

## “She is my Eleanor”: The Character of Isabella of Angoulême on Film—

### A Medieval Queen in Modern Media

Carey Fleiner

#### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The life of Isabella of Angouleme (c. 1188-1246) is the stuff of fiction: At the age of thirteen, the ‘Helen of the Middle Ages,’ was heir to important property in France.<sup>2</sup> Supported by her parents, she spurned her fiancé Hugh of Lusignan, Count of La Marche (breaking a legal contract of affiance) in favor of John of England<sup>3</sup> (who divorced his first wife for her – and to acquire said property).<sup>4</sup> When she was perhaps only between nine and fourteen years old, she was sent to be educated at Hugh’s estate when John fetched her back to Angouleme for a quick wedding. Although the 35-year-old John seems to have waited a few years before consummating the marriage,<sup>5</sup> the chroniclers note that the pair scandalized the court with their vigorous sex life and extravagant living.<sup>6</sup> Isabella persuaded first John, then her second husband Hugh, the son of the original fiancé Hugh of Lusignan,<sup>7</sup> a powerful castellan (whom she stole from her own preteen daughter, whom she then kidnapped),<sup>8</sup> and finally her son Henry III to pursue useless wars against the French—wars which they lost<sup>9</sup> when promised Lusignan support failed to show up.<sup>10</sup> Isabella declared herself a queen until the day she died,<sup>11</sup> refusing to pay homage to her French overlord (the count of Poitou)<sup>12</sup>—appearing, instead with her family at his home at Christmas in 1242 to beg forgiveness for her and Hugh’s transgressions against his authority;<sup>13</sup> after a suitably humble display of obeisance, they withdrew and set the place on fire on the way out. Isabella’s final (alleged) act of infamy was a plot to poison King Louis IX in 1243,<sup>14</sup> whereupon she fled to the abbey at Fontevraud.

This is an accepted manuscript of book chapter published by Palgrave Macmillan in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, available online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68771-1>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Palgrave Macmillan.

According to legend, she finished her life living bricked up in a secret room (*secretissima camera*) in the abbey.<sup>15</sup>

This paper focuses primarily on Isabella's two main big screen appearances, 1977's *Robin and Marian* (directed by Richard Lester) and 2010's *Robin Hood* (directed by Ridley Scott). It will survey, against the relevant historical context of Isabella's life and career, how these two cinematic Isabellas reflect the image of the queen as a royal wife as recorded by contemporary literature, if not subsequently shaped by nineteenth-century cultural expectations for acceptable feminine behaviour. Isabella has a richly developed character in modern popular fiction, especially historical romances, for example, where she comes across as an ambitious, aggressively sexual woman who was limited by contemporary expectations of appropriate female roles. As a royal wife and mother, Isabella was expected to be a model of the domestic helpmeet and counterpart to her husband's public responsibilities, but her forward behaviour was seen as a sign that her menfolk were ineffective, especially the 'wicked' John. On film, however, she has very limited screen time: perhaps, between the two films, a grand total of about twenty minutes. However, in that short amount of time and with limited dialogue she becomes a powerful symbol representing John's failings as a leader and king.

### **Looking for the Historic Isabella**

Only recently has English scholarship focused on Isabella and a re-examination of her life. Her earliest modern biographies are French, Castaigne in 1836 and Surin in 1846, followed by Agnes Strickland's English biography in 1854. At first in modern scholarship, she appears as a secondary character: mid twentieth-century scholarship focuses on her Lusignan husband and brood,<sup>16</sup> and of course she makes an appearance in scholarship on John of England.

This is an accepted manuscript of book chapter published by Palgrave Macmillan in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, available online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68771-1>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Palgrave Macmillan.

Recent scholarship on John, like other maligned ‘historical villains,’ re-examines the nature of his rule and the sources which recount it, and these studies have brought Isabella herself into the spotlight,<sup>17</sup> especially from the 1990s. She has been the topic of dedicated studies<sup>18</sup> that examine her actions in light of the growing trend on medieval queen-consorts and queens who wielded authority behind the throne.<sup>19</sup> Despite such ongoing scholarship, however, Agnes Strickland’s biography—errors, sentimentality, and all—often remains the first—if not last—stop for those authors who craft the fictional Isabella as they fold into their dramas Strickland’s innovative but uncritical read of primary sources and her own Victorian morality.<sup>20</sup>

Primary sources for Isabella include the ruins of Fontevraud castle, her sarcophagus, and her seal. Written sources include royal records, Isabella’s own letters and charters, royal financial records, and charters such as those found in the Close Rolls, Charter Rolls, and Pipe Rolls, and contemporary chronicles and accounts including papal and English monastic chronicles.<sup>21</sup> The latter sources tend to be brief if not synoptic, and, despite the variety of surviving sources that mention Isabella, it is these monastic chronicles that primarily shape the image of the queen that we see on the big screen. These chroniclers are not particularly sympathetic towards Isabella,<sup>22</sup> least of all Matthew Paris. Matthew was a monk at St. Albans and a prolific writer and illustrator best known for his *Chronica Maiora* and *Historia Anglorum*.<sup>23</sup> No mere cloistered churchman, he seems well-acquainted with the movers and shakers at the English court, and he shows no inhibition when criticising the nobility—John’s military incompetence, for example, and Henry III’s inability to control neither his Savoyard in-laws nor his Poitevin half-siblings.<sup>24</sup> Roger of Wendover’s contemporary account of Isabella, folded into Matthew’s *Historia Anglorum*, is a principle source of the best-known anecdotes—sleeping in with John until 11 am every day, the extravagant spending, her

beauty, greed, and ambition, and the subsequent shenanigans of her French children as they ran roughshod over their half-brother Henry's hospitality. Matthew's information on Isabella and John comes down to him second hand, and Weiler notes that while Matthew was scrupulous in naming his sources, he inserted his own views and criticisms into the narrative.<sup>25</sup> That said, it does not mean that Matthew is necessarily inaccurate; rather, one must keep in mind Matthew's purpose for writing history and his idea of historical accountancy. The idea of history as a source of moral exempla predates Matthew by centuries, being entrenched in the Roman and Greek biographical and historical writing of authors such as Sallust or Plutarch. For Matthew Paris, as again with Strickland, Matthew took seriously his duty to provide moral guidance and instruction.<sup>26</sup> He makes no attempt to delve into Isabella's motivations, although his bile for Isabella takes on a different character than his usual dismissal of ambitious women as 'viragoes.' Medieval authors called a woman a virago if she did not follow the passive or domestic role expected of her and demonstrated more political ambition (or competency) than the men around her.<sup>27</sup> Instead, Matthew comments that the French described Isabella as 'more Jezebel than Isabella,' that is, her sexuality and 'feminine wiles' weakened, influenced and manipulated the men in her life.<sup>28</sup>

### **Isabella on Film**

Isabella's literary character reflects a complicated scenario in the eras of women's liberation and post-feminism. She is a strong woman who elicits sympathy as she is oppressed by the men around her, only so far—she still needs men (and her beauty) for fulfilment. Strickland's biography remains a profound influence on creators of historical fiction as they dramatize Isabella's story and adapt her circumstances to their contemporary audiences. Thus Isabella's character has been fitted into different eras. For example, the frustrated Victorian housewife

This is an accepted manuscript of book chapter published by Palgrave Macmillan in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, available online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68771-1>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Palgrave Macmillan.

might readily relate to Strickland's nineteenth-century, ambitious, but suppressed medieval queen. Likewise, in the feminist 1970s, the Isabella of historical romance appears as a liberated, but frustrated political superwoman. Finally, in the post-feminist, politically correct new millennium Isabella is recast yet again as a woman who relies on her sex as a means to enthrall the men around her, but at the same time, needs a man to tame her passions and remind her that she is a woman. Isabella is most fully fleshed out in modern historical fiction from the 1970s onwards.<sup>29</sup> Recent examples of the literary Isabella include Erica Laine's *Isabella* (2015) where Isabella's relationship with John is set out as the origins of the Hundred Years' War, Jean Plaidy's *The Prince of Darkness* (1978) in which Isabella is carried off by a John who is in league with Satan himself, and Lisa Hilton's *The Stolen Queen* (2011) where young Isabella is held captive by a cult 'of the old religion' who plan to use her to overthrow Christianity in England. Rachael Bard's *Isabella: Queen without a Conscience* (2006) relates Isabella's story from multiple first-person points of view to present more sympathy for Isabella than found in previous versions of the story: Bard's Isabella is driven to use her sexuality and ambition less selfishly and more as a means of survival. No matter what the framework of these stories are, the character of Isabella still reflects Strickland's portrayal of an ambitious woman trying to fulfil her expected role against the restrictions placed upon her by social expectations on the one hand, and the repression of the menfolk around her on the other.

Novels allow for extensive storytelling, but unless it is a multi-part television series, historical films rely on shortcuts and assumed audience knowledge in place of deep character development. Isabella's celluloid characterisations are very brief, and yet they nevertheless indicate her passion, her influence on politics, and the weakness and folly of the men around her. The two films in which Isabella appears are revisions of the tale of Robin Hood, a

character whom himself carries about 110 years' worth of cinematic baggage.<sup>30</sup> Recent depictions of Robin revisit his heroism and his relationship with Maid Marian. Isabella appears only tangentially—she should not be in these films, as Robin's king is Richard I, and John is but a prince, but 1977's *Robin and Marian* sets the story late in Robin's career, and 2010's *Robin Hood* fiddles a bit with the timeframe.<sup>31</sup> John is still a prince at the start of the film and becomes king early on; Isabella is, in the film, the niece (in real life, first cousin, once removed) of the King of France, with whom John plans to replace his wife.

*Robin and Marian* (d. Richard Lester) depicts the title characters in their middle age, as author James Goldman was inspired to reflect on the lack of strong heroes in popular culture in the mid-1970s, and, in particular, the evolution of Robin Hood as a cinematic hero over the course of the twentieth century.<sup>32</sup> Noting that Robin's adventures always depict him in his prime, and that all ever noted about his death was that he was struck down 'by treachery,' Goldman decided to present Robin as a middle-aged man and to give him a death connected to his 'character and intentions'.<sup>33</sup> Robin (Sean Connery)'s acceptance of his reputation and the difficult relationship between Robin and Marian (if not Robin and Little John, played by Ronnie Corbett) are the principle focus of Lester's intriguing film.<sup>34</sup> Lester's plan was to put on the screen 'historical truth' and to ratchet down the myth and to make Robin a more realistic character.<sup>35</sup> As a consequence *Robin and Marian* is a 'lived-in' film<sup>36</sup> and meant to reflect the bitter cynicism and deep disillusionment of seventies America.<sup>37</sup> John himself has only about ten minutes' screen time, and Isabella perhaps less than five minutes, although she warrants mention early on in the film. When catching up on the news of the past twenty years, Robin (Sean Connery) learns from Will Scarlet (Denholm Elliott) that Robin has become a legend, and that the king (Ian Holm) is now married to and besotted with a twelve-year-old girl and lies in bed all day with her. The sarcastic tone in which Will

tells the story and Robin's look of distaste tell us all we need to know about John's current reputation as a dirty old man who is neglecting his royal duties.

When we finally see John at nearly halfway through the film, he is sat before a splendid tent overlooking a sea cliff and shouting at a papal legate; he is a man, according to Goldman's script 'given to fits of uncontrollable rage'.<sup>38</sup> From behind him appears Isabella (Victoria Abril) wrapped only in a fur duvet. Very young, 'an adorable girl, who looked every day of twelve,'<sup>39</sup> speaking stilted English, she begs him petulantly to come back to bed. Seeing her, John instantly loses his anger and becomes a soppy schoolboy; they cannot keep their hands off each other. She asks him to return to bed, informing him that '[she's] clean all over'.<sup>40</sup> His eyes wander to her breasts, but when Isabella offers to drop her furs, John becomes self-conscious and nods awkwardly towards his men (who have been watching in disgust). She chirps, 'I don't mind; I think you're pretty! You're pretty every place!'<sup>41</sup> She settles for a kiss as John sends her back to the tent, but not without a lot of backwards glances and a little wave from the king. He then turns back to the business at hand and to shout at his chancellor. In only a few minutes, actor Ian Holm conveys a man in the middle of a mid-life crisis; lust, shame, and longing cross quickly over his features at the sight of his queen; Abril's Isabella—a pouty pre-teen, beautiful and empty-headed—is here interested only in luring the king back into her bed. Women's lib may have come to Lester's Sherwood Forest in the form of an embittered Maid Marian, but it has not reached the king's bedroom. This Isabella represents John's corruption, weakness, and consequent lack of respect from his own men.

Ridley Scott also chooses to depict Isabella in his 2010 reimagining of the Robin Hood story written by Brian Helgeland, Ethan Reiff and Cyrus Voris (screenplay by Helgeland) – in this case a 'prequel' of how Robin became an outlaw, and a film affected by

modern feminism and late twentieth-century political correctness. Here, too, Isabella has very little screen time in the film's theatrical release of 140 minutes—the longer director's cut is well worth a look, at least for us, as otherwise trimmed dialogue that establishes Isabella's role is restored. In the film, Isabella herself is nearly lost between the two better-known women in the film, each of whom are familiar to cinema and literature audiences: Cate Blanchett's Maid Marian and Eileen Atkin's Eleanor of Aquitaine. Blanchett's Maid Marian reflects the influence of strong, independent post-modern feminism on popular culture, and modern Marian is worth a longer discussion than can be allowed here. More important for us, and the consideration of these two films, Eleanor reminds us of when she dominated the stage and screen on the first wave of feminism in 1968's *Lion in Winter*. Isabella has been connected to and compared with Eleanor since Strickland's account, and in Scott's *Robin Hood* (especially in the director's cut and David Coe's novelization of Brian Helgeland's screenplay), the parallel between Isabella and Eleanor is established at Isabella's introduction in the film. Eleanor has just berated her son for romping with 'the niece' of the king of France (that is Isabella). John retorts that his own wife is 'barren as a brick' and he plans to appeal to the Pope for an annulment. He then reminds his mother that she gave Henry eight children—he, 'the runt of the litter,' is the hope for the kingdom—and not only will Isabella provide him with the heirs that he needs, but that 'she is *my* Eleanor.'<sup>42</sup>

### **She is my Eleanor**

Half way through Strickland's biography of Isabella, there is a break in the narrative of Isabella and John as Strickland focuses on the death of Eleanor of Aquitaine. She tells the reader that Eleanor had been willful, lusty, and independent but that 'adversity...improved [her] character' as a young woman—rather reminiscent of Isabella—but as she grew older,



she learned ‘a stern lesson of life’ and that ‘power, beauty, and royalty are but vanity’.<sup>43</sup>

Eleanor, unfortunately, learned that lesson too late for it to have full effect on her life.<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, Strickland notes that the same misfortunes plagued Isabella, because her own pride and willfulness are similar to the problems faced by Eleanor, as even this great queen failed to tame her own ‘restless spirit’.<sup>45</sup>

The screenwriter for *Robin and Marian* was James Goldman who won a Tony in 1966 for his play *Lion in Winter*. He wrote the screenplay for the film in which Eleanor is brought to life by Katharine Hepburn. Audiences of the film generally do not know the historical Eleanor; they know Hepburn (who stepped into the role following the portrayal of the queen by the then-unknown Sian Phillips in 1964’s *Becket*).<sup>46</sup> *Becket*’s Eleanor is a passive character, helpless and restricted by domestic roles; as Finke notes, the character is restricted by the very clothes she wears and often remains static in scenes where Peter O’Toole’s Henry chews up the scenery around her.<sup>47</sup> *Lion in Winter*’s Eleanor, by contrast, is a formidable dame; Goldman’s stage directions describe her as truly handsome, authoritative, with great presence; she is ‘a genuinely feminine woman thoroughly capable of holding her own in a man’s world’ in contrast to the king’s cynical use of marriage to Alais as a token of exchange, nothing more.<sup>48</sup> Hepburn’s regal presence makes the queen a powerful royal equal in the domestic sphere,<sup>49</sup> and she stands firm against O’Toole’s ranting and raving. Her conflict with Henry over their sons is central to the plot, and she displays the political influence a queen could wield behind the scenes in her domestic capacity.<sup>50</sup> In Act 1, scene 1 of *Lion in Winter*, Henry tells his lover (and fiancée to his son) Alais not to be ‘jealous of the gorgon; she is not among the things I love;’ she is ‘the new Medusa’ and ‘the great bitch’.<sup>51</sup> He reminds the young woman that he has not kept Eleanor imprisoned at Chignon ‘out of passionate attachment’. In *Robin and Marian*, Goldman has Richard I refer to his mother

Eleanor, again, as ‘the bitch’.<sup>52</sup> Eleanor is never seen in the film, as we glimpse only her baggage train, but surely 1976 audiences anticipated a cameo by Hepburn and may well have recalled at that moment her strong characterization, and thus be reminded of this formidable queen in comparison to John’s current consort.

Unlike Goldman and Lester’s film, Scott’s has Eleanor and Isabella interact. The comparison between Isabella and Eleanor arguably plays a significant role, especially if she is meant to be John’s ‘Eleanor’. Isabella (Sophie Marceau) is introduced as an empty-headed sex toy, romping about with John in his bed whilst his cast-aside wife watches them through the keyhole. Isabella scornfully dismisses criticism from her mother-in-law Eleanor who catches them between the sheets—and Eleanor significantly throws the sheet over Isabella’s face because on the one hand, she wants Isabella to hear what she has to say to John, but does not want to look at her. Certainly in *Robin and Marian* Isabella represents nothing more than a sexual cipher (as was *Becket*’s Alais), and she initially fills this role in the modern film. She certainly reveals John’s lust (if not need for an heir), but she also shows that she is not going to take dismissal from her political role (literally) lying down. She jumps out of bed to stand beside John and to speak for herself as he explains to his mother his importance to the future of the crown, and Isabella’s role in his plans.

What is Isabella of Angouleme’s role as the Eleanor the Next Generation? One might argue that she reminds the viewer that she has the potential to become the strong Eleanor depicted in *Lion in Winter* and John another Henry II. In Scott’s story, Eleanor is initially the strongest, most decisive woman in John’s household. She scolds John’s first wife for moping and spying on John and Isabella in bed (‘An English princess shut out of her husband’s bedchamber by a piece of French pastry!’).<sup>53</sup> Ultimately, however, Isabella impresses Eleanor as having ‘spirit’ when Isabella defends herself as John’s choice, and that she will

provide John with the heir that Richard has not given to Eleanor.<sup>54</sup> Eleanor is also the one who crowns John and declares him king when Robin delivers to Eleanor the news and the crown of the dead Richard I. In this scene at the gate of the Tower of London, augmented in the director's cut of the film, John follows Eleanor down to the platform where Robin's boat has landed, looking dismayed if not terrified on hearing the news of his brother's death. The camera focuses on Isabella as she slips her hand into John's, and after a moment he squeezes and grips hers tightly in his own. The director's cut of the film restores critical lines into another scene which reveals Isabella's partnership with John: at 51 minutes, she speaks up to query William Marshal when he advises John on dealing with the remains of Richard I's army—Marshal gives Isabella a strange look, but John reaches out again to take and squeeze her hand.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile in this same scene Eleanor watches on and is dismissed by John when she offers him advice about taxation—he reveals more of his insecurity by informing his mother that her bad advice and Richard's loyalty to her led to 'the wreckage that is my inheritance'—a remark which earns him a stinging slap from his mother.<sup>56</sup> Eleanor later meets with William who informs her that John is about to be betrayed by a man he believes to be his closest advisor; Eleanor remarks that 'it's up to the King's mother to scold him like a child and point him to his duty' and here she transfers her role of advisor and helpmeet to Isabella. This scene appears in both the uncut and theatrical version as Eleanor approaches Isabella and explains not only the situation to the young queen, but how exactly to tell John of the situation.<sup>57</sup> Isabella is baffled that she is not to tell John the honest truth, but Eleanor rebukes her, saying, 'If *you* wish to be queen, *you* must save John...and England;'<sup>58</sup> Coe extends the scene in his novelization, describing Eleanor's dismay that she had 'fallen, and how desperate matters had grown that she should be so dependent on ... this child.'<sup>59</sup> On screen, although frightened, Isabella does as Eleanor asks and stands fast as John whirls about

in anger, tearing up the scenery—not unlike the passion and fury exhibited by Henry II in *Lion in Winter*. John pulls up only when he sees the stoic Isabella stood firm and holding a dagger at her breast; he puts his hand over hers on the hilt as they both cry. The knife falls away; they clinch and exchange the royal tongue; adds Coe, ‘her ardour a match for his’.<sup>60</sup> Thus, these short scenes onscreen complete Isabella’s transformation from mere adornment and heir-factory to that of political helpmeet. Later we see her accompanying him when he receives a proto-Magna Carta from his nobles;<sup>61</sup> she is also shown seated in a throne next to him while he hears official business—as he berates his nobles, he silences their protests as well as hers. He sets the charter on fire, declares Robin Hood from this day forward an outlaw, then retreats inside his palace with his queen.

Despite the time constraints of the medium (and trims to the run-time of the theatrical release), Scott’s Isabella parallels the Isabella of the historical romances, if not Isabella of history, a bit more closely than Lester’s. It is all still flashpoints: first the teenaged sex toy, but even then (in the Director’s Cut) she is seen as an opinionated woman from her introduction. Even without the complete scene of John explaining to his mother Isabella’s importance to him, the ‘Eleanor’ line explicates that her role in Scott’s film is shorthand for her potential to influence John with similar competence as Eleanor (as Henry II’s wife, then John’s mother). Coe’s novelization augments this scenario with additional dialogue and description, especially strengthening Isabella’s transformation from ‘a mere French pastry’ to someone who is equal to John in his passions in the scene where she brings him news of William Marshall’s treachery. In Scott’s film and Helgeland’s story, Isabella represents that John has the *potential* to be another Henry II—which of course emphasizes all the more his *failure*, as the audience is assumed to be familiar with the powerful cinematic Eleanor and the long folk-tradition of John I as a miserable loser. *Robin Hood* does not delve this deeply into

the story: John is a weakling, and his insecurity (and desires to remedy this) are indicated in his comments to Eleanor that now ‘the runt of the litter’ has become king. Although the main story here belongs to Robin and Marian, Isabella and John’s relationship is a neat little subplot with subtext that rewards the more critical viewers.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, one must note that since the seventies and again from the nineties, there is an increasing body of scholarship devoted to finding “women’s voices” in history, a search made difficult as ancient and medieval sources come through the filter of elite male perception of standards of behavior. Literary history of course can take liberties that scholarship cannot; moralizing biographies, historical fiction, and film fill in gaps in the sparse historical record, recreating the personalities of such powerful women by hanging contemporary attitudes, cultural mores, and experience on the skeleton of intriguing facts provided by the original sources. Time constraints restrict cinematic Isabellas the same liberty; they remain signposts to illustrate the weakness of King John, whether besotted by his own lust, and unable to find himself a helpmeet as respected and well-regarded—in popular culture at least—as Eleanor of Aquitaine. The Isabellas in both media remain pawns against the actions of the men (and women) in their stories; historical revisionism has not yet reached this particular corner of popular fiction. The queen receives only the briefest of screen time in both of these films, and ultimately how she behaves and is judged is within the context set for her by John. One awaits cinematic depiction of Isabella that takes advantage of recent trends in new evaluation of royal women’s lives, circumstances, and consequent behavior in the context of contemporary sources to see how she fares perhaps at last on her own terms.

This is an accepted manuscript of book chapter published by Palgrave Macmillan in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, available online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68771-1>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Palgrave Macmillan.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

*Annales Monastici*. “Annales de Burton.” Edited by H. R. Luard. 5 vols. London: The Rolls Series, 1864-9.

*The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I, 1169-1192*. Edited by W. Stubbs, 2 vols. Rolls Series, 1867.

Paris, Matthew. *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*. Edited by H. R. Luard, 7 vols. London: Rolls Series, 1872-83.

Paris, Matthew. 1866. *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Historia Anglorum*, ed. Edited by F. Madden, 3 vols. London: Rolls Series, 1866.

Hoveden, Roger de, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*. Edited by W. Stubbs, 4 vols London: Rolls Series, 1868-71.

Wendover, Roger. 1886-9 *Rogeri de Wendover Liber qui dicitur Flores Historiarum* Edited by H. G. Hewlett, 3 vols London: Rolls Series, 1886-9.

### Films

Anhalt, Edward, Jean Anouilh, and Lucienne Hill. *Becket*. Directed by Peter Glenville. Orlando Park, IL: MPI Home Video, 2007. DVD.

Goldman, James. *The Lion in Winter*. Directed by Anthony Harvey. London: Studio Canal, 2008. DVD.

Goldman, James. *Robin and Marian*. Directed by Richard Lester. Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2002. DVD.

Helgeland, Brian, Ethan Reiff, and Cyrus Voris. *Robin Hood*. Directed by Ridley Scott. Extended Director’s Cut. London: Universal Pictures UK, 2010. DVD.

This is an accepted manuscript of book chapter published by Palgrave Macmillan in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, available online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68771-1>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Palgrave Macmillan.

## Secondary Sources

- Aberth, John. *A Knight at the Movies: Medieval History on Film*. New York and London: Routledge, 2003.
- Beem, Charles. *The Lioness Roared: The Problems of Female Rule in English History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Bianciotto, Gabriel, et al (eds). *Isabelle d'Angoulême: comtesse-reine et son temps (1186-1246)*. Actes du colloque tenu à Lusignan du 8 au 10 novembre 1996. Poitiers: Université du Poitiers, 1999.
- Burstein, Miriam E. "From Good Looks to Good Thoughts: Popular Women's History and the Invention of Modernity, ca. 1839-1870," *Modern Philology* 97, no. 1 (1999): 46-75.
- . "The Reduced Pretensions of the Historic Muse": Agnes Strickland and the Commerce of Women's History." *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 28, no. 3 (1998): 219-242.
- . "'Unstoried in History'? Early Histories of Women (1652-1902) in the Huntington Library Collections." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 64, no. 3/4 (2001): 469-500.
- Church, S. D. *King John: New Interpretations*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999.
- Coe, David. *Robin Hood: The Story Behind the Legend*. New York: Tor Books, 2010.
- Cook, Petronelle. *Queens Consort of England: The Power behind the Throne*. New York, 1993.
- Curran, Cynthia. "Private Women, Public Needs: Middle-Class Widows in Victorian England." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 25, no. 2 (1993): 217-236.
- Dabby, Benjamin. "Hannah Lawrance and the Claims Of Women's History in

- Nineteenth-Century England.” *The Historical Journal* 53, no. 3 (2010): 699-722.
- De Groot, Jerome. *The Historical Novel*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- De Saint Surin, Madame. *Isabelle d’Angoulême*. Paris, 1846.
- Evans, Michael. “A Remarkable Woman?: Popular Historians and the Image of Eleanor of Aquitaine.” In *Studies in Medievalism XVIII: Defining Medievalism(s) II*, edited by Karl Fugelso, 244-64. Boydell and Brewerpp, 2009.
- Finke, Laurie A. and Martin B. Shichtman. *Cinematic Illuminations: The Middle Ages on Film*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 2010.
- Flori, Jean. *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Rebel*, Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
- Fougère, Sophie. *Isabelle d’Angoulême, reine d’Angleterre*. Payre: Edit-France, 1998.
- Goldman, J. *Robin and Marian: An Original Screenplay*. New York: Bantam Books, 1976.
- . *The Lion in Winter*. London: Samuel French, 1966.
- Green, Mary Anne Everett. *Lives of the Princesses of England from the Norman Conquest*. London: Longman, 1857.
- Hahn, Thomas, ed. *Robin Hood in Popular Culture: Violence, Transgression, and Justice*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000.
- Harty, Kevin *The Reel Middle Ages: American, Western and Eastern European, Middle Eastern and Asian Films about Medieval Europe*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006.
- . “Robin Hood on Film: Moving Beyond a Swashbuckling Stereotype.” In *Robin Hood in Popular Culture: Violence, Transgression, and Justice*, edited by T. Hahn, 87-99. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000.
- Hilton, Lisa. *Queens Consort: England’s Medieval Queens from Eleanor of Aquitaine to Elizabeth of York*. New York: Pegasus Books, 2010.
- Jansen, Douglas C. “Women and Public Authority in the Thirteenth Century.” In *Queens*



- Regents, and Potentates*, edited by Theresa M Vann, 91-105. Dallas: Academia, 1993.
- Knight, Steven. *Robin Hood: A Complete Study of the English Outlaw*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.
- , ed. *Robin Hood: An Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism*. Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999.
- Krueger, Christine L. “Why She Lived at the PRO: Mary Anne Everett Green and the Profession of History,” *Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 1 (2003): 65-90.
- Laurence, A. “Women Historians and Documentary Research: Lucy Aiken, Agnes Strickland, Mary Everett Green, and Lucy Toulmin Smith.” In *Women Scholarship and Criticism*, edited by J Bellamy, A Laurence, and G Perry, 125-42. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2000.
- Leitch, Thomas. “Adaptations without Sources: The Adventures of Robin Hood,” *Literature/Film Quarterly*. 36, no. 1 (2008): 21-30.
- Lifshitz, Felice. "Destructive Dominae: Women and Vengeance in Medievalist Films." In *Studies in Medievalism XXI: Corporate Medievalism*, edited by Karl Fugelso. 1611-90. Boydell and Brewer, 2012.
- Maitzen, Rohan. “This Feminine Preserve: Historical Biographies by Victorian Women.” *Victorian Studies* 38, no. 3 (1995): 371-393.
- McLynn, Frank. *Richard and John: Kings at War*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2007.
- Painter, Sidney. “The Houses of Lusignan and the Chatellerault,” *Speculum* 30 (1955): 374-84.
- Painter, Sidney. *The Reign of King John*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1949.
- Parsons, John Carmi. “Piety, Power, and the Reputations of Two Thirteenth-Century

- English Queens.” In *Queens, Regents, and Potentates*, edited by Theresa M Vann, 107-23. Dallas: Academia, 1993.
- Pollard, A. J. *Imagining Robin Hood: The Late-Medieval Stories in Historical Context*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Reader, Rebecca. “Matthew Paris and Women.” In *Thirteenth-Century England VII: The Proceedings of the Durham Conference*, edited by M. Prestone, R. Britnell, and R. Frame, 153-59. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997.
- Richards, Jeffrey. “Robin Hood on the Screen.” In *Robin Hood: Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism*, edited by Steven Knight, 429-67. Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999.
- . “Sir Ridley Scott and the Rebirth of the Historical Epic.” In *The Return of the Epic Film: Genre, Aesthetics and History in the 21st Century*, edited by Andrew B. R. Elliott. 19-35. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.
- Richardson, H. G. “The Marriage and Coronation of Isabella of Angouleme,” *English Historical Review* 241 (1946): 289-311.
- Snellgrove, Harold. *The Lusignans in England 1247-1258*. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1950.
- Stafford, Pauline. *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King’s Wife in the Early Middle Ages*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983.
- Stapleford, Richard. “Robin Hood and the Contemporary Idea of the Hero.” *Literature/Film Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (1980): 182-87.
- Strickland, Agnes. 1850. *Lives of the Queens of England*. Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard.
- . *Lives of the Queens of England* (preface by Antonia Fraser). London: Continuum, 2011.
- Vaughan, Richard. *Matthew Paris*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, New

Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Vincent, Nicholas. "Isabelle of Angoulême: John's Jezebel." In *King John: New*

*Interpretations*. Edited by S. D. Church. Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1999.

Warren, W. L. *King John*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1978.

Weiler, Björn. "Matthew Paris on the Writing of History," *Journal of Medieval History*

35, no. 3 (2009): 254-78.

Wilkinson, Louise J. "Maternal Abandonment and Surrogate Caregivers: Isabella of

Angouleme and her Children," In *Virtuous or Villainous? The Image of the Royal*

*Mother from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern Era*, edited by Carey Fleiner

and Elena Woodacre, 101-24. New York: Palgrave, 2016.

Williams, David. "Medieval Movies," *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 20, Literature

in the Modern Media: Radio, Film, and Television Special. 5, 1990: 1-32.

---

1. The seeds of this chapter were sown in my undergraduate dissertation at the University of Delaware in 1987, when I wrote about Isabella's son William de Valence. Many thanks to Ellie Woodacre and other Winchester colleagues for their feedback on earlier versions of this paper, and to Kevin Harty who heard a version of this chapter at MAMO in Lincoln in 2015. Many thanks go also to Kathy Cephas.

2. On Isabella's family holdings, see S. Fougere, *Isabelle d'Angouleme, reine d'Angleterre* (Payre: Edit-France, 1998), 13-26.

3. Matthew Paris, *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R.

Luard, 7 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1872-83), ii, 462; Matthew Paris, *Matthaei Parisiensis,*

*Monachi Sancti Albani, Historia Anglorum*, ed. F. Madden, 3 vols (London: Rolls Series,

This is an accepted manuscript of book chapter published by Palgrave Macmillan in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, available online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68771-1>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Palgrave Macmillan.

---

1866), ii, 86; Roger de Hoveden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1868-71) iv, 119; Roger of Wendover, *Rogeri de Wendover Liber qui dicitur Flores Historiarum*, ed. H. G. Hewlett, 3 vols. (London: Rolls Series, 1886-9), iii, 148.

4. See *Annales Monastici*, “Annales de Burton,” ed. H. R. Luard, 5 vols. (London: The Rolls Series, 1864-9), i, 202; cf. Matthew Paris, *Historia Anglorum* ii, 86; Roger de Hoveden iv, 119. See also Fougere, *Isabelle d’Angouleme*, 27-31.

5. Roger de Hoveden ii, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, 483; N. Vincent, “Isabella of Angoulême: John’s Jezebel,” in *King John: New Interpretations*, ed. S. D. Church (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 173-75.

6. Matthew Paris, *Historia Anglorum* ii, 96. “cum regina epulabatur cotidie splendidissime, usque ad horam prandii sompnos protrahens matutinales.”; Roger de Hoveden iii, 171. On Isabella’s inheritance and the consequences of breaking the contract with Hugh and her subsequent marriage to John, see Vincent, “John’s Jezebel,” especially 166-170 and 177-82.

7. “Annales monasterii de Waverlei,” in *Annales Monastici*, ed. H. R. Luard, 5 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1864-9), ii, 291; “Annales Prioratus de Wigornia,” in *Annales Monastici*, iv, 412. See note 16 for scholarship on the identity of Isabella’s second husband.

8. “Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia,” in *Annales Monastici*, iii, 57; *Royal and Other Historical Letters Illustrative of the Reign of Henry III*, 2 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1862), i, Appendix 5, no. 11, 536-7.

9. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora* iv, 179, 210-12. *Royal and Other Historical Letters*, i, 22, no. xvii 22; *Ibid.*, i, 114-15, no. xcvi. Honorius warned Isabella to stop annoying Henry (*Ibid.*, I, 536, x; Dunstable, iii, 75).

10. *Royal and Other Historical Letters*, ii, 25-27, no. xlxxxiv.

This is an accepted manuscript of book chapter published by Palgrave Macmillan in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, available online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68771-1>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Palgrave Macmillan.

- 
11. On Isabella's coronation, see *Chronica Majora*, ii, 467, Hoveden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, iv, 139, and *Historia Anglorum*, ii, 88. The couple were, in fact, crowned thrice, first at Westminster in October 1200, at Canterbury in early 1201 (*Historia Anglorum* ii, 89), and in 1202 at Canterbury (ii, 96). Isabella's seal, used for personal and official business on her return home to Angouleme, and her tomb effigy depict her crowned and enrobed.
12. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, iv, 178.
13. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, iv, 178
14. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, iv, 253; Roger of Wendover, *Rogeri de Wendover*, ii, 251.
15. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, iv, 253.
16. On the Lusignan Hughs and the identity of Isabella's second husband, see H. G. Richardson, "The Marriage and Coronation of Isabella of Angouleme," *English Historical Review* 241 (1946): 289-311 and Sidney Painter "The Houses of Lusignan and the Chatellerault," *Speculum* 30 (1955): 374-84; see also H. Snellgrove, *The Lusignans in England 1247-1258* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1950) for Isabella's relationship with Henry III.
17. Whilst there is a vast scholarship on John, good starting places include Painter's seminal monograph *The Reign of King John*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1949); W. L. Warren, *King John* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1978); S. D. Church, *King John: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999); and F. McLynn, *Richard and John: Kings at War* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2007).
18. Fougere, *Isabelle d'Angouleme* and G. Bianciotto, et al.'s *Isabelle d'Angouleme, comtesse-reine et son temps (1186-1246): actes du colloque tenu a Lusignan du 8 au 10 novembre 1996* (Poitiers: Universite de Poitiers, 1999).

---

19. P. Cook, *Queens Consort of England: The Power behind the Throne* (New York, 1993); John Carmi Parsons, "Piety, Power, and the Reputations of Two Thirteenth-Century English Queens," in *Queens, Regents, and Potentates*, ed. Theresa M Vann (Dallas: Academia, 1993): 107-123; Vincent, "John's Jezebel"; Douglas C. Jansen, "Women and Public Authority in the Thirteenth Century," in *Queens, Regents, and Potentates*, ed. Theresa M. Vann (Dallas: Academia, 1993): 91-105; Charles Beem, *The Lioness Roared: The Problems of Female Rule in English History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Lisa Hilton, *Queens Consort: England's Medieval Queens from Eleanor of Aquitaine to Elizabeth of York* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2010); Louise J. Wilkinson, "Maternal Abandonment and Surrogate Caregivers: Isabella of Angouleme and her Children," in *Virtuous or Villainess? The Image of the Royal Mother from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern Era*, C. Fleiner and E. Woodacre (New York: Palgrave, 2016): 101-24.

20. M. E. Burstein, "'The Reduced Pretensions of the Historic Muse': Agnes Strickland and the Commerce of Women's History," *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 28, no. 3 (1998): 469-500. Burstein discusses the place of Strickland amongst nineteenth-century historians. See also A. Laurence, "Women Historians and Documentary Research: Lucy Aiken, Agnes Strickland, Mary Everett Green, and Lucy Toulmin Smith," in *Women Scholarship and Criticism*, ed. J. Bellamy, A. Laurence, and G. Perry (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2000): 130; on Strickland's dependence on sources that had been edited by others, see Christine L Krueger, "Why She Lived at the PRO: Mary Anne Everett Green and the Profession of History," *Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 1 (January 2003): 65-90. Krueger considers the issue of gender and the nineteenth-century professionalization of history writing; see also R. Maitzen, "This Feminine Preserve: Historical Biographies by Victorian Women." *Victorian Studies* 38, no. 3 (1995): 371-393 on the approaches of Strickland and

This is an accepted manuscript of book chapter published by Palgrave Macmillan in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, available online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68771-1>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Palgrave Macmillan.

---

Everett Green to their sources, subjects, and audience, and B. Dabby, “Hannah Lawrance and the Claims of Women's History In Nineteenth-Century England,” *The Historical Journal* 53, no. 3 (2010): 699-722, who compares Strickland and Everett Green’s work with journalist Hannah Lawrance (especially 706-807).

21. Many of the Rolls Series volumes are now available online as scanned texts via a project hosted by Stanford University. Matthew Paris’s *Historia Anglorum* has been scanned by the British Library, which holds a unique, complete copy.

22. Cf. Vincent, “John’s Jezebel,” 200-201, 203-04; Wilkinson, “Maternal Abandonment.”

23. See R. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, New Series) (Cambridge, 1979) and B. Weiler, “Matthew Paris on the Writing of History,” *Journal of Medieval History* 35, no. 3 (2009): 254-78. Weiler considers Vaughan and Gransden (268-9) and investigates Matthew’s approach to history. See Weiler (262-3) for recent discussion of Matthew’s sources.

24. Weiler, “Matthew Paris,” 269-70 on Matthew Paris’s interests in English politics and well-being of the kingdom.

25. Weiler, “Matthew Paris,” 274-5.

26. Weiler, “Matthew Paris,” 275.

27. Rebecca Reader, “Matthew Paris and Women,” in *Thirteenth-Century England VII: The Proceedings of the Durham Conference*, ed. M. Prestone, R. Britnell, and R. Frame (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997): 153-159. She also considers Matthew’s interpretation of female sexuality and its power (157-59); she notes that Matthew’s more prurient passages were left untranslated ‘unsuitable’ for Victorian readership (158).

28. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, iv, 253 – not in reference to her relationship with John, but rather her command of her husband Hugh, in the context of his entanglement in a duel

This is an accepted manuscript of book chapter published by Palgrave Macmillan in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, available online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68771-1>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Palgrave Macmillan.

---

with “a French knight.” Cf. Roger of Wendover, *Rogeri de Wendover*, ii, 251, who repeats the same line in the same context – whereas Strickland has Matthew himself offer the opinion (44).

29. See Jerome de Groot, *The Historical Novel* (London: Routledge, 2009) for a survey of scholarship on the historical novel and medievalism, especially 11-50 on the history of the historical novel. On the modern historical romance in the twentieth century, see 52-69, and then in the post-modern era, 97-103.

30. Robin first appears on film in Britain in 1908 (*Robin Hood and his Merry Men*) and 1912 in the USA (David Williams, “Medieval Movies,” *The Yearbook of English Studies, Literature in the Modern Media: Radio, Film, and Television Special* 20, no. 5 (1990): 26).

On Robin Hood in film in general, see, for example, J. Richards, “Robin Hood on the Screen,” in *Robin Hood: An Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism*, ed. Steven Knight (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999); Kevin Harty, “Robin Hood on Film: Moving beyond a Swashbuckling Stereotype,” in *Robin Hood in Popular Culture: Violence, Transgression, and Justice*, ed. Thomas Hahn, (Woodbridge: D S. Brewer, 2000): 87-99; and Steven Knight, *Robin Hood: A Complete Study of the English Outlaw* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 218-261

31. See, for example, Leitch, “Adaptations without Sources,” on the malleability of Robin Hood’s story. He notes that for the past century Robin Hood films freely plunder the various aspects of the Robin Hood myth. See also Stapleford “Contemporary Idea of the Hero,” on *Robin and Marian*; he also notes that critics of Lester’s film compare Robin not to the original literary sources but rather 1938’s *Adventures of Robin Hood* as their point of departure.

32. James Goldman, *Robin and Marian* (New York: Bantam Books, 1976), 6-13; 16-17.

Goldman wrote both the screenplay and novelisation of *Robin and Marian*; the latter

This is an accepted manuscript of book chapter published by Palgrave Macmillan in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, available online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68771-1>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2018, Palgrave Macmillan.



---

combines script with prose, and is preceded by an essay on his thoughts on traditional heroes in the wake of American disillusionment with and distrust of authority and government after the Vietnam War and other contemporary crises. On *Robin and Marian*, see Harty, “Robin Hood on Film,” 94-97 and Stapleford, “Contemporary Idea of the Hero,” 182-87; the latter looks at Sean Connery’s Robin as a case study of a contemporary hero.

33. Goldman, *Robin and Marian*, 17.

34. John Aberth, *A Knight at the Movies: Medieval History on Film* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003):, 177-87.

35. Aberth, *A Knight*, 181.

36. Aberth, *A Knight*, 184-85; Knight, *Robin Hood*, 237-38.

37. Aberth, *A Knight*, 185; Harty, “Robin Hood on Film,” 97-98; Richards 436-37.

38. Goldman, *Robin and Marian*, 146.

39. Goldman, *Robin and Marian*, 146.

40. Goldman, *Robin and Marian*, 146.

41. Goldman, *Robin and Marian*, 147.

42. David Coe, *Robin Hood: The Story Behind the Legend* (New York: Tor Books, 2010), 13-15.

43. Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*, 34-35.

44. Ibid..

45. Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*, 34.

46. See Michael Evans, “A Remarkable Woman?: Popular Historians and the Image of Eleanor of Aquitaine,” in *Studies in Medievalism XVIII: Defining Medievalism(s) II*, ed. Karl Fugelso (Boydell and Brewer, 2009): 244-264.

- 
47. Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman, *Cinematic Illuminations: The Middle Ages on Film* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 2010): 97-98.
48. Finke and Shichtman, *Cinematic Illuminations*, 94.
49. Finke and Shichtman, *Cinematic Illuminations*, 103.
50. Finke and Shichtman, *Cinematic Illuminations*, 99.
51. Finke and Shichtman, *Cinematic Illuminations*, 102; James Goldman, *The Lion in Winter* (London: Samuel French, 1966), 2.
52. Finke and Shichtman, *Cinematic Illuminations*, 97.
53. See Vincent, "John's Jezebel," 196-7, on a brief discussion of the possible arrangement between John and his two queens. Although John cast aside his first wife on the grounds that she was too closely related (see note 3 above), he provided her with rooms in his household and maintained her upkeep; she and Isabella seemed to reside in at least one palace together.
54. Coe, *Robin Hood*, 15.
55. Cf. Coe, *Robin Hood*, 92-99.
56. Coe, *Robin Hood*, 92-99.
57. In Coe, *Robin Hood*, 182-87.
58. Coe, *Robin Hood*, 185.
59. Coe, *Robin Hood*, 183.
60. Coe, *Robin Hood*, 187.
61. Coe, *Robin Hood*, 291-4. Coe's novelisation makes it very clear, without actually saying "Magna Carta," that it was Scott and Helgeland's intention that the audience assume this was meant to be seen as John facing down and rejecting a version of the baronial charter at the start of his reign (1199). To be fair, this scene takes dramatic licence with the facts, the episode roughly matches the historical record (see Matthew Paris, *Historia Anglorum* ii, 96-

---

97), as John was met with complaints in early 1203 from his nobles for his spending sprees and inattention to affairs of state. He dismissed their complaints, and, according to Matthew, continued to live in lazy luxury whilst roistering with his friends.