

HIBATALLĀH MUḤAMMAD b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Muṭṭalib Majd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī Abū l-Ma‘ālī b. Abī Sa‘d, vizier, jurist and high dignitary during the reign of the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Mustaẓhir bi’llāh (487-512/1094-/1118). According to most sources he was born in 440/1048-9 and died on 2 Shawwāl 503/24 April 1110. However, al-Dhahabī’s *Ta’rīkh* features contradicting dates in its two entries for him. One indicates the above years but, according to the other notice Hibatallāh was born in 443/1051-2 and died confined to his house in 509/1115-6. Al-Dhahabī confirms this date in his *Siyar*. Hibatallāh’s *nisba*, al-Kirmānī, indicates that he came from a family of Iranian origins. He trained as a Shāfi‘ī jurist and was a respected memoriser of biographies, history and prophetic traditions, though not a prolific transmitter. Al-Ṣafadī quotes one of his aphorisms. He learned from ‘Abd al-Ṣamad b. al-Ma’mūn, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Naqūr and Abū l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Muhtadī bi’llāh. The latter taught also the prominent *shaykh* and Ṣūfī Abū Ya‘qūb al-Hamadānī. Described as generous, dutiful, clever, experienced and morally upright – hence his appellative *majd al-dīn* (glory of the faith) - it was thanks to the high ranking posts he occupied at the ‘Abbāsīd court that he became renowned in Baghdād. As a skilful scribe, excelling in accountancy, administration and bookkeeping, he headed the office of control and audit during al-Muqtadī’s reign (467-78/1075-/1094). Under al-Mustaẓhir, Hibatallāh continued in this role until he became vizier. Hibatallāh’s vizirate lasted somewhere between two and two and a half years. His position as vizier was conditioned by the power struggles that characterised al-Mustaẓhir’s reign. Under this caliph the office of vizier had remained the monopoly of the Banū Jahīr, with ‘Amīd al-Dawla b. Jahīr continuing in this role, having served two of al-Mustaẓhir’s predecessors. However, in Ramaḍān 493/July-August 1100 ‘Amīd al-Dawla was arrested and dismissed. In the meantime the Shī‘ī Mazyadid ruler of al-Ḥilla, Ṣadaqa (d.501/1107-8) rose to influence al-Mustaẓhir’s choice of viziers. Ṣadaqa had been involved in 500/1106-7 in the removal of al-Mustaẓhir’s vizier Za‘īm al-Ru’asā’ Abū l-Qāsim b. Jahīr, brother of ‘Amīd al-Dawla. It is at this junction that Hibatallāh became vizier in that same year. Ibn al-Athīr says in Muḥarram 501/August-September 1107 but lists the event in his entry for the year 500. He kept the post until Za‘īm al-Ru’asā’ was re-appointed to the vizirate by the caliph in 502/1108-9 to remain in office until his death in 507/1113-14. Though short, Hibatallāh’s vizirate was not uneventful. As a court insider, al-Bundārī mentions him as the source of an anecdote about an envoy of the Saljūq Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Malikshāh seeking information about Hārūn - al-Mustaẓhir’s brother - through the help of a court housekeeper. In Ramaḍān 501/April-May 1108 the caliph dismissed him following written instructions from the Saljūq Sulṭān. Hibatallāh was then re-appointed, again at the instigation of the Sulṭān, on condition that he would be just, would conduct himself properly and would not to employ *dhimīs*. The discrimination against Christians and Jews during al-Mustaẓhir’s rule echoed policies already adopted during the reign of this caliph’s two predecessors. Upon being dismissed once and for all, according to some sources Hibatallāh fled the caliphal palace in secret with his children and sought refuge with Muḥammad b. Malikshāh. According to al-Ṣafadī, Hibatallāh’s daughter married Abū ‘Alī b. Ṣadaqa. It is possible that he was a member of Ṣadaqa’s Mazyadid family, in which case the twists in Hibatallāh’s career at the ‘Abbāsīd court might have been also influenced by marriage

alliance. Hibatallāh was buried in Baghdād in the Wardiyya cemetery by Bāb Abraz, the burial place of many persons of note.

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