HIBATALLĀH MUḤAMMAD b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Muṭṭalib Majd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī Abū l-Maʿālī b. Abī Saʿd, vizier, jurist and high dignitary during the reign of the ‘Abbāsid caliph al-Mustazhir biʾllāh (487-512/1094-/1118). According to most sources he was born in 440/1048-9 and died on 2 Shawwāl 503/24 April 1110. However, al-Dhahabiʾs Taʾrīkh features contradicting dates in its two entries for him. One indicates the above years but, according to the other notice Hibatallāh was born in 443/1051-2 and died confined to his house in 509/1115-6. Al-Dhahabiʾ confirms this date in his Siyar. Hibatallāhʾs nisba, al-Kirmānī, indicates that he came from a family of Iranian origins. He trained as a Shāfiʿī jurist and was a respected aserstor of biographies, history and prophetic traditions, though not a prolific transmitter. Al-Ṣafadī quotes one of his aphorisms. He learned from ‘Abd al-Ṣamad b. al-Maʾmūn, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Naqūr and Abū l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Muhtadī biʾllāh. The latter taught also the prominent shaykh and Ṣūfī Abū Yaʿqūb al-Hamadānī. Described as generous, dutiful, clever, experienced and morally upright – hence his apppellative majd al-dīn (glory of the faith) - it was thanks to the high ranking posts he occupied at the ‘Abbāsid court that he became renowned in Baghdād. As a skilful scribe, excelling in accountancy, administration and bookkeeping, he headed the office of control and audit during al-Muqtadīʾs reign (467-78/1075-/1094). Under al-Mustazhir, Hibatallāh continued in this role until he became vizier. Hibatallāhʾs vizirate lasted somewhere between two and a half years. His position as vizier was conditioned by the power struggles that characterised al-Mustazhirʾs reign. Under this caliph the office of vizier had remained the monopoly of the Banū Jahīr, with ‘Amīd al-Dawla b. Jahīr continuing in this role, having served two of al-Mustazhirʾs predecessors. However, in Ramaḍān 493/July-August 1100 ‘Amīd al-Dawla was arrested and dismissed. In the meantime the Shiʿī Mazyadid ruler of al-Ḥilla, Ṣadaqa (d.501/1107-8) rose to influence al-Mustazhirʾs choice of viziers. Ṣadaqa had been involved in 500/1106-7 in the removal of al-Mustazhirʾs vizier Zaʾīm al-Ruʾasāʾ Abū l-Qāsim b. Jahīr, brother of ‘Amīd al-Dawla. It is at this junction that Hibatallāh became vizier in that same year. Ibn al-Atthīr says in Muḥarram 501/August-September 1107 but lists the event in his entry for the year 500. He kept the post until Zaʾīm al-Ruʾasāʾ was re-appointed to the vizirate by the caliph in 502/1108-9 to remain in office until his death in 507/1113-14. Though short, Hibatallāhʾs vizirate was not uneventful. As a court insider, al-Bundārī mentions him as the source of an anecdote about an envoy of the Saljuq Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Malikshāh seeking information about Hārūn - al-Mustazhirʾs brother - through the help of a court housekeeper. In Ramaḍān 501/April-May 1108 the caliph dismissed him following written instructions from the Saljuq Sulṭān. Hibatallāh was then re-appointed, again at the instigation of the Sulṭān, on condition that he would be just, would conduct himself properly and would not to employ dhimmīs. The discrimination against Christians and Jews during al-Mustazhirʾs rule echoed policies already adopted during the reign of this caliphʾs two predecessors. Upon being dismissed once and for all, according to some sources Hibatallāh fled the caliphal palace in secret with his children and sought refuge with Muḥammad b. Malikshāh. According to al-Ṣafadī, Hibatallāhʾs daughter married Abū ‘Alī b. Ṣadaqa. It is possible that he was a member of Ṣadaqaʾs Mazyadid family, in which case the twists in Hibatallāhʾs career at the ‘Abbāsid court might have been also influenced by marriage
alliance. Hibatallāh was buried in Baghdād in the Wardiyya cemetery by Bāb Abraz, the burial place of many persons of note.

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