

Hugh the Great

Hugh the Great (c. 898^[1] – 16 June 956) was the Duke of the Franks and Count of Paris.

Contents

- Biography**
- Family**
- Ancestry**
- Notes**
- References**

Biography

He was the son of King Robert I of France and Béatrice of Vermandois, daughter of Herbert I, Count of Vermandois.^[2] He was born in Paris, Île-de-France, France. His eldest son was Hugh Capet who became King of France in 987.^[3] His family is known as the Robertians.^[4]

In 922 the barons of western Francia, after revolting against the Carolingian king Charles the Simple (who fled his kingdom under their onslaught), elected Robert I, Hugh's father, as King of Western Francia.^[5] At the death of Robert I, in battle at Soissons in 923, Hugh refused the crown and it went to his brother-in-law, Rudolph of France.^[5] Charles, however, sought help in regaining his crown from his cousin Herbert II, Count of Vermandois, who instead of helping the king imprisoned him.^[5] Herbert then used his prisoner as an advantage in pressing his own ambitions, using the threat of releasing the king up until Charles' death in 929.^[6] From then on Herbert II of Vermandois struggled with king Rudolph and his vassal Hugh the Great.^[5] Finally Rudolph and Herbert II came to an agreement in 935.^[5]

At the death of Rudolph in 936, Hugh was in possession of nearly all of the region between the Loire and the Seine, corresponding to the ancient Neustria, with the exceptions of Anjou and of the territory ceded to the Normans in 911.^[7] He took a very active part in bringing Louis IV (d'Outremer) from the Kingdom of England in 936.^[8] In 937 Hugh married Hedwige of Saxony, a daughter of Henry the Fowler of Germany and Matilda, and soon quarrelled with Louis.^[9]

In 938 King Louis IV began attacking fortresses and lands formerly held by members of his family, some held by Herbert II of Vermandois.^[10] In 939 king Louis attacked Hugh the Great and William I, Duke of Normandy, after which a truce was concluded, lasting until June.^[11] That same year Hugh, along with Herbert II of Vermandois, Arnulf I, Count of Flanders and Duke William Longsword paid homage to the Emperor Otto the Great, and supported him in his struggle against Louis.^[12] When Louis fell into the hands of the Normans in 945, he was handed over to Hugh in exchange for their young duke Richard.^[13] Hugh released Louis IV in 946 on condition that he should surrender the fortress of Laon.^[14] In 948 at a church council at Ingelheim the bishops, all but two being from Germany, condemned and excommunicated Hugh *in absentia*, and returned Archbishop Artauld to his See at Reims.^[15] Hugh's response was to attack Soissons and Reims while the excommunication was repeated by a council at Trier.^[15] Hugh finally relented and made peace with Louis IV, the church and his brother-in-law Otto the Great.^[15]

On the death of Louis IV, Hugh was one of the first to recognize Lothair as his successor, and, at the intervention of Queen Gerberga, was instrumental in having him crowned.^[15] In recognition of this service Hugh was invested by the new king with the duchies of Burgundy and Aquitaine.^[16] In the same year, however, Giselbert, duke of Burgundy, acknowledged himself his vassal and betrothed his daughter to Hugh's son Otto-Henry.^[16] On 16 June 956 Hugh the Great died in Dourdan.^[2]

Family

Hugh married first, in 922, Judith, daughter of Roger, Count of Maine, and his wife Rothilde, a daughter of Emperor Charles the Bald.^[2] She died childless in 925.^[2]

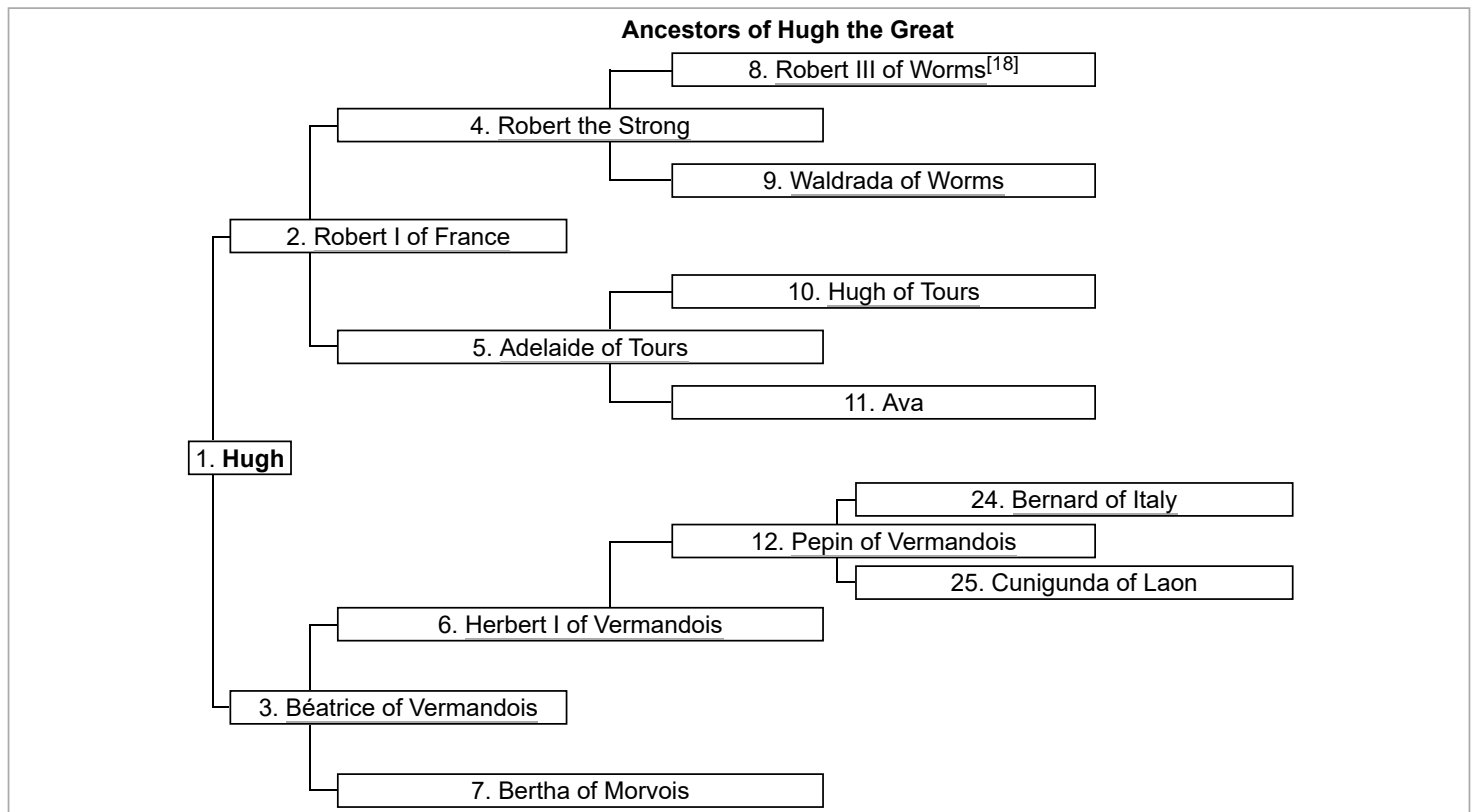
Hugh the Great	
Born	c. 898 <div>Paris</div>
Died	16 June 956 <div>Dourdan</div>
Noble family	Robertians
Spouse(s)	Judith of Maine <div>Eadhild of England</div> <div>Hedwige of Saxony</div>
Issue	Beatrice of France <div>Hugh Capet</div> <div>Emma</div> <div>Otto, Duke of Burgundy</div> <div>Henry I, Duke of Burgundy</div>
Father	Robert I of France
Mother	Béatrice of Vermandois

Hugh's second wife was Eadhild, daughter of Edward the Elder, king of the Anglo-Saxons, and sister of King Æthelstan.^[2] They married in 926 and she died in 938, childless.^[2]

Hugh's third wife was Hedwig of Saxony, daughter of Henry the Fowler and Matilda. She and Hugh had:

- Beatrice married Frederick I, Duke of Upper Lorraine.^{[a][2]}
- Hugh Capet(c. 939-997)^[17]
- Emma (c. 943-aft. 968).^[17]
- Otto, Duke of Burgundy, a minor in 956.^[16]
- Odo-Henry I, Duke of Burgundy (d. 1002)^[16]

Ancestry



Notes

- a. By his daughter Beatrice's marriage to Frederick I, Duke of Upper Lorraine Hugh became an ancestor of the Habsburg family. From their son Hugh Capet sprung forth the Capetian dynasty, one of the most powerful dynasties in Europe.

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