

Susie Student

Mr. Teacher

World History

April 2nd, 2016

Charles Martel

Introduction

In the late 600s, the kings in the Frankish territories were kings in name only. These kings were called the “do-nothings” because they would really do nothing when they were king. The only thing the king wanted or did was entertainment and other things that did not involve ruling the Franks or doing anything useful. This would leave the Franks open for anyone to attack while the king was too busy fooling around. However, they eventually found a system that worked out for everyone. They would assign a “Mayor of the Palace”, which was a person who would basically rule over the Franks in the place of the king. At this time, the Franks had three parts of land that were separate from each other: Austrasia, Neustria, and Aquitaine. Later, Charles Martel would unite all of the Frank lands together into one. The Frankish lands are located in what is now known as France.

Early Life

Charles Martel was born in 688 AD, in the Frankish territory called Neustria. His father, Pepin II of Herstal, was Mayor of the Palace. Just before his death, Pepin II's first wife, Plectrude, tried to make him disinherit all of his children from his other wives and mistresses, which included Charles. She did this so that her eight-year-old grandson, Theudoald, could become the king. Plectrude thought that Theudoald's age would allow her to rule in his place. After Pepin II's death, Plectrude took Charles captive for a whole year, hoping that would keep him from ruling the Franks. Charles, already an established warrior, probably would have been the Frank's first choice for leader. After a year, Charles escaped the Neustrians, and left for Austrasia. There, the Austrasians made Charles the Mayor of the Palace. Charles served as the Mayor of the Palace from 715 AD until his death.

Uniting France

In 715-718 AD, Charles wanted to unite the Frankish territories. Not everyone wanted to unite, so there was a civil war, and all of the Frankish land started to fight each other. In 716 AD, the Neustrians teamed up with the leader of the Frisians, and they marched their army up to the Austrasians. Charles, in turn, marched his army south toward them. They battled in Austrasia; this battle was called the “Battle of Cologne”. Charles unfortunately lost this battle to the

Neustrians. This was his first time losing a battle. However, after his defeat, there were two other battles that turned Charles' defeat upside-down. The "Battle of Ambleve" was a well-planned sneak attack against the Neustrians, and he defeated them. Then the "Battle of Vincy" took place right at the Neustrians front door. Charles won this battle as well, leaving their king and mayor on the run. After these battles, Charles finally became leader of the whole Frankish territory.

<ADD TABLE HERE>

Wars with South

Now that Charles had regained his control over the Franks and had a better army, he turned his attention to the south and a new enemy: the Muslims. In 732 AD, a band of Muslims was marching up from northern Spain and heading right for the Franks. Their plan was take over the Franks and then the rest of Europe. However, Charles and the Franks already knew about their coming and they did not want to convert to Islam. As the Muslims came into the Frankish lands, Charles led his army from Austrasia to go and battle with the Muslims. This resulted in one of history's most important battles of all time: "The Battle of Tours".

Battle of Tours

This battle lasted for a week. On the seventh day, both Muslim and Frankish armies clashed together in one of the worst battles in history. When it was too dark to fight, the men went back to their camps to wait for morning. No one knew the outcome of the battle. The next morning, Charles gathered his army and marched back to the battle-field, but did not find the Muslims. Charles noticed that the Muslims retreated in the dead of night. This was not the last time the Muslims fought on Frankish soil, but they never gained more land in the Frankish territory. After the battle, Charles was granted the name "Charles Martel" and the nickname "The Hammer" for his fierce fighting.

Impact on France

Charles Martel was a capable ruler and a great warrior. His ability to unite the Franks helped to stabilize that area and his defeat of the Muslims helped prevent the spread of Islam in Europe during that time.

Works Cited

- Duckett, Eleanor Shipley. "Charles Martel | Frankish Ruler." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Web. 12 Nov. 2015.
- Hickman, Kennedy. "Battle of Tours (732 A.D.)." *Battle of Tours (732 A.D.)*. MilitaryHistory.About.com. Web. 12 Nov. 2015.
- Haaren, John H., and Addison B. Poland. "Charles Martel, 714-741 AD." *Famous Men of the Middle Ages*. New York: American Book, 1904. Print.