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MOQANNAʿ

MOQANNAʿ (lit. "the veiled one," d. 163/780 or later), leader of a rebellious movement in Sogdiana.

Moqannaʿ's name is usually given as Hāšem b. Ḥakim, but Ḥakim is also said to have been his own name, suggesting that some took the underlying Persian form, Hāšem-e Ḥakim, to mean Hāšem the Sage. Jāḥeż (III, pp. 102-3) gives his name as ʿAṭāʾ. Reputed to have come from Balkh (Balḵ), not Sogdiana, Hāšem participated in the ʿAbbāsid revolution (see ABBASID CALIPHATE) and continued to serve as a soldier and secretary in the army at Marv under Abu Dāwud Ḵāled b. Ebrāhim al-Ḍohli (governor of Khorasan 137-140/755-57), and his successor ʿAbd-al-Jabbār b. ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Azdi (140-41/757-58). The language he used as army secretary was presumably Persian, but Jāḥeż disparagingly says that he was *alkan* (Ar.), spoke incorrectly with an accent, implying that Moqannaʿ used Arabic too. He is also said to have studied magic and sleights of hand, perhaps a mere inference from his later ability to produce miracles (i.e., illusion tricks), but he was clearly a man of some education.

Revolt. According to the *Tāriḵ-e Boḵārā*, Moqannaʿ started prophesying after the downfall of his employer, ʿAbd-al-Jabbār, and spent some time in jail in Iraq, but eventually returned to Marv, where he lived in the village of Kāza and worked as a fuller; there he took to preaching again, and also to organizing a movement. When Ḥomayd b. Qaḥṭaba became governor of Khorasan in 151/768-69, he ordered Moqannaʿ arrested, whereupon he went into hiding and later crossed to Transoxania when his followers had taken

over some localities for him. It is probably on the basis of this information that the beginning of his *daʿwa* (see DĀʿI) is placed in 151/768-69 in Abu'l-Maʿāli. Both Abu'l-Maʿāli and the *Tārik̲-e Boḵārā* mention uprisings in Keš (the modern Šahr-e Sabz, Uzbekistan), especially one in Subak̲ near Nasaf led by one ʿOmar al-Subak̲i, which should probably be placed around this time. Moqannaʿ now ensconced himself in the mountainous region of Keš called Senām or Seyām (Barthold, pp. 134-35), where he built a fortress sometimes also called Senām, though its name appears to have been Nawāket̲; this castle, and another called Sangard or Sangarda, had been seized for him by his followers, the *Sapid-jāmagān* (Ar. Mobayyeża, lit. "whiteclothed ones"; cf. Ebn al-Aṯir, VI, p. 39; Gardizi, p. 279 l. 4; both drawing on Sallāmi).

According to Gardizi, the Sapid-jāmagān first appeared at Bukhara in 157/773-74; the *Tārik̲-e Boḵārā* says 159/775-76 (reflecting the common confusion of "sabʿa" and "tesʿa" – in manuscripts dates are usually not written in numbers). Here 157 is probably correct, for both sources place the emergence of the Sapid-jāmagān before the arrival, in 159, of Jebraʾil b. Yaḥyā, the new governor of Samarqand (Ṭabari, III, p. 459), and Sallāmi, as reflected in Gardizi and Ebn al-Aṯir, gives a long list of commanders that Moqannaʿ had defeated before Jebraʾil was sent. The outbreak of the revolt should thus be placed in 157, in the reign of al-Manṣur (r. 136-58/754-775). It is in the reign of al-Manṣur that the revolt is placed in a statement credited to al-Faẓl b. Sahl (Ṭabari, III, p. 773; Ebn al-Aṯir, VI, p. 224) and, as regards its first phase, also in the *Tārik̲-nāma* (paras. 1-18)

It was only some years later that the movement attracted general attention, however. Ḥomayd b. Qaḥṭaba died in office in 158/774-75 or the following year, shortly before or shortly after the death of the caliph al-Manṣur (Ḵalifa, pp. 676-77, 696), and Moqannaʿ seems to have used the opportunity to conquer Samarqand with the help of the Turkish Ḵāqān with whom he was allied (*Tārik̲-nāma*). Al-Manṣur or, according to most sources, al-Mahdi (r. 158-69/775-85), now appointed ʿAbd-al-Malik b. Yazid Abu ʿAwn to the governorship of Khorasan and Jebraʾil b. Yaḥyā to Samarqand. Jebraʾil spent the first four months after his arrival, in 159/775-76, fighting Moqannaʿ's followers at Bukhara together with the governor of that city before proceeding to Samarqand (*Tārik̲-e Boḵārā*; Gardizi, p. 280), which he is said to have reconquered, though it may not have been until 161/777-78 or later, in the governorship of Abu ʿAwn's successor, that he did so. About the same time Moqannaʿ's forces defeated an army sent against him from Balkh at Tirmidh

(Termeḏ) and laid siege to the cities of Čaḡāniān and Nasaf, with unidentified outcome in the case of Čaḡāniān, but without success at Nasaf (*Tāriḵ-nāma*). If he never took Nasaf, it must have been at Samarqand that he struck coins (cf. Kochnev). In 161/777-78 al-Mahdi replaced Abu ʿAwn with Moʿāḏ b. Moslem as governor of Khorasan and assigned a number of commanders to his service, including ʿOqba b. Salm (or b. Moslem) al-Honāʾi and Saʿid al-Ḥaraši. Moʿāḏ also engaged in operations at Bukhara before proceeding to Samarqand, where he joined forces with Jebraʾil b. Yaḥyā and reconquered it (for the second time?) from Moqannaʿ's governor, Ḵāreja. Moʿāḏ then began the operations against Moqannaʿ in Keš (*Tāriḵ-nāma*; Gardizi, p. 281; Ebn al-Aṯir, VI, p. 51). At some point the supreme command of the war was handed to Saʿid al-Ḥaraši, with whom Moʿāḏ is said to have had a disagreement, and in 163/780 Moʿāḏ was replaced as governor by al-Mosayyab b. Zohayr al-Żabbi. It was in the latter's governorship, which lasted until 166/783, that Moqannaʿ was defeated.

Moqannaʿ's stronghold was a double fortress in a famously inaccessible site. There was cultivated land within the walls of the outer fortress, and Moqannaʿ is said to have prepared for the siege by stocking up food (Ṭabari, III, p. 484); but Saʿid al-Ḥaraši stayed at the fortress "summer and winter" (*Tāriḵ-e Boḵārā*, pp. 72/101=74) and kept the siege going for long enough to reduce the inhabitants of the fortress to starvation, so that his commanders surrendered in return for safe-conduct (Gardizi, p. 282; Ebn al-Aṯir, VI, p. 51; *Tāriḵ-nāma*, paras. 19-20). Moqannaʿ committed suicide when the outer fortress fell. He is widely said to have burnt himself, allegedly by throwing himself into a hearth, and to have disappeared without a trace (e.g., Abu'l-Maʿāli;*Tāriḵ-e Boḵārā*; Esfarāʾeni). Since he was also said to have killed all his wives and retainers first, so that nobody could know what had happened, a story was told of a woman who had feigned death and watched him kill everybody, including himself, as the only witness to the events. In most versions (cf. *Tāriḵ-nāma*, paras. 19, 22 and commentary) she opens the gate as well. (The story of this woman, found in most Persian sources, never seems to have reached the Arabic-speaking world.) Moqannaʿ's disappearance without a trace was meant to prove his claim to divinity (Biruni, *Āṯār*, p. 211); his followers took him to have been raised to heaven, as other sources say. His enemies duly denied that he had disappeared, insisting that his body had been found and his head cut off and sent to al-Mahdi.

Moqannaʿ's death is usually placed in 163/780, which tallies with the date

given for the journey to the Byzantine border and Jerusalem on which al-Mahdi is said to have received the news (e.g., Ṭabari, III, pp. 494, 498-99). In the *Tāriḵ-e Boḵārā* (pp. 64/90 = 65), however, the date is 167/783-84, which reappears as 169/785 in al-Biruni (*Āṯār*, p. 211) – thanks to the confusion of "sabʿa" and "tesʿa" in writing again. Since Moqannaʿ is said to have been defeated in the governorship of al-Mosayyab b. Zohayr, 169 is impossible. The corrupt date must have taken on a life of its own, however, for in Gardizi (p. 155) al-Mahdi dies after receiving the news, implying that it happened in 169. Sallāmi (quoted in Nasafi, no. 287 s.v. "Saʿid al-Ḥaraši") places the victory in 166/782. The same year, or the very beginning of 167, is also implied by Gardizi (pp. 282-83), and 166 appears in Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi (p. 299) as well. Since it was in 166 that the Boḵārḵodā, who had sympathized with the rebels, was assassinated by the caliph (*Tāriḵ-e Boḵārā*, pp. 9/14-15 = 10-11), Ṣadiqi (p. 179, Fr.; pp. 223-24, Pers.) places the end of the revolt in 166. This would indeed seem the best date if a good explanation could be found for the association of the victory and al-Mahdi's journey to the Byzantine border, or, alternatively, if the caliph's journey could be redated (cf. Yaʿqubi, *Taʾriḵ*, II, p. 480). As things stand, no verdict seems to be possible.

Message. All accounts of Moqannaʿ's message appear to go back to a certain Ebrāhim b. Moḥammad, known to Ebn al-Nadim (p. 408) as "learned about the *Moslemiya*" and quoted (without patronymic) as an authority on Moqannaʿ in the *Tāriḵ-e Boḵārā*. According to the earliest version, found in the Ismaʿili (see ISMAʿILISM) heresiography by Abu Tammām (pp. 76-79, Ar., and 74-77, Eng.), Moqannaʿ's followers held that the divine spirit would every now and again enter the body of a man whom God wished to act as His messenger; the messenger was charged with informing other human beings how God wished them to behave. His spirit had entered Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammad and Abu Moslem Ḵorāsāni, returning to His throne in between each incarnation, and it had also been incarnate Moqannaʿ, who was the Mahdi and thus by implication the last of them, though his followers had come to await another incarnation by the time this was recorded. This was a doctrine of periodic *ḥolul*, manifestation of God in man, not of metempsychosis, though it is often called *tanāsoḵ*. Abu Moslem's appearance in the scheme is probably a mistake. Moqannaʿ certainly cast himself as an avenger of Abu Moslem, and perhaps of Yaḥyā b. Zayd as well; and he may well have deified Abu Moslem as a prophet or king, as he held God's spirit to have been incarnate in both (Ṯaʿālebi, p. 37). But it is hard to see the point of two messengers in immediate succession, and the sectarians explicitly said

that there were long intervals between them; moreover, as the last Moqannaʿ was undoubtedly meant to be the seventh.

God was held to manifest Himself in human beings because He was not otherwise accessible to them (Esfarāʾeni), but even his human manifestation was more than humans could bear: it was to shield his followers from his divine radiance that Moqannaʿ wore a veil (explained by his enemies as designed to hide his ugliness). His veil was of green silk (Biruni, *Āṯār*, p. 211) or golden (Gardizi, p. 278 l.5) and clearly meant to recall the garments of green silk and heavy brocade that the believers will wear in Paradise (Q. 18:31; cf. the explicit explanation of the green silken shirt that Behāfariḏ brought back from heaven as the clothing of Paradise in al-Ṯaʿālebi cited in Houtsma, pp. 33 (Ar.) and 34 (Ger.)). Abu'l-Maʿāli and Esfarāʾeni connect Moqannaʿ's veil with the story of Moses as told in the Quran, but the parallels are strained because the Quran does not mention the veil that Moses was said to have worn when he descended from Sinai to hide the radiance that his face had acquired when he spoke with God (Bible, Exod. 34:29-35). If the Mosaic parallel was adduced by Moqannaʿ himself or his followers, they would seem to have read the Quran in the light of Jewish or Christian traditions.

It is hard to avoid the impression that Buddhist (see BUDDHISM) beliefs are lurking in the background too. The Buddhists operated with the idea of a plurality of Buddhas, all of whom preached the same message and one of whom, Maitreya, was a savior still to come: he would appear at a time when things had gone from bad to worse to inaugurate a period on bliss on earth. Maitreya was extremely popular in Central Asia, not just among Buddhists, but also among Manicheans (see MANICHEISM), who identified him with Jesus-the Splendor (see CHRISTIANITY v. Christ in Manicheism) as well as Mani himself. At Bāmiān and elsewhere Maitreya is depicted with features borrowed from depictions of Sasanian kings, and he was envisaged as enormously big and glittering (Abegg, pp. 15, 24; Scott, pp. 51-52, 61).

That Maitreya played a role in Moqannaʿ's conception of himself is suggested by the claim that he burnt himself (full discussion in Crone, 2012, p. 133). Of Maitreya we are told that he would enter Parinirvana with fire emanating from his body when his mission was over: he would disappear in flames as a cone of fire, surrounded by pupils, and be extinguished as a flame for lack of fuel (Abegg, pp. 15, 25). This was how Moqannaʿ disappeared, except that his enemies insisted that nobody was present when he died and/or that his body had in fact been found. Further, Moqannaʿ's miracles included a famous

moon, which he is said to have produced by means of quicksilver in a well. This does not have any Islamic, Christian, or Jewish meaning, but Mahāyana Buddhists commonly illustrated the doctrine of *śunyatā* (Sk. "emptiness", i.e., to the effect that all things are non-existent) by comparing the Buddha's career to something seen in a dream or a mirage, and the Khotanese *Book of Zambasta* further compares it to "a moon reflected in water" (6:52). This suggests that Moqannaʿ's moon was meant to evoke the dependent nature of the phenomenal world and/or his Buddha status, and that its unreal nature was an intrinsic part of the message.

All in all, Moqannaʿ seems to have cast himself as a divine being who had come to wreak vengeance on the tyrants who had killed local heroes such as Abu Moslem and Yaḥyā b. Zayd and who would inaugurate a final era of paradisical bliss on earth for a Sogdian community of believers familiar with concepts from a variety of religious traditions. If he was indeed playing the Maitreya Buddha, the Turkish Ḵāqān with whom he was allied presumably cast himself as the righteous king who would welcome Maitreya (Ch'en, p. 428).

On one occasion, we are told, Moqannaʿ removed his veil (*Tārīḵ-e Boḵārā*, pp. 72/101-102 = 75; Abu'l-Maʿāli, pp. 59-60). This was a great messianic event, a theophany which abolished all restraints in the relations between his followers and members of other religious communities: "The lives, possessions, and children of anyone who does not join me are lawful to you," as the *Tārīḵ-e Boḵārā* presents him as declaring on this occasion. The free hand that he allowed his followers in their dealing with their enemies was misunderstood as a doctrine of free use of women and property among the followers themselves, and it was on this basis that al-Biruni (*Āṯār*, p. 211) held Moqannaʿ to have prescribed everything that Mazdak had laid down. There is no trace of Mazdakism in anything Moqannaʿ is on record as having said.

Sogdiana had not formed part of the Sasanian empire (see SASANIAN DYNASTY), and there is no suggestion of Sasanian restorationism in anything remembered about Moqannaʿ either. He is not credited with plans to bring down the caliphate. But he clearly wanted to eliminate Islam as a political force in Sogdiana, and he probably branded all Muslims who wished to remain under caliphal rule as "Arabs," singling out the Arab invaders of Sogdiana as the source of his troubles. The *Tārīḵ-e Boḵārā* (p. 65/92 = 67) stresses the Arab identity of some victims of the revolt. It also tells us that Moqannaʿ's own father-in-law was an Arab from Marv who worked as a

missionary (Ar. *dāʿi*) for him, clearly because it was shocking. A story in the *Tārik̲-nāma* (para. 23 and commentary) depicts Saʿid al-Ḥaraši as capturing this man, here cast as a descendant of a Qoraši ally of Moʿāwiya (d. 64/683), and spitting him in his face, telling him that he was an even worse traitor to Islam than his ancestor.

Followers. Moqannaʿ's Arab father-in-law notwithstanding, Moqannaʿ's followers were mostly Sogdians. Judging from their names, some of them were ex-Muslims like himself, that is to say, men who, disappointed with their experience as members of the Muslim community, hoped to create a Sogdian polity of their own based on a nativized creed, which they may well have regarded as true Islam: thus ʿOmar Subak̲i, Ḥakim-e Aḥmad (also known as Ḥakim-e Bok̲āri), and perhaps also K̲āreja. Most bear non-Muslim names, however: Bāḡi, *Krdk*, *Qyrm/Qtwm*, Ḥjmy, Ḥjdān, Kwšwy, and Srjma. In social terms they were mostly villagers. In the *Tārik̲-nāma* both they and their opponents include *dehqān*s, in the apparent sense of village headmen. If the village headman sided with Moqannaʿ, the entire village would presumably do so, willingly or unwillingly. One passage in the *Tārik̲-e Bok̲ārā* (pp. 66-67/94 = 68) identifies a clutch of rebel leaders at Bukhara as strongmen/brigands (sing. *ʿayyār*) fighters (sing. *mobārez*), pickpockets (sing. *ṭarrār*) and runners (sing. *davanda*), clearly in a disparaging vein, but the rebels may well have included such men. The Bok̲ār K̲odā, whose dynasty had been reduced to puppet status by the Muslims, was said to also to have sympathized with the movement, and the same may have been true of his counterpart at Samarqand, the *ik̲šid* and nominal king of Sogdiana (Yaʿqubi, 1883, II, p. 479), where he submits to al-Mahdi, implying that he had rebelled), but there is no mention of the ruler or rulers of Keš and Nasaf.

In so far as the rebels were not Sogdians, they were Turks. The Turkish leader who conquered Samarqand for Moqannaʿ is identified as the K̲āqān, king of Sogdiana. The *Tārik̲-nāma* later mentions a Turkish chief, probably the same man, by the name of *K̲lk̲/K̲lj* K̲āqān, who had a dispute with an ally called K̲ayyāk/K̲ayyāl Ḡuri, while the *Tārik̲-e Bok̲ārā* mentions one Kulār Tekin. The identity of these Turks is problematic. Sallāmi (as cited by Ebn al-Aṯir, VI, 39; Gardizi, p. 279) merely identifies them as infidel Turks. In connection with the Saljuqs, however, Ebn al-Aṯir (XI, p. 178, year 548) cites an earlier historian of Khorasan according to whom they were Ghuzz (Ḡozz) who had crossed into Transoxania in the reign of al-Mahdi and converted to Islam: when things went badly for Moqannaʿ they betrayed him, as was their wont. This is meant

to illustrate the unreliability of the Ghuzz who had flooded the Muslim world by then, and Moqannaʿ's Turks may simply be cast as Ghuzz for that purpose. *Ḵlj* Ḵāqān suggests a chief of the Khalaj Turks of southeastern Iran. Al-Baḡdādi (pp. 243-44) says that Moqannaʿ's Turks were *al-atrāk al-ḵalajiya*. If Ḡuri is an Arabic *nesba*, Ḵalaj Ḵāqān's companion Kayyāk could be a Khalaj from Ḡur. This would fit the information that Moqannaʿ came from Balkh in that he could have established connections with the Khalaj there. But the imperial title of *ḵāqān* is not attested for the Khalaj, and the *Tāriḵ-e Boḵārā* (p. 66/93 = 68) followed by Abu'l-Maʿāli (p. 59) says that the Turks came from Turkestan. This suggests that the chief's name should be read as Ḵalloḵ Ḵāqān, and Baḡdādi's *ḵalajiya* as *ḵollaḵiya*: Ḵalloḵ is the Persian transcription of Qarloq. The Qarloq were the dominant Turkish power in Central Asia after the collapse of the western khaqanate. The imperial title of *ḵāqān* is a problem again, however, for the Qarloq had not adopted it yet. Their chief appears as *yabḡu* in the list of rulers who submitted to al-Mahdi (Yaʿqubi, *Taʾriḵ*, II, p. 479). One would have expected Moqannaʿ's allies to be or include former Turgesh (Türgeš, Torgeš). It was a chief of this confederation who had borne the title of *ḵāqān*, who had been overlord of Sogdiana before the arrival of the Muslims, and who had been forced to submit to the Qarloq in 766. If the Ḵāqān who conquered Samarqand was a Qarloq from Turkestan, he could have acted as leader of the Qarloq splinter groups in Transoxania and laid claim to the Turgesh heritage, including the imperial title, in an attempt to assert his position against the Muslims and the *yabḡu* of main body of Qarloq alike. This would have secured him the support of former Turgesh in the region, whatever name they were known by now. Kayyāk Ḡuri could perhaps be a chief from the Balkh region, or, alternatively reading Ḡuzi, a leader of outriding bands of Ghuzz in Transoxania. We know that there had been support among the Turks of Transoxania for Esḥāq, the soldier who had preached a message related to Moqannaʿ's after Abu Moslem's death; and we later hear of the Sapid-jāmagān in Ilāq, Šāš, Ḵojand, Farḡāna, and Kāsān (Neẓām-al-Molk, chap. 46.22; Šahrastāni, I, p. 194). Al-Baḡdādi (p. 243) credits their presence in Ilaq to Moqannaʿ. They are more likely to predate him, for Buddhists adherents of the Maitreya Buddha were known to the Chinese as "the whiteclothed ones" (Seiwert and Ma, pp. 151-55; full discussion in Crone, 2012, chap. 6). As devotees of Maitreya or a comparable redeemer feature identified with him, they would have been receptive to Moqannaʿ's message, however. That Moqannaʿ's Ḵāqān came from this region is supported by the mention, in some manuscripts of the *Tāriḵ-nāma*, of the title "King of the Turks and Farḡāna" (see Crone and Jafari, para. 1.5n; compare Moqannaʿ as the

Ḵāqān in 2.1 and the confusion over who bore the title King of Sogdiana in 1.5n, 2.2, 3.1n, 4.1). If Moqannaʿ's Turks were mainly Transoxanian Qarloqs and former Turgesh claiming the position once held by the Turgesh, it will not just have been for the plunder, but also for his messianic message that they, or some of them, joined him.

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