

Ḳays b. ‘Āṣim b. Sinān b. Khālīd b. Minḡar b. ‘Ubayd b. Muḡā‘is, Abū ‘Alī (according to other versions: Abū Ṭalḡa or Abū Ḳabīṣa), a *mukhadram* chief of the Banū Muḡā‘is and leader of his tribe. Tribal tradition emphasised his generosity, care for people under his protection, mildness and leniency. Al-Aḡnaf b. Ḳays reported the story, recorded in the compilations of *adab*, of how Ḳays b. ‘Āṣim received calmly the news about the murder of his son and magnanimously pardoned the murderer who was brought fettered into his presence. A poet of Sulaym, ‘Abbās b. Mirdās, praised his noble behaviour towards his *djār*. He is counted among the magnanimous ones (*ḡulamā‘*) and the nobles of the *Djāhiliyya* who abstained from drinking wine. His re-introduction of the practice of burying alive female infants is connected with a story of a woman of his family who, when captured in a raid on the tribe, preferred to remain with her captor and refused to return to her tribe. In order to prevent the recurrence of such an ignominy he decided to bury his daughters alive; verses 8-9 of Sūra LXXXI are said to have been revealed in connexion with this practice of Ḳays b. ‘Āṣim.

Ḳays is recorded as a leader of his tribe in the stories of the battles which took place in the first decade of the 7th century. He was victorious in all of his battles, except that of Abraḡ al-Kibrīt where he was captured with his mother and two of his sisters. In the battle of al-Sitār he is said to have killed Ḳatāda b. Salama al-Ḥanafī; if this report is true, Ḳatāda must have been a very old man when Ḳays killed him, as he had already been a tribal leader during the Expedition of the Elephant and had been warned by Ṭarafa of the advancing troops of Abraha (see Muḡammad b. Ḥabīb, *al-Munammak*, ed. Khursheed Aḡmad Fariq, Hyderabad 1383/1964, 69). The attack on the ‘Abd Ḳays at *Djuwātha*, in which Ḳays distinguished himself, seems to have been led by al-Ahtam. The attack on the Lahāzim (see W. Caskel, *ḡamharat an-Nasab*, Leiden 1966, ii, 26-27) at Nibādj-Ṭhaytal was a joint action undertaken by Ḳays at the head of the Muḡā‘is and Salāma b. Zarīb, chief of the Adjārib (see Caskel, *op. cit.*, 144). His rapid action and

his effective tactics assured them of victory. In the battle of al-Kulāb II (where the tribal units of Tamīm gathered after the slaughter of al-Mushakḳar) Ḳays became the leader of the troops of Sa‘d and by his energetic action and bravery helped to win the battle; the Tamīm attacked by allied Yamanī tribes took spoils and captives. It was at this battle, which took place at the beginning of the second decade of the 7th century, that Ḳays clashed with al-Ahtam. The animosity between these two leaders and the rancour between Ḳays and al-Zibriḳān b. Badr are echoed in the recorded verses of *bidjā’* and in the stories about the deputation of Tamīm to the Prophet. A *mathal* story reports the part played by Zayd al-Khayl (who left his tribe for some time and dwelt in the camp of Ḳays) in repelling an attack of the ‘Idjl against the Muḳā‘is; Ḳays denied Zayd's meritorious deed and because of this gained the epithet “the liar”.

Tamīmī tradition stresses the role of Ḳays in the deputation of Tamīm to the Prophet, emphasising that the Prophet was impressed by him and named him “the chief of the nomad people” (*sayyid abl al-wabar*). A spurious tradition records a conversation between the Prophet and Ḳays, in which Ḳays told the Prophet that the first man who applied *radjaz* in driving camels (*bidā’*) was the ancestor of the Prophet, Muḍar; the first man who received information about the appearance of a prophet named Muḥammad was Sufyān b. Mudjāshī‘ al-Dārimī, who accordingly named his new born son Muḥammad. It is apparent that the tendency of this tradition is to stress the Prophet's link with Muḍar and Tamīm. The alleged sincerity of Ḳays' belief is indicated in a story of his divorce of his beloved wife from the Banū Ḥanīfa, because she refused to embrace Islam. The Prophet exhorted Ḳays to donate some of his flocks to the poor and needy, and is said to have forbidden tribal alliances to be formed in Islam. The Prophet appointed Ḳays tax collector of the Muḳā‘is and the Buṭūn (see Caskel, *op. cit.*, 230).

After the death of the Prophet, Ẓays seems to have wavered in his loyalty to Medina. He doubted the stability of the Medina establishment and preferred to divide the taxes collected for Medina among his tribe. This he apparently did according to some kind of agreement with al-Zibriḳān; when al-Zibriḳān later hurried to Abū Bakr with the taxes levied from his tribal units, Ẓays felt himself deceived and accused al-Zibriḳān of treacherous behaviour. Both leaders showed no hostility towards Medina at the beginning of the *riḍḍa*: they escorted ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ in their territories when he was on his way from ‘Umān to Medina; they took a neutral stand towards Medina while waiting to see whether Medina would stand fast against the tribal revolts.

Ẓays further aided Saḍjāh, but no war action of his on her behalf is recorded. After the revolt of the Banū Ḥanīfa was crushed, Ẓays joined ‘Alā’ al-Ḥaḍramī when he was on his way to Baḥrayn, but even then he simply escorted him through the territories of the Sa‘d; only later did he decide to fight on his side. He fought bravely, and is credited with the killing of al-Ḥuṭam and Abdjar b. Budjayr.

Ẓays settled in Baṣra. He is said to have had 33 sons and many daughters. Ṭalaba b. Ẓays was known for his generosity; Muḳātil b. Ṭalaba was in the deputation of the nobles of Tamīm and ‘Āmir b. Ṣa‘ṣa‘a sent by Ibrāhīm b. ‘Arabī to ‘Abd al-Malik. Mayya, the daughter of Muḳātil b. Ṭalaba, was the beloved of Dhū ’l-Rumma.

According to Ibn Kathīr, Ẓays died in 47/667. He enjoined his sons not to reveal his place of burial, because he feared the Banū Bakr b. Wā’il, whom he had fought and who hated him. Following the example of the Prophet, he gave orders to refrain from lamentations at his funeral. He was eulogised by ‘Abda b. al-Ṭabīb in his famous elegy in which he said “The death of Ẓays was not the death of one man: it was [as if] the edifice of a people had fallen down”.

(M. J. Kister)

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