

Elizabeth of Vermandois, Countess of Leicester

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Elizabeth of Vermandois, or **Elisabeth** or **Isabel de Vermandois** (c. 1085 – 1131), was the third daughter of Hugh Magnus and Adelaide of Vermandois,^[1] and as such represented both the Capetian line of her paternal grandfather Henry I of France, and the Carolingian ancestry of her maternal grandfather Herbert IV of Vermandois.^[2] As the wife of two Anglo-Norman magnates, Robert de Beaumont, 1st Earl of Leicester and William de Warenne, 2nd Earl of Surrey, she is the ancestress of hundreds of well-known families down to the present time.^[3]

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Elizabeth of Vermandois

Spouse(s)	Robert de Beaumont, 1st Earl of Leicester William de Warenne, 2nd Earl of Surrey
Noble family	House of Capet
Father	Hugh I, Count of Vermandois
Mother	Adelaide, Countess of Vermandois
Born	c. 1085
Died	13 February 1131

Life

Countess of Leicester

In 1096, Robert de Beaumont, Count of Meulan reputed to be "the wisest man in his time between London and Jerusalem" insisted, in defiance of the laws of the church, on marrying a very young Elizabeth, he being over fifty at the time.^[4] In early 1096 Bishop Ivo, on hearing of the proposed marriage, wrote a letter banning the marriage and preventing its celebration on the grounds the two were related within prohibited degrees. In April of that year Elizabeth's father count Hugh left on Crusade, his last act being to see his daughter married to count Robert. The crusader was able to convince Pope Urban to issue a dispensation for the marriage which then went forward.^{[2][4]}

Her husband was a nobleman of some significance in France, having inherited lands from his maternal uncle Henry, Count of Meulan, and had fought at the Battle of Hastings as a known companion of William the Conqueror.^{[5][6]} He was rewarded with ninety manors in the counties of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Wiltshire.^[7] The count of Meulan was one of Henry I's "four wise counsellors and was one of the king's commanders at the Battle of Tinchebray 28 September 1106.^[8] In 1107 Robert became Earl of Leicester.^[9]

Countess of Surrey

Elizabeth, Countess of Meulan is reputed to have had an affair and left her husband when he was near death. The historian James Planché claimed (1874) that the Countess was seduced by or fell in love with a younger nobleman, William de Warenne.^[10] There is no evidence that her second husband, William II de Warenne, second earl of Surrey, was that lover and only later rumors that she had a lover at all during her first marriage. William had sought a royal bride in 1093, but failed in his attempt to wed Matilda of Scotland also known as Edith, who later married Henry I.^[11] He obtained a bride of royal blood when he married Elizabeth in 1118, very soon after the death of Earl Robert.^[12] Elizabeth survived her second husband William to later die 1131.^{[11][13]}

Family

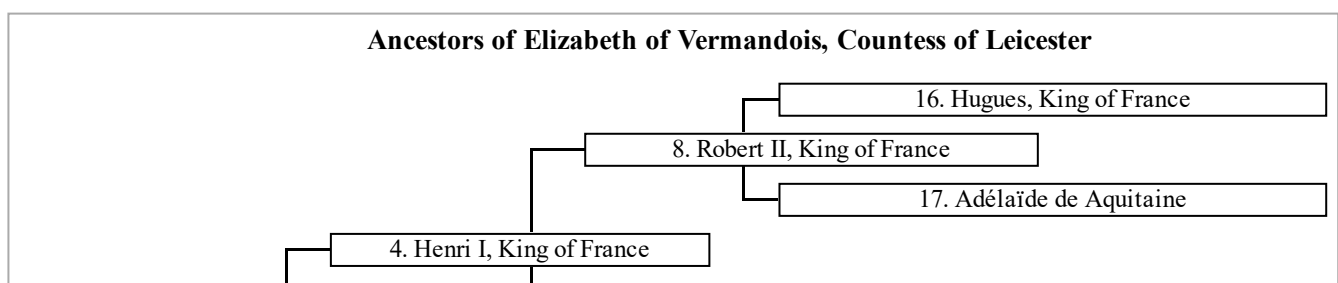
By her first husband, Robert de Beaumont, Count of Meulan, (d 5 June 1118), Elizabeth had three sons (including twin elder sons) and five or six daughters:^[14]

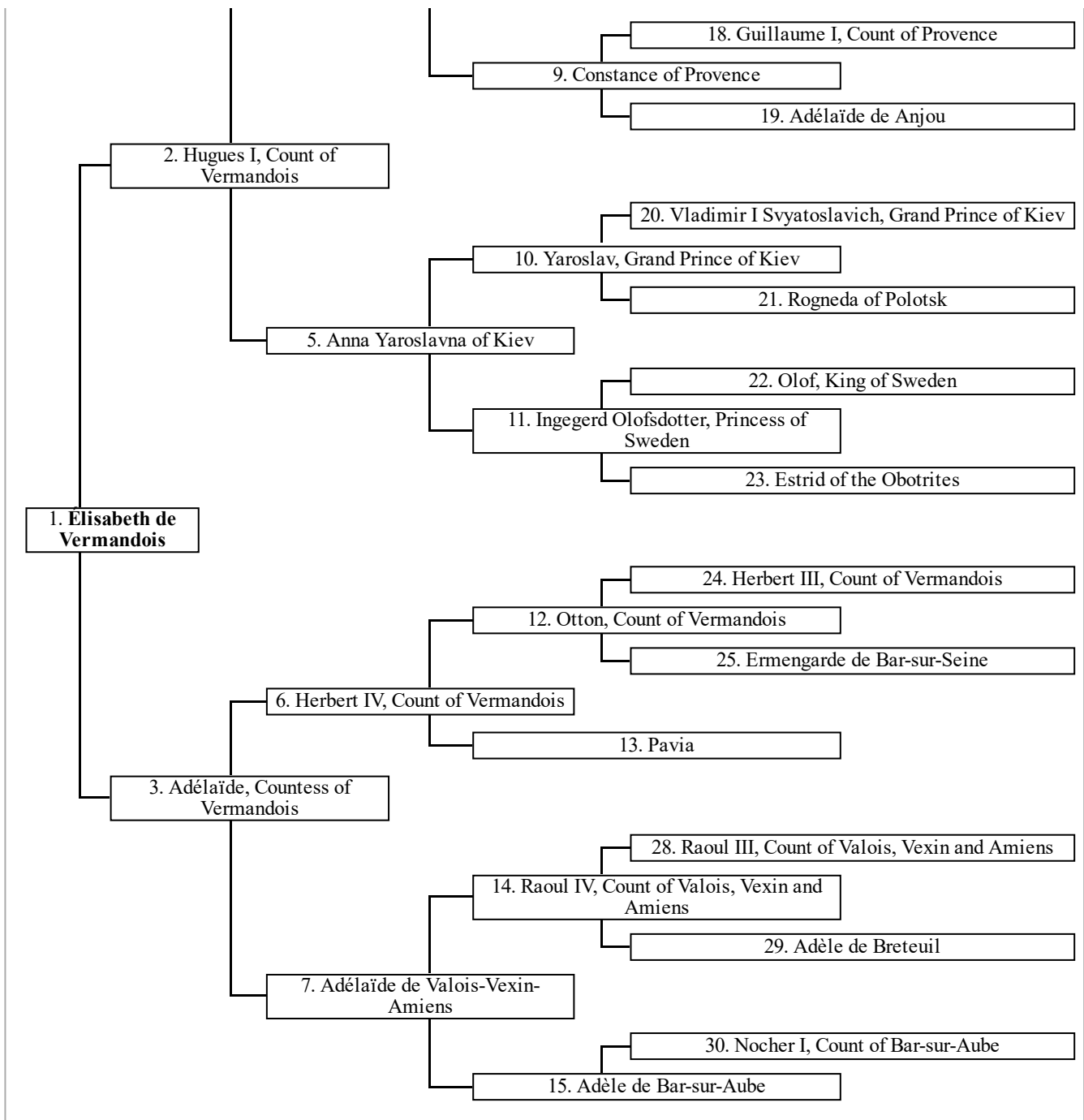
- Emma de Beaumont (born 1102),^[10] was betrothed as an infant to Aumari, nephew of William, Count of Évreux, but the marriage never took place. She probably died young, or entered a convent.^[15]
- Waleran IV de Beaumont, Count of Meulan (born 1104) married and left issue.^[14]
- Robert de Beaumont, 2nd Earl of Leicester (born 1104) married and left issue.^[14]
- Hugh de Beaumont, 1st Earl of Bedford (born c. 1106) lost his earldom, left issue.^[14]
- Adeline de Beaumont (b ca 1107), married 1stly, Hugh IV, 4th Lord of Montfort-sur-Risle, and 2ndly Richard de Granville of Bideford (d. 1147).^[14]
- Aubree (or Alberee) de Beaumont (b ca 1109), married Hugh II of Châteauneuf-en-Thimerais.^[14]
- Maud de Beaumont (b ca 1111), married William Lovel.^[14]
- Isabel de Beaumont (b Aft. 1102), a mistress of King Henry I of England.^[16] She married 1stly Gilbert de Clare, 1st Earl of Pembroke^[14] and 2ndly Hervé de Montmorency, Constable of Ireland.^[17]

By her second husband, William de Warenne, Elizabeth had three sons and two daughters:^[18]

- William de Warenne, 3rd Earl of Surrey.^[18]
- Ralph de Warenne.^[18]
- Reginald de Warenne, who inherited his father's property in upper Normandy, including the castles of Bellencombre and Mortemer^[19] He married Adeline, daughter of William, lord of Wormegay in Norfolk, by whom he had a son William (founder of the priory of Wormegay),^[19]
- Gundrada de Warenne, (Gundred) who married 1stly Roger de Beaumont, 2nd Earl of Warwick and had issue, and 2ndly William de Lancaster and had issue.^[18]
- Ada de Warenne (d. ca. 1178), who married Henry of Scotland, 3rd Earl of Huntingdon, younger son of King David I of Scotland and had issue.^[20] She is known as the Queen mother of Scotland for her two sons Malcolm IV, King of Scotland and William I 'the Lion', King of Scotland as well as being the ancestor of numerous Scottish kings.^[21]

Ancestry





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External links

- Elizabeth de Vermandois (<http://www.thepeerage.com/p10466.htm#i104653>) on thepeerage.com

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