

The chronicles record a description of the teenage Richard: "He was tall of stature, graceful in figure; his hair between red and auburn, his limbs were straight and flexible; his arms rather long, and not to be matched for wielding the sword or for striking with it, and his long legs suited the rest of his frame." His physical strength was proverbial, as the casualty lists of those who succumbed to him in combat bear out, and he had a natural athleticism until he became increasingly overweight in his late thirties. In many ways he became the archetypal knight of medieval chivalry, skilled in music and composing verse for the ladies, yet at the same time a fierce warrior in battle who showed no quarter to his enemy. Being brought up in a court where the female element tended to