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Babak, Mazyar, Afshin

Dear Iranian friends

I have tried here to give a summary of the events and not get into details. The events surrounding these three men are very interesting. When it comes to Afshin, I don't know, but it gives me a mixed feeling reading him, it seems that we haven't been told the whole truth about him. Nevertheless his acts (according to what we have today) do not put him in the same category as Babak and Mazyar. These three men entered the history together and left it together with the difference of a few years. Babak Khorramdin **بابک خرم‌دین** was born in Khorram, a village near Ardebil. He started a movement in Azarbaijan with the name "Khorram dinian", which their ideology was based on Mazdak and his thinking. His followers used to wear red shirts that's why they were called "soorkh jAmegAn" or "khoram diniyan". In year 210 Arab, Babak started the uprising against Arab caliphs and during the next 20 years he defeated many great Arab commanders sent by Maemon **مامون** and Moetasam **معتصم** the Abbassi caliphs. During Moetasam's rule, the caliph got tired of Babak's successes and sent Abu Said to rebuild the roads and fortresses to prevent Babak from getting more power. That helped, because Babak's tactic was to attack each Arab army before they got settled down. By building the roads and fortresses they had more protection this time and Babak in those first attacks lost a lot of soldiers.

At this time Afshin was living in court of caliph as one of his army commanders. His plan was to take over the northern part of Iran (Azarbaijan, Tabaristan, Gilan and Khorasan) and then get rid of Arab invaders. He wanted to accomplish this task with the help of Babak and Mazyar.

Mazyar was son of Gharen [قارن](#) , son of Vandad Hourmoz [ونداد هرمز](#) . Mazyar came to power year 201 during caliph Maemon. His goal was to free Iran from Arab invaders and renovate the white faith(as to opposite to black faith, Islam. This is the terms used by scholars and historian). He had direct contact with Babak from the day he came to power. Mazyar have had build a wall from Gilan to Gorgan. On that wall were many passages (Band) in certain places that people could pass through.

So, Afshin was working from inside and Babak and Mazyar from outside, they also had some communication with Rome to put more pressure on Arabs. Afshin was in constant contact with Babak and Mazyar, it seems that the person who was taking care of his correspondence with the other two, was also reporting it to Moetasam. We dont know if Moetasam knew about their correspondence(at that time), nevertheless he sent Afshin with a large army to bring in Babak. According to Tabari, Afshin did not seem to be keen to arrest Babak and was just wasting time, from what I read about the details of Babak and Afshin's battles, I have to agree, because they were going around each other a lot, Babak knew always about Afshin's plan and so on.

Any way, Babak was invited by Sahl Sambat [سهل سنباط](#) to his fortress and there he cheated Babak and arrested him and turn him over to Afshin. Babak's brother was also taken in the same way in another fortress while he was trying to gather soliders. In the year 223 Afshin took Babak and his brother to Samaria(SAmereh) to Moetasam. MoetAsam ordered to cut his hands and feet one by one and then cut his head of and let his body to be hanged outside of the city for people to watch. They say, when they cut of Babak's first hand, he put some blood with his other hand on his face. When they asked why he did that, he replayed:

I dont want people to mistake my pale face as a sign of cowardice.

At that time the ruler of Khorasan was a man by the name of Abdullah-Ibn-Taher, he was not happy with the treatment moslems were getting in Mazyar's territory, on the other hand Afshin was planing to take Taher's position as ruler of Khorasan, so Afshin wrote to Mazyar and encouraged him to stop paying the taxes. The deal was that Mazyar should send the taxes to Taher in Khorasan but he have had refused to do that for sometimes and sent the taxes directly to Samaria to Moetasam and Moetasam then sent them to Taher. Now, Mazyar stopped sending the taxes all together and with what had happened to Babak he prepared for war.

Moetasam wrote to Taher and told him to move with his army to Tabarestan and arrest Mazyar. Afshin also informed Mazyar of this event and hoped himself that if Mazyar could defeat Taher or at least discredit Taher, Moetasam would send him(Afshin) to Tabarestan with troops, money or maybe a new position as the ruler of Khorasan.

The end of Mazyar is full of betrayal and deception. Moetasam sent three different army from three different direction to surround Mazyar, one army sent to Shervin mountain, one to Damavands mountains and one to Roodbar and Rooyan and Taher's army from Gorgan (look at the map).

Mazyar had also placed a part of his army under command of Sarkhastan in TamiShe(near Gorgan). Sarkhastan repaired the remaining wall (from Sassanid time) which went into the sea and added a long ditch to it. It happened that some soliders on one part of the wall opened the doors for the Taher's soldiers and thats was the end of Sarkhestan and his army. The last betrayal came from Mazyar's own brother (Kohyar) who convinced him that, he(Kohyar) can take him to Hassan one of the Taher's commander and then he could help him to save his life. Kohyar was

killed shortly after by Mazyar's Daylami friends for this betrayal.

Mazyar was taken to Samaria and suffered the same death (year 225) as Babak did. Afshin was also arrested at the same time of Mazyar's arrival for his secret connection with Babak and Mazyar and died in jail in year 226.

And then for the first time Arabs directly controlled Tabarestan and Gilan.

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