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The Limits of Universal Rule

Eurasian Empires Compared

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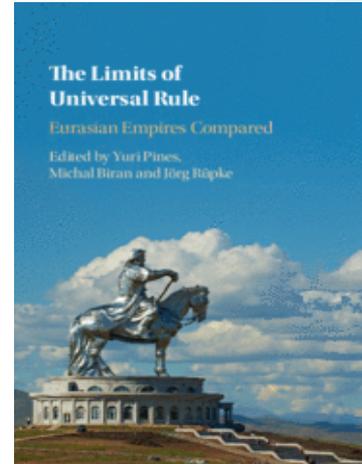
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All major continental empires proclaimed their desire to rule 'the entire world', investing considerable human and material resources in expanding their territory. Each, however, eventually had to stop expansion and come to terms with a shift to defensive strategy. This volume explores the factors that facilitated Eurasian empires' expansion and contraction: from ideology to ecology, economic and military considerations to changing composition of the imperial elites. Built around a common set of questions, a team of leading specialists systematically compare a broad set of Eurasian empires -from Achaemenid Iran, the Romans, Qin and Han China, via the Caliphate, the Byzantines and the Mongols to the Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals, Russians, and Ming and Qing China. The result is a state-of-the-art analysis of the major imperial enterprises in Eurasian history from antiquity to the early modern that discerns both commonalities and differences in the empires' spatial trajectories.

Foreword; Introduction: Empires and their Space; 1. From the Mediterranean to the Indus Valley: Modalities and Limitations of the Achaemenid Imperial Space; 2. Limits of All-under-Heaven: Ideology and Praxis of 'Great Unity' in Early Chinese Empire; 3. The Roman Empire; 4. The Medieval Roman Empire of the East as Spatial Phenomenon (300-1204 CE); 5. Early Islamic Imperial Space; 6. The Mongol Imperial Space: From Universalism to Glocalization; 7. The Territories and Boundaries of Empires: Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal; 8. Delimiting the Realm under the Ming Dynasty; 9. The Expansion of the Qing Empire Before 1800; 10. All under the Tsar: Russia's Eurasian Trajectory.



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'By considering a range of factors that influenced the expansion and contraction of ancient Eurasian empires, including ideological, military, economic, political and ecological, this book offers fascinating new insights into the study of empires, and also points historians towards exciting new directions in the developing field of comparative imperial analysis.'

Craig Benjamin,

author of Empires of Ancient Eurasia: The First Silk Roads Era, 100 BCE – 250 CE



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