

= Husayn ibn Hamdan =

Husayn ibn Hamdan ibn Hamdun ibn al @-@ Harith al @-@ Taghlibi was an early member of the Hamdanid family , who distinguished himself as a general for the Abbasid Caliphate and played a major role in the Hamdanids ' rise to power among the Arab tribes in the Jazira .

Husayn entered caliphal service in 895 , and through his co @-@ operation with the caliphal government , he established himself and his family as the leader of the Arabs and Kurds of the Jazira , leading his troops to successful campaigns against the Qarmatians , Dulafids and Tulunids over the next few years . As one of the most distinguished generals of the Abbasid Caliphate , he rose in power and influence until 908 , when he was one of the leading conspirators in the abortive coup against Caliph al @-@ Muqtadir . Although the coup failed and Husayn was forced to flee the capital , he soon secured a pardon and served as governor in Jibal , where he again distinguished himself in military operations in south @-@ central Iran . In ca . 911 , he was appointed governor in Mosul , where he remained until rising in revolt in 914 / 5 , for reasons that are unclear . Defeated and captured in 916 , he was imprisoned in Baghdad , where he was executed in 918 . Through his influence , the family rose to high offices , beginning a long period during which Mosul and the entire Jazira were ruled by the Hamdanids . His nephews , Nasir al @-@ Dawla and Sayf al @-@ Dawla , went on to establish autonomous emirates in Mosul and Aleppo respectively .

= = Biography = =

= = = Origin and early career = = =

Husayn was a son of the Hamdanid family 's patriarch , Hamdan ibn Hamdun . His family belonged to the Banu Taghlib tribe , established in the Jazira since before the Muslim conquests . In a pattern repeated across the Abbasid Caliphate , the Taghlibi leaders took advantage of the collapse of central caliphal authority of the during the decade @-@ long Anarchy at Samarra ( 861 ? 870 ) to assert increasing control over their particular area , centred on Mosul . Hamdan established himself among the leading tribal leaders during this time , and led the resistance against caliphal attempts to restore direct control , even allying with the Kharijite rebels in the 880s . Finally , in 895 Caliph al @-@ Mu 'tadid launched a determined attack to recover the Jazira . Hamdan fled before the Caliph 's advance and was captured after a long pursuit and thrown in prison .

Husayn , however , who had been entrusted with the fortress of Ardumusht on the left bank of the Tigris , chose to surrender it instead , and offered his services to the Caliph . He managed to capture the Kharijite leader Harun al @-@ Shari , thereby bringing an end to the Kharijite revolt in the Jazira . In exchange he secured not only a pardon for his father , but also the lifting of a tribute that the Taghlib had been forced to pay , and the right to form a regiment of 500 Taghlibi cavalry at government expense . This was a major success , laying the groundwork for his own and his family 's ascent to power . In the words of the Islamic scholar Hugh N. Kennedy ,

to the caliph he offered a group of experienced warriors under his own skilled and loyal leadership ; to the Taghlib , and other people in the Jazira , he offered the prospect of salaries and booty ; and to his own family military command and the opportunity of acquiring wealth in government services . It was in fact not as an independent tribal leader , c but rather as an intermediary between government and the Arabs and Kurds of the Jazira that al @-@ Husayn made the family fortune .

= = = In Abbasid service = = =

Husayn led his Taghlibi regiment with distinction over the next few years . He fought against the Dulafid Bakr ibn Abd al @-@ Aziz ibn Ahmad ibn Abi Dulaf in the Jibal in 896 . After 903 he played a decisive role in the campaigns of Muhammad ibn Sulayman al @-@ Katib against the Qarmatians of the Syrian desert , where his experienced cavalry was crucial in countering the highly mobile Qarmatians . In 903 he participated in Muhammad 's major victory over the Qarmatian leader al

@-@ Husayn ibn Zikrawayh , better known by his laqab of " Sahib al @-@ Shama " , near Hama . The Qarmatian leaders fled to the desert , but were soon captured , and brought in triumph to Baghdad . Husayn then participated as commander of the vanguard in Muhammad 's 904 ? 905 campaign that ended the Tulunid dynasty and restored Syria and Egypt to direct caliphal control . Muhammad ibn Sulayman reportedly offered him the governorship of Egypt , but Husayn refused , preferring to return to Baghdad with the enormous booty he had collected .

On his return from Egypt , in 905 ? 906 , Husayn was sent against the Banu Kalb of Syria , who had risen in revolt at the instigation of the Qarmatians . Although he drove them into the desert , the Kalbis filled up the wells as they retreated , and he was unable to follow them . As a result , the rebels were able to reach the Lower Euphrates , where they defeated another Abbasid force at al @-@ Qadisiyya and raided the hajj caravan of the Mecca pilgrims ( late 906 ) . In the end , the forces of the central government defeated the Qarmatians and drove them to flight . On their retreat back to Syria along the Euphrates , they were attacked and annihilated by Husayn in March / April 907 . Although these victories did not entirely remove the Qarmatian threat ? the Qarmatians based in Bahrayn continued to remain active and raided lower Iraq ? they signalled the near @-@ eradication of the sect from Syria . Husayn then subdued the remaining Kalbi rebels between the Euphrates and Aleppo , and in 907 ? 908 confronted and drove back into Syria the Banu Tamim who had invaded the Jazira seeking pillage , defeating them near Khunasira .

By 908 , this distinguished service had established Husayn as " one of the leading generals " ( Kennedy ) in the Caliphate , and enabled him to advance his own brothers to positions of power : they received various offices , the most important of which was the award of the governorship of Mosul to Husayn 's brother Abu 'l @-@ Hayja Abdallah in 905 . In December 908 , Husayn became involved in a palace plot to depose the new Caliph , al @-@ Muqtadir , in favour of the older Ibn al @-@ Mu 'tazz . Along with two others , on 17 December 908 he attacked and killed the vizier al @-@ Abbas ibn al @-@ Hasan al @-@ Jarjara 'i , who had endorsed al @-@ Muqtadir 's accession . The conspirators then sought to kill the young caliph as well , but the latter had barricaded himself in the Hasani Palace . Ibn al @-@ Mu 'tazz was proclaimed as caliph , and Husayn went to the palace to persuade al @-@ Muqtadir to surrender . However , the unexpected resistance of the palace servants under the chamberlains Sawsan , Mu 'nis al @-@ Fahl and Mu 'nis al @-@ Khadim , and the plotters ' indecision , doomed the coup . Al @-@ Muqtadir prevailed , and Husayn fled from Baghdad to Mosul and to Balad . He then spent some time wandering with his followers across the Jazira . The caliph sent Husayn 's own brother , Abu 'l @-@ Hayja Abdallah , to pursue him , but Husayn managed to surprise and defeat him . This success encouraged him to contact the new vizier , Ali ibn al @-@ Furat , through the mediation of his brother Ibrahim . Although he had been a leading figure in the conspiracy , and most of the other participants in the coup were executed or imprisoned , Husayn succeeded in receiving a pardon . He was not welcomed back to Baghdad , however , but appointed governor of Qumm and Kashan in the Jibal .

As governor , he aided Mu 'nis al @-@ Khadim in his campaign against the Saffarid al @-@ Layth ibn Ali in Sijistan and Fars , and later against the former Saffarid general and rebel Subkara and his lieutenant al @-@ Qattal . The Abbasid forces under Mu 'nis al @-@ Khadim succeeded in suppressing the rebellion by 910 / 1 , with al @-@ Qattal being captured by Husayn in person , according to a celebratory poem by the later Hamdanid poet Abu Firas .

Abu Firas further reports that Husayn was offered the governorship of Fars , but refused , and returned to Baghdad . Ibn al @-@ Furat , who probably still mistrusted his intentions , promptly dispatched him to the governorship of the Diyar Rabi 'a , the province encompassing the eastern Jazira , including Mosul . From this post , Husayn led a raiding campaign against the Byzantine Empire in 913 / 4 . Soon after , however , an open rift developed between Husayn and the vizier Ali ibn Isa al @-@ Jarrah . The reason is unclear , but revolved around the finances of Husayn 's province . In 914 / 5 he rose in open rebellion , assembling a force of 30 @,@ 000 Arabs and Kurds in the Jazira , a testament to his influence there . He managed to defeat a caliphal army sent against him , but when confronted by the redoubtable Mu 'nis al @-@ Khadim , recalled from Egypt , he was defeated and captured in February 916 while trying to flee north into Armenia . He was brought to Baghdad , where he was publicly paraded across the city in ritual humiliation , riding a camel and

wearing a cap of shame . He was put into prison , and executed in October / November 918 on the caliph 's orders .

The reason for Husayn 's execution is unclear . The historian of the Hamdanid dynasty , Marius Canard , suggested that it may have been due to his involvement in a Shi 'a @-@ inspired conspiracy , possibly connected to the dismissal of Ibn al @-@ Furat from his second vizierate at the same period , or with the rebellion of the autonomous governor of Adharbayjan , Yusuf ibn Abi 'l @-@ Saj , whom al @-@ Muqtadir may have suspected of ties with the imprisoned Husayn . As Canard writes , " in any case the caliph must have feared that if Husayn were released he would once again start a revolt , either through a desire for independence or as a Shi 'i . In order to avoid attempts by those ( probably numerous ) who desired his release to secure it by force , the caliph preferred to take a measure which put a stop to all intrigue " .

Despite Husayn 's rebellion and execution , the Hamdanid family continued to prosper : his brothers were soon released from captivity , and Abdallah rose to prominence by aligning himself with Mu 'nis al @-@ Khadim and sharing in the ups and downs of the court politics in Baghdad . It was Abdallah 's two sons , however , al @-@ Hasan and Ali , better known by their honorific titles Nasir al @-@ Dawla and Sayf al @-@ Dawla , who established the family as the ruling dynasty in the semi @-@ independent emirates of Mosul ( until 978 ) and Aleppo ( until 1002 ) respectively .

= = Character and assessment = =

According to Canard , Husayn " stands out more clearly than the supreme commander Mu 'nis or any other military leaders " of the period for his ability and valour , as well as for his restive and ambitious spirit . He was also singled out in being of Arab descent , an unusual case among the Caliphate 's senior leaders of the period . Canard assesses him as unusually open @-@ minded , and attuned to the ideological turmoil and ferment in the Muslim world of his time , as indicated by his contact with the Sufi mystic al @-@ Hallaj , who dedicated a work on politics to Husayn . Indeed , according to Canard , Husayn 's espousal of Shi 'ism , and his participation in the abortive coup of 908 , can best be seen in light of a desire ? typical of Shi 'a sympathisers ? for a renewal of the Caliphate and the establishment of an " ideal Muslim government " , something which the corrupt and decadent Abbasids were no longer capable of . Finally , although it fell to his brother to found the actual Hamdanid dynasty , it was Husayn who first gave his family a taste of power and glory , for which he was later celebrated in the poetry of Abu Firas .