

Conclusions and Answers

Change in late-Carolingian Catalonia

From Gurb in the 880s and Sant Joan de Ripoll in the 900s to the men who saw Borrell II's will carried out in 993 and went on to attend the gatherings of his sons, then, we have ranged through the evidence of Carolingian Catalonia's frontier counties and heard dozens of the micro-histories I heralded in the introduction, heard the voices of scribes and the instigators of what they wrote as recorded in the documents they left behind them, and most of all seen the pervasiveness of the connections this study set out to examine. Whether the connections are of the most humble, the peasants associated in the Vall de Sant Joan hearing or those who took Borrell II to court at Vallformosa, or of the count's men either with him or with each other, such as Guifré de la Néspola and his Roman devotee colleague Riculf, or from one level to another, it is clear both that the methods employed can expose such connections, and that they have an explanatory value which allows new depth to be perceived in the social relations of the area.¹

In the combination of personal histories and the exposure of such connections, we can trace the careers of those who held power, whether notables such as Eldoard in Vallfogona, or Adalbert in Gurb, or lords such as the vicars, viscounts and counts, or those of equal status without the name. As long as we remember that we see this secular world through a cat's cradle of

¹ I have not studied the connections between the counts themselves, but there is much that could be said particularly with regard to what seems to have been an uneasy relationship between Borrell II and Count Gauzfred of Empúries. This would however require a sample of documents from across all Catalonia.

strings of documents all of whose ends are held by the Church, and that this is the only reason we can make these observations, we can pursue a number of these laymen through it. A host of rarely-glimpsed dignitaries such as Viscount Daniel in Urgell or Count Gauzfred the kinsman of Borrell remind us that our sample's population's contact with the Church may not have been typical,² but we can hope that balance is brought to our views by those whose preservation is not down to their own such contact but that of others.

Among all these careers we see rises, like that of the vicars of Gurb or any of the smaller (or less visible) notables Borrell's patronage brought into a land-based record. We also see falls, albeit over generations as with the family of Sal·la rather than over the course of individual careers. The reason for this latter discrepancy is obvious; if we detect a rise in influence by an increased appearance in documentation, we are not however able to detect falls by a corresponding decrease which might have many meanings. Only when the next generation appear frequently but deflated as with Guillem Amat do we have a comparison which may be more safely relied on.³

Beyond the changes for individuals, which are illustrative but do not lend themselves to synthesis, it is necessary to ask if we see here changes in the structure and operation of lordship. This is hard to answer. I know of 190 documents mentioning Borrell II, 67 for his father Sunyer; 44 for Count-Marquis Oliba Cabreta of Besalú, 26 for his father Miró of Cerdanya; 44 for Sunyer's and

² Viscount Daniel is seen only after his death as the previous holder of an estate in a single charter (Urgell 250); Baraut sees him as a Viscount of Urgell and grandfather of Viscount Guillem of Urgell ("Els documents, dels segles IX i X, conservats a l'Arxiu Capitular de la Seu d'Urgell" in *Urgellia* Vol. 2 (Montserrat 1979), pp. 78-143 at p. 15); the former seems a permissible assumption, the latter is not evidenced at all. On Count Gauzfred, see Chapter 4 above, pp. 244 n. 148.

³ See *ibid.*, p. 234.

Miró's father Guifré the Hairy, mostly posthumous mentions, and no certain ones at all for his father.⁴ We are in a century in which the area's documentary preservation effectively began, and that century ends with an increasing eagerness to record, a seemingly growing use of the written law and a massively weighted body of evidence which favours our chances of observing any given phenomenon to the later tenth century.⁵

We have also focused on an area which was effectively returning to the wider world after some considerable time on its own; of course we must expect to see change here. In Gurb we have seen an apparent pioneer landscape of small-scale independent exploitation, not unlike that also perceived in *Arigo* in Vallfogona, become over a century a castle-dominated centre of a lordship with numerous wealthy proprietors of farflung interests maintaining a presence

⁴ For Borrell see *ibid.*, pp. 222-223 n. 55. I have not done the same complete search for Sunyer but he appears in Barca 30, Carlemany 43 & 45, Cat. Car. II Sant Pere de Rodes II & Sant Cugat del Vallès III, Cat. Car. IV 119, 120, 155, 283, 284, 293, 390, 419, 420, 440, 464, 528, 535, 539, 633, 748, 791, 923, 1242, 1358 & X, Comtal 154, Condal 9, 33, 47, 49, 70, 89, 90, 93, 99, 100, 104, 106, 121, 128, 130, 131 & 181, Condes pp. 69 & 133, HGL II 147, HGL V 80 & 94, La Grasse 67 & 68, *MH* ap. CCCCIV, Oliba 71, M. Rovira, "Un bisbe d'Urgell del segle X: Radulf" in *Urgellia* Vol. 3 (Montserrat 1980), pp. 167-184, ap. 18, Sant Cugat 343 & Vic 55, 114, 163, 166, 171, 180, 182, 194, 365 & 445. Oliba Cabreta appears in at least: R. Ordeig i Mata, "Ató, bisbe i arquebisbe de Vic (957-971), antic arxiprest-ardiaca de Girona" in *Studia Vicensia* Vol. 1 (Vic 1989), pp. 61-97, ap. 26; R. Ordeig i Mata, "Dades referents al comte Oliba Cabreta" in *Estudis d'història oferts a Ramon d'Abadal i de Vinyals en el centenari del seu naixement, Estudis Universitaris Catalans* Vol. 30 (Barcelona 1994), pp. 25-40, app. 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6; Cat. Car. II Particular XL & Cat. Car. IV 446, 1026, 1195, 1331 & 1526; Comtal 121; Condal 144, 162, 163, 165 & C; Condes pp. 98-105; Cuixà 109; Diplômes VIII; Dotalies 91 & 101; F. Monsalvatje y Fossas, *El Obispado d'Elna*, Noticias Históricas vols XXI-XXIV (Olot 1911-1915), 4 vols, I pp. 138-40; HGL V 65, 134 & 144; R. Beer, *Los Manuscritos del Monasterio de Santa María de Ripoll* (Barcelona 1910), pp. 355-356; *MH* ap. CXXII, CXXIV, CXXXV, CXXXVIII & CXXXIX; Oliba 1 & 7; Papsturkunden 193; San Juan 251 & 285; Sant Joan 8; Urgcon 36, 39, 40 & 41; Urgell 136 & 149; perhaps Vic 407; VL VIII app. XIV, XXII & XXVI & VL XIII ap. XVI, as well as J. Roc d'Olzinelles, "Índice de los Donaciones de los Condes y Reyes, Bulas Pontificas, etc., existentes en el archivo de Ripoll", Barcelona BC MS 430 fo. 14v. For Miró of Cerdanya's appearances see Chapter 2 above, p. 120 n. 171. For Guifré the Hairy see F. Valls i Taberner, "Estudis sobre els documents del Comte Guifré I de Barcelona" in *Homenatge a Antoni Rubió i Lluch: miscel·lània d'estudis literaris, històrics i lingüístics* (Barcelona 1936), 3 vols, I pp. 11-31; repr. in *idem, Obras Selectas*, ed. J. E. Martínez Ferrando (Barcelona 1961), Vol. IV pp. 47-70. On Guifré's parentage see R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, *Els Temps i el Regiment del Comte Guifré el Pilós* (Barcelona 1989), pp. 39-50.

⁵ Of the 651 documents in E. Junyent i Subira (ed.), *El Diplomatarium de la Catedral de Vic, segles IX i X*, ed. R. Ordeig i Mata (Vic 1980-1996), 5 fascs, for example, 29 are from 882-900; 85 from 900-924; 149 from 925-949; 169 from 950-974; and 217 from 975-1000 (Vic 1-651). Similar tallies in longer-established Urgell give figures from the cathedral archive of 46 (from 823-900), 39, 33, 46 & 97

there. Castles appear, but so do churches, and so do roads, linking the power centres that had gone before to the new ones belonging to the counts and their men and to the opportunities these centres offered.⁶ This was a frontier under development and therefore subject to continual change and the thickening of wealth and landed interests as its ability to support them grew.

This expansion was as we saw in Gurb carried out on several levels. Waste land could be occupied by relatively humble pioneers and turned rapidly to profitable account. Many of these people claimed tenure by *aprisio*, but this does not make them royally-backed independents with a legally-defensible immunity,⁷ even if relics of such rights seem to lie behind such expressions as “first men on the land under the rule of the Franks”;⁸ like the Visigothic thirty-year rule (which was **not** part of the *aprisio* legislation),⁹ this was a formulaic claim with legal origins which might help justify tenure.¹⁰ Its remaining power is evident in what seem to have been Borrell II’s attempt to lay claim to such

respectively (Urgell 2-261).

⁶ A. Benet i Clarà, “Castells i llinies de reconquesta” 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. 265-391; O. Engels, “Der Weltklerus und das Pfarrnetz”, *ibid.*, I pp. 477-490; J. Bolòs i Masclans, “Aportacions al coneixement de les vies de comunicació”, *ibid.*, I pp. 409-436. Cf. M. Zimmermann, “La rôle de la frontière dans la formation de Catalogne (IX-XII^{ème} siècle)” in Las Sociedades de Frontera en la España Medieval. Aragón en la Edad Media: sesiones de trabajo. II seminario de historia medieval (Zaragoza 1993), pp. 7-29. Cf. Introduction above, p. 14 & n. 13.

⁷ As one might suppose from studies such as C. J. Chandler, “Between Court and Counts: Carolingian Catalonia and the *aprisio* grant, 778-897” in Early Medieval Europe Vol. 11 (Oxford 2002), pp. 19-44, which is predominantly based on external, royal, normative material. Even this material however makes it clear that *aprisio* was just a word used by the settlers who had come to court to describe their assarts (Cat. Car. II ap. III: “... *sua porcione, quam vocant adprisionem...*”; in Cat. Car. II Santa Grata o Senterada I Louis the Pious is made to use the verb “*adprisere*”).

⁸ Condal 116; for more discussion and references see Chapter 2 above, p. 86.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 86 n. 56.

¹⁰ In this respect its use was much like the Church’s more explicit citation of the *Forum Iudicum*: 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. 33-47. Bowman does not however recognise such legal arguments behind lay use of such ideas (*ibid.*, pp. 47-51). The norms he opposes here were not in fact conflictual, only differentiated by use of written sources by one side.

vacant royal possession in Osona on the basis of his ancestors' supposed royal precept,¹¹ and his use of related terms like *perprisio* to place himself in charge of this process of settlement.¹² The instigation of settlement by the powerful itself was however nothing new, as we have seen with Sant Joan de Ripoll and similar efforts in Gurb on the parts of not only Sant Pere de Vic but the Viscounts of Osona.¹³ What must not be forgotten, however, is that all these supports for a pioneer venture, the legal self-defence of an *aprisio* or *ruptura* claim or the material backing of a powerful patron, were available not just to new settlers but those who were already there who saw opportunity in the extension of more centralised rule to these frontier areas. In Gurb and in Vallfogona, we have seen that both sorts of settler were present in these zones where institutional rule was slowly being solidified.

Changes in this zone were not a result of an impersonal social dynamic. Castellans may seem to sprout from everywhere in the close of the tenth century, but this is not entirely either due to the boom in preserved documents, or to an increase in actual fortifications as land came under development; Borrell was fuelling this expansion by setting people up to build or operate castles.¹⁴ I have suggested above that much of his career could be seen as an effort to hold onto control until not only his brother but the Vicar Sal·la had

¹¹ Condal 159: see Chapter 3 above, pp. 192-193.

¹² For example Condal 174, which gives a thorough breakdown of the processes of such settlement as driven by an institution, in this case the monastery of Sant Sadurní de Tavèrnoles: "*ut faciant per prisiones ubicumque voluerint nec potuerint longe lateque per universorum loca, hermis solitudinis edificent ecclesias, faciant munificenciis in congruis locis et obducant laboratores qui ipsas heremitates reducant ad culturam et in ipsis munificenciis habitent et adquirant ibi et emant de ipsis possessoribus quantum illis Deus dederit et possibile eis fuerit*".

¹³ Allow me to note again the suggestion of Gaspar Feliu i Montfort that such organised settlement may have been the default: see Chapter 3 above, p. 166 n. 43.

¹⁴ Zimmermann, "La rôle de la frontière", pp. 17-18.

died, giving him room to breathe. Within forty years of his death, albeit out of our period, a similarly mighty notable, Mir Geribert, was almost similarly invulnerable to comital pressure during the long-lasting rebellion of the Catalan magnates which Bonnassie sees as the opening floodgate of Catalan feudalisation.¹⁵ If lordship had for a while between times been structured in such a way as to prevent such huge accumulations of power arising, we should not ignore Borrell's rôle in this. He and the other lords, lay and spiritual, affected their social environment, and below them lesser persons were affecting theirs in lesser ways. There was agency inherent in the social situation of the March, even if not necessarily dominant.

Borrell and Sal·la were perhaps creatures of their age seeing opportunities their predecessors had not had, but the situations were not all new. To the Vicar Fedanç *c.* 900, contrast the Vicar Sendred de Gurb *c.* 1000.¹⁶ Nonetheless the newness is not just in the record; that there was an increased record at all bespeaks new approaches to these old situations which required it. Some of the changes which appear to be personal decisions, such as the occasional emphasis on royal delegation in Borrell II's charters, remained in effect after their innovators had died; Ramon Borrell and his wife Ermessenda used such language often.¹⁷ What had been new responses to what may not have been new situations were found effective and repeated, recorded and eventually formalised. If the only macro-scale change here is the increase in

¹⁵ P. Bonnassie, La Catalogne du Milieu du X^e à la Fin du XI^e Siècle: croissance et mutations d'une société (Toulouse 1975-1976), 2 vols, II pp. 625-680; S. Sobrequés i Vidal, Els Grans Comtes de Barcelona, Biografies Catalanes: sèrie històrica 2 (Barcelona 1961), pp. 57-73. Cf. A. J. Kostó, 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), pp. 9-13.

¹⁶ See Chapter 3 above, pp. 204-207.

documentation, nevertheless we see policies and actions in its wake which are novel because of their reference to and use of this fact.

On the other hand, of course, Boso in Taradell in 898 knew of a formalised procedure for the replacement of his written title deeds, and the first charters that we have from Catalonia are not stumbling efforts by those unfamiliar with documentary forms. Deciding the exact extent to which change is a true or false impression in our documents will always be a subjective choice, but in a frontier area where change on the ground may be expected perhaps slightly less so. It is this of course which has made Bonnassie's fortress for theories of feudalisation so hard to assault in Catalonia; the open frontier and its opportunities balance the trend towards subjection in the older territories in the equilibrium described in the Introduction. In this documentary landscape where any given social phenomenon could be ancient and native, the 'Gothic relics' we have noted, ancient but imported from settlers' homelands, or lastly novel and spontaneous, but all these possibilities be indistinguishable in the documents it is easy to find either a picture of continual change or a picture of apparent stasis of which more and more becomes visible.¹⁸

Knowing what was to come—Catalonia's increasingly international face, the collapse of Muslim Spain and the reconquest and economic boom¹⁹—it is easy to look back into this period and see its precursors, but though c. 910 we

¹⁷ See Chapter 4 above, pp. 211-212.

¹⁸ For an argument that the documents' reflection of change is authentic, see P. Bonnassie, "Nouveautés linguistiques et mutations économique-sociales dans la Catalogne des IX^e-XI^e siècles" in M. Banniard (ed.), Langages et Peuples d'Europe: cristallisation des identités romanes et germanique. Colloque International organisé par le Centre d'Art et Civilisation Médiévale de Conques et l'Université de Toulouse-le-Mirail (Toulouse-Conques, juillet 1997), Méridiennes 5 (Toulouse 2002), pp. 47-66.

¹⁹ Bonnassie, Catalogne, I pp. 321-514.

have mighty castellans, elaborate documentary procedures, semi-independent frontier magnates and booty taken from war with the Muslims, just as *c.* 1010,²⁰ does not mean that nothing had changed in between these points. Comital control had been tightened over castles, and they had been delegated to lesser persons than before and to churchmen whose appointment the counts could influence; this control would again loosen after 1020.²¹ The elaborate documentary procedures backed by the Visigothic Code recorded in 898 Taradell had not ensured the sort of respect for record or consistent use of writing that gave us the bulging archives of a century later; not least due to the learning and training of judges like Ervigi Marc, perhaps encouraged by Borrell II and his sons, after that point it seems that it would. The semi-independent frontier magnates had one way or another been reduced, or replaced; new ones would arise when this policy was not pursued with such vigour. The Muslims had returned in force and reclaimed the frontier gains of Marquis Sunyer; but by 1010 Córdoba itself lay briefly open to raiding.

All these local changes thus took place in a context of larger changes, agricultural growth, expanding international contacts, the disappearance of Frankish royal power and the slow, if perhaps not apparent to Borrell, disintegration of the Caliphate of Córdoba. When local changes were durable in this context, they assume a significance for the historian which those which were not do not. Ranló and Fredeburga's re-establishment of Sant Joan or Adalbert's property accumulation did not endure into long-term importance.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 340-359.

²¹ Cf. Kosto, *Making Agreements*, pp. 59-64, and on delegation to the Church, P. Freedman, *The Diocese of Vic: tradition and regeneration in medieval Catalonia* (New Brunswick 1983), online at <http://libro.uca.edu/vic/vic.htm>, last modified 16th August 2000 as of 11th May 2005, pp. 14-20.

But we need to balance the importance long-term with the importance short-term for the fullest understanding we can manage of the period and its people; these things mattered at the time. As more and more data line up in the direction we recognise from these people's future, teleology beckons, but should not be conceded to unnecessarily. Change could reverse, and we need to explain why it did not before closing the gap between the past and the future.

In some cases here I have been able to do so. Sant Joan's initial growth spurt and splendour ended in an ignominious dissolution but as we have seen, long before this it had become subject to the limitations of a far closer comital interest as the comital family attitude to the house altered in succeeding generations. Vallfogona remained an unusually diffuse territorial organisation under the shadow of the monastery, but one which the counts had almost entirely owned before it disappears from our record. In Gurb I have spotlighted the double-handed use of comital and episcopal patronage which allowed the Gurb-Queralt to engineer themselves into an position of local invulnerability, though also displayed the continuing buzz of interaction with other interests which went on at lower levels. Where we see Borrell II wresting control of his counties' patronage and castling the frontier with safer men, this is not a passing flicker but a set of actions which had permanent results, and altered the board from which the next generation's moves would be played.

The Character of Power

One common factor of any power situation our sources allow us to examine is that they depend crucially on the local context of the persons involved. Patronage was not indiscriminate, and both material and family

status as well as simple personal compatibility must have helped direct it. Not just who one was, but where one was; Borrell's holdings in la Néspola appear to have been extensive and not just the Vicar Guifré but lesser men such as Constable and Ervigi profited from his ability to be generous there.²² In Vallfogona, until the mid-tenth century one had a choice of interaction with Sant Joan or taking one's chances elsewhere. In Gurb many patrons were available, the bishop, the vicars, the viscounts, the counts. If one was not confined to one area, one's choice of patron became still wider, but in some areas, at least for some people, a patron was unnecessary; the Vicar Sal·la is the obvious independent, though Sal·la chose more interaction than some, and there were several smaller examples of non-involvement from Vallfogona. We seem to see Borrell replacing where possible large interests like Sal·la with lesser men of his own choosing; but he was reliant on opportunity to do this as far as we can tell, as were the counts of Cerdanya and Besalú with Viscount Unifred. For those below this level, a choice of patron was not as far as we can tell necessary, but clearly it was one way to advance oneself and one's ambitions and perhaps, for those not blessed with Sal·la's wealth, the best way. Lastly, for the peasantry, the options we see appear to be little more than acceptance or combination in opposition, surely risky; even acceptance however could be more or less active or passive, embracing or not the opportunities for service with a lord which might lead to rewards. Here as ever we cannot ignore personality as well as material circumstances.

²² See Chapter 4 above, pp. 240-241 & 241-242.

If secular power was thus a matter of circumstance, connection and use of opportunity, one may ask whether the situation of the Church appears differently in our material. Certainly Abbess Emma shows these same factors in abundance. This is not to say that the two lordships were without differences. The Church had special weapons; Emma called on two councils of bishops and a king for immunity, in a way that a layman could not have done, and Bishop Sal·la of Urgell on one occasion excommunicated the Besalú comital family's chief advisors.²³ The ability to attract donations of land caused by concern for souls, and institutional ownership of these properties preventing their division, meant that the Church accumulated property in different ways to lay lords, although it also ran castles for the count and so on. In this respect, a worldly one which the documents we are using prioritise,²⁴ the Church appears as a lord with extra powers. On the other hand, succession to control of these assets was uncertain and in the hands of others, who might impose "an unsuitable woman" in a nunnery or raise competing episcopal candidates,²⁵ and the effectiveness or not of spiritual sanctions in what one charter of Borrell's called "this military age" is of course much debated.²⁶ So the Church had its disadvantages too in the exercise of power. All the same, if one considers

²³ Urgell 224 & 225.

²⁴ This said, documents like consecration acts (collected in R. Ordeig i Mata (ed.), *Les dotalies de les esglésies de Catalunya: (segles IX-XII)*, *Estudis Històrics: Diplomataris 1-5* (Vic 1993-1994), 3 vols in 5), inventories of liturgical books and their disseminated locations (such as Vic 303 & 413) and references to schools (see M. S. Gros i Pujol, "Els textos d'ensenyament en l'escola catedral de Vic al Segle XI" in Udina, *Symposium Internacional*, II pp. 19-26) do display the Church's pastoral rôle in our material too; it is as much the focus of the inquiry as that of the material that has relegated such matters to a footnote.

²⁵ The unsuitable woman placed in control of Sant Joan de Ripoll as recorded in Condal 128; see Chapter 2 above, p. 77. For competing episcopal candidates, see Chapter 4 above, p. 211 & n. 6, and for other cases, R. Martí, "Delà, Cesari i Ató, primers arquebisbes dels comptes-prínceps de Barcelona (951-953/981)" in *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia* Vol. 67 (Tarragona 1994), pp. 369-386, and Vic 624.

²⁶ Urgell 127: "*hujus militie seculi*". On the effectiveness or not of excommunication see Bowman, *Shifting Landmarks*, pp. 56-80.

Church *familia* versus secular family, the operations of the respective *patresfamilias* do not appear very different, if perhaps better documented in the case of the former.²⁷ We have seen indeed that to an extent the latter could become the former, as Sant Benet de Bages permanised Sal la's patrimony past the endurance of his family and was indubitably his favoured heir. Count Guifré the Hairy confused the two thoroughly by placing his children in the foundations he favoured, only for his other heirs to claw back what those heirs had inherited wherever possible in later generations. There were differences to Church power, then, but they did not render secular strategies irrelevant or ineffective.

Aims Answered

Can we then answer the questions set out in the Introduction? Answers to some have been provided already. Power belonged to a number of persons rather wider than use of titles indicating power would suggest. Such names were not important enough even to be consistently used. True *potentia* was therefore probably not based in title but in wealth, the ownership or use of land whose farmers were partially producing for that owner or user.

Nonetheless, some uses of such land remained special to certain classes of ownership, even if these were alienable, and towards the end of our period, even as real royal control of 'royal' rights faded to nothing, this quality was being emphasised more and more, perhaps in defence against their generalisation but perhaps simply because of their exploitation being a

²⁷ In this light we might compare negotiations with canons such as seen in Condal 138 or *MH* ap. CLIX with individual lords' wills dividing properties between sons, daughters and followers such as Viscount

novelty.²⁸ This means that we can only make a halfway answer. We can compare landowners and guess at who was the more wealthy, but without unusual detail we cannot say how total their exploitation of any part of their lands was. Sometimes rights in this land belonged to others; in some cases, we can suspect that these rights were not being exploited. Some of the later 'bad customs' were indubitably new, but some were not and some such exploitations were still more or less controlled.²⁹

Ownership of power was thus in some cases the same as its use, and in other cases a limit on its use when carried out by others. Other limits were the law, either still or anew, and combined action by the producers, whether this used the law or merely consisted of emigration. How effective these limits were is far harder to judge, and given the changing pattern of distribution of the evidence, almost impossible to quantify. We see them work, and also see them fail, at more or less the same time,³⁰ and the end result must be explicable only in terms of the same individual circumstantial differences that also blur our impressions of true change. Such circumstances are rarely available to us, but those that are at least help us suppose what others might have been.

Unless power, in the ability to appropriate production surplus or more simply in terms of being obeyed, was direct from its exerciser to its experiencer,

Bernat of Conflent's in Urgell 281.

²⁸ See Chapter 3, p. 193.

²⁹ On the 'mals usos' see P. Freedman, *The Origins of Peasant Servitude in Catalonia*, Cambridge Iberian and Latin American Studies (Cambridge 1991), pp. 79-83.

³⁰ For a successful defence see Condal 181; but contrast the examples of failure given by P. Bonnassie & P. Guichard, "Les communautés rurales en Catalogne et dans le pays valencien (IX^e-XIV^e siècle)" in *Les Communautés Villageoises en Europe Occidentale du Moyen Âge aux Temps Modernes*, Flaran 4 (Auch 1982), pp. 79-115, transl. J. Birrell as "Rural Communities in Catalonia and Valencia (from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries)" in Bonnassie, *From Slavery to Feudalism in South-Western Europe* (Cambridge 1991), pp. 243-287 at pp. 250-254 of the translation.

from for example Adalbert to one of the people who held a manse for him, and could thus be carried out in person, delegation must have been involved. We have seen that the accepted structures of this delegation do not match the templates which their names suggest. Whether or not the count controlled who could call themselves Vicar, or indeed Viscount, irrespective of whether he had a choice in who it was to whom such a title would be applied, is a question we have not been able to answer, though it seems likely that he was only able to where a family's importance in the area had broken down.³¹ It does seem clear that use or not of such a title did not crucially hinder some people's importance.

The count did not necessarily work through such people however; power took varying routes to the ground.³² Some of the people it passed through were themselves lords of others, but sometimes they were not; Borrell dealt directly with the *coloni* of Armàncies and the peasantry of Vallformosa for example. A tenancy in this area need not be subjecting; the sole tenant we see in pioneer Gurb seems also to have been a landowner in his own right, and Borrell's *fideles* were often clearly men of means. On the other hand, of course, it could be; several new tenants of Santa Maria d'Urgell who could choose no other lord were indubitably losing some of their liberty and ability to negotiate their conditions of living,³³ and the subjection of the Vall de Sant Joan speaks for itself. Individual circumstances again varied; there were not yet fixed rules and nor would there be for a very long time, especially while franchises like

³¹ Cf. Kosto as in n. 15 above.

³² 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, observing similar differences in texture in different parts of Northern Spain.

³³ Urgell 246 & 259.

Cardona's were awarded which welcomed and immunised fugitives.³⁴ The potential to exploit inequality in individual cases was of course substantial, and can be seen at the beginning of Carolingian Catalonia as much as at the end.³⁵ Opportunity for power had its losers as well as its winners throughout, although the agreements and *quid pro quo* deals by which someone advanced their position presumably also benefited the other parties. It is hard to say that as Borrell died the area was approaching Bonnassie's 'new servitude',³⁶ but some of the ways in which such conditions would be established were already old here. At all points in this study we have been looking at a society in which such subjections seemed possible, but even by the deaths of the last Carolingians the outcome was not definite, and still open to manipulation.

³⁴ Cardona 7.

³⁵ E. Müller-Mertens, Karl der Grosse, Ludwig der Fromme, und die Freien. Wer waren die Liberi Homines der Karolingischen Kapitularien (742/743-832)? Ein Beitrag zur Sozialgeschichte und Sozialpolitik des Frankenreiches, Forschungen zur Mittelalterlichen Geschichte 10 (Berlin 1963), pp. 61-65.

³⁶ P. Bonnassie, "The Noble and the Ignoble: a new nobility and a new servitude in Catalonia at the end of the eleventh century" in Bonnassie, From Slavery to Feudalism, pp. 196-242, transl. J. Birrell from Bonnassie, Catalogne, II pp. 781-829.