



# Making of the Western Mind Institute for the Study of Western Civilization Week 14, Courtly Love







Love hurts, love scars  
Love wounds, and marks  
Any heart, not tough  
Or strong enough  
To take a lot of pain,  
Take a lot of pain,  
Love is like a cloud,  
Holds a lot of rain  
Love hurts,  
ooh, ooh, love hurts









# Courtly Love



A photograph of Courtney Love. She has blonde, wavy hair and is looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a black, sequined, halter-neck crop top and black leather pants. She has a small star-shaped necklace and thin bracelets on both wrists. The background is dark and out of focus, showing other people in a dimly lit setting.

# Not Courtney Love





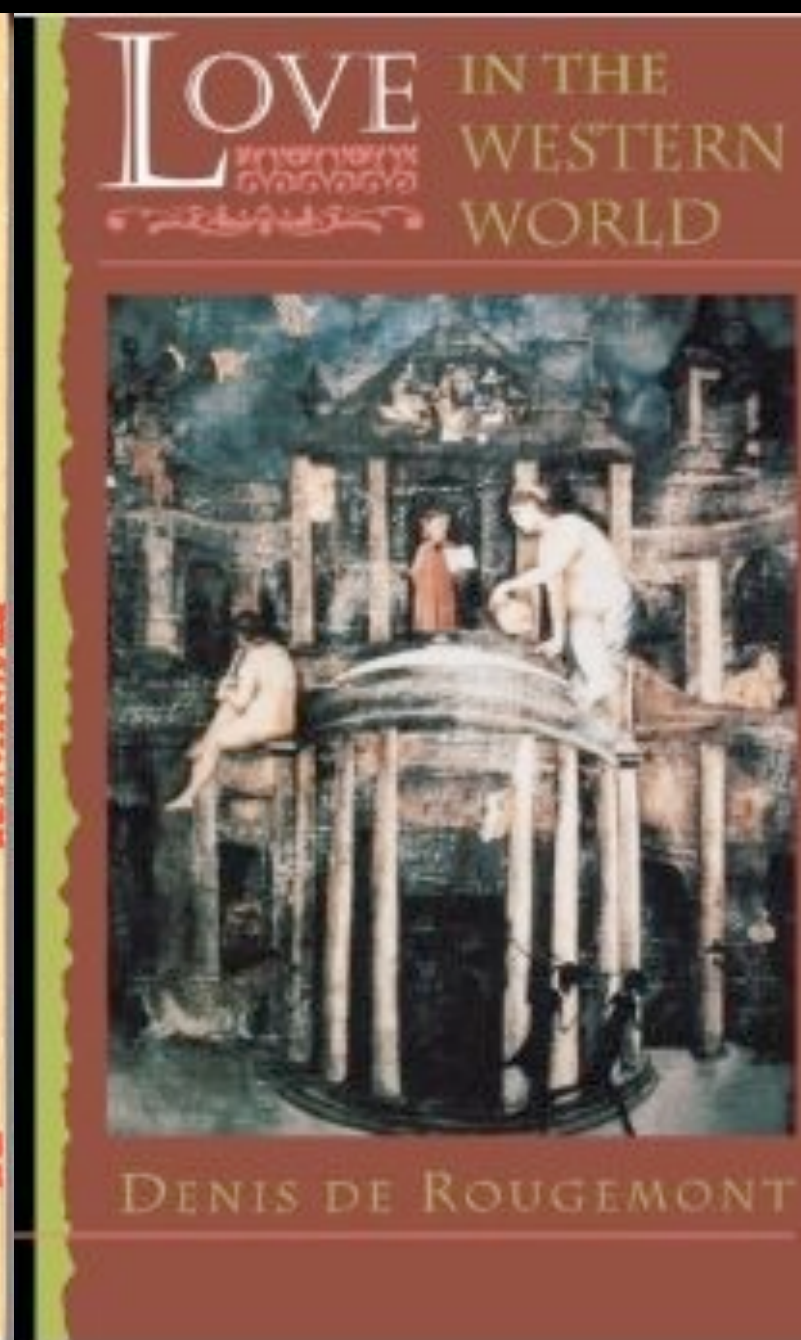
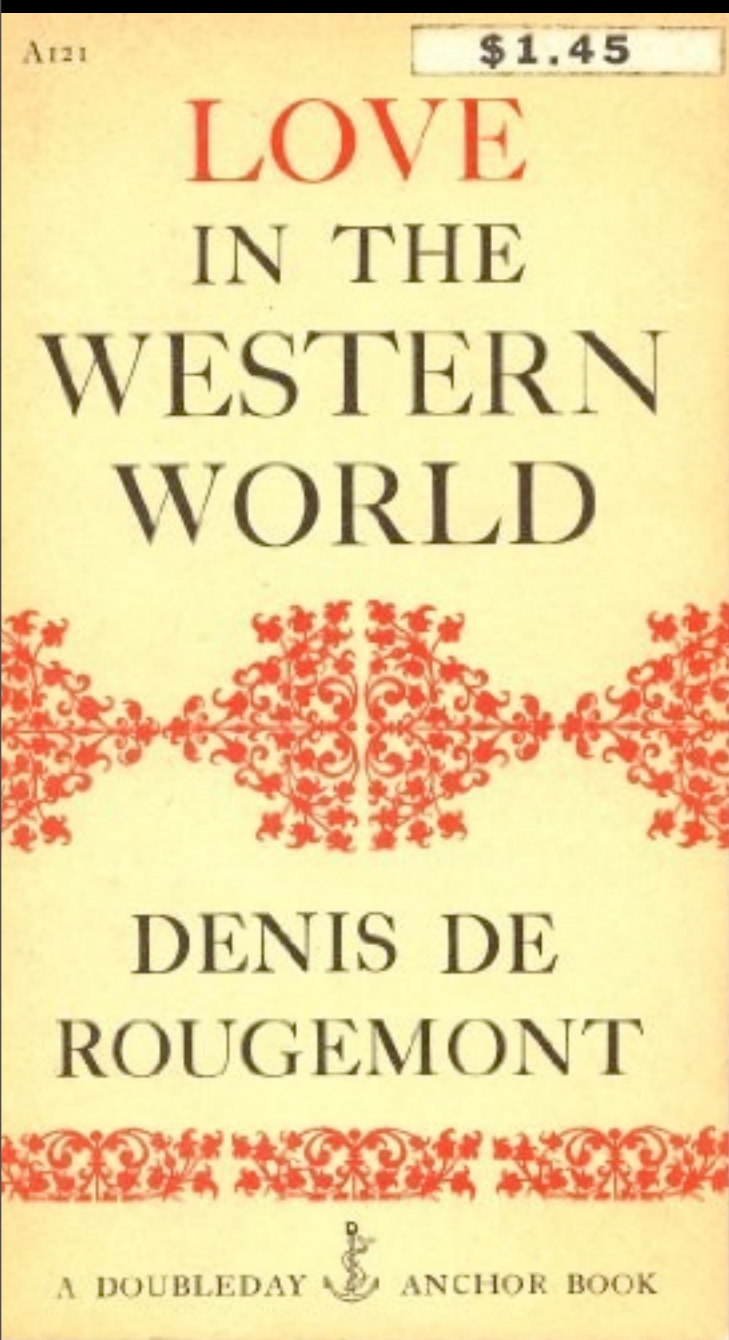
# Courtly Love





# Love Hurts









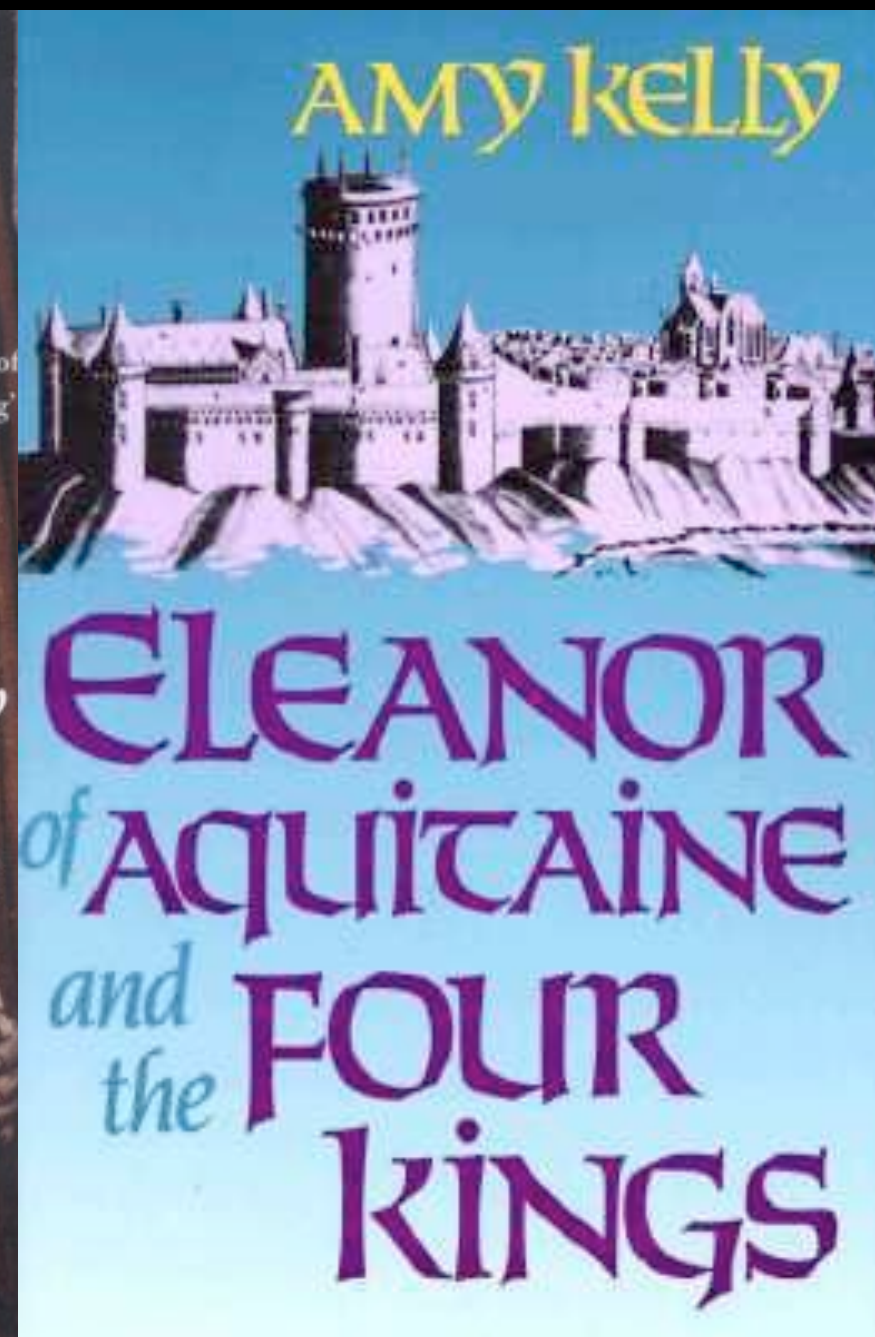
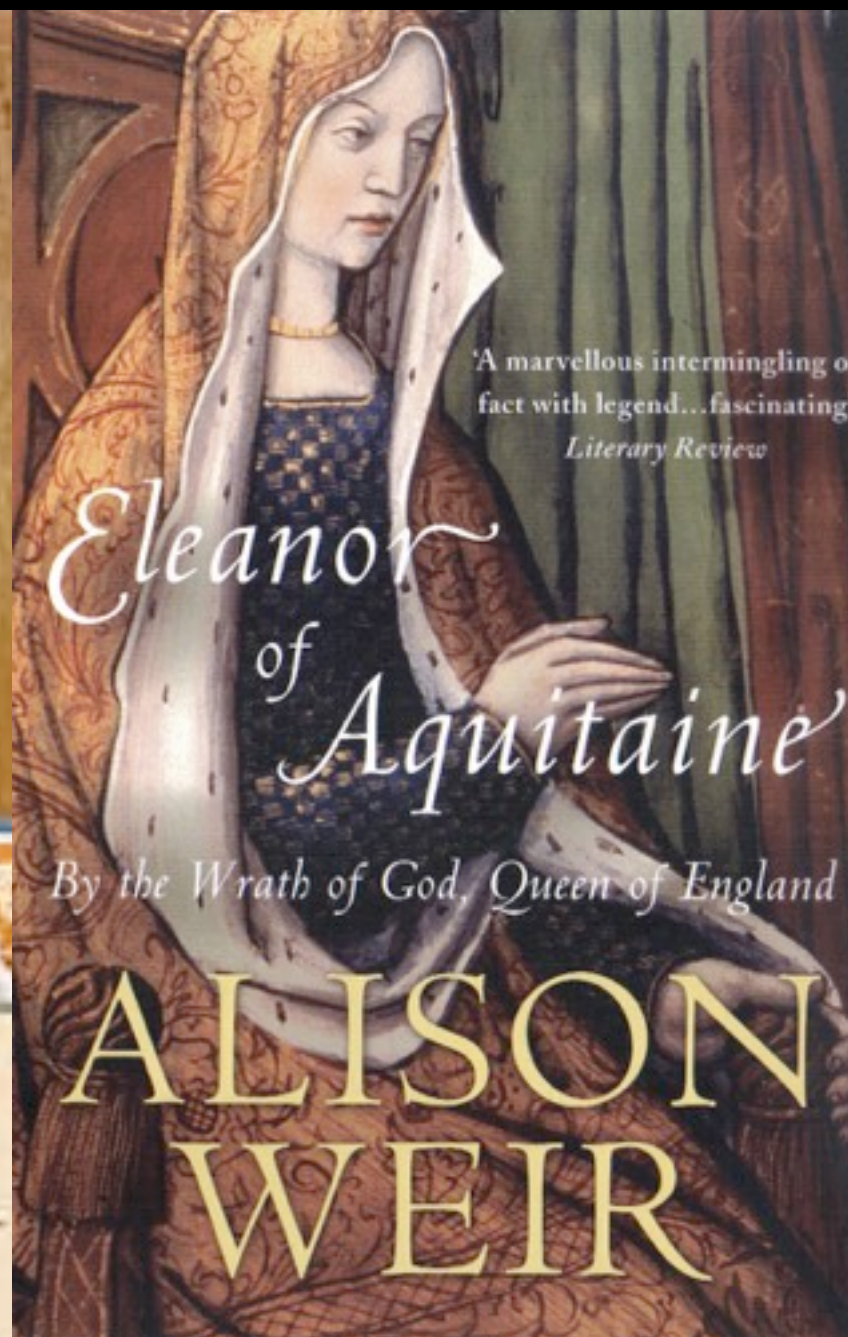
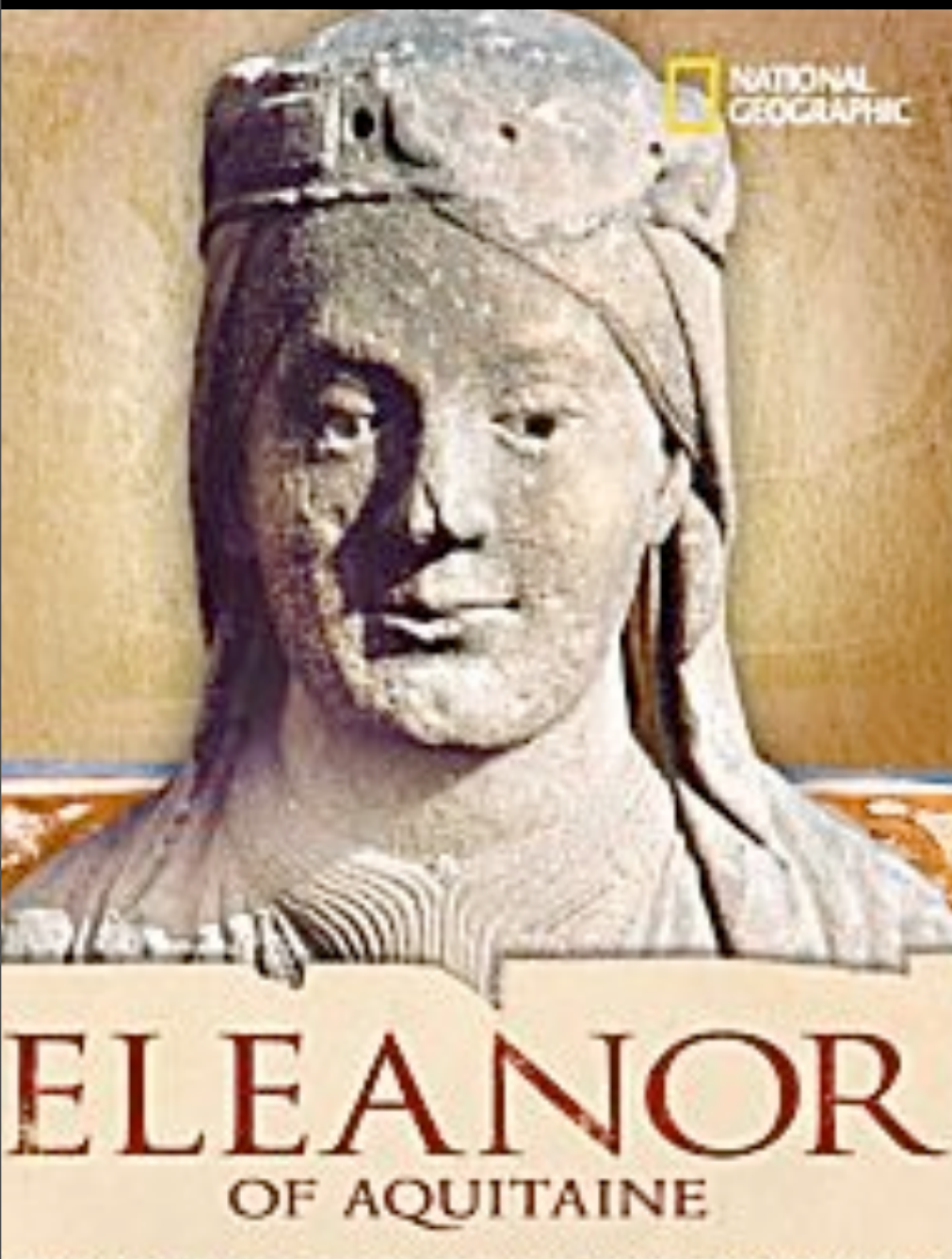
# Courtly Love





Eleanor of Aquitaine, 1122 - 1204  
in the church of Fontevraud Abbey  
Loire Valley, France

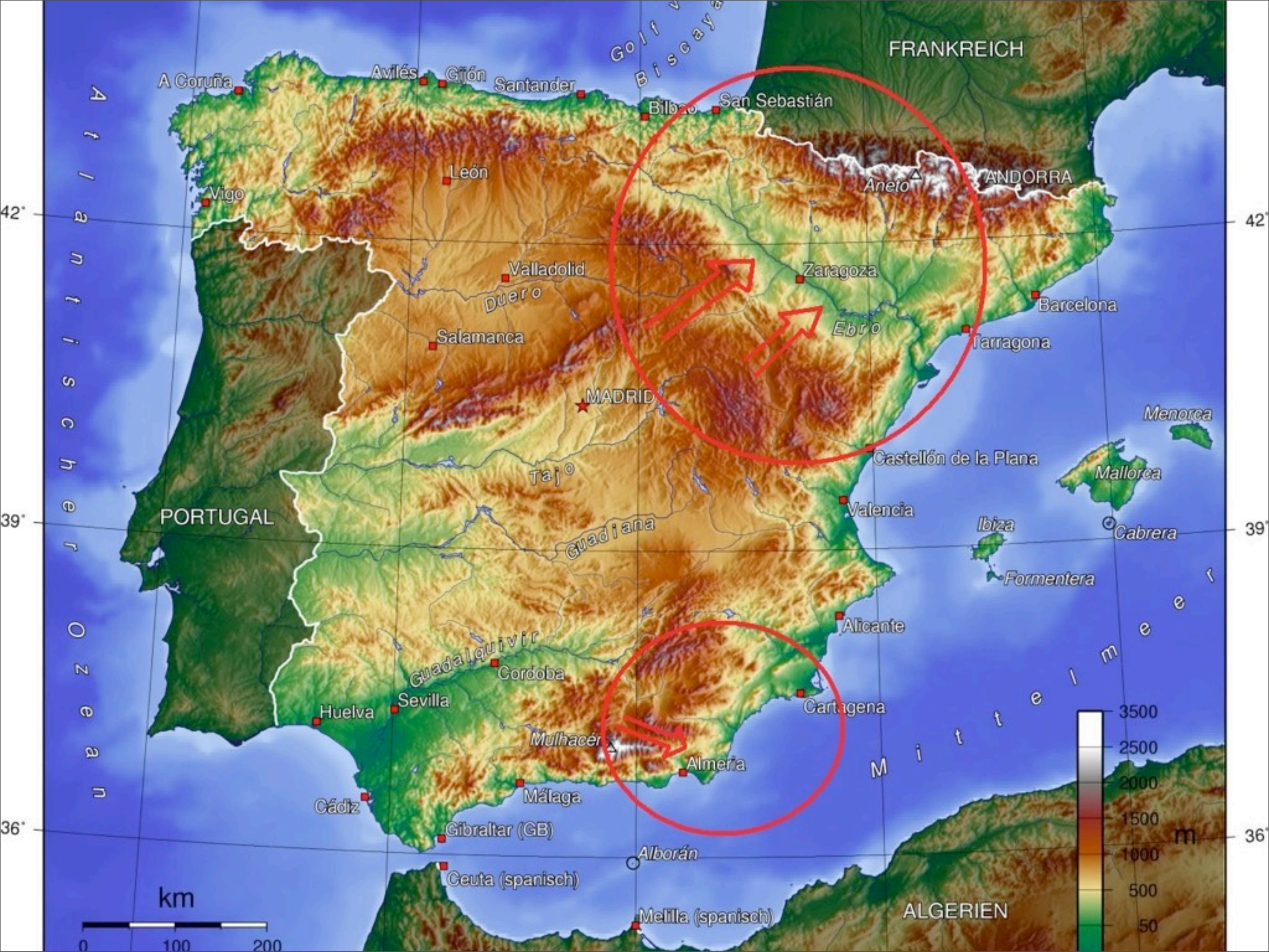














# THE SPREAD OF ISLAM, 622 – 750 CE





# POITIERS AD 732

Charles Martel turns the Islamic tide



DAVID NICOLLE

ILLUSTRATED BY GRAHAM TURNER

Charles Martel  
and the  
Carolingians  
Stop  
Muslims at  
Poitiers  
732









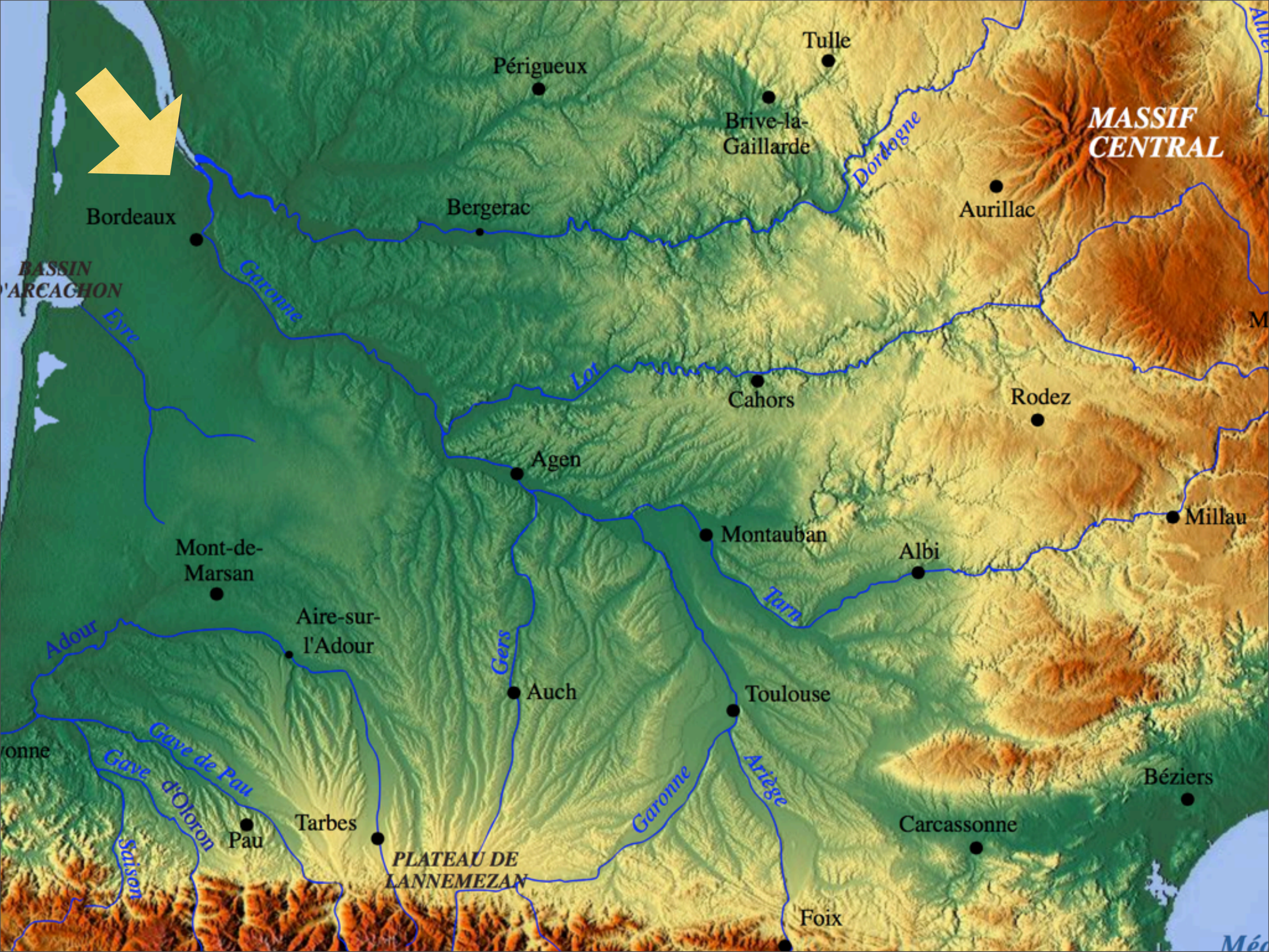
























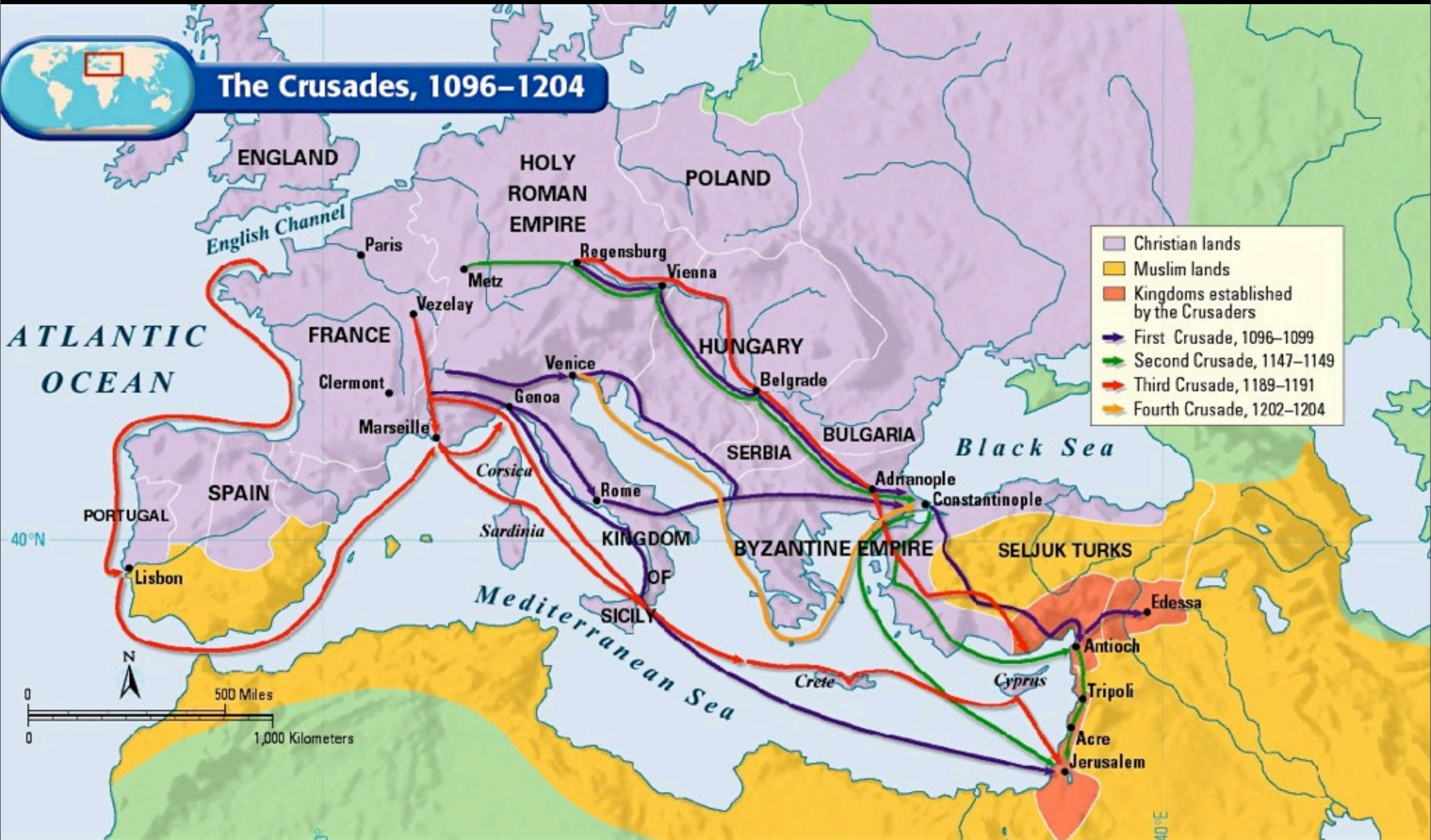
Eleanor of Aquitaine  
Born 1122





**William IX**  
(Occitan:  
*Guilhèm de Peitieu*;  
French:  
*Guillaume de Poitiers*)  
( 1071 – 1126),  
called **the Troubador**,  
Duke of Aquitaine  
and Gascony and  
Count of Poitou  
(as **William VII**)  
He was the earliest  
troubadour whose work  
survives. Eleven of his  
songs survive.









**William IX**  
(Occitan:  
*Guilhèm de Peitieus*;  
French:  
*Guillaume de Poitiers*)  
( 1071 – 1126),  
called **the Troubador**,  
Duke of Aquitaine  
and Gascony and  
Count of Poitou  
(as **William VII**)  
He was the earliest  
troubadour whose work  
survives. Eleven of his  
songs survive.



fais z labie Du Roy loys le quos



Ca comencent les fais Du Roy loys filz Du  
Roy loys le quos porrenement se son

















# Courtly Love





1. When:  
Great age of Courtly Love is  
12th Century.  
Politics: Eleanor b. 1122  
Court at Poitiers  
Crusades 1099, 1147, 1190  
Religious Reform:  
Cluny  
Cistercians c. 1100,  
Francis of Assisi 1182.  
Cathar Heresy.  
Philosophy: Abelard  
Eleanor marries Henry 1152  
K & Q of England 1154  
carry Courtly Love to Eng



## 2. Where:

A product of Provencal  
(South France)  
& southwest French culture  
and an **EXTENSION**  
of the southern French culture  
as it was married to England  
in marriage of  
Eleanor of Aquitaine  
to Henry II.  
thus the courtly love ethic  
that Eleanor encourage gets  
married to the "Matter of Britain"  
ie the myths surrounding King Arthur  
through her marriage (1152)







### 3. Who:

It centers on the court of Duke William of Aquitaine, and his son William X and his granddaughter Duchess Eleanor of Aquitaine, later Queen of France(1137), and later still, Queen of England(1152), later Queen Mother of King Richard the Lionhearted(1189) and King John(1199).



#### 4. Feudalism:

Courtly Love ethic all part of the feudal-chivalric world with lots of unoccupied knights sitting around. Crusaders home and out of work temporarily.

(ie. so you have female dominated Courtly Love culture with knight "serving" his lady.

His lady in charge at home.)

Nature of Courtly Love influenced by nature of aristocratic 12th feudal marriage which was merely a contract of alliance between families/ marriage without love.

**Any idealization of Love in a society of arranged marriages is necessarily an idealization of adulterous love.**





mance and the war-horn to the lute. The mystique of the noble lady became the center of the chivalric code. It may be futile to seek far afield the reasons why a class that enjoyed increasing leisure should choose ladies as the center of the cult, the attachment of gentlemen to ladies not requiring elaborate explanation. But the peculiar *romantic* nature of the attachment rather than simple libertinism may be explained in terms of Christian influence. The Church had failed, except in unusual cases like that of the Templars, to make knighthood into a religious institution, but knighthood in a Christian society could not help but share deeply in Christian attitudes. Chivalry and courtly love are unimaginable removed from the Christian background. The straightforward pagan attitude toward sex produced no conflict, though it might occasionally produce exhaustion, but Christianity, with its ambivalence toward the world, its uncertainty whether the flesh were good or evil, brought with it an inherent tension. That tension in turn made passion—passion in its root sense of suffering—in love possible, and it was this suffering for love that the troubadours found so sweet. The moral obstacles that Christianity put in the path of sexual fulfillment also helped to create tension. Romantic love cannot flourish where sexual fulfillment is easily obtainable, but only where obstructions are placed in its way. Beyond this, the elevation of women, the physically weaker of the sexes (at least so it used to be thought) in the esteem of men, may itself stem in part from the Christian glorification of the meek.

or MARY!

Feudalism  
Crusades  
Christianity  
Ladies



SO IF COURTLY LOVE IS ROOTED IN CHRISTIANITY  
HOW CAN IT BE  
ANTI CHURCH ANTI CLERICAL?



## 5. Courtly Love and the Church:

Courtly Love poets extremely anti-clerical.

write wild attacks on church and priests.

Courtly Love cherished many poets who were atheistic in everything except open admission.

(atheism not out of the closet in 12-13thC Europe)

There is a heavy tone of heresy hanging around the ethic of Courtly Love. It is tangled up with the Cathar heresy of 12thC and with the Albigensian crusade against that heresy.

It is hated by the Roman Catholic church which correctly judges it to be undermining all the more conventional values of marriage.

Bernard of Clairvaux is an implacable foe of all that Courtly Love espouses and he hates Eleanor for her involvement which he deems heretical.



## Russell: Courtly Love possible only within context of Christian society

The origins of courtly love will continue to be debated, and it is clear that its roots tap many soils. Wechssler's position is probably overstated: courtly love is not simply a distorted image of Christianity. Yet it is clear that the particular form it took was possible only within the context of Christian society. In this sense it was, as a perversion of Christian ideas, a form of religious dissidence. It cannot be dismissed as an idle pastime, for the commitment of the courtly lovers to their ideas was more than that. If ultimate concern is the mark of a religious attitude, as Tillich maintains, then the courtly lovers were religious, and their religion was not Christianity, even though many of them may have attended Mass. Tillich would call their concern an idolatrous faith in that it elevated the finite quality of human love to the level of the infinite.



## 6. The Ethic of Love:

At the center of Courtly Love is the ethic of Love itself which requires the man to serve his lady slavishly....he is never her husband....he is usually a poet who praises and idealizes his lady the way Dante did. Whether he sleeps with his lady or not is part of the vast variety of CL imagery. But all the imagery is very erotic and if he does not sleep with her -and usually he did not- he talks about it all the time and is driven wild by the fact that he can't.





The Love in Courtly Love requires suffering. It is nothing if there is no suffering. Therefore meeting someone in Stanford dorm (“Hooking Up”) and jumping into bed with that person is totally antithetical to Courtly Love. The essence of Courtly Love is DENIAL of the physical gratification. The whole ethic is one of denial, of barriers to consummation, of suffering for desire unrequited.





# All the poetry and all the literature of Courtly Love stresses the BARRIERS



Thus the ethic is one in which one  
pines for one's love,  
suffers for one's love,  
misses her, is eternally away from  
her,

can't see her cause her  
husband would kill you if you did.  
Now you can see how the story of  
Arthur/Guinevere/Lancelot would be  
the perfect story.



# TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF LOVE



All the poetry and all the literature  
of Courtly Love stresses the  
**BARRIERS**

Thus the ethic is one in which one  
pines for one's love,  
suffers for one's love,  
misses her, is eternally away from  
her, cant see her cause her  
husband would kill you if you did.

**AND IN THIS SUFFERING YOU  
ARE TRANSFORMED  
MADE BETTER, MADE GREATER**



The unique creation of Courtly Love was the evocation of this image of Love as Suffering. It led to and created all our Western images of love.

IT ALL STARTS HERE.

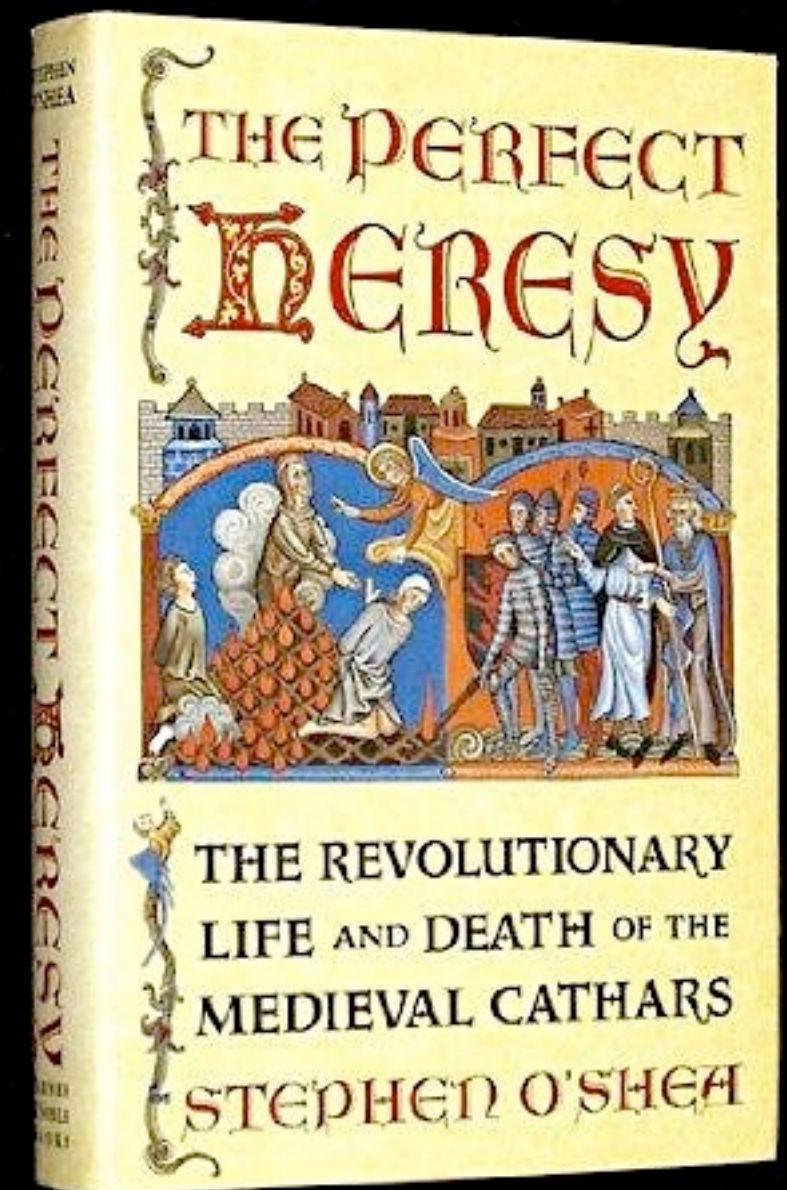
We could make a very long list of the western tradition of love poetry and love literature and you would see that it all contains this Courtly Love core.

This is why we can say that 12thC "invented" the idea of "Love" put it in quotes so that you know that it is specific cultural phenomenon not just love=sex. Everyone has always known love=sex but everyone has not known the Western version of love=suffering.



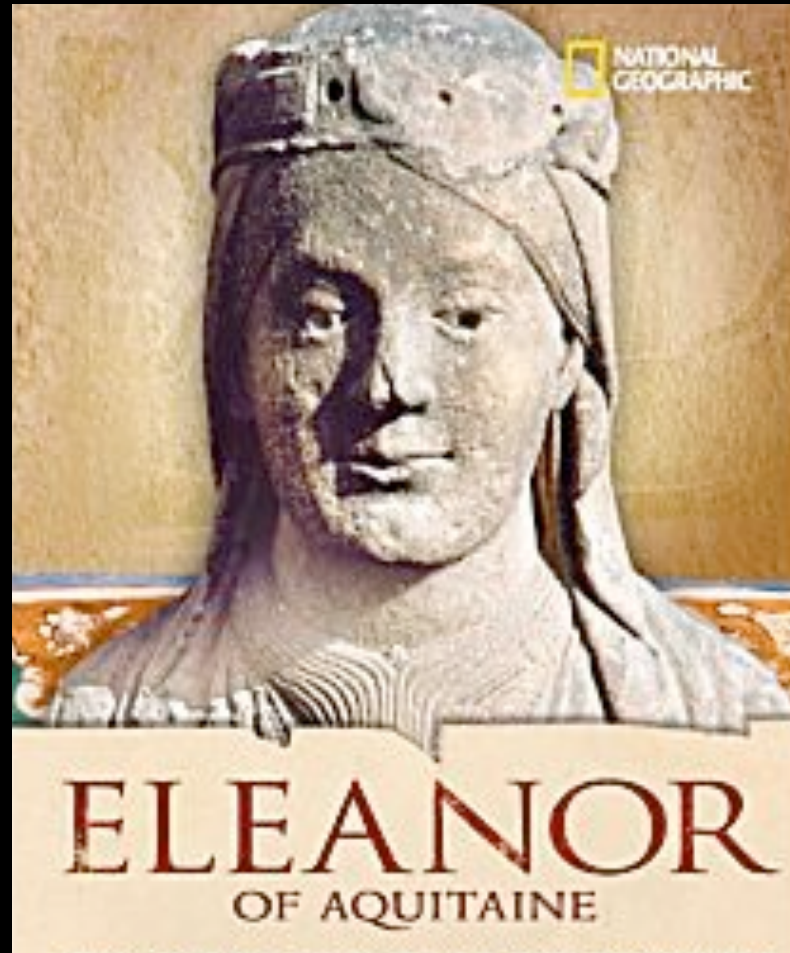


# The Cathar Heresy





# Eleanor of Aquitaine and Bernard de Ventadour



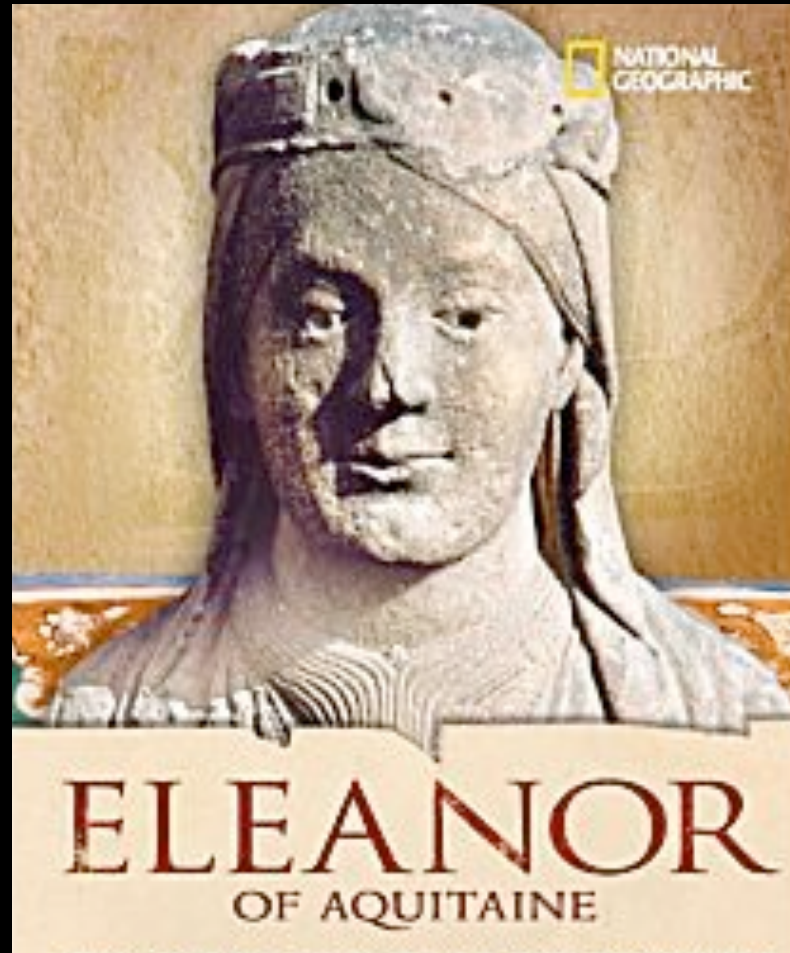
1122-1202



1135-1194



# Eleanor of Aquitaine and Bernard de Ventadour



Bernard was known for being able to portray his woman as a divine agent in one moment and then, in a sudden twist, as Eve – the cause of man's initial sin.





Bernard  
de  
Ventadour  
1135-1194  
born at  
Chateau  
de  
Ventadour  
(Limoges)

When I see the skylark winging



When I see the skylark winging  
("Can vei la lauzeta mover")  
Joyfully toward the sun, how  
Her heart filled with tender feelings  
She freely, easily glides  
Ah! I overflow with envy  
For all those who are joyous!  
How I marvel that my heart  
Does not just burst with longing.



Alas! I who thought I knew love  
Barely do I know love at all!  
For I cannot keep from loving  
One whose gifts I'll never share;  
She has stolen from me my self  
My heart, and my world;  
When she struck me thus she left  
But my longing and desire.

Women bring me to despair  
Nevermore will I trust them,  
As much as I used to adore them,  
Nor will I abhor them,  
For no one will ever save me  
From her who confounds me and slays me;  
All fill me with doubt and with fear,  
For well I know that thus they are.

No longer was I my own master  
Nor from that time ever free  
Since she granted me a glance  
From her eyes that mirrored joy.  
Glass, since I saw my reflection  
My heart's deep sighs left me dying,  
For I have lost myself as once  
Fair Narcissus in the fountain.

In this my lady proves to be  
True woman, so I tell this tale;  
She does not wish what she should want  
And does what is forbidden her.  
I have fallen into disfavor,  
Behaved like a fool on a bridge,  
And know not why this befell me.  
Perhaps the prize was too lofty.



When I see the skylark winging

When I see the skylark winging  
("Can vei la lauzeta mover")  
Joyfully toward the sun, how  
Her heart filled with tender feelings  
She freely, easily glides  
Ah! I overflow with envy  
For all those who are joyous!  
How I marvel that my heart  
Does not just burst with longing.



Alas! I who thought I knew love  
Barely do I know love at all!  
For I cannot keep from loving  
One whose gifts I'll never share;  
She has stolen from me my self  
My heart, and my world;  
When she struck me thus she left  
But my longing and desire.



No longer was I my own master  
Nor from that time ever free  
Since she granted me a glance  
From her eyes that mirrored joy.  
Glass, since I saw my reflection  
My heart's deep sighs left me dying,  
For I have lost myself as once  
Fair Narcissus in the fountain.



Women bring me to despair  
Nevermore will I trust them,  
As much as I used to adore them,  
Nor will I abhor them,  
For no one will ever save me  
From her who confounds me and slays me;  
All fill me with doubt and with fear,  
For well I know that thus they are.



In this my lady proves to be  
True woman, so I tell this tale;  
She does not wish what she should want  
And does what is forbidden her.  
I have fallen into disfavor,  
Behaved like a fool on a bridge,  
And know not why this befell me.  
Perhaps the prize was too lofty.



When I see the skylark winging  
("Can vei la lauzeta mover")  
Joyfully toward the sun, how  
Her heart filled with tender feelings  
She freely, easily glides  
Ah! I overflow with envy  
For all those who are joyous!  
How I marvel that my heart  
Does not just burst with longing.



Alas! I who thought I knew love  
Barely do I know love at all!  
For I cannot keep from loving  
One whose gifts I'll never share;  
She has stolen from me my self  
My heart, and my world;  
When she struck me thus she left  
But my longing and desire.

No longer was I my own master  
Nor from that time ever free  
Since she granted me a glance  
From her eyes that mirrored joy.  
Glass, since I saw my reflection  
My heart's deep sighs left me dying,  
For I have lost myself as once  
Fair Narcissus in the fountain.

Women bring me to despair  
Nevermore will I trust them,  
As much as I used to adore them,  
Nor will I abhor them,  
For no one will ever save me  
From her who confounds me and slays me;  
All fill me with doubt and with fear,  
For well I know that thus they are.

In this my lady proves to be  
True woman, so I tell this tale;  
She does not wish what she should want  
And does what is forbidden her.  
I have fallen into disfavor,  
Behaved like a fool on a bridge,  
And know not why this befell me.  
Perhaps the prize was too lofty.



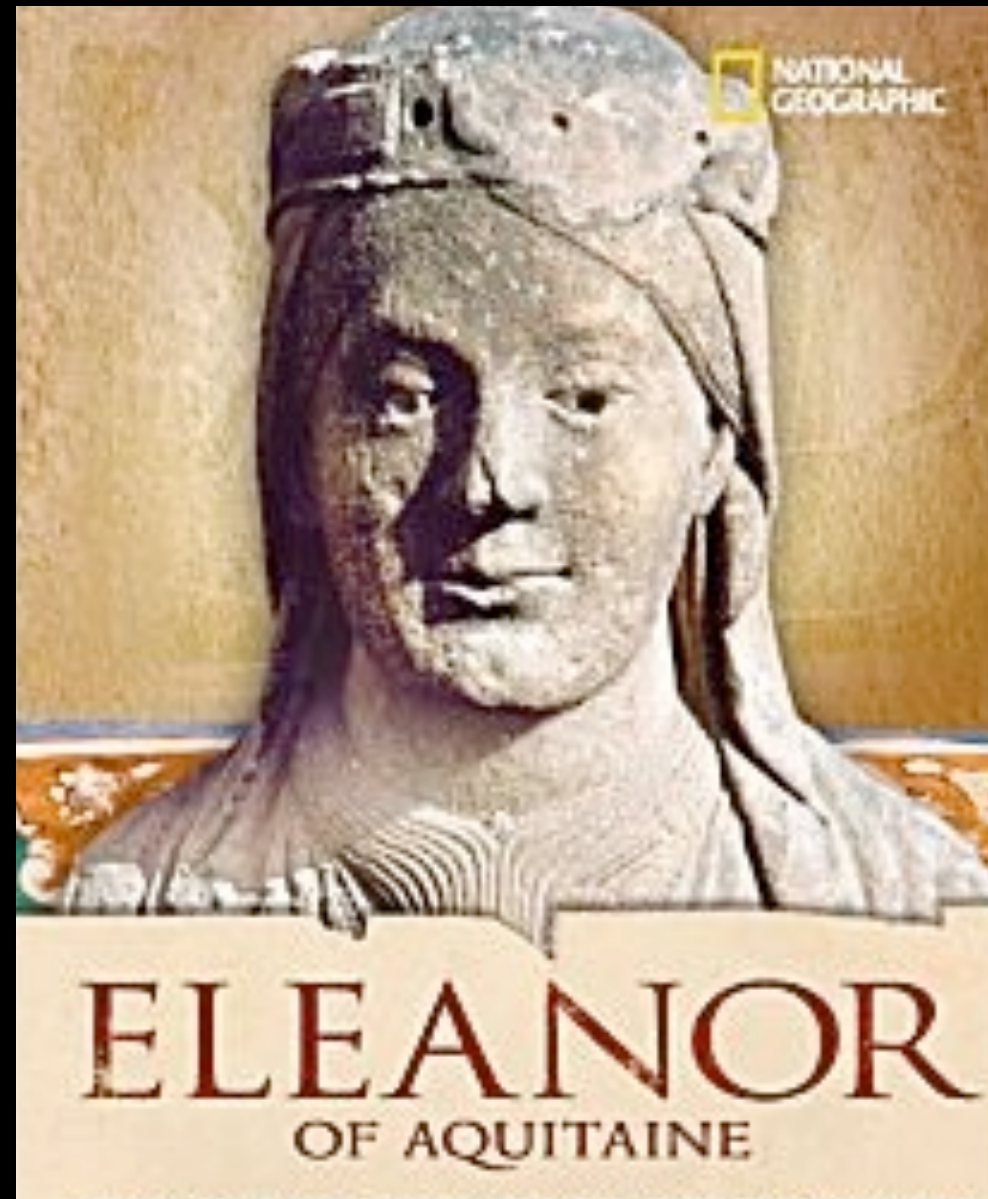


Bernard  
de  
Ventadour  
1135-1194  
born at  
Chateau  
de  
Ventadour  
(Limoges)

When I see the skylark winging



# Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen of England, 1154-1190





ISTIN - ALEXE - JACQUEMOIRE

# LANCELOT

Livre I - Claudas des Terres Désertes



## THE MATTER OF BRITAIN





Penguin Classics \$1.65

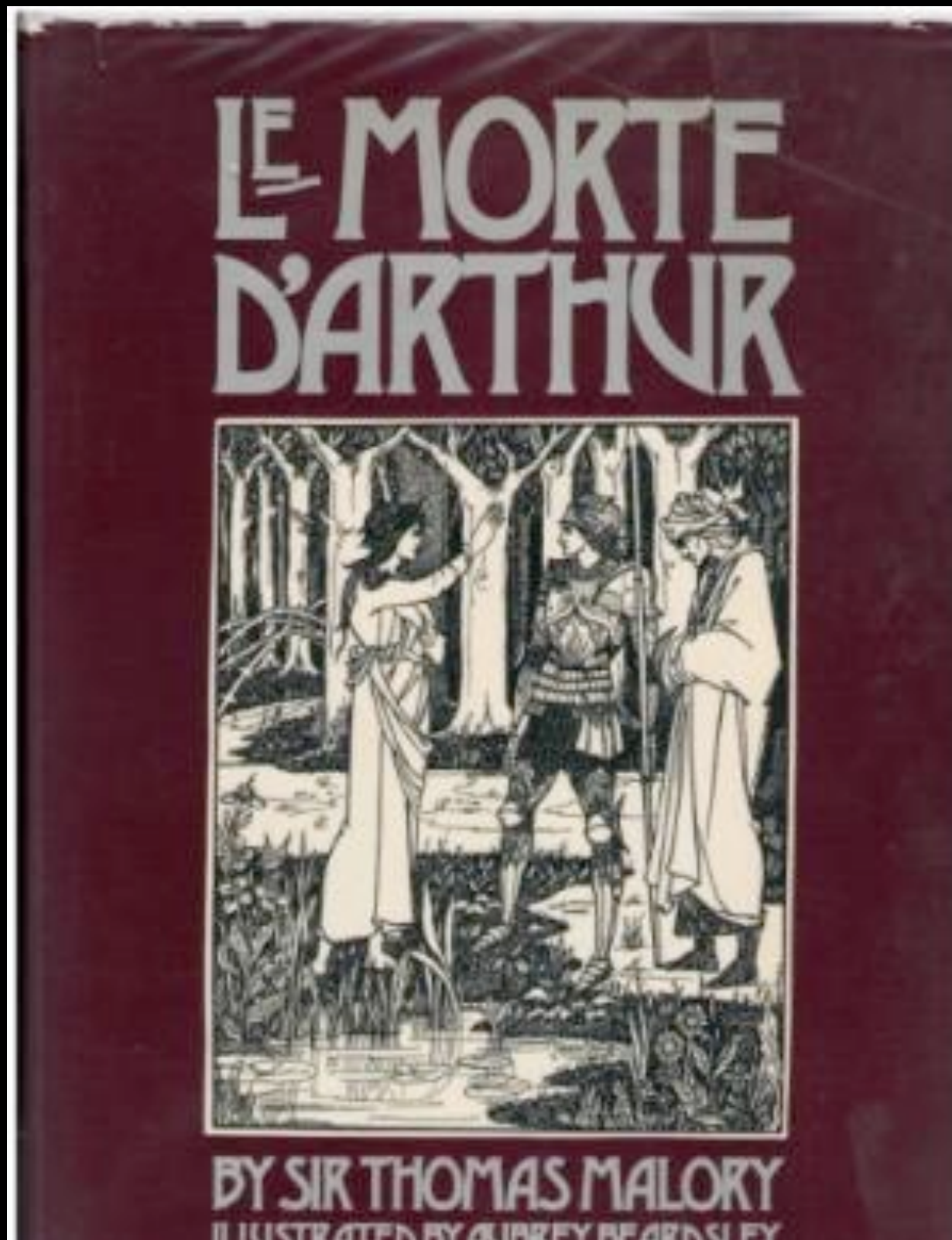
GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH  
THE HISTORY OF  
THE KINGS OF BRITAIN



## Geoffrey of Monmouth 1100-1155

is the most important source for all later books about Arthur. There are hundreds of books after the 12 C and all of these go back to him. From 500 -1500 in that long evolution of the story of Arthur Geoffrey Monmouth is key factor in having the source of the story. Sir Thomas Malory sums it all up in the 15<sup>th</sup> C. In the history of the Arthur legend Malory is critical. In the 15<sup>th</sup> C he is close enough to these stories. He could find out what we can't find out anymore. If you know nothing about Malory you are skipping a lot.





THOMAS  
MALLORY  
1415-1471  
His book has  
immense  
influence  
in 15th C.  
England.  
Tudors  
name their  
prince  
“Arthur”





Marie de France, 1145-1198  
Daughter of King Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine  
Countess of Champagne, Her Court at Troyes



# GREATNESS OF TROYES: CULTURE



Marie and her Courtly Poet Chretien de Troyes  
(c1150-1200) and stories of Britain: Lancelot and Arthur





CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES

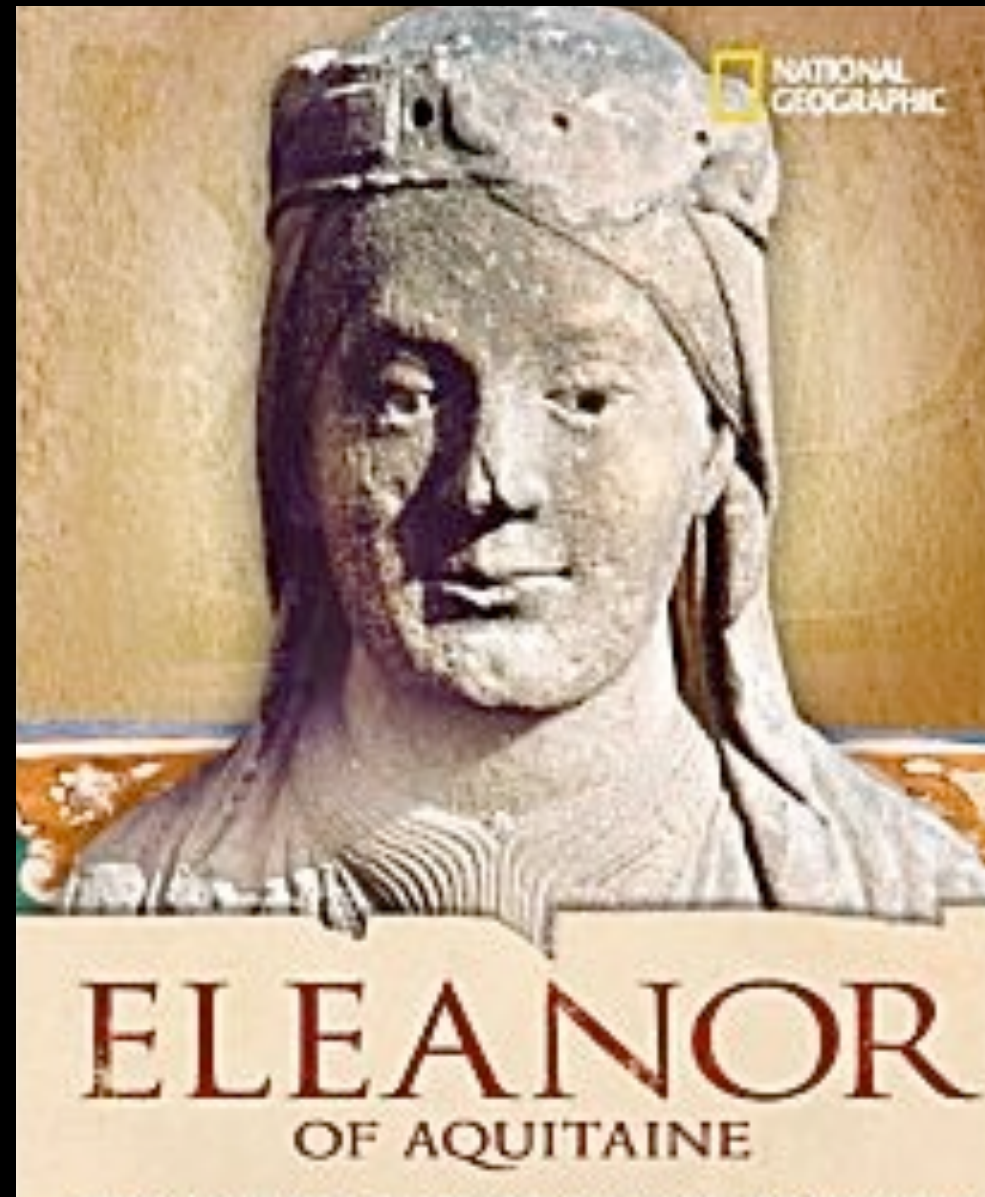
# LANCELOT

ou le chevalier de la charrette



GF-Flammarion










KING RICHARD  
THE  
LIONHEARTED  
VISITS THE  
NEWLY  
DISCOVERED  
GRAVE  
OF  
ARTHUR





SITE OF KING ARTHUR'S TOMB.  
IN THE YEAR 1191 THE BODIES OF  
KING ARTHUR AND HIS QUEEN WERE  
SAID TO HAVE BEEN FOUND ON THE  
SOUTH SIDE OF THE LADY CHAPEL.  
ON 19TH APRIL 1278 THEIR REMAINS WERE  
REMOVED IN THE PRESENCE OF  
KING EDWARD I AND QUEEN ELEANOR  
TO A BLACK MARBLE TOMB ON THIS SITE.  
THIS TOMB SURVIVED UNTIL THE  
DISSOLUTION OF THE ABBEY IN 1539













Casablanca  
 Gone with the Wind  
 Titanic  
 Dr Zhivago  
 Romeo and Juliet  
 West Side Story  
 The Way We Were  
 Il Postino  
 Annie Hall  
 Camelot  
 Out of Africa  
 Roman Holiday  
 Splendor in the Grass  
 Brief Encounter  
 Now, Voyager  
 Wuthering Heights  
 Love is a Many Splendored  
 Thorn Birds (TV)  
 Like Water for Chocolate  
 Possession (Novel and movie)  
 Bridges of Madison County









