

apparently knights of Frankish or Burgundian origin, who profited from the anarchy brought about by the collapse of the Carolingian dynasty to carve out a place for themselves in Piedmont. We first encounter Arduin around the year 945, already bearing the title of count. By then he was already established at Turin, in a fortress at the western gate leading towards Susa and the Alps, which served as his headquarters in his constant struggles against Saracen incursions. He proved himself to be an effective soldier and a resourceful – even unscrupulous – politician. About 950 he was invested with the March of Turin, probably by Berengar of Ivrea. He was also granted the right to administer the lands of the then-vacant abbey of Novalesa, in the upper valley of Susa. These lands, which Arduin had probably seized some time before, were a valuable acquisition, giving him control of the Mont-Cénis and Mont-Genèvre passes. When the abbot of Novalesa demanded that he give these lands back to the monastery, Arduin refused. His refusal earned him the undying enmity of the monks. The monastic chronicle of Novalesa, our sole source for Arduin's deeds, condemns him bitterly and unsparingly: he was “puffed up with pride”, “avaricious”, “a ravening wolf in the white clothing of a sheep”.

If we discount this rhetoric, it is clear that Arduin was acting like every successful warlord of his time, aggrandizing his power and expanding his territorial holdings at the expense of his weaker neighbors, both lay and clerical; bowing to superior force when he had to; and consolidating his family's influence through well-chosen marriages. Although linked by marriage to his overlord Berengar of Ivrea – he married one of his daughters to the latter's son Conrad – he was probably involved in the conspiracy that overthrew Berengar in 961-62 and secured the Italian crown for Otto I. This well-timed shift of allegiance from one patron to another left him in undisputed command of the March of Turin, and evidently earned him the favor of his new overlord, the emperor, who rewarded him by elevating him to marquis of Turin. Arduin greatly increased the security of the March by maintaining an energetic defense against the Saracen raiders, and finally rooted them out. In 972 they kidnapped the abbot of Cluny, an august clerical dignitary, as he crossed the Alps on pilgrimage to Rome. This outrage sparked an immediate reaction. Next year Arduin mobilized his men, crossed the Alps, joined forces with the lords of Provence, and destroyed the Saracens' stronghold at Fraxinetum, putting an end once and for all to their depredations.

Arduin died some time around 976. As custom dictated, his lands were divided between his three sons: the eldest, Manfred, inherited the