

ABU MUSLIM

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Elton Daniel devotes an entire chapter to Abu Muslim and the Abbasid Counter Revolution, which is hard to summarize here, but the interested reader may find it very informative as well as objective.¹ Only what we have not already observed about him is noted here. Abu Muslim's origins are so shrouded in mystery that even Daniel cannot fathom and come to any firm conclusion about it. Some accounts claim he was born of a slave girl and was a slave or a menial servant. "The most coherent account of Abu Muslim as a freeman states that 'he was descended from Buzurgmihr, the well known Sasanian minister.'" Daniel adds: "An interesting variant of this tradition holds that Abu Muslim was descended from Budarz; this involves a neat irony since Gudarz was the semi-legendary hero who, (like Abu Muslim) carried the black banners of the Iranians into combat with the Turanian army and who again like Abu Muslim never laughed except in battle." (p. 102). Among the various tributes to Abu Muslim David quotes the Caliph al-Mamun as saying: "The greatest princes of the earth were three in number: I mean Alexander, Ardashir, and Abu Muslim" and even backs it up with ample historical evidence. (p. 106). Even though Abu Muslim's real intentions are not clear, it seems with his perfidious murder if there was any chance of overthrowing the Arab rule faded forever even as his death led to a counter-revolution and seriously undermined the Abbasid rule.

¹ Elton L. Daniel, "The Political and Social History of Khurasan under Abbasid Rule 747-820" in *Bibliotheca Islamica*, Minneapolis and Chicago, 1979.