

# THE FAMILY OF WILFRED I, THE HAIRY: MARRIAGE AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF POWER, 800-1000

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## ABSTRACT

The reconstruction of the family relations of count Wilfred the Hairy<sup>1</sup> still contains points of contention about which not all studies are in agreement. In a deep reconsideration of the traditional hypotheses, the clarification of some of these points goes hand in hand with a more exact understanding of the matrimonial relations established by Wilfred's family and the marital strategies that they employed. Finally, the different interpretation of these problems is motivated and justified by reflecting on the modalities of establishing power in the *Marca Hispanica*, the Spanish March, during the ninth and tenth centuries. It is also justified by reflecting on the dynamics of this establishment which should help illuminate and better explain their functions.

## KEY WORDS

*Marca Hispanica*, Counts of Barcelona, Genealogy, Marriage, Power.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Marchia Hispanica, Comites Barcinonenses, Genealogia, Matrimonium, Potestas.

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1. Translator's and editor's note: as usual in translation we use the English version of names of Emperors, Kings, Popes and known counts (such as Wilfred the Hairy). In other cases we use their Catalan or Occitan form.

Reconstructing and understanding the history of the *Marca Hispanica* during the ninth and tenth centuries is difficult and delicate work. Investigation proceeds with great difficulty due to the shortage of documentary evidence and the almost complete absence of Frankish annals or narratives; the Carolingian rulers paid only rare and occasional attention to such distant marches. There still remain many difficult-to-fill gaps in the historical record. Even so, the extensive work completed above all by Ramon d'Abadal has permitted several important advances. Numerous previous scholars, most notably Josep Maria Salrach, have contributed to the study of this material with different objectives and levels of involvement.<sup>2</sup>

One of the aspects that has finally achieved a certain stability of results and some measure of scholarly consensus, after many and long discussions and however far from complete unanimity, is the reconstruction of the genealogy of count Wilfred I. More recently, Marti Aurell has investigated the matrimonial strategies of the first counts of the Spanish march. His work focuses more generally on the matrimonial politics of the counts of Barcelona and the other families connected with them up to the time of Peter I. However, I believe it is possible to bring together certain considerations from the first aspect of Wilfred's genealogy with this second aspect concerning matrimonial politics. These considerations, while perhaps secondary points, are no less useful for being so, and will help to make clear particular aspects and details. Additionally, they should help restate or amplify the methodological bases of research. The second aspect, matrimonial strategies, seems especially important due to the consequences it could have for more general historical investigation and particularly for the understanding of the political dynamics and colonizers at the periphery of the Carolingian empire.

My principal objective is to reconsider the system of marriage alliances of the counts of the *Marca Hispanica*<sup>3</sup> during the generations immediately before and after Wilfred I—that is to say, from the time of the establishment of Carolingian power in the *Marca* until that power passed to the hereditary possession of the autonomous counts. This reconsideration is based on different sources than those most commonly used to date. These sources will, in some cases, allow the use of new data or

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2. I want to thank sincerely to Josep Maria Salrach his kindness reading this pages and the correction of his suggestions. Of course, he is not responsible of my opinions. Abbreviations used: CC I, *Catalunya Carolíngia. El domini carolíngi a Catalunya*, Ramon d'Abadal, ed. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1986; CC II, *Catalunya Carolíngia. Els diplomes carolíngis a Catalunya*, ed. Ramon d'Abadal. Geneva: Institució Patxot de Catalunya, 1926-1950; CC V, *Catalunya Carolíngia. Els comtats de Girona, Besalú, Empúries i Peralada*, eds. Santiago Sobrequés, Sebastià Riera, Manuel Rovira. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2003; CC VI, *Catalunya Carolíngia*, eds. Josep Maria Font i Rius. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2006; MHCA: *Monuments d'Història de la Corona d'Aragó; PI, Polyptique de l'Abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Prés rédigé au temps de l'abbé Irminon*, ed. Auguste Longnon. Geneva: Mégariots Reprints, 1978; RAC, Bolòs i Masclans, Jordi; Moran i Ocejnjuregui, Josep. *Repertori d'antropònims Catalans*. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1994.

3. I use this phrase for convenience, even though I am conscious of its imprecision and inexactitude; on the other hand, during this era, to speak of the Catalan counts or even of Catalonia seems to me even more imprecise. See about: Sabaté, Flocel. "El nacimiento de Cataluña. Mito y realidad", *Fundamentos medievales de los particularismos hispánicos. IX Congreso de Estudios Medievales (León, 2003)*. Ávila: Fundación Sánchez Alborno, 2005: 221-276.



the clarification, unfortunately always highly hypothetical, of some of the aspects of the family tree of the first hereditary county of much of the lands of the *Marca*; more generally, the data will put forward certain understandings of the unification of Carolingian power together with some of the families of local magnates, families from the Gothic or Hispanic-Gothic ascendancy, who finally made that power hereditary.

Over the centuries, due in part to the testimony of the *Gesta Comitum Barchinonensium*, the exact lineage of Wilfred I was a difficult problem to define until Ramon d'Abadal proposed a genealogical reconstruction which now has been almost unanimously accepted.<sup>4</sup> Abadal established (in this case without subsequent dispute except from Pere Ponsich) that Wilfred I was the son of Sunifred I, count of Urgell-Cerdanya (834-848) and also count of Barcelona-Girona and of Narbonne (844-848). The father of Sunifred I was Bello, count of Carcassonne (died 812). The brothers of Sunifred included the counts of Carcassonne, Gisclafred (died ca. 821) and Oliba I (died 837), and the counts of Empuries-Rosselló, Sunyer I (died 848) and Alaric (died 844). These second connections have been generally accepted. However, Josep M. Salrach<sup>5</sup> had already expressed some reservations and more recently Pere Ponsich has refuted almost all of them.<sup>6</sup> I will return to this point below. Moreover, Pere Ponsich did not limit himself to denying these links. He also placed in doubt other aspects of the reconstruction of Abadal,<sup>7</sup> earning a response by Armand de Fluvià who, for his part, defended the system of Abadal.<sup>8</sup> Most recently, even while accepting the genealogical model of Abadal, Martí Aurell has come up with new details and a new interpretation of the situation.<sup>9</sup>

It seems to me time to take up the theme again, even if briefly, because, as I noted, I believe that it is possible to bring a different focus to certain points which should affect the principal hypothesis: Sunifred I, son of Bello de Carcassonne (Abadal *et alii.*) versus Sunifred I, son of Borrell, count of Urgell-Cerdanya-Osona (Ponsich). This leaves aside other older proposals, because, as Ponsich states: *Ens trobem, doncs, en presència de dues hipòtesis i solament d'aquestes: Sunifred, fill de Borrell, o Sunifred, fill de Bello;*<sup>10</sup> this also leaves aside other minor details.

When attempting to establish the familial relations between different people who appear in the documentation, there are two traditional tests established by Poupardin (first: the repetition of names within a family, and second: the posses-

4. Abadal, Ramon. *Els primers comtes catalans*. Barcelona: Vicens Vives, 1983 (1958): 13-28.

5. Salrach, Josep Maria. *El procés de formació nacional de Catalunya (segles VIII-IX)*. Barcelona: edicions 62, 1978: I, 100.

6. Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició del comtat de Rosselló entre els casals de Cerdanya i d'Empúries a la mort del comte Miró I el Vell (896)", *Miscel·lània Ramon d'Abadal*. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1994: 9-24.

7. Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de l'ascendència de Guifré el Pelós". *Revista de Catalunya*, 23 (1988): 35-44.

8. Fluvià, Armand de. "La qüestió de l'ascendència del comte Guifré I el Pelós". *Revista de Catalunya*, 29 (1989): 83-87.

9. Aurell, Martí. *Les noces del comte. Matrimoni i poder a Catalunya (785-1213)*. Barcelona: Omega, 1998: 28-41.

10. "We find ourselves with two and only two hypotheses: Sunifred, son of Borrell, or Sunifred, son of Bello" (Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de l'ascendència...": 39).



sion of the same patrimonial goods). More recently, scholars have added analyses from anthropological and structural reasoning, developed above all by Martí Aurell, which governed the matrimonial conduct of the nobility.<sup>11</sup>

While accepting in principle the proposal of Abadal with certain aspects modified, I would say that to propose a solution, we must diligently reconsider the territorial politics and the marriages of the first Catalan counts, including the particular practices of naming, of at least three generations: those of Sunifred I, those of Wilfred I and his brothers, and those of the children of Wilfred I. In some cases we should also keep in mind the generations of Wilfred's nieces and nephews. That is to say, we should make a more extensive analysis of naming and, above all, try to escape the strict genealogical schemata, both traditional and anthropological, in order to consider the question from a more historical point of view as it relates to the creation of the structures of power in the area of the *Marca Hispanica*. As is well known, behind the system of matrimonial strategies there is not only a social mentality —as much as we are able to grasp that mentality through anthropological studies— but also the fact that the system is a reflection of a vision of power —of its organization and of the paths that one must take to establish and reinforce that power. It is thus obvious that the forms of this process of the affirmation of power changed profoundly according to the model of matrimonial strategies that they followed.

In my opinion, to be able to attempt a new evaluation of these genealogical and matrimonial problems, we must examine the rare and often dubious elements which we can glean from other perspectives. We must not limit ourselves to simply fitting the scant data within a genealogical scheme, as Abadal and, even more so, Aurell have done following anthropological models of analysis for the marriage behavior of the nobility, thus reducing the data to a single family: that of the decedents of Bello de Carcassonne.<sup>12</sup> What should be attempted, is to take into consideration the broader situation of the counts of the *Marca* —from the end of the eighth century to approximately the middle of the tenth— to bear in mind the characteristics of their population and to especially consider the process of the occupation of the land, precedent the Carolingian conquest by the possible remains of the aristocracy and the magnates, both Goths and Hispano-Romans. This should be carried out prior to considering the possibility of adopting interpretative schema elaborated for different cultures from that of the Early-Medieval Pyrenees, and in general from: the Carolingian world, with which we are occupied.

The sources of the time are not a great help. The documentation, especially until the middle of the ninth century, is scarce and the majority comes from the other side of the Pyrenees. Using the Carolingian historical sources and the documentation issued by the imperial chancery, it is possible to create at least an approximate

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11. For a general look at the Frankish world (unfortunately without taking into consideration the *Marca Hispanica*), see: Le Jan, Régine. *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde Franc (VII<sup>e</sup>-X<sup>e</sup> siècle). Essai d'anthropologie sociale*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1995.

12. The model was introduced into the historiography of the Catalan counts and defended by Ruiz Domènec. See: Ruiz Domènec, José Enrique. *L'estructura feudal*. Barcelona: Edicions del Mall, 1985.



idea, because the Franks, for example, were more interested in the *hispani* that crossed the border—in their contracts and the legal problems they raised—than in those who remained in the still-Muslim territories or those areas that had just been conquered. On the other hand, we know that the Islamic influence in the Catalan lands, at least from the Llobregat northward, was brief and superficial and concentrated in the cities. It was still more rare, it is said, north of Barcelona, an area seen as the final stronghold of the *Marca Superior*. Finally, there are several facts that lead one to think about the existence of nuclei of indigenous populations: the spontaneous surrender of Girona in 785, the easy penetration into the territory even before the conquest of Barcelona on 3 April, 801, and the establishment of the frontier along the Llobregat, together with the granting of the first comital titles to the *hispani* and the Goths (such as Borrell in Osona-Cerdanya-Urgell, Berà I in Barcelona, and Ermenguer in Empúries),<sup>13</sup> who seem to have been members of the old, local aristocracy or closely connected to them. These populations were still important and organized in some fashion (even though we don't know how) around several aristocratic figures, as can be observed also in the western Pyrenees, in those lands where the kingdoms of Navarre and Aragon arose.

It seems evident to me that we must place the development and strengthening of different families, comital or not, during the ninth century, above all, and the tenth, in the ambit of these local power-groups, in their reinforcement thanks to the Carolingian conquest, and in the strategies, including matrimonial, conducted by the members of this aristocracy. The presence, until the middle of the ninth century, of Frankish counts (and settlers) did not change the background situation, just as it did not change the appearance (if we should not see it as a return) of the family of the counts of Carcassonne, with the figure of Sunifred I, the first count of Urgell-Osona and later Barcelona-Narbonne. The very likely origin of the family from the Conflent made it homogeneous, from an ethnic point of view, with the other local power groups that we begin to see spreading themselves from the Urgell all the way to Rosselló and the Narbonne, often with properties widely dispersed throughout the territory.<sup>14</sup>

13. Borrell and Berà are both certainly Goth, demonstrated by their names, which both appear in an exclusively local context; concerning Ermenguer, there is some doubt whether or not it could be a French name (see: Morlet, Marie-Thérèse. *Les noms de personne sur le territoire de l'ancienne Gaule du VI<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Paris: Centre Nationale de Recherches Scientifiques, 1971: *Ermengarius*). Even so, in Hirminion's Polyptych (PI: I, 334).

14. The name Sunifred, like Sunyer, is similarly Gothic. The first Sunifred appears in Narbonne at the end of the seventh century; see: Morlet, Marie-Thérèse. *Les noms de personne...: Sunifredus*; for further material, see: Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició"...: 22 (doc. n<sup>o</sup> 49). For this approach, I owe much to: Carlos Laliena (Laliena Corbera, Carlos. "La formación de la sociedad cristiana en el Pirineo central aragonés en los siglos VIII-IX", *Frontière et espaces pyrénéens au Moyen Age*, Philippe Sénac, ed. Perpignan: Université de Perpignan, 1992: 69-94; Laliena Corbera, Carlos. *La formación del Estado feudal. Aragón y Navarra en la época de Pedro I*. Huesca: Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, 1996: 29-35). For considerations concerning the group of genealogies from Navarre in the codex of *Maia*, see: Lacarra, José María. "Textos navarros del Codex de Roda". *Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón*, 1 (1945): 193-283 and *Els annals de la família Rivipullense i les genealogies de Pallars-Ribagorça*, ed. Stefano Maria Cingolani. Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, forthcoming (MHCA, 3).



Turning to the proposals to identify the different people and their membership of one family or another, we can see that the observations of Ponsich are all quite reasonable, even if we do not completely agree. There are at least a few difficulties: it is true that the term *avus* (the term that Miró I the Old used to address Bello of Carcassonne in a document of restitution for the properties of Saint Andrew of Eixalada)<sup>15</sup> is also used to address the maternal grandfather, and is not used exclusively for the paternal grandfather as Abadal believed.<sup>16</sup> This fact, in Ponsich's eyes, radically limits the proof that Wilfred I is a descendant of Bello, such as was thought to be demonstrated by the aforementioned document. If that is true, it is no less a fact that the act of consecration of Saint Mary of Formiguera in Capcir (21 September, 873)<sup>17</sup> indicates (insofar as the later *acts* include an extended family) an agnatic kinship relationship (a common paternal grandparent) and not a cognatic relationship. Additionally, many of the observations made by Ponsich with respect to the transmission or origin of names are not entirely definitive and deserve to be nuanced.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from the fact that there are names which are apparently not perpetuated, not even in the same dynasty of Carcassonne (such as Bello or Gisclafred)<sup>19</sup>—an observation that in no way demonstrates that Sunifred was not the son of Bello—it must be stated that we know too little about the family and familial relations of Bello for it to be possible to draw conclusions with any certainty.<sup>20</sup> (This is generally the case with the onomastics and prosopography of the territories that we are studying—Carcassonne, Narbonne and the Catalan counties— during the eighth, ninth and much of the tenth centuries.) We cannot be certain that all of the sons that we know of from the different counts are all those that were born; it is possible

15. The original dates from 863-874; the document of restitution is from 29 January, 879, (CC VI: 139, 165-166, docs. n° 86, 121): *interpellante eos Sesenando, mandatario de Mirone comite, de cella vel ecclesia Sancti Vincenti cum adiacentias suas, qualiter sua hereditas esse debet per successionem abii sui Bellone* (Abadal, Ramon. *Els primers comtes...*: 19); A few years prior, in a document of Sisenand, the parents of the count Miró I receive mention, specifically his father: *et servicium fecerunt domno Suniefredo comite, genitore seniore meo* (CC VI: 135-136, doc. n° 81; 25 March 874).

16. However, in an analysis of the familial terminology, Le Jan, Régine. *Famille et pouvoir...*: 159-177, demonstrates how the normal, though not exclusive, use of *avus* occurred in reference to the *paternal grandfather*.

17. *a comitibus hisce nominibus Wifredo et fratre eius Mirone et comitibus Olibano et fratre eius Ayfredo, comitum [...] nos predicti comites pro Dei amore et remedio animarum nostrarum seu parentum nostrorum*. Here, Wilfred I appears with his brother Miró I of Cerdanya, Oliba II and Acred of Carcassonne, who are cousins in that they are all common grandchildren of Bello of Carcassonne (CC VI: 133, doc. n° 79).

18. On the patterns and standards of naming, see: Le Jan, Régine. *Famille et pouvoir...*: 179-223, which has an ample bibliography. The uncertainty concerning the older familial relations and the genealogical trees prevents the full use of this methodology in the case of the *Marca Hispanica*. The *Marca* also deserve a new work of synthesis beyond the attempts of Ponsich and Vajay.

19. However, these are names which appear widely in the Catalan counties; see: RAC: I, *Bellus* after 834, and *Wisclafredus* after 870 (the variant *Gisclafredus* appears only once in 812). For example, in a trial presided over by Servusdei, Bishop of Girona (15 March 893), two men named Wifredo and Bellone appear as vassals to count Dela of Empuries (CC V: 120-121, doc n° 84).

20. This is so despite such detailed studies as: Settipani, Christian. *La noblesse du Midi carolingien. Études sur quelques grandes familles d'Aquitaine et du Languedoc du IX<sup>e</sup> aux XI<sup>e</sup> siècles: Toulousain-Périgord-Limousin-Poitou-Auvergne*. Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, Linacre College, 2004.





that some did not survive, dying in childhood or adolescence without leaving a documentary trace. In general, we know even less about the maternal families. Consequently, at least for the ninth century, any argument based on transmission and presence of family names must be used with caution.

In this way, we also need to question the observation, formulated by historians contrary to the Abadal hypothesis, that is Ermessenda, the wife of Sunifred I, who must have been the daughter of Bello, because we find the name later in the same Carcassonne family.<sup>21</sup> Making this claim only displaces, but does not resolve the origin of family names. The fact that the wife of Ramon Borrell is Ermessenda of Carcassonne does not mean that the name would be typical of the family line already at the beginning of the ninth century. In fact, it seems that it does not appear until the tenth; yet already during the same years we find other Ermessendas in the south of France and in the eleventh century we find at least one Ermesinda of Bigòrra, wife of Ramirus I of Aragon, and another Ermessenda, wife of Ramon IV of Pallars and a daughter of Pons I of Empúries,<sup>22</sup> while a daughter of Wilfred the Hairy was also called Ermessenda.<sup>23</sup> Thus, it seems to be a Pyrenean name which, after the countess, became widespread at the end of the ninth century.<sup>24</sup>

Neither the name Wilfred nor Miró, as far as we can tell, appear in the dynasty or their probable forefathers before Wilfred the Hairy himself and his brother. They are already names attested to in the same era; Miró was the founder of Saint Andrew of Sureda at the beginning of the ninth century.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, we should be thinking with an open mind of familial relations in which the entire family is taken into consideration, and without forcing the scant data

21. For example, see: Settapani, Christian, *La noblesse du Midi carolingien...*: 71-72; He follows the genealogical hypotheses of Ponsich.

22. Aurell, Martí. "Jalons pour une enquête sur les stratégies matrimoniales des comtes catalans (IX<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> s.)", *Symposium internacional sobre els orígens de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1991: I, 281-364, doc. 105 and 58.

23. Aurell, Martí. "Jalons pour une enquête...": doc. n° 16.

24. RAC: I, 40, where it is defined as a common name; however, it is also found in the: PI, 305 and VIII, 26; Settapani, Christian. *La noblesse du Midi carolingien...*

25. *Guifredus* is a Germanic name, possibly Frankish, but certainly not Gothic. It is composed of two very common elements: wic- and -fred; the oldest evidence (761 and 769), like other later examples, appear at the abbey of Saint Gall (Morlet, Marie Thérèse. *Les noms de personne...: Uuicfridus*); Miro, on the contrary, is of Gothic origin and is entirely local, despite one occurrence in Tours (Morlet, Marie Thérèse. *Les noms de personne...*: 168, a). It is clear that these arguments based on onomastics are largely hypothetical, since the same names can appear also in other families; on the other hand, it is possible to believe that the family lineages could acquire comital names through imitation without having any familial relations. Given the same name, this could lead to incorrect conclusions, such as when we find one Benicó, son of Madresèn, giving lands to Saint Peter of Rodes, that his mother has received from *condam avunculi sui Wifredi*, and earlier had said, *anima mea et anima genitricis meae, et anima consanguinei nostri condam Wifredi qui fuit* (CC V: 389-390, doc. n° 436; 7 February 977); or one *Oliba presbiter et filio meo Mirone*, who on 20 December, 988, made a donation to Saint Michel de Cuxa (CC VI: 472-473, doc. n°588), or later one Borrell, who made his will on 15 February, 1017, and who had as a first born son, Ramon, in addition to his other sons, Guillem and Sunyer; see: *Diplomatari de l'Arxiu Capitular de la Catedral de Barcelona. Segle XI*, eds. Josep Baucell i Reig; Àngel Fàbrega i Grau; Manuel Riu i Riu; Josep Hernando i Delgado, Carme Batlle i Gallart. Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 2006: II, 621-624 (doc n° 269).



at our disposal or trying to make the data to fit in predetermined anthropological models. This is what Aurell also attempts, but to my mind, he pushes the anthropological tool of marriage between crossed cousins too far and, when faced with the doubt, he looks for this solution; that is to say, in my opinion, that he imposes an elaborate model, developed for other societies, searching for confirmation before, in some cases, having examined other possibilities, without having demonstrated, using much broader bases, that the model functions generally in the Frankish realms in the ninth and tenth century where, apparently, it was completely the opposite.<sup>26</sup>

Also, the capacity to do this is facilitated by the acceptance of the hypothesis that the family of the counts of Empúries descended from Bello. It has never been taken into account that the counts could have come from Ermenguer (thus following a system of transmission of power that can be found in other territories) or from another unknown progenitor.<sup>27</sup> However, if we leave this hypothesis aside (I will analyze it in detail later), it can be seen that if the reading of marriage between cousins were to be valid, it seems to me that the alternative reading of which I spoke at the beginning must also be taken into consideration; namely, trying to see that the counts of the March established marriage links with powerful families of the territories they begin to control and where they had to affirm their power.<sup>28</sup> Thus, they are alliances of power, but not necessarily within the same family; on

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26. Le Jan, Régine. *Famille et pouvoir...*: 263-327, provides an analysis of the forms, strategies and matrimonial ideologies of the Frankish territories (between the Loire and the Rhine); Although there could have and must have been differences and nuances between these lands and the *Marca Hispanica*, it is quite clear that the endogamous model is rare and of minor importance, especially during the Carolingian period and the second half of the ninth century. However, it is difficult to accurately evaluate the importance and effectiveness of church regulations, when: *pour répondre au souci d'assurer la sécurité du patrimoine, de l'accroître et de justifier ce pouvoir, les règles matrimoniales s'infléchirent dans une direction plus netement exogamique* (p. 327) (to address the concern for the safety of the assets, the increase and justify this power, the marriage rules became more exogamous); That is to say, during the epoch important to this study, the exogamous tendency would have been even stronger than in previous eras.

27. Ramon d'Abadal makes the following argument: *El que no té comprovació precisa és el parentiu de Sunyer (I d'Empúries) amb els comtes Oliba de Carcassona i Sunifred d'Urgell, nosaltres hipotèticament els suposem germans, perquè és l'única explicació verssemblant del lligam que s'endevina més tard entre les cases de Cerdanya i del Roselló* ("that which cannot be precisely confirmed is the joint parentage of Sunyer (I of Empúries) and the counts Oliba of Carcassonne and Sunifred of Urgell; we hypothetically assume them to be brothers, because it is the only plausible explanation of the later connection assumed between the house of Cerdanya and the house of Rosselló") (CC I: 229, doc n° 212).

28. *Al menos dos aspectos pueden considerarse firmes sobre la configuración del poder en estas regiones en la época más temprana: el primero es el surgimiento de liderazgos indígenas —carentes de vínculos con el Estado visigodo (...)— que pueden estar encajados en estructuras territoriales muy antiguas y de considerable homogeneidad geográfica. La tardía mirada de los monjes que compilan las genealogías de Roda percibe a estos dirigentes como reyes, pero se trata de una construcción ideológica destinada a conmemorar la gloria de la dinastía pamplonesa a fines del siglo X, más que una realidad comprobable* ("At least two aspects can be considered proofs of the configuration of power in these regions in the earlier period: the first is the appearance of indigenous leadership —lacking connection to the Visigothic state [...]— that can be connected to very old territorial structures and can be considered geographically homogeneous. The later viewpoint of the monks who compiled the genealogies of Roda saw these leaders as kings, but that was an ideological construction designed to commemorate the glory of the Pamplona dynasty at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> century rather than a verifiable fact.") Laliena, Carlos. *La formación del Estado feudal...*: 29-30. The fact that we find hints of counties in the *Marca Hispanica* clearly established by the imperial power does not substantially change the situation, nor does





the contrary, they could be *exogamic* marriages in the same territorial area in order to secure the alliances of other aristocrats. The fact that, even in the second generation of the hereditary counts at the end of the ninth century and the middle of the tenth, the personal domains of the counts, especially of the counts of Barcelona and their familiars, are quite disperse throughout the entire area from Rosselló to the Llobregat, with strong ties to the Narbonne, seems to me an argument that supports this vision; also, the reduced area of the counties over which they exercised lordship were not organized in a homogenous manner.

If we can say no more, at the moment, about the first generation of Bello of Carcassonne and Borrell of Osona-Urgell, it is still possible to add some considerations regarding the second: the generation of Sunifred, son of the *fidelis* Borrell, Sunifred I, count of Urgell, son of Bello (accepting the hypothesis of Abadal that the two Sunifreds are different people), Ermessenda, the wife of Sunifred, and, finally, Sunyer I of Empúries, keeping in mind that it is possible to study the third generation with much more data —the generation of the sons of Sunifred I and Sunyer I.

A fact that seems to me very significant should be noted: as we have already stated, the first generation of counts appears to be completely formed of members of the old, local aristocracy:<sup>29</sup> Borrell in Osona-Cerdanya-Urgell, Berà in Barcelona-Girona,<sup>30</sup> and, possibly, Ermenguer in Empúries. The first replacement, in 816, is that Guilhèm of Ermenguer with Gaucelm, son of Guilhèm of Tolosa (Saint Guilhèm de Gellona), possibly because of the death of the count. In 820, the second replacement occurs: Asnar Galindo, the old count of Aragon, succeeded Borrell and, first the Frankish count, Rampó (820-825), then Bernat de Septimània, another son of Guilhèm of Tolosa, both succeeded Berà, who had been accused of treason. In this way, Guilhèm of Tolosa's lineage expanded their southern territories.

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the fact that in place of the rationalizations of tenth century monks, we find ourselves dealing with those of nineteenth and twentieth century historians.

29. Following the Carolingian terminology, they were called *nobles viri* (that is to say, he who is distinguished by birth, by social superiority or by power). They sometimes also became *illustri viri* (that is to say, those who held higher office in the royal administration); the momentary (or even permanent) loss of the title of count in the ninth century does not represent a diminishing in the importance of the family, either from the perspective of social prestige or of local power (on these concepts, see: Le Jan, Régine. *Famille et pouvoir...*: 10).

30. The traditional hypothesis formulated by Pere Ponsich (Ponsich, Pere. "Bera I, comte de Barcelone, et ses descendants. Le problème de la juridiction comtale", *Conflent, Vallespir et montagnes catalanes. Actes du LI Congrès de la Fédération historique du Languedoc méditerranéen et du Roussillon*. Montpellier: Fédération historique du Languedoc méditerranéen et du Roussillon, 1980: 51-69) makes Berà the son of Guillem of Toulouse and a Visigoth, Kunegunda, and thus a Frank with early roots in the territory: This hypothesis was accepted by: Aurell, Martí. *Les noces del comte...*: 31; According to Fluvià, Armand de. *Els primitius comtats i vescomtats de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1989: 24, the parentage of Berà is unknown and the daughter of Guilhèm of Tolosa is the wife of Berà, Romilda; however, Berà is possibly of Gothic origin based on his name; later has revised the hypothesis in order to dispute: Dubreucq, Alain. "Guillaume de Toulouse et la politique carolingienne en Aquitaine", *Entre histoire et épopée. Les Guillaume d'Orange (IXe-XIIIe siècles)*. *Hommage a Claudie Amado*, Laurent Macé, ed. Toulouse: Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 2006: 183-206; Settapani, Christian, *La noblesse du Midi carolingien...*: 6-8. He makes Cunegunda the mother of Herbert and the grandmother of another Cunegunda, the wife of Bernard I, king of Italy.



Abadal explains<sup>31</sup> how at least the replacement of the counts of Barcelona saw the appearance of the belligerent party against the Muslims in place of a more peaceful development of the territory. We can find the same significance, quite possibly, in the successions of Empúries or Osona-Cerdanya-Urgell, where Asnar Galindo had been expelled from Aragon by his son-in-law, García the Bad, in alliance with the Banū Qasim.<sup>32</sup> The rebellion of Aissó and Guillelmó, son of Berà, in the plain of Vic, in alliance with the Muslims, has been seen as a revolt of the local aristocrats against the new, more centralizing and warlike Frankish politics.<sup>33</sup> In Urgell, finally, came to power Galindo, son of Asnar, and Bernard of Tolosa in the other countries. However, in 834 there was a new and significant change in the assignment of the comital appointment, as power returned to members of the local aristocracy, in an alternation between them and the expansion of the family of Guilhèm of Tolosa:<sup>34</sup> Sunifred I in Urgell-Cerdanya-Osona, Sunyer I and his brother Alaric in Empúries-Rosselló (a fact that would make more sense if they were the descendants of count Ermenguer). Neither had the family of Berà disappeared:<sup>35</sup> at least from 843, we find Àrgila, son of Berà, as the count of Conflent-Rasès and his son, Berà II, was count from 846 onward. The details of the connections between these local aristocratic families are, at times, difficult to determine, but they allow us to begin to see and to grasp how the webs of local power were created through marriages. Alaric of Empúries married Rotruda, daughter of Berà I (who, we should not forget, possibly had his matrilineal origin in Rosselló), and a daughter of theirs, Ridlinda, would marry Radulf, count of Besalú brother of Wilfred the Hairy. At the same time, a son of Berà II, possibly married to Garsenda, was named Miró.<sup>36</sup> The later presence of the name Miró among the sons and grandsons of Sunifred and of Garsenda, wife of Guifré II Borrell, leads one to infer family ties between the lineages; ties difficult or impossible to elucidate with certainty, but that permit us to make out the politics of exogamous familial alliances between power groups in the Catalan counties.<sup>37</sup>

What can be noticed, I would say, is a similar and parallel process to that which occurred in the rest of the Carolingian empire. Facing the instability of the appointment of the counts and the weakening of central power, already in the 830's, the great families of the Carolingian nobility tried to construct large territories, governed with ever greater autonomy (even though the attempts failed,

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31. CC I: 265-266.

32. CC I: 267-270.

33. Salrach, Josep Maria. *El procés de formació...*: I, 73-90; CC I: 270-260.

34. Nor should we forget that in 829, Sunifred, son of Borrell, received the confirmation of his paternal inheritance (see below); and in 858 there is documentation of one viscount Sunifred of Barcelona about which we know nothing (see: Salrach, Josep Maria. *El procés de formació...*: 2, 56); this is similar to one Sunyer, count of Barcelona (19 August 862), hypothetically identified with Sunyer II of Empúries (Salrach, Josep Maria. *El procés de formació...*: 2, 60).

35. Salrach, Josep Maria. *El procés de formació...*: II, 6-11; Ponsich, Pere. "Bera I, comte de Barcelone...": 51-69.

36. Both Àrgila (Akhila) and Alaric are royal Visigothic names (Àkhila is the last king of Septimania just on the arrival of the Arabs), while the names Radulf and Riculf are Frankish.

37. Settipani, Christian. *La noblesse du Midi carolingien...*: 22.



at least during the first half of the century). While the local aristocracy attempted to reinforce their power over their territories with matrimonial alliances, this was still leaving out of consideration the necessary possession of comital power. At the end of the ninth century, the establishment of the inheritance of comital power ended in such a way that the counts sought to reinforce and refine their power through marriages with other territorial nobility (above all, this occurred over the succeeding century in the alliances between the viscount dynasties). The aristocracy also created familial alliances with the neighboring counts on both sides of the Pyrenees, above all after the 930's as Martí Aurell demonstrates.<sup>38</sup> However, they did not do so within the same familial group, or perhaps only very occasionally (these cases are quite dubious as will be seen); on the contrary, they expand the group widening the web of relations and constructing extensive horizontal familial relations.

We now move to the third generation. We know of eight children of Sunifred:<sup>39</sup> Wilfred I, count of Barcelona-Osona-Urgell, married to Guinedilda, daughter of another Sunifred; Sesenanda; Sunifred, who abandoned holy orders before 10 June, 878, and who was abbot of Arles-sur-Tec from 881;<sup>40</sup> Miró I, the Old, count of Conflent-Rosselló, married (according to Ponsich) to one Quixilona;<sup>41</sup> Radulf, count of Besalú, married to Ridlinda of Empúries; Quixilona, married to Dela, count of Empúries (Dela and Ridlinda were children of Alaric and Rotruda);<sup>42</sup> and Riculf, bishop of Elna.<sup>43</sup> At least one thing is evident at first glance: both the marriages as

38. Aurell, Martí. *Les noces del comte...*: 41-70; even though the treatment is hypothetical, for the previous era, see: Settipani, Christian. *La noblesse du Midi carolingien...*

39. It is possible that there had been a first-born son named Sunifred who died young; otherwise it would be difficult to explain the repetition of the naming pattern with Sunifred as the third born, considering that everything indicates a pattern of name repetition and with the presence of an apparently new name for the first son (Wilfred), which does not seem to originate in maternal collection of proper names.

40. Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició...": 11 and 13.

41. Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de l'ascendència...": 35-44.

42. The same policy is followed in the marriage of the sister, Anna, to Esteve, a noble in Septimania of Gothic origin (from the family of the viscounts of Narbonne), who held large estates, some of which Anna later left to her sister Ridlinda, wife of Radulf of Besalú (Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició...": 14, says Ridlinda was her niece). The presence of Francó I as viscount of Osona in 879 provides proof of the relations with the viscounts of Narbonne, see: Settipani, Christian. *La noblesse du Midi carolingien...*: 19-20; Stasser, Thierry. "La maison vicomtale de Narbonne aux x<sup>e</sup> et xi<sup>e</sup> siècles". *Annales du Midi*, 105 (1993): 489-507.

43. Aurell lists the children in this order (and adds one Hunfrid after Sisenanda, which seems to be an error originating from a poor reading of Sunifred in the epistle from Pope John VIII to Miró and Sunifred in May, 878 (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epistolae Merovingici et Karolini aevo*, Gerhard Laehr, Enrich Caspar, eds. Berlin: apud Weidmannos, 1928: 107-108). However, apart from the possible premature death of Hunfrid, I would say that we should believe that Sunifred must be younger than Radulf and Miró (who already appears in the above mentioned act of 873), since these two brothers shared the task of governing while Sunifred, like Riculf, took up an ecclesiastical career. The names are almost all Gothic and local, except Radulf, which is again a Frankish name (found at Saint Gall and more than once in the PI : II, 419, see: *Radulfus*); and Riculf that is found in Moissac (Morlet, Marie Thérèse. *Les noms de personne...*: Riculfus; PI: V, 80).



well as the ecclesiastical dignity show alliances and interests on both sides of the Pyrenees. But we will view this in greater detail.

Wilfred is a new name for the family and, in the Catalan documentation it begins to appear in the same years, the first instance of the name is a viscount Wilfred in Girona in a document from 2 September, 841 (CC V: doc. 18). Afterwards, we find it in 862, 879, 889 and 893.<sup>44</sup> It does not seem to be a very common name in the germanic tradition, but, as in the case of his brother Radulf, it is possibly of Frankish origin, as I noted above. Is there evidence of the undemonstrable relations between the family of Bello-Sunifred and Frankish lineages?<sup>45</sup>

The marriage of Wilfred I with Guinedilda, daughter of one Sunifred, has given rise to different hypotheses.<sup>46</sup> Recently, Martí Aurell<sup>47</sup> thought of her as a lady from Cerdanya, possibly the daughter of Sunifred the abbot of Saint Mary of Lagrasse, son of Oliba I of Carcassonne.<sup>48</sup> His argument that certain lands that she possessed made her closer to the region (Cerdanya-Empordà) is not necessarily solid proof because, as I have said and as can be seen widely in the literature, the Pyrenean nobility had highly dispersed possessions. The most common hypothesis<sup>49</sup> is that she was the daughter of the *fidelis* Sunifred, son of the *fidelis* Borrell, who is almost certainly the same Borrell, count of Osona-Cerdanya-Urgell.<sup>50</sup> In the royal precept for Sunifred I of Urgell,<sup>51</sup> he is also named *fidelis* but not count, as are *fidelis* Borrell/Sunifred. Thus, because the first of them certainly was a count, based only on this element, it is not possible to separate the identification of the Borrell, grandfather

44. Another Wilfred found in the literature, comes from a document of 22 January, 850 (CC V: 83-85, doc. n° 30); according to the latest editors, it is a bad reading of Hunifred. Even so, as Joan Vilaseca suggested to me while working on this personage, and as was previously thought, it is very possible that this Wilfred is the same Wilfred found in 841 as viscount of Girona. Corbera, Joan. *Recerques sobre l'Alta Edat Mitjana Catalana*. Terrassa: 2010: 34-42.

45. Such as, for example, the alliance between Sunyer I of Empúries and Bernat of Gothia, because, according to Ponsich (Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició...": 22-23) he married his daughter Ermengarda (thus the Frankish name Gausbert entered the patrilineal proper names of the family).

46. CC V: 68 (doc. n° 4; 26 June 885); there it is declared that the countess holds lands in Cabanes of Empurdà, purchased by her father, Sunifred.

47. Aurell, Martí. "Jalons pour une enquête...": doc. 4; Settiani does not propose any parentage; Settiani, Christian. *La noblesse du Midi carolingien...*

48. The ties of the family of Bello, like the family of Wilfred I, to the monastery of La Grassa could be an outside confirmation of the decendat of the latter from the former; see: Salrach, Josep Maria. "Memòria, poder i devoció: donacions catalanes a La Grassa (segles IX-XII)", *Histoire et archéologie des terres catalanes au Moyen Age*, Philippe Sénac, ed. Perpignan: Presses Universitaires de l'Université de Perpignan, 1995: 103-118.

49. For example: Fluvià, Armand de. *Els primitius comtats...*: 31; Costa, Maria-Mercè. "Les genealogies comtals catalanes", *Symposium internacional sobre els orígens de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1991: I, 447-462, 453.

50. Borrell, in CC II: 316 (preceptes per a particulars n° 4, lost), received a diploma from Charlemagne for several possessions in Fontcuberta (Narbonne); while Sunifred (CC II: 323-324, particulars doc. n° 9; 14 October 829) received one from Louis I which confirms the paternal patrimony (CC II: preceptes per a particulars doc. n° 9; 14 October, 829). Guinedildis is a Frankish name that we already find in: PI: II, 429, *Wineguildis*.

51. CC II: 333-334, documents particulars n° 15; 25 January 843.



of Guinedilda and the Borrell, count of Osona. Evidently there is no certainty. The eastern interests of the father of Guinedilda and the *fidelis* Sunifred probably contribute to at least this first part of the identification. The second part is more dubious. Even so, if we think about the important roll played by Borrell during the time of the Hispanic conquests of Charlemagne, the fact that this Borrell could be one of many *hispani* who fled to Septimània after Roncesvall's defeat and who was named count of Osona because his family was important in the area could explain both the possessions in Narbonne and the title of count; this makes the possible identification easier, also given the rarity of the name, which began to appear in documentation with some continuity only after the end of the ninth century (see: RAC 1: s.v. Borrellus).

About this Borrell, it is said that he was, in addition to being count of Osona-Cerdanya, also count of Urgell, but without clear proof. For instance, there is a document, almost certainly false, badly dated, and unconsidered by scholarship, that could confirm this, adding significant new elements to make Borrell the grandfather of the wife of Wilfred the Hairy. Cebrià Baraut<sup>52</sup> published a document, that he declares a forgery, in which one *Borrellus gratia Dei comes et marchio et coniuge me committissa Engelrada*<sup>53</sup> gave to Saint Mary of *Kastro veteri* (Castell-Llebre) the possessions that they had in the stated castle. The document is conserved as a copy in volume I of the *Liber dotaliorum* of the Seu d'Urgell of the thirteenth century and is dated 29 October, 942 (967). In the document it is stated that the possession, *advenit nobis per aprisione et per successore (sic) (success[i]o[ne] re[ge]?) nostro Karlomagne*. In fact Baraut dates the document *die sabato IIII kalendas novembris, anno VII regnante Ledovigo rex in Francia filius Karle Magne*, a date that corresponds to 29 October, 820. Evidently Baraut thought that *Karle Magne* referred to Charles III, the Simple (when in the documentation of the *Marca*, that Charles is never titled *Magnus*) and *Ledovigo* to Louis IV of Ultramar; both identifications would place the date of the document in 942. On the contrary, Baraut proposes to change the date to 967, which is doubly incongruous, because, I imagine, he thinks of Borrell II as count of Barcelona and Urgell, which was only true after 948. Consequently, *Ledovigo* would be Louis V,

52. Baraut, Cebrià. "Els documents, dels segles IX i X, conservats a l'Arxiu Capitular de la Seu d'Urgell". *Urgellia* 2 (1979): 7-145, doc. n° 102.

53. In the signature of the document, we find: *ego princeps Urgelli Borrellus*. Keeping in mind the use of the title, *princeps*, in the lands of the *Marca*, this forgery must be at least from the eleventh century (see: Cingolani, Stefano Maria. "Estratègies de legitimació de poder comtal: l'abat Oliba, Ramon Berenguer I, la Seu de Barcelona i les *Gesta Comitum Barchinonensium*". *Acta historica et archaeologica mediaevalia*, 29 (2008): 134-175, especially pages 152-156; and Cingolani, Stefano Maria. *Llenguatges de la memòria i del poder (Catalunya segles x-xiii)*. València: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, forthcoming. The name of the wife of Borrell is of Frankish origin, found in the Catalan counties only after 911 and in areas of Frankish onomastic influence (RAC: I, 33, Ingilradus) however, the name is quite widespread in Frankish territories (see: PI: *Ingilrada*). If this was actually the name of the wife of Borrell of Osona-Urgell, mother of the *fidelis* Sunifred and grandmother of the wife of Wilfred the Hairy, Guinedilda, who also had a name of Frankish origin, it would be another demonstration of the union of the families of local magnates with the Frankish families, both to reinforce the fidelity of the Hispano-Gothic nobility and integrate them better into the *regnum Francorum* as well as, on the part of the Frankish aristocracy, for the purpose of creating a more solid power base in the recently conquered lands.





son of Lothair and great-grandson of Charles the Simple; furthermore, his seventh regnal year corresponds to 986 (still co-ruler with his father) and not at all to 967. Thus this dual proposal has no merit.<sup>54</sup> Hence, the only coherent date is 820.

The document contains a language and several difficult-to-explain anachronisms for an original (even though some errors can be justified by the difficulty of transcribing, during the thirteenth century, a document originally written in Visigothic). However, whether it is based on some prior document as the correct date demonstrates (something uncommon in entirely false documents), or whether if the document is completely false, to my understanding, it testifies to the idea of the existence of one count Borrell of Urgell in the Carolingian era. This idea would be difficult to invent without having some documentary basis or by simply projecting count Borrell II back in time. That is, if this document is completely false, as it seems to be, it attempts to place the donation in the time of Louis the Pious and in a time when Borrell I of Urgell-Osona-Cerdanya was, possibly, still living.<sup>55</sup>

As a consequence of this hypothesis, we can explain the marriage of Wilfred I to the granddaughter of the first count of Urgell, occurring before 20 January, 877, through the needs of the count. He was only recently also the count of Urgell through the succession of Salomó and needed to reinforce his position and domain with the alliance to an old family of notables in the county, who also had influence outside the area of Urgell-Osona, as the possessions in Narbonne testify. This support was still more useful, if not necessary, in the moment in which Wilfred I began to direct and control the repopulation efforts in the regions of the county of Osona that had remained depopulated after the revolt of Aissó.<sup>56</sup> It was not, there-

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54. However, those who cite or use the document accept the incorrect date of 942 and do not note the proposed date of 967 (RAC: I, Borrellus; Terré, Mercè; Roca, Ventura. "Castell de Castell-llebre", *Catalunya Romànica*. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1992: VI, 284).

55. Fluvià, Armand de. *Els primitius comtats...*: 52 and Salrach, Josep Maria. *El procés de formació...*: I, 14, 34; II, 125. It must also be said that the fake act of consecration from of the Seu of Urgell, dated in the sixth year of the reign of Louis, mentions one count Seniofred; Baraut dates the document 1 November, 839 (Baraut, Cebrià. "Les actes de consagracions d'esglésies del bisbat d'Urgell (segles IX-XII)". *Urgellia* 1 (1978): 11-182, doc. n° 2), while Ordeig i Mata dates it 1 November, 816, and demonstrates that it is a fake (Ordeig i Mata, Ramon. *Les dotatives de les esglésies de Catalunya (segles IX-XII)*. Vic: Estudis històrics, 1993: I/1: 14, doc. n° 1), in one way or, another is one more element of the tradition that establish Borrell and Seniofré of Urgell. We also find, in the continuation of the *De gestis Francorum* of Aimoin de Fleury, that Louis, while still king of Aquitaine and prior to the conquest of Barcelona: *Ordinavit autem illo tempore in finibus Aquitanorum circumaque firmissimam tutelam. Nam civitatem Ausonam, castrum Cardona, Castaserram et reliqua oppida olim deserta munivit et habitati fecit, et Burrello comiti cum congruis auxiliis tuenda commisit*. Fleury, Aimon. *De regum procerumque Francorum origine gestisque clarissimis usque ad Philippum Augustum, libre quinque nunc primum impressi*. Paris: Badius Asensius, 1514: chap. III, f. 102r, the same Borrell would also participate in the expedition against Tortosa (c. 804-806), together with Hisembard, Ademar and Berà (Fleury, Aimon. *De regum procerumque Francorum origine...*: chap. VI, f. 103r). The continuations of the work of Aimoin (possibly composed at Saint-Germain-des-Prés) are still in need of study and must be read in the edition of *Annonii monachi benedectini*, dedicated to Guillem Petit and printed in Paris in 1514; Therein, we find notice of Jerónimo Zurita (book I, chap. IV) demonstrating the error in the name of the author (*Anonio*), who also cites the document which I just mentioned (Zurita, Jerónimo. *Anales de Aragón*, ed. Ángel Canellas. Saragossa: Institució Fernando el Católico, 1998: I, 24-25).

56. Salrach, Josep Maria. *El procés de formació...*: II, 121-139.





fore, a marriage between crossed cousins, as Aurell thought, but rather a marriage between family clans, rooted in territory, seeking to strengthen their authority and power at the moment in which the distance to the Carolingian monarchy became ever stronger.<sup>57</sup>

Returning now to the brothers of Wilfred the Hairy, we must say that about Sesenanda, we know nothing, while I have spoken about Sunifred above. For his part, Miró I the Old, count of Conflent and Rosselló, is a more interesting case. The name of his spouse is unknown, even though Ponsich<sup>58</sup> says that it is Quixilona, present in the donation to Saint Germanus of Cuixà in 1 December, (877) (CC VI: doc. 107); however, we do know that he had at least one daughter, Godlana, who married Benció, son of Sunyer II of Empúries.<sup>59</sup> He might have had a second, Guinedilda, as I will demonstrate later. Ponsich places Sunyer II's succession to Miró as the count of Rosselló in doubt,<sup>60</sup> but it is certain, even with imprecise data, that Benció was count, in such a manner that the marriage between the children of the counts of Rosselló and Empúries could serve to strengthen and guarantee Benció's position at the head of the county.<sup>61</sup> If we see the families of Sunifred I and Sunyer I as the descendants of Bello, this marriage would be considered endogamous. However, if we use the opposing hypothesis, it would reinforce my own concept of Frankish marriages between lineages of notables within a territory, with lands and webs of allegiances that serve to establish and reinforce their power.

The marriage of Radulf, count of Besalú, with Ridlinda,<sup>62</sup> daughter of Alaric of Empúries and Rotruda, daughter of Berà I, strengthened the family ties between non-warring lineages, that set apart from the power by the government of the Frank's counts (above all Bernat of Septimània and Bernat of Gothia) reinforce their roots in the territory and expanded the web of possessions and patronage (Rotruda would inherit the lands of Narbonne that were left by her sister, Anna, noted above). This tie would be further strengthened by the marriage between Quixilona and Dela of Empúries, brother of Sunyer II (the county of Besalú borders on the county of Empúries and the *pagus* of Peralada).<sup>63</sup>

57. We can meet again this dynamic other parts of the Empire; for example, see: Hammer, Carl I. "Crowding the King: Rebellion and Political Violence in Late-Carolingian Bavaria and Italy". *Studi Medievali*, 48 (2007): 493-541, with extensive bibliography.

58. Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició...": 13.

59. See: Aurell, Martí. "Jalons pour une enquête...": doc. n° 43 and Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició...": 14.

60. Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició...": 15.

61. Must we believe that Quixilona, according to Ponsich, the wife of Miró, must have been a noble of Rossellones origin, as the name of the daughter, with only two attestations in that county, also suggest? The name also appears little in the Frankish sources, but the root *god-* is more productive (Pl: *Gotlanda* and *Gotlindis*).

62. Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició...": 16-19, who also denies that Radulf was count of Besalú and makes him the lieutenant of his brother in Conflent and Rosselló.

63. Martí, Ramon. *Col·lecció diplomàtica de la Seu de Girona (817-1100)*. Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 1997: 50-62. Martí proposes a rather different reading than previous regarding the affirmation of the power of Wilfred I "the Hairy" and of the rol of Sunyer II, count of Empúries; his work is still awaiting revision or



We must also think about the possible military function of these wider webs of solidarity that unified all the counties of the *Marca* and the lands of Septimania at a moment when the defense of the territory was becoming ever more a local task, with few possibilities of receiving help from the weakening and distant central power. The marriages of the sons of Sunifred I, more than following crossed endogamous lines, traced a web of alliances —from Urgell all the way to Rosselló and Narbonne— between families of *hispani* or Hispano-Gothic origin. All of these families belonged to the first southern nobility loyal to Charlemagne (Bello, Berà, Borrell), who, possibly through these marriages (at least those of Berà and Borrell) had sought to integrate the *Hispanos* and the Franks as a way to the reinforcement of the new Frankish dominion. They were aligned with groups we would call pacifistic, who, from *ca.* 820/840 till *ca.* 870, had been gradually alienated from comital power (but not territorial control) by the Frankish magnates for the purpose of both the war with Islam and in order to direct the construction of broad domains, which were weakly controlled by the monarch.

Before proceeding, it seems I should finally clarify a point that until now has only been alluded to. Since its formulation by Ramon d'Abadal, the hypothesis that would identify Alaric and Sunyer I, the originators of the lineage of the counts of Empúries, as the brothers of Sunifred I of Barcelona and Oliba I of Carcassonne, and all of them sons of the count of Carcassonne, has been largely accepted —even though this hypothesis is hypothetical as I said at the beginning.<sup>64</sup> As I have also said, Pere Ponsich is the only decidedly contrary voice against the hypothesis.<sup>65</sup> I believe the question merits further clarification, beyond the contributions of Ponsich.

First, we should give some consideration to the historiographic treatment of these presumed family ties. This should be done both because it can place in doubt certain hypotheses by contributing other reasons to those already mentioned and those of Ponsich, and because it will allow us to clarify some aspects of the formation of family memory and the genealogical constructions of the lineage. Indeed, it should be noted that the counts of Empúries are totally absent both from the *Gesta Comitum Barchinonensium*, as Ponsich also noted, and also from the annals of the Family of the Ripoll; they only make their first appearance in the *Annals de Ripoll*

acceptance by the scholarly community; on page 54, with good reason, Martí claims that Sunyer II and Dela (count of Girona) were not brothers (Martí, Ramón. *Col·lecció diplomàtica...*: 54) the consequence being that the marriage of Virgilia (daughter of Dela) to Miró II (Martí, Ramón. *Col·lecció diplomàtica...*: 60) would represent an attempt to consolidate the power of the count of Cerdanya over Girona, which would then enter the possessions of Wilfred II Borrell in 908.

64. Abadal, Ramon. *Els primers comtes catalans...*; Abadal, Ramon. *Els temps i el regiment del comte Guifré el Pilós*. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1989: 299; Salrach, Josep Maria. *El procés de formació...*: II, 100; Salrach remains neutral, but cite this contrary opinion of Ponsich, Pere. "Bera I, comte de Barcelona...", while Fluvià, Armand. *Els primitius comtats...*: 59, says curtly that they were, "certainly sons of Bello of Carcassonne." Aurell, Martí. *Les noces del comte...*: 31-36, accepts and develops the idea following their matrimonial arrangements; it must be said that, apart from Sunyer I and II (and *Suniarius* is a fairly common name), the naming choices of the counts of Empúries have no connection to the counts of Carcassonne nor to the other Catalan counts.

65. Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició...": 22-24.



II in 1153, when they record the death of count Ponç II Hug.<sup>66</sup> This observation leads to three different considerations, without the possibility of determining the probability of each, at least as long as no new data emerges or it might be possible to refine the analysis further. However, these considerations should reinforce the hypothesis of Ponsich.

First, one might think (an idea I have followed to this point) that the hypothesis of Abadal is wrong, and that Sunyer I and Alaric of Empúries do not belong to the family of the counts of Carcassonne, but rather, I would say, they are probably descendents of Ermenguer, the first count of Empúries;<sup>67</sup> for this reason, they are perceived as a foreign lineage by historians (in the manner of the counts of Pallars and Ribagorça) and do not appear until very late in the historiography tied to the lineages descendant from Wilfred I. The absence of any documentary or onomastic data leads me to prefer this hypothesis, above all based on the matrimonial relations that can be interpreted in a completely contrary sense to that which is generally accepted and followed, as has been seen.<sup>68</sup>

Second, and if the hypothesis of Abadal were to be accepted, it should be considered that the dynastic memory did not conserve the record of the first forefather known to us: the count Bello. In fact, the only document which records the familial relations —and which has allowed use to determine the predecessors of Sunifred I of Barcelona-Urgell— is an act from 879, already cited above, which records that Bello was the grandfather of Miró I the Old, count of Conflent and brother of Wilfred I. It is quite likely that, with the passage of time and the shifting, from the south of France to the *Marca Hispanica*, of the interests of one branch of the family, the record of their common predecessors has been hidden; or, as I suggested above, the record would have lost historic significance given the importance assumed by Wilfred I as the head of the house and the first hereditary count. This importance emerged in more than one deed of the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh, following the typical dynamics of the construction of a family memory. However, I would say that this is not accomplished completely among the descents of Wilfred I, at least not before the end of the tenth century (which is when the *Annals de Cuixà*, the origins of the *Rivipullense* family, began to be redacted),<sup>69</sup> because the name of Oliba Cabreta, count of Besalú-Cerdanya, still recalls specifically

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66. They are also not mentioned in the documentation. However, we do have an expression of familiar awareness among those that were definitely sons of Bello in the often cited act of Saint Mary of Formiguera.

67. If the oldest documentation allows us to perceive, as has been noted, the familial relations between the houses of Barcelona and Carcassonne, that which eventually existed between those houses and the house of Empúries never appears in the sources.

68. As Ponsich notes (Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de la partició...": 22-23), with the enmity and the competition between Sunyer I of Empúries and Miró I "the old," it becomes even more difficult to see such a close kinship between the two.

69. Cingolani, Stefano Maria. *La memòria dels reis. Les quatre grans cròniques i la historiografia catalana, des del segle X al XIV*. Barcelona: Base, 2007: 13 and MHCA, 3.



the old count of Carcassonne.<sup>70</sup> Also to the contrary, one should keep in mind that the members of the different lineages derived from Wilfred I still maintained these feelings of inter-familial connections at least until the era of Abbot Oliba.<sup>71</sup>

Third, together with the preceding arguments, the subsequent organization of dynastic memory must date from the eleventh century, given the confusion between the first descendants of Wilfred I. That is when the lineages began to be structured vertically and this oldest record would have been subsequently forgotten, if there had still been any trace. It must also be said that the origin legend from the *Gesta Comitum*, that of Wilfred of Arrià, even changed the name of the common ancestor of the then counts of Barcelona, Urgell, Besalú, and Cerdanya. Thus, since the *Gesta* centered on the beginning of the hereditary transmission of the lands of the *Marca Hispanica*, dominated by the members of the same family, it could not help but contribute to the later erasing of any possible record of family bonds with the lands beyond the Pyrenees.

In any case, these final conclusions will be meaningful only if the hypothesis of the common lineage from Bello of Carcassonne is accepted, a hypothesis I do not believe based on everything stated above. Rather, these conclusions serve to set some guidelines for the construction and organization of the dynastic memory.

To either deny or more precisely establish the existence of the familial tie between the counts of Urgell-Barcelona and the counts of Empúries is a central element in trying to better understand the distribution of power in the *Marca Hispanica* and in Septimània, and the balance and transmission of power within a specific number of families. It also has strong implications for the assessment of the evolution of these same structures. Finally, the existence, or not, of these ties is also central to the possibility of choosing one model or another for the interpretation of marriage politics. In the case that one accepts the hypothesis that counts Oliba I of Carcassonne and Sunifred I of Urgell-Barcelona and Sunyer I of Empúries are brothers, it becomes evident that the links between the families of Empúries and Besalú-Cerdanya follow an endogamous model of marriage; as such, this interpretation could also sort out other more ambiguous cases. In the opposite case, that is, that Sunyer I is not from the family of Bello, but rather might be descended from Ermenguer, count of Empúries (that is, that Sunyer might be a member of a family of local magnates brought into comital power at the time of the conquest), this case would fail one of the strongest pieces that supports the endogamous reading of marriage politics starting from the first generations of counts, reinforcing the contrary hypothesis to Abadal—that which I am defending here.

If we move now to the following generation, that of the sons of Wilfred I, we will again find some of these connections and it will be possible some of the above formulated hypotheses; at the very least, it will be possible to provide further discussion.

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70. For the recurrence of this name in the family, see: Ponsich, Pere. "El problema de l'ascendència...": 40-41.

71. Cingolani, Stefano Maria. "Estratègies de legitimitació..."; Cingolani, Stefano Maria. *Llenguatges de la memòria...*



The known sons of Wilfred I “the Hairy” are: Wilfred II Borrell, married to Garsenda (who, despite the hypotheses that claim she was a daughter of Sunyer II of Empúries, is for the moment of unknown origin);<sup>72</sup> Miró II of Cerdanya-Besalú, married to Ava and also maintaining a concubine relationship with Virgilia of Empúries; Sunifred II of Urgell, married to Adelaide; Radulf, bishop of Urgell; Sunyer, count of Barcelona, married to Riquilda; Emma, abbess of Sant Joan; Quixilona, Riquilda and Ermessenda.

Wilfred II was possibly the first born of Wilfred the Hairy because of his name (but see considerations about his naming formulated above), and because he succeeded Wilfred I in the most important county. He has the additional or second name of Borrell, which would be the name of his maternal grandfather.<sup>73</sup> The documentation is full of people with double names, even though the reason is not always possible to establish; for example: *Miro que vocant Argemundo*<sup>74</sup> or *Cuscha que vocant Ermovigia*.<sup>75</sup> However, the later documentation of the counties presents many cases of double names or renaming, in some instances for dynastic reasons, and in others for the wishes of the maternal line.<sup>76</sup> Thus, we could imagine that the name Borrell is due to his mother, Guinedilda, who wanted to perpetuate the record of her lineage by introducing a new name into the name's patrimony of the family of her husband; Wilfred, the name of the founder, comes from the repertoire of names of the paternal family, where the name of Sunifred already existed.<sup>77</sup> If we can say no more about the political alliances represented by the marriages of Wilfred II, the marriage of his daughter Riquilda to Eudes, viscount of Narbonne, continues to demonstrate interest within the house (still seen in their supportive connections) for alliances with nobles beyond the Pyrenees, especially in the Narbonne.

72. For example Aurell, Martí. *Les noces del comte...*: 36; Vajay, Szabolcs de. “Comtesses d’origine occitane dans la Marche d’Espagne aux 10<sup>e</sup> et 11<sup>e</sup> siècles”. *Hidalguia* 28 (1980): 585-616, 755-788, 601-605; Vajay makes Garsenda the daughter of Eudes of Tolosa and Garsenda of Albi; this hypothesis is accepted by S tasser, Thierry. “La maison vicomtale de Narbonne”...; however, it is rejected by: Settapani, Christian, *La noblesse du Midi carolingien...*: 22.

73. There are documents in which he appears only as “Borrell,” including a sale made by his daughter, Riquilda, wife of Eudes/Otó, viscount of Narbonne (Aurell, Martí. “Jalons pour une enquête”...: doc. 18); on double naming, see Le Jan, Régine. *Famille et pouvoir...*: 192-193.

74. *Diplomatari de l’Arxiu Capitular de la Catedral de Barcelona...*: 276-277, doc. n° 4 (16 March, 1001).

75. *Diplomatari de l’Arxiu Capitular de la Catedral de Barcelona...*: 293-294, doc. n° 20 (25 January, 1002).

76. Especially significant for this second possibility are: Ramon Berenguer, renamed Alfons by his mother Peronella; Pere, renamed Ramon Berenguer when he became count of Provence; and Pere, renamed Jaume by his mother Maria of Montpellier (Cingolani, Stefano Maria. “Seguir les vestigies dels antecessors”. *Llinatge, reialesa i historiografia a Catalunya des de Ramon Berenguer IV a Pere II (1131-1285)*. *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 36 (2006): 201-240, 203-205 and Cingolani, Stefano Maria. *Llenguatges de la memòria...*); Vajay states, on the contrary, that the son of Wilfred I was originally called Borrell and added the “forename of the realm” when he succeeded his father (Vajay, Szabolcs de. “Comtesses d’origine Occitane...”: 599); this reading, contrary to the above, would find confirmation in the hypothesis that Wilfred II Borrell might not have been the first born of Wilfred I and would have to have had an older brother named Sunifred, who died in infancy and remained unmentioned.

77. The claim that the later existence of Borrell among the comital names is justified by the fact that Sunifred I might be the son of Borrell of Osona does not hold much weight; on the contrary, it is explained perfectly by the hypothesis that I have laid out at length in this article.



More explicit are the matrimonial relations of Wilfred's brother, Miró II of Cerdanya-Besalú. His wife, Ava, is the daughter of the levite Fidel, a local magnate, possibly also with possessions in the Narbonne.<sup>78</sup> This marriage, like that of his cousin, Guinedilda, with the viscount of Cerdanya, forms part of the same strategy of alliances between local magnates used to broaden the web of relationships and reinforce the bases of power.<sup>79</sup> His taking of Virgília, his cousin, as a concubine (daughter of Dela of Empúries and his aunt, Quixilona),<sup>80</sup> even though it is not an official relationship, tightened further the relations between the Pyrenees countries (Besalú and Cerdanya) and the counts of Empúries, uniting in alliances a zone at the extreme fringe of the eastern Pyrenees.

Finally, we must consider the marriage of Sunifred II of Urgell with Adelaida. Aurell claims that Adelaida is his niece (daughter of his brother Sunyer I of Barcelona). This would be, up to now, the only marriage that can be categorized, without any possible discussion, as strictly endogamous, to a degree prohibited by both civil and ecclesiastical law.<sup>81</sup> Wilfred had separated the counties of Urgell and Barcelona, and this marriage would tighten the ties and, in case Sunifred died without sons, allow Urgell to return to the counts of Barcelona. If this kinship relation is true, then it would seem to be the product of a temporary contingency and not a widespread practice. Also, this possible identification proposed by Aurell is not entirely secure. Christian Settipani, though hypothetically, considers Adelaida to be the sister of Riquilde, daughter of Ermengaud of Rouergue and Adelaide.<sup>82</sup> If this is the case, namely two brothers marrying two sisters, which is not improbable, we must see this as a double bond with the family of the counts of Rouergue.

The marriage of Sunyer I of Barcelona with one Riquilda of unknown origin is more difficult to evaluate. The hypothesis of Vajay, accepted by Settipani,<sup>83</sup> makes her the daughter of Ermengaud I of Rouergue, although there is no clear evidence; this hypothesis is seductive because it would also explain the appearance of the name Ermengol among the proper names of the counts of Barcelona and later Urgell—Ermengol is the second son both of Sunyer I (Ermengol of Osona, brother of Borrell II, killed at Baltarga in combat against the Hungarians in 942) and of Borrell II (Ermengol I of Urgell). In this case, we find ourselves with another early example

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78. Aurell, Martí. "Jalons pour une enquête...": doc. n° 9.

79. In the will of Miró II, still printed in Bofarull, Pròsper de. *Los condes de Barcelona vindicados*. Barcelona: Oliveras-Monmant, 1836 (facsimile, Barcelona: Fundación Conde de Barcelona, 1988): I, 88-90 (13 June, 925), Guinedilda, Miró's cousin and married to the viscount of Cerdanya Remesari, is present among the executors; we do not know who this Guinedilda is, but hers is one of the first examples of marriage between daughters of the dynasty of counts and the sons of the viscounts; this practice must have reinforced the authority of the count over the territory. This Guinedilda could be the daughter of Miro I "the old," who certainly had one daughter, Godlana, who married Benció, the son of Sunyer II of Empúries.

80. Aurell, Martí. "Jalons pour une enquête...": doc. n° 10 and see above, note 62.

81. Aurell, Martí. "Jalons pour une enquête...": doc. n° 11 and Aurell, Martí. *Les noces del comte...*: 36.

82. Settipani, Christian, *La noblesse du Midi carolingien...*: 25-27.

83. Vajay, Szabolc de. "Comtesses d'origine Occitane...": 589-598; Settipani, Christian. *La noblesse du Midi carolingien...*: 25-26.





of a search for wives far from the lands strongly related to those of the *Marca* in the southern Pyrenees. This is reinforced by the hypothesis on the origin of Adelaide.

Among the other sons of Wilfred I, two entered the church, as is normal: Radulf was bishop of Urgell and Emma the abbess of Sant Joan; we know no more about Riquilda and Ermessenda than their names.<sup>84</sup>

However, I believe something more can be said about Quixilona.<sup>85</sup> It is known that she died on 22 February, 945, according to a stone inscription, that could still be read at the time of Pròsper de Bofarull, in the chapel of the Torre de la Garriga's, near Granollers.<sup>86</sup>

*Hic requiescit bonae memoriae Chixiloni Deo dicata, filia Wifredi comitis. Dimittat ei Deus. Amen. Quae obiit VIII kalendas martii, Era DCCCCLXXXIII, anni Domini DCCCCXLV, anno VIII regnante Ludovico rege.*

We find one Quixilona, married to one Ansemon, testified for in these same years. Quixilona, together with her husband, sold lands to their sons in Rosselló, Cerdanya and Besalú: *Sunieffredo clerico, Sentilles, Mirone, Riculfo, Suniario et Olibane*;<sup>87</sup>... all the possessions are in Rosselló touching the Conflent, Vallespir, or Cerdanya and Besalú. According to Vajay,<sup>88</sup> this Quixilona is the daughter of Dela of Empúries and Quixilona, his wife. Ansemund is the lord of Cameles and he is the origin of the house of the viscounts of Fenollet.<sup>89</sup> However, I do not believe that the Quixilona in the document is the daughter of Dela and Quixilona, but rather is the daughter of Wilfred I, the same as in the stone inscription. If we consider the names of his sons, apart from Sentill, they are typical names from the family of the counts of Barcelona: Sunifred, Miró, and Sunyer are his brothers; Oliba is the brother of the grandfather and the son of his brothers (Oliba Cabreta, son of Miró II and Oliba son of Radulf, bishop of Urgell); while Riculf is a name found much earlier in the counts of Besalú, Cerdanya, and above all, Rosselló (see: RAC 1: *Riculfo*). Thus the name could also come from the patrimonial proper names of the family of the husband. There is also another element which makes me believe this: the Quixilona, daughter of Wilfred I, died in 945 *Deo dictata*. This Quixilona sold land in Cerdanya, Besalú, and Rosselló to her sons in 941 (all these are territories where there were properties of the family of Wilfred). Why the sale to her sons? Is it not because she was preparing, already old, to abandon her worldly life and become a *Deo dictata*? Although this is not certain, the identification seems more probable to me than the other, both with respect to the norms of transmission of both names and lands, as well as because

84. Aurell, Martí. "Jalons pour une enquête...": docs. n° 13, 15 and 16.

85. Aurell, Martí. "Jalons pour une enquête...": doc. n° 14.

86. Bofarull, Prosper de. *Los condes de Barcelona...*: I, 29.

87. CC VI: doc. n° 259; 18 May, 941.

88. Vajay, Szabolc de. "Comtesses d'origine occitane..."; reprinted in: Costa, Maria-Mercè. "Les genealogies comtals...": 454.

89. The first to appear is Pere I, c 992-c 1017, son of Sentill, lord of Cameles, and quite possibly the *Sentilles*, son of Quixilona and Ansemund; see: Fluvià, Armand de. *Els primitius comtes...*: 182.



it is perfectly coherent with the marriage strategies of local magnates already seen and considered above.

Having arrived now at the middle of the tenth century, the time has come to end this brief contribution. On the one hand, there are less problems in the refining of the genealogical trees; on the other, the dynamics and necessities of establishing and transmitting power also continue to change. However, at least in the matrimonial politics, I believe that the century can be seen to have a certain continuity, more than a relatively radical change —only with modifications due to the evolution of the forms and exigencies of power. That is, it seems to me that we must view the marriages, most frequently between the first-born sons with nobles ladies north of the Pyrenees, and of the daughters with members of viscounts' families, as the outcome and perfecting of the strategies of the preceding period. The difference being that, if prior to this time these magnates (of the territory or adjacent lands) did not have an official and well determined title, by the middle of the tenth century they did begin to have it. Also, once is well established the power of the counts over the *Marca*, their demands for alliances with foreign lineages increase to increase its sphere of influence and interest, expanding further into the territories of the French *Midi* and not only into the lands of Septimania.

