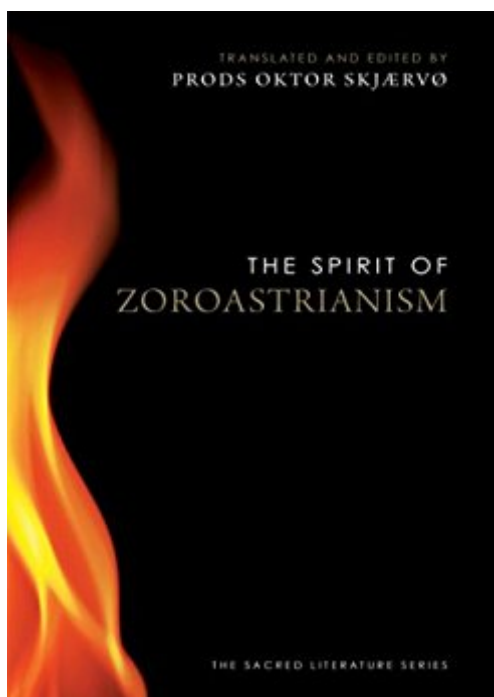


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The Spirit Of Zoroastrianism (The Spirit Of ...)



Synopsis

Zoroastrianism is one of the world's oldest religions, though it is not among the best understood. Originating with Iranian tribes living in Central Asia in the second millennium BCE, Zoroastrianism was the official religion of the Iranian empires until Islam superseded it in the seventh century AD. Centered on the worship of Ahura Mazda, the All-knowing Ruler, Zoroastrianism follows the practices and rituals set out by the prophet Zarathustra, according to the indigenous tradition. As one of the world's great religions, Zoroastrianism has a heritage rich in texts and cultic practices. The texts are often markedly difficult to translate, but in this volume, Prods Oktor Skjærvæ, professor of ancient Iranian languages and culture at Harvard, provides modern and accurate translations of Zoroastrian texts that have been selected to provide an overview of Zoroastrian beliefs and practices. In a comprehensive introduction to these sacred texts, Skjærvæ outlines the history and essence of Zoroastrianism and discusses the major themes of this the first fully representative selection of Zoroastrian texts to be made available in English for over a century.

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Customer Reviews

Prior to reading this book, I had encountered many references to the ideas and texts of the

Zoroastrian religion, mostly in relation to the Vedic religion and mythology (with which early Zoroastrianism shares much in common), as well as with regard to its influence on the beliefs of the Hebrew and early Christian religions. However, as many of these references are often presented in passing and with very little context or explanation of Zoroastrianism, I was searching for a book that would provide me with a fairly simple overview of the topic before I explored the religion further. This book provides an excellent introduction to the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism, as well a brief overview of its beliefs and rituals. The first section of the book (comprising roughly 40 of the 260 pages of the book) introduces the background and history of the religion and its texts, as well as summarising a variety of aspects of Zoroastrian belief including Creation and cosmology, gods and demons, Eschatology, the relationship between body and soul(s), and ethics in clear and simple terms. The remainder of the book contains modern translations of various Zoroastrian texts, from both the older and younger Avesta (including the Yasnas, Gathas, Yashts and Vendidad) as well as number of later inscriptions and Pahlavi texts (i.e. Middle-Persian, around 9th-11th century CE). These texts are arranged by topic in order to correspond with the subjects introduced in the book's first section and are organised together according to their source (Old Avesta, Young Avesta, Pahlavi text, etc), which is both highly convenient and easy to read. With regard to the criticism expressed in C.

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