



ABŪ LO'LO'A

ABŪ LO'LO'A, a Persian slave of Moḡīra b. Šo'ba, the governor of Bašra, who assassinated the caliph 'Omar b. al-Ḳaṭṭāb, on Wednesday, 26 Ḍu'l-ḥeġġa 23/2 November 644. The sources agree on his Persian origin, but disagree with respect of his religion; some claim that he was a Mazdean from Nehāvand, while others claim that he was Christian called Fērōz Našrānī. What motivated him to kill 'Omar is not clear. According to Mas'ūdī, for example (*Morūġ* IV, pp. 191, 226-27, 353; ed. Pellat, pars. 1524, 1559, 1670), 'Omar would not let any 'aġam enter Medina. He had, however, authorized Moḡīra to send him Abū Lo'lo'a, whose skills as a joiner and blacksmith could be of service. Since his master had imposed on him a tax (*karāj*) of two dirhams a day (three dirhams a month according to Ebn 'Abd Rabbeh, *Eqd al-farīd*, ed. A. Amīn et al., Cairo, 1962, IV, p. 272), Abū Lo'lo'a complained to 'Omar, but in vain. As a result he conceived an implacable hatred of the caliph which, according to tradition, expressed itself in a threat concerning the construction of a mill. In contrast Ebn al-Ṭeqṭaqā (*Fakrī*, ed. J. Derenbourg, Paris, 1895, p. 134) maintains that Abū Lo'lo'a was angry at 'Omar because the caliph had imposed the *karāj* on his master, Moḡīra.

The circumstances of the assassination itself and of the death of the assassin are no less controversial. According to some sources, Abū Lo'lo'a, having hidden under his robes a double-bladed dagger, crouched in a corner of the mosque of Medina. When the caliph was going to perform the morning prayer and passed within his reach, he leapt out and stabbed him three (or six) blows, one of which struck below the navel and was fatal. Others say that Abū Lo'lo'a



placed himself behind 'Omar among the worshippers. According to some sources, death was instantaneous. Others relate that the caliph survived three days; this version seems more probable. In addition, Abū Lo'lo'a, while trying to make a way through the crowd, was supposed to have stabbed some dozen or more men; of these, one, six, or seven died. According to one version, he was captured and killed; according to another, he committed suicide.

The caliph's son, 'Obaydallāh, killed the assassin's wife and daughter, and swore to have all the Persians of Medina killed. Among the Persians of Medina was Hormezdān (*Hormozān*), who was the victim of his thirst for vengeance, although innocent. The subsequent acquittal of 'Obaydallāh was a matter for contention between the Sunnites and the Shi'ites. According to one source, Abū Lo'lo'a had previously belonged to Hormezān, in whose company he had been some time before the assassination; it was thus concluded that Abū Lo'lo'a had plotted with his former master to assassinate 'Omar. According to Caetani, Abū Lo'lo'a was made the unconscious instrument of a conspiracy hatched by some of the Companions of the Prophet who wanted to rid themselves of the caliph. One can equally well suppose that he was simply moved by a personal feeling of vengeance aroused by the rebuff he had received.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Caetani, *Annali* V, pp. 51-79, translates the principal accounts, including Ṭabarī, I, pp. 2722-24.

Ebn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammads*, Leiden, 1904, II/1, pp. 246-47, 250-52.

See also: Balāḍorī, *Fotūḥ*, Persian tr. by Ā. Āḍarnūš, Tehran, 1346 Š./1967, pp. 248, 285.

Maqdesī, *Bad'*, pp. 188-89; tr., pp. 196-97. Ebn al-Aṭīr, p. 23.