Studia Ceranea 14, 2024, p. 369–387
https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.14.23

ISSN: 2084-140X
e-ISSN: 2449-8378

Maciej Czyż (Wrocław)
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9160-9847

Byzantine Reconquista (10th–11th Centuries) and the Attacks on Christians in the Lands of Islam (Egypt, Syria and Iraq)*

Abstract. The paper discusses a wave of attacks on Christians in the lands of Islam that accompanied Byzantine victories on the battlefield in 10th–11th centuries, including pogroms and attacks in the capital of Egypt, Antioch, Alexandria, and Daqūqā', which were clearly linked with the fear or anger towards Byzantines, as well as events in Damascus, Al-Ramla, Caesarea, Ascalon and Tinnis, in case of which the link with Byzantium is not mentioned by the sources. It is argued that these events paved the way for the persecutions of Al-Ḥākim.

Keywords: pogrom, Christians, Islam, Byzantium

Christians, and most of all Melkites, were always in danger of being accused of being the fifth column of Byzantium[1]. It was less significant when Muslims were strong, and Byzantium was defending itself. But in the 10th century the Muslim world was in crisis, and Byzantium was at the new peak of its power. In the 10th century Shia movements and states took control of most of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate. Fāṭimids conquered North Africa, Egypt, Great Syria and Hejaz. The Qarmaṭians took much of Arabia. Buwayhids took control of Iran and Iraq, including Baghdad. Sunni caliphs were being overthrown and mutilated by them. The looting and

* The text was originally used as a chapter of thesis: M. Czyż, *Sytuacja chrześcijan za panowania Al-Ḥākima bi-Amr Allāha*, MA thesis written under the supervision of dr P. Lewicka, Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw 2007, p. 43–55.

[1] Not always without a reason; Al-Antākī, *Tārīḫ Al-Anṭākī ăl-maʿrūf bi-ṣilat tārīḫ Awtīḫā*, ed. ʿU. Tadmurī, Tripoli 1990 (cetera: Al-Anṭākī), p. 162 – Christian secretary Kulayb submitted fortresses Barzūya and Ṣahyūn (today Qalʿat Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn); p. 193–194 – an Armenian captive with her family took the fortress of Raʿbān and submitted it to Byzantium.

cracking of the black stone from Mecca by Qarmaṭians can be a symbol of these unquiet times. The internal conflicts were accompanied by military defeats, especially at Byzantine hands.

The Byzantines under the Macedonian dynasty were knocking out one "front tooth"[2] after another and moving the border more and more into the lands that Muslims once took from them and got used to treating as their own. The Byzantine danger loomed over the very centre of the Muslim world, that is Syria and Iraq. Byzantines temporarily subjected the former capital of the Caliphate, Damascus[3], and even Baghdad was not free from danger[4]. The fear of Byzantine conquest reigned among the Muslims of the Middle East, especially during the reign of Nikephoros Phokas[5]. The (ahistorical) legends have Nikephoros say, after conquering Tarsus, that he is in Jerusalem already, because – as the capital of the frontier Al-Ṯugūr region, filled with fortresses – Tarsus was the only obstacle on the way to the holy city[6]. In an alleged letter to caliph Al-Muṭīʿ ascribed to him, Nikephoros was threatening to march on Jerusalem, Baghdad and Al-Fusṭāṭ, foretold the conquest of Mecca and called on Arabs to return to Yemen, which he wanted to conquer as well[7]. Although the letter is a forgery, it shows the level of fear associated with Nikephoros. It's worth noting that it was he who, according

[2] *Al-Ṯuḡūr*; that's how the Muslim fortressed at the border with Byzantium were called.

[3] AL-ANṬĀKĪ, p. 162 – Damascus was forced to ransom itself from Tzimiskes.

[4] AL-ANṬĀKĪ, p. 149–151: *ʿIzz al-Dawla Baḫtiyār went from Baghdad to Kufa. A group of elders of these lands went to him and met him. They lamented their fear of Romans* (Byzantines) *which torments them and the inhabitants of Baghdad, and that they do not have enough strength to defend themselves from them if they returned to fight them* (my own translation).

[5] AL-ANṬĀKĪ, p. 136–137 – a part of the chronicle of Al-Anṭākī shows the mood of these times. Ironically it's written next to a remark about a place that, in the future, will become a symbol of Muslim triumph over the Byzantines. Al-Anṭākī says that no one doubted that Nikephoros would capture the entirety of Syria and Al-Ǧazīra. In *Al-Kāmil fī ăl-tarīḫ* these words are repeated, and Egypt is added to the potential Byzantine conquests, albeit it's likely a typo, mistaking Muḍar (مضر) for Egypt (Miṣr: مصر): ʿIZZ AL-DĪN ABŪ ĂL-ḤASAN ʿALĪ ĬBN AL-AṮĪR, *Al-Kāmil fī ăl-tārīḫ*, vol. V, Beirut 1994 (cetera: IBN AL-AṮĪR), p. 363 – The author mentions that no one fought Nikephoros during his Syrian campaign and also mentions a great fear which the Byzantines inspired in Muslims at that time; p. 367 – Again he mentions the Muslims' fear of the Byzantines; p. 369 – The author mentions that Nikephoros was a staunch enemy of the Muslims and enumerates his conquests; p. 370 – the author mentions that Nikephoros made raiding the lands of Islam his goal and repeats Al-Anṭākī's description of his tactics, as well as that Muslims feared him much and believed that he would take, without a fight, Great Syria, Al-Ǧazīra and Egypt.

[6] KAMĀL AL-DĪN IBN AL-ʿADĪM, *Zubdat al-ḥalab min tārīḫ Ḥalab*, ed. Ḫ. AL-MANṢŪR, Beirut 1996 (cetera: ZUBDA), p. 84. On the city of Tarsus, see C.E. BOSWORTH, *The City of Tarsus and the Arab-Byzantine Frontiers in Early and Middle ʿAbbāsid Times*, Or.JPTSIS 33, 1992, p. 268–286.

[7] TĀĞĞ AL-DĪN AL-SUBKĪ, *Ṭabaqāt al-Šāfiʿiyya al-Kubrà*, vol. II, p. 179–181, [apud:] N.M. EL CHEIKH, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, Cambridge–London 2004, p. 173–174 – It is uncertain whether the letter ascribed to Nikephoros is authentic, especially since it was, for the one creating polemic with it, a pretext for criticising the Daylamits while praising the Chorasanians. Even if not authentic, the letter could have been expression of Muslim fears.

to the advice of *Tactic* of Emperor Leo the Wise, tried to transplant the Muslim idea of martyrdom – death in a fight against infidels – to Byzantium[8]. Nikephoros was murdered, but his successors – John Tzimiskes, less so Basil the Bulgar-slayer – lead successful campaigns against Muslims as well.

Byzantine conquests were accompanied by rapes[9], killings[10] and destruction of lands within the range of military operations[11]. To force fortified border towns to surrender, imperial forces were destroying cultivations and causing famine, often accompanied by pestilence[12]. It meant great suffering for the nearby population, both local Muslims and Christians. Christians were, however, sometimes treated differently to the Muslims[13]. Perhaps that's why even Christian refugees from lands conquered by the Byzantines were suspected of treason[14]. Byzantines often destroyed mosques in conquered cities[15], and many Muslims were "suffering poverty and harassment"[16] in Byzantine slavery. Those who escaped death and slavery were going into exile, crossing hundreds of kilometres in search of safe haven and sometime dying on their way[17]. Many local Muslims remained, or returned to

[8] M. Canard, *La guerre sainte dans le monde islamique et le monde chrétien*, RAfr 1936, p. 605–623; N.M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed…*, p. 174; Leo Philosophus, *Tactica*, XVIII, 128–133, [in:] *PG*, vol. CVII, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1863, p. 975–978; G. Dagron, *Byzance et le modèle islamique au Xe siècle. À propos des Constitutions Tactiques de l'empereur Léon VI*, CRAIBL 127.2, 1983, p. 221–224. Interestingly, Ibn al-Aṯīr believed that Nikephoros II Phokas was of Muslim descent. In reality he came from an old aristocratic family. Muslims, used to Byzantines and Christians being defeated and humiliated, were struck with cognitive dissonance when faced with the victories of the Macedonian dynasty. Some of them overcame it by striking against local Christians. Meanwhile, someone from whom Ibn al-Aṯīr took his information overcame it by making Nikephoros II descendant of Muslims. In reality it was Nikephoros I that was a Christian Arab – Ph.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 10th ed., London–Basingstoke 1984, p. 300, n. 2 – which again shows how easy it was to confuse historical personas, especially if they had similar names, and the mistake fit with the author's worldview– Ibn al-Aṯīr, vol. V, p. 369; a case of conversion to Christianity of defeated Arab tribes shows another way of solving this dissonance.

[9] The rapes are hinted at in *Al-Kāmil fī ăl-tārīḫ* – Ibn al-Aṯīr, vol. V, p. 325 AH 351.

[10] Al-Anṭākī, p. 92.

[11] Which influenced the attitude of local population to the Byzantines, and its anger was released by attacks on Christians.

[12] Al-Anṭākī, p. 105–106, 107, 128, 136–137.

[13] Al-Anṭākī, p. 135 – Byzantines released the Christians from among the captives taken in Antioch and settled them in the city. Ibn al-Aṯīr, vol. V, p. 323 – an information which can be understood that Byzantines captured Muslims only (and left Christians alone).

[14] Ibn al-Aṯīr, vol. V, p. 366–367 – According to the author Christian refugees from Lūqā (Būqā) assisted Byzantines in the capture of Antioch. But Al-Anṭākī, better informed about his hometown, does not mention that. It is likely that the story of Ibn al-Aṯīr came about because in Antioch the Byzantines treated the Christians well and allowed them, and likely also the refugees from Lūqā, to stay in the city. Ibn al-Aṯīr must have believed it was the reward for their betrayal.

[15] Ibn al-Aṯīr, vol. V, p. 337 – Nikephoros turned the Friday mosque in Tarsus into a stable, and burnt its minbar; p. 300 – Byzantines burnt the mosques in Sarūğ; Al-Anṭākī, p. 95 – Nikephoros destroyed the mosques in Crete. Etc.

[16] Al-Anṭākī, p. 42.

[17] Ibn al-Aṯīr, vol. V, p. 324 AH 351.

their houses[18] as soon as the situation stabilised. But it was likely that – subject to similar pressure as Christians in Muslim-conquered lands – they would convert to Christianity[19]. ʿUbayd Allāh, one of the elders of Melitene (Malatya), converted and played a major role in Byzantine politics[20]. As the governor of Antioch, he represented Byzantium in Syria. Some of the Bedouins, dazzled by the victories of Nikephoros, changed their religion as well[21]. In the aforementioned letter to Muslims, Nikephoros said himself that he is making his conquests in order to spread Christianity[22]. The letter is a forgery, but shows how Nikephoros was seen in Muslim lands. All of this had to intensify the sense of danger among Muslims in the lands threatened by Byzantine expansion, which is seen e.g. in a popular revolt in Syria, directed against Byzantines[23].

Common Muslims were aware of the immense danger posed by the Byzantines and their atrocities, but not always of the subtle difference between the Byzantines beyond the sea and the local Christians. Thus they launched attacks on churches, calling for fight against Byzantium. This should not come as a surprise, because victory against Byzantines was also, as Al-Mutanabbī claims, a victory over crosses and churches[24]. Here are a few examples of what were the effects of victories of imperial armies in the neighbouring Muslim lands[25].

In year 960 (AH 349) the Muslims of Al-Fusṭāṭ, having learnt about a Christian victory on the distant Syrian border, turned against their Christian neighbours[26]:

> The news of [the Byzantine victory] reached Miṣr on Sunday, the third of Al-Muḥarram of year 349[27]. The people of Miṣr and its scoundrels were greatly stirred, and Christians closed

[18] Al-Anṭākī, p. 108.

[19] Such fear was expressed in: Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, p. 179–180, 180, [apud:] N.M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed…*, p. 168.

[20] Al-Anṭākī, p. 167, 170 – by changing sides as the duke of Antioch he contributed to Basil's victory.

[21] Ibn al-Aṯīr, vol. V, p. 363.

[22] Tāǧǧ al-Dīn al-Subkī, vol. II, p. 179–181, [apud:] N.M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed…*, p. 174: *I will conquer east and west and propagate everywhere the religion of the cross.*

[23] Al-Anṭākī, p. 254–255 AH 395–397.

[24] Al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān*, ed. F. Dietrici, Berlin 1861, 453.12, [apud:] N.M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed…*, p. 166.

[25] I enumerated only these cases of assaults on Christians for which the sources themselves mention Byzantium as the reason for the attacks. Among the other ones, one should mention the murder of the patriarch of Jerusalem, John. It was accompanied by the destruction of several churches in Jerusalem, including the Holy Sepulchre, and it took place at the same time as the murder of the patriarch of Antioch Christopher – Al-Anṭākī, p. 110–113 AH 355. One should also mention the destruction of the last pseudo-Sabeans' temple, in Ḥarrān – Al-Anṭākī, p. 428–429 AH 422.

[26] Al-Anṭākī, p. 92–93 AH 348/349; it's interesting that one attack took place during a holiday, and another on Sunday. Perhaps it was the sight of happy or celebrating Christians that enraged Muslims. Perhaps (at least in the first case) they thought they celebrated Byzantine victories?

[27] 5 III 960, Monday.

their churches quickly that day[28]. Early morning Monday a mob gathered and headed to the Melkite church of angel Michael in Qaṣr al-Šamʿ. They smashed the gate, vandalised the church and robbed what they got in it. [Next] they returned to the Jacobite [Coptic] church of anbā Cyrus, which is in Qaṣr al-Šamʿ, and did the same to it as in the previous one. When Friday, the eighth of Al-Muḥarram of this year[29] came, after the midday prayer[30], a commotion and stirring occurred in the Old Mosque. Many people were robbed and their clothes were taken. The mob returned to the church of angel Michael. The door was smashed again, and the church was robbed and demolished. A similar thing occurred to a Jacobite [Coptic] church in the upper part of the Channel, under the invocation of the Lady, known as -B-RĪS.

Also in the next year, after the news of the Byzantine conquest of Crete arrived, a devastation of churches happened[31].

The news of [the conquest of Crete] reached Miṣr on Friday [after which comes] the Saturday night, the eighth of Ṣafar of this year[32], and this was the day of the feast of St Lazarus, which takes place two days before the Palm Sunday. Soon the mob and the common folk of Miṣr gathered. They went to the Melkite church of angel Michael, vandalised it and injured it greatly. They robbed everything they found inside. They pillaged and vandalised also the Nestorian church[33] and the church of St Theodore, as well as the church of St Lady Mary known as the patriarchal church – they vandalised it as well. It was in the hands of Jacobites [Copts] back then, and today is a Roman church, because the patriarch of Alexandria Arsenios, who was the metropolitan of Cairo, took it over from the Jacobites in the times of Al-ʿAzīz bi-Āllāh. When the riots intensified that day, one of Iḫšīdid commanders came with a group of ġulāms, dispersed the crowd and put the riots down. When it comes to the church of angel Michael, it remained closed and ruined for a long time. The prayers of Christians Melkites took place in the church of Isidore, which is close to the Mosque of the Dome in Qaṣr al-Šamʿ. The church of St Michael remained closed, and its gate was covered with dust. It remained in such a state until Elijah became the patriarch of Alexandria. He was

[28] Such protective measures often confirm in the eyes of the would-be pogromists that a pogrom is about to begin, encouraging it. The same attempts on the part of the minority to arm itself before a pogrom can be seen as a threat. See Rumors, p. 241 (7), 245 (11).

[29] 10 III 960, Saturday.

[30] The Midday Prayer (Ar. *ṣalāt al-ẓuhr*) is the second out of five daily prayers in Islam. See G. Monnot, *Ṣalāt*, [in:] *EI²*, vol. VIII, ed. C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, G. Lecomte, Leiden 1995, p. 928.

[31] Al-Anṭākī, p. 95–96 AH 349. An event mentioned by A. Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood*, Oxford 2017, p. 37.

[32] 29 III 961.

[33] The Nestorians had a good reputation amongst Muslims, and these were Melkites who were associated with the Byzantines, but they were still Christian, and pogroms can spread from one group to another, see W. Bergmann, *The Role of Rumors in the Emergence and Diffusion of Pogroms*, CRQ 41.3, 2024, p. 247 (13). See also E. Lohr, *1915 and the War Pogrom Paradigm in the Russian Empire*, [in:] *Anti-Jewish Violence. Rethinking the pogrom in East European History*, ed. J. Dekel-Chen, D. Gaunt, N.M. Meir, I. Bartal, Bloomington 2010, p. 44 about Russian World War I commander-in-chief N. Ianushkevich who was convinced that not only Germans, but also Jews and foreigners in general spied for Germany. As a result, after the military defeats, pogroms of Jews and Germans took place.

coaxing and exerting himself, until he opened it. Because, before that, Muslims have forbidden its opening. Elijah cleared the church out of rubble and restored it as he could, and Melkites begun praying in it again.

In year 967 (AH 356) many Chorasanians arrived in Antioch to raid Byzantium. When they were routed, some of the Muslim elders accused the patriarch Christopher of cooperation with the Byzantines. The patriarch was killed (AD 967, AH 357), and many churches were destroyed. The perpetrators were punished only when the city was captured by the Byzantines[34].

[34] Al-Anṭākī, p. 108–109 AH 354, 116–120 AH 355–356 – according to Al-Anṭākī, the story of this murder started when, during his absence in Syria, Sayf al-Dawla nominated governors in Aleppo and in Antioch. The Antiochenes revolted and handed over the city to Rašīq al-Nusaymī, whom Byzantines pushed out of Tarsus. The patriarch Christopher did not want to be accused of supporting the rebels, thus he left the city, and, despite the attempts of Al-Ahwāzī (Antiochene supporter of Al-Nusaymī) to get him to return, remained in the neutral ground of the monastery of St Simon. When Sayf al-Dawla returned, the patriarch went to him and was rewarded for his fidelity, and simultaneously interceded on the behalf of other Antiochenes. When Sayf al-Dawla died, Antioch immediately rebelled. During the rebels' rule, Chorasanians, on their way to fight Byzantium, came to the city. The patriarch was killed under the pretext of encouraging Byzantines to take the city; Abū ăl-Faraǧ Ǧamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿIbrī (Bar Hebraeus), *Tārīḫ al-Zamān*, trans. I. Armaleh, Beirut 1986 (cetera: Ibn al-ʿIbrī), p. 65 – Ibn al-ʿIbrī claims that the patriarch was killed due to frustration of the Antiochenes and Chorasanians after a failed expedition against Byzantium, and the murder was accompanied by the destruction of the majority of the churches in Antioch. In the text, I decided to merge these versions, but it's not the only possibility. It's strange that Al-Anṭākī, well informed about the history of his city, does not mention the expedition of Chorasanians prior to the murder, or that he mentions the destruction of just one church, albeit the most important one, while Ibn al-ʿIbrī claims many were destroyed. The information of Ibn al-ʿIbrī is very typical, while the story of Al-Anṭakī is complicated and multithreaded. On the other hand, Al-Anṭākī seems almost hagiographical in his description of Christopher's relations with the elders of Antioch, and he must have taken information from the Melkite circles, to which he also belonged. See also: Jean Skylitzès, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, trans. B. Flusin, Paris 2003 "Nicéphore Phocas" XIV, 21, p. 234, who first mentions the death of the patriarch of Jerusalem John – who, according to him, was burned alive by "Saracens" under the pretext that he was encouraging Nikephoros to come and attack them – and follows it by saying that Antiochenes have done the same to their patriarch Christopher. But as we know from Al-Anṭākī, p. 110–112, patriarch John was burned after being killed, and the reason of this murder (and the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre) was his refusal to submit to extortions of the local governor. *The History of Leo the Deacon. Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century*, VI, 6, trans., ed. A.-M. Talbot, D.F. Sullivan, Washington 2005, p. 149–150, who mentions that *former Hagarene ruler killed the patriarch Christopher, an apostolic and divinely inspired man, by driving a javelin through his chest, bringing against the man the charge of reverence for Christ the Savior*. The subject of this patriarch is mentioned by K. Kościelniak, *Grecy i Arabowie*, Kraków 2004, p. 222. Finally, there exists a hagiography of Christopher by Ibrāhīm Ibn Yūḥannā (J. Mugler, *The Life of Christopher*, "Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wusṭā" 29, 2021, p. 112–180), which is surmised to have been the source of Al-Anṭākī, but the relationship between the texts is more complicated (p. 116–117: *Counterintuitively, therefore, much of the material shared between the two texts was actually added from Al-Anṭākī's text to Ibrāhīm's by a later editor, not borrowed from Ibrāhīm's work by Al-Anṭākī himself*). The text praises Sayf al-Dawla (p. 152 / 113r-v, 160 / 119v–120r, 163 / 121v etc), but also

In 985 (AH 375), in response to a Byzantine raid of Killiz, the Ḥamdānid army plundered the famous monastery of Saint Simon (today Qalʿat Samʿān)[35].

When in 996 (AH 386) the fleet prepared by caliph Al-ʿAzīz burned, Byzantine traders and caulkers were accused of sabotage, and a pogrom[36] took place in which 160 Byzantines were killed. Next, the mob attacked local Christians – Melkites and Nestorians. Their churches were robbed, and the Nestorian bishop died from his wounds[37].

Another interesting story is told by Severus Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ who informs us that, sometime around 907–909, a Coptic bishop brought persecution upon Melkites, including cutting of two fingers of the Melkite patriarch and tearing the robes of six Melkite bishops, by suggesting that Melkites are Byzantines and that he's afraid that the Melkite patriarch would spy for the Byzantines, and that the Byzantine emperor would come with his navy to Alexandria[38].

But the most telling is the story of year 997 (AH 387), which shows how easily the hatred of Byzantium could turn into an attack on the local Christians, and the other way round: how easily the hatred of local Christians could be associated with the fear of Byzantium:

> In this period, two Christian scribes in Daqūqā'[39] were oppressing this city and its environs[40]. It coincided with that Ǧabrā'īl Ibn Muḥammad, a Persian leader, was passing the city, heading for the land of the Romans (Byzantium), in order to raid it. The inhabitants went out to him, saying: "there's no need to go far. There are, in our city, two Christians who oppress us more than Romans (Byzantines) would do if they captured our city. So show your bravery, if you can". Ǧabrā'īl attacked the scribes, killed them and possessed the city according to a deal with its inhabitants. They gave him the title of Dabbūs al-Dawla[41].

---

mentions the lowly status of *ḏimmīs* under Ḥamdānids (p. 157 / 117r-v, also 160 / 119r-v). What's noteworthy, the author explains better than Al-Anṭākī does, why the intercession of Christopher on behalf of Muslims caused them to hate him: he reduced the amount of money one of them had to pay to Sayf al-Dawla, and vouched for him paying the requested sum. When he was thus asking the Muslim for the money, *it was like his heart was being pierced, as the arrows of envy worked within him* (p. 165 / 122v–123r). He also mentions that the conspirators received a *fatwà* against Christopher, as someone who "plots against a Muslim fortress". The matter is also mentioned in K. Kościelniak, *Grecy i Arabowie*…, p. 162.

[35] Al-Anṭākī, p. 204 – The monastery was at the very Byzantine-Arab border and perhaps it was considered a fortress. The event is mentioned by A. Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold*…, p. 93.

[36] Pogrom to be understood as "an excess against a certain section of the population", see D. Engel, *What is a Pogrom? European Jews in the Age of Violence*, [in:] *Anti-Jewish Violence*…, p. 20.

[37] Al-Anṭākī, p. 233–234. The event is mentioned by A. Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold*…, p. 107 and by M. Gertz, *Shiʿite Rulers, Sunni Rivals, and Christians in Between. Muslim-Christian Relations in Fāṭimid Palestine and Egypt*, Piscataway 2023, p. 124–125.

[38] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *History of the Patriarch of the Egyptian Church* (cetera: Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ), ed., trans. A.S. Atiya, Y. ʿAbd al-Masīḥ, p. 78 (Ar.), 114–115 (Eng).

[39] In the Arab version of Ibn al-ʿIbrī's work the name "Daqūqa" was used. Daqūqā' is a city between Baghdad and Irbil, today called Dāqūq.

[40] Or "took control of it", or even "became its independent rulers".

[41] Ibn al-ʿIbrī, p. 74; Ibn al-Aṯīr, vol. V, p. 528 – the same history.

It is characteristic that in all the cases when the fear of Byzantium was clearly stated by the sources, the attacks on Christians were preceded by an arrival of people or of information. In Daqūqā' and Antioch it was the appearance of Muslim expeditions against Byzantium. It was not the newcomers who initiated the attacks on Christians, but – coming from a land with few Christians – the locals were inclined to believe the accusations made against them[42]. In Al-Fusṭāṭ these were news from the front, most likely brought by refugees from Syria and Crete[43]. The waves of refugees from the border regions[44], apart from the network of mosques[45], likely were the best transmitter of information about the looming danger and the catalyst of anti-Christian feelings and excesses perpetrated by the Muslims[46]. In the belles-lettres of the time (*Qaṣīda Sasāniyya* and *Maqāmāt* of Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamaḏānī) one can find a mention of the formation of a class of beggars claiming they were mutilated by the Byzantines. There were also those who claimed that

[42] Their religious zeal was so great that they were killing as infidels even the mainly Shia Daylamīs – IBN AL-AṮĪR, vol. V, p. 344.

[43] As the main political centre and one of the main cities in the region, Al-Fusṭāṭ was a natural target of emigration from the lands conquered by Byzantium or endangered by such conquest. This concerned Crete the most, but also the cities of Syria. That's why one should surmise that the information about Byzantine conquests in Syria, and most certainly in Crete, was brought to Al-Fusṭāṭ by refugees.

[44] AL-ANṬĀKĪ, p. 105–106: *Many people moved from Al-Ṯaġr to Damascus, Al-Ramla and other lands, escaping the high prices and out of fear of Romans*; p. 108 – when the Byzantines captured Tarsus, they let its inhabitants head to Muslim-controlled lands; IBN AL-AṮĪR, vol. V, p. 333 – *domestikos* directed these words to the inhabitants of Al-Ṯuġūr: *I will return to you. The one who will move out, will be saved. And the one I find here after I come back, I will kill*; p. 345: *Many people from Al-Ṯuġur and Syria escaped out of fear of Romans, with their families and possessions, to Mecca, to go from there to Iraq* etc.; N.M. EL CHEIKH, *Byzantium Viewed*…, p. 166 – the motif of an escapee from the lands conquered by Byzantium appeared also in the *Maqāmāt* of Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamaḏānī. Etc.

[45] AL-ANṬĀKĪ, p. 92: *On Friday, after the midday prayer, on the eighth of Al-Muḥarram of this year, shouts and stirring occurred in the Old Mosque. Many people were robbed and stripped out of clothes. The mob returned to the church of angel Michael. The door was smashed again, and the church was pillaged and destroyed*; It is not a coincidence that the pogrom started at the mosque. As W. Bergmann states, the probability of pogrom increases in situations like festivals, market days or assemblies, where a "critical mass" is already gathered. The large number of participants is important for reducing the sense of individual responsibility as well as the individual risk of punishment. See W. BERGMANN, *The Role of Rumors*…, p. 239–240 (5–6). AL-JAZĀ'IRĪ ṬĀHIR BEN ṢĀLIḤ, *Šarḥ ḥuṭab Ibn Nubātah (Explenation of Ibn Noubata's orations)*, ed. A.F. AL-MIZIYADI, Beirut 2007 – Ibn an-Nubāṭa, the preacher of Sayf al-Dawla, was mentioning Byzantine raids in his sermons (in this case the propaganda was anti-Byzantine, and not anti-Christian).

[46] About the role of refugees from Caucasus and Balkans in the attacks on Armenians, and Christians in general, in the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th – early 20th centuries (which I see as an analogous situation) see B. MORRIS, D. ZE'EVI, *The Thirty-Year Genocide*, Cambridge–London 2019, who mention extensively the participation of Circassians, Chechens and *muhacirs* (Muslim refugees from the Balkans) in the attacks on Armenians (and other Christians), see especially p. 149: "*They arrive in Turkey with the memory of their slaughtered friends and relations fresh in their minds*," *the British consul in Salonica wrote. "They remember their own sufferings" and find "themselves without means or resources"* and *The muhacirs saw "no wrong in falling on the Greek Christians of Turkey and meting out to them the same treatment that they themselves have received from the Greek Christians of Macedonia*" […].

they were gathering money for buying their families out of the Byzantine slavery[47]. They would call armies to fight against their alleged oppressors and it seems they were successful at it. Al-Anṭākī mentions that, soon after the news about the success of Byzantium came, Egyptian authorities started preparing for war, even though they were not directly threatened by it[48]. In another place he mentions a citizen of Tarsus (captured by the Byzantines), who returned from Egypt to the Byzantine border with troops (most likely composed by volunteers or other refugees), to fight the infidels[49].

One cannot assume that the attacks happened only where the Byzantines were a real danger. One example to the contrary was the case of Antioch. Al-Fusṭāṭ was far away, but it was a capital of a threatened state. Most likely there was a group of refugees present there[50], and the presence of many Byzantine captives settled in the same location[51] was fuelling the flame of memory of the Byzantine danger and helped with associating of Christians with Byzantines. Daqūqāʾ and Al-Kūfa were far away and it's unlikely that someone in Byzantium knew about their existence. Their fear was likely fuelled by refugees, some of whom escaped to Iraq[52].

When it comes to the cities in Palestine, Steven Runciman mentioned the topic I discuss in his history of the crusades, when he wrote:

> When in the tenth century things were going badly for the Arabs in their wars against Byzantium and Arab mobs attacked the Christians in anger at their known sympathy with the enemy, the Caliph always made restitution for the damage done. His motive may have been fear of the renascent power of the Emperor, who by then had Moslems within his dominions whom he could persecute in revenge.

And, in the footnote:

> In 923 and 924 Moslem mobs destroyed Orthodox Christian churches in Ramleh, Askelon, Caesarea and Damascus; whereupon the Caliph Al-Muqtadir helped the Christians to rebuild them[53].

---

[47] C.E. Bosworth, *The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld. The Banu Sasan in Arabic Society and Culture*, Leiden 1976, 2, 8.37 and 8.45, [apud:] N.M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed…*, p. 165–166.

[48] In Al-Fusṭāṭ in 960 (AH 349) and in Baghdad in year 974 (AH 363) the mob, creating riots, forced the ruler to start war preparations against Byzantium.

[49] Al-Anṭākī, p. 134.

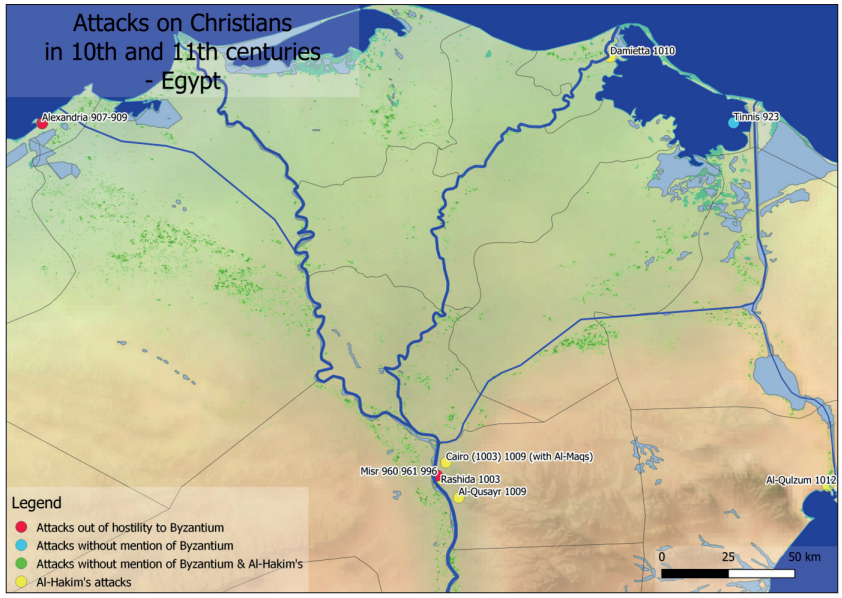
[50] Taqī ăl-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn ʿAlī ăl-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ al-Ḥunafā*, vol. I, Cairo 1996 (cetera: Ittiʿāẓ), p. 209 mentions the kadi of Adana in Egypt.

[51] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, p. 75 (the Arabic text), 110 (the translation) – Ṭūlūnids settled many Byzantine captives in Al-Fusṭāṭ.

[52] Ibn al-Aṯīr, vol. V, p. 345.

[53] S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. I, Cambridge 1995, p. 27 and n. 3. The topic itself is also mentioned briefly by A.M. Eddé, A.M. Eddé, *Communautés Chrétiennes en Pays d'Islam du début du VII^e siècle au milieu du XI^e siècle*, Paris 1997, p. 69; K. Ikonomopoulos, *Byzantium and Jerusalem, 813–975: From Indifference to Intervention*, [in:] *Papers from the First and Second Postgraduate Forums in Byzantine Studies: Sailing to Byzantium*, ed. S. Neocleous, Cambridge 2009, p. 19, 21, and K. Kościelniak, *Grecy i Arabowie…*, p. 161–162, apparently repeating the claim of Runciman. The destruction of the church in Damascus is mentioned in *ibidem*, p. 148, 161.

Map 1. Attacks on Christians in 10th and early 11th century.



Map 2. Attacks on Christians in 10th and early 11th century – Egypt.

Runciman based his claims on Eutychius where there are, on two consecutive pages, four stories about Muslim-Christian relations[54]. Runciman bases his assumption on the first one, while merging it with the third, and assumes the reason for the destruction of the churches was Byzantium, but it is but a surmise.

The first story mentions that Muslims in Al-Ramla have risen (against Christians) and destroyed two Melkite churches there, of St Cosma and Kūrqis (?George). They also destroyed the (main) churches of Ascalon and Caesarea. It happened in Ǧumādà ăl-Āḫar 311 AH (16 IX – 14 X 923). Christians reported it to the caliph Al-Muqtadir, who "ordered" them (Christians) to rebuild what was destroyed. No help concerning the rebuilding is mentioned, and the "order" should be interpreted as granting permission.

The second story, immediately after it, mentions that in Rağab of the same year (15 X –13 XI 923) Muslims in Tinnīs have risen (against Christians) and destroyed a Melkite church "outside Ḥimṣ, in Tinnīs", called the Church of Būṭūr. The Christians rebuilt the church, but when it was nearly complete, Muslims have risen against the Christians again and destroyed what was rebuilt, burning it. Afterwards, however, the ruler/sultan (the caliph? Al-Iḫšīd?) assisted the Christians so that they rebuilt the church once more.

Reading the stories side by side, one can deduct from them additional information. It was forbidden for Christians to rebuild a destroyed church. If the caliph "ordered" Christians to rebuild it, it simply meant he allowed it by issuing an order, so that the Muslims did not protest – and act – against the reconstruction. What happened when such an "order" was absent can be seen in the second story, in which Muslims destroy the church again. Also, the "help" Christians received in rebuilding the church most likely consisted of allowing it to happen and protecting Christians from Muslims, and it is unlikely any additional practical help was included.

The third story is about the Muslims, in the middle of Rağab 312 (around 17 X 924), rising (against Christians) in Damascus and destroying the cathedral (*al-kāṭūlūkiyya*) church of Mary there. It was a great church, large and beautiful: one hundred thousand dinars were spent on it (which either is an assessment of its value, or it was repaired for that much prior to the described events; a renovation would be a possible reason for its destruction). The buildings adjacent to it ("in it") were looted, in addition to other things that were stolen – such as jewellery and curtains. The monasteries were looted as well, especially the nunnery next to the church. (Muslims) vandalised many Melkite churches and destroyed the church of Nestorians. This time there is no mention of rebuilding the churches, or informing the caliph about their fate.

[54] Aftīšiyūs al-mukannà bi-Saʿīd Ibn Biṭrīq, *Kitāb al-tārīḫ al-maǧmūʿ ʿalà ăl-taḥqīq wa-ăl-taṣdīq*, ed. L. Cheikho, B. Carra de Vaux, H. Zayyat, Beirut 1909, p. 82–83.

The fourth story is the one of vizier ʿAlī Ǐbn ʿĪsà visiting Egypt and forcing the *ǧizya* tax on monks, bishops, weak and poor people, and Al-Muqtadir being informed of that and reversing his decision.

Even though one cannot be sure if the attacks mentioned by Runciman were linked to Byzantium, it is a fact confirmed by historical sources that, due to Byzantine reconquista, a wave of attacks on Christians under Muslim rulers did happen. This state of affairs is to a notable extent analogous to the situation in the late 19th – early 20th century Middle East, when the danger posed by (among others) self-proclaimed successor of Byzantium – Russia – again roused suspicion of Muslims towards local Christians[55] and an outburst of intolerance followed.

In the context of the aforementioned events, one should ask oneself three questions. The first is about the scale of this phenomenon; the second, whether the Byzantine military victories were the only reason for the deterioration of the situation of Christians. The third question is whether this phenomenon had any far-reaching consequences.

Written sources provide information only about the most significant attacks, and primarily about the main cities or centres of Christianity, such as Al-Fusṭāṭ, Jerusalem, Antioch or Baghdad. Although these attacks were serious, one can assume that there were many other smaller attacks, in smaller cities or villages, especially since *it is typical for pogroms to spread concentrically from one place, usually a town, further and further into the surrounding places*[56], something W. Bergmann called the *ripple effect*[57]. Yet, until the middle period of the reign of Al-Ḥākim, that is until the end of 10th century, one cannot be sure if they had a mass character.

Moreover, the anti-Christian feeling didn't concern all of the Muslim society. Patriarch Christopher was killed with the assistance of his Muslim friends, however at the same time one of them tried in vain to save his life[58]. Many Muslims were eager to participate in Christian feasts and it's telling that in the early reign of Al-Ḥākim Muslims were called upon to neither hinder Christian celebrations, nor to participate in them[59].

---

[55] It is a common situation. E.g. the long and destructive wars of Poland with protestant Sweden caused decrease in tolerance in Poland, including the banishment of Antitrinitarians, and Arab defeats by Israel caused banishment of Jews from Arab countries etc.

[56] W. Bergmann, *The Role of Rumors*…, p. 246 (12).

[57] J. Tokarska-Bakir, *The Pogrom as an Act of Social Control: Springfeld 1908 – Poland 1945/46* [A keynote at the international conference], "Pogroms: Collective anti-Jewish violence in the Polish lands in 19th and 20th centuries", Warsaw, 10–12 June 2015, p. 5.

[58] Al-Anṭākī, p. 108–109, 116–120; J. Mugler, *The Life of Christopher*…, p. 166 / 123v–124r. The difference is that in the hagiography, the patriarch deliberately chose martyrdom, while Al-Anṭākī claims he believed in the friendship of the Muslim he decided to visit after he learnt of the plot.

[59] Al-Anṭākī, p. 276.

The rulers of this age, such as Al-Muʿizz, Al-ʿAzīz[60] or Sayf al-Dawla, seem friendly towards Christians, even though they fought Byzantium, and Sayf al-Dawla is the symbol of that fight. The state – with exception of the times of Al-Ḥākim and the financial extortions of Iḫšīdids and Kāfūrids[61] – rarely manifested aversion towards Christians, although it was also not eager to defend Christians from the attacks once they happened, probably being afraid of openly opposing a popular sentiment.

In the discussed period, there is only a single mention of the authorities punishing the participants of a pogrom[62], and it was done by a Christian vizier of the Fāṭimids, ʿĪsà Ǐbn Nasṭūrus[63]. Fāṭimids were the most Christian-friendly Muslim dynasty. Moreover, another account of these events (Al-Maqrīzī) says the attackers were punished only because they destroyed the caliph's property[64]. The tolerance was still quite common in the Fertile Crescent, but never, and in no place under Muslim rule, did Christians gain as much influence on the state as during the reign of Fāṭimid imams-caliphs. Michael, the bishop of Tinnīs, writes about "great peace in the churches" during the reign of Al-Muʿizz and Al-ʿAzīz[65]. But this[66] would enrage Muslim fanatics. One can see how irritated they were by the strong position of *ahl al-ḏimma* in the Fāṭimid state in two poems allegedly circulating in these times:

> Become a Christian, because Christianity is the religion of truth;
> That's what our times indicate.
> Speak in three: "three almighty"[67]

---

[60] S.M. Gertz, *Shiʿite Rulers*…, p. 102 claims that Al-ʿAzīz was treating Christians better when he was successful, and worse (forbidding them to celebrate holidays) when he experienced military defeats.

[61] Al-Anṭākī, p. 25–28.

[62] Lack of punishment surely could act as an incentive for further attacks.

[63] Al-Anṭākī, p. 233–234. Ibn Nasṭūrus was killed most likely as soon as the tolerant caliph Al-ʿAzīz died, and the families of the executed people received money for their burial (Al-Anṭākī, p. 238 about the killing, Taqī ăl-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn ʿAlī ăl-Maqrīzī, *Al-Ḫiṭaṭ*, vol. III, ed. M. Zaynuhum, M. al-Šarqāwī, Cairo 1997, p. 22–23 about the money for the burial). Note that pogromists often do not feel they commit a crime. Moreover, one of the common rumours that is attested to before many pogroms is that the violence against the target group was sanctioned by the authorities, or is even expected by them – see W. Bergmann, *The Role of Rumors*…, p. 239–240 (5–6). This results in anger if a crack-down occurs (see *ibidem*, p. 241 (7)).

[64] Ittiʿāẓ, vol. I, p. 290.

[65] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, p. 100 (Ar.), 150–151 (Eng.).

[66] Even assuming it was true, and not a view created ex post by comparison with the age of persecution during Al-Ḥākim's reign. Note that *fear of upward mobility of the Jews after positions unattainable for them in pre-war Poland* was one of the reasons for pogroms after the Second World War, see J. Tokarska-Bakir, *The Pogrom*…, p. 6.

[67] This is reference to the expression *ʿizza wa-ǧalla*.

> And let go all the rest, because it would harm you[68]
> Because vizier Yaʿqūb is the Father,
> Al-ʿAzīz the Son, and Faḍl is the Holy Spirit[69].
>
> * * *
>
> The Jews of our times have fulfilled their dreams and grew strong
> The dignities and money are theirs!
> The advisors and commanders are chosen from among them
> Oh Egyptians! I advise you: become Jews, because the Heaven did[70].

Even stronger is the content of a letter Al-ʿAziz received when his vizier was Christian ʿĪsà Ǐbn Nasṭūrus, and his deputy in Syria Jew Manaššā (Manasses). The author wrote to the father of Al-Ḥākim:

> In the name of God who exalted Jews through Manaššā and Christians through ʿĪsà Ǐbn Nasṭūrus, and humiliated Muslims through you[71].

According to Ibn al-Aṯīr, after reading this message Al-ʿAzīz "understood what was wanted from him" and exacted money from both these officials. According to some of the other historians he also made ʿĪsà promise that from now on he would hire only Muslims for the offices[72].

Fāṭimids (ruling Egypt and Syria, and indirectly also Maghreb), and likely also Buwayhids (ruling Iran and Iraq), because of being Shia, a minority among Muslims, likely were less inclined towards persecuting religious groups which did not have – unlike Sunnis – any ambitions to gain the supreme power in their

---

[68] Precisely "because it's a loss (a mistake)" – *fa-huwa ʿuṭl*. If read *fa-huwa ʿaṭal* it can mean "because it's unemployment"; Christian clerks were sometimes accused of supporting their coreligionists when staffing offices.

[69] Vizier Yaʿqūb is Yaʿqūb Ibn Killis, a Jewish convert to Islam, and the famous vizier of Al-ʿAzīz. Al-Anṭākī mentions Al-ʿAzīz's attachment to him. Al-ʿAzīz is the caliph Al-ʿAzīz bi-Amr Allāh. Al-Faḍl is Al-Faḍl Ibn Ṣāliḥ, a Christian convert to Islam and a famous Fāṭimid general – IBN AL-AṮĪR, vol. V, p. 515.

[70] ǦALĀL AL-DĪN AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *Ḥusn al-Muḥadara fī Aḫbār Miṣr wa-ăl-Qāhira*, vol. II, Cairo 1909, p. 129, [apud:] http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history05/history555.html [25 V 2024]; Translation according to: A.S. TRITTON, *The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects. A Critical Study of the Convenant of ʿUmar*, Oxford 1930, p. 25.

[71] IBN AL-AṮĪR, vol. V, p. 515 AH 386 – one should note that all these poems are mentioned by late sources and are not necessarily authentic (note also that Ibn al-Aṯīr's story of transmitting a message to the caliph via an effigy placed along his way is a variant of a famous story about Al-Ḥākim). Likely the poems were composed to explain the later persecution of Al-Ḥākim.

[72] ǦAMĀL ĂL-DĪN ʿALĪ ǏBN AL-ẒĀFIR, *Al-Duwal al-munqaṭiʿa*, Ms., Greek Papyri in the British Museum, No Or. 3685, fol. 56A [apud:] S.A. ASSAAD, *The Reign of Al-Hakim Bi Amr Allah. A Political Study*, Beirut 1974, p. 43.

states[73]. Sunnis could always have been surmised to support the Sunni caliphate of ʿAbbāsids. Christians, on another hand, were neutral in the internal conflicts within Islam, and if anything, they could sympathise with the rule of a minority, less inclined to force upon them any limitations and having fewer coreligionists it would be supporting, at their expense, in the administration of the state[74]. As the riots in Baghdad have shown, a mob incited against Byzantium could turn not even against Christians, but against Shias[75]. Thus a symbiosis existed between Christians and the Shia states, or at least that of the Fāṭimids, benefitting both sides. The tolerance of Al-ʿAzīz can be partly explained by the fact that he had a Melkite (Greek Orthodox) wife. Apart from this, the might of Byzantium, which was turning Muslim folk against local Christians, could – on the other hand – discourage Muslim states from taking any actions against them[76]. Irrespective of what the reason for the tolerance of the rulers was, there was a discrepancy between the attitude towards Christians presented by the tolerant rulers and the attitude of the, hostile to Christians, population[77]. This discrepancy was brought to an end, against the traditions of his dynasty, by Al-Ḥākim. Thanks to his spies and personal travels to Cairo, he knew the popular attitudes well. The influence of the Byzantine Reconquista on the persecution of Christians by this caliph was surprisingly neglected. While it may be considered the expression of anti-Christian tendencies in these affairs which, as the limitation of *ḏimmī* dress, needed cooperation of the ruler.

The anti-Christian acts can be divided into two categories. Firstly, there were financial extortions, pogroms and murders and attacks on churches; secondly, introduction of restrictions resembling the so-called Pact of ʿUmar[78]. The populace limited itself to destroying churches, robberies and attacks on Christian communities. We do not have direct information on whether it also demanded any restrictions similar to Pact of ʿUmar. We do know, however, that some of the Muslims at this time were against displays of the Christian cult in public[79], that some

[73] I am not alone in that opinion. André Raymond writes that the marginal position of Ismāʿīlism undoubtedly is one of the reasons for Fāṭimid tolerance, in accordance with a rule that minorities, if in power, are more tolerant towards other minorities – A. Raymond, *Cairo*, trans. W. Wood, Cambridge–London 2000, p. 44–45.

[74] Just like today the Christians of Syria seem to be more supportive of the Alawite rules than the Sunnis are. This is the case even though the Shias tended to group *ahl al-kitāb* with *mušrikūn*, while Sunnis gave them intermediate status. See S.M. Gertz, *Shiʿite Rulers…*, p. 148.

[75] Al-Anṭākī, p. 149–151 – a crowd armed to fight the Byzantines turned against the Shia rules.

[76] G. Dagron, P. Riche, A. Vauchez, *Historia Chrześcijaństwa*, vol. IV, trans. J. Kłoczowski, Warszawa 1999, p. 339 – Sitt al-Mulk, when attempting to conclude peace with Byzantium, mentioned the end of persecutions of Christians which took place under her brother, Al-Ḥākim.

[77] Note that in the case of patriarch Christopher, the positive attitude of rulers towards him made Muslims more hostile to him.

[78] Such discriminatory measures increase the impression that the minority can be attacked with impunity. See W. Bergmann, *The Role of Rumors…*, p. 240 (6).

[79] Al-Anṭākī, p. 276; A.S. Tritton, *The Caliphs…*, p. 117.

Muslims destroyed churches that were renewed under Islam[80], that the Daqūqā'ans saw the rules of Christian officials as a foretaste of Byzantine conquest. Thus the tendency to limit the rights of Christians did exist, irrespective of whether these were attempts to renew old anti-Christian laws, or independent from them outbursts of feelings that lead to these restrictions in the first place. One can assume that the atmosphere of distrust and fear of Christians, which reigned among some Muslims during these times, influenced that. However, such influence is much more uncertain than the events leading to funerals and church ruins.

Note that certain forms of collective violence can be understood as exercising social control by a group in response to deviant behaviour – in this case, the local Christians being victorious by proxy through their Byzantine brethren[81]. The victories of Byzantines created what Allen Grimshaw calls disorders in the classic accommodative pattern of superordination-subordination[82]. In the context of Byzantine victories, attacks on local Christians must have seemed a just punishment or revenge[83]. Moreover, the pogromists often believe that their victims wanted to hurt them, they felt threatened and acted in "self-defence"[84]. It is likely that – after hearing of victories of a Christian power – Muslims felt threatened by the presence of Christians. What's more, many of them likely had a "hostile belief system", that is, a negative set of generalised views, perceptions and convictions regarding Christians (including that they regarded them as a dangerous enemy). With the news of Christian victories over Muslims, or a fire of the fleet in an area frequented by the Byzantines, this hostile belief system was confirmed while associated with an actual event[85]. The pogroms were usually started by rumours or by events that symbolised a threat to the majority[86], and the difference of culture (language, religion and clothing) was one of the factors that, according to Senechal de la Roche, made them more likely to occur[87].

The fear that Muslims felt due to the Byzantine danger could have contributed to the rise of Messianic tendencies which had some influence on the situation of Christians. Crises often turn people to God, thus towards His law and against the unbelievers. Both meant turning against Christians. This was not because Islam, at its core, was hostile towards them. During the time of Muḥammad and

---

[80] Al-Anṭākī, p. 28, 96, 252.

[81] See W. Bergmann, *The Role of Rumors*…, p. 236 (2).

[82] J. Tokarska-Bakir, *The Pogrom*…, p. 3 *in which whites, the dominant group, have expected deference, obedience and complicity*. Such deference was also expected from *ahl al-ḏimma*.

[83] See W. Bergmann, *The Role of Rumors*…, p. 236 (2).

[84] *Ibidem*, an example in R. Dhattiwala, M. Biggs, *The Political Logic of Ethnic Violence: The Anti-Muslim Pogrom in Gujarat, 2002*, PSoc 40, 2012, p. 486, 488.

[85] W. Bergmann, *The Role of Rumors*…, p. 237 (3) and T.A. Knopf, *Rumors, Race and Riots*, London–New York 1975, p. 117 [apud:] W. Bergmann, *The Role of Rumors*…, p. 237 (3).

[86] W. Bergmann, *The Role of Rumors*…, p. 238 (4).

[87] Cited by J. Tokarska-Bakir, *The Pogrom*…, p. 4.

early Caliphate Christians were only burdened with a poll tax (*ğizya*). However, several rulers of the first half-millennium of Islam – ʿUmar II, Al-Mutawakkil, Al-Ḥākim – introduced short-lived laws deteriorating their situation. These were never forgotten by the jurists, served as an inspiration, and were creatively developed by them, and thus the jurists created the tradition that eventually formed the "Pact of ʿUmar"[88] – a set of restrictive laws in the form of an alleged treaty between ʿUmar I and a Christian town in Syria. The situation of Christians was deteriorating gradually both before and after the discussed period[89]. There were many reasons for that. One of them was the uncompromising result of the development of sharia (*al-šarīʿa*). Another was that in Christian cities, conquered by the Caliphate, Muslim societies were growing. The restrictions were not necessarily enforced when there were no Muslims around. For example, some belfries survived in Egypt, but only where there were no adherents of Islam[90]. And such places were fewer and fewer. Moreover, the demands posed by fundamentalists in 10th century, such as removal of Christians from offices, were unrealistic, but would have been unthinkable three centuries earlier, when the Muslim rule was young, uncertain, shallow and lacking its own staff which could replace the non-Muslim one. With time the situation changed, also due to the rise of the number of Muslims. Another perceived reason why the situation of Christians changed was that in the 7th century Muslims were the victors and they didn't feel the fear or the need to take revenge. In the 10th century, due to growth of Byzantine might, it was different. The negative tendencies that already existed were strengthened, and the tension that encompassed the Muslim Middle East paved the way to the persecutions of Al-Ḥākim.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Aftīšiyūs al-mukannà bi-Saʿīd Ibn Biṭrīq, *Kitāb al-tārīḫ al-mağmūʿ ʿalà ăl-taḥqīq wa-ăl-taṣdīq*, ed. L. Cheikho, B. Carra de Vaux, H. Zayyat, Beirut 1909.

Al-Antākī, *Tārīḫ Al-Anṭākī ăl-maʿrūf bi-ṣilat tārīḫ Awtīḫā*, ed. ʿU. Tadmurī, Tripoli 1990.

Ibn al-Aṯīr ʿIzz al-Dīn Abū ăl-Ḥasan ʿAlī, *Al-Kāmil fī ăt-tārīḫ*, vol. V, Beirut 1994.

The History of Leo the Deacon. Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century, trans., ed. A.-M. Talbot, D.F. Sullivan, Washington 2005.

[88] A.M. Eddé, *Communautés*…, p. 188 – no known version of Pact of ʿUmar is older than 12th century, so the events of 10th and 11th century may have influenced it.

[89] A.S. Tritton, *The Caliphs*…, *passim*.

[90] A.J. Butler, *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, vol. I, Oxford 1884, p. 15; A.S. Tritton, *The Caliphs*…, p. 49.

Ibn al-ʿIbrī (Bar Hebraeus) Abū ăl-Faraǧ Ǧamāl al-Dīn, *Tārīḫ al-Zamān*, trans. I. Armaleh, Beirut 1986.

Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *History of the Patriarch of the Egyptian Church*, vol. II.2, ed., trans. A.S. Atiya, Y. ʿAbd al-Masīḥ, Cairo 1948.

Al-Jazā'irī Ṭāhir ben Ṣāliḥ, *Šarḥ ḫuṭab Ibn Nubātah (Explenation of Ibn Noubata's orations)*, ed. A.F. al-Miziyadi, Beirut 2007.

Jean Skylitzès, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, trans. B. Flusin, Paris 2003.

Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab min tārīḫ Ḥalab*, ed. Ḫ. al-Manṣūr, Beirut 1996.

Leo Philosophus, *Tactica*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus*, *Series graeca*, vol. CVII, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1863, col. 671–1094.

Al-Maqrīzī Taqī ăl-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn ʿAlī, *Al-Ḫiṭaṭ*, vol. III, ed. M. Zaynuhum, M. al-Šarqāwī, Cairo 1997.

Al-Maqrīzī Taqī ăl-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn ʿAlī, *Ittiʿāẓ al-Ḥunafā*, Cairo 1996.

Secondary Literature

Assaad S.A., *The Reign of Al-Hakim Bi Amr Allah. A Political Study*, Beirut 1974.

Bergmann W., *The Role of Rumors in the Emergence and Diffusion of Pogroms*, "Conflict Resolution Quarterly" 41.3, 2024, p. 235–252 (1–18), https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.21365

Bosworth C.E., *The City of Tarsus and the Arab-Byzantine Frontiers in Early and Middle ʿAbbāsid Times*, "Oriens" 33, 1992, p. 268–286, https://doi.org/10.2307/1580607

Bosworth C.E., *The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld. The Banu Sasan in Arabic Society and Culture*, Leiden 1976, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004659445

Butler A.J., *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, vol. I, Oxford 1884.

Canard M., *La guerre sainte dans le monde islamique et le monde chrétien*, "Revue Africaine" 1936, p. 605–623.

Czyż M., *Sytuacja chrześcijan za panowania Al-Ḥākima bi-Amr Allāha*, MA thesis written under the supervision of dr P. Lewicka, Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw 2007.

Dagron G., *Byzance et le modèle islamique au X^e siècle. À propos des Constitutions Tactiques de l'empereur Léon VI*, "Comptes rendus des séances de l'année de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres" 127.2, 1983, p. 219–243, https://doi.org/10.3406/crai.1983.14040

Dagron G., Riche P., Vauchez A. *et al.*, *Historia Chrześcijaństwa*, vol. IV, trans. J. Kłoczowski, Warszawa 1999.

Dhattiwala R., Biggs M., *The Political Logic of Ethnic Violence: The Anti-Muslim Pogrom in Gujarat, 2002*, "Politics & Society" 40, 2012, p. 483–516, https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329212461125

Eddé A.-M., *Communautés Chrétiennes en Pays d'Islam du début du VII^e siècle au milieu du XI^e siècle*, Paris 1997.

El Cheikh N.M., *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, Cambridge–London 2004.

Engel D., *What is a Pogrom? European Jews in the Age of Violence*, [in:] *Anti-Jewish Violence. Rethinking the pogrom in East European History*, ed. J. Dekel-Chen, D. Gaunt, N.M. Meir, I. Bartal, Bloomington 2010, p. 19–40.

Gertz S.M., *Shiʿite Rulers, Sunni Rivals, and Christians in Between. Muslim-Christian Relations in Fāṭimid Palestine and Egypt*, Piscataway 2023, https://doi.org/10.31826/9781463244743

Hitti Ph.K., *History of the Arabs*, 10th ed., London–Basingstoke 1984.

Ikonomopoulos K., *Byzantium and Jerusalem, 813–975: From Indifference to Intervention*, [in:] *Papers from the First and Second Postgraduate Forums in Byzantine Studies: Sailing to Byzantium*, ed. S. Neocleous, Cambridge 2009, p. 7–26.

Kaldellis A., *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood*, Oxford 2017.

Knopf T.A., *Rumors, Race and Riots*, London–New York 1975.

Kościelniak K., *Grecy i Arabowie*, Kraków 2004.

Lohr E., *1915 and the War Pogrom Paradigm in the Russian Empire*, [in:] *Anti-Jewish Violence. Rethinking the pogrom in East European History*, ed. J. Dekel-Chen, D. Gaunt, N.M. Meir, I. Bartal, Bloomington 2010, p. 41–51.

Monnot G., *Ṣalāt*, [in:] *EI²*, vol. VIII, ed. C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, G. Lecomte, Leiden 1995, p. 925–934.

Morris B., Ze'evi D., *The Thirty-Year Genocide*, Cambridge–London 2019, https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674240070

The Problems of Ahl Dhimma, http://www.ismaili.net/histoire/history05/history555.html [25 V 2024].

Raymond A., *Cairo*, trans. W. Wood, Cambridge–London 2000.

Runciman S., *A History of the Crusades*, Cambridge 1995.

Tokarska-Bakir J., *The Pogrom as an Act of Social Control: Springfeld 1908 – Poland 1945/46* [A keynote at the international conference], "Pogroms: Collective anti-Jewish violence in the Polish lands in 19th and 20th centuries", Warsaw, 10–12 June 2015, p. 1–18.

Tritton A.S., *The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects. A Critical Study of the Convenant of ʿUmar*, Oxford 1930, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783112615263-023

Maciej Czyż
University of Wrocław
The Faculty of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
ul. Św. Jadwigi 3/4
50-266 Wrocław, Polska/Poland
maciej.czyz@uwr.edu.pl