 3. Queens—France—Biography—Juvenile literature. 4. Great Britain—History—Henry II, 1154–1189—Biography—Juvenile literature. 5. France—History—Louis VII, 1137–1180—Biography—Juvenile literature. 6. Middle Ages—Juvenile literature. I. title. II. Series.

DA209.E6K64 2005

942.03'1'092—dc22

2005007489

All links and web addresses were checked and verified to be correct at the time of publication. Because of the dynamic nature of the web, some addresses and links may have changed since publication and may no longer be valid.

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A Wedding That Changed the World



On May 18, 1152, Eleanor of Aquitaine stood at the altar in a cold, stone cathedral in the city of Poitiers, in what is now France. The young man facing her at the wedding altar was Duke Henry of Normandy, Count of Anjou, the most promising young ruler in the land. The couple had a lot in common.

An unquenchable desire for power, seemingly limitless energy, and a strong will were just a few of their shared attributes. Few would have guessed that the wedding ceremony about to take place would change all of Europe.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was considered one of the most beautiful women of her century, but she possessed much more than long, auburn hair and a lovely face. Her intelligence, wit, and sophistication were unmatched by other women of her time. She cared little about what society expected of her and she carried herself with confidence and authority. Her free spirit and strong character—unusual traits for a woman of that time—made many people whisper about her when she walked by. Her previous marriage to King Louis VII of France had recently been annulled, ended according to the rules of the Catholic Church, but scandals and rumors about her marriage to the French king still seemed to follow her.

Now, Duke Henry of Normandy was about to marry Eleanor of Aquitaine, one of the greatest heiresses of the Middle Ages. Eleanor was Duchess of Aquitaine and Countess of Poitou, an enormous



Eleanor of Aquitaine was Duchess of Aquitaine and Countess of Poitou. Her beauty, intelligence, wit, and sophistication were unmatched by other women of her time.

Eleanor of Aquitaine



Eleanor of Aquitaine was more than just a beautiful woman. Her wit and sophistication—traits uncommon to women of her time—helped her to outsmart many opponents throughout her lifetime.

area of the richest land in Europe. Duke Henry was already Count of Anjou and Duke of Normandy, and many believed he would soon rule the kingdom