
Colin Mitchell
The eminent Safavid historian Roger Savory offers here a concise exploration of the status and treatment of non-Muslims during the Safavid period (1501-1722) of Iran. In addition to a short overview of Islamic juridical justifications for the second-class status of Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Sabeans living under Islamic rule, Savory provides a brief synopsis of the rise of Mongol ecumenical policies in 13th and 14th century Iran and their subsequent disappearance during the internecine politics during the Timurid and Turkmen periods of the 15th century. Savory contends that the advent of a Shi'i state introduced a new dynamic to the age-old issue of relations between an Islamic state and its non-Muslim subjects, namely the peculiarly Shi'i doctrine of *najāsat* ("ritual impurity"). According to Savory, this disdain for impure substances, both animate and inanimate, had strong ramifications for the treatment of 'unclean' Jews and Christians during reign of the increasingly orthopraxic Shah Tahmasp. Undoubtedly, the issue of non-Muslims in the Safavid state would become central during the reign of 'Abbās II and the vazirate of Muhammad Beg (an Armenian convert to Islam) when it was decreed that up to 100,000 Jews across Iran were to be forcibly converted to Shi'i Islam. Intolerance became more widespread during the
subsequent reigns of Šāh Sulaymān and Šāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn. Large numbers of Zoroastrians and Jews were forced to reject their own faiths and embrace Islam, and by the beginning of the 18th century, most foreign non-Muslims had left Isfahan.

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Thèmes : 4.2.1. Safavides et Qâjârs

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