



AFŠĪN B. DĪVDĀD

AFŠĪN B. DĪVDĀD, ABU'L-MOSĀFER or ABŪ 'OBAYDALLĀH MOḤAMMAD, founder of the semi-independent Sajid dynasty in Azarbaijan (r. 276/889-90-317/929). He and his brother Yūsof, who seized power after him, are prominent in Armenian history. In Arabic sources he is named Moḥammad b. Abī Sāj, in Armenian sources Afšīn, which was the title of the princes of Ošrūsana in Transoxania; he evidently assumed the name Afšīn at some stage, as it appears on a coin minted for him at Barda'a in 285/898. His father Abu'l-Sāj Dīvdād was a kinsman of the celebrated Afšīn Keydār or Ḥaydar; like him he entered the caliphal service as a condottiere and rose to high military rank before his downfall in 266/879-80. Moḥammad continued to enjoy 'Abbasid favor, and was appointed guardian of the roads to Mecca in 266/879-80 and governor of Raḥba and Anbār in 269/883. The death of Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn, the ruler of Egypt and Syria, in the following year prompted him to conceive a plan to conquer Syria with the help of Eshāq b. Kendājeq and support from caliphal troops. After inflicting defeats on the Egyptians, he quarreled with Eshāq, and after overcoming him, took control of Mosul; but in Moḥarram, 275/May-June, 888 he was beaten by the Egyptians in a battle near Damascus.

In 276/889-90, or perhaps not until 279/892, he was appointed governor of Azarbaijan by the regent Mowaffaq, brother of the 'Abbasid caliph Mo'tamed. In 280/894 he took Marāḡa from a rebel, 'Abdallāh b. Ḥasan al-Hamdānī (Hamadānī ?), and went on a mission with gifts from the caliph to Sonbāṭ, the Bagratid king of Armenia. Later he clashed with Sonbāṭ and captured



Naḳčavān and Dabīl (Dvin), but eventually made peace. For a time he defied the caliph and perhaps then assumed the title Afšīn. After renewing his allegiance to the caliph and obtaining a confirmation of his governorship, he launched a campaign in which he captured Qars, took as hostage Sonbāṭ’s wife (whom he later exchanged for Sonbāṭ’s son), subdued the Ardžrunid Armenian prince of Vāspūrakān, and occupied Tiflis. He was preparing another expedition against Sonbāṭ when he died in a plague at Barda‘a in 288/901.

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