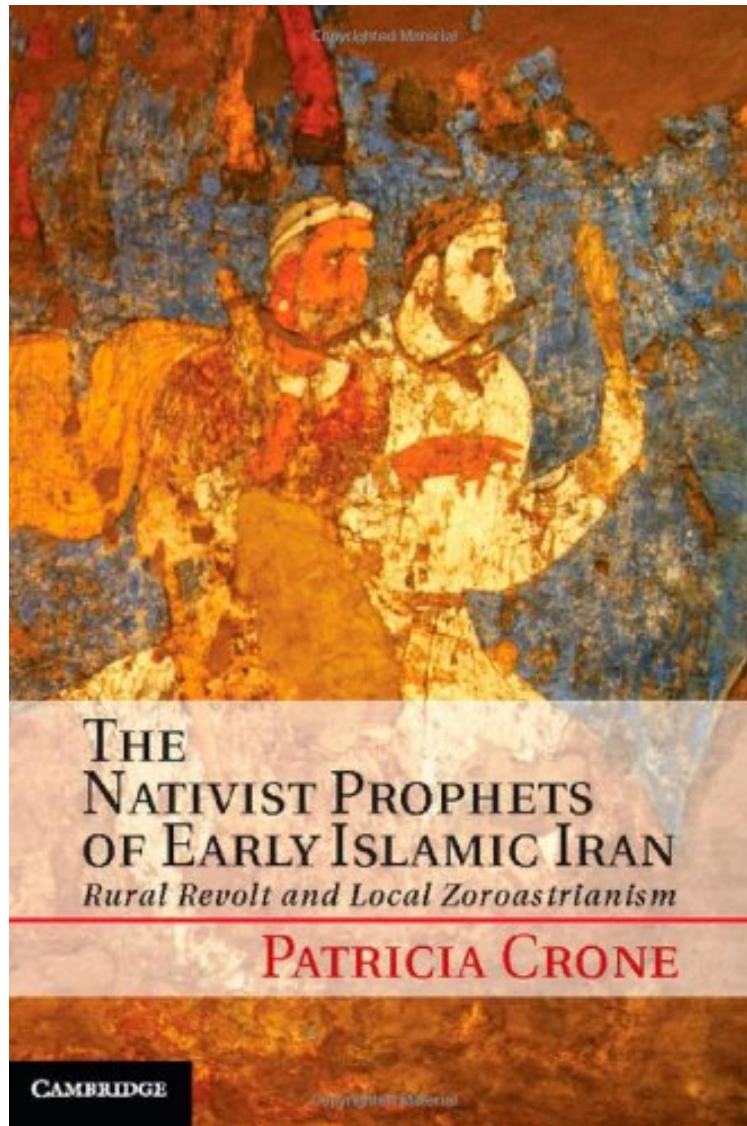


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## The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism

Patricia Crone

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**Patricia Crone : The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant! By Kindle Customer Anyone interested in this time, region or topic, should add this brilliant original book to their academic library. Additionally, Patricia Crone can write well,

so at certain points, I lifted my head from the page and asked, "Why hasn't someone made a movie out of this?" In my lifetime of extensive academic reading, this is has not been a common reaction. Usually, I get another double espresso latte as the turgid historical landscape unfurls, but with Crone, I yelp and gurgle, and mutter, "Well, I never knew that!" until the other patrons of the coffee shop ease slowly away from me. Yes, she assumes you have some basic background, yes, she toddles off into all sorts of unexpected directions, yes, one might quibble with translations or assumptions, or violently object to interpretations, but she kicks starts even the jaded academic into reassessing, pawing through references, and even - I blush and shudder - hitting Wiki, Get this book, dear reader in or out of the field, and get it now. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Philip Leetch I found it fascinating- such erudition, careful analysis and intriguing material. A gem. 17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Dense But Interesting By R. Albin An impressive work of scholarship in which Crone attempts to reconstruct crucial features of traditional Iranian religion from a close reading of a variety of Arabic, Persian, Chinese, and other texts. The result is considerably more than one would expect as Crone's work reveals a great deal about the history of religion in a broad swath of the Middle East and Central Asia. This is a very scholarly book in several respects. Crone's careful interpretative work clearly provides considerable new insights. Most of the book, however, was written with her fellow specialists in mind and is pretty heavy going for general readers. For a non-specialist reader like myself, I think there are 3 particularly interesting features. First, Crone shows the remarkably diverse and highly interactive world of religious thought across a broad swathe of time and geographically from the eastern Mediterranean to Central Asia. This includes native Iranian traditions such as those that gave rise to Zoroasterianism, the influence of Platonism and Buddhism, and less familiar traditions such as Manicheanism, and various strains of Gnosticism and Islam. How these diverse traditions interacted is quite interesting. Second, there is interesting discussion of Zoroasterianism in both its official and popular forms - something that will be unfamiliar to many readers. Finally, Crone has some very interesting analysis of the role of popular religion, messianic traditions, and the role of religion in traditional societies and its relation to states. For general readers, this part is probably the most interesting and I wish Crone had incorporated more higher level analysis into the book. Overall, an important work of scholarship that can probably be read selectively depending on the reader's interests. While I read this book cover to cover, Crone provides a useful outline of the text in her introduction which is a very good guide to how to read the book selectively.

Patricia Crone's latest book is about the Iranian response to the Muslim penetration of the Iranian countryside, the revolts subsequently triggered there, and the religious communities that these revolts revealed. The book also describes a complex of religious ideas that, however varied in space and unstable over time, has demonstrated a remarkable persistence in Iran across a period of two millennia. The central thesis is that this complex of ideas has been endemic to the mountain population of Iran and occasionally become epidemic with major consequences for the country, most strikingly in the revolts examined here, and in the rise of the Safavids who imposed Shi'ism on Iran. This learned and engaging book by one of the most influential scholars of early Islamic history casts entirely new light on the nature of religion in pre-Islamic Iran, and on the persistence of Iranian religious beliefs both outside and inside Islam after the Arab conquest.

"What needs to be stressed about *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran* is that it is a book of rare intellectual courage. It is written in such a way that we are left in no doubt as to the momentous issues that were at stake in this procession of seemingly bizarre creeds and persons, in a land which, for most outsiders of the time (Arab Muslims quite as much as Byzantine Christians), was as distant and majestic as the face of the moon ... Patricia Crone's book has made this battle intelligible and vivid to us, and as real and urgent, in its wider implications, as if it had happened only yesterday." *Times Literary Supplement* "The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran is the story of an immense and mysterious landscape, intermittently rocked, throughout the late antique and early Islamic periods (effectively from around 250 to 850 AD), by detonations of religious fervor sparked by social unrest ... The thrill of this book is that it brings the Iranian world into the mainstream of late antique history. Iran is seen as yet another participant in the religious and intellectual upheavals of the time." *The New York Times* "One of Patricia Crone's achievements in her magnificent book on Iran in the aftermath of the Islamic conquest is to shed new light on sex on the Iranian plateau ... using sources, besides Herodotus, that range from hostile Muslim missionaries to Buddhist pilgrims, she establishes that polyandry, the lending of wombs, and the renting of inseminators were not uncommon and that incestuous marriage was encouraged under Zoroastrian law." Christopher de Bellaigue, *Common Knowledge* About the Author Patricia Crone is Mellon Professor of Islamic History, School of Historical Studies, Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton. Her numerous publications include *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (1980, 2003), *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, coauthored with Martin Hinds (1986, 2003), *Pre-Industrial Societies: Anatomy of the Pre-Modern World* (1989, 2003) and *God's Rule: Government and Islam: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (2005).