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Manfred W. Wenner

THE ARAB/MUSLIM PRESENCE IN MEDIEVAL CENTRAL EUROPE

INTRODUCTION

For nearly three centuries after the famous Battle of Poitiers (Tours), which is usually regarded as the high-water mark of Arab/Muslim expansion into Western Europe, the Muslims continued to maintain a series of relatively isolated presences in regions of Western Europe outside the Iberian Peninsula. Although these presences have tended to be forgotten within the larger picture of Muslim/Christian relationships during the medieval period, the researches of some nineteenth and twentieth century scholars would seem to indicate that they left behind a considerably larger legacy than has previously been suspected.

Perhaps the most interesting of these presences was the one which resulted in Arab/Muslim control of the Alpine passes which connect Italy with the remainder of Western Europe for a number of decades in the tenth century A.D. The present study, then, is first a brief summary of the relevant events of this period. More importantly, however, it seeks to analyze the motivations for this particular incursion into Western Europe, the method of administration of these non-Muslim areas, and finally, the modern legacies from this brief period when Arab/Muslim forces controlled an essential part of Western European communication.

THE EVENTS

Sometime around the year 889 A.D. a small force (perhaps as few as 20) of "Saracens" landed and established a base-camp or small settlement at the northern end of the small inlet on the French Mediterranean coast which is best known today because of the town at its southern end, St. Tropez.¹ Known to the medieval chroniclers as Fraxinetum, it is today known as Garde-Frainet (or simply Frainet) in the Department of Var. Apparently the location and general environment were satisfactory, since defensive installations and further immigration took place during the next few years – perhaps even including women and children. The nearby mountain, Mont de Maures (mountain of the Moors), provided the cornerstone of defense against land-based attacks and the settlement apparently grew in size and population.

Once the settlement had been sufficiently fortified against possible counter-attacks, its "Saracen hordes" undertook pillaging expeditions, especially against the Kingdom of Burgundy and the Kingdom of Italy (Piedmont). Since

these predations apparently encountered little or no resistance, and the amount of booty obtained was high, Fraxinetum attracted further waves of Saracens from Spain as participants. According to contemporary account, the major reason for the relative freedom of movement throughout these areas was the fact that they were widely contested between a large number of different petty princes, dukes, and other nobility. The latter, in order to gain a temporary upper hand against one another, were not above making alliances with the invaders in order to strengthen their own individual positions.²

During the first three decades of the tenth century, that is until 930 A.D., little if any effective counteraction appears to have been taken by local leaders. It was during these years that the invaders succeeded in attacking and destroying – in whole or in part – such diverse towns and cities as Asti and Acqui in the East; the monasteries at Novalesse and Oulx; Embrun, Vienne, and Valence in the West, with major attacks upon such additional cities as Aix-en-Provence and Marseille in the south.³

Of much greater importance, however, was the fact that by this time the invaders controlled the three major passes between France and Italy; the little St. Bernhard, Mt. Cenis, and Mt. Genève, and were thereby able to seriously disturb developing commercial routes and the substantial flow of pilgrims from points North and West using these passes on their way to Rome.⁴

It was apparently this latter fact which brought about the first serious effort to drive the invaders from Fraxinetum. In 931, elements of the Greek (Byzantine) fleet attacked the settlement from the sea. This effort appears to have been completely without effect, however, since accounts from the same year have the Saracens still in control of the major Western Alpine passes. Indeed, Saracen operations appear to have increased in both size and ferocity, since for example, it appears likely that they were the forces responsible for the death of Archbishop Robert of Tours on his return from Rome through one of the Western passes.⁵

In the following decade, the areas into which the Saracens advanced increased markedly. Their raiding and related activities now extended north of the Alps, and included the sacking of the famous Monastery at St. Maurice in the Rhône Valley. At the same time, they make their appearance in the upper reaches of the Rhine Valley, sacking the Bishopric of Chur in Rhaetia.⁶

Since the Hungarians had also begun their forays and invasions of central and western Europe during this time period, contemporary accounts of these decades of the tenth century are somewhat confused and not always dependable. As a result, it is not entirely clear by what route the Saracens advanced into what is today southern Switzerland and then further north. Three alternatives have been suggested, each of which has some evidence in its favor, and some proponents and detractors. The first of these suggests that the invaders proceeded almost methodically up the Rhône Valley, crossed the Furka Pass, and from there followed the Rhine. Some place names (e.g., the Tour des Sarasins near Vevey) as well as an alleged Saracen graveyard in the area of Geneva are suggested proof of this route.

The second route is from Mont Cenis through the northern Italian plains, and

then northward into present-day Switzerland through the Bernhardin and Septimer Passes; one contemporary account of Saracen activities tends to support this path, though the lack of any accounts of Saracen activities in the neighborhood of some sizable towns through or near which the invaders would have had to pass casts some doubts on this alternative.

The third alternative is through the little St. Bernhard into the Val d'Aosta, through the successive valleys in the foothills of the Alps, and then northward through whatever passes were available, the Monte Moro, the Lukmanier (Luqman?) and others. This route would have provided the route of least resistance, and is supported by the sizable number of place names which may be or are of Arabic origin.⁷

In any event, by whatever route, it appears that by the third decade of the tenth century the Saracens were well-established both in some northern Italian towns in the foothills of the Alps (e.g., Vercelli, discussed below), and had control of at least the following major North-South routes through the Alps: the Great St. Bernhard, the Bernhardin, and the Septimer, with likely control of the Monte Moro, the Lukmanier, and perhaps the Simplon.

Once again, the extent of the Saracen expansion and the nature of their activities brought about an effort to destroy Fraxinetum, apparently widely recognized as the base of operations. Forces under the leadership of King Hugo of Italy attempted a joint attack with the Byzantines on the town.

According to contemporary accounts, the Greek control of the sea coupled with King Hugo's land-based attack through the massif of Mont de Maures was on the verge of success when King Hugo decided to concern himself more closely with his personal interests, that is, his future on the Italian throne. At the time, a contestant for the Italian throne, Count Berengar of Ivrea, was accumulating support for his pretensions; specifically he sought the support of Hermann of Swabia, and crossed the Great St. Bernhard on his way north for the necessary assistance. At this point, King Hugo called off his attack upon Fraxinetum and entered into an alliance with the Saracens. Under the terms of the alliance, the Saracens received control over all the Alpine passes from the west (Mont Genève) to the east (the Septimer).⁸

Despite their having become the "establishment" according to some chroniclers, the Saracens made further attacks upon the territories north of the Alps. For example, Chur was attacked more than once, and the great Abbey at St. Gallen, located near the Lake of Constance, was sacked in 954, the same year in which Grenoble, in the west, also fell into the hands of the Saracens.⁹

It would appear that this was the highpoint of Saracen power. Although there are accounts as late as 972 (specifically, the holding for ransom of St. Maiolus of the Abbey of Cluny) of Saracen control of the St. Bernhard, the contemporary accounts agree on a general decline in Saracen activity.¹⁰ (In addition, there are accounts in the chronicles of conversions to Christianity of various pagan elements in the mountain regions as late as the beginning of the eleventh century.)¹¹ Grenoble was recaptured in the late 960s, and a series of other mountain passes were no longer in Saracen control when significant kings or other political figures traversed them.

In the year 975 (983?), another joint effort to recapture Fraxinetum was undertaken by Duke Wilhelm of Arles, Count Arduin of Ivrea (the Marquis of Turin), and possibly Count Robald of Provence. This time, the effort was successful, and the town of Fraxinetum was taken. Its Muslim inhabitants were dispersed; some were driven off, some were forcibly converted to Christianity, some were exterminated, some were sold into slavery (and their descendents were still slaves in the area more than four centuries later), while a few apparently married and settled locally.¹²

MOTIVATIONS

Precisely why the settlement at Fraxinetum should have been established is difficult to determine with any certainty. According to many writers, including the contemporary chroniclers, the western Mediterranean was the home of large numbers of Muslim pirates, whose predations upon the ships and ports of the Christian rulers in the area substantially disrupted the local economic life and trade. It has been suggested, therefore, that this particular settlement was established by a small force which had been driven ashore during a particularly violent storm. In brief, the founding of the Fraxinetum colony was an accidental occurrence.¹³

On the other hand, during the reign of the Amirs (later Caliphs) of Cordoba, there arose the practice of undertaking regular summer incursions, known as *Šā'ifa* from the Arabic word for summer, into the territories of the Christian rulers of present-day France and Spain. Apparently, their original purpose was to demonstrate the religious merit of the participants, who through their commitment to the *jihād* would extend the *Dār al-Islām*.¹⁴

Since the participants also gained large amounts of booty, it seems clear that another motive was soon important for many: the prospects of substantial additional personal wealth. This would explain, for example, the (fragmentary) evidence that some Christians and Jews also participated. In any event, the *Šā'ifa* wreaked considerable hardship upon the populations affected, since despite whatever Christian-inspired exaggeration of Muslim behavior colors the accounts, it is clear that pillaging, burning, and general destruction of small settlements and the harvest were a common practice.

There is some evidence that at least some of these incursions were undertaken for the express purpose of obtaining primarily male prisoners, called *Saqālība*, who upon their return to Spain entered the personal service of the Amir/Caliph. Since they are described as a strong, highly reliable armed force and body-guard, and since they were educated and trained in Muslim academies for this purpose, the whole process bears a remarkable resemblance to the later practice of the Ottoman Sultans in recruiting and employing Christian prisoners (the so-called Janissary Corps). In both instances, it might be added, the male prisoners were frequently eunuchs.¹⁵

Medieval Muslim and Christian accounts both refer frequently to the practice of obtaining such *Saqālība* from various areas, although the preferred source appears to have been the lower Rhône Valley and northward as far as Metz and

Verdun. It is interesting to note that Jews in this area frequently acted as middlemen between the Spanish Muslims and their European sources of supply; further, Jews in the area of Prag, another center of supply, also participated in this particular form of commerce. We do not know, however, whether these middlemen were dispatched from Spain, or whether it was a commercial activity into which the members of the Jewish community in these areas gravitated.¹⁶

The origin of the term itself, Saqālība, has resulted in a dispute among linguistic scholars due to the fact that the Slavs were known to medieval Arab travellers in Western Europe as Siqlāb, plural Saqālība. It is not known whether this particular Arabic term is derived from the Latin root *esclavus*, meaning slave, or from the Arabic word for Slavs; it would seem possible to trace it to either origin.¹⁷

ADMINISTRATIVE PATTERNS

It is generally agreed that the Muslim/Arab armies which established the vast empire in the century following the death of Muḥammad had a relatively well-developed set of principles for dealing with administered, occupied, and incorporated territories and peoples.¹⁸ Despite these principles, however, it is more than likely that the forward elements of the conquering armies were less than wholly cognizant of, or caring about, the niceties of public administration. The elaborate law which existed or was developed for the treatment and administration of new territories and populations was not in fact always strictly adhered to.

Once occupation became permanent, regularized administrative procedures were established, which provided a substantial level of toleration for the subject populations and their religious and social beliefs and practices. It seems superfluous at this point to review, for example, the administrative and cultural accomplishments of the Arab administration of Spain, Sicily, or some other Muslimized territories.

The important question in this regard would appear to be: When, and for what reason, did the Arab/Muslim armies and their leaders decide what the status of any new territory and its population was, and what administrative patterns were then implemented? Despite the generous and positive characterizations of the Cordoba caliphate, European chronicles of the period provide accounts of Muslim incursions into other areas of Europe after the defeat at Poitiers which are filled with reports of less than exemplary behavior. To what may we attribute these widely disparate behavior patterns on the part of the Muslim/Arab forces?

It is, of course, difficult to be precise at this late date concerning such events and the behavior patterns which were associated with them. There is, clearly, good reason to treat contemporary Christian sources concerning the Muslims/Arabs with some skepticism.

It nevertheless appears possible to reach some general conclusions. It is of some significance that we do not possess a single contemporary Arab account

of the events which have been recounted here. Though it is possible that in the future some such account will come to light, it appears legitimate in the interim to conclude that the relevant elites in the Cordoba Caliphate placed no great value on the activities of the Fraxinetum settlement. In fact, though the available evidence indicates large numbers of Saracens were involved throughout the nearly 100 years of the settlement's activities, even the geographical and sociopolitical knowledge of the area which would have been gained never made its way into the general knowledge of Europe which existed among later Muslim/Arab geographers.¹⁹

While there is evidence that commercial contacts were developed, and we know from the European and Arab sources that at least one diplomatic contact between the Christian Europeans (Otto the First) and the Cordoba Caliphate ('Abd al-Raḥmān III) was undertaken (for the express purpose of requesting that the Caliph cease his support of the Fraxinetum settlement), the whole range of events and conquests here described were not specifically recorded by any of the Arab chroniclers or historians.²⁰ We may consider this as indirect evidence of two conclusions: (1) the activities of the Fraxinetum colony were indeed largely, if not solely, carried out by irregular forces, that is, an ad hoc group including pirates and mercenaries (including Christians, Jews, and "pagans"), among whom no one with any scholarly pretensions was present; and, (2) that the Fraxinetum settlement and its activities were never conceived of as being anything more than a highly successful *Ṣā'ifa*.

In the contemporary and later European literature, the only explanation offered for why these forces began their retreat from the Alpine regions is the outrage of the indigenous population at the holding of St. Maiolus for ransom.²¹ In view of the rather ineffective attempts made during the first few decades of their presence, this explanation is not quite convincing. A close reading of the sequence of expansion and contraction on the Fraxinetum settlement suggests that another factor may have been important, one which does not seem to have occurred to previous writers. This is the role of the Caliph in Cordoba in countenancing and at least tacitly supporting these *Ṣā'ifa*.

It appears that the death of the Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān in 961, and the ascension of his son Hakam II, marks a crucial turning point. From all accounts, both contemporary and modern, Hakam II was considerably more peaceful and tolerant than his father. The domestic and foreign policies, as well as personal behavior, which the accounts attribute to him make it possible to argue that he refused to support the continued use of *Ṣā'ifa* to harass Christian central Europe. It is at least possible that he withheld permission for reinforcements to leave for Fraxinetum from Spanish ports, perhaps even influenced in this decision by the earlier mission from Otto the First. Eventually, such a lack of support (both material and personnel) would have made it easier for the local populations in the Alpine regions to gain the upper hand. Since the Muslims presumably suffered personnel losses in their continued engagements with the indigenous population, and perhaps in occasional battles with the Hungarians who were simultaneously sweeping westward, a source of reliable reinforcements would seem to have been necessary.

Even a cursory review of the events in the mid-tenth century shows a precipitous decline in their holdings after the mid-960s, especially when contrasted with the almost unbroken record of success until that time. But, we have no evidence that the forces which were operating in the Alpine passes suffered a long series of reversals or defeats at the hands of the local population. If anything, the evidence indicates a process of *withdrawal* was underway when, for example, the St. Maiolus incident takes place at the great St. Bernhard. It, therefore, seems at least possible that some change in the policies of the Caliphate offers a more logical explanation for the fact that within at most a decade or so, the Saracen presence in the Alpine regions disappears.

CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTS

This brief survey covers a period of just under 100 years when one of the most important geographical regions of Europe was only infrequently under the control of the indigenous Christian population. Indeed, these Alpine passes, separating northern and western Europe from Italy, retain much of their geopolitical significance even into the 1970s. It is, therefore, of some interest to summarize and analyze the available evidence concerning this century of Saracen activities.

Archeological Evidence

Systematic archeological research on the subject of the Saracens in southern France and the Alpine regions appears to have been undertaken only since the end of World War II. Earlier writers interested in the period cited primarily the various towers and fortifications whose origins are attributed to the Saracens, especially by local legend and occasional documentary evidence;²² the discovery (in the nineteenth century) of a number of caches of Muslim coins;²³ and, a few isolated and sometimes dubious inscriptions.²⁴ It was not until the researches of Jean Lacam that extensive evidence of the Saracen presence was unearthed. This includes to date, cemeteries, weapons, coins, wells, buildings, and most significant of all, the discovery of *mihrabs* in the walls of some churches in southern France, notably in Narbonne.²⁵ It is possible, also, that some other present-day churches and cathedrals in the Department of Var and the Rhône Valley may have originally been built as mosques and later converted. Unfortunately, no similar work has been undertaken in Switzerland.

Linguistic Evidence

It is in the area of linguistic research that perhaps the greatest disputes concerning the presence of Saracens in the Alpine regions exist. The lack of certainty is due to a number of causes. First, there is considerable doubt concerning the origins of many place and family names which may be found in the Alpine regions. This led a number of nineteenth century scholars and writers to speculate on a possible Arabic origin for some of them.²⁶ No doubt this was

occasioned by the extraordinarily large number of place names in Switzerland which begin with the syllable "al," the Arabic definite article. Examples include Almagell, Albula, Albana, Albris, to name just a few.

Second, many locations in northern Italy (especially in the Anzasca Valley), southern Switzerland, and southern France contain variations of the word "Moor," as part of a proper name, for example, Mont de Maures (in southern France), and the Monte Moro (on the border between Italy and Switzerland). What is striking in most cases is that the places so named are those where it was either logical militarily for the Saracens to have built redoubts or fortifications, or in the event of passes and locations, the word is applied to routes which it would have been logical for the Saracens to have used.

Linguistic research of this type is highly speculative; it is, of course, impossible to know, (a) precisely what language or dialect the Muslim invaders employed (more on this below); (b) what the pronunciations of certain key words might have been; and (c) what corruptions of (presumably) Arabic words might have been employed, or how many metamorphoses such corruptions might have undergone in the intervening centuries at the hands of German, French, and Italian speakers.

There are, in addition, some specific problems associated with these speculations. For one, any place name in Switzerland beginning with the letters "a-l-b" is immediately suspect, since it is more than likely that the current name is simply a contraction of "alp" or "alb" (depending on the dialect in different areas) with a locally derived name. Therefore, this writer does not place much, if any, confidence in the Arabic origin of such place names.

Furthermore, although a number of the other names with suggested Arabic origins (see below) are quite evocative and even plausible sounding, we do not have any systematic methodology for deriving such possible associations or derivations. Studies of language development do not, of course, rule out the kinds of derivations suggested: the point is that the writers who have made these suggestions have not detailed the methods used to reach the stated conclusions, other than they appear to be both logical and appropriate to the named place.

The following table gives a brief summary of the place names which have

<i>Current Name</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Description</i>
Pontresina	Pons Saracenorum	Important town on the Bernina Pass road
Almagell (Saas-Almagell)	<i>Al-Mahall</i> (the place)	Village in the Saas Valley near Monte Moro
Allalin, Allalain	<i>ala al-Ain</i> (to the source)	Mountain near head of Saas Valley; a source of the Visp
Alp Aien	<i>Ain</i> (source)	Mountain in Saas Valley; source of the Visp

<i>Current Name</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Description</i>
Mischabel	<i>Mushbil, Mushabil</i> (Lioness with cubs)	Mountain group in the Saas Valley
(Gstein)-Gabi	<i>Jaba, Jabi</i> (to levy taxes)	Village on the route to the Simplon Pass

been most frequently cited in support of the contention that the presence of the Saracens is responsible for these terms, still in use today:²⁷

It should be noted here that *only* the first can be documented from contemporary sources.²⁸ It is beyond doubt that the origin of the name Pontresina is from the Latin descriptive name, bridge of the Saracens, which in turn may be presumed to have its origins in the fact that the Saracens here erected an important bridge. Furthermore, a family name which is common in the area – Sarraz – is associated with a coat of arms which contains a clear depiction of a bridge.²⁹

There are, in addition, numerous place names – Château Sarrasin, Pont Sarrasin – as well as the names of some small villages in western Switzerland as far north as the Berner Jura (La Sarraz) which could be assumed to have their origins in the Saracen invasions.³⁰ Since in most cases there is documentary evidence that these appellations did not exist until after the Saracen presence, it could be argued in some instances that there is a historical relationship. Direct evidence, however, is lacking.

It is with names which are alleged to have been derived from Arabic antecedents that the greatest difficulty lies. One may argue that the logic of the relationship between a certain term (in Arabic) and its referent's present location and/or characteristics lends credence to the claim. This argument, however, suffers from certain problems. For one thing, a systematic check of the Arabic vocabulary for words that one might assume to have been used in these regions – snow, ice, fort, glacier, pass, avalanche, ravine, gorge, barrier, and so forth – produces no appreciable correlations with current place names. While this alone is not sufficient to completely rule out those place names which are said to have been derived from the Arabic, it does highlight the relatively low likelihood of finding a specific name having survived a full millennium of use in these areas.

Furthermore, in at least one of the instances cited above, "Muschbil," there is substantial evidence that the name is in fact derived from the local dialect. In the view of one prominent local historian, this particular mountain group derives its name from a local corruption of the term "mistgabel" (manure fork), since the grouping closely resembles the tines of the widely-used local tool.³¹ This line of argument is further supported by the fact that many locations in the area did not have any names at all until the very recent past; indeed, some local names prominent today may be directly traced to events which have occurred within the last fifty years, and whose origins are known only by local (elderly) inhabitants who can recall the specific event. (Apparently the source of the appellation is not a part of local folklore.)³²

On the other hand, it must be added that the local population of these mountain valleys is extremely sensitive to the allegation that they may have part of their origins in the Saracen occupation. They have, on occasion, denied in the strongest possible terms any Arab antecedents, so it may be that this has colored more recent local lore and provided an incentive to find alternative explanations for any evidence which would appear to support the contention.³³

Economic Evidence

Some writers have suggested that the Saracens were responsible for certain innovations in the economic life of the populations under their domination, especially in France and Switzerland.

In France, these suggestions include the following: (a) the introduction of buckwheat cultivation, especially in the Department of Var. Buckwheat is known in French by two names, *blé noir* (black wheat), and in support of this contention, *blé sarrasin* (Saracen wheat); (b) the introduction of corktree cultivation in the area around Garde-Freinet, as local legend suggests; and (c) the introduction of the Arab method of turning pine-resin into pine-tar for the caulking of naval vessels. In support of this, the writers offer the fact that the French word for pine-tar is *goudron*, derived from the Arabic *qitrān*.³⁴

This "evidence" is not, however, without its problems; it is utterly dependent upon linguistic relationships in two instances, and local tradition in the other. In the case of the first, such relationships do not conclusively demonstrate a causal link; in the case of the second, we have already seen (note 22) that local legends are not consistently reliable.

Some of the evidence is more tangible and reliable: It has been suggested that the Saracens undertook mining activities, specifically in Tende and La Ferrière, near Barcelonnette, where they apparently manufactured weapons. In this instance, the remains of their forges have been excavated. Furthermore, in the mines near Tende (as well as in the mines of Valauria), there are galleries which bear the name "gallerie sarrasine," presumably due to their exploitation by the Saracens (and, in this case, supported by archeological remains).³⁵

In Switzerland, the evidence is less conclusive. In fact, all of what has been adduced to date is dependent upon local legend, though some extraordinary characteristics of the suspect regions appear worthy of mention. For example, there is a local legend in one of the Rhône valleys that a particular variety of grape which is grown there was introduced by the Saracens when they settled in the valley. The fact that the wine made from these grapes is known locally as "Heidenwein," that is, pagan wine, presumably in commemoration of its introduction by non-Christians, has been cited by some as evidence.³⁶

Others have suggested, as will be discussed below, that the Saracens were responsible for the introduction of sheep as a meat source, and the refusal of the local population to raise swine, as one of those extraordinary circumstances which cannot be easily explained except through recourse to the Saracen period.

In sum, then, the evidence for extensive Saracen economic activities is not

great. On the other hand, the indicators we do have at least suggest that the activities of the Fraxinetum colony had a greater impact than one might suspect from a cursory reading of the contemporary accounts; perhaps the actions of the Saracens were substantially more diversified and extensive than was suspected at the time. This, of course, raises the question as to whether the Saracens planned a long-term presence in these regions, only to have such plans negated – perhaps by a directive from the Caliph (Hakam) in Cordoba, as I have suggested above.

Ethnographic Evidence

In many ways, this is the most fruitful source of “evidence,” and at the same time, the area which is of greatest interest as a means of assessing events in the past through “signposts” in the present.

In the case of France, the writers have suggested that a number of curious usages and customs found in Provence and the Rhône Valley date from the time of the Saracen invasions and occupation. Included among such customs are certain folk dances, as well as some specific celebrations to mark the departure of the Saracens from certain small villages.³⁷ Other authors have tended to treat such suggestions with skepticism, arguing that the attribution to the Saracens may have been made later in time and carelessly attributed to an era about which the rural population knew very little.

On the other hand, scholars of the relevant periods (late antiquity and the early Middle Ages) have long agreed that the Arab/Muslim incursions, and presence, in southern France had some long-term impact; the question is: How much? A related question for the present subject is: Is it possible (not to mention necessary) to separate out distinct impacts from the invasions and occupations of the mid-eighth century from those of the mid-tenth?

In answer to the first question, for some the impact was of a monumental nature, utterly altering the future of Europe. In some scholars' view, these conquests destroyed the cultural and commercial unity of the Mediterranean, and led to the northward relocation of the cultural centers of Europe; others allow that these conquests altered established religio-political relationships in order that the population could more effectively cope with the military aspect of the Muslim/Arab threat; and, yet others see economic, political, and especially social relationships in subtle but meaningful ways. It is not possible, of course, within the scope of this essay, to adequately summarize the lengthy and complex arguments and evidence associated with the various theories concerning the impact of the Saracens upon southern Europe. It should, however, be noted that one of the most widely suggested impacts has been that upon the language and literary styles and traditions of Provence. In addition, analysis and discussion of such diverse causes and effects as the role of technological improvements in cavalry; in trading relationships; in land acquisition and redistribution policies, and even the very origins of the term “fief” itself continue to keep alive the dispute over the aftermath of the Saracen presence.³⁸ At this time, it seems highly unlikely that any clear distinction needs to be made between

events in the different time periods alluded to above; in other words, barring substantial new finds (archeological and literary) it is not likely that we will be able to do so.

In the case of Switzerland, the evidence is both more substantial and more varied. For example, many writers have remarked on the unusual characteristics of the population of the Saas Valley, a relatively isolated valley which runs southward from the Rhône at the town of Visp and ends in a now relatively little-used pass, the Monte Moro, which leads to the similarly isolated Anza Valley in Italy (at the town of Macugnaga). One writer has remarked on the "almost Semitic physical type" found in this and nearby valleys,³⁹ while another has observed that the population as a whole reminds him of the physical types found in southern Italy or among the North Africans.⁴⁰ It should be added that this difference in the aggregate physical type which has so often been mentioned in the past is still visible today. Moreover, at least one observer has noted the remarkably high percentage of names in these southern Rhône valleys which have a "Middle Eastern or Northern African flavor to them."⁴¹

Of some importance perhaps are the following behavioral patterns which were noted first in the 1940s, but are still evident today: (1) the refusal of the indigenous population of the Saas Valley to keep or raise swine, despite the fact that pork is an almost traditional meat source for the population of the other Rhône valleys;⁴² (2) the peculiar method of sheep slaughtering (for food) which is practiced in the Visp valleys, and which the author of one report states he has previously observed only among North African Berbers;⁴³ and (3) the notable lack of timber and forest stands in the Saas Valley, combined with archeological evidence that methods peculiar to the North African coastal areas for the purpose of clearing forested land have been discovered.⁴⁴

Indeed, a number of writers on the subject of the Saracen invasions have suggested that a substantial amount of settlement and intermarriage with the local population took place – both in France⁴⁵ and Switzerland – prior to the dissolution of the Fraxinetum base itself. Aside from the indirect evidence referred to above, this contention is very difficult to prove, and would require substantial investment in additional research. It may be, however, that a certain amount of intermarriage and settlement contributed to the ability of the Fraxinetum colony to maintain and perpetuate its hegemony in some areas without new immigrants from Spain.

Since there has been *no* systematic research – physiognomic, genetic, or haematological – in these valleys which might help to answer the question of the origins of the current inhabitants, one is forced for the present to remain with speculations to explain whatever unusual behavioral patterns do, in fact, exist.

POLITICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Since the contemporary European accounts of the Saracen incursions are overwhelmingly concerned with presenting evidence of the inhuman, cruel, and destructive nature of these invaders, it is extremely difficult to assess accurately the impact of these incursions on the Alpine regions, much less their

long-term significance. Although there are some accounts by Arab historians and chroniclers which cover this period in Muslim history, none specifically refers to the development of the Fraxinetum colony or the administrative control which the Saracens had over the Alpine regions. The single piece of evidence which indicates an Arab presence is the claim that for some time, the Arabic term for the Alpine regions was *jabal monjaws*, presumably derived from the Latin name of the time, *mons jovis* (the mountain of Jupiter). This was the term specifically reserved for the St. Bernhard Pass area, which did not receive its current name until after the activities of St. Bernhard himself.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, there is some evidence from contemporary sources which would indicate that the Saracens were not always as brutal or inhuman as they were made to appear (often for local political reasons). For example, there is one account which appears to be completely genuine, by a traveller in the northern Italian hilltown of Vercelli, who describes the Saracens as living within and among the local population in a manner which led him to assume they were well-established: The Saracens neither carried arms nor were they molested by the local populace; indeed, they were apparently administering the town and the surrounding countryside with a "light hand."⁴⁷

Similarly, there are some accounts of the administration of the major trans-Alpine passes during the mid-tenth century which indicate they were administered peacefully, carefully, and even impartially, that is, with a minimum disruption of trade and pilgrim traffic during the period of the agreement with King Hugo. In fact, there are extant records which indicate the established tolls which were collected for specific items.⁴⁸ In addition, it would appear from some of the accounts that this administration of (some of) the passes did not seriously interfere with such transit trade, since the peaceful administration of the passes by the Saracens continued *after* the end of the stipulated alliance period. It was, in fact, not until some time thereafter that any efforts were made to dislodge them from their posts.⁴⁹

It may be that it was not until the Fraxinetum colony was informed that it would no longer be supported from Spain that the Saracen administrators of the passes reverted to the random collection of booty and ransom. The most blatant example of this is described in some detail by nearly all of the contemporary writers, since it involved a man of some piety and renown at the time: St. Maiolus of the Abbey of Cluny. In the year 972, St. Maiolus was returning to Cluny from a trip to Rome, and decided to use the St. Bernhard as his trans-Alpine route. After descending on the north side into the valley towns along the ascent route, his party was kidnapped and held for ransom by a rather substantial number of Saracens. The ransom (which was indeed collected and paid through the sale of much of the Abbey's holdings) amounted to 1,000 pounds of silver. It was specifically stated that this amount was decided upon because it would provide every member of the Saracen force with one pound of silver.⁵⁰

This particular incident is of some importance for two reasons: (1) it provides us with the *only* evidence concerning the numbers of Saracens to be found in the Alpine regions at the time. The actual figure gains some credibility through the fact that no one appears to have seriously considered military action against

the Saracens, that is, their numbers were apparently large enough to make this an unfeasible alternative to paying the stated ransom. And (2) it is the last major action on the part of the Saracens in the pass region. In other words, it lends some credence to the contention that the Saracens were more or less voluntarily withdrawing to their base camp at Fraxinetum. It may be that this particular force was, in fact, slowly making its way back to Fraxinetum when it took advantage of an opportunity to make one last "collection."

In sum, then, it would appear that in those instances where the Saracens had established themselves and had decided that their presence was a more-or-less permanent one, they adopted a regularized system of administration which was at least no more onerous than the ad hoc system prevailing until that time. On the other hand, until some measure of political and administrative control was generally recognized (e.g., as a result of the agreement with King Hugo), and after Cordoba decided to no longer support the enterprise, they did indeed depend largely upon the traditional means of an invading army for support – taking what was needed, when it was needed, with "a little extra" for the participants.

CONCLUSIONS

The above account of the actual events, as well as the evidence available concerning the aftermath, raises a number of questions.

First, the reader will have noticed that the term "Saracen" has been used in preference to any modern alternative (except in certain limited instances). Essentially, this has been done because it is not at all clear with whom we are dealing. None of the contemporary European literature makes use of the word "Arab"; the terms used to categorize the invaders are restricted to "Saracen" or in a very few instances "Ismaelites" or "Moors." What is curious about this is that all the contemporary accounts clearly recognize and acknowledge the Spanish origin of the invaders – that the bulk, if not all of the Saracens came from Spain and received their instructions from the Amir/Caliph at Cordoba. Yet, at the same time, some of the chroniclers (e.g., Liudprand) refer to them as "Africans." Who, then, were the "Saracens?"

The answer to this question appears to be that, in fact, the Saracen invaders were probably primarily Berber in origin, and not Arab. Many of the more recent scholars have speculated on this possibility, and there is some reason to accept this interpretation.⁵¹ In addition to the indications outlined above, it should be remembered that the Arab Amirs/Caliphs of Spain frequently used the more recently arrived Berbers as their front line of harassment of the Europeans in trans-Pyrenees expeditions, and that it would be eminently sensible for them to have encouraged the Berbers to undertake the *Ṣā'ifa* in order to divert them from any resentment at their less-than-equal status with the Arabs in Spain.

In this connection, it might be relevant to add that the contemporary writers are rather consistent in their appreciation of the military skills of the Saracens in the mountain regions, and the group's clear preference for the mountains.

While it is obvious that any small armed force in enemy territory would prefer defensible positions in foothills and mountains to indefensible positions in the plains or valleys, these descriptions recall the traditional Arab reluctance to penetrate mountain regions. For example, most of the mountainous regions in the Arab world today are still not wholly Arabized for all their having been Islamized: the mountains of Iraq, Morocco and Algeria, and Lebanon and Syria are good examples.

Another question arises in this regard: not one contemporary source ever mentions the existence of language difficulties between the Saracens and the indigenous population. Since the invaders administered the major passes for nearly a generation, this may not be unusual – at least for those regions. Yet, even in all the chilling accounts of chroniclers who are only concerned with later raids, the subject never arises. Why?

The answer to this particular query apparently lies in the fact that some Christians and Jews from Spain participated in the *Ṣāʿifa*.⁵² Although we have some evidence that Latin and perhaps local languages were studied in Arab Spain, it does not appear likely that the *Ṣāʿifa* participants actively sought out, or were able to gain the services of linguists. However, the unquestioned success of certain *Ṣāʿifa*, and most especially the Fraxinetum one, attracted the “soldier of fortune” types which were to be found throughout the area. We are probably justified in assuming that the non-Arab and non-Berber elements which participated in *Ṣāʿifa* for motives of personal gain acted as ad hoc interpreters and middlemen between the Muslim elements and the local population in those instances where communication was necessary.⁵³

It has, in addition, been suggested that a substantial number of people in the general region where the Saracens were most numerous probably had some understanding of Arabic, gained perhaps as a result of almost two centuries of coping with Arab-speaking conquerors and administrators (for varying lengths of time).⁵⁴

With respect to the Saracens: An extensive effort to determine whether the Caliphate in Cordoba, and more importantly, the general Muslim view of administrative practices in lands which temporarily became part of the *Dār al-Islām*, were affected by the nearly century-long presence in the Alpine regions, failed to produce any concrete evidence of such effects. The lack of any detailed description or analysis of these events by any Arab/Muslim historian leaves no alternative but the rather banal conclusion that a temporary occupation or military conquest of a foreign peoples produces little or no concern for organized administrative activity.

It is only when there is an explicit recognition that a long-term administration of new territories is anticipated that regularized patterns of administrative behavior make their appearance. We have, for example, no evidence aside from the regularized collection of tolls on the trans-Alpine passes that the Saracens undertook any structured governmental or administrative activities; we have no evidence that any judicial activities were ever carried out, that is, that any organized framework for processing disputes between the Saracens and the indigenous population existed; and we have no evidence that any law-making functions were undertaken.

Since the Caliph in Cordoba gave no indication that these areas were to be made a permanent part of the *Dār al-Islām*, there seems to have been no motivation for beginning such regularized, structured governmental functions as we find in other areas which come under Muslim rule.

In sum, then: Although the Alpine regions of France, northern Italy and southern Switzerland appear to show some aftereffects (even into the later twentieth century) of this brief period of subjugation to Muslim overlords, the Muslim world has never considered this venture as anything more than an unusually successful "summer incursion" into the European heartland while much more serious matters needed attention.⁵⁵

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APPENDIX: CHRONOLOGY

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Major Events</i>
632	Death of Muḥammad
711	Tāriq and the Muslim Armies enter Spain
719–726	Muslim armies take Narbonne, Carcassone, Nîmes, etc.; expand into the Rhône Valley as far north as Lyon
732	Charles Martel victor at battle of Poitiers (Tours)
737–759	Some cities in southern France retaken from Muslims
793	New Muslim incursions into France across the Pyrenees
810–820	Muslim attacks on Sardinia, Corsica, etc.; occupation of the Balearic islands, Nice, portions of southern Italy
827	Muslim naval attacks in Brittany
846–869	Muslim attacks on the southern French coast, especially around Arles, and establishment of a port in the Camargue
888–891	Founding of the Muslim colony at Fraxinetum
906	Muslim control of Mont Cenis Pass; attacks upon towns and monasteries in the area, including Novales, Oulx, Susa, Acqui
911	Muslim control of all western Alpine passes
915–918	Muslim attacks on Embrun, Maurienne, Vienne, etc.
920	Muslim attacks on the Italian Piemonte in the East, and upon Marseille, Aix-en-Provence, etc., in the West
929–933	Muslim control of the eastern Alpine passes, and attacks in the upper Rhône Valley
931	Byzantine attack against Fraxinetum (unsuccessful)
936–939	Attacks in the Valais, Rhaetia, northern Savoy, and towns around Lake Geneva, including Geneva and Lausanne
c.940	Attacks on Chur, St. Maurice, etc.
942 (?)	Nice and Grenoble taken by Muslims; King Hugo and Byzantines attack Fraxinetum
by 950–51	Regularized administration of the Alpine passes
952–954	Attacks on the Abbey of St. Gall; into the Berner Jura

956	Emperor Otto I's diplomatic mission to Cordoba
957	Last recorded attacks in the east (Rhaetia)
965 (968?)	Evacuation of Grenoble by the Muslims
970	Evacuation of Savoy
972–973	Evacuation of major northern Alpine passes; last major attack on the St. Bernhard Pass (against St. Maiolus)
975/983?	Attack on Fraxinetum by allied Christian princes; evacuation of town by Muslims and dispersal of the colony
early-11th	New Muslim attacks on southern France
mid-11th	Muslims evacuate southern Italy and Sicily

NOTES

¹ Liudprand, *Antapodosis*; trans. by F. A. Wright (London: Routledge, 1930), pp. 33–34. There is some difficulty in determining the precise date, since Liudprand cites various overlapping reigns of local rulers during whose tenure the landing took place.

² *Ibid.*

³ The chronicles of various monasteries and medieval writers are here summarized; for one of the most complete lists, see: René Poupardin, *Le Royaume de Bourgogne* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1907), pp. 86–87.

⁴ John E. Tyler, *The Alpine Passes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1930); P. H. Scheffel, *Verkehrsgeschichte der Alpen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1908 and 1914); and E. Oehlmann, "Die Alpenpässe im Mittelalter," *Jahrbuch für schweizerische Geschichte*, Vols. 3 and 4 (1878–79).

⁵ Poupardin, *op. cit.*, p. 91; and, Flodoard, *Annales* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1905), p. 47.

⁶ Oehlmann, *op. cit.*, and Poupardin, *op. cit.*, pp. 91–93.

⁷ Oehlmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 212 ff. The major argument against the second alternative has been the "fact" that the Abbey of Disentis, which stands in the direct path of this route, has no record of its being subjected to Saracen harassment during this era. On the other hand, another author claims that there is indeed evidence that the Abbey was attacked by the Saracens at this time. Cf. Reinaud, p. 470, citing Sprecher, *Chronicon. Rhaetiae* (Basel, pp. 68, 197 ff., vs. Keller, p. 9 as well as Poupardin).

⁸ Liudprand, *op. cit.*, pp. 186–87.

⁹ Oehlmann, *op. cit.*, and Poupardin, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Due to the renown of Maiolus, this is one of the best described incidents of Saracen interference with trans-Alpine communications. The most complete summary in a modern European language is found in Poupardin, *op. cit.*, pp. 97–99.

¹¹ Poupardin, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–111.

¹² G. de Rey, *Les Invasions des Sarrasins en Provence* (Marseille: Typographie Marius Olive, 1878), pp. 192–93; and M. Reinaud, *Invasions des Sarrasins en France et de France en Savoie, en Piémont, et dans la Suisse* (Paris: Librairie Orientale de Ve Dondey-Dupré, 1836), p. 266.

¹³ See, for example, Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (6th Edition), (London: MacMillan & Co., 1958), pp. 493–601. E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de L'Espagne Musulmane* (Paris: G. P. Maisonneuve, 1950), Vol. I.

¹⁴ S. and N. Ronart, *Concise Encyclopedia of Arabic Civilization* (The Arab West) (New York: Praeger, 1966), pp. 339–340.

¹⁵ Lévi-Provençal, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 122–130.

¹⁶ Lévi-Provençal, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 124–125; and Georg Jacob, *Arabische Berichte* (Berlin: De-Gruyter, 1927), pp. 6–7. The role which the Jews played as intermediaries and/or allies of the Saracens bears further research. For example, it was widely believed at the time that the Jews were indeed a kind of "third column" for the Muslims; they were accused in many instances of having actively sabotaged Christian defences against the Muslims. It was because of this belief, for exam-

ple, that Charlemagne and other Frankish rulers placed certain restrictions upon the Jews in the 8th and 9th centuries. See, for example, de Rey, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17.

¹⁷ Lévi-Provençal, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 123–24.

¹⁸ Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1955).

¹⁹ Alauddin Samarrai, "Some Geographical and Political Information on Western Europe in the Medieval Arabic Sources," *The Muslim World*, LXII, No. 4 (1972), pp. 304–322.

²⁰ For the account of the mission of the monk, Jean de Gorze, to the court of the Caliph 'Abd al-Rahmān III around 956, see the brief accounts and sources cited in Poupardin, *op. cit.* (1907), pp. 94–96, and Lévi-Provençal, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 154. There is agreement that the mission had no influence on 'Abd al-Rahmān. Concerning the lack of accounts in the Arabic sources, see Lévi-Provençal, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 155.

²¹ René Poupardin, *Le Royaume de Provence sous les Carolingiens* (Paris: Librairie Émile Bouillon, 1901), p. 273.

²² Reinaud, de Rey, Keller, etc., all cite the existence of various towers and fortifications which are alleged to be Saracen in origin. Poupardin (1901) pp. 255–6 indicates that great care should be exercised in accepting these attributions, and even Reinaud (p. 310) expresses some skepticism. The latter suggests that for the local population, the Saracen invasions had a certain "character" which later upheavals, etc., did not have, and that therefore local fortifications and constructions were assigned to that time period despite the fact that many are clearly Romanesque.

²³ F. Keller, "Der Einfall der Sarrazenen in die Schweiz um die Mitte des 10. Jahrhunderts," *Mitteilungen der Antiquarischen Gesellschaft* (Zürich), XI (1856), pp. 22–25; and Felice Ferrero, *The Valley of Aosta* (New York, 1910), pp. 209–210 concerning the numismatic literature and the coins kept in the Hospice of St. Bernhard.

²⁴ The most famous of these inscriptions is the one which was located in the small church at Bourg-St.-Pierre-Montjoux (on the access route to the Great St. Bernhard Pass). Composed between 1019 and 1038, it was removed and relocated as part of a reconstruction effort in 1739, and is today almost completely illegible. The best version of the text is given in Keller, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–19. Essentially it commemorates the havoc wrought by an "Ismaelite force" in the Val d'Entremont at a time when the "Ismaelites" were on similar rampages in the general vicinity of the Rhône Valley.

²⁵ Jean Lacam, *Les Sarrazins dans le haut moyen-âge français* (Paris: G. P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1965).

²⁶ Speculation concerning the Arabic origins of place names apparently begins with C. M. Engelhardt, *Naturschilderungen und wissenschaftliche Bemerkungen aus den höchsten Schweizer Alpen, besonders in Sud-Wallis und Graubünden* (Basel: Schweighauser Buchhandlung, 1840); de Rey, *op. cit.*, pp. 188–89 also offers some names, especially in the Department of Var, which he attributes to Saracen origins, e.g., Gualdixar, Tamariz, Miramar, and so on.

²⁷ The place names which have been the subject of widest interest are Almagell, Alp Aien, Mischabel, and Allalin. The given list has been compiled from Oehlmann, *op. cit.*, Keller, *op. cit.*, and H. Dübi, "Saracenen and Ungarn in den Alpen," *Jahrbuch des Schweizer Alpenclub*, XIV, pp. 485–6. I have added one item to the original list, i.e., Gabi, based upon the suggestion of Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 605. It should be noted that Hitti (*ibid.*, note 2) suggests that the adjective "maur" and related variations are probably derived from the local adjective for the color brown. In view of the linguistic history of the term "Moor," and the rather rare and limited use of "marron" to designate a specific shade of reddish brown, this seems a questionable assertion at best. In fact, it is more likely that the color term is derived from the ethnic term than vice versa.

²⁸ It should be added that the debate over the origins of these place names and their alleged Arabic origin still exists in Switzerland. See, for example, the sources cited in Emil Hess, "Waldverwüstungen im Saastal," *Die Alpen*, XXI, No. 11 (1945), p. 334. Nevertheless, it would appear that the theory of their Arabic origin is now more widely-accepted than in the past, since many of these nouns have no Celtic, Latin, or German origins. See, for example, Karl Alfons Meyer, "Sarazenen im Saastal?" *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 12 September 1965, who reports the existence of a document from 1139 which gives the name of Pontresina as "ad pontem Sarisinam."

²⁹ J. H. Hotz, "Sarrazenische Spuren in der Schweiz," *Anzeiger für Schweizerische Geschichte und Alterthumskunde* (Zürich), I (1855–1860), pp. 10–11. Indeed, local tradition specifically attributes this family's origins to the Saracens who settled in the area.

³⁰ Dübi, op. cit., p. 481, although he offers no further specifics, suggests further that "eine Reihe von Ortsnamen, die sich vom Genfersee bis in den Berner Jura zieht, hält die Erinnerung an jene bösen Tage noch heute aufrecht."

³¹ Personal correspondence with Werner Imseng, Saas-Fee, 1974. Cf. M. Julen, "Gipfel des Saasgrates," *Blätter aus der Walliser Geschichte*, XI (1951), pp. 32–36.

³² Personal correspondence with Werner Imseng, Saas-Fee, 1974.

³³ Personal experiences, 1970 and 1972. It is possible, however, that this is due to the rather negative image of the Arabs which is currently prevalent in Switzerland. It is, therefore, of some significance that a well-respected local historian of the 19th century not only specifically acknowledges some Saracenic antecedents for the population, but that they also contributed substantially to making the entire valley cultivable. See: Peter Joseph Ruppen, *Die Chronik des Thales Saas für die Thalbewohner* (Sitten: Buchdruckerei von Calpini-Albertazzi, 1851), pp. 11–14.

³⁴ Reinaud, op. cit., pp. 295–299. The author further contends that the renowned Camargue horses were bred by the Arabs/Saracens, and that it is even possible that they have their origins in runaways from earlier campaigns (i.e., in the early 8th century).

³⁵ de Rey, op. cit., pp. 104 and 117.

³⁶ Dübi, op. cit., Vol. IIV, p. 486.

³⁷ de Rey, op. cit., pp. 150 and 173.

³⁸ See, in the sequence in which the theories are summarized: Henri Pirenne, *Mohamed and Charlemagne* (New York, 1939); R. Buchner, *Die Provence in merowingischer Zeit* (Stuttgart, 1931); H. Dannenbauer, *Die Entstehung Europas* (Stuttgart, 1958); H. Brunner, "Der Reiterdienst und die Anfänge des Lehnwesens" in his *Forschungen zur Geschichte des deutschen und französischen Rechts* (Stuttgart, 1894); Lynn White, Jr., *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (New York, 1962); H. A. R. Gibb, "Literature," in T. Arnold and A. Guillaume, eds., *The Legacy of Islam* (New York, 1931); P. K. Hitti, op. cit., p. 562; and, Alauddin Samarrai, "The term 'fief': a possible Arabic origin," *Studies in Medieval Culture*, IV, 1 (1973), pp. 78–82.

³⁹ Scheffel, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 15.

⁴⁰ Hess, op. cit., p. 334.

⁴¹ Scheffel, op. cit., p. 107 remarks on the number of "Spanish-sounding" surnames found in these valleys, as does Dübi, op. cit., p. 492, citing specifically Sarratz and Sarrasin. See also Felice Ferrero, op. cit., p. 210 for similar observations concerning the upper reaches of the Aosta (including the Anza Valley), and other Swiss valleys. Personal correspondence with a Swiss Army Officer, responsible for the training of local recruits during World War II, who cites such "unusual, Berber-like names as Es-Borra", as well as a check of the telephone directories for Süd-Wallis (the canton in which these valleys are found) further confirms these contentions.

⁴² Hess, op. cit., p. 335.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 335–35.

⁴⁵ de Rey, op. cit., pp. 117, 151, and 173 and others suggest considerable Saracen settlement in the Dauphiné, especially near Devoluy. Further Saracen settlement near Pontresina (in Switzerland) has already been covered above (note 28), Keller, op. cit., p. 14 also suggests the Val d'Abondance in Savoy.

⁴⁶ H. P. Goergens, "Der Islam in der Schweiz," *Der Bund* (Bern), Sonntagsblatt for 12 May 1878 (No. 19), p. 148. (One in a series of six special articles on the subject).

St. Bernhard of Menthon, in whose honor the Pass is now named, is credited with converting the remaining "pagan elements" in this region in the early 11th century. If these "pagan elements" were remnants of the Saracen forces, which is at least possible, it is further possible that the re-naming of the Pass is connected with the Saracens and their activities. For example, it may very well be that the decision to found the famous Hospice at the summit is a by-product of the fact that St. Maiolus (above, note 10) and his party were forced to cross the Pass and begin the descent into the approach valley, where they then fell prey to the Saracen attack (instead of finding adequate shelter and refuge in the most treacherous and "inhospitable" part of the Pass itself). Cf. Reinaud, op. cit., pp. 195–6, and Keller, op. cit., p. 15.

⁴⁷ Oehlmann, op. cit., pp. 212–14.

⁴⁸ Oehlmann, op. cit., pp. 216, and 248–49 for an account of the precise taxes levied.

⁴⁹ Flodoard, op. cit., p. 132 (951).

⁵⁰ Cf. note 10.

⁵¹ Most especially Goergens, op. cit., No. 22 (2 June 1878), pp. 171–72, and Reinaud, op. cit., p. 242. This, and the other evidence given above for possible Berber elements among the Saracens, would seem to suggest that we might find specifically Berber antecedents for certain place names. This has, unfortunately, been impossible to check since no Berber dictionary which would facilitate research of this type is available.

⁵² Reinaud, op. cit., p. 243 suggests that the evidence for the participants in the earlier raids being Christians, Jews, miscellaneous pagans, as well as "Saracens" is rather strong; see also the references in note 15 cited by Lévi-Provençal.

⁵³ Reinaud, op. cit., pp. 282–84, who adds that there were many Saracen serfs held by Christians, which fact could also have led to more widespread limited knowledge of Arabic.

⁵⁴ See esp. de Rey, op. cit., pp. 191–92, and note 38.

⁵⁵ It is, then, not accurate to describe it as "a foreign Islamic state inserted into the heart of Christian Europe," as has been done by the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, citing J. Calmette, *L'effondrement d'un empire et la naissance d'une Europe* (Paris: 1941), p. 117 (Article "Fraxinetum").

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