

Baldwin II, Margrave of Flanders

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Baldwin II (c.865– 10 September 918) was the second margrave (or count) of Flanders, ruling from 879 to 918. He was nicknamed **the Bald** (*Calvus*) after his maternal grandfather, King Charles the Bald.^[1]

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Life

Baldwin II was born around 865 to Baldwin I of Flanders and Judith of Flanders, the great-granddaughter of Charlemagne.^[2]

Early Years

The early years of Baldwin's rule were marked by a series of devastating Viking raids into Flanders.^[3] By 883 CE, he was forced to move north to Pagus Flandransis, which became the territory most closely associated with the Counts of Flanders.^[3] Baldwin constructed a series of wooden fortifications at Saint-Omer, Bruges, Ghent, and Kortrijk. He then seized lands that were abandoned by royal and ecclesiastical officials.^[4] Many of these same citadels later formed castellanies which housed government, militia, and local courts.^[3]

Marriage

In 884 CE, Baldwin II married Ælfthryth (or Elfrude or Elfrida), the daughter of Alfred the Great.^[5] The immediate goal of that Anglo-Flemish alliance was to help Baldwin control the lower Canche River valley.^[6]

Rise to power

Baldwin II

Margrave of Flanders



Baldwin II from the 16th century

Spouse(s)	Ælfthryth of Wessex
Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Arnulf I, Count of Flanders Adelolf, Count of Boulogne Ealswid Ermentrud
Noble family	House of Flanders
Father	Baldwin I of Flanders
Mother	Judith of Flanders
Born	c. 865
Died	10 September 918 (aged 52–53)

In 888 CE, the western Frankish king, Charles the Fat, was deposed, leaving several candidates vying to replace him.^[7] As a grandson of Charles the Bald, Holy Roman Emperor and King of West Francia, Baldwin could have competed for the crown of West Francia.^[4] Instead, Baldwin and others tried to convince the East Frankish King, Arnulf, to take the West Frankish crown, but Arnulf declined.^[7]

The Robertine Odo, Count of Paris, was eventually made king.^[8] Odo and Baldwin's relationship deteriorated when Odo failed to support Baldwin's attempts to gain control of the Abbey of St. Bertin. Odo attacked Baldwin at Bruges but was unable to prevail.^[7] Baldwin continued his expansion to the south and gained control over Artois, including the important Abbey of St. Vaast.

Death

When the Abbey came under the jurisdiction of Archbishop Fulk of Reims in 900 CE, Baldwin had the archbishop assassinated.^[6] When his attempts to expand further into the upper Somme River valley were opposed by Herbert I, Count of Vermandois, Baldwin had the count assassinated as well.^[6] Baldwin died on the 10th of September, 918 CE,^[9] at Blandijnberg (near Ghent) and was succeeded by his eldest son, Arnulf I of Flanders. His younger son, Adalulf, became the first Count of Boulogne.

Family

Baldwin II was married to Ælfthryth, daughter of Alfred the Great,^[2] and had five children:

- Arnulf I of Flanders (c. 890–964), married Adela of Vermandois^[2]
- Adalulf (c. 890–933), Count of Boulogne^[2]
- Ealswid^[2]
- Ermentrud.^[2]

He is a direct patrilineal ancestor of Anne Boleyn, the second wife of King Henry VIII and mother of Queen Elizabeth I.

References

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Preceded by Baldwin I	Margrave of Flanders 879–918	Succeeded by Arnulf I
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