

Taj Mahal



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While Galileo suffered under house arrest at the hands of Pope Urban VIII, the Thirty Years War ruined Europe, and the Pilgrims struggled to survive in the New World, work began on what would become one of the Seven Wonders of the World: the Taj Mahal. Built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan as a memorial to his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, its flawless symmetry and gleaming presence have for centuries dazzled everyone who has seen it, and the story of its creation is a fascinating blend of cultural and architectural heritage. Yet, as Diana & Michael Preston vividly convey in the first narrative history of the Taj, it also reflects the magnificent history of the Moghul Empire itself, for it turned out to mark the high point of the Empire's glory at the same time as it became a tipping point in Moghul fortunes.

The roots of the Moghul Empire lie with the legendary warriors Genghis Khan and Tamburlaine; at its height it contained 100 million people, from Afghanistan in the north and present-day Pakistan in the west, to Bengal in the east and southwards deep into central India.. With the storytelling skills that characterize their previous books, Diana & Michael Preston bring alive both the grand sweep of Moghul history and the details that make it memorable: the battles and dynastic rivalries that forged the Empire alongside an intimate chronicle of daily life within the imperial palace. A tale of

overwhelming passion, the story of the Taj has the cadences of Greek tragedy and the ripe emotion of grand opera, and puts a memorable human face on the marble masterpiece.

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