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In 2000 I noticed a newspaper article casting doubt on someone's claim to be descended from Charlamagne. On the contrary, I don't doubt it at all.

Since Charlamagne lived about 1200 years ago, assuming an average generation of about 30 years, that is about 40 generations ago. If we consider the numbers involved with the nature of generations (see the table below), we may conclude that it is fairly likely that most if not all of us who have European ancestors, can rightfully claim descent from Charlamagne. The problem is identifying accurately which line(s) tie. Once a person establishes a link to royalty, since the royal lines intermarried so much, everybody is related.

Consider this: By generation, we each have a potential of

1	2 parents
2	4 grandparents
3	8 great grandparents
4	16 gg grandparents
5	32 ggg
6	64 gggg
7	128 ...
8	256
9	512
10	1024
11	2048
12	4096
13	8192
14	16,384
15	32,768
16	65,536
17	131,072
18	262,144
19	524,288
20	1,048,576
21	2,097,152
22	4,194,304
23	8,388,608
24	16,777,216
25	33,554,432
26	67,108,864
27	134,217,728
28	268,435,456
29	536,870,912
30	1,073,741,824
31	2,147,483,648
32	4,294,967,296

33	8,589,934,592
34	17,179,879,184
35	34,359,738,368
36	68,719,476,736
37	137,438,953,472
38	274,877,906,944
39	549,755,813,888
40	1,099,511,627,770 potential direct-line ancestors in the 40 th generation

Since it seems unthinkable that there might have been even close to a trillion people alive on the earth in 800 AD, it is highly likely that at least one of each of our lines goes through Charlamagne. Especially considering he had a whole bunch of children. If each of them had several children, the arithmetic progression coming from him could produce even more staggering numbers of potential direct-line descendants, thus increasing the likelihood of at least one connection.

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