Civil War, Invasion, and the Breakdown of Royal Authority

[91] The last years of the reign of Louis the Pious saw the beginning of a period of disorder which was to affect most regions of Southern France and the Spanish March for some seven decades. By the end of this period royal authority had all but vanished over the lands which lay south of Poitou and Burgundy. A new order of things had emerged in which real, de facto power had passed into the hands of a series of noble families who, by hereditary right, ruled local areas and were powerful enough to ignore the royal government.

The story of the emergence of such independent local ruling families is a complex one, and historians are still very much in disagreement over the details which attended the process and even, in some respects, over basic causes. It does, however, seem to be agreed that this change was due to a series or combination of factors. Perhaps the most important one was the civil strife which continued intermittently among various members of the Carolingian royal house and then between them and the rising Capetian family. Almost equally important as a basic factor were invasions by Vikings and Moslems which proved the inability of the royal government to protect its realm. Finally there was the policy of elevating certain officials to great authority by giving them command over two or more counties of the empire which, more often than not, resulted in their disloyalty to the central authorities as they attempted to make themselves completely independent.

All three of these factors were, as a matter of fact, interrelated. Dissension within the empire and civil war encouraged outside attack. Danger along the frontiers and actual invasions made it necessary to give broad powers over wide areas to certain counts. Such officials increased their authority still further by playing one side against the other in the disputes [92] which the various heirs of Louis the Pious had with one another. They could even negotiate or ally themselves with foreign invaders. Finally they could become powerful enough to revolt openly, which encouraged invaders and started the whole cycle going again.

Faced by this dangerous cycle Carolingian rulers strove to maintain their authority by maintaining peace, whenever possible, along their frontiers and by delicately balancing the power of their dangerous subordinates, the counts, by removing some from office and playing the rest one against the other as the occasion demanded. The remarkable thing is that they succeeded in maintaining their authority as long as they did, from the time of Bernard of Septimania to that of Boson of Provence. Yet in each crisis they were forced to give up a little more royal authority to gain support, until by the time of Charles the Fat they had little power left. When Eudes, of the new Capetian family, became king late in the century, he found himself a monarch who possessed only shadowy rights south of Poitou and Burgundy. An old era had ended and a new one was at hand.

Within this pattern of development let us examine in some detail the events of this period. By 829 Louis the Pious' premature division of his empire among his heirs was already affecting Southern
France and Catalonia. One son, Pepin, as we have noted, ruled the sub-kingdom of Aquitaine, now smaller in extent than had been the case earlier, since in 817 Septimania and the maritime counties of Catalonia had been taken from it and placed under direct imperial control. Provence, the Lyonnais, and Viennois formed part of a middle kingdom which was marked out as the portion of Lothaire, Louis' oldest son.1 In actual control of the frontiers of each of these regions were subordinate officials who exercised authority over wide areas. Berengar, count of Toulouse, who bore the title of *dux* and *marchio*, seems to have been in charge of the Gascon border and the interior counties of the Spanish March. Bernard, son of Duke William of Toulouse, controlled Septimania and Barcelona as *dux* and *marchio*, while his brother Gaucelm was count of Ampurias and Roussillon.2 Provence at this time was probably also controlled by a *dux* and *marchio*, as it was after 835, but we do not know the name of the count who controlled it as heir to Count Leibulf's authority.3

Difficulties along the frontiers, which we have discussed earlier, seem to have been the reason for the establishment of such extraordinary commands -- difficulties marked by the failure to recover Aragón and Navarre after the disastrous expedition of Count Ebles and Count Aznar in 824 (which left a restive Gascony), and the revolt of Aizo in Catalonia in 826, which resulted in the loss of Ausona and other border marches that had been gained between 802 and 814. In the face of such a crisis Count Bernard had held firm in Barcelona4 and Count Berengar seems to have restored the situation along the borders of the Toulousain, but they could do little more without additional military assistance.5 This assistance they did not receive, since the army raised in Northern France by Pepin and Lothaire never reached them. The peace which had to be made with Cordova in 828 left the custodians of the empire's southern frontiers still very much on the defensive.6

Such was the situation in the Midi when, in 830, while leading an expedition into Britanny, Louis the Pious' three older sons revolted against him, most probably because of resentment over his plans to carve a kingdom for Charles, his fourth son, out of land already allotted to them.7 This revolt seems to have had important repercussions in the Midi and Catalonia. Count Berengar of Toulouse stayed loyal to the emperor Louis. Count Bernard of Septimania favored his rebellious sons. Therefore, 8 when Louis won out, Bernard fled to Catalonia where he and his partisans held out against both Louis and his loyal Count Berengar of Toulouse until the latter's death in 835. With Berengar's death Count Bernard returned to imperial favor, and as his reward received Toulouse and other counties of Septimania.8 It was probably due to Bernard that Count Asnar Galindo, a partisan of Berengar, was then removed as count of Urgell-Cerdanya and this charge given to Sunifred, a relative of Count Oliba I of Carcassonne.9 Not until 838, however, was Sunifred able to drive Asnar Galindo from Pallars and Ribagorça which he had usurped in these troubled times.10 It is also probably the shift of power to Bernard from Berengar which was responsible for troubles with Aznar, count of Hither Gascony, who in 836 is reported to have been killed in a revolt and who was succeeded by his brother Sánchez over the strong objections of Pepin, king of Aquitaine.11

By 838 peace had come to the Midi and Spanish March in regions along the frontiers. But it did not last for long. For in that year King Pepin died and a group of Aquitanian nobles led by Ermenon, count of Poitou, defied the emperor Louis and proclaimed Pepin's young son Pepin II, king of Aquitaine. Louis was forced to lead an army in Aquitaine to put down this rebellion and, according to Ademar of Chabannes, replaced a number of the disloyal counts. He gave Rannoux the county of Poitou, Turpio that of Angoulême, and made Landry count of Saintes.12 Count Bernard of Septimania, who appears to have stayed neutral during this rebellion, was not removed from office. Perhaps this was because Louis did not feel strong enough to do this. More probably, however, he died in 840 before he had an opportunity to act.
This first period of civil wars, though, had other results for the Midi besides those already discussed. It encouraged outside attacks. These began in 838 when Pepin II was rebelling in Aquitaine and when Count Asnar Galindo was being expelled from Pallars and Ribagorça by partisans of Count Bernard. The first was an attack by Moslem pirates on Marseille, interesting because for twenty-five years the coasts of Provence had been free of such assaults.\(^{(13)}\) The second was a Viking attack directed against Aquitaine which since 820, also, had been free of such raids.\(^{(14)}\) It was probably in response to this Viking raid that Louis, in reorganizing Aquitaine following Pepin II's revolt, gave to Séguin the county of Bordeaux and bestowed on him the title of *dux* of Bordeaux.\(^{(15)}\) Probably he hoped, in doing so, to set up an important command which would guard the Garonne River entrance into Aquitaine. Perhaps with the same idea in mind in the same year he made Count Warm *dux* and *marchio* of Provence, a position he certainly held in 843, if not earlier.\(^{(16)}\)

These attempts by the emperor Louis in his last years to reorganize and bring peace to the empire, however, were to prove unsuccessful, for when \(98\) he died in 840 civil wars broke out at once. These civil wars were complex in character, particularly as far as Charles the Bald, Louis' son and heir for France, was concerned. On the one hand, in alliance with his brother, Louis of Germany, he directed his efforts against his other brother, Lothaire, and his middle kingdom of Lorraine. On the other hand, within his domains he had to deal with his nephew Pepin II, who was attempting to set up an independent kingdom of Aquitaine. Down to 843, it was his struggle with Lothaire which claimed most of his energies, a struggle that need not concern us here.\(^{(17)}\) After that time, for a decade he devoted his attention primarily to Pepin II.

The war in Aquitaine between Charles and Pepin II was a long and bitter one, primarily because Pepin had been given time to entrench himself solidly in the southern portion of this province along the borders of Gascony, and because Bernard of Septimania was again playing an equivocal role. Charles was fortunate to be freed of Bernard by his death in 844 but his son, William, an open ally of Pepin, made trouble for him despite the loyalty displayed by the Gothic counts of Carcassonne and Catalonia.\(^{(18)}\) Charles even suffered a serious defeat in 845 that forced him to make a temporary peace with Pepin, his rival.\(^{(19)}\) Gradually, however, the tide turned. In 849, Count Frédélon deserted Pepin and surrendered to Charles the important city of Toulouse.\(^{(20)}\) In 850, Sánchez, duke of Gascony, submitted.\(^{(21)}\) William, rebel son of Bernard of Septimania, who in 848 and 849 appears to have invaded Catalonia and allied himself with the Moslems, was beaten in battle and then slain when he tried to take refuge in Barcelona in 850.\(^{(22)}\) When Pepin was delivered to Charles in 852 as a prisoner by the duke of Gascony,\(^{(23)}\) Aquitaine seemed to be firmly in \(99\) Charles' hands. Pepin, however, made one last effort to secure his inheritance. In 862 or 863 Marquis Humfrid revolted against Charles along with Charles' son whom he had made sub-king of Aquitaine.\(^{(24)}\) Pepin, released from custody during the disorders that ensued, raised the standard of revolt again. This time he did not hesitate to ally himself with Viking invaders of the Midi.\(^{(25)}\) Thwarted in this last effort, he died soon afterwards leaving no heirs who could dispute control over the Midi with Charles the Bald.

This long struggle over Aquitaine between Carolingian rivals lasting from 840 to 852 and then again from 862 to 865 only partly explains the disorders which affected the Midi and Spanish March during this period. Equally disturbing were invasions by Moslems and by Viking pirates which bore particularly heavily on certain regions. Let us first consider those attacks which originated in Moslem Spain. The first such attack was launched by Cordova in 842, some fourteen years after peace had been made in 828. It was timed to coincide with that period of intense disorder in the Carolingian Empire which followed the death of Louis the Pious. Directed against Cerdanya, the invasion had little success, since it seems to have been contained by Count Sunifred of Urgell-Cerdanya before it reached the other
side of the Pyrenees. It was perhaps as a reward for this success that in 844 Sunifred was given the counties of Barcelona and Gerona upon the death of Bernard of Septimania. He apparently handled the defense of Catalonia and its marches skillfully, for in 847 envoys from Cordova went to Rheims to make peace with Charles the Bald.

This peace did not last long. By 848 Count Sunifred was dead and William, rebel son of Bernard, had invaded Catalonia. Taking advantage of the inevitable disorders which ensued, the Moslems, probably in alliance with William, attacked and took the city of Gerona. They continued hostilities after William's death in 850, and we learn that in 851-852 a Moslem army captured Barcelona itself and sacked it. They also appear to have extended their attacks toward the Northwest into Navarre and Gascony where at about this time they seem to have captured Duke Sánchez and his brother-in-law Count Ermenon of Périgord in battle. It may have been this Moslem threat which caused Duke Sánchez to desert Pepin and come to terms with Charles the Bald both in 850 and in 852. This new solidarity on the Carolingian side, however, did not stop the Moslems from making one more important raid on Catalonia, one in which in 856 they captured the castle of Tarrassa near the city of Barcelona.

Then they negotiated peace with Marquis Humfrid, Charles the Bald's new viceroy in the Midi, a peace which was to last some thirty years down to the time of Count Guifred later in the century. No doubt such Moslem incursions between 842 and 856 caused serious damage in parts of the Spanish March, but they did not directly affect the rest of the Midi. Quite different, however, was the case of another set of invasions, those which took place in Aquitaine and Gascony during the same period and were the result of the activities of Viking pirates. Serious Viking attacks seem to have begun in 843, five years after their first probing raid of 838. In this year, while all eyes were fixed on the civil war between Pepin II and Charles the Bald, the Vikings invaded the Loire region. Next year, after wintering on the island of Noirmoutier, they began an assault on the Garonne region. Meeting little opposition from local counts, who, as the chronicler puts it, were busy fighting each other, they penetrated far into the interior and for some five years plundered the land without serious opposition. Séguin, count of Bordeaux and Saintes, who seems to have been charged with the defense of the Garonne, was slain by the invaders in 845, and they ranged widely, sacking Bordeaux, Saintes, Angoulême, Périgord, Poitiers, and other centers here and in Gascony, as well as a number of monasteries and castella.

The end of the civil war between Pepin and Charles the Bald may have reduced their freedom of action to a certain extent, but they could still launch periodic raids into the interior from their fortified island bases along the coast. Such raids were only interrupted by their great Mediterranean expedition under Hastings and Bjorn between 859 and 862, which seems to have stripped the coast of Aquitaine of pirates temporarily. After their return in 862, however, they again began to raid the interior, killing Count Turpio of Angoulême in 863 and with the help of Pepin II launching an unsuccessful attack on Toulouse. By 870 Archbishop Frotaire had been forced by their activities to abandon Bordeaux and in 875 the abbey of Saint-Cybard of Angoulême felt their fury. Gradually, however, their attacks slackened off, as local counts like Vulgrin raised castles against them which effectively limited their freedom of action. Down to 930, however, they continued to vex Western Aquitaine with their raids, and indeed the Viking menace remained endemic along western Gallic shores right into the first years of the eleventh century.

While portions of Aquitaine, Gascony, and the Spanish March were feeling the effect of such invasions, the Mediterranean shores of the Midi did not escape unscathed. This is particularly true of Provence. Information concerning Provence during this period is limited, but we do know that in 842 the Moslems followed up their raid on Marseille with another on Arles. Six years later, in 848,
Marseille was attacked again, this time by Greek pirates. These attacks may have been the result of disturbed conditions in this region following the revolt of Duke Fulcrad, successor to Warin in 845, a revolt which the emperor Lothaire does not appear to have completely suppressed. Whatever the causes, the Moslem pirate menace continued. In 859 Arles was fortified against such attacks and at about this time the monks of Psalmodi were forced to abandon their abbey in the Camargue.

For a brief period the Moslem menace was even replaced by another, that of the Vikings. In 859-860, the Mediterranean expedition of Hastings and Bjorn, after plundering abbeys in Roussillon, wintered in the Camargue. During their stay they seem to have raided over a wide area, as far north as Valence where they were checked by Count Gerald of Vienne. When the Vikings sailed away the Moslems returned and seem to have set up a pirate base at Maguelonne. Efforts made by the archbishop of Arles in 869 to defeat them failed until the building of castles and other fortifications in the region so limited their effectiveness that between 884 and 889 they shifted their center of activity to the east. At Fraxinetum during this period they established a base from which they were for many years to vex the coasts and the interior of Provence.

During these years of Moslem depredations in Provence, this region, like the rest of the Valley of the Rhone, was disturbed by Carolingian rivalries. This part of the Midi in 840 had been allotted to the emperor Lothaire and in 843 was still part of his middle kingdom. When he died about 855 his domains were divided among his sons, Lothaire II inheriting Lorraine, Louis II Italy, and Charles Provence. Charles' kingdom of Provence, stretching along the Rhone from the Lyonnais to the Mediterranean, seems to have been only loosely controlled by this ineffectual prince. Real authority lay in the hands of Count Gerald of Vienne who was in direct charge of the Lyonnais and Viennois. When Charles died about 865 his domains excited the cupidity of his uncle, Charles the Bald, who, victorious over Pepin of Aquitaine, felt free to make an attempt to add Provence to his kingdom. Other claimants included Charles' brothers, Lothaire of Lorraine, and Louis of Italy. Charles, however, proved the stronger and after one earlier unsuccessful attempt in 870 led an army into the Valley of the Rhone, defeated Count Gerald and took control of the region, which he turned over to his fidelis and kinsman, Boson, who ruled it as duke.

Charles' ambitions, however, included more than Provence, and when Louis II of Italy, who held the title of Emperor, died, he hastened to gather together an army which he led to Rome and where he received the imperial title from the Pope in 876. Then, after his death in 877 while returning to France, Boson usurped Provence and in 879 assumed the title of king. Such presumption seems to have annoyed his royal neighbors, and armies led by Charles the Fat of Germany and Carloman and Louis III of France invaded Boson's new kingdom and drove him from Vienne. By 887 he was dead, a fugitive in the Alps, and his kingdom seemed destined to disappear into the domains of the French Carolingian family.

This, however, did not happen. Louis II and Carloman died without heirs who were of age, and Charles the Fat proved totally incompetent. As a result, in 887 the French nobility north of the Loire conferred the royal title on Eudes of the Capetian family. The Midi in general was reluctant to accept Eudes as king, and so, during this period, it was not difficult for Louis, the son of Boson, to reconstitute his father's kingdom of Provence from Lyon to the Mediterranean with himself as king. From this time on, for many years, this kingdom was to enjoy a political existence separate from the rest of the Midi.
claims our attention; for only when we have examined each region can we come to any final conclusions as to how power moved from the hands of Carolingian monarchs to the now hereditary counts and dukes who replaced them as the governors and rulers of the lands which lay south of Poitou and Burgundy.

In the examination of this problem, Gascony presents the fewest difficulties, though our information concerning this region is quite limited. Here throughout the entire period of Carolingian dominance, we have evidence of the existence of a family of native dukes or *principes* who held authority over Gascony by hereditary right. The Carolingians had made periodic attempts to reduce the power of this Aznar family, by setting up a Frankish county of Fézensac within their domains (55) or by backing, at times, a rival family, the Séguins, as dukes of Gascony. (56) But they were never able to destroy the Aznars. Thus, in 850 and 852, when Sánchez came to terms with Charles the Bald, our sources speak of him as dux of Gascony. (57) This, incidentally, marks the last real evidence of Carolingian control of this region. From this time on, into the next century, the Aznars seem to have ruled their Gascon domains in full *de facto* independence, without sharing even nominal authority with the kings of France.

The story of the development of a similar *de facto* independence for other families in various parts of the Midi and Catalonia, however, presents more complex problems. In the first place, we must emphasize that the greater number of officials appointed as counts by Carolingian monarchs between 828 and 900 for various reasons never did lay the basis for hereditary family authority over the regions which they governed. Many examples of this spring to mind, like Counts Aléran and Odalric (105) and Marquis Humfrid in Septimania and Catalonia, (58) Count Landry in Saintonge, Count Appolonius in Agde and Béziers, (59) Count Gerald in the Vienne region (60) or even the powerful Bernard, marquis of Gothia from 865 to 879. (61) Other families, from all appearances firmly entrenched in their local regions, disappeared in the course of the century or shortly thereafter like the Séguins of Bordeaux (62) or the family of the counts of Turenne in the lower Limousin (63).

There were a number of other important families, however, who were amazingly successful both in establishing themselves in certain regions and in surviving until they could achieve *de facto* independence in the regions they governed. Let us examine what evidence we can find concerning eleven such families, three in Western Aquitaine, two in Central Aquitaine, four in Catalonia and the Narbonnaise, one in Septimania, and one in the Valley of the Rhone. This may allow us to discern some pattern in their success.

Let us begin with Western Aquitaine. The first family that concerns us is one that goes back at least to 838 when two brothers, Ermenon, count of Poitou, and his brother Turpio, count of Angoulême, had established themselves in this part of the Carolingian Empire. Ermenon, who supported Pepin II in 838, was deprived of his *honorem* of Poitou by Louis the Pious, (64) but a little later he seems to have acquired the county of [106] Périgord, where he married a sister of Sánchez, duke of Gascony. A son by this union, Arnaud, was Count of Fézensac with some claim to Gascon overlordship in 864. (65) Both Count Turpio and Count Ermenon died in the 860's, the former in 863 fighting the Vikings, (66) the latter in 866 fighting Landry, count of Saintes. (67) But the family seems to have continued to have importance, for a son of Count Ermenon, Ademar, was count of Poitou and may have had some power in the Limousin from 890 to 902, (68) finally dying without issue in 926. (69)

A second family of importance is one which became established in Angoulême and Périgord in 869, when Charles the Bald appointed a certain Vulgrin as count of these regions and perhaps of Saintonge as well. (70) Vulgrin died in 886 and left two Sons: William who became count of Périgord and gained Agen from the count of Toulouse, and Aldouin who became count of Angoulême. (71) This family was
allied to the earlier lords of the region, for a sister of Count William of Périgord, Santia, married Ademar, count of Poitou, mentioned earlier. The descendants of these counts continued in possession of their counties into the tenth century.

A third family is one descended from a certain Rannoux, himself a son of Count Gerald of Auvergne, to whom in 838 Louis the Pious gave the county of Poitou. He was succeeded by his son Rannoux II who held Poitou as count until 890, when he was replaced by Ademar. His son Ebles Manzur, however, in 902 managed to drive out Ademar and to recover the county. He transmitted it to his descendants, the famous counts of Poitou and dukes of Aquitaine of later history. Turning from Western Aquitaine, let us examine Auvergne where we find a particularly important family descended from Count William of Gellone who was count of Toulouse under Charlemagne. Certain early members of this family, like Count Gaucelm of Roussillon, Count Bernard of Septimania and the latter's rebellious son, William, have already been mentioned during the period of their importance under Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald, when the center of their power was located in Septimania and Catalonia. Though the victory of Charles the Bald over Pepin seems to have dimmed their prospects in his part of the Midi, a son of Count Bernard, who bore his father's name, was able to salvage from the wreck of the family fortunes a position as count of Auvergne in 846. He had a brother, Count Warin, who held a number of important posts. More important, his son, who succeeded him, was the famous Count Bernard Plantevelue, who rose to great authority during the last years of the reign of Charles the Bald. He added to his honores the counties of Autun, the Lyonnais, Gevaudun, the Toulousain, and others in the Midi. He died about 886 and his son, Duke William the Pious, was not able to keep all his father's honores. Enough remained, however, in Auvergne, the Lyonnais, Autun, and Gevaudun to make him and his heirs important lords of Southern France until well into the tenth century.

The principal rival of the Bernards of Auvergne was a family more recently established in the Midi, descended from Frédélon, whom Charles the Bald had made count of Toulouse in 849. With various intervals during which rivals were appointed to this position, Frédélon was succeeded by his brother Count Raymond in 862, and then Raymond's son, Bernard, in 865. From Toulouse the family of Frédélon extended their authority over Rouergue, the Albigeois, Quercy, and the Limousin during these years. For a moment in 872 when Bernard, count of Toulouse, was murdered by partisans of Bernard Plantevelue and his honores were taken over by the latter, it seemed that the family of Frédélon was doomed to obscurity. They rallied, however, and recovered their former honores and, even more important, turned out to be the principal beneficiaries of the fall of Bernard of Gothia in 879. His honores in Septimania east of Carcassonne and Narbonne fell to them. After the death of Bernard Plantevelue in 886, Eudes, son of Bernard of Toulouse, and his sons, Raymond and Ermengaud, became the most important lords in Southern France, possessing counties which stretched from the borders of Gascony and of Périgord to the Rhone.

South of the honores accumulated by the House of Toulouse during these years three other closely related families of Gothic origin came to control domains below Carcassonne and Narbonne which included all of what was to become Catalonia. The oldest of these families was that of Carcassonne, going back to Bellon, who was appointed count of this region by Charlemagne. The descendants of Count Bellon seem to have controlled Carcassonne almost without a break for a century. Bellon was succeeded by his sons, Gisclafred and then Oliba I, and then the latter was followed by his sons Oliba II of Carcassonne and Acfred I of Razès, who continued in authority down into the first years of the next century.
The second important family of this region was that of Ampurias Roussillon. Its founder seems to have been a certain Count Sunyer I, who Abadal convincingly argues was a son of Count Bellon and a brother of Count Oliba I of Carcassonne. Some time after his death in the 840's, after a succession of Frankish counts, Ampurias and Roussillon came under the control of his son, Sunyer II, who was to rule it in conjunction with his brother Dela from the 870's on.

Even more important was a third such family, that of the celebrated Count Guifred the Hairy of Barcelona. The founder of this family's fortunes was a Count Sunifred of Urgell-Cerdanya-Confluent, who ruled these counties from 844 to 848 and in addition was count of Barcelona and Gerona. Abadal believes that Count Sunifred was a fourth son of Count Bellon of Carcassonne to whom he most certainly was related, but it seems more probable that he was descended from Count Borell of Ausona, the original Gothic count of this region. After his death his honores of Barcelona and Gerona went to a series of Frankish counts. Urgell-Cerdanya-Confluent, however, was given to a certain Count Saloman. The Gesta of Barcelona and most historians have advanced the view that Saloman was a Frank, but Abadal rather convincingly argues that he was a Goth and a relative of Sunifred. Sometime after Count Saloman's death about 870, Guifred, son of Sunifred, was invested with these counties which he probably governed with his brother, Count Miró. By 878, Count Guifred and his brothers had added to their domains the counties of Gerona and Barcelona. From this time on this group of counties stretching from Barcelona to Pallars and Ribagorca were to be governed by Count Guifred, Count Miró, and Count Radulf and their descendants. Thus, starting with Count Bellon of Carcassonne in Charlemagne's time, there developed a group of related counts who by 878 ruled this whole region by hereditary right and in full de facto independence.

One other area, close to Catalonia, remains to be considered. I refer to the counties of Pallars and Ribagorca. From the time of its reconquest this remote trans-Pyrenean region had been ruled as a district of the Toulousain by the counts of Toulouse -- except for the brief period when Count Asnar Galindo had taken over authority there as a usurper. About 872, however, during the disorders which attended the murder of Count Bernard of Toulouse by the followers of Bernard Plantevelue, a certain Ramón made himself count of both Pallars and Ribagorca by usurpation. From this time on, he and his descendants were to govern these counties without even nominal ties with the rulers of the Frankish monarchy.

This leaves two more families to be considered. One of them is by far the most insignificant which we have considered so far, since it confined its authority to a single county -- that of Melgueil or Maguelonne. Furthermore, we know little concerning it except that its founder seems to have been a certain Count Robert of Frankish origin who governed this county at the time of Louis the Pious. In the last years of the century his probable descendants, Countess Guillaumette and her son Count Bernard, were still in possession of it and were able to pass it on to their descendants.

The last family is one we have already examined in some detail, the royal family of Provence. They were, as we have noted, the last to become established in the region they were to rule, going back to the time when Boson, the founder of the family's fortunes, was made duke of Provence and the Valley of the Rhone about 875 by Charles the Bald. We have explained how in 879 he made himself king of Provence and how after his death in 887 his son Louis, taking advantage of the accession of King Eudes, reconstituted his father's kingdom. From this time on into the tenth century Louis and his kinsman, Count Hugh of Arles, were to control this region in the Rhone Valley as a separate and distinct kingdom.

Now when we come to analyze these twelve families who by the year 900 had come to exercise ruling authority over Southern France and the Spanish March by hereditary right a number of things seem
apparent to us. First of all we are struck by the fact that all of them, with the exception of the dukes of Gascony, gained a real and *de facto* independence between the years 870 and 890, a period which comprised the last years of Charles the Bald, the three short reigns of his Carolingian successors, and the first years of King Eudes of the Capetian line. It was during these two decades that Northern French monarchs lost effective control over the Midi and Catalonia.\(^{(98)}\)

Furthermore, we can mark the steps in this process. The murder of Count Bernard of Toulouse and the taking over of his *honores* by Bernard Plantevelue in 872, followed as it was by the loss of Pallars and Ribagorça, seems to be the first step.\(^{(99)}\) The famous Assembly of Quiersy in 877 where the magnates protected their rights of succession to their *honores* seems a second.\(^{(100)}\) The deprivation of the *honores* of Bernard of Gothia in 879 by the magnates and their redistribution seems a third step.\(^{(101)}\) Finally, after the disastrous reign of Charles the Fat, the accession of Eudes represented the final step, since the lords of the Midi could, by claiming a Carolingian loyalty, in effect make themselves independent.\(^{(102)}\)\(^{(112)}\) This is just what they did. Out of civil wars, rebellions, invasions, and royal weakness, then, there developed a group of noble families who now ruled south of Burgundy and Poitou by hereditary *de facto* right.

Examination of these families, however, shows us more than this fact, well known to historians. For though all of them, except the Gascon dukes, owed their final independence to the events of the years 870-890, the circumstances which led each family to establish itself firmly in the local district varied immensely. One family, the Gascon dukes, goes back to the pre-Carolingian period. All the other eleven were initially appointed to power over the region or regions they came to rule by Carolingian monarchs -- with the exception of Ramón of Pallars-Ribagorça who probably was in charge of the region as a subordinate of the counts of Toulouse prior to 872.\(^{(103)}\) But the dates when they began to establish themselves in their regions vary immensely. Four began to establish themselves during the reigns of Charlemagne, and the first years of Louis the Pious -- the family of Melgueil, that of Carcassonne, that of the Bernards of Auvergne, that of Ademar of Poitou. Four others seem to date from the very last years of Louis the Pious and the early years of the reign of Charles the Bald -- the family of Toulouse, that of Rannoux of Poitou, and those of Ampurias-Roussillon and Urgell-Cerdanya-Besalu. Three became firmly established in their regions very late -- that of Vulgrin of Angoulême-Périgord, that of Ramón of Pallars-Ribagorça, and that of Boson of Provence. Viewed in this way then, the development of independent ruling families in these regions was a slow, evolutionary process in some cases, a rapid affair in others -- dependent on the special and varied circumstances which affected every family quite differently. Such facts seem to preclude any sudden revolutionary forces at work in the process, such as some historians have seemed to emphasize.

Even more interesting is an analysis of the nationalities represented by these families. As far as we can tell, one was Gascon, one Hispano-Gascon, three Gothic, six Frankish, and one either Frankish or Gallo-Roman.\(^{(104)}\) In the case of the Gascon dukes, their support may have been due to a dislike of alien Frankish rule. In the case of the others we have no reason or facts upon which we can base such an opinion. In fact, the\(^{(113)}\) last two families who managed to establish themselves in our regions, those of Vulgrin and Boson, were Frankish ones who established their authority in areas which were overwhelmingly Gallo-Roman in character. Even a nascent nationalism, except in Gascony, is hard to discern as a cause of the failure of the Carolingians to maintain their authority over Southern France and Catalonia.

To sum up then, civil wars and invasions weakened the imperfect system of centralized control which the Carolingians had established in Southern France and the Spanish March. Special circumstances, the most important being the short reigns of Charles the Bald's successors and the accession of King Eudes allowed the leading ruling counts of the Midi and Catalonia to establish their families as hereditary and
independent in fact of royal authority. This, however, more often than not, was the result of no sudden, revolutionary situation, but the culmination of a slow, gradual evolution of authority which, for most of these families, took many decades. This process, inevitable under the circumstances, rather than any supposed national consciousness of portions of the Midi and the Spanish March explains in large measure the new situation which by 900 had arisen out of the failures and weaknesses of the Carolingians. (105)

Notes for Chapter 6

1. "Ordinatio Imperii," in Boretius, Capitularia, I, no. 136, pp. 270-271. In 829, however, Louis changed his division of the empire, by attempting to set up a special kingdom for his fourth son, Charles, the issue of his second marriage (Theganus, Vita Hludovici imperatoris, ed. G. Pertz, ch. 35, in Mon. Ger. Hut. Scriptores, II, 597; and Nithard, Histoire, I, ch. 3, p. 8). This set in motion revolts among his older three Sons which from 830 on helped to destroy the unity of the empire.


3. It was perhaps Warin, brother of Bernard of Auvergne, who was duke and marchio under Lothaire in 843. See E. Duprat in Bouches du Rhône: Encyclopédie départementale, II, 132-134.


5. Ibid., ch. 42, p. 632.


7. On the background of this revolt see Theganus, Vita Hludovici, ch. 36, p. 598, and Nithard, Histoire, I, ch. 4-5, pp. 8-10. See also F. Ganshof, "Observations sur l'Ordinatio Imperii de 817," in Festschrift Guido Kisch, pp. 30-31.


9. It seems probable that this Sunifred is the same Sunifred who in 829 is called a fidelis by Louis the Pious and who was a son of Count Borell of Urgell-Cerdanya-Ausona (Catalunya Carolingia, II, 324). According to a charter of 873 he was the father of Counts Guifred and Miró of Cerdanya (P. de Marca, Marca hispanica sive limes hispanicus, I, appendix 27 [hereafter cited as Marca hispanica]). Abadal in his "Un diplôme inconnu de Louis le Pieux," pp. 53-57, advances the connection between Counts Guifred and Miró and the earlier Count Bellon of Carcassonne was through the distaff side, since Count Sunifred married Ermissende, a daughter of Count Bellon. This would make Guifred and Miró of Cerdanya and Oliba II and Acfred of Carcassonne first cousins. In later writings he has preferred to regard Count Sunifred as descended only from Count Bellon, and do away with any identification of him as that fidelis of Louis the Pious who is called the son of Count Borell (see Abadal "La Catalogne sous l'empire de Louis le Pieux," pp. 83-91, and Els Primers Comtes Catalans, pp. 222-225). On the whole Abadal's first solution of the problem seems the more reasonable one, and it is probably wiser to
accept his original identification of this Sunifred with Sunifred the fidelis of 829 and so make him grandson of both Count Borell and Count Bellon.


16. See Duprat in *Bouches du Rhône*, pp. 133-140, on the changes which took place in Provence during this period.

17. Charles the Bald, however, was on the Gascon frontier in 842 which shows his interest in rallying doubtful Aquitaine lords to his side during this period (F. Lot and G. Tessier *et alii*, *Recueil des actes de Charles II le Chauve*, I, 25). See note 12 on the pro-Pepin sentiment among some of these lords.


24. On this revolt see J. Calmette, "Onfroy, Marquis de Gothie," in *Etudes Médiévales*.


32. See Abadal, *Els Primers Comtes Catalans*, pp. 178-187, on these decades of peace along the Moslem-Catalan frontier.


37. See Calmette, "Le siege de Toulouse par les Normands."

38. Johannis VIII, *Papae Epistolae*, in Migne, *Patrologia latina*, CXXVI, no. 36, and *Annales Bertiniani*, anno 877, p. 149. See also Archbishop Frotaire's interest in the abbey of Brioude where he served as abbot from 874 to 879, after his flight from Bordeaux (*Cart. de Brioude*, nos. 132, 334, 236, 197, 268).


42. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133. Note, however, that in 845, according to a charter of this date, Marseille was ruled by a Count Adaibert (*Cart. de Saint-Victor*, no. 26).

43. Duprat, in *Bouches du Rhône*, pp. 151-152.

44. *Ibid.* Note that monks fled from Psalmodi to a new home near Substantion during this period.


47. On the castle built in the Camargue about this period see *ibid.*, p. 280. On Moslems in this region and nearby see A. Lewis, *Naval Power and Trade in the Mediterranean A.D. 500-1100*, pp. 135-170.


50. See the mention of Duke Boson in a charter which Charles the Bald gave to the church of Vivarais in 877 (*Hist. Gén. de Lang.*, II, no. 187).

52. *Cart. de Grenoble*, no. 70.

53. See Boson's last charter given to the bishop of Maurienne, high in the Alps (*Chartes de Maurienne*, no. 1). On his loss of Lyon to his Carolingian enemies in 880 see *Annales Bertiniani*, anno 880, p. 151.

54. See charter given by King Louis to the church of Saint-Etienne of Lyon in 892 in *Cart. de Grenoble*, no. 81.

55. See Astronomus, *Vita Hludovici*, ch. 13, p. 612, on the setting up of the county of Fézensac.

56. The first reference we have to the Séguin family comes from 778 when Charlemagne makes a Séguin count of Bordeaux (*ibid.*, ch. 3, p. 608). They are last mentioned holding office in 845 when Duke Séguin is killed by the Vikings (*Chron. Aquitanicum*, anno 845, p. 252, and *Ademar de Chabannes*, III, 7, p. 134). Early in the eleventh century however a Séguin is still mentioned as holding the office of archbishop of Bordeaux.

57. See note 30 on references to Sánchez of the Aznar family.


59. Appolonius is first mentioned as count in 848 (*Hist. Gén. de Lang.*, II, no. 138). He is last mentioned in a charter of 872 (*ibid.*, no. 182). Probably, as a partisan of Bernard of Gothia he lost out in the changes that took place from 872 to 879.

60. See Levillain, "Giraut, Comte de Vienne," on this powerful count who controlled the Middle Rhone region for many decades.


62. See note 56.

63. We possess a charter issued by Rudolf, count of Turenne in 823, *Cart. de Beaulieu*, no. 185. The family supported Pepin II in 848 (*ibid.*, no. 7). In 866 Gotfred, of this family, was still count (*ibid.*, no. 3). Yet by 870 Count Bernard of Toulouse controlled this region (*ibid.*, no. 27). In 887 a certain Gotfred, who seems to bear no title, gave land to Beaulieu (*ibid.*, no 169). Again in 898 another, or the same, Gotfred is a donor to Beaulieu (*ibid.*, no. 29). Then the family disappears from the history of Quercy and the Limousin.

64. *Ademar de Chabannes*, II, 16, p. 132.


70. *Ademar de Chabannes*, III, 19, pp. 136-137.


73. Ibid., III, 16, p. 132.


76. See J. Calmette, "Les comtes d'Auvergne et les comtes de Velay sous Charles le Chauve," in Annales du Midi, XVI (1904), and "La Famille de Saint Guillem," in ibid., XVIII (1906). See also the charter of 846 which marks his assumption of power in Auvergne (Cart. de Brioude, no. 172).

77. See mention of Count Warin in a charter of 859 in Cart. de Brioude, no. 56, and also that of 868 in ibid., nos. 266-267. See also F. Lot, "Etudes Carolingiennes: Les comtes d'auvergne entre 846 et 877; Les Comtes d'Autun entre 864 et 878" in Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes, CII (1941).

78. L. Auzias, "Recherches d'histoire carolingienne, II: Le personnel comtal et l'autorité comtale en Septimanie méridionale (872-878)," in Annales du Midi, XLV (1933), and "Les relations de Bernard Plantevelue avec les princes carolingiens de 880 à 885," in Le Moyen Age, XXXI (1935). See also Abadal, Els Primers Comtes Catalans, pp. 53-70.


80. Chron. Fontanellensis, anno 849, p. 43.

81. See Dhondt, Etude sur la naissance des principalités, pp. 185-206, on the circumstances and the activities of the House of Toulouse during these years.

82. Note that in 860 Count Raymond I of Toulouse signed the will of Archbishop Rodulf of the House of Turenne (Cart. de Beaulieu, no. 1). In 870 a charter reveals to us Count Bernard of Toulouse presiding over a court which returned to the abbey of Beaulieu land which had been usurped (ibid., no. 27). And in the same year a charter which Charles the Bald gave to the abbey of Vabres calls him "Tolosanus Marchio et dilectissimus nobis fidelis" Lot and Tessier, Recueil des actes de Charles II le Chauve, I, no. 339.

83. On the murder of Bernard in 872 see Annales Bertiniani, anno 872, and Abadal, Els Primers Comtes Catalans, pp. 43-45.

84. It is hard to escape the feeling that the survival of the Toulousain House in this period following the murder of Bernard was primarily due to the effective action taken by their kinsman, Archbishop Frotaire. Frotaire kept control of the abbeys of Beaulieu and Brioude and as archbishop of Bourges (he had previously been archbishop of Bordeaux) maintained his family's authority until the death of their rival, Bernard Plantevelue. On Frotaire's authority and its effectiveness throughout the Midi see Chapter III, Section III. See also Cart. de Saint-Etienne de Limoges, no. 8; Cart. de Brioude, nos. 197, 234; and Grand Cart. de Brioude, nos. CCLXXV; CCLLI. On his role in the distribution of the honores of Bernard of Gothia see Lot and Tessier, Recueil des actes de Charles II le Chauve, I, no. 428.

85. Abadal, Els Primers Comtes Catalans, pp. 7-9, 41-50, gives the background of the establishment of the House of Carcassonne-Razès. See also his "Un diplôme inconnu de Louis le Pieux," pp. 52-57.

86. On Count Sunyer's establishing himself in Ampurias see Abadal, Els Primers Comtes Catalans, pp. 8-9, 13-24. Though Abadal's surmises as to the close relationship between the counts of Ampurias-Roussillon and those of Carcassonne-Razès seem reasonable, they are, of course, impossible to prove.

88. See note 9.


91. Ibid., pp. 53-70.


94. *Cart. de Maguelonne*, no. 1.


96. *Cart. de Grenoble*, no. 70.

97. Ibid., no. 81.

98. The *Annales Bertiniani*, anno 877, pp. 137-138, mentions a revolt of the magnates which forced Louis the Stammerer, heir to Charles the Bald, to confirm rights given them by his predecessor. This helped to make *honores* and benefices hereditary. On this change see F. Ganshof, "L'origine des rapports féodovassiliques" in *I problemi della Civiltà Carolingia*, pp. 53-56.


100. The Assembly of Quiersy did not make all *honores* hereditary, only those assigned to the magnates who were accompanying Charles the Bald on his Italian campaign (see "Capitulare Carisiacense," ch. 9, and "Capitula excerpta in conventu Carisiacense," ch. 3, in Boretius, *Capitularia*, I, nos. 281, 282, pp. 358, 362). On the other hand it did help to serve as a precedent for making all other *honores* hereditary too.


102. Most of the magnates in the Midi and Catalonia were reluctant to accept Eudes as king, as seen by their refusal to date their charters by his reign. The exception seems to have been the House of Toulouse judging by a charter of 892 from Nîmes (*Cart. de Nîmes*, no. 5).

103. See note 92.

104. The dukes of Gascony were of Gascon origin, the counts of Carcassonne, Ampurias, and Barcelona were Gothic, the counts of Melgueil, Toulouse, Auvergne, Angoulême, and Poitou, and the kings of Provence-Burgundy were Frankish, the counts of Pallars and Ribagorça were Hispano-Basque, and the counts of Périgord were either Frankish or Gallo-Roman.

105. Both Calmette and Dhondt have emphasized nationalities as a cause of the disintegration of Carolingian rule in the Midi and Catalonia. So does Auzias in his *L'Aquitaine Carolingienne*. See the wise words of Abadal on this subject, which, while they refer to Catalonia, can also be applied to the entire Midi, as well. He says that the major problem of the period was not an incipient nationalism but
a split between the powerful landowners and the less powerful mass of the population. Abadal, *Els Primers Comtes Catalans*, pp. 226-227. If we add a split between crown and magnates, we have a real explanation of what happened to the Carolingian Empire in this part of France and Catalonia.