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The Iranian Apocalyptic Literature and its Historical Context

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(The Polonsky Academy in the Van Leer Institute of Jerusalem)

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Abstract. The Arab conquest of Iran, in the middle of the seventh century, was for Zoroastrians the beginning of a long period of troubles that pushed the most part of this community into the exile in India. On that moment Zoroastrians probably conceived an apocalyptic literature that was reworked at least until the tenth century according to their social and religious vicissitudes. These accounts swarm with mythical topics as well as with cryptic historical figures which were perfectly identifiable at that time.

The goal of this lecture is to define the nature and the origins of Iranian apocalyptic literature and to show how these historical events and figures can be included into a millenarian literary framework. We will read and comment passages in translation from some of the most important Zoroastrian apocalyptic texts, such as the *Jâmâsp-Nâmag*, the *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* and the chapter 33 of the *Iranian Bundahišn*.