

Hugh the Great

	
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For other uses, see Hugh the Great (disambiguation).

Hugh the Great (898 – 16 June 956) was the **Duke of the Franks** and **Count of Paris**.

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Hugh the Great	
	
Born	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

Biography

He was the son of King **Robert I of France** and **Béatrice of Vermandois**, daughter of **Herbert I, Count of Vermandois**.^[1] He was born in **Paris**, **Île-de-France**, **France**. His eldest son was **Hugh Capet** who became **King of France** in 987.^[2] His family is known as the **Robertians**.^[3]

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.^[4] 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**.^[4] Charles, however, sought help in regaining his crown from his cousin **Herbert II, Count of Vermandois**, who instead of helping the king imprisoned him.^[4] 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.^[5] From then on Herbert II of Vermandois struggled with king Rudolph and his vassal Hugh the Great.^[4] Finally Rudolph and Herbert II came to an agreement in 935.^[4]

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.^[6] He took a very active part in bringing **Louis IV (d'Outremer)** from the **Kingdom of England** in 936.^[7] In 937 Hugh married **Hedwige of Saxony**, a daughter of **Henry the Fowler of Germany** and **Matilda**, and soon quarrelled with Louis.^[8]

In 938 King Louis IV began attacking fortresses and lands formerly held by members of his family, some held by Herbert II of Vermandois.^[9] In 939 king Louis attacked Hugh the Great and **William I, Duke of Normandy**, after which a truce was concluded, lasting until June.^[10] 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.^[11] When Louis fell into the hands of the **Normans** in 945, he was handed over to Hugh in exchange for their young duke Richard.^[12] Hugh released Louis IV in 946 on condition that he should surrender the fortress of **Laon**.^[13] 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.^[14] Hugh's response was to attack Soissons and Reims while the excommunication was repeated by a council at **Trier**.^[14] Hugh finally relented and made peace with Louis IV, the church and his brother-in-law Otto the Great.^[14]

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.^[14] In recognition of this service Hugh was invested by the new king with the duchies of **Burgundy** and **Aquitaine**.^[15] In the same year, however, Giselbert, **duke of Burgundy**, acknowledged himself his vassal and betrothed his daughter to Hugh's son **Otto-Henry**.^[15] On 16 June 956 Hugh the Great died in **Dourdan**.^[1]

Family

Hugh married first, in 922, Judith, daughter of Roger Comte du Maine & his wife Rothilde.^[1] She died childless in 925.^[1]

Hugh's second wife was **Eadhild**, daughter of **Edward the Elder**, king of the Anglo-Saxons, and sister of King **Æthelstan**.^[1] They married in 926 and she died in 938, childless.^[1]

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][1]}
- Hugh Capet**^[16]
- Emma** (c.943-aft. 968).^[16]
- Otto, Duke of Burgundy**, a minor in 956.^[15]
- Odo-**Henry I, Duke of Burgundy** (d. 1002)^[15]

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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