



ABŪ SALAMA ḲALLĀL

ABŪ SALAMA ḤAFṢ B. SOLAYMĀN ḲALLĀL HĀMDĀNĪ, head of the Hashemite propaganda organization (*da'wa*) that sparked the 'Abbasid revolution and first vizier of the new dynasty. Abū Salama was a Kufan *mawlā* of an Arab tribe variously reported to have been al-Sabī' or al-Ḥāretī b. Ka'b. His *nesba* Ḳallāl is variously explained as derived from manufacturing, or associating with makers, of vinegar (or else of sword scabbards). In any case he was a wealthy man and used his wealth to finance the Hashemite movement. His association with the Hāšemīya came about through his brother-in-law Bokayr b. Māhān, his predecessor as director of the *da'wa*. Before his death in 127/744-45, Bokayr recommended Abū Salama to Imam Ebrāhīm b. Moḥammad 'Abbāsī. From that time until the triumph of the 'Abbasid revolution, Abū Salama conducted an active and effective movement, even traveling to Khorasan, where the revolt untimely broke out, to meet with and be accepted by the local Hashemite leaders.

When Kūfa was liberated from Omayyad control in 132/749, Abū Salama was recognized as vizier of the yet unnamed imam; and he was saluted by this title by the Hashemite military commanders when they entered the city. At this point it was still not generally known that the imam of the Hāšemīya was of the 'Abbasid family, and it is reported that Abū Salama suppressed any announcement of this fact while he conducted a private correspondence with three prominent members of the 'Alid family, including Ja'far al-Ṣādeq, in which he offered them the office of caliph. The three turned down his offer, and his motivation in turning to the 'Alids after five years of conducting an



underground movement on behalf of an 'Abbasid imam is quite uncertain. Evidently he took quite literally the title vizier of the family of Moḥammad and understood it to mean that any member of the Prophet's family, whether 'Abbasid or 'Alid, could be considered for the caliphate. This can scarcely be considered his sole motivation, however.

Whatever Abū Salama's motives for trying to supplant the 'Abbasids in the hour of triumph, the new 'Abbasid caliph, Abu'l-'Abbās Saffāḥ, was still willing, or possibly obligated, to retain him as vizier after he was installed in the caliphate by supporters of the leader of the movement in Khorasan, Abū Moslem. But Abū Salama's disloyalty proved his undoing. For three or four months he acted as a true vizier with full direction of governmental affairs, the first person ever to hold such a position; but at the end of that time (Rajab, 132/February-March, 750) he was assassinated by an agent of Abū Moslem, who had been inspired to order the act by the caliph's brother, the future Manṣūr. It is likely that Abū Moslem was attempting to prove by his deed his own suspect loyalty to the new regime. Little is known about the manner in which Abū Salama conducted affairs either before or after the revolution, but his power and importance are unquestionable and may well have been greater than that of the more famous Abū Moslem.

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