

EXODUS TO SANJAN

Dr. Kersey Antia, Aug 10, 2020

According to R. Frye, the religious uprisings occurred in Khursan while none in Fars or elsewhere in western Persia because Eastern Iran and Central Asia were prone to dissatisfaction and heresy to a much greater extent than western Persia and the eastern Iranians did not have the same religious unity as the state church of Sasanian Persia.

“Gradually the network of fire temples fell to pieces as the number of Zoroastrians declined, but Fars remained predominately Zoroastrian down to the tenth century and with substantial numbers of Zoroastrians even in the time of the Turkish Seljuk conquests in the eleventh century.”

Frye refers to a fascinating account of struggles between Muslims and Zoroastrians with the city of Kazrun during the life of the Sufi al-Kazeruni who died 1034.

“Many Zoroastrians were converted to Islam by him, but none the less the strong position of Zoroastrianism is clear from this book as well as from other Islamic sources. The governor of Kazerun under the Boyid dynasty, which ruled Fars at that time, was a Zoroastrian called Khorshid who held the high esteem of the Boyid ruler in Shiraz, so much so that the Boyid prince ordered Shaykh Kazeruni to appear before him where he was reprimanded for disturbing the peace with his proselytizing activities.”

As I have noted elsewhere, the Boyids were quite sympathetic to the Zoroastrians. While there were Shi'ites and Sufis as well as Sunnites among the Muslims in Fars, the Zoroastrian community seems to have been relatively stable and orthodox. (Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*, Mazda Publishers, 1993, pp. 282-3) which often led to disunity among them. This may explain why there was no exodus to India of Zoroastrians from Fars at the time, whereas for the Kharasanis it was a different matter. But of all places why they finally settled on the west coast of India (and nowhere else in India) is hard to explain except by the fact that they were already so familiar with the area during the course of their trading activities there which by the way must have enabled them to be prosperous and resourceful.