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Power over Past and Future: Abbess Emma and the Nunnery of Sant Joan de les Abadesses

Historical and Historiography

The Charter as Narrative

Catalonia is an area of medieval Europe that lacks narrative source material before about the twelfth century. Before then the outline of its history must be gleaned from references to the area from the Frankish or Umayyad courts (in the latter case at considerable removes)¹ and by painstaking research through the area's thousands of surviving charters.² This weight of

¹ The Frankish source material is comprised of, most obviously, the *Annales Regni Francorum* (ed. F. Kurze as *Annales regni Francorum inde ab a. 741 usque ad a. 829, qui dicuntur Annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum Scholarum separatim editi) VI*) (Hannover 1895; 1950), trans. B. Scholz & B. Rogers in *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories* (Michigan 1972)), hereafter *ARF*, and the *Annales Bertiniani* (ed. L. Levillain, F. Grat, J. Vieillard & S. Clemencet as *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, Société de l'Histoire de France 470 (Paris 1964), trans. J. L. Nelson as *The Annals of St-Bertin* (Manchester 1991)), hereafter *AB*, but the area also occasionally occurs later in Richer's History of France (ed. H. Hoffmann as *Richer von Saint-Remi: Historiae* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Scriptores) Tomus XXXVIII*) (Hannover 2000)). For the various Arabic references, see J. Millas Vallicrosa, "Els Textos d'Historiadors Musulmans Referents a la Catalunya Carolíngia" in *Quaderns d'Estudi del Consell de Pedagogia de la Mancomunitat de Barcelona* Vol. 14 (Barcelona 1922), pp. 125-161.

² In what follows I cite a large number of charters, all in printed editions. These are, alphabetically by sigil: Cat. Car. II (R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals (ed.), *Catalunya Carolíngia Vol. II: els diplomes carolíngis a Catalunya*, Memòries de la Secció Històrico-Arqueològica II & III (Barcelona 1926-1952), 2 vols), Cat. Car. IV (R. Ordeig i Mata (ed.), *Catalunya Carolíngia IV: els comtats de Osona i Manresa*, Memòries de la Secció Històrico-Arqueològica LIII (Barcelona 1999-2001), 3 vols), Condal (F. Udina Martorell (ed.), *El Archivo Condal de Barcelona en los Siglos IX-X: estudio crítico de sus fondos*, Textos 18/Publicaciones de la Sección de Barcelona 15 (Madrid 1951)), HGL V (the documents in the section "Chartes et Diplômes" of the Preuves in C. Devic, J. Vaissete, *Histoire Générale de Languedoc avec les Notes et les Pièces Justificatives. Édition accompagnée de dissertations et actes nouvelles, contenant le recueil des inscriptions de la province antiques et du moyen âge, des planches, des cartes géographiques et des vues des monuments*, rev. E. Mabille, E. Barry, E. Roschach, A. Molinier; ed. M. E. Dulaurier, Vol. V (Toulouse 1875; repr. Osnabrück 1973)), *MH* ('Appendix' of P. de Marca, *Marca Hispanica sive Limes Hispanicus, hoc est geographica & historica descriptio cataloniae, ruscinonis, & circumiacentium populorum*, ed. É. Baluze (Paris 1688; Barcelona 1972; 1989); Ramlón (the appendix to J. Marqués Casanovas, "Domna Ramlón, ilustre dama gerundense de mil años atras" in *Anales del Instituto de Estudios Gerundenses* Vol. 15 (Girona 1962), pp. 315-329 at pp. 327-329), San Juan (the inventory of the erstwhile archive of the abbey of Sant Joan de les Abadesses printed by Udina Martorell in *El Archivo Condal*, pp 448-499), Sant Joan (the documents in the *regesta* of M. S. Gros i Pujol, "L'arxiu del monestir de Sant Joan de les Abadesses: notícies històriques i regesta dels

documentation can however be made to tell a story, for though more or less formulaic in their redaction many of the charters contain small narratives of their own giving what context was felt to be useful for the transaction they describe. Like any other narrative source, however, their presentation has its own agenda, and their transmission often raises the question of editorial intervention.³

The historiography of Catalonia has its own more modern agendas.⁴ Direct royal involvement in the area ended with Louis the Pious's 809 campaign against Tortosa, and the last Frankish royal presence on the March was Lothar and Pippin's tardy and inconclusive show of force against the Muslims in 828.⁵ The history of the area thereafter has been seen as an evolution towards independence, aided substantially by the rise of a single family to power in almost all the area's counties in 878, indigenous magnates being favoured after the rebellions of four different Frankish marquises.⁶ Most work on the area in this period has had to address itself to these issues,⁷ which has obvious importance to nationalist thinking in Catalonia, where nationality was officially suppressed for much of the last century. To a foreign scholar it sometimes appears, however, that the exact definition of the situation of the Counts of the March is more important to scholars than it was to contemporaries. Clearly they paid at least lip-service, at most times, to a

documents dels anys 995-1115" in E. Fort i Cogul (ed.), II Col·loqui d'Història del Monaquisme Català. Sant Joan de les Abadesses 1970, II (Poblet 1974), pp. 98-128, Urgell (C. Baraut (ed.), "Els documents, dels segles IX i X, conservats a l'Arxiu Capitular de la Seu d'Urgell" in Urgellia: anuari d'estudis històrics dels antics comtats de Cerdanya, Urgell i Pallars, d'Andorra i la Vall d'Aran Vol. 2 (Montserrat 1979), pp. 78-143 & "Els documents, dels anys 981-1010, de l'Arxiu Capitular de la Seu d'Urgell" in Urgellia Vol. 3 (1980), pp. 7-166, (the numeration of the documents is continuous between the articles)) and Vic (E. Junyent i Subira (ed.), El Diplomatarí de la Catedral de Vic, segles IX i X, ed. R. Ordeig i Mata (Vic 1980-1996)). The editors' numerations are followed throughout.

³ See e. g. P. J. Geary, Phantoms of Remembrance: remembering and forgetting in the tenth and eleventh centuries (Princeton 1985), pp. 81-133.

⁴ The starting point for this area in this period must be R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals's Els Primers Comtes Catalans, Biografies Catalanes: sèrie històrica 1 (Barcelona 1958; 1980); the background is also given in *idem*, "El domini carolíngi a la marca hispanica (segles IX i X)" in *idem*, Dels Visigots als Catalans (ed. J. Sobrequés i Callicó) Vol. I, Estudis i Documents Vol. XIII (Barcelona 1969; 1974), pp. 139-152. In English, apart from R. Collins, "Charles the Bald and Wifred the Hairy" in J. L. Nelson and M. Gibson (edd.), Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom, 2nd ed. (Aldershot 1990), pp. 169-188, there is only a short section by Michel Zimmermann in "Western Francia: the southern principalities" in T. Reuter (ed.), The New Cambridge Medieval History volume III: c. 900-c. 1024 (Cambridge 1999), pp. 420-456 at pp. 441-449.

⁵ *ARF s. aa.* 809 & 828 respectively.

⁶ Abadal, "El Domini Carolíngi", pp. 143-146.

⁷ The debate on the origins of the Catalan nation has been carried into English by Collins, "Charles the Bald and Wifred the Hairy", but this barely scratches the surface. The entire second half of Abadal's Primers Comtes deals with this question; see also J. M. Salrach i Marés, El Procés de Formació Nacional de Catalunya (segles VIII-IX), Llibres de l'Abast 136 & 137 (Barcelona 1978). Discussion is most recently collected in F. Udina i Martorell (ed.), Symposium Internacional sobre els Orígens de Catalunya: segles VIII-XI (Barcelona 1991-1992), also published as Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona, Vol. 23 & 24 (Barcelona 1991 & 1992).

Frankish royal overlordship.⁸ Equally clearly this lordship affected them little after the reign of Louis the Stammerer and then, largely, only when it was called upon to do so. What had been royal responsibilities, albeit administered by the Counts, became comital ones in reality, but these were often explicitly claimed to be the Counts' by royal grant (though this is not demonstrably the case)⁹ and the Counts, in keeping with this stance, never claimed royal status.

Settlement

One of these responsibilities was the settlement of the frontier, originally orchestrated by royal grants to refugee settlers, the *Hispani*, under the first two Carolingian emperors.¹⁰ The counts had also been involved from early on, with Asnar Galindo,¹¹ an expelled Count of Aragón, being given permission to settle land in the royal name in the 820s,¹² and a previous document of 812 instructing the counts of all the March to return lands and rights they had abstracted from *Hispani*.¹³ The idea, as expressed in the eleventh century,¹⁴ was that all waste land was notionally royal. One made an *aprisio* or *ruptura* of this land, which could involve military action, or could just be clearance of forest, but one had no title to it until it was conceded by the king, at which point it was granted with many attractive privileges.¹⁵

⁸ On the continuing Carolingian loyalty of the counts of the March see Abadal, "El domini carolíngi", pp. 146-152.

⁹ For example the right to a third of the profits from minting at Vic, which the Cathedral claimed had been given them by Count Guifré II Borrell (Vic 55). See R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, Catalunya Carolíngia II: els diplomes carolíngis a Catalunya, Pt. 2 (Barcelona 1952), pp. 375-377; for other examples see Abadal, Primers Comtes, pp. 336-340.

¹⁰ R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, Catalunya Carolíngia II: els diplomes carolíngis a Catalunya, Pt. 1 (Barcelona 1926-1950), pp. viii-xi.

¹¹ I have normalised names to modern Catalan forms where the people concerned are from the area, but Asnar was a Basque, and so appears as Asnar Galindo, not Asner Galí as one might expect.

¹² Cat. Car. II Particular X.

¹³ Cat. Car. II Particular II.

¹⁴ J. Rius Serra (ed.), Cartulario de «Sant Cugat» de Vallés, Textos y Estudios de la Corona de Aragón 5 (Barcelona 1946), Vol. II No. 464: "*Propterea iudicatum est in ipso iudicio melius et verius esse hec terra iuris principalis, sicut et cetera spacia heremarum terrarum, quam est ipsius iuris que hoc potebat...*", and G. Feliu i Montfort & J. M. Salrach (edd.), Els pergamins de l'arxiu comtal de Barcelona de Ramon Borrell a Ramon Berenguer I: estudi i edició, Vol. I, Col·lecció Diplomataris 18 (Barcelona 1999), No. 172, "*Advenerunt nobis hec omnia... per regiam vocem quam habemus in supradictis locis sicuti et antecessores nostri...*". The transcription of this latter is that of P. Bonnassie, who cites these documents in his La Catalogne du Milieu du X^e Siècle à la Fin du XI^e Siècle: croissance et mutations d'une société (Toulouse 1975, 1976), I p. 153, nn. 62 & 63 respectively.

¹⁵ In addition to Abadal as in n. 10 above, see the remarks of E. Müller-Mertens, Karl der Grosse, Ludwig der Fromme, und die Freien. Wer waren die Liberi Homines der Karolingischen Kapitularien (742/743-832)? Ein Beitrag zur Sozialgeschichte und Sozialpolitik des Frankenreiches, Forschungen zur Mittelalterlichen Geschichte 10 (Berlin 1963), pp. 61-65; the most recent Catalan treatment, A. Udina i Abelló, "L'aprisió i el problema de repoblament" in Udina, Symposium Internacional II pp.

The privileged status of land thus cleared, and the possibility of gaining title by conquest, however, gives rise to a particular nuancing in the sources. We have a number of documents which in explaining title use the phrase “first men under the rule of the Franks”.¹⁶ This is used by different scribes and is clearly to an extent at least a formula. Sometimes it occurs without the specification of Frankish overlordship.¹⁷ Recent historiography has however questioned the extent to which these lands were in fact waste or empty. Following on from a brief discussion in the work of Pierre Bonnassie,¹⁸ Eduardo Manzano Moreno has taken the Spanish frontier as a whole and argued that there are occasional but convincing references to people in the almost-unknown frontier zones, and that what was really involved in the settlements was not a genuine colonisation so much as an extension of control.¹⁹ In some cases it seems clear that the settlement really did involve several families, an entire farm’s staff being moved in,²⁰ but in others the picture may have been less pioneering. The benefits of a claim to be the “first man” must have obscured the question, though some names, like Sarracín, Abdeiro, Assà or Hismael suggest that the roots of the area’s population might be anything but Frankish or Gothic.²¹ We should therefore be cautious of claims of empty landscapes and vanquished pagans.

Sant Joan and the material

The documents of the nunnery of Sant Joan de les Abadesses offer an unparalleled opportunity to observe this kind of rhetoric of tenure in action,

159-170 takes a precise and possibly over-legalistic approach to the material, but has many interpretations which deserve attention. I hope to publish a response to the recent treatment of the theme by C. J. Chandler (“Between court and counts: Carolingian Catalonia and the *aprisio* grant, 778-897” in Early Medieval Europe Vol. 11 (Oxford 2002), pp. 19-44) and meanwhile do not cite it here.

¹⁶ Condal 114 & 116: “*primi homines sub ditioe Francorum*”.

¹⁷ Cat. Car. IV 120.

¹⁸ P. Bonnassie, La Catalogne I, pp. 106-112.

¹⁹ E. Manzano Moreno, “Christian-Muslim Frontier in al-Andalus: idea and reality” in D. Agius, R. Hitchcock (edd.), Arab Influence upon Medieval Europe (Reading 1994), pp. 83-96 & “The Creation of a Medieval Frontier: Islam and Christianity in the Iberian Peninsula, eighth to twelfth centuries” in D. Power, N. Standen, Frontiers in Question: Eurasian borderlands, 700-1700 (London 1999), pp. 32-52. See also S. Reynolds, Fiefs and Vassals: the medieval evidence reinterpreted (Oxford 1994), pp. 107-111. Professor Paul Fouracre has pointed me to the useful comparisons offered in J. Escalona Monge, “Comunidades, territorios y poder condal en la Castilla del Duero en el siglo X: communities, territories and power in tenth-century Castile” in Studia Historica: historia medieval Vols. 18-19 (Salamanca 2001), pp. 85-120 with English abstract p. 86.

²⁰ The clearest account of this is that in Cat. Car. II Particular I; see Abadal, Catalunya Carolíngia II Pt. 2 pp. 307-310; Cat. Car. II Particular VI shows a band of settlers founding a church in their *aprisio*.

²¹ Sarracín or similar names occur in Cat. Car. IV 119, Vic 233 & 234; one Assà (from Hassān?) occurs in Vic 236, Abdeiro is to be found in Vic 420 and Hismael occurs in Condal 180 where there is a settlement named after him.

as well more basic processes of the procedure, orchestration and defence of settlement. There are several reasons for focussing on this particular institution. First, it neatly combines comital and ecclesiastical endeavour. The house is sited in the Ripoll valley in what was then the frontier county of Osona.²² Sant Joan, like its sister house further down the valley, Santa Maria de Ripoll, was a comital foundation, the work of Count Guifré the Hairy, the founder of the dynasty that would rule Barcelona and later Aragón for the next five centuries.²³ To each of these houses, it is said by their later documents, he gave one of his children. It was his daughter Emma who went to Sant Joan, possibly the March's first nunnery since Visigothic days,²⁴ and who appears certainly as its Abbess for the first time in 898.²⁵ Much of Sant Joan's land came from Count Guifré, therefore, albeit rapidly obtaining royal immunity,²⁶ and in the areas that the nunnery's archive covered the counts frequently appear as transactors and landholders, often on a large scale.²⁷

Sant Joan also has a large number of surviving documents. The Sant Joan archive was incorporated into the comital archive of the Crown of Aragón at Barcelona, and there there remain about 150 charters dated to the ninth and tenth centuries.²⁸ There is also the *Llibre de Canalars*, an eighteenth-century list of the monastery's holdings at that time which makes it clear that what remains is about half of what was once there.²⁹ In most cases it gives summaries of the documents and in some it goes into detail, but the

²² A short history of the house in our period is provided by Udina in *El Archivo Condal*, pp. x-xxvii; see further J. Masdeu, *Sant Joan de les Abadesses: resum historic* (Vic 1926), and most recently A. Pladevall i Font *et al.*, "Sant Joan de les Abadesses", in A. Pladevall (ed.), *Catalunya Romànica X: el Ripollès*, ed. J. Vigué (Barcelona 1987), pp. 354-410.

²³ On Guifré see now R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, *Els Temps i el Regiment del Comte Guifré el Pilos* (Barcelona 1989).

²⁴ It is the only one known until the appearance of Sant Pere de les Puelles de Barcelona, probably founded in 942 or thereabouts (on which see Abadal, *Catalunya Carolíngia II* Pt. 1, pp. 72-74). See M. Cabré i Pairet, "«*Deodicatae*» y «*Deovotae*». La regulación de la religiosidad femenina en los condados catalanes, siglos IX-XI" in A. Muñoz Fernandez (ed.), *Las Mujeres en el Cristianismo Medieval: imágenes, teóricas y cauces de actuación religiosa*, Colección Laya 5 (Madrid 1989), pp. 169-182 at pp. 177-178. As the rest of the article shows, this is not to say that was no female religious life in the area before Sant Joan's foundation.

²⁵ In Condal 10.

²⁶ Cat. Car. II Sant Joan de les Abadesses I, also printed as Condal 11.

²⁷ To pick only a few examples, Emma's brother Count Miró of Cerdanya appears in Cat. Car. IV 119, 73 & 76 & Cat. Car. IV 120, another brother Count Sunyer of Barcelona & Osona in Cat. Car. IV 119, 112 & 121 & Cat. Car. IV 120, Miró's son Oliba Cabreta of Cerdanya and Besalú in Condal 144, 162, 163 & 165, and Count Sunyer's son Borrell II of Barcelona and Osona in Condal 128, 144 & 157; on Borrell's sister Adelaide who occurs as Countess in Condal 130 see later. Also, Martin Aurell believes that Riquilda, a donor to the monastery in Condal 12, was the daughter of Guifré the Hairy and thus Emma's sister, though solid evidence is lacking (M. Aurell, "Jalons pour une enquête sur les stratégies matrimoniales des comtes catalans (IX^e-XI^e s.). Annexe II: fichier prosopographique des femmes des familles comtales catalans" in Udina, *Symposium Internacional I*, p. 313/ no. 15).

²⁸ Gros, "L'Arxiu" as in n. 2 above, pp. 87-98.

²⁹ Udina, *El Archivo Condal*, pp. 439-442 with inventory as in n. 2 above.

substantial loss tempers the rich survival. Such richness is not unusual in Catalonia, but Sant Joan's early documents have had the distinct advantage of having been published as a diplomatic study making in-depth palaeographical data available. This is what makes Sant Joan a particularly fruitful target for inquiry.

In this documentation the most prominent figure, without any doubt, is the Abbess Emma, daughter of Count Guifré the Hairy. She features either as neighbour or more usually as one of the principal actors, in 138 of the listed charters in the *Llibre de Canalars*, of which 77 are among the surviving documents.³⁰ She is also seen in one comital archive document not from Sant Joan,³¹ in four charters from the cathedral of Vic,³² in a council record preserved at the French abbey of Saint-Victor de Marseille which later briefly ruled Sant Joan,³³ and in three documents which once existed in the archive of Ripoll but are now only known through transcripts.³⁴ These appearances run from 898 (to take a safe date, as I will shortly explain) to 942, and she was dead by 949 when we have a document which records the nomination of her second successor.³⁵ Her career is thus densely documented, giving as we shall see an impression of a strong character and considerable industry, but the beginning and end of her career are oddly obscure, and the documents for them bring the historiographical agendas discussed above to the fore. I intend

³⁰ Condal 3, 4, 10-12, 16, 18-20, 23, 24, 26-29, 31-41, 43-46, 48, 53, 55, 56, 59-62, 64, 66-68, 71-73, 75-79, 83, 85, 87, 95-97, 101-103, 107, 109-111, 113-115, 117, 118, 120, 121, 128 & ap. II A & B, and additionally San Juan 16, 17, 29, 39, 40, 47, 50-53, 56-58, 61, 68, 69, 83-88, 98-101, 103-109, 114-117, 121, 127, 131, 132, 145, 146, 151-153, 155, 156, 165, 170, 179, 184-186, 188, 189, 193, 194, 199, 200, 202 & 268, as well as San Juan 4 which survives elsewhere and is printed as Cat. Car. IV 35; her life is covered briefly by Masdeu, *Sant Joan de les Abadesses*, pp. 13-14, and E. Albert i Corp, *Les Abadesses de Sant Joan: verificació històrica*, Episodis de la Història (Barcelona 1965), pp. 7-20. Cat. Car. IV 346 is more or less plainly an abbey transaction but nonetheless shows no sign of having come from the abbey's archive. I learnt of this document too late to fully take account of the implications of this fact; see n. 110 below.

³¹ Condal 33.

³² Vic 55, 114, 117 & 166.

³³ Printed as the first part of HGL V 32, also in B. Guérard (ed.), *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Victor de Marseille*, Collection des Cartulaires de France 8 (Paris 1857), Vol. II No. 1039.

³⁴ The earliest of these was a record of the election of Abbot Ennegó of Ripoll. This act is referred to in a later list of the properties of Ripoll which is itself only known now through the partial transcript of P. Bofarull y Mascaró, *Los Condes de Barcelona Vindicados, y Cronología y Genealogía de los Reyes de España considerados como Soberianos Independientes de su Marca*. Tomo Primero: abraza los siete primeros, desde el año 874 al 1035 (Barcelona 1836; 1990), p. 70: Emma was one of those in attendance. The second, also recorded and given in full transcript this time by Bofarull at *ibid.* p. 88-90, was the will of Count Miró of Cerdanya, for whom Emma was an executor. On this see pp. [15-17] below. The other was a sale by Bishop Radulf and his son Oliba of land at the comital residence of Palau de Gurb to Count-Marquis Sunyer, transcribed before 1936 from an nineteenth-century manuscript inventory lost in the Civil War, which is printed in M. Rovira, "Un bisbe d'Urgell del segle X: Radulf" in *Urgellia* Vol. 3 (Montserrat 1980), pp. 167-184, as ap. 12; here Emma appears as a neighbour of the comital estate. This is also the provenance of the text of San Juan 4 printed as Cat. Car. IV 35.

³⁵ This is shown in Condal 128.

therefore to examine these episodes in detail and then place them in the context of a more general look at the strategies by which Emma ran and secured the Sant Joan patrimony.

The Changing History of Sant Joan

The Prehistory

The sequence of original documents at Sant Joan begins with a charter of Count Guifré which has nothing to do with the abbey,³⁶ but this is followed by Emma's appearance in 898. Earlier documents exist in later copies, but these bear indications of considerable alteration, if not complete fabrication. Some of the crucial documents have been lost since (in a fire which destroyed the entire Ripoll archive in 1835 and in a Civil War sack of Sant Joan in 1939 in which the archivist and historian Josep Masdeu was killed and the archive very nearly burnt³⁷) and transcripts are all we have to go on in these cases. Among the authentic documents however, there is some variation in accounts of the foundation.

The shortest of these accounts, of 914, only refers in passing to Sant Joan, the beneficiary of its donation, as the monastery, "which Abbess Emma built so that she might remain a preacher and praetor and bride of Christ before the face of God".³⁸ Emma does not herself feature in this document, and I cite it first because it differs from all the others in ascribing the building to Emma. Compare an earlier contemporary document which is rather more solemn, a record from 913 of a sacramental oath by the inhabitants of the valley of Vallfogona, who are listed, there being an unparalleled 493 names given. They swore collectively that Abbess Emma was the owner of their lands:

“... through the voice... of the monastery in honour of Saint John the Baptist which the late most glorious Count Guifré, of blessed memory, rebuilt and ordered to be dedicated... and he invested the already-said Abbess Emma, his daughter, with it through the voice of the king in the honour of the already-said Saint John the Baptist so that all the men whom she or her successors should establish to live

³⁶ Condal 6.

³⁷ On the Ripoll fire, see A. Pladevall i Font, J.-A. Adell i Gisbert & X. Barral i Altet, "Santa Maria de Ripoll", in Pladevall, *Catalunya Romànica X*, pp. 206-275 & 332-334, at p. 206; on the death of Masdeu see Gros, "L'Arxiu", p. 95.

³⁸ Condal 43: "*quod edificavit domna Emo abatissa ut orator et pretor et sponsa Christi permaneat ante faciem Domini*".

so as to perform service thence in the already-said valley should do so to the already-said Emma, abbess, or her nuns, or their successors...³⁹

We have a royal precept to record this “voice of the king”, from Charles the Simple in 899, but all it says on the status of the house is that it was at that time “under the rule of the venerable Abbess Emma”, which tells us little.⁴⁰ Charles seems to have known little of the nunnery. Though Archbishop Arnust of Narbonne was probably the king’s informant,⁴¹ Abadal noted that there is a blank space in the charter where one would generally expect the precise location of the beneficiary house to be given.⁴²

That Guifré is said to have rebuilt the monastery is not surprising: many of Catalonia’s cathedrals and monasteries had Visigothic antecedents and a ruin would often prove a well-chosen location for a renewal of religious building.⁴³ There were more than solely practical reasons for such a choice. Using a previously-occupied site gave access to an already-established sacred space and reputation, with wider implications for immunity and sanctity.⁴⁴ There were also of course similar premiums to occupying a wasteland, cleared from the desert in good Athanasian tradition,⁴⁵ though as said in the

³⁹ Cat. Car. IV 119: “... per voce... monasterio que est in honore sancti Iohannis Bapstista, quod condam gloriosissimus Guifréus comes, bone memorie, reedificavit vel dedicare iussit... et revistivit exinde iamdicta Hemmone abatissa, filia sua, per vocem regis in onorem iamdicto sancti Iohannis Monasterii ut omnes homines quod illa suasque successores in iamdicta valle conlocaverit ad abitandum ut omnem servicium exinde infendere faciant ad iamdicta Hemmone, abatissa, vel suas monachas, sive illorum successores...”. This act is discussed in detail below but see also G. Feliu i Montfort, “Sant Joan de les Abadesses: algunes precisions sobre l’acta judicial del 913 i el poblament de la vall” in S. Claramunt & M. T. Ferrer i Mallol (edd.), Homenatge a la Memòria del Prof. Dr. Emilio Sáez. Aplec d’Estudis de seus Deixebles i Col·laboradors (Barcelona 1989), pp. 421-433.

⁴⁰ Condal 11 & Cat. Car. II Sant Joan de les Abadesses I: “... notum esse volumus... quatinus res quasdam datas monasterio sancti Ihoanis Baptiste, quod est constructum in pago Ausonensi, in loco qui dicitur [blank] ubi sacrae virgines Christi, sub regimine venerabilis abbatissae Hemmae, Domino famulantur, cum omnibus rebus ad se pertinentibus, sub nostræ tuicionis mundeburdo, susciperemus et præcepto nostræ auctoritatis illi confirmaremus...”.

⁴¹ He was at court at around this time obtaining Cat. Car. II Elna IV for Bishop Riculf of Elna as well as a general order enjoining respect for the Church’s property (see Abadal, Primers Comtes, p. 143).

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 150, n. 49, which credits J. Rubió with bringing this to Abadal’s attention.

⁴³ The bishoprics of Urgell, Osona, Barcelona and Girona were all Visigothic sees, and Urgell and Barcelona may have operated uninterrupted until the Frankish conquest although the Frankish reorganisation suggests otherwise (see O. Engels, “Der Weltklerus und das Pfarrnetz” in Udina, Symposium Internacional, I pp. 477-490 at pp. 482-483 with Catalan translation as “El clero secular y la red de parroquias”, *ibid.* II, pp. 267-280, cite at pp. 272-273); Abadal suggested that any discontinuity at Urgell was caused by a Muslim attack of 793. Meanwhile, the monasteries of Arles, Banyoles, Camprodon & Sureda are all said in their first royal charters (Cat. Car. II Arles I, Banyoles I, Camprodon I & Sureda I) to have been founded on older ruins and Visigothic or earlier burials have been located under Santa Maria de Ripoll (J. Bolòs i Masclans, “Necròpoli de Santa Maria de Ripoll” in Pladevall, Catalunya Romànica X, p. 334).

⁴⁴ A. G. Remensnyder, Remembering Kings Past: monastic foundation legends in medieval southern France (Ithaca 1995), pp. 43-50.

⁴⁵ M. de Jong, F. Theuws, “Topographies of Power: some conclusions” in M. de Jong & F. Theuws with

Catalan context there were also important material claims inherent in such a version of events. There are reasons for either variation to be claimed by the nunnery, but the important thing is that there is variation.

Falling more or less into line with this version is a later document, also original, the nomination of one of Emma's successors referred to above, in which the story is given as follows: "For once Count Guifré built this house afresh and endowed it with gifts of lands and offered it his daughter, believing that for it he would be promised the redemption of his sins and would attain the reward of eternal remuneration".⁴⁶ Here the important variation is that Guifré is said to have made a gift of his daughter. This is not implausible, given that he oblated her brother to Santa Maria,⁴⁷ but nonetheless this, after her death, is the earliest surviving document saying so, and others which also say so are questionable.

Emma's oblation is mentioned in three other documents, of which one is much later and exists only in a 1925 transcript of a document now lost, with many dubious features.⁴⁸ The other two both purport to be donations of Count Guifré to the house, one its endowment and the other the act of consecration of its church.⁴⁹ Both use similar phrasing, having Guifré and his wife Guinedildis declare that they hand over,

"our daughter, Emma by name, to Saint John the Baptist, for the remedy of our souls or those of our parents and we give there something from our alods, that is, the castle of Mogrony, with the churches of Santa Maria and Sant Pere and Sant Esteve, with the tithes and first-fruits and with their appurtenances or houses, courtyards, cultivated and uncultivated lands... which came to us

C. van der Rhijn (edd.), *Topographies of Power in the Middle Ages*, The Transformation of the Roman World 6 (Leiden 2001), pp. 533-545 at pp. 540-541.

⁴⁶ Condal 128: "*Olim enim hanc domum Guifredus, comes, ad novo opere construxit et opibus hac terris ditavit et filiam suam obtulit, credens sibi ad id veniam peccatorum promereri et premium sempiternae remunerationis consequi*".

⁴⁷ On Radulf, see Rovira, "Un Bisbe d'Urgell".

⁴⁸ Condal ap. II D.

⁴⁹ Condal 3 (the first text of those given) and 4 (the second text of those given) respectively. The former of these was first shown to be false in F. Valls i Taberner, "Estudis sobre les Documents del Comte Guifré I de Barcelona" in N. de la R. (ed.), *Homenatge a Antoni Rubió i Lluch: miscel·lània d'estudis literaris històrics i lingüístics* Vol. I (Barcelona 1936), pp. 11-31, repr. in Valls, *Obras Selectas Volumen IV*, ed. J. E. Martínez Ferrando (Barcelona 1961), pp. 47-70, at pp. 16-17 of the original. Valls considered it to be an entirely false donation made up to cover the additions to Condal 4's interpolated version, as its coverage is almost identical to them; Udina however (in *El Archivo Condal* p. 99) considers that it might have partly authentic contents, partly because as Valls admits (p. 23) the royal charter from which the lands are missing (see n. 26 above) is not a full list of Ripoll's possessions, and also because of the inclusion of Mogrony. My own views differ slightly as the reader will see.

through purchase...”⁵⁰

The documents both go on with details, again closely matching, of the other properties given to the house at this time, which represent a substantial patrimony. It seems likely that parts of whatever was the common source for these acts are authentic, as Guifré is only referred to as a Count, whereas later documents featuring him tend to inflate his title to that of Marquis, which he cannot be shown to have used.⁵¹ Also, it provides details of the different people from whom Guifré had bought much of the land, and by 977, in the consecration of the third church at Santa Maria de Ripoll, Bishop Miró of Girona, officiating and also writing the act, preferred to talk of Guifré, his grandfather, having conquered the area and expelled the “Hagrites”.⁵² This rhetoric of clean tenure by conquest in its simplest form. Sant Joan may not have shared either Miró’s grandiloquent vocabulary or his exact aims in making Ripoll appear territory reclaimed for Christianity, but as we have seen even by 913 it was being sworn for Emma that her nunnery was founded on Guifré’s efforts. That previous occupation is indicated by these documents thus suggests that their content is quite possibly authentic, as does the fact that the consecration act appears to be the text from which Charles the Simple’s precept, which survives in the original, was produced.⁵³

Despite this we cannot trust these two documents as they survive. This is as copies of the late tenth or early eleventh century, which does not in itself threaten their authenticity as the originals were probably removed by the monks of Saint-Victor de Marseille.⁵⁴ What does present a problem is that in

⁵⁰ Condal 3: “... *filiam nostram, nomine Emmone, ad sanctum Iohannem Babtista, propter remedium animas nostras vel parentorum nostrorum et donamus ibi aliquis de alodes nostros, id est, castrum Mochoronio, cum ecclesias sancta Maria et sanctum Petrum et sanctum Sthepanum, cum decimis et primiciis et cum illorum apendico set domos, curtes, terras cultas et incultas, silvis, garricis, aquis, aquarum vieductibus vel reductibus, cum exiis vel regressiis earum, qui nobis adveniunt ex comparacione...*”

⁵¹ Valls, “Documents del Comte Guifré”, p. 15.

⁵² *MH* ap. CXXIII, also printed (from that text, the original having been lost in the 1835 fire) with translation by J. M. Salrach i Marés as “Acta de Consagració de l’Església del Monestir de Santa Maria de Ripoll (15 de novembre de 977)” in Pladevall *et al.*, “Santa Maria de Ripoll”, pp. 212-213: “... *non ignotae memoriae Wifredus extitit Comes atque, ut verius fatear, subditorum carus patricius, vir nobilitatis titulo pollens, virtutum vigore immarcessibilliter vernans; qui inter cetera Ecclesiarum aedificia, expulsis Agarenis, qui tunc temporis colonos extiterant, more per prisiones desertam incolam terram, coenobium Ripollense beatae virginis Mariae honore construxit...*”; contrast the consecration of the era of Guifré in *MH* ap. XLV (reprinted with translation by J. J. Busqueta i Riu as “Acta de Consagració de l’Església del Monestir de Santa Maria de Ripoll (20 d’Abril de 888)” in Pladevall *et al.*, “Santa Maria de Ripoll”, p. 209) and the donation in *MH* ap. LXI which refer to the lands’ previous owners without compunction.

⁵³ This is Udina’s argument, but perhaps the transmission could have been the other way round. A very similar problematic applies to Guifré’s supposed endowment and consecration acts of Santa Maria de Ripoll, printed as Condal 5 and *MH* ap. XLV respectively (see n. 52 above), which appear to be related to the Sant Joan documents in that they respect each others’ claims in areas where the monasteries both had property. On this see Valls, “Documents del Comte Guifré”, p. 18 of the original.

⁵⁴ Gros, “Arxiu”, p. 89.

both cases copies from earlier in the tenth century survive which lack exactly the same phrases,⁵⁵ these being more or less everything between “give” and “the castle of Mogrony”,⁵⁶ meaning that we must regard the record of Emma’s oblation as a late tenth-century addition. The earliest point at which it is recorded was then, it seems, in 949, after a period of confusion following her death. Even this does not get to the bottom of the two documents, however, as the mention of the castle of Mogrony further complicates matters. The castle of Mogrony has often been said to have been a centre of a princely lordship in the eighth century whose line donated or sold the place to Count Guifré. This suggestion rests on almost no actual evidence, and much of what underpins it existed, if at all, in the Sant Joan archive.⁵⁷ However, in 899, the year after the death of Count Guifré the supposed donor, in which Charles the Simple was invited to place his protection over all of Sant Joan’s property, it seems that the castle was not among it as all that was mentioned at Mogrony was “the cell of Mogrony with its limits and bounds”.⁵⁸ Furthermore, when in 906 the assembled bishops of the province of Narbonne offered Emma similar guarantees, they too only mentioned “the cell which is called Mogrony with the parish subjected to it”.⁵⁹ Thus, though Sant Joan was clearly a force in the area, there is no early evidence that it then held the castle.

⁵⁵ The second of the documents given under Condal 3, and the former of those under Condal 4: see the detailed palaeographical discussion of Udina, *Archivo Condal*, pp. 103-104.

⁵⁶ Condal 4: “*Ad ipsius dedicacionem, tradidimus ego Wifredus comes et Winedildes commetissa, id est, castro Mogoronio cum suo apendicio seu domos, terras cultas vel incultas que nobis adveniunt ex comparacione...*”.

⁵⁷ The suggestion originated with Francisco Codera y Zaidín (in his “Límites Probables de la Dominación Árabe en la Cordillera Pirenaica” in *Boletín de la Real Academia de Historia* Vol. 48 (Barcelona 1906), pp. 289-311, repr. in *idem*, *Estudios Críticos de Historia Árabe Española (Segunda Serie)*, Colección de Estudios Arabes Vol. VIII (Madrid 1917), pp. 235-276, at pp. 307-309 in the original). It was based on observations of a lost manuscript by Jaime Villanueva (*Viage Literario a las Iglesias de España tomo X: viage a Urgel* (Valencia 1821), p. 19), some very hypothetical onomastics and a report of another now-lost Sant Joan manuscript, otherwise unknown even to Masdeu before the 1939 sack, and unseen by Codera. Nonetheless, the suggestion has been picked up and expanded by Abilio Barbero (in “La integración social de los «hispani» del pirineo oriental al reino carolingio”, in P. Gallais, Y.-J. Riou (edd.), *Mélanges Offerts à René Crozet, Professeur à l’Université de Poitiers, Directeur du Centre d’Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale, à l’Occasion de son Soixante-Dixième Anniversaire, par ses Amis, ses Collègues, ses Élèves et les Membres du C. É. S. C. M.* Vol. I (Poitiers 1966), pp. 67-75, at p. 72, the article reprinted in A. Prieto (ed.), *Conflictos y Estructuras Sociales en la Hispania Antigua* (Madrid 1977), reedd. A García Bellido *et al.* as *Conflictos y Estructuras Sociales en la España Antigua* (Madrid 1986), pp. 151-165), Esteve Albert (*Les Abadeses* pp. 10-17), A. Vadillo Pinilla (“El dominio de San Juan de las Abadesas: algunas consecuencias de su formación” in M. A. Ladero Quesada (ed.), *En la España Medieval IV: estudios dedicados al Professor D. Angel Ferrari Núñez Tomo II* (Madrid 1984), pp. 1019-1045) and Albert Benet i Clarà (‘Castell de Mogrony’ in *idem*, A. Pladevall i Font & J. Vigué i Viñas, ‘Castells i Viles del Ripollès anteriors al 1300’ in Pladevall, *Catalunya Romànica X*, pp. 26-32 at p. 28). Given the weakness of the original suggestion (uncited after Barbero’s article), I do not think their respective conclusions about Mogrony and its rulers can easily stand.

⁵⁸ “*Id est in praedicto pago ausonensi cella Mucronio cum finibus et adiacenciis suis...*” (see n. 26 above).

⁵⁹ HGL V 32: “... *cellam quoque [sic] dicitur Mucuronio cum subijuncta sibi parrochia...*”.

This suggests that by the late tenth century at least the nuns and canons of Sant Joan were finding it useful to alter the early details of their house's history, but I think it can be shown that in this they were only following in the grand footsteps of Abbess Emma herself.

Emma's Version of History

The best indication of this comes from a document related to the oath over Vallfogona of 913. It has been taken to come from a separate hearing, as Udina in his edition, from a transcript, dated the two documents a month apart, but closer study by Gaspar Feliu i Montfort suggests that in fact this date was a misreading and the two are from the same day. This has been confirmed by Ramon Ordeig i Mata's subsequent edition of the original.⁶⁰ The document is an evacuation or quit-claim by one Oliba, representing Emma's brother Count Miró of Cerdanya, before that same Count and his and Emma's brother Sunyer Count of Barcelona and Osona, over "the lesser service of the king which all men who live in the selfsame villages ought to render to my lord, that is, hostings or other royal service" from many of the villages of Vallfogona.⁶¹ Unfortunately, neither are the villages involved all the same ones as named in the oath,⁶² nor are the witnesses all the same,⁶³ which must limit our confidence in the document. Nonetheless, the oath is phrased as a defence of Emma's rights over the lands in exactly the same terms as Oliba's evacuation, and it seems clear that the two are dealing with the same case. Since both survive in what appear to be originals it is difficult to consider either document as false on its own merits, and perhaps we should take the lack of precision as part of the evidence.

The document makes interesting comparisons with the other versions of Sant Joan's earliest history we have been looking at. The justification of

⁶⁰ Udina's edition was made from a 1925 transcript without palaeographical notes by Ramon d'Abadal I de Vinyals, and is ap. II A in El Archivo Condal, though it is Cat. Car. IV 119 (his Condal 38) that he backdated by a month. The original survives in a volume mostly composed of later copies in the Sant Joan archive, rather than from the comital archive whose parchments Udina was publishing; it is published as Cat. Car. IV 120. Feliu's discussion is at "Sant Joan de les Abadesses", pp. 421-422.

⁶¹ Cat. Car. IV 120: "... *servicium regis minus... quod omnes homines qui in ipsos villares abitant seniori meo debent inpendere, id est, hostes vel alium regale servicium...*".

⁶² Cat. Car. IV 120 deals with Vil·lar d'Esclúa, Vil·lar de Rodebald, Forns, Puig-rodó, La Vinya, Vil·lar de Centoll, Boscarons, Santigosa, Vilaplanes, Vedellar, Roverbell, Clarà, Isla de Longovard, Genebrosa, Vil·lar de Bera, Perella, Enculats, Moix, *Franconeiga* and *Ocega*. Assuming that the last is Cat. Car. IV 119's Olceia, that document nevertheless also names *Calvello* and *Miralias* and does not name Vil·lar de Bera. Furthermore many of the names in ap. II A appear to have been modernised (though the current names are given here). This may however have been the work of Abadal. Feliu suggests that there were two names for some of the settlements ("Sant Joan de les Abadesses", p. 423); I remain suspicious.

⁶³ All the witnesses of Cat. Car. IV 120 also feature in Cat. Car. IV 119, but that document also features several others.

Emma's rights is given as follows:

“that while the already-said valley with the hamlets already-said was located in the waste or desert thus there came the late Count Guifré of blessed memory, who was father of the already-said Counts and Abbess, and thus he invested the already-said Abbess by order of the King of the hamlets already said with their bounds and limits, just as is described in her selfsame profession of judgement, and the already-said Emma first of men in those same times thus settled in the selfsame hamlets the men who live there themselves, and all the building and the lands they might clear from the waste for cultivation, they did all this through the right of the already-said Abbess Emma”.⁶⁴

Here we have, it seems, all our historiographical agendas working together, the empty landscape, the pioneering settlers and a royal commission. The fit is not perfect: it is implied, although possibly not intentionally, that the hamlets which are at issue existed even before Emma arrived.⁶⁵ They are however said to have been in the waste, deserted, and Emma is ungrammatically said to have been the first man there, as if the whole area had to be built from the ground up. This looks like the rhetoric of reconquest tenure again.

Against this must be set one of the lost documents of Ripoll, preserved only by Jaime Villanueva in his *Viage Literario a las Iglesias de España*.⁶⁶ This document, the earliest known from the county of Osona,⁶⁷ claims to date from 880, and is a donation by a priest by the name of Ariulf to Santa Maria de Ripoll. Its importance is that it refers to “the monastery of Ripoll, and the other churches which are founded there”, the others being Sant Pere (which was the parish church of the village of Ripoll, subject to the monastery⁶⁸) and

⁶⁴ “... quia dum esset iamdicta vallis cum iamdictis villaribus in eremo vel deserto posita sic venit condam Guifréus commes bone memorie, qui fuit genitor de iamdictos comites vel abatissa, et sic revestivit iamdicta abatissa per iussionem regis de iamdictos villares cum fines et terminos illorum, sicut in ipso suo iudicio professionis resonat; et iamdicta Hemmo primus hominum istis temporibus sic conlocavit in ipsos villares homines qui ibidem habitant, et omnem edificium... et terras de eremo ad culturam perducerunt, omnia per beneficio de iamdicta Hemmone abbatissa hoc fecerunt.”

⁶⁵ Feliu argues (in “Sant Joan de les Abadesses” pp. 422-423) that this is implicit in the phrasing of the consecration act of the abbey church (Condal 4) also, which grants the tithes from four villages but describes the monastic territory in such a way as to include only one; I however suspect that the act is here giving the boundaries of the monastery's own alod, which would not preclude it holding further territories outside. It seems to me that in the older version of Condal 4 only the tithes of any of the villages are transferred; this is one of the things changed in the later version by which time Sant Joan clearly did own them all and more.

⁶⁶ J. Villanueva, *Viage Literario a las Iglesias de España* tomo VIII: viage a las iglesias de Vique y Solsona (Valencia 1821), ap. I.

⁶⁷ And thus Cat. Car. IV 1, though the actual text is deferred to another volume in the series meaning that Villanueva's is still the only edition.

⁶⁸ See A. Pladevall i Font *et al.*, “Sant Pere de Ripoll” in Pladevall, *Catalunya Romànica X*, pp. 335-

Sant Joan.⁶⁹ Sant Joan de les Abadesses is a name that postdates the nunnery, and Sant Joan de Ripoll is how our house appears in early documents; it is undoubtedly the church that is meant. The link to Santa Maria would however have seemed wrong to later readers, and so this reference is quite possibly authentic. It may explain firstly the references to rebuilding, and it also suggests how the abbey was ruled before Emma took control, that is, jointly with Ripoll under Abbot Daguí.⁷⁰ Abadal chose to date the foundation of the abbey to 879 because of this document, his argument being that the repopulation of the area was begun by Count Guifré that year,⁷¹ but, again, there are reasons to doubt that the area was empty before then. For one there is the apparent size of the population in Vallfogona,⁷² but also the fact that this document confers two entire *villae* which are said to have terms. Boundaries being known like this suggests continuity of population. There was therefore probably a Sant Joan de Ripoll by 880, and it may have been there for some time. If so, Guifré had grander plans for it and it may have been thanks to him that it became a cloister rather than just a church.

Vallfogona and Count Miró: rule over the past

With these data in mind, it's worth looking in more detail at the documents from the Vallfogona hearing. As said, in the first, the oath, 493 names are given, by my count at least,⁷³ as inhabitants of twenty-one settlements inside the valley, which neighbours that in which the nunnery was sited. Of these settlements the average population is thus twenty-three, but some boast more than forty people. Populations of this size make it seem likely to me that the whole adult population is being listed, not just heads of houses. Also, many names are identifiably female and occur alternately with male ones as if couples were recorded together.⁷⁴ There are however oddities.

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⁶⁹ "... *Dono atque concedo domini Sanctae Mariae virginis in monasterio Riopullense, et ipsas ecclesias alias qui ibidem sunt fundatas, nomine Sancti Petri apostoli, et in onore Sancti Iohannis martiris Christi, at Dachino habate, et monachis ibidem Deo servientibus, tam praesentibus, quam et futuris.*"

⁷⁰ On whom see R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, "La fundació del monestir de Ripoll" in *Miscel·lània Anselm M. Albareda* Vol. I, *Analecta Montserratensia* Vol. 9 (Montserrat 1955-1956), pp. 187-197; repr. in *Dels Visigots als Catalans* Vol. I, pp. 485-494, at p. 487 of the reprint.

⁷¹ R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, *La Plana de Vic en els Segles VIII i IX* (Barcelona 1948), repr. as "La reconquesta d'una regió interior de Catalunya: la plana de Vic (717-886)" in *Dels Visigots als Catalans* I, pp. 309-321.

⁷² Vadillo, "Dominio de San Juan de las Abadesas" p. 1025.

⁷³ Abadal said that there are 476 people named. Feliu by contrast makes it 510. I can only say that I count it differently. I suspect the differences lie in what names we consider to be unique, or merely varied in orthography from list to signatures.

⁷⁴ Abadal and Feliu both disagree with me here, Abadal having suggested that the population's leading couples were being listed along with heads of houses. Feliu follows this argument, but Abadal was keen to show the magnitude of Count Guifré's repopulation endeavour (see n. 71 above) and Feliu is

At least three settlements within the valley are not mentioned, and these are settlements which we know of from Emma's purchases there, before and after 913, and therefore must have been contemporary.⁷⁵ Furthermore, from other donations and sales we know of several people living in Vallfogona who are neither named as inhabitants nor featured among the signatories (who are not all the same people).⁷⁶ One Eldovard, who features in several sales and two donations to Emma and Sant Joan respectively, both before and after the hearing,⁷⁷ is absent, as is his neighbour Asner who also occurs several times,⁷⁸ and these are far from the only cases. One might think that those swearing were only those who had contested Emma's rights; however, among them is one Esclúa, seeming founder of a hamlet which bore his name, who appears in other documents as Emma's representative and was therefore presumably someone she trusted.⁷⁹ Perhaps they were only those who supported Emma's claim: but among the men of Vinya was one Reinovard,⁸⁰ who is elsewhere seen opposing another representative of Emma's in court.⁸¹ On the other hand, he appears later as *saio* in Vallfogona, an office from which one might have thought Emma's influence would keep him. Perhaps they came to an agreement in 913... Feliu suggests that the omissions represent islands of full propriety by alodists or holders of *aprisiones* whose tenure the abbey was not able to contest.⁸² Certainly, it is noticeable that the names which we can certainly identify with men of such substance, where they appear in this document, do so usually as witnesses or *boni homines* overseeing the oath;

attempting to use the high population to explain an apparent overflow into Vallès which he studied in "Sant Joan de les Abadesses i el repoblament del Vallès" in Miscel·lània Fort i Cogul. Història Monàstica Catalana. Història del Camp de Tarragona (Montserrat 1984), pp. 129-135 (of which I must thank the author for providing me with an offprint); nonetheless, see his discussion at "Sant Joan de les Abadesses" pp. 423-424, as the evidence does not permit one to dismiss either case.

⁷⁵ Tolosa, *Arigo* and *Cannas*, featuring in Condal 21, 24 and 48 respectively, among others less contemporaneous.

⁷⁶ Only the witnesses of the ceremony signed autograph; the swearers' signatures are all in the scribal hand.

⁷⁷ Featured in Condal 15, 27, 28, 36, 42, 52, 57, 61, 86 & 111.

⁷⁸ In Condal 20, 35, 50, 82, 85, 105, 126, 127 & 140.

⁷⁹ He occurs in Cat. Car. IV 119 & Condal 35, 42, 51, 53, 58 & 64, and is mandatory for Emma in 35 & 53.

⁸⁰ Reinovard appears in Cat. Car. IV 119 & Condal 16, 28, 35, 40, 41, 46, 50, 51, 53, 55, 58, 71, 75 & 86; he leads the Vinya subscribers in 38 and in 53 only he is *saio*. Otherwise he appears as witness or representative, and was clearly therefore a man of some standing.

⁸¹ Condal 16; Udina dates this to 919 but places the document at a place in his edition's sequence where 904 or 905 would be expected; neither of these dates really answer the regnal year, the seventh of Charles son of Louis, which caused Bofarull to date it to 900 as Udina notes. It is noticeable that the hearing is some way from Vallfogona, emphasising Reinovard's range of influence.

⁸² "Sant Joan de les Abadesses", pp. 422-423. Apart from the reservations below, at least one of the men he expects to see, Langovard, presumably founder of the eponymous settlement *Casas de Longovard*, is seen only in Condal 15 & 29, the last of which dates from 910, and so he may well have been dead by 913.

Reinovard and Esclúa are almost alone among the 493 names in appearing again in our record.⁸³ This suggests that the most useful way to treat the documentation might be to divide it by class, that is to see it as the enforcement of a landholding consensus on a land-working population. Studies of other areas, however, most notably Rosenwein's work on Cluny,⁸⁴ suggest that a conflictual paradigm may be insufficiently subtle. Contact with the abbey would have brought benefits as well as costs, and might be sought or eschewed (in which case of course evidence would be lacking).

The hearing may in fact have had less to do with Vallfogona than with Emma's lordship as a whole. As we have seen these documents firmly state that Emma was installed in the lands which her father had cleared and that she moved the settlers in herself. The 880 document suggests very strongly that the surrounding area was able to support three churches before that date anyway, so this seems unlikely to be true. There seem to be two alternative solutions of this dilemma, and the choice between them hinges on the relations between Emma and the other members of her family. If we take the documents at face value, Emma had gone to considerable lengths to prove her brother wrong. Even though it seems that some Vallfogona landholders were not present, which may be suggestive of divided opinion, she obtained the word of many more than were necessary for a convincing oath, in a considerable display of power and influence. Why Miró, with a county's fiscal resources behind him, was not able to command greater loyalty or even fear in the area is hard to explain. Possibly the numbers involved were Emma's illustration of the sort of armed response she could call on, if as it seems from the evacuation rights to the area's military service were involved, though this makes it odd that women were among the oath-takers. Possibly the presence of Count Sunyer should be taken to imply that Emma had quite literally called in Big Brother,⁸⁵ but as we shall see he was later to be no great friend to

⁸³ In this group we might for example see the *bonus homo* Miró, a witness both to this hearing and, if the documents may be believed and the common name accepted as significant, to the abbey's endowment, seen in Cat. Car. IV 119 & 120 & Condal 3 & 4; another Miró, appearing as a witness, and seen as a Tolosa and *Arigo* landholder in Cat. Car. IV 119 & 120 & Condal 36, 37, 39, 54, 77, 86, 99 & 115, though no-one called Miró appears in Cat. Car. IV 119 as an inhabitant of Tolosa (*Arigo* is not mentioned there); or Desiderí, also seen at Tolosa and *Arigo* in Cat. Car. IV 119 & Condal 21, 24, 44, 60, 62, 99, 109 & possibly 124, often with his wife Bero, though the only men of this name in Cat. Car. IV 119 sign for Enculats and Roverbello, in the former of which our man does not occur, and the latter of which is only mentioned in Cat. Car. IV 119. Once their presence as witness or *bonus homo* be accepted as an indication of wealth, several more such men can be spotted in the record. On the other hand, the implication of the majority's non-appearance is that they were not sufficiently well-off to reach our record as transactors. This analysis is carried out in more detail in my doctoral thesis, in progress at Birkbeck College London, "Pathways of Power in late-Carolingian Catalonia", Chapter 2.

⁸⁴ B. H. Rosenwein, To Be The Neighbor of Saint Peter: the social meaning of Cluny's property, 909-1049 (Ithaca 1989); see also B. H. Rosenwein, T. Head & S. Farmer, "Monks and their Enemies: a comparative approach" in *Speculum* Vol. 66 (Cambridge 1991), pp. 764-796.

⁸⁵ On seniority and succession among Guifré's children see R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, 'Un gran comte de Barcelona preterit: Guifre-Borrell (897-911)' in Cuadernos de Arqueología e Historia de la Ciudad

the monastery. The fact that, as we shall see, Emma appears to have begun to try to safeguard the monastery's possessions at about the time her father died, in 899, suggests perhaps that she feared her brothers' claims to land their father had cleared. This does not perhaps comfortably explain the sheer scale of the Vallfogona affair, but makes a plausible enough explanation, if we are prepared to see in Emma a separatist against the family interests.

Alternatively, the variation might be explained by considerable evidence elsewhere for the use of such recognitions as devices to obtain a written title to property or reinforce ownership.⁸⁶ Some have suggested, indeed, that such *Scheinprozesse* make up most or all of such documents in some areas.⁸⁷ Bonnassie also suggests that the hearing was a formal way of expressing that the inhabitants of the area were now being brought under regular government.⁸⁸ Its terms appear however as if its intended result was to remove this valley from lay lordship, not to impose it. The answer could however be that the aim was not to remove Miró from the area, but to confirm in the sight of as many people as possible that even the counts legally conceded Emma's control of her lands, as guaranteed her already by a king and fifteen bishops but now by the population's immediate rulers. This idea carries some weight because it seems that relations between Emma and her brother were otherwise cordial. Emma appears with Miró at the election of Abbot Ennegó in 919, but more convincingly she was one of the executors of Miró's will in 927, a document in which she is the only person referred to with any sign of affection, as "*dilectissima soror*".⁸⁹ A further datum may be that Miró is also seen presiding over a hearing deciding in favour of the monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll, concerning the tithes of some villages granted there by his and Emma's brother Bishop Radulf, the suit being brought by that same Radulf, which suggests that defence of the monasteries' rights in the area was something on which Miro and his siblings agreed.⁹⁰ This therefore looks more like the success of an agreement between partners in power than a sibling brawl, though of course it also involves the agreement of 493 alleged settlers and of what this involved we are not told.

de *Barcelona* Vol. 5 (Barcelona 1964), pp. 83-180, repr. in *Miscellanea Barcinonensia* Vol. 3 (Barcelona 1964), pp. 49-90 and in *idem*, *Dels Visigots als Catalans*, I, pp. 323-362, at pp. 338-346 of the reprint.

⁸⁶ P. Fouracre, "'Placita' and the Settlement of Disputes in Later Merovingian France" in W. Davies, P. Fouracre (edd.), *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge 1986), p. 26; Rosenwein, *To Be The Neighbor of Saint Peter*, pp. 134-135 and *passim*.

⁸⁷ C. Wickham, "Land Disputes and their Social Framework in Lombard-Carolingian Italy, 700-900" in Davies & Fouracre, *Settlement of Disputes*, pp. 105-124 at p. 117 gives references to the Italian version of this debate; see also Rosenwein as above.

⁸⁸ *La Catalogne* I, pp. 102-105.

⁸⁹ Bofarull, *Los Condes de Barcelona* I p. 70 (the election) and pp. 88-90 (the will).

⁹⁰ Rovira, "El Bisbe Radulf", ap. 5.

In this establishing of Emma as the “first man on the land”, if by her father’s installation, we are shown a claim not just to the present rule of the area, but to that of its past. Nearly half a thousand people, in various places, had sworn before God that this had been the shape of past events, even though it seems unlikely from what documents survive that this was true, and as we have seen at least one scribe in 914 appears to have been confused about how he was supposed to remember the abbey’s foundation. Amy Remensnyder and Patrick Geary among others have shown monasteries reshaping their early histories to their own advantage and thereby eventually restructuring the past for later viewers.⁹¹ Here we have the story being agreed by its characters in their own lifetimes. Indeed, unless a monastery that embarked on such an enterprise enjoyed a complete *tabula rasa* of local memory, there must always have been such variant stories which needed to be secured; again, one would like to know how. The effects in this case have endured till our times; despite the fact that the act of oblation as it survives is at best dubious, despite its support in the abbey church’s consecration being only present in the later copy, and despite the variation in the texts, Emma’s authoritative history is that given in the works of Udina (who condemned the documents), of Abadal (who used the 880 donation to Ripoll to anchor his chronology) and of later authors, because after a while everyone agreed that that was how it had been.

The Documents and their Story

Emma’s control of the past however was directed towards power in the present, and there is enough evidence to say quite a lot about how she wielded this. It is worth pausing first to fix the chronology, however. Abadal considered that Emma was fifteen when she first appears in 898, though on what information he based this conclusion is unclear.⁹² There appears to be no evidence for Emma’s age in any source, and the act of oblation, which might give us an idea of when she might have been considered a child, is as we have said in that part interpolated. The consecration of Sant Martí del Congost in 898 claims that she had built the church, which suggests that she had been of managerial age for a few years by that time. At around the same time, she is

⁹¹ Remensnyder, Remembering Kings Past, *passim*; Geary, Phantoms of Remembrance, *passim* but esp. pp. 134-157.

⁹² Abadal, Primers Comtes, p. 92; at p. 140 he states that she must have been born between 880 and 885 but again does not explain on what basis he believed this. He cites Masdeu, Sant Joan de les Abadesses and Albert, Les Abadesses to cover the section in which he states this but gives no precise reference; neither appear to support this claim. Perhaps the unspoken assumption is that Emma’s appearance betokens her attainment of the age of legal majority, but this implies that she leapt into the written record almost immediately, which the lack of preservation before this date would seem to make a dangerous assumption.

found soliciting a donation by Bishop Godmar of Osona to Sant Joan.⁹³ At this point, then, though it is possibly only a factor of the record, there seems to have been a sudden leap into activity at the monastery. This suggests that her command actually began about then, so that the date of the act of oblation, 885, would be plausible enough were the document itself not clearly interpolated.

By 899, in the wake of Count Guifré's death, a policy of securing the monastery's possessions was clearly in operation, including perhaps better organisation of the archive which would explain the start date of our evidence. In that year her embassy obtained the royal precept granting the abbey immunity, and in 905 and 906 Emma sent representatives to two Church councils in order to obtain a similar reinforcement from a final total of 15 bishops including all three of those into whose dioceses Sant Joan's territories fell.⁹⁴ Meanwhile, in 902 or earlier begin court hearings in which Emma is shown obtaining judicial recognition of her lordship.⁹⁵ In 913 one of these was held over land in Vallfogona which the defendant had been holding for twenty years but, having donated it to Sant Joan, had been somewhat slow in actually transferring.⁹⁶ Despite this Emma had been happy to buy land from the man in question the previous year.⁹⁷ Later that year comes the large hearing we have just examined, and two other Vallfogona landholders had to admit their loss of autonomy later in Emma's career,⁹⁸ while the two earlier cases stem from further afield.⁹⁹

The Sales

There are however only five such hearings, huge though the Vallfogona one was: there are very many more purchases from Emma's rule. Sant Joan seems to have taken a while to start attracting donations, or at least donations whose documents survive, but 50 of the 73 surviving documents

⁹³ This document, listed by Udina as San Juan 4, actually exists in a pre-1936 transcript by the then archivist of Vic cathedral from notes by the nineteenth-century Ripoll archivist Olzinelles, and has been printed as Cat. Car. IV 35.

⁹⁴ See n. 33 above. Sant Joan itself was in the bishopric and county of Osona, though its area was later assigned to the county of Besalú (see M. Pagès i Paretas, "El marc històric" in Pladevall i Font, *Catalunya Romànica X*, pp. 17-25, 32-37 & 41-62 at p. 17), where many of its lands lay, these being under the sway of the bishoprics of Girona or Urgell. Sant Joan also held land in the counties of Cerdanya, Bergà, Conflent and Empúries, or so Charles the Simple was told (see n. 26 above).

⁹⁵ The full list of such hearings is Cat. Car. IV 119 & 120, Condal 16, 35 & 53 and San Juan 14 & 58. See n. 81 above on the dating of Condal 16: unless it is to be dated 900 as Bofarull thought, San Juan 14, of 902, is the earliest.

⁹⁶ Condal 35.

⁹⁷ Condal 31.

⁹⁸ Condal 53 and San Juan 58.

⁹⁹ Condal 16 from *Stegale* in Cerdanya and San Juan 14 from Bianya.

which mention Emma are sales, and none by her.¹⁰⁰ There are a further 60 of her purchases which have been lost.¹⁰¹ Little of what she bought was massive,¹⁰² but the acquisitions were usually tightly focused. Already, when she brought the villagers of Vallfogona to swear that their land was hers in 913, she had directly acquired at least 18 different plots there which had, over a period of eight years, cost her 35 *solidi* and 5 *denarii* (plus the cost of three other purchases),¹⁰³ not a great deal for as Bonnassie notes the area had low prices for the principality at this time.¹⁰⁴ At the same time she had also been acquiring land in Segúries as part of a prolonged programme, but the sack (Sant Joan's archive was, the *Llibre de Canalars* tells us, sorted in "sacs") that held these documents is lost and we know little more there;¹⁰⁵ she was also active in other areas. She continued after 913 to acquire land in Vallfogona, in 22 more transactions,¹⁰⁶ right up till 942 when she ceases to appear. Again these were cheap lands, but from the 920s onward she was usually already a neighbour of the land she purchased, suggesting a policy of slow aggrandisement. Feliu suggests that she was purchasing that of which she had not been able to claim the lordship, the islands of full tenure mentioned above,¹⁰⁷ but she bought from both those who had sworn and those who had not so this seems unlikely to be the full picture. Furthermore, at least one of the places Feliu sees as such an island was later given in its entirety to the abbey by Count Miró Bonfill of Besalú,¹⁰⁸ Emma's nephew, so we should not necessarily expect places that Emma left alone to belong to free peasants. Even in Vallfogona Count Sunyer, her brother, is seen buying land in one

¹⁰⁰ Condal 18-20, 23, 24, 26-28, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37, 40, 41, 45, 46, 48, 53, 55, 56, 59-62, 64, 66-68, 71, 72, 75, 76, 78, 79, 83, 95, 97, 107, 109, 111, 113-115, 117, 118 & 120 are all purchases by Emma.

¹⁰¹ San Juan 16, 17, 29, 39, 40, 47, 50-53, 56, 61, 68, 69, 83-88, 98-109, 114-118, 121, 131, 132, 145, 146, 151-153, 155, 156, 164 (probably), 165, 167, 170, 179, 184, 185, 188, 189, 193, 194, 199 & 200; San Juan 57 was an exchange by Emma, and San Juan 60 was a purchase by some of the nuns.

¹⁰² Though note that the non-surviving San Juan 194 is said to have concerned a castle and its alod, which cannot have been cheap even in this area.

¹⁰³ Condal 18-20, 24, 26-28, 31, 34, 36 & 37, plus San Juan 40, 47 & 51.

¹⁰⁴ *La Catalogne* II, p. 900.

¹⁰⁵ The term is the site of San Juan 5, 12, 19, 27, 29, 39, 46, 50, 55, 56, 68, 82-88, 114, 130, 131, 146, 149, 153, 154 & 155 and Sant Joan 5, none of which survive. That Sant Joan's interests were substantial is clear from the fact that when the parish of Sant Pau de Segúries was created it was allotted to Sant Joan, even though it had been split off from that of the rising comital house Sant Pere de Camprodon: see A. Pladevall i Font, M. Lluïsa Cases & J. Vigué i Viñas, "Esglésies del Ripollès anteriors al 1300", in Pladevall, *Catalunya Romànica X*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁰⁶ Condal 40, 41, 45, 48, 53, 55, 60-62, 64, 67, 71, 79, 95, 109, 111, 113 & 117 are those that still exist, San Juan 69, 98, 188 & 189 being those that do not.

¹⁰⁷ "Sant Joan de les Abadesses" pp. 422-423.

¹⁰⁸ Caballeria, discussed by Feliu in *ibid.*, p. 422, but given to the monastery "*in omne integritate*" in San Juan 238, following on a prior large donation also by Miró in San Juan 235, and numerous smaller purchases and donations including many by Emma (San Juan 45, 134, 145, 152, 168, 173, 188, 189, 202 & 211).

charter.¹⁰⁹ The picture is more complex even than this density of evidence will unravel for us.

Donations

The other large category is donations to Sant Joan. Though there are a reasonable number of these, twenty surviving from Emma's rule and another fifteen which do not, in only nine of these is she named and only one (which does not survive) as the recipient.¹¹⁰ In four of the survivors she is named as neighbour, another is that confused charter which mentions her as the founder of Sant Joan,¹¹¹ and another, although it identifies the transaction as a donation, also specifies a price of five *solidi* and names Emma as buyer.¹¹² In the last she is mentioned by the donor, Bishop Godmar of Osona, as having requested the donation but it is the abbey which is the recipient.¹¹³ Of the non-survivors, one is actually a donation by Emma, which we will discuss later,¹¹⁴ and the other is from 942 or 943, at which point, I shall suggest, Emma was no longer able to direct such matters.¹¹⁵ In any case, as the document does not survive we cannot be sure of its authenticity. It would seem therefore that Emma generally did not have herself included, as did some bishops or abbots, as one of the beneficiaries in donations to her house; one possible out of thirty-five seems to be more than just a coincidence. On the other hand, all her purchases name her only and do not imply that the nunnery is the beneficiary, though there are two documents recording purchases in the voice of the nunnery from Emma's abbacy which make no mention of her.¹¹⁶ Possibly she saw her position as lord distinct from that as abbess, and was buying land in her own interest not the monastery's? This seems to coincide with later evidence, as we shall see.

¹⁰⁹ Condal 99.

¹¹⁰ The surviving donations are Condal 29, 42, 43, 50-52, 54, 58, 74, 75, 84, 86, 88, 96, 110, 119 & 121, and Cat. Car. IV 35; of these Emma is named in 29, 43, 75, 96, 110 & 121 and Cat. Car. IV 35 (which is San Juan 4). Those not surviving are San Juan 24, 55, 91, 127, 130, 134, 140, 147, 149, 150, 157, 183, 186 & 202, of which 127 & 202 are said to have mentioned her. In addition should be included Cat. Car. IV 346, which does appear to be a regular donation to Emma, by several people we know from other Vallfogona transactions. It is preserved at Barcelona, but does not appear to have been part of either the abbey archive or the comital one. This raises the question of whether other such documents existed and were preserved apart; why would they be different from sales to Emma?

¹¹¹ Condal 43.

¹¹² Condal 75.

¹¹³ Cat. Car. IV 35.

¹¹⁴ San Juan 127, discussed below at pp. [24-25].

¹¹⁵ San Juan 202.

¹¹⁶ Condal 77 and San Juan 164.

Consecrations

The smallest category is consecrations. There are only four of these known from Emma's rule, and notably none are clearly associated with the nunnery, being in areas where Sant Joan is not known to have had land this early.¹¹⁷ As against this, however, it must be admitted that one donation of 942, almost the last in which Emma appears, mentions the church of Llaés, whose consecration was to be in 960,¹¹⁸ as having been "founded from the monastery",¹¹⁹ so perhaps this work was being begun in Emma's last years. Of those known to have reached fruition under her rule however, none are in the Ripollès, and although she gave considerable movables to each one only to Sant Joan de Muntarn and Sant Martí del Congost did she give any lands and those small plots acquired by purchase.¹²⁰ Emma's work in the pastoral sphere would seem then not to have been directed to the lands where she or the abbey had the most substantial interests.

Rule for the Future

This all gives a picture of the way in which Emma carried out her office which is centred around land. This, it has been argued, was inevitable for the manager of so large an institution as a monastery,¹²¹ and to a degree also it must be a factor of the source material. Had we a life of Emma written by one of her canons or nuns we might learn of unsuspected acts of prayer, fasting and alms-giving. We do not see this, although the rôle of the abbess as memorial coordinator with which students of the Ottonian world might be more familiar is rarer in Spain, where in this period the sons of the deceased more usually took charge of the family commemoration.¹²² If the comital family of Barcelona had a memorial centre it was not Sant Joan, but nearby

¹¹⁷ See Albert, *Les Abadesses*, p. 18. The consecrations are Condal 10, 73, 102 & 103.

¹¹⁸ Condal 147; the delay involved in this makes it possible that the other churches that Rnló had consecrated which are there discussed had also been begun by Emma, but this does imply that each one had taken between 12 and 18 years to complete.

¹¹⁹ Condal 121.

¹²⁰ Condal 73 and Condal 10 respectively.

¹²¹ D. Hägermann, "Der Abt als Grundherr. Kloster und Wirtschaft im frühen Mittelalter" in F. Prinz (ed.), *Herrschaft und Kirche. Beiträge zur Entstehung und Wirkungsweise episkopaler und monastischer Organisationsformen*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 33 (Stuttgart 1988), pp. 345-385 at pp. 345-351.

¹²² So says L. Paz Marinas in "La mujer y la practica religiosa: el ejemplo de la Condesa Ilduara (ca. 880-ca. 960)" in Muñoz, *Mujeres en el Cristianismo Medieval*, pp. 363-371, at pp. 366-367; on the Ottonian type see, for example, G. Althoff, "Gandersheim und Quedlinburg: ottonische Frauenkloster als Herrschafts- und Überlieferungszentren" in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* Vol. 25 (Berlin 1991), pp. 123-144.

Ripoll, where Guifré the Hairy was buried;¹²³ on the other hand Emma's brothers, the successive Marquises Guifré II Borrell and Sunyer I, are buried in Santa Creu de Barcelona and Notre Dame de la Grasse respectively.¹²⁴ Emma mentions the souls of her parents in these documents only once, in the earliest of her consecrations.¹²⁵

What we do see is the exercise of an aggrandising lordship. She acquired a considerable amount of land for a fairly trifling sum of money, seemingly for her own purposes, and was not afraid to pursue what were cast as her rights. In short, she acted not unlike her lay brothers, including as we have seen perhaps raising troops and "*alia servicia regalia*";¹²⁶ whatever these may in practice have been, they are clearly trappings of public authority. And such may have been exactly what Guifré wanted of her; her acquisitions brought more new land into his descendants' power and extended authority further into no man's land. By her fifty years of continuous activity the abbey was given a patrimony, and a substantial area of frontier land brought under the direct control of Guifré's children. Emma's rôle in this seems closely parallel to that of her brothers, with the important difference of the use of the Church's dead hand to accumulate the capital for the expansion she and they carried out. This difference may be crucial to the way in which events unfolded after Emma's death. She had equipped the abbey with a past; was it however the abbey, Guifré's plans, or her family to which she tried to give the future inherent in her aggrandisement?

The End of Emma

Emma last appears in a document of the 8th of November 942.¹²⁷ The *terminus ante quam*, meanwhile, is the 16th August 949, when Borrell II met at Sant Joan with his cousin Sunifred Count of Cerdanya and Besalú, Bishop Guadamir of Osona and Bishop Godmar of Girona to discuss the succession at the nunnery.¹²⁸ By this time, it is clear, Emma had been dead for a while. After giving the short history of the foundation cited above, the document rather obscurely goes on:

¹²³ Bofarull, *Los Condes de Barcelona* I, pp. 41-43.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63; E. Magnou-Nortier, A. Magnou (edd.), *Recueil des Chartes de l'Abbaye de la Grasse* Vol. I, Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de la France: série in 8vo 24 (Paris 1996), Nos 67 & 68 and commentary there.

¹²⁵ Condal 10.

¹²⁶ Cat. Car. IV 120.

¹²⁷ Condal 120. Udina suggests that she died in the next fortnight because, he says, she does not appear in Condal 121. She does in fact do so, however, as neighbour, and is not there said to be "*condam*", which were the event so recent would surely be noted.

¹²⁸ Condal 128.

“After her death, indeed, that Sunyer, the Count, led by cupidity, emplaced in that rank by force of his hand an unsuitable woman as afterwards became clear. For, as it is the custom of those desiring to follow God to emend to whomever they have been unjust, he himself afterwards with a free will took the habit of religion. He said that he was greatly penitent for this reason, and chose with the consent of the holy community serving Christ in the same monastery one who seemed to be better suited to that rank”.¹²⁹

This is all that is known of Emma’s immediate successor, apparently appointed by Borrell’s father and Emma’s brother Sunyer the Marquis of Barcelona, Girona and Osona. The phrase “led by cupidity” has been taken to imply that some concubine of Sunyer’s was appointed,¹³⁰ but given substantial territorial losses which the nunnery seems to have suffered in the years after Emma’s death perhaps a more immovable sort of cupidity was involved. Moreover, it should be noted that her replacement in this document was one Adelaide, who was Borrell’s sister and Sunyer’s daughter, the dowager Countess of Urgell and Besalú. Esteve Albert suggests instead that the episode should be seen as an attempt to apply tighter comital control over nunnery, which as a result of the rights which Emma had defended had become an island of jurisdiction between the counties of Urgell, Besalú and Osona. Sunyer’s candidate would have made the nunnery clearly Osonan; with Adelaide’s appointment its independence was placed in the hands of someone with ties to all three countships.¹³¹

¹²⁹ “*Post discessum, vero, illius Suniarius, comes, cupiditate ductus, misit per vim quendam manum huic ordini non aptam quod postea claruit. Nam ipse, Deum sequi cupiens uti mos est cuique emendare quod iniuste egit et postmodum cum libera consciencia religionis abitum suscipere. Magis ex hac cause penitere se dixit, elegit que cum consensu sancti monialum in eodem cenobio cristo famulancium unam que videtur illius ordinis fore apta*” (all spacing and orthography as in Udina’s text). Sunyer had by this time joined the congregation of La Grasse (see Magnou-Nortier & Magnou as in n. 124 above) but was not dead so despite the appearance of the Latin it cannot be his “*discessum*” that is meant, and Emma is the previous subject.

¹³⁰ This paragraph opposes the viewpoints expressed in Udina, El Archivo Condal, p. 286, and Albert, Les Abadesses, pp. 22-23.

¹³¹ The counties were at this time held by Borrell II (grandson of Guifré, son of Sunyer, and also inheritor of Urgell from his uncle and Adelaide’s late husband Sunifred II of Urgell) in Osona and Urgell, sharing Osona with his brother Miró I, and Guifré II and Sunifred II, the sons of Emma’s brother Miró el Jove and Counts after him in Cerdanya, who had apparently inherited Besalú from their uncle Sunifred II of Urgell, he having it not from Guifré the Hairy but from Guifré’s brother Radulf. On the confusions of the descent of the various counties of the March, see Bofarull, Los Condes de Barcelona Vindicados I, pp. 71-91, the works in n. 85 above, and the modifications, not all fully triumphant over Bofarull’s arguments, of Aurell, “Jalons pour une enquête”. Note however that Borrell and Sunifred represented the two cousinly branches of the family at this ceremony, branches whose alliance was often uncertain (see for example J. M. Salrach i Marés, “El Comte Guifré de Besalú i la Revolta de 957. Contribució a Estudi de la Noblesa Catalana del Segle X” in Amics de Besalú i del seu Comtat, II Assemblea d’Estudis sobre el Comtat de Besalú (Olot 1973), pp. 3-36 at pp. 6-7, who however believes that Besalú went from Radulf brother of Guifré straight to Miró el Jove of Cerdanya), but that Adelaide was, as would her successor Ranló be, from the older generation whose

Adelaide is seen in one further document, a donation to Sant Joan from the following year in which she is still using the title Countess,¹³² however, so her exact style of office is rather difficult to estimate. Within five years she had herself been replaced by Ranoló, but it may be that Ranoló was appointed almost immediately, as the intervening documents, being mostly donations, name no Abbess.¹³³ This would make the failure of Adelaide to mention her abbacy in her donation easier to understand. The rapid turnover of rulers at the nunnery, combined with comital pressure in the *interregnum*, cannot have contributed to the smooth running of the institution. Indeed there are several signs that this transition cost them quite heavily. In 960 for example Ranoló is seen making an exchange with Count Sunifred of Cerdanya, the same who had seen Adelaide appointed, by which the nunnery gained a substantial alod in the Ripoll valley.¹³⁴ Unfortunately for them this alod's bounds are the same on three sides as one given them in 938 by one Osseza as her entry-gift to the community.¹³⁵ She admittedly gave only the fifth part of what lay in those bounds but it seems clear nonetheless that the two grants overlap, and we must conclude that the land had been lost by Sant Joan during the intervening period and was now being returned with extra, albeit at a cost. This is not the only example: in 955 the Countess Elo, daughter-in-law of Emma's brother Bishop Radulf,¹³⁶ presented her daughter Enquília to the monastery, and with her came several pieces of land in the term of the castle of Llaés.¹³⁷ Among these was a village called "*casas de Longovard*", which in 913 had been one of those in Vallfogona whose inhabitants swore for Emma, and whose eponymous founder occurs in donations to Sant Joan.¹³⁸ Here too then the monastery had lost ground to Emma's cousins, and these are only the cases which we can identify because they were remedied. It is also worth noting that there was a revolt in the neighbouring county of Besalú in 957,¹³⁹ which resulted in numerous expropriations and indeed some executions: Albert has suggested that the numerous grants of Count-Bishop Miró of that county, when he succeeded to it,¹⁴⁰ represented restorations of Sant Joan land taken

internal rivalry seems not to have been so sharply expressed against its own members as compared to their progeny.

¹³² Condal 130.

¹³³ Ranoló first occurs in Condal 135.

¹³⁴ Condal 150.

¹³⁵ Condal 112.

¹³⁶ See Rovira, "El bisbe Radulf", p. 173.

¹³⁷ Condal 192.

¹³⁸ See n. 82 above.

¹³⁹ On which see Salrach, "El comte Guifré de Besalú".

¹⁴⁰ On Miró see J. M. Salrach, "El bisbe-comte Miró Bonfill i la seva obra de fundació i dotació de monestirs" in Fort i Cogul, *II Col·loqui del Monaquisme Català II*, pp. 57-81, with French summary pp. 412-413 & English summary pp. 422-423.

over at that time.¹⁴¹ We shall never know if this is true, and Albert uses the idea to justify some fairly dubious genealogical speculation,¹⁴² but it is not out of keeping with the other losses to the abbey which we can observe in this period. Certainly one of Miró's grants was of land which he had from Marquis Borrell II, the son of Sunyer.¹⁴³

All this suggests a considerable lapse from Emma's standard of defence of Sant Joan. We may wonder what arrangements she had made for the safety of the monastery. If she left a will we do not have it, and given the confusion and vulnerability that the end of her control seems to have brought in, it seems likely that there was not one. Earlier we saw that Emma seems to have distinguished between acquisitions in her name and those made by the monastery; this may be confirmed by the fact that the *Llibre de Canalars* records a donation by her of all her alods to the abbey in 921, the single donation by Emma referred to above.¹⁴⁴ However, it seems to me doubtful that this document was genuine, as there seems to be no break in the rhythm of her acquisitions at this time. She went on buying land in many of the same places at more or less the same rate for another twenty years, anyway, so that if this donation were genuine it can hardly have resolved the issue of where her own property was to go in any final way. The lack of definition, and Emma's silent disappearance from the record seem to suggest that there was something difficult about her death; she does not seem for example to have been commemorated in the now-lost Ripoll necrology to which Bofarull often referred. If she died very suddenly, or at some distance from the nunnery, or perhaps after some incapacity such as a severe stroke,¹⁴⁵ we might understand how things were left so unresolved; but we shall never know of course. All that we can see is that the nunnery was left vulnerable.

The principal threat to Emma's house seems to have come from her own family, itself far from a united group and, as it seems from Borrell II's and Sunifred's agreement on the need for a new Abbess, capable of changing policy between generations. In this second generation of Guifré the Hairy's successors, rivalry and competition is more apparent,¹⁴⁶ and Sant Joan's privileges and property, which under Emma and Miró seem to have been

¹⁴¹ Albert, *Les Abadesses* p. 40.

¹⁴² He appears to invent a second husband for Abbess Rarló, in the form of the Sunifred who was executed for his rôle in the rebellion that killed Count Guifré of Besalú, Miró's brother. As his book usually uses no footnotes I do not know on what evidence he based this idea, just that I have not seen it and that Marqués either did not know or did not use it when he wrote his "Domna Rarlón" only a few years earlier.

¹⁴³ Condal 157, the transaction between the cousins being Condal 131.

¹⁴⁴ San Juan 127. Abadal saw a change in Emma's activity here, I do not.

¹⁴⁵ This is my preferred interpretation, as this might explain her appearance as recipient in the one donation in which she does, San Juan 202, which would thus date from the period of her incapacity.

¹⁴⁶ See n. 131 above.

commonly-agreed tools of a common policy, were now something of which the counts, perhaps more hungry for resources, only some with access to a frontier expansion zone, at any rate less apparently cooperative, became jealous. On the other hand, Emma's property may not have been clearly defined as the nunnery's in a solid enough way to contest the claims of inheritance from the most powerful men and women in the land. This was presumably at least one way in which Sunyer's preferred candidate was unsuitable, although it probably suited him quite well. It fell to Ranló to browbeat her second cousins twice removed and make good some of the losses.¹⁴⁷

Conclusions

In the records of Emma's rule, indeed, we can see a strategy, one of aggrandisement and self-protection. Emma's efforts in buying land in steadily-concentrating blocs and reinforcing her ownership through royal, episcopal and comital concessions should have left Sant Joan with a patrimony to withstand the ages, forming its own micro-county in prime territory for expansion. But we are here seeing the construction of a lordship in two senses. Emma seems to have set great store by title. We know that there were once 110 of her purchases committed to parchment, but even more than this, she set about changing the past to justify her rule, to place it in the terms of what would become a family legend of conquest. By 977 Count-Bishop Miró was writing of vanquished "Hagrites" where Guifré the Hairy had been made, in 885, to speak of purchases from free settlers; we can see here how such legends were born. A narrative had been established that explained the abbey's presence in terms of dominant lordship, and that required the supporting legend of empty wasteland preceding it. Doubtless underpinned by the abbey's omnipresence and the benefits of being 'a neighbour of Saint John', the importance is that this narrative was felt to be necessary, and that it was possible to establish. And, thanks to Bishop Miró, thanks also to Emma, but thanks not least to 493 Vallfogona landholders, it has endured as a rich vein for us to exploit today.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ On Ranló see Marqués, "Domna Ranlón".

¹⁴⁸ I must thank several people for comments on this, most notably Dr Matthew Innes and Dr. Martin Brett, but also Kirsten Procter and Kathryn Thompson. I gave a version of it before the Institute of Historical Research Earlier Middle Ages Seminar on 28th May 2003, and profited from the numerous friendly comments there, in particular those of Professors Susan Reynolds and Janet Nelson. Professor Paul Fouracre made valuable comments in the final drafting stages. All the flaws these kind people have not managed to remove, however, are my own.