

THE IMAM, THE PASHA & THE ENGLISHMAN

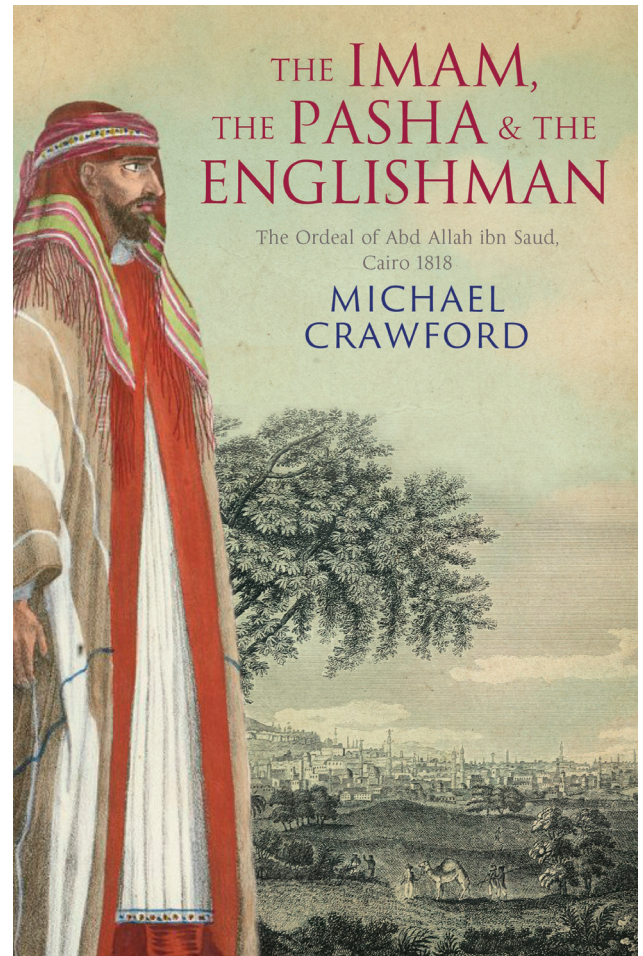
THE ORDEAL OF 'ABD ALLAH IBN SA'UD, CAIRO
1818

Michael Crawford

The dramatic encounter between Muhammad 'Ali Pasha, Ottoman governor of Egypt, and his vanquished Saudi foe, Imam 'Abd Allah, in Cairo in November 1818 marks the symbolic end of the First Saudi State. 'Abd Allah was in transit to public execution in Istanbul, the pasha on his way to becoming a major regional force and founding a local dynasty. The meeting was witnessed by an English Whig, John Bowes Wright, Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, whose previously unpublished account throws new light on the exchanges, and the surrender by 'Abd Allah of the remaining treasures taken by his late father Sa'ud from the Prophet's tomb in al-Madina.

The book highlights the importance of this historic moment in the uneasy relationship between Muhammad 'Ali and his nominal sovereign, Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II, and analyses their respective efforts to benefit domestically and internationally from 'Abd Allah's final journey. It considers the political cultures of the main regional protagonists and the Whiggish attitudes and assumptions that Bowes Wright brings to his experiences in Cairo and Istanbul. It is this cultural exploration that distinguishes this work and makes it of particular value to those interested in pre-modern Middle Eastern history and the contribution to understanding of Western travellers in Egypt and the Levant.

Michael Crawford is an independent historian who writes on the history of the Arabian Peninsula. After qualifying as a barrister, he served the British government in London and overseas, including in Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, from 1981 to 2009. He was a visiting Fellow at Princeton in 2009. His incisive biography of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, founder of the Wahhabi movement, was published in 2014 by Oneworld in its Makers of the Modern World series.



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