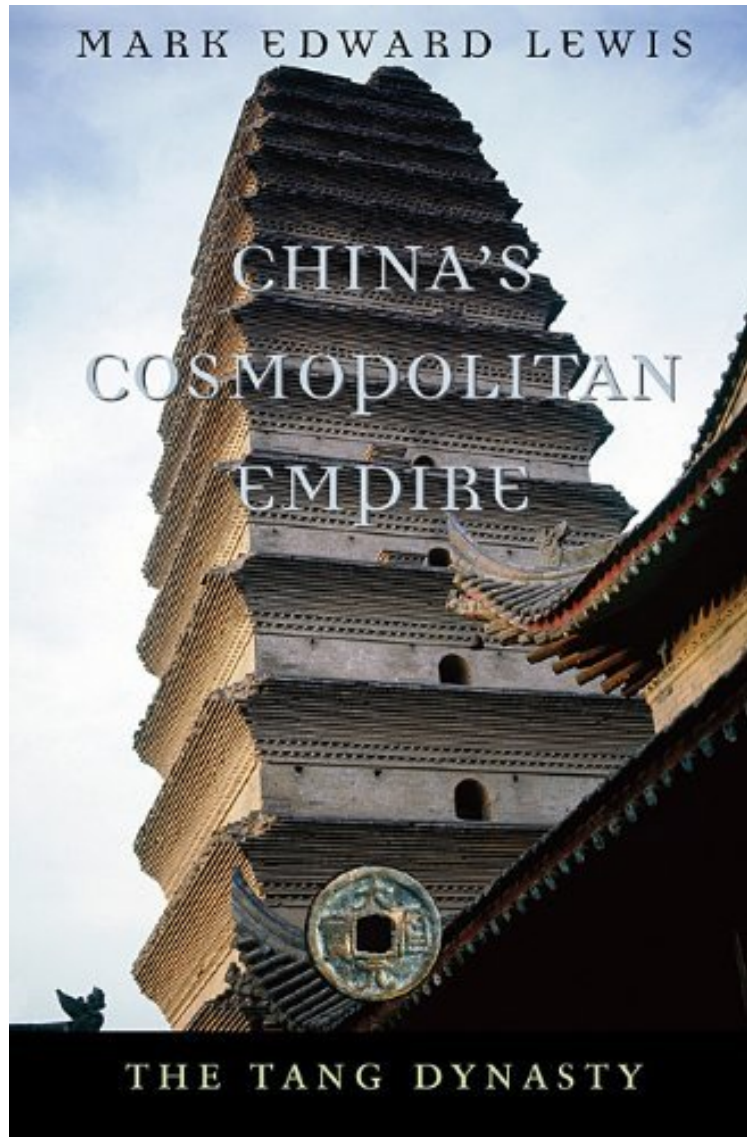


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China's Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty (History of Imperial China)

Mark Edward Lewis

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Mark Edward Lewis : China's Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty (History of Imperial China) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised China's Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty (History of Imperial China):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Essential to a general comprehension of the Tang dynastyBy Larry N. StoutA solid scholarly appraisal of the Tang dynasty, integrated with preceding and following eras of Chinese history. Inclusions of excerpted verse notwithstanding, an essentially dry text that is both summarily informative (thus

enlightening for the non-specialist) and interpretive. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. EnjoyableBy FitOregonMamaI enjoyed reading about the Tang Dynasty for a Chinese history elective class. The book was fairly easy to read and provided nice graphics with timelines. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very Nice Introduction to Tang Dynasty ChinaBy Jeffrey ReedI would actually like to give this 4.5 stars but I dont have that option!I like this series of books--there is one on early Chinese empires and on the Ching Dynasty as well. They are quite comprehensive, covering the broad contours of the empires, in this case the Tang Empire. In addition, though these are scholarly works, they are written as much as possible with the lay reader in mind. I am an academic, so I appreciate all the paraphernalia that goes along with these books, particularly the notes and bibliographies. But, I am not a China expert, so I appreciate the presentation in a fairly clear and readable format. In this volume, I do have one small criticism. I love the chapters devoted to religion, ideas and culture. But, they do, in this particular volume on the Tang, require a certain amount of pre-existing knowledge on the part of the reader. This is especially the case in the chapters on religion dealing with Buddhism and Taoism. The author tends to introduce concepts and personalities and presumes that the reader has some background knowledge. If it gets someone to go to the notes and bibliography and read more for themselves, that is great. But it may turn some people off. He writes about culture, poetry and ideas in a similar vein. I also may have a small quibble with the author's use of evidence from the Song dynasty, the Tang successor, which he sometimes uses to illustrate events and ideas from the Tang--arguing that the origins of the Song practice is rooted in the Tang. This is a very very small criticism, however. All in all, this is a very nice, comprehensive introduction to Tang dynasty China, written for a general audience by an expert.

The Tang dynasty is often called China's "golden age," a period of commercial, religious, and cultural connections from Korea and Japan to the Persian Gulf, and a time of unsurpassed literary creativity. Mark Lewis captures a dynamic era in which the empire reached its greatest geographical extent under Chinese rule, painting and ceramic arts flourished, women played a major role both as rulers and in the economy, and China produced its finest lyric poets in Wang Wei, Li Bo, and Du Fu.

This is an impressive survey history of the Tang dynasty, concise and accessible. China's Cosmopolitan Empire is written so succinctly and clearly that it provides, to my knowledge, the best summary of the Tang period yet available in English. It will make an excellent source for the general student of Chinese or East Asian history. (David L. McMullen, University of Cambridge) [A] readable introduction to the Tang Dynasty. (J. K. Skaff Choice 2010-05-01) This series on China, brilliantly overseen by Timothy Brook, is a credit to Harvard University Press. Above all, it encourages us to think of China in different ways. (Jonathan Mirsky Literary 2010-11-01) In China's Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty, Mark Edward Lewis has done a superb job of synthesizing the scholarship on the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and rendering it into a readable account. Professor Lewis's general narrative of Tang history, chapters two and three of the book, is the best overview of Tang history in any language, and would be a good starting point for anyone interested in the dynasty... There is a large corpus of scholarship in English on Tang dynasty history and culture. China's Cosmopolitan Empire is an admirable addition to that corpus. It will undoubtedly become the standard survey in English for the foreseeable future. (Peter Lorge Journal of Military History 2011-01-01) With clarity and rich details, sustained by quotes, anecdotes, poems, and visual images, Lewis brings to life the vitality of a transforming China in geography, politics, urban life, rural society, the outer world, kinship, religion, and writing, all in comparison with previous times... Lewis's nuanced details of a changing Tang are direct challenges to the dated but still influential views of China as an unchanging Sinocentric empire, uninterested in commerce and foreign contact. (Yihong Pan China International 2009-05-01) Lewis' book will be of great interest and utility to general readers as well as students who are looking for a lucid overview of Tang history and culture. (Michael R. Drompp Journal of Asian History 2010-10-01) Mark Edward Lewis has produced an impressive volume on the history of the Tang dynasty... Its greatest contribution is its integration of the latest secondary scholarship into interesting arguments about the evolution of Chinese society between the seventh and tenth centuries... This book remains an excellent place to see the latest insights into Tang history. It is a thought-provoking effort to synthesize that work and reflect on the significance of the Tang for China's history. If it inspires the next generation of students to pursue Tang history seriously, Lewis will have made a real contribution to Tang studies. (Anthony DeBlasi Journal of Asian Studies 2010-05-01) About the Author Mark Edward Lewis is Kwoh-Ting Li Professor in Chinese Culture at Stanford University. Timothy Brook is Professor of History and Republic of China Chair at the University of British Columbia.