

Dossier on the Merovingians and the Carolingians

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*To have another language is to possess a second soul
~ Charlemagne*

As the Roman Empire declined, many people groups moved throughout Europe and fought for supremacy. The tribes in Gaul grew and shrank; sometimes they merged with others to form larger tribes, and at times certain tribes disappeared altogether. The Roman presence, which had been a constant for decades, eventually waned as soldiers were recalled for service elsewhere in the Roman Empire, and finally the Empire itself began to crack and come apart. In AD 410 (three hundred fifty years or so after the death of Lazarus and Mary Magdalene), Rome was sacked by the Visigoths, and Gaul was left to itself.

Another of the barbarian groups, known as the Franks, had moved westward during this time. The Celtic tribe of Vercingetorix merged with one of the larger and more powerful of the Frankish groups known as the Salic Franks and intermarried with them. As some point in the fifth century, a Salic Frank named Merovech (from the Latin Meroveus or Merovius) was said to have become the chieftain. He became the founder of a dynasty of Frankish kings known as the Merovingians that ruled France for the next three hundred years, from the 400s to the 700s.

The name “Merovingian” comes from “mer” meaning sea, and “vingian” meaning grapevine or possibly bloodline, and it was later said of Merovech that he came partially from a sea creature. Perhaps this alluded to Mary Magdalene coming over the sea, but it was also alleged that he was related to Posiedon and Dagon, gods of the sea. However, it is also possible that his name was a Latinized form of the German “Marwig” which means “famed fighter.”

The Merovingians were known as the “long-haired kings” because Merovech was said to have always kept his hair long in contrast the Romans. That custom was preserved by his descendants and it was regarded as a mark of royalty. Like Samson in the Bible, their long hair was a symbol of their power, and after childhood it was never cut. No men except royalty could grow their hair long, and for the royals long hair was mandatory. There is a story of two royal sons who were seen as a threat to one of the Merovingian kings, and therefore their mother was presented with two options regarding them: either death or a haircut. She chose death for them, not wanting them shamed by having their hair shorn and their power debased.

The grandson of Merovech was Clovis (AD 466—511). He was a warrior king who conquered and reigned over much of what is now the country of France. He was the greatest of all of the Merovingian kings, and established the concept of what a Frankish king would be and do.

Like other Franks, Clovis was wild. His parties were full of large, blonde, muscular, and drunken men with huge appetites, gorging themselves on meat and beer, throwing food at each other and getting into blood feuds over petty arguments. Clovis also loved his women and had a number of them. In war he would invoke the spirit of Woden, the Norse god of power, to give him and his men the gift of battle-frenzy—the drunken, berserk rage that can take a warrior out of himself, making him invulnerable to wounds and capable of superhuman feats of strength. Woden was also the lord of the slain, the one who leads the hosts of the dead, and the Franks believed that Woden required discipline and suffering from them—by dancing to the point of exhaustion, by long fasts, or by painful self-inflicted wounds. To the civilized Romans who usually saw them only from a distance, the Franks were barbarian cave men. But Clovis was a very clever and shrewd leader who built strong coalitions, and he knew when to attack and when to keep his peace. As the Roman Empire crumbled, Clovis built a kingdom and a country that has lasted in one form or another down to the present day; it was due to his efforts that France was united much earlier than the rest of Europe, and therefore often dominated politics of the continent throughout its history. Clovis was ruthless and brutal, never allowing anyone to threaten his power; after he had conquered or subdued the kingdoms around him, he began to kill his own relatives who ruled over smaller parts of his kingdom, and anyone who he thought could possibly be a threat. Clovis then would complain, “How sad a thing it is that I live among strangers like some solitary traveler, and that I have none of my own relations left to help me when disaster threatens!” It was said that Clovis made this complaint not because he grieved for his relatives, but in the hope that he could still find some alive whom he could kill.

Clovis’ wife was a Christian, and she encouraged him to convert from paganism. As he was fighting to establish his kingdom, he went into battle with a neighboring tribe and was almost defeated. He promised God that if he won the victory that he and his men would become Catholic, and after a miraculous victory, he was baptized by St. Remigius, the bishop of Reims, along with many of his warriors. Clovis eventually received recognition from Remigius and other bishops as being the king of the Franks, and he returned the favor, giving many gifts to churches and abbeys across Gaul. There is a strong suggestion that Clovis received more than just personal recognition, and that long-term guarantees of allegiance from the church were made, both for himself and his descendants, in return for royal support of the church. Thus, the church and the Merovingian dynasty were bound together, and a quasi-divine status was given to the line of Clovis; so began the long history of involvement between France and the Papacy in Rome.

But even though the society was “Christianized,” religion was mostly a patina—Clovis and his descendants remained pagan in many ways. They continued to revere Woden, to practice magic, to cast spells, and engage in divination, sorcery and other occult rituals.

Many years later when the tomb of Childeric I was unearthed, a number of occult items were discovered which included a severed horse's head, a golden head of a bull and a crystal ball. It was said that the robes of the Merovingian kings had the power to heal, and that, like Sampson, their power lay in their long hair. The Merovingians also were said each to have a birthmark that took the form of a red cross, either over the heart or between the shoulder blades. The people were in awe of their arcane authority, their reportedly clairvoyant ability, and their spiritual or perhaps demonic power. Thus, they were known as the "sorcerer kings," and they seemingly combined the power of both Christ and Satan in a Gnostic dualism that incorporated both Christian and Satanic elements.

Immediately before his death, Clovis divided his lands among his four sons, thereby weakening the kingdom and leading to much conflict among his descendants. But even though the kingdom was divided, the authority of the Merovingians was unchallenged for centuries, and they ruled by "blood right." Their sons were not invested as kings but simply assumed the right to rule upon reaching their twelfth birthday. However, the factor that was to prove fatal to the Merovingian dynasty was their method of exercising power. The kings reigned but did not rule—they were the visible head of the government, leading in matters of war, religion, and justice, but left the day-to-day running of the kingdom up to an administrator who was known as the "major domo" or "mayor of the palace." Over time these men became very powerful and eventually sought to depose their masters.

Merovingian power continued for another one hundred fifty years until the death of Clovis II in 656. His son Dagobert II, perhaps named after Dagon, the fish god, was only five years old at the time, and Grimoald, his major domo, had the boy abducted and exiled to Ireland. Grimoald, who died soon afterward, was succeeded by his nephew Pepin the Fat (Pepin II, also called Pepin Heristal). In addition to being fat, Pepin was cruel and power-hungry. He seized control of the government, and when Dagobert returned to France, Pepin had him assassinated with an arrow shot through his eye and into his brain.

With the death of Dagobert, the Merovingian dynasty fell into decline forced on them by their own major domos. The long-haired kings continued to "reign" for another one hundred years, but power had passed into the hands of Pepin and his descendants, who had all of the authority of the kings but were afraid to call themselves such, because of the mystique of the Merovingian dynasty in the minds of the people.

Thus the line of Judas and Mary (presuming that such a coupling took place) had been almost extinguished, but after Dagobert II returned to France and before he was assassinated, he married and it was said that he had a son named Sigebert IV, who was supposedly raised in secret in the southwest of France. So, the Merovingian line continued.

The Carolingian Dynasty

The son of Pepin the Fat was Charles, who united the provinces of the Merovingians, conquered even more territory, and fought what was later regarded as one of the most significant battles in all of history, the Battle of Tours in 732 in which the Moors were defeated. It was after this battle that he was called Charles Martel, “the Hammer,” for in the eyes of many, this victory halted the seemingly unstoppable advance of the Muslim armies who had conquered many territories including North Africa and Spain, and had appeared poised to take over all of Europe. It is said that after hearing of the great victory, French bakers made rolls in the shape of the Muslim crescent as a testament to how Martel and his army had devoured the invader on the battlefield. They referred to the rolls as *croissants*.

Charles Martel later fought additional battles against the Moors and eventually drove them completely out of France, but like his father, he also refrained from calling himself a king. As major domo he continued to exercise complete power throughout the life of the last Merovingian king Childeric III, who had lived most of his days under house arrest and died childless in 754. Martel himself had died three years earlier and his son Pepin the Short (Pepin III) had become major domo in his place.

The stage was then set for perhaps the most significant act in the history of France and the Catholic Church—the deal between Pepin and the Pope. Rome had been suffering from the attacks of the Lombards, barbarians from the north who had conquered northern Italy and plundered Rome on several occasions. The Pope was therefore looking for a champion who would remove the Lombard threat. Pepin had the power of the kingship in France but not the title and felt a strong need to legitimize his authority. Therefore, he appealed to the Pope in Rome asking if the kingship should belong to the man who held the title or the one who held the power. The Pope agreed that Pepin as the one who held power should be king, and in exchange for a promise of military help against the Lombards, Pope Stephen II traveled to Paris and anointed Pepin as king of the Franks. Furthermore, the Pope made a solemn pledge binding the Catholic Church to support Pepin’s dynasty in perpetuity. Pepin kept his part of the deal by invading northern Italy and defeating the Lombards. This territory was then given to the pope and became the Papal States, which plunged the Roman Church into the politics of Italy and Europe for the next thousand years. Pepin’s son was Charles, who became known as Charles the Great or Charlemagne, for whom the Carolingian dynasty was named (from Carolus Magnus, the Latin form of his name).

The secret Merovingian bloodline line of Sigebert IV, the son of Dagobert II, was said to have eventually intermarried with the Carolingian dynasty, as one of his female descendants later became a concubine of Charlemagne. Thus, the purported bloodline of Judas and Mary flowed through the Merovingian and the Carolingian dynasties of France, both of which the Catholic Church had pledged to support. The line continued down through the generations, through the Capetian, Valois, and Bourbon dynasties, which finally ended in the French Revolution of 1789. Surviving elements of French royalty continued to seek power and participate in government, down to the present.