

= Battle of Kopidnadon =

The Battle of Kopidnadon or Kopidnados took place in September 788 between the armies of the Abbasid Caliphate and the Byzantine Empire . The Abbasid army launched an invasion of Byzantine Asia Minor , and was confronted by a Byzantine force at Kopidnadon . The resulting battle was an Abbasid victory . Among the Byzantine losses was a certain Diogenes , who is identified by some scholars with the probable original source for the literary hero Digenes Akritas .

= Background =

Ever since the failure of the last Arab attempt to conquer the Byzantine capital Constantinople , regular , almost annual raids were undertaken by the Caliphate 's forces into Byzantine Asia Minor . In 782 , a major invasion , led by the Abbasid heir apparent , the future Harun al @-@ Rashid (r . 786 ? 809) , resulted in a humiliating settlement for Byzantium , which was forced to sue for a truce in exchange for an annual payment of 160 @,@ 000 gold nomismata . In 785 , Empress @-@ regent Irene of Athens resolved to cease the payment of the tribute , and warfare recommenced . The Arabs raided the Armeniac Theme , but in early 786 the Byzantines retaliated by sacking and razing to the ground the fortress town of Hadath in Cilicia , which the Abbasids had spent the last five years turning into a major stronghold and military base for their cross @-@ border expeditions against Byzantium .

= Battle =

With Harun al @-@ Rashid 's accession in 786 , the raids launched over the next two years were relatively minor affairs ; the first great invasion of the new reign occurred in 788 , when a large expeditionary force crossed the Cilician Gates into the Anatolic Theme . Although the raid is not mentioned in Arabic sources , its description by the Byzantine chronicler Theophanes the Confessor points to a major invasion , as it was confronted by the forces of the two most powerful Byzantine thematic armies , those of the Anatolic Theme itself and of the Opsician Theme .

The site of the battle is called " Kopidnadon " in Theophanes , a name otherwise unattested . Modern scholars , beginning with Henri Grégoire in 1932 , have identified it with the town of Podandos , on the western exit of the Cilician Gates . According to the brief account of Theophanes , the battle ended in a bloody defeat for the Byzantines , who lost many men and officers , including members of the tagma of the Scholai who had been banished to the provinces by Irene in 786 for their continued support of Iconoclasm . Theophanes also singles out the loss of the capable officer Diogenes , a tourmarches (division commander) of the Anatolics .

= Impact =

The immediate impact of the Byzantine defeat seems to have been negligible ; losses were heavy but not unbearable , and the level of devastation of the region seems to have been minimal . In material terms , there is therefore little to distinguish the defeat at Kopidnadon from the " typical " Arab raid . It marks , however , a recommencement of large @-@ scale border warfare after the relative lull since 782 , which continued unabated until Harun 's death in 809 and the subsequent Abbasid civil war .

Perhaps the most long @-@ term consequence of the battle was the death of the tourmarches Diogenes : by virtue of his unusual prominence in Theophanes 's account , Henri Grégoire identified this Diogenes with the original archetype for the later epic hero Digenes Akritas .