

= Siege of Tyana =

A Siege of Tyana was carried out by the Umayyad Caliphate in 707 ? 708 / 708 ? 709 in retaliation for a heavy defeat of an Umayyad army under Maimun the Mardaite by the Byzantine Empire in c . 706 . The Arab army invaded Byzantine territory and laid siege to the city in summer 707 or 708 . In fact virtually each of the extant Greek , Arabic and Syriac parallel sources has in this respect a different date . Tyana initially withstood the siege with success , and the Arab army faced great hardship during the ensuing winter . Emperor Justinian II sent a relief army in the next spring , but the Umayyads defeated them , whereupon the inhabitants of the city were forced to surrender . Despite the agreement of terms , the city was plundered and largely destroyed , and according to Byzantine sources its people were made captive and deported , leaving the city deserted .

= = Background = =

In 692 / 693 , the Byzantine emperor Justinian II (reigned 685 ? 695 and 705 ? 711) and the Umayyad Caliph Abd al @-@ Malik (r . 685 ? 705) broke the truce that had existed between Byzantium and the Umayyad Caliphate since 679 , following the failed Muslim attack on the Byzantine capital , Constantinople . The Byzantines secured great financial and territorial advantages from the truce , which they extended further by exploiting the Umayyad government 's involvement in the Second Muslim Civil War (680 ? 692) . However , by 692 the Umayyads were clearly emerging as the victors in the conflict , and Abd al @-@ Malik consciously began a series of provocations to bring about a resumption of warfare . Justinian , confident in his own strength based on his previous successes , responded in kind . Finally , the Umayyads claimed that the Byzantines had broken the treaty and invaded Byzantine territory , defeating the imperial army at the Battle of Sebastopolis in 693 . In its aftermath , the Arabs quickly regained control over Armenia and resumed their attacks into the border zone of eastern Asia Minor , that would culminate in the second attempt to conquer Constantinople in 716 ? 718 . Furthermore , Justinian was deposed in 695 , beginning a twenty @-@ year period of internal instability that almost brought the Byzantine state to its knees .

= = Arab campaign against Tyana = =

As part of these Arab raids , an invasion under a certain Maimun al @-@ Gurgunami (" Maimun the Mardaite ") took place , which raided Cilicia and was defeated by a Byzantine army under a general named Marianus near Tyana . The dating of this expedition is unclear ; although the primary account , by al @-@ Baladhuri , places it under Abd al @-@ Malik (who died in 705) , it is commonly dated to 706 by modern scholars . According to Baladhuri , this Maimun had been a slave of Caliph Muawiyah 's sister , who had fled to the Mardaites , a group of Christian rebels in northern Syria . After the Mardaites had been subdued , the general Maslama ibn Abd al @-@ Malik , who had heard of his valour , liberated him and entrusted him with a military command , and later swore to avenge his death .

As a result , Maslama launched another attack aimed at Tyana , with his nephew al @-@ Abbas ibn al @-@ Walid as co @-@ commander . The chronology of the expedition is again unclear : the Byzantine chronicler Theophanes the Confessor puts it in A.M. 6201 (708 / 709 AD , and possibly even 709 / 710) , but Arab sources date it to A.H. 88 and 89 (706 / 707 AD and 707 / 708 AD respectively) . As a result , the siege has been variously dated to 707 ? 708 AD and 708 ? 709 AD .

The Arabs laid siege to the city , employing siege engines to bombard its fortifications . They managed to destroy part of the wall , but were unable to enter the city . Despite launching several assaults , the defenders successfully drove them back . The siege continued into winter , and the Arabs began to suffer greatly from shortage of food , so that they began contemplating abandoning the siege altogether . In the spring , however , Justinian II , who had been restored to the Byzantine throne in 705 , assembled a relief army under the generals Theodore Karteroukas and Theophylact Salibas and sent it towards Tyana . The Byzantine chroniclers record that the regular troops were

complemented by armed peasants , numerous but lacking in any military experience . This may point to the dire straits the regular Byzantine army was in , partly as a result of Justinian 's purge of the officer corps after his restoration and partly due to the losses suffered in the war with the Bulgars .

As the relief army approached Tyana , it was confronted by the Arabs , and in the ensuing battle , the Byzantines were routed . According to Theophanes , the two Byzantine generals quarrelled among themselves , and their attack was disorderly . The Byzantines lost many thousand dead , and the captives also numbered in the thousands . The Arabs captured the Byzantine camp and took all the provisions they had brought along for the beleaguered city , allowing them to continue the siege . The inhabitants of Tyana now despaired of any succour , and as their own supplies dwindled they began negotiations for a surrender . The Arabs promised to allow them to depart unharmed , and the city capitulated after a siege of nine months (in March according to Michael the Syrian , in May ? June according to al @-@ Tabari) . Theophanes reports that the Arabs broke their promise and enslaved the entire population , which was deported to the Caliphate , but no other source confirms this . After looting the town , the Arabs razed it to the ground .

= = Aftermath = =

The chroniclers report that after sacking Tyana , Abbas and Maslama divided their forces and campaigned in Byzantine territory . Again the chronology , as well as the identity of the targets , is uncertain . The primary sources give 709 or 710 as the dates , which could mean that these raids happened in the immediate aftermath of Tyana or in the year after . Abbas raided Cilicia and from there turned west as far as Dorylaion , while Maslama seized the fortresses of Kamuliana and Heraclea Cybistra near Tyana , or , according to another interpretation of the Arabic sources , marched also west and took Heraclea Pontica and Nicomedia , while some of his troops raided Chrysopolis across from Constantinople itself . Arab raids continued for the next years , and were carried out even while a huge army under Maslama was besieging Constantinople in 717 ? 718 . After the failure of this undertaking , Arab attacks continued , but they were now concerned with plunder and prestige , rather than outright conquest . Although the Umayyad attacks of the early 8th century were successful in gaining control of the border districts of Cilicia and the region around Melitene , and despite their destruction of Byzantine strongholds like Tyana in the following decades , the Arabs were never able to permanently establish a presence west of the Taurus Mountains , which thus came to delineate the Arab @-@ Byzantine frontier for the next two centuries .