

Chlothar I

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(Redirected from Clotaire I)

Chlothar I^[1] (c. 497 – 29 November 561), called **the Old** (*le Vieux*), King of the Franks, was one of the four sons of Clovis, of the Merovingian dynasty. He was born circa 497 in Soissons.



Coins of Chlothar I

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Life

On the death of his father in 511, he received, as his share of the kingdom, the town of Soissons, which he made his capital; the cities of Laon, Noyon, Cambrai, and Maastricht; and the lower course of the Meuse River. But he was very ambitious, and sought to extend his domain.

He was the chief instigator of the murder of his brother Chlodomer's children in 524, and his share of the spoils consisted of the cities of Tours and Poitiers. He took part in various expeditions against Burgundy and, after the destruction of that kingdom in 534, obtained Grenoble, Die, and some of the neighbouring cities.

When the Ostrogoths ceded Provence to the Franks, he received the cities of Orange, Carpentras, and Gap. In 531, he marched against the Thuringii with his nephew Theudebert I and in 542, with his brother Childebert I against the Visigoths of Spain. On the death of his great-nephew Theodebald in 555, Chlothar annexed his territories. On Childebert's death in 558 he became sole king of the Franks.

He also ruled over the greater part of Germany, made expeditions into Saxony, and for some time exacted from the Saxons an annual tribute of

500 cows.^[2] The end of his reign was troubled by internal dissensions, his son Chram rising against him on several occasions. Following Chram into Brittany, where the rebel had taken refuge, Chlothar shut him up with his wife and children in a cottage, which he set on fire. Overwhelmed with remorse, he went to Tours to implore forgiveness at the tomb of St Martin, and died shortly afterwards at the royal palace at Compiègne.

Family

Chlothar's first marriage was to Guntheuc, widow of his own brother Chlodomer, sometime around 524. They



The division of Gaul upon Chlothar's death (561).

had no children. His second marriage, which occurred around 532, was to Radegund, daughter of Bertachar, King of Thuringia, whom he and his brother Theuderic defeated.^[3] She was later canonized. They also had no children. His third and most successful marriage was to Ingund,^[4] by whom he had five sons and two daughters:

- Gunthar, predeceased father
- Childeric, predeceased father
- Charibert, King of Paris
- Guntram, King of Burgundy
- Sigebert, King of Austrasia
- Chlothsind, married Alboin, King of the Lombards

His next marriage was to a sister of Ingund, Aregund, with whom he had a son, Chilperic, King of Soissons.^[5] His last wife was Chunsina (or Chunsine), with whom he had one son, Chram,^[6] who became his father's enemy and predeceased him. Chlothar may have married and repudiated Waldrada

Notes

1. ^ Also spelled *Chlothachar*, *Chlotar*, *Clothar*, *Clotaire*, *Chlotochar*, or *Hlothar*, giving rise to the name Lothair.
2. ^ Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms:450-751*, (Longman Limited, 1994), 65.
3. ^ Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms:450-751*, 137.
4. ^ Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms:450-751*, 59.
5. ^ Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms:450-751*, 59.
6. ^ Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms:450-751*, 60.

Further reading

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- Wallace-Hadrill, J. M. (1962). *The Long-Haired Kings, and Other Studies in Frankish History*. London: Methuen.
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<p style="text-align:center">Chlothar I Merovingian Dynasty Born: 497 Died: 561</p>		
Preceded by Clovis I	King of Soissons 511–558	Succeeded by Chilperic I
Preceded by Chlodomer	King of Orléans 524–558	Succeeded by Guntram
Preceded by Theudebald	King of Reims 555–558	Succeeded by Sigebert I <i>Moved to Metz</i>
Preceded by Childebert I	King of Paris 558	Succeeded by Charibert I
Vacant Title last held by Clovis I	King of the Franks 558–561	Vacant Title next held by Clotaire II

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