
The Argument of the Charlemagne's Awareness of His Coronation

There is some debate over whether Charlemagne knew if he was going to be crowned as the Roman Emperor on Christmas Day in the year 800. While there are varying opinions on this question, Charlemagne did not know he was going to be crowned as emperor. While there are observations in the accounts that could support that he did know, there are more points as to why Charlemagne did not know that he was going to become the Roman emperor. Charlemagne's reactions were that of a person who did not expect to be crowned as emperor and the little celebration that came with the crowning proves that there was no time for a celebration to be planned in his honor.

Charlemagne did not suspect that he was going to be crowned as emperor, because he had too much of a reaction to have known he was going to become Roman emperor before it happened. If Charlemagne had known prior to the crowning, he would have had time to express his emotions privately, and then keep his emotions in check while he graciously accepted his emperorship in front of the public. According to Einhard[1], Charlemagne even disliked the idea of being crowned emperor to the point that he did not want to enter a church. In another account of the crowning of Charlemagne, the way Charlemagne acted just days after was driven by emotion[2]. He used his power to hunt down those that took the Pope out of office[3]. There was no chance for Charlemagne to adjust to having the amount of power he obtained, rather he was just thrown into it which caused a bigger reaction from him. If Charlemagne had known previously that he was going to become the Roman emperor, there would have been time for him to collect his thoughts and emotions and for him to decide on how to use this power in order to for things to be better for his people. With the predisposed knowledge that he was going to be crowned, he could have repressed his emotions and acted with his power in a more beneficial way. The way he acted shows that he did not have the time to react on his own before the crowning because in most scenarios such as this, the one being crowned remains calm to the public to show they can handle the power being thrust upon them.

Another reason that proves that Charlemagne did not know of his crowning was that there was no description of a grand celebration. One of the accounts of the celebration seems to just include a small group of people, which included the Christian priests, that watched as Charlemagne accepted the Roman emperor title and was declared sacred by the lord pope Leo[4]. In another account, it appears that Charlemagne is performing a normal part of his routine when he is suddenly crowned with people around him cheering[5]. If he had known, he would have been prepared to be crowned rather than being in the middle of doing something

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when he is being crowned emperor. When an emperor is being crowned, part of the process would include the celebration, but it seems that Charlemagne had none. If he had knowledge of the crowning and time before the ceremony, he would have planned a celebration, but it shows that he did not know as there was no celebration.

Due to the exuberance of Charlemagne's reaction and the lack of celebration in his honor, it proves that Charlemagne was surprised by his crowning as Roman emperor on Christmas Day in the year 800. There are many different accounts on what happened the day Charlemagne was crowned with many different tales of what happened. Through these different accounts there is evidence that points towards him knowing and some that points to him being oblivious to the situation. While some may argue that Charlemagne knew that he was going to be crowned as Roman emperor, there is more evidence pointing towards Charlemagne's ignorance of being crowned.

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