

## FRAXINETUM: AN ISLAMIC FRONTIER STATE IN TENTH-CENTURY PROVENCE

Mohammad Ballan\*

**Abstract:** The primary focus of this article is a reconsideration of Fraxinetum as an Islamic frontier state in tenth-century Provence. Traditional scholarship about Fraxinetum has interpreted the Muslim presence in Provence within the context of piracy. The interpretation of Fraxinetum as a pirate base centers largely on the interpretation of primary documents and the replication of the arguments of the Latin chroniclers within modern scholarship. Seeking to challenge the view that the Muslims in Francia were merely bandits, through a reassessment of primary sources and an analysis of some non-textual evidence, this article demonstrates that Fraxinetum was the political, military, and economic center of an Islamic frontier state in Provence that was populated largely by *ghāzīs* or *mujāhidīn* (Islamic frontier warriors) from al-Andalus. Reconceptualizing Fraxinetum as an Islamic frontier state should not be understood to mean that Muslim activity in Provence was centrally administered, but intends to convey that *jihād*, as well as certain economic motivations, played a crucial role in this frontier military settlement and, as such, needs to be adequately understood. This will allow scholars to comprehend more fully the nature of Fraxinetum, providing additional insight into the Muslim presence in Provence, and contributing to the understanding of the phenomenon of Islamic frontier states more broadly during the tenth century.

**Keywords:** Fraxinetum, Muslims, Provence, Andalus, early medieval Mediterranean, jihad, piracy, ribat, frontier state, Iberia.

Remarkably little scholarship has been devoted to the history of Islam in Francia during the early Middle Ages. Many scholars of medieval Europe and the Islamic world consider the decisive defeat of an Umayyad force led by Abdurrahman al-Ghāfiqī by a Frankish army commanded by Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours-Poitiers in 732—and the subsequent conquest of Narbonne from the Arabs in 759—to mark the culmination of Muslim involvement in Francia. In fact, contrary to this perspective, the tenth century witnessed a re-establishment of Muslim authority in southeastern Francia, albeit of a different nature than the occupation two centuries prior, underscoring the dynamic interconnectivity between events in Iberia, the Mediterranean, and Christian Europe during this period. This article will outline how an Islamic frontier-state, centered around Fraxinetum in Provence, emerged in the late ninth century and allowed the Andalusīs to play a more significant role in southern Francia throughout the tenth century than has traditionally been understood.<sup>1</sup> A reassessment of primary documents and recent ar-

\* 5330 S. Blackstone Ave., #304, Chicago, IL 60615, mballan@uchicago.edu.

<sup>1</sup> “Andalusi” will be the main term employed throughout this article to describe the Muslims of Fraxinetum and, where the context is clear, it will also be used interchangeably.

chaeological evidence will also reveal that the Muslim military, cultural, and religious presence in Gaul did not truly end until the last decades of the tenth century, nearly 250 years after Charles Martel's victory at Tours.

The Islamic establishment at Fraxinetum has posed several problems for historians. The scarcity of contemporary Arabic sources aside, one of the greatest challenges faced by modern scholars has been how to situate an analysis of Fraxinetum within the context of the turmoil that characterized the late Carolingian Empire. While some have studied the settlement as an historical anomaly, others have framed it within a specific regional or thematic context. Over the past century, this latter approach has led to a variety of conclusions, ranging from arguments that Fraxinetum was a by-product of the rapid Muslim maritime expansion during the tenth century, to assertions that the Muslim presence in Provence was a barbarian incursion particularly disruptive to the economic and social life of the region. What was Fraxinetum? How and why was it established? What evidence exists about Fraxinetum, and what does it reveal to historians about the Islamic presence in Provence during the tenth century? Was Fraxinetum unique? These are a few of the questions that this article seeks to address.

Regardless of their different approaches, the majority of scholars prior to the 1970s and 1980s consistently characterized the Muslims of Fraxinetum as “robbers” or “pirates” and dismissed their settlement-fortress as a “corsair's nest” unworthy of further attention. However, the documentary and material record present a different, more complex picture of these Muslims, their activities, and the nature of their presence in Gaul. Through a reassessment of primary sources and an analysis of some non-textual evidence, I shall demonstrate that, contrary to the traditional view depicting the Muslims in Francia as bandits, Fraxinetum was the political, military, and economic center of an Islamic frontier state in Provence that was populated largely by *ghāzīs* or *mujāhidīn* (Islamic frontier warriors) from al-Andalus.<sup>2</sup> My use of the phrase “frontier state” to describe Fraxinetum is potentially problematic and

bly with “Muslim” and “Provençal Muslim.” When referring to non-Iberian Muslims, their origins, if known, will be emphasized using the designations “Arab,” “Berber,” or “Persian.”

<sup>2</sup> Al-Andalus refers to the portions of the Iberian Peninsula under Islamic rule in the Middle Ages. Within the context of this article (9th and 10th c.), it therefore denotes most of the Iberian Peninsula with the exception of the extreme northwest (Galicia and León) and Pyrenean northeastern Iberia (Aragón and Catalonia).

needs to be clarified. The term is best understood as “military settlement,” resembling the more familiar *ribāts/thughūr*/frontier fortresses in other regions of the Islamic world such as North Africa, northern Iberia, Cilicia, and eastern Anatolia where Muslims engaged in frontier warfare. Hence, rather than suggesting that Fraxinetum was an administrative center with an advanced bureaucracy and developed institutions (the traditional understanding of the term “state”), “frontier state” is meant to denote a self-sustaining entity existing on the frontier zone between Iberian Islam and Frankish Christendom which served as the focal point of several autonomous bands of Andalusī Muslim *ghāzīs* in Provence and the Alpine passes. Although there was no structured centralized authority regulating the activity of these groups of warriors, their engagement in *jihād* suggests that they coordinated their activities and often acted in unison, giving their opponents and other observers in the medieval world the impression that they formed a single, unified front. In the context of this paper, the term *jihād* refers specifically to its tenth-century Islamic jurisprudential definition, characterizing violence against non-Muslims who did not acknowledge Islamic rule as a religiously-sanctioned duty, and describing an act intended to weaken and overthrow the “land of unbelief” (*dār al-ḥarb*) and bring about the ultimate victory of Islam.

The assertion that the warriors of Fraxinetum were *mujāhidīn* does not disregard that there were mixed motivations, economic as well as religious, for the establishment and maintenance of a Muslim presence in Provence. Nor does it discount various modes of interactions, ranging from violent battles to commercial relations, which reflected the different motivations of the Muslims residing there. However, it appears that *jihād* provided the basic legitimizing and operational framework for the Muslims in Francia, and informed the perception of their activities by contemporary Muslim observers in al-Andalus and the eastern Islamic world. As noted, reconceptualizing Fraxinetum as an Islamic frontier state should not be understood to mean that Muslim activity in Provence was centrally-administered, but intends to convey that *jihād*, as well as certain economic motivations, played a crucial role in this frontier military settlement and, as such, needs to be taken seriously. This perspective will allow scholars to comprehend more fully the nature of Fraxinetum, providing additional insight into the Muslim presence in Provence, and contributing to the understanding of

the phenomenon of Islamic frontier states more broadly during the tenth century.

#### FRAXINETUM

According to Liutprand, the bishop of Cremona, the history of Muslim Fraxinetum began around 887, when a small vessel carrying about twenty Andalusī sailors landed on the Provençal coast near the modern town of St. Tropez.<sup>3</sup> The Andalusīs forcibly seized the neighboring settlement of Freinet, and on the mountain above the town proceeded to occupy the fort, which had been called *Fraxinetum* since Roman times.<sup>4</sup> The subsequent fortress-city which they established was highly defensible and practically impenetrable, protected on one side by the sea whence the Andalusīs drew their reinforcements, and on the other by large forests of thorny trees.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the fort could only be accessed through a single, narrow path leading up the mountain.<sup>6</sup> Contemporary Latin authors, namely Liutprand of Cremona and the anonymous author of the *Life of Beuve of Noyers*, allude to the Iberian origin of the raiders, but differed in naming them; Liutprand designated them “saraceni,” whereas the author of the *Life of Beuve* called them “hispanicolae.”<sup>7</sup> Tenth-century Muslim geographers, especially Muḥammad Ibn Ḥawqal in his *Surat al-Ard* (977) and al-İstakhrī in his *Kitāb al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik* (951), referred to the fortified port of Fraxinetum as *Jabal al-Qilāl* (“Mount of Lumber/Timber”) and described it as a vast mountainous region with rivers/streams and fertile soil that took two days to cross.<sup>8</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, like Liutprand, empha-

<sup>3</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* 1.3, *The Complete Works of Liutprand of Cremona*, trans. Paolo Squatriti (Washington, DC 2007) 45–46; Jean-Pierre Poly, *La Provence et la société féodale* (Paris 1976) 6–7; René Poupardin, *Le royaume de Provence* (Paris 1908) 250–251.

<sup>4</sup> For the history of Fraxinetum from the Roman era to the arrival of the Muslims, see Jacques Dalmon, *La Garde en Freinet: D’or et sinople* (Universud 1994) 20–27. The name “Fraxinetum” is probably derived from the Latin word “fraxinus” meaning ash-tree, a reference to the thick forests surrounding the site.

<sup>5</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis* 1.2, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 45; Muhammad Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-Ard* (Beirut 1963) 185; Ibn Hawqal, “Surat al-Ard,” in Philippe Sénac, *Provence et la piraterie sarrasine* (Paris 1982) 18–19.

<sup>6</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis* 1.3, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 45–46; Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L.A. Manyon (Chicago 1961) 4–8. Ibn Ḥawqal, “Surat al-Ard,” *Provence et la piraterie sarrasine* (n. 5 above) 19.

<sup>7</sup> Paul-Albert Février, *La Provence des origines à l’an mil* (Paris 1989) 491; Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-Ard* (n. 5 above) 185; Al-İstakhrī, *Al-masālik wa al-mamālik* (Cairo 1961) 51; Shakib Arslan, *Tarikh Ghazawat Al – ‘Arab fi Faransa wa Swisra wa*

sized the virtual impenetrability of the fortress and specified that it was only accessible through one route on the side of the mountain. He also added that it was dependent on the Umayyads of Cordova, as implied by his cartographic representation of Fraxinetum as an island at the mouth of the Rhone River and located close to the Iberian Peninsula, similar to the Balearic Islands.<sup>9</sup>

Shortly after their establishment at Fraxinetum, the Andalusīs called upon their brethren in Iberia and the Balearics to join them; about one hundred warriors answered this call, encouraged by their religious zeal and the prospect of wealth from raids.<sup>10</sup> Although it is plausible that Muslims from Sicily and North Africa participated in the raids in Francia, it is more likely that most of the raiders originated from Fraxinetum, and hence, from the coastal regions of the Iberian Peninsula. Within two decades of their arrival, the Andalusīs had subdued Provence in its entirety and even conducted raids as far as western Italy, where they occupied Acqui and threatened the abbey of Novalesa in 906.<sup>11</sup> Despite their relatively small numbers, the Muslims conquered the land with relative ease due to the divisions and internecine struggles that had characterized Provence since the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, they did not meet any significant resistance from the Provençals.<sup>13</sup> By 939 the Andalusīs had crossed the Alps (all the chroniclers praise their mountaineering abilities) and raided what is today northern Italy as well as southern Switzerland, where they attacked the renowned monastery of St. Gall and destroyed the abbey of Aguane in the Valais.<sup>14</sup> They established numerous fortresses—which Latin chroniclers in the raided regions all called Fraxinetum or

*Italia wa Jaza'ir al Baḥr Al-Mutawassit* (Beirut 1966) 210–213.

<sup>9</sup> Arslan, *Tarikh* (n. 8 above) 210.

<sup>10</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 1.3, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 45–46; Kees Versteegh, “The Arab Presence in France and Switzerland in the Tenth Century,” *Arabica* 37 (1990) 364.

<sup>11</sup> *Chronaca di Novalesa*, ed. Gian Carlo Alessio (Turin 1982) 28, 61, 112, 231–242, 278; Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 2.43 and 4.4, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 94 and 142; Versteegh, “The Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 365. Like the Vikings, the Muslims of Fraxinetum found that raiding local monasteries was a convenient source of income.

<sup>12</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis* 1.4, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 46–47; Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 4; Versteegh, “The Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 364.

<sup>13</sup> Georges de Manteyer, *La Provence du premier au douzième siècle* (Paris 1908) 239.

<sup>14</sup> Ekkehard, *Casus Sancti Galli* ed. Hans F. Haefele (Darmstadt 1980) 244; Ekkehard, *Casus S. Galli*, in Gonzague De Rey, *Les invasions des sarrasins en Provence* (Marseille 1878) 232–233; Versteegh, “The Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 377–379; Poupardin, *Le royaume de Provence* (n. 3 above) 266–267.

some variation of the name (*Frassineto, Frascendello, Fraxinth*, etc.)—that formed the basic infrastructure supporting their expansion and facilitating their domination of Provence and the Rhone Valley. From their principal base at Fraxinetum, the Muslims extended their raids into Alemannia and Rhaetia in the north, Grenoble in the west, and Lombardy in the east.<sup>15</sup> Even though Provence and parts of Piedmont were under the nominal control of the Andalusīs, the local administrative (and religious) infrastructure was left intact, so that most Provençal towns were relatively self-governing, provided they paid a tax to Fraxinetum.<sup>16</sup> The extent of the Andalusīs' influence and their impact on the regions they conquered or raided is evidenced by some of the place names of the region, which allude to the “Saracens” and their base at Fraxinetum; indeed, the mountainous region of southern Provence, where the principal base was established, is still known as *Massif des Maures* (“Mountain of the Moors”).<sup>17</sup>

Following the devastating sack of Genoa in 935 (by North African and Sicilian Muslims, who may have been joined by raiders from Fraxinetum), the destruction of the important Provençal port of Fréjus in 940, and the extension of raids beyond the Alps, Hugh of Arles, king of Italy, resolved to act against the Muslims of Fraxinetum. In 941 he summoned a fleet from the Byzantine emperor, Romanus Lecapenus, in order to assault the fortress both by land and by sea, hoping to crush Fraxinetum and break the power of the Andalusīs in the trans-Alpine region.<sup>18</sup> At a critical juncture during the two-pronged attack, when Fraxinetum was about to fall to his forces, Hugh decided to halt the of-

<sup>15</sup> For details on the raids of the Muslims in Provence, Piedmont, and Rhaetia, see Joseph Re naud, *Invasions des sarrasins en France et de France en Savoie, en Piemont et dans la Suisse* (Paris 1836); Poupardin, *Le royaume de Provence* (n. 3 above) 243–273; Arslan, *Tarikh* (n. 8 above) 207–328; Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 4–30; Bloch, *Feudal Society* (n. 6 above) 5–10; Sénac, *Provence et la piraterie sarrasine* (n. 5 above) 35–48; Versteegh, “The Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 359–382.

<sup>16</sup> Jean Lacam, *Les sarrasins dans le haut moyen age Français* (Paris 1965) 102. This style of governance was based on earlier precedents, including the conquests of Egypt and Spain, in which individual (non-Muslim) towns and cities capitulated to Muslim rule and paid a special tax, known as *jizya*, in exchange for being permitted to observe their religious practices and maintain a certain degree of autonomy. This arrangement was known as the *dhimma* pact.

<sup>17</sup> Versteegh, “The Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 381–385.

<sup>18</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 5.16, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 181; Sénac, *Provence et la piraterie sarrasine* (n. 5 above) 38; Steven Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign: A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium* (Cambridge 1963) 195; Jonathan Shepard, “Byzantium and the West,” *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume III*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge 1995) 609; Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 25 n. 103.

fensive and form an alliance with the Muslims.<sup>19</sup> He opted for this sudden change in strategy because he had received word that his rival for the Italian crown, Berengar of Ivrea, intended to cross the Alps with reinforcements from Saxony and invade Italy; it is also possible that his accommodation with the Andalusīs was part of a broader *rapprochement* with Abdurrahman III, ruler of al-Andalus, with whom he had entered into trade relations around 941. Hugh reached an agreement with the Andalusīs whereby they would continue to occupy and control the Alpine passes, where they had entrenched themselves since 921, effectively closing the connection between France and Italy, and thus barring any hostile armies from reaching his kingdom.<sup>20</sup> The Muslims maintained this agreement, as it allowed them to acquire vast amounts of wealth by controlling the movement of soldiers and pilgrims traveling through the Alps between Francia and Italy.<sup>21</sup>

In the short term, Hugh of Arles was heavily criticized for his actions by his contemporaries, including Liutprand of Cremona, who compared him to Ahab, the king of ancient Israel, and held him responsible for the deaths of hundreds, if not thousands, of Christians.<sup>22</sup> More significantly, the *realpolitik* behind Hugh's decision to allow Fraxinetum to survive would have dramatic long-term consequences. It was during the period of its control of the Alpine passes that Fraxinetum reached the apex of its power, and the raids by the Andalusīs became the most destructive and deadly; according to Latin chroniclers, the Muslims sacked numerous monasteries and indiscriminately killed hundreds of pilgrims on their way to Rome.<sup>23</sup> It was also during this time that Fraxi-

<sup>19</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 5.17, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 181; Arslan, *Tarikh Ghazwat al-Arab* (n. 8 above) 223–225.

<sup>20</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 5.17, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 181; Versteegh, “Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 367–368.

<sup>21</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 2.43, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 94; Steven Fanning and Bernard Bachrach, *The Annals of Flodoard of Reims* (Peterborough 2004) 5, 10, 19, 24, 32, 56; “Chronicle of Flodoard of Reims, s. a. 923–951,” in De Rey, *Les invasions* (n. 14 above) 230–231; Versteegh, “Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 365. That the Muslims of Fraxinetum collected tolls/tribute from travelers in the Alpine passes is supported by the 951 entry from the Chronicle of Flodoard: “Saraceni meatum Alpium obsidentes a viatoribus Romam petentibus tributum accipiunt et sic eos transpire permittunt” (“The Saracens occupying the Alpine passes extract/exact tribute from travellers to Rome, only thus allowing them to pass”).

<sup>22</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis* 5.17, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 181–182; Versteegh, “Arab Presence,” (n. 10 above) 369.

<sup>23</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 2.43, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 94; Ekkehard, *Casus S. Galli* (n. 14 above) 244; “Chronicle of Flodoard of Reims, s. a. 923–951,” *Les invasions* (n. 14 above) 230–231.

netum hosted a number of rebels and renegades, notably Adalbert of Italy, son of Berengar of Ivrea, from the neighboring kingdoms, thereby drawing additional hostility from the local and regional authorities in Germania, Francia, and Italy.<sup>24</sup> The Muslims built a long line of defensive fortresses along the mountain range in order to consolidate their control of the passes and to increase the scope of their attacks during this period.<sup>25</sup> However, their confidence—largely a product of the lack of resistance and the repeated success of their activities in Provence and Piedmont—would also prove to be their downfall. Their first major miscalculation was conducting raids into the Upper Rhine Valley.<sup>26</sup> This was the territory of Otto I, who decided to appeal to the caliph of al-Andalus, Abdurrahman III, whom Otto believed to have the authority to check their activities.<sup>27</sup> This episode of diplomacy between the two most powerful sovereigns of western Europe, Otto I and Abdurrahman III, demonstrates that the significance of the Muslims of Fraxinetum went beyond the limited scope of their raids, and actually had the potential to upset the balance of power and status quo between Muslim and Christian powers in western Europe.<sup>28</sup> Their northward expansion also brought them into contact with the Magyars, who were raiding

<sup>24</sup> Liutprand, *Liber de rebus gestis Ottonis*, 4 and 7, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 221 and 225.

<sup>25</sup> Versteegh, “Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 366. Some of the sources describe people (the Andalusis) who “lived in a labyrinthine network of subterranean galleries in a mountainous area that was surrounded by enormous forests” (*in monte silvis permaximis circumdato inextricabilibus subterraneis cuniculis habitabant*). Ekkehard refers to their strength in the Alpine passes: “Saracenos, quorum natura est in montibus multum valere, cum e parte australi nos et nostros adeo infestarent suis temporibus, ut alpes nostras et montes optinentes” (Ekkehard, *Casus S. Galli* [n. 14 above] 244).

<sup>26</sup> Flodoard of Reims, *Annals of Flodoard* (n. 21 above) 28.

<sup>27</sup> Versteegh, “The Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 363. Otto I and Abdurrahman III exchanged a number of embassies regarding the issue of Fraxinetum. Although the discussion of those embassies and their outcome is a topic that falls outside the scope of this essay, it is important to recognize that in the aftermath of the exchange of embassies, material and moral support from the caliph of al-Andalus to Fraxinetum decreased considerably. For more on this, see “The Niceties of Diplomacy,” in Colin Smith, *Christians and Moors in Spain* (Warminster 1988) 1.62–75. Otto also viewed Fraxinetum as a threat because it had given refuge to several of his enemies, notably Adalbert of Italy, son of Berengar of Ivrea, who, following his defeat by Emperor Otto, was given sanctuary by the Andalusis at Fraxinetum. See Liutprand, *Liber de rebus gestis Ottonis*, 4 and 7, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 221 and 225; Versteegh, “Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 372.

<sup>28</sup> Philippe Sénac, “Contribution à l’étude des relations diplomatiques entre l’Espagne musulmane et l’Europe au dixième siècle,” *Studia Islamica* 61 (1985) 49–50. There had been a state of détente and relative stability between al-Andalus and western Europe for over a century; Philippe Sénac, *Musulmans et sarrasins dans le sud de Gaule* (Paris 1980) 102.

westwards. This led to a confrontation between the Muslims of Fraxinetum (*Saraceni e valle Fraxnith*) and the Hungarians (*Ungari*) around 954, which ended when Conrad of Burgundy (r. 937–993), taking advantage of the situation, “slaughtered the survivors of both groups indiscriminately” (*nullo discrimine trucidentur Saracenus et Hungar*).<sup>29</sup> Indeed, by 955, with the Magyar threat against western Europe having subsided following their defeat at Lechfeld, Otto I began to take a more active role in encouraging and sponsoring local Christian resistance against the Muslims of Fraxinetum, who were forced on the defensive from the 950s onwards.<sup>30</sup>

The second major error committed by the Andalusīs, which subsequently triggered a series of events leading to the eventual demise of Fraxinetum, was the capture of Maiolus, the abbot of Cluny—considered a living saint by many of the counts, dukes, and kings of western Europe—while he crossed the Alps in 972.<sup>31</sup> His capture provided a unifying factor in the struggle of the lords of Provence against the Andalusīs and prompted them to respond collectively to the threat emanating from Fraxinetum.<sup>32</sup> Following his ransom and subsequent release, Maiolus rallied a coalition of nobles in a semi-crusade aimed at removing the Muslims from Francia.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Ekkehard, *Casus S. Galli* (n. 14 above) 138–140; Charles Bowlus, *The Battle of Lechfeld and Its Aftermath: The End of the Age of Migrations in the Latin West* (Aldershot 2006) 4; Versteegh, “Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 372.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 372–373, 379; Widukind of Corvey, “Battle of Lechfeld,” trans. Boyd H. Hill, *The First Reich: Germany in the Tenth Century* (New York 1969) 15–18; Bowlus, *The Battle of Lechfeld* (n. 29 above) 1; Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages* (London 1991) 160–161.

<sup>31</sup> Syrus, *Vita S. Maiolus, Les invasions* (n. 14 above) 233–235; Versteegh, “Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 370. A detailed discussion of the capture of Abbot Mailous of Cluny and how it led to the subsequent decline of Fraxinetum is given in De Manteyer, *La Provence* (n. 13 above) 239–250.

<sup>32</sup> Sénac, *Musulmans et Sarrasins* (n. 28 above) 55–57.

<sup>33</sup> Syrus, *Vita S. Maiolus, Les invasions* (n. 14 above) 235. The movement to expel the Andalusīs from Fraxinetum can be contextualized within the early origins of the crusading movement. The fall of Muslim bases across the Mediterranean had an ideological impact on the movement that would culminate in the First Crusade. The idea of fighting in defense of the church in exchange for a spiritual reward had existed as early as the time of Pope John VIII, who had struggled with removing the Arabs from southern Italy. In 878, John VIII had stressed the importance of *defensio totius christianitatis* in the face of an aggressive Muslim enemy that was at the time threatening Rome itself. Although this goal never materialized during his lifetime, the ideal had a long-term influence, and was arguably first applied when Pope John X assembled a coalition of knights, which he personally led, and eliminated the Muslims from Monte Garigliano in 915. Several scholars argued that the fall of Fraxinetum was the first known *western* Christian offensive/counterattack against Muslim expansion in the early Middle Ages. The importance

The expedition was led by Guillaume I of Provence, but aristocrats from northern Italy, Provence, and Septimania also took part.<sup>34</sup> The Frankish forces met the Muslims at Tourtour, in upper Provence, during the summer of 972 and destroyed their ranks before moving on to the main base at Fraxinetum, which did not receive any reinforcements from al-Andalus. Following a short yet intensive siege, it fell in late 972 (although a number of sources place the date as late as 990).<sup>35</sup> After the destruction of Fraxinetum, the Muslim inhabitants of Provence—combatants and non-combatants alike—were either killed, enslaved, or exiled, and the lands they had controlled were partitioned among the many lords who had taken part in the expedition to expel them from Provence.<sup>36</sup> This victory of the Provençals over the Andalu-

of Cluny in inspiring the crusading movement has also been outlined by several scholars, and linking the crusading ideal with Maiolus's campaign against the Muslims in Provence has been very common. Indeed, it has been noted that Pope Urban II, himself a Cluniac, prior to giving his famous speech at Clermont in 1095, where he preached the *bellum sacrum* (holy war), prayed at the tomb of Maiolus in Souvigny, perhaps indicating that he was influenced by Maiolus's semi-crusade in 973. For more on these ideas and theories, see Dominique Iogna-Prat, "L'islam et la naissance de la 'Chretiente' a la fin du neuvieme siècle," *Histoire de l'Islam et des musulmans en France du moyen-age a nos jours*, ed. Mohammed Arkoun (Paris 2006) 74–75; Bernard Hamilton "Pope John X (914–928) and the Antecedents of the First Crusade," *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar*, ed. Iris Shagrir et al. (Aldershot 2007) 309–318; Stephen O'Shea, *Sea of Faith: Islam and Christianity in the Medieval Mediterranean World* (Vancouver 2006) 150 n. 93. For more on Cluny and the First Crusade, see Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Ordonner et exclure: Cluny et la societe chretienne face l'heresie, au judaisme et a l'islam, 1000–1150* (Paris 1998) 324–330; Vicente Cantarino, "Spanish Reconquest: A Cluniac Holy War Against Islam," *Islam and the West: Aspects of Intercultural Relations* ed. Khalil I. Semaan (Albany 1980) 82–109, esp. 90–95; Giles Constable, "Cluny and the First Crusade," *Cluny from the Tenth to the Twelfth Centuries*, ed. idem (Ashgate 2000) 7.179–193.

<sup>34</sup> Raoul Busquet, *Histoire de Provence* (Monaco 1954) 138.

<sup>35</sup> Sénac, *Musulmans et sarrasins* (n. 28 above) 57–58; Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 27–29.

<sup>36</sup> A significant number of the Muslims at Fraxinetum were converted to Christianity and became serfs in the newly united duchy of Provence. It was the expulsion of the Saracens from Provence and the division of land among local lords that marked the transition of Provence from autonomous self-rule to "feudalism." For more on the impact of the expulsion of the Muslims on the social reorganization of Provence, see Archibald Lewis, *The Development of Southern French and Catalan Society, 718–1050* (Austin 1965) 344; Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 3–130. For an extensive critique of the concept of "feudalism" within modern scholarship of the Middle Ages, see Jean Pierre Poly and Eric Bournazel, *The Feudal Transformation, 900–1200* (New York 1991); Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe," *American Historical Review* 79 (1974) 1063–1088. According to Benjamin Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton 1988) 42–44, the Christian pattern of "reconquest" in Sicily, Iberia, and the Near East during the 11th and 12th c., one involving conquest followed by slaughter and conversion, origi-

sīs of Fraxinetum effectively ended Muslim control over southern France almost 240 years after Charles Martel’s defeat of Abdurrahman al-Ghafiqī at the Battle of Tours in 732.<sup>37</sup>

#### SOURCES

Due to the relative paucity of evidence about Fraxinetum, historians generally rely on the same set of primary text sources.<sup>38</sup> Although non-textual materials, including cartographic, ethnographic, and archaeological sources, have also been widely employed in very diverse ways by more recent scholars, constraints of space unfortunately prevent a discussion of such evidence here. The Latin source used most frequently is Liutprand of Cremona’s *Antapodosis* (ca. 963), a rich chronicle of the political history of Italy, Pavia, and Provence in the tenth century. Liutprand, a Lombard historian and bishop of Cremona, provided detailed information regarding the Andalusī base at Fraxinetum, the origins of the Muslims there, and their activities.<sup>39</sup> He also elaborated upon the relations that existed between the Andalusīs and the king of Italy, Hugh of Arles. The *Royal Frankish Annals* (*Annales regni Francorum*), which cover the political history of the Frankish Empire from 741 to 829, and Einhard’s *Life of Charlemagne* (*Vita Karoli Magni*) are also widely used by scholars due to their multiple references to the political situation in the Carolingian Empire in the early ninth century, which set the stage for the arrival of the Andalusīs in Provence. Ecclesiastical works, such as the *Annals of St. Bertin* (*An-*

nated at Fraxinetum in 972. In other words, the capture of Fraxinetum by a Christian coalition, one of the earliest episodes of the Catholic European counteroffensive against the forces of Islam, associates Christian conquest with Muslim defeat, enslavement, and conversion.

<sup>37</sup> For more on the historiography of the Battle of Tours/Poitiers, see Françoise Micheau and Philippe Sénac, “La bataille de Poitiers, de la réalité au mythe,” *Histoire de l’islam* (n. 33 above) 7–15.

<sup>38</sup> For a detailed survey of the main sources, both Arabic and Latin, see Philippe Sénac, “Les musulmans en Provence en dixième siècle,” *Histoire de l’Islam* (n. 33 above) 26–39.

<sup>39</sup> Liutprand of Cremona has been discussed in detail by various scholars. See Karl Leyser, “Liutprand of Cremona: Preacher and Homilist,” in idem, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries* (London 1994) 111–124; Robert Levine, “Liutprand of Cremona: History and Debasement in the Tenth Century,” *Mittelalterliches Jahrbuch* 26 (1991) 70–84; Philippe Buc, “Writing Ottonian Hegemony: Good Rituals and Bad Rituals in Liutprand of Cremona,” *Majestas* 4 (1996) 3–38; Karl Leyser, “Ends and Means in Liutprand of Cremona,” in idem, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries* (London 1994) 125–142.

*nales Bertiniani*) begun around 830, the *Annals of Flodoard of Reims* (919–966), the *Casus St. Galli* by Ekkehard (d. 973), the *Annals of St. Victor* in Marseille (ca. 838–1000), and the *Chronicle of Novalesa* (ca. 1050), are also utilized by many historians for the detailed information they provide about Muslim incursions in southern France, the establishment of Fraxinetum, and the extension of the Andalusī raids into Piedmont, Rhaetia, the Alpine passes, and the upper Rhine Valley. Despite their interpreting many of the events in which the Muslims were involved within a biblical framework, the ecclesiastical sources are invaluable for providing detailed information about the chronology of Fraxinetum and the raids of the Muslims in Provence, Rhaetia, and Piedmont.

There are several other Latin sources relating to Fraxinetum that have been largely neglected. *The Life of Beuve of Noyers*, otherwise known as the *Vita Sancti Bobonis* (ca. 896), a contemporary account of a noble Frankish knight who fought against the Muslims in Provence during the late ninth century, and which outlines the establishment of the Andalusīs at Fraxinetum, has only been studied by a handful of scholars.<sup>40</sup> Another work that is inadequately utilized is Syrus's *Life of Maiolus* (*Vita S. Maiolus*), a biography of Maiolus of Cluny dating from the early eleventh century that makes explicit reference to the capture of the abbot by Andalusīs from Fraxinetum, and contains important details about the interactions between Maiolus and his captors.<sup>41</sup> The *Life of John of Gorze* (*Vita Iohannis Gorziensis*), an account of the life of a German monk and ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor Otto I, composed around 960, details his travels to Umayyad Spain in the mid-tenth century to encourage the caliph Abdurrahman III to stop supporting the Muslims of Fraxinetum. It has been used mainly by those schol-

<sup>40</sup> The *Vita Sancti Bobonis* is based on the life of St. Bobo, who hailed from a noble family in Provence and who experienced the earliest Andalusī raids. He viewed the Muslims of Fraxinetum as a grave threat, and, according to the source, responded by constructing a massive fortress on the mountain opposite theirs from which he harassed their forces. His legend was popularized at the time of the Crusades and was seen as an inspirational figure of the "crusading spirit." For more on Bobo, see Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 6–9.

<sup>41</sup> Odilo of Cluny, Maiolus's successor, also composed a biography of the abbot, commonly known as the *Vie de Saint Maieul*, which contains detailed information about Maiolus's interactions with the Andalusīs. An excerpt from Odilo's biographical work pertaining to Maiolus's capture is translated by Dominique Iogna-Prat, "La Capture de l'abbe Maieul par les loups sarrasins," *Histoire de l'islam* (n. 33 above) 54–55.

ars interested in diplomatic exchange between the Holy Roman Empire and al-Andalus in the tenth century.

The existing Arabic textual evidence, while providing useful details about Fraxinetum, is extremely meager. The most important of these texts has been the *Muqtabis*, the famed chronicle of the Umayyad Andalusī historian Ibn Ḥayyan al-Qurtubī (d. 1076), which includes relevant details about the political and diplomatic history of al-Andalus in the tenth century, and which makes explicit reference to Fraxinetum. *Surat al-Ard* by Ibn Ḥawqal (ca. 970), an edited and updated version of al-Iṣṭakhri's *Kitāb al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik* (ca. 950), is also a central work. The fact that it happens to be a tenth-century geographical treatise, including both textual and cartographic evidence, is particularly useful for the study of Fraxinetum, and has been employed differently by various historians. Another important source is an anonymous geographic work written in Persian and dated to the late tenth century, entitled *Hudud Al-Alam*, which provides insight into how Fraxinetum was perceived by contemporary Muslims.

#### HISTORIOGRAPHY

Over the past century, two approaches have dominated the historiographical debate about Fraxinetum: one traditional, the other revisionist and interdisciplinary. The traditional approach, chiefly represented by René Poupardin's *Le Royaume de Provence* (1908) and Georges de Manteyer's *Provence du premier au douzième siècle* (1908), can be further divided into three specific sub-themes: the regional context, the economic and social impact of the Muslims on Provence, and the capture of Maiolus.<sup>42</sup> Historians dealing with Fraxinetum within the regional context are predominantly concerned with the political history and chronology of the Muslim presence in Provence, and especially with the impact that Andalusī raids had on the ecclesiastical and lay life in Provence and Piedmont. Scholars taking this approach have further emphasized the socio-political and economic significance of the Muslim control of the Alpine passes. Those

<sup>42</sup> Poupardin, *Le royaume de Provence* (n. 3 above) 243–273. Poupardin's work builds on earlier studies, namely Gonzague de Rey, *Les invasions* (n. 14 above); and Joseph Toussaint Re naud, *Invasions des sarrazins en France et de France en Savoie, en Piemont et dans la Suisse* (Paris 1836). Both of these works provide detailed information about the Muslim base at Fraxinetum, their activities, and their expulsion from Provence. De Manteyer, *Provence* (n. 13 above) 237–250; Lacam, *Les sarrazins* (n. 16 above) 99–105.

discussing the expansion of Andalusī power in the region within the context of trans-Alpine power politics have also integrated Carolingian, Ottonian, and Italian political history into their analyses.<sup>43</sup> Several historians have concluded that the establishment of an Islamic (i.e., “foreign”) entity in southeast Francia and Piedmont, and especially its subsequent reconquest by Frankish forces in 972, had a significant and lasting impact on the social and economic reorganization of Provence.<sup>44</sup>

Few scholars following the traditional approach have chosen to investigate Fraxinetum in more detail; those who have tended to focus on the significance of the capture of Abbot Maiolus and on the campaign to expel the Andalusīs from Francia. It should be noted that such historians make limited use of Arabic source material and rely heavily on Latin ecclesiastical sources, thus hindering their ability to view Fraxinetum, the Andalusī Muslims, and their activities from a broader perspective. Despite these shortcomings, the traditional school of thought raises several thematic questions and issues that contribute to the understanding of the Muslim presence in Provence in the tenth century are raised by the traditional school of thought—in particular, the importance of understanding the role of local power politics in both facilitating and impeding Andalusī hegemony in the region.

Over the past two decades, an alternative approach to the question of Fraxinetum has developed. This new interpretative framework has reassessed the site’s significance by employing a wider range of source material, critically analyzing the extant Latin sources, emphasizing the multi-faceted nature of the establishment of Muslims in Provence, exploring possible continuities with the earlier Muslim presence there during the early eighth century, and underscoring the existence of a

<sup>43</sup> J. E. Tyler, *The Alpine Passes, 962–1250* (Oxford 1930) 147–151; James Westfall Thompson, “The Commerce of France in the Ninth Century,” *Journal of Political Economy* 23 (1915) 857–887; J. Wesley Hoffmann, “The Commerce of the German Alpine Passes during the Early Middle Ages,” *The Journal of Political Economy* 31 (1923) 826–839; J. Lestocquoy, “The Tenth Century,” *Economic History Review* 17 (1947) 10; Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton 1994) 121–145; Bloch, *Feudal Society* (n. 6 above) 5–8; Constance Brittain Bouchard, “Burgundy and Provence: 879–1032,” *New Cambridge Medieval History* (n. 18 above) 342.

<sup>44</sup> Busquet, *Histoire de Provence* (n. 34 above) 134–136; Lewis, *Development of Southern French and Catalan Society* (n. 36 above) 202–240; Stephen Weinberger, “Peasant Households in Provence, ca. 800–1000,” *Speculum* 48 (1973) 247–257; Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 3–30; Peter Johanek, “Merchants, Markets and Towns,” *New Cambridge Medieval History* (n. 18 above) 77.

powerful Andalusī military presence at Fraxinetum.<sup>45</sup> This recent approach has been interdisciplinary and revisionist, and can be sub-divided into three dominant themes: Andalusī history, cultural history, and Mediterranean/maritime history. Many elements of Andalusī and European history intersect, not least in the case of Fraxinetum, which many historians of al-Andalus and frontier history have described as existing on a fault line between Christian and Islamic civilizations in the western Mediterranean.

Another dominant theme that emerges from recent historiography is cultural exchange. Scholars seeking to investigate Latin Christendom's image of the "other" with a focus on Islam have made reference to Fraxinetum in this regard.<sup>46</sup> They have analyzed Latin sources about the Andalusīs and their base in Provence to demonstrate the construction of the image of Islam and Muslims among Latin-speaking Christians resulting from political and military contact between Arabs/Berbers and Franks in Provence. Historians adopting this approach have investigated many elements of Muslim-Christian, Andalusī-Frankish, and secular-religious exchanges. Their methodology has ranged from etymological analysis of the Latin chronicles, reinterpreting accounts of the capture and release of Maiolus, to comparing the depiction of Vikings and Muslims in contemporary Latin ecclesiastical sources.<sup>47</sup> Several recent scholars, however, have placed less emphasis on the local context of Provence and sought to incorporate Fraxinetum within a broader understanding of the Mediterranean world of the early Middle Ages. As a result, they have indicated the existence of a net-

<sup>45</sup> Manfred W. Wenner, "The Arab/Muslim Presence in Medieval Central Europe," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12 (1980) 59–79; Sénac, *Musulmans et sarrasins* (n. 25 above) 15–41; Sénac, *Provence et piraterie sarrasine* (n. 5 above). One of the most comprehensive studies in English of the Muslim presence in Provence is William Ernest Watson, "The Hammer and the Crescent: Contacts between Andalusī Muslims, Franks, and Their Successors in Three Waves of Muslim Expansion into Francia" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania 1990).

<sup>46</sup> Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe* (London 1975) 52–73; Philippe Sénac, *L'Occident médiéval face à l'islam: L'image de l'autre* (Paris 2000) 20–59.

<sup>47</sup> Scott G. Bruce, "An Abbot between Two Cultures: Maiolus of Cluny Considers the Muslims of La Garde-Freinet," *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2007) 426–440; John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York 2002) 71–103; Abdurrahman Ali El Hajji, *Andalusian Diplomatic Relations with Western Europe during the Umayyad Period, 755–976* (Beirut 1970) 207–225. For more on the Holy Roman Emperor Otto I and Fraxinetum, see Rudolf Köpke, *Kaiser Otto der Grosse* (Darmstadt 1962) 113–134, 235–279, 344–348, 435–454; Philippe Sénac, "Contribution à l'étude des relations diplomatiques entre l'Espagne Musulmane et l'Europe au dixième siècle: Le règne de Abdurrahman III (912–961)," *Studia Islamica* 61 (1985) 45–55.

work of sea raiders in North Africa, eastern Iberia, the Balearics, and southern France, drawing attention to the broader regional and thematic context of the ninth- and tenth-century Mediterranean.<sup>48</sup> In order to understand the historical significance of Fraxinetum, and attain a clearer view of the base itself, it is critical to integrate an analysis of the base within this larger context.

#### THE ISLAMIC MEDITERRANEAN IN THE TENTH CENTURY

The historiographical debate about Fraxinetum makes it clear that different historians have contextualized Fraxinetum in a multitude of ways. Yet, whatever their approach, modern historians must still rely on certain details about the politico-military situation of the ninth- and tenth-century Mediterranean; after all, this was the context in which Fraxinetum arose and existed. The history of Fraxinetum can best be understood as a chain of events, beginning with the Muslim conquest of Hispania and culminating in the late ninth century with the arrival of several hundred Andalusī *ghāzīs*, who eventually occupied southern Provence and established a frontier military settlement. The eighth century was a highly eventful period in the history of the western Mediterranean. The Visigothic kingdom of Hispania was destroyed by invading Muslim armies in 711, and the Merovingian dynasty was supplanted by the Carolingians in Gaul around 751. Moreover, the Umayyads, fleeing the Abbasid onslaught in the Levant, established their rule in Iberia in 756. The close of the century also witnessed the rise of a phenomenon in the Mediterranean which would have a profound impact throughout the ninth and tenth centuries: sea-borne offensive raiding, or *jihād al-baḥr*.

<sup>48</sup> Archibald R. Lewis, *Naval Power and Trade in the Mediterranean, A.D. 500–1100* (Princeton 1951) 132–183; Francesco Gabrieli, “Greeks and Arabs in the Central Mediterranean Area,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964) 57–64; Ekkehard Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland: Das Mittelmeer unter Byzantinischer und Arabischer Hegemonie (650–1040)* (Berlin 1966) 60–80, 201–218, 297–320; John H. Pryor, *Geography, Technology, and War: Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Cambridge 1988) 102–110; John Haywood, *Dark Age Naval Power: A Reassessment of Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Seafaring Activity* (London 1991) 113–118; Jorge Lirola Delgado, *El poder naval de al-Andalus en la época del Califato Omeya* (Granada 1993) 150–236; Christophe Picard, *La mer et les musulmans d’Occident au Moyen Age, huitième au douzième siècle* (Paris 1997) 9–30. On the political, military, and economic contexts of the 9th and 10th c. within the discussion of Muslim maritime expansion, see Francesco Gabrieli, “Islam in the Mediterranean World,” *The Legacy of Islam* ed. Joseph Schacht and C. E. Bosworth (Oxford 1974) 63–104.

Sea-raiding in the early Middle Ages has more often been associated with the Scandinavian Vikings, whose power in the North Sea was demonstrated by the devastating sack of Lindisfarne in 793, while relatively little attention has been devoted to the raids of the Andalusī Muslims in the Mediterranean. To be sure, the activities of the Muslims were no less complex, and their raids no less destructive than those of their Scandinavian contemporaries, but there were significant differences. The motivating factor that prompted these raids, the eventual outcome of the attacks, as well as the legitimizing and operational framework within which the activities of the Andalusīs took place in the Mediterranean distinguished them from the Vikings. I have avoided the term “piracy” to describe the raids of the Muslims because it does not fully capture the essence of their activities in the Mediterranean during the early Middle Ages, specifically in the ninth and tenth centuries. It is also unhelpful, since, being such an ambiguous and broad term which carries certain connotations, it over-generalizes a complex and heterogeneous phenomenon; it does not encapsulate or explain the motivations and consequences of Muslim sea-raids, which are better understood within the context of *jihād*. As scholar Majid Khadduri has explained,

According to tenth-century Islamic jurisprudence] the world was split into two divisions: the territory of Islam (*dār al-Islām*), which can also be called *Pax Islamica*, comprising Muslim communities and non-Muslim communities that had accepted Islamic sovereignty, and the rest of the world, called the *dār al-harb* (territory of war). The *dār al-Islām*, in theory, was in a constant state of war with the *dār al-harb*. The instrument that would transform the *Dar al-Harb* into the *Dar al-Islam* was *jihād* (Islamic *bellum justum*). The *jihād*, in the broadest sense, was therefore meant to achieve Islam’s ultimate aim: the universalization of the faith and the establishment of God’s sovereignty over the entire world. In Islamic legal theory, *jihād* was a permanent obligation upon the believers to be carried out by a continuous process of warfare, psychological or political, even if not strictly military. No other form of warfare (other than *jihād*) was permissible, whether within Islamic territory or outside it.<sup>49</sup>

An explanation of the rise of frontier warfare and *jihād* in the ninth and tenth century Islamic world requires a brief sketch of the Mediterranean

<sup>49</sup> Majid Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybānī’s Siyār* (Baltimore 1966) 10–16. For more on *jihad* in early medieval Islam and its meaning, see Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State: The Reign of Hisham ibn Abd-al Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads* (Albany 1994) 11–15.

world in the early Middle Ages. In 711, twelve thousand Berber and Arab troops began the Muslim conquest of the Visigothic Kingdom of Spain.<sup>50</sup> In less than five years they had overrun the entire Iberian peninsula, and by 730 Muslim troops controlled southern Gaul, including Aquitaine and Septimania, and were raiding as far north as the Seine river. The Arabs suffered a severe defeat in 732 at the Battle of Tours/Poitiers, when one of their larger raiding parties, led by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ghafiqī, governor of al-Andalus, was intercepted and its forces routed by Frankish troops commanded by Charles Martel, the Mayor of the Palace of the Merovingian monarchy.<sup>51</sup> The consolidation of Muslim control over Iberia and the raids into Gaul were centrally-planned and officially sanctioned campaigns by the Umayyad caliphate in the eighth century. The setback at Tours-Poitiers, and subsequent others, confined the Muslim presence in Francia to Provence and Septimania until they were expelled from southern Gaul altogether in 759, when Narbonne fell to Charles Martel’s son Pippin.<sup>52</sup> Their ambitions of conquest were frustrated even further in the last quarter of the eighth century with the creation of Christian Catalonia in northeastern Iberia.<sup>53</sup> The establishment of this kingdom created a buffer zone between

<sup>50</sup> On the Muslim conquest of Spain, see Abdulwahid Dhanun Taha, *The Muslim Conquest and Settlement of North Africa and Spain* (New York 1988); Roger Collins, *The Arab Conquest of Spain* (Oxford 1989); Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity* (London 1995) 144–181; Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus* (New York 1996) 1–23; Maria Jesus Viguera Molins, “The Muslim Conquest of Spania/al-Andalus,” in Manuela Marin, ed., *The Formation of al-Andalus*, pt. 1 (Aldershot 1998) 13–39; Pedro Chalmeta, *Invasión e Islamización: La Sumisión de Hispania y La Formación de al-Andalus* (Jaén 2003); Eduardo Manzano Moreno, *Conquistadores, Emires y Califas* (Barcelona 2006) 1–188; Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *La España musulmana* (Madrid 1982), 1–90; Norman Roth, *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims in Medieval Spain: Cooperation and Conflict* (Leiden 1994) 41–71; Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409–711* (Oxford 2004) 117–143. For the Arab conquests and the establishment of the early Islamic state in general, see Hugh Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests* (Philadelphia 2007); Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates* (New York 2004); Walter Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge 1992); Fred Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton 1981). For the conquests in the Mediterranean, see Lewis, *Naval Power* (n. 44 above) 54–97; Michel Terrasse, *Islam et occident méditerranéen* (Paris 2001) 15–91. An overview of the political history of al-Andalus is given in Mahmoud Makki, “The Political History of al-Andalus,” *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden 1992) 3–87.

<sup>51</sup> *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar* ed. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (London 1960) 90–91.

<sup>52</sup> For a concise summary of the events of the Muslim conquests in Gaul in the 8th c., see Arkoun, *Histoire de l’islam* (n. 33 above), 1–25; Sénac, *Musulmans et Sarrasins* (n. 28 above) 15–35.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 37.

Umayyad al-Andalus and the Carolingian-ruled Frankish kingdom in Gaul, thus eliminating any chance for the Muslims to extend their conquests further north. Consequently, the Andalusīs began to organize maritime raids in the western Mediterranean through which they could continue to conquer territory, acquire wealth, and expand *dār al-Islām*. Initially, these raids were of an official nature and were sanctioned by the Muslim authority (either in the province of *Ifriqiya*, encompassing the former Roman province of Africa, or al-Andalus, the former Roman region of Hispania). This was the case with the naval expedition of 752, led by the Muslim North African admiral Abdurrahman ibn Ḥabīb al-Fihrī, against the southern coast of Gaul.<sup>54</sup> Due to the fragmented and chaotic state of Umayyad caliphate at the time, which would not have been favorable to expansionist policies, it is highly likely that most such expeditions were aimed at acquiring booty rather than territorial annexation.<sup>55</sup>

Following the Abbasid revolution of 750, which toppled the ruling Umayyad dynasty in Damascus, Abdurrahman I, the only surviving member of the Umayyad family, fled to Spain, where he founded his own kingdom amid the existing intra-Muslim civil strife.<sup>56</sup> Despite having lost Narbonne, their last trans-Pyrenean possession, in 759, the Umayyads of al-Andalus were initially more concerned with consolidating their rule in the Iberian peninsula than with raiding the western Mediterranean or invading Francia. Although hostile towards the Carolingian Franks, there is little evidence of any major military campaigns, aside from a brief attempt to recover Narbonne, launched by the Umayyads against Gaul in the eighth century (however, small-scale raids, notably the incursion across the Pyrenees into Septimania in 793, continued until the creation of the *Marca Hispania* [Spanish March] by Charlemagne in 795).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.; Mohammed Talbi, *L'émirat Aghlabide* (Paris 1966) 388.

<sup>55</sup> Sénac, *Musulmans et Sarrasins* (n. 28 above) 38. See also Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State* (n. 49 above).

<sup>56</sup> For more on the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty and the establishment of Abbasid rule in the Near East, see Hugh Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate: A Political History* (London 1981); John Alden Williams, *The Abbasid Revolution* (Albany 1985); Salih Said Agha, *The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads* (Leiden 2003). For the establishment of Umayyad power in Iberia, see Miguel Cruz Hernández, "The Social Structure of al-Andalus during the Muslim Occupation and the Founding of the Umayyad Monarchy," *Formation of al-Andalus*, pt. 1 (n. 50 above) 51–85.

<sup>57</sup> For a detailed discussion of Muslim raids into France in the 8th c., see Arslan, *Tarikh Ghazwat al-Arab* (n. 8 above) 30–179; Reinaud, *Invasions des sarrasins* (n. 15

Between 752 and 798, there was a relative decline in Muslim naval activity in the western Mediterranean, although a new form of raiding began to develop. This involved small-scale, unorganized, and unofficial raiding parties setting out from the eastern Iberian coast and attacking Frankish and Italian shipping.<sup>58</sup> Barely five years after the devastating Viking sack of the monastery of Lindisfarne in Northumbria in 793, Andalusī flotillas in the western Mediterranean began their protracted raids against the Balearic Islands, Corsica, Sardinia, and the Italian and Frankish coasts.<sup>59</sup> These raids were ultimately unsuccessful, due primarily to the efforts of Charlemagne, who reorganized the coastal defenses of the Carolingian realm from Narbonne to Rome.<sup>60</sup> The incorporation of the Balearic Islands into the Carolingian Empire was central to Charlemagne's defensive strategy.<sup>61</sup> This annexation secured an immeasurable strategic advantage for the Franks over the Andalusīs, and drastically reduced their operational capabilities in the western Mediterranean by keeping them largely confined to the coasts of Valencia, Tortosa, and Pechina-Almeria.<sup>62</sup> During these ventures during the early ninth century, there is little evidence indicative of any significant ideological motivation for the raids that would correspond to a religio-military doctrine of *jihād*. Rather, such expeditions seem to have served as a means for acquiring wealth, in addition to providing an outlet for restive Arab and Berber elements within the Iberian peninsula to direct their energies against external, mainly Christian, adversaries.

After 815, Andalusī maritime attacks against the Balearics and Frankish interests in the Mediterranean waned drastically. In fact, there

above) 7–153. A detailed summary of Andalusian-Carolingian relations in the 8th and 9th c. is given in Philippe Sénac, *Les Carolingiens et Al-Andalus, huitième-neuvième siècles* (Paris 2002).

<sup>58</sup> Delgado, *El Poder Naval* (n. 49 above) 94; Pierre Guichard, “Los inicios de la piratería Andalusí en el Mediterráneo Occidental (793–813),” in idem, *Estudio sobre historia medieval* (Valencia 1987) 84–86.

<sup>59</sup> “Royal Frankish Annals: s.a. 798,” *Carolingian Chronicles*, trans. Bernhard Walter Scholz (Ann Arbor 1970) 77; Picard, *La mer et les musulmans* (n. 48 above) 10; Lewis, *Naval Power and Trade* (n. 48 above) 103; Delgado, *El Poder Naval* (n. 48 above) 95; Haywood, *Dark Age Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 113.

<sup>60</sup> “Royal Frankish Annals: s.a. 807,” *Carolingian Chronicles* (n. 59 above) 86–87; Lewis, *Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 103–104; Haywood, *Dark Age Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 113–115; Arslan, *Tarikh Ghazwat al-Arab* (n. 8 above) 182–185; Guichard, “Los inicios de la piratería” (n. 58 above) 86–89.

<sup>61</sup> “Royal Frankish Annals: s.a. 813,” *Carolingian Chronicles* (n. 59 above) 95–97; Lewis, *Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 104; Haywood, *Dark Age Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 114; Picard, *La mer et les musulmans* (n. 48 above) 10.

<sup>62</sup> Haywood, *Dark Age Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 113.

was a general lull in Muslim corsair activities in the western Mediterranean between 815 and 838.<sup>63</sup> The reason for this respite not only was the effectiveness of Carolingian naval defenses, but also has much to do with the political situation within al-Andalus. In 818, in the southern Cordovan suburb of *Arrabal del Sur* (Ar. *al-Rabaḍ*), a rebellion broke out against the rule of the Umayyad *amīr* of al-Andalus, al-Ḥakam I (r. 796–822). Largely instigated by Hispano-Roman and Visigothic Muslim converts who had allied themselves with Andalusī Arab *fuqahā'* (jurists), this uprising threatened to engulf the Umayyad realm in civil strife.<sup>64</sup> In response, al-Ḥakam suppressed all opposition, crucifying three hundred jurists from *Arrabal del Sur*, which was burnt to the ground, and exiling twenty thousand of its inhabitants.<sup>65</sup> Half of these exiles, including many artisans, were welcomed by the neighboring Idrissid dynasty and settled in Fez.<sup>66</sup> The other ten thousand, including many warriors, sailors, and jurists, headed for the eastern port city of Alexandria, where they placed themselves under the client-ship of a local Bedouin Arab tribe.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Delgado, *El Poder Naval* (n. 48 above) 97.

<sup>64</sup> S. M. Imamuddin, "Cordovan Muslim Rule in Iqritish (Crete)," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Association* 8 (1960) 297; Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London 1956) 512. For more on the role of jurists in al-Andalus, see Hussain Mones, "The Role of Men of Religion in the History of Muslim Spain up to the End of the Caliphate," *The Formation of al-Andalus*, pt. 2, ed. Maribel Fierro, Julio Samsó (Ashgate 1998) 51–84; Khalil Athamina, "The 'Ulamā' in the Opposition: The Stick and Carrot Policy in Early Islam," *Islamic Quarterly* 36 (1992) 153–178; Dominique Urvoy, "The 'Ulamā' of al-Andalus," *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden 1992) 849–877. An insight into the ethnic and theological tensions in al-Andalus is given in Goran Larsson, *Ibn Garcia's Shu'ubiyya Letter: Ethnic and Theological Tensions in Medieval Al-Andalus* (Leiden 2003); Thomas Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton 1979) 165–190. For a discussion of conversion to Islam in Iberia, see Anwar G. Chejne, "Arabization and Islamization in al-Andalus: A General View," *Islam and Cultural Change in the Middle Ages*, ed. Speros Vryonis Jr. (Wiesbaden 1975) 59–86; Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Harvard 1979) 114–138; Richard Fletcher, *Moorish Spain* (London 1992) 35–50.

<sup>65</sup> Ibn Idhārī al-Marrākushī, *Al-Bayān al-Mughreb fī Akhbār al-Andalus wāl Maghreb* (Beirut 1983) 2.75–77; Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (n. 64 above) 513; Imamuddin, "Cordovan Muslim Rule" (n. 61 above) 298–299; Ahmad Abbadi and Abdul-Aziz Salem, *Tarikh al-Bahriyya al-Islamiyya fī Hawd al-Bahr al-Abyad al-Mutawassit: Al-Bahriyya al-Islamiyya fī al-Maghreb wa al-Andalus* (Alexandria 1981) 67–74.

<sup>66</sup> Imamuddin, "Cordovan Muslim Rule" (n. 61 above) 299; Xavier de Planhol, *L'Islam et La Mer: La Mosquee et le Matelot* (Paris 2000) 64.

<sup>67</sup> Ibn al-Abbār, *Kitāb al-Ḥullāh al-siyarā'* (Cairo 1985) 1/45; Arslan, *Tarikh Ghazwat al-Arab* (n. 8 above) 185–187.

The mass exodus from al-Andalus greatly weakened the economic vitality of the Umayyad *emirate*, but simultaneously led to an increased centralization of power in Cordova. This centralization impacted the corsairs, who had previously operated in the western Mediterranean from Valencia, Tortosa, and other cities on the eastern Iberian coast, by threatening their autonomy.<sup>68</sup> Rather than face the repression of al-Ḥakam, the sailors undertook a general migration eastwards. Many joined their brethren in Alexandria, while thousands of others journeyed to Tunisia to aid the Aghlabids in preparing for their *jihād* (holy war) against Sicily.<sup>69</sup> This exodus helps explain why there was a relative lull in Andalusī raids in the western Mediterranean between 818 and 838. Al-Ḥakam's consolidation of power and its impact on eastern Iberia also highlights the important connection between autonomous raiding ventures initiated by *ghāzī* warriors and centralized Islamic authority.

While Muslim maritime activity declined in the western Mediterranean during the second quarter of the ninth century, it experienced a surge in the eastern and central Mediterranean after 827. A few years after landing in Alexandria, the Iberian exiles placed themselves under the leadership of fellow Andalusī Abu Ḥafs al-Ballūṭi, rebelled against their Arab *walīs* (guardians), and ruled the city for several years.<sup>70</sup> In 825, the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad sent an army against Alexandria, effectively ending Andalusī control of the city, and forcing them to seek refuge elsewhere.<sup>71</sup> The island of Crete was the ideal destination for the refugees, since they had heard about its riches, known of its vital strategic location, and already raided it on several occasions.<sup>72</sup> Thus, in 826/827 the Andalusīs landed on the island, conquered it with little

<sup>68</sup> Picard, *La mer et les musulmans* (n. 48 above) 17.

<sup>69</sup> Guichard, "Los inicios de la piratería" (n. 58 above) 90–91; Talbi, *L'Emirat Aghlabide* (n. 54 above) 391–393; Lewis, *Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 133; Abbady and Salem, *Tarikh al-Bahriyya al-Islamiyya* (n. 65 above) 111–114.

<sup>70</sup> Ibn al-Abbār, *Kitāb al-Ḥullah* (n. 67 above) 1/45; Amin Taybi, "Amara Andalusīyya 'Arabīyya fī Jazīrat Iqrītish," *Majallat al-Mu'arrikh al-Arabi* 28 (1986) 47; Ali Fahmy, *Muslim Sea-Power in the Eastern Mediterranean* (London 1950) 129–131; Abbady and Salem, *Tarikh al-Bahriyya* (n. 65 above) 75–80.

<sup>71</sup> John Bagnell Bury, *History of the Eastern Roman Empire from the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I* (London 1912) 288; Taybi, "Amara Andalusīyya 'Arabīyya" (n. 67 above) 46; Abbady and Salem, *Tarikh al-Bahriyya* (n. 62 above) 80–82.

<sup>72</sup> Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire* (n. 71 above) 288; Fahmy, *Muslim Sea-Power* (n. 70 above) 130; Taybi, "Amara Andalusīyya Arabīyya" (n. 70 above) 46; Dimitris Tsougarakis, *Byzantine Crete: From the Fifth Century to the Venetian Conquest* (Athens 1988) 36–37.

difficulty, and established their capital at Chandax/*al-Khandaq* in the north, which looked towards the isles of the Aegean Sea.<sup>73</sup> From their base at Chandax, the Andalusis raided the Aegean Sea, devastating a large number of islands.<sup>74</sup> Their victory over a Byzantine fleet in 829 allowed them to continue their activities in the Aegean unchecked.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the Andalusis of Crete managed to establish bases in southern Italy, namely at Brindisium and Tarentum, from where they harassed Byzantine shipping in the Adriatic Sea, and even managed to besiege Ragusa/Dubrovnik on the Dalmatian coast in 868 and sack Venice in 875.<sup>76</sup> It was not until Crete was conquered by the Byzantines in 961 that the raids ended.<sup>77</sup>

With regard to the political status of Crete, Abū Ḥafṣ and his successors were virtually independent monarchs, but may have found it expedient to acknowledge the authority of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn, who was engaged in a war with Byzantium and recognized the strategic value of the island.<sup>78</sup> The Andalusis left the local religious infrastructure of Crete intact, allowing the native population to practice their faith, but implemented Islamic patterns of taxation, urbanization, and administration.<sup>79</sup> *Jizya* (Islamic poll tax) was imposed on the con-

<sup>73</sup> Genesisios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis (Canberra 1998) 39–40; Tsougarakis, *Byzantine Crete* (n. 72 above) 40; Taybi, “Amara Andalusiyya Arabiyya” (n. 70 above) 46–48; Alexander Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison 1961) 278.

<sup>74</sup> For a discussion of the problematic nature of the sources for the chronology of the raids of the Cretans in the Aegean, see E. W. Brooks, “The Arab Occupation of Crete,” *English Historical Review* 28 (1913) 431–443. For a detailed look at the raids of the Cretans in the Aegean Sea, see Taybi, “Amara Arabiyya Andalusiyya” (n. 67 above) 49–50; Vassilios Christides, “The Raids of the Muslims of Crete in the Aegean Sea: Piracy and Conquest,” *Byzantion* 51 (1981) 76–111; Vassilios Christides, *The Conquest of Crete by the Arabs* (Athens 1984) 157–165.

<sup>75</sup> Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire* (n. 71 above) 289; Fahmy, *Muslim Sea-Power* (n. 70 above) 133–134; Abbadly and Salem, *Tarikh al-Bahriyya* (n. 65 above) 82–85.

<sup>76</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus De Administrando Imperio*, trans. Romilly Jenkins (Dumbarton Oaks 1967) 127–129; Lewis, *Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 137–138.

<sup>77</sup> Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire* (n. 71 above) 292; Speros Vryonis Jr., *Byzantium and Europe* (London 1967) 86–87. The raids of the Cretans in the Aegean are fully described in Kenneth Setton, “On the Raids of the Moslems in the Aegean in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries and Their Alleged Occupation of Athens,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 58 (1954) 311–319.

<sup>78</sup> Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire* (n. 71 above) 292; Taybi, “Amara Andalusiyya Arabiyya” (n. 70 above) 47; Abbadly and Salem, *Tarikh al-Bahriyya* (n. 65 above) 83; Tsougarakis, *Byzantine Crete* (n. 72 above) 75.

<sup>79</sup> Delgado, *El Poder Naval* (n. 48 above) 225; Christides, “The Raids of the Muslims” (n. 74 above) 98; Christides, *The Conquest of Crete* (n. 74 above) 104–117.

quered non-Muslim populations (known as *ahl al-dhimma* or “protected people”) of Crete and the Aegean islands, and the Cretans secured active support from the Ṭulūnids of Egypt (868–905), demonstrating a certain level of administration and political aptitude.<sup>80</sup> The economic vitality and political autonomy of Andalusī Crete is also evident from the fact that the Cretans minted their own coinage, and traded with al-Andalus, Egypt, and the Vikings in such commodities as honey, olive oil, timber, and weaponry.<sup>81</sup>

The occupation of Crete and the raids in the Aegean were happening simultaneously with the Aghlabid conquest of Sicily. The Aghlabid conquest of Sicily was initiated in 827 by the North African admiral Asad ibn al-Furāt, who, at the behest of the Aghlabid *amīr* Ziyādāt Al-lāh, launched an assault on the island with ten thousand heavy Arab cavalymen and thousands of infantry units.<sup>82</sup> The conquest of Crete by Andalusī Muslims was a major blow to Byzantine naval power in the Mediterranean and gave the Andalusis control of the major sailing route from the eastern Mediterranean to the West.<sup>83</sup> The Byzantine ability to relieve Sicily of the massive Aghlabid onslaught was greatly impeded by the Cretans; the imperial navy did not have the means to assist the island due to the Andalusī raids in the Aegean and Ionian seas, which limited both the resources and manpower of Byzantium.<sup>84</sup> In contrast to the sea-borne raids carried out by Andalusis in the western Mediterranean, the Aegean Sea, and the Italian peninsula, however, the Aghlabid conquest of Sicily was an organized and officially sanctioned expedition carried out by a professional army.

<sup>80</sup> Christides, “The Raids of the Muslims of Crete” (n. 74 above) 98. On the religio-political outlook of the Arabs, the treatment of non-Muslims in Islamic society, and the idea of *dhimmi*, see R. Steven Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Enquiry* (Princeton 1991) 255–283; John Tolan, “Islamic Dominion and the Religious Other,” *Saracens* (n. 47 above) 21–39.

<sup>81</sup> Christides, *Conquest of Crete* (n. 74 above) 114; Delgado, *El Poder Naval* (n. 48 above) 227–228. On the coinage of Andalusī Crete, see George C. Miles, *The Coinage of the Arab Emirs of Crete* (New York 1970).

<sup>82</sup> Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire* (n. 71 above) 298; Muhammad Abdullah Enan, *Decisive Moments in the History of Islam* (London 1940) 79; Enno Franzius, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (New York 1967) 163.

<sup>83</sup> Lewis, *Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 132; Richard Unger, *The Ship in the Medieval Economy, 600–1600* (London 1980) 96; Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik* (n. 48 above) 65–66; Pryor, *Geography, Technology and War* (n. 48 above) 106.

<sup>84</sup> Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire* (n. 71 above) 301; Unger, *The Ship* (n. 83 above) 96. For the logistics and financing of the Byzantine army in the Aegean and Ionian seas, and for a discussion of the impact that the Andalusian conquest of Crete had on its military capabilities, see Warren Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army* (Stanford 1995) 189 and 210.

The particular episode of Andalusī Crete, whereby autonomous *ghāzīs* succeeded in establishing their authority over a specific territory, developed a self-sustaining military settlement for an extended period of time, and were granted legitimacy from the established centralized Islamic authorities, has immense value in illuminating the case of Fraxinetum. Although Andalusī Crete was primarily an Islamic frontier state or *ribāṭ*, its capital, *al-Khandaq*, prospered economically and gradually developed into an administrative and scholarly center, attracting jurists and encouraging settlement from across the Islamic world.<sup>85</sup> Like Crete, Fraxinetum appears to have been an Islamic frontier state, which was the focal center for *ghāzi* warriors committed to waging *jihād* against the Franks, but which also had an economic basis, through the development of agriculture and exploitation of timber resources, allowing it to become a self-sustaining military settlement. As in the case of Crete, Fraxinetum gradually acquired legitimacy as an Islamic frontier state and granted a certain degree of endorsement by the Umayyads of al-Andalus, who admittedly may have been more interested in Fraxinetum's economic importance than its success against the Franks.

When contrasted with the more "official" campaigns such as the conquest of Sicily, the dichotomy between centrally-organized campaigns and the autonomous expeditions launched by *ghāzī* warriors becomes especially clear. In addition to Crete, parts of Sicily, the Aegean Sea, and the Italian peninsula also became subject to raids by Andalusī Muslim *ghāzīs*. During the civil wars that ravaged the Italian peninsula in the mid-ninth century, various Italian cities hired Arab and Berber mercenaries from North Africa, Crete, and Iberia.<sup>86</sup> In the chaos that

<sup>85</sup> Ibn Hawqal, *Sūrat al-Ard* (n. 5 above)184; "Abu Hafṣ 'Umar al-Ballūṭī," *The Encyclopedia of Islam* 121; Taybi, "Amara 'Arabīyya Andalusīyya" (n. 70 above) 47–48; Christides, *Conquest of Crete* (n. 74 above)133–136; Ibn al-Abbar, *Kitāb al-Hullah* (n. 67 above) 1/45; Arslan, *Tārīkh Ghazwāt al-'Arab* (n. 8 above)189; Brooks, "The Arab Occupation of Crete" (n. 74 above) 442; Ibn al-Farādī, *Tārīkh al-'ulamā' wa-al-ruwāh lil-'ilm bi-al-Andalus* (Cairo 1988) 2/123, 2/187; Delgado, *El Poder Naval* (n. 48 above) 226–227.

<sup>86</sup> Nithard, *Histories*, 3.6, *Carolingian Chronicles* (n. 59 above) 173; Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire* (n. 71 above) 312; C. R. L. Fletcher, *Making of Western Europe* (London 1912) 289; Franzius, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (n. 82 above) 193–195; Barbara Kreutz, *Before the Normans: Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Philadelphia 1992) 19–27. Several Italian city-states, notably Amalfi, allied with the Arabs for purely economic reasons; see Armand O. Citarella, "The Relations of Amalfi with the Arab World before the Crusades," *Speculum* 42 (1967) 299–312; idem, "Patterns in Medieval Trade: The Commerce of Amalfi before the Crusades," *Journal of Economic History* 28 (1968) 531–555.

followed this practice, the Muslims were able to establish themselves at Monte Garigliano north of Gaeta, at Bari on the coast of Apulia, and at Tarentum.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the Arabs in southern Italy were even able to raid Rome on three separate occasions, sacking the city in 846, attacking its outskirts in 849, and plundering it again in 876.<sup>88</sup> It does not appear that the raids of the Muslims in Italy were regulated or sponsored by any centralized Muslim authority, but, rather, seem demonstrative of the trend of autonomous *ghāzī* warfare in the ninth and tenth centuries. The relative lull that had existed in the western Mediterranean since 818 ended with increasing raids in the eastern and central Mediterranean areas and on the Provençal coast over the course of the ninth century. These forays culminated in the establishment of the Andalusī base at Fraxinetum.<sup>89</sup>

The independent naval expeditions of the Andalusī Muslims in the western Mediterranean intensified during the mid-ninth century. The re-appearance of Andalusī corsairs in 838 off the coast of Provence when they sacked Marseilles marks the beginning of a new phase of Muslim sea-raids against southern Francia.<sup>90</sup> The *Annals of St. Bertin* provide the clearest indication that Muslim raids against the Frankish coast increased from the mid-ninth century onwards, for they list the Andalusī raids on Marseille in 838 and 846, Arles in 842 and 850, and Italy in 849.<sup>91</sup> The Muslims were even able to establish a semi-permanent base at the mouth of the Rhone River on the island of Camargue, which they

<sup>87</sup> On the political situation in southern Italy during the 9th and 10th c., see Chris Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society, 400–1000* (London 1981) 47–92 and 146–170.

<sup>88</sup> Enan, *Decisive Moments* (n. 82 above) 90–95; Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik* (n. 48 above) 182–183; Kreutz, *Before the Normans* (n. 86 above) 26–27. Around 880, Pope John VIII was forced to pay a tribute (*jizya*) of 25,000 silver coins annually to the Muslims of Monte Garigliano for a period of three years. See Fred Engreen, “Pope John the Eighth and the Arabs,” *Speculum* 20 (1945) 328; Kreutz, *Before the Normans* [n.86 above] 58). This is reflective of the fact that the Muslims in southern Italy were not mere pirates but *ghazi* warriors who intended to subjugate gradually but surely parts of Italy to Islamic authority.

<sup>89</sup> Bloch, *Feudal Society* (n. 6 above) 5. The *Annals of St. Bertin*, s.a. 891, narrates how the Muslims occupied the fort at Fraxinetum and used it to raid Italy: “In Italia Saraceni castrum quoddam Fraxinetum occupantes, magno exitio Italiae esse coeperunt.”

<sup>90</sup> *Annals of St. Bertin*, s.a. 838, *Les invasions* (n. 14 above) 82; Lewis, *Naval Power and Trade* (n. 44 above) 146; Fevrier, *La Provence* (n. 7 above) 488; Sénac, *Musulmans et sarrasins* (n. 28 above) 38.

<sup>91</sup> *Annals of St. Bertin*, s.a. 838, 842, 846, 849, and 850, *Les invasions* (n. 14 above) 222–223. The *Annals of St. Bertin* describe the Muslim raiders variously as “saracenorūm piraticoe,” “maurorūm piratae,” “mauri,” and “saraceni.”

used as an outpost (described as a *portum* by the *Annals of St. Bertin*) for raiding the Rhone valley.<sup>92</sup> For reasons that remain unclear (but possibly due to their being harassed by Viking raiders in 860), the Muslims abandoned their base at Camargue at the end of the ninth century and shifted their attention towards the eastern Frankish coast and Provence.<sup>93</sup>

There were two main factors which enabled the Andalusīs to become more active in the western Mediterranean from the mid-ninth century to approximately the mid-tenth century. The decline of Carolingian naval defenses following the fragmentation and decentralization of the Carolingian Empire amid the civil strife of the ninth century was a major reason why the Andalusīs were able to establish themselves at Fraxinetum.<sup>94</sup> Muslim sea-raids in 838, 842, 846, 850, and 869 against the Provençal cities of Arles, Marseilles, and Fréjus testify to the relative weakness of Carolingian naval defenses compared with their capabilities in the early ninth century, at which time they were able to hold the corsairs at bay.<sup>95</sup> The consolidation of Muslim rule over the Balearics in 902 and the establishment of the Andalusīs at Fraxinetum signaled the effective decline of Frankish naval power in the western Mediterranean.<sup>96</sup> Hence, the arrival of the Andalusīs in Provence is best understood as the product of a natural outgrowth in raiding activities, which were facilitated by the weakness of the Carolingian Empire's defenses in the late ninth century, rather than as a comprehensive policy to conquer and colonize non-Muslim territory. Presented with the opportunity, it appears that a specific group of Andalusī Muslim *ghāzīs* took the initiative to secure a strategic outpost in southern Provence and establish themselves at Fraxinetum.

The intensification of the activities of Muslim raiders in the western Mediterranean should also be understood within the context of the

<sup>92</sup> *Annals of St. Bertin*, s.a. 859, *Les invasions* (n. 14 above) 224; Lewis, *Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 146. There is also evidence that the Muslims established another semi-permanent base, further upstream, at Maguelone.

<sup>93</sup> *Annals of St. Bertin*, s.a. 859, *Les invasions* (n. 14 above) 224, explain in detail the arrival and subsequent establishment of "piratae Danorum" on the island of Camargue; Lewis, *The Development* (n. 31 above) 102.

<sup>94</sup> For a discussion of the decline of the Carolingian Empire and its conceptualization, see Paul Edward Dutton, "Awareness of Historical Decline in the Carolingian Empire, 880–887" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto 1981).

<sup>95</sup> Picard, *La mer et les musulmans* (n. 48 above) 11; Haywood, *Dark Age Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 116.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* 116; Lewis, *Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 146–147.

socio-political situation in Iberia during the ninth century. Continuing the centralizing policies of al-Hakam, the *amīr* Abdurrahman II took measures to consolidate Umayyad authority on the eastern Iberian coast; this led to an exodus of sailors from Hispania to southern Francia, which partly explains why there is evidence of Muslim bases there as early as 850.<sup>97</sup> However, following the death of Abdurrahman II in the mid-ninth century tensions in al-Andalus were reignited, as the Iberian Peninsula experienced another period of *fitna* (civil strife), prompted mainly by growing dissatisfaction with Umayyad Arab rule and the decreasing competence of the *amīrs* of al-Andalus.<sup>98</sup>

This chaotic situation contributed to a general state of lawlessness in al-Andalus and was especially beneficial to the maritime communities on the eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula, in Valencia, Pechina, and Tortosa, allowing them to (re)assert their autonomy.<sup>99</sup> Most of the inhabitants of these cities were *muwalladūn* (offspring of mixed marriages between Iberians and Arab settlers) as well as indigenous Hispano-Roman/Visigothic converts to Islam. During the reign of the Umayyad emirs Muhammad I (d. 886) and Abdullah I (d. 912) they succeeded in creating virtually autonomous entities that were independent of Cordova's authority.<sup>100</sup> It is probable that the Andalusī sailors who established themselves at Fraxinetum originated from the maritime communities of these autonomous cities, and therefore acted independently of Umayyad control.<sup>101</sup> In light of these facts, it can be said that an important element in the resurgence of Muslim sea-raiding in the western Mediterranean was the *fitna* in al-Andalus during the mid to late ninth century, which allowed *muwalladūn* and Hispano-Roman Muslims to establish their autonomy throughout the eastern Iberian coast, and permitted the Andalusī corsairs to operate freely.<sup>102</sup> It was not until the late tenth century, during the reign of Abdurrahman III

<sup>97</sup> Picard, *La mer et les musulmans* (n. 48 above) 17.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* 12–14.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* 13; Muhammad al-Himyari, *Kitab al-Rawd al-Mi'ar fi Khabar al-Aqtar* (Cairo 1937) 38.

<sup>100</sup> Picard, *La mer et les musulmans* (n. 48 above) 17.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>102</sup> Pechina-Almeria was especially important in this regard, as it was the central port of al-Andalus, and many of the Andalusī sailors in Fraxinetum and the rest of the Mediterranean likely originated/set-out from there. For a detailed study of the relationship between Almeria and the Andalusī maritime enterprise in the Mediterranean during the 9th and 10th c., see Jose Angel Tapia Garrido, *Almeria Musulmana: I* (Almeria 1986) 91–153.

(r. 912–961), that the Umayyads brought eastern Iberia under their control and gradually incorporated these semi-autonomous maritime communities into the framework of the centralized authority of al-Andalus and its growing military/naval infrastructure.<sup>103</sup>

The resurgence of maritime raids in the western Mediterranean occurred simultaneously with the establishment of key Muslim strongholds in the Italian peninsula, namely Bari (847–871) and Monte Garigliano (882–915), and the consolidation of Cretan Muslim rule in the Aegean, which manifested itself in the occupation of several important Aegean islands. Like Crete, Fraxinetum was both a strategic outpost for the procurement of timber and a valuable naval base for Muslims in the Mediterranean. Thus, the establishment of Fraxinetum should be understood as a manifestation of the ninth- and tenth-century trend of Muslim maritime expansion in the Mediterranean, of which Crete, Bari, Monte Garigliano, Tarentum, and Brindisium were all a part. Although this expansion was motivated and facilitated by several factors, including opportunism and the desire for wealth, the decline in centralized authority in the Islamic world and the dissemination of *jihād* jurisprudence throughout the Islamic world were perhaps the most crucial developments which gave rise to this phenomenon of *ghāzī* warfare and facilitated the creation of frontier states.

AN ISLAMIC FRONTIER STATE IN PROVENCE: A NEW PERSPECTIVE  
ON FRAXINETUM

Traditionally, the establishment of both *al-Khandaq* in Crete and *Jabal al-Qilāl* in Provence by Andalusī Muslims has been interpreted as a manifestation of the phenomenon many scholars have termed “Saracen piracy.” Although modern scholars still occasionally apply this definition, historians of both Fraxinetum and Crete have tended to be more cautious about how they label the movement that facilitated the arrival of the Muslims in the Aegean and Provence. Consequently, the

<sup>103</sup> Picard, *La mer et les musulmans* (n. 48 above) 19. See also Eduardo Manzano Moreno, “El asentamiento y la organizacion de la junds Sirios en al-Andalus,” *Al-Qantara* 14 (1993) 327–359; Mohamed Meouak, “Hierarchie des fonctions militaires et corps d’armee en al-Andalus Umayyade,” *Al Qantara* 14(1993) 361–392; Hassan Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law: An Introduction* (Leiden 1998) 9. On the restoration of centralized authority in al-Andalus, see Pierre Guichard, *La España musulmana: Al-Andalus Omeya* (Madrid 1995) 64–93; E. Levi-Provencal, *L’Espagne musulmane au dixieme siècle* (Paris 1932). A discussion of Spain under the rule of Abdurrahman III is given in Joaquin Vallve, *Abderraman III: Califá de España y Occidente* (Barcelona 2003).

historiography of the Muslim Mediterranean in the early Middle Ages has branched into two lines of argumentation, with more recent scholarship challenging the traditional categorization of Muslim bases in the Mediterranean as “pirate nests.” The debate has focused on defining the exact nature of Muslim maritime expansion, and has been split on characterizing this phenomenon either as part of the trend of “piracy” or as part of the larger, more complex context of *jihād* (holy war). In the case of Crete, historians have reached the uneasy consensus that it was indeed a Muslim frontier region established by the Andalusī and, consequently, they emphasize that the activities of the Muslims there constituted *jihād* (several scholars, however, still characterize their activities as “piracy”). Conversely, in the case of Fraxinetum, many historians have persisted in classifying the Andalusī settlement as a “pirate base,” and interpret the activities of the Muslims there strictly within the context of Muslim “piracy.” The question of whether Fraxinetum was a “corsairs’ nest” or an Islamic frontier state largely centers on the interpretation of primary documents. This binary of piracy/*jihād* suggests a false dichotomy—that the Muslims of Fraxinetum were either hardened religious warriors or self-interested opportunists. Neither description adequately contextualizes the motives of the Muslims of Fraxinetum, who appear to have been motivated by a religious sense of mission, but may also have found it prudent to engage in commercial activities, including raiding and trading, which did not interfere with their devotion to *jihād*. The conceptualization of Fraxinetum as an Islamic frontier state in this article is not meant to reinforce the piracy/*jihād* binary, but rather seeks to integrate an understanding of the Muslim presence in Provence within the broader context of Islamic frontier states and *ghāzī* warfare in the tenth century.

Scholars of early medieval Muslim maritime expansion have distinguished between organized, centrally-planned campaigns, such as the conquest of Sicily by the Aghlabids, and independent, unaffiliated ventures, such as the establishment of the Andalusī in Crete. This distinction has formed the grounds for the debate about whether the actions of autonomous Muslim sailors in the Mediterranean constituted piracy or corresponded to *jihād*. While the “official” nature of the conquest of Sicily by the Aghlabids contrasts sharply with the seemingly unorganized and spontaneous seizure of Crete, it is less evident that the general motivating factor behind both expeditions was entirely different. The

use of the word “official” in this context is potentially problematic and needs to be clarified.

“Official” is meant to denote the endorsement, participation, legitimacy, and aid granted by the dominant Muslim dynasties (the Aghlabids, the Abbasids, the Umayyads, the Tulunids, and the Fatimids) to the independent flotillas operating in the Mediterranean. Theologically, historically, and politically, the authority to declare *jihād* rested with the *amīr* or *khalīfa*, who sponsored and even participated in such expeditions, which were meant to the ruler’s Islamic legitimacy, given that *jihād* was viewed as an obligation.<sup>104</sup> Testifying to this correlation between *jihād* and centralized political authority is reign of the Abbasid caliph Harūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809), during which the former was employed in service of the latter.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, such “official” calls for *jihād* were launched from fortified coastal/frontier towns, known as *ribāts*, which were usually established, garrisoned, and supported by the troops of major Muslim dynasties. While several campaigns are known to have been officially sponsored and designated as “*jihād*” by an Islamic centralized authority, as was the case with the conquest of Sicily in 827 and the campaigns of the Abbasids against Byzantium in the early ninth century, it is highly ambiguous whether other expeditions, such as the invasion of Crete or the establishment of Fraxinetum, were considered as such, since they were not initiated by any major dynasty.

Nevertheless, because these campaigns/incursions were also carried out against non-Muslim territory, they can also be considered *jihād* according to tenth-century Islamic jurisprudence. In fact, during the period in question—the ninth and tenth centuries—Islamic jurists and scholars, especially those from the Mālikī and Ḥanafī schools of thought, had begun codifying what became known as the doctrine of *jihād*—both its land (*jihād al-bar*) and maritime (*jihād al-baḥr*) variants—legally and theologically defining for the first time a distinctively “Islamic” ideology of warfare based largely on the Qur’an and the *ḥadīth*.<sup>106</sup> This rise in *jihād* jurisprudence was closely tied with the

<sup>104</sup> Deborah Tor, “Privatized Jihād and Public Order in the Pre-Seljuq Period: The Role of the Mutatawwi’a,” *Iranian Studies* 38 (2005) 556.

<sup>105</sup> Michael Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier* (New Haven 1996) 101; Walter E. Kaegi, “Confronting Islam: Emperors versus Caliphs,” *Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge 2008) 390.

<sup>106</sup> ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-jihād* (Mecca, 1978); Mālik ibn Anas, *Al-*

decline in central authority, the rise of the *thughūr*, and the increasing necessity to legitimize frontier warfare, and to encourage and mobilize Muslims to participate in such activity. Nor was the rise of *jihād* and frontier warfare confined to any particular geographical location during this period, as it was a trend also characteristic of regions in the Islamic world as far apart as Khurasān, Turkeṣtān, and northern Iberia.

As Deborah Tor has demonstrated, beginning in the late eighth and early ninth century a new phenomenon began to take shape, namely that of “privatized *jihād*.”<sup>107</sup> This involved the transference of religious leadership of *jihād* from the caliph to the *mutaṭawwi‘a*, or *ghāzīs*, volunteer warriors for the faith, and hence the transformation of *jihād* from “centrally-directed state campaigns to independent, non-governmentally controlled smaller-scale raids.”<sup>108</sup> Although lacking any dynastic endorsement or legitimacy acquired directly from the caliph, these campaigns were viewed by their participants and other observers in the Islamic world as an exercise of the religious duty of *jihād*, considering that the objective was not merely to plunder or raid, but to extend Islamic rule into *dār al-ḥarb*, and to establish *ribāṭ* outposts garrisoned by *ghāzī* warriors for this ultimate purpose.<sup>109</sup> It is in this latter sense that the conquest of Crete by the Andalusīs and establishment of Fraxinetum differed from the more recognizable *jihād* launched by Muslim dynasties such as the Abbasids or the Aghlabids. Consequently, the base from which this *jihād* was organized and launched would be considered a *ribāṭ/thaghr* and an Islamic frontier state.<sup>110</sup>

*Muwaṭṭā‘*: *Kitāb al-jihād* (Dubai, 2003), 3:7–59; Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī, *Al-Ṭabarī’s Book of Jihād: A Translation from the Original Arabic* (Lewiston 2007) 59–377; Abū Bakr al-Sin‘ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf: Kitāb al-jihād* (Beirut 1970) 5.171–312; Muḥammad ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī, *Al-jihād ḥasba al-madhab al-Mālikī* (Stuttgart 1994); Aḥmad ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Kitāb al-Jihād* (Medina, 1989). See also Michael Bonner, “Some Observations Concerning the Early Development of Jihad on the Arab-Byzantine Frontier,” *Studia Islamica* 75 (1992) 5–31; Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice* (Princeton 2006); David B. Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley 2005) 5–48; Reuven Firestone, *Jihād: the Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York 1999); Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State: The Reign of Hisham ibn Abd-al Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads* (Albany 1994) 11–15; Richard Bonney, *Jihad: From the Qur’an to Bin Laden* (New York 2004) 21–90; Alfred Morabia, *Le Jihad dans l’Islam médiéval: Le “combat sacré” des origines au douzième siècle* (Paris 1993); Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (New Jersey 2005) 1–41.

<sup>107</sup> Tor, “Privatized Jihad” (n. 104 above) 558.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. 558.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. 556–572.

<sup>110</sup> Ralph W. Brauer, “Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography,”

Generally, scholars have associated unofficial (non-state sponsored) naval expeditions and conquests with “piracy.” However, this is an inadequate representation of a more complex trend, as it does not take into account the idea of *jihād* described above, or the historical role of the *ghāzī* in Islamic military history; this view also overlooks the decisions made by certain Muslim dynasties to actively or passively endorse such expeditions. More recently, scholars have tended to describe the Muslim sea-raiders in the Mediterranean as *ghāzīs*, thus equating offensive sea-raiding with a form of maritime *jihād*.<sup>111</sup> As stated earlier, the creation of the Spanish March in 795 greatly reduced the prospects of the Muslims extending their conquests beyond the Pyrenees and induced them to turn to maritime activity. Although there is evidence of land incursions into Aquitaine and Septimania as late as 931, when an Umayyad Andalusī army sacked Toulouse, land-based campaigns against Francia launched from al-Andalus were very rare. The Muslim base at Fraxinetum, therefore, provided an outpost to the Andalusīs from which they could continue their *jihād* against the Franks. Indeed, the fact that the raids of the Muslims of Fraxinetum were aimed largely (if not solely) against non-Muslim shipping in the western Mediterranean and non-Muslim targets in Provence and Piedmont (monasteries, villages, etc.) suggests that it is more appropriate to speak of their activities/raids as *jihād* as opposed to brigandage.<sup>112</sup> This argument in favor of viewing the Muslims of Fraxinetum as *ghāzīs* is supported by Ibn Hawqal’s characterization of them as “*mujāhidīn*,” and by al-Istakhri’s emphasis on their struggle with the Franks, alluding to their engagement in holy war, although admittedly this may be a later projection of an eastern Islamic perspective onto Fraxinetum.<sup>113</sup> The tendency of sev-

*Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* n. s. 85 (1995) 14.

<sup>111</sup> See Archibald Lewis, Timothy Runyan, *European Naval and Maritime History, 300–1500* (Bloomington 1985), where the *ghazi* raiding fleets of Fraxinetum, Crete, and Bari are not only contrasted with the more official Islamic armies and navies, but also compared to the more familiar land-based *ghazis* in Anatolia and Iberia, who engaged in raiding frontier territory.

<sup>112</sup> Monasteries were also attacked for the wealth they contained, suggesting a mixed motivation for raids, rather than solely a *jihādī* disdain for Christianity. The raiding of monasteries was not a new practice, and was carried out by the Magyars, the Vikings, and even by some Frankish lords. There are indications that the Carolingians Lothar I and Charles the Bald indulged in this practice; Simon Coupland, “The Rod of God’s Wrath or the People of God’s Wrath? The Carolingian Theology of the Viking Invasions,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 42 (1991) 543.

<sup>113</sup> Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-Ard* (n. 5 above) 185; Al-Istakhri, *Al-masālik wa al-mamālik* (n. 8 above) 51.

eral historians to describe the activities of the Muslims of Fraxinetum as piracy or banditry is largely a product of their uncritical reading of the primary sources, which has led to the replication of many of the arguments of the medieval Latin authors within modern scholarship.

The image presented by Latin chroniclers is essentially that of Muslim raiders pillaging the Provençal landscape. The Latin chroniclers tended to portray the Muslims negatively due to the devastation that accompanied their raids and their opposition to the Andalusī on theological-political grounds. It is evident that, apart from experiencing the raids first hand, the ecclesiastical chroniclers, from whom most information regarding Fraxinetum has reached modern historians, had little or no direct contact with the Muslims in their own environment, and had only a vague idea of their other activities. Consequently, the natural outcome of scholars giving more weight to the Latin sources, which are more plentiful and presently far more accessible, is that the representation of the Muslims of Provence by the Frankish chroniclers becomes more influential and gradually more acceptable in scholarly discourse about Fraxinetum. In other words, the image represented by Ekkehard of St. Gall, Liutprand of Cremona, and the Chronicle of Novalesa—that of Andalusī raiders pillaging Provence, Piedmont, and the Alps and aimlessly sacking monasteries—has become the dominant depiction of the Muslims of Fraxinetum. As a result of the frequency of such accounts, many historians discuss Fraxinetum solely in terms of piracy and destructive raids, rather than questioning the veracity of the accounts or conceptualizing Fraxinetum in ways other than as a pirate base. Some scholars have even referred to the tenacious persistence of this image as the “black legend” (*legende noire*).<sup>114</sup>

The earliest Latin references to independent Muslim sea-raiders from Iberia appear in the *Royal Frankish Annals*, the *Annals of Fulda*, and Einhard’s *Vita Karoli Magni*, which discuss the activities of the Andalusī against the Frankish and Italian coasts during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. For the years 798 and 799, the *Royal Frankish Annals* describe how the “Mauri et Sarraceni” plundered the Bale-

<sup>114</sup> Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 51. Sénac also argues that this “black legend,” which depicts Arabs/Muslims as barbarians incapable of civilized ways, was perpetuated by Orientalist authors throughout the 19th c. in order to justify the colonial occupation of Algeria by France, and continues to pervade modern scholarship on Fraxinetum. See Philippe Sénac, “Les musulmans dans le sud de la France, un enjeu de mémoire,” *Histoire de l’islam* (n. 33 above) 42–43; Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 70.

aric Islands in what the *Annals* describe as “praedonum incursione,” which can be translated as “piracy,” while the *Annals of Fulda* refer to “mauri piratae” and “Mauris praedatum” in the years 798 and 808 respectively.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, Einhard, in his *Vita Karoli Magni*, explains how the Frankish and Italian coast, from Narbonne to Rome, was fortified by Charlemagne due to the fact that it was constantly ravaged by “Mauros piraticam.”<sup>116</sup> These references clearly show that the actions of the Muslim sea-raiders in the early part of the ninth century were characterized as piracy by the Latin chroniclers.

Contemporary Latin chroniclers cited the resurgence in Muslim sea-raids against the Frankish coast in the mid-ninth century as a continuation of this earlier period of “piracy.” The *Annals of St. Bertin*, for example, narrate the sack of Marseille in 838 by “saracenorum piratae,” and describe the Arab raid on Arles in 842 by “maurorum piratae.”<sup>117</sup> When discussing the Andalusí Muslim attacks on the Provençal coast, the author of the *Life of Beuve of Noyers* refers to “paganorum piratarum,” and decries how “the Iberians laid waste to Provence” (*Hispanicolae devastant Provinciam*).<sup>118</sup> In the descriptions of the activities of the Muslims by the Latin chroniclers, a heavy emphasis is placed on the devastative (*maurorum devastant, mauri irruenes*), the destructive (*destruendos saracenos, paganorum destructum, depopulantes terram*), and the deadly (*paganorum adnihilatam, saraceni trucidatur, callidus exactor*) aspects of their incursions.<sup>119</sup> The way in which the Muslims and their raids were described by Frankish chroniclers from the mid-ninth century onwards is more detailed and elaborate than how they were described in the earlier part of the century by the *Royal Frankish Annals* and by Einhard. In addition to maintaining continuity in the label they gave to Muslims who occupied Fraxinetum at the end of the ninth century (“Saracen pirates”), the chroniclers

<sup>115</sup> *Royal Frankish Annals*, s.a. 798 and 799, *Carolingian Chronicles* (n. 59 above) 76–78; *Annals of Fulda*, s.a. 798 and 808, *Les invasions* (n. 14 above) 215–216; Haywood, *Dark Age Naval Power* (n. 48 above) 113 n. 101.

<sup>116</sup> Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni* 17, *Charlemagne’s Courtier: The Complete Einhard*, ed. and trans. Paul E. Dutton (Peterborough 1998) 27.

<sup>117</sup> *Annals of St. Bertin*, s.a. 838 and 842; *Les invasions* (n. 14 above) 222–223.

<sup>118</sup> Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 7.

<sup>119</sup> *Annals of St. Bertin*, s.a. 838, 842, 849, 850, and 859, *Les Invasions* (n. 14 above) 222–224; St. Martin of Apt 896, *Les Invasions* 111; “Annals of St. Victor of Marseille, Chap. 44,” *Les Invasions* 132; “Flodoard of Reims, year 923” *Les Invasions* 230; MGH *Capitularia Regum Francorum* 2.376–377.

described their raids as being more devastating than earlier incursions.<sup>120</sup>

The Latin chroniclers not only described the Muslims and their activities within the context of piracy, but also presented their incursions in terms similar to the raids of the Scandinavians (*piratae Danorum*) and Magyars (*Ungariorum gens, Hungari*), who were concurrently plaguing western Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>121</sup> The major source of information about the establishment of Fraxinetum and the political history of the Muslims there is Liutprand, the bishop of Cremona, writing in the mid-tenth century. Liutprand and many other Latin chroniclers portrayed the Muslims of Fraxinetum as infidel “pirates,” who were threatening the very heart of Christendom, and who raided, desecrated, and burnt churches and monasteries.

During the ninth and tenth centuries, the areas encompassing modern-day France, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany were being assaulted by three main groups: the Vikings, the Magyars, and the Muslims. As the main external threat to Latin Christendom, they were depicted almost monolithically as invading barbarian hordes, ravaging western Europe from three different directions.<sup>122</sup> More specifically, the invasions of the Vikings and the Muslims were both represented as manifestations of God’s wrath against the perceived impiety of the Frankish kingdom.<sup>123</sup> The sensitivity of the Latin chroniclers to the Viking and Muslim destruction of monasteries is especially apparent, and seems to inform their theological perspective on the invasions, since they viewed such attacks not only as manifestations of divine displeasure, but also

<sup>120</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* 1.3, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 45–46; *Annals of St. Bertin*, s.a. 891, *Les Invasions* (n. 14 above) 224.

<sup>121</sup> Jean Dunbabin, *France in the Making, 843–1180* (Oxford 1985) 37–43.

<sup>122</sup> For the conceptualization of the “barbarian” in the Latin Christian imagination, see W. R. Jones, “The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13 (1971) 376–407.

<sup>123</sup> On the theology of the Viking invasions in Latin Christendom, see Mary Garrison, “The Bible and Alcuin’s Interpretation of Current Events,” *Peritia* 16 (2002) 68–84; Coupland, “The Rod of God’s Wrath” (n. 112 above) 535–554, in which a parallel between the way that Latin Christians viewed the Viking invasions and the Muslim raids in western Europe is drawn. During the initial period of the Arab conquests in the 7th c., Muslims were also portrayed by various eastern Christian chroniclers as God’s “rod” of chastisement against the oppressive regime of the Byzantine Greeks. See Walter Emil Kaegi, Jr. “Initial Byzantine Reactions to the Arab Conquest,” *Church History* 38 (1969) 139–149. See also *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*, ed. Robert Hoyland (Princeton 1997) 53–231, 387–434, and 523–541.

as reflective of “pagan” disdain for Christianity.<sup>124</sup> By recognizing that the Latin chroniclers described both the Vikings and the Muslims in similar terms, as God’s instrument for chastising faithless Christians for their sins, it becomes less puzzling why the Muslims of Fraxinetum were depicted as faceless invaders. The characterization of their raids in the *Annals of St. Victor* of Marseille as God’s divine rod of chastisement against the Christians (“Deus flagellare vellet populum christianum per seviciam paganorum, gens barbaric in regno Provence irruenes”), and the lamentation by Alcuin of York of the Viking devastations in Northumbria using the words of an Old Testament prophet (“Uae genti peccatrici, populo graui iniquitate, filiis sceleratis; derelinquunt Deum et blasphemauerunt sanctum saluatorem mundi in sceleribus suis”; Isa. 1.4), are both demonstrative of the fact that the Muslim raids in Provence were viewed in the same light as the depredations of the Vikings in the North, i.e., as punishment for the sins of Christendom.<sup>125</sup>

This theological framework of interpretation is particularly evident in the work of Liutprand, who interpreted the contemporary Magyar and Muslim invasions as manifestations of divine retribution for Christian sin. Liutprand believed that the judgment and will of God pervaded everyday life and, above all, emphasized the justice of God, whereby sinners would inevitably be punished and piety rewarded. As such, he began his *Antapodosis* by attributing the arrival of Iberian Muslims, who would establish themselves at Fraxinetum, to “the just judgment of God.”<sup>126</sup> Liutprand further asserted that the sins of the Provençal Christians, who were engaged in internecine strife and who entered into alli-

<sup>124</sup> Attacks against monasteries were motivated largely by economic considerations; Coupland, “The Rod of God’s Wrath” (n. 112 above) 541–544. See also Niels Lund, “Allies of God or Man? The Viking Expansion in European Perspective,” *Viator* 20 (1989) 46–47.

<sup>125</sup> Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 9; Garrison, “The Bible and Alcuin’s Interpretation” (n. 123 above) 80; Coupland, “The Rod of God’s Wrath” (n. 112 above) 538–541. “Deus flagellare vellet populum christianum per seviciam paganorum, gens barbaric in regno Provence irruenes”; roughly “God flagellated the Christian nation through a pagan, barbaric people who have ruined Provence.” “Uae genti peccatrici, populo graui iniquitate, filiis sceleratis; derelinquunt Deum et blasphemauerunt sanctum saluatorem mundi in sceleribus suis”; “Woe to the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity...wicked sons; they have forsaken the Lord and they have blasphemed the Holy Saviour of the world in their wicked deeds.” To my knowledge, no comprehensive comparative analysis has been published on the Viking invasions and the Muslim sea-raids in the 9th c., let alone a comparison between the theological conceptualization of both the Arabs and the Scandinavians by contemporary Latin chroniclers.

<sup>126</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis* 1.3, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 45.

ances with “infidels” were punished by the Muslims who were able to “ravage, exterminate, and [make] it so that no one was left.”<sup>127</sup> This biblical imagery was supplemented by Liutprand quoting the book of Deuteronomy when referring to the Muslims of Fraxinetum: “One of them pursued a thousand and two chased ten thousand ... because their God had sold them and the Lord had shut them up” (Deut. 32.30).<sup>128</sup> Such language can also be observed in Liutprand’s discussion of the Magyar threat against Latin Christendom, and is reflective of the biblical-theological frame of analysis he employed.

In addition to the employment of this biblical framework, the representation of the Muslims by the Latin sources as ruthless raiders needs to be understood within the context of the simultaneous Viking incursions and raids of the Magyars, which made the Christian Franks feel particularly vulnerable to outside attack. Moreover, the characterization of the Vikings, Magyars, and the Muslims as instruments of divine retribution shows that the Latin chroniclers viewed the raiders as a military threat that would eventually subside, rather than as permanent ideological or religious rivals.<sup>129</sup> Contextualizing the Muslim invasion in this way provides a clearer indication of why the Latin Christian chroniclers were more concerned with outlining the devastation associated with the raids, interpreted as divine retribution for the sins of Christendom, than with attempting to identify and describe with precision the Muslims of Fraxinetum. Hence, while they are informative and descriptive with respect to the raids of the Andalusīs in Provence, the Latin documents are less useful in describing the Muslims themselves or their base at Fraxinetum.

Rather than dismissing the Christian source material outright, however, it is important to distinguish between its polemical and historical

<sup>127</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis* 1.4, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 46–47.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* 47

<sup>129</sup> In Iberia, on the other hand, the Muslims were first depicted by Christian chroniclers as a military and political threat, but were soon recognized, especially by ecclesiastical chroniclers, as a theological threat as well. See Kenneth Baxter Wolf, “Christian Views of Islam in Early Medieval Spain,” *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed. John Victor Tolan (New York 1996) 85–108; *idem*, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain* (Liverpool 1990) 28–60, 111–177; Norman Daniel, “Spanish Christian Sources of Information about Islam,” *Al-Qantara* 15 (1994) 365–384; Jessica Coope, *The Martyrs of Cordova: Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion* (Lincoln 1995). On the Anglo-Saxon view of Islam in the early Middle Ages, see Katharine Scarfe Beckett, *Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of the Islamic World* (Cambridge 2003).

value, which can provide important insight into the Muslim establishment in Provence. Although all Latin documents asserted that the Muslims had a negative impact on Provence, and that their base at Fraxinetum only exacerbated the existing regional turmoil, they differ in describing the nature of the Muslim settlement there. The *Chronicle of Novalesa*, for example, described Fraxinetum as “a place on the coast near Arles,” Liutprand of Cremona spoke of “a village between Italy and Provence,” Ekkehard’s *Casus S. Galli* referred to a “valley,” and another contemporary author, Sigebert of Gembloux, called it a “castle.”<sup>130</sup> As such, the fortress itself was variously characterized as a *castrum* (fortified outpost), a *villa* (rural agricultural dwelling), and an *oppidum* (town).<sup>131</sup> These divergent terms each carry a completely different meaning; depending on whether Fraxinetum is interpreted as being a *castrum* or an *oppidum*, the implications for the question of whether it was a raiding outpost or a civic entity on the frontier between the Islamic world and Christendom are profound. Another anonymous Latin chronicler described how some Muslims had settled and were living unarmed among the local Provençal townsfolk in the vicinity of Fraxinetum, a fact that is greatly revealing about the nature of Muslim settlement in the region, and raises questions about the degree to which they were integrated with the local population.<sup>132</sup>

A more accurate understanding of the nature of the Muslim settlement at Fraxinetum can be attained by taking into account the contemporary Arabic sources. Unlike the Latin sources, the representation of Fraxinetum in the Muslim sources is more sympathetic. Most information from a Muslim perspective comes from Arabic geographical works. Unfortunately, there are only three surviving contemporary Arabic sources that make mention of Fraxinetum, and, unlike the detailed Latin sources, they provide scarce information about it. The two main sources are Al-Istakhri’s *Kitāb al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik*, and Ibn Hawqal’s *Surat al-Ard*. Al-Istakhri, who was writing during the mid-tenth century, described *Jabal al-Qilāl* (Fraxinetum) as a mountainous country, which the Muslims inhabited and developed to the dismay of the Franks, with many streams and rivers, and explained

<sup>130</sup> Ekkehard, *Casus S. Galli* (n. 114 above) 138; Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 1.1, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 45; Poupardin, *Le Royaume de Provence* (n. 3 above) 252, 254.

<sup>131</sup> Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 1.1, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 45; Poupardin, *Le Royaume de Provence* (n. 3 above) 254.

<sup>132</sup> Wenner, “The Arab/Muslim Presence” (n. 45 above) 71.

that it took two days to cross it by foot.<sup>133</sup> Istakhri also noted that the region surrounding Fraxinetum was a previously neglected area, and that the arrival of the Muslims and their subsequent settlement there led to its prosperity. Furthermore, he asserted that the Muslims were in a constant struggle with the Franks of the land, and emphasized the strategic importance of the base.<sup>134</sup>

Ibn Hawqal elaborated on al-Istakhri's writing by describing Fraxinetum as the main stronghold of the *mujāhidīn* (holy warriors) who were victorious in the land of the Franks, and observed that it was very productive agriculturally due largely to the fertile soil, multitude of land, and water currents that flowed there.<sup>135</sup> He echoed Istakhri by claiming that it was the arrival of the Muslims which caused the region to flourish.<sup>136</sup> He further explained that the Muslims fortified the mountain above the settlement by building a fortress, which was only accessible by one narrow path, thus underscoring its strategic importance.<sup>137</sup> It appears that Ibn Hawqal viewed Fraxinetum primarily as a viable agricultural settlement housing frontier warriors, whose military character was necessitated by the hostile environment and security concerns, not to mention their *raison d'être* in Provence: *jihād*. His description, similar to Istakhri's, corresponds very closely to the modern scholarly understanding of a medieval Islamic *ribāʾ*/frontier state, and allows scholars to draw comparisons with the frontier states located on the border region between the Abbasids and Byzantium in Anatolia in the Near East or even the later Turkish *ghāzī* emirates on the frontiers of the Byzantine and Serbian empires in the fourteenth century.<sup>138</sup> As with the Latin documents, the Arabic sources need to be read with caution.

<sup>133</sup> Al-Istakhri, *Al-masālik wa al-mamālik* (n. 8 above) 51; Fevrier, *La Provence* (n. 7 above) 489; Philippe Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 17.

<sup>134</sup> Al-Istakhri, *Al-masālik wa al-mamālik* (n. 8 above) 51; Shakib Arslan, *Tarikh* (n. 8 above) 212–213.

<sup>135</sup> Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-Ard* (n. 5 above) 185.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> See John Haldon and Hugh Kennedy, "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries: Military Organization and Society in the Borderlands," *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Aldershot 2006) 7.79–116; Michael Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier* (New Haven 1996); idem, "The Naming of the Frontier: Awasim, Thughur, and the Arab Geographers," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 57 (1994) 17–24; idem, "Some Observations concerning the Early Development of Jihad on the Arab-Byzantine Frontier," *Studia Islamica* 75 (1992) 5–31.

The depiction of Fraxinetum and its inhabitants as holy warriors engaged in *jihād* may be the projection of a distinctively eastern Islamic worldview onto the western Mediterranean, with Ibn Ḥawqal and al-Istakhrī seeking to draw parallels between the activities of the Andalusī Muslims and the *ghāzīs* of eastern Anatolia. Hence, although the evidence of these two authors should be taken into consideration when assessing Fraxinetum, it should be utilized critically and in conjunction with other sources.

Another tenth-century geographical work, *Hudūd al-‘Alām*, written by an anonymous Persian traveler and dated to 982, described Fraxinetum as an inhabitable mountain on the Mediterranean Sea, which was in close proximity to the Italian Peninsula. The author of *Hudūd al-‘Alām* also added that “[to the] west of *Jabal al-Qilāl* is a mountain, whose summit is so high that it cannot be reached, and from [this region] comes game, timber, and fuel,” a rare indication of the economic importance of the region of Provence that the Muslims occupied.<sup>139</sup> This source is notable for its lack of reference to any militant activity, let alone *jihād*, and, if read in isolation, would suggest that Fraxinetum was primarily an agricultural settlement, in which timber resources were also exploited. Hence, it poses problems for historians because it seems to contradict the idea that Fraxinetum was primarily an Islamic frontier state. There are several possible reasons why the author of *Hudūd al-‘Alām* excluded a discussion of Fraxinetum’s military-political nature from his narrative, the most plausible explanation being that the source was a treatise concerned primarily with the geographical and economic aspects of the Islamic world, and not with the social and political dimensions of the regions it described. The textual tradition of Arabic and Persian sources thus seems to place varying emphasis on Fraxinetum’s status as a frontier zone, but all primary Islamic documents emphasize the economic vitality of Fraxinetum, and take for granted the fact that the Muslim establishment in Provence was an integral part of *dār al-Islām*, as opposed to a dislocated group of opportunistic bandits operating in Francia. Despite the brevity of these three geographical sources, two of which were written in Persian and one in Arabic, they are extremely helpful in describing the nature of the Muslim presence in Provence. Due to the scarcity of the Arabic

<sup>139</sup> V. Minorsky, *Hudud al-‘Alam: The Regions of the World* (London 1970) 59; Andre Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman* (Paris 1967) 379.

sources, it has been far more difficult to conceptualize Fraxinetum in terms of a cultural or economic centre—as recent studies have demonstrated for Andalusī Crete—but archaeological and ethnographic evidence has shown that the Muslim presence in Provence was more multi-faceted than has previously been thought.

Scholars have recently elaborated on the nature of the agricultural, semi-industrial, and other commercial ventures of the Muslims of Fraxinetum. The argument has been made that the introduction of buckwheat, originating from Persia, into Provence was initiated by the Andalusīs, a fact possibly indicated by etymology, since it is referred to as “blé sarrasin” in the Provençal dialect of the French language.<sup>140</sup> In addition to the introduction of buckwheat, it has been speculated, based on local legend, that cork tree cultivation and the method of turning pine-resin into pine-tar for the strengthening of wooden ships was begun by the Muslims; indeed, the Arabic name for Fraxinetum, “Jabal al-Qilāl,” is a reference to this practice.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, the existence of distinctly Arab and Berber agricultural and pastoral practices can also be inferred from the fact that certain species of goats native to North Africa are herded in Provence, while the raising of pigs is rare, a detail that can be attributed to the period of the Andalusī Muslim presence.<sup>142</sup> The archaeological remains of pottery, metallurgy (mines commonly referred to as *le trou de Sarrasins* and *gallerie sarrasine* have been identified near Grimaud, La Garde-Freinet, and Plan de Tour), the manufacture of weapons (forges have been excavated in Tende and La Ferrière), and forestry have also been cited as indicative that non-military activities were relatively widespread at Fraxinetum, and that there were possibly artisans and other skilled Muslims among the warriors there.<sup>143</sup>

It can be inferred from the works of Ibn Ḥawqal and al-İṣṭakhrī that the Muslims were not only “*mujāhidīn*” who held Fraxinetum as a defensible, frontier outpost for Islam, but also engaged in other activities such as irrigated farming and trade with the rest of the Islamic world, exporting their produce as well as timber and fuel. The overall

<sup>140</sup> Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 57.

<sup>141</sup> Wenner, “Arab/Muslim Presence” (n. 45 above) 68.

<sup>142</sup> Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 57; Wenner, “Arab/Muslim Presence” (n. 45 above) 68 and 70

<sup>143</sup> Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 58–59; Wenner, “Arab/Muslim Presence” (n. 45 above) 68–69.

impression scholars can derive from *Hudūd al-'Alām* is that of an economically viable region, from where timber and combustible fuel could be procured. Eastern Islamic sources thus assert that the Muslim presence in Francia had reinvigorated the region economically and caused it to flourish, a perspective which sharply contrasts with exclamations by Syrus and Liutprand who claim that “the Saracens transformed the realm into a desert.” It is therefore apparent that the Muslim sources depict Fraxinetum not as a mere raiding outpost but as a defensible, self-sustaining Andalusī political entity in the midst of a largely-hostile Frankish/Christian population.

Although neither the Latin nor the Arabic sources give a balanced perspective, when read in conjunction with each other they provide a clearer view of Fraxinetum. By looking at how the contemporary Arabic sources portray the Andalusīs in Provence, and juxtaposing their representation with the portrayal in the traditional set of Latin documents, it becomes clear why modern scholars have described the Muslims of Fraxinetum in different ways. Based on the overall evidence, therefore, it is clear that Fraxinetum was a fortified outpost (*castrum*) housing Muslim *mujāhidīn*, who were in constant struggle (*jihād*) with the Franks in Provence, and whose activities included not only destructive raids that tormented the Provençal Christians, but also commercial activities such as farming and trade. Undoubtedly, as with other frontier regions of the Islamic world, there were mixed motivations driving the *ghāzīs* of Fraxinetum, a fact which enabled various modes of interactions with the Franks in Provence. It was not uncommon for cultural and social ties between non-Muslims and Muslims, even those engaged in *jihād*, to develop in the frontier regions between Islam and Christendom—as can be seen from the Byzantine-Arab frontier in Anatolia which gave rise to a literary genre (the *Digenes Akrites* and *Sayyid Battal* cycle)—indicating the varied modes of interaction between inhabitants of the frontier and the fluidity of interaction in the frontier zone, which enabled violent as well as peaceful relations. As outlined throughout this article, one of the defining aspects of an Islamic frontier state was its relative autonomy from central authority. Hence, in order to more fully appreciate the characterization of Fraxinetum as a *ribāt* in Provence, the relationship between the Muslims of Fraxinetum and the Umayyads of al-Andalus needs to be explored.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FRAXINETUM AND AL-ANDALUS

The relationship between Fraxinetum and al-Andalus is particularly problematic because it is ambiguous whether Fraxinetum was as an independent Muslim frontier state and staging ground for *jihād* against the Franks, or if it was in fact a *thaghr*/frontier region of al-Andalus that acknowledged Umayyad authority. In the case of Crete, there is no doubt about the fact that, although nominally recognizing Abbasid overlordship, the *amīrs* were independent monarchs who cemented their autonomy by minting their own distinctive coinage. For the Muslims of Provence, however, the relationship of Fraxinetum to centralized authority appears far more tenuous due to the lack of documentation. Many of the Latin sources make a direct connection between the Muslims of Fraxinetum and Umayyad Spain by describing the Andalusis as natives of Iberia or tributary to the rulers of al-Andalus, and explain that they received reinforcements from the Caliphate of Cordova.<sup>144</sup> The *Life of Beuve of Noyers*, for example, refers to the Muslims of Fraxinetum as *hispanicolae*, while Liutprand of Cremona describes how they were *tributari regis Abdurrahman*, which can be understood to mean vassals or subjects of the caliph of Spain, Abdurrahman III, and is the only reference directly asserting the existence of a vassal-lord relationship between Fraxinetum and al-Andalus.<sup>145</sup>

The association of the Muslims of Fraxinetum with al-Andalus can further be ascertained from the Frankish chronicles which designate the raiders as *mauri*, a term generally understood to mean Iberian Muslim, although this does little to inform scholars of the political relationship between the raiders in Provence and the authorities in Cordova. The most compelling contemporary evidence derived from Latin sources suggesting that Fraxinetum was affiliated with al-Andalus is the diplomatic mission sent by Otto I to Abdurrahman III in 953, demanding that Cordova halt its support for the Muslims of Fraxinetum, whose raids extended as far north as the Rhine valley by the mid-tenth cen-

<sup>144</sup> Christophe Picard explains how the major centers of maritime activity in al-Andalus were the cities on the eastern Iberian coast, especially Pechina, Valencia, and Tortosa. Picard highlights the fact that these groups were autonomous and outside of government control, and explains how the centralized policy of the Umayyad regime in Spain contributed to the rise of these independent bands. He notes that the increasing restrictions and regulations by the Umayyads of Spain led to an exodus of sailors to places like Fraxinetum, where they could be more autonomous and escape Cordova's authority. Picard, *La mer et les musulmans* (n.48 above) 10–13.

<sup>145</sup> Poly, *La Provence* (n. 3 above) 7; Liutprand, *Antapodosis* 1.2, trans. Squatriti (n. 3 above) 45; Versteegh "Arab Presence" (n. 10 above) 363.

ture.<sup>146</sup> Although Abdurrahman III assured Otto's emissary, John of Gorze, that he was not supporting the Muslims in southern Provence, subsequently there was a recognizable reduction in the activities of the Muslims of Fraxinetum, whose base fell in 972 to a coalition of Provençal knights without receiving aid from al-Andalus. It is plausible that Otto's embassy had a direct impact on Abdurrahman III with regard to his policy towards Fraxinetum, although without further evidence this cannot be definitively asserted.

It has been suggested by several scholars that the relationship which existed between Fraxinetum and al-Andalus was based on commercial interests, specifically timber resources, a commodity which Fraxinetum had in abundance, and for which there was a high demand in al-Andalus.<sup>147</sup> Fraxinetum has been hypothesized as a possible outlet of this scarce, but essential, resource for al-Andalus, which was in the process of constructing a navy to counter the emerging Shī'ī Fatimid threat in North Africa.<sup>148</sup> The theory that Abdurrahman III of Cordova required timber for his fleet, and that Andalusī Muslim *ghāzīs* (namely those from the largely autonomous eastern Iberian coast and Fraxinetum) provided him with it, touches upon a central thematic question regarding the relationship between Fraxinetum and al-Andalus.<sup>149</sup> Apparently, active Umayyad sponsorship of the base at Fraxinetum in exchange for resources such as timber would have greatly endangered the status quo with Christian powers in western Europe. However, since exploitative centers in Provence where timber could be procured were of vital importance to Abdurrahman III, the caliph supported Fraxinetum logistically. Yet, for fear of an economic and military backlash from western European powers, especially the Ottonians and the Italian city-states, he did not officially provide military or economic support to the settlement, but seems to have turned a blind eye to the activities of the *ghāzīs* of eastern Iberia prior to 953.

<sup>146</sup> Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal* (n. 50 above) 97; Joaquin Vallve, *Abderraman III: Califa de Espana y Occidente (912–961)* (Barcelona 2003) 239. Liutprand of Cremona's *Antapodosis* was dedicated to Abdurrahman's emissary to Otto I. The fact that Liutprand chose to begin his book by discussing Fraxinetum demonstrates the significance of the Muslims of Provence, and perhaps even the urgency with which the matter was viewed in the Ottonian court, where Liutprand was based.

<sup>147</sup> Sénac, *Musulmans et Sarrasins* (n. 5 above) 104.

<sup>148</sup> Delgado, *El poder naval* (n. 48 above) 295.

<sup>149</sup> Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 57.

It is also plausible that in exchange for providing the Caliphate of Cordova with timber, the Muslims of Fraxinetum received a certain degree of endorsement, along with supplies and reinforcements, from al-Andalus.<sup>150</sup> As seen above, the anonymous author of *Hudud al-'Alām* explicitly stated that Fraxinetum was a main site from which timber (and fuel) was exported to the rest of the western Islamic world, justifying this perspective. This claim is also reinforced by several archaeological digs in southern Provence near the site of Fraxinetum which have recently uncovered Arab tools, such as axes, nails, saws, chisels, and hammers, that would have been used to exploit timber resources.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, marine archaeologists excavating the bay of St. Tropez have uncovered several Arab ships with compartments presumably for the transportation of such materials as timber and other items, notably ceramics.<sup>152</sup>

Other evidence suggests that the Andalusīs of Fraxinetum excelled at the development of the use of cork oak and pine resin, materials used for caulking ships. This is supported by the fact that the French and Provençal word for tar, “goudron/quitran,” is derived from a similar Arabic word, “qatrān,” and by the less-apparent detail that the southern Provençals are still famed for their cork-oak industry, the origins of which they attribute to the “Saracens.”<sup>153</sup> Based on such evidence, it is at apparent that timber was exploited by the Muslims of Fraxinetum, and that this commodity was an important factor in the relationship between the Caliphate of Cordova and Fraxinetum.<sup>154</sup> In addition to the

<sup>150</sup> Sénac, *Musulmans et Sarrasins* (n. 28 above) 104.

<sup>151</sup> Sénac, *Musulmans et Sarrasins* (n. 28 above) 108.

<sup>152</sup> See Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, 300–900* (Cambridge 2001) 597–599, who discusses the itinerary of the recently discovered ship wrecks and concludes that it is unlikely that the materials carried by these vessels, which included pottery, millstones, metals, and some foodstuffs, were destined for Fraxinetum. His conclusion may stem from the fact that he considered Fraxinetum little more than a “pirate base.” On the content of the shipwrecks discovered near the Provençal coast, see Philippe Sénac, “Les musulmans en Provence au Xe siècle,” *Histoire l'islam* (n. 33 above) 36–39, who argues that it is very possible that the materials and the ships discovered were headed for Fraxinetum. See also Jean-Pierre Joncheray, Philippe Sénac, “Une nouvelle épave sarrasine de haut moyen âge,” *Archéologie islamique* 5 (1995) 25–34; Jean-Pierre Joncheray, “The Four Saracen Shipwrecks of Provence,” *Barbarian Seas: Late Rome to Islam*, ed. Sean Kingsley (London 2004) 102–107.

<sup>153</sup> Sénac, *Musulmans et Sarrasins* (n. 28 above) 104; Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 58.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.* 57. Sénac also highlights the fact that there was a great influx of precious metals from Provence into the Islamic world, especially Africa and Iberia, which he attributes to the Muslims of Fraxinetum and their raids on monasteries, which allowed

timber connection, tenth-century fragments of ceramics have been excavated off the coast of Provence bearing identical patterns to ceramics in southern Iberia, especially to patterns found in the town of Almeria-Pechina, indicating another direct link between al-Andalus and Fraxinetum.<sup>155</sup> This evidence indicates that at least some of the Muslims of Fraxinetum originated from Almeria-Pechina, which was, as described earlier in this article, one of the centers of Andalusī dissidents opposed to the centralization measures of the Umayyads of al-Andalus. It also highlights the fact that the Andalusīs of Fraxinetum still maintained important connections with Iberia in order to reinforce themselves, just as the Cretan Muslims were reliant on the Egyptian Delta region for logistical and material support. Hence, this lends credence to the argument that the Muslims of Fraxinetum were autonomous and beyond Cordova's control, at least until the establishment of the Caliphate of Cordova in 929, when Abdurrahman instituted stricter measures of centralization and sought to integrate frontier and coastal regions into the structure of the Umayyad state.

The Arabic sources, composed after 929, support the notion that Fraxinetum was directly affiliated with al-Andalus. Contemporary geographer Ibn Ḥawqal explicitly asserted that Fraxinetum, like Majorca, fell under the jurisdiction of “*ṣāhib al-Andalus*,” referring to the caliph in Cordova.<sup>156</sup> This relationship is underscored by his depiction of Fraxinetum as an island at the mouth of the Rhone River near al-Andalus, similar to how he portrays the Balearics, in his map of the western Mediterranean.<sup>157</sup> This cartographic representation has been interpreted literally by some scholars, who have taken it to mean that Ibn Ḥawqal and other Muslim geographers visualized Fraxinetum as an is-

them to gain access to vast amounts of wealth, such as silver and gold, but also to their metallurgy and mining activities; Sénac, *Musulmans et Sarrasins* (n. 28 above) 109–110. See Olivia Remie Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900–1500* (Cambridge 1994) 196–197; Thomas Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain* (n. 61 above) 109–112. See also Maurice Lombard, “Le bois dans la méditerranée musulmane,” *Annales économiques sociétés civilisations* 14 (1959) 234–254.

<sup>155</sup> Constable, *Trade and Traders* (n. 154 above) 167, 189–190; Joncheray and Senac, “Une nouvelle épave sarrasine” (n. 152 above) 25.

<sup>156</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Surat al-Ard* (n. 5 above) 185; Versteegh, “Arab Presence” (n. 10 above) 363.

<sup>157</sup> Sénac, *Musulmans et Sarrasins* (n. 28 above) 43–44; Miquel, *La géographie humaine* (n. 139 above) 365.

land.<sup>158</sup> However, as is the case with many pre-modern maps, it should not be viewed as a strict attempt to depict geographic territory.<sup>159</sup> Rather, the map should be understood as a depiction of the reality that Fraxinetum was highly (geographically) isolated from al-Andalus, but simultaneously (politically) affiliated and connected with it. Ibn Ḥawqal may also have been suggesting that the Balearics, specifically Majorca—which was initially conquered by *ghāzīs* before being incorporated into the Umayyad kingdom in 902—and Fraxinetum possessed an identical political status with regards to Umayyad al-Andalus.

Perhaps the most important indication of the relationship that existed between al-Andalus and Fraxinetum is a reference by Ibn Hayyan al-Qurtubi to how in 940/941 Abdurrahman III had copies of a peace treaty with the “Franks,” including Hugh of Italy, made and sent to the governors of Valencia, the Balearics, and to the *qa'id* of Fraxinetum (mentioned by name as Nasr ibn Aḥmad), who were likely the main parties concerned with such a treaty.<sup>160</sup> That the *qa'id* of Fraxinetum was mentioned by name in such an important chronicle also suggests that the Muslim presence in Provence was of some importance to al-Andalus, and that the events in Fraxinetum were of interest to Cordova. In other words, the fact that the name of the leader of the Muslims of Fraxinetum was recorded by a major Umayyad historian may indicate that the relationship between the Andalusīs in Iberia and their brethren in southern Francia was more developed than is commonly supposed by modern historians. However, it could also be an attempt on the part of Ibn Hayyan, a pro-Umayyad historian writing after the fact, to glorify the Caliphate of Cordova by asserting its power and authority to be more far reaching than was actually the case. Some scholars have

<sup>158</sup> Minorsky, *Hudūd al-'Alām* (n. 139 above) 192.

<sup>159</sup> Ibn Hawqal belonged to the Balkhi School of Cartography, which used maps to depict the existing geo-political reality of the Islamic world, rather than presenting spatial/geographic representations of the known world. See Emilie Savage-Smith, “Memory and Maps,” *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*, ed. Farhad Daftary and Josef Meri (London 2003) 109–127.

<sup>160</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *Muqtabis* 249, in María Jesús Viguera, Federico Corriente, trans., *Cronica del califa Abdurrahman III An-Nasir* (Saragossa 1981) 342; Ibn Hayyan, *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, ed. Olivia Remie Constable (Philadelphia 1997) 71. Ibn Hayyan in his *Muqtabis* implies that the caliph of Cordova viewed the Muslim governors of the Balearic islands, the governors of the Iberian ports, and the *qa'id* (commander) of Fraxinetum, mentioned by name as Nasr ibn Ahmad, as answerable to him.

speculated that the treaty referred to above was in fact an agreement with Hugh of Italy, thus leading them to believe that Hugh's decision to call off his siege of Fraxinetum in 941 was related to the establishment of trade relations with the Umayyads in al-Andalus.<sup>161</sup> Although there is no authoritative evidence to support this, Abdurrahman's distribution of a copy of the treaty to the Muslims of Fraxinetum suggests that there is value in this assertion.

The use of the word "qa'id" in the above context is particularly significant and deserves further attention. The term implies a unique relationship between al-Andalus and Fraxinetum, one different than that which existed between the Balearics and Cordova, since it does not simply denote a "governor" or a civil servant administering a region on behalf of the centralized authority.<sup>162</sup> Unlike inland towns, which were governed by a *wālī* ("governor"), port cities were usually under the control of the *qa'id*, who typically had more powers than the regular governor and was responsible for military as well as civil affairs.<sup>163</sup> "Qā'id," an Arabic geographical and administrative term, usually designated the commander of a frontier zone, or *thaghr*.<sup>164</sup> The Arabic word *thaghr* is understood to mean a virtual no-man's land studded with fortresses (*husūn*), located on the outskirts of Muslim territory near *dār al-ḥarb*, and used for staging raids into the territories of non-Muslims.<sup>165</sup> This form of boundary was typical of al-Andalus, and formed the first line of defense between Muslim-ruled Iberia and its northern Christian neighbors. The *thaghr* was quite different than other border regions, generically known as *ḥudūd*, because it typically contained *ribāṭs*, and its role was primarily military, although several *ribāṭs* also developed

<sup>161</sup> Versteegh, "Arab Presence" (n. 10 above) 369.

<sup>162</sup> Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 60; Versteegh "Arab Presence" (n. 10 above) 363.

<sup>163</sup> Constable, *Trade and Traders* (n. 154 above) 114.

<sup>164</sup> *Thaghr* can also be translated as "March," as in the case of the *Marca Hispania*, or Spanish March

<sup>165</sup> On the term "qa'id," see Ralph W. Brauer, "Boundaries and Frontiers" (n. 110 above) 1–73. See also Jacinto Bosch Vila, "Considerations with Respect to Al-Thaghr in Al-Andalus and the Political-Administrative Division of Muslim Spain," *Formation of al-Andalus*, pt. 1 (n. 50 above) 377–387; Eduardo Manzano Moreno, "Christian-Muslim Frontier in al-Andalus: Ideal and Reality," *The Arab Influence in Medieval Europe*, ed. Dionisius Agius, Richard Hitchcock (Reading 1994) 83–99; Miquel, *Le géographie humaine* (n. 139 above) 535–540; Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal* (n. 50 above) 52–53; Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain* (n. 64 above) 52–53; Phillipe Sénac, "Islam et chrétienté dans l'Espagne du haut Moyen Age: La naissance d'une frontière," *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999) 91–108.

agriculture and industry.<sup>166</sup> In this regard, it should be noted that an Islamic frontier state does not denote merely a militant entity on the political-military zone between *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*. As demonstrated by the cases of Crete and other frontier states, such as *thughūr* in eastern Anatolia, the frontier was a region in which multiple modes of interactions were possible and in which trading, raiding, and even cultural exchange could occur. As such, both Crete and Fraxinetum were simultaneously strategic advance bases for waging holy war against Christendom, but also important economic centers which exported timber to the rest of the Islamic world. Thus, it would be erroneous to view Fraxinetum's development of a sustainable economic basis as at odds with its primary function as an Islamic frontier state, which was merely the first phase of Islam's expansion into frontier regions and was, theoretically, intended to set the stage for gradual and permanent settlement.

One of the most problematic aspects for historians is the fact that, unlike other Islamic frontier states, there does not appear to have been an *amīr*, or commander, around whom the *ghāzīs* rallied. In the case of Crete, for example, the dynasty of Abū Ḥafs and his descendants formed an emirate which regulated (to a certain degree) the activities of the *ghāzīs* stationed there; 'Umar al-Aqtā' in the emirate of Melitene was likewise the *amīr* of the *ghāzīs* in eastern Anatolia. Similarly, even in the case of Bari in Apulia, which existed as a Muslim outpost for less than three decades, the *ghāzī* bands were led by an *amīr*, Kalfūn. With regards to Fraxinetum, aside from an obscure reference to the *qā'id* of Fraxinetum, Nasr ibn Aḥmad, there does not appear to have been a specific individual who exercised authority over the *ghāzīs* in Provence and the Alpine regions; in the case of Nasr ibn Aḥmad, scholars can only speculate as to authority he actually wielded. The absence of a leadership structure should not necessarily detract from the understanding of Fraxinetum as a frontier state or a *ribāṭ*, but is potentially problematic and raises an important question about how it differed from other Islamic frontier regions in the eastern Mediterranean. Due to the lack of sufficient documentation, however, scholars can only speculate as to the specific organization of the bands of *ghāzīs* in Provence and whether, apart from their commitment to

<sup>166</sup> See Christophe Picard and Antoine Borrut, "Rabata, Ribat, Rabita: Une institution à reconsidérer," *Chrétiens et musulmans en Méditerranée médiévale: Échanges et contacts*, ed. Nicolas Prouteau and Philippe Sénac (Poitiers 2003) 33–65.

*jihād*, there was any attempt to coordinate their activities. Aside from this distinguishing characteristic, Fraxinetum seems to have conformed to modern scholarly understanding of a tenth-century *ribāṭ* in the Islamic world.

*Ribāṭ* fortresses in the frontier/*thughūr* regions were a unique political entity, distinct from the core parts of the state, and were given a special administrative status. They were under the control of a military commander, the *qa'id*, and their link to the centre of power tended to be much more tenuous than that of other regions of the state. The *qa'id* fulfilled many of the functions of a regular ruler, and at times could act in defiance of the wishes of the central government. Thus, it seems plausible, based on the evidence of Ibn Ḥayyan, that Fraxinetum was a *thaghr* of al-Andalus, inhabited by frontier warriors, *ghāzīs*, engaged in *jihād*, rather than as a fully independent and self-sustaining entity.<sup>167</sup> The description of Fraxinetum in the Arabic sources therefore corresponds very closely to the conception of the Muslim frontier-fortress of the ninth and tenth centuries. Although none of the contemporary Arabic sources explicitly claims that it was a frontier-province of al-Andalus, their descriptions of the fortress, its inhabitants, and their activities all point to the fact that it was indeed a *ribāṭ* housing Andalusī Muslims engaged in *jihād* against the Franks.<sup>168</sup> According to the Andalusī chronicler Ibn Ḥayyan al-Qurtubī, the Umayyad admiral 'Abd al-Mālik ibn Sa'ād ibn Abī Ḥamāma, commanding a fleet of forty ships, led an expedition against the Frankish coast in 935 and possibly interacted with the Muslims of Fraxinetum, coordinating the attack in conjunction with them.<sup>169</sup> This raises the question about the degree to which al-Andalus actively endorsed, encouraged, and sponsored the Muslims stationed there.

Conceptualizing Fraxinetum as a frontier zone that was beyond the reach of centralized authority also illuminates the nature of its inhabitants' activities, which did not usually conform to prescribed Islamic military regulations and conduct of warfare that imposed certain restric-

<sup>167</sup> Miquel, *La géographie humaine* (n. 139 above) 397, rejects the notion that Fraxinetum was a frontier zone or a *thaghr/ribat* of al-Andalus, yet does not take into account the implications of the term *qa'id*, which can justify such a connection

<sup>168</sup> For more on *jihad* within the context of al-Andalus, see Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrine and Practice* (Princeton 2006) 111–112.

<sup>169</sup> Ibn Hayyan, *Muqtabis* 249, *Cronica del califa Abdurrahman III* (n. 160 above) 275; Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 53.

tions on the activities of Muslim soldiers while on campaign.<sup>170</sup> Since *ghāzīs* were established in fortified areas on frontier regions, they were generally beyond the reach of any Islamic authority, a fact that enabled them to employ particularly brutal tactics to weaken the defenses and morale of *dār al-ḥarb*, since they were not bound by the regular conduct of warfare. This partially explains why *ghāzīs*, not least those of Fraxinetum, were so destructive to the commercial, agricultural, and social life in the areas adjacent to their main base.<sup>171</sup> The lack of any established Muslim authority among them meant that they could not be held accountable for their actions, as an official Muslim army on campaign would have been.<sup>172</sup>

The surviving description by Arabic chroniclers and geographers that the Andalusīs engaged in agriculture, exploited timber resources, and behaved as merchants at times suggests that, due to their relative isolation, they needed to sustain themselves through means other than relying on al-Andalus or raiding. Even if it is accepted that Fraxinetum was a *thaghr* of the Caliphate of Cordova, its autonomous nature is implied by the distance between Provence and Iberia (a five day sea-journey from the Valencian coast).<sup>173</sup> This reality was no doubt exacerbated following the destruction of Fraxinetum's harbor by Byzantine forces, and the elimination of its entire fleet in 941, ending any connection that it had with Iberia and perhaps influencing the decision by the Muslims stationed there to raid beyond the Alpine passes. The decline in Umayyad sponsorship was another probable reason for the intensification of the raids of the Muslims of Fraxinetum beyond the Alpine passes. Threatened by the rising power of the Shī'ī Fatimid dynasty in North Africa, who were attempting to invade Iberia and had destroyed Almeria, the main port of al-Andalus, in 954—the same year a force of Andalusīs from Fraxinetum were routed in the Alpine passes—the Umayyads were in no position to aid their co-religionists in Provence.

<sup>170</sup> Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History* (n. 168 above) 171; Wenner, "The Arab/Muslim Presence" (n. 45 above) 63. Muslims were prohibited from harming non-combatants, women, children, the elderly, and were, in theory, to refrain from attacking religious infrastructure and agricultural lands.

<sup>171</sup> This was even more pronounced in the case of the Turkish *ghazis* of the 11th to 14th c. in Anatolia, who eventually Turkified and Islamized the region by devastating the agricultural and sedentary life to such a degree that they disrupted Christian Greek settlement there. Ottoman Empire, which lasted for over 600 years (1299–1923), began as a minor *ghazi* state on the frontier with Byzantium in the late 13th/early 14th c.

<sup>172</sup> Khadduri, *Islamic Law of Nations* (n. 49 above) 103.

<sup>173</sup> Sénac, *Provence* (n. 5 above) 56.

Moreover, the declining fortunes of the Andalusī Muslims within Iberia, especially following the disastrous psychological and military defeat of the Muslims by Ramiro II of León and his allies at Simancas in 939, was also a factor in the changing relationship between Cordova and Fraxinetum. This battle, which was predicted to end in a swift and decisive victory for the Muslims, resulted in their crushing defeat and the capture of the personal *Qur'an* of Abdurrahman III. As a result, the caliph was compelled to agree to a humiliating peace treaty with León, surrendering large amounts of territory to the Spanish kingdoms, and was forced to reassess the strategic situation in the Iberian Peninsula. The loss at Simancas, therefore, greatly hindered Cordova's ability to concern itself with affairs beyond al-Andalus.<sup>174</sup> Consequently, during the last two decades of Fraxinetum's existence, there seems to have been a gradual decline of aid and sponsorship granted to the Muslims of Fraxinetum, which may have contributed to their defeat by 975, similar to how the drop in active support for the Cretan Muslims and the *thughūr* in eastern Anatolia enabled their conquest by a resurgent Byzantine Empire in the late tenth century.

It should not be surprising for scholars that Fraxinetum was affiliated with al-Andalus on a certain level, as many Islamic frontier states, such as Andalusī Crete and the emirate of Melitene in Anatolia, were also associated with centralized authority in order to secure a degree of endorsement and legitimacy. The relationship between Fraxinetum and al-Andalus should thus be understood as bands of *ghāzī* warriors seeking the sponsorship of a powerful Islamic entity rather than placing themselves under its direct authority. The main question that needs to be raised in this regards pertains to the nature of the relationship between Fraxinetum and al-Andalus, and whether the connection between the *ghāzīs* in Provence and the centralized authority in Cordova was directly related to the rise, development, and demise of an Islamic frontier state in tenth-century Provence. This remains for further research to ascertain.

<sup>174</sup> Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400–1000* (London 1995) 195; idem, "The Spanish Kingdoms," *New Cambridge Medieval History III* (n. 18 above) 342. One of the major consequences of the defeat was Abdurrahman's refusal to lead an army on campaign again, a sharp fall in his faith in offensive *jihad* and *ghazi* warfare, and a huge blow to Islamic morale in the Iberian peninsula.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A BROADER UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAMIC  
FRONTIER STATES IN THE TENTH CENTURY

This article has sought to demonstrate that, contrary to traditionalist perspective of Fraxinetum as a pirate base, it is more appropriate to conceptualize it as an Islamic frontier state which Andalusī Muslims inhabited and developed into an important economic and military center in Provence. The interpretation of Fraxinetum as a pirate base centers largely on the interpretation of primary documents and the replication of the arguments of the Latin chroniclers within modern scholarship, and the failure to incorporate other evidence, including Arabic sources and non-textual material, into the discussion. Although it is apparent that there was a mixed motivation for the *ghāzīs* inhabiting Fraxinetum which enabled various modes of interaction with the Franks of the region, *jihād* appears to have played a defining role in legitimizing their presence and informing their activities, as it did for other frontier regions of *dār al-Islām*. As Deborah Tor has recently indicated in her article about Ya‘qūb ibn al-Layth, founder of the Saffarid Dynasty in eastern Iran, Muslim frontier warfare and the activities of *ghāzīs* have too often been dismissed as a “series of haphazard and seemingly random campaigns, rather than as a coherent string of military activities in the service of the faith.”<sup>175</sup> This is clearly the case in historiography about Fraxinetum, which has not been adequately contextualized within the understanding of frontier warfare in the Islamic world. The existing evidence supports the view that Fraxinetum was indeed an Islamic frontier state, which reflected in many ways the frontier societies of Andalusī Crete and the Abbasid-Byzantine frontier. In order for Fraxinetum to be comprehended more fully, it is necessary for there to be an integration of its study into this broader context, which will demonstrate the degree to which it resembled and differed from the frontier states of the eastern Islamic world, allowing scholars to attain a better understanding the phenomenon of frontier warfare in the western Mediterranean during the early Middle Ages. By discussing Fraxinetum from this alternate perspective, this article has sought to further the debate about the Muslim presence in Provence, and to encourage additional inquiry into the question of Fraxinetum.

<sup>175</sup> Deborah Tor, “Historical Representations of Ya‘qūb b. al-Layth: A Reappraisal,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 12 (2002) 251.