



'ABDALLĀH B. KĀZEM

'ABDALLĀH B. KĀZEM B. ZĀBYĀN B. AL-ŞALT AL-SOLAMĪ, ABŪ ŞĀLEḤ, Arab military leader, governor of Khorasan, partisan of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zobayr, d. 72/691-92. His adventurous life illustrates the possibilities open during the Arab conquests to men with the requisite qualities, irrespective of birth. Ebn Kāzem was apparently the son of a black mother whose name is variously given: 'Ajla (Ebn Qotayba, *Ketāb al-ma'āref*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen, 1850, p. 418) or Asmā' (Balāḏorī, *Fotūḥ*, p. 418; Ḍahabī, *Ta'riḳ al-eslām wa ṭabaqāt al-mašāhīr wa'l-a'lām*, Cairo, 1367-69/1947-48, III, p. 167). On his father's side, he may have been connected with one of the leading families of Banū Solaym, a tribe of the Możar; he accompanied his cousin Qays b. al-Hayṭam al-Solamī (called Qays b. Hobayra by an oversight in the Leiden text of Ṭabarī, I, p. 2831) when the latter went as commander of the Nišāpūr zone of Khorasan in 29/649-50. He was probably a young man of about eighteen or nineteen, since we are expressly told that he was not a Companion of Moḥammad (Ḍahabī, *Ta'riḳ* III, p. 167). The capture of Saraḳs, perhaps his greatest exploit (mentioned by nearly all the authorities), took place in 31/651-52. The next year in the neighborhood of Herat, he met and defeated a confederacy under the Persian Qāren.

Ebn Kāzem apparently received the governorship of Khorasan after the victory over Qāren (Ṭabarī, I, p. 2906). Ṭabarī, in placing this appointment in 35/656 (after 'Oṭmān's death), has confused it with Ebn Kāzem's second appointment in 43/663-64. The first appointment actually followed the departure from Khorasan of 'Omar b. al-Hayṭam, when Ebn Kāzem was left as



his successor (Ṭabarī, I, p. 2832).

During the troubles of 'Alī's caliphate, Ebn Kāzem returned to Baṣra, where his family had a house. In 38/658-59, he joined Mo'āvīa's representative, Ebn al-Ḥazramī in escorting Zīād b. Abīh to Mo'āvīa. At this point Ebn Kāzem's support of Omayyad authority became clear, and his second governorship of Khorasan began in 43/663-64. In the same year he made a short speech before Mo'āvīa in defense against accusations of having usurped the governorship. Although he disclaimed any oratorical skill, he displayed notable talent and easily won his case (Ṭabarī, II, p. 66). He returned to Khorasan and remained as governor until 45/665.

The crisis which rapidly developed after the death of the caliph Yazīd I in the year 64/683 afforded Ebn Kāzem the opportunity of again becoming governor of Khorasan, but at the same time led indirectly to his downfall. In the general support for 'Abdallāh b. al-Zobayr, Khorasan passed temporarily to his camp. The province was in the hands of Salm b. Zīād, a nominee of Yazīd I, who, however, withdrew and was easily persuaded to appoint Ebn Kāzem as his successor (64/684). When Ebn Kāzem reached Marv, the provincial capital, Khorasan was already in revolt, and he could establish himself only by force. In the next years he had to face almost continuous fighting against the Rabī'a and later the Tamīm, as well as against the Hephthalites. In all these battles, says Ya'qūbī (II, p. 301), he did wonders and was repeatedly successful.

While the rest of the Islamic world gradually came to terms with 'Abd-al-Malek, Ebn Kāzem continued to support 'Abdallāh's brother, Mos'ab b. al-Zobayr, who was then fighting in Iraq (*Ta'rik al-kolafā'*, ed. P. Gryaznevich, Moscow, 1967, p. 121a). In 72/691-92 after the death of Mos'ab, 'Abd-al-Malek sent an envoy to Ebn Kāzem and offered him Khorasan for seven years in return for his acknowledgment of him as caliph. Ebn Kāzem indignantly refused the offer. 'Abd-al-Malek then wrote to one of Ebn Kāzem's officers and appointed him to the governorship. This was too much for Ebn Kāzem's loyalty, and he abandoned his allegiance to the Omayyads. The people of Marv followed him; but before long, Ebn Kāzem was overtaken and killed.

Ebn Kāzem was typical of military leaders in the early days of Islam. His courage was well-known ("the bravest of the people," says Ebn Qotayba, *Ma'āref*, p. 214). It was displayed in such incidents as his fight with an elephant at the siege of Kabul (Balāḍorī, *Fotūḥ*, p. 396) and his duel with a chief of the Tamīm during one of his last campaigns (Ṭabarī, II, p. 586). He had no great



political importance at any time; his own description of himself at the time of his death as a “chief (*kabš*) of the Moẓar” (Ṭabarī, II, p. 883) well sums up his career.

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See also Dīnavarī, *Aḳbār al-ṭewāl*, p. 149.

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