

# The Hammer

by [Harry Cording](#) (August 2021)



*Basilica of St. Denis, Maurice Utrillo*

**King of the** Franks, grandfather of Charlemagne,  
Charles Martel steered history  
toward the world we have today.

His stepmother imprisoned him  
so her grandson could be king.  
Charles escaped, won battle after battle,

and won his kingdom.  
They called him The Hammer,  
a tribute to his martial skills—  
he never lost a battle.

In 732 destiny cast his role.  
Abdul Rahman led 80,000 soldiers of Allah  
north from Spain into the Frankish lands  
to conquer them for the caliphate.

Charles was ready for them.  
He had trained an army.  
They waited on a plateau between Tours and Poitiers—  
high ground above the enemy.

After seven days waiting, the attack came.  
Chance, never known to miss a battle,  
played its part.  
Frankish scouts invaded the Moslem camp  
to free prisoners.  
Their loot in danger, Moslem troops  
abandoned battle for their camp.  
Abdul Rahman died trying to stop their retreat;  
his army fled to Iberia.  
The tide of Islam withdrew from western Europe  
until the 21st century.

Now Charles Martel's name is hardly known,  
a forgotten hero in an unheroic era,  
his triumph eroding.  
The streets around his tomb in Saint Denis cathedral  
are filled with followers of Islam.

Back in the dark ages  
they knew enough to fight invaders,  
not invite them in.

[Table of Contents](#)

---

**Harry Cording** is a retired journalist, occasional poet and aspiring artist in Auckland, New Zealand. He has published 6 books of poetry and his paintings are in private collections in New Zealand, Britain and Japan.

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](https://twitter.com/NERIconoclast)