



ABŪ 'AWN

ABŪ 'AWN, 'ABD-AL-MALEK B. YAZĪD ḲORĀSĀNĪ AZDĪ, a distinguished 'Abbasid general, twice governor of Egypt and once of Khorasan. Although Abū 'Awn's career can be followed for a period of forty years, little is known beyond its bare outline. He first is mentioned raising money for the 'Abbasid cause in Gorgān, his native city, in 129/747 along with Ḳāled b. Barmak. He was a *mawlā* of the Honā'a branch of the Azd tribe; but, judging from an insult once given him (Kendī, *Wolāt Meṣr*, ed. H. Naṣṣār, Beirut, 1379/1959, p. 31), his original occupation may have been that of a cattle dealer. Once the revolution broke out, he quickly proved his worth as a general. In 130/748 he was simply another second echelon commander. A year later he was an independent commander and played a major role in defeating the army of Marwān II, first at Šahrezūr (131/749) and then on the Zāb river (132/750). In 132/750, under the supervision of Šāleḥ b. 'Alī of the 'Abbasid family, he led the successful hunt in Egypt for the fugitive Marwān II. Šāleḥ b. 'Alī became the first 'Abbasid governor of Egypt, but Abū 'Awn succeeded him from 133/751 to 136/754, during which period he suppressed a Coptic revolt. Then Šāleḥ b. 'Alī returned for a brief second tour as governor and sent Abū 'Awn first on a military expedition into Libya and then on a punitive one against a rebel in Palestine. Abū 'Awn became governor of Egypt again in 137/754 and served until his recall in 141/758. By 144/761 he was back in Khorasan trying to bring order to that troubled area, and in 150/767 he joined in the fight against the rebel Ostāḍsis. He finally attained the governorship of Khorasan, one of the most important and powerful posts in the caliphate, in 159/776; but his failure to press effectively the campaign against the rebel Moqanna' seems to have



brought about his replacement a year later. The last that is heard of him is the caliph Maḥdī's visit to his death bed in 169/784. This act of caliphal respect was surely warranted by the lifetime of unstintingly loyal service rendered by Abū 'Awn.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See the indices to Ṭabarī and Ebn al-Aṭīr, as well as Kendī (reference in the text).