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## The Revolt of Hujr b. Adi

While Mu'awiya was in power adherents of the Shi'a in al-Kufa remained fairly quiet. On the death of al-Hasan some of the Kufan Shi'a were prompted to write to al-Husayn urging him to lead a revolt against Mu'awiya. However in his reply al-Husayn advises them to keep their views to themselves while Mu'awiya is alive. When Mu'awiya died, he would be prepared to seek office<sup>1</sup>.

Al-Husayn may have been being merely politic in avoiding any confrontation with Mu'awiya, who had clearly established his power. However it is also possible that he was observing the terms of the treaty his brother had concluded with Mu'awiya.

During this time, the cursing of 'Ali had regularly taken place in the mosque at al-Kufa on the orders of Mu'awiya. Some of the leading members of the Shi'a, notable among them Hujr b. 'Adi, had voiced their opposition to this practice. However, Mu'awiya's governor in al-Kufa, al-Mughira b. Shu'ba, had turned a blind eye to such protests<sup>2</sup>.

On al-Mughira's death Mu'awiya had joined the governorship of al-Kufa to that of al-Basra and put the governor of al-Basra in charge of both cities. This man was Ziyad. Ziyad had been a follower of 'Ali and had enjoyed positions of some responsibility under 'Ali. For a time he had held out against Mu'awiya after al-Hasan's abdication. He had been won over by Mu'awiya through judicious bribery. The biggest bribe that Mu'awiya gave to Ziyad was the offer of paternity. Ziyad was the illegitimate child of a prostitute of Thaqif. What Mu'awiya did was to arrange witnesses to swear that his own father, Abu Sufyan, had been the father of Ziyad and he then recognised Ziyad as his brother<sup>3</sup>.

Through this offer of legitimacy to Ziyad, he seems to have gained his total support.

During the time of 'Ali, Ziyad and Hujr b. 'Adi had been comrades. When Ziyad came to al-Kufa, he attempted to use that old comradeship which the two men had shared to win over Hujr, at the same time threatening Hujr with dire consequences if there was any opposition from him<sup>4</sup>.

This seems to have worked while Ziyad was in al-Kufa but when he returned to al-Basra, Hujr and some of the Shi'a began once more to show their opposition to the cursing of 'Ali. Ziyad's deputy sent to him and he quickly returned. He sent a delegation to Hujr to try to win him over but Hujr refused. Ziyad's

next act was to send the *shurta*, a kind of police force, to Hujr but he and his friends drove them off. A Shi'a rebellion under Hujr had in effect begun<sup>5</sup>.

The group with Hujr do not appear to have belonged to the front rank of Arab nobility. Hujr himself had enjoyed a position of some seniority in his tribe under 'Ali, but he owed this status to his position in Islam and his loyalty to 'Ali rather than to any traditional tribal position<sup>6</sup>.

Another close colleague of Hujr's in the revolt 'Amr b. al-Hamiq also appears to have had a similar status<sup>7</sup>.

Ziyad used the strategy of applying pressure to the traditional tribal leaders<sup>8</sup>, whose authority seems to have been endorsed by Mu'awiya as a means of reducing the power of the Shi'a. The policy worked and soon the numbers of Hujr's supporters were reduced. Hujr became isolated and had to flee for his life. Ziyad then threatened Hujr's tribe Kinda that unless Hujr surrendered he would execute their leader<sup>9</sup>. Thus Hujr, deprived of even a tribal base, surrendered. Ziyad sent him to Mu'awiya where he was offered his freedom if he cursed 'Ali. He refused to do this and was executed<sup>10</sup>.

1. al-Dinawari, al-Akhbar al-tiwal (Leiden 1888) II 235.

2. Tabari, II 112-113.

3. Tabari, II 81-83.

4. Abu 'l-Faraj al-Isfahani Kitab al-aghani (Bulak-Cairo 1285) XVI, 3; Ibn Sa'd al-Tabaqat al-kabir ed. Sachau et al. (Leiden 1879-1901) VI, 152.

5. Ibid; Tabari, II 117ff; Kitab al-Aghani XVI, 3-4.

6. cf. M. Hinds "Kufan Political Alignments and their Background in the Mid. 7th Century A.D." International Journal of Middle East Studies (Cambridge, October 1971) 362.

7. He is alleged to have been involved in the killing of 'Uthman.

8. Tabari, II 117; Kitab al-aghani XVI 3-4.

9. Tabari, II 125-6.

10. Tabari, II 116.

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