

Dale

The Garden of the Eight Paradises

Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India (1483-1530)

This is the first critical biography of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, the founder of one of the great premodern Islamic empires, the Timurid-Mughul empire of India. It contains an original evaluation of his life and writings as well as fresh insights into both the nature of empire building and the character of the Timurid-Mughul state. Based upon recently published critical editions of Babur's autobiography and poetry, the book examines Babur's life from the time he inherited his father's authority in the Ferghanah valley, east of Samarqand, in 1494, until his death in Agra, India in 1530. The book is written in an alternating series of thematic and narrative chapters. The thematic or analytical chapters examine his major writings, discuss his cultural personality and his reaction to Indian culture, while the narrative chapters relate the story of his life while critically commenting on his autobiographical intent. The book contributes to the history of the Timurid period, the study of early modern Islamic empires and the nature of autobiographical literature in Islamic and Asian societies. It is illustrated with fifteen colour plates and four maps.

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