



Summary :

Early in the summer of 707, the Arabs under Maslamah ibn 'Abd al-Malik and 'Abbas ibn al-Walid invaded Cappadocia and laid siege to Tyana. In early 708, Emperor Justinian II sent an expeditionary corps under Theophylaktos Salibas and Theodore Karteroukas to help the city. The defeat of this army forced the citizens of Tyana to surrender the city to the Arabs in March 708.

Date

early summer of 707 - March 708

Geographical Location

Tyana, Cappadocia

1. Historical framework

The early 8th century was marked by continuous [conflicts](#) between Byzantines and Arabs along the eastern border of [Asia Minor](#) from [Cilicia](#) to [Armenia](#). The Arabs were launching [raids](#) every year, while the Byzantines were trying to withhold them and retaliate with attacks against Arab lands. This situation, which characterized the last years of the reign of Emperor [Tiberios-Apsimaros](#), continued after 705, when Justinian II reoccupied the imperial throne (685-695, 705-711).

In 706 (in all probability), on its way from [Tarsos](#), an Arab expeditionary corps under Maioumas the [Mardaite](#), as he is referred to in the sources, invaded the Byzantine territories of southeastern Asia Minor. The Arab raiders were intercepted by Byzantine forces under [strategos](#) Marianos. The battle must have taken place near the city of [Tyana](#), at a strategic position near the passages leading from Cilicia to [Cappadocia](#). The Arab expeditionary corps was defeated by Marianos and Maioumas was killed.

Such was the fame and the abilities of Maioumas, that the Arabs were very distressed about his loss.¹ As a result, Maslamah ibn 'Abd al-Malik, the brother of the Arab [Caliph](#) al-Walid, in cooperation with his nephew 'Abbas ibn al-Walid), the caliph's son, decided to avenge his death and raided against Tyana in 707.

2. The siege and fall of Tyana

In the early summer of 707, an Arab expeditionary corps under Maslamah ibn 'Abd al-Malik and 'Abbas ibn al-Walid invaded Cappadocia through Cilicia and laid siege to Tyana. The Arabs plundered the suburbs and blockaded Tyana. Then, with the help of their war machines, they managed to pull down a part of the [fortification enclosure](#). But despite their partial success, they failed to seize Tyana and had to camp around the city. The winter was difficult for them as they soon got short of supplies.

When Justinian II was informed about these developments, he ordered that an expeditionary corps be formed and sent to Tyana in order to take supplies to the besieged and repel the invaders. The army was reinforced by a number of Asia Minor farmers, although they were unarmed and untrained. The expeditionary corps was headed by two close assistants to the Emperor, Theophylaktos Salibas and Theodore Karteroukas.

The Byzantines arrived in Tyana probably in the early spring of 708, shortly before the Arabs, discouraged by hardships, gave up their attempt to capture the city. A great battle took place in front of the city walls between the besiegers and the Byzantine army. At first, the Byzantines repelled the Arabs, but 'Abbas managed to restrain his forces. The Arabs took advantage of the irregular army of farmers as well as of the dispute between Salibas and Karteroukas and took the offensive. The Byzantines faced a catastrophic defeat and suffered numerous casualties, while lots of them were captured. Moreover, the supplies they were to take to the besieged fell in the hands of the Arabs.

After the Byzantine corps was defeated the inhabitants of Tyana negotiated with the Arabs and agreed to surrender under certain



conditions. The Arabs eventually entered the city in March 708.²

3. Consequences

The siege and fall of Tyana had direct consequences for the city and the citizens. After the fall, the Arabs plundered, destroyed and deserted the city taking the citizens as captives. For several years the city of Tyana remained in ruins and was deserted. The Arabs allegedly violated the terms of the treaty with the citizens of Tyana and enslaved a large number of them, while others were displaced.³ Also, lots of Byzantine soldiers and non-combatants were killed or captured during the battle in front of the city walls.

The consequences for the entire Byzantine Empire were equally significant. The Byzantine army was defeated and suffered heavy losses in Tyana and therefore the road was paved for further Arab invasions against the Byzantine territories of Asia Minor. It was a terrible blow to Justinian's prestige and yet another step towards the final fall of the emperor in 711.

1. Brooks, E.W., "The Arabs in Asia Minor (641-750), from Arabic Sources", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 18 (1898), p. 203.

2. According to Brooks, E.W., "The Arabs in Asia Minor (641-750), from Arabic Sources", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 18 (1898), p. 192, some Arab historians date the fall of Tyana to mid-707. However, they probably confuse the date of fall with the onset of the siege. Χριστοφιλοπούλου, Αικ., "Κρίσιμοι χρόνοι 642-802", in *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* 8 (Athens 1979), p. 22, dates the fall of Tyana to 709.

3. Στράτος, Α., *Το Βυζάντιον στον Ζ' αιώνα* 6 (Athens 1977), pp. 157-158, expresses his doubts about the sources supporting that the Arabs did not observe the terms of the treaty and enslaved the citizens of Tyana.

Bibliography :

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	Νικηφόρος Πατριάρχης , <i>Ιστορία σύντομος</i> , Mango, C. (ed.), <i>Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History</i> , Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 13, Washington, D.C. 1990
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	Head C. , <i>Justinian II of Byzantium</i> , Madison – Milwaukee – London 1972

Glossary :

	caliph The supreme religious and political authority of Muslims, considered successor of Muhammad (Arabic: khalifa = deputy). He was the head of the
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Caliphate, the religious state of the Arabs.

strategos ("general")

During the Roman period his duties were mainly political. Office of the Byzantine state's provincial administration. At first the title was given to the military and political administrator of the themes, namely of the big geographic and administrative unities of the Byzantine empire. Gradually the title lost its power and, already in the 11th century, strategoi were turned to simple commanders of military units, responsible for the defence of a region.

Sources

De Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig 1883), pp. 376.31-377.14.

Mango, C. (ed.), *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 13, Washington 1990), p. 44.1-18.

Quotations

The siege and the fall of Tyana, according to the Byzantine chronicler Theophanes

"Τούτω τῷ ἔτει ἐπεστράτευσε Μασαλμᾶς καὶ Ἄβας τὴν Τύανον διὰ τὴν μανίαν τοῦ ἀποκτανθέντος στρατοῦ σὺν τῷ Μαΐουμᾳ ὑπὸ Μαριανοῦ, καὶ ταύτην πολιορκοῦντες παρεχρίμασαν ἐκεῖ. καὶ ἀποστέλλει πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὁ βασιλεὺς δύο στρατηγούς, Θεόδωρον τὸν Καρτεροῦκαν καὶ Θεοφύλακτον τὸν Σαλιβᾶν μετὰ στρατοῦ καὶ γεωργικοῦ λαοῦ χωρικοβοηθείας πρὸς τὸ πολεμῆσαι καὶ ἐκδιῶξαι αὐτούς. αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς ἔριν ἀλλήλων ἐλθόντες καὶ ἀτάκτως συμβαλόντες αὐτοῖς τρέπονται, καὶ πολλαὶ χιλιάδες ἀπώλοντο, καὶ ἠχμαλωτεύθησαν πολλοί. λαβόντες δὲ τὸ τοῦλδον καὶ τὰ τούτων βρώματα παρεκάθισαν, ἕως οὐ παρέλαβον τὴν πόλιν. λειφθέντες γὰρ ἦσαν τὰ βρώματα, καὶ ἤμελλον ἀναχωρεῖν. οἱ δὲ τῆς πόλεως Τύανων ταῦτα ἰδόντες καὶ ἀπογνόντες ἔλαβον λόγον τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀπαθείας καὶ ἐξῆλθον πρὸς αὐτοὺς καταλιπόντες τὴν πόλιν ἔρημον ἕως τοῦ νῦν. οἱ δὲ τὸν λόγον μὴ φυλάξαντες τούτους εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ἐξώρισαν, καὶ πολλοὺς δούλους ἐκράτησαν."

De Boor, C. (ed.), *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig 1883), pp. 376.31-377.14.

The siege of Tyana in the historical work of Patriarch Nikephoros

"Ἐν τούτοις ὄντων τῶν πραγμάτων ὁ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν βασιλεὺς λαὸν πλείστον ὀπλίτην ἐκπέμπει, ἡγεμόνας αὐτοῖς ἐπιστήσας Μασαλμᾶν καὶ Σολυμᾶν κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν διάλεκτον καλουμένους, ὡς τὰ Τύανα τὴν πόλιν πολιορκήσοντες. οἱ δὲ ἐκεῖσε παραγενόμενοι, πολέμους πλείστους συνάψαντες, μέρος δὲ καὶ τοῦ τείχους ἐκ τῶν πρὸς τειχομαχίαν ὀργάνων καταβαλόντες καὶ πλέον οὐδὲν ἀνύσαι ἰσχύσαντες, ἀποχωρεῖν πρὸς τὰ οικεῖα ἐβούλοντο. ἐν ᾧ ἐκπέμπει Ἰουστινιανὸς πρὸς τὴν μεσογείαν, καὶ πλείστον λαὸν ἀγροικόν τε καὶ γεωργικὸν ἀθροίσας πρὸς τὰ Τύανα ἀφικνεῖσθαι ἐκέλευσεν ὡς τοὺς πολιορκουμένους ἐπαμυνόμενος. τούτους ἀόπλους οἱ Σαρακηνοὶ θεασάμενοι ὀρμῶσι κατ' αὐτῶν, καὶ τοὺς μὲν ξίφει ἀνείλοντο τοὺς δὲ αἰχμαλώτους συνέλαβον. ἐντεῦθεν θαρραλέωτερον διατεθέντες τῆς προσεδρίας Τύανων εἶχοντο. οἱ δὲ ἀπορία δαπανημάτων τῶν πρὸς μάχην ἀπειπόντες τῆς τε παρὰ βασιλείως βοήθειας οὐκ εὐπορήσαντες, ὁμολογία ἑαυτοὺς τοῖς ἐχθροῖς παρέδωσαν καὶ πρὸς τὰ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν ἦθη ἀπώχοντο."

Mango, C. (ed.), *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 13, Washington 1990), p. 44.1-18.

Chronological Table

706: Maioumas the Mardaite is defeated and killed during a battle against the Byzantine general Marianos near Tyana

early summer of 707: An Arab expeditionary corps under Maslamah ibn 'Abd al-Malik and 'Abbas ibn al-Walid lays siege to Tyana

early spring of 708: Battle between Arabs and a Byzantine expeditionary corps in front of the walls of Tyana. The Byzantines are defeated

March 708: The inhabitants of Tyana surrender to the Arabs under prearranged conditions