



MOḤAMMAD B. 'ABD-ALLAH

MOḤAMMAD b. 'ABD-ALLAH b. ṬĀHER, Abu'l-'Abbās (b. 209/824-25, d. 253/867), high official in Iraq and the central lands of the caliphate. He was one of several sons of 'Abd-Allāh b. Ṭāher Du'l-Yaminayn, governor of Khorasan for the 'Abbasids 213-30/828-45 (see 'ABD-ALLĀH B. ṬĀHER DU'L-YAMINAYN), and spent his early years in Khorasan as one of his father's aides. Then he was summoned westwards by the caliph al-Motwakkel to take over the governorship and *šorṭa* (command of the guard) in Baghdad, together with the governorships of the Sawād of Iraq and the Persian province of Fārs. In this way he succeeded to the positions of power already held by the Taherids in Iraq and the west; since his predecessor for over 20 years in the governorship of Baghdad had been his kinsman, Eshāq b. Ebrāhim b. al-Ḥosayn (d. 235/849-50). At the accession of al-Mosta'in in 248/862, he was given the further office of the governorship of the Ḥaramayn, Mecca and Medina. In Iraq, Moḥammad b. 'Abd-Allāh was active in military and political events. In 251/865 he sent an army against Kufa to suppress the revolt there of the al-Ḥosayn b. Moḥammad b. Ḥamza (a descendant of Ḥosayn, the 3rd Shi'ite Emām). In this same year he organized the defense of Baghdad for al-Mosta'in against the Turkish soldiery supporting the cause of his cousin al-Mo'tazz; but he later made peace with Abu Aḥmad al-Movaffaq and allowed the abdication of al-Mosta'in and succession of al-Mo'tazz. In the latter's reign he continued to be influential until his death.

Moḥammad b. 'Abd-Allāh was further notable as a great patron of scholarship and, like many other members of the Taherid family, a considerable littérateur



and scholar himself. One of his many offices Baghdad was that of *ḥājeb* or chamberlain at the caliphal court, and it was there that he gathered around himself a circle of talented authors and poets. One of his protégés was the famous singer Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Makki, called Zonayn or Zonayn (d. 250/864), who wrote for Moḥammad b. 'Abd-Allāh a *Ketāb mojarraḍ fi'l-aḡāni* ("Choice book of songs"). There are at least two accounts of disputations in his presence on grammar and philology, in which the protagonists were T̄o'a'lab, representing the Kufan school, and al-Mobarrad, representing the Basran one. He was himself a poet of talent, whose verses are quoted by such authorities as Šābuṣṭi, Šafadi, and Ebn Šāker al-Kotobi. He related *ḥadiṯ*, and he considered himself as an authority on correct style and elegant language.

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