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Ela of Salisbury

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Ela of Salisbury (* c. 1190 – † 24 Aug 1261)

1. Name variants: E., countess of Salisbury; Isabel; Isabella

2. Places: Lacock Abbey (Wiltshire), Hinton Priory (Somerset), Salisbury

3. Biography: E. was sole heir to William, second Earl of Salisbury, and Eleanor de Vitré. In 1196, she was arranged to be married to William Longespée, son of Henry II. They had eight children; their youngest son, Nicholas Longespée, would be elected bishop of Salisbury. After William died in 1226, E. became countess of Salisbury and sheriff of Wiltshire. She directed her energies toward the religious life, however. In 1220, she laid one of the foundation stones at Salisbury Cathedral. After her husband’s death, she oversaw the relocation of a charterhouse, founded at Hatherop in 1222, to her land in Hinton, Somerset in 1227. She subsequently sought to found a community of Cistercian nuns. Frustrated in this effort, in 1230 she founded and endowed an Augustinian priory at Lacock. She joined this community in 1238, becoming its first abbess upon its elevation to abbey in 1240 and serving until her retirement in 1257. She was buried at Lacock.

4. Cultus:
   a. Relics: –
   b. Liturgical commemoration: –
   c. Patronage: –
   d. Attributes: –


7. Illustrations: A terra cotta sculpture and possibly a terra cotta bust, both in Lacock (1755), by Victor Alexander Sederbach; http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/996399 and http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/996421 [1 Sep 2021]

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