



‘ABDALLĀH B. ‘ĀMER

‘**ABDALLĀH B. ‘ĀMER B. KORAYZ**, ABŪ ‘**ABD-AL-RAḤMĀN**, Arab general and governor active in Iran, b. in Mecca in 4/626. He belonged to the clan of ‘Abd Šams and was related to the future caliph ‘Oṭmān b. ‘Affān. The latter, upon assuming the caliphate as a compromise candidate, found himself increasingly isolated from the old Muslims politically arrayed against him. ‘Oṭmān then turned to his relatives for support, although they represented those Qorayš clans which were, by and large, the early opponents of the prophet Moḥammad. As a result ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Āmer was appointed in 29/649-50 governor of Baṣra, replacing Abū Mūsā Aš‘arī. He soon embarked on a series of extensive campaigns to the east. After early successes in Fārs, where he conquered Eṣṭaḳr, Dārābīerd, and Gōr (Fīrūzābād), he moved into Khorasan. The campaign in Fārs represented a successful completion of a policy begun by his predecessors at Baṣra. Previous forays, however, stopped short of Khorasan itself, the farthest penetration being to Ṭabasayn.

The *amṣār* of Iraq were volatile. A campaign far to the east had the advantage, not only of bringing new territories under Islamic control, but also of serving as a safety valve for pressures generated by the anarchic tribal armies. After reaching Ṭabasayn, the gateway to Khorasan, ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Āmer marched to Nīšāpūr, where stiff resistance was met. After a siege of several months, the city capitulated and a large tribute was arranged. Other cities in the region soon fell into line according to similar treaties of capitulation. Within months these territories which had been part of Sasanian Khorasan were nominally brought under Islamic control. In 32/652 Marv-al-rūd, the last stronghold of



the opposition, fell. The Muslim forces, however, do not appear to have advanced significantly, if at all, beyond the Oxus river into eastern Khorasan. Nevertheless, Ebn ‘Āmer seems to have neutralized any immediate threat from the Hephthalite principalities. The Muslims, however, did not make an extended effort to consolidate their position to the east. Ebn ‘Āmer returned to Baṣra, leaving a relatively small force behind. These troops were soon tested, and Ebn ‘Āmer was forced to march east again. The situation continued unsettled; the Muslims, plagued by internal strife and lacking a strong resolve to hold and to consolidate these territories, did not make the necessary commitment to bring Khorasan fully under control.

The internal breakdown of order in the Islamic state seriously affected the career of Ebn ‘Āmer. Following the assassination of his cousin ‘Oṭmān, he sided with the triumvirate of Ṭalḥa, Zobayr and ‘Ā’eṣa, against the new caliph, ‘Alī b. Abū Ṭāleb. With the defeat of the rebels and their Basran supporters, Ebn ‘Āmer fled to Damascus to join the governor of Syria, his relative, Mo‘āvīa b. Abū Sofyān. Mo‘āvīa’s resistance to the incumbent regime resulted in a civil war which was destined to last five years. Following Mo‘āvīa’s election to the caliphate in 41/661, Ebn ‘Āmer was returned to his previous position in Baṣra. The extended civil war had completely diverted Muslim energies from the frontier lands. Since a strong Muslim presence was lacking, occupants of eastern territories hitherto defeated, but not fully conquered by the Muslim armies, reasserted their independence. The task fell once again to Ebn ‘Āmer, as governor of Baṣra, to subjugate the eastern territories. Over a period of two years (42-43/662-64) his generals reconquered Sīstān and Khorasan, although certain Hephthalite principalities continued to resist Muslim encroachment. Ebn ‘Āmer was less successful in keeping order in Baṣra. The tribal units defied the established authority, and there seems to have been a breakdown of public order. Though the situation called for vigorous measures, Ebn ‘Āmer was reluctant to act with resolve, for fear of further aggravating tribal sensitivities. Mo‘āvīa then felt no recourse but to remove him in favor of a more energetic governor. This was a rather delicate matter in view of the close relations between them. Ebn ‘Āmer was not only a blood relative, but he was the father-in-law of Mo‘āvīa’s son Yazīd. The caliph offered him the hand of his daughter in marriage as well as considerable sums of money. In the end he was officially replaced by Zīād b. Abīh, who had been designated for the post some time earlier. Ebn ‘Āmer then retired to Mecca. There is no indication that he ever again assumed a position of importance in the Omayyad administration. He died ca. 59/680.



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