



The Literature of Pre-Islamic Iran: Companion Volume I: History of Persian Literature A, Vol XVII (A History of Persian Literature)

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Persian literature is the jewel in the crown of Persian culture. It has profoundly influenced the literatures of Ottoman Turkey, Muslim India and Turkic Central Asia. It has been a source of inspiration for Goethe, Emerson, Matthew Arnold and Jorge Luis Borges among others and praised by William Jones, Tagore, E. M. Forster and many more. Yet Persian literature has never received the attention it merits. Whereas Persian art and architecture, and more recently Iranian cinema, have been written about extensively and at different levels for a varied audience, Persian literature has largely remained the exclusive domain of specialists. And although in the past few years the poems of Rumi have attracted the kind of popular attention enjoyed by Omar Khayyam's quatrains in the 19th century, Persian literature has never received the attention it truly deserves.

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This book answers this need and offers a new, comprehensive and detailed history of its subject. This volume is part of an 18-volume authoritative survey that reflects the stature and significance of Persian literature as the single most important accomplishment of the Iranian experience. The main object of this companion volume is to provide an overview of the most important extant literary sources in Old and Middle Iranian languages--the languages of the Achaemenid, Parthian and Sasanian periods culminating in the rich resource of Pahlavi Persian which fed so directly into the language of the later great Persian poets. It will be an indispensable source for the literary traditions of pre-Islamic Iran and an invaluable guide to the subject.

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