

Tulunid and Ikhshidid Dynasties

868-969 AD

Objectives

- ❖ To learn about the “Church History” and the “Islamic Invasion”.
- ❖ Egypt ruled by the Tulunid and Ikhshidid.

References

- ❖ CD Audio for HG the late Bishop Youannis of Gharbeya

Scriptural Verse

- ❖ “I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist” (Luke 21: 15)

Lesson Outline

The Tulunid Dynasty

- ❖ 868-905 AD.
- ❖ Founded by Ahmad Ibn Tulun (868-884), a Turkish officer, who triumphed over the Abbasid’s Waly, and added Palestine and Syria to Egypt under his autonomy.
- ❖ Egypt became an independent state governed by a Muslim ruler after it was ruled by 108 Walys during 229 years according to Stanley Lanpoole, an English historian.
- ❖ Once the tax income no longer had to go to the Caliph in Baghdad, it was possible to develop irrigation works and build a navy, which greatly stimulated the local economy and trade.

Ahmad Ibn Tulun

- ❖ Muslim historians imply that Ahmad was a virtuous person who loved charity, and was known to have learned the Qoran very well.
- ❖ They however agree that he was very quick in using the sword.
- ❖ During the 16 years of his reign, he killed, directly and indirectly 18,000 people.
- ❖ Ahmad wanted to acquire an army that would be independent of the caliphate and loyal to him.
- ❖ To build such an army, Ahmad purchased Mamluks (mercenaries of different nationalities) who could be trained as military units loyal to their owner.
- ❖ Mamluks means, “the owned” in Arabic
- ❖ In 16 years, he amassed a huge surplus and built many buildings.
- ❖ At his death in 884, he left 10 million denarii.
- ❖ The source of this wealth is questionable.
- ❖ He built his great Mosque, as is the norm of every new ruler, spending large sums of money.

- ❖ Some Muslims refused to pray in it, doubting the source of the money.
- ❖ Stanley Lanpoole says, “It is almost certain that Ahmad Ibn Tulun had levied huge amounts of money on the Coptic Patriarchs, especially Pope Shenouda I (55th).
- ❖ Ahmad Ibn Tulun used to visit a monastery and stayed in solitude in a cell for contemplation.
- ❖ He gave the monks some privileges – did not collect money from them.
- ❖ He was moved when all people prayed for his healing before his death.
- ❖ He heard the Copts praying for him from his palace and started crying.

Khumarawayh

- ❖ Ahmad’s son and successor was different than his father.
- ❖ Expended huge sums on luxuries for his residence and in 895 paid a fortune as a dowry to marry the daughter of Caliph Al-Mutadid (reigned 892-902).
- ❖ Was able to maintain the Egyptian armies in the field, leading them to victory both in Syria and in Mesopotamia (Iraq).
- ❖ He resolved his father’s conflict with the caliphate by a combination of arms and diplomacy.
- ❖ While visiting St. Macarius Monastery, he ordered that the body of St. Macarius) to be uncovered, and took him by his beard and said, “defend yourself.”
- ❖ The saint opened his eyes and looked at him, causing Khumarawayh to faint and became mute and lame for 1 hour until he was anointed with the blessed oil above the relics
- ❖ He treated the Copts nicely after this incident.
- ❖ The country’s apparent strength evaporated when he was murdered in 896, leaving no funds with which his 14-year old heir could pay the troops.
- ❖ The entire country fell into anarchy, which lasted until 905 when the caliphal army invaded Egypt and momentarily restored it to the status of a province ruled by governors sent from Baghdad.

The Ikhshidid Dynasty

- ❖ For 30 years, the governors were unable to restore stability in Egypt until this dynasty came to power (935-969 AD)
- ❖ It was a period of extreme poverty in Egypt’s history; to a great extent it was the Copts that suffered the most.
- ❖ In general, it was period of good relations between Copts and Muslims, although whenever the Byzantines won a battle against the Muslims in the East, the Muslims would attack the Copts destroying many Churches and Monasteries.
- ❖ In many occasions the government would quickly calm the crowds and bring peace and order to the streets.

Famous Character: Saeed Ibn Katib Elfaraghani

- ❖ A Coptic architect during the Tulunid Dynasty.

- ❖ Designed the Nile gauge at Rodah during the days of Al Mutawakil the Abbasid (864 AD) and an irrigation system of water reservoirs connected by channels to provide water to Al-Qata'ie city during the days of Ibn Tulun (873).
- ❖ As Ahmad Ibn Tulun was inspecting the reservoirs, his horse tripped on some bricks left by the workers.
- ❖ Tulun was told that Saeed put the bricks there to humiliate him.
- ❖ So he ordered to scourge Saeed 500 times and to put him in jail instead of rewarding him.
- ❖ While in jail, Saeed heard that Ahmad had decided to build his grand Mosque with 300 columns (compared to 120 columns in the Mosque of Amr Ebn El-Aas).
- ❖ Saeed was concerned that, like many other grand Mosques, Ahmed will get the needed columns to build the Mosque from the Coptic Churches.
- ❖ He made a model of the grand Mosque design that would only need 2 columns.
- ❖ First building ever designed that did not use columns.
- ❖ Ahmed was very amazed and gave him 100,000 denarii to start building (876/877).
- ❖ The genius engineer built it in 2 years.
- ❖ He asked for his reward and Ahmed granted him 10,000 denarii.
- ❖ He invented the use of pointed arches that appeared 2 centuries later in Europe (Gothic Architecture).
- ❖ Even the motifs and ornaments in Ahmad's mosque are similar to that of El Suryan Monastery.
- ❖ Some historical sources say that Ahmad asked Saeed to convert to Islam.
- ❖ When Saeed refused, Ahmad ordered to behead him and he was martyred on the 7th of Kiahk.
- ❖ His relics are kept at St. Kolta's Church.

Negative Influences of Arab Invasion

- ❖ Changing the social structure – different nationalities.
- ❖ Each ruler was never concerned about public welfare or growth of future resources.
- ❖ Injustice, destruction, and persecution.
- ❖ Jeziah (Muslim taxes on non Muslims).
- ❖ Bad influence on Coptic Language.
- ❖ Losing the famous Library of Alexandria.

Conclusion

- ❖ In general, it was period of good relations between Copts and Muslims, although whenever the Byzantines won a battle against the Muslims in the East, the Muslims would attack the Copts destroying many Churches and Monasteries.

Activities / Discussion Points

- ❖ Have a print out for the most important points to be given to the youth to avoid distraction and to help them to follow easily.