

= Bajkam =

Abū al-ʿAbbās Husayn Bajkam al-ʿAbbāsī Māḳānī ( Arabic : أبو الحسن الحسيني المهكاني ) , referred to as Bajkam , Badjam or Bachkam ( from Bāḳām , a Persian and Turkish word meaning a horse- or yak tail ) , was a Turkish military commander and official of the Abbasid Caliphate . A former ghulam of the Ziyarid dynasty , Bajkam entered Abbasid service following the assassination of the Ziyarid ruler Mardavij in 935 . During his five year tenure at the Caliphate 's court at Baghdad , he was granted the title of amir al-umara , consolidating his dominance over the Caliphs al-Radi and al-Muttaqi and giving him absolute power over their domains . Bajkam was challenged throughout his rule by various opponents , including his predecessor as amir al-umara , Muhammad ibn Raʿīq , the Basra based Baridis , and the Buyid dynasty of Iran , but he succeeded in retaining control until his death . He was murdered by a party of Kurds during a hunting excursion in 941 , shortly after the accession of al-Muttaqi as Caliph . Bajkam was known both for his firm rule and for his patronage of Baghdad intellectuals , who respected and in some cases befriended him . His death led to a void in central power , resulting in a brief period of instability and fighting in Baghdad .

= = Early military career and service under Ibn Raʿīq = =

Details of Bajkam 's early life are unknown . He was one of the ghilman ( military slaves , usually of Turkish origin ) of the Daylamite warlord Makan ibn Kaki in northern Iran . Makan took care of the young Bajkam 's training and education , something for which the latter showed his gratitude by adopting his patron 's name as his nisba ( surname ) . After Makan , Bajkam entered the service of Mardavij , founder of the Ziyarid dynasty , who came to control Daylam , Jibal and Tabaristan . Mardavij mistreated his ghilman , who consequently murdered him at Isfahan in January 935 , an act in which Bajkam may have been complicit . After Mardavij 's death , most of the ghilman in Ziyarid service dispersed . Bajkam and his fellow officer Tuzun assumed the leadership of a large group and , after first offering their services to the new governor of Jibal , Hasan ibn Harun , proceeded to the Abbasid court at Baghdad . At first , their offers were rejected by the court , where the Caliph 's Hujari bodyguards jealously guarded their prerogatives , but the ghilman were eventually taken into the service of Muhammad ibn Raʿīq , governor of Basra and Wasit in southern Iraq . Now known as Bajkam Raʿīqī , Bajkam created a large military force under his command consisting of his own followers as well as additional Turks and Daylamites summoned from Jibal .

In early November 936 , the Caliph al-Radi ( reigned 934 ? 940 ) bestowed the newly created title of amir al-umara ( " commander of commanders " ) on Ibn Raʿīq , who was effectively granted absolute control over the Caliphate . This provoked the reaction of various provincial governors as well as that of powerful interest groups in Baghdad itself , such as the caliphal bodyguards . Against them , Ibn Raʿīq employed Bajkam and his Turkish supporters . With their aid , he managed to neutralize the Hujari and Saji guard units , after which , in February 937 , Bajkam was rewarded with the posts of sahib al-shurta ( chief of police ) and governor of the eastern provinces .

Far more difficult and protracted was the war against the ambitious governor of Ahwaz , Abu Abdallah al-Baridi , who aimed to supplant Ibn Raʿīq . Al-Baridi 's family was of Basran origin , and had served the Abbasids in various roles as officials before managing to assert a weak hold over Khuzistan . Ibn Raʿīq himself was defeated and forced to leave Basra to the Baridis , but Bajkam saved the situation by scoring two major victories , despite being outnumbered , that allowed him to take possession of Khuzistan . The hard-pressed al-Baridi now turned to his powerful neighbour , the Buyid ruler of Fars , Ali ibn Buya , for help . Ali 's brother Ahmad soon took over Khuzistan , and Ibn Raʿīq was forced to offer possession of the province as an independent domain if Bajkam would recover it . Bajkam however was repulsed by the Buyid forces , and fell back to Wasit .

Ignoring Ibn Raʿīq 's orders to retake Khuzistan , Bajkam remained at Wasit , and began plotting to depose Ibn Raʿīq himself . To this end , Bajkam began seeking allies : he offered the governorship

of Wasit to the Baridis , and through the former vizier Ibn Muqla , who wished to avenge himself on Ibn Ra 'iq for his own downfall and confiscation of his property , gained the covert support of Caliph al @-@ Radi himself . In September 938 , Bajkam led his troops from Wasit to Baghdad . Ibn Ra 'iq tried without success to impede his advance by destroying the great dams of the Nahrawan Canal and flooding the plain , but Bajkam 's army entered the Abbasid capital without opposition , and al @-@ Radi immediately transferred Ibn Ra 'iq 's title of amir al @-@ umara to Bajkam .

= = Amir al @-@ umara = =

Despite the continued relegation of al @-@ Radi to a ceremonial role , the relationship between the Caliph and Bajkam was strong , with al @-@ Radi praising Bajkam for his harsh discipline and referring to the latter as his " protégé " . Al @-@ Radi was appreciative of Bajkam 's respect for his position as Caliph , and promised his support for the amir al @-@ umara .

In October ? November 938 , Bajkam and the Caliph campaigned against the influential Hamdanid emir of Mosul , Hasan ibn Abdallah , who had taken advantage of the turmoil in Iraq to cease forwarding his province 's revenue to Baghdad . Although Bajkam 's army captured Mosul , Hasan fled before him to the remotest corners of his domain , where Bajkam 's forces pursued him in vain . In the meantime , the local population resented the presence of the caliphal troops and launched guerilla warfare against them , while Ibn Ra 'iq used Bajkam 's absence to take control of Baghdad at the head of a Carmathian force . These developments forced Bajkam to negotiate with his rivals : the Hamdanids were restored in their province in exchange for the payment of the tax arrears , and Ibn Ra 'iq was bought off with the governorship of the provinces of Tariq al @-@ Furat , Diyar Mudar , Qinnasrin and al- ' Awasim , which were also claimed by the Ikhshidids of Egypt . This arrangement allowed Bajkam and the Caliph to return to Baghdad in February 939 .

Bajkam , having consolidated his control over Baghdad , now turned to face the threat posed by the Buyids . To this end , he strengthened his ties with the Baridis of Basra , by handing over Wasit , as previously agreed , appointing Abu Abdallah al @-@ Baridi as vizier of the Abbasid court ( although the latter remained at Wasit and did not visit Baghdad ) , and , finally , by marrying himself to one of al @-@ Baridi 's daughters . Bajkam 's success against the Buyids was mixed : Wasit was saved from Buyid attack , and the Baridis led a successful campaign in Susiana , but an expedition into Jibal was crushed by the third Buyid brother , Hasan . The alliance with the Baridis quickly soured , however , as al @-@ Baridi still maintained his ambition of replacing Bajkam , and ajkam was aware of this . In late August 940 , Bajkam removed al @-@ Baridi from the vizierate and launched an attack on Wasit , which the Baridis abandoned without resistance . In the meantime , the Baghdad was in turmoil as religious violence had become commonplace , with fanatical members of the Hanbali school imposing their tenets on the general populace .

In December 940 , al @-@ Radi died . Bajkam remained at Wasit , but sent his secretary to Baghdad to convene a council of Abbasid aristocrats , who selected al @-@ Muttaqi ( r . 940 ? 944 ) , al @-@ Radi 's brother , as Caliph . Bajkam also sent a slave named Takinak to the deceased Caliph 's palace , the Dar al @-@ Sultan , to procure various items , including the valuable al @-@ Yatimah pearl . He also obtained three female slaves from al @-@ Radi 's palace , whose singing he remembered from his earlier visits to the Caliph .

Among al @-@ Muttaqi 's first actions as Caliph was the confirmation of Bajkam as amir al @-@ umara . Despite al @-@ Muttaqi 's gesture of support , Bajkam still faced opposition among the semi @-@ autonomous provincial governors , including al @-@ Baridi .

= = Death and ensuing anarchy = =

Bajkam opened a campaign against al @-@ Baridi in early spring 941 . His lieutenants were at first defeated by the Baridis , whereupon Bajkam himself left Wasit to take the field . On his way to join his army , however , he was informed that his generals had achieved a major victory over the Baridis , and decided to return to Wasit . On 21 April 941 , while travelling , he took part in a hunting excursion , during which he and his party inadvertently encountered a band of Kurdish brigands .

During a brief skirmish , Bajkam was slain when one of the Kurds stabbed him in the back with his lance .

Bajkam 's unexpected death created a power vacuum in Baghdad , with disagreements between Daylamite and Turkish forces prompting the former to join the defeated al @-@ Baridi . With their assistance , he marched on Wasit and Baghdad , capturing them , but was soon forced to flee due to the disorder that followed his usurpation of power . A Daylamite chief named Kurankij replaced him as de facto ruler of Baghdad , but he imposed tyrannical rule , and al @-@ Muttaqi appealed to the former amir al @-@ umara Ibn Ra 'iq for assistance .

Ibn Ra 'iq soon retook control of Baghdad , but political turmoil did not cease with his re @-@ installation as amir al @-@ umara . Once again , al @-@ Baridi captured the city , and Ibn Ra 'iq fled with the Caliph to Mosul , from where the Hamdanid rulers launched a successful attempt to restore them . The Hamdanid emir Hasan , after ordering the assassination of Ibn Ra 'iq , was made amir al @-@ umara and given the laqab of Nasir al @-@ Dawla ( " Defender of the Dynasty " ) . In 943 , the Hamdanids were forced to retreat to Mosul when Tuzun , one of Bajkam 's officers , seized power with military support ; the following year , Tuzun captured , blinded , and deposed al @-@ Muttaqi , assuming the role of amir al @-@ umara . The Caliph 's brother , al @-@ Mustakfi ( r . 944 ? 946 ) , was appointed as his successor . The competition for control of the Caliph ended in 945 , when the Buyid Ahmad took over the position of amir al @-@ umara with the title of Mu 'izz al @-@ Dawla . This begun the period of undisputed Buyid control over Baghdad and Iraq , which lasted until the Seljuk conquest in the 1050s .

= = Character = =

Despite his slave origin , Bajkam was educated in Arabic ( although he reportedly did not speak it for fear of making mistakes ) , respected by intellectuals and was known to seek the company of such men as al @-@ Suli and the physician Sinan ibn Thabit . It is in their writings that glimpses of his character survive . According to the researcher Marius Canard , Bajkam was " covetous of power and money , he did not hesitate to resort to dissimulation and ruse , corruption and torture to attain his ends ; he was at times cruel , though his bravery was legendary , and was more upright in character than Ibn Ra 'iq " . Bajkam was also solicitous for the welfare of his subjects , and especially the inhabitants of Wasit cherished his memory .