

Charlemagne



Charlemagne was a king of the Franks (a Germanic tribe that settled in the 400s AD in modern-day France), from 768 to 814, the year of his death. His grandfather, Charles Martel, led Frankish forces against the Moors in the Battle of Tours (733 AD); his father, Pippin the Short, was the first of his family to be King of the Franks.

- He defended Christian Europe against raids from Nordic tribes as well as attacks by Islamic armies from Africa.
- Stimulated the Carolingian Renaissance
- Stabilized the currency of his realm by basing it on a pound of silver
- Crowned Holy Roman Emperor by the Pope on Christmas Day, 800.
 - As Emperor of the Romans, he defeated the Lombards in Italy, protecting the Pope and others in Italy.
- His reign as Holy Roman Emperor created a resurgence of the idea of a united Europe, at a time when it was beset by attacks from the north, south, and east, and much trade had been cut off. His vision of a re-united Roman empire stayed alive, and became the unifying force for the German people, even though their nation did not unify until 1871.