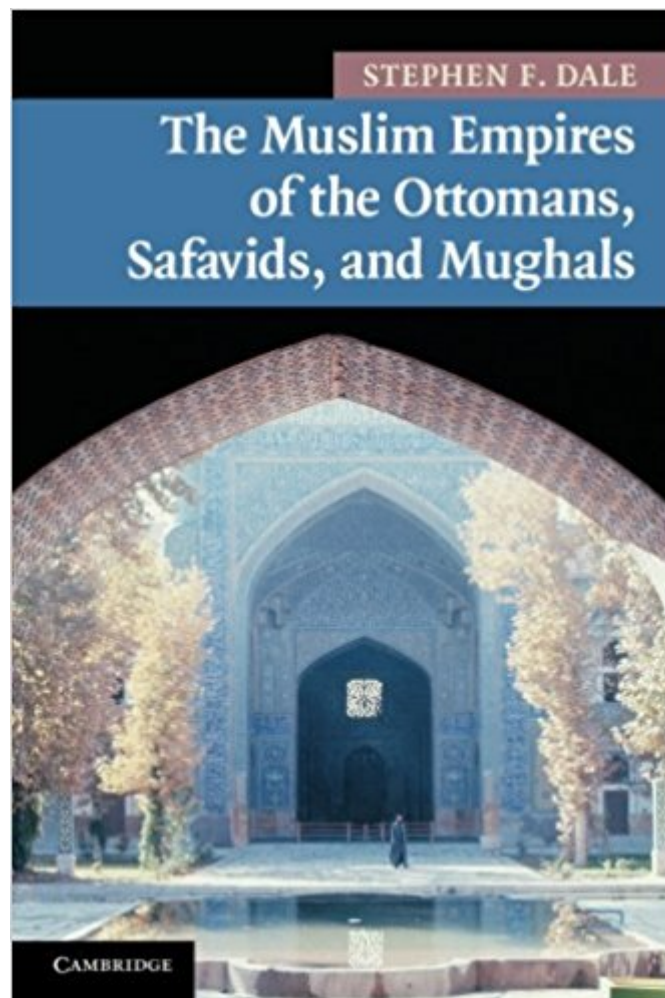




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The Muslim Empires Of The Ottomans, Safavids, And Mughals (New Approaches To Asian History)



Synopsis

Between 1453 and 1526 Muslims founded three major states in the Mediterranean, Iran and South Asia: respectively the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires. By the early seventeenth century their descendants controlled territories that encompassed much of the Muslim world, stretching from the Balkans and North Africa to the Bay of Bengal and including a combined population of between 130 and 160 million people. This book is the first comparative study of the politics, religion, and culture of these three empires between 1300 and 1923. At the heart of the analysis is Islam, and how it impacted on the political and military structures, the economy, language, literature and religious traditions of these great empires. This original and sophisticated study provides an antidote to the modern view of Muslim societies by illustrating the complexity, humanity and vitality of these empires, empires that cannot be reduced simply to religious doctrine.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'In sum, this is a vivid, learned, yet approachable comparative study of three remarkable Muslim empires at the height of their power and prestige, positioned carefully in their historical context. Scholars of the Islamic world used to believe that it reached its apogee in the early centuries after the Arab conquests, during the period of the early Abbasid caliphate. Dale's book provides ample grounds for suspecting that things may not be quite that simple.' David Morgan, *The Times Literary Supplement*

'Professor Dale deploys an impressive range of contemporary and modern sources in taking us through the intertwined history of the three empires.' *Asian Affairs*

Between 1453 and 1526 Muslims founded three major states in the Mediterranean, Iran and South Asia: respectively the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires. This book is the first comparative study of the politics, religion, and culture of these three empires between 1300 and 1923.

least dense of the books for my middle eastern islamic history class, bearable and not too hard to get through. we didn't touch much on the mughals, but the parts comparing empires were very interesting (fall of ottomans vs fall of safavids, for example)

Stephen Dale has written a largely narrative history that outlines and compares the rise and fall of the empires created by three Muslim dynasties: the Turkish Ottomans, Iranian Safavids, and Indian Mughals. At their height these ruled a vast area from the Balkans to Bengal, including parts of northern Africa and Central Asia, controlling substantial populations and much of the trade between Asia and Europe. After an introductory chapter on the Islamic world before these states were formed, which shows their debt to their predecessors, Dale covers their history in the period from the 15th to the early 20th century. Within this, each empire rose, expanded, had a golden age and then declined. The Safavids were the shortest lived, being overthrown in the 17th century; the Mughals lost most of their power in the 18th century but lingered until the mid 19th; the Ottomans undertook reforms and lasted into the 20th century. Dale shows that the three dynasties had much in common. As well as being Muslim, all had Turkic, partly military origins, efficient armies and, at least at the start, expansionist policies. All three were also strongly influenced by Persian language and culture. As well as summarising their political history and economy, he also discusses their art, architecture, and literature of the area. His book is well written in clear and accessible language, supported by a good number of illustrations and maps and a bibliography for further study. There were differences between the three: both the Ottomans and the Mughals ruled substantial non-Muslim populations, and although the Safavid population was more homogeneous, they were much poorer and weaker than the other two. Each also empire faced its own internal and external problems, which Dale discusses. He also deals with the responses of their European, Hindu, and Chinese neighbours to their initial expansion and later weaknesses, and relates the history of the three dynasties not only to each other but the wider context of world history. The coverage of the Mughal Empire seems the most thorough, although the Ottomans are discussed at reasonable length; there is less on the Safavids. The book concentrates on narrative description rather than analysis. Apart from these points, Dale has produced a very good, up to date narrative summary of the three empires for those

with a general interest in them.

It was a really boring book at times but in terms of information, it is amazing. It gives different aspects of each of the empires with the sources cited to perfection.

This book deals with three Muslim empires, not all of them. Dale's book is a kind of comparative summary that offers a great deal of information. The text is informative, but it is a bit of a chore to get through the book. The maps are good and the bibliography is excellent. This would be a good book to browse as an overview, but a reader new to the topic might think the sometimes labored prose is typical, and abandon it. To readers not so familiar, the Safavids were Persian (the empire larger than what is now Iran); the Mughals ruled much of India until the British ended their last claims to rule by defeating a massive rebellion in India in the 1850s; and the Ottomans, based in what is now Turkey, lasted until 1918.

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