



ABŪ 'ABDALLĀH YA'QŪB

ABŪ 'ABDALLĀH YA'QŪB B. DĀ'ŪD, vizier of the 'Abbasid caliph Maḥdī (r. 158-69/775-85). He professed pro-'Alid sentiments and participated in the revolt of the Hasanids Ebrāhīm and Moḥammad b. 'Abdallāh against the caliph Maṣṣūr in 145/762-63. Imprisoned, he was set free in 159/775-76 by Maḥdī, who sought, by means of a general amnesty, to reconcile the opposing moderate Shi'ites with each other. He soon became the advisor of the caliph, who in 163/779-80 gave him the title "brother in God and vizier" and conferred on him the direction of matters with which Abū 'Obaydallāh had formerly dealt. This was the first official nomination of a vizier that the chroniclers relate, but that does not mean that the title of vizier had not previously been used. Ya'qūb profited from his position to appoint Zaydī partisans, that is, moderate Shi'ites, throughout the provinces. However, the caliph did not succeed by these means in overcoming the opposition; for their part, the Zaydīs were becoming disillusioned with their former friend who had become vizier. The policy of Maḥdī failed; and the caliph, wishing to test the loyalty of his vizier, set a trap for him by asking him to dispose of an 'Alid who had been arrested. When he learned that Ya'qūb had let the 'Alid escape, he became violently angry and had his vizier and the members of his family imprisoned. Ya'qūb was to remain in prison until the beginning of the reign of Hārūn al-Rašīd. Having become blind, he managed to establish himself in Mecca, where he died in 186/802.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

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