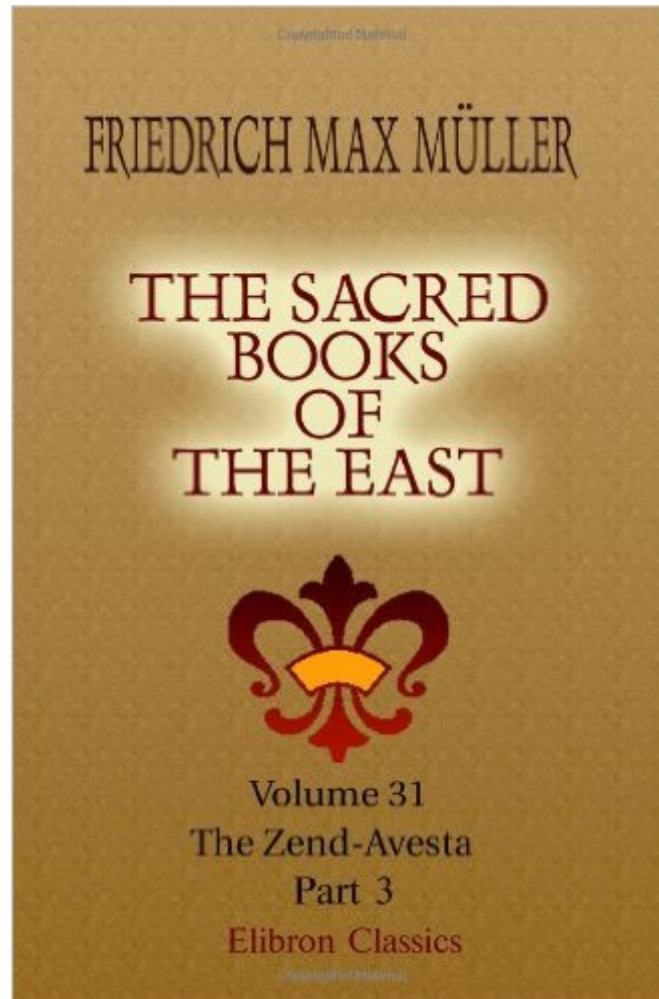


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The Sacred Books Of The East: Volume 31. The Zend-Avesta. Part 3



Synopsis

This Elibron Classics book is a facsimile reprint of a 1887 edition by the Clarendon Press, Oxford.

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Customer Reviews

For one interested in a scholarly commentary for the Avesta, as well as the most recent complete translation (I think), this series by James Darmesteter I have found to be the best. Mazdeism (also known as Zoroastrianism), in particular, reveals a great deal about the formative influences of the Abrahamic religions, as well as Hinduism, from which Buddhism also later developed. It's a bit costly to buy these three volumes of the Avesta, but it is certainly a worthwhile investment.

This third and final volume of the Zend-Avesta contains the works that I had heard most about--the Gathas. This volume is quite a departure from the previous one in that most of the attention is focused strictly between Ahura Mazda, Fire and Zarathrustra, often in the form of dialogues. A few highlights include:--Yasna XXXI on page 41 seems to imply that Zoroastrianism was open to the idea of allowing converts.--While Fire is often associated with this religion, we see in Yasna VI (and elsewhere) that it is often mentioned in conjunction with waters and plants.--For those with an interest in fantasy, there is mention of Dragons, demons, sorcerers, sirens, and even a Unicorn. Whether these are legitimate translations of the original text could be up to debate, but it is interesting nonetheless. In particular, Yasna IX on page 239 has a good description of a Dragon.--Having read most of the more "important" texts of Judaism and Hinduism, I found it interesting that there is mention of "science" in Yasna XIII (page 251). This is the first time I've seen a religious text explicitly use such a word.--The Hindu caste system reveals itself in Yasna XIX on

pages 264-265. As a religion, the Zend-Avesta is arguably easier to understand compared to older Hindu works such as the Rig-Veda Samhita, Rig-Veda Brahmanas and the Upanishads. However, when compared against Judaism, it lacks the narrative cohesion and flow of the Old Testament. The Fire of Zoroastrianism is definitely still there, but its time as a religion is fading, not flaring.

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