

Charlemagne

The Franks and their Kingdoms

Franks were members of a confederation of Germanic peoples that attacked the Roman Empire beginning in the A.D. 200's and were divided into two branches, the Salians and the Ripuarians. The Salians settled in the Low Countries on the lower Rhine, near the North Sea. The Ripuarians moved into the region around what are now the cities of Aachen, Trier and Cologne, Germany, in the region of the middle Rhine.

Frankish history is divided into two periods, the Merovingian (See *Merovingian Kings*), from about 481 to 751, and the Carolingian, 751 to 987. Charlemagne, king of the Franks from 768 to 814, created a vast empire. In 800, Pope Leo III crowned him emperor of the Romans. The arms of Charlemagne are described by Richard Thomson as "Impaled: 1st Coat, or, a double-headed eagle displayed sable crowned gold, dimidiated and joined to the centre line; 2nd Coat azure 6 fleurs-de-lys, 1, 2, 2, and 1, or" which means "A shield divided in half with the first half gold with a black half eagle with a gold crown and the second half blue with 6 gold fleurs-de-lys arranged 1, 2, 2, and 1. After the time of Charlemagne, the Frankish empire began to break up into what later became the kingdoms of France, Germany, and Italy.



Our genealogical history begins with Clovis, a Ripuarian Frank who was King of Cologne in the early 5th century and is based on Weis' *Ancestral Roots* and Moriarty's *Plantagenet Ancestry*. (See References)

Generation One

Clovis, King of Cologne

fl. ca. 420 (flourished circa 420)

Clovis was a Ripuarian Frank and King of Cologne circa 420 AD. Frankish "kings" at this time were really just local tribal chieftains. Note this is not Clovis I (466? - 511) who founded of the Merovingian Dynasty. (For that line, see *Merovingian Kings*.) Clovis had a son:

- **Childebert**, mentioned next.

Generation Two

Childebert, King of Cologne

fl. ca. 450

Childebert had a son:

- **Siegbert**, mentioned next.

Generation Three

Siegbert the Lamé, King of Cologne

Murdered in 509

Seigbert was murdered by his son:

- **Cloderic**, mentioned next.

Generation Four

Cloderic the Parricide, King of Cologne.

Murdered in 509

Cloderic murdered his father in 509, and was himself murdered the same year by Clovis (I), the founder of the Merovingian Dynasty.

Cloderic married a kinswoman of Clothilda, the Burgundian Princess and wife of Clovis (I). They had a son:

- **Murideric**, mentioned next.

Generation Five

Murideric, Lord of Vitrey-en-Perthois

Murideric was “very young” in 509 when his father was murdered by Clovis (I). He revolted against Thierry (I), a son of Clovis (I), who killed him. Murideric had the following sons:

- **St. Gondulfus**, mentioned next.
- Duke Bodegisil (I) who died in 581. Bodegisil married first to Palatina, a daughter of Gallus Magnus, a Gallo-Roman Senator and Bishop of Troyes (elected 562). Bodegisil married second to Sancha, a Gascon.

Generation Six

St. Gondulfus

Born in 524

Died on July 6, 607.

St. Gondulfus was a political figure. He was Governor of Marseilles in 581, Mayor of the Palace to Theibert (I) and was consecrated in 599 as Bishop of Tongres.

St. Gondulfus is almost certainly the father of Duke Bodegisil (II); see F.L. Weis, *Ancestral Roots*, Baltimore, 1999, 190-6. Other earlier works including George Andrews Moriarty: *The Plantagenet Ancestry of King Edward III and Queen Philippa*, Mormon Pioneer Genealogical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1985, pages 5 and 241, show St. Gondulfus’ brother Duke Bodegisil (I) as the father of Duke Bodegisil (II). However, it was very unusual among the early Franks for a son to have the same name as his father as would be the case if Bodegisil (I) had been the father of Bodegisil (II). The same name was used to indicate a close kinship such as the uncle and nephew relationship here.

While it may seem strange to us to-day for a “saint” and a “bishop” to have had children, this was not the case in early mediæval times. Married clergy were the rule rather than the exception until Gregorian reforms of the 11th century. By the late middle ages, there were virtually no married clergy.

St. Gondulfus had a son:

- **Duke Bodegisil (II)**, mentioned next.

Generation Seven

Duke Bodegisil (II), Governor of Aquitaine.

Killed in 588

Duke Bodegisil (II) married Oda, a Suevian and they had a son:

- **St. Arnoself**, mentioned next.

Generation Eight

St. Arnoself, Bishop of Metz

Born in 582

Died on August 16, 641

Arnoself is also known as Arnold, Arnulf and Arnuioph. He was a member of the court of the Frankish king Theodebert (II) of Austrasia. A noble, Arnoself married Doda, and their son was Ansegisel. Doda became a nun, and Arnulf made plans to enter a monastery but was named the bishop of Metz around 616. He continued his court services, making Clotaire of Neustria the king of Austrasia. He also served as counsellor to Dagobert, King Clotaire's son. In 626, Arnulf retired to a hermitage at Remiremont, France. His feast day is July 18.

St. Arnoself married Clothilde (Doda) who became a nun at Trèves in 612 and they had a son:

- **Duke Ansigise**, mentioned next.

Generation Nine

Duke Ansigise, Mayor of the Palace in Austrasia

Born circa 602

Died (murdered) in 685

Ansigise, also known as Anchises, Ansegisel and Ansegilius, married St. Bégue or Begga, daughter of Pépin the Old of Landen who was Mayor of the Palace of Austrasia in 623 and a counsellor of Dagobert (I), King of Austrasia. (*Note: St. Bégue's brother was Grimoald, father of Childebert who was adopted by Sigibert III, King of Austrasia; see *Merovingian Kings*, Generation Nine*)

St. Bégue's mother was St. Itta, a daughter of Arnoldus, Bishop of Metz, said to be a son of Ansbertus, the Gallo-Roman Senator and his wife Blithilda. On the death of her husband in the year 691, St. Bégue built a church and convent at Andenne on the Meuse River and died there. Her feast day is December 17th.

Duke Ansigise and St. Bégue had a son:

- **Pépin**, mentioned next.

Generation Ten

Pépin of Heristal, Mayor of the Palace in Austrasia

Born circa 635

Died on December 16, 714

Pépin married first to Plectrud, a daughter of Hugobert and Irmina, and they had the following sons:

- Drogo, Duke of Champagne
- Grimoald (II), Mayor of the Palace of Austrasia

Pépin was associated with Aupais (Aupai s, Elphide or Chalpaida?) who is said to have been be a concubine. Historically, this referred to a secondary or inferior wife and may help explain why some sources state that Pépin and Aupais were married. They had a son:

- **Charles Martel**, mentioned next.

Generation Eleven

Charles “The Hammer” Martel, Mayor of the Palace in Austrasia

Born in 676

Died on October 22, 741

When his father Pépin of Heristal died in 714, Charles Martel had to overcome opposition from the family of Pépin’s first wife Pletrude. By 718, Charles had triumphed, gaining not only his father’s office of Mayor of the Palace, but also his father’s fortune. He then vanquished other Frankish leaders to greatly extend his realm. The Merovingian kings Childeric (II) (reigned 715-721) and Theuderic (IV) (reigned 721-737) were mere figureheads, and the Mayor of the Palace possessed supreme authority. Following the death of King Theuderic (IV) in 737, Charles Martel ruled alone as Mayor of the Palace. Although the throne was vacant, Charles did not attempt to claim it.

Charles’ most spectacular victory came in 732 when he triumphed over an invading Islamic army from Spain at the Battle of Poitiers, also called the Battle of Tours, and is regarded as one of the most decisive battles in the history of the world. The wave of Saracen conquest had flown over the Pyrenees into Gaul, and for a time it appeared likely to add that country to the empire of the caliphs. Fortunately for Europe, Charles Martel, the ruler of the Franks, proved equal to the occasion, and in a desperately hard-fought battle that began near Tours and ended near Poitiers, defeated the Saracenic emir Abd-er-Kahman, and saved Europe from the Moslem yoke.

It is worthy of notice that this battle - emphatically one of the most decisive battles of the world – was fought in 732, exactly 100 years after the death of Mohammed, the so-called the “Prophet of God”. Charles was later called Martel, meaning “the Hammer”, because of his victory over the Moslem horde. Edward Gibbon wrote that were it not for Charles Martel “Perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate . . . the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet. . . . From such calamities was Christendom delivered by the genius and fortune of one man.”

. . . Edward Gibbon: *The History Of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire*, Volume 5, page 156 - 157

In order to maintain his power, Charles had to engage in continual struggles with various princes, both secular and ecclesiastical. Following his victory at Poitiers in 732, he attacked some unruly bishops including Eucherius of Orléans. Because of this, his memory suffered. During the ninth century, his tomb at the abbey of St. Denis is said to have been opened by the abbot, and a hideous dragon supposedly emerged from a blackened, charred and otherwise barren coffin; thus demonstrating Charles Martel’s damnation for despoiling the Church of its property. Later historians at St. Denis said he had taken Church lands only temporarily and had intended eventually to reimburse and further enrich the Church.

Charles Martel married first to Rotrou or Chrotrud who was perhaps a daughter of St. Liévin, Bishop of Trèves. Charles and Rotrou had the following children:

- Carloman who ruled Neustria, Burgundy and Provence as Mayor of the Palace from 741 until 747 when he retired from political life and became a monk at the Monastery of Monte Casino. He was succeeded by his younger brother Pepin the Short.
- Landrée who married Count Sigrand | • Jerome
- **Pépin the Short**, mentioned next.

Charles Martel married secondly to Swanhilde or Sunnichilde, daughter of Theodebert, Duke of Bavaria and they had the following children:

- Grifo, who was endowed with a portion of his father's land, but was displaced and imprisoned by his half brothers Carloman and Pépin the Short.
- Chiltrud, who married in 749 to Odilo, Duke of Bavaria. In 757, their son Duke Tassilo III of Bavaria and the magnates of Bavaria acknowledged themselves as vassals of Pépin the Short.

Generation Twelve

Pépin the Short, King of the Franks

Born circa 715

Died on September 24, 768

Following the death of their father Charles Martel in 741, Pépin the Short along with his older brother Carloman imprisoned their half brother Grifo and took control of the Frankish Empire as joint Mayors of the Palace. Pépin ruled in Neustria, Burgundy and Provence and Carloman ruled in Austrasia. In order to legitimize their rule, the brothers revived the kingship by raising Childeric III to the throne in 743. Pépin and Carloman continued to hold the real power. That same year, Pépin and Carloman conquered their brother-in-law Duke Odilo of Bavaria. However, discord in Bavaria continued; and it was not until 757 that Odilo's son (Pépin's nephew) Duke Tassilo III of Bavaria and the magnates of Bavaria were finally forced to acknowledge themselves as vassals of Pépin the Short.

In 747, Carloman withdrew from politics. With the support of the church and the Pope, Pépin had himself declared King of the Franks in 751. The former king, Childeric III, retired to a monastery.

In the winter of 753-754 after the Lombards forced Pope Stephen to leave Rome, the Pope visited Pépin the Short. The next summer, Pope Stephen anointed Pépin and his two sons Charlemagne and Carloman, and declared that the Franks were never to elect a king who was not of the sacred lineage of Pépin the Short. In return for Pope Stephen's support, Pépin the Short took his army to Italy and defeated the Lombards. Pépin's gift of a wide strip of land in central Italy to the Pope became known as the "Donation of Pépin". This land, called the Papal States, remained under the control of the popes until the unification of Italy in the 19th century.

Pépin the Short married in 740 to Bertha or **Bertrada II of Laon** also known as "Bertha Broadfoot". She was the daughter of Caribert (or Herbert), Count of Laon and granddaughter of Bertha, a Merovingian Princess who was in turn a daughter of Thierry (III), King of Austrasia, Neustria and Burgundy. (See *Merovingian Kings*, Generation Eight) Bertha was known as "Queen Goose-Foot" or "Goose-Footed Bertha", and is perhaps the original "Mother Goose".

Pépin the Short and Bertha of Laon had the following children:

- **Charlemagne, Emperor of the West**, mentioned next.
- Carloman of the Franks, King of Franks, born about 751, died in 771
- Gisela, Abbess of Chelles, who had a son Rowland, who had a daughter Juliana who married her first cousin once removed, Charles the younger, Duke of Ingelheim who was a son of Charlemagne. (See Generation Thirteen)
- Pippin who died young

Generation Thirteen

Charlemagne, Emperor of the West

Born on April 2, 742 at either Ingolheim or Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle)

Died on January 28, 814 at Aachen

When Pépin the Short died in 768, the Frankish lands were divided according to ancient Frankish law and tradition between Pépin's sons Carloman and Charles. During the next three years until Carloman's death in 771, relations between the two brothers were sometimes strained. In 774, Charles "the Great" or Karolus Magnus, more widely known as Charlemagne, conquered Lombardy and confirmed his father's donation of the Papal States. Charlemagne added Bavaria to his realm, and eventually defeated the Saxons and forced them to convert to Christianity. Charlemagne also waged war in Spain. He was returning from an expedition there in 778 when a mountain people called "the Basques" ambushed and wiped out his rear guard. This incident became the subject of the famous epic poem *The Song of Roland*. In the poem Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the Romans by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day, 800.



More is known about Charlemagne than most mediæval rulers because of a biography written by Einhard, a friend of his son Louis the Pious. This biography describes Charlemagne as more than six feet tall, with piercing eyes, fair hair, a thick neck, and a potbelly. He was strong, fond of exercise, and had an alert mind and a forceful personality. Charlemagne could read and speak Latin, the language of educated people of the time; and he improved education and culture by establishing a school at his palace in Aachen. This palace school attracted the best teachers and students in Europe. It educated clergymen, thus strengthening the church, and trained teachers for schools throughout the empire. Scholars at the schools collected and copied ancient Roman manuscripts, which otherwise would have been lost forever.

Charlemagne married in 771 at Aachen to Hildegard of Vinzgau, and they had the following children:

- **Pépin I, King of Italy**, mentioned next.
- Charles the younger, Duke of Ingelheim, born 772 and died 811 before his father. Charles married Juliana, who was his first cousin once removed. (See Generation Twelve)
- **Louis I the Pious of Aquitaine, King of France**, whose 7X great granddaughter Mathilda of Flanders married in 1053 to William the Conqueror. (See *Flanders*)

Charlemagne had additional wives, an abundance of girlfriends and many more children.

Generation Fourteen

Pépin I, King of Italy

Born in April 773

Died on July 8, 810, before his father Charlemagne.

Pépin was crowned King of Italy by his father Charlemagne in 781. He married in 795 to Bertha who may have been his cousin; a daughter of his Uncle Carloman. Pépin and Bertha had a son:

- **Bernhard, King of Italy**, mentioned next.

Generation Fifteen

Bernhard, King of Italy

Born circa 797

Died on August 17, 818 at St. Amrosius, Mailand.

Bernhard doubtless felt that his father Pépin had been crowned King of Italy by Charlemagne and that he should follow his father as the full fledged King of Italy. His uncle, Louis I the Pious, had a different view of the situation. Seeing as Pépin had died before Charlemagne, Louis the Pious felt that as Charlemagne's heir, he was overall king or emperor; and that his nephew Bernhard was perhaps sort of a sub-king. Bernhard revolted in July 817 when his Uncle Louis proceeded to divide the empire among his sons, Bernhard's cousins. The revolt didn't work, and he was forced to submit to Louis in December 817. Eventually, by the Treaty of Verdun in 843, the territory that had been Bernhard's Kingdom of Italy was awarded to Louis the Pious' son Lothaire who became Holy Roman Emperor. (For a map, see *Flanders*, Generation One)

Bernhard married in 813 to Kunigunde (also Cunegonde or Cunigunde) and they had a son:

- **Seigneur Pépin**, mentioned next.

Generation Sixteen

Seigneur Pépin de Peronne

Born in 817

Died after 840

Seigneur Pépin was probably the Lord or Count of Peronne and St. Quentin in the Vermandois; an area in Picardy in northern France. Seigneur Pépin had the following children:

- **Herbert I**, mentioned next.
- **a daughter** who married Gui, Count of Senlis. Their children included:
 - Bernard, Count of Senlis was a friend and counsellor of Hugh Capet "the Great" of Neustria.
 - **Poppa** who married in 886 to Rolf, 1st Duke of Normandy. (See *Normandy*, Generation Five) This descent for Poppa, wife of Rolf, 1st Duke of Normandy, is from George Andrews Moriarty: *The Plantagenet Ancestry of King Edward III and Queen Philippa*, Mormon Pioneer Genealogical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1985, page 226 where Professor Moriarty corrects a line from page 11 that shows Poppa as a daughter of Count Berenger of Bayeux.

Generation Seventeen

Herbert I, Count of Senlis and Vermandois

Born circa 840

Died (murdered) circa 900 – 908

Herbert I married Bertha, a daughter of Guerri (I), Count of Morvois and they had the following children:

- **Sprota** (or Adela) who married **William I Longsword**, 2nd Duke of Normandy as his first wife. (See *Normandy*, Generation Six)
- **Herbert II**, mentioned next.
- **Beatrice de Vermandois**, born in 880, who married **Robert I**, King of the West Franks. (See *Capet*, Generation Nine)

Generation Eighteen

Herbert II, Count of Vermandois

Born circa 880 – 890

Died circa 943 at St. Quentin

Herbert (II) married **Liegarde** (or Hildebrante) a daughter of Robert (I), King of France and his first wife Aelis. (See *Capet*, Generation Nine), and they had the following children:

- **Alice of Vermandois**, born 910, who married **Arnolph “the Great”**, Count of Flanders. (See *Flanders*, Generation Five)
- **Robert, Count of Troyes**, mentioned next.
- **Albert I, Count of Vermandois**, mentioned next.
- Luitgarda of Vermandois, born about 915 who married William I Longsword, 2nd Duke of Normandy as his second wife. (See *Normandy*, Generation Six) Luitgarda married secondly to Theobald “le Tricheur”, Count of Blois.

Generation Nineteen

Robert, Count of Troyes and Meaux

Born circa 910

Died circa 967/68

Robert married Adelaide, a daughter of Giselbert, Count of Burgundy and his wife Ermengarde. Robert and Adelaide had the following daughters:

- **Adelaide de Vermandois** who was born in 950 and died circa 975 - 978. Adelaide married Geoffrey I “Grisgonelle”, Count of Anjou (died July 21, 987), son of Fulk (II) “the Good”, Count of Anjou. Adelaide and Geoffrey had a son:
 - **Fulk III “the Black”, Count of Anjou** (died June 21, 1040) who married Hildegarde; they had a daughter:
 - **Ermengarde, heiress of Anjou** (born circa 1010/1015 and died 21 March, 1076) who married **Aubri-Geoffrey**, Count of Gâtinaise. (See *Plantagenet*, Generation Two)
- **Ermengarde of Anjou** who married in 980 to Conan “the Crooked” Duke of Brittany who died in 992. Ermengarde and Conan had a daughter:

- **Judith of Brittany** (982 - 1017) who married **Richard II “the Good”**, Duke of Normandy. (See *Normandy*, Generation Eight)

Albert I “the Pious”, Count of Vermandois.

Born circa 915

Died in 987

Albert married **Gerberga of Lorraine**, a daughter of Giselbert, Duke of Lorraine and Gerberga of Saxony. (See *Merovingian Kings*, Generation Nineteen) Adalbert and Gerberga had a son:

- **Herbert III, Count of Vermandois**, mentioned next.

Generation Twenty

Herbert III, Count of Vermandois

Born circa 954

Died about 1000

Herbert married Ermengard, a daughter of Reinald, Count of Bar and they had a son:

- **Otho, Count of Vermandois**, mentioned next.

Generation Twenty-one

Otho, Count of Vermandois

Born circa 1000

Died May 25, 1045

Odo married Parvie, Parrie or Parrè, and they had a son:

- **Herbert IV Count of Vermandois**, mentioned next.

Generation Twenty-two

Herbert IV, Count of Vermandois

Born circa 1032

Died circa 1080

Herbert IV married Adela, daughter of Raoul III Count of Valois and the Vexin, and they had a daughter:

- **Adelaide de Vermandois**, mentioned next.

Generation Twenty-three

Adelaide de Vermandois, Countess of Vermandois and Valois

Died circa 1120

Adelaide married to **Hugh “the Great” Capet**, Count of Vermandois, son of Henry (I) Capet, King of France and brother of Philip (I), King of France. (see *Capet*, Generation Fourteen.)

For the continuation of this line, see *Capet*, Generation Fourteen.

After Hugh’s death, Adelaide married secondly to Reinald, Count of Clermont.

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