



A History of Iran: Empire of the Mind

Michael Axworthy

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Iran is a land of contradictions. It is an Islamic republic, but one in which only 1.4 percent of the population attend Friday prayers. Iran's religious culture encompasses the most censorious and dogmatic Shi'a Muslim clerics in the world, yet its poetry insistently dwells on the joys of life: wine, beauty, sex. Iranian women are subject to one of the most restrictive dress codes in the Islamic world, but make up nearly 60 percent of the student population of the nation's universities.

In *A History of Iran*, acclaimed historian Michael Axworthy chronicles the rich history of this complex nation from the Achaemenid Empire of sixth century B.C. to the present-day Islamic Republic. In engaging prose, this revised edition explains the military, political, religious, and cultural forces that have shaped one of the oldest continuing civilizations in the world, bringing us up modern times. Concluding with an assessment of the immense changes the nation has undergone since the revolution in 1979, including a close look at Iran's ongoing attempts to become a nuclear power, *A History of Iran* offers general readers an essential guide to understanding this volatile nation, which is once again at the center of the world's attention.

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