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(The Earlier Annals of Metz)

In the six hundred and eighty-eighth year from the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, Pippin, son of the late most noble leader of the Franks, Ansegisel, happily succeeding his glorious father, took up the leadership of the eastern Franks after many battles and triumphs given to him by God. And the commentaries on his memorable deeds, which he accomplished before his rule or during it, shine forth, having been made known to all the people of the Franks. The leadership, however, stands as the crown of his famous victory and lasting praise because while still in the flower of youth and in inestimable good fortune he avenged the unjust death of his glorious father with the aid of divine power. He brought low the perpetrator of this unspeakable crime, a man awash with foreign pleasures, killing him in a surprise attack by his youthful hand, yet with heroic ferocity. This is not unlike what is read concerning David, who, with the Lord guiding him and with his youthful blow, deprived the immense Goliath of his life and head with his [Goliath's] own sword. When this most cruel tyrant named Gundoin along with his followers had been killed, and when his riches had been given to his own faithful, Pippin's power and victory were made known to the people far and wide. Then too when the leaders and the magnates of the Franks, whom his glorious father had fostered and formerly elevated with highly honoured positions, heard of the death of the most evil tyrant, they were filled with great joy, hastened to Pippin, and gave themselves over to his authority along with all those whom they governed. As support, however, in the administration of such a large state, the Lord providing, he had his glorious mother, Begga by name, worthy of all praise. She was the daughter of the late most excellent Pippin, who with just laws governed the population living in the vast territories between the Forest of Charbonnière and the river Meuse up to the borders of the Frisians. Doubtless, because offspring of the masculine sex was lacking to him, he left his name along with his leadership to his surviving grandson, Pippin. The above-mentioned lady Begga, filled with every good sense, daily instructed her son Pippin with the salutary exhortation that, with the Lord helping, he should keep himself in his coming rule among the teachings of his youth without the contagion of iniquity. But he, endowed with divine grace, surpassed all the salutary teachings of his mother in his energetic character. He shone with so great a light of prudence that he aroused the greatest admiration in the aged and higher-born people subject to him. For the strength of his justice, the unconquerable solidity of his bravery and the guidance of his moderation freely acquired such a place in the heart of this youth that the sources of these virtues were believed without any doubt by all the people whom he governed to lie open to him not only from natural instillation (because he had possessed them from the unconquerable lineage of his parents) but also from divine inspiration. As the founding basis of his rule he had a close relative on his father's side, a certain man full of powers, Arnulf by name, the bishop of Metz. He of all the Franks is held before God and men to be a special patron. He nonetheless very often strengthened him [Pippin] with sacred admonitions and divine and human learning so that he would be strengthened for more important matters. He, indeed, being no slow listener, happily employed himself in all the Lord's commandments and works. In addition, his maternal aunt, named Geretrud, a virgin consecrated to God, who, filled with the grace of God from the cradle of her infancy, gave herself over to the service of the immortal Lord, along with her mother, Itta, having constructed a monastery in the place which is called Nivelles on her own inherited property, with a great band of virgins, repaid worthy service to the Lord. She therefore, with her fruitful stream of heavenly teaching, watered the young man's spirit as it exulted among the joys of fresh strength. Strengthened, therefore, by the teachings and most holy exhortations of these, as I would say, holy relatives, he progressed along the pathways of justice to

the governance of the realm without stumbling. All the nobles of all the eastern Franks streamed to his court, and he became for them their defender against all rivals and their most just ruler in setting right their character.

In the six hundred and eighty-eighth year from the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, Pippin, in a favourable succession, took up the leadership of the eastern Franks, whom in their own language they call Osterliudos. Hereupon he brought under the yoke of his authority the Swabians, Bavarians, and Saxons, worn down by repeated attacks and frequent battles. Indeed, these peoples and several others, acquired with many labours, submitted to the highest authority of the Franks. But on account of the do-nothingness of the kings, domestic disagreements, and civil wars, which had fallen upon many areas of the divided realm, they, one by one in their own land and deserting the lawful authority, attempted to defend their freedom with arms. But the unconquerable leader Pippin, with the Lord's help, held this stubbornness in check by frequent expeditions, very effective military strategy, and frequent devastation. And, with divine power accompanying him, he brought the most savage nations under his own domination.

In the same period, Theuderic, king of the western Franks, whom they call Neustrians, ruled the Empire, having a mayor of the palace, Ebroin by name, a cruel man and prone to several vices. At one point he, forced by certain circumstances, joined the monastery which is called Luxeuil, and there, the hair of his head having been cut, he, with a vow, took up the habit of the monastic life. But with the passing years, when another king who had been friendly to him took up the rule of the Franks, he, leaving the monastery behind and keeping the habit only so far as the tonsure, abandoned the monastic habit, took a wife, and again snatched up the position of mayor of the palace. But compared with the irregular and illicit way he succeeded to the management of the office, he exercised his rule even more perversely and wickedly. For he so persecuted those who were seen as his adversaries in the loss of his first rule that he deprived some of their life, many of their freedom, and more of their private property. And in this furore even Leudegar, a bishop of exceptional holiness, was crowned with martyrdom because he alone tried to expose his insanity.

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In the seven hundred and fourteenth year from the incarnation of the Lord, when Pippin grew ill in the royal villa of Jupille, which is located on the river Meuse, his son Grimoald hastened to visit him and, as he proceeded to prayer in the basilica of St Lambert the Martyr, and as he persisted a long while lying face down in his prayer, he was run through with a sword by a most evil man named Rantgar and he died. But out of just retribution, leader Pippin, recovering from his illness, killed all those who had been part of the plot. And in Grimoald's place as mayor of the palace with King Dagobert he appointed his little boy named Theudoald, born of a concubine. In the same year the leader Pippin, having reduced all weakened by bodily illness, died in peace on 16 December. He had ruled the people of the Franks for twenty-seven years and six months. He left a surviving son named Charles. When Pippin died, the greatest disorder grew up among the people of the Franks. For his elder sons, Drogo and Grimoald, had departed from this life while he was still living. Theudoald, Grimoald's son by a concubine, was still a boy. And although he had succeeded his father in the leadership, he was hardly able to direct the head of so great an affair. But Charles, whom his father had left behind as the only surviving heir worthy of such great power, was gravely suffering the plots of his stepmother. Because Grimoald's mother, Plectrud, desired to promote her grandson, Theudoald, she was keeping Charles from the legitimate governance of his father's authority and she herself, with the infant, in a womanly plan, presumed to control the reins of so great a kingdom.

Because she had decided to rule with feminine cunning more cruelly than was necessary, she quickly turned the wrath of the Neustrian Franks to the destruction of her grandson and the leaders who were with him. And they, rushing upon them in a surprise attack in the Forest of Compiègne, butchered them in a very great slaughter. Theudoald along with a few escaped with difficulty, but at a time not much later he ended his innocent life. And in his place they appointed Raganfred as mayor of the palace under King Dagobert. Then that people [the Neustrians], forgetful of all the benefits of the invincible leader Pippin, hastened with full force into Austrasia up to the river Meuse and laid waste that whole region. They also concluded a pact with Radbod, leader of the Frisians, against the Pippinids. But the Lord, who giveth and upbraideth not, rescuing Charles from the plots of his stepmother, brought him openly before the trembling peoples. Then just as the eclipsed sun gradually unveils its bright rays to the whole world, so Charles, the most worthy heir of Pippin, began to shine forth as a mighty defender before a people suffering and almost despairing of hope. As, however, he appeared to the hesitating people, he was received with such favour and rejoicing by everyone it was as if their ruler Pippin had come to life for their comfort. In the second year after the death of his father, Pippin, Charles obtained the leadership of the Austrasians. For in the first year after the death of Pippin, Raganfred devastated the Austrasians up to the river Meuse and entered into a pact with Radbod. The Saxons, too, devastated the land of the Attuarii.

Liber historiae Francorum, *ibid.* 89-

CHAPTER 45

Some time later, when the mayor of the palace, Erchinoald, died, the Neustrians, arguing back and forth in uncertainty, called the required council and established Ebroin in the high position of mayor of the palace at the king's court. In these days King Clothar, still a boy, died, having ruled four years. His brother, Theuderic, was brought up as king of the Neustrians and they sent Childeric, his other brother, to take up rule in Austrasia along with Duke Wulfoald. Some time later the Neustrians formed a conspiracy against Ebroin and they rose up against Theuderic and deposed him from the throne. Dragging them off by force, they cut the hair of both. They gave Ebroin a tonsure and sent him to the monastery at Luxeuil in Burgundy. Sending into Austrasia for Childeric, they brought him to them and when he came with Duke Wulfoald they raised him to the throne of the Neustrians. But this Childeric was too frivolous; he conducted all the affairs so heedlessly that he grew to be a cause of offence and a great object of hatred among them as he greatly oppressed the Neustrians. He ordered one of their number, a Neustrian named Bodilo, to be stretched upon a stake and beaten illegally. Seeing these things, the Neustrians were greatly enraged. Ingobert and Amalbert, along with the other hereditary Neustrian nobility, entered into a plot against Childeric. Bodilo, along with the others who were conspiring against the king, rose up against him and killed him together with, I am sorry to say, his pregnant queen. Wulfoald barely escaped by flight and returned to Austrasia. The Neustrians then chose Leudesius, Erchinoald's son, for the palace mayoralty. From Burgundy the blessed Leudegar, Bishop of Autun, and his brother, Gaerin, took part in this counsel and they gave their consent. Ebroin, allowing his hair to grow, and gathering a band of allies to aid him, left the monastery at Luxeuil ready for battle and returned to Francia with an army. He sent off to the blessed Audoin so that he might give him [Ebroin] a plan. But he [Audoin], through his messengers, sent only this in writing: 'Recall to mind that [plan] of Fredegund's.' And because he was sly he understood. Rising up by night with his army assembled, he came to the river Oise and, having killed the sentries, he crossed the Oise near Pont-Sainte-Maxence, where he found some of those who had conspired against him and those he killed. Leudesius with King Theuderic and many of their allies escaped by flight, but Ebroin pursued them. Coming to Baisieux, he took the royal treasury. From

there after this, coming to Crécy-en-Ponthieu, he captured the king. He requested Leudesius to come to him, giving him a deceitful guarantee. When Leudesius did so, he killed him and quickly assumed the mayoralty once again. He ordered the holy Leudegar, who had been smitten with various punishments, to be killed by the sword and he also condemned his brother, Gaerin, to harsh punishment. The rest of their allies, indeed Neustrians, managed to escape by flight; some wandered in exile, having been deprived of their possessions.

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CHAPTER 47

Ebroin, indeed, cruelly oppressed the Neustrians more and more until finally it came to the point where he secretly prepared an ambush for the Neustrian, Ermenfred. He [Ermenfred] therefore rose up secretly by night against the above-mentioned Ebroin, violently killed him, and escaped, fleeing to Pippin in Austrasia.

CHAPTER 51

At that time Pippin died, having been weakened by a strong fever. He held the governing position under the above-mentioned kings for twenty seven and a half years. Then Plectrud along with her grandchildren and the king directed all the affairs of state under a separate government. During these times, at the instigation of the devil, Neustrians again attacked Neustrians and in the Forest of Compiègne they cut each other down in a most awful slaughter. Theudoald, however, was snatched up and he slipped away by flight. And there was at that time a terrible persecution. With Theudoald having flown, they therefore chose Raganfred for the governing position as mayor of the palace. And together with an assembled army and the king they crossed the Forest of Charbonnière as far as the river Meuse, devastating and burning those lands. With Radbod, the gentile duke, they entered into an friendship treaty. In these days Charles was held in custody by the lady Plectrud but with the help of the Lord he escaped with difficulty.

CHAPTER 52

In the following time King Dagobert took ill and died. He ruled for five years. On the throne the Neustrians placed, in fact, Daniel, a former cleric, having allowed the hair of his head to grow, and they named him Chilperic. In that time they once more gathered an army and sent it to the river Meuse against Charles; from the other direction the Frisians rose up with Duke Radbod. Charles, therefore, attacked these Frisians and there he suffered a great loss of his followers, but, taking to flight, he escaped. Time therefore having elapsed, with his army assembled, Chilperic himself, along with Raganfred, entered the forest of the Ardennes and came to the river Rhine and Cologne, laying waste the land. Having taken a great amount of treasure from the lady Plectrud he turned back, but in a certain place [called] Amblève Charles fell upon them and they suffered a very great loss.

CHAPTER 53

In that same period the above-mentioned warrior Charles, having assembled an army, again rose up against Chilperic and Raganfred. They assembled a force, prepared for battle, and hastened out against him. Charles, however, sued for peace. This they rejected and went out to battle in the place called Vinchy at dawn on the twelfth day before the Kalends of April, a Sunday in Lent. Although they indeed fought bravely, Chilperic and Raganfred turned their backs [in flight]. Charles emerged the victor. He laid those regions waste, took captives, and with much booty returned to Austrasia,

coming to Cologne, where he caused an insurrection. He fought with the lady Plectrud and straightway took his father's treasure and established a king for himself by the name of Clothar. And then Chilperic and Raganfred sought the help of Duke Eudo. And he [Eudo] assembled an army and led it against Charles. He [Charles], however, was not afraid and hastened steadfastly to meet him, but Eudo fled, fell back on Paris, and, having snatched up Chilperic along with the royal treasure, retreated