

25 February 2017 - Live Chat with Lauren Browne on the reputations of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Eleanor of Castile

Claire Ridgway 2/25/2017 11:59

I've sent a reminder email out and put an alert on Facebook so hopefully we'll get some more people...

Claire Ridgway 2/25/2017 11:59

Hi Wendy!

Wendy Dunn 12:00

Hello - and what a fascinating subject, Lauren!

Wendy Dunn 12:00

Hello Lorna!

Claire Ridgway 12:00

It is, isn't it?!

Lauren Browne 12:01

Thank you so much Wendy! I'm really enjoying researching it at the moment. I'm actually giving a conference paper in Cork University on this subject in April

Claire Ridgway 12:01

Hi Brandi!

Brandi Brown 12:01

Hi everyone!

Lauren Browne 12:01

Hi Brandi

Claire Ridgway 12:01

Hi Teri!

Lauren Browne 12:02

Hi Teri

Teri Fitzgerald 12:02

Hi Claire!

Claire Ridgway 12:02

Lauren, your talk made me think about what people would think about our history books today and how we represent historical personalities.

Teri Fitzgerald 12:03

Hi Lauren!

Lorna Wanstall 12:03

I'm back, I going to have to give nova a little pet talk I think... with a axe....

Claire Ridgway 12:03

Things seem to come in cycles with people being maligned then rehabilitated and so on...

Lorna Wanstall 12:03

Hi Teri and Wendy

Teri Fitzgerald 12:04

Hi Lorna!

Lorna Wanstall 12:04

hi Ceri

Wendy Dunn 12:04

A conference paper in Cork University? That's exciting!

Ceri Creffield 12:04

Hi everyone

Claire Ridgway 12:04

Hi Ceri!

Lauren Browne 12:04

It's a really interesting idea Claire! So much of our understanding of the Medieval period has actually been shaped by Tudor historians

Teri Fitzgerald 12:04

Hi Ceri!

Lauren Browne 12:04

Hi Ceri

Lorna Wanstall 12:05

Or tampered with Lauren to fit what the tudors want people too believe

Ceri Creffield 12:05

Hope everyone is well.

Claire Ridgway 12:06

I found it interesting that there had been this confusion with the Eleanors.

Lauren Browne 12:06

I was looking into Mistress Shore this week and discovered that she wasn't actually called Jane, a Tudor playwright just decided she needed a first name! My mind was blown!!

Claire Ridgway 12:06

Jane Shore wasn't even Jane Shore??!!

Lauren Browne 12:06

Yes, it was the Tudors that dubbed it 'The Dark Ages' after all, Lorna

Ceri Creffield 12:07

SO we don't know Mistress Shore's first name at all?

Teri Fitzgerald 12:07

Hi Wendy!

Lauren Browne 12:07

No, there was no historical record of her name. The first time she is called Jane is in a play written by Heywood in 1595 (I think the date is right) It was discovered in the 1070s that she was actually called Elizabeth, from her father's will

Lorna Wanstall 12:08

Eleanor of Aquitaine by all accounts was a force to be reckoned with that's for sure. It seems to me at least she was a very determined a driven woman. What she wanted she went out full hell for leather to acheive

Lauren Browne 12:08

*1970s

Brandi Brown has joined the channel

Claire Ridgway 12:08

I haven't formally introduced Lauren but I think that many of you know her from her previous talks and chats. But a very warm welcome to Lauren and please do feel free to comment or ask questions, Welcome everyone!

Wendy Dunn 12:08

G'day Teri!

Lauren Browne 12:08

Oh yes Lorna, she's one of my favourite women in history!

Claire Ridgway 12:08

My mind is blown too!

Claire Ridgway 12:09

It makes you wonder if people in the future will be talking about the novels of Philippa Gregory, Jean Plaidy etc. in the same way that we talk about chronicles, romances, legends etc. from the medieval and Tudor periods.

Teri Fitzgerald 12:10

Hi Elizabeth!

Lauren Browne 12:10

Because Jane Shore is such a popular character in Tudor histories, poems, ballads and plays, the name Jane seems to have stuck and even though we now know she was actually Elizabeth, we still call her Jane. Just shows how influential the Tudor period has been on medieval history!

Wendy Dunn 12:10

Eleanor of Aquitaine! She lived such an amazing life!

Claire Ridgway 12:10

Hi Elizabeth!

Ceri Creffield 12:10

Eleanor of Aquitaine is one of those women whose personality shines through history, when so many women have had their characters effaced from the chronicles.

Lauren Browne 12:11

Yes Claire! There's a big concern in academic circles that historical fiction is giving people the wrong ideas about the past

Lorna Wanstall 12:11

Not to mention going to fetch the chosen bride of the French King? in winter weather at such an age I believe she was in her 60's at this point.. 60 isn't old by todays standands of course, but back then she would have been seen as old

Elizabeth Clayton 12:11

Hi Claire!

Lorna Wanstall 12:11

Hell Elizabeth

Wendy Dunn 12:11

So Jane Shore really was Elizabeth Shore??? Love learning new stuff!

Lorna Wanstall 12:12

Hello Elizabeth I mean damn marmalade in the keyboard again

Lauren Browne 12:13

Yeah, E of A was certainly a formidable woman. She went through a character assassination for centuries, but more recently (with the rise of feminism and the study of queenship) a lot is being done to rehabilitate her image

Ceri Creffield 12:13

TV and film are even more misleading than historical novels of course.

Lorna Wanstall 12:14

I agree Lauren, although you must admit she did idolise her son Richard and was perhaps blind to some of his faults

Claire Ridgway 12:14

I know men get their reputations tarnished too, but listening to you talking about the way that Eleanor of Aquitaine's story had been twisted over time made me very cross. It's as if all strong women have to have an evil side. And the bit about her being old and sexual...

Lauren Browne 12:15

You're right Ceri! It can become a bit frustrating when people come up to you and say with certainty that something happened because they have seen it in a historical drama, when actually we don't know if it did or not. But then again, historiography (the history of writing history) doesn't make good TV

Elizabeth Clayton 12:15

In Lauren's talk I was fascinated by the labyrinth being used as an allegory for the path of human life.

Lauren Browne 12:15

Yes Claire, unfortunately many queens have been posthumously attacked in that way! It really makes me mad too.

Lauren Browne 12:16

Elizabeth, the Tudors really loved their metaphors didn't they! I found it quite a moving one too, in a way

Lorna Wanstall 12:16

Is there any truth in the rumours that she found fair Rosamund in a bower and forced her to go into a convent or kill herself

Ceri Creffield 12:17

The Empress Matilda was another whose reputation was shaped by male perception.

Lauren Browne 12:17

No Lorna, E of A was actually held in captivity by Henry II during that period, so there's no truth in it at all. The rumours only began to circulate in the late 13th/ early 14th century

Wendy Dunn 12:17

"many queens have been posthumously attacked in that way! It really makes me mad too." Yes - the problem is that the victors shape the history left behind....

Claire Ridgway 12:17

Very true, Ceri.

Lorna Wanstall 12:18

Lauren you are quite right, many royal woman seemed to have been villified for nearly taking charge of a situation, which a man doesn't seem to understand

Lauren Browne 12:18

Oh absolutely Ceri. Do you know they called her The Lady of England, because there was no old english word for a queen regnant?

Ceri Creffield 12:19

Yes, I think the Anglo-Saxon word only referred to a consort.

Lorna Wanstall 12:19

Thank you Lauren, so yet another pretty story just to make Eof A look like a wicked witch

Lauren Browne 12:20

Yes Lorna, and because the study of queenship is such a new field (its not recognised as a word on my version of Microsoft word) we are only just starting to untangle all of the character assassinations.

Ceri Creffield 12:20

It must be a fascinating area to research.

Lauren Browne 12:21

It's true what they say - "Well behaved women seldom make history" (That was actually a chapter title of my undergrad dissertation on Elizabeth of York)

Lauren Browne 12:22

It really is Ceri, especially with the lens I'm looking at it through. I'm much more concerned with how their reputations have been moulded posthumously than their biographies or what power they were able to wield in their own right

Claire Ridgway 12:22

And interesting that women's reputations are very linked to their male relations, like Eleaor and the changing view of King John.

Lorna Wanstall 12:23

I know this sounds really daft, but Margaret of Anjou, had to take command of England when H6 started to have mental breakdowns, one has to ask was she wrong to do that? because she was after all keeping England safe from H6th enemies who would have taken his throne?

Lauren Browne 12:23

Yeah Claire, I hadn't thought about it much before until I came across that recently. But once you look out for it you see it everywhere!

Lorna Wanstall 12:24

Hello Phillip how are you?

Claire Ridgway 12:24

Yes, women can't seem to be able to stand on their own, according to history anyway!

Ceri Creffield 12:25

When they do, they are called she-wolves and monsters!

Claire Ridgway 12:25

Hi Phil!

Lorna Wanstall 12:25

but it seems strange that, that view completely changed when Elizabeth Tudor came to the throne

Lorna Wanstall 12:26

She proved that woman were every bit as equal to men

Lauren Browne 12:26

Margaret of Anjou is another example of how women who stepped outside their usual role have been attacked for it. Eleanor of Aquitaine and Margaret of Anjou were the two medieval queens most commonly written about in the Tudor period. They were examples of how not to behave

Ceri Creffield 12:26

The Queen who seems to buck the trend for me would be Isabella of Castille, as she wielded real power, marshalled troops and was very proactive - yet her reputation has endured.

Philip Roberts 12:26

Hi Claire. Just catching up on past comments

Lauren Browne 12:26

It's an interesting case Ceri, because during her own life she was relatively unpopular!

Lorna Wanstall 12:27

Ceri and don't forget Isabella of Castille did more than just conquer and unite Spain

Ceri Creffield 12:27

Really? I didn't realise that.

Philip Roberts 12:27

Hi Lorna. I'm feeling much better than I was thank you

Lauren Browne 12:27

Oh sorry, I read that wrong haha I read Eleanor not Isabella!

Wendy Dunn 12:27

but it seems strange that, that view completely changed when Elizabeth Tudor came to the throne.

Yes - but there was a backlash against women when James VI/I came to the throne.

Teri Fitzgerald 12:27

Hi Philip!

Lauren Browne 12:28

The worry over who would be James' consort is also very telling Wendy

Philip Roberts 12:28

Hi Teri. Great to be in all your company

Lauren Browne 12:28

Hi Phillip

Wendy Dunn 12:29

LOL! You know, it appears Isabel of Castile was renamed by the English 'Isabella' as a way to put her down and her granddaughter Mary I.

Lorna Wanstall 12:29

Good to hear Philip, perhaps when you are ready we can have a chat on Facebook one evening

Teri Fitzgerald 12:29

Hi Roland!

Lauren Browne 12:29

Hello Roland

Roland Hui 12:29

hello everyone, sorry to be late

Claire Ridgway 12:29

Hi Roland!

Ceri Creffield 12:29

Isabella to bring back memories of Isabella, consort of Edward II?

Philip Roberts 12:30

Hi Lauren. Thank you for a very interesting chat. I'm learning so much

Wendy Dunn 12:30

Of course, the name 'Isabel' translates to 'Elizabeth'.

Lauren Browne 12:30

That's a very interesting point Ceri! Many primary sources I've read on her have called her Isabella

Lorna Wanstall 12:31

But was Isabella of France really as black as she has been painted

Ceri Creffield 12:31

Well, she had a lot to out up with!

Roland Hui 12:32

Speaking of 'Isabella', I read that King John's 1st wife Hadwisa of Gloucester, was also called Isabella of Gloucester.

Lauren Browne 12:32

That's a really good question Lorna, something that I'm hoping to do research on for my PhD! Just haven't made it to her yet haha

Lorna Wanstall 12:32

Again to my mind she simply took control of England because Edward 2nd was making a pig's ear of things and upsetting people along the way

Lauren Browne 12:35

While researching this, the thing that I found the most fascinating was how Eleanor of Aquitaine's, Eleanor of Provence's and Eleanor of Castile's reputations were conflated in tudor culture

Lorna Wanstall 12:36

I don't think Isabella of F knew anything about the murder of Edward 2 but history point firmly in her direction as the person who ordered his murder

Roland Hui 12:36

Lauren: can you give us an example in the case of Eleanor of Aquitaine?

Ceri Creffield 12:36

Such different women - how did that happen?

Wendy Dunn 12:38

FYI - I was referring to Isabel of Castile. Isabel I de Castilla, Old Spanish: Ysabel

Philip Roberts 12:39

Hi Wendy

Lauren Browne 12:39

The ballad queen Eleanor's confession is thought to have been about Eleanor of Aquitaine, as the earliest version we have of it mentions the Rosamond legend. But other copies don't mention this incident and attribute it to E of P. The ballad then went on to influence Peele's revision of Edward I, which takes the events of the ballad (minus the Rosamond legend) and attributes the misdeeds to Eleanor of Castile

Roland Hui 12:40

How interesting!

Ceri Creffield 12:41

I suppose most ordinary people must have had a very sketchy idea of the country's past back then.

Lauren Browne 12:41

I just read a journal article that suggests the actual incident of an affair with Earl Marshall did occur, but it was Henry the Young King's wife Margaret of France, not Eleanor of Aquitaine. They just changed it to her because she was more well known and it made for a juicier plot

Wendy Dunn 12:42

G'day Philip!

Ceri Creffield 12:43

There was never a proven relationship between William Marshall and Marguerite anyway - it was probably an echo of the Lancelot /Guinevere story.

Lauren Browne 12:43

Yes Ceri, they didn't really think of the past chronologically either. And the history represented in cheap print was one that we might see in children's fairy tales today, 'a long time ago' etc

Lauren Browne 12:44

Yes, very true Ceri, but the rumours may have influenced Eleanor of Aquitaine's reputation. I find it so interesting attempting to untangle all the threads of rumours and reputations

Claire Ridgway 12:44

It's like what Galadriel says in LOTR "History became legend. Legend became myth..."

Lauren Browne 12:44

Yes Claire! I love that!

Philip Roberts 12:47

G'day Wendy. I keep losing connection so while I have the chance, thank you Claire for arranging the chatroom tonight, thank you Lauren for a very interesting chat and was lovely catching up with you all again xx

Lorna Wanstall 12:47

Did Eleanor of A see her daughters after her divorce from the french king

Lauren Browne 12:47

Of course, all of this is just in the Tudor period. Eventually I'll write a thesis chapter on the later moulding of medieval queens' images, with the iconoclasts especially!

Elizabeth Clayton 12:49

Oh, great! I will look forward to another fascinating talk then, Lauren!

Ceri Creffield 12:49

How did you decide to study this subject, Lauren?

Lauren Browne 12:49

I'm not actually sure Lorna, it isn't something I've looked into! There's a book on her daughters with Henry II, by Colette Bowie, but I'm unsure about Louis' children

Ceri Creffield 12:50

I thin Eleanor did meet at least one of her French daughters later, once she was a married woman.

Lauren Browne 12:52

Good question Ceri! I've always been interested in queens, every since we learnt about the wives of Henry VIII in primary school. At university I took a class that covered the lifecycle in the medieval and early modern period, and the week on death fascinated me. I became very interested in tombs and especially effigies as a way of projecting a certain image of a person after they had died. From there it went to other ways a reputation could be shaped posthumously.

Lorna Wanstall 12:52

Did Eleanor ever wonder what happened to Arthur of Brittany?

Roland Hui 12:53

Did E. of A. actually become a nun in her old age, or did she just live amongst them at Fontevrault in her waning years (as Elizabeth of Woodville later did)?

Elizabeth Clayton 12:54

I loved the detail about Rosamond's tomb in your talk, the epitaph.

Lauren Browne 12:54

It's extremely difficult to assess that Lorna, the sources for the 12th/13th century are mainly chronicle accounts which have their own set of problems!

Lorna Wanstall 12:55

Yes I can imagine Lauren,

Lauren Browne 12:56

It's said that she took the veil on her deathbed Roland, but we don't know if this happened in reality or if it was a way to fit her death neatly into the concept of a 'good' death. Certainly the chronicle accounts state that she was a nun at the time of her death, but the date she took the veil is somewhat unclear

Claire Ridgway 12:56

It would be like trying to pick between newspapers and news channels from today in a few hundred years time!

Lauren Browne 12:56

Yes Elizabeth! Gerald of Wales certainly had a way with Latin puns!

Lorna Wanstall 12:56

I believe the Crowland chronicles are usually used as the main source of history in the 11/12/13 century

Elizabeth Clayton 12:57

I do love Latin puns!

Lauren Browne 12:58

There are a great many Lorna, I actually comprised a finding aid for them, in relation to research on Eleanor of Aquitaine, for an MA class I took last year.

Lorna Wanstall 12:58

Ah yes Latin a beautiful language but very difficult to learn, not to mention pronounce correctly.. I can read it and speak latin after a fashion

Lauren Browne 12:59

I'm learning it at the moment to help with my research Lorna and I agree!

Claire Ridgway 1:00

Thank you to Lauren for giving up her time to be with us tonight and thank you to her for her wonderful talk too. I believe that Wendy Dunn (Hi Wendy) is our expert speaker speaker in March, on Thomas Wyatt the Elder, so I'm looking forward to that. I'm also going to organise an informal live chat/debate and thought perhaps something to do with Elizabeth I. I will post details on the site.

Claire Ridgway 1:00

Thank you to you all for joining, it's been an enjoyable hour as per usual.

Ceri Creffield 1:00

Thanks you Lauren - and Wendy, I look forward to that talk.

Elizabeth Clayton 1:00

Latin was my favourite subject at school. My Mum (sadly no longer with me) was a latin teacher, so we had lots of fun.

Lorna Wanstall 1:00

My cousin, had to learn it in his school and when I told him I was teaching myself Latin, he said what the hell for, it will give you a major headache, it always did me.. But actually once you have thee basics you are fine

Lauren Browne 1:00

Thank you everyone for all of the questions and comments! Another really interesting chat!!

Elizabeth Clayton 1:01

Thank you so much Lauren.

Roland Hui 1:01

Thank you!

Lorna Wanstall 1:01

Thank you Lauren really enjoyable talk. Xxxxxxxx

Claire Ridgway 1:01

Thank you so very much, Lauren, and keep in touch.

Elizabeth Clayton 1:01

Goodnight everyone.

Teri Fitzgerald 1:01

Thank you Lauren. Great chat.

Claire Ridgway 1:02

Thank you, everyone, and good night/morning! Enjoy the rest of your weekend!

Lorna Wanstall 1:02

Goodnight everyone take care and keep safe Xx

Ceri Creffield 1:02

Good night all.

Lauren Browne 1:02

It's been my pleasure! It's amazing to be able to talk about my research in detail without everyone rolling their eyes, it's all I ever talk about nowadays - a PhD certainly takes over your life haha

Teri Fitzgerald 1:02

Goodnight everyone!

Claire Ridgway 1:02

Enjoy your studies Lauren.

Claire Ridgway 1:03

Night!

Lauren Browne 2/26/2017 1:03

Goodnight everyone, and thanks Claire- I certainly am!!