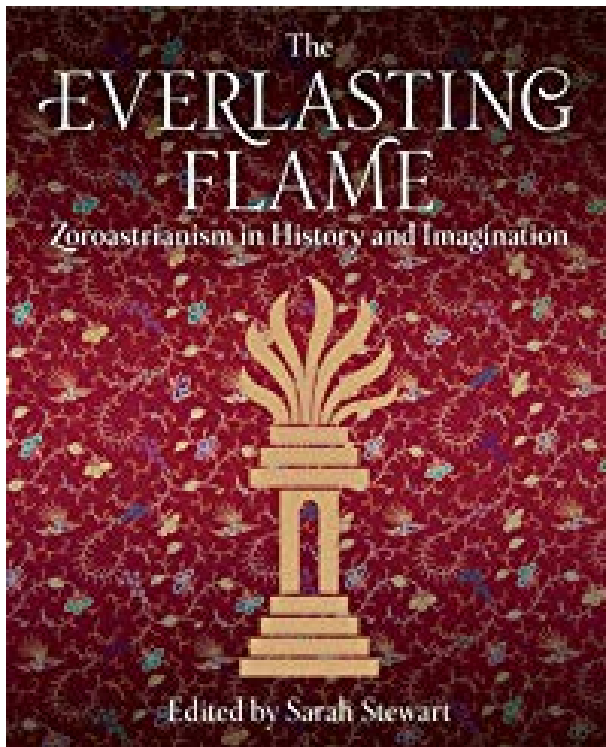


The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination



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With such ancient beginnings, Zoroastrianism is as remarkably enduring as it is venerable. It has also been influential beyond its own followers, interacting with other, younger faiths: especially their views on evil, messianic notions and ideas about the last days. The power of its sacred scriptures, the Gathas, and the resonance of the message of its founder, Zarathustra (or Zoroaster) transformed it from small beginnings into the principal religion of Iran until the advent of Islam. This richly illustrated book explores the chief themes of Zoroastrianism: its rise during the second millennium BCE; its doctrines, rituals and teachings; its growth into the foremost faith of the Achaemenid and Parthian empires; its consolidation under the Sasanians; its expansion east to China; and the impact it had on Judaism, Christianity and Islam. From Iran to the west coast of India, the story continues with the maritime exodus of the Zoroastrians and their settlement as an immigrant community (now called 'Parsis') under British colonial rule. With chapters by world-leading authorities, this is a vital record of the arts, literatures and cultures of one of the world's most fascinating religious traditions.