
NON-REGULATED FEMALE RELIGIOSITY IN THE CATALAN COUNTIES IN THE NINTH AND TENTH CENTURIES: A TERRITORIAL AND NETWORK-ORIENTED APPROACH**Xavier Costa Badia**

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Resum

En el present article es pretén aprofundir sobre l'espiritualitat femenina no reglada en els comtats catalans dels segles IX i X, un fenomen que, des dels pioners estudis de Montserrat Cabré als anys 80 i 90, pràcticament no ha atret l'atenció del medievalisme català. Per suplir aquesta mancança, s'aprofitaran els avanços que darrerament s'han produït en matèria d'edició documental per oferir una llista completa de totes les *devotae* i *deodicatae* que tenim documentades abans de l'any 1000, entre les quals es distingiran aquelles que vivien en un entorn monàstic institucionalitzat i aquelles que desocuparen la seva vida religiosa fora de tota institució regular. Així mateix, tenint en compte que per a la majoria d'elles tenim molt poques dades, però que gran part són susceptibles de ser georeferenciades, s'empraran les moltes possibilitats que ofereixen els Sistemes d'Informació Geogràfica per tal de treure'n la màxima rendibilitat possible i oferir una caracterització més precisa d'aquestes dones, del seu *modus vivendi* i, sobretot, dels espais en què el dugueren a terme.

Paraules clau: Comtats catalans, Religiositat femenina, Formes d'espiritualitat no reglades, *Devotae*, *Deodicatae*, Cartografia històrica, Sistemes d'Informació Geogràfica (SIG)

Abstract

This article aims to look into non-regulated female spirituality in the Catalan counties in the ninth and tenth centuries, a phenomenon that has attracted virtually no attention among Catalan medievalists since the appearance of Montserrat Cabré's pioneering studies in the 1980s and 1990s. To fill this gap, recently edited sources will be used to provide a complete list of the *devotae* and *deodicatae* who can be documented before the year 1000, including both those who lived in regulated monastic environments and those who carried a religious life outside regulated establishments. Likewise, taking into account that although there are very few data on the majority of these women, most of it can be georeferenced, the many possibilities offered by Geographic Information Systems will be used to maximise its potential and to offer a more precise characterization of these women, their way of life and, above all, the spaces they inhabited.

Key Words: Catalan Counties, Female Religiosity, Non-regulated Forms of Spirituality, *Devotae*, *Deodicatae*, Historical cartography, Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

During the 9th and 10th centuries, monasticism in the Catalan counties¹ experienced a period of clear expansion. After a long period of instability marked by Muslim domination of the region, the arrival of a new Christian power –the Carolingians– led to a sharp increase in monastic foundations and re-foundations. Thus, in two centuries, this territory of just over 25,000 km² was endowed with a dense network of monasteries made up of at least 144 different centres (COSTA BADIA 2019: 199-353).

However, the high monastic density detected was not equal from a gender perspective. In fact, in the Catalan counties as a whole, there is a clear disproportion between the number of monasteries of both sexes. We have a total of 140 male houses, but only 4 female houses are documented: Sant Joan de les Abadesses, Sant Pere de les Puel·les de Barcelona, Santa Maria de les Puel·les de Girona and Sant Pere del Burgal (fig. 1).² Furthermore, the last two houses had an ephemeral life or, at least, very little known. San Pedro del Burgal, if it really came to be, only existed between October 12, 948, when the abbess Ermengarda bought its church from the male abbey of Santa María de la Grasa for 400 *sous*,³ and October 24, 950, when the same abbess, for unknown reasons, backed out and returned the church of Burgal to its former owner.⁴ Also, the existence of Santa Maria de les Puel·les is only attested by two bequests, one from 962, in which the Viscountess Riquilda de Narbona ordered the foundation of the monastery,⁵ and another from 993, which makes it very difficult to say anything about its historical evolution.⁶ Therefore,

¹ This article is the outcome of the research carried out during the doctoral thesis “Paisatges monàstics. El monacat als comtats catalans alt-medievals (segles IX-X)”, which was developed within the framework of the research project “*Spiritual Landscapes. Models of Spatial Analysis of the Transformation of Women’s Medieval Religiosity in the Iberian Kingdoms (12th-16th c.)*”, funded by the Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad of the Government of Spain (HAR2014-52198P).

² Sometimes, the monastery of Santa Maria del Camí, in La Garriga, has also been classified as a female monastery, since, according to Mossèn Pau PARASSOLS PI (1894: 32), had been a priory of the abbey of Sant Joan de les Abadesses. However, taking into account that this author does not cite any source on the subject, and that we can only identify the presence of a single *devota*, the latest studies –including this one– are inclined to consider it as a non-monastic space where a religious woman lived without the support of any nearby regular community (AURELL CARDONA 1998: 158; COSTA BADIA 2019: 360-363; ROSILLO LUQUE 2019: 170-171).

³ CC III, doc. 158, p. 365 (948). It is worth noting that, at the time of this purchase, Ermengarda de Pallars is already listed in the document as *abbatissa*. This fact, as I have discussed elsewhere, could be an evidence that she had previously led another monastic community whose name and exact location are unknown to us. (COSTA BADIA 2019: 212). However, this is a hypothesis that, with the available sources, can hardly ever be proved.

⁴ CC III, doc. 162, p. 368 (950).

⁵ «*In primis iussit (...) ut si Arnulphus episcopus infra istis annis duobus inchoaverit monasterium ante Gerunda, in onore Sancte Mariae, et eum in antea perseveraverit, concessit ibidem alaude Sancti Baudilii omnem suam portionem cum ipsas aeclesias, et ipsum alaude de Infrunos et quantum abebat in Martires et in Decollatos et in Parietes, et ipsum alaude quod aquisivit de Eudo, qui est in Ausor. (...) Et si Arnulphus episcopus non aedificaverit ipsum monasterium ante Ierundam, iussit donare ipsum alaude de Sancti Baudilii ad domum Sancti Petri sedis Vigo*»: CC V, doc. 349, p. 313-315 (962).

⁶ CC VII, doc. 1214, p. 1090-1093 (993). The scarcity of historical information about the monastery of Santa Maria de les Puel·les has even led some authors to suggest that the foundation never prospered, remaining a mere frustrated attempt (MARTÍ CASTELLÓ 1994: 378). However, in my opinion, the reference dated 993, thirty years after the viscountess Riquilda ordered its foundation, leaves no doubt that the initiative would have gone ahead. Moreover, we must not forget that, until recently, the funerary inscription of a certain Maria, *abbatissa*, who, whether or not she was the eponymous embroiderer of the stole of Sant Narcís (MUNDÓ MARCET 1994: 143-144; ROSILLO LUQUE 2019: 184-186), was probably the rector of that monastery: ELMCC, doc. 35, p. 318 (end of the 10th century). Not surprisingly, no other female monastery is known in the area until the foundation of Sant Daniel de Girona, well into the 11th century.

although the latter may have survived for almost half a century, everything seems to indicate that, before the year 1000, the number of women's monasteries was residual in the Catalan counties and was limited almost exclusively to the foundations of Sant Joan de les Abadesses and Sant Pere de les Puel·les.

This lack of female monasteries is even more surprising if we take into account the high number of women devoted to religious life that appear in the written sources. If we examine in detail all the documentation preserved for that period, we find 46 women designated as *devotae* or *deodicatae*. These are two interchangeable terms that are used in patristic texts to designate women who lived their religiosity in a particularly intense way and who have often been interpreted in historiography as nuns (CABRÉ PAIRET 1989: 171-174). In fact, although the documents use the terms *sanctimoniales* or *monachae* to refer to the members of a female monastic community, 9 of the 46 *devotae* found in the sources can be identified as nuns of one of the two large known monasteries. Thanks to the preservation of various sales and exchanges signed by the whole community, we know that the *deodicatae* Riquil·la, Emma, Caríssima and Bel·luça were nuns at the monastery of Sant Joan de les Abadesses (fig. 2), while Quintiló, Ermel·la, Argudàmia, Ermetruit and Riquil·la were nuns at the monastery of Sant Pere de les Puel·les (fig. 3).⁷ However, the remaining 37 appear in the documents just as *laica persona* [lay person] in private transactions, and there is no sign that they ever professed in any of the four female monasteries discussed above (fig. 4).

No.	Name	Designation	Chronology	Sources
1	Sabegòncia	<i>Deodicata</i>	871	DMR, doc. 3, p. 80-82 (871)
2	Judit	<i>Devota</i>	904	CC VI, doc. 174, p. 205-206 (904)
3	Gorgòria	<i>Devota</i>	904	ACB, doc. 16, p. 129-131 (904)
4	Madrona	<i>Devota</i>	915	CC VII, doc. 130, p. 240-241 (915)
5	Sunló	<i>Devota</i>	919	CC V, doc. 164, p. 172-173 (919)
6	Guinedella	<i>Devota</i>	926	CC V, doc. 201, p. 201 (926)
7	Runa	<i>Deodicata</i>	928	CC V, doc. 168, p. 174-175 (928)
8	Ermegonça	<i>Deodicata</i>	928	CC VI, doc. 213, p. 234-235 (928) CC VI, doc. 216, p. 236-238 (928)
9	Eleda	<i>Devota / Deodicata</i>	928-934	CC VI, doc. 213, p. 234-235 (928) CC VI, doc. 216, p. 236-238 (928) CC VI, doc. 238, p. 254-256 (934)
10	Àuria	<i>Devota</i>	932 ⁸	CC V, doc. 228, p. 218-219 (932) CC V, doc. 246, 232-233 (938)

⁷ Recently, the biography and kinship ties of the professed nuns in the different early medieval monasteries of the Catalan counties have been studied by Jonathan JARRETT (2019: 139-149), focusing in particular on Sant Joan de les Abadesses, and by Araceli ROSILLO LUQUE (2019: 167-173, 189-192), which also includes the data concerning the other known monasteries.

No.	Name	Designation	Chronology	Sources
11	Osesa	<i>Devota</i>	938	ACB, doc. 112, p. 263-266 (938)
12	Honesta	<i>Devota</i>	939	MSLLB, doc. 3, p. 180-181 (939)
13	Quíxol (1)	<i>Deodicata</i>	944	CC IV, doc. 544, p. 435-436 (944)
14	Elserga	<i>Devota</i>	948	CC IV, doc. 612, p. 476-477 (948)
15	Cutella	<i>Devota</i>	948	CC VII, doc. 295, p. 348 (948)
16	Quíxol (2) ⁹	<i>Deodicata</i>	950	CC IV, doc. 663, p. 510 (950)
17	El·ló	<i>Devota / Deodicata</i>	959-973	CC VI, doc. 391, p. 349-351 (959) CC VI, doc. 475, p. 407-408 (973)
18	Cusca	<i>Devota</i>	963	CC IV, doc. 931, p. 693-694 (962-963)
19	Maia	<i>Deodicata</i>	969	CC VII, doc. 561, p. 536 (969)
20	Truitel·la (1)	<i>Deodicata</i>	972	CC VII, doc. 593, p. 561-563 (972)
21	Ranovígia	<i>Deodicata</i>	977	CC IV, doc. 1229, p. 884-885 (977)
22	Minovella	<i>Devota</i>	979	CC V, doc. 453, p. 409-413 (979)
23	Ermesinda	<i>Deodicata</i>	979-985	CC VII, doc. 718, p. 667 (979) CC VII, doc. 847, p. 764 (985)
24	Truitel·la (2) ¹⁰	<i>Deodicata</i>	981	CC VII, doc. 753, p. 691-692 (981)
25	Honorada (1)	<i>Devota / Deodicata</i>	986-1003	CC VII, doc. 874, p. 793-794 (986) CC VI, doc. 639, p. 503-504 ([988-998]) CC VII, doc. 1517, p. 1352-1353 (1000) DACU 981-1010, doc. 287, p. 119 (1003)
26	Oruçà	<i>Devota / Deodicata</i>	986-992	CC VII, doc. 874, p. 793-794 (986) CC VII, doc. 1006, p. 909-910 (989) CC VII, doc. 1141, p. 1028-1030 (992)
27	Virgília	<i>Deodicata</i>	986	CC VII, doc. 863, p. 783-784 (986)
28	Astrudes	<i>Deodicata</i>	989	CC VII, doc. 1009, p. 912-913 (989)

⁸ In the case of the *devota* Auria, although we find her in the register in 938, we know that she was already dead at that time, as she is referred to as *quondam*. Moreover, the document of 932 is the execution of his will, so we know she is not alive beyond that date.

⁹ Everything seems to suggest that the *deodicata* Quíxol documented in 950 was not the same as the one recorded in 944, as she had died earlier (the document of 944 is the execution of her will). However, the fact that the second Quíxol appears only in a few documents prevents us from ruling out the possibility that they were really the same person and that, due to forgetfulness or ignorance, the author of the document had not recorded that she had died six years earlier.

¹⁰ The case of Truitel·la is practically identical to the one mentioned in the previous footnote. Taking into account that she appears as *quondam* in a document of 979, it seems that she could not be the same as the one we find as owner of some goods in 981. However, the fact that she is indirectly mentioned in both cases makes it impossible to be certain, and it could also be the case that the scribe of the second document, for some reason, had omitted the fact that she was already dead at that time. In any case, when in doubt, I have chosen to consider that we are dealing with two different *deodicatae*.

No.	Name	Designation	Chronology	Sources
29	Todesera	<i>Devota</i>	991	CC VII, doc. 1121, p. 1005-1006 (991)
30	Gudrilda	<i>Devota</i>	992	CC VII, doc. 1141, p. 1028-1030 (992)
31	Lívol	<i>Devota</i>	992	CC VII, doc. 1132, p. 1015-1021 (992)
32	Espana	<i>Devota</i>	996	NH, vol. XV, doc. 2161, p. 227-228 (996)
33	Bellida	<i>Deodicata</i>	996	CC VII, doc. 1314, p. 1178-1179 (996)
34	Honorada (2) ¹¹	<i>Deodicata</i>	996	CC VII, doc. 1320, p. 1183-1184 (996)
35	Fruiló	<i>Deodicata</i>	996	CC VII, doc. 1365, p. 1223-1224 (996)
36	Oriola	<i>Devota</i>	998	CC V, doc. 612, p. 518 (998)
37	Ermengarda	<i>Devota</i>	999	CC VII, doc. 1483, p. 1326-1327 (999)

Fig. 4: *Deodicatae* and *devotae* found in documents from the Catalan counties before 1000 that are not part of any known monastic community.

It is not easy to explain this discrepancy between the number of female monasteries and the number of women devoted to religious life. Undoubtedly, this image may be conditioned by our own inability to identify some monasteries which, due to their small size and/or the loss of their archives, left no documentary or material evidence. This could be the case, for example, of the community that Ranlo, the widow of Viscount Guiscafred of Urgell, would have ruled around 949. Although she appears as *abbatissa* in a donation that her son Simplicio made to the monastery of Santa Cecília d'Elins,¹² we are not able to link her to any of the four known female communities.¹³ However, the fact that most of the known male monasteries were also small, and that this phenomenon has its parallel in other European regions (SCHULENBURG 1989; WEMPLE 1990), shows that we need to look for the roots of this discrepancy in more complex dynamics.

A plausible hypothesis is the one put forward by Montserrat CABRÉ PAIRET (1989: 178-179) who, after noting the large number of *deodicatae* and *devotae* who did not appear to be linked to any monastery and studying the use of these terms in the surviving sources, suggested that, between the 9th and 11th centuries, there may have existed in the Catalan counties a considerable

¹¹ This religious woman should not be confused with the *devota* Honorada that we have documented in the county of Barcelona a few years earlier, as the surviving documentation cites the children of both, and there is no coincidence whatsoever. Moreover, one document from each of them has been preserved in original format and with their autograph signatures, which confirms that they were not the same person.

¹² DSCE, doc. 7, p. 39 (949).

¹³ As for the case of Viscountess Ranlo d'Urgell, it should be noted that we could easily fall into the error of identifying her with the abbess of the same name who governed Sant Joan de les Abadesses between approximately 955 and 962. However, leaving aside the fact that this identification would mean assuming an error of more than five years in the dating of the previous document, thanks to several documents recently studied by Araceli ROSILLO LUQUE (2019: 169), we know that the abbess Ranlo of Sant Joan was the daughter of the counts Delà and Quíxol d'Empúries, widow of a certain Miró, not Guiscafred, and that she had three sons, Miró, Quíxol and Sunifred, with no mention of any Simplicio. It can therefore be concluded that these would be two different women and it must be assumed that, at the very least, there would be a fifth unknown female monastery over which Ranlo d'Urgell would have exercised his authority; unless, of course, the use of this title was the result of a possible transcription error, a hypothesis put forward by Oliver VERGÉS PONS (2014: 53-54).

number of women, mostly from the high aristocracy, who devoted themselves to religious life without necessarily being attached to any monastic community. Thus, based on this approach, the limited presence of female monasteries in the Catalan counties was due to the fact that, at a time when the spaces for women devoted to spiritual work were still being defined, the monastic life was not perceived as the only valid option and many of them chose to live an alternative religious and spiritual life outside the monastic institutions, much less regulated and essentially feminine.¹⁴ This model –as the same author studied shortly afterwards– must have disappeared in the 11th century, in parallel with the development of the feudal gender system, which found in monasticism a way to channel and frame all those *devotae* who until then had lived their faith on the margins of institutions with a freedom that professed nuns did not have. (CABRÉ PAIRET 1994: 185-208).

The validity of this proposal, which is included in the main syntheses on female monasticism in the early medieval Catalan counties, is beyond doubt (RIVERA GARRETAS 1999: 110; VINYOLÉS VIDAL 2005: 37-39; BRUGUÉS MASSOT 2019: 70-73). Otherwise we could not understand why, in two centuries, only four female monasteries were founded in that territory and why we find such a large number of nuns scattered in the documentation. Therefore, it is not the intention of this article to question this explanation. On the contrary, its aim is to take advantage of the historical research carried out in recent years, and the growing number of edited sources, in order to examine in greater detail this historical phenomenon, its protagonists and, above all, the places where the *deodicatae* and *devotae* who lived outside the monasteries developed their particular religious life. This work will also benefit from the possibilities offered by Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to exploit and map all the geographic data contained in the documentation, a new line of research that can undoubtedly offer great possibilities for future studies.

First of all, we must bear in mind that approaching these unregulated forms of spirituality and their spaces is not easy, since the sources are extremely sparse. In fact, we usually only have information about these *deodicatae* and *devotae* when their properties appear as bordering another property or when they received a bequest. This would be, for example, the case of the *devota* Elserga, who is only recorded in the will of the archdeacon Guadamir de Vic receiving a garment,¹⁵ or that of the *deodicata* Bellida, about whom we only know that one of her orchards bordered on a property transaction between two private parties.¹⁶ What is more, when we

¹⁴ This is an essentially feminine life choice, but not exclusively, since we also find some men who appear in the documentation as *deodatus* or *devotus*, which suggests that they must have led a religious life similar to that of the *deodicatae*, although we cannot rule out the possibility that men leaned more towards eremitic models. In any case, this is a very rare phenomenon and, in the documents examined for this article, I have only been able to locate two, «*Avionio deodato*» and «*Bonefilio devoto*»: CC V, doc. 553, p. 486-487 (994); PACB, doc. 236, p. 577-578 (1034); PACB, doc. 262, p. 607608 (1038). However, this does not mean that they should not be considered.

¹⁵ CC IV, doc. 612, p. 476-477 (948). A very similar case is that of the *devota* Oriola, who is only mentioned in the will of a certain Avierna receiving a garment: CC V, doc. 612, p. 518 (998).

¹⁶ CC VII, doc. 1314, p. 1178-1179 (996). The same could be said of the *deodicata* Virginia, whose existence is known to us only because one of her lands bordered on a plot of land that the Viscount Geribert of Barcelona gave to the cathedral of that city: CC VII, doc. 863, p. 783-784 (986).

have additional information, the *devotae* usually appear to be acting as laywomen in ordinary economic transactions, without giving any information about their particular way of life. Consequently, one of the few ways we have to find out about the specificities of these women, their social status and their spheres of action is through the study of their patrimonial assets and the social networks in which they were inscribed.

If we map the land properties of all the known *deodicatae* and *devotae* we see that the vast majority were located in the easternmost Catalan counties, to a point that we do not find a single example in the counties of Cerdanya, Berga, Urgell, Pallars and Ribagorça (fig. 5).¹⁷ This image, however, may be conditioned by the number of sources preserved in each territory, as we must not forget that, while we have little more than three hundred documents from Pallars and Ribagorça for the entire period of our study, we have more than three thousand from Barcelona and Osona. Furthermore, this simple exercise also makes it clear that, as Montserrat CABRÉ PAIRET (1989: 175-176) has already pointed out, the religious women under study were not women of humble extraction with a few properties close to their places of residence to guarantee their subsistence, but powerful ladies, very often widows linked to the main power groups of the time,¹⁸ who owned numerous properties located in places that were not always close to each other.

A good example is the *deodicata* El·lò, widow of Guisard and mother of the presbyter Duran and the deacon Sesmon, who we find in 959 donating an alloy in Sant Feliu de Calmella to the cathedral of Elna as a sign of gratitude for holding the usufruct of the parish of Sant Sadurní de Tresserra and the rights that derived from it,¹⁹ and, in 973, making a donation ‘for the soul’ (*pro anima*) of numerous properties distributed throughout the counties of Rosselló and Empúries to the same Cathedral (fig. 5).²⁰ Moreover, these properties were not ordinary plots of land, but large domains, as it was for example the property in Sant Feliu de Calmella, which was made up of houses, courts, orchards, vineyards, woods, kermes oaks, water, mills, a flax field and all kinds of fruit trees.²¹ Therefore, it is clear that she was a powerful woman, with an important capacity

¹⁷ In the case of Ribagorça, a donation to Santa Maria de Ovarra by a certain Cenón, designated as *sanctimonialis*, has been preserved, which could be included among the nuns not linked to a monastery studied in this article: CC III, doc. 276, p. 431432 ([988]). However, although it has traditionally been considered a 10th century document, the latest revisions date it to the middle of the 11th century, leaving it out of the present compilation: RAEM, doc. 462, p. 298 ([1036-1040]).

¹⁸ As for the high presence of widows among the *devotae*, it should be noted that this phenomenon has also been observed in many other parts of the Carolingian Empire and the Iberian Peninsula. In Galicia, for example, it has been established that 60% of the nuns documented between the 9th and 11th centuries were widows (ANDRADE CERNADAS 2012: 320-321).

¹⁹ CC VI, doc. 391, p. 349351 (959).

²⁰ CC VI, doc. 475, p. 407-408 (973).

²¹ «*Alodem nostrum quod nos habemus in comitatu Russilionense, in Valle Asperi, in appenditione de Serra Sancti Petri, in locum quem vocant Sancto Felice vel infra eius fines et termines, id est in domibus, casas, casalibus, curtis, curtalibus, ortis, ortalibus, terris et vineis, silvis, garricis, aquis, aquarum, molendinis et molinaribus, cum illorum capitaquis decurentis superioribus et subterioribus, et linaribus factis et faciendis, arboris, arboribus pomiferis vel impormiferis*»: CC VI, doc. 391, p. 349-351 (959).

for economic action, and very well connected with the aristocracy of Rosselló, to which she undoubtedly belonged.

Another significant case is that of Honorada, who, besides owning properties in places as far away as the city of Barcelona or the Conflent valley (fig. 5),²² is recorded as the wife of the judge Odesindo, who had also opted for the religious life by taking monastic vows (“*mulier de Odesindo iudice qui hodie est monacho*”).²³ This, on the one hand, proves that she was indeed a powerful woman, a member of the local elite, as does her ability to do business with some of the most important personalities of her time, such as the abbot Garí de Cuixà and the viscounts Arnau and Guisla de Conflent.²⁴ On the other hand, it shows that it would not be unusual for married couples, at a certain point in their lives, to choose to devote themselves to religious life. In this case, it is significant that, while he retired to a monastery, disappearing from the sources, she continued to be active as a *deodicata*.

A final interesting example is that of Quíxol, since, although we do not have many sources to reconstruct her patrimony and we can only link her to some assets in the county of Osona that she bequeathed in her will in Ripoll (fig. 5),²⁵ her tombstone has been preserved in the church of Santa Maria del Camí, where we can read «*hic reqiescit bonae memoriae Chixiloni, deodicata, filia Wifredi com(ittis), dimitat ei D(eus), am(en). Q(uae) obiit VIII kale(nda) mar(ties) era DCCCCLXXXIII, ani D(omi)ni [DC]CCCXLV, anno VIII Regna(n)te Leofo[vi]co rege*». ²⁶ Based on the information provided by this epigraph, there is no doubt that Quíxol was the youngest daughter of Count Guifré, known as the Hairy, and, therefore, sister of the abbess Emma de Sant Joan and of the counts Sunifred II of Urgell, Miró II of Cerdanya, Guifré Borrell and Sunyer of Barcelona.²⁷ Thus, we can claim that, even for women of the highest rank, and even when their family had founded the only two female monasteries that existed at the time in the Catalan counties, the option of living a religious life unmediated by any institution was still fully viable and socially sanctioned.

In the light of these three examples, we can confirm that becoming a *deodicata* or *devota* was not an option reserved for women of humbler extraction, but for members of the higher echelons of society. This forces us to rule out the possibility of using the distribution of their properties to study their places of residence, since these properties could be scattered around a vast territory.

²² CC VII, doc. 874, p. 793-794 (986); CC VI, doc. 639, p. 503-504 ([988-998]); CC VII, doc. 1517, p. 1352-1353 (1000); DACU 981-1010, doc. 287, p. 119 (1003).

²³ CC VI, doc. 639, p. 503-504 ([988-998]); DACU 981-1010, doc. 287, p. 119 (1003).

²⁴ CC VII, doc. 874, p. 793-794 (986).

²⁵ CC IV, doc. 544, p. 435-436 (944).

²⁶ ELMCC, doc. 45, p. 327 (945).

²⁷ The identification of Quíxol as the daughter of Count Guifré el Pelós had already been noted in the 19th century by Pròsper de BOFARULL MASCARÓ (1836: 29-30) in his attempt to rebuild the dynasty of the counts of Barcelona. More recently, however, Stefano M. CINGOLANI (2010: 139-140) has provided some new information on the subject and, for example, has been able to identify her husband and several of her children, which gives a much more detailed portrait of this interesting member of the Barcelona casal.

However, the cartography produced does allow us to detect another interesting pattern. If we pay attention to the relationship between the properties of the different *devotae*, we will find several cases in which more than one owned property in the same area and, even more surprisingly, sometimes the sources specify that they were adjacent to each other. This is especially evident in the case of the plain of Barcelona, where, leaving aside the interurban space, we find three areas where two different *devotae* owned property and, in two of the cases, their lands bordered directly on each other (fig. 6). Therefore, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that these religious women, although not necessarily living in community, may have been in contact with each other and even had a certain personal relationship.

In favour of the latter argument is also the fact that, for example, the *deodicata* Oruça, in her will, left the *devota* Gudrilda a shop opposite the gates of Barcelona, two vineyard *mujades* [plots of 4900 square meters] and several movable goods.²⁸ From this alone it is not possible to know what kind of relationship existed between them and, in fact, it is quite possible that they were only linked by ties of kinship or *amicitia* fruit of sharing the same way of living and understanding female spirituality. However, they could also have lived together in the same space and formed a sort of ‘paramonastic’ community with less strict rules. This hypothesis seems very suggestive, but it is very difficult to prove. In light of the preserved sources, we can say practically nothing more about the relationships between the different *devotae*, just as it is very difficult to reconstruct their links with the rest of society.

However, after analysing the network of contacts of the different *deodicatae*, it is worth noting that, although we cannot place them within any regular community, there is a certain link between some of them and the two female monasteries. Thus, for example, in the case of Sant Joan de les Abadesses, we find the *devota* Gorgòria, who as early as 904 had already made an important donation to the valley of Ribes,²⁹ the *devota* Guinedell, who offered his daughter Elon to the monastery to be professed as a nun,³⁰ or the *devota* Osesa, who, in her will, mainly benefited that community of *sanctimoniales*.³¹ Consequently, it seems clear that there were close links between the religious women who lived within the monastic institutions and those who lived outside, which confirms that the spirituality of the latter, as Teresa VINYOLES VIDAL (2005: 39) rightly pointed out, developed beyond the boundaries of the monastery, but not in opposition to it.

²⁸ CC VII, doc. 1141, p. 1028-1030 (992). An even clearer example of links between *deodicatae* can be found in 1032, slightly outside the chronology of this article, when we find a *devota* named El-ló acting as executor of the *deosacrata* Guinedell: DSJA, doc. 22, p. 57-59 (1032). However, in this case, as I have recently studied with Irene Brugués, I believe that their relationship would be conditioned by the fact that they had both been members of the community of Sant Joan de les Abadesses, suppressed by papal order in 1017 (BRUGUÉS MASSOT, COSTA BADIA 2019: 283-286).

²⁹ ACB, doc. 16, p. 129-131 (904).

³⁰ CC V, doc. 201, p. 201 (926).

³¹ ACB, doc. 112, p. 263-266 (938).

Leaving aside the issue of the social framework in which the different *devotae* were inscribed –which should be expanded with a detailed prosopographical study of each case that I cannot undertake on this occasion– I would like to focus on the question of the spaces where these women developed their particular religious life. In this respect, it is worth remembering that, as I have already pointed out, the sources are scarce and it is often difficult to determine where these women lived. However, if we pay attention to the details, we can find some data that give us clues in this regard, since, for example, in Runa's testamentary execution it is specified that she had died «*in territorio Elenense, in villa Longa, intus in sua domo*»;³² Ranovígia participated in a trial together with all her neighbours, the inhabitants of Vallformosa;³³ Honesta founded, together with the priest Daniel, the house of Sant Sebastià del Sull «*per Dei revelacionem*»;³⁴ Sabegòncia attended, as part of the neighbourhood of Gréixer, the consecration of the cell of Sant Andreu, founded by the future abbot Daguí de Ripoll;³⁵ and, finally, we know that Madrona «*fuit devote de ipsa cella Sancte Crucis*», belonging to the abbey of Sant Cugat del Vallès.³⁶

These references allow us to map the sites most clearly linked to the *deodicatae* and to study their characteristics, similarities and differences. Furthermore, taking advantage of all the possibilities offered by a GIS, we can compare their distribution with other elements that made up the spiritual landscape of the time, such as, for example, the monasteries founded in the Catalan counties before the year 1000 (fig. 7). The results of this exercise are as promising as they are unexpected, since they do not confirm the previously mentioned relationship between the *devotae* and the four known monasteries, but reveal a clear coincidence between the unregulated spaces where these women developed their *modus vivendi* and the male monasteries. Consequently, if the study of the actors who took part in the transactions involving these *deodicatae* revealed fluid relations with the professed nuns of their time, the present cartographic approach shows a close link with male cenobitic communities.

In this sense, I have already mentioned the cases of Honesta and Sabegòncia, who were involved in the foundation of two different male monasteries, and that of Madona, who is recorded in the documents as *devota* of the cell of the Santa Creu de Cervelló, which, as a property of Sant Cugat del Vallès, has always been assumed that was a male community. The case of Sant Martí del Congost, is also very revealing, since at the consecration of this short-lived cell of Sant Joan de les Abadesses, the bishop Gotmar de Vic mentions all the «*sacerdotes, monachos vel deodicatas, qui modo ibidem Deo militare noscuntur vel deinceps, Deo favente, servituri erunt sive serviture*». ³⁷ It is implied, therefore, that it would be common to find women living in male

³² CC V, doc. 168, p. 174-175 (928).

³³ CC IV, doc. 1229, p. 884-885 (977).

³⁴ MSLLB, doc. 3, p. 180-181 (939).

³⁵ DMR, doc. 3, p. 80-82 (871).

³⁶ CC VII, doc. 130, p. 240-241 (915).

³⁷ CC IV, doc. 37, p. 95-97 (898).

monastic cells or in their immediate surroundings, in such a way that they would live together with monks and priests in a sort of double monasteries; a phenomenon that, despite its long tradition in the northwest of the Iberian peninsula (ORLANDIS ROVIRA 1960; LINAGE CONDE 1990), is not documented in the Catalan counties of the 9th and 10th centuries.

However, we have not been able to link many *devotae* to any monastery. In these cases, it seems that they lived in private homes, either in their own family centres or in the vicinity of secular churches. In this regard, it is interesting to remember that, in the donation of the parish church of Sant Julià de Ribelles, although no specific *devota* is mentioned, the neighbours reported that «*ipsa terra ubi ipsa ecclesia est fundata*» bordered on «*ipsa casa de ipsa devota*».³⁸ Therefore, it is clear that, at least in this case, there was a nun who lived in the vicinity of the church and who must have been involved in its parish life. Perhaps this would be the case of Santa Maria del Camí, the church where the *deodicata* Quíxol –daughter of Count Guifré, known as the Hairy– was buried, as we have no evidence that there was any stable community until the 13th century, when we find a group of *donades* living together (SUNYOL BUSQUETS 1991: 356).³⁹

At this point, we can conclude that, in the early medieval Catalan Counties, there were many women who –especially in their adulthood, once they were widowed– sought a religious life. However, most of them did not profess in any monastery and rather preferred to develop their spiritual life in less normative and regulated spaces, and that is why we often find them living alone or in small communities near monasteries –not necessarily female ones– or secular churches where their spiritual needs were satisfied. Consequently, in the early Middle Ages, as in the period of late antiquity (SALES CARBONELL 2019), the spaces of female religiosity were much more diverse and numerous than the sources allow us to see, and we would certainly find *deodicatae* and *devotae* in any part of the territory. This is why, when he consecrated the church of Sant Pere de la Serra in 953, bishop Riculf d’Elna established that “*si vero infra dictos terminos ecclesia vel aliqua loco devota vel religiosa in sua parrochia fuerunt in obediencia ecclesie predictae Sancti Petri et in regimine eiusdem auctoritate de qua fungimur subponimus in eternum.*”⁴⁰

³⁸ CC V, doc. 272, p. 250-252 (947).

³⁹ The existence of this 13th century community in the same place where a *devota* lived in the 10th century raises the question of the possible relationship between the early and late medieval *donades*. However, I do not think we can establish a continuity between the two phenomena, since their social and spiritual contexts are totally different. In the particular case of Santa Maria del Camí, I believe the coincidence must be attributed to the strategic location of that church at the foot of the road between Vic and Barcelona, something that made it a perfect place to host all kinds of religious settlements with a certain vocation for assistance.

⁴⁰ CC VI, doc. 338, p. 318-319 ([953]).

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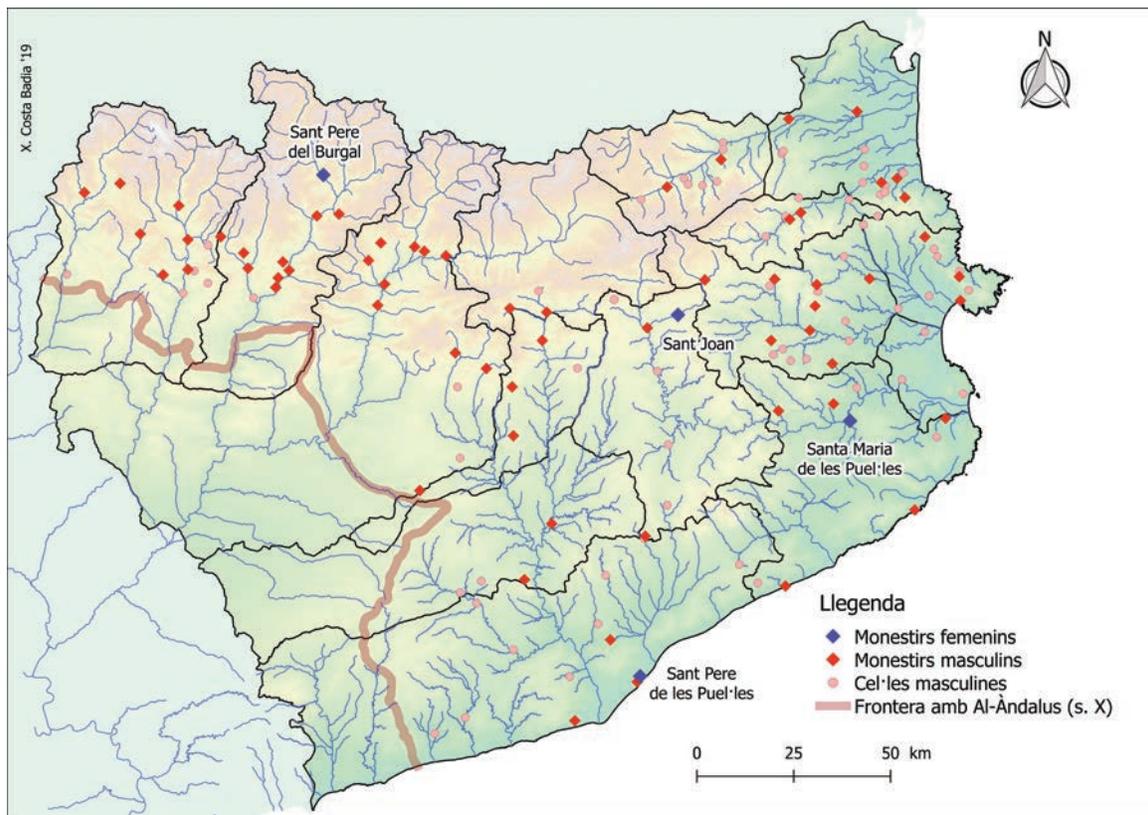


Fig. 1: Monasteries founded throughout the 9th and 10th centuries in the Catalan counties..

CC VII, doc. 216 (945)	CC IV, doc. 1127 (972)	CC VII, doc. 857 (985)	CC VII, doc. 1014 (989)	CC VII, doc. 1132 (992)	CC VII, doc. 1215 (993)	CC VII, doc. 1319 (996)	CC VII, doc. 1344 (996)	PACBI, doc. 96 (1009)
Adalaude, abbatissa	Filmera, abbatissa	Quintio, devota	Chantilo, deodicata	Quintio	Quintio, devota	Chantilo, devota	Chantilo	Chantilo, devota
			Adalec, dita Bonafilla, abbatissa	Bonafilla, abbatissa	Adalez, dita Bonafilla, abbatissa			
			Emelde, deodicata	Emelae	Emelde, devota	Emelle, abbatissa	Emeldes, abbatissa	
			Argudama, deodicata	Argudancia	Argudama, devota	Argudama, devota	Argudama	Argudama, devota
			Emetrane, deodicata	Emetrane, devota	Emetrane, devota			Emetrane, devota (1)
						Chusca	Chuschao	Cusca, devota
						Rechide, devota	Rechide	Tendelinds, abbatissa
								Santulo, devota
								Emetrane, devota (2)

Fig. 3: Chronological evolution of the nuns who formed the community of Sant Pere de les Puel·les, highlighting in red those recorded as *deodicae* or *devotae*.

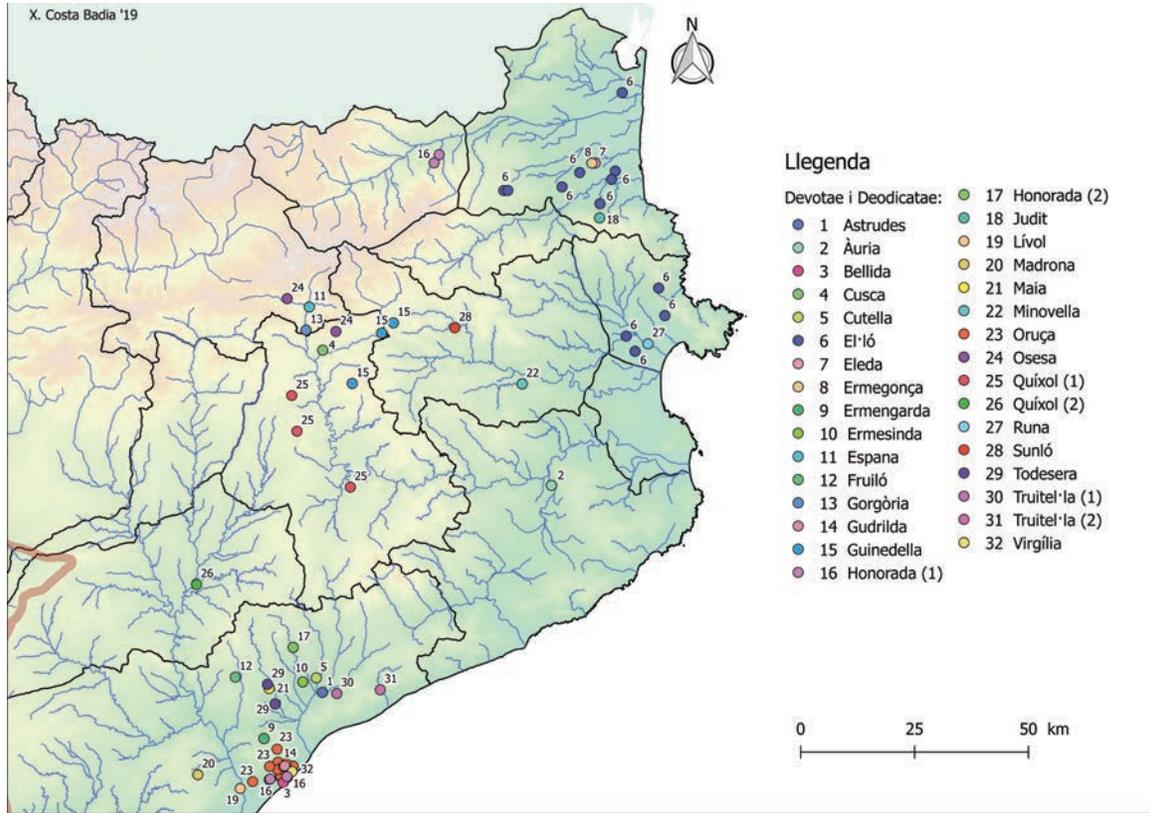


Fig. 5: Map of all the properties owned by the different recorded *devotae* and *deodicatae*.

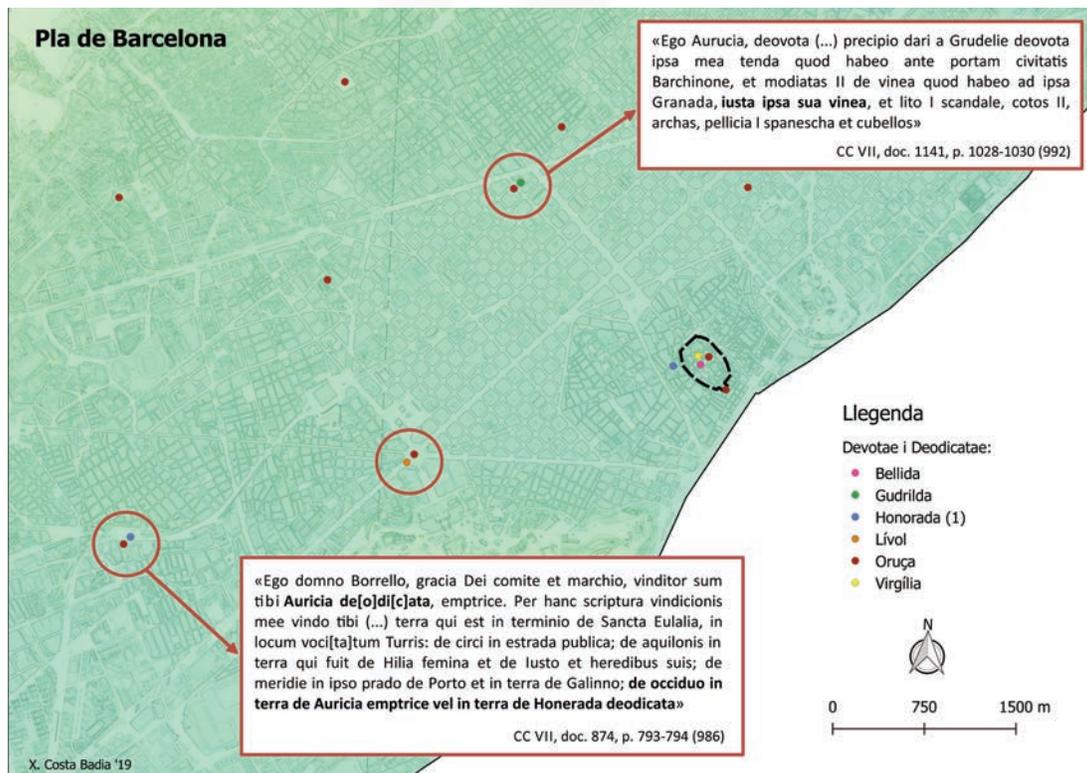


Fig. 6: Distribution of the properties of the *deodicatae* in the Plain of Barcelona, highlighting those places where the properties of more than one Deodicatae bordered on each other.

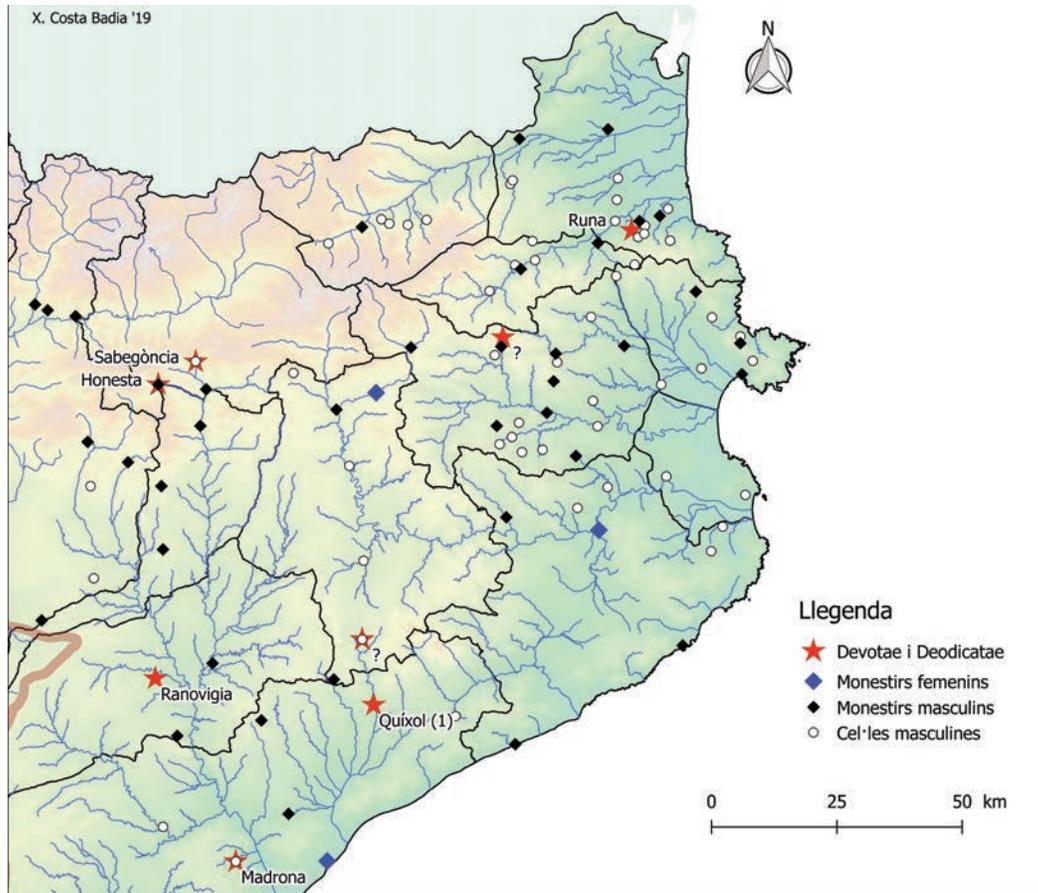


Fig. 7: Specific places where we can document the presence of *Devotae* and *Deodicatae* in the 9th and 10th centuries, relating them to the regular monastery that existed in the same chronology. In each case, the name of the religious woman in question is indicated. Question marks designate those places where unregulated religious life is documented but no proper nouns are mentioned.