APOCALYPSE NOW: ZOROASTRIAN REFLECTIONS ON THE EARLY ISLAMIC CENTURIES

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Although Middle Persian apocalyptic texts were redacted during the Muslim era, they have rarely been used as historical sources for the early Islamic period. While the texts do not give detailed chronological information, they do present the Zoroastrian community's reflection on the conquest and the sectarian and political developments of that era. Further they present information that cannot be ascertained from other sources regarding the view of the native population of the plateau, especially the Zoroastrians. This is important, since there seems to have been a large number of Zoroastrians until the ninth and tenth centuries and it was only then that there appears to have been a high rate of conversion.¹

What the apocalyptic texts predict is simply an internalization and the framing of current events, written by the author followed by an end of time scenario. When looking at the texts, at once it becomes clear that we are not dealing with apocalyptic stories but with contemporary political events embedded in this genre of semi-literary historical works. Apocalyptic literature appears in situations of hardship and fear. This type of situation could emerge when the social organization, including access to central power is cut off and the group is jeopardized, especially when the cultural pattern of a society is at risk or in danger from an external force.² This holds true for the Zoroastrians when we would think of the Arab Muslim conquest, the Abbāsi revolution, sectarian revolts, and provincial uprisings as recorded in these texts. What needs to be done is to identify these events within the texts, which would provide clues as to the view of the Zoroastrians regarding these events and their importance for that community. To demonstrate the usefulness of these texts, here it is intended to study three historical episodes reflected in Middle Persian apocalyptic literature. The first, reflecting


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on the conquest of Iran in the seventh century and social and religious interaction between the conquerors and the conquered; secondly the reaction of the Zoroastrian community to the Abbāsi revolution and the downfall of the Marwānis; and the thirdly, a sectarian revolt, namely that of the Khorrāmiyyā which made a great impression on the priestly scribes of the Middle Persian texts.

While we can guess as to how the Zoroastrian community would react to the Arab Muslim conquest of the Šāsānian empire, in regard to the Abbāsi revolution and sectarian revolts interesting information is gained. Although it has been the norm to see the Abbāsi revolution and sectarian movements of the eastern caliphate, such as that of Bābak Khorrām-dēn in the early Islamic period as “national” uprisings against the Arab Muslim invaders, and the assertion of Iranian dynasties, the Middle Persian texts testify to the contrary. The Zoroastrian “orthodoxy” for its part, detested such sectarian movements as Bābak Khorrām-dēn and the Surkh-Jāmagan (Muḥammad). The reason for this is simple, and that is that they were not “orthodox” Zoroastrians, and thus by their very nature would contribute to ag-dēn (evil religiosity) and ahlām-o (heresy) and in no possible way could they be beneficial to the religion and community solidarity. Zoroastrian communal identity had already been formed under the Šāsānians, and had been solidified in reaction to the Arab Muslim conquest. The redaction of most of the Middle Persian texts in the early Islamic period further solidified the teachings of the Zoroastrian religion for the community and the dwindling number of priests. What is important is that there are a good number of apocalyptic texts written in Middle Persian, and while the time predicted for the end of the world never arrived, the priests kept on copying them and some even translated them into New Persian until recent times.

The parameters of information provided by apocalyptic texts have been enumerated by Paul J. Alexander. As he has noted, these sources can elaborate or corroborate historical facts; they can reveal information regarding the reaction of groups to historical events, their judgments on the course of history, and finally their hopes and fears for the future. The appearance of this genre of literature in the early Islamic period also reveals what Alexander calls “eschatological pressures.” This is interesting in itself since it not only expresses the reaction of the Zoroastrians to historical events, but it also coincides with Muslim and other religious communities’ apocalyptic expectations.

3 By orthodoxy here is meant the religion espoused by the redactors of the ninth and tenth century Middle Persian texts.
5 Alexander, ibid., 998.
6 Alexander, ibid., 1002.
in this period. This may hint that the eighth and the ninth centuries were a period of extreme eschatological pressure.

The basic structure of Zoroastrian apocalypticism in Middle Persian texts is that before the world becomes renovated, (Middle Persian) fraša, for a time the world would go through certain hardships and disasters. While there has been much discussion regarding the authenticity of Zoroastrian apocalypticism, the question that concerns us here is how these texts describe historical events, especially the early Islamic centuries. The texts present the future apocalyptic scenario by having Zoroaster, the prophet ask questions and Ohrmazd, God, give the answers. This method of dialogue, which has its precedents in the Avesta, gave more authority to these texts since it is the word of God that passed to the prophet. The Lord, Ohrmazd, recounts the eras of justice and hardships within the framework of Sasanian history and historiography. This means that history begins as enumerated in the sacred text, the Avesta, where it begins with the Sasanian's ancestors, the Pēšdādānš and Kēyānīān, the Iranian dynasties par excellence. Then the focus shifts to the Sasanians, and then the Arab Muslim invasion and sectarian movements which is the ultimate era of disorder which brings about the end of world. This last epoch, the period of disorder, begins with the Arab Muslim conquest of the Iranian plateau. In the Jāmāsp Nāmag, king Wištasp, the Kēyānī sovereign asks his minister Jāmāsp to predict the future of Erān-šahr (the domain of the Iranians) and the answer is:

Erān-šahr ē tāzīgān abespārēnd ud tāzīgān
har rōz nērōgtar bawēnd ud šahr šahr frāz ġirand
Iran will come to the Muslims and the Muslims will grow stronger daily
and will seize (Iran) city by city. 11

This episode presents the Arab Muslim encroachment onto the plateau, from province to province. We know that by the end of the Sasanian dynasty, because of the reforms of Kawd I and his son, Xusro I, the Dehgāns and local governors had much power and that it was they who were the ones

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who made treaties with the Muslim conquerors and capitulated to pay (Middle Persian) *gazzdag* > (Arabic) *jizya* "poll-tax" in return for safety. Another passage in the *Jāmūs Nāmag* illuminates this fact:

\[
\text{pad abēdādīh ēn Ėrān-sahr ō dahibedān bār ē garān rasēd}
\]

because of lawlessness, this Iran will come as a heavy burden to the governors of the provinces.\(^{12}\)

Of course, there is nothing new in these texts as regards the conquest, but they do corroborate assumptions about the early Islamic conquests. What is more interesting is that the texts hint at the settlement and co-existence of the invaders which seems to have been a greater travesty in the opinion of the priestly writers. The same text describes the Arab Muslim settlement in the Iranian plateau in this manner (*Jāmūs Nāmag* 12-13):

\[
\text{ud hamāg Ėrān-sahr ō dāst ē awēšān dušmenān}
\text{rasēd ud anērān ud Ėrān gumezhīhēnd ẓōn kū ērīh}
\text{az anērēh paydāq nē bawēd ān ī ēr ābaž anērēh ēstēnd}
\]

and all of Iran will fall to the hands of those enemies, and non-Iranians and Iranians will be confounded in such a way that Iranianness will not be distinguishable from non-Iranianess, (and) those who are Iranians will turn back on non-Iranian ways.\(^{13}\)

This is not unusual when considering how the conquered viewed the conquerors, and the text simply describes the taking of provinces one after another and the local governors having a difficult time controlling their provinces, and then the eventual settlement of the Arab Muslims which led to co-existence.\(^{14}\) In another Middle Persian text, the *Bundahīn*, the account is more historical (Chapter XXXIII 20-22):

\[
\text{ud ka xwādāyīh ṭ Yazdgrīd mad 20 sāl xwādāyīh kard ādān}
\text{tāziğān pad was maraghīh ō Ėrān dwāristhēnd Yazdgrīd pad}
\text{kārēzār abāḡ əyšān nē šuktān ō Xwārāsān ud Turkestan ūd}
\text{asp ud mard ayārīh xwāst ušān ānōh əzād pas i Yazdgrīd ō}
\text{Hindūgān ūd spāh əvurdān ud pēš az āmadān ēy}
\text{Xwārāsān əzād ud ān spāh ud gund wīšīft Ėrān-sahr pad}
\text{tāziğān mānd ušān ān i xwēs dād ag-dēnīh rawāγēnēd was}
\text{ēwēn i pēšēnāgān wīšōbēnēd ud Dēn ū Mazdesnān nizārēnēd ud}
\text{nīsā əyšīshīh nīsā nīgānīh nīsā xwarīshīh pad kard nīhād ud az}
\text{bundahīsh gāhān tā ēm rōz nāyjīh az ēn garāntar nē mad ē}
\]

\(^{12}\) Bailey, 56; Messina, 66.

\(^{13}\) Bailey, 56; Messina, 67; Olson, *op. cit.*, 34.

and when the rulership came to Yazdgerd (III), he ruled for 20 years, then the Arabs rushed with many numbers to Iran, Yazdgerd (III) was not able to battle them, and before arriving, he was killed in Xwarasān and Turkestan and asked for horses and men for assistance, he was killed there. The son of Yazdgerd went to India and brought an army (and) troops, and before arriving, he was killed in Xwarasān and that army and troops were destroyed, Iran was left to the Arabs and they have made that law of evil religion current, many customs of the ancients they destroyed and the religion of the Mazda-worshipping religion was made feeble and they established the washing of the dead, burying the dead, and eating the dead. And from the primal creation of the material world till today, a heavier harm has not come, because of their evil behavior, misery and ruin and doing violence and evil law, evil religion, danger and misery and other harm has become accepted.15

This passage clearly demonstrates the socio-religious implications of the conquest, where the natives see the Arabs bringing an evil religion, followed by the process of conversion. One could also note the choice of verbs used in this context. When describing the Arab Muslim invasion, the verb commonly used is "dwarist," meaning to "rush," which usually is reserved for demonic creatures in the Zoroastrian tradition. This is done since they are perceived to be from the lineage of Xèm (the demon of wrath). This epithet is not uniquely given to the Arab Muslims, but also to other non-Zoroastrian personages which will be seen below as well. Thus through this processes the invaders are demonized and fitted within the Zoroastrian world view. In the scheme of apocalyptic vision, according to the Zand i Wahman Yasn, the next calamity is described as having been brought by people who have black clothing. This is in reference to the uprising of the Siyāh Jāmagān, the army of Abu Muslim Khurāsān:

\[
\text{êk-sad ëwênaq ùd hazâr ëwênaq ùd bëwâr ëwênaq dëwân ù wizärd-wars ù xèm-töhmag az kustag ù Xwarasàn ân ù nidom-töhmag ù Erân-shahr dwärênd ul-grît drañš hênd syâ zën bañêñ ùd wars wizärd ù puñt dârıênd ùd xwurdag ùd nidom-bunîg nêrı-g-kâr-zaniñ pêşyâr-wiñ hênd}
\]

one hundred kinds one thousand kinds and innumerable kinds of demons with disheveled hair, from the lineage of Xèm (wrath) from the district of Khurāsān, those of low lineage will rush to Iran, they will have raised banners, will wear black armor and have hair parted on their back and will be mean and low in origin and of mighty blows and piss venom.16

15 The translation is based on the three Bundahish manuscripts, DH, TD1, and TD2, otherwise see, B.T. Anklesaria, Zand-Atash, Iranian or Greater Bundahish, (Bombay, 1956), 277-279; M. Bahâr, Bundahisch, Tus Publishers, (Tehran, 1969), 141.
16 The translation is based on the two Zand i Wahman Yasn manuscripts. DH, and TD2,
The color black clearly has been identified with the Abbāsī movement and propaganda and other messianic movements, although the text can be referring to several other episodes. After the death of Zayd b. 'Ali and his son in 743, the Shi‘a of Khurāsān wore black garments, and also Khīdās, who was the Abbāsī emissary, who later was accused of following the ideas of Khorram-dēns. More importantly, however, the black banners have been identified with the Abbāsī cause. Abū Muslim in 746-747 received from the imam the standard, lewā-ye zāl, and banner, riya-yat-e seḥāb, and propagated the ‘Abbāsī da‘wa, and his followers wore black garments. The Middle Persian apocalyptic texts appear to refer to the coming of Abū Muslim Khurāsānī and the rise of the Abbāsī revolution when discussing the people with black banners appearing from the east. What is interesting is the way the Zoroastrians view the rise of this Muslim folk-hero who became a legend and about whom stories were composed. In these texts, Abū Muslim’s campaign is seen as a travesty, which is contrary to some notions that the non-Arab inhabitants of the plateau were pleased to see a balanced rule by the Muslim caliphate based on the equality of Arabs and non-Arabs. Contrary to the Muslim apocalyptic accounts of this event, the Mahdī neither came, nor did it have a positive consequence. For the Muslims, the Mahdī would appear after the coming of the people who wore black (Ibn Khaldūn: Vol. II, p. 184):

The black banners shall come from the east and kill you as men have never been killed before, then Allāh’s caliph, the mahdī, shall come; when you see him you shall do homage to him even if you shall have to creep on the snow.

What is also noteworthy is the class and race consciousness of the Zoroastrian writers, i.e., calling Abū Muslim of "low origin." Not only is he thought of otherwise see, B.T. Anklesaria, Zend-i Vahman Yasn and Two Pahlavi Fragments, (Bombay, 1957), 17-18; and the best and latest translation, Carlo G. Cereti, The Zend i Wahman Yasn, A Zoroastrian Apocalyptic, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, (Rome, 1995) chapter 4.2, 139.

“low origin” but also *bun ne paydag,* of “unknown origin.”\(^{23}\) This, of course does not help us as to the origin of this famous personage, but only indicates that the Zoroastrian writers did not care about his origin and only that he was detrimental for their community. In the Middle Persian apocalyptic texts, the Khurāsānī army is accused of burning down and destroying properties and cities and fire temples of the Zoroastrian community. The *Jāmāsp Namag* describes the events thus:

\[\text{pas āxēzd andar Xwarašan zamīg xwurday ud abaydag mard-e abāg was mardom asp sar ā nēzag ā tēz ud šahr pad ērūngī ō pādxāyīh ā xweš kard bawēd xwad miyān ā pādxāyīh awēm ud abaydag bawēd pādxāyīh hamāg az Īrānagān šawēd ō an-ērān rasēd}\]

Then will rise in the land of Khurāsān a lowly and obscure man, with many men and horse(s) and sharp pointed spears, and he will take over and rule and make the land his own. In the midst of his rule, he will be destroyed and pass out of sight. The whole rule will pass from the Iranians to the non-Iranians.\(^{24}\)

The idea that Abū Muslim may be of Iranian origin is suggested in these texts because it is stated that he will come to *pādxāyīh,* “rule” or “sovereignty,” and that this *pādxāyīh* will then pass on to non-Iranians. We should also take into consideration another possibility in regard to the ethnicity of the supporters of the revolt against the Marwānīa. While it is known that the Abbāṣīs wore black as opposed to the Umayyāids who wore white, this tradition does not precede the Abbāṣī caliphate and may be Abbāṣī propaganda.\(^{25}\) Further, there is little evidence that the Abbāṣīs had black banners themselves. H. Ringgren has voiced another possibility, based on G. Widengren’s suggestion, that the color black represents the Iranian peasantry and that of the Männerbund, or “men’s society,” and the banner was connected to the ideology of the Männerbund. According to Abu Hanifah al-Dinawarī, those who had gathered around Abū Muslim were dressed in black and carrying *kāfrkūbāts,* i.e., “clubs” for slaying the unbelievers which was characteristic of the Iranian society.\(^{26}\) We should take note, however, that while it is true that in the traditional Indo-European society, black represented the color of the peasantry, in Iran the color blue was connected with the peasantry.\(^{27}\)

In the later Persian Zoroastrian texts of the medieval period, Abū Muslim

\(^{23}\) Zand i Wshman Yult, Chapter 4.5-8, 153.


\(^{25}\) H. Ringgren, *op. cit.,* 743-744.

\(^{26}\) H. Ringgren, *op. cit.,* 744.

is also detested and given a demonic lineage. In the *Zarduiš Nāme*, Abū Muslim is given the following characteristics (1346-1347):

bowad pādešāḥi-ye ān dēw kēn ka dēn ī behi rā xanad bar zamin siyah jāme dārād dārwēš u tāng jahān karde az xēş bē nām u nang

It will be rulership of that wrathful demon, who strikes down the good religion; they have black clothing and are poor and weak, they have made the world nameless and low.

What the Middle Persian texts reveal is that we must abandon the idea regarding the connection between Abū Muslim and Zoroastrianism. Although Yūsoff does not subscribe to such a belief, he has stated that this idea has been encouraged by the fact that Abū Muslim crushed Zoroastrian sectarian movements, such as those of Behāfrōd, thus he must have been beneficial for the “orthodox” Zoroastrianism. Whatever we may think of Abū Muslim’s relation with the non-Arab population, what was important for the Zoroastrian community was the non-Zoroastrianess of Abū Muslim and so the dangers that he may pose to that community.

The third apocalyptic episode under discussion has to do with a sectarian or heretical movement, namely that of Bābak Khorrām-dēn and his followers. It has been assumed that “The Khorrāmiyya represented Persian national sentiments looking forward to a restoration of Persian sovereign rule in contrast to the universalist religious tendencies of Manichaeism.” But for the Persian community what Bābak and his movement meant is a different question, since by then religious communal identity had become the main mode of one’s identification. Spuler was correct in stating that while there may have been national and social undercurrents, the indigenous sources are silent about this assumption of the restoration of Persian sovereignty. The Middle Persian apocalyptic sources make clear of the danger of Bābak and take a dim view of the Khorrāmiyya. The ninth century encyclopedic text, the *Bandahāšn* (Chapter XXXIII 23-24) states:

pad dēn gowēd kū dūš-pādāxāyih oyšan sar kārmed būdān grōh-e āyānd suxr nišān suxr drafš ud Fārs rōstāghiā ī Ėrān-šahr tā ē Bābil ġirand oyšan īāzīgān nižār kunānd

In the religion it is said that their evil rule will come to an end. A group will come, with red signs, red banners and will capture from Fārs (and) the districts of Iran to Babylon. They will weaken the Arabs.

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28 Yūsoff, *op. cit.*, 343.
Here we have an army which has been identified as non Arab, i.e., Iranian which will kill the Tazfgan i.e., Muslims.

Even this act was not perceived as contributing to the cause of the Zoroastrian community. It is clear that heresy was deemed dangerous and so it can not be looked upon as anything positive, even though the communities adversaries were being annihilated. But what the apocalyptic Middle Persian texts can tell us is in regard to specific events which can demonstrate the intensity of certain episodes in the medieval period. The Middle Persian apocalyptic text, the Zand i Wahman Yasn, also gives an account of the Khorramiyya, which appears very much the same as the above report of the Bundahišn. This report, however, is actually different from that of the Bundahišn, which has not been noticed before, and as the result of confusion over the substance of the text a disagreement has arisen. In this episode, in the Zand Wahman Yasn the Khorramiyya are grouped with the Byzantines and are considered to be from the lineage of the demon Xēšm (Chapter VI 3-5):


as the Greeks dwelling in Asûrestân (that is the Greeks who are hard to count, its nature of being the residence of the Asûrîg is explained by the fact that Asûrîg men dwell in it) and to their residence (that is there is one who said "The dwelling of the dews").

Gignoux had identified the wearers of the red caps and red banners in this episode as the followers of Bâbâk Khorram-den and their revolt. The problem is that the evidence demonstrates that they wear red caps and hold a red banner, but are moving from the West, i.e., Byzantium. Cereti, in his translation of the Zand i Wahman Yasn did not accept Gignoux’s suggestion, exactly based on this point. He also questioned Gignoux’s assumption based on epithet of kîlsâyîg “Christian,” of these people which he thought did not match with Bâbâk and his followers. Thus Cereti exclaimed that they could not be the Khorramiyya and that the text was describing the Byzantines. The text clearly states that these men were coming from the west, and came up to the Euphrates river. The text uses sarmân dehân, Avestan sairinam dâhyunam, Greek sarânes for their location. In the Iranian tradition, Salm, the eldest son Faraidîn, was given the region of Rome to rule (Pahlavi Texts 25.5):

az frazandân î Frédôn Salm kë kîswar î Hrûm
ud Tûc kë Turkestân pad xwadâyîh dâst Ėrij
Èrân dâhibed bûd u s be ëzâd

From the offspring’s of Frédûn, Salm who (ruled) the land of Rome and Tûc who ruled Turkestân, they killed Ėrij who was the ruler of Iran.

In the Bundahîn there is a gloss which states sarm deh ast hrôm “the country of Sarm is Rome.” The thirteenth century Zoroastrian Persian text, the Zarduft-nîme also confirms the story that these people were known as wearing red and coming from the West (ZN 94.1448):

becângah bêyâyad sepâhî ze rûm bad anûsh u bad fe’l u nâpâk u sûm abû jâmî surx u bû surx zên yekâyêk be kerdar dêw la’în

then an army will come from Rome, with bad thoughts, bad deeds, unclean and sinister, their clothing red and with red armor each one acts like the damned demon.

Gignoux believed that since this group advanced to Mesopotamia and were in the Iranian plateau, they should be identified as the Khorramiyya because this is precisely their geographical limit. Now we can reject this assumption,
since it has been made clear through the Middle Persian and New Persian texts that the direction of the movement of these men was from the West, i.e., Byzantium to the East. This certainly was not the traditional location of the Khorramiyya’s activity. Cereti’s rejection of Gignoux’s identification of these men with the Khorramiyya should also be questioned, since the color red was the color of that group, and the historical texts support this fact. 38

We can find the answer to this puzzle in the Muslim accounts of the ninth century. Al-Ṭabarī tells us that when the Caliph’s forces had put Bābak on the defensive in year 837-838 A.D., Bābak had written a letter to Theophilus, the Byzantine emperor, in which he had instigated the emperor to invade the caliphate, and so the emperor with one hundred thousand men had reached Zibaṭrāh in Syria. Within his army he had a group of muḥammārah who had revolted in the Ḥijāb and then had joined the emperor after Ishaq b. Ibrāhīm b. Muṣ‘ab had fought with them. This is quite possibly the origin of the Zand i Wohman Yasn’s account, since al-Ṭabarī also confirms the fact that there were a large number of Khorramiyya in al-Ḥijāb (Māḥ) who had come together in Hamadān. The Caliph al-Mu’tasim had sent Ishaq b. Ibrāhīm b. Muṣ‘ab, the new governor of al-Ḥijāb in 833-834 to battle them. The Khorramiyya had been defeated and some sixty thousand of them killed, the rest had fled to Byzantium. 40 Masʿūdī in recounting the Byzantine emperors, mentions Theophilus as the forty third emperor and the one who had taken Zibaṭrāh, the famous city and fortress. This historian tells us that it was Afshin, the famous general, who had confronted Theophilus and that the Khorramiyya who were in Theophilus’ entourage had kept him safe from total defeat. He states the number of the muḥammārah were in the thousands. 41

The gloss in the Zand i Wohman Yasn may suggest that the text is referring to this battle in the ninth century. The gloss indicates the importance of that location, hād būd kē Frāt rād gūf “there was one who said, (up to) the river Furāt/Euphrates.” The city of Zibaṭrāh is located at the head of the Euphrates river or known as Furat al-Šam in Syria. 42 The Khorram-dēn’s demonization is no surprise since they were connected with the Mazdakites who did not represent the “high church of orthodox Zoroastrianism” but the Low Church, and were the popular religious tradition. 43 The Byzantine and the Khorramiyya

40 Ibid., The Events of the Year 218, 3.
43 Madelung, op. cit., 2.
invasion of the Caliphate seems to have made such an important impression on the population of the Near East that the news traveled quickly and caused havoc. The Persian version of the *Wahman Yasn* gives the location of the confrontation at the banks of the river Euphrates as well. The battle seems to have been so bloody that it became a well known episode in history: "So many men and animals will be killed that the girths of the horses will be besmeared with the blood of men. The river Euphrates will turn red and the cloud will take up this (red) water and carry it to the sky, and it will rain red hail in the world."\(^4\)

The Zoroastrian priests in Fars inserted this episode in the text, feeling the eminent danger. What seemed apocalyptic in scope was inserted in the texts, and the battle at Zibaṭrah seems to have had apocalyptic proportions. This is confirmed by Muslim attestation of the horror that followed the battle afterwards where by the order of the Byzantine emperor, Muslim men were blinded with hot iron and their ears and noses were cut off.\(^6\) It was reported that the calamity was so great that refugees came as far as Iraq and that the Caliph al-Mu’tasim prepared for battle at once.\(^7\) The news certainly had reached Fars as well, where the Zoroastrian priests took this as the eminent coming of the end. While Gignoux was correct to identify them as the Khorramiyya, he misread their direction. Cereti, while correctly reading the text, came to a wrong conclusion. The Khorramiyya were much more mobile, especially after their defeat at the hands of the caliph and were devastating not only for the caliphate, but also the Zoroastrian community.

This brief review of the Middle Persian apocalyptic texts should encourage the historians of Islamic history to utilize these sources as complementary to those of the Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Syriac, and Greek sources used for insights into the psyche of a beleaguered community which was facing a tide of conversion in the ninth and the tenth centuries and had been devastated by the Arab Muslim conquest, Abū Muslim’s military action, and the Khorrammadens. The importance of these sources are that they present the Zoroastrian view as to how history was unfolding and nearing the end in the medieval period. Because they were written from a communal perspective, they can give answers or help to give answers to the many issues which preoccupy the historians of medieval Islamic history and demonstrate the reaction of other religious communities in the Near East.

\(^5\) Ibid., 479.
\(^6\) al-Ṭabarī, 93.
\(^7\) al-Ṭabarī, 95.
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