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Ancient Greek writers on Persian history give us a glimpse of the influential role played by some individual women at these courts, but these are sporadic and hardly reliable accounts of a few colourful femme fatales in the royal family, designed to show up the scandalous machinations of barbarian women gaining political control and causing the decline and effeminacy of the Persian kings. This book is the first to demonstrate the true importance of not only royal but non-royal women in Persia, with the benefit of contemporary Persian and Babylonian sources.

This book explores the representation of Persian monarchy and the court of the Achaemenid Great Kings from the point of view of the ancient Iranians themselves and through the sometimes distorted prism of Classical authors.

The only book of its kind to cover both the Achaemenid period and the thousand years following Alexander's conquest, *The Persians* explores the period from the seventh century BC, to the seventh

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century AD, and presents a comprehensive introduction to ancient Persia. Incorporating recent research, and translated sources from a wide range of corpus material, Maria Brosius explores the history of Persia, and brings a new understanding of Persian society and culture and the structures on which these empires were built: the king and his court; religion and culture; art and architecture. From the lands of Egypt to the Indus River, from the Russian Steppes to the Indian Ocean, Brosius has provided an up-to-date account of the three empires of pre-Islamic Iran, and discussing key topics such as women, religion and art and architecture, she presents a clear survey of the history of these empires. Providing additional reading references along with frequent source citations, students of ancient Persia will find this an invaluable addition to their course studies.

This is a literary study of Aeschylus' *Persians* alongside Herodotus' *Histories*, which offers a comprehensive understanding what actually happened at the battle of Salamis and afterwards. Thomas Harrison examines the political and ideological motivating factors underpinning *Persai* in the context of the times. Aeschylus' *Persians* is not only the first surviving Greek drama. It is also the only tragedy to take for its subject historical rather than mythical events: the repulse of the army of Xerxes at Salamis in 480 B.C. It has frequently been mined for information on the tactics of Salamis or the Greeks' knowledge of Persian names or institutions, but it also has a broader value, one that has not often been realised. What does it tell us about Greek representations of Persia, or of the Athenians' self-image? What can we glean from it of the politics of early fifth-century Athens, or of the Athenians' conception of their empire? How, if at all, can such questions be approached without doing violence to the *Persians* as a drama? What are the implications of the play for the nature of tragedy?

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Greek women routinely wore the veil. That is the unexpected finding of this meticulous study, one with interesting implications for the origins of Western civilisation. The Greeks, popularly (and rightly) credited with the invention of civic openness, are revealed as also part of a more Eastern tradition of seclusion. Llewellyn-Jones' work proceeds from literary and, notably, from iconographic evidence. In sculpture and vase painting it demonstrates the presence of the veil, often covering the head, but also more unobtrusively folded back onto the shoulders. This discreet fashion not only gave a privileged view of the face to the ancient art consumer, but also, incidentally, allowed the veil to escape the notice of traditional modern scholarship. From Greek literary sources, the author shows that full veiling of the head and face was commonplace. He analyses the elaborate Greek vocabulary for veiling and explores what the veil meant to achieve. He shows that the veil was a conscious extension of the house and was often referred to as 'tegidion', literally 'a little roof'. Veiling was thus an ingenious compromise; it allowed women to circulate in public while maintaining the ideal of a house-bound existence. Alert to the different types of veil used, the author uses Greek and more modern evidence (mostly from the Arab world) to show how women could exploit and subvert the veil as a means of eloquent, sometimes emotional, communication. First published in 2003 and reissued as a paperback in 2010, Llewellyn-Jones' book has established itself as a central - and inspiring - text for the study of ancient women.

A richly-illustrated and important book that traces the rise and fall of one of the ancient world's largest and richest empires.

Some of the most fascinating human epochs lie in the borderlands between history and mystery. So it is with the life of Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Empire in the sixth century bce. By conquest or

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gentler means, he brought under his rule a dominion stretching from the Aegean Sea to the Hindu Kush and encompassing some tens of millions of people. All across this immense imperium, he earned support and stability by respecting local customs and religions, avoiding the brutal ways of tyranny, and efficiently administering the realm through provincial governors. The empire would last another two centuries, leaving an indelible Persian imprint on much of the ancient world. The Greek chronicler Xenophon, looking back from a distance of several generations, wrote: "Cyrus did indeed eclipse all other monarchs, before or since." The vision of the biblical prophet known as Second Isaiah anticipates Cyrus' repatriation of Jews living in exile in Babylon with these words of the Lord: "He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please." Despite what he achieved and bequeathed, much about Cyrus remains uncertain. Persians of his era had no great respect for the written word and kept no annals. The most complete accounts of his life were composed by Greeks. More fragmentary or tangential evidence takes many forms - among them, archaeological remains, administrative records in subject lands, and the always tricky stuff of legend. Given these challenges, *Discovering Cyrus: The Persian Conqueror Astride the Ancient World* is a remarkable feat of portraiture. In his vast sweep, Reza Zarghamee draws on sources of every kind, painstakingly assembling detail, and always weighing evidence carefully where contradictions arise. He describes the background of the Persian people, the turbulence of the times, and the roots of Cyrus' policies. His account of the imperial era itself delves into religion, military methods, commerce, court life, and much else besides. The result is a living, breathing Cyrus standing atop a distant world that played a key role in shaping our own.

Towards the end of the fifth century BC Ctesias of Cnidus wrote his 23 book *History of Persia*. Ctesias is a remarkable figure: he lived and worked in the Persian court and, as a doctor, tended to the world's

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most powerful kings and queens. His position gave him special insight into the workings of Persian court life and access to the gossip and scandal surrounding Persian history and court politics, past and present. His History of Persia was completed at a time when the Greeks were fascinated by Persia and seems very much to cater to contemporary interest in Persian wealth and opulence, powerful Persian women, the institution of the harem, kings and queens, eunuchs and secret plots. Presented here in English translation for the first time with commentaries, Ctesias offers a fascinating insight into Persia in the fifth century BC.

The late 7th and 6th centuries B.C. were a period of tremendous upheaval and change in ancient western Asia, marked by the destruction of the Assyrian Empire, the rise and collapse of the Neo-Babylonian state, and the stunning ascent of what was to become the Achaemenid Persian Empire, the largest polity the world had yet seen. Of the major cultural entities involved in these far-reaching events, Elam has long remained the least understood. The essays contained in this book are part of a continuing reassessment of the nature and significance of Elam in the early 1st millennium B.C., with a focus on the relationship between “Elamite” culture of the Neo-Elamite period and the emerging “Persian” culture in southwestern Iran in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. The conception of this volume goes back to the 2003 meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research that took place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where two sessions were dedicated to the rich cultural heritage of ancient Iran. It was also the first time that Iranian archaeology was represented at ASOR since the Iranian Revolution. This volume contains 14 contributions by leading scholars in the discipline, organized into 3 sections: archaeology, texts, and images (art history). The volume is richly illustrated with more than 200 drawings and photographs.

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