

# QUEEN ORABLE OF ORANGE

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*Lord Aurelius Joseph Michael Isamat Anax of Catalania*

According to the chansons de geste of the wilhelmingian cycle, the second wife of Saint William “the Great” ≈ Wilhelmus “Magnus” ≈ Guillem “el Gran” ≈ Guilhelm “el Grand” ≈ Guillaume “le Grand” ≈ Wilhelm “der Grosse” ≈ Guillelme d’Orange ≈ Willehelm, Anax of Catalania /0755-0813/, Apostle of God ≈ Isaac ≈ יִשָּׂק ≈ Jıyyaq II, Patriarch of the Holy Grail /0793-0812/ ≈ Willehelm I, Rex of Catalania /0793-0812/, Dux of Helvetia /0793-0808/, Dux of Septimania /0780-0812/, Dux of Aquitaine /0781-0812/, Dux of Spain /0801-0812/, Archon of Lodeve /0873-0812/, Archon of Narbonne /0793-0812/, Archon of Carcassone /0778-0795/, Archon of Razes /0778-0795/, Archon of Toulouse /0781-0812–/, Archon of Nimes /0793-0812/, Archon of Orange /0793-0812/, Archon of Ribagorce /0806-0812/, Archon of Pallars /0806-0812/, was the Saracen princess *Orable*, who took the name *Witberg*,<sup>1</sup> when she was baptized in order to marry Saint William. She was daughter to the Saracen monarch *Deramez*, *Roi de Cordres*,<sup>2</sup> that is to say, Lord Abu’l Modhaffer Abu Suleiman Abd er-Rahman ibn Mu’waia, Anax of Ismaelia-Omaja /...-0788/ ≈ Abd er-Rahman I, Caliph of Cordova /0756-0788/.

According to some chansons de geste, Lady Orable was sister-german to the Saracen prince *Rainouart*, who was born in Cordova, also son to Lord Abd er-Rahman I, Caliph of Cordova /0756-0788/. Lord Rainouart ≈ Ragincharde was baptized in order to marry the Frankish princess *Aélis*, supposedly daughter to Lord Louis “the Pius” of France ≈ Louis “le Débonaire” of France ≈ Hluotwig “dem Frommen” ≈ Chlodowig, Anax of Sicambria-France-Cologne /0778-0840/ ≈ Chlodowig IV, Rex of France /0814-0840/ ≈ Chlodowig I, Rex of Aquitaine /0781-0814/, Emperor of the West /0816-0840/, and to the Catalan princess *Blanchefleur* (sister-german to Saint William),

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Liber Manualis of Dhouda* it is written *Withbergis*, which corresponds to the gaut. *Widuberg* → *Witberg*. The name has usually been supposed to be the gaut. *Witburg*, due to the typical spellings used in the epic poems, such as *Guibor* in the *Prise d’Orange*, and *Guitburc* in others. Even the two reconstructions of the foundation charters of the Monastery of Gellone correspond to this spelling (*Witburg*, *Guitburge*). However, as the latter are adulterated reconstructions of the /0804/ original which was destroyed in the /1066/ fire, the most trustworthy source is the *Liber Manualis*, written in /0841-0843/ by Lady Widuberg’s daughter-in-law. The spellings *Widu* → *Wit*, *With*, *Wid* are medieval equivalents, but the gaut. *berg* “mountain castle”, is distinct from the gaut. *burg* “town”, even though their ultimate origin is the same.

<sup>2</sup> The Romance title derived from the Latin noun *Rex* “royal sovereign” is usually translated “King” in English. However, *King* is *Kuningaz* “issue of the Royal Kin”, characteristically called “Prince of the Blood Royal” in modern times, but strictly *applicable only to all agnate members of the primeval Royal Kin*, a dignity never transmissible through a female. Thus, legal “princes” of a “royal family”, even the firstborn and heir to a legally legitimate *Rex*, are not *Kings*, nor is any *Rex* a *King*, unless they be members of the *primeval Royal Kin*. For this reason, *King* is not used here to translate Latin *Rex* (French *Roi*, Provençal *Rei*, Catalan *Rei*, Portuguese *Rei*, Spanish *Rey*, Italian *Re*). Also for linguistic reasons, the medieval title *Count* “sovereign prince (usually a Duke’s vassal)” is rendered *Archon*.

but Lord Louis “the Pius” did not marry any sister-german to Saint William.<sup>3</sup> Lord Rainouart is not mentioned in the *Prise d’Orange*, but is the hero of *Moniage Rainouart*, written at the close of the 12<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, who is also mentioned frequently in other chansons de geste. According to *Moniage Rainouart*, he conquered (sic) *Aljeste* (*Algiers*), and later became a monk at the Abbey of Saint Julian, in Briude (Auvergne), now Brioude (Haute-Loire), where he died.

According to the *Song of William* (lat. frank. *Chançon de Guillelme* → *Chanson de Guillame*), nephew to Lady Orable was the Saracen prince *Guischard*, born in the Caliphate of Cordova, who “abjured God” when he was dying in battle.<sup>4</sup>

Lady Orable’s first husband was the Saracen prince *Theudebald*, *Rex of Orange* (lat. provenç. *Tidbald*, *Rei d’Aurenja* ≈ lat. frank. *Tiebaut*, *Roi d’Orange* → *Thibaud*, *Roi d’Orange*), who had captured and married her. In the *Prise d’Orange*, he is variously named *Tiebaut l’Arragon*, *Tiebaut d’Aufriquant*, *Tiebaut d’Aufrique*, and even *Tiebaut l’Esclavon*, *Tiebaut d’Esclavonie*, *Tiebaut l’Escler*, *Tiebaut le Persant*, *Tiebaut de Perse*, revealing much confusion about his origins. According to the legends, Lady Orable, who fell in love with Saint William at first sight, betrayed her family and Faith to deliver *Orange* (lat. *Arausium* → lat. provenç. *Aurenja* → lat. frank. *Orange*)<sup>5</sup> to the Christians. This is the most solid tradition. Nonetheless, according to the *Prise d’Orange*, Lady Orable was blond (“Orable au cler vis”), and this could point to Frankish or Gothic blood, although it proves nothing, since it could easily be a mere rhetorical convention of the poem, and, besides, although rare, it is possible that she have been an Arab and blond, particularly as her mother’s origin is unknown. However, the mention of her capture by Lord Theudbald suggests more emphatically that Lady Orable may have been a Christian who was seized during one of the Muslim leader’s military expeditions, and thereafter forced to worship under the Islamic rite throughout her marital bondage. Historically, when Saint William abdicated to become a monk,<sup>6</sup> his two wives became nuns —Lady Witberg at the Monastery of *Chalon* (*Cabillo* → *Cabillonum* → *Chalon* → *Chalon-sur-Saône*), where she was assassinated in /0834/.

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<sup>3</sup> It seems irrelevant that a daughter to Lord Ludwig “the Pius”, Lady Gisèle ≈ Gisla, Anakes of Sicambria-France-Cologne /0820-0874/, married Lord Everard ≈ Eberhart ≈ Eberchard, Anax of Catalania-Artois-Therouane-Ostrevant-Amiens /0800-0866/ ≈ Eberchard I, Dux of Friulia /0846-0866/, who was *brother-akin* (though not *brother-german*) to Saint William.

<sup>4</sup> In tune with the idiosyncrasy of the *Chançon de Guillelme*, we should not interpret that he actually denied *God*, but *Christian Faith* (reverting to Islam).

<sup>5</sup> Although this toponym is often given as lat. *Arausio*, genitive *Arausionis*, the older form was lat. *Arausium*, genitive *Arausii*.

<sup>6</sup> It is usually said that in /0806/ he abdicated and retired to the Monastery of Gellone, alias *House of God* (ujem heber. בית אל {BJT `L} → {Bet `El} ≈ lat. *Domus Dei*), later *Monastery of Saint William in the Wilderness* (lat. *Monasterium Sancti Wilhelmi a Desertis* → lat. catalan. occitan. *Monestir de Sant Guillem-le-Désert* ≈ lat. frank. *Monastère de Saint Guillaume-au-Désert*, Gellona (Lodeva), Septimania, founded by him in /0804/, where he died in /0812/ or /0813/, although he is also said to have reigned until /0812/ or /0813/. A careful analysis suggests that he most probably abdicated to retire to his monastery in /0812/ and died in /0813/.

The etymology of the name *Orable* is unknown to me. Some authors have denied its Arabic origin, pretending that it be derived from the Latin adjective *orabilis* “prayable”, meaning “lovable” or “benevolent”. Although it could be a Latin epithet adopted by the chansons de geste, the original Arabic name having been totally forgotten, it could also be a typically corrupted Romanization of a personal woman’s name in Arabic, such as *'Ablah*, perhaps with the characteristic article (*al-'Ablah* “the Perfectly Formed”), or another name unknown to me. I am unaware of any study on this matter by Arab linguists.

Interestingly, the Arabic names of Lady Orable’s brother-german and nephew are not mentioned in the chansons de geste, but it is feasible that they were forgotten by the 11<sup>th</sup> century. What seems inadmissible, however, is that Lady Orable’s first husband — a *Saracen Wali* (“*Roi*”) of *Orange* who was not baptized— be always given the Germanic name *Theudebald* (“*Tiebaut*”).

Perhaps Lady Witberg was a Christian princess, captured by a Saracen Wali who married her, and, being forced to observe Muslim practices at the court of her husband, was, after his fall, restored to Christianity... Lady *Witberg* “*al-'Ablah*”, that is *Witberg* “*the Perfectly Formed*”...? Of course, the Arabs would have used her Arabic name, not *Witberg*. In such case, the Wali might have been a son to Lord Abd er-Rhaman I, Caliph of Cordova. On the other hand, if Lady Orable Witberg was Lord Abd er-Rhaman’s daughter, her first husband may well have been a noble Visigoth named *Theudebald*.

Is it possible, then, that Lady Orable’s *Saracenity* be a mere fantasy, or did the authors of the chansons de geste Romanize the onomastics absolutely, using only baptismal names, and actually inventing a new one for the husband who was never baptized? Conspicuously, Lord Sadun al-Ruajni, Wali of Barcelona /0796-0801/, was captured by the Franks when he tried to flee his domains to seek help in Cordova, and his successor, Lord Harun, last Wali of Barcelona /0801-0803/, had “Gothic” relatives who delivered him to Saint William. Moreover, if Lord Harun, had “Gothic” relatives because he was a Visigoth himself, he would have had a visigothic name, and, if he was, in fact, Lady Orable’s first husband, his name could have well been *Theodebald*  $\approx$  *Tiebaut*  $\approx$  *Tidbald*  $\approx$  *Theudebald*. This historic process, so similar to the one narrated in the *Prise d’Orange*, manifests that Lady Orable’s first husband might have been the last Wali of Barcelona, instead of the last Wali of Orange. On the other hand, considering that Lord Bernard is usually assumed to have been born about /0804/ or /0805/, as the eldest child of Saint William and Lady Witberg, the echronology for the marriage of Lady Orable Witberg to Saint William should be shortly before /0804/, and a wedding immediately after the conquest of Orange in /0793/ would seem to be rather early, though not impossible.

Nevertheless, a serious error has gone unnoticed in all writings that I have read about this matter, even in those which do not entirely fall in its trap.

The presumption that Lord Bernard was the first born child to Saint William and Lady Witberg, and born circa /0805/, is unacceptable. Even those studies that assume his birth circa /0795/ give as an alternative possibility a birth circa /0805/. Nevertheless, it is only logical to conclude that Lord Bernard must have been born in /0800/ or before, as it seems improbable that both his father and mother would have

taken religious vows in monasteries while one of their children was substantially under twelve years of age.

It is said that Saint William retired to the Monastery of Gellone in /0806/, and died in /0812/ or /0813/, but this is not feasible. If he had done so, the chronological difficulty would be much worse regarding the births of his children by Lady Witberg, since instead of being born by /0800/, the youngest had to be born by /0794/.

From Lord Bernard's marriage in /0824/, a birth date circa /0805/ has been deduced. This date is barely acceptable, in relation to his first known ducal rule in /0820/, but if his parents both took religious vows in /0812/, as it seems most likely, and even if Lord Bernard had gone with his father to live at the Monastery of Gellone in /0812/ because he was still under twelve years of age, he might have been born as late as /1801/, but hardly in /0805/, since he would have been merely seven years old, and it does not seem normal at all for his parents to separate and take religious vows, leaving a child so young. Therefore, he should have been born circa /0800/ or before.

On the other hand, Lord Gauthelm, who is usually thought to have been younger than Lord Bernard, was the Archon of Roussillon in /0812/. As there is no mention that he was under a regency, it is not credible that he was less than twelve years old, and would seem much more likely to have been sixteen years of age or older, which necessarily indicates a birth date in /0800/ or before, and most likely in /0796/ or before.

Having said the foregoing, we must conclude that the first husband of Lady Orable could not have been the Wali of Barcelona, but, in fact, the Wali of Orange, as affirmed by all legends. As Saint William took Orange in /0793/, a date in /0793/ or /0794/ for his marriage to Lady Orable Witberg becomes obvious, as well as very reasonable birth dates for Lord Gauthelm circa /0795/, Lady Gerberg circa /0797/ and Lord Bernard circa /0800/.

We know nothing about the genealogy of Lady Orable's first husband, Lord *Theodebald* (gaut. *Theudebald* → lat. occitan. *Tidbald* ≈ lat. frank. *Tiebaut* → *Thibaud*), but, considering his Germanic name, it is likely that he belonged to a Visigothic family which had converted to Islam, particularly since various Visigothic princes retained their estates in Septimania during the Arab occupation. In that case, he might have been related to Saint William's first wife, Lady Cunegund of Carcassonne ≈ Cunégonde de Carcassonne ≈ Cunegundis de Carcasona ≈ Cunigund, Anakes of Baltia /0760-0835/, who died on 15 June /0835/ in the monastery where she lived since /0812/, and was heiress (daughter or niece) to Lord Sunifred ≈ Sunifrid, Anax of Baltia /...-0778/ ≈ Sunifrid II, Archon of Carcasona /...-0778/, Archon of Razes /...-0778/; and paternal granddaughter to Lord Ardo ≈ Sisebuto Artobás ≈ Hardovasto ≈ Hardo ≈ Sigsebut Hardevast, Anax of Baltia /0705-0756/, Rex of Visigothia /0713-0720/, Dux of Septimania /0713-0720/, who was born between /0702/ and /0709/, and died after /0756/. Moreover, the estates of Lord Sunifred's elder brother Lord Ansemund of Nimes ≈ Asemon de Nimes ≈ Ansemundus Nemausi ≈ Ansimund, Anax of Baltia /...-0753/ ≈ Ansimund I, Archon of Nimes /...-0753/, Archon of Agde /...-0753/, Archon of Magalonne /...-0753/, Archon of Usez /...-0753/, limited with the County of Orange, about which history during the Arabic occupation we have no record other than through the epic poems, particularly the *Charroi de Nîmes*.

Various cybernetic publications make Lady Witberg a daughter of a *Count Lambert of Hornbach*, said to be a grandson of the historical *Saint Lievin of Treves*, although the purported *County of Hornbach* did not exist. In /0737/ Saint Primin ≈ Priminus /0670-0753/, Abbot of Mittelzell /0724-.../, Abbot of Hornbach /0737-0753/, founded the Monastery of Hornbach, where he died in /0753/, so that before /0737/ Hornbach was totally or, at least mostly, uninhabited. The town of the same name grew later around the monastery. The alleged *Count Lambert of Hornbach* is said to have been son to Lord Guy ≈ Guid ≈ Widon ≈ Witto ≈ Wido, Anax of Catalania /0685-0722/, Abbot of Fontanelles /0704-0722/, and to Lady Rolande ≈ Hruotland ≈ Chlodeland, Princess of Hasbanie-Laon /0685-0704/; paternal grandson to Saint Lievin ≈ Liutwin ≈ Leudewin, Anax of Catalania /...-0722/, Arch-Bishop of Treves /0695-0713/, and to Lady Wiligarde ≈ Willegard, Princess of Hasbanie, who were married in /0689/; maternal grandson to Lord Ervée ≈ Harivée ≈ Herwig ≈ Chariwig, Prince of Hasbanie /0660-0715/ ≈ Chariwig I, Archon of Laon /...-0715/. This genealogy makes Lady Orable Witberg an agnate third-granddaughter of Saint Gerin de Montglane ≈ Warin ≈ Gerinvs ≈ Gereint, Anax of Catalania /1605-0677/, Martyr ≈ Gereint II, Rex of Catalonia /0650-0677/, Dux of Helvetia /0650-0677/, Archon of Poitou /...-0677/, who was an agnate fifth-grandfather of Saint William. The truth is that this pretended filiation of Lady Orable Witberg's is false. Perhaps the said cybernetic pedigrees derive such a ludicrous filiation from two basic errors:

- 1<sup>st</sup> To imagine that Lady Orable Witberg was the mother of Lord Herbert "Borrell" ≈ Haribertus "Burrellus" ≈ Herbert ≈ Chariberht, Anax of Catalania /0779-0834/ ≈ Chariberht I, Archon of Tortosa /0809-.../, Archon of Vivarius /...-0830/. Lord Herbert "Borrell" was son to Saint William "the Great", and his first wife, Lady Cunégonde ≈ Cunigund, Anakess of Baltia /0760-0835/, Archontess of Carcassonne, Archontes of Razès, who died on 15 June /0835/.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> To imagine that Lady Orable Witberg was a sister-german of Lady Waldrade ≈ Waltrat ≈ Waldrad /...-0824/, who died after 15 February /0824/, and was the wife of Lord Hadrian ≈ Hadrianvs Udalrichinger, Anax of Longbardia-Vintzgau /0760-0824/, Archon of Orléans /...-0824/, and mother of Lord Eudes d'Orléans ≈ Odo ≈ Otto ≈ Vuodo Avrelianensis ≈ Audo, Anax of Longbardia-Vintzgau /0798-0834/ ≈ Audo I, Archon of Orléans /0824-0834/, who is well attested as *consobrinvs* of Lord Herbert "Burrellus". As the reason for this relationship was that their respective mothers were sisters-german, to mistakenly assume that Lady Orable Witberg was Lord Herbert's mother, misrepresents her as sister-german to Lady Waldrad. Actually, Lady Waldrad would have been sister-german to Lady Cunegund, and would not have been necessarily related to Lady Orable Witberg. Furthermore, to imagine that Lady Waldrad and Lady Orable Witberg were daughters to an inexistent *Count of Hornbach* merely adds error upon error. In any case, Hornbach is irrelevant to Lady Cunegund's family, and she inherited her father (or uncle) Lord Sunifred ≈ Sunifrid, Anax of Baltia /...-0769/ ≈ Sunifrid II, Archon of Carcassonne /...-0769/, Archon of Razès /...-0769/. His name, and the name of his brother-german Lord Suniarius ≈ Sonna ≈ Sunyer ≈ Sunher ≈ Sunichari, Anax of Baltia, Governor of Lugo (in Portugal), occur repeatedly amongst the immediate descendents of Saint William and Lady Cunegund. Finally, it seems very unlikely that the

descendants of Saint William and Lady Cunegund could have inherited the County of *Carcassonne* (lat. *Carcaso* → lat. catalan. *Carcasona*), and the County of *Razes* (lat. *Rhedesium* → lat, catalan. *Rasés*), from any other source.

Although her filiation has not been confirmed beyond doubt, all the evidence that we have continues to favour Lady Orable's Saracenicity. To deny that she was an Arab princess, trustworthy documentation must be furnished. Perhaps an Arabic expert with access to documents from the Caliphate of Cordova may clarify these obscure matters of History.