

= Al @-@ Jarrah ibn Abdallah =

Abu ʿUqba al @-@ Jarrah ibn ʿAbdallah al @-@ Hakami (Arabic : ??? ????? ?????? ?? ??? ????? ?????) was an Arab nobleman and general of the Hakami tribe . During the course of the early 8th century , he was at various times governor of Basra , Sistan and Khurasan , Armenia and Azerbaijan . A legendary warrior already during his lifetime , he is best known for his campaigns against the Khazars on the Caucasus front , culminating in his death in the Battle of Marj Ardabil in 730 .

= = Early career = =

According to Baladhuri , al @-@ Jarrah was born in Jordan , and probably followed Sufyan ibn al @-@ Abrad al @-@ Kalbi and Abd al @-@ Rahman ibn Habib al @-@ Hakami to Iraq in 696 . In 701 , he fought against the rebellion of Ibn al @-@ Ash 'ath .

In 706 or a few years later he was appointed as governor of Basra under the governor of Iraq , al @-@ Hajjaj ibn Yusuf , and remained in the post until al @-@ Hajjaj 's replacement by Yazid ibn al @-@ Muhallab in 715 . Yazid in turn named al @-@ Jarrah as his deputy for Iraq , before he himself left for Khurasan , and in 717 , Caliph Umar II (r . 717 ? 720) appointed al @-@ Jarrah as Yazid 's successor in the governorship of Khurasan and Sistan . Al @-@ Jarrah remained in Khurasan until March / April 719 , when he was dismissed after 17 months in office due to complaints of his mistreatment of the native converts to Islam (mawali) , who , despite their conversion , were still obliged to pay the poll @-@ tax (jizya) . He was replaced by his deputy , Abd al @-@ Rahman ibn Nu 'aym al @-@ Ghamidi . The most notable event of his tenure was the beginning of the covert missionary activity (da 'wah) by the agents of the Abbasids in Khurasan . After his return to Iraq , in 720 , he seems to have fought alongside Maslamah ibn Abd al @-@ Malik in the suppression of the rebellion of Yazid ibn al @-@ Muhallab .

= = In the Caucasus = =

In 721 / 2 , the main phase of the Second Arab ? Khazar War began on the Caucasus front . In the winter of this year , 30 @,@ 000 Khazars launched an invasion of Armenia and inflicted a crushing defeat on the army of the local governor Mi 'laq ibn Saffar al @-@ Bahrani at Marj al @-@ Hijara in February / March 722 . In response , Caliph Yazid II (r . 720 ? 724) sent al @-@ Jarrah with 25 @,@ 000 Syrian troops to Armenia , placing him in command of the Umayyad offensive against the Khazars . Al @-@ Jarrah was swiftly successful in driving the Khazars back across the Caucasus , and fought his way north along the western coast of the Caspian Sea , recovering Derbent and advancing onto the Khazar capital of Balanjar . The Khazars tried to defend the city by ringing the citadel with a laager of wagons , but the Arabs broke it apart and stormed the city on 21 August 722 (or 723) . Most of Balanjar 's inhabitants were killed or enslaved , but a few managed to flee north . The Arabs also took the town of Wabandar , and even approached Samandar (near modern Kizlyar) .

Despite these successes , the Arabs could not achieve a decisive result . The main Khazar army remained intact and a constant threat , since like all nomad forces it was not dependent on cities for supplies . Coupled with the fact that his rear was still insecure , al @-@ Jarrah was forced to abandon any attempt at capturing Samandar as well , and to retreat to Warthan south of the Caucasus . From there he asked for reinforcements from Yazid , but although the Caliph promised to send more troops , he failed to do so . The sources are obscure on al @-@ Jarrah 's activity in 723 , but he seems to have led another campaign north (which may indeed be the true date of the Balanjar campaign) . In response , the Khazars raided south of the Caucasus , but in February 724 , al @-@ Jarrah inflicted a crushing defeat on them in a battle between the rivers Cyrus and Araxes that lasted for several days . Al @-@ Jarrah followed up his success by capturing Tiflis , whose inhabitants were obliged to pay the kharaj but received a charter of rights in return . This campaign brought Caucasian Iberia and the lands of the Alans under Muslim suzerainty , and al @-@ Jarrah became the first Muslim commander to march through the Darial Pass in the process . This

expedition secured the Muslims ' own flank against a possible Khazar attack through the Darial , while conversely it gave the Muslim army a second invasion route into Khazar territory .

In 725 , however , the new Caliph Hisham ibn Abd al @-@ Malik (r . 724 ? 743) replaced al @-@ Jarrah with his own brother Maslamah ibn Abd al @-@ Malik .

= = Recall to the Caucasus and death = =

In 729 , after a mixed performance against the Khazars , Maslamah was replaced yet again as governor of Armenia and Adharbayjan by al @-@ Jarrah . For all his energy , Maslamah 's campaigning failed to produce the desired results : by the time of his dismissal , the Arabs had lost control of northeastern Transcaucasia and been thrust once more into the defensive , with al @-@ Jarrah again having to defend Adharbayjan against a Khazar invasion .

In 730 , al @-@ Jarrah returned to the offensive through Tiflis and the Darial Pass . Arab sources report that he reached as far as the Khazar capital , al @-@ Bayda , on the Volga , but modern historians such as Khalid Yahya Blankinship consider this improbable . Soon after , he was forced back to Bardha 'a to defend Arran from invasion by the Khazar general Tharmach . It is unclear whether the Khazars moved through the Darial Pass or the Caspian Gates , but they succeeded in outmanoeuvring al @-@ Jarrah , bypassing the Arab forces and laying siege to Ardabil , the capital of Adharbayjan , where 30 @,@ 000 Muslim troops and their families were gathered . News of this development forced al @-@ Jarrah to hastily withdraw from Bardha 'a and march south in a rapid march to Ardabil 's rescue . Outside the city walls , after a three @-@ day battle on 7 ? 9 December 730 , al @-@ Jarrah 's army of 25 @,@ 000 was all but annihilated by the Khazars under Barjik , with al @-@ Jarrah himself falling in the field . Command passed to al @-@ Jarrah 's brother al @-@ Hajjaj , who was unable to prevent the sacking of Ardabil , or to check Khazar raids that reached as far as south as Mosul . The experienced general Sa 'id ibn Amr al @-@ Harashi was put in command and soon succeeded in driving back the invasion , while under the leadership of Marwan ibn Muhammad (the future Marwan II) the war was concluded in a nominal Arab victory in 737 .

Al @-@ Jarrah 's death caused widespread lamentation in the Muslim world , particularly among the soldiers , as he had achieved a legendary status already during his lifetime : the " paradigmatic general " (Patricia Crone) , he had an impressive physical presence ? according to tradition , he was so tall that when he entered the Great Mosque of Damascus , his head seemed to be suspended from the lamps ? and his military prowess was celebrated with the sobriquets " hero of Islam " (Ba?al al @-@ Isl?m) and " Cavalier of the Syrians " (F?ris Ahl al @-@ Sh?m) .