

## **Power with a Name: the rulers of the March**

### **Introduction: 'public' power in late-Carolingian Catalonia**

#### **Ideology: power with a name**

In the figures of Guifré and Ansulf we have men who held what institutional historians might consider a public authority, delegated from the count as seen in his patronage which gave these men their *beneficia* or castles. Their authority has titles whose etymology is one of this delegation: the *vicarii*, local substitutes for the count, and further up, viscounts, deputies for the count; even the counts themselves derived their title from a long-notional companionship with the distant king. These are ideas of power external to the March itself, imported with the Franks, if not, as in a few cases like the vague office of *saio* or the Code-backed one of judge, with the Visigoths.<sup>1</sup> They are structures which the historian of other areas coming to Catalonia will recognise; and so did the kings, for they appeared in royal documents.<sup>2</sup> They provide a template of administration for the area.<sup>3</sup> All the same one is entitled to ask what it was that they meant, in this local environment where the king was absent.

Until 878 at least, the kings of the Franks had chosen the counts of the March, albeit from a decreasing pool of possible candidates. With the council of Troyes in 878 and Guifré the Hairy's succession with his brother Miró to the

---

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 2 above, pp. 107-113.

<sup>2</sup> E. g. Cat. Car. II ap. X.

<sup>3</sup> On the personnel of Catalan authority, see P. Bonnassie, *La Catalogne du Milieu du X<sup>e</sup> à la Fin du XI<sup>e</sup> Siècle: croissance et mutations d'une société* (Toulouse 1975, 1976), I pp. 131-313 for in-depth detail; a useful summary is to be found in R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, "La institució comtal carolíngia en la pre-Catalunya del segle IX" in *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* Vol. 1 (Barcelona 1964), pp. 29-75; repr. in *idem*, *Dels Visigots als Catalans*, ed. J. Sobrequès i Callicó, *Estudis i Documents* Vol. XIII & XIV (Barcelona 1969; 1974) Vol. I, pp. 181-226.

few counties on the March they did not already share, as reward for their part in undermining Bernard of Gothia, this ended, although respect for the king did not.<sup>4</sup> Leaving aside the tricky matter of charter dating and what it may or may not indicate about subjective loyalty,<sup>5</sup> the king remained a recourse to end deadlocks between the counts. These seem to have arisen above all else over elections to the bishopric of Girona, perhaps because unlike other bishoprics it was not clear which comital family controlled the see.<sup>6</sup> He also remained an issuer of immunities to Catalan churches, some of which appear to have been based on real possessions and presumably possessed of the practical value that only the respect of the counts could have given them.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, we find the power of the counts occasionally expressed in terms of delegation from the king: Borrell II twice claimed the disposal of lands “through the voice of my parents or by the fiscal voice that my parents obtained, just as do I obtain it, by a precept of donation of royal power”.<sup>8</sup> This phrase occurs word-for-word in two charters in the archive of the cathedral of Santa Creu de Barcelona, by different scribes, which suggests that it was a formula of Borrell’s own rather

---

<sup>4</sup> M. Aurell, “Pouvoir et parenté des comtes de la marche hispanique (801-911)” in R. Le Jan (ed.), La Royauté et les Élités dans l’Europe Carolingienne (début IX<sup>e</sup> Siècle aux Environs de 900) (Villeneuve de l’Ascq 1998), pp. 467-480 at pp. 473-476.

<sup>5</sup> J. Dufour, “Obédience respective des Carolingiens et des Capétiens (fin X<sup>e</sup> siècle—début XI<sup>e</sup> siècle)” in X. Barral i Altet, D. Iogna-Prat, A. M. Mundó, J. M. Salrach & M. Zimmermann (edd.), Catalunya i França Meridional a l’entorn de l’any mil: la Catalogne et la France méridionale autour de l’an mil. Colloque International du D. N. R. S./Generalitat de Catalunya «Hugues Capet 987-1987: la France de l’an mil», Barcelona 2-5 juliol 1987, Col·lecció Actes de Congressos 2 (Barcelona 1991), pp. 21-44, is wide-ranging but too incautious in its conclusions.

<sup>6</sup> In 891 and 892, to resolve a dispute between would-be Bishops Servedéu and Ermemir (see J. Morera i Sabater, “Un conato de secesión eclesiástica en la Marca Hispánica en el siglo IX” in Anales del Instituto de Estudios Gerundenses Vol. 15 (Girona 1962), pp. 293-315 & Robert-Henri Bautier, “La prétendue dissidence de l’épiscopat catalan et le faux concile de «Portus» de 887-890” in Bulletin Philologique et Historique (jusqu’à 1610) du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques 1961 (Paris 1963), pp. 477-498), and in 908 when King Charles the Simple nominated Guiu, a courtier of his (VL XIII ap. IX).

<sup>7</sup> Most obviously the series of precepts issued to the see of Girona (Cat. Car. II Girona II-IX & Particulars XXX), whose renewal each reign displays a repeated process of updating that evidently reflects real changes in the bishopric’s patrimony.

<sup>8</sup> Barca 160 & 168: “*per voce parentorum meorum sive per voce fischalia quod obtinuerunt parentes mei,*

than a scribal flourish, and we have already seen the very similar formulation in the sale of Sant Esteve de Granollers.<sup>9</sup> Both earlier (if textually difficult) and later declarations of this royal delegation can be found.<sup>10</sup>

These are specific claims, which appear in several cases to reference an actual charter which granted royal powers to the counts. The principal problems with them is that firstly they are artefacts only of the close of the Carolingian age, references to the actual charter beginning only with Borrell,<sup>11</sup> and secondly that they are almost certainly false. Ramon d'Abadal collected all references to its existence, found them hopelessly inconsistent and concluded that if there were anything to the claims at all perhaps the document had been a grant of waste land solely in the counties of Osona and Manresa to Guifré II

---

*sicuti et ego obtineo per preceptum donacionis regie potestatis...*".

<sup>9</sup> Condal 159: "... *per vocem preceptis regis franchorum quod fecit Charolus de omnibus fisci vel et eremis terre illorum.*" See Chapter 3 above, pp. 192-193.

<sup>10</sup> The earlier Urgell 102, where Borrell II of Urgell (**not** the Count-Marquis of Barcelona who succeeded Count Sunifred II but Sunifred's son, who pre-deceased them) claims his right "*per successore nostro Karlomagno*". Addressing this document in his "Naissance d'une principauté: Barcelone et les autres comtés catalans aux alentours de l'an mil" in Barral *et al.*, *Catalunya i França*, pp. 111-135, at p. 119 n. 113 Michel Zimmermann observes, "Ce document n'est parvenu que dans une copie du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle; nous pouvons nourrir quelques doutes légitimes concernant son authenticité", which is true although he cites it with no such reserve *ibid.* p. 113 n. 19. Nonetheless the presence of the almost unknown count, whom a later age forgot but who is clearly identified here both by his wife and the date of 942, three years before Borrell of Barcelona's comital début, suggests that this document is at root authentic (see P. de Bofarull y Mascaró, *Los Condes de Barcelona Vindicados, y Cronología y Genealogía de los Reyes de España considerados como Soberanos Independientes de su Marca*. Tomo I: abraza los siete primeros, desde el año 874 al 1035 (Barcelona 1836; 1990), pp. 64-71). Quite what the mangled Latin was meant to convey, and whether Charlemagne or Carloman son of Louis II was meant is difficult to tell. Later statements were less ambiguous but also less specific: in 1026, for example, Ermessenda, dowager countess of Barcelona, Girona and Osona justified her right to alienate fiscal land "through the royal voice which we have in the above-said properties just as did our predecessors" (Comtal 172: "*per regiam vocem quam habemus in supradictis rebus sicuti et antecessores nostri*").

<sup>11</sup> Borrell's uncle Count-Marquis Guifré II Borrell of Barcelona, Girona and Osona is made in one version of an execution of his testament to refer to a royal gift of minting rights at Vic (Vic 55, later of the two texts); however, the word "*preceptum*" is not used, the issue was clearly a disputed one and his brother and successor Count-Marquis Sunyer happily alienated such rights without any mention of such a gift (Carlemany 43). See A. M. Balaguer & M. Crusafont i Sabater, *Medieval European Coinage: with a catalogue of the coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. 6: the Iberian Peninsula*, (Cambridge forthcoming), Chapter 4 sections (e), (f), (h) & (j), or *eidem*, "De les encunyacions carolíngies a l'autonomia monetària" in F. Udina i Martorell (ed.), *Symposium Internacional sobre els Orígens de Catalunya (segles VIII-XI)* (Barcelona 1991, 1992); also published as *Memorias de le Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* Vols. 23 & 24 (Barcelona 1991 & 1992), I pp. 463-475 at pp. 470-474).

Borrell by King Charles the Simple.<sup>12</sup> From these references however was to be formed the legendary kernel of the *Gesta Comitum Barcinonensium* in which Charles the Bald granted the whole of Catalonia to Guifré the Hairy if he could but take it from the Muslims. That this legend was already in formation in Borrell's time is apparent from the bold claims of Count-Bishop Miró Bonfill in the 977 consecration act for Santa Maria de Ripoll, that his and Borrell's grandfather Guifré had expelled the 'Hagrites' and repopulated the Ripollès.<sup>13</sup> I suggest above that this was also a time that saw Borrell II making new claims about the ownership of waste land by princely right, which was couched in these terms,<sup>14</sup> and I suggest below that he was in a more or less conscious process of reshaping comital power into the context of which such statements must be fitted. His martial father had however not used them; his cousins in Besalú or occasional colleague in Empúries felt no need of them even though they were in many ways more connected to the royal court than he,<sup>15</sup> and all in

---

<sup>12</sup> Cat. Car. II Particulars XXXIV; discussion, R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals (ed.), *Catalunya Carolíngia II: els diplomes carolingis a Catalunya*, Memòries de la Secció Històrico-arqueològica 2 & 3 (Barcelona 1926-1952), 2 vols, Pt 2 p. 377. Cat. Car. II Particulars XL, which does not survive, would have been another such delegation, to the counts of Besalú, but in relation to one specific matter only.

<sup>13</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1242; its claims would be carried into the *Brevis Historia Monasterii Rivipullensis* (MH ap. CCCIV) and thence into the *Gesta* (L. Barrau Dihigo & J. Massó Torrents (edd.), *Gesta Comitum Barcinonensium: textos llatí i català*, Cròniques Catalanes 2 (Barcelona 1925), cap. 2, p. 5 in the "Redacció primitiva" and p. 25 in the "Redacció definitiva". On the formation of this legendary historiography see M. Zimmermann, "La prise de Barcelone par Al-Mansûr et la naissance de l'historiographie catalane" in *L'Historiographie en Occident du Ve au XVe siècle. Actes du Congrès de la Société des Historiens Médiévistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur*. Tours, 10-12 juin 1977, *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* Vol. 87 (Rennes 1980), pp. 191-218 at pp. 202-218; at p. 217 Zimmermann also draws this link back to Miró's grandiloquence.

<sup>14</sup> Chapter 3, pp. 192-193. His son Ramon Borrell couched it more explicitly in terms of the Visigothic Law's conception of the sovereign (Sant Cugat 464: "... *esse hec terra iuris principalis, sicut et cetera spacia heremarum terrarum...*") but was called "*princeps*" far more often than was his father: see, although with the gravest reservations about the assumption that what scribes wrote was what the counts thought, M. Zimmermann, "Catalogne et '*Regnum Francorum*': les enseignements de la titulature comtale" in Udina, *Symposium Internacional*, II pp. 209-263 at pp. 234-237.

<sup>15</sup> Sunyer's documents contain no such usages that I have found. It seems that Guifré of Besalú's trip north to get Cat. Car. II Particulars XL was the last made by a Catalan count in person: Cat. Car. II Camprodon I, probably accorded in the same audience (Abadal, *Catalunya Carolíngia II* Pt 2 pp. 391-392), has Louis IV explain: "*nostrum adiens praesentiam Wifredus comes*". Diplômes VIII, also records this voyage by

all we cannot consider such claims a real statement of the basis of comital power.

This is not to deny the counts' real power, which though it was not unchallengeable was clearly considerable, and after 878 at least beyond the control of the king. It is merely to say that the ideology of royal delegation was only a recent addition to it, albeit possibly based on memories of the real royal intervention which underlay the fact that the area now had counts where in 778 it had had *walīs*. The independence of the counts' material power does not however imply that their notional subordinates were any less independent. When the counts of Besalú-Cerdanya sent one of their number north to King Louis IV, it was because Viscount Unifred of Cerdanya had rebelled against them and they wished to claim his lands.<sup>16</sup> Given however that Unifred attended the Vall de Sant Joan hearing in 913,<sup>17</sup> and that the counts made their embassy in 951, it seems likely that they had had to wait for his death, and even then they granted part of the lands back to his descendants.<sup>18</sup> Viscount Unifred's appearance with counts in 913 is as such highly unusual; the two sorts of officer rarely appear in cooperation at other times. Unifred's contemporary Viscount Francó of Berguedà seems to have ruled there for fifty years without

---

Camprodon's founder: "*perrexit idem comes Wifredus Franciæ ante domnum Ludovicum imperatorem*", though as Louis's title suggests there are dubious aspects to this document. See R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, *Els Primers Comtes Catalans*, *Biografies Catalanes: sèrie històrica 1* (Barcelona 1958; 1980), pp. 282-284. Count Gauzfred of Empúries is called Duke, a title never used of him domestically, in a charter of King Lothar III of 981 (Cat. Car. II Particulars XLI) which also calls him the king's friend, though this charter also calls Lothar *imperator* and should perhaps be considered with more suspicion than it has been; the title of *dux* also occurs in the more trustworthy Cat. Car. II Sant Genís les Fonts III, which records that in order to request the charter Gauzfred "*pagi litteram transmiserit*".

<sup>16</sup> Abadal, *Catalunya Carolíngia II*, Pt 2 pp. 391-392. Cf. 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 p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Cat. Car. IV 119 & 120.

<sup>18</sup> In Urgell 136, the connection explained in Urgell 203.

ever appearing with any of the three counts who might have claimed rule there in his time;<sup>19</sup> Viscount Bernat of Conflent a century later likewise avoided such an appearance.<sup>20</sup> Normalistic studies claim that the office of viscount originated in the need for counts holding multiple counties to have a deputy in the areas where they could not be.<sup>21</sup> This may be doubted. Though we find four comital brothers ruling two counties as with Cerdanya-Besalú from 928 to 957,<sup>22</sup> or Marquis Sunyer apparently grooming his sons for succession in his three counties by setting them up one in each under his control,<sup>23</sup> the office of viscount does not seem to have disappeared in those areas.<sup>24</sup> That it did have some territorial circumscription seems demonstrable,<sup>25</sup> but viscounts demonstrably operated out of their areas,<sup>26</sup> so if the viscount's office did originate in a per-county vicariate for the counts, this was before very long possible to ignore or circumvent. The same normalistic presentations suggest that this was because it was useful to have a comital deputy even in the same

---

<sup>19</sup> Vic 1, 5, 7 & 138; the equivalence of the last appearance with the far earlier ones is shown by the occurrence of his wife Sesnanda with him in Vic 5, 7 & 138.

<sup>20</sup> In Consagracions 39 & 40, Cuixà 77, *MH* ap. CII (which is a forgery) & Urgell 170, 181, 182, 184, 185, 188, 190, 191, 194, 195, 199, 205, 211, 217, 228, 229, 230, 234, 242, 245, 268, 275 & 281.

<sup>21</sup> E. g. F. Caula, *El Règim Senyorial a Olot* (Olot 1935), pp. 24-25, or Abadal, "Institució comtal", pp. 64-66.

<sup>22</sup> R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, *L'Abat Oliba, Bisbe de Vic, i la seva Època*, 3rd edn. (Barcelona 1962), repr. as "L'abat Oliba i la seva època" in *idem*, *Dels Visigots als Catalans*, II pp. 141-277, at pp. 153-154 of the reprint; Salrach, "Comte Guifré", pp. 4-6.

<sup>23</sup> See below, pp. 224-225.

<sup>24</sup> Viscount Unifred of Cerdanya appears widely in a time when that area shared four counts (Carlemany 43, Cat. Car. II Particulars XL, Cat. Car. IV 119 & 120, Condes pp. 88-90, *MH* app. XCII & CXX & Urgell 136) and Viscounts Ermemir I and Guadall II of Osona operated during the lifetime of Count Ermengol of Osona (on whom see Bofarull, *Condes de Barcelona*, pp. 114-116).

<sup>25</sup> Consagracions 39 is the only instance of which I know of such specification, brought on by the need to distinguish two viscounts called Bernat (of Conflent and of Cerdanya), but it could evidently be done; other territories are however assumed from operating areas. This can lead to disagreement: while Unifred of Cerdanya is given as such by Ordeig (R. Ginebra & R. Ordeig, "Índex alfabètic de noms" in Ordeig, *Catalunya Carolíngia IV*, Pt. 3, pp. 1355-1563, at p. 1550), and Abadal and Salrach agree (see n. 16 above), Udina reckons him Viscount of Girona (F. Udina Martorell (ed.), *El Archivo Condal de Barcelona en los Siglos IX-X: estudio crítico de sus fondos*, Textos 18/Publicaciones de le Sección de Barcelona 15 (Madrid 1951), p. 366).

<sup>26</sup> For example, wherever Unifred was Viscount of (see above), it did not cover the Ripollès where he

county, which undermines the initial explanation.<sup>27</sup>

There is, basically, nothing in these men's careers to suggest that the counts controlled them. We have seen above how the first Vicar we see in Catalan territories, Fedanç of Corcó and perhaps Llaés, appears to have been far wider-spread and more independent a magnate than his title might imply, and suggested that his local standing also did not relate to any kind of comital patronage.<sup>28</sup> Similar things are shown below in the case of the Vicar Sal·la who founded Sant Benet de Bages. Like pre-existent statuses have been hypothesised above for some judges, especially for Centurion son of Centurion.<sup>29</sup> Later judges such as the famous Ponç Bonfill Marc demonstrate that some parts of the judicial apparatus at least were based on considerable legal scholarship and a relatively disinterested pursuit of equity. His learning and ubiquity however, as well as his later *floruit*, make him and one or two companions (Guifré d'Osona, Dacó the priest and judge, and Ponç's father Ervigi Marc, who was made a bishop but never had a bishopric) stand out among a raft of other less 'professional' *iudices* such as Guifré the Vicar of la Néspola, discussed below, whose status was more difficult to define but among whom Centurion or others might have comfortably fitted.<sup>30</sup>

All of this means that the clear picture of public authority prior to the

---

appears in Cat. Car. IV 119 & 120.

<sup>27</sup> See n. 21 above.

<sup>28</sup> Chapter 2, pp. 118-119.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107-111.

<sup>30</sup> On judges in Catalonia, see J. A. Bowman, *Shifting Landmarks: Property, Proof, and Dispute in Catalonia around the Year 1000*, *Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past* (Ithaca 2004), pp. 81-99, and on the learned panel particularly pp. 90-99, where such detailed studies as are also available are cited; cf. Bonnassie, *Catalogne*, I pp. 183-203. It will be clear that I have a less exalted idea of judicial status in Catalonia than do these authors, allowing for more transpyrenean-type officers alongside this élite, whose *floruerunt* suggests that their *schola* was the creation of Borrell II.

disturbances of 1020-1050 given by Bonnassie is idealised.<sup>31</sup> We first see this picture as it is already changing, and while it may be possible to state hopefully that at some point these offices must have been based in the Carolingian delegation which gave them their names, it is clear that such a point had passed by the time we see the results.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, local statuses and *potentiae* were given appropriate names from a limited vocabulary by scribes, and perhaps by others, but the structure of authority that can be spun from the names cannot be assumed. In what follows, therefore, I try and find what real connections, structures and networks permitted and informed power relations. If the count did not rule through a culturally-ingrained respect for the king whose lieutenant they were, even if Borrell found it useful to mention this where his predecessors had not, how did they manage to achieve action on the part of others?

### **Reality: power on the ground**

Did anything differentiate the power of the counts from those who simply held a lot of land and could dispose of plentiful wealth, like Adalbert in Gurb or Eldoard in Vallfogona? The most obvious thing is military leadership, and of those not directly their subordinates.<sup>33</sup> It must immediately be said that our sources are not designed to preserve this sort of action, although the will of a man who died “in the public expedition for the defence of the city of Barcelona” and other details of the events of 985 show that such concepts are

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, both *loc. cit.* and more widely; I pp. 31-313 are all about setting up this picture ready to be broken by feudalisation.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. M. Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: the middle Rhine valley 400-1000*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 4<sup>th</sup> Series 47 (Cambridge 2000), pp. 4-11.

<sup>33</sup> Abadal, “Institució comtal”, p. 35.



not mere anachronisms.<sup>34</sup> It is to other sources, and those mostly Arabic, that we have to turn for a military history of the counts of the March.<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, the Vall de Sant Joan hearing shows us that these rights were not limited to the counts for one of the things at issue in that hearing was “the lesser royal service, that is, hostings or other royal service”.<sup>36</sup> This indicates that such ‘public’ rights were alienable. Thus, when we see the counts selling or giving castles to apparently private landholders,<sup>37</sup> or disposing of fiscal lands or lands inherited from their equally comital parents with “*censi, usatici, servicia, loca, traginos, opera*”, “just as comital men have or ought to have”,<sup>38</sup> we may suspect that the people receiving these rights could indeed raise troops for their own use on a notionally ‘public’ basis.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile the count presumably did not lose his right to demand troops from these lands. Until the supposedly different world of the feudal *convenientiae* fifty years later, however, such matters are simply not documented in land transfers.<sup>40</sup>

What we may take from these fragmentary allusions is that there was at least an idea of services which it was only proper to demand if one could claim

---

<sup>34</sup> Vic 524. Cf. *MH* ap. CXXXIV which says that Count Borrell ordered the area’s population to mass inside the walls to defend the city, where they were marshalled by Viscount Udalard.

<sup>35</sup> The Arabic material summarised in D. Bramon (ed./transl.), *De quan erem o no musulmans: textos del 713 al 1000. Continuació de l’obra de J. M. Millàs i Vallicrosa* (Vic 2000).

<sup>36</sup> Cat. Car. IV 120. See J. Jarrett, “Power over Past and Future: Abbess Emma and the Nunnery of Sant Joan de les Abadesses” in *Early Medieval Europe* Vol. 12 (Oxford 2004), pp. 229-258, at pp. 246-247.

<sup>37</sup> Instances in Cat. Car. IV 1122 & Manresa 92, Condal 186 & 232, Sant Cugat 126, Urgell 207, 239 & 254 and Vic 328, 365, 528 & 537; cf. Bonnassie’s table of alienations of the fisc at *Catalogne* I pp. 145-148, and Chapter 3 above, p. 195 n. 166. Further comments on this and other aspects of Borrell’s policy of management of his patrimony may be found in Zimmermann, “Naissance d’une principauté”, pp. 123-127, with discussion of castles at pp. 126-127.

<sup>38</sup> Tavèrnoles 26: “*sicut comitales habent vel abere debent*”.

<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile Urgell 70, discussed in Chapter 1, p. 54, shows that war could also be a private business, in several senses.

<sup>40</sup> On the period in which they *are*, see A. J. Kosto, *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia: power, order and the written word, 1000-1200*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 4th Series 51 (Cambridge 2001), esp. pp. 85-97.

to be a holder of the appropriate power. How exactly this claim was constituted is hard to discern from the short terms used in the documents, which only go to show that scribes writing such documents did not feel that such things were uncommon enough to need specification. Nonetheless, that entitlement to such rights was not generalised to all landowners is obvious, and this does seem to be a marked distinction from the situation as depicted by Bonnassie and others fifty years later.<sup>41</sup> If labels of 'public' and 'private' will not help us, what else can we say about these people's power?

### The Office of Viscount

Below the counts, but equally 'public' in their title, we know of a large number of viscounts: the corpus of documents covering Osona and Manresa alone shows us fourteen. None however appears in more than eighteen documents total, and most in far fewer; several are never seen in their lifetimes.<sup>42</sup> This and the vagueness of such appearances (two viscounts in this sample, Sunifred of Girona and his father Guinguís, do not always appear with their titles; another, Adalbert Baret,<sup>43</sup> held it only temporarily as far as can be

---

<sup>41</sup> E. g. Bonnassie, *Catalogne*, II pp. 764-780.

<sup>42</sup> The Viscounts are, in order of appearance in the area, with circumscriptions where inferable: Guadamir (Cat. Car. IV 46); Ermemir (I of Osona) in Cat. Car. IV 119, 120, 155, 160, 165, 283, 294 & 296 & Condal 9 & 33; Unifred (of Cerdanya) for whom see n. 24 above; Guifré in Cat. Car. IV 438, 456, 476 & 557 & Condal 144; Guadall (of Osona) in Cat. Car. IV 601, 633, 830, 879, 1038 & 1134, Condal 128, 159 & 181, Manresa 69 & 92, Montserrat 20, 24 & 61 & Vic 182, 276, 356 & 448; Otger (of Girona) in Vic 277; Ermemir (II of Osona) in Cat. Car. IV 879, 1235, 1508 & Vic 448 & 526; Guinguís Mascaró (of Girona) in Condal 158 & 194 & Vic 466; Guitard (of Barcelona) in CDCB MMCXLIX & Gurb 1; arguably Adalbert (Baret of Barcelona) in Vic 491, 537 & 569 (see n. 43 below); Sunifred (of Girona) for whom see Chapter 3 above, p. 164 n. 35; Guillem (of Urgell) in Cat. Car. IV 1557, Condes p. 156, Urgell 232 & 233 & Vic 444; Ermengol in Urgell 232; & Ramon (I of Osona) in Manresa 277.

<sup>43</sup> Adalbert appears only as Viscount in Condal 220 & 221, which deal with land at Barcelona; however, as the titular Viscount of Barcelona at this time was Udaldar, it has been suggested that he was in fact Viscount of Girona and son of Guinguís Mascaró (J. Coll i Castanyer, "Els vescomtes de Girona" in *Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Gironins* Vol. 30 (Girona 1989), pp. 39-98, at p. 83). The filiation "*filium Barone*" in Condal 220 however contradicts both this and Udina's suggestion that he was son of Viscount Guitard of Barcelona (*Archivo Condal* p. 409; cf. Bonnassie, *Catalogne*, I p. 171 n. 151). At this time (989) Viscount Udaldar was still a captive in al-Andalus after the 985 sack of Barcelona; he returns to

told) makes it very hard to say much about the rights of succession to or nomination to the office.

In fact we do not know much about what these men did. We see them presiding over hearings; sometimes they do this with counts, sometimes without.<sup>44</sup> Sometimes hearings take place where neither count nor viscount were present but whose results still seem to have had force,<sup>45</sup> so the participation of neither was necessary. We have seen that Viscount Guadall of Osona held fiscal lands as part of a so-called benefice of which he could however freely dispose;<sup>46</sup> but did the title carry the entitlement to fiscal lands, or was the title accorded Guadall's predecessors because of their holding them already? It seems that the title could be removed, as with the case of Unifred, but royal authority was felt necessary to undertake this.<sup>47</sup> The point at which a line may be drawn therefore either between the great but non-fiscal landowner, who could nonetheless be gifted with fiscal lands and their rights by the count,<sup>48</sup> and viscounts who may also have notionally held some of their lands from him but were clearly important men in their own rights, is obscure, especially as both could seemingly claim succession to 'fiscal' lands. If a

---

view in 992 (Condal 237). Meanwhile, an Adalbert who used the surname Baret is seen in several other documents (Condal 158, 170, Vic 346 & those listed in n. 42 above) and a Viscount Baró is mentioned, deceased, in Condal 215; it seems clear that this is the father of the man in question in Condal 220. I therefore suggest that Adalbert, of vicecomital stock but apparently of a line no longer in office, was placed in temporary charge at Barcelona during Udaldar's captivity whereafter he returned to his previous rôle, whatever that may have been. On the line of the viscounts of Barcelona see F. Carreras y Candi, "Lo Montjuich de Barcelona" in Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona Vol. 8 (Barcelona 1906), pp. 200-449, although I have not been able to obtain this myself.

<sup>44</sup> E. g. Cat. Car. IV 119 & 120, a hearing before two counts and two viscounts, probably because one of the counts was defendant; cf. *MH* ap. CXXXIV, presided over by Viscount Geribert of Barcelona only.

<sup>45</sup> E. g. *MH* ap. CCIV, presided over by the famous but still neither vice- or otherwise comital Ponç Bonfill Marc, on whom see n. 30 above.

<sup>46</sup> Vic 360, discussed in Chapter 3 above, pp. 194-195.

<sup>47</sup> See n. 16 above.

<sup>48</sup> Such as Ansulf de Gurb in Cat. Car. IV 1122, albeit with the reservations expressed about that

viscount was thus indistinguishable from a vicar with a broader remit, then, we may be forgiven for thinking that the choice of title lay at some level with the observer, or indeed the bearer.

Such conclusions on the viscounts of our area, though sketchy, will have to suffice, for reasons both of space and of the ephemeral footprint they leave in our area, which has in any case been thoroughly studied by other scholars.<sup>49</sup> Viscounts on whom more patrimonial data is available, such as Bernat of Conflent, are often based in sufficiently isolated areas that they tell us little of engagement with other powers on the March.<sup>50</sup> It is therefore necessary to study those powers in their own right, and this means that we have reached the counts.

### Count-Marquis Borrell II and his Men

There is only really one count who offers us sufficient detail in the area we know best, and that is Count-Marquis Borrell II. He was ruler of all the areas we have surveyed, following his father Sunyer in Barcelona and Girona, his brother Ermengol in Osona and Manresa and his uncle Sunifred II in Urgell. To the wider scholarly community his historiographical importance is as the ruler

---

document in Chapter 3, pp. 193-194 & n. 159.

<sup>49</sup> Most recently M. Rovira, "Noves dades sobre els primers vescomtes d'Osona-Cardona" in *Ausa: patronato de estudios ausonens* Vol. 9 No. 98 (Vic 1981), pp. 249-260, & F. Rodríguez Bernal, "Els vescomtes d'Osona: dades familiars i gènesi patrimonial d'un llinatge nobiliari pels volts de l'any 1000" in I. Ollich i Castanyer (ed.), *Actes del Congrés Internacional Gerbert d'Orlhac i el seu Temps: Catalunya i Europa a la Fi del 1r Mil·lenni*, Vic-Ripoll, 10-13 de Novembre de 1999 (Vic 1999), pp. 163-173; see also A. Pladevall i Font, A. Benet i Clarà, M. Pagès i Paretas, "El marc històric" in J. Vigué (ed.), *Catalunya Romànica II: Osona I*, ed. J. Vigué (Barcelona 1984), pp. 24-45, 49-63, 68-71, 76-77 & 85-104 at pp. 32 & 35-6.

<sup>50</sup> See p. 215 & n. 20 above. Also deprived of a separate coverage by the requirements of space is the question of ecclesiastical authority, though Sant Joan in Chapter 2 and Sant Pere de Vic in Chapter 3 counterbalance this omission somewhat. A top-down counterpart to these studies based on work for this thesis formed my presentation at the International Medieval Congress, Leeds, 11th July 2005; a text of this paper, "Sales, swindles and sanctions: Bishop Sal·la of Urgell and the counts of Catalonia", is included as an appendix, pp. 290-310.

who failed to answer a Capetian call for allegiance, thus propelling Catalonia into *de iure* independence.<sup>51</sup> There is also much that could be said of his marriage links to the Languedoc, which prefigured those of later generations which would lead the counts of Barcelona to take over Provence,<sup>52</sup> or of his prolonged series of peace treaties with the Caliph of Córdoba.<sup>53</sup> Other subjects that could be addressed are the extent of his control of the Catalan Church, and whether or not he attempted to make it into a separate province with its own metropolitan see,<sup>54</sup> and the extent to which his sales of castles and fiscal lands to followers constituted a 'privatisation' of the defence network and thus an opening for feudalisation as soon as comital authority was weakened.

The project of properly studying Borrell's 190-odd documents (what would include systematic electronic analysis) would be years' study in itself.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> See Abadal, *Primers Comtes*, pp. 327-340; M. Zimmermann, "Hugues Capet et Borrell. À Propos de l'«Indépendance» de la Catalogne" in Barral *et al.*, *Catalunya i França*, pp. 59-64; & P. Freedman, "The Symbolic Implications of the Events of 985-988" in Udina, *Symposium Internacional*, I pp. 117-129. The *e silentio* weakness of this argument should not be ignored, and neither should the question of how far the other two counts of the March would have cared about anything Borrell decided. Two of Borrell's Besalú cousins have received detailed studies of their own (Salrach, "El comte Guifré" & *idem*, "El bisbe-comte Miró Bonfill i la seva obra de fundació i dotació de monestirs" in E. Fort i Cogul (ed.), *II Col·loqui d'Història del Monaquisme Català, Sant Joan de les Abadesses 1970 II*, *Scriptorium Populeti* 9 (Poblet 1974), pp. 57-81, with English summary pp. 422-423), but as yet the house of Barcelona has only been treated in aggregate; see Bofarull, *Condes*, and Abadal, *Primers Comtes*.

<sup>52</sup> On which see most compactly R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, "À propos de la «domination» de la maison comtale de Barcelone sur le midi français" in *Annales du Midi* Vol. 76 (Toulouse 1964), pp. 315-345, transl. as "La «dominació» de la casa comtal de Barcelona sobre el migdia de França" in *idem*, *Dels Visigots als Catalans* Vol. II, pp. 281-309; on Borrell's marriages specifically, see M. Aurell, *Les Noces du Comte: mariage et pouvoir en Catalogne (785-1213)* (Paris 1994), pp. 53-55.

<sup>53</sup> Abadal, *Primers Comtes*, pp. 313-326.

<sup>54</sup> See for the moment R. Martí, "Delà, Cesari i Ató, primers arquebisbes dels comptes-prínceps de Barcelona (951-953/981)" in *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensis* Vol. 67 (Tarragona 1994), pp. 369-386.

<sup>55</sup> It would obviously be helpful to have them assembled into a diplomatic collection first, such as Thomas Bisson has suggested should be compiled for various lords as an alternative to editions by ecclesiastical archive (in *Speculum* Vol. 68 (Cambridge 1993), p. 491, in a review of various recent books; full details are given in the bibliography). Lacking such, I have assembled a best-possible list of Borrell's occurrences. Some (most, I hope) of these documents are: E. Pruenca i Bayona (ed.), *Diplomatari de Santa Maria d'Amer*, ed. J. M. Marquès, *Diplomatari* 7 (Barcelona 1995), Nos. 9-11; L. G. Constans i Serrats (ed.), *Diplomatari de Banyoles*, ed. J. Fort i Olivella, Vols I-II (Banyoles 1985-1987), Nos. 35, 45, 46, 48 & 104; [Barça 30, 89, 108, 123, 144, 160, 162, 168, 172, 178, 201, 220, 237, 240 & 265]; Cardona 3, 7 & 33; Carlemany 43 & 45; Cat. Car. II Santa Cecília de Montserrat I, Sant Cugat III, Sant Pere de Rodes II & ap. XI; Cat. Car. IV 678, 680, 744<sup>bis</sup>, 758, 762, 783, 791, 864, 923, 954, 996, 1049, 1057,

Instead here I have used a database of as much of this material as could be assimilated, focussing particularly on the counties of Osona and Manresa for two reasons. Firstly there is the fact that the complete sample of this material, thanks to the efforts of Ramon Ordeig, is in print and indexed.<sup>56</sup> This means that we have a good chance of spotting men and women connected to Borrell in their local context. It might mean that compared to other as yet 'unedited' counties, the apparent focus of his activity there may be misleading;<sup>57</sup> however other factors suggest that the frontier counties were in fact his particular preoccupation.

It seems that Borrell's father, Marquis Sunyer, had it in mind in 945 that his three sons, of whom Borrell was probably the middle one, would succeed to one each of his counties of Barcelona, Girona and Osona. Ermengol, the oldest,

---

1205, 1206, 1235, 1238, 1242, 1290, 1358, 1396, 1401, 1433, 1464, 1524, 1525, 1542, 1557, 1596, 1649, 1705, 1709, 1864, IV & IX; CDCB MMCXLIX; [L. To Figueras (ed.), El Monestir de Santa Maria de Cervià i la Pagesia: una anàlisi local del canvi feudal. Diplomataris segles X-XII (Barcelona 1991) No. 1]; Condal 128, 131, 138, 139, 144, 157, 159, 166, 173, 174, 181, 186, 225 & 232; Condes pp. 98-105 & 148; Consagracions 33, 34 & 35; Girona 88, 120 & 131; Gurb 1; HGL V 132 & 146; La Grasse 68; Manresa 28, 69, 87, 92 & 277; MH app. CIX, CXXXIII, CXXXIV, CXLV & CLXXIX; Montalegre 8; Montserrat 7, 11, 14, 16, 20, 24, 26, 31, 32, 51, 54, 86, 98 & 146; J. Alturo i Peruch, L'Arxiu Antic de Santa Anna de Barcelona del 942 al 1200 (aproximació històricolinguística), Textos i Documentos 8-10, 3 vols (Barcelona 1985), No. 2; Sant Cugat 115, 125, 126, 150, 157, 190, 201, 217, 239, 241, 243, 284, 295, 302, 337, 343, 379, 382, 412, 436, 452, 453, 454, 456 & 486; Sant Llorenç 42, 110 & 138; E. Morera Llauro, Tarragona Cristiana: historia del arzobispado de Tarragona y de la territoria de su provincia (Cataluña Nueva) (Tarragona 1954-1955), 3 vols, ap. 1; Tavèrnoles 21, [23], 24, 26, [29, 35 & 38]; Urgell 127, 147, 156, 177, 192, 207, 212, 214, 231, 232, 233, 238, 239, 254, 283, 286 & 300; Vic 256, 271, 306, 318, 328, 345, 352, 365, 405, 407, 445, 446, 450, 462, 465, 517, 528, 533, 537, 603 & 624 & VL XIII ap. XX, as well as among others [Montserrat, Arxiu de l'Abadia, Perg. Sant Cugat No. 1109]. Square brackets indicate sources not included in the electronic sample.

<sup>56</sup> Ordeig, Catalunya Carolíngia IV.

<sup>57</sup> 79 occurrences of Borrell II in Osona and Manresa as against around 60 for Barcelona, 25-odd for Urgell and a mere 10 or so for Girona. The total for Osona and Manresa, thanks to the Catalunya Carolíngia, is as accurate as it can be; the others have had to be assembled from those documents known to me (listed in n. 55 above) which feature Borrell, counting only living appearances, and assigned as readily to counties as possible. Those covering lands in more than one county have been excluded from these totals. The result is partly due to the state of publication, but also to the rate of survival: note that S. Sobrequès i Vidal, S. Riera i Viader & M. Rovira i Solà (edd.), Catalunya Carolíngia V: els comtats de Girona, Besalú, Empúries i Peralada, ed. R. Ordeig i Mata, *Memòries de la Secció Històrico-Arqueològica LXI* (Barcelona 2003), 2 vols, which covers four counties ruled by three different families, including two cathedrals and innumerable monasteries, contains only 643 documents as compared to Osona-Manresa's 1893 as given in Cat. Car. IV. Borrell's profile in Girona may therefore only be accidental; I did not have access to a copy of Cat. Car. V at time of submission, however, so a per-county

is seen as Count of Osona as early as 936.<sup>58</sup> Borrell is first mentioned in 934, but at this stage was likely still a child.<sup>59</sup> The act is a concession of comital rights to the cathedral of Girona, and despite the fact that Ermengol at least was certainly born by now, Borrell is the only child of Sunyer's to be mentioned as a soul beneficiary, which may suggest that Borrell was being placed in a special relationship with Girona to groom him for succession there. This would presumably have left Miró, the youngest of the brothers, with Barcelona.

This was not how matters fell out. By 945 Ermengol was dead, and in the event Borrell and Miró succeeded as joint heirs to the Marquis's three counties.<sup>60</sup> Sunyer retired to the monastery of Notre Dame de la Grasse in that year, allegedly stricken by remorse for his misdeeds at Sant Joan and elsewhere,<sup>61</sup> and died in 947. The same year, his brother Sunifred II of Urgell, similarly deprived of his male heir (also called Borrell) by untimely death, passed on and left his county to Borrell II.<sup>62</sup> He may have also left Besalú to the heirs of his other brother, Miró II of Cerdanya, perhaps by way of equality.<sup>63</sup> Miró of Barcelona did not share his brother's dignity in Urgell however. The two counts co-operated until Miró's death in 966 which left Borrell sole ruler of

---

analysis of its documents has not been possible.

<sup>58</sup> Cat. Car. IV 420.

<sup>59</sup> Carlemany 43.

<sup>60</sup> See Bofarull, *Condes*, I pp. 114-116.

<sup>61</sup> Condal 128; there is no la Grasse document noting this conversion, and as the editors of that archive note (E. Magnou-Nortier & A. M. Magnou. (edd.), *Recueil des Chartes de l'Abbaye de la Grasse Tome I 779-1119*, Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de France: section d'histoire médiévale et de philologie, Série in 8<sup>vo</sup> 24 (Paris 1996), p. 114), Abadal records Sunyer's change of vocation without an indication of his evidence. It seems likely however that Condal 128 was Abadal's source, and it unlike much of the La Grasse material featuring Sunyer is apparently authentic.

<sup>62</sup> See Bofarull, *Condes*, I pp. 71-79; the succession made clear in Consagracions 31. Borrell II of Urgell seen in *MH* ap. CCCCIV (of which the relevant extract printed as Cat. Car. IV 414 and discussed by Bofarull, *Condes*, pp. 74-76) & Urgell 102.

<sup>63</sup> Bofarull, *Condes*, pp. 80-82; cf. Salrach, "El comte Guifré", pp. 4-6.

the four counties he had managed to inherit.<sup>64</sup>

Borrell's will does suggest that the lack of appearance in Urgell at least is unrepresentative of the interests he had inherited there, and it is significant that this document is in fact preserved at Santa Maria there,<sup>65</sup> but it seems from his brother's will that Miró had a particular focus in Barcelona.<sup>66</sup> Borrell II would have mostly been his successor there, which may explain his pattern of appearances in that county: Borrell hardly appears in Barcelona until Miró's death and where he does usually with his brother. In either case, Osona and Manresa are not only the best places to see Borrell in action but also for us to identify his men.

Nonetheless, by this necessary narrowing of the lens we must remember that important persons will be escaping from under it. To serve as one example only, the Vicar Ennegó Bonfill shows up in two documents only from the frontier pair of counties.<sup>67</sup> From these alone we would know him only as a castellan of Miralles for the Bishop of Osona, who also later bought land in Òdena from Borrell's son Ramon Borrell. In fact he appears elsewhere in at least twenty-five more documents which serve to make it clear that he was one of the foremost nobles of the Barcelona March and that he profited from an alliance with Bishop Vives of Barcelona that should be seen in the same light as that of Sendred de Gurb with Bishop Fruià of Osona, a partnership of powerful men

---

<sup>64</sup> Bofarull, *Condes*, pp. 126-130.

<sup>65</sup> Urgell 232 & 233; see C. Baraut, "La data i el lloc de la mort del Comte Borrell II de Barcelona-Urgell" in *Urgellia* Vol. 10 (Montserrat 1991), pp. 469-472. The will was available for consultation to an Urgell court in 1024 (Urgell 390).

<sup>66</sup> CDCB MMCXLIX.

<sup>67</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1823 & Vic 531.



whose interests were vital to each other.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, one Eldemar appears three times as witness in the Osona-Manresa area with Borrell II;<sup>69</sup> it is only elsewhere that we find him buying land from the count worth 250 *solidi* which rather alters our idea of his standing.<sup>70</sup> Such links and occurrences we must elsewhere be missing, and as usual our picture of the pathways to power must be qualitative rather than quantitative.

### **Borrell's company**

#### The great men

Chief of several groups detectable among Borrell's associates are the people who appear with him in many areas.<sup>71</sup> Sometimes their high status is apparent even though actual evidence of landholding is hard to discover. As an example we may note Tassio, who seems almost uniquely to have witnessed for the counts of Besalú and Cerdanya (and indeed Urgell) as well as those of Barcelona and Osona. He held land in both Besalú and Osona also, and he must have been a veritable elder of the court at his last appearance in 992.<sup>72</sup> He was unquestionably a magnate, but his eleven appearances show no clear focus of landholding and it is impossible to say whence his status may have come.<sup>73</sup>

Similarly difficult to interpret is the situation of Guillem, apparently a

---

<sup>68</sup> Ennegó's other occurrences include: Barca 178, 201 & 240, Cardona 7, Comtal 22, 23, 26, 44 & 46, Condal 192, 202, 220, 221, 229 & 232, Sant Cugat 239, 243, 298, 317, 327, 331, 337 & 343 & VL VIII ap. XXVII. For the alliance of Sendred with Fruia see Chapter 3 above, pp. 204-207.

<sup>69</sup> See Table 2 below.

<sup>70</sup> Montalegre 8.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. the classification in terms of mobility found useful in W. Davies, Small Worlds: the village community in early medieval Brittany (London 1988), pp. 105-133.

<sup>72</sup> Vic 569; it is noticeable that here Tassio breaks the grouping of witnesses sometimes observable in the charters by preceding a bishop in the list; whether this can be used to illustrate his 'venerability' given the patchy use of such groupings is however dubious. See Chapter 1 above, pp. 58-59.

client of Borrell II with vast landholdings most of which wound up with the Cathedral of Sant Pere de Vic.<sup>74</sup> Guillem seems to appear in at least three other documents, usually in connection with property in the term of Sant Llorenç in Osona. It is only the disposal of his properties to Vic that warns us that this may have been little more than coincidence, for no Sant Llorenç property is there mentioned.<sup>75</sup> His appearances there may therefore have been official, in some sense, rather than patrimonial. He may however emerge once more into the record in a hearing under Borrell's sons in 996, where one of the two Guillems attending signs as witness (the other, who seems to appear with his father, must have been too young to be the old associate of Borrell) and is identified as the brother of Gombal of Besora, another major magnate hardly seen in our Osona sample (though in this case mostly because his *floruit* was later).<sup>76</sup> This would identify Guillem as a member of a substantial family with links across several counties, but the equation is not certain, he gave no property in the Besora area to Vic, and it is quite possible that Vic's Guillem only appears in our record because of the events of 985 driving him into the arms of the Church.

#### Sal·la of Bages and family

Sal·la, the founder of Sant Benet de Bages, is perhaps the mightiest non-comital magnate visible in these documents.<sup>77</sup> He is repeatedly called Vicar in

---

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 3 above, p. 196 and n. 172.

<sup>74</sup> Guillem discussed *ibid.*, p. 159; his other likely appearances are noted in Table 2 below.

<sup>75</sup> Vic 517.

<sup>76</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1736; in our sample, Gombal of Besora appears in Cat. Car. IV 1556, 1712 & 1736, Gurb 6, *MH* app. CLXXII & CCIV and Oliba 63 & 71, as well as more widely later.

<sup>77</sup> He appears in Cat. Car. IV 214, 222, 239, 240, 261, 308, 313, 322, 339, 342, 368, 371, 377, 394, 396, perhaps 419, 423, 467, 470, 555, 570, 671, 683, 689, 711, 769, 802, 808, 811, 852, 864, 881, 884, 926, 958, 988, 995B, 996, 1014 & 1143, Condal 104, Manresa 25, 69, 74, 92, 114 & 277, Urgell 148 & Vic 174, 276, 277, 315, 357, 372 & 604, as well as perhaps others from e. g. Girona. I consider more

his fifty-plus appearances (almost all once preserved by Sant Benet de Bages, whether or not the lands in question came to them it seems),<sup>78</sup> but this title is used of him in several different areas and it is not clear of which he was Vicar. The spread of these appearances nonetheless gives some idea of his importance: he is so entitled in documents dealing with lands at Cabrera and at Castellterçol,<sup>79</sup> the former on the far eastern boundary of Osona and the latter well beyond its western one; on the Riu d'Osor and at Sevedà,<sup>80</sup> between these two terms; and at Sacalm in the south-east of Osona (see Map 4).<sup>81</sup> These are only his appearances as Vicar; other appearances spread his area of operations far wider, including *aprisiones* made at Òdena in deep-south Manresa,<sup>82</sup> Queralt even further to the west where he was called "*primus homo*",<sup>83</sup> and Maians, between Òdena and the town itself of Manresa.<sup>84</sup> Also, of course, he had extensive property around the other side of that town in the plain of Bages.<sup>85</sup> At Maians he built the castle; at Bages he built a 'tower' and founded Sant Benet.<sup>86</sup> His rôle in subjecting this relatively wild country to organisation was thus

---

appearances to be his than does A. J. Kosto in his "Laymen, Clerics and Documentary Practices in the Early Middle Ages: the example of Catalonia" in *Speculum* Vol. 80 (Cambridge MA 2005), pp. 44-74, at p. 61 n. 62, which the reader should therefore compare.

<sup>78</sup> The Sal-la 'dossier' is discussed *ibid.*, pp. 60-62.

<sup>79</sup> Cabrera: Cat. Car. IV 555. Castellterçol: Cat. Car. IV 683.

<sup>80</sup> Osor: Vic 372. Sevedà: Vic 276.

<sup>81</sup> Cat. Car. IV 808.

<sup>82</sup> Cat. Car. IV 769.

<sup>83</sup> Cat. Car. IV 864, a donation to Sal-la's son Isarn (see below) of land of which Borrell II is made to say: "*ienitor tuus primus primus [sic] apprehendit de istis temporibus*". On the rhetorical value of this language see the works cited at Chapter 2, p. 87 n. 60; also I de la Concha y Martínez, *La "Presura". La Ocupación de Tierras en los primeros siglos de la Reconquista*, Publicaciones del Instituto Nacional de Estudios Jurídicos Serie 3.<sup>a</sup>: Monografías de Derecho Español 4 (Madrid 1946), pp. 47-54 & Jarrett, "Power over Past and Future", pp. 232-233.

<sup>84</sup> Cat. Car. IV 995B & 996 & Manresa 69. On the relation between these three documents see Chapter 1 above, pp. 38-48.

<sup>85</sup> First seen there in Manresa 25; other appearances in the area aside from the foundation and endowment of Sant Benet (see n. 84 above) are Cat. Car. IV 884, 958 & 988.

<sup>86</sup> The tower is mentioned in Cat. Car. IV 1143.

considerable; he did not just found castles but also funded settlers through pacts of complantation and so on,<sup>87</sup> genuinely peopling the frontier. His importance in Manresa must have been second only to Borrell himself, if indeed it did not exceed the count's. One charter has him sign himself "Sal·la the egregious prince":<sup>88</sup> where with other dignitaries such a title would be considered a clear indication of tampering or forgery in the document,<sup>89</sup> here we might be persuaded to think it genuine.

Clearly Sal·la cannot have amassed this land and importance entirely by the grace and favour of the counts or shrewd purchasing; it was inherited wealth which allowed him to undertake such endeavours. It is noticeable that he never appears with Marquis Sunyer in our target area, with whom we might expect him to have had dealings. In Osona and Manresa it is hard to pin down where his roots may have lain, so thickly had the growth from them tendrilled across the counties. Vexingly, he never names his father, even when dealing with land which he states he had inherited from him.<sup>90</sup> We first see him however in Sacalm, which may suggest that his core inheritance lay there or perhaps across the border in Girona.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Manresa 114.

<sup>88</sup> Manresa 74: "*Sig+num Allæ, ægrægii principis...*". Other parts of the document suggest that this grandeur was at least partly the chosen style of the scribe.

<sup>89</sup> The comital family of Barcelona only started using the title *princeps* themselves under Ramon Borrell, although a few documents in others' voices use it of Borrell; see n. 14 above.

<sup>90</sup> E. g. Urgell 148. The fact that he sells to his 'brother' Viscount Isarn of Conflent but identifies the previous owner as 'my' father may perhaps suggest that he and Isarn were related through their mother but from two separate marriages (cf. Rovira, "Noves dades", pp. 153-155). Certainly his first appearance, at legal age already, in 920 is very early if he is to be considered a son of Viscount Unifred of Cerdanya, apparently only recently dead in 952 (Cat. Car. II Particulars XL).

<sup>91</sup> First appearance Cat. Car. IV 214; Sacalm remained a major focus, with Sal·la acting there also in Cat. Car. IV 239, 261, 342, 394, 467, 470, 570, 671 & 808.



this dossier of (now-lost) parchments to Sant Benet.<sup>93</sup> In two of the documents only Morgad is called Vicar, and in one more, *dominus*.<sup>94</sup> This Cabrera focus on both Morgad's and Sal·la's part is significant because it is there that we have almost our earliest appearance of a Vicar, that of Fedanç.<sup>95</sup> There is no direct evidence to associate the man who appeared at Corcó as Vicar in 906 with those who did so in nearby Cabrera later, but the coincidence is certainly suggestive. Sal·la and Morgad appear together in one of Morgad's vicarial purchases, so it seems unlikely that the two were opposed, and it would be interesting to know what the connection between them was.<sup>96</sup> A key difference between them however is that Morgad is never seen interacting with the counts.<sup>97</sup> His standing, like Fedanç's, seems to have been independent despite his apparently 'official' title. If it was to Fedanç's dignity that he had succeeded he may be best seen as a surviving and more successful version of Centurion son of Centurion,<sup>98</sup> which only makes Sal·la's apparent connection with him the more interesting.

This may suggest the sort of context in which Sal·la's position arose, but whether his roots lay in such a dynasty or not, he appears to us as a more or less independent magnate carving out his own ventures on the frontier with

---

<sup>93</sup> Cat. Car. IV 753 names Sunifred as Morgad's son as he bought land in the same area. Sunifred also likely appears in Cat. Car. IV 705, 753 & 1103; Kosto, "Laymen, Clerics, and Documentary Practices", p. 61 n. 68 does not note the last.

<sup>94</sup> Cat. Car. IV 701, 703 & 711 respectively.

<sup>95</sup> That appearance Cat. Car. IV 71; on Fedanç and Sant Joan see Chapter 2 above, pp. 117-118. Sal·la's appearances here are Cat. Car. IV 511 & 711.

<sup>96</sup> Cat. Car. IV 711.

<sup>97</sup> A man of this name sells land to Marquis Sunyer in Condal 47 (915). The land in question was however at Cervelló, in a different county many miles away, and this is thirty-seven years before the Cabrera appearances. Morgad could certainly have been in late middle-age by the time we see him, as he had a son who was a priest in 956, but this is not enough to identify him with this man who seems to be of a previous generation and different area.

<sup>98</sup> On Centurion see Chapter 2 above, pp. 107-111.

reference to, perhaps, but not necessarily the support of, Borrell II. He can hardly have been beholden to Borrell; what could the count, clearly of the next generation, have offered him that was compelling?<sup>99</sup> Their aims however at least partly coincided: both wished to see the frontier castled and under lordship, but we may wonder to whom its first obligations were in Sal·la's territory. Borrell managed, it seems, despite his initial consent, to reclaim control of the castle of Maïans after it was given to Sant Benet de Bages.<sup>100</sup> It may not be unconnected that Sal·la's grand-daughter, Filmera (named after Sal·la's wife) is at the same time first seen as abbess of the nunnery of Sant Pere de les Puelles de Barcelona, whose subsequent abbess was Borrell's daughter and which remembered its foundation as a comital one.<sup>101</sup>

Unquestionably Borrell needed Sal·la's goodwill and cooperation, and Sal·la meanwhile may have needed little from the count. The same does not seem to be true of Sal·la's children. Two men are identified in charters as sons of Sal·la, whose names are Unifred and Isarn, and his daughters also occur, including Eigó, Abbess Filmera's mother. There may also have been a third son also called Sal·la;<sup>102</sup> if this man was not a son, he was clearly connected to the family in some way and he appears contemporarily with the others (and also the Bishop of Urgell of the same name).

---

<sup>99</sup> Sal·la is first seen in 920 (Cat. Car. IV 214) and mentioned as dead in 970 (Cat. Car. 1057) after a last appearance in 967 (Manresa 74). Borrell was a child still in 934, of legal age at least in 945 but probably no sooner and died in 993 (Carlemany 43, Dotalies 57 & Urgell 233 respectively).

<sup>100</sup> See Chapter 1 above, pp. 47-48.

<sup>101</sup> She is seen as Abbess in 972 (Manresa 92); Adelaide Bonafilla, Borrell's daughter was in place by 989 (Condal 212). Given that the nunnery was sacked in 985 and its occupants carried off to al-Andalus (recounted in the abbey's house history, partly printed in *MH* ap. CXXXIII) Filmera's fate may not have been a kind one. Memories of comital foundation could of course arise very rapidly: cf. Jarrett, "Power over Past and Future".

<sup>102</sup> This leaving aside a son Sendred who predeceased Sal·la, and for whose soul Sal·la gave to Sant Pere

Of these men, Isarn appears in twenty-three charters of which six are also occurrences of Borrell II.<sup>103</sup> These documents show him holding land principally again in the area of Sacalm, but also Osor, Solterra, Vallors and of course Bages. Bages however stands out here from what is otherwise a compact and self-contained group of territories with none of his father's spread. He does appear once with the title of Vicar, in Osor in 958,<sup>104</sup> but there is no indication of any title thereafter, and what is more, in 960 he was entrusted with a castle (that of Roqueta, in Queralt) which his father had cleared from the waste, by Borrell, who calls him *fidelis*.<sup>105</sup> This was a donation, so again this may only have been a recognition of heredity, but Sal·la was not only not yet dead but present and consenting, and while his influence may have allowed his son to expect this position in charge of one of Sal·la's conquests, it is notable that in order to do so it was acceptable to all parties for Isarn to become, in some sense or other, Borrell's subordinate. Sal·la seems to have wished his sons to serve under the count.

Unifred confirms this impression. He is probably seen in seventeen charters, and in three of these uses the surname Amat.<sup>106</sup> We see him in many areas where Sal·la had held land, Orís (where he makes his sole appearance as

---

de Vic in Vic 277.

<sup>103</sup> Cat. Car. IV 677, 800, 804, 814, 828, 834, 864, 891, 926, 955, 995B, 996, 1041, 1066, 1143, 1227, 1246, 1468 & 1490, Manresa 40, 69 & 92, Urgell 147 & Vic 306, of which Cat. Car. IV 864 & 996, Manresa 69 & 92, Urgell 147 & Vic 306 with Borrell II. Compare Kosto's list in his "Laymen, Clerics and Documentary Practices", p. 61 n. 62.

<sup>104</sup> Cat. Car. IV 804.

<sup>105</sup> Cat. Car. IV 864.

<sup>106</sup> Cat. Car. IV 677, 678, 680, 864, 995B, 996, 1057, 1263 & 1283, Condal 182, Manresa 28 & 69, Sant Cugat 126 & Vic 273, 283, 292, 301, 433 & 604 as well as Montserrat, Arxiu de l'Abadia, Pergamins, Sant Benet No. 133, of which Cat. Car. IV 678, 864, 996 & 1057 & Manresa 28 & 69 with Borrell II; surname in Condal 182, Sant Cugat 126 and the Montserrat parchment. A few of these call him Guifré instead, which seems to result from scribal misreading; context allows his identification however, though other less obvious appearances under this name may have been missed.



Vicar), Buc near Bages and Bages itself.<sup>107</sup> Unlike his brother, he occurs as *domnus*, in Òdena and Orís.<sup>108</sup> Also, we see from a later charter of its subsequent holders, he seems to have held the castle of Maïans (presumably from Borrell),<sup>109</sup> and to have died in 978.<sup>110</sup> Outside Sal·la's area he also held the castle of Castellet in Barcelona from Borrell,<sup>111</sup> and it was also to Borrell that he owed the land with which we see him in Buc.

Uniquely of the children of Sal·la, we can also say something about Unifred's family. He was, if the surname is enough to identify him, married to one Riquilda with whom he had a son Guillem, who unusually appears to have adopted his father's surname. Guillem only came of age in 982, when Riquilda's brother, a priest by the name of Seniol, ceded to him a swathe of properties in Barcelona of which we otherwise have no indication in Unifred's hands.<sup>112</sup> By this time Riquilda was probably also dead, as Unifred seems to have moved on. A woman by the name of Sesnanda appears several times with him, her connection only stated once when she is made to call him her *senior*.<sup>113</sup> She appears to have been an Òdena landholder in her own right, but acquired more from Unifred in widely-scattered locations. At his death she also executed both the bequests which survive from his will. Finally, in 996 she appeared before a comital court, whose record calls her "*venerabilis femina*", and there impeached

---

<sup>107</sup> Orís: Vic 273, 283, 292, 301 & 433. Buc: Cat. Car IV 678 & Manresa 28 (both gifts of Borrell's). Bages: Cat. Car. IV 995B, 996 & 1283 & Manresa 69.

<sup>108</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1191 & Vic 433 respectively.

<sup>109</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1283.

<sup>110</sup> Parts of his will were still being carried out in 979 (Vic 455), so it seems likely that he died in 978.

<sup>111</sup> Sant Cugat 126.

<sup>112</sup> Condal 182.

<sup>113</sup> She executes the bequests in Cat. Car. IV 1283 & Vic 455, and holds land from Unifred in Cat. Car. IV 1133 & 1263 & Vic 604, in the first by purchase; Unifred is "*senior meo*" in Cat. Car. IV 1133.

one Bonfill Sendred for appropriating land in Òdena which she had acquired from “her man the late Unifred by bound testament, by a series of conditions [the formulaic phrase used for the sworn declaration of a testament] and by other scriptures”.<sup>114</sup> When they were listed these lands spanned considerably more than Òdena, also featuring estates in Relat, l’Espelt and Serràima and including a tower near Manresa. Unifred, in case we might not be certain of his identity, is said to have cleared these lands from the waste “with his father Sal·la”; Sesnanda’s title to them was vindicated by the court. Not only then do we seem to see Sesnanda, Unifred’s vassal in some sense, becoming something like his wife, but we should also be warned by this and the lands held in trust for Guillem against thinking that all of Sal·la’s patrimony is necessarily evident to us from his and his sons’ pious bequests.

With Unifred we have been luckier than with his siblings. We are able dimly to perceive motivations on his part, as well as a wide range of connections and properties, which we miss with Sal·la’s other children. All the same, all his castles except perhaps Orís appear to have been held from Borrell, not from his father. He also appears with Borrell in areas where he held no land,<sup>115</sup> and while his independent importance is clear, more so than his brother’s, his rôle as a frontier castellan seems more clearly than his father’s to have been one which he accepted from the count.

Obviously Sal·la’s main heir, or at least as substantial a one as his

---

<sup>114</sup> Vic 604: “... quem condam Unifredus vir suus dimisit ei per suum testament alligatum per seriem condicionum et per alias scripturas”.

<sup>115</sup> Cat. Car. IV 864 & 1057.

children,<sup>116</sup> was Sant Benet de Bages, into which he poured a great deal of his resources and which he subjected direct to San Pietro di Roma, though what difference this made in reality beyond a certain amount of revenue (30 *solidi* a year) to be sent thither is hard to say.<sup>117</sup> Perhaps this was a way of expressing the independence he intended the foundation to enjoy from the 'regular' authority structures of the March, which was probably why Borrell insisted on reclaiming its military responsibilities. Sant Benet preserves the bulk of the evidence of Sal·la's family, but it is clear that the connection between the house and the children was a genuinely strong one; all Sal·la's children attended the consecration of the monastery church in 978, excepting Unifred who was already ill but there, the scribe assures us, in spirit.<sup>118</sup> When Isarn died in 984 a substantial portion of his lands went thither;<sup>119</sup> and though Unifred bequeathed the castle of Maians to another couple, the reason that we know this is that they too passed it on to Sant Benet for his and their souls in 979.<sup>120</sup> Much of what Sant Benet did not get from Sal·la in the first generation thus rapidly followed in the second, shorter-lived, one. Isarn refers to a son Guadall in his will; we know nothing of this man. Likewise, after the death of Abbess Filmara the abbacy of Sant Pere de les Puelles returned to the comital family, and Unifred's

---

<sup>116</sup> I have here left aside the possible third son, Sal·la 'the younger', who appears in Sant Benet-connected transactions in Cat. Car. IV 996, 1027, 1057 & perhaps 1590, Manresa 69 & Vic 470. Of these the last (Vic 470) is the execution of Isarn's will, where if Sal·la, as executor, were Isarn's brother one would expect it be said (although cf. the sons of Dató and Jacinta in Gurb whose relation is not stated in similar circumstances in Vic 516, discussed in Chapter 2 above, pp. 178-180); it is not, however, and his exact connection to the family, though clearly present, is obscure. He is probably also to be identified with an Òdena landholder who held from the family, seen in Cat. Car. IV 1368, 1369, 1378, 1379, 1403, 1458, 1556, 1557 & 1776 & Vic 596. In Cat. Car. IV 1556 he completes the confusion by buying land from his presumed kinsman, the Bishop of Urgell of the same name.

<sup>117</sup> Cat. Car. IV 995B & 996 & Manresa 69 & 74.

<sup>118</sup> Manresa 92: "*Supradictus vero Wifredus, frater Isarni, pre nimia infirmitate non potuit adesse ad diem dedicationis presens, sed in omni obedientia predicti templi libenter adfuit...*"

<sup>119</sup> His will is Cat. Car. IV 1468.

son Guillem Amat seems to have gone to serve under Borrell II's son Ramon without the impressive property spread of his forebears. What became of Sesnanda's property is harder to guess, but it is unlikely to have contributed to the family's staying power in comital circles.

Sant Benet was Sal·la's family's success then, a permanisation of his importance which was able to preserve that status better than his fleshly heirs. They were among Borrell II's most important servants, albeit seemingly under Sal·la's tutelage, but early death prevented them securing their importance against the rising stars of Borrell's own favoured men such as Ansulf de Gurb and the Vicar Guifré of Taradell.<sup>121</sup>

### **Local notables**

The second class of person we see connected to Borrell have a narrower geographical range. Sal·la and his children did not just hold property over a wide area: they also appeared with the count in areas where they are not seen holding property. This distinguishes them from a group of people whose appearances are confined to the area in which they were themselves important. Examples of these are numerous: we may for example note one Argemir, who held the title of Vicar in the Voltregà area but appears recognisably nowhere else;<sup>122</sup> Seniol, the uncle of Unifred's son Guillem Amat, who despite his nephew's heritage appears almost only in the Mura and Avinyó areas in the south of Manresa;<sup>123</sup> Guitard in Roda de Ter;<sup>124</sup> a priest Baldemar who seems to

---

<sup>120</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1283.

<sup>121</sup> See Chapter 3 above, pp. 188-192.

<sup>122</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1524 & 1705 (perhaps) & Vic 308 & 429.

<sup>123</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1238, 1266, 1464, 1635 & 1642, Condal 182 & Vic 480.

have had a connection to Sant Benet but himself operated as land transactor only in Balsareny; or one Sunyer based in Montdó near Castelltallat.<sup>125</sup> These people usually appear with the count only once or twice; it seems that their importance or resources enabled them to transact with him, or ensured that they would attend and act as witnesses when he had business in their area, but that otherwise they did not go to court, take their place on judicial panels or generally appear in 'public'.<sup>126</sup>

### **Followers rewarded**

Another class is that of followers rewarded, people to whom the count gave or sold substantial estates who seem to have been in his service. Sometimes, such grants are made explicitly as such a reward, such as to Galí, to whom Borrell gave lands at Tuixen in Urgell "on account of your good service".<sup>127</sup> At other times, and more often, the recipient seems to have had to pay for his land. One follower who shared the name Borrell got one donation from his eponymous lord and then bought more land in a quite different area; the latter however included a castle.<sup>128</sup> We may also note one Guifré, who was Vicar of la Néspola and also a judge. On one occasion we see him, posthumously, because Sant Benet were complaining that Borrell had taken land given them at their endowment by a priest Danlà and given it to Guifré,

---

<sup>124</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1525 & Vic 308 & 495.

<sup>125</sup> Baldemar: Cat. Car. IV 995B, 996, 997, 1006 & 1057 & Manresa 69. Sunyer: Cat. Car. IV 1524 & Montserrat 89.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. the sense of 'public' specified by A. J. Kosto, "Reasons for Assembly in Catalonia and Aragón, 900-1200" in P. S. Barnwell & M. Mostert (edd.), *Political Assemblies in the Earlier Middle Ages*, Studies in the Middle Ages 7 (Turnhout 2003), pp. 133-148, at pp. 148-149, citing T. N. Bisson, "The Feudal Revolution" in *Past and Present* No. 142 (Oxford 1994), pp. 6-42 at pp. 9-12.

<sup>127</sup> Urgell 147; see Cat. Car. IV 1589<sup>bis</sup> for a similar donation by Borrell's son Ramon.

<sup>128</sup> Vic 352 & 365.

from whose widow they were now trying to reclaim it.<sup>129</sup> She refused to give it up despite the sentence against her that it rightly belonged to Sant Benet, and a subsequent hearing agreed that as the fault was not hers or her children's they ought not to be expropriated without compensation. No-one was willing to offer this, so in the end they were allowed to hold the lands for their lives under *tascha* with eventual reversion to Sant Benet.<sup>130</sup> Other less controversial cases can easily be found: we have mentioned Eldemar who was set up with Borrell's help in Terrassa,<sup>131</sup> and there was also a priest by the name of Francemir who was clearly an important man in his own right, as he is first seen founding the monastery of Sant Pere del Grau d'Escales, but who nonetheless later appears as a *fidelis* of Borrell.<sup>132</sup> Visible almost entirely through the dark glass of *regesta* of now-lost documents from the archive of Santa Maria de Ripoll is a man called Guifré whom Borrell established in Sora in the same way as he seems to have established Ansulf de Gurb in his territory.<sup>133</sup> Like Ansulf, this man was able to pass on his count-created standing to his children, though with such a common name he may also, like Ansulf, have had prior importance elsewhere which is not easily distinguishable.

Several other instances of such men should perhaps warn us against thinking such people came to the count with no prior standing. Something must have drawn them to his attention or given them the connection to him. It is

---

<sup>129</sup> Manresa 277.

<sup>130</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1864; the detailed record and apparent concern for equity are characteristic of the work of the judge Ervigi Marc, cf. n. 30 above. Note that Ervigi was well ahead of the pack as far as documentary verbosity goes, and reminds this writer that fashions can be led as well as followed. Guifré de la Néspola's likely other appearances are: Cat. Car. IV 1238, 1290, 1589<sup>bis</sup> & 1649 & Vic 577, 603 & 634.

<sup>131</sup> See p. 226 & n. 69 above.

<sup>132</sup> Consagracions 34 & 35 & Urgell 189 & 192, the first being the foundation and the last being the appearance as *fidelis*.

noticeable that in few of these cases do we see much of the man in question before his arrival in the land market, thanks to Borrell's willingness to provide. If therefore they were servants of his they did not witness charters. This may however be the purchase of the service of members of the pre-established local notability, who are only thus brought to our notice. That some of them were in fact relatively humble men raised to a private livelihood by Borrell's donations cannot be ruled out; but as so often, we cannot be sure in any individual instance that this was the case.

Certainly the arrival into this group was not the last we see of such men. Sendred de Gurb used the status his father's acquisitions from Borrell had given him to anchor himself while extracting similar concessions of importance from the cathedral of Vic.<sup>134</sup> Similar again were two more of Borrell's men, Guifré and Riculf.<sup>135</sup> These two were both separate recipients of the count's generosity in the area of la Néspola, but they frequently acted together and one instance of this was their being given in charge of the rock of Mura.<sup>136</sup> When later they had built a castle on it, their choice was to donate the whole thing to San Pietro di Roma.<sup>137</sup> Riculf is seen elsewhere getting a papal privilege of exemption for his lands,<sup>138</sup> an unparalleled thing for a layman in this era, which does suggest an unusual devotion to the Holy See, but if we consider the practical effect of this donation it must seem that it was very small. They set themselves to pay a tiny

---

<sup>133</sup> Cat. Car. IV 864, 923, 1049, 1337 & 1396.

<sup>134</sup> See Chapter 3 above, pp. 204-207.

<sup>135</sup> Guifré of la Néspola discussed above, p. 239; Riculf appears in Cat. Car. IV 1205, 1238, 1290, 1649, 1725 & 1864.

<sup>136</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1238.

<sup>137</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1290.

<sup>138</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1725.

*tascha* to Rome, but obviously the castle remained in Catalonia. Instead, what this constituted was a removal of the castle from conventional jurisdiction in the area in the same way as Sal·la had done with Sant Benet de Bages. By conceding their property to Rome they made themselves independent in the manner of a monastery with an immunity. Whether in fact Borrell respected this, it could be alleged in writing, and must have given the two men and their castle a peculiar status.

### **Lower-level comital ties**

We can get below even this level. Borrell dealt with the ruled as well as the rulers. As ever this is difficult to extract from the sources because they do not routinely interest themselves in such interactions. When we see Borrell reserving the rights of two men, one Constable and a priest Ervigi, in land at la Néspola (again), a self-contained but not huge estate which had been sold to him by three men whose names are given, we do so because the land was being given to the monastery of Sant Llorenç del Munt.<sup>139</sup> Constable and Ervigi do not appear again in our documents,<sup>140</sup> and it seems reasonable to suppose that since they were sharing this unremarkable alod they were relatively humble men maintained by Borrell's favour. One would like to know by what reason they were chosen to receive this estate from him, but as they do not reappear we cannot reconstruct this, only presume that there was one. Other instances show the count in direct negotiation with peasants and smallholders, both on lands which he himself controlled and land which he could be forced to admit he did

---

<sup>139</sup> Sant Llorenç 42.

<sup>140</sup> Ervigi is mentioned posthumously in Sant Llorenç 54.



not.

The former of these cases seems to be shown in a now-lost document preserved through two *regesta* by the Ripoll archivist Jaume d'Olzinelles. It deals with the settlements of Armàncies and Palou de Campdevàdol, Balbs, Salter, Mullol and Vidabona d'Ogassa and their *coloni*, who were in the final result of things being placed under the lordship of Santa Maria de Ripoll. Olzinelles's two accounts differ in detail. In the earlier he says that what Borrell was doing was transferring to the *coloni* there the title to the alods on the understanding that they would then donate them and themselves to Santa Maria. In the latter, more simply, he records it as a donation by Borrell of the alods to Santa Maria but one which the *coloni* subscribed. There were apparently over two hundred signatures on the document, which Olzinelles reckoned to be some fifty households but which understandably enough he did not transcribe. As a regrettable result this data was lost in the 1835 fire at the monastery, depriving us of a Santa Maria parallel to the Vall de Sant Joan.<sup>141</sup> Exactly why the peasants' consent was necessary here, unlike other transfers where no such attention was paid to the wishes of the peasants is hard to guess. Perhaps rights were being transferred which the inhabitants were likely to consider their own otherwise, or perhaps the inhabitants of these 'alods' of Borrell's held their land in a privileged way we cannot now reconstruct; in either case, Borrell was able to dictate the transfer.

The alternative is shown in a 977 hearing at Vallformosa, west of Manresa, where the inhabitants successfully invoked the thirty-year rule of the

---

<sup>141</sup> Cat. Car. IV 783.

Visigothic Law,<sup>142</sup> effectively a statute of limitations, to refuse the services Borrell claimed from them on the basis of his father's rule of the area.<sup>143</sup> Borrell had no proof of his claim, or at least his mandatory offered none, and the inhabitants kept their independence. The fact that Borrell's representative presented no proof and that the document was preserved in the comital archive may raise the question of whether this was a *Scheinprozess* intended to create a franchise; but as franchises proper were being made at this time,<sup>144</sup> there seems little reason to go to these lengths to accord one. Borrell's power, then, did not only reach down to the lowest levels of society; sometimes it went there direct, and sometimes once there it was unable to make itself felt.

### **Retainers?**

We might also expect to be to see a comital retinue, in the form of either servants or associates, whose connection to the comital household brought them a living but no lands. Possibly the lands would come later, as in the case of Galí.<sup>145</sup> Unfortunately we do not see Galí with the count at any other point. There is indeed a danger that such people simply did not witness Borrell's charters. For example a man named Oliba *venator* appears to us for the first time in a charter of Borrell's son Ermengol I, but his later appearances include as an executor of Borrell's will in Urgell, which suggests that he was a trusted man of

---

<sup>142</sup> See S. P. Scott (transl.), The Visigothic Code (Boston 1910; 1922), on-line at <http://libro.uca.edu/vcode/visigoths.htm>, last modified 16th August 2000 as of 17th July 2005, X.2.

<sup>143</sup> Condal 181.

<sup>144</sup> E. g. Cardona 7: for others see J. M. Font Rius (ed.), Cartas de Población y Franquicias de Cataluña Vol. I, Instituto de Historia «Jerónimo Zurita», Escuela de Estudios Medievales Textos 36/Publicaciones de la Sección de Barcelona 17 (Madrid 1969).

<sup>145</sup> See p. 238 above.

reasonably high status.<sup>146</sup> Perhaps his title of *venator* was an honorific, in as much as Bernard of Septimania probably did not actually make Louis the Pious's bed for him even though he was the Emperor's chamberlain, but whether Oliba was a court dignitary (this in a 'court', it should be pointed out, which is entirely undocumented until Ramon Borrell's charters start to identify the palace of Barcelona as a location for meetings<sup>147</sup>) or a mere functionary, he does not appear with Borrell until he had already fairly clearly moved on to Ermengol's household as an established notable. To Oliba the Hunter we might compare the single occurrence of Guallus "Prince of Cooks" in a rather unusual charter dealing with land in the furthest reaches of the March which Borrell, along with his obscure kinsman Gauzfred,<sup>148</sup> was entrusting to the exploitation of Sant Sadurní de Tavèrnoles.<sup>149</sup> Guallus's title has occasioned some comment as some historians have tried to read it as "Prince of the Goths".<sup>150</sup> In this furthest reach of the March, it is argued, perhaps some relic authority calling itself 'Gothic' survived, and as I have argued for something very similar in the

---

<sup>146</sup> Seen in Urgell 223, 232, 233, 249, 295 & 300. All of these but 232 & 233 are appearances with Ermengol.

<sup>147</sup> See G. Gonzalvo i Bou, "Les assemblees comtals: una aproximació historiogràfica" in Udina, *Symposium Internacional*, II pp. 9-17.

<sup>148</sup> Gauzfred, or Guifré as he sometimes appears, is variably said to have been a brother or a 'kinsman' ("*consanguineus*") of Borrell II, and in his last appearances is qualified as Count. This suggests to me that he was perhaps a son of Marquis Sunyer's second marriage, or else perhaps a bastard. He appears solely in documents dealing with what is in this case called 'the extreme ultimate edges of the marches' ("*extremis ultimas finium marchas*"), and it seems possible that he was given a proto-countship in this area to build a family territory in the wasteland. His fate is obscure. He appears in Cardona 7 (986, as Gauzfred, Count, brother of Borrell), Tavèrnoles 23 & 24 (both 973, as Guifré, untitled, kinsman of Borrell), Vic 491 (Guifré, Count, no relation specified, though it is possible that this is actually Count Guifré II of Cerdanya) & VL VIII XXVII (987, Gauzfred, no title, brother of Borrell).

<sup>149</sup> Tavèrnoles 24.

<sup>150</sup> The reading would be "*princeps cotorum*" (for "*princeps gotorum*") over "*princeps cocorum*", although another version (Condal 174) reads "*princeps coquorum*": see Udina, *Archivo Condal*, p. 347 n. 1. Such considerations of Gothic forebears seem to interest certain historians far more than they may have done those who provide the evidence; compare Udina's "El llegat i la consciència romano-gòtica. El nom d'Hispania" in *idem*, *Symposium Internacional*, II pp. 171-200, with J. Lalinde Abadía, "Godos, hispanos y hostolenses en la órbita del rey de los Francos", *ibid.*, pp. 35-74, and the onlooker's perspective provided by R. A. Fletcher, "Reconquest and Crusade in Spain c. 1050-1150" in *Transactions of the*

case of Centurion it is hard to entirely reject this idea. It does not however strike me as less unlikely, if Borrell was actually in these far-off reaches of his country at the time which the unusual presence of Gauzfred would seem to suggest, that his retinue was sufficiently thin that any man present could be asked to witness, and that the cook of the retinue, Guallus, was given a chance for flamboyance in an unconventional setting.<sup>151</sup>

Looking for Borrell's domestic staff may in any case be rather optimistic.<sup>152</sup> There are certain people who reoccur in numerous charters of his as witnesses but do not have obvious landed interests. Such a one is Trasuer, seen three times before a final appearance in 988, for lands from Osona to Urgell, with no apparent focus in his appearances.<sup>153</sup> But if he was a regular retainer of Borrell why did he not appear more frequently? Was he sufficiently humble of status that by and large there were more important men than him present with the count, or is the answer instead that he was actually tied to a location at which all these meetings were held but which is not apparent from the lands which were transacted? Likewise with an Ansulf who turns up in three charters of Borrell preserved in the Vic archive and seemingly not elsewhere with him;<sup>154</sup> there is no apparent factor common to these three documents that shows an association of place or person for him beyond that with Borrell, but there must be something that explains why Ansulf appears

---

Royal Historical Society 5th Series Vol. 37 (London 1987), pp. 31-47.

<sup>151</sup> Regrettably, as the charter exists at its earliest in a 12th-century copy, we cannot tell whether Guallus signed autograph or not. If the retinue really was stretched this thin, however, one has to ask what the two bishops were doing this far out on the March unattended.

<sup>152</sup> His son Ramon Borrell offers us better chances: note the appearances in Comtal 46 & Sant Cugat 343 of one Queruç *procurator*, along with Recosind *custos comitis* in the former. I have not conducted a full analysis of Ramon Borrell's many charters and there may be more such occurrences to be found.

<sup>153</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1589<sup>bis</sup>, Condal 128 & Vic 328 & 537.

here and not elsewhere which we cannot recover.

A more certain example may be Radulf, seen in six comital charters between 977 and 990.<sup>155</sup> Again however problems arise with claiming that he was a household retainer and no more. His appearance rate is still hardly frantic. His single non-comital appearance, moreover, witnessing a sale of land at Òdena,<sup>156</sup> is two days before a sale of other land there by Borrell and his son Ramon,<sup>157</sup> so it may be that Radulf was an Òdena man and that his comital witnessing appearances are somehow related to the place rather than the counts. On the other hand, a transaction between these two great men may well have taken place in a comital assembly and Radulf does not obviously appear in other Òdena transactions which do not involve the count. Perhaps we have a genuine retainer here or perhaps it is only that we do not know what he really did when he was not with the count.

Similar if less tractable problems arise with the frequent occurrences of men called Sunifred with the count; if they were all the same man, this might be a retainer but he would be one with identifiable landed interests and a vicarial title; once all these are by one logic or another separated, the number of

---

<sup>154</sup> Vic 306, 328 & 352.

<sup>155</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1238, 1525, 1526, 1556, 1557 & IX, Condal 181 & Montserrat 86. Cat. Car. IV 1526 is an act of Count Oliba Cabreta of Besalú, but seems to have been confected with a witness list from a charter of Borrell's that we no longer have; among its witnesses, Oliba and Radulf are probably, and the judges Auruç, Bonuci and Ervigi Marc are certainly men who otherwise appear with Borrell while no such men appear with Oliba Cabreta (the witness Oliba otherwise seen in Cat. Car. IV 1635 & 1780<sup>bis</sup>, Condal 181, Montserrat 24 & Vic 457, 465, 537, 539 & 604; Auruç in Comtal 46, Condal 207, 211, 218, 227, 228 & 237, Sant Cugat 126, 243 & 337 & Urgell 278; Bonuci in VL XIII ap. XX; and Ervigi Marc in Cat. Car. IV 1122, Comtal 46, Condal 214 & 215, *MH* app. CXXXIX & CLVII, Manresa 277, Oliba 23, Sant Llorenç 110, Urgell 278 & Vic 604 among many others later). On the other hand there is a witness called Florenci who is only paralleled in one of Oliba's charters (seen also in Condal 157) but his connection may be with Sant Joan de Ripoll, featured there and the beneficiaries here, in a document which concerns Mogrony, an area which occasioned several other documentary alterations in the Sant Joan archive (see Jarrett, "Power over Past and Future", pp. 240-241).

<sup>156</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1556.

appearances remaining does not impress. There must have been a man by this name who accompanied Borrell at some assemblies; but which, why and whence he came are insoluble.<sup>158</sup>

It is fairly clear then that Borrell did not have a retinue as such, if by retinue we mean a set of people who consistently accompanied him on his business. Even from our partial sample such a conclusion is readily justifiable. Table 2 presents the occurrences of the men who appear as witnesses to Borrell's Osona and Manresa transactions three or more times (excepting where those occurrences are the three interconnected acts of endowment of Sant Benet de Bages). From even this partial sample, limited to charters featuring these persons, it is clear that there is no-one among Borrell's Osona and Manresa contacts who could be said to be appear with him continuously for any length of time. The one case where one might argue this, Miró in the early 960s, is easily reduced by bringing in other evidence; he does not attest the sale of Sant Julià de Sassorba to Ansulf de Gurb in 962.<sup>159</sup> One might argue that documents with such long periods between them would have little hope of showing a continuous retinue, but an examination of the two cases above where pairs of charters are from the same month (February 976 and July 987) reveals that only

---

<sup>157</sup> Cat. Car. IV 1557.

<sup>158</sup> Sunifreds appear with Borrell II in Cardona 7, Cat. Car. IV 1235, 1401, 1433, 1524, 1557 & 1670, Condal 214 & 225, HGL V 146, Sant Cugat 239 & 337 & Vic 465, 500, 533, 536, 537, 543 & 603. Of these Cat. Car. IV 1235 & 1670 could both be a Taradell man not otherwise seen. There is a man of this name seen at Òdena in Cat. Car. IV 1458 who could be the man seen there in Cat. Car. IV 1557, which might mean that this person should also be considered a local notable seen just once with the count. Likewise, a Sunifred who appears at Montdó in Cat. Car. IV 1594 & 1839 & Montserrat 53 might perhaps be the man who appears there with Borrell in Cat. Car. IV 1524. Cat. Car. IV 1401's Sunifred is a Vicar, after whom a tower in Vilomara (near Manresa) had been named. With a name so common, each individual occurrence might also be such a local notable appearing. There clearly was at least one Sunifred who appeared repeatedly with Borrell, but the fact that there are two together in Vic 533 & 537, joined in the former by a priest of the same name, warns us that taking the simplest route and identifying them all as the same man is almost bound to be wrong.

once, in the later pair, does one of our repeated attesters, Sunifred, turn up in both, and that in fact he is the only witness who is shared in either of the pairs.<sup>160</sup> This is not a steady house-troop of loyal followers. Or, if it is, it is one of men who did not sign documents, except in unusual circumstances, until they became landowners. Here we can do no more than open the possibilities. Even this however tells us something about how Borrell did or did not marshal the resources of cooperation which he had available.

### Borrell's use of men

We have seen the variety of standings displayed by Borrell's followers. While we can never be sure that we see them boxing their full weight, it does nonetheless seem that in each class of person we have separated, there were substantial differences between the richest and poorest: Sal·la's wealth was apparently unparalleled by that of Tassió or Guillem, or Ansulf de Gurb's by Guifré of Sora's. The classes we have drawn have proved to usefully categorise Borrell's connections, but individuals could move from one class to another. Ansulf seems to have jumped from a local notable to a supra-local one by means of comital patronage. One certain case of this sort of promotion is Lleopard:<sup>161</sup> his initial appearances are with the family of Sal·la, but after their rapid and serial demise he seems to have been taken on by Borrell, and as a result probably became a Vicar. The change of masters profited him well, and the choice of patron is not unlike that we saw Guimarà make in Vallfogona once

---

<sup>159</sup> Condal 159.

<sup>160</sup> The problems with identifying witnesses of this name have been mentioned (see n. 158 above) but as here Vic 533 features a total of three men so named, it is fairly probable that he in Cat. Car. IV 1401 is one of them.

<sup>161</sup> Chapter 3 above, pp. 195-196.

he had got on Abbess Emma's bad side.<sup>162</sup> These may then be common patterns which could profitably be used as models.

As for Borrell himself, we can see development in his political practice over time. The beginning of his rule saw him sharing his importance in the frontier area not only with his brother but also the pre-existent and entrenched interests of Sal·la. There may have been other likewise independent interests in various places in Borrell's territories. It is not that Sal·la was evidently hostile to Borrell as far as we can tell, indeed we have adduced above several instances of cooperation and apparent negotiation, but that while Sal·la lived Borrell's frontier policies and actions must always have been decided with reference to him. Such men were not easily biddable. Borrell, moreover, had come to power young, much younger than had his father Sunyer, who had also profited from Andalusí politics to turn a military career as cadet count into a sustained programme of conquest. Sunyer would have thus been able to reward loyal companions while the pickings were easy. These circumstances ceased soon after Borrell's accession, with the return of central caliphal control to the March, and a succession of peace treaties followed which probably saw Borrell and Miró forced to concede their father's greatest gains.<sup>163</sup>

In these circumstances it took time and, arguably, the death of other possible patrons before Borrell was able to deploy patronage in a mature fashion which enabled him to raise his own favoured men like Ansulf or the pro-Roman pairing of Guifré de la Néspola and Riculf alongside the scions of

---

<sup>162</sup> Chapter 2 above, pp. 126-131.

<sup>163</sup> On this see Abadal, *Primers Comtes*, pp. 314-326; Benet, "Castells", pp. 386-388; & Bramon, *De quan erem on no musulmans*, pp. 284-286 & 306-307 & n. 169 for the conquests of Sunyer & pp. 316-317 & n.



the old guard. By the 970s he was in control, though an inability to secure his will over Church appointments and the damage that his reputation must have suffered in the wake of the 985 sack of Barcelona remind us that it was not total.<sup>164</sup> This control was exercised in various different ways. Sal·la had run the frontier for him; Borrell had new men he trusted to do this, and some of these castellans such as Ennegó Bonfill or Sendred de Gurb were mighty people, if not in the way that Sal·la had been. He also had much lesser men who looked to him as lord, and in the cases we get to see generally profited from so doing. Even peasants could come to Borrell and hope for advantage however, and moreover seek it from him at law with hope of success. In each area the route that Borrell's influence took to the ground and the dues he might expect must have differed, and differed most significantly according to who it was in the area to whom he looked to obtain or use them, and what their standing and relations with their neighbours was.<sup>165</sup> The count's job then was at least partly to keep track of and make the best use of a hugely varied structure across many

---

220 for their restitution to the Caliphate.

<sup>164</sup> On Church appointments see Abadal, *Primers Comtes*, pp. 306-311 & Martí, "Delà, Cesari i Ató". On the sack, see most especially M. Zimmermann, "La prise de Barcelone par Al-Mansûr et la naissance de l'historiographie catalane" in *L'Historiographie en Occident du Ve au XVe siècle. Actes du Congrès de la Société des Historiens Médiévistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur. Tours, 10-12 juin 1977, Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* Vol. 87 (Rennes 1980), pp. 191-218, and n. 34 above.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. S. Castellanos & I. Martín Viso, "The Local Articulation of Central Power in the North of the Iberian Peninsula (500-1000)" in *Early Medieval Europe* Vol. 13 (Oxford 2005), pp. 1-41 at pp. 35-36 & 39-40.

counties and territories, and this section has aimed to show what the evidence will tell us of how it was done.

	Trasuer	Guifré	Godmar	Miró	Sunifred	Gauzfred	Eldemar	Bonfill	Guillem	Ermemir	Radulf	Dacó	Sendred	Sunyer
Cat. Car. IV 798, Nov 957	X													
Vic 328, May 960	X													
Poblet 1, Jul 960		X	X	X										
Vic 352, Mar 963				X										
Vic 365, Dec 964				X	X									
Cat. Car. IV 1057, Feb 970			X				X							
Sant Llorenç 42, Jun 973				X										
Condal 174, Jul 973		X												
Cat. Car. IV 1205, Feb. 976							X	X						
Cat. Car. IV 1206, Feb 976									X	X				
Gurb 1, Jul 976			X	X			X		X					
Condal 181, Mar 977		X	X											
Cat. Car. IV 1235, Aug 977		X			X									
Cat. Car. IV 1238, Aug 977										X	X			
Vic 465, Apr 980		X			X	X			X			X		
Cat. Car. IV 1358, Dec 981								X						

	Trasuer	Guifré	Godmar	Miró	Sunifred	Gauzfred	Eldemar	Bonfill	Guillem	Ermemir	Radulf	Dacó	Sendred	Sunyer
Cat. Car. IV 1401, Oct 982					X				X					
Cat. Car. IV 1433, May 983					X									
Cat. Car. IV 1464, Apr 984									X				X	
Vic 517, Sep 985												X		X
Vic 528, Jan 987						X								
Vic 533, Jul 987					X							X		
Cat. Car. IV 1524, Jul 987					X									X
Cat. Car. IV 1525, Nov 987								X			X			
Vic 537, Sep 988	X					X		X					X	
Cat. Car. IV 1557, May 989		X		X	X		X			X				
Cat. Car. IV IX, Mar 990											X	X		
Condal 225, Jul 990					X			X						X
Cat. Car. IV 1586, Nov 990											X			
Cat. Car. IV 1649, Mar 993		X					X							

Table 2. Witnesses to Borrell II's charters appearing three or more times

