of Val di Mazzara answers roughly to the old Carthaginian possessions. From Panormus the amir or lord of Sicily, Mahommed ibn Abdallah, sent forth his plunderers throughout Sicily and even into southern Italy. There, however, they made no lasting settlements.

The chief work of the next ten years was the conquest of the Val di Noto, but the first great advance was made elsewhere. In 843 the Saracens won the Mamertine city, Messana, and thus stood in the path between Italy and Sicily. Then the work of conquest, as described by the Arabic writers, went on, but slowly. At last, in 859, the very centre of the island, the strong­hold of Henna, was taken, and the main part of Val di Noto followed. But the divisions among the Moslems helped the Christians; they won back several towns, and beat off all attacks on Syracuse and Tauromenium. It is strange that the reign of Basil the Macedonian (867), a time of such renewed vigour in the empire, was the time of the greatest of all losses in Sicily. In Italy the imperial frontier largely advanced; in Sicily imperial fleets threatened Panormus. But in 875 the accession of Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad in Africa changed the face of things. The amir in Sicily, Ja'far ibn Ahmad, received strict orders to act vigorously against the eastern towns. In 877 began the only successful Semitic siege of Syracuse. The next year the city passed for the first time under the yoke of strangers to the fellowship of Europe.

Thus in fifty-one years the imperial and Christian territory in Sicily was cut down to a few points on or near the eastern coast, to the Val Demone in short without Messana. But between Moslem dissension and Christian valour the struggle had still to be waged for eighty-seven years. Henna had been the chief centre of Christian resistance a generation earlier; its place was now taken by the small fort of Rametta not far from Messina. The Moslems of Sicily were busy in civil wars; Arabs fought against Berbers, both against the African overlord. In 900 Panormus had to be won by a son of Ihrāhïm from Moslem rebels provoked by his father’s cruelty. But when Ibrāhīm himself came into Sicily, renewed efforts against the Christians led to the first taking of Tauromenium (908), of Rametta and of other points. The civil war that followed his death, the endless revolutions of Agrigentum, where the weaker side did not scruple to call in Christian help, hindered any real Saracen occupation of eastern Sicily. The emperors never gave up their claims to Sicily or their hopes of recovering it. Besides the struggle with the Christians in the island, there was often direct warfare between the empire and the Saracens; but such warfare was more active in Italy than in Sicily. In 956 a peace or truce was made by the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus. A few years later, Otho the Great, the restorer of the Western empire, looked to Sicily as a land to be won back for Christendom. It had not yet wholly passed away; but the day soon came. Strange to say, as Syracuse fell in the reign of Basil the Mace­donian, the Saracen occupation was completed in the reign of Nikephoros Phokas (Nicephorus Phocas), the deliverer of Crete. In the year of his accession (963) Tauromenium was taken, and became for a hundred years a Mahommedan possession. Rametta was the last stronghold to fall (965).

Thus in 138 years the Arab did what the Canaanite had never done. The whole island was a Semitic, that is a Mahommedan, possession. Yet the complete Saracen possession of Sicily may seem a thing of a moment. Its first and longest period lasted only 73 years. In that time Mahommedan Sicily was threatened by a Western emperor; the Arabic writers claim the Saracen army by which Otho II. was beaten back in 982 as a Sicilian army. A mightier enemy was threatening in the East. Basil II. planned the recovery of Sicily in good earnest. In 1027 he sent a great army; but his death stopped their progress before they reached the island. But the great conqueror had left behind him men trained in his school, and eleven years later the eagles of the new Rome again marched to Sicilian victories. The ravages of the Sicilian Saracens in the Greek islands were more frightful than ever, and George Maniaces, the first captain of his time, was sent to win back the lost land. He too was helped by Saracen dissensions. The amir Abul-afar became a Roman vassal, and, like Alaric of old, became *magister* in the Roman army. His brother and rival Abuḥafaṣ brought help from Africa; and finally all joined against the Christians. Four years of Christian victory (1038-1042) followed. In the host of Maniaces were men of all races—Normans, who had already begun to show themselves in south Italy, and the Varangian guard, the best soldiers of the empire, among whom Harold Hardrada himself is said to have held a place. Town after town was delivered, first Messana, then Syracuse, then a crowd of others. The exact extent of the reconquest is uncertain ; Byzantine writers claim the deliverance of the whole island; but it is certain that the Saracens never lost Panormus. But court influence spoiled everything: Maniaces was recalled; under his successor Stephen, brother-in-law of the emperor Michael, the Saracens won back what they had lost. Messana alone held out, for how long a time is uncertain. But a con­queror came who had no empresses to thwart him. In 1060 began the thirty years’ work of the first Roger.

Thus for 263 years the Christian people of some part or other of Sicily were in subjection to Moslem masters. But that subjection differed widely in different times and places. The land was won bit by bit. One town was taken by storm; another submitted on terms harsher or more favourable. The condition of the Christians varied from that of personal slaves to that of communities left free on the payment of tribute. The great mass were in the intermediate state usual among the non-Mahommedan subjects of a Mahommedan power. The *dhimmī* of Sicily were in essentially the same case as the *rayahs* of the Turk. While the conquest was going on, the towns that remained unconquered gained in point of local freedom. They became allies rather than subjects of the distant emperor. So did the tributary districts, as long as the original terms were kept. But, as ever, the condition of the subject race grew worse. After the complete conquest of the island, while the mere slaves had turned Mahom­medans, there is nothing more heard of tributary districts. At the coming of the Normans the whole Christian population was in the state of *rayahs.* Still Christianity and the Greek tongue never died out; churches and monasteries received and held property; there still are saints and scholars. It would be rash to deny that traces of other dialects may not have lingered on ; but Greek and Arabic were the two written tongues of Sicily when the Normans came. The Sicilian Saracens were hindered by their internal feuds from ever becoming a great power; but they stood high among Mahommedan nations. Their advance in civilization is shown by their position under the Normans, and above all by their admirable style of architecture (see Palermo). They had a literature which Norman kings studied and promoted. The Normans in short came into the inheritance of the two most civilized nations of the time, and allowed them to flourish side by side.

The most brilliant time for Sicily as a power in the world begins with the coming of the Normans. Never before or after was the island so united or so independent. Some of the old tyrants had ruled out of Sicily; none had ruled over all Sicily. The Normans held all Sicily as the centre of a dominion which stretched far beyond it. The conquest was the work of one man, Count Roger of the house of Hauteville (see Roger I.). The conquests of the Normans in Italy and Sicily form part of one enterprise; hut they altogether differ in character. In Italy they overthrew the Byzantine dominion; their own rule was perhaps not worse, but they were not deliverers. In Sicily they were welcomed by the Christians as deliverers from infidel bondage.

As in the Saracen conquest of Sicily, as in the Byzantine recovery, so in the Norman conquest, the immediate occasion was given by a home traitor. Count Roger had already made a plundering attack, when Becumen of Catania, driven out by his brother, urged him to serious invasion. Messina was taken in 1060, and became for a while the Norman capital. The