

## ‘Abbās b. Abī l-Futūḥ

‘Abbās b. Abī l-Futūḥ b. Tamīm b. Mu‘izz b. Bādīs al-Šinhājī (d. 549/1154) was *wazīr* for slightly more than a year, 548–9/1153–4, first under the Fāṭimid caliph al-Zāfir, then briefly under his successor, al-Fā’iz. His father, Abū l-Futūḥ, had been a ranking member of the Zīrid royal family but was suspected of involvement in an attempted assassination of the ruler, his brother Yaḥyā. He was imprisoned, along with his wife, Bullāra, ‘Abbās’s mother, in the Maghrib from 502/1108 to 509/1115. ‘Abbās was born during that period. Following Yaḥyā’s death and the succession of his son ‘Alī, the couple and their young son were sent into exile in Egypt. There the caliph al-Āmir ordered them given honors. Abū l-Futūḥ, however, died soon afterward. His widow then married ‘Alī b. al-Sallār, the governor of Alexandria. ‘Abbās thus grew up well connected through his stepfather and he advanced in rank with the approval of the caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ, who succeeded al-Āmir. At the time of al-Ḥāfiẓ’s death, ‘Abbās was governor of al-Gharbiyya province.

When al-Ḥāfiẓ died in 544/1149, al-Zāfir ascended the throne and immediately appointed Ibn Maṣāl as *wazīr*. Ibn al-Sallār objected strongly to that appointment and set out from Alexandria to march on Cairo, accompanied by his stepson. Al-Zāfir favoured Ibn Maṣāl over Ibn al-Sallār and tried to support him with funds and troops, but the *wazīr* was soon on the defensive and had to flee Cairo across the river and south from there. ‘Abbās commanded the pursuing forces, which caught and defeated Ibn Maṣāl at Dalāš near Bahnasā. The *wazīr* was killed and his head brought back for display, carried on the lance of ‘Abbās’s son Naṣr.

Ibn al-Sallār became *wazīr* with the title al-‘Ādil. His relationship with the caliph was always strained, in part because of his having once ordered the massacre of the Youth Guard (*subyān al-ḥujar*), and perhaps also because he was a Sunni in service to a Shiite dynasty.

By 548/1153, four years into Ibn al-Sallār’s tenure as *wazīr*, the Crusaders were besieging ‘Asqalān by land and sea. The Fāṭimids tried to relieve their forces in that city by rotating reinforcements into it. Ibn al-Sallār ordered several of his senior commanders to leave Cairo for that purpose, among them ‘Abbās, his son Naṣr, and Usāma b. Munqidh, the famous memoirist, who had become quite close to ‘Abbās. One day’s march from Cairo, at Bilbays, the three contrived a plot to avoid having to serve at ‘Asqalān and at the same time to replace Ibn al-Sallār with ‘Abbās as *wazīr*. Already ‘Abbās’s son Naṣr was on terms of such intimate familiarity with al-Zāfir, he could readily gain access to him. He returned to Cairo, obtained the caliph’s approval to kill Ibn al-Sallār, and then arranged to do it by entering the *ḥaram* section of the *wazīr*’s abode, using his status as the grandson of the master’s wife. Ibn al-Sallār was normally escorted by a large contingent of his own *mamlūks*, but they did not follow him into his *ḥaram*, and it was there that Naṣr brought about his death.

Immediately, a pigeon was dispatched with a message to alert ‘Abbās at Bilbays. He returned to Cairo at once and confronted those formerly loyal to Ibn al-Sallār, some of whom joined him, while others set off for Damascus, leaving ‘Abbās to claim the wazirate with relatively weak opposition, on the 7th of Muḥarram 548 (4 April 1153), one day after the murder of his stepfather and predecessor. The Franks at ‘Asqalān

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'Abbās b. Abī al-Futūḥ, al-Afḍal Rukn al-Dīn of the Zīrids, a vizier of the Fāṭimids from 548 to 549/1153 to 1154. He was originally a prince of the family of Ibn Bādīs al-Ṣanhājī (of Banū Zīrī), who had been governors of Ifrīqiya in the 6th/12th century. As a result of conflicts within the family, his father Abū al-Futūḥ was expelled from Ifrīqiya in 509/1115 by his brother 'Alī b. Yahyā, and he was forced to go with his wife Bullāra and his young son 'Abbās to Alexandria, where they were warmly and respectfully received on the orders of the Fāṭimid caliph, al-Āmir. When Abū al-Futūḥ died, Bullāra married Ibn Sallār, the governor of al-Buḥayra and Alexandria, in whose care 'Abbās was brought up (Ibn Khallikān, 3/417, 6/216). Ibn al-Athīr's reference to 'Abbās's learning to sew and becoming proficient at it (11/185) must relate to this period. 'Abbās was almost certainly in the ranks of Ibn Sallār's army when the latter marched on Cairo in opposition to Ibn Maṣāl's vizierate, during the reign of the caliph al-Zāfir. Ibn