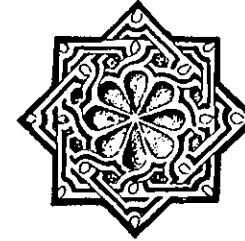


d'état. Some of al-Mu'izz's wazirs realized that Zawi could no longer be considered a powerful military ally because his authority in Granada had ended, and they expected that Habus would repudiate his predecessor's schemes. They feared that the cunning old Zirid would succeed in taking advantage of the inexperienced al-Mu'izz and persuade the young ruler to appoint him to a leading position. The wazirs, furthermore, suspected that Zawi's plan was the overthrow of the dynasty of Buluqqin b. Ziri and feared for their position in the government as well. They, therefore, decided to assassinate Zawi and, probably without the permission of al-Mu'izz, "sent someone in secret who gave him poison to drink."¹⁵⁸ According to Ibn Basam,¹⁵⁹ quoting Ibn Hayyan, Zawi lived to an old age, obscure and forgotten, in Qairawan and finally fell victim to an unspecified disease. The sources are silent about his sons' eventual fate.

The failure of Zawi's lifelong ambition to gain mastery over Ifriqiya and his personal tragedy ended an eventful chapter in the history of the Spanish Zirids. Although he outlived the 'Amirid dictators, a number of successive Cordovan caliphs, and two of his brother Buluqqin's ruling descendants, Zawi was unable to ensure the succession of his own dynasty. Ifriqiya held no promise for the Berbers of Granada; their leaders returned there to die but never to rule. The land of promise, despite Zawi's warning, was al-Andalus, and their future lay with the destiny of Granada.

CHAPTER FOUR



The dynasty of the Banu Maksan b. Ziri

Habus b. Maksan (410/1019-20-429/1038)

Habus b. Maksan b. Ziri b. Manad al-Sanhaji, surnamed Abu Mas'ud,¹ succeeded his uncle Zawi mainly because of his established personal prestige and military reputation. He had been virtually independent in Iznajar, and his well-trained horsemen formed a strong army. His popularity among the joyful people of Granada soared high after the Berbers' defeat of al-Murtada. Yet he made no explicit claims to Granada after Zawi's departure because the Awlad Zawi were themselves critical of their father's plan and, being respected warriors who enjoyed the support of the Sanhaja, rightfully considered Granada as theirs. Halala, probably Zawi's eldest, by his inexplicable harassment of a number of notables lost their support and alienated the population of Granada. Regardless of the length of the Awlad Zawi's reign,² Habus, with the exception of Halala b. Zawi,

was well received when he arrived upon Ibn Abi Zamanayn's urging, and the people of Granada readily made their submission to him.

The reign of Habus inaugurated a period of peace, security, and prosperity in his new capital, Granada.³ He reestablished the unity of the territory al-Musta'in had conferred upon the Zirids and became the founder of a new dynasty of the united Zirid state of Granada and Elvira.⁴ Although Habus nominally acknowledged the Hammudid caliphs, he kept aloof from their quarrels⁵ and, instead, concentrated his efforts on the strengthening of Granada, which became the main source of his power and the place of permanent settlement for his people.⁶

The new amir⁷ possessed qualities that made him well suited for leadership. He was aware of the problems heterogeneous Granada presented and wisely showed himself as a friend to all. The Arabs were pleased with his display of continued goodwill toward them, the Jews admired his strong-mindedness and clear thinking, and the Berbers respected him for his military reputation, bravery, cunning, and his awe-inspiring appearance.⁸ He was resolved to protect his people from foreign intrusions, especially from the encroachment of neighboring Berbers.⁹ With these ends in mind, he annexed the city of Cabra¹⁰ and seized Jaen.¹¹ This display of force was intended to discourage outside attacks by those who had hoped that the coup d'état of Habus would engulf the Zirids in a power struggle for the leadership of the Sanhaja. Habus then proceeded to put the internal organization of his domain on a sound basis and so modeled it after the political and administrative organization of the North African Zirids and the Caliphate of Cordova. He ordered his qadis to adhere strictly to proper religious conduct and to refrain from illicit acts and from the extortion of money. He eliminated corruption and injustice and made the roads safe—to the great satisfaction of his people.¹²

Despite his popularity in Granada and the support of the whole of the Sanhaja, Habus strove to maintain good relations with those members of the Banu Zawi b. Ziri who chose to stay after Zawi's departure. He allowed them to retain their possessions in order to gain their confidence, support, and active participation. Habus had no desire to become an absolute ruler over his people. He divided his

domain into a number of military districts and entrusted them to his able relatives.¹³

They were responsible for the recruitment of soldiers in proportion to the size and strategic importance of their districts and for the collection of taxes.¹⁴ Habus emphasized the necessity of well-trained and numerous troops: "When the occasion arises," he said, "I shall summon the commander whose troops are the largest and best trained, and he will have my trust and esteem." Due to the efficient work of the *qa'ids* (commanders), the troops steadily increased in number and engaged in competition for military excellence and courageous decisions.¹⁵

Encouraged by the enthusiastic response, Habus expanded the scope of jurisdiction of the Banu Zawi b. Ziri. He reaffirmed their title of *sultan*¹⁶ and entrusted them with unlimited power and exclusive command of their troops over the portion of the land he had assigned to them. They also became his advisers, and he hardly ever made an important decision, whether in the council of the central government or concerning local issues, without consulting them beforehand.¹⁷ "The Sanhaja to me are like the teeth in the mouth," he used to say, "if I lost one of them I could never replace him." This wise intertribal policy ensured the military superiority of Habus over his neighbors and made Granada virtually inaccessible to their attacks.¹⁸

In spite of his superior military organization, Habus strove to avoid conflict with his neighbors. Except for his obscure participation in the attack of Khayran and Mujahid in Cordova (417/1026),¹⁹ not until shortly before his death did Habus allow himself to be drawn into a major military venture. In 427/1036 the qadi Muhammad b. Isma'il b. 'Abbad installed the alleged former Umayyad caliph Hisham II al-Mu'ayyad, and a number of the muluk al-tawa'if swore allegiance to him.²⁰ The qadi's son, Isma'il, with the help of the Zanati chief Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Birzali,²¹ defeated the Hammudid caliph, Yahya b. 'Ali b. Hammud, who lost his life in the battle at Carmona.²² In the same year the exiled al-Qasim b. Hammud died, and the very existence of the Hammudid caliphate was threatened. The expanding military power of the 'Abbadids finally forced Habus to launch a punitive expedition against them.