



The Zoroastrian Flame: Exploring Religion, History and Tradition

Alan Williams, Sarah Stewart

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Zoroastrianism has always commanded interest way beyond the circles of its actual adherents. Its unbroken history, remarkable texts and distinctive beliefs span three millennia, making it one of the world's most venerable faiths. For many centuries, from the birth of the religion late in the second millennium BC to its influence on the Achaemenids and later adoption in the third century AD as the state religion of the Sasanian Empire, it enjoyed imperial patronage and profoundly shaped the culture of antiquity. The Magi of the New Testament most probably were Zoroastrian priests from the Iranian world, while the enigmatic figure of Zarathushtra (or Zoroaster) himself has exerted continual fascination in the West, influencing creative artists as diverse as Voltaire, Nietzsche, Mozart and Yeats. This authoritative volume brings together internationally recognised scholars to explore Zoroastrianism in all its rich complexity. Examining key themes such as history and modernity, tradition and scripture, art and architecture and minority status and religious identity, it places the modern Zoroastrians of Iran, and the Parsis of India, in their proper contexts. The book extends and complements the coverage of its companion volume, *The Everlasting Flame*.

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