COURSE GUIDEBOOK

Medieval Heroines in History and Legend

Part II

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Medieval Heroines in History and Legend, Part II
Professor Bonnie Wheeler

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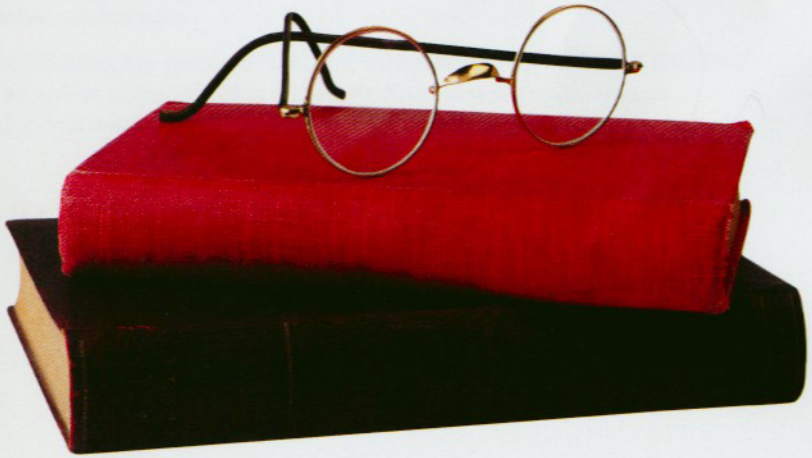
COURSE GUIDEBOOK

THE Great Courses℠

Medieval Heroines in History and Legend

Professor Bonnie Wheeler
Southern Methodist University

Part II



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Lecture Thirteen

Eleanor, Duchess of Aquitaine, Queen of France

Scope: The thirteen-year-old Eleanor became a great heiress in her own right on the death of her father. King Louis (1077–1137) moved swiftly to secure her marriage to his son and heir, the seventeen-year-old Louis—who had been crowned in 1131 at Reims—in late July of 1137. He sent his highest royal advisor, Abbot Suger of St.-Denis, to Bordeaux to secure the marriage, and he made sure that the ceremony and oaths emphasized the subordination of Eleanor's Aquitaine to the king of France. Only days later, Louis VI unexpectedly died, and another ceremony, held at Poitiers, now confirmed Eleanor and Louis VII (1120–1180; r 1137–1180) as the new king and queen of France. They were married for almost fifteen years. Chroniclers said that Louis loved Eleanor, but it was later rumored that she resented him. The marriage seemed privately and politically troubled from its early days.

Outline

I. Eleanor, it is now thought, was a mere thirteen when she inherited Aquitaine. (This new information comes to us thanks to Prof. Andrew Lewis, who is publishing these findings in a book I have just co-edited entitled *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* and who argues that Eleanor was born in 1124, not 1122 as previously presumed.) Eleanor's background and the few facts that are known of her childhood provide perspective for understanding her interests and aims as an adult.

A. She was the first daughter and second child of William X of Aquitaine and his first wife, Anor (or Ænor) of Châtellerault.

B. She was the granddaughter of William IX of Aquitaine, the mocking, cynical, duke-poet and crusader, and womanizer.

C. As a child, Eleanor must have known her grandfather, though he died when she was still very young. She may not have remembered him, but she surely heard talk of him and his exploits, and she, her parents, and her elder brother William were under his authority at the beginning of her life.

D. William X, Eleanor's father, was less flamboyant than his own father and was known chiefly for his enormous appetite. As this suggests, he was no ascetic; he had two bastard sons and, after the death of his first wife in 1130, married again. Nonetheless, he was remembered not for his pursuit of women but rather as a faithful son of the church, cowed and humbled by Bernard of Clairvaux in 1125. On April 9, 1137, Good Friday, he died on pilgrimage to Santiago of Compostella, where he was buried before the church's main altar.

E. Eleanor and her sister Alice Petronilla were left orphans and alone; their elder brother had died in the same year as their mother in 1130.

F. Before departing for Spain, however, their father had provided his daughters and his lands with a powerful guardian, Louis VI, king of France (c. 1077–1137, r. 1108–1137).

1. Louis VI shrewdly decided that his son, namesake, and heir (who had been crowned in 1131 at Reims) should marry Eleanor.
2. From this decision unfolded the chain of events that led, proximately, to the subordination of Aquitaine to France and England and, finally, to the long wars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that resulted in 1453 in the fall of Bordeaux and the territory's definitive incorporation into the kingdom of France. In the short run, the move was advantageous to both Eleanor and Louis.

II. We know nothing with certainty of Eleanor's youth, but we can presume it to have been led in a colorful court—full of visitors from many cultures, abundant with elegant varieties of food and clothing, sounded with music and amusing speech—given the character of her family.

A. We also don't know whether or how she was educated.

B. But we do know that her father explicitly allocated the Aquitaine for her and her heirs as a separate territory not to be annexed into one entity with France.

C. Leaving his father ill in Paris, the young Louis, then seventeen, proceeded southward with Abbot Suger of St.-Denis and a host of other "heroes." In late July, he and Eleanor were married at Bordeaux.

D. With Louis, Eleanor was crowned with the royal diadem in a ceremony in which a novel coronation *ordo* emphasized the subordination of Aquitaine and Burgundy to the king of France.

E. On August 1, Louis VI died. On August 8, another ceremony was held at Poitiers, where a second coronation rite was performed. Orderic Vitalis reports that by this coronation, "Louis obtained the kingdom of the Franks and the duchy of Aquitaine, which none of his ancestors had held."

F. The marriage was a great coup for the French Capetian dynasty.

1. The marriage reemphasized Eleanor's status as a lady rather than an independent lord—that is, in the medieval scheme of gender-power relations, she was relegated to the position of lady in relation to her lordly husband.
2. But Eleanor remained active as queen and duchess of the Aquitaine along with Louis, though he did not prove very successful with her people.
3. Was the marriage appealing to Eleanor? We know nothing of her original response to Louis.

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Medieval Heroines in History and Legend
Part II

Medieval Heroines in History and Legend

Scope:

This course looks at some varieties of the heroic life as it was lived by four actual medieval women. Each of these women had grand ambitions, profound intelligence, and dramatic achievements, and each of these women still has her measure of fame and infamy. Interestingly, three of our four subjects' lives overlapped in time in the twelfth century. The twelfth-century German abbess Hildegard of Bingen lived the dramatic life of a prophet who brought to her voluminous writings and preaching a rare ecological sense of life's wholeness; in these lectures, we discuss Hildegard as the last flowering of antique learning. Her personal courage, as a passionate speaker for clerical and imperial reform, give her special interest in our own day. Heloise is another twelfth-century abbess, but she is better known to us as the consummate Parisian, a spectacular lover who preferred (as she said) to be Abelard's mistress than his wife. Her letters passionately overflow with the new knowledge of her day, a mode of philosophic thought that she and Abelard were together inventing. Heloise is a harbinger of Europe's new day. The third twelfth-century figure is Eleanor of Aquitaine, duchess, twice queen, and mother of at least ten children. She has captivated all later ages, though we discuss ways in which she remains a strangely elusive epic figure. Finally, we consider the girl-hero Joan of Arc, a fifteenth-century peasant who rose to lead her king's soldiers to a daring victory over their enemies. Each of these women is larger than life, powerfully projecting the past into the future.

4. Did she love Louis in these early days? She was barely beyond childhood, and the chroniclers don't record her initial responses to the new king. It was said later that she found him monk-like.
5. He, however, was reputed to have adored her. Was the question of love even relevant? For this society, probably not.

III. If we cannot judge much about Eleanor's affection for Louis, we can see his failures to pursue successful ducal policies on her behalf.

A. Louis failed in his attempts to secure Eleanor's claim to Toulouse. (Eleanor's claim was through her grandmother Philippa, whose parents were Count William of Toulouse and Emma of Mortain).

B. Louis also failed to secure a fast, peaceful resolution in his war with Champagne.

1. The war was provoked by the scandalous marriage of Eleanor's sister Petronilla to Count Raoul of Vermandois, who had deserted his wife.
2. Eleanor backed a faction at court that arranged a dubious annulment for Raoul and got some pliable members of the clergy to marry Raoul and Petronilla, who thus became Countess of Vermandois.
3. Leaders of Church reform, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, were outraged at what they saw as a cynically corrupt violation of canon law.
4. The mighty family of Raoul's discarded wife was outraged and went to war to avenge her (and their) honor.
5. In 1142, Louis's forces in Champagne committed several unspeakable atrocities, including torching the village of Vitry.
6. It was only in 1144, when all France came to see the new gothic wonder of Abbot Suger's new chevet at St.-Denis, that Louis made a firm peace with the Church and the Count of Champagne.

IV. In 1145, Eleanor's first child, her daughter Marie, was born.

A. Was that enough to bring contentment or even peace to the young couple?

B. We already see a change in attitude toward inheritance—from south to north, from Occitania to France. Louis needed a male heir to secure his throne. Eleanor's proof of fecundity now needed to be repeated, this time by the provision of a male heir.

V. For Eleanor, was it better to be queen of France by virtue of marriage than duchess of Aquitaine in her own right? Not until Elizabeth I of England several centuries later would another European woman face the question of marriage with so much riding on the answer.

Essential Reading:

Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "Eleanor of Aquitaine Reconsidered: The Woman and Her Seasons," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds. (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

Supplementary Reading:

Amy Kelly, *Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1950).

Marion Meade, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Biography* (New York: Dutton, 1977).

D. D. R. Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1993).

Alison Weir, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Life* (New York: Ballantine, 2000).

Questions to Consider:

1. Was Eleanor merely a pawn in a Capetian plan for territorial expansionism?
2. Was there anything except duty that bound Eleanor and Louis together?

Lecture Fourteen

Eleanor and the Politics of Estrangement

Scope: Louis and Eleanor had both heard Bernard preach the Second Crusade at Vézelay in 1146, and by June of 1147, the royal cavalcade fulfilled its pledge and set out for the East. It was a remarkable trip for the young queen, although her contemporaries did not find it entirely unsuitable. Eleanor and Louis did not become closer as they traveled to and from the Holy Land. On their return from the crusade, Eleanor was finally determined to be free of the French king. She found her mechanism in the regulations of consanguinity, arguing that she was too closely related to the king to be his legitimate wife and that this was an insurmountable impediment to the marriage. The most distinguished clergy-advisors of their time made many efforts to save the marriage, and for a time, they prevailed. Eleanor even produced a second child, again a daughter, Alix, in 1150. But after the death of Abbot Suger in 1151, Louis himself pushed for an annulment, which was officially granted on March 21, 1152.

Outline

I. Eleanor joined Louis on crusade to the Holy Land in 1147.

- **A.** Louis and Eleanor had both heard Bernard preach this crusade, traditionally called the Second Crusade, at Vézelay in 1146, and by June of 1147, the royal cavalcade set out for the East.
- **B.** It was not unexpected for a queen to go on crusade, and the experience was pivotal in Eleanor's life. It demonstrates to us one fact known well to her contemporaries: She was physically hearty and did not lack courage. Like her grandfather, she exploited opportunities for travel.
- **C.** Besides, she may well have had some strong individual motives for going on this great voyage of penance: All crusades and many unarmed pilgrimages were, to some extent, penitential exercises.
- **D.** She may have felt guilt, for example, for supporting her sister Petronilla's affair with Raoul of Vermandois, which led to the disastrous incineration of the people of Vitry.

II. Women were always in the crusades and (it seems) in substantial number, but most histories have erased all but the very great.

- **A.** Urban II's general call for crusade in November 1095 was quickly hedged by hesitations and limitations, including those on crusading women; however, by the thirteenth century, it had become quite standard for women of standing to "take the cross." What happened?

- **B.** One person who happened was Eleanor of Aquitaine, who, with a large force of her own vassals, went on crusade (as did other noble women before and after). The First Crusade looked like a "once-only" event that had to be radically revived in the 1140s, but the basic elements of the Second Crusade remained the normative elements of crusades until 1274.
- **C.** What roles were there for women in this consciously reconstructed enterprise? One change made by the revivers was tacitly to allow women to participate.
  1. Historians of the crusades recognize the important roles in early crusades played by women who formally allowed and even encouraged their husbands to go on crusade.
  2. In all crusades, women provided crucial economic support.
  3. Women were quite active, not just in the origins and funding of crusades, but also in field operations.
- **D.** Crusading came to play a normative role for medieval queens, as well as for certain noble households.
  1. Eleanor maintained a visible political and diplomatic presence and, when on crusade, continued to inhabit the range of roles that she played at home, most notably that of loyal consort.
  2. One change in the situation of this married couple's consorting was that they made an oath to abstain from sexual contact as long as they were on that pilgrimage. The official historian of the French army on this crusade tells us that a monk of St.-Denis was posted at the flap of the king's tent to make sure that the king and queen kept that vow.
  3. This would have been a standard vow for married couples going together on an unarmed pilgrimage.
  4. We may well wonder what further stresses this requirement would have put on anyone's marriage and particularly that of Eleanor. One can easily imagine the monastic Louis acceding to this customary requirement, but Eleanor?
- **E.** What was a crusade for women who took the cross? How can we define and limit the term?
  1. Were many women who vowed crusade as naïve as little Teresa of Avila, who left home at six years old, hand-in-hand with her brother, seeking martyrdom at the hands of the Moors? Martyrdom was hard to find in her historical moment just outside the walls of sixteenth-century Avila, but it was certainly possible earlier in parts of Outremer.
  2. Were some earlier women crusaders likewise seeking martyrdom and certain redemption?
  3. Was crusade for them an extension of a rigorously traditional pilgrimage, which would have meant that they went unarmed? The

so-called Children's Crusade of the thirteenth century, which included girls, eschewed arms, counting on the sincerity of the participants' prayers to convert the enemy. (Those who actually got to the Holy Land were sold as slaves, which may have been the worst form of protracted martyrdom.)

4. Were women crusaders bearing their strong faith as their arms? In what circumstances did some of them actually fight?

F. Furthermore, a crusade is not just an attempt at conquest, but often a form of emigration, often with colonial motivation.

1. From the time that Urban preached about the "land of milk and honey," crusaders were not merely expected to defeat the enemy and win the Holy Land but to settle, to form (in Benjamin Kedar's words) "fragment societies," if not colonies. Unlike pilgrims, crusaders didn't necessarily intend to return home even if they didn't swarm and stay in sufficient numbers.
2. Even when women merely accompanied their husbands, it must often have been with the expectation that they were moving toward a new home and new life. It became a convention for royal and noble women to go on crusade and return home, but we also need to study more carefully the uncounted numbers of women went to live in the Holy Land.
3. Historians are now addressing some larger questions of definition (what is a crusade?) and of women's diverse roles in enabling (or resisting) crusade. This is exciting work that suggests potential new horizons even for military histories of the Middle Ages. When it is done, this work will allow us to imagine women outside the usual contexts of family and domesticity and to understand that medieval women —with Eleanor as an exemplar—were agents of (sometimes radical) change.

III. Though Eleanor was later falsely rumored to have taken many lovers, it seems credible to believe that, in some ways, she was enraptured not only with the glamour of Antioch but also with its lord, her young uncle Raymond.

A. She allied herself politically with Raymond against Louis, and in the end, she had to be forced to leave Antioch in Louis's company.

B. By the time the royal couple arrived home, Raymond was dead and his head had been brandished over the city gate of Baghdad.

IV. After the crusade failed disastrously, and after a year-long visit to Jerusalem and long voyage home, Eleanor and Louis visited the pope on their return in 1149.

A. Pope Eugenius III consulted with them about their marital problems. Privacy about such matters was not a privilege allocated to noble couples.

B. Like Abbot Suger, the Pope was adamantly opposed to their divorce.

C. Within the year, Eleanor had another child, Alix.

D. Around this time, Geoffrey of Anjou and his son Henry (this family was later known as the Plantagenets) appealed to Louis for help in their dynastic struggle against Stephen of Blois for the English throne and the duchy of Normandy. (This Stephen was the son of the Stephen of Blois who deserted from the First Crusade and of William the Conqueror's daughter Adela.) The French king's advisor Abbot Suger supported this move.

E. Eleanor met Geoffrey and Henry at this time, and it may be that the queen, now in her mid-twenties, made her own secret arrangements for the future with either the father or the son.

F. After the death in 1151 of Abbot Suger, who had championed the royal marriage, there was a rising tide of sentiment in favor of annulment.

G. Once the powerful Bernard of Clairvaux—enemy of Abelard, friend of Heloise and Hildegard—expressed his doubts about the legality of the marriage of these third cousins once removed, Louis decided to forge ahead and push for an annulment, which was finally granted on March 21, 1152.

1. What were the grounds for divorce—or annulment, as it is usually called?
2. As historian Constance Bouchard argues, each of them later married partners to whom they were equally or more closely related; clearly, consanguinity was not the primary consideration in the dissolution of Louis and Eleanor's marriage.
3. Our most recent interpretations, then, suggest that Louis wanted this annulment at least as much as Eleanor did, and we know that only Louis, as king, could successfully bring the matter forward. It seems that Louis wanted a Capetian son even more than he wanted the rich but troublesome Aquitaine and its duchess.
4. This loophole in Church regulation was later closed so that it became more difficult both for close cousins to marry and for a (supposedly) indissoluble union to be erased.
5. Because the closeness of blood was treated as if it were a surprise to all and all parties were, thus, guiltless, the legitimacy of the royal daughters was intact, and the decree gave Louis their custody. Eleanor evidently saw little of them after this: Medieval motherhood, especially royal motherhood, may have had different rhythms than does contemporary mothering, and she never seemed to highlight these daughters.
6. Fifteen years of marriage now ended. Eleanor and Louis never saw each other again.

V. Now the brilliance of Eleanor's father's stratagems became apparent.

A. The subordination of Aquitaine was not the same thing as its permanent annexation, as the divorce settlement proved. Eleanor once more became Lord of Aquitaine, although like her father before her, she acknowledged Louis as her overlord.

B. Louis was not anxious to return to Eleanor full control of her lands. Some (such as historian E. A. R. Brown) attribute this to personal jealousy, as well as a desire to protect his daughters' interests.

C. Did Louis think their daughters would be Eleanor's only offspring and that they would be the heirs to the Aquitaine?

D. As Eleanor returned swiftly to Poitiers and her own territories, had she already decided to marry again?

Essential Reading:

Elizabeth A. R Brown, "Eleanor of Aquitaine Reconsidered: The Woman and Her Seasons," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds. (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

Constance Brittain Bouchard, "Eleanor's Divorce from Louis VII: The Uses of Consanguinity," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds. (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (Yale University Press, repr. 1990).

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D. D. R. Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1993).

Alison Weir, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Life* (New York: Ballantine, 2000).

Questions to Consider:

1. Was Eleanor's crusade more an act of pilgrimage? War? "Travel and leisure"?
2. Was Eleanor unfaithful to Louis? Was she predisposed to infidelity as a family habit?

Lecture Fifteen

Eleanor, Duchess of Aquitaine, Queen of England

Scope: We can hardly help being enraptured by the next phase of Eleanor's dramatic life. It reads like the most romantic of swashbuckling fictions. Twice on her way home to Aquitaine, Eleanor was almost kidnapped by young nobles apparently intent on having her and gaining her lands. In marriage, then, lay her greatest safety. On May 18, 1152—not quite two months after her annulment—Eleanor married the Angevin Henry (also known as Henry Plantagenet), who was about a decade her junior. The bond between them appears to have been authentically passionate, based on a sympathy of physical and political desires. They wanted each other, a kingdom to rule, and a brood to raise. With her backing and resources, her new husband soon claimed the English throne as Henry II. Together, they ruled and had at least eight children, seven of whom lived into adulthood.

Outline

I. After Eleanor and Louis were divorced on March 21, 1152, Eleanor departed for Poitiers at once, leaving her husband of fifteen years and her two young daughters.

A. Eleanor demanded the return of her duchy, but Louis VII balked. Not until August 1154 did he cease entitling himself duke of Aquitaine and using the counterseal he had employed since his marriage to Eleanor.

B. Louis's reluctance to restore Eleanor's lands to her cannot be explained solely by his desire to guard the interests of their daughters. His jealousy must have been piqued by Eleanor's adventures after she left him.

1. First, Thibaud of Blois (who would later marry Alice, the younger daughter of Eleanor and Louis), then Geoffrey of Anjou (Henry's younger brother and their father's namesake) attempted to waylay Eleanor as she journeyed to Aquitaine, and each was apparently intent on marrying her.
2. Then, on May 18, 1152, within two months of the divorce, Eleanor married Henry, who had become count of Anjou on his father's death the preceding September.

C. Louis continued to call himself duke of Aquitaine and summoned Henry to his court, confiscated his lands when he failed to appear, and captured two of his most important Norman castles.

D. For his part, Henry moved cautiously, refraining from assuming the title of duke of Aquitaine until early 1153.

E. As to Eleanor, Henry does not seem to have delayed in asserting his authority over her. From the beginning, Henry controlled her retinue, as he would later the household of their eldest son.

F. Leaving Eleanor pregnant on the Continent, Henry departed for England, where he succeeded in vanquishing King Stephen.

G. Military success bolstered his self-assurance, as did the birth on August 17, 1153, of a son, named William after both his and Eleanor's ancestors.

II. Between divorce and the early months of her remarriage, Eleanor solidified her control over Aquitaine, issuing grants and charters in her own name.

A. Once she married Henry, he swiftly exerted control over her and the Aquitaine, where he was popular but she also maintained, for some time, her lordly status.

B. Soon after their marriage, Eleanor visited Fontevraud for the first time. Happily enough, Henry's family also had a long link to this monastery, and at this time, his aunt Mathilda was abbess. Eleanor granted that monastery a new charter.

C. It is crucial for us to remember that (with or without Eleanor's ready assent) marriage transferred first to Louis VII, then to Henry II crucial aspects of her lordship.

III. Henry was a compelling, gloriously handsome, and charismatic young man whose line was said to descend from the devil.

A. The couple committed a form of feudal treason by marrying without the permission of Louis, their overlord, but they were stuck in a quandary.

1. Louis would never have allowed his former wife and one of his most aggressive rivals to marry.
2. Louis would immediately have perceived the danger of having Eleanor's vast property allied to the Angevin Henry's. Not only was this collective territory ten times larger than Louis's own, it also stretched from the English Channel to the mountains of the Pyrenees.

B. The death of King Stephen's heir left the way clear for Henry's accession to the English throne.

C. Thus, the year 1153 came tied in a ribbon for Henry, because the Treaty of Winchester of November 1153 acknowledged him as the next king.

D. At this point, Henry had brought Eleanor from Poitiers to his Normandy, closer to the English Channel.

E. After King Stephen's death in October of 1154, Eleanor and Henry sailed for England. They were crowned king and queen of England on December 19 in Westminster Abbey.

F. At thirty, now queen of England, Eleanor enjoyed Europe-wide fame. She was lauded in conventional ways and her compelling desirability was celebrated.

IV. Henry II quickly found himself facing difficulties brought on by his Continental military campaigns to maintain his Norman duchy, his (futile) campaigns to revive Eleanor's claims to Toulouse, and his constant diplomatic negotiations. In the later 1160s, he was embroiled as well in fights with his former best friend and chancellor, Archbishop Thomas à Becket, whose murder he caused and for whose martyrdom he was, thus, responsible.

V. During this long period, from their marriage in 1152 until 1168, Eleanor performed a multitude of tasks in tandem with Henry.

A. Together, they had at least eight children (others may have died in childbirth or infancy), seven of whom lived into adulthood.

B. Adding to the physical burden of pregnancy was the role that Eleanor seemed to relish of regent in Henry's frequent absence. She herself traveled frequently and often selected children to accompany her.

C. Her public political role started to diminish in 1163 when Henry took a more aggressive hand in controlling the affairs of the kingdom.

VI. A striking change occurred in 1168, when Eleanor assumed, at Henry's wish, control of the duchy of Aquitaine. The fact that Henry set Eleanor over Aquitaine after the death of his mother, Matilda, in the fall of 1167 suggests an impulse on his part to free himself from the control (and, perhaps, annoyance) of powerful women. With his mother removed by death, his wife could be sent off to the Continent.

A. Had Henry foreseen the long-term consequences of dispatching Eleanor to Aquitaine, he might have decided to keep her at his side.

1. From this time on, Eleanor's ambitions were centered on her children and their fortunes.
2. According to most historians, she was not primarily concerned with fostering their development but was most interested in using them in her struggle against Henry.

B. It is no exaggeration to say this marked the end of their great shared love affair.

1. They saw each other on rare occasions thereafter.
2. Henry remained a famous philanderer and adept wielder of power over all except his family.
3. Eleanor, who concentrated on her children's destinies, was locked in an endless struggle: Was it Henry's attention she wanted? Did he reject her because she was too old, too knowing, too powerful, and herself too accustomed to authority?

VII. Henry made a series of errors or time-consuming diplomatic mistakes that marred his reign.

A. The Treaty of Montmirail with Louis VII in 1169 split his French lands among Henry's sons, one of whom (Richard) became affianced to Louis's daughter (by his third wife) Alice.

B. In June 1170, the Archbishop of York crowned young Henry as heir presumptive, a mistake in itself and an insult to Henry's former closest friend, whom he had raised from obscurity to become his impressive but independent chancellor, Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas à Becket.

C. At the supposed urging of Henry ("Will no one rid me of this impertinent priest?"), Becket was murdered at Canterbury on December 29, 1170.

D. The pope chastised Henry, whom he held personally responsible, and placed England under an interdict.

E. Becket was canonized on February 21, 1173, and Henry became increasingly unpopular among his people

VIII. In June 1172, in Eleanor's presence, fifteen-year-old Richard was installed as duke of Aquitaine. Young Henry was crowned a second time in the fall of 1172.

A. Trouble was brewing. It erupted shortly after Raymond of Toulouse did homage to Henry and to Richard (as count of Poitou) —note, not to Eleanor—in February 1173 at Limoges.

B. Eleanor may have been disturbed at being excluded from the ceremony. If she was, she did not have to wait long for revenge. As Raymond is said to have informed Henry, the English king's family was conspiring against him, and battle was soon joined.

C. Eleanor played an essential part in her sons' rebellion and may have inspired it.

1. Understandably, Henry had her seized. For the rest of his life she was secluded and closely watched wherever she was, in England or on the Continent.

2. For fifteen years, Henry used her as he struggled with his sons. Her sequestration did not bring peace, and a period of intense conflict culminated in the death of young Henry on July 11, 1183.

D. Eleanor worked to advance her sons against their father.

E. By 1174, Henry kept Eleanor in captivity or under his close thumb. She would be paraded out on certain limited state occasions when it pleased Henry; otherwise, she was kept in careful confinement.

F. Eleanor helped arrange the marriage of her daughters, but she concentrated especially on her sons. On the shoals of their rebellious relations with their father, what was left of her partnership with Henry broke.

G. In the end, their sons Richard and John joined with Philip of France in a final rebellion against Henry II, who capitulated on July 4, 1189. He died at Chinon (where Joan later met her dauphin) two days later without the comfort of his wife or sons.

H. Rather than being buried in England, on the recommendation of William Marshall (the flower of chivalry), Henry II was buried at Fontevraud.

I. This tells us as much as anything can how loose the notion of nationhood still was and how intertwined were the French and English by blood and by desire.

J. It marked the beginning of Fontevraud as a royal and family burial place.

K. Eleanor was in several respects (as we shall see) liberated by Henry's death and swiftly began the perambulations that marked her widowhood.

Essential Reading:

Elizabeth A. R Brown, "Eleanor of Aquitaine Reconsidered: The Woman and Her Seasons," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds. (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

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D. D. R. Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1993).

Alison Weir, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Life* (New York: Ballantine, 2000).

Questions to Consider:

1. Unlike Abbess Hildegard, most of the time Queen Eleanor had to wield power indirectly by using her wiles to influence the men in her life. Do we consider "manipulators" (in the literal sense of the word) to be more, less, or equally powerful as those who directly wield power?
2. Eleanor derived much of her power from being overlord of Aquitaine. She and the land were inextricably bound together; her fertility (in primitive terms) constituted the land's—and its people's—fertile future. Does the

itinerancy and landlessness of the modern woman make pregnancy signify a condition of comparative weakness?

Lecture Sixteen

Eleanor the Dowager Queen

Scope: In her own right, and as the wife and mother of kings, Eleanor's wealth and influence afforded her fields of action by no means insignificant to her husbands' governments, as shown by Henry II's decision to keep her closely guarded—mostly in England, far from Aquitaine—for the last fifteen years of his life. Eleanor's unquestioned importance in the governments of her sons Richard I and John demonstrates that her influence and political reach were recognized during her widowhood, as well. Passion for power and her family's future propelled Eleanor's active final years. She was also active in the marital arrangements of her grandchildren, ensuring the noble continuity of her line. She fought off all threats to her children except the most implacable—death—as one by one they died, leaving, in the end, her feckless son John who ruled disastrously as the English king.

Outline

I. Eleanor took full advantage of her reign as Queen Mother when her son Richard the Lionheart inherited the throne.

- **A.** Though the ranks of Eleanor's children were thinning, Marie and Alix (by Louis) were still thriving, as were Richard and her three younger children by Henry (Eleanor, Joanna, and John).
- **B.** Richard I, as surviving eldest son, was close to his mother and encouraged her ambitions for him.
- **C.** Richard confirmed Eleanor's control of her dower lands from her marriage to Henry.
- **D.** Being delivered from captivity herself, she went about delivering others who had been on Henry's "enemies" list and imprisoned by him.
- **E.** She moved with great energy to secure the loyalty to Richard of the barons and the free men alike, and she helped arrange a glorious homecoming in England for Richard's coronation at Westminster on September 3, 1189.
- **F.** But Richard's interests were not with ruling England: He milked it for the revenue he required to set off on crusade (by way of his ducal territories) with Philip Augustus that very December.
- **G.** Mother and son conspired in a small piece of successful diplomacy and slicing revenge on Henry when they repudiated Richard's engagement to Philip Augustus's half-sister Alice.

H. Eleanor spent much of 1190–1191 traveling across Europe solidifying her and her son's alliances, then returned by circuitous route to England, where she ruled the kingdom as Richard's regent.

I. She arranged his marriage to Berengaria, princess of Navarre, which took place in Cyprus in May of 1191 when Richard was on his way to the Holy Land.
   1. The choice of Berengaria (whom Richard of Devizes called "more sensible than stunning") also had the advantage of ensuring that Richard would have a wife who would not challenge Eleanor's authority or influence over her son.
   2. The rejection of Alice of France also put Philip Augustus on notice that Eleanor and Richard were people to be reckoned with.

J. Richard was taken prisoner of war in December of 1193, and in the meantime, Eleanor countered a conspiracy between her younger son John and Philip Augustus by threatening John into submission.

K. She simultaneously worked for Richard's release, raising the staggering sum of 100,000 marks for his ransom, much more than the annual revenue of the kingdom.

L. She sailed to Germany (remember that she was now seventy years old) to join Richard as he paid homage to the Emperor Henry VI at Mainz; by doing so, they assured the emperor's loyalty to Richard's interests above those of Philip Augustus and John.

M. In an escalating series of successes, Eleanor accompanied her favorite son on a triumphal tour as they made their way back to England. On April 17, 1194, she (not Berengaria) sat as his enthroned equal as he once more ceremoniously took his crown in that ancient English capital, Winchester.

II. Eleanor presumed that her prime progeny were secure and—now that Richard and John were reconciled—she retired from public view later in 1194 to spend her final years at her beloved Fontevraud.

A. We have records of the many gifts and endowments that Eleanor gave to Fontevraud. (While Richard was warring and building, Eleanor was in honorable retreat at Fontevraud. She showered the house with gifts, having walls constructed to protect it, providing an endowment for the habits of the religious, and donating a gold processional cross adorned with jewels and many gold and silver vessels and silken cloths.)

B. It must have given her deep satisfaction when, in 1196, her daughter Joanna took as her second husband Raymond VII of Toulouse, once more yoking Toulouse with Aquitaine and satisfying one of Eleanor's most fundamental political desires.

C. Her family seemed to be moving from glory to glory, when in July 1198 (through Richard's efforts), her grandson Otto of Brunswick, duke of Poitou (the land that was directly Eleanor's by inheritance), reached the coveted height of Holy Roman Emperor. Otto reached the imperial heights that his grandfather Henry had been denied.

III. In 1199, however, tragedy struck again. By the beginning of 1199, Eleanor had lost all but four of her children.

A. While putting down a petty insurrection by laying siege to the minor castle of Châlus, Richard was mortally injured.
   1. He sent for his mother, who rushed to his side and attended him.
   2. After naming his brother John as his heir, he died on April 6, 1199, in her presence.

B. In September, Eleanor witnessed the death of her daughter Joanna and of Joanna's infant son.

IV. In between, she once more acted on a son's behalf, summoning as much support for John's kingship as possible.

A. John was crowned on May 25, 1199, but Eleanor's diplomatic missions on his behalf were just beginning.

B. The months after Richard died witnessed a flurry of activity.

C. Eleanor issued numerous charters, which as H. G. Richardson declared, "are as authoritative and binding as the charters of any English king."

D. Nor did she simply give written orders and commands. She herself led the mercenaries Richard had been commanding north to Anjou, where they vanquished the supporters of her grandson Arthur of Brittany (son of Geoffrey and Constance of Brittany), who was claiming the throne of England.

E. Next, she traveled through Poitou and Gascony to affirm the regions' loyalty. In July 1199, having formally recognized Philip Augustus's overlordship of Poitou (although not of Aquitaine, which she held independently), she and her son John entered into an arrangement that made them co-rulers of Poitou and Aquitaine.

F. The acts confirming the agreement are curious.
   1. Ordering that all homages, acts of fidelity, and services be rendered to him as liege lord, Eleanor bestowed on John, "her dearest son" and "rightful heir," all of Poitou.
   2. In turn, John acknowledged his homage to his mother for Poitou and declared that during her lifetime, his mother should have and hold Poitou as *domina* and that neither he nor she would make any alienation without the other's consent, except for appropriate donations for the benefit of their souls.
   3. Perhaps the phraseology of Eleanor's charter, doubtless carefully chosen, was intended to suggest her endorsement of the rightfulness of John's claim to the kingdom of England.

G. She spent the next year negotiating with Philip Augustus and John to secure lasting peace.

H. Eleanor sealed that peace by promising one of her granddaughters as bride for Philip's son Louis.

I. She crossed to Spain in harsh winter and returned in the spring with the superb Blanche, princess of Castile, whose marriage to Louis on May 23, 1200, brought the royal families of Europe into alignment once more and produced the future saint King Louis IX.

J. This marriage ensured a peace between England and France for a good period of time.

V. Eleanor's last years were marred by the consistently foolish decisions of her son John, whose cause she always tried to protect.

A. John badly needed her assistance because of his reckless, ill-advised marriage to Isabelle of Angoulême on August 24, 1200.

B. This union brought him and Philip Augustus into conflict yet again.

C. Early in 1201, Eleanor intervened from her sickbed to help John retain the allegiance of a powerful Poitevin lord.

D. After John's formal condemnation by the court of France on April 28, 1202, Philip Augustus invaded his lands. Eleanor, then seventy-eight, again went to her son's aid, and her presence in the field resulted in one of John's few victories.

E. John's one monumental military success was the lifting of the siege on the castle of Mirebeau in late July of 1202, when Eleanor was under attack by her grandson Arthur of Brittany and the forces of Philip Augustus.

F. The Plantagenet-Capetian struggles continued. Arthur was murdered, and historians still ask whether he died at John's hand.

G. After her rescue, Eleanor retired, we think, to Fontevraud. She would there have heard the sad news that Chateau Gaillard, the impregnable Plantagenet fortress built by her beloved son Richard, fell to Capetian forces in March of 1204.

VI. On April 1, 1204, three weeks later, the eighty-year-old Eleanor died. She had outlived all but two of her ten or more children.

A. She did not live to see the shame of John signing Magna Carta on June 15, 1215.

B. She had carefully supervised the marriages of her many children and many of her grandchildren.

C. Of her royal progeny we are sure, for Eleanor's fecundity was prolific and her descendants, numerous.

D. Historians today are just beginning to emphasize the importance of mothers and family descent traced through the maternal line.

E. Eleanor's greatest skill (perhaps not her joy) was the management of motherhood. Whether or not we think she was a good mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine was one of Europe's greatest progenitors.

Essential Reading:

Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "Eleanor of Aquitaine Reconsidered: The Woman and Her Seasons," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds. (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

Alison Weir, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Life* (New York: Ballantine, 2000).

Supplementary Reading:

Amy Kelly, *Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1950).

Marion Meade, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Biography* (New York: Dutton, 1977).

D. D. R. Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1993).

Questions to Consider:

1. Was Eleanor treacherous to Henry? If so, were her actions justified?
2. Most women in the Middle Ages lived a considerably shorter life than Eleanor did (and Hildegard and Heloise, for that matter). Did age augment her authority?

Lecture Seventeen

Legendary Eleanor

Scope: Thus far, we have stayed rigorously to the facts of Eleanor's life as we now know it. Will new charters and other documents tell us more? Of course they will—and the hope that more might be discovered keeps historians in the archives. But in this lecture, we ask where historical narrative ends and legends begin, because fact and legend conspire with each other in the representations of Eleanor of Aquitaine. The historical blanks and gaps of Eleanor's crusade have been filled to overflowing from the twelfth to the twenty-first centuries by lurid and leering sexual speculation. Hers is a story full of sex, violence, suspense, and the teeth-grinding tenacity of brilliant conflicting will power. Who could ask for anything more? Certainly not the gossips of her own day or the writers and artists of subsequent generations. What are the lusty legends that surround this woman, and why do new ones continue to arise?

Outline

I. Legends about Eleanor have accumulated in vast numbers over generations.
   - **A.** She was the greatest heiress in Christendom, married and crowned queen of France at thirteen (true).
   - **B.** She bemoaned an unexciting marriage to Louis VII (maybe true).
   - **C.** She rode bare-breasted to the crusades (well, she went on crusade, but bare-breasted?).
   - **D.** She dallied scandalously with her uncle at Antioch (dallied, but how did they dally?).
   - **E.** She returned to France to divorce Louis (true).
   - **F.** She passionately adored, then fought endlessly with, her second husband, Henry II of England (all too true).
   - **G.** She poisoned Henry's mistress Rosamund—Fair Rosamund—Clifford (no proof; if it was fidelity she wanted, she should have poisoned Henry instead).
   - **H.** She presided as Henry's, then Richard's lieutenant in Aquitaine (true, but also acting as proper lord of the Aquitainians).
   - **I.** She held "courts of love" to encourage and engage in amatory liaisons (unproved).
   - **J.** She was imprisoned as a rebellious (and cross-dressing) queen (true; she dressed as a man in an attempt to evade capture when Henry was trying to imprison her).
   - **K.** She dominated her children and manipulated their politics almost to her last breath (true).

II. The book-length biographies of Eleanor still tend to mix fiction with fact—even those books that carefully separate the "fact" chapters from the "fiction" chapters.
   - **A.** But the myths themselves are compelling, telling us (among other things) what commentators from the twelfth to the twenty-first centuries think about women, sexuality, motherhood, and power.
   - **B.** What stories do we have about Eleanor on crusade?
     1. At Easter of 1146, Eleanor heard Bernard preach the Second Crusade at Vezelay, and she and Louis fulfilled their well-understood intention to crusade by taking the cross at that highly charged symbolic moment.
     2. We now recognize what previous historians obscured. Eleanor did not merely accompany her husband while he went on crusade: She herself went on crusade—she "took the cross" just as he did.
     3. Crusading was a pilgrimage of desire for God as much as a war against the infidel.
     4. For medieval people in general, the image of women among warriors conjures up scenes of licentiousness, although in Eleanor's own day these remarks were carefully *sub rosa*.
     5. Odo of Deuil lists some of the many noble ladies and 300 less-exalted women who vowed crusade that day.
     6. More than a year later (on the feast of St. Denis in 1147), with goods, troops, friends, and servants, the royal couple began their campaign, not to return to France until two and a half years later, in November of 1149.
     7. No contemporary historian can yet tell us what Eleanor's full role was during her crusade: Was she acting as lord of her troops? Was she cavorting like an Amazon at play? Did she (like Louis) think of herself as undertaking a penitential pilgrimage? We don't know. Many women, it seems, undertook the First Crusade, but Eleanor is by far the most famous to have attempted the Second Crusade.
     8. Many of us cut our medieval milk teeth on the story first recounted by Gervase of Canterbury: Eleanor, when she went on crusade with Louis, cavorting with her ladies in armor, or billowing red and white costumes, evoking the image of the single-breasted Amazon warrior women.
     9. By the late seventeenth century, stories spread across Europe of Eleanor as a latter-day Hipployta, leading a battalion of women warriors in full armor—armored, that is, except for their bravely and titillatingly exposed breast.
   - **C.** Eleanor's sexual immorality before and during the crusade was allegedly flagrant.

1. Not satisfied by her penitent, feminized husband (the story goes), Eleanor had an affair before leaving France with Henry II's father, Geoffrey of Anjou; while on crusade, she was passionately linked with her uncle Raymond of Antioch.
2. These—and better—stories are still recycled in contemporary fiction.
3. She is alleged to have treated her crusade as a sexual experiment, bedding the randy Raymond and the Emperor Manuel Comnenus (of course, her "relations" with Bernard of Clairvaux, the Abbot Suger, her handmaidens, and her horses are also described in remarkable detail).
4. But the best are the hand-me-down stories of Eleanor and Saladin, called the intrepid Turk.
5. By the nineteenth century, stories about Eleanor and the great Saracen warrior Saladin are fully developed. The assumption of these stories is that any woman with Eleanor's spirit would naturally desire a magnificent dark warrior, just as any dark warrior would desire a magnificent (white) Western lady. She almost escapes to join Saladin when betrayed by a handmaid and forcibly restrained by Louis.
6. Eleanor was notable for "robbing the cradle" by marrying a man almost ten years younger than she (Henry II). But surely even the most gullible historians would have paused had they looked at the ages of Eleanor and Saladin, who was only twelve when Eleanor was in Antioch. This story also got wrapped into the "history" of Eleanor, repeated even by those who might have known better.
7. Even in Eleanor's time, however, there were rumors from John of Salisbury and others of her relations with her uncle Raymond.
8. If there had really been physical infidelity, as Dartmouth historian Charles T. Wood recently remarked to me in a private e-mail, "given the lack of privacy that was the ever-present reality of the servant-pampered upper classes of the day, not to mention all the rules surrounding the chastity of a queen, there would have been no way to keep a physical relationship private. Real infidelity would surely have left a much more memorable paper (perhaps a sheet) trail."
9. Having been between the sheets with two kings, Eleanor was perfect fodder for medieval and modern scandals. And the fact that her family had a propensity for "weird relationship issues" (William, Eleanor, and John were all medieval divorcees) added more smoke to the issue. In any case, these stories, too, became part of the "history" of Eleanor.

D. Perhaps the most popular of all rumors about Eleanor involve her supposed hatred and murder of Henry II's mistress Rosamund Clifford, by whom he was supposedly "gobsmacked," dazed in love. There is no shred of information about Eleanor and Rosamund, though, again, this story is now part of her "history."

E. The most persistent myth surrounding Eleanor and accepted by scholars and general readers is that she was involved in real courts of love.
1. These stories originated with Andreas Capellanus.
2. Many presume that between 1168 and 1173, Eleanor was cavorting in her French daughters' courts and judging witty courtiers presenting keenly argued cases about why their pleas as lovers should be accepted.
3. On the other hand, Eleanor was already imprisoned by Henry II on the one date mentioned in the text (May 1, 1174).
4. Andreas gives up a literary conceit but one that comports so well with the rumors about Eleanor that it slips into the record.

III. We know much about the duchess and the queen; it is the woman we yearn to know and cannot find, except in our imaginations. Our fascination with Eleanor is like our fascination with King Arthur: We are fascinated by the legends and romances that provide a "mythic scaffold" around these characters. We want the truth, we historians and listeners, but not at the expense of the scaffolding. Consider the story, then, as we have told it, in the terms in which Winston Churchill considered King Arthur's: It is all true, or ought to be, and more and better besides.

Essential Reading:

John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

Alison Weir, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Life* (New York: Ballantine, 2000).

D. D. R. Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1993).

F. M. Chambers, "Some Legends Concerning Eleanor of Aquitaine," *Speculum* 16.4 (1941), pp. 459–468.

Supplementary Reading:

Amy Kelly, *Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1950).

Marion Meade, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Biography* (New York: Dutton, 1977).

Questions to Consider:

1. Given the conceptions of women most cultures hold even now, are we surprised by the salacious quality of the legends regarding Eleanor of Aquitaine?
2. What might Eleanor have thought of the new language of love as promulgated by the troubadours?

Lecture Eighteen

Joan of Arc and Her Times

Scope: What can we really know about the extraordinary peasant girl Joan of Arc (1412?–30 May 1431)? How did a peasant girl from the fringes of France become, as Mark Twain tells us, the "youngest person of either sex to lead her nation's army before the age of nineteen"? How do we explain her prominence, first in the military victory in Orléans, then in the coronation of King Charles VII at Reims? Some claim that Joan changed the course of European history in her two public years before being burned at the stake as a heretic at the age of nineteen. She is one of history's most well documented persons, and this lecture introduces us to her life in context (as recorded in extensive trial records and contemporary reports) and to two of the overwhelming institutional facts of the period: the Hundred Year's War and the Great Schism.

Outline

I. In her own time, Joan of Arc was an enigma and, to her enemies, a scandal—a stumbling block even to many of her friends, supporters, and allies.

- **A.** She was very young to presume to do the things she did.
- **B.** She was probably born in 1412, some said on January 6, the feast day of the Epiphany (popularly known as the Day of the Kings).
- **C.** She was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431, aged something like nineteen.
- **D.** Before that, she became, in the awestruck words of Mark Twain, "the youngest person of either sex to lead her nation's army before the age of nineteen."

II. Joan's historical moment was shaped by two major, long-lasting European crises.

- **A.** The crown of France was disputed in what is conventionally known as the Hundred Years War (1337–1453).
  1. It had old roots in a centuries-long dispute about limits of authority between the crown of France and the several great principalities that made up the kingdom. Some say it began with the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine to Henry Plantagenet (Henry II of England).
  2. It then became—and remained—a succession crisis between two closely blood-related royal dynasties, the Plantagenets and the Valois.
  3. This dynastic rivalry was aggravated by the ambitions of the House of Burgundy, closely blood-related to the other two dynastic claimants.
  4. The war was actively fought in four phases: 1337–1360, 1364–1380, 1413–1429, and 1430–1453.
  5. Eventually, the Valois dynasty retained its hold on the crown of France, and the French nation was born (as was the English nation, whose Plantagenet kings remained in control until the Tudors).
  6. The famous, bloody battle of Agincourt in 1415 (when Joan was a small child) seemed to give real substance to the English hopes of placing all of France under Plantagenet control.
  7. Joan of Arc's brief intervention, her supporters insisted and still insist, gave "France" victory in the third phase and made the fourth phase merely a protracted mopping-up operation.
- **B.** The second crisis occurred between 1378 to 1415, when three popes claimed to be authentic. This conflict is known as the Great Schism.
  1. Ordinary Christians became terribly confused as one pope excommunicated his opponents and all their followers.
  2. Who could tell which was the rightful pope and, therefore, who had been condemned to hell?
  3. Some preachers claimed visions revealing that no one had entered heaven since the schism began.
  4. During this time of high general anxiety, visionaries multiplied.

III. Joan was of solid peasant stock and behavior. Her family was seemingly normal, but the family as a whole was more upwardly mobile than the norm.

- **A.** Joan's family was quite respectable in the village of Domrémy.
  1. Her father, Jacques Darc (as her name probably should be spelled), was frequently chosen by his fellows as leader-speaker (what we call mayor) of their village.
  2. Her mother, Isabelle Romée ("Pilgrim"), was a committed homemaker who had the leisure to go on pilgrimages.
  3. Joan would have been known to her neighbors as Jehanne Romée (that was how naming patterns worked in that part of Europe).
  4. Her more distant relatives were successful in rural life, and the whole family was more mobile than most. She had an uncle, for instance, who was a village priest.
  5. But they were all peasants, with no claim to noble or bourgeois connections.
  6. Joan was illiterate, as was typical for her class, sex, and age.
  7. After Joan got him crowned at Reims, King Charles VII elevated Joan and all her relatives and all their legitimate descendants to nobility; they were assigned a coat-of-arms. But before that, they were peasants pure and simple.

8. Some have found this fact (peasants?) so astounding (perhaps intolerable) that they have decided Joan was, in fact, a royal bastard raised by the loyal Darc family. This way of thinking is very medieval—heroic deeds can be performed only by those with noble or better blood—and a lot of ink has been spilt trying to prove and disprove this thesis.

B. Joan and her family were devout and ordinary.
1. In their testimony at her post-death retrial, her fellow villagers described her over and over again as "just like everyone else"—with one big exception (emphasized by historian Régine Pernoud): how "willingly" she did everything she thought she had to do.
2. Her life was full of normal village activities.

C. Joan was illiterate, a serious inconvenience even in the Middle Ages.
1. She did learn to write her name during her year (really four months) of triumph.
2. How could an illiterate peasant begin to comprehend the complex issues of politics, diplomacy, and law that impinged on her constantly during the two years of her public life?

D. Joan came from the farthest eastern frontier of France, a region predominantly loyal to the Burgundian (English) faction opposed to the dauphin, whom she got crowned king of France. Why should such a person care about an old dispute being fought out at the center of France? How much of it could she understand?

E. Most amazing, this illiterate peasant girl from the frontier achieved remarkable military victories and showed a strategic, as well as a tactical, sense that won the respect of hardened veteran officers.
1. There are four prime examples, the first of which was her moral and tactical victory in raising the siege of Orléans (in early May 1429), then perhaps the key place, geopolitically, in the Hundred Years War.
2. The second was her open-field victory at Patay (June 18), a minor reverse of Agincourt, with high casualties for the English and practically none for the French.
3. The third was her strategic daring in penetrating deep behind enemy lines to get Charles the dauphin crowned king at Reims, the key symbolic event of that final phase of the war.
4. The fourth was her uncanny understanding of artillery tactics, something it had always taken older commanders quite a while to learn. And this on the part of someone distressed by bloodshed!
5. A fifth would have been her taking of Paris in August 1429, which any modern strategist sees as obvious and manageable, if the suddenly cautious king, duped by the Duke of Burgundy, had committed to this attack the minimum forces necessary. But he didn't, so the attack failed, discrediting Joan in the eyes of many. She was right, even though she failed.
6. Most contemporary field commanders were firmly convinced that Joan's military expertise was either a divine miracle or witchcraft. That's why the English faction had to get her tried and burned at Rouen (May 1430).

IV. Yet Joan of Arc won her goals. Some modern historians dismiss her as an incomprehensible quirk; others think she changed the course of European (indeed, of world) history. The debate about her goes on.

A. The debate ought to be easier to resolve but has been aggravated by the fact that Joan is one of the most well documented figures in premodern human history.

B. Because of the amazingly detailed and lovingly preserved transcripts of her two famous trials, as well as an explosion of contemporary reports, we know more historically about her short life than we do about the lives of Jesus Christ, Julius Caesar, Plato, Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, or anyone who lived after her for perhaps another two or three centuries.

C. Joan has generated many legends, but we can (and should) dispense with all of them.

Essential Reading:

Régine Pernoud and M.-V. Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, Jeremy duQ. Adams, rev. and trans. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood, eds., *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc* (New York: Garland, 1996).

Supplementary Reading:

Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York: Knopf, 1981; reissued, University of California Press, 1999).

Questions to Consider:

1. In your estimation, was Joan of Arc an entirely unique historical personage? If you don't think so, of whom do you conceive as a person similar to Joan?
2. In this age, would it be possible for someone like Joan to emerge? If she did, would she meet a similar fate?

Lecture Nineteen

Joan Discovers Her Mission and Her Dauphin

Scope: This lecture tracks Joan's life from the solid context of her native village of Domrémy on the eastern frontier of France to the royal court at Chinon in the Loire Valley at the heart of the kingdom. There, she told the Dauphin Charles a secret that convinced him of her authenticity and that of her mission to save him. The transcript of her second trial at Rouen (1456) is rich in village testimony about her early life—startlingly ordinary, in fact. But at thirteen, Joan began to hear heavenly, angelic voices, and at sixteen, she dedicated herself to virginity in view of the mission she now saw as hers: to save the embattled dauphin and get him crowned king. Perhaps Joan's first "miracle" was to persuade her family and Robert de Baudricourt to send her to the dauphin. But what was the secret she revealed to him?

Outline

I. In adolescence, or perhaps pre-adolescence, Joan developed an unusual personal spirituality.

A. At thirteen (Joan told her trial judges), she began to hear voices—the voices of angels, she was sure.

1. The timing of this experience has led several modern medieval scholars to speculate that it all had something to do with hormones: Joan never developed normal adolescent female sexuality, they argue, was never fully a woman.
2. There is no contemporary evidence for this image of her. The Duke of Alençon, in fact, was given to remarking how beautiful her breasts were, and her English jailers at Rouen appreciated her buttocks.
3. Joan's contemporaries remarked instead on what a womanly young woman she was, despite her manly behavior on campaign, the practical men's clothes she wore at such times (but not at others—she liked red dresses), and her short haircut.
4. For her medieval contemporaries, the issue would have been the source of those voices: Were they from God or the devil?
5. Because these voices first spoke to her in her father's garden, a secure and happy place, Joan was sure they were the voices of angels coming from God.
6. After much later prayer and probable consultation with her parish priest, she was convinced that these were good and holy voices, to which were soon added the voices of St. Catherine (of Alexandria) and St. Margaret (of Antioch), two mythic virgin martyrs of the heroic days of the early Church.
7. What did these voices tell her? To reconstruct her later statements, they told her to save France and to get the Dauphin Charles, the Valois claimant to the French throne, crowned at Reims.
8. Professor Charles T. Wood of Dartmouth College has suggested that her mission was originally to save the dauphin, and only later, after doing so by saving the city of Orléans, did she become convinced that her mission included getting Charles crowned.

B. At sixteen, Joan dedicated herself to virginity, in view of what by then, she later said, she saw as her vision: to save France by rescuing the Dauphin Charles from the English armies that beset him and getting him crowned king.

1. Her chief title during her military activity was *Jehanne la Pucelle*, Joan the Maid (i.e., the virgin).
2. In medieval Europe, virginity was a normal condition of life for anyone, male or female, with such a special, totally demanding vocation. Lack of demonstrable virginity would have been a strong indication that she was a fraud.

C. Around the same time, she successfully defended herself in an ecclesiastical trial in the nearby diocese of Toul against a young man who claimed she was pledged to him in marriage. This Joan confessed to be the one time she had disobeyed her parents (of course, leaving Domrémy to go find the dauphin was against their wishes, but she saw God's will in that matter as entirely overriding her parents' authority to command). The suitor's name has not come down in the surviving records.

1. It seems that Joan had rejected a betrothal arranged by her parents and became the defendant in a breach-of-promise suit. She claimed consistently that *she* "had not made any man any promise."
2. Joan's respectable father especially worried about her safety. Jacques went so far as to tell his sons that if their sister "went off with soldiers"—which to him had to mean that she was going off as a camp-follower—they should drown her. The marriage to the boy from Toul, whoever he was, must have seemed the perfect solution.

II. Joan had to convince the practical adult world of her improbable mission.

A. The first step was to get not just permission, but a military escort from the local military commander, the embattled pro-Valois Robert de Baudricourt.

1. Her father dealt with Baudricourt regularly as mayor of Domrémy, but he resisted Joan's pleas for intercession.
2. Joan began trying in May 1428 (when she was sixteen) to persuade Baudricourt of her mission; she went to the fortified town of Vaucouleurs, which he commanded. Not surprisingly, he dismissed her swiftly.

3. Baudricourt was pressed for both time and resources. Vaucouleurs was a Valois holdout in a region that had largely gone over to the duke of Burgundy. The duke wanted to secure it as a corridor connecting the traditional core of Burgundy to the south with his richest northern territories in Flanders and the other Low Countries.

B. But Joan was not one to stop attempting the impossible.
1. In January 1429, Joan got her favorite older male cousin, Durand Laxart, to take her again to see Baudricourt at Vaucouleurs.
2. Baudricourt rebuffed Joan again, but eventually, Joan overcame Baudricourt's hesitations, and he sent her to the dauphin at Chinon with a letter of introduction and a small escort of men.

C. The little troupe covered more than 200 miles in eleven days, traveling almost entirely by night to avoid enemy soldiers. They even avoided going to mass (with one exception, when they blended incognito into a Friday mass at Auxerre cathedral); for the devout Joan, this was a real hardship.

D. The next step was to get to see the dauphin.
1. Having agreed to see her during a daytime session of open court, with perhaps 300 courtiers in attendance, the dauphin decided to test her by hiding among the courtiers.
2. How did Joan pass that cunning courtly test? Ignoring the courtier dressed up in kingly clothes, she went straight for the disguised dauphin. How did she recognize him?
3. Partisans of the Royal Bastard Theory answer that she already knew him; it was prearranged. According to the usual form of this theory, Joan was Charles's half-sister, the child of Queen Isabeau and Duke Louis of Orléans. She had been sent for raising to the loyal Darc family on Jeanne of Joinville's lands and prepared for a dramatic intervention when the time was right. Even if she had not actually seen Charles before, she was told of some sign that would let her know who he was.
4. What, in any case, was the secret she told him?
5. Some say she reassured him that he was, in fact, the son of Charles VI, not of Louis of Orléans or some other lover of Queen Isabeau. But that exaggerates a propaganda rumor circulated by his enemies only later, and the bastardy theory is unsupported by any reasonable evidence, according to Régine Pernoud, Marie-Véronique Clin, and other current scholars. Clin has recently published a scholarly biography of Isabeau that rejects the slanders about her infidelity.
6. Joan's secret remains a mystery.

Essential Reading:

Régine Pernoud and M.-V. Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, Jeremy duQ. Adams, rev. and trans. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood, eds., *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc*, (New York: Garland, reissued, 1996).

Mark Twain, *Joan of Arc*.

Supplementary Reading:

Vita Sackville -West, *Saint Joan of Arc* (New York: Grove Press, reissued 2001).

Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York: Knopf, 1981; reissued, University of California Press, 1999).

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you suppose Robert de Baudricourt granted Joan the favor she asked of him? He needed every man-at-arms he could get, and the letter to the dauphin risked his own reputation for common sense.
2. Joan's companions on the risky trip from Vaucouleurs to Chinon became firm partisans of her cause. How do you suppose she won them over?

Lecture Twenty

Joan the Warrior, Holy Berserker

Scope: This lecture discusses Joan's anomalous position as a warrior. She was the opposite of nearly every traditional medieval military stereotype: a virgin peasant girl without a shred of military experience. Yet something about her, some sort of charisma, inspired the Dauphin Charles and other great nobles to let her have a major share in commanding the war effort and inspired the common soldiers and the civilians to believe in her unlikely promises. The completeness and swiftness of her victory in raising the siege of Orléans must have seemed some kind of miracle to her contemporaries.

Outline

I. What convinced Charles to make Joan a captain of arms and send her against the English besieging Orléans?

- **A.** The rank the dauphin accorded her was indicated by her own personal banner and a fine suit of plate armor, both of which were made for her at top speed.
  1. She had her own contingent of troops and an accredited herald—just like the top-level noble commanders.
  2. More important, she had the right to coordinate on an equal basis with the French commander defending Orléans.
  3. Most of Charles's counselors at court seem to have been dead set against these striking concessions.
- **B.** To check his instincts, the dauphin had Joan examined by a court of university professors and other high clerics at Poitiers.
  1. They cleared her: Her orthodoxy was attested; her virginity, affirmed; and her mission, approved.
  2. This was to be Joan's first trial.
  3. Unfortunately, the transcript (the famous Poitiers transcript) has been lost, perhaps with the collusion of the archbishop of Reims, who never liked Joan.

II. Remember that France was riven between an Anglo-Burgundian alliance and the so-called French: the "Armagnacs," supporters of the Valois dynasty.

- **A.** Joan was not interested in the Armagnac faction as such, or in any factions; she saw the matter simply—to drive the English out of France—and she saw her mission as the restoration of French national identity.
  1. By the time she left for Orléans (in the third week of April 1429), *La Pucelle* seemed to embody Christian nationalism with her banner, her armor, and her full-fledged military and diplomatic household.
  2. She had also acquired a holy sword, for which she had Charles send to Sainte-Catherine-de-Fierbois, a shrine to the Frankish hero Charles Martel's victory against the Saracens seven centuries before (732). How she knew the sword was there, buried behind the altar, is a mystery.
- **B.** The strategic importance of Orléans was great.
  1. It lay close to the center of the kingdom, of which the English/Burgundians controlled most of the northern provinces.
  2. Orléans was, then, the key to the southern half of the kingdom.
  3. Not far to the south of Orléans lay the city of Bourges. Bourges had become the Valois/French capital since King Henry V of England had conquered Paris, which enjoyed being the capital of Plantagenet France.
  4. The English began a serious and expensive siege of Orléans in October of 1428. Neither side had any illusions about the crucial significance of that operation.

III. Why did troops follow *La Pucelle*?

- **A.** The French forces defending Orléans were demoralized, as was the city's population of about 30,000—a large urban population for the time.
- **B.** The experienced captains of arms there were commanded by John, the Bastard of Orléans (later Count of the Dunois).
  1. The Bastard (as he was generally addressed) was then acting as head of the House of Orléans.
  2. His half-brother Charles, the legitimate Duke of Orléans, was languishing in long, elegant captivity in England, where he had been "visiting" since being captured at Agincourt (and where he wrote some important poetry in both English and French). He still awaited his ransoming.
  3. None of these experienced noble warriors was inclined to take the advice, not to mention the orders, of an inexperienced peasant girl.
- **C.** Joan's strategy was unremitting attack on the English positions, no matter how invincible they seemed.
  1. The seasoned commanders were aghast at her recklessness, but the rank-and-file soldiers and the besieged populace agreed with her.
  2. Several times Joan issued orders to attack in direct confrontation of the orders of the day issued by the Bastard and his staff. (Regardless, the Bastard esteemed her.)

3. Although sustaining great losses, the French troops, supported by townsmen on the city walls, stormed the strongest of the seven fortresses with which the English had surrounded the city.
4. After that, the English army abandoned the siege on May 8 and marched north. The townsfolk organized a vibrant thanksgiving procession, of which Joan was the ecstatically praised heroine.

IV. *La Pucelle* was a curious kind of military commander.

A. Although she carried a sword in battle, she never used it to kill a man.
1. It was later alleged that she had struck some female camp-followers on the back with it, to drive them away from her morally purified army. (The soldiers went to mass and confession daily, were forbidden to curse, and so on: *drôle de guerre* indeed!)
2. She seems never to have become really used to the sight of dying men, English or French.

B. She lacked any kind of military training, yet her military instincts seemed impeccable—at least until the failed attack on Paris in August 1429.
1. It was universally assumed that military talent, as well as the right and capacity to command, were inherited with noble blood, yet Joan was a peasant through and through.
2. She rode warhorses very well, like a man born to that skill (the Royal Bastard Theory had not yet been invented, though it would call attention to that fact).

C. Given that women traveling with soldiers were commonly assumed to be prostitutes, how could Joan have won the respect and, occasionally, the obedience of such great nobles as the Bastard of Orléans, Duke John of Alençon (who may have had a sort of crush on her), and the supremely self-confident Gilles de Rais (later known as the child molester and murderer Bluebeard), a Breton ultra-aristocrat who was one of the richest men in Europe?

D. How could *La Pucelle* exert such persuasive power over common soldiers, as well as noble captains?
1. To answer that, one might have to believe in miracles, or to recognize the power of her promise to these men that those who died would go straight to heaven.
2. It may also be true that Joan was the first popular figure who gave voice to the French form of nationalism that persisted into the Revolution: The king is France. Thus, the need to make Charles king was identical to a need to save the country.
3. Finally, it is also true—though historians have underestimated this—that soldiers want to follow only someone who has absolute confidence in the mission and that they prefer to follow into battle someone who *becomes* the heat of battle. What later is called "cold strategy," and is studied in military academies, is often at the time thought to be menacing madness, boiling blood. Like the ancient hero Achilles, Joan was a berserker in battle, though a Holy Berserker who used the edge of her tongue and the point of her exposed, mystic sword to rally her troops to terrifying, impossible victory.

Essential Reading:

Régine Pernoud and M.-V. Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, Jeremy duQ. Adams, rev. and trans. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

Kelly DeVries, "Joan of Arc as Military Leader," in *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc*, Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood, eds. (New York: Garland, 1996).

Supplementary Reading:

Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Kelly DeVries, *Joan of Arc: A Military Leader* (Stroud, U.K.: Sutton, 2002).

Questions to Consider:

1. How much of Joan's military charismatic power depended on her demonstrated virginity?
2. What about Joan appealed to battle-hardened captains and professional soldiers, many of them veteran mercenaries?

Lecture Twenty-One

Joan's Success and Captivity

Scope: Joan reached the peak of her military and political success in May and June of 1429. The first part of her mission was to relieve the strategically crucial city of Orléans from siege; the second was to get Charles the Dauphin crowned King Charles VII of France, a feat that could be done with full effect only at Reims, which lay well behind enemy lines. Nevertheless, Joan accomplished this, as well. Then, Joan's fortunes turned: Charles, once king, did things his way, not Joan's way. Always preferring diplomacy to the risks and costs of warfare, Charles did not adequately support Joan's strategically coherent effort to take Paris in August. Her military failure there discredited her in the eyes of many. She spent the next half year wasting her time in winter quarters and skirmishes in the center of France. With the spring of 1430, Joan returned to the attack, commanding a small contingent. She was captured at Compiègne on May 23 in the course of a skirmish against the Burgundians. Charles did nothing to rescue her.

Outline

I. Let's recall how this peasant girl got to Orléans. Having convinced Robert de Baudricourt to send her to the dauphin in Chinon, she spoke her "secret" to Charles, and Charles was convinced—but not so convinced as to appoint her war captain without proof of her spiritual purity. Therefore, he sent her to Chinon, where she was investigated and her virginity was confirmed.

II. Joan was verbally dexterous, witty, from her early days.

- **A.** Friar Seguin later reported what Joan said when he asked her why she called the king "dauphin" and not "king." She answered that she would not call him "king" until he had been crowned and consecrated at Reims, where she intended to bring him. "She responded in great style," said Seguin. Joan's language always provoked admiration: "This girl spoke terribly well," Albert d'Ourches from the region of Vaucouleurs said of her, adding, "I would really like to have had so fine a daughter."
- **B.** The friar—talking from the vantage point of 1453, when he gave this deposition—said that Joan predicted to the Poitiers tribunal four things that would happen. They did indeed happen thereafter.
  1. First, she said that the English would be driven away; thus, the siege they had laid to Orléans would be lifted and the city would be free of the English. But first she would send them an invitation to surrender.
  2. Next, she said that the king would then be consecrated at Reims.
  3. Third, she said that the city of Paris would return to the king's obedience.
  4. Fourth, she predicted that the duke of Orléans would return from England.

III. The king accepted Joan's aid and sent her to Orléans.

- **A.** Joan spoke with the English on the opposite embankment, telling them to go away in God's name; otherwise, she would drive them out.
- **B.** During the next days, Joan proved her mettle and that of her soldiers; their full frontal attack broke the English control of the Tourelles, and the French crossed the bridge and entered the city of Orléans.
- **C.** To report simply that the Tourelles had been taken would have been monumental enough news for the day. But the fervor of Joan's soldiers had brought the greatest goal: total victory and liberation of the city of Orléans.
- **D.** On the next day, a Sunday, the troops squared off against each other, but Joan would not allow her troops to initiate the battle because she was firmly committed to chivalric warfare and its rituals, in spite of the fact that the organization of armies and practices of warfare were swiftly changing in her day.

IV. On May 9, 1429, Joan left a delirious Orléans for the next stage of her mission. She believed that the most important part of her mission lay ahead of her.

- **A.** Now, she was determined to bring Charles to the cathedral city of Reims for his anointing as true king of France.
- **B.** To go to Reims meant going deep behind enemy lines. This daring move required a high degree of military and diplomatic ingenuity.
- **C.** Fortunately, the English did not regroup to cut them off from the west, nor get the Burgundians to do the same from the east. Neither did the English and Burgundians combine to face the high morale of the relatively modest army accompanying the dauphin.
- **D.** On June 18, the French won a pitched field battle at Patay against a sizeable regrouped English force bearing down on Orléans from the northwest.
- **E.** The English estimated their casualties at 2,000, while the French lost miraculously few.
- **F.** Patay was Joan's finest victory in a classic military engagement.

V. On July 17, 1429, Charles the dauphin became King Charles VII of France in the traditional royal anointing ceremony in the cathedral of Reims, where most previous French kings had been anointed by the ancient charismatic oil and crowned.

A. Joan played a major and entirely unconventional role in the coronation ceremony at Reims.

1. She stood close to her king in full armor and held her banner unfurled. When reproached later for doing so, she answered that because her banner had "worked hard to achieve this victory, it deserved some of the honor."
2. Once Charles had been properly anointed, she fell to her knees, grasping the king by his knees and explaining the divine significance of the event. That intimacy and presumption irritated some.

B. Pierre Cauchon, the bishop of Beauvais, one of the six ecclesiastical peers, did not attend. His absence is explained by his long-time devotion to the English faction.

C. Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, was also absent.

D. Joan had written the duke of Burgundy on the very Sunday morning of the coronation, July 17.

E. Her letter, preserved in the archives of Lille, brilliantly evokes the grandeur of her Christian, martial, and chivalric mentality, though it masks the increasing irrelevance of these qualities to Joan's world and moment.

F. The letter also suggests that Joan expected the fate of France to be determined by submission or by battle. She was not aware of the swarming diplomatic activity then underway among France, England, and Burgundy.

G. The coronation was a major symbolic victory for the French/Valois cause in the war of propaganda.

H. In December 1431, seven months after Joan's execution, the English/Plantagenet party had their contender, the boy-king Henry VI, crowned in the cathedral of Paris as king of France. These symbolic acts had great political force in that era, but Paris was not Reims—the most powerful traditional king-making site—when it came to coronations.

VI. Once Charles was crowned, he reverted to his preference for diplomacy over military attack, and he distanced himself from Joan.

A. Joan the king-maker knew that her new cause, driving the English utterly out of France, required taking Paris.

B. Joan was frantic with frustration as the king dallied, negotiating with the duke of Burgundy and the English.

C. The "great army of the coronation" began to disintegrate, and the remaining French troops lost forward propulsion.

D. This slackening of initiative gave the pro-English time to fortify the capital city.

E. Joan's foray on Paris was a humiliating failure.

F. Charles reduced his support for her fiscally and in personnel.

G. He ordered her to spend the winter skirmishing with troublesome mercenary captains in the center of France and spending time at the castle of George de la Trémoille, a favored counselor to whom he was deeply in debt and who never liked Joan.

H. Charles clearly wanted Joan to go home with her family's new patent of nobility and leave high policy alone.

VII. In the spring of 1430, Charles allowed Joan to return to the north to campaign against the English and the Burgundians.

A. By now, she was simply one of his captains, with a small though devoted force of veteran soldiers.

B. Charles wanted her to spend her time skirmishing against the Burgundians, wearing them down—perhaps the only kind of strategy he understood.

C. During one of these skirmishes, at Compiègne on May 23, 1430, Joan was taken captive.

D. Historians still debate whether Joan was captured by her Burgundian enemies with the complicity of the supposedly pro-French commander of Compiègne.

E. The Duke of Burgundy, after meeting Joan in an encounter unfortunately not recorded, sold her for a staggering sum to the Earl of Warwick, the English regent of France for the boy-king Henry VI.

F. Warwick wanted Joan condemned as a witch and burned, but he needed an ecclesiastical court to produce that verdict.

Essential Reading:

Régine Pernoud and M.-V. Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, Jeremy duQ. Adams, rev. and trans. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

Kelly DeVries, "Joan of Arc as Military Leader," in *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc*, Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood, eds. (New York: Garland, 1996).

Supplementary Reading:

Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Kelly DeVries, *Joan of Arc: A Military Leader* (Stroud, U.K.: Sutton, 2002).

Questions to Consider:

1. Should Joan have foreseen that once he was king, Charles would insist on doing things his way, which she as a loyal subject had to obey?
2. Do you suspect that Joan may have felt some despair at God's apparent loss of interest in her?

Lecture Twenty-Two

Joan's Trial, Death, and Retrial

Scope: This lecture deals with Joan's captivity, trial, condemnation, and death at Rouen in 1431. Joan's trial is a fascinating study in professional jurisprudence and in the raw intelligence and courage of the illiterate peasant girl who was its target. We also consider one of the strangest and most compelling parts of Joan's story: her retrial (*in absentia*, of course), also at Rouen, twenty-five years later, three years after final French victory in the Hundred Years War. This second trial was spurred by Charles VII, who owed his throne to Joan. After taking testimony from dozens who knew Joan, the judges set aside the previous trial's decision that Joan was a heretic.

Outline

I. Bishop Pierre Cauchon, an English partisan, planned Joan's trial and lobbied intensely for it to be under his direction.
   - **A.** Cauchon was a native of Reims and bishop of Beauvais, two cities that had come over to the side of Charles VII, thanks largely to Joan.
   - **B.** His consequent inability even to visit these two cities of "his" must have increased his hostility to Joan.
   - **C.** Cauchon assembled a distinguished panel of several dozen professional canon-law jurists and theologians for this ecclesiastical trial of Joan.
     1. Many of them were graduates of the pro-English University of Paris and some of them, current faculty members.
     2. Cauchon was intensely proud of "his" trial and saw to it that punctilious minutes and other records were preserved.
     3. But the trial had problems at the outset.
     4. What issues about Joan's political and military career could an ecclesiastical court properly try?
     5. What charges could be brought against her? Was she a prisoner of war or a suspected heretic?
     6. Did the rules of an Inquisitorial trial allow someone not charged of any crime to be interrogated?
     7. These were some of the problems that allowed the illiterate peasant girl to achieve her greatest victory: the near-frustration of nearly 100 highly trained, male professionals.

II. Joan's trial lasted from January 9 to May 23.
   - **A.** She was imprisoned in incredibly harsh and painful circumstances, and without women companions or jailers, who would normally accompany a female defendant.

1. Her greatest danger was from her particularly brutal English guards, who may have threatened her virginity.
2. On the other hand, Joan was a handful: She had tried quite dramatically to escape by jumping a long distance into a moat in Beaurevoir. She must have been extremely agile to have survived.

B. At almost every turn, the illiterate peasant girl frustrated her professional inquisitors.
1. This was, perhaps, her final "miracle."
2. It was certainly a sign of great innate intelligence.

III. Joan's last days on earth were terribly conflicted.

A. Whether to save her life or from doubt in her voices, Joan denied her vision and her mission.
1. On May 24, Joan accepted the tribunal's offer of life in a church prison run by women.
2. Cauchon reneged on that promise, sentencing her to life imprisonment in an English prison run by jailers who would be delighted to have their way with her.

B. For whatever reason, Joan resumed male garb, recanted her previous denial, and reaffirmed her faith in her mission. The tribunal promptly declared her a relapsed heretic and condemned her to die at the stake (always Warwick's goal).

C. Did Joan die a virgin or did her guards finally rape her?

D. Why was she finally allowed the consolation of the sacraments—presumably forbidden to heretics?

IV. The execution itself was a dramatic event.

A. It produced the conversion to belief in Joan of many; even some of the English were converted to belief in her: "We have burned a saint!"

B. Joan's body was reduced totally to ashes.
1. The English wanted no relics to survive.
2. Her ashes were thrown into the Seine.

C. Her burning at the stake remains perhaps the most vivid vision we have of Joan.

V. Throughout her life and trial, Joan claimed that she shaped her life, mission, and goals at the direction of her "heavenly voices." She identified them as the archangel Saint Michael, Saint Margaret (of Antioch), and Saint Catherine (of Alexandria).

A. Joan in her own day (and in ours?) embodied and symbolized profound religious faith.
1. How has her faith been represented, admitted, and denied?
2. Here, we interrogate the figure of Joan and our modern embarrassment about belief.

B. We also look at the power of Joan's own voice.
1. She speaks with grave and compelling simplicity.
2. Her letters alone are remarkable documents that testify to her confidence in her mission as a form of national crusade.
3. The trial records reveal her quick wit, piercing honesty, and insistent righteousness.

VI. A quarter-century after Joan's death, Charles VII wanted her reputation (and, hence, his title) vindicated.

A. Working with Pope Nicholas V, Charles VII arranged for a second trial at Rouen in 1456.
1. Dozens of witnesses, some of them formerly witnesses at Rouen in 1431, were summoned.
2. Joan's fellow villagers from Domrémy came in a group.

B. This fascinating recasting of her condemnation process gives us a richer view of Joan, but that view confirms what we previously could know about her.
1. The court's final judgment was that the 1431 trial was so procedurally flawed as to be null and void.
2. Joan was not formally rehabilitated, though that was this trial's evident agenda.
3. The movement to rehabilitate her fully and declare her a saint had to wait until the nineteenth century, and she was not raised to the full dignity of Roman Catholic sainthood until World War I had ended.

Essential Reading:

Régine Pernoud and M.-V. Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, Jeremy duQ. Adams, rev. and trans. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

H. A. Kelly, "Joan of Arc's Last Trial: The Attack of the Devil's Advocates," in *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc*, Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood, eds. (New York: Garland, 1996).

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Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

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Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York: Knopf, 1981; reissued, University of California Press, 1999).

Kelly DeVries, *Joan of Arc: A Military Leader* (Stroud, U.K.: Sutton, 2002).

Questions to Consider:

1. Of what could Joan have reasonably been found guilty?
2. Which is the more implausible: Joan's military victories or her solitary resistance to her judges?

Lecture Twenty-Three

Joan of the Imagination

Scope: Always remembered at Orléans by a solemn festival in her honor on May 8, Joan was relatively forgotten, even in France, until the eighteenth century. Several dramatists, including Shakespeare, revived memory of her from the late sixteenth century onward, especially in France. In the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, she was mocked by Voltaire and celebrated as a heroine by Schiller and Southey. The nineteenth century saw the revival of what can only be called the cult of Joan the Maid of Orléans, not only in France. Since World War I, Joan has become a heroine for feminists, national liberation movements, political prisoners, and amnesty movements. Today, she is exploited in the propaganda mostly of rightist-nationalist parties. The Catholic Church beatified Joan in 1909 and canonized her (declared her a saint) in 1920. The international film industry has adopted Joan as one of its favorite characters. She remains an extraordinary, rule- and role-defying figure of human history.

Outline

I. One of the most remarkable tributes to Joan was written by a woman of her own day, the elegant court poet Christine de Pizan (1364–1430). Christine had already retired to monastic life by the time she heard of Joan, about whom she wrote a poem, the *Ditie de Jeanne D'arc*, completed on July 31, 1430—that is, between the time that Joan brought Charles to be crowned in Reims and Joan's failure to take Paris.

II. Two mystery writings sum up much of the continuity and difference between medieval and modern perceptions of Joan. Many lesser versions of the story were written for local entertainment.

   A. Joan's memory has been consistently honored at Orléans since 1435 by a festival on the 8th of May.

      1. The ritual reenactment of the siege has been celebrated with dramatic performances, as well as processions and the like, for more than five centuries (barring a few short breaks at periods of extreme political difficulty).
      2. The central dramatic performance is a mystery play in medieval style, *The Mystery of the Siege of Orléans.*

   B. In the early twentieth century, the French Catholic poet Charles Péguy wrote a major poem that can be (and frequently has been) performed as drama. Influenced by, although very unlike, the Orléans mystery play, Péguy's *Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc* is generally recognized as a monument of modern French literature.

C. These two works sum up much of the continuity and difference between medieval and modern perceptions of Joan.

III. Interestingly enough, most of the writers of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who wrote on Joan were dramatists. That changed during the Enlightenment.

A. Shakespeare, as always a patriotic Englishman, said nasty things about Joan in *Henry VI, Part I* (1592–1594?). For Shakespeare, she was the whore of the Armagnacs—a sexually perverse and lurid witch.

B. Several Francophone dramatists wrote supportive and successful plays about the Maid in the seventeenth century.

C. Three major poetic works for and against Joan were composed in the eighteenth century, in three languages.

1. The great Enlightenment writer Voltaire's scurrilous satire *La Pucelle d'Orléans*, circulated first privately (1740), then formally published in 1762 and later, caricatured Joan as a lumpish and stupid peasant who rides an ass, is constantly surprised while naked, and finally, yields her virginity to Dunois. Voltaire sought to undermine her story ironically because he was amused that the French, given their proclivities, would make a national heroine of a virgin.
2. Outraged at this caricature, the Englishman Robert Southey published a long laudatory epic entitled *Joan of Arc* in 1796 (when he was twenty-two).
3. In 1801, comparably outraged, Friedrich Schiller published his verse drama *Die Jungfrau von Orléans*.
4. Despite their opposition on almost every other point, both Voltaire and Schiller had to get rid of Joan's virginity (Schiller felt that her virtues deserved the fullness of romantic bliss).

D. Most of the plays and nondramatic poems written about Joan from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries also ended with Joan's deflowering: Her virginity, the guarantee of her mission in the medieval mind, was too much for those modern male authors.

IV. The nineteenth century saw the revival of what can only be called the cult of Joan the Maid of Orléans, not only in France.

A. In France, she became the nationalist heroine of monarchists and republicans, socialists and conservatives.

B. She became a potent figure of Allied propaganda (which meant including the English) in World War I. American enthusiasm for her mounted at that time. She was seen as a figure of liberation.

C. In World War II, Joan's example inspired both Charles de Gaulle and Vichy propaganda: Two sides of the political coin claimed her inspiration.

D. Today, Joan is exploited as a propaganda figure in France mostly by rightist parties; Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the anti-immigrant National Front political party that was popular in the early part of the third millennium, said that she was his special inspiration: Was he trying to copy de Gaulle?

E. From its inception, film has celebrated Joan's life. Have more movies been made worldwide about Joan of Arc than about any other historical figure? Perhaps so. Even Thomas Edison made a film about Joan.

F. Joan also remains an inspiration for movements of national and economic liberation, some of the most important movements of twentieth-century world history.

G. She is also a model for political prisoners.

H. If anything, Joan has been more important to the imagination of our time than she was to that of her own fifteenth century.

V. The Catholic Church finally validated Joan in the early twentieth century.

A. Joan was beatified at Rome in 1909, thus paving the way officially for her to be made a saint.

B. Joan's cult then spread throughout the Catholic world.

C. In 1920, she was canonized (declared a saint) just after World War I by Pope Benedict XV.

D. Interestingly, in a move some see as politically motivated, she was sainted as a virgin, not as a martyr or confessor of the faith.

VI. We end by considering the power of Joan's own voice. She speaks with grave and compelling simplicity.

A. Her letters alone are remarkable documents that testify to her confidence in her mission as a form of national crusade.

B. As Marina Warner said, Joan is most notable for what she is *not*: no queen, no courtesan, no mother, no beauty, no artist. She is not an intellectual: She belongs to the sphere of action, not contemplation. And she was hated by intellectuals because she didn't hold to their party line.

C. She is renowned for what she did on her own—not by birthright or by marriage.

D. She claimed that she shaped her life, mission, and goals at the direction of her "heavenly voices."

VII. Joan in her own day embodied and symbolized profound religious faith.

A. How has her faith been represented, admitted, and denied? The figure of Joan forces us to face our embarrassment about belief.

1. Most troublesome of all, more shocking than sex and strumpets, Joan's story forces us to face the problem of faith. Faith is the inadmissible topic.
2. It is easy in our culture to talk about sex, but the absence of Joan's desire for anyone other than God challenges our post-Freudian sensibilities.

B. If we can't comfortably contend with faith, we are certainly nevertheless able to perceive Joan's constancy and honor as a form of heroic grace and greatness.

Essential Reading:

Régine Pernoud and M.-V. Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, Jeremy duQ. Adams, rev. and trans. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood, eds., *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc* (New York: Garland, 1996).

Supplementary Reading:

Vita Sackville -West, *Saint Joan of Arc* (New York: Grove Press, reissued 2001).

Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York: Knopf, 1981; reissued, University of California Press, 1999).

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you think of any other historical figure enjoying as durable and polyvalent an influence as Joan—especially if defeated and killed in two years of often-frustrated activity?
2. Saint or political martyr: Ultimately, did Joan die for her religion or for her politics?

Lecture Twenty-Four

Four Pioneers

Scope: The daunting queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, the learned abbess Heloise, the prophet Hildegard of Bingen, and the warrior Joan of Arc: Each of these women had a profound impact on her culture. In this course, we have considered issues of biography, personal and national identity, and identity-anxiety, as well as myth-making; we have considered the lives and later interpretations of these medieval women. In each case, we have reported from contemporary records and later interpreters. All these instances show us women who elaborated or escaped the boundaries inside which medieval women are conventionally thought to have lived.

Outline

I. All the stories we have been thinking about in this course make us aware of the alterity—the *otherness*—of the Middle Ages.

A. This culture, for example, whether in the twelfth or fifteenth century, whether in France or Germany or other parts of Europe, attached profound importance to contemplative life and symbolic acts.

B. Even when they chose monastic life (or found it thrust on them), these women were active in the world.

C. Consider Heloise and Hildegard.
1. They were institution builders, literally "homemakers" for their "daughters."
2. They contributed crucial revenue to their orders and amplified their organizational structures.
3. But they also performed another basic function: They led communities of women dedicated to prayer. Prayer was not a luxury for medieval European Christians; it was as crucial as food.

II. Why do we want to know about these women? Why do they seem heroic?

A. One fact that makes these women remarkable is that they were considered notable figures in their own times.
1. Those were times when women's accomplishments usually weren't considered valuable enough to record.
2. These women had what we now call *agency*: They acted as themselves for themselves; they were not merely "acted upon," subsumed, or remembered only as companions to inherently more important men.
3. These women were exceptional figures in a society where women were not forces to be considered but, instead, things to be used.

4. The very existence of these four women tells a different story about gender than historians often record.
5. Gender is a very basic distinction in society. The question "Is it a boy or a girl?" often comes before "Is the baby healthy?"
6. In their day, each of these women significantly redefined gender roles. Hildegard did this in theory (virgins are virile), and the others, in action.

B. The accomplishments of these women were notable and were noted because they achieved great feats in many realms: intellectual, spiritual, scholastic, prophetic, philosophical, political, cultural, and so on.
1. They were engaged in feats of war and peace, of private and public life, of romance, fantasy, and gripping reality.
2. Their achievements were generally thought by most people to be the exclusive prerogative of the male.
3. Such feats lead us to ask some basic questions about what we mean (and what older cultures meant) by the concepts of "masculine" and "feminine."

III. We moderns inevitably find each of these women problematic, as well as fascinating.

A. Was Heloise was just an adjunct of Abelard?

B. Was Eleanor merely a manipulative power monger?

C. Were Hildegard and Joan mad?

D. Was crazy Hildegard just zany?

E. Was crazy Joan really berserk and menacing?

F. All of these women were, in some way, perceived as dangerous:
1. Heloise's "in-habited" (in and out of clerical garb) sexuality
2. Hildegard's spiritual monomania
3. Eleanor's thirst for passion and power
4. Joan's push as warrior girl-wonder.

G. They often frightened as much as fascinated the men who (at least temporarily) controlled their reputations by writing about them. Fear often distorts.
1. Hildegard exercised most control over how she was seen; to a large extent, she created her "press," her public and historical persona. She controlled her writings, her manuscript production, her letter collection, and even part of her own biography (autohagiography, as Barbara Newman cleverly names it).
2. She also attempted to enforce a view of herself in her letters, as did Joan in her trial.
3. Illiterate Joan knew she had left a paper trail and was part of the historical record—witness her remarks on her faith that the Poitiers trial record was accessible, available.

4. Ironically, it is the grandest dame of them all, Eleanor, who had least control over her press.

IV. What is important about the stories we have gathered in this course is that these women can now live in the light of history.

A. These women (especially our twelfth-century women) remind us of a moment long ago in Western Christian culture when women *almost* made it as partners to men who had parallel roles and equal rights.

B. Those "gender rights" depended, however—as we must remember—on a medieval caste or class system that was fundamentally inequitable.

C. The caste system persisted, and repression soon swallowed that brief shining moment in which women could hope:
1. To rule as much as be ruled
2. To teach as much as learn
3. To travel and see the world
4. To assert their prerogatives over their own bodies.

D. Women did not again have such huge possibilities until modern times.

Essential Reading:

Thelma S. Fenster and Clare A. Lees, eds., *Gender in Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

Supplementary Reading:

Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, ed., *A History of Women in the West II: Silences of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992).

Questions to Consider:

1. What is most memorable about each of the four women we have studied?
2. Would women today face the barriers these women faced?