



## ABU'L-QĀSEM 'ALĪ B. MOḤAMMAD

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**ABU'L-QĀSEM 'ALĪ B. MOḤAMMAD** B. ḤOSAYN B. 'AMR, a wealthy *dehqān* from Sabzavār who was prominent as a founder of *madrasas* in the second decade of the 5th/11th century. As a member of an old and aristocratic family which had marital connection with the illustrious Mikālī family, Abu'l-Qāsem served as the deputy for the Bayhaq area of the *ra'īs* of Nīšāpūr, Abū Naṣr Maṣṣūr b. Rāmeš (d. 427/1036). The most noteworthy aspect of his career, however, was his foundation in Sabzavār of four *madrasas*, one each for the Hanafites, Shafe'ites, Karramites, and Shi'ites. Although *madrasas* are known to have existed in Khorasan for over a century before his time, Abu'l-Qāsem 'Alī is the only known patron to have established institutions for more than one *madḥab* or faction prior to the 6th/12th century. This was considered so unusual at the time that he was summoned to Ġazna in 414/1023 and reproved by Sultan Maḥmūd on the grounds that Abu'l-Qāsem had damaged his own faction by patronizing his opponents. It is uncertain which faction Abu'l-Qāsem actually favored, but he is mentioned as being a disciple of Ebn Abi'l-Ṭayyeb, for whom he built the Shi'ite *madrasa*. In 5th/11th century Khorasan, torn by violent factional divisions, Abu'l-Qāsem's patronage of rival groups appears anomalous, but his actions may possibly be seen as a precursor of later government efforts to use educational patronage as a means of controlling factional strife. A letter from people of Bayhaq to the *ra'īs* of Nīšāpūr has been preserved, extolling his patronage of both *madrasas* and mosques.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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A. Bahmanyār, Tehran, 1938, pp. 185, 194-95, 205.