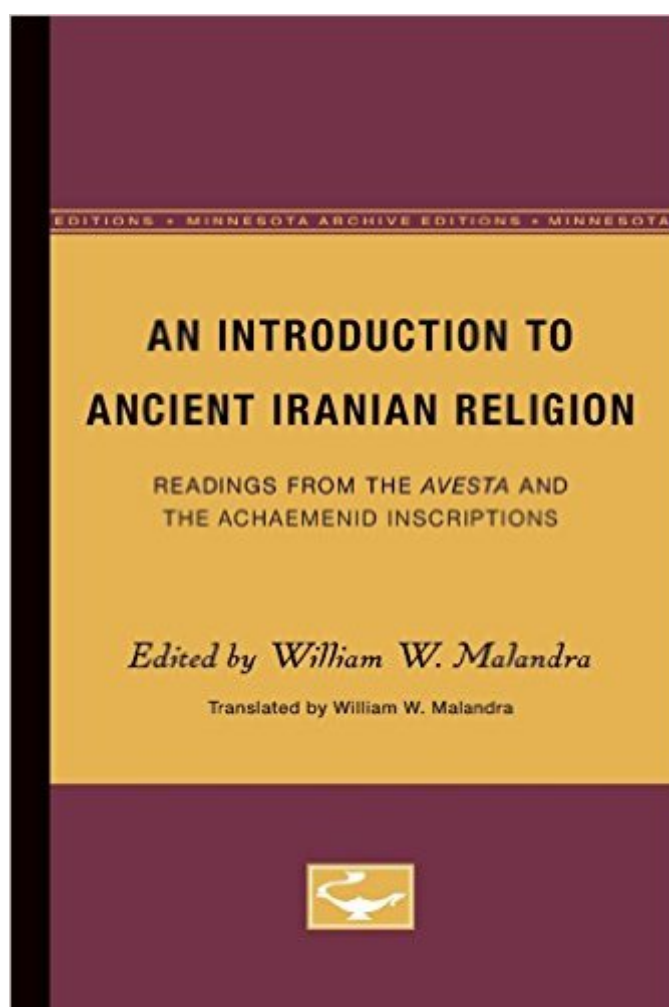


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An Introduction To Ancient Iranian Religion: Readings From The Avesta And The Achaemenid Inscriptions (Minnesota Publications In The Humanities)



Synopsis

An Introduction to Ancient Iranian Religion was first published in 1983. Minnesota Archive Editions uses digital technology to make long-unavailable books once again accessible, and are published unaltered from the original University of Minnesota Press editions. When Persia fell to Islam in the mid-seventh century, the ancient Iranian religion of Zoroastrianism all but disappeared (although it is still practiced by small groups in India and Iran). As one of the dominant religions of antiquity, it influenced the Judeo-Christian tradition as well as some forms of gnosticism. Despite its age and venerable place in the history of world religions, Zoroastrianism remains little known outside of a few philologists and historians of religion. Because of the difficulty of translation, there is little primary textual material available for nonspecialists; the few translations that do exist are quite old. In An Introduction to Ancient Iranian Religion, William Malandra provides not only modern English translations of the sacred texts but also a comprehensive introduction to the subject of Zoroastrianism itself. In an introductory essay Malandra outlines the main features of Zoroastrianism in its historical, cultural, and spiritual setting. His new translations of readings from the Avesta, the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, and selections from the Achaemenid inscriptions of the great kings Darius and Xerxes are accompanied by interpretive notes that allow students to make their way through this difficult material. This book is, therefore, not just a collection of texts but a self-contained introduction to Zoroastrianism that can be used by the nonspecialist without recourse to additional interpretive works.

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Customer Reviews

I am amazed that "An Introduction To Ancient Iranian Religion: Readings From the Avesta and the Achaemenid Inscriptions" is not more generally available (and less expensive!) than it is, since it appears to be the ONLY work of its kind. Be that as it may, this volume gives the reader the primary texts of Zarathushtra, the inscriptions of Darius and his heirs, and the essential texts of Zoroastrianism. The introductions are extensive, and except for what appears to me to be an odd system of transliteration, illuminating. The book as a whole is organized to present texts concerning major figures in the religion in an orderly fashion rather than in their (I gather) extremely mixed-up later format. Translations are clear insofar as this is possible, and where the texts are really obscure, Malandra indicates this. This book is very short (fewer than 200 pages), but extremely clear and fair-minded (as opposed, say to Edwin Yamauchi's discussion of Zoroaster), and definitely worth having for anyone interested in the ancient near east.

Excellent book. I recommend it highly for all those who are interested in Zoroastrianism. The book is also for scholars as well as lay people who would benefit from the author's deep knowledge.

I would recommend this book very highly to anyone who is interested to know about Zoroastrianism.

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