

Spahbod Rustam Farrukh-Hormazd and The Faith Making Battle of Qadisyyeh

The domination of generals and governors was the last phase of the political evolution of the Sassanide period; but this new feudalism had no time to consolidate itself before the Arab invasion.¹ In this eminently just dictum, Professor Christensen draws attention to the most important factor in the decline and fall of the Sassanide Empire. That feudalism, according to him, was the result of the military policy inaugurated under Khosro I (Anoshirvan the Just); for one result of that policy was that each Spahbod or governor considered his province as something like a hereditary fief.

Professor Christensen might have gone on to add that, with the decline of the old dynasty, such generals and governors were tempted more and more to play the part of king-makers, or to set up as kings themselves. For example, Bahram Chobin, Vistakhm (Bistam) and Farrukhan Shahrvaraz (Shahran-Guraz) made themselves kings with temporary success. The fatal example was set by Bahram Chobin and was followed by Shahran-Guraz with disastrous results for the unity and independence of old Iran. But the assassination of Shahran-Guraz convinced the nobles of the country that the game of usurping the throne was too dangerous, and one which the country, devoted as it was to the Sassanian dynasty, was not likely to tolerate. Thenceforward the aristocracy took up the plan of playing the part of king-makers. This accounts for the very large number of young kings, who were set up and dethroned after the reign of Shahran-Guraz. Even before that year under Ardeshir III, Mah-Adhur-Gushnasp had figured as the regent. Some time later Farrukh-Hormuzd who was the governor of Khorassan, according to Tabari, or the "ishkan" or prince of Azarbaijan, according to Armenian sources) aspired to the crown and attempted to secure it by proposing a marriage to queen Azarmidokht. The proud queen refused these overtures and got rid of her ambitious suitor by having him assassinated. However, Rustam, the son of Farrukh-Hormuzd, avenged his father by marching on the capital, seizing the queen and having her blinded and deposed.² Both father and son have been styled "ishkans" or "princes" of Azarbaijan by Armenian writers. It would also appear that prince Rustam had the ambition of enlarging his realm by conquests. For we read in the Armenian history by M. St. Martin that Rustam conquered Armenia from its Byzantine governor Prince Varazdirot in A.D. 631. These Armenian conquests of Rustam might account for the fact that when he marshaled his army against the Arabs, there were important Armenian contingents in it.³

When we next hear of Rustam, he has taken the part of Yazdgard III (who had been recently crowned) who had captured Ctesiphon and installed himself as regent. He was assisted in his rule by his brother Farrukhzad, who had been made the "darik-pat" (or chamberlain), and by another leader Zadhoe.⁴ It may be as Noldeke guesses that his support to the coronation of Yazdgard was simultaneous with his attack on the queen.⁵

But while there was little so far to distinguish Rustam from other aristocratic claimants for power of the day in Iran, he and his brother honorably distinguished themselves by their single-minded devotion to the sovereign, whom they had raised to the throne, and to the task of defending Iran against foreign invaders. They went down fighting for their country and king to the last, harassed

and handicapped though they were by intrigues at the capital as well as by the indifference of the majority of the Satraps to the cause of national defense. They have had their reward in the homage and admiration of Iranians ever since.

In the Iranian Epic, Rostam is endowed with a noble character and great Vigor; and he and his brother are held up to admiration as sole champions of Iran and of Yazdgerd. Their unflinching loyalty and energy are contrasted with the treachery or feebleness of other Iranian spahbads. Nor have later historians failed to do justice to Rostam. Christensen describes him "as a man endowed with extraordinary energy, a good administrator and a fine general".⁶ One might also quote the appreciation of Sir W. Muir: In Rostam "we may discern the lineaments of a prince brave in the field, but proud and over-weening. His energy was soon felt. The nobles rallied round him".⁷

Though Persia was destined to go down before the invaders from Arabia, fortune favored Rostam with at least one resounding victory, namely, that at "the battle of the Bridge". He successfully recovered the delta from the Arabs and sent forward against the Arab commander Abu 'Ubad the one Persian general in whom his troops had confidence, namely, Bahman Dhu-l-Hajib, With this latter was joined another general Jalenus, who had fled before the enemy before and who was now warned that the penalty of any further retreat would be death. Indeed, though Rostam was not himself present at the victory of al-Jisr (or the Bridge), yet that success was so closely associated with his name that such a great historian as Baladhuri names him as the victor. Relying therefore on such high authority, we may assert at least that the last victory of ancient Iran was won under the auspices of Rostam.⁸

Bahman conducted the campaign with bravery as well as caution and allowed the Arab general Abu Ubaid to cross and place the river Euphrates behind him. When, therefore the Arab army emerged on the battlefield on the other side of the river, it found no room for maneuvering: very soon it was driven back on the river and hemmed in by a charge of elephants, while its general was trampled to death by the White Elephant. Indeed, only the skill of Mothanna, the lieutenant of Abu 'Ubad, saved even a remnant of three thousand men. As it was, had Bahman been able at this juncture to pursue Mothanna, the Arab forces would have been entirely destroyed. But, at that time, Firuzan, the leader of the party of Persians proper; threatened the position of Rostam at the capital and thus the finest opportunity that Persia ever had in this war was irretrievably lost. As Sir W. Muir well observes, the one thing certain as regards the internal history of Persia at this great crisis of the Empire was that "the nobles sacrificed the empire to intrigue and jealousies".⁹ But, in spite of all this, Rostam had certainly finished one campaign against the Arabs with a decisive victory, a thing that had not been possible even for the Emperor Heraclius with all his prestige as a military genius and with the undivided resources of the Byzantine Empire at his disposal.

The Caliph Umar met this great reverse with his usual courage and firmness; but even so, as Baladhuri observes, "for one year after the calamity, that befell Abu Ubaid and Salit, Umar refrained from the mention of Iran."¹⁰ Meanwhile, however, Mothanna had gathered round his banner tribes of the frontier including even Christian tribes like the Beni Namr. He then advanced against the Persian general Mehran, who had reoccupied Hira. The battle took place at Boweib; and this time, experience induced Arabs to remain on the defensive and allow the Persians to cross the river and take the risk of an offensive. The Persians were defeated in the fight though the issue remained doubtful for some time.

The Arabs reaped the fruits of their victory by the occupation of Mesopotamia and the Delta, while raids were being constantly made in other Persian territories to obtain supplies and to strike terror. Moreover the Caliph Umar was encouraged by the success to resume the invasion of Persia on a larger scale; and he gave the leadership to Sad ibn-abi Waqqas, who had the distinction of having been a Companion of the Prophet. Mothanna was superseded partly because he "was a mere Bedouin chief", and partly because he never really recovered from the wounds which he had received at the battle of al-Jisr, wounds which shortly after proved fatal. But before his death, he performed a great service to the Arab cause by advising Sad to meet the enemy between Qadisiyyah and Udhaib.¹¹ "Fight there the enemy," said the dying Mothanna, "for ye will be the victors; and even if worsted, ye will still have the friendly and familiar desert wastes behind. There the Persians cannot enter; and from thence ye will again return to the attack." The army of Sad was swollen by the new levy *en masse* ordered by the Caliph; and it contained "no fewer than 1,400 Companions, and ninety-nine, who had fought at Bedr". As to the total forces at the disposal of Sad accounts vary. Some put it about 30,000 men, taking Mothanna's command at eight thousand, a similar number which Sad himself had brought up, and the Syrian levies as well as the new levies from Yemen and the South. He wisely followed the advice of the Caliph to practice patience and vigilance. He had chosen his battlefield well, his right resting on a great swamp and his rear and the other flank on the great Trench of Shapur, the fort of Qodeis and the desert.

The advance in person of Rustam who was now virtually the regent of Iran, though hampered by his rival Firuzan, could only meet such a great danger. His effort was worthy of his high position and energetic character. He retook much lost territory, advanced on Hira, reconquered it and rebuked the inhabitants for falling away from the old Empire. He is supposed to have "crossed the Euphrates below Babylon, encamped for a time near the ruined pile of Birs Namrud" and, passing by Najaf, faced the Arab army. As regards the size of the army which he commanded, we have widely different accounts. Some accounts put it as high as 200,000 men; others estimate it at 120,000 men. Of these latter 40,000 men are supposed to have formed the vanguard under Jalenus, 60,000 were in the main body under Rustam. But as a high authority has put it, "it is all guess-work".

Another account puts the Arab army at only five to six thousand; according to this view, the numerical superiority of the Arabs could not have been considerable.¹² This last account very probably errs on the side of paucity. One element of Rustam's army deserves special notice. It consisted of a battalion of four thousand men from Dailain and was called "Jund-i Shahanshah",¹³ a sort of Imperial Guard. It would appear however that the solidarity of this northern race with the other races of old Iran was imperfect; for, on the death of Rustam, their contingent made terms with the Arab invaders, accepted Islam and received stipends from the former.

One thing is obvious that while the prudence and foresight of Umar placed the maximum possible number of Arab troops at the disposal of Sad, Rustam did not dispose of anything like the full military resources of the Persian monarchy. Not only individual nobles, but the Queen-mother herself, kept back very large bodies of troops, which, had they been joined to Rustam's army, would have decisively turned the tide of battle. This is obvious from the fact that very shortly after the battle of Qadisiyyah, another Persian noble, Nakhvargan, sallied from the capital to fight the Arabs on his own account.

Similarly, when the Arabs marched on the capital, the Queen despatched a third army against them which fought with them valiantly at the battle of Bahurashir being commanded by a

veteran general designated as the “Lion of Chosroes.”¹⁵ Finally, soon after the fall of Medain, a fourth Persian army fought with the Arabs at Jalula. Baladhuri informs us that “the Persians were on this occasion led by Khurrahzad, a brother of Rostam. The fight that ensued was the fiercest they ever had, in which arrows and lances were used until broken to pieces, and swords were applied until they were bent”.¹⁶ As another authority puts it, the severity of this fourth battle “was not surpassed by the Night of Clangor at Qadisiyyah, excepting that it was shorter”.¹⁷ But while the bravery of the Persian forces was undoubted, it is obvious that these masses were frittered away in successive engagements.

It remains to be added that quite a large contingent of Armenians accompanied Rostam to the battle-field. This was to be expected, since Rostam was the “ishkan” or prince of Azarbaijan. On this point Caetani, Dulaurier and Patkanian have collected much valuable information from old Armenian chronicles. We learn from these sources that Varaz-Grigor (Gregorio), prince of Alowan in Armenia, sent his forces under his brave son (named Jewansher) to join the Persian army at Ctesiphon. The chronicles tell us that Rostam “had hardly seen the young Armenian chief when he felt a great sympathy for him and treated him as a brother or a son”.¹⁸ This narrative is important as showing prince Rostam’s kind and sympathetic manner of treating his subordinates. And here we might refer to one Bahman Hajib, who was the right-hand man of Rostam in the campaign and who commanded the confidence of the troops as no other officer in the Persian army did. He was obviously a “fecht-general”, for we find him fighting and meeting a hero’s death in the front lines of battle; and he was the first of the Iranian generals to fall on the field of honor.

Both Rostam and Sa’d marched towards the great encounter with suitable caution. The former is alleged to have taken four months to march from Medina to Qadisiyyah; and similarly, the latter left Medina in the spring while the battle was fought in November of the same year. Rostam, as the defeated party, has, however, received a greater share of blame. But both generals had no doubt great pre-occupations to detain them. Sa’d was constantly receiving reinforcements and required time to incorporate them into his army. Rostam had to reconquer and reorganize much territory as his base of operations, while he was certainly in no mood to respond to the impatience of the Persian court, or to the intrigues of his enemies at the court, who would have liked him to stake the fate of the Empire on a single battle fought at the earliest opportunity.

A word might be said about “the desponding dreams and auguries” of Rostam. No portents were required from supernatural quarters to inform that commander of the seriousness of his situation. The constant intrigues against him at the Persian court, which at once denied him the forces which he had a right to expect, and which put pressure on him to hasten the decisive struggle, were by themselves the worst omens. He was no doubt also well posted about the contemporary successes of the Arabs in Syria where they had won the battles of Wacusa and Fihl and were taking Damascus. He could not be ignorant that each of these successes made more and larger reinforcements available for the invaders of Persia. Moreover, for years the decline of the Persian monarchy had been obvious; thus the patriotic heart of the Persian general might well have been oppressed by this accumulation of unfavorable circumstances and he might well have seen corresponding portents in the heavens, with the help of the then fashionable science of astrology. But it might also be that Rostam resorted to these divinations in order to check the precipitous haste with which the court at Ctesiphon was bringing on a battle. Indeed one anecdote preserved for us by Tabari¹⁹ indicates that Rostam himself

utilized either the skill or the dishonesty of the astrologers of the royal court at Ctesiphon for his own purposes. Thus, the services of the astrologer-royal, of one of his assistants and of an Indian astrologer of the name of Zurna were employed by Rustam himself to obtain his commission to march against the Arabs.

All authorities agree that before the final struggle in the field, there were interviews between Arab envoys and Rustam as well as with the king of Iran. On this subject, too, there is a diversity of accounts. One of the envoys sent by Sa'd to Rustam was al-Mughirah; and Baladhuri informs us that the latter "betook himself towards Rustam's throne, in order to sit by him, but was not allowed to do so by the Persian cavalry guard". In the course of the interview, Rustam used both diplomacy and a show of superior force, as was indeed his true policy. That procedure is also indicated in the Shah-Nameh.

According to another account, Rustam sent the Arab embassy to King Yazdegard, who broke off the interview in anger and rebuked Rustam for referring the envoys to the court. But those historians who assume from Rustam's "contemptuous denunciations" of the Arab envoys that he was a man of "overweening pride," are surely mistaken. For exhibitions of resentment is sometimes only an aspect of diplomacy. Moreover, we cannot rely on all the details of these interviews as given to us. As one authority has observed in the accounts of these wars and related transactions, "much is drawn evidently from the imaginations of the traditions".¹⁹ As the great Noldeke says "we must accept with great caution the sayings of Arab warriors based on confused recollections". For, in fact, the events, the circumstances and the recollections were all confused.

The negotiations were followed by three "days of grace", granted to the Persians to consider the terms offered by the Arab general. It is not too much to say that this delay of three days was fatal to the Persian cause, since it enabled the Syrian reinforcements commanded by that redoubtable warrior al-Qa'qa to arrive at the critical juncture of the battle. It was he, indeed who was the foremost champion on the Arab side, since Sa'd himself was unable to mount his horse to lead the fight on account of his illness.

At the end of that time, Rustam invited the Arab commander to cross the river and begin the battle. But the latter was too prudent to abandon his strong and well-covered position. He left it to Rustam to cross the river in the face of strong opposition and to seek an engagement with such a great obstacle at his back. The Arabs stoutly defended the bridge of boats on the river; but the Persian engineers managed to throw a dam across the stream and their army crossed over, with Rustam encouraging his men by observing "by tomorrow we shall have beaten them small". Whatever despondency he might have felt at heart, it was his duty to hearten his troops, and he performed it well.

As regards the dispositions for the battle, our information is scanty and vague. But we know that the wings of the Persian army were commanded by the generals Hurmuzan (Satrap of Pars) and Mihran Bahram Razi, while Jalenus led the advance guard. Pirozan was placed in command of the rear-guard.²⁰ Rustam had at his disposal 30 (or by other accounts 33)²¹ elephants. Of these, 18 were placed in the center and the rest on the wings. Rustam had a sort of throne made for himself from which he could direct the operations. Prof. Christensen tells us that this was the constant practice in battles royal of the Sassanide dynasty.²³ What was unique in this case was that the Persian prince kept in constant communication with the court at Ctesiphon by an uninterrupted chain of men stationed at suitable intervals, who could

communicate the news of the events of the battle to King Yazdegard.²⁴ It was a human "telephone" that Rustam had thus installed.

All accounts agree that the first day of the battle was one of entire success for the Persians, and that at the end of it, the Arabs and their leaders were in a state of profound despondency. After the usual series of single combats, the line of elephants advanced upon the Arab army and bore down all before them. In vain, the bravest of Arab warriors performed deeds of valour like those of Abu Mihjan. The elephants were not to be denied. At last the Arab commander-in-chief appealed to the gallant Asim of the Tamim tribe to stop the advance of elephants "at all costs". Asim advanced with his archers against the elephants, shot down some of the soldiers riding the elephants and cut the girths of their "howdahs". As the "howdahs" fell to the ground the riders were massacred. But though the advance of the elephants was thus stayed, the battle lasted without interruption until sunset.²⁵ No wonder that as Sir W. Muir says "the Arab force was downcast."²⁶

Ya'qubi, in his account of the first day's battle, throws additional light on the maneuvers of prince Rustam. According to him, that general attempted to surprise the Arab commander in the castle of al-'Udzayb, whence he was surveying the fight. But the Arabs rallied to the defense of their general successfully²⁷ and checked the attempt.

The second day of the battle, however, opened well for the Arabs, since it brought reinforcements for them from Syria. The advance guard of these succors was led by al-Qa'qa; and it would not be too much to say (that to him the Arabs owed the victory of Qadisiyyah. His arrival gave great confidence to his side, especially as he signaled his arrival by a sudden attack on the leading Persian file, where he fought Bahman Hajib; the victor of the battle of the Bridge.

Al-Qa'qa with two other Arab warriors rushed against Bahman shouting that he wanted to avenge Abu 'Ubaid and others who had perished in that battle. Bahman too received help from two Persian champions, Pirozan and Bindawan. But Al-Qa'qa struck down Pirozan while his companions smote the other two Persians.

The Persians were further dismayed as other parties of reinforcements came up in batches. "The spirits of the Arabs rose", observes Sir W. Muir, "and they forgot the disasters of yesterday."²⁸ Above all, the Persians were fighting without their former advantage, since the harness of their elephant corps was being repaired, that equipment having been cut in the first day of the battle, while with an improvised camel corps, the Arabs drove back the Persian cavalry. But then Rustam descended from his post of observation and restored the battle with the help of his well disciplined infantry. Thus closed "the day of Aghwath", in which the Arabs lost over 2,000 men; and, owing to such heavy mortality, Sa'd dispensed with the ceremony of washing the bodies of the dead before lowering them into hastily constructed tombs.²⁹

On the third day of the battle (called Yaum. Ghimas or Imas) the event still remained doubtful. But the arrival of Hisham with 700 more men from Syria heartened the Arab troops, especially since by strategy these reinforcements advanced at intervals in batches of 100 men; and thus the succors were magnified. Meanwhile the harness of the elephants had been repaired and they again advanced to the attack, But, acting on the advice of some Persian refugees, al-Qa'qa, his brother Asim and others advanced against these pachyderms and wounded them in their trunks and eyes. Thus assailed, the elephants wavered for a time between the two armies;

but, later on, they charged through the Persian army and stampeded across the canal. Rustam, however, succeeded in maintaining the day. No wonder that, in the opinion of the great authority on the battle, on Sayf b. Umar the Arabs would have been defeated on that day but for the skill of al-Qa'qa and the arrival of reinforcements under Hisham.³⁰ We have also to remember when appraising the services of al-Qa'qa to the Arab cause that he organized a sort of camel corps in order to neutralize the advance of the Persian cavalry; for the horses of the Persians were unaccustomed to the sight, sound, and the smell of the camels. The result of this ruse of al-Qa'qa was a stampede of the Persian cavalry into the lines of the infantry which caused serious trouble.³¹

A confused struggle raged throughout the third night of the battle, which has been made famous in history under the designation of the "Laylah al-Harir". According to Caetani,³² the title alluded to the groans of pain heard throughout its course; while Wellhausen supposes that the word "harir" means suppressed cries of combating animals³³; for the two sides were now too exhausted and furious to pronounce coherent challenges. It is curious, adds Caetani, that in the struggle at Yermuk, too, there was a night so named. On the Arab side, there were some moves attempted in the course of this night, though only partially under the direction of the High Command. Thus Sa'd ordered Tulayhah bin Khuwaylid to guard the fords of the canal below the Arab position, lest the Persians might be attempting a flanking movement. But Tulayhah could not resist the temptation to cross the canal, and boldly carried out his design. He was, however, driven back by the Persians across the canal. Other Arab bands followed up this move and attacked the Persians shouting their own tribal names to give some information to their leader of what was going on. Sa'd had to pardon such acts of "brave indiscipline".³⁴ Like the Arabs; the Persians kept up shouting by tribes or regiments during the second and third nights to keep up their confidence. Needless to add that these night operations were in no sense directed by the generals on either side. They marked the exhaustion as well as the exacerbation on either side, and an effort to bring the battle to a speedy termination.

It was only on the morning of the fourth day (Sunday) of the battle that the Persian army gave way. One important factor in this was a terrific dust storm which, as Sayf bin 'Umar has recorded, beat down even the pavilion under which Rustam was watching and directing the operations.³⁵ Weil³⁶ has justly observed that "as in Palestine the south wind forced the Christians to fly before the followers of Islam, so at Qadisiyyah such clouds of dust were blown against the Magians by a west wind, so heavy that even the pursuing Mohammedans could not see the faces of their foes.

Another factor in the Persian defeat was a last desperate charge advised by Qa'qa. As all tents had been thrown down, Rustam who had been directing operations in the center was compelled to take refuge under a mule laden with bags of treasure; but one of the heavy bags of treasure fell on him and crushed his back. Rendered thus incapacitated and incapable of defending himself, Rustam threw himself into the canal in order to cross it and was slain there. There are many accounts of his death. and many claimants to the honor of terminating such a great career. The usual account is that he was slain by Hillal bin 'Ullafah.³⁷ According to Bala-dhuri however "Rustam was slain and his body was found covered with so many blows and stabs that the one who gave the fatal blow could not be determined.

Amir-bin-Madikarib, Tulayhah ibn-Khuwaylid, Kurt ibn Jammah and Dirar ibn al-Azwar had all rushed at him.³⁸ Some say that Rustam was killed by Zuhair ibn-'Abd Shams; others by 'Auwam

ibn-'Abd Shams. In still another version, we read that Rustam shot an arrow at Hillal who was riding towards him and transfixing his foot to his stirrup. Upon this, Hillal rushed against Rustam and dispatched him.³⁹ However that may be, with the death of Rustam the Persian army was in full flight.

On Rustam's death, no one was left to lead the army back and hence, according to Tabari, it lost 10,000 men in its flight besides those that had been killed in the three earlier days.⁴⁰ The army corps led by Pirozan and Hormuzan were lucky in being the first to re-cross the dam at the canal al-Atiq; but before Jalenus could follow with his corps, the dam was swept away and that general was slain while trying to rally his men. Amongst other noted fugitives were Zadz⁴¹ Buhaysh and Qarin, who came of a family that had given many a noted warrior to old Iran.

It is noteworthy that the Arab chronologist, Sayf bin 'Umar, to whom we owe so many traditions of the great battle, has been at pains to preserve the names of some brave Persian chiefs, who with their followers refused to retreat. They preferred after the retreat to "die gloriously". On this role of honor Sayf, and following him Tabari,⁴² places the names of Sharyar Kanara, Hirbidz, Farrukhan Ahwazi and Khusrawshnum Hamdani.⁴³ As Waqidi also observes, "a group of Persians planting their banner firmly in the ground said 'we shall not leave our position until we die'." But although such rallies were highly honorable to those who took a part in them, they cost Persia the lives of generals who could be ill spared. The same might be said of the struggle of Nakhveraghan at Dayr-I-Ka'b.⁴⁴ Thereafter, no generals were left who could direct the defense of Ctesiphon.

Incidentally it might be observed that in the mention of the brave Hirbidz we have the only authority for the fact that men of the priestly caste served as fighting officers during the Sassanian age.

Neither as a tactician, nor as a strategist, could Rustam be said justly to have been found wanting, and historians have not laid at his door the adverse result of the great battle. As regards tactics, he could not be blamed for the stampede of elephants, which was certainly a great misfortune for the Persian cause; and he must be praised for restoring the battle after that event. It was in fact the advent of great reinforcements from Syria that decided the battle. Perhaps, Rustam had some inkling of the imminent advent of these fresh hostile forces; and it was that knowledge, and no "overweening confidence", that impelled him to cross the canal al-Atiq and to bring on a battle with the well-chosen and strong Arab position before him and the canal in his rear. For the Iranian general was no rash assailant; and, as Caetani observes, Rustam knew the weakness of the Persian Empire at the time. Had he been able to prevail by a show of force, he would have been glad to return to Ctesiphon with the laurels of a great moral victory. His long delay before the battle showed that he was aware of Sa'd's strategy of drawing the Persian army into the desert—a region well known to Arabs and adapted to their manoeuvres of cavalry⁴⁵ but which would have been very unfavorable to the Persians. Rustam's hands were also forced by Arab raids on the one hand and by his king's injunctions on the other.⁴⁶

It is all to Rustam's credit that he faced the Arab invaders in the hardest fought battle that they encountered either before or after. In none of the battles that these invaders had fought in Syria with the forces of Heraclius had they ever been brought so near defeat. It was no disgrace to prince Rustam that he fell after a gallant struggle against a unique combination of

circumstances- the full tide of a Semitic national flood, the genius and policy of Caliph 'Umar, the desperate bravery of warriors like al-Qa'qa, Hashim and Tulayha, and finally the rage of nature itself as shown in the furious dust storm, which went far to decide the result of the well-fought field of al-Qadisiyyah. It is also worth noting what a mass of traditions - in fact, a veritable epic, has been constructed by the Arabs about the Qadisiyyah. In particular, the Iraqi school of traditionalists has labored hard to embellish and ornament the epic of this fight,⁴⁷ while there is also a Medinah version which is less labored & ornamented. Finally, in times to come, the fight of Qadisiyyah served as a standard and a pattern to the Arabs of what a really hard-fought field was like. Thus, when the great battle of Siffin, with all the ferocious intensity of a civil conflict, had to be described, it was compared to that of Qadisiyyah.

The importance, which both friends and foes attached to the power and personality of Rustam, was well illustrated soon after his death. Thus, four thousand cavaliers from Day-lam, who had formed the "royal regiment" under Rustam, did not hesitate to cast in their lot at once with the Arabs when he had passed away, feeling that there was now no future with Persia.⁴⁸ Simultaneously, Christians belonging to the Bedouin tribes on both sides of the Euphrates came to the Arab general and said: "Now that Rustam has been slain, we will accept the new religion."⁴⁹ Obviously, friend as well as foe, regarded the death of Rustam as equivalent to the complete triumph of the Arabs and the passing away of the Persian power; they felt that as long as he lived, the prospects of the invaders were doubtful indeed, but that with his death the doom of Persia was sealed.

What better epitaph can a patriotic general either desire or require?

References:

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2. Christensen, op. Cit. 49
3. Cf. Caetani, Annali dell' Islam, Vol. VII. P. 78, sec. 28
4. Christensen, op. Cit. P. 494
5. Noldeke, Geschichts der Perser und Araber, p. 398
6. Op. Cit. P.496
7. Annals of the Early Caliphate, p. 127.
8. Hitti, Origins of the Islamic State, Vol. I. P. 403
9. Annals of the Early Caliphate, p 131, note 2
10. Op. Cit. P. 405
11. Baladhuri, Op. Cit. 409
12. Prof. Baker in Cambridge Mediaeval History, Part II, pp. 346-7
13. Baladhuri, Op.Cit. 440
14. Nolldeke, 523, and Baladhuri, 417
15. Muir, 180
16. Hitti, Op. Cit. 420
17. Muir, 188
18. Caetani, Vol. III. P.686, sec. 117
19. I. 2251-2253; Caetani, pp. 661-2
20. Geschichte der Perser und Araber, p. 399.
21. Caetani, p. 660

22. Caetani, p. 664
23. Christensen, op. cit. P. 207
24. Caetani, p667
25. Caetani, p670
26. Sir W. Muir, op. cit. P.169.
27. Caetani, Vol. III, p. 647
28. Muir, p. 170
29. Caetani, p. 673
30. Caetani, pp. 673-4: Muir, pp. 171-3.
31. Ibn Athir, II, 368; Caetani, p. 672.
32. Caetani, p. 675.
33. Wellhausen, VI. 75.
34. Caetani, pp. 675-6, and Muir, pp. 173-4
35. Caetani, op. Cit. P. 676
36. Geschichte der Chalifen, Vol. I. P. 70
37. Caetani, op. Cit. P. 670
38. Hitti, op. Cit. P. 415
39. Muir, p. 174 n.
40. Tabari, I. 2335-2337, and Caetani, p.676
41. Caetani, p. 678
42. Tabari, I. 2345-2346
43. Caetani, p. 678
44. Hitti, p. 415
45. Caetani, 652
46. Caetani, op. cit. Vol. III. pp. 708-709
47. Caetani, pp. 716-7
48. Caetani, op. cit. pp. 716-7
49. Caetani, Vol. III. p. 916, secs. 106-7
50. Caetani, Vol. III. P. 814, SEC. 323 and Sir T.W. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, p. 47.

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