

Philippa, Countess of Toulouse

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Philippa (c. 1073 – 28 November 1118) was the sovereign Countess of Toulouse, as well as the duchess consort of Aquitaine by marriage to Duke William IX of Aquitaine.

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Life

Early life and marriage

Philippa was born in approximately 1073 to Count William IV of Toulouse, and his wife Emma of Mortain. She was his only surviving child, and thus, by the laws of Toulouse, his heir. In 1088, William went on a pilgrimage to Palestine, leaving his brother Raymond of Saint-Gilles as regent. (Before he left, it is claimed, he also married his daughter to the King of Aragon in order to disinherit her;^[1] however, this marriage is apocryphal, as contemporary evidence shows that Sancho was still married to his previous wife at the time of his death in 1094.)^[2]

Philippa's early life – if she was not married to Sancho Ramirez of Aragon – is something of a mystery. It is known that she did not marry William IX of Aquitaine until 1094, after the death of her father and the succession of her uncle; the circumstances in which she lived prior to her father's death, the manner of her disinheritance, and the arrangement of her marriage, are thus unknown. Those historians that argue her to have been married to Sancho Ramirez argue that her removal from Toulouse prevented her from effectively claiming her inheritance, and that with the death of Sancho, she was free to remarry based on her own choice.^[3] What is certain is that, upon the death of Count William, Philippa's claims were ignored, and Raymond became count. Philippa then married William, whom she considered worthy due to his numerous merits: a handsome man fully capable of flattering a woman, he was not only one of the most prominent Dukes in Europe, able to give her the life she felt she deserved; his realm was also conveniently situated next to Toulouse, and consequently would easily be able to regain her homeland for her own – as indeed, the Duke promised to do for her. Consequently, the two swiftly married.^[4] Why she was allowed by her uncle to marry such a dangerous man, or indeed if Raymond had any choice in the matter, is unknown.

Political life

Philippa, Countess of Toulouse

Countess of Toulouse

Tenure 1098-1101 and 1109-1114

Duchess consort of Aquitaine

Tenure c. 1094–c. 1116

Born c. 1073

Died 28 November 1118 (around aged 45)
Abbey of Fontevrault

Spouse William IX of Aquitaine

Issue William X, Duke of Aquitaine
Raymond, Prince of Antioch
Agnes, Queen of Aragon

House Rouergue

Father William IV, Count of Toulouse

Mother Emma of Mortain

When Raymond IV of Toulouse set out on the First Crusade in the autumn of 1096, he left his son Bertrand to rule the County. However, in the Spring of 1098, William and Philippa marched into the city of Toulouse, and took control without a single life being lost. In the next year, she gave birth to her first child in the city: William the Toulousain.

In 1099, her husband went on crusade and he left her as regent in Poitou.^[5]

She was an admirer of Robert of Arbrissel and persuaded her husband to grant him land in Poitou to establish a religious community dedicated to the Virgin Mary.^[6] In 1100 he founded Fontevraud Abbey there.

She was stunned in 1100 when her husband mortgaged Toulouse to her cousin Bertrand in exchange for a vast sum of money, which the Duke used to go on Crusade himself. Philippa, removed from her home, was sent to his capital of Poitiers, from where she ruled Aquitaine on behalf of her husband whilst he was absent.

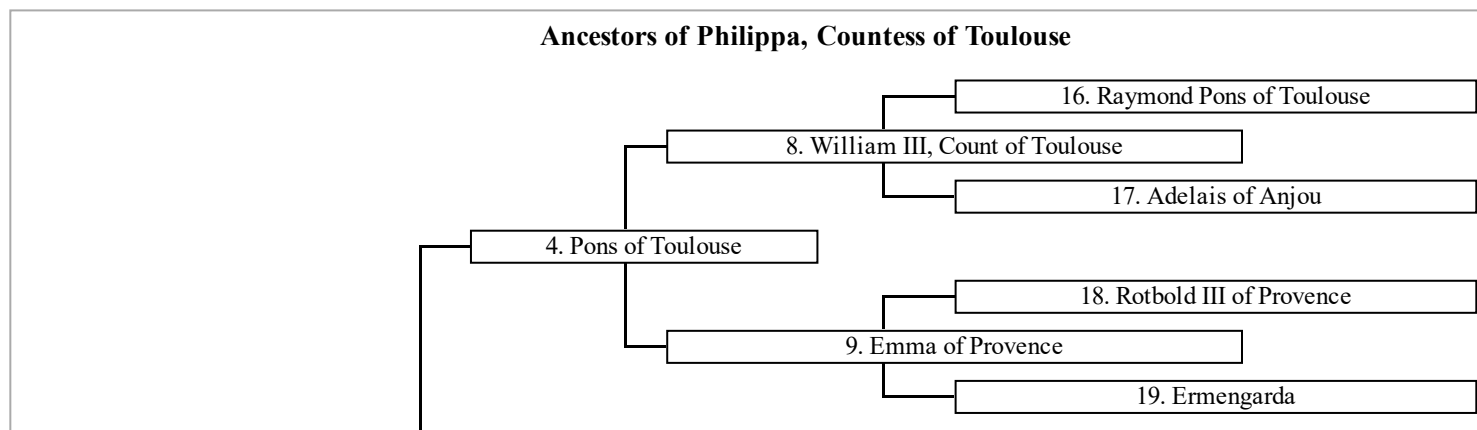
After William's return, he and Philippa for a time lived contentedly with each other, producing a further five daughters, and a son, Raymond. She also ignored the Duke's sexual boasting in song and talk, instead concentrating on religion (in particular the Abbey of Fontevrault, of which she remained a keen sponsor), especially the teachings of its founder, who preached the superiority of women over men. Her obsession with a doctrine considered offensive by many men of that time, combined with William's growing dissatisfaction with her, and his teasing of her (claiming to be founding an abbey of prostitutes), led to discord in the marriage.

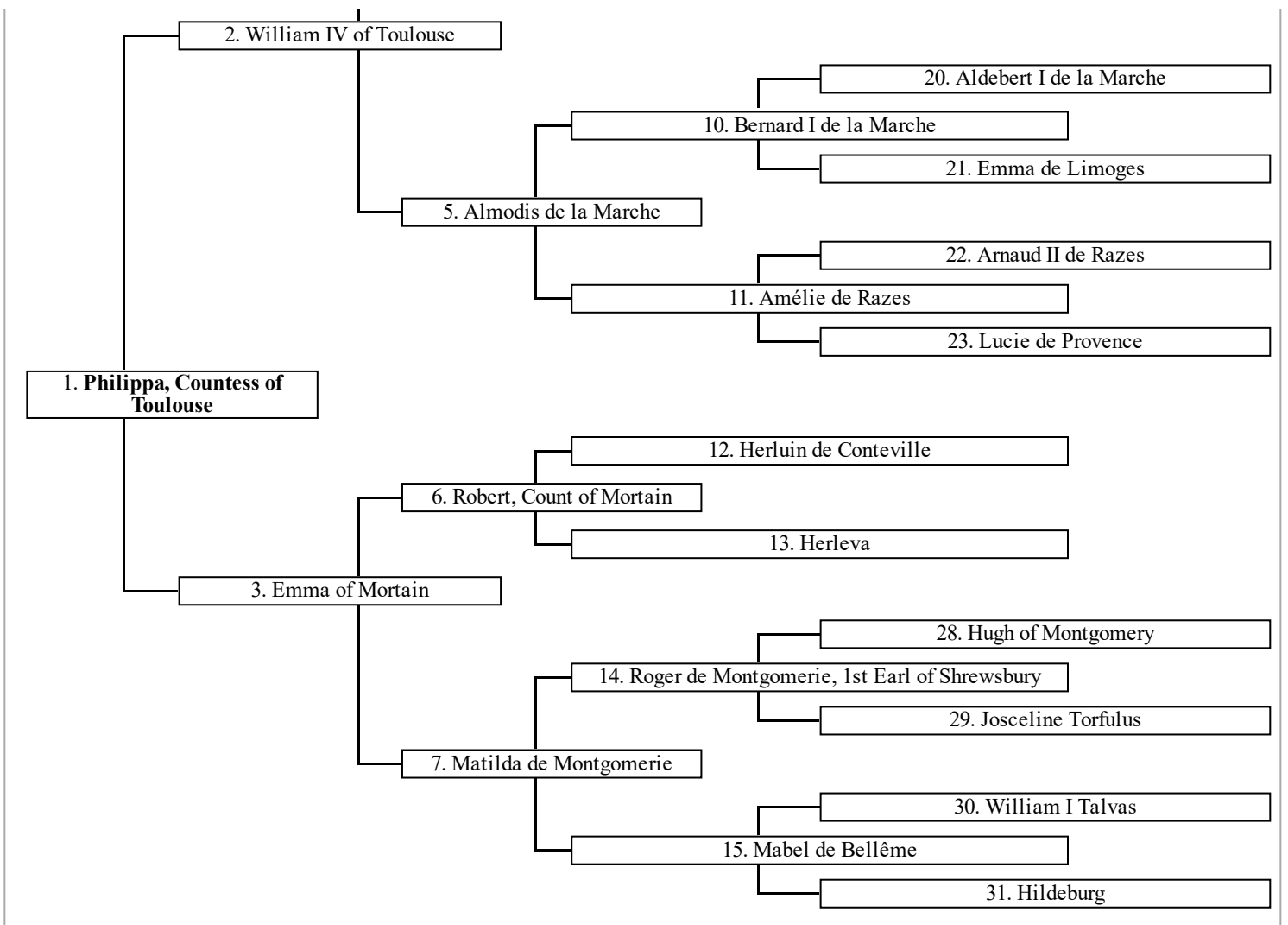
Toulouse had been won back by William for his wife in 1113, following the death of Bertrand in Syria in 1112: his heir being his half-brother, the 9 year old Alphonse-Jourdain, William had been unopposed. Thus, by 1114, Philippa was spending most of her time ruling there. Accordingly, she was less than pleased when, upon her return from Toulouse to Poitiers in 1114, she discovered her husband to have moved his mistress, Viscountess Dangereuse of Châtelleraut, into her palace. Philippa appealed to friends and the church for assistance in ousting her husband's mistress, but to no avail – none could persuade the Duke to give up his mistress.

Later life

In 1116, a humiliated Philippa, devastated by her husband's repayment of her service to him for so many years, left the Court, taking refuge at the Abbey of Fontevrault. There she became a close friend of her husband's first wife, Ermengarde of Anjou, and the two spent much time reflecting upon the shortcomings of William. However, for all Philippa's devotion to the Abbey and its ideals, she found little peace there, both angry and resentful that her husband had cast her off in favour of a mistress. She died of unknown causes there on 28 November 1118, survived by her husband, his mistress, and Ermengarde, who would shortly attempt to avenge Philippa by attempting to have Dangereuse banished from Aquitaine.

Ancestry





Notes

1. Meade, Marion, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*
2. Szabolcs de VAJAY, "Ramire II le Moine, roi d'Aragon et Agnes de Poitou dans l'histoire et la légende", in *Mélanges offerts à René Crozet*, 2 vol, Poitiers, 1966, vol 2, p 727-750; and Ruth E Harvey, "The wives of the first troubadour Duke William IX of Aquitaine", in *Journal of Medieval History*, vol 19, 1993, p 315. Harvey states that, contrary to prior assumptions, William IX was certainly Philippa of Toulouse's only husband. Vajay states that the marriage to an unnamed king of Aragon reported by a non-contemporary chronicler is imaginary even though it has appeared broadly in modern histories, and likewise he cites J de Salarrullana de Dios, *Documentos correspondientes al reinado de Sancho Ramirez*, Saragossa, 1907, vol I, nr 51, p 204-207 to document that Sancho's wife Felicie was clearly still married to him just months before his death, making the marriage to Philippa several years earlier, as reported in several modern popular biographies of her granddaughter, completely unsupported.
3. Meade, Marion, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*
4. Meade, Marion, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*
5. Hilton, Lisa (2008). *Queens Consort, England's Medieval Queens*. Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicholson. p. 112. ISBN 978-0-7538-2611-9.
6. Weir, Alison (1999). *Eleanor of Aquitaine, a Life*. London: Jonathan Cape. pp. 11–12. ISBN 0-345-40540-4.

External links

- Medieval Lands Project on Philippa of Toulouse (<http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/TOULOUSE.htm#Philippa1117>)

Regnal titles		
Preceded by William IV	Countess of Toulouse 1094	Succeeded by Raymond IV
Preceded by Raymond IV	Countess of Toulouse 1098–1101	Succeeded by Bertrand
Preceded by Bertrand	Countess of Toulouse 1112–1117	Succeeded by Alfonso Jordan

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