

THE ROBERTIANS - RELATIONS AND ALLIANCES

by *Olivier Mistral*¹

translated from French² by *Patrick Evans*

ABSTRACT

For many years work in France by Karl Werner, followed by that of Christian Settapani, has shed considerable light on the status of the Robertians, particularly as regards their ancestry, which is probably linked with a large clan which for its part contributed to the rise of the Carolingians. Whatever the case, their family has its origins along the Rhine and is closely related to the Carolingians and to the family of Queen Ermentrude, first wife of Charles the Bald. Starting from the work of Christian Settapani in his book on the Robertians, I attempt to clarify various hypotheses concerning this family for the period between Robert the Strong and Hugh Capet. Adelaide, wife of Robert the Strong, is thought to be related both to the family of Adalard the Seneschal and to the family of Empress Hildegarde. Teodrade, wife of King Odo [Eudes], is considered to be related to the Rorgonides. Adelaide, wife of Hugh Capet, is probably not from the family of the Counts of Poitiers, but could be a relative of the Counts Roger/Hugh, descended from the Unrochides.

Foundations (2011) **3** (5): 471-486

© Copyright FMG and the author

The wife of Robert the Strong

The most widely held view identifies Adelaide, widow of Count Conrad of Auxerre and daughter of Count Hugh of Tours (very probably from the family of the Etichonides) and of Ava,³ as Robert the Strong's wife. It is indicated thus in the chronicle of Saint Benigne of Dijon, which presents Odo⁴ and Robert (son of Robert the Strong) as brother to Hugh the Abbot (son of Conrad Count of Auxerre); this makes them uterine brothers born to the same mother, Adelaide;⁵ but because it comes from a late and in this case a rather unreliable interpolation,⁶ supporters of this theory generally add five supplementary justifications:

- the appearance of the name Hugh (grandson of Robert the Strong) in the line of Robertians in memory of Adelaide's father, Hugh the Timid, Count of Tours;

¹ Olivier Mistral is a recently retired senior manager, long interested in the middle ages and genealogy.

Contact details: mistralf@wanadoo.fr

² The original text in French is available as a link from the online edition of this article.

³ This is foremost the view of Y Sassier, *Recherches sur le pouvoir comtal en Auxerrois du Xe au début du XIIIe siècle* (1980), 16-17. It is also the view of R le Jan in the genealogical tables of *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde Franc* (1995) (without discussion).

⁴ [translator's note] "Eudes" in French.

⁵ L'Abbé E Bougaud & Joseph Garnier, eds., 109.

⁶ Christian Settapani, *La préhistoire des Capétiens* (1993), 400.

- the transmission of Ligerian⁷ *honores* [feudal rights] from Robert the Strong to his stepson Hugh the Abbot, son of the first marriage of Adelaide and Conrad Count of Auxerre.
- the further transmission of these same Ligerian *honores* from Hugh the Abbot to his half-brother Odo, son of Robert the Strong;
- Robert the Strong's nomination as Count of Auxerre by virtue of his wife's rights
- and above all the production of 2 entries from the *Liber Memorialis* of Remiremont⁸ requested by King Robert I in 922 in which are cited: Hugh and Ava (incontestably Hugh, Count of Tours and his wife), then Robert and Adelaide (Robert the Strong and his wife); thus in his prayers King Robert I made mention first of his maternal grandparents then of his parents.

Yet this hypothesis nevertheless remains open to criticism.

1° The name Hugh does not occur at the level of the sons of Robert the Strong, but at that of his grandson; this is troubling, for if it was important to show a link to the lines of the Etichonides and the Welfs, it should have been done at the time of the births of Odo and Robert, sons of Robert the Strong (between 862 and 866 according to these models), in order to ensure their future accession to the *honores* of Auxerre (held by the Welfs, and at one time attributed to Robert the Strong) and of Tours (held by Hugh, an Etichonide, fifty years previously). The names of Odo and Robert are in no way linked to the families of the Welfs and the Etichonides. At the time of the birth of Hugh, son of King Robert, around 900, that would mean linking the parentage of the newborn with his putative uncle Hugh the Abbot; the latter was competitor and enemy to Gauzlin, Abbot of Saint-Denis who had made King Odo's fortune. It is therefore hardly plausible that the appearance of the name of Hugh along with the Robertians should be linked to the existence of the Welf Hugh the Abbot.

2° According to contemporary documents, relations between Hugh the Abbot and Odo and Robert, claimed to be his half-brothers, are at best interpretable as indifferent; although Hugh the Abbot succeeded Robert the Strong as chief of the Ligerian Counts, contemporaries make no mention of any familial link between them; furthermore Hugh the Abbot had to share with Odo the *honores* left by Robert the Strong upon his death⁹. Similarly when Odo became Marquis of Neustria, no allusion was made to his predecessor and so-called half-brother Hugh the Abbot. Further still, Odo did not immediately succeed Hugh the Abbot since the Marquisate of Neustria was first devolved by the Emperor Charlemagne to his *fidellis*, the *dux* Henry.

3° A final point is that Count Conrad of Auxerre died in 862. Nowhere is any mention made of his widow Adelaide having remarried. If we suppose however that she contracted a union with Robert the Strong (already at least 40 years old at this point if not nearer 50), her children Odo and Robert would have been born between 863 and 866. Odo would therefore have been a maximum of 13 years old when he was cited in 876 as *nepos* to Count Meingaud during a bequeathal of rights in Lorraine to

⁷ [translator's note] Ligeria = Ligérie – a name for the region around the Loire river

⁸ K Schmid in "Unerforschte Quellen aus Quellenarmer Zeit. Zur amicitia zwischen Heinrich I und dem westfränkischen König Robert im Jahre 923," *Francia* 12 (1984), studied these two entries from Remiremont (in R Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde Franc*, 1995, p.210).

⁹ K Werner, "Les Robertiens", in *Le roi de France et son royaume autour de l'an mil*, (1992), 20.

Mettenheim¹⁰, 19 years old when he became Count of Paris, and likely to have had to defend the city against hordes of Normans, 23 when Emperor Charles the Fat named him Marquis of Neustria and virtual Viceroy of Western Francia, and 25 when the elders finally chose him as king. This is possible, yet it attributes remarkable precocity to Odo that he managed to impose himself among magnates who could claim such rights of control over these *honores* and responsibilities. Let us remember that in 888, the date of his election to the throne, his competitors had been: for 11 years, Ramnulf Count of Poitiers, descendant of the Carolingians, perhaps married to the widow of Louis the Stammerer; for 2 years, Guillaume Count of Auvergne, also of Carolingian descent; to the north of the Loire, Wido, Duke of Spoleto but who equally and above all had as many cousins in the Brittany marches (Anjou, Maine) as in Burgundy, and who furthermore officially solicited the title of king by having himself blessed in Langres; in Burgundy, Richard "le Justicier" the powerful Marquis of Burgundy, brother of Boson the defunct king crowned at Mantaille in 877, brother-in-law of Charles the Bald; once again in Burgundy Rodolphe Duke of Transjuria who had himself elected king in 888, and who was nephew to Hugh the Abbot, son of the Count of Auxerre, cousin to the Count of Paris who died in 882. In spite of all these, he was elected, and excepting the brief episodes of Guy of Spoleto and Ramnulf of Poitiers, was recognised without many difficulties. A further episode reinforces scepticism: in 866, at the death of Robert the Strong, Hugh the Abbot received only the *honores* of Tours and of Angers; it was not until 868 that he obtained those of Blois and Orleans. If Odo had held the titles of Count in Blois and Orleans during 866-868,¹¹ he could only have been around five years old. That Regino of Prüm mentions Odo and Robert as *parvuli* in 866 does not necessarily mean that they were less than five years old.

In the face of these criticisms, another model has been proposed, supported by K. Werner, which makes Adelaide, wife of Robert the Strong, daughter to Odo Count of Orleans¹².

This name, Adelaide, although very fashionable in the Welf family, is by no means specific to them. We may find an Adelaide, wife to King Louis the Stammerer, whom Werner has shown to be a great-granddaughter of Count Begon, from the Gerard-Adalard clan; Begon was the son of Gerard and of a Rotrude who is thought to be Carolingian (perhaps a daughter of Carloman, brother of Pepin the Brief)¹³; she would have passed on the name Adelaide, which was common among the Carolingians.

Issued from this Gerard-Adalard clan was Ingeltrude (sister to Adalard the Seneschal, niece to Count Begon), the wife of Count Odo of Orleans.

If Adelaide, wife of Robert the Strong, really is the daughter of Odo of Orleans and of Ingeltrude, she is by the same token sister to Ermentrude, wife of Charles the Bald. Through this marriage, Robert the Strong became not only the ally of the powerful Gerard-Adalard clan, present in Neustria and Lorraine, but also brother-in-law to the Queen of France and thus his sons first cousins to King Louis the Stammerer; this throws more light on the Robertians' career:

¹⁰ K Werner, *Enquêtes sur les premiers temps du principat français (IXe-Xe siècles)* (2004), 121, with references to G Glöckner and Reginon.

¹¹ Hincmar, *Annales*, for year 868 : "*Abbatis a Rotberti filio quos post mortem patris de honoribus ipsius ei concesserat, et per alios divisit*".

¹² K Werner, *op.cit.* (2004), 295.

¹³ K Werner, *Die Nachkommen Karls des Grossen, Exkurs II, Königin Adelheid*, (1967b) 429 *et seq.*

- Robert the Strong succeeds his father-in-law Odo as Count of Orleans with continuity; he succeeds his father-in-law's brother Guillaume the Connetable as Count of Blois and Chateaudun, and his wife's uncle, Adalard the Seneschal, as lay Abbot of Saint-Martin in Tours;
- Odo, son of Robert the Strong, taking his grandfather's name, first becomes Count of Paris as successor to the Gerards and Adalards who held this *honor* for more than a century with some interruptions;
- A branch of the Gerard-Adalards settled in Burgundy with the marriage of Suzanne, Begon's daughter, to Wulfard (whence posterity as Counts of Paris and Abbots of Flavigny); the Robertians' rights to Burgundy may come from there.

This model on the origins of Adelaide, wife of Robert the Strong, has the advantage of explaining some other Robertian relations:

- Adelhelm is cited *avunculus*¹⁴ (uncle, most often on the maternal side) to King Odo; he is often claimed as brother to Robert the Strong who is supposed to have married a sister of Adelaide Welf; in our model he is brother to Adelaide and to Queen Ermentrude, and via his father Odo, a member of the large Agilolfinge family; this Adelhelm is an important person who would be elected by Charles the Bald as first member of the council charged with supervising (in fact warding) his son and heir Louis the Stammerer in 877 while preparing for his expedition to Italy; other lay members of this council were exclusively close allies of the Carolingian family, for example Adalard (father-in-law to Louis the Stammerer), Baudoin of Flandres (son-in-law of Charles the Bald), Conrad (nephew to Charles the Bald's mother), Thierry (from the Carolingian branch of the Nibelung family); it would not be out of place if Adelhelm were to be uncle to Louis the Stammerer;
- Adelhelm's son, Waltger, Count of Laon, is cited as *nepos* (cousin in what was then a possible and habitual sense of this word) or *consobrinus*¹⁵ to King Odo; the name Waltger is typically Agilolfingian, returning as it does to Gerold (Walt/Ger, Ger/Wald), a name taken by the grandfather and the cousins of Odo of Orleans;
- Adelhelm's name can also be found in the ancestry and among the descendants of Guillaume the Connetable (brother of Odo of Orleans): Adelehelm, brother of Guillaume of Orange is probably his uncle (his father Adrien having married their sister Wialdrude); Alleaume Count of Troyes is his great-grandson;

The name Gautier (Roman form of Waltger) is to be found among relations of the Robertians, such as Gautier, Bishop of Orleans, and his nephew Gautier, Archbishop of Sens (who blessed Odo as King in 888 and Robert I in 922); the Archbishop Gautier of Sens is described as *consanguineus* to Count Odo (the future King) in a letter written to him by his relation Adela, widow of the lay Abbot of Saint-

¹⁴ R le Jan, *Famille pouvoir dans le monde franc* (1995): "Adelhelm was count in the region of Gent, lay abbot of Saint-Pierre and of Saint-Bavon in Gent. He also held titles in the Laon region." Reginon, entry for 892 : "*Walgarius nepos Odonis regis, filius scilicet avunculi eius Adelelmi*".

¹⁵ cf note on his father Adelehelm. *Annales Vedastini* : "*Waltger is the "consobrinus" of King Odo.*"

Symphorien in Orleans¹⁶; this bloodline related to the Robertians, which took root among the Orleanese as Counts of Gatinais, may well have been closely related to Odo of Orleans (descendant of Gerold, or Gerwald, an inverted form of Waltger) and in this way may be considered as a cousin to the Robertians.

Yet does this bundle of clues match up to the two texts at our disposal: the chronicle of Saint Benigne of Dijon and entries in the *Liber Memorialis* of Remiremont?

Using either of these two sources, I think that we can uphold that Adelaide was definitely the name of the wife of Robert the Strong, and that the Robertians were certainly related to the Welfs and the Etichonides, although not at the level of Robert the Strong, but rather at that of his son, Robert I.

King Robert I married for the second time around 898 a certain Beatrice. It has been demonstrated¹⁷ that Beatrice should be recognised as a daughter to Herbert I Count of Vermandois, and this seems highly plausible. On the other hand, the wife of Herbert I remains unknown. All that is known is that she may have been called Liegardis. Nothing prevents her being a daughter (or furthermore a granddaughter) to Hugh of Tours and Ava. Yet no text supports this hypothesis. Nonetheless there are two reasons why she is important:

- she may explain the appearance of the name of Adalbert among the Vermandois; Adalbert is in fact the son of Herbert II and Adele (daughter to the first marriage of King Robert I) and this name is neither to be found among the Robertians, nor among the Heribertians; conversely it is part of the onomastic stock of the Etichonides (cf. Adalbert Duke of Alsace, son of Adalric-Eticho);
- she explains the appearance of the name of Hugh as much among the Robertians (Hugh the Great son of King Robert I), as among the Heribertians (Hugh Archbishop of Reims, son of Count Herbert II).¹⁸

What is more, this model explains certain patrimonial rights among the Heribertians (Countship of Meaux?), or among the Robertians (Countship of Sens of which it seems that Hugh of Tours held the title in 820?), or the future Viscounts of Sens (Fromont Viscount of Sens for the Robertians, is thought to be brother-in-law to Heribert II).

In conclusion, it is more comfortable to picture Adelaide, wife of Robert the Strong, as a member of the Adlahard/Agilolfinges clan, than as a daughter of Hugh Count of Tours. The text of entries in the *Liber Memorialis* of Remiremont does not suffer for it: King Robert assured the appearance therein of the names of his wife's grandparents, then the name of his own parents. The interpolation in the chronicle of Saint-Benigne of Dijon must be read as an amalgam conceived between the known name of Adelaide, wife of Robert the Strong, of a known ancestry of the Robertians up to Hugh of Tours, and the name of a daughter to Hugh of Tours, Adelaide.

¹⁶ O Guillot, *Arcana imperii (Ive-XIe siècle)* (2003), 516.

¹⁷ C Settiani, *op.cit.* (1993), 407.

¹⁸ C Settiani, *op.cit.* (1993), 407-408.

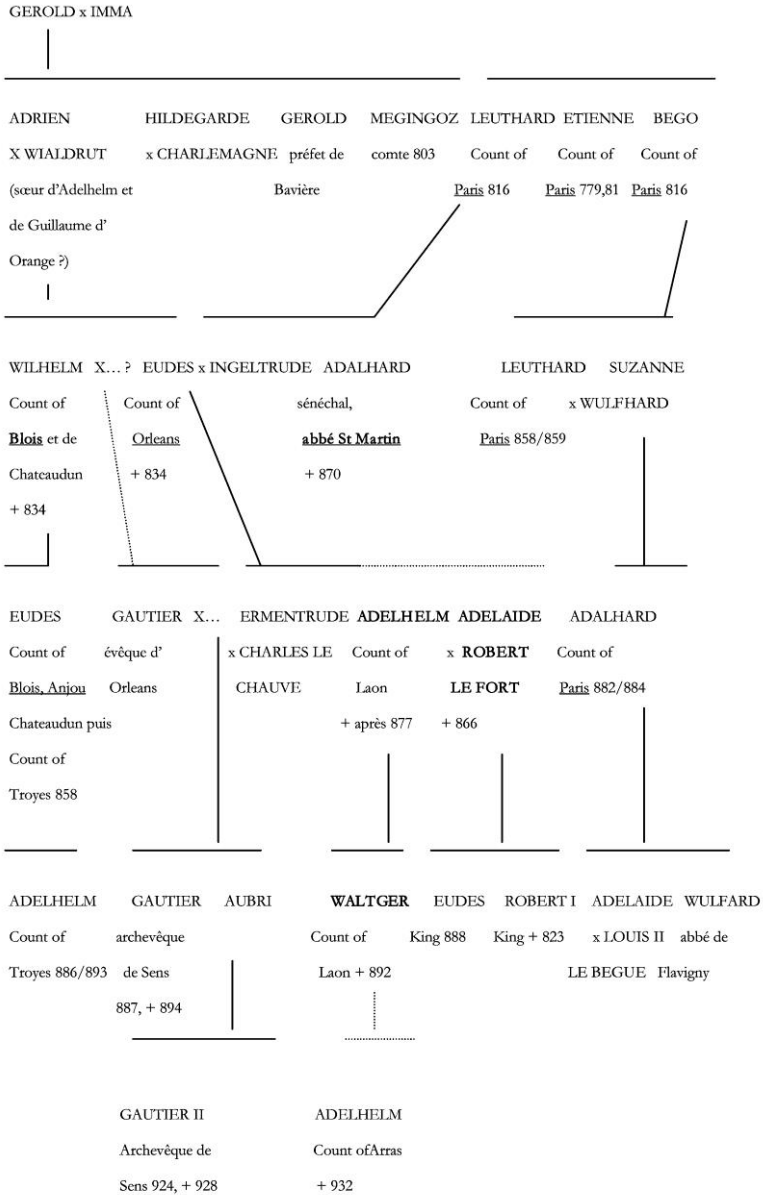


Fig 1. Relationships between the Robertians and the families of Adalhard/Agilolfings¹⁹

¹⁹ K Werner, *op.cit.* (1967b); C Settapani, *op.cit.* (1993); B Bedos, *La Châtellenie de Montmorency* (1980).

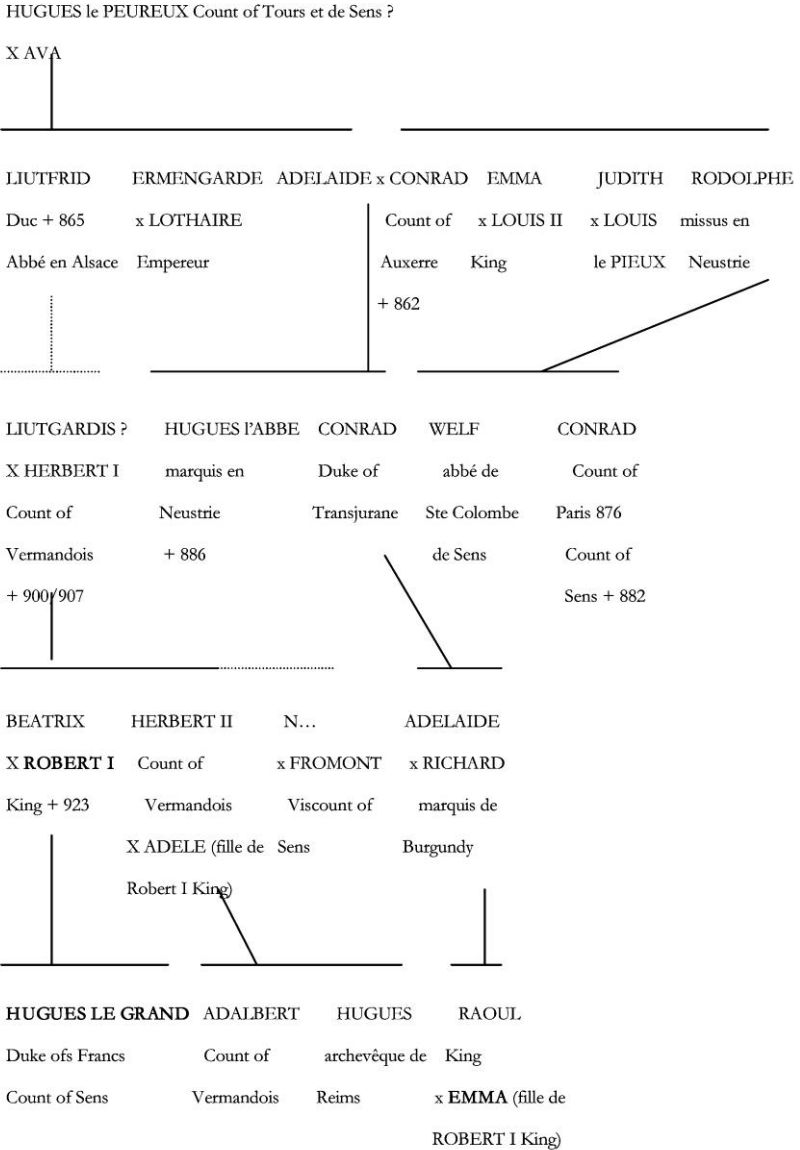


Fig 2. Relationships between the Robertians and the Héribertiens²⁰

²⁰ R le Jan, *op.cit.* (1995).

The wife of King Odo

The sole mention which exists of the wife of King Odo is in a charter for the Abbey of Saint-Waast: "*carissima conjux noster Theoderada*".²¹ Some have her as daughter to Aleran II Count of Troyes; the latter is thought to have bequeathed his lands in Lachy to Hugh the Great, Theodrada's nephew. C. Settapani does not follow this theory, and nor does he propose any other.²²

This name may lead us to think of the Rorgonides. Theodradus, son of Gauzbertus, was Abbot of Saint-Maur (the Rorogonide family monastery) in 868. Being son of this Gauzbert also makes him nephew to Rorgon Count of Maine.²³

Three people in the Rorgonide family should interest us:

- Gauzlin, who was Abbot of Saint-Denis, Saint-Germain des Prés, Saint-Amand, and Bishop of Paris. He defended the city of Paris against the Normans with the future King Odo. A very powerful figure, he was the true leader of Neustria under King Carloman, while Hugh the Abbot held this role under King Louis III. It was under his influence that Odo became Count of Paris. It must be noted that upon Gauzlin's death his abbeys were all ceded to Odo, Count of Paris at that time.²⁴ Gauzlin is son of Rorico Count of Mans and Bilechild.
- Adhemar, Count of Poitiers, is cited *consanguinus* to King Odo via Abbon; in April 887 he helped Odo restore property to the monks of Saint-Martin; in July 889 he came to help when Paris was besieged by the Normans.²⁵ This Ademar was a son of Emenon Count of Poitiers and Angouleme, who was himself son to Bernard Count of Poitou (died 843) and to the Rorgonide Bilechilde²⁶; Adhemar is brother to an Alleaume.
- Ebles, brother to Count Ramnulf II of Poitiers, who starting from 889 was Arch-Chancellor to King Odo; he was also Abbot of St Germain des Prés in 881, and Abbot of Jumieges and St Denis around 886.²⁴ He is son to Ramnulf I and to the Rorgonide Adaltrude.²⁵

Following this series of clues, it is clear that an alliance was knitted between the Rorgonides and the Robertians in King Odo's time; this was a novel alliance, for the two clans had been opposed to one another in the time of Robert the Strong: in 862 for example, the Rorgonides took up in common cause with Salomon, Leader of the Bretons, and Louis, rebel son of Charles the Bald, against Robert Count of Anjou, *fidelis* to Charles the Bald.²⁷ It is tempting to make Theodrada, wife of King Odo, a sister, or rather a niece of Abbot Gauzlin. This link would have the advantage of explaining the rise of Odo under the protection of Gauzlin, his wife's uncle, the rallying of the Rorgonide tribe to the Robertians, and the ceding of Gauzlin's properties to the Robertians.

²¹ C Settapani, *op.cit.* (1993), 404.

²² C Settapani, *op.cit.* (1993), 404-405.

²³ K Werner, *Bedeutende Adelsfamilien im Reich Karls des Grossen* (1967a), 138.

²⁴ K Werner, "Les premiers Robertiens et les premiers Anjou", in *Pays de la Loire et Aquitaine de Robert le Fort aux premiers Capétiens* (1997), 30.

²⁵ Léonce Auzias, *L'Aquitaine carolingienne* (1937).

²⁶ R le Jan, *op.cit.* (1995): Genealogical table of the Rorgonides.

²⁷ A. Chedeville & H. Guillotel, *La Bretagne des saints et des rois V-Xe siècle* (1984), 301.

Wido,²⁸ the name of Odo's son, does not seem to me to be an obstacle to this identification. It seems likely that this son was a bastard. Effectively not a single *honor* was passed on to him, whereas Robert, King Odo's brother, received the entire Marquisate of Neustria upon his brother's coronation.

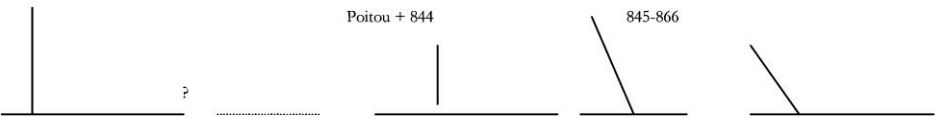
RORICO

Comte du Maine 831-841

X Bilechilde



GAUZBERTUS	GAUZFREDUS	GAUZLINUS	BILICHILDE	GAUZBERTUS	ADALTRUDE
Comte du	comte	abbé, évêque	x 1 ^o BERNARD	comte du	x RAMNULF I
Maine + 853	870-872	de Paris	Count of	Maine 850	Count of Poitou



GAUZBERT	GAUZLIN	THEODRADA	ADHEMAR	ALLEAUME	THEODRADUS	RAMNULF II	EBLES
Le JEUNET	GAUZFRED	x EUDES King	Count of		abbé de Saint-Maur	Count of Poitou	évêque
Comte du	vicomtes de		dePoitou		868		de Paris
Maine + 851	Chateaudun						

Fig 3. Relationships between the Robertians and the Rorgonides ²⁹

The wife of Hugh Capet

That which is known about the family of Adelaide, wife of Hugh Capet, can be summed up in a few mentions from which it is possible to draw several hypotheses³⁰.

1° Helgaud indicates in the Life of King Robert II the Pious, that according to Robert himself, talking of his mother: "her illustrious family came from...the region of Ausonia."³¹.

2° Adalbero, in his poem on King Robert [II], wrote : "*Patres namque tui longe rex, induperator/ Lac tibi neggenti dat nutrix induperatrix*", or "for a long time your

²⁸ C Settipani, *op.cit.* (1993), 405: "Son of King Odo, he is known only by a single mention in a charter of Redon as witness on the 28th of August 903 in an act by Duke Alain of Brittany. This mention raises numerous questions. The act itself was certainly false."

²⁹ R le Jan, *op.cit.* (1995): Genealogical table of the Rorgonides.

³⁰ C Settipani, *op.cit.* (1993), 416-419. He exposes the whole problem but nonetheless concludes by identifying Adelaide as a daughter of the Count of Poitiers.

³¹ Helgaud de Fleury, *Vie de Robert le Pieux*, eds. R-H Bautier & G Labory (1965).

fathers have been Kings and Emperors/the milk you suckle is the gift of an imperial nurse."³²

3° Richer says that Wilhelm Duke of Aquitaine was *nepos* to Robert II.³³

4° A late source dating from the end of the XIth century, or more probably the start of the XIIth century, the story of the translation of Saint Magloire makes a point on the subject of the wife of Hugh Capet: "*Adalais, daughter of the Count of Poitiers, of Charlemagne's race...*"³⁴

5° A 982 Act by King Lothaire indicates that Adele, wife of the Duke Ebles, *consobrinus* to the King, was Adela's daughter and sister to the Marquis Guillaume.³⁵

The clearest text concerning Adelaide's origins is the story of the translation of Saint Magloire. It is too late³⁶ to take it literally, above all since it formally contradicts that which contemporaries of Adelaide such as Helgaud and Adalberon actually said.

Helgaud said that Adelaide's family came from Ausonia, a poetical term for Italy at that time. The Counts of Poitou have no known direct ancestry in Italy, nor any through marriage. Supporters of Adelaide's origins from Poitiers argue that Helgaud allowed himself poetic licence:

- either in assimilating Aquitaine, which bore the very strong mark of Romanity, into Italy, the country of Romanity's origin;
- or in making an allusion not to Adelaide's origins but to those of Hugh Capet who via his Carolingian ancestry would be part of their hypothetical gallo-roman origins.

Adalberon gives Adelaide imperial origins. If we subscribe to the hypothesis that the first known ancestor of the Counts of Poitou, Gerard Count of Limoges was definitely the husband of a daughter of King Pepin of Aquitaine, himself a son of the Emperor Louis the Pious, then these origins are plausible.

In any case Lothaire's Act serves as ultimate confirmation for this model, provided that we read *dux* Hugh (Capet) in place of *dux* Ebles; this error in transcription being due to the scribe who recopied the Act, who is known to us only by a *vidimus*.

This step is not wholly satisfying, insofar as it has as its point of departure a non-contemporary text whose value is highly discussable, and twists texts which *are* contemporary in order to make them fit the plan. The most troubling part of this affair is that Hugh Capet never took any interest in Aquitaine (either in a friendly or in an ambitious sense) in contrast to all his ancestors, King Odo, King Robert I, Duke Hugh the Great; and reciprocally the Duke of Aquitaine never showed any inclination

³² Adalbéron de Laon, *Poème au roi Robert*, ed. & transl. C Carozzi (1979).

³³ Richer, *Historia IV*, ed. R Latouche (1930-1937), 108.

³⁴ Translation of St Magloire, in R Merlet, "Origines de Robert le Fort," *Mélanges Julien Havet*, (1895), 287.

³⁵ "Recueil des actes de Lothaire et Louis V", no.48, in C Settipani, *La Préhistoire des capétiens*, (1993), 418.

³⁶ While R Merlet (1895) dated it to the end of the 10th century, Lot in 1899/1900 dated it to the 11th-12th centuries.

towards Hugh Capet; all this despite Adelaide's indubitable status, having been crowned Queen, which was unusual at that time.³⁷

A final point to examine is the relationship invoked between Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine for the dissolution of their marriage. Some use it as an argument to rebuild this consanguinity into the marriage of Hugh Capet and Adelaide as daughter to the Count of Poitiers. This is absolutely not a valid argument, since the consanguinity of Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine was established differently and according to the following manner:

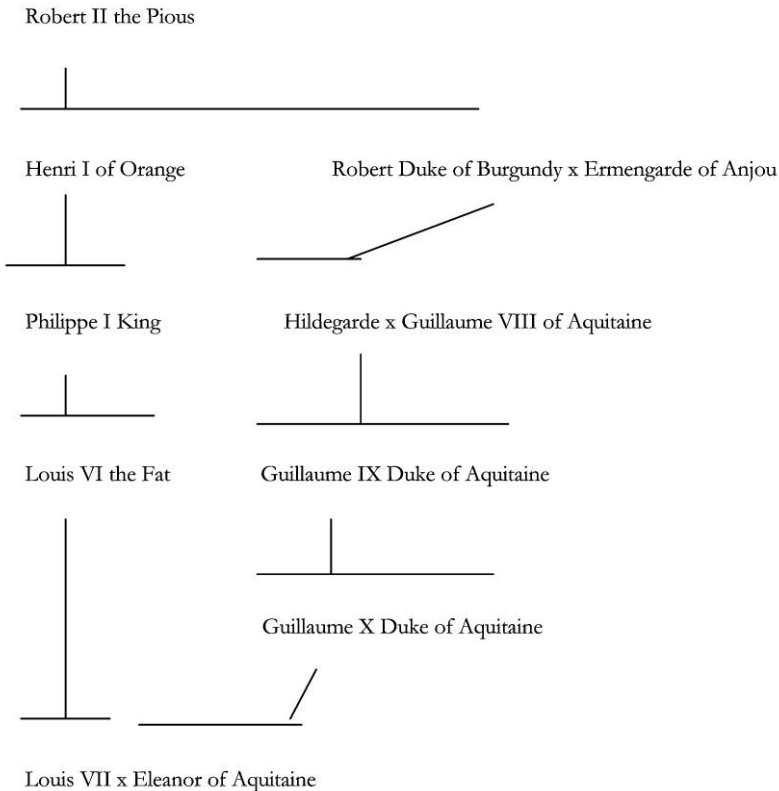


Fig 4. Consanguinity of Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine

This relationship was already not very close, being that they were only fourth or fifth cousins. In any case it renders useless any justification of consanguinity via a marriage between Hugh Capet and a daughter of the house of Poitiers.

³⁷ Gerbert, *Briefsammlung n°120*, Adelaide is elevated to the rank of "*socia et particeps nostri regni*".

By contrast the marriage of Guillaume VIII and Hildegarde of Burgundy would be a lot more consanguineous if Adelaide, wife of Hugh Capet, was the daughter of Guillaume III "Tête d'étoupe":

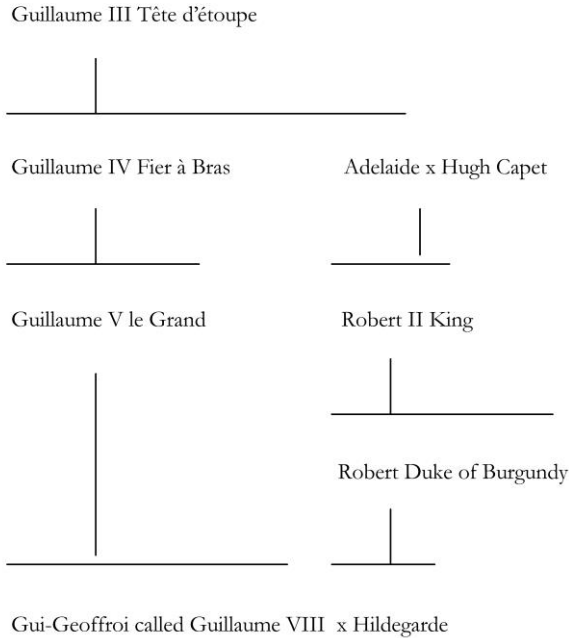


Fig 5. Descent from Guillaume III Tête d'étoupe

In this hypothesis the link lies at the third and fourth levels. At this time such marriages were dissolved on account of consanguinity. Regine Le Jan indicates for example that the marriage of Duke Conrad, son of Otto of Carinthia with Matilda, daughter of Gerberga and Herman of Swabia, his fourth cousin was dissolved. Certainly some marriages among fourth cousins escaped sanction, such as that of Godefroy the Humpback and Mathilde of Tuscany. But this case of consanguinity at the third or fourth level is really an exception, further examples of which in the XIth century it seems impossible to find.³⁸

This poses the legitimate question whether or not a more coherent model exists, both in line with the political forces of the epoch and with the different texts available to us.

When Helgaud and Adlaperon allude to a royal family coming from Ausonia, one lineage is a candidate: the Unrochides. A first problem is immediately posed, since by marrying Suzanne-Rozala Robert II the Pious joined this lineage's direct descent. Adelaide, wife of Hugh Capet, may by contrast come from a well known branch, that of the Counts of Laon resulting from the marriage of Roger I Count of Laon with

³⁸ R le Jan, *op.cit.* (1995), 321.

Helvise, daughter to Eberhard Duke of Friuli and Gisele (herself a daughter of the Emperor Louis the Pious), and sister to Berengario King of Italy and Emperor [of Rome].

Such a candidate respects the sayings of Helgaud and Adalberon.

Richer's text qualifying Robert II as *nepos* to Wilhelm Duke of Aquitaine justifies itself: both descend from King Robert I:

King ROBERT I

ADELE

HUGUES le Grand duc des Francs

X HERBERT Count of Vermandois

LEDGARDE

HUGUES Capet King

X THIBAUD Count of Blois

x ADELAIDE

EMMA

King ROBERT II le Pieux

X WILHELM III Count of Poitiers

WILHELM IV Count of Poitiers

Fig 6. *Descent from King Robert I*

This filiation was well known, for it was simultaneously the symbol of the alliance of the house of Blois with the Heribertians, whose inheritors they considered themselves to be, and with the house of the Robertians whose names of Robert and Odo they then retook. Furthermore the mother of Wilhelm IV took the name Emma, very characteristic of the Robertians: an aunt and a great-aunt of Robert II carry this name.

What else does this model bring us?

1° It should be noted that Hugh Capet was probably Count of Laon³⁹. It is often thought that he obtained this city upon his election as King. Yet it is not unreasonable to make it an inheritance from his wife if Adelaide really was daughter of Roger II Count of Laon; she could have transmitted her rights over

³⁹ J Lusse, *Naissance d'une cité: Laon et le Laonnais du Ve au Xe siècle* (1992), 348 (n.36) ; 350.

this Countship to her husband on the death of her brother Hugh, Count of Bassigny and Bolenois.

2° A daughter of Hugh Capet has the name Gisele. This name recalls Adelaide's great-grandmother: Gisele, daughter of the Emperor Louis the Pious and wife of Duke Eberhard of Friuli.

3° Around the year 1000, Adelaide founded the collegiate church of Saint-Frambourg in Senlis⁴⁰. We may imagine that she would have been working with the country of her ancestors in mind.

4° Diplomatically, it was more pressing to Hugh Capet to consolidate his power in *Francia* by taking hold of landed rights over Laon, a region under serious threat in the face of a Carolingian power in whose lungs vigorous exertions still lurked, rather than through an alliance with a faraway magnate. In 960-970, probable period of the marriage of Hugh and Adelaide, the parties showed themselves in the following manner:

- on one side King Lothaire, allied to Thibaud Count of Blois and Chartres, and to the Heribertians;
- on the other Hugh Capet Duke of the Franks, his brother the Duke of Burgundy and Richard Duke of Normandy;
- as an arbiter, the Lorrainians, representatives of imperial power who occupied the seat of Reims.

For Hugh Capet, at the beginning of his powers in 960, the situation was dangerous. From his father he had retained only a theoretical power over the Ligerian Countships (excepting that of Orleans) which had emancipated themselves during the interregnum between the death of his father in 956 and his nomination as Duke of the Franks in 960, and his activities were centred upon the valley of the Seine. Odo Count of Blois was particularly dangerous, because by virtue of his Heribertian heritage he had acquired not only the Countships of Champagne but also the rights to Laon and in Madrie;⁴¹ he was also Castellán of Coucy. Hugh Capet was surrounded.

It should be noted that in 968 Wilhelm III married Emma, daughter of Thibaud Count of Blois, sister of Odo, Hugh Capet's menacing enemy.

The hypothesis of an alliance of Hugh Capet with the heiress to the Counts of Laon, although without formal proof, has at least the merit of being consistent with the state of political forces of that time, and of the strategic concerns of the Duke of the Franks.

⁴⁰ A Chedeville, "Le paysage urbain vers l'an mil," in *Le roi de France et son royaume autour de l'an mil* (1992).

⁴¹ A small region of France between Paris and Rouen.

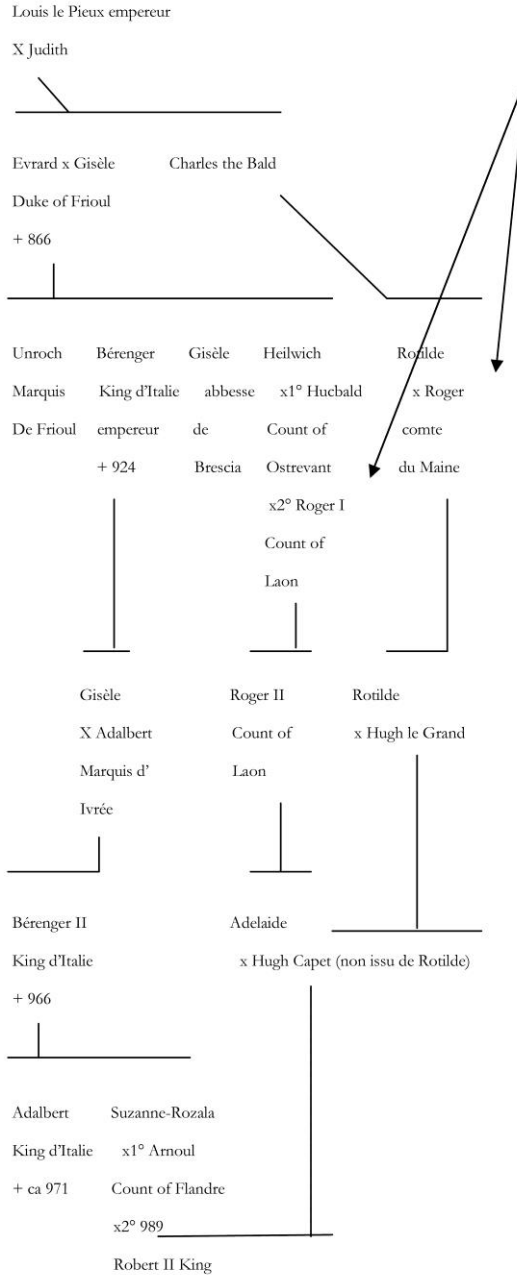


Fig 7. Table of relationships between the Robertians and the Unrochides

Bibliography

- Adalbéron de Laon, *Poème au roi Robert*, ed. & transl. Claude Carozzi. Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1979.
- Auzias, Léonce. *L'Aquitaine carolingienne*. Toulouse & Paris: Toulouse University, 1937.
- Bedos, B. *La Châtellenie de Montmorency*. Pontoise: Société Historique et Archéologique de Pontoise, du Val d'Oise et du Vexin, 1980.
- Bougaud, E & Joseph Garnier, eds. Dijon: Darantiere, 1875.
- Chedeville, A & H Guillotel. *La Bretagne des saints et des rois V-Xe siècle*. Rennes: Editions Ouest-France, 1984.
- Chedeville, A. "Le paysage urbain vers l'an mil," in *Le roi de France et son royaume autour de l'an mil*, [Proceedings of the Colloquium on Hugues Capet 987-1987. La France de l'an Mil. Paris - Senlis, 22-25 juin 1987]. Paris: Picard, 1992.
- Gerbert, *Briefsammlung, Vol.1*, eds. & French transl. as *Lettres*, by P Riché & R Callu. Paris, 1993.
- Guillot, O. *Arcana imperii (Ive-XIe siècle)*. Limoges: Université de Limoges, Faculté de Droit et Sciences économiques, Cahier de l'Institut d'Anthropologie Juridique n°10, 2003.
- Helgaud de Fleury. *Vie de Robert le Pieux*, eds. & transl. R-H Bautier & G Labory. Paris: Sources d'histoire médiévale. no. 1, 1965.
- Hincmar. *Annales de l'Europe carolingienne, 840- 903*.
- le Jan, R. *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde Franc*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1995.
- Lusse, J. *Naissance d'une cité: Laon et le Laonnais du Ve au Xe siècle*. Nancy: University Press, 1992.
- Merlet, R. "Origines de Robert le Fort," in *Mélanges Julien Havet*. Paris: Léopold Victor Delisle, 1895.
- Réginon de Prüm, *Chronicon*, ed. F Kurze. Hannover: Scriptorum Rerum Germanicarum 50, 1890.
- Richer, *Historia IV*, ed. R Latouche. Paris: Classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Âge, 1930-1937.
- Sassier, Y. *Recherches sur le pouvoir comtal en Auxerrois du Xe au début du XIIIe siècle*. Auxerre: Société des Fouilles Archéologiques et des Monuments historiques de l'Yonne, 1980.
- Settipani, Christian. *La préhistoire des Capétiens 481-987*. Villeneuve d'Ascq: Patrick Van Kerrebrouck, 1993.
- Werner, K. *Bedeutende Adelsfamilien im Reich Karls des Grossen, Karl der Grosse I*. Düsseldorf: W Braunsfels, 1967a.
- Werner, K. *Die Nachkommen Karls des Grossen, Exkurs II, Königin Adelheid, Karl der Grosse*, Vol.4. Düsseldorf: W Braunsfels, 1967b.
- Werner, K. "Les Robertiens", in *Le roi de France et son royaume autour de l'an mil*, [Proceedings of the Colloquium on Hugues Capet 987-1987. La France de l'an Mil. Paris - Senlis, 22-25 juin 1987]. Paris: Picard, 1992.
- Werner, K. "Les premiers Robertiens et les premiers Anjou", in *Pays de la Loire et Aquitaine de Robert le Fort aux premiers Capétiens*. Poitiers: Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest, 1997.
- Werner, K. *Enquêtes sur les premiers temps du principat français (IXe-Xe siècles)*. Ostfildern: J Thorbecke, 2004.