

THE ARAB CONNECTION

Posted on March 17, 2021 by Keghart



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By Jirair Tutunjian, Toronto, Ontario, 13 March 2021

The mother of Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal of Saudi Arabia was an Armenian named Munayir. She had survived the Genocide. She was also the mother of Prince Nawaf.

The Medieval Arab armies had many Armenian commanders. Among them were Wardan (Vartan) who was the commander of Amr Ibn Al Aas. Together they invaded Egypt and Syria. Other famous Armenian leaders included Anbasa Ibn Bahr Al Armany, Barmark Ibn Abdallah Al Dabily (from Tvin), Muhammad Ibn Al Makheesy Al Khelaty (from Khelat), Muhammad Ibn Bashir Al Qaly (from Garin), and Muhammad Ibn Wazr Al Qaly.

Emir Ali Ibn Yahyah Al Armany was the commander of the Muslim armies during the reign of Caliphs Al Mo'tassem (833-842), Caliph Al Watheq (842-847), and Caliph Al Motawakil (847-861). He was twice the governor of Egypt, of Syrian sea ports and of Armenia in 862. He fought against the Byzantines and died while fighting them in 863. He played a big role in releasing the Armenian nobility detained in Baghdad and Samarra during the time of Caliph Al Motawakil.

Al Yahyah Al Armany was described by Egyptian historian Abul Mahassen Ibn Thagry as follows: "He was a courageous and fearless Emir, knowledgeable in war strategies and fighting tactics, a great leader and organizer, a fair man of straight character and morals during all the period of his reign. He was of Armenian origin."

Al Yahyah Al Armany had two prominent sons: Emir Al Hussein Ibn Ali ibn Yahyah Al Armany and Emir Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Yahyah Al Armany.

In addition to military leaders, there were Armenians who contributed to Arab literature. Poet Abu Ali Al Qaly (died 967) and Abul Hassan Al Malty, who died in 987, are among "Arab" writers of Armenian origin. The famous painter and artist Yahyah Ibn Mahmood Ibn Al Hassan (died 1242), who was the head of the centre of painting and drawing in Baghdad, was Armenian.

Famous Armenians who settled in Egypt during the Fatimid period (11th century): Emir Badr al Gamaly Al Armany, surnamed the Emir of the armies (died in 1094). A district in Cairo is named after him (Al Gamaliah). He was chief minister for twenty years. The Egyptian historian Al Marqreezy said about him: "He is of Armenian nationality. He reigned over Egypt like a king. He improved Egypt's condition which was corrupted. He was a good spirit. And a man of dignity, respect, a great diplomat and always victorious. Happy and generous and of high morals."

Badr Al Gamaly was succeeded by his son Al Afdal Ibn Badr Al Gamaly, who ruled for 27 years. (died in 1121). Other Arabized Armenians were Talee Ibn Razeek and Al Maamun Ahmad Ibn Afdal Ibn Badr Al Gamaly (1130-1131). Also a commander called Yanes (1131-1132). Armenian Badr Al Deen Lulu ruled Mosul and surroundings from 1233 to 1259.

There were also Armenian leaders who served the Arab armies but remained Christian. Bahram

(Vahram) 1135-1137. Another Arabized Armenian who remained Christian was historian Abu Saleh Al Armany, who wrote a book (1168) describing the churches and monasteries in Egypt and the situation of the Armenian community in Egypt.

There were also prominent Armenian Muslim women. They were the daughters and mothers of eminent Armenian Muslims.

Comments



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Thank you for the informative article about the "contribution of Armenian genes" to the Arab and Islamic populations! Loss really. Between the planned, organized, and perpetrated Turkish Genocides of Armenians, rape, and Islamization, there are currently outside of occupied western Armenia and present day Armenia. The issue of migrations directly related to the Genocides as well as corrupt leaders, assimilation into other national and religious groups by marriage or other, has become a major issue. The pressures to assimilate are subtle sadly but also effective. Is it a wonder then, why the Armenian nation has decreased in number and quality, and the elegant language is in danger mixed with English, German, Scandinavian, Arabic, Russian, and other?