

Byzantium

The Empire of Byzantium

Byzantium was the name of the ancient Greek port at the Hellespont leading into the Black Sea. In 330 A.D., the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great began transforming it into Constantinople; and it became the capital of the eastern, Greek speaking part of the Roman Empire. Constantine is thought to have chosen Byzantium as the new eastern capital partly because he felt it was best to have a capital closer to the crucial frontiers with Mesopotamia and the Balkans, partly because it was on a peninsula and hence relatively easy to defend, and partly because he had converted to Christianity. Many of the old families of Rome continued to worship classical pagan gods.

During the fifth century A.D., the western or Latin speaking part of the Roman Empire was gradually overrun by Germanic peoples; but Constantinople remained the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire until it finally fell to the Muslims in 1453. The name “Byzantium” stuck, and the eastern empire was known as the Byzantine Empire.

“And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.”

William Butler Yeats: *Sailing to Byzantium*

As was the case with ancient Rome, the Byzantine Empire was ruled by an authoritarian political system headed up by an emperor. A dynasty gained control of the throne and ruled by hereditary succession until it was overthrown. Of course, the emperor claimed to be appointed by God.

By the year 900 A.D. the Byzantine Empire consisted of most of modern Turkey and Greece as well as parts of what is now the Crimea, Albania and Italy.

Generation One

Eudocia Ingerina

Born circa 840

Died 882/3

Eudocia was a mistress (a sort of secondary wife) of Michael III, Emperor of Byzantium 842 - 867. She married Michael's successor, Basil I, Emperor of Byzantium 867 - 886.

Michael III, son of the Emperor Theophilus, was only thirteen years of age when he acceded to the throne in 842. A regency was undertaken by his mother Theodora, his uncle Burdas who was said to be a strong and unscrupulous character, and the Magister Manuel. However, symptoms of madness appeared in the young emperor as he displayed a passion for low company, extravagance, drunkenness and unrestrained lust. Eventually, Michael's ex-groom and friend Basil gained control and became a joint emperor. Basil then put Michael III to death and sole emperor as Basil I.

Basil was descended from an Armenian family of military colonists. His mother was called Pankalo and was said to be of Slavic ancestry. Basil founded the “Macedonian Dynasty” which lasted for two hundred years.

Eudocia, mistress of Michael III and wife of Basil I, had a son. It is uncertain whether Michael or Basil was the father of:

- **Leo the Wise**, mentioned next

(Weis, Ancestral: 141A-15 The Book of History, Vol. VII, pg. 2942 – 2948)

Generation Two

Leo VI “the Wise”, Emperor of Byzantium

Born on September 1, 866

Died on May 12, 912

Emperor of Byzantium 886 - 912

Leo “the Wise” renewed and revived the learning and laws from the past including the Code of Justinian - a codification of Roman Law - dating from the time of Justinian the Great who had ruled the Byzantine Empire over three hundred years earlier, from 527 to 565. Leo also displayed a keen interest in Theology. Leo had the following children:

- **Anna of Byzantium**, mentioned next. Anna’s mother, Zoe Tzautzina, was a mistress of Leo at the time of Anna’s birth circa 886 - 888. Leo finally married Zoe in 898.
- **Constantine VII** who was born circa 906; he succeeded Leo VI in 912 as Emperor of Byzantium.

(Weis, Ancestral: 141A-16 The Book of History, Vol. VII, pg. 2948 – 2951)

Generation Three

Anna of Byzantium

Born circa 886 - 888

Died circa 914

Anna married circa 900 to Louis “the Blind” (circa 883 - 928), King of Provence and Italy. Louis “the Blind” was a great grandson of Lothaire I, King of Italy and Emperor of the West who was in turn a grandson of Charlemagne. (see *Flanders*, Generation One) Anna and Louis had a son:

- **Charles Constantine, Count of Vienne**, mentioned next.

(Weis, Ancestral: 141A-17, 141B, and 140-13, 14, 15.)

Generation Four

Charles Constantine, Count of Vienne

Born circa 900/1

Died circa January 962

Charles married Teutberg (died circa 960) and they had a daughter:

- **Constance of Provence**, mentioned next.

(Weis, Ancestral: 141A-18)

Generation Five

Constance of Provence

Died circa 961 - 965

Constance married circa 930 to Boso II, Count of Provence at Arles 949, and at Avignon 935, died 965/67, son of Rotbaud I, a Burgundian, Seigneur d’Angel. Constance and Boso had the following sons:

- **William I, Count of Provence**, mentioned next.

- **Rotbaud, Count of Provence**, mentioned next.

(Weis, Ancestral: 141A-19 Moriarty, pg. 27)

Generation Six

William I, Count of Provence

Born in 950

Died circa 993-994

William married first to Arsenda de Comminges and secondly to Adelaide (or Blanche), a daughter of Fulk II, Count of Anjou. William and Adelaide had the following children:

- William II Count of Provence who died in 1018
- **Constance of Provence**, mentioned next.
- Ermengarde who married Robert, Count of Auvergne who died in 1032.

(Weis, Ancestral: 141A-20 Moriarty, pg. 28)

Rotbaud, Count of Provence

Died April 22, 1015

Rotbaud married Ermengarde and they had a daughter:

- **Emma of Provence**, mentioned next.

(Moriarty, pg. 28)

Generation Seven

Constance of Provence

Born circa 986

Died on July 25, 1032

Constance married **Robert (II) Capet “the Pious”, King of France**. (See *Capet*, Generation 12)

(Weis, Ancestral, 141A-21, 141-21, 101-21 Moriarty, pg. 28)

Emma of Provence

Emma married circa 990 William III “Taillefer”, Count of Toulouse (born circa 947; died in October 1037). Emma and William had a son:

- **Pons III, Count of Toulouse**, mentioned next.

(Weis, Ancestral: 185-2 Moriarty, pg. 41, 42)

Note: Weis states in Line 185-2 that Emma of Provence was a “gt. gr. dau. of Boso II, . . . and his wife, Constance of Provence” and gives as his reference “Moriarty 42, 46”. However, on pages 27 and 28 Professor Moriarty shows Emma as a granddaughter of Boso II as shown here.

Generation Eight

Pons III, Count of Toulouse

Born circa 990

Died in 1060

Pons III married Almode, a daughter of Bernard, Count of La Haute Marche and Périgord. Almode was murdered by her stepson Raimond of Barcelona in 1071.

Pons and Almode had the following children:

- **William IV, Count of Toulouse**, mentioned next.
- Almode who married Peter, Count of Melgueil

(Weis, Ancestral: 185-2 Moriarty, pg. 42)

Generation Nine

William IV, Count of Toulouse and Duke of Norbonne

Born circa 1040

Died in 1093

William married Emma of Mortain, a daughter of Robert, Count of Mortain and Earl of Cornwall. Robert of Mortain was a son of Herleva and Herluin, Vicomte of Contreville. Prior to marrying Herluin and while still in her teens, Herleva had been a girlfriend of Robert I, 6th Duke of Normandy; their son was William the Conqueror. Thus, Robert of Mortain was a half brother of William the Conqueror. Robert and his brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent appear to have been very close to their half brother William. Both Odo and Robert were most certainly present at the Battle of Hastings. (See *Normandy*, Generation Ten)

William and Emma had a daughter:

- **Philippa (Matilda or Maud) of Toulouse**, mentioned next.

(Weis, Ancestral: 185-1, 185- 2 Moriarty, pg. 42 Douglas, Table 6)

Generation Ten

Philippa (Matilda or Maud) of Toulouse

Born circa 1073

Died on November 28, 1117

Philippa married William VII “the Troubadour” of Poitou (IX of Aquitaine). William was the first known troubadour, or lyric poet, employing the Romance vernacular called Provençal.

William “the Troubadour” was a great X3 grandson of Rolf the Ganger, as shown next:

William (I) “Tête d’ Etoupes”, Count of Poitou (born circa 915, died April 3, 963) who married Gerloc or Adela of Normandy (born circa 917, died after January 14, 962), a daughter of Rolf the Ganger, 1st Duke of Normandy. (See *Normandy*, Generation Five) William and Adela had a son:

- William (II) “Fier de Bras”, Count of Poitou (born circa 937, died February 3, 995) who married Emma (born circa 950, died after 1004), a daughter of Theovald (I), Count of Alois. William and Emma had a son:
 - William (III) “the Great”, Count of Poitou and Duke of Aquitaine (born circa 990, died a monk on January 31, 1030) who married Agnes (born circa 995, died after November 9, 1068) a daughter of Otto William, Count of Burgundy. William and Agnes had a son:
 - Gui Geoffrey, called William (VI), Count of Poitou (born circa 1024, died on September 25, 1086) who married Hildegard (died after 1104) a

daughter of Robert (I) Duke of Burgundy, the first of the Burgundian Capets, a son of Robert (II) “the Pious” Capet, King of France. (See *Capet*, Generation Twelve) William and Hildegard had a son:

- William VII “the Troubadour” of Poitou (IX of Aquitaine) who married Philippa of Toulouse.

(Moriarty, pg. 24, 27, 35, 36, 40)

Philippa of Toulouse and William VII “the Troubadour” had the following children:

- **William VIII “the Pious” of Poitou (X of Aquitaine)**, mentioned next.
- Agnes of Poitou who married Ramiro II, King of Aragon.
- Raymond of Poitou, born circa 1100 - 1104; killed by Saracens in 1149. Philippa of Toulouse may not have been his mother; Moriarty shows him as being illegitimate. He became Prince of Antioch by his marriage and is reputed to have had an “affair” with his niece Eleanor of Aquitaine. (See Generation Twelve, below.)

(Weis, Ancestral: 185-3, 110-24 Moriarty, pg. 36, 42)

Generation Eleven

William VIII “the Pious” of Poitou (X of Aquitaine)

Born 1099

Died of food poisoning on April 9, 1137 in Galicia, Spain while on a pilgrimage to Santiago De Compostela.

William married in 1121 Eleanor de Châtellârault, daughter of Almeric (Aimery) I, Viscount of Châtellârault. Eleanor was a great granddaughter of Aimery IV, Viscount of Thouars who was most certainly present at the Battle of Hastings. (See *Normandy*, Generation Ten)

The descent of Eleanor de Châtellârault from Aimery IV can be summarized as follows:

Aimery IV, Viscount of Thouars, died in 1093, who was present at the Battle of Hastings, (See *Normandy*, Generation Ten) married Auregarde de Mauleon and they had a daughter:

- Eleanor de Thouars who married in 1075 Boso II, Viscount de Châtellârault; they had a son:
 - Aimery I, Viscount de Châtellârault, who died on November 7, 1151 as a monk at Notre Dame de Noyers, married in 1109 to Dangerose, a daughter of Bartholomew de l’Isle Bouchard and his wife Gerberga. Dangerose was later a mistress of William VII of Poitou (IX of Aquitaine), father of William VIII “the Pious” of Poitou (X of Aquitaine). Thus, Dangerose was her daughter’s father in law’s mistress. (This certainly gets confusing!) Aimery I and Dangerose had a daughter:
 - Eleanor de Châtellârault who married William VIII “the Pious” of Poitou (X of Aquitaine).

(Weis, Ancestral: Line 183 Moriarty, pg. 45, 46)

William VIII “the Pious” of Poitou (X of Aquitaine) and his wife Eleanor de Châtellârault had a daughter:

- **Eleanor of Aquitaine**, mentioned next.

(Weis, Ancestral: 110-25 Moriarty, pg. 36)

Generation Twelve

Eleanor of Aquitaine

Born circa 1123

Died on either March 31 or April 1, 1204

The Arms of Aquitaine are described as “gules a lion passant guardant, or” which means a red shield with a gold lion. Now, ladies were not supposed to carry coats of arms; and if they did have a seal it was generally in the shape of a lozenge or diamond. However, Eleanor wasn’t any ordinary lady. As the ruler of Aquitaine, she carried the Arms of Aquitaine.



Aquitaine

Eleanor was perhaps the most powerful and influential persons of her time. As heiress to her father’s vast estates of Aquitaine and Poitou, she ruled a domain larger than that of the King of France. Just after her father’s death in April 1137, she married (on July 25, 1137) the son of Louis VI “the Fat” Capet who promptly died on August 1, 1137 leaving the teenaged Louis VII “the Young” Capet (age 17) and Eleanor of Aquitaine (age 15) as King and Queen of France.

Louis “the Young” and Eleanor went together on the Second Crusade in the late 1140’s. It was very unusual for a lady to go on a crusade, but that didn’t stop Eleanor. She is rumoured to have engaged in assorted “affairs” with other men including her Uncle Raymond (See Generation Ten, above.) while on the Crusade. The Second Crusade is remembered historically as being a flop, but apparently Eleanor had a jolly time anyway.

Around this time, Eleanor and Louis had two daughters:

- Mary Capet, born in 1145
- Alisa Capet, born in 1150

After the events of the Second Crusade, Louis “the Young” was reputed to have become an old sourpuss. Undoubtedly, Eleanor’s conduct during the Crusade didn’t help much in this regard. Louis arranged to have the marriage annulled in early 1152. He got custody of the children; but Eleanor kept her vast estates. Louis was apparently disappointed with this settlement as he continued to use the title “Duke of Aquitaine” for a year or so.

Eleanor didn’t waste any time in lining up a new husband. On May 18, 1152, she married Henry Curtmantle who had just turned 20 and was to become King Henry II of England two years later. Eleanor was 30 and had a “bad reputation”; so Henry’s father advised against the marriage. Henry thought he was onto a good thing, so he married Eleanor anyway. The relationship was a bit rough at times, due largely to Henry’s assorted affairs with other women. However, they had eight children including King Richard “the Lionhearted” and King John. (See *Angevin Kings*, Generation One)

Eleanor was officially a vassel of the King of France; but that didn’t mean much because the part of the “Kingdom of the Franks” controlled by Eleanor was larger than the part controlled by the King of France. The combined possessions of Eleanor of Aquitaine and her husband King Henry II Curtmantle were over twice the area controlled by the French and consisted approximately of England, the western half of France (from the Pyrenees in the south to Normandy in the north) as well as the eastern half of Ireland.

During the reign of her son Richard “the Lionhearted”, Eleanor played a significant role in holding England together while Richard was crusading. When Richard was captured, Eleanor helped raise the ransom to secure his release. Later, when John was king, Eleanor helped defend his interests as well.

For King Henry II and the continuation of this line, see *Angevin Kings*.

(Weis, *Ancestral*: 110-26, 101-24 & 25 Moriarty, pg. 36)

Sources

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