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In this timely two-volume set, Kamrava (Georgetown Univ.) and Dorraj (Texas Christian Univ.) banish many of the common misconceptions surrounding modern Iran. Joined by an international cast of academics, they reveal post-revolutionary Iran
as a richly diverse nation, far more complex than recent headlines have indicated. Unlike many encyclopedias that attempt to address hundreds of topics in limited detail, this work willingly sacrifices breadth for depth by focusing on fewer topics. These sophisticated, objective articles explore a variety of themes: arts, civil society, culture, economy, ethnic groups, foreign relations, government, law, media, people, politics, and women. The diverse topics covered, some familiar and some unfamiliar, range from the Iran-Iraq war to human rights, the Iranian art diaspora, and the Qashqaii Confederacy. The work opens with alphabetical and topical lists of the entries plus a chronology of events and concludes with a single index. In between are roughly 100 articles, short lists of suggested readings, a selected bibliography, and notes on the many contributors. BOTTOM LINE Although pricey, Iran Today provides a wider treatment of subjects than Michael Axworthy’s History of Iran, which lacks the post-revolutionary concentration, and Britannica’s Iran: The Essential Guide to a Country on the Brink which is solely concerned with foreign policy. The inclusion of more maps would have greatly aided the editors’ goal of correcting the misreading of Iran. The single map in the work is sparse and disappointing, especially when considered against the many articles that reference Iran’s geography. Recommended for academic and larger public libraries. [Available electronically through Greenwood Digital Collection.]—Daniel Sifton, Cariboo Regional Dist. Lib., Williams Lake, B.C.