

# Charlemagne: The Formation of European Identity



## Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity

by Rosamond McKitterick

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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Charlemagne, born in 742 AD, was the first Holy Roman Emperor, ruling over a vast empire that stretched from the Pyrenees to the Elbe River. He was a skilled military leader, a wise politician, and a devout Christian. His reign marked a turning point in European history, and he played a pivotal role in shaping the identity of Europe.

### **Charlemagne's Early Life**

Charlemagne was the eldest son of Pepin the Short, King of the Franks, and Bertrada of Laon. He was born in Aachen, which was then a small town in the Rhineland. Charlemagne received a well-rounded education, studying Latin, Greek, and theology. He was also trained in the art of war, and he became a skilled horseman and swordsman.

## **Charlemagne's Reign**

Charlemagne became King of the Franks in 768 AD, following the death of his father. He quickly set about consolidating his power, and he soon began a series of military campaigns to expand his empire. Charlemagne conquered the Saxons, the Lombards, and the Avars, and he established a vast empire that stretched from the Pyrenees to the Elbe River.

Charlemagne was not only a military conqueror, but he was also a wise politician. He reformed the Frankish government, and he established a system of justice that was based on Roman law. Charlemagne also promoted education and culture, and he founded several schools and monasteries.

Charlemagne was a devout Christian, and he played a key role in the spread of Christianity throughout his empire. He converted the Saxons to Christianity, and he supported the missionaries who were working to convert the Slavs. Charlemagne also established the Holy Roman Empire, which was a Christian empire that lasted for over a thousand years.

## **Charlemagne's Legacy**

Charlemagne died in 814 AD, at the age of 72. He was succeeded by his son, Louis the Pious. Charlemagne's empire did not long survive his death, but his legacy lived on. Charlemagne is considered to be one of the most

important figures in European history, and he played a pivotal role in shaping the identity of Europe.

Charlemagne's military conquests created a large, unified empire that spanned much of Europe. This empire provided a stable environment for the development of European culture, politics, and religion. Charlemagne's reforms to the Frankish government and his support for education and culture also helped to lay the foundation for the future development of Europe.

Charlemagne's legacy is still felt today. The European Union is a modern expression of the unity that Charlemagne sought to create. The Christian faith that Charlemagne spread throughout his empire is still the dominant religion in Europe. And the culture and politics of Europe have been shaped by Charlemagne's reforms.

Charlemagne was a remarkable figure who played a pivotal role in shaping the identity of Europe. His military conquests, political reforms, and support for education and culture laid the foundation for the future development of Europe. Charlemagne's legacy is still felt today, and he remains one of the most important figures in European history.



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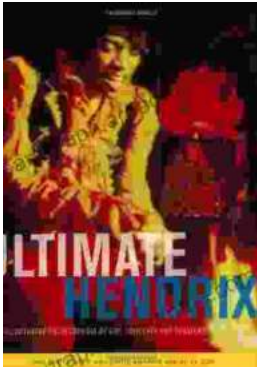
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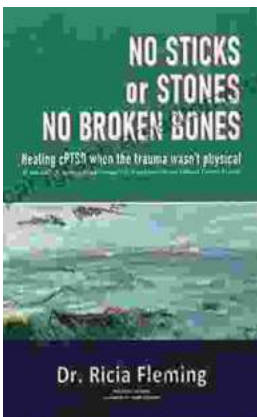
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