



Birth of the Persian Empire: The Idea of Iran, Volume I

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This book explores the formation of the first Persian Empire under the Achaemenid Persians. It brings together a multi-disciplinary view of ancient Iran in the first millennium BC and concentrates on the art, archaeology, history and religion of a vast geographical area far beyond the present borders of modern Iran in the period beginning just before the formation of the Persian empire in the middle of the 6th century up to its collapse following conquest by Alexander the Great in the late 4th century BC. Eminent scholars offer a critical approach to some of the traditional interpretations and guide the reader towards a better understanding of the formation of the Persian empire. This is the first volume in the four-volume *Idea of Iran* series.

Charting over 1000 years of history, *The Idea of Iran* series offers a significant new appraisal of one the most fascinating, but also (at least in the West) relatively little known, of the great civilizations of antiquity. Comprising four substantial volumes, which have emerged from a series of seminars held under the joint auspices of the London Middle East Institute and the British Museum, and supported by the Soudavar Memorial Foundation, the series explores the empires which have shaped the culture of Iran. Beginning with the Achaemenid dynasty of Cyrus the Great, which founded Persian imperial rule in the middle of the sixth century BCE, the series goes on to examine, amongst other key topics, the society, religion, and government of ancient Iran under the Parthians, Sasanians and the Arab rulers of the early Islamic period. *The Idea of Iran* will be mandatory reading for all serious scholars and students of ancient and early medieval Iranian history.

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