



Epic of the Persian Kings: The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi

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Composed more than a millennium ago, the Shahnameh -- the great royal book of the Persian court -- is a pillar of Persian literature and one of the world's unchallenged masterpieces. Recounting the history of the Persian people from its mythic origins down to the Islamic conquest in the seventh century, the Shahnameh is the stirring and beautifully textured story of a proud civilization. But the Shahnameh (or, literally, the ""Book of Kings"") is much more than a literary masterpiece: it is the wellspring of the modern Persian language, a touchstone for Iranian national consciousness and its illustrations, in manuscripts of different eras, are the inspiration for one of the world's greatest artistic traditions.

Epic of the Persian Kings combines revealing scholarship with stunning, full-color illustrations from the rich manuscript tradition of the Shahnameh. International experts including Charles Melville, Barbara Brend, Dick Davis and Firuza Abullaeva shed light on the epic's background, national importance and enduring legacy. This context is accompanied by a wealth of illustrations from Shahnameh manuscripts belonging to the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Bodleian Library, as well as rarely-seen material from the Royal Collection. These illustrations, drawn from a wide range of artists and styles, display the timeless flexibility of the Shahnameh story as well as the marvellous ingenuity of the Persian artistic experience.

Epic of the Persian Kings is an essential textual and pictorial guide to one of the world's great cultural achievements.

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