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978-0-521-69142-0 - The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals

Stephen Frederic Dale

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The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals

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 influenced 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 a common simplistic view of Muslim societies by illustrating the complexity, humanity, and vitality of these empires, empires that cannot be reduced simply to religious doctrine.

STEPHEN F. DALE is a Professor in the Department of History at Ohio State University. His previous publications include *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade 1600–1750* (Cambridge, 1994) and *The Garden of the Eight Paradises: Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India 1483–1530* (2004).

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For Roderic Maurice Kauai Dale
husband, father, brother, scientist, gentleman

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Preface

Marigold Acland of Cambridge University Press commissioned this book and, like dozens of other scholars, I deeply appreciate both her encouragement and her sympathetic interest in and sophisticated knowledge of Islamic studies. The book was written during a wonderful leave year funded by a research fellowship from the National Endowment of the Humanities in Washington, DC, supported by matching funds from the Ohio State University.

I have benefited from the work of so many scholars in so many disciplines that it is impossible to credit them all. My intellectual debts will be obvious from the footnotes and bibliography, but beyond those citations, I want to particularly acknowledge Cornell Fleischer, who introduced me to both Turkish and Ottoman history; my own colleagues in Ottoman studies, Carter Findley and Jane Hathaway; Gülru Necipoğlu for her cultural studies of Ottoman architectural history; and Suraiya Faroqhi for her many works on Ottoman social history. Hamid Algar introduced me to Persian and modern Iranian history and John Masson Smith Jr. taught me the use of documents and coins for pre-modern Iranian and Middle Eastern history. In addition I am particularly indebted to Rudi Matthee for his publications on the Safavids and to Paul Losensky for his revealing studies of Persian poetry of the Safavid and Mughal eras. I first studied Indian history with Eugene F. Irschick, and began my studies of Mughal history with the work of the late John Richards. I have also benefited from the work of Muzaffar Alam and an entire galaxy of Indian historians who have produced seminal scholarship on the Mughal period, especially Tapan Raychaudhuri, Irfan Habib, Athar Ali, and the scholar of Indo-Persian literature, Abdu'l Ghani. Amina Okada's studies of Mughal art have also shaped the way in which I look at the paintings of the imperial atelier.

Three scholars took the time to read and critique this book in manuscript form, and they will recognize that many of their valuable suggestions are integrated into the final text. They are Catharine Asher, the

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historian of Mughal architectural history; Gene Garthwaite, a specialist on the Bakhtiyari nomads and the history of modern Iran; and Ruby Lal, who is known for her study of women in early Mughal history. The book is substantially better for their help.

My thanks go to three institutions for permission to quote from copyright material. They are: Princeton University Press, for Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541–1600)* (1986); the University of Washington Press, for a book whose rights they now own, namely *Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, ed. and trans. Walter G. Andrews, Najaat Black, and Mehmet Kalpakli (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997); and Mazda Press, for Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1998).

I have dedicated this book to my late brother, Roderic M. K. Dale.

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Languages and transliteration

Languages

Three principal languages were used in the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires. These were: first, the Semitic language Arabic, the native language of ethnic Arabs as well as religious and scientific language of the Islamic world; secondly, the Indo-European language Persian, the native language of ethnic Iranians, the lingua franca of educated Muslims in Anatolia, Central Asia, and northern and central India, and the prestigious literary language of Muslims in all three empires; thirdly, Turkish, one of a larger family of some thirty-four related languages, sometimes labeled, controversially, as Altaic languages. All three languages were written in the Arabic script, but the use of this script for Persian led to the creation of new letters to reflect Persian pronunciation. This script was particularly ill suited to Turkic languages, including Ottoman, so that some letters in Ottoman or other Turkic dialects have different values from those they have in Persian or Arabic.

Transliteration

Generally Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words have been spelled in accordance with the system used by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. However, some exceptions have been made for commonly accepted usages, such as “Mughal” for “Mughul,” “Abu’l Fazl,” the name of the Mughal minister, instead of “Abu’l-Fadl,” and a few others. Such usages partly reflect customary pronunciations, and the pronunciation of all three languages, belonging as they do to three major language families, is distinctly different. To take just one simple example, the common name for a Muslim religious judge is usually written, reflecting its original Arabic pronunciation, as *qadi*. In Turkish, as will be seen, it is usually written, in the Latin script adopted in the Turkish Republic, as *kadi*, while in Persian the word is often written, as it is pronounced, *qazi*. And in both

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Turkish and Persian the “a” of *qadi* is sounded differently than in Arabic. Speakers of each language have even modified the pronunciation of religious terminology. Readers familiar with one or more of these languages will supply their own pronunciations. Others need not be concerned, as it is the meaning of the terminology, as explained in the text or listed in the Glossary, which is most important.