

Arnulf of Metz

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Saint Arnulf of Metz (c. 582 – 640) was a Frankish bishop of Metz and advisor to the Merovingian court of Austrasia, who retired to the Abbey of Remiremont.

Arnulf was born to an important Frankish family at an uncertain date around 582. His father was probably Baudgise or Baudegisel II of Aquitaine (d. 588), Palace Mayor and Duke of Sueve and his mother probably Oda. In his younger years he was called to the Merovingian court of king Theudebert II (595-612) of Austrasia and sent to serve as *dux* at the Schelde. Later he became bishop of Metz. During his career he was attracted to religious life, and he retired to become a monk. After his death he was canonized as a saint. In French he is also known as **Arnoul** or **Arnoulf**. In English he is also known as **Arnold**.

Arnulf gave distinguished service at the Austrasian court under Theudebert II. After the death of Theudebert in 612 he was made bishop of Metz. The rule of Austrasia came into the hands of Brunhilda, the grandmother of Theudebert, who ruled also in Burgundy in the name of her great-grandchildren. In 613 Arnulf joined his politics with Pippin of Landen and led the opposition of Frankish nobles against Queen Brunhilda. The revolt led to her overthrow, torture, and eventual execution, and the subsequent reunification of Frankish lands under Chlothachar II.

Chlothachar later made his son Dagobert I king of Austrasia and he ruled with the help of his adviser Arnulf. Not satisfied with his position as a bishop, he was involved in the 624 murder of Chrodoald, an important leader of the Frankish Agilolfings family and a protégé of Dagobert.

From 623 (with Pippin of Landen, then the Mayor of the Palace), Arnulf was an adviser to Dagobert I. He retired around 628 to a hermitage at a mountain site in the Vosges, to realize his lifelong resolution to become a monk and a hermit. His friend Romaric, whose parents were killed by Brunhilda, had preceded him to the mountains and together with Amatus had already established Remiremont Abbey there. Arnulf settled

Saint Arnulf of Metz



Born	ca 582 AD Lay-Saint-Christophe
Died	640 AD near Remiremont
Honored in	Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church
Feast	July 18
Attributes	portrayed with a rake in his hand
Patronage	Brewers

Carolingian dynasty

Pippinids

- Pippin the Elder (c. 580–640)
- Grimoald (616–656)

there, and remained there until his death twelve years later.

Arnulf was married ca 596 to a woman whom later sources give the name of Dode or Doda, (born ca 584), and had children. Chlodulf of Metz was his oldest son, but more important is his second son Ansegisel, who married Begga daughter of Pepin I, Pippin of Landen. Arnulf is thus the male-line grandfather of Pepin of Herstal, great-grandfather of Charles Martel and 3rd great grandfather of Charlemagne.

Arnulf was canonized as a saint by the Roman Catholic Church. In iconography he is portrayed with a rake in his hand.

- Childebert the Adopted (d. 662)

Arnulfings

- **Arnulf of Metz** (582–640)
- Chlodulf of Metz (d. 696 or 697)
- Ansegisel (c. 602–before 679)
- Pippin the Middle (c. 635–714)
- Grimoald II (d. 714)
- Drogo of Champagne (670–708)
- Theudoald (d. 741)

Carolingians

- Charles Martel (686–741)
- Carloman (d. 754)
- Pepin the Short (714–768)
- Carloman I (751–771)
- Charlemagne (742–814)

After the Treaty of Verdun (843)

- Lothair I, Holy Roman Emperor (795–855; Middle Francia)
- Charles the Bald (823–877) (West Francia)
- Louis the German (804–876) (East Francia)

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Genealogy

Shortly after 800, most likely in Metz, a brief genealogy of the Carolingians was compiled, modelled in style after the genealogy of Jesus in the New Testament. According to this source, Arnulf's father was a certain Arnoald, who in turn was the son of a *nobilissimus* Ansbertus and Blithilt (or Blithilde), an alleged and otherwise unattested daughter of Chlothar I. This claim of royal Merovingian descent, at a time when the Carolingian dynasty was at the peak of its power, clearly contradicts the contemporary reference *Vita Sancti Arnulfi's* :

The *Vita*, written shortly after the saint's death, merely states that he was of Frankish ancestry, from "sufficiently elevated and noble parentage, and very rich in worldly goods",^[1] without making any claims to royal blood. It should be noted, however, that due to practice of Salic Law, no children of Blithilde would be recognized as legitimate heirs to the dynasty. Therefore, the connection may or may not have been noted in relevant documentation.

Legends

There are three legends associated with Arnulf:

The Legend of the Ring

Arnulf was tormented by the violence that surrounded him and feared that he had played a role in the wars and murders that plagued the ruling families. Obsessed by these sins, Arnulf went to a bridge over the Moselle river. There he took off his bishop's ring and threw it into the river, praying to God to give him a sign of absolution by returning the ring to him. Many penitent years later, a fisherman brought to the bishop's kitchen a fish in the stomach of which was found the bishop's ring. Arnulf repaid the sign of God by immediately retiring as bishop and becoming a hermit for the remainder of his life.

The Legend of the Fire

At the moment Arnulf resigned as bishop, a fire broke out in the cellars of the royal palace and threatened to spread throughout the city of Metz. Arnulf, full of courage and feeling unity with the townspeople, stood before the fire and said, "If God wants me to be consumed, I am in His hands." He then made the sign of the cross at which point the fire immediately receded.

The Legend of the Beer Mug

It was July 642 and very hot when the parishioners of Metz went to Remiremont to recover the remains of their former bishop. They had little to drink and the terrain was inhospitable. At the point when the exhausted procession was about to leave Champigneulle, one of the parishioners, Duc Notto, prayed "By his powerful intercession the Blessed Arnold will bring us what we lack." Immediately the small remnant of beer at the bottom of a pot multiplied in such amounts that the pilgrims thirst was quenched and they had enough to enjoy the next evening when they arrived in Metz.

See also

- The Pippinids, who traced their descent from St. Arnulf.
- Descent from antiquity
- List of Catholic saints
- Tonantius Ferreolus (prefect)

References

1. ^ *Vita Arnulfi* c. 1, MG. SS. rer. Merov. 2, p. 432.

- Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, edited, revised and supplemented by Thurston and Attwater. Christian Classics, Westminster, Maryland.
- Christian Settiani - *La Préhistoire des Capétiens*, Première Partie.
- *Saint ARNOUL - ancêtre de Charlemagne et des Européens*, edited by Imp. Louis Hellenbrand. Le Comité d'Historicité Européene de la Lorraine, Metz, France, 1989.

External links

- *Catholic Encyclopedia*: St. Arnulf of Metz (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01752b.htm>)

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