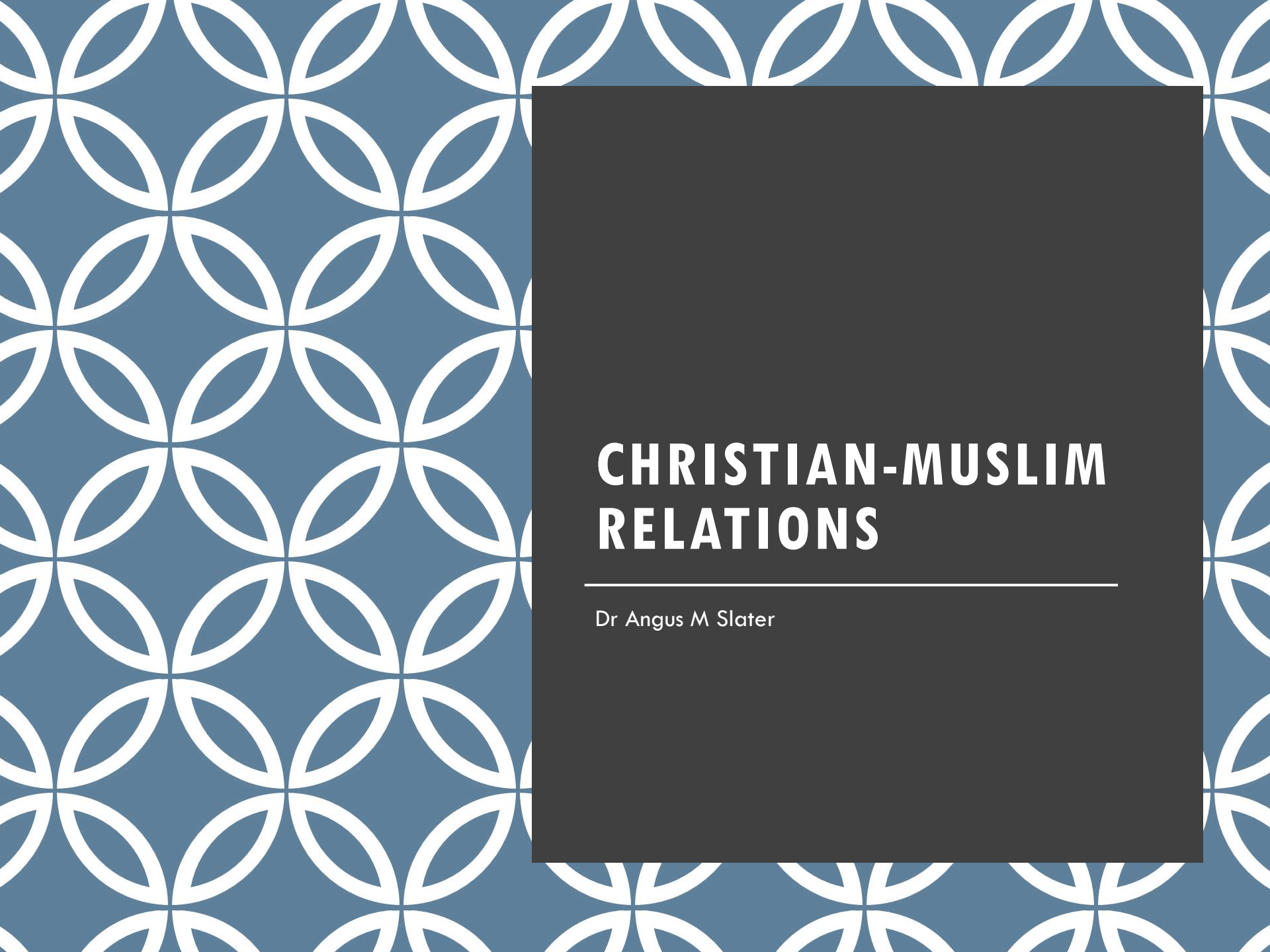




CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Dr Angus M Slater

REVISION

In the previous section, we moved through a significant period of history that has a profound impact on the relationship between the traditions of Christianity and Islam. This period, stemming from around 1000AD to 1300AD is the first period of sustained interaction between Western Christianity and the tradition of Islam. Over time, as the population of Eastern Christians living under Muslim rule declined, this relationship becomes ever more important in the broader story of Christian-Muslim relations.

We looked the genesis of many tropes in Christian responses to Islam and their roles in early interactions in Spain and elsewhere, as well as the impact of the military expeditions and cultural interchange of the Crusades.

We also examined the important role played by Peter the Venerable in encouraging the translation of critical Islamic texts, and the increasing influence these translated texts played in the development of western European civilization.



REVISION

You had four readings to complete as part of the last section, two primary sources and two secondary pieces.

The two primary sources offer insights into the perception of the religious other during the time period examined, with Ibn-Mundiqr offering a broader cultural reaction, while Peter the Venerable is focused much more on the specific religious and theological questions.

The two secondary sources take a different tack, focusing on a specific area of change in the relationship between Christianity and Islam around practices of violence and how the changing perception of the other promotes internal change within the religious tradition.

You were also provided with a copy of Al-Kindi's *Apology*, a much earlier example of interaction and attempted understanding between the Christian and Islamic traditions.



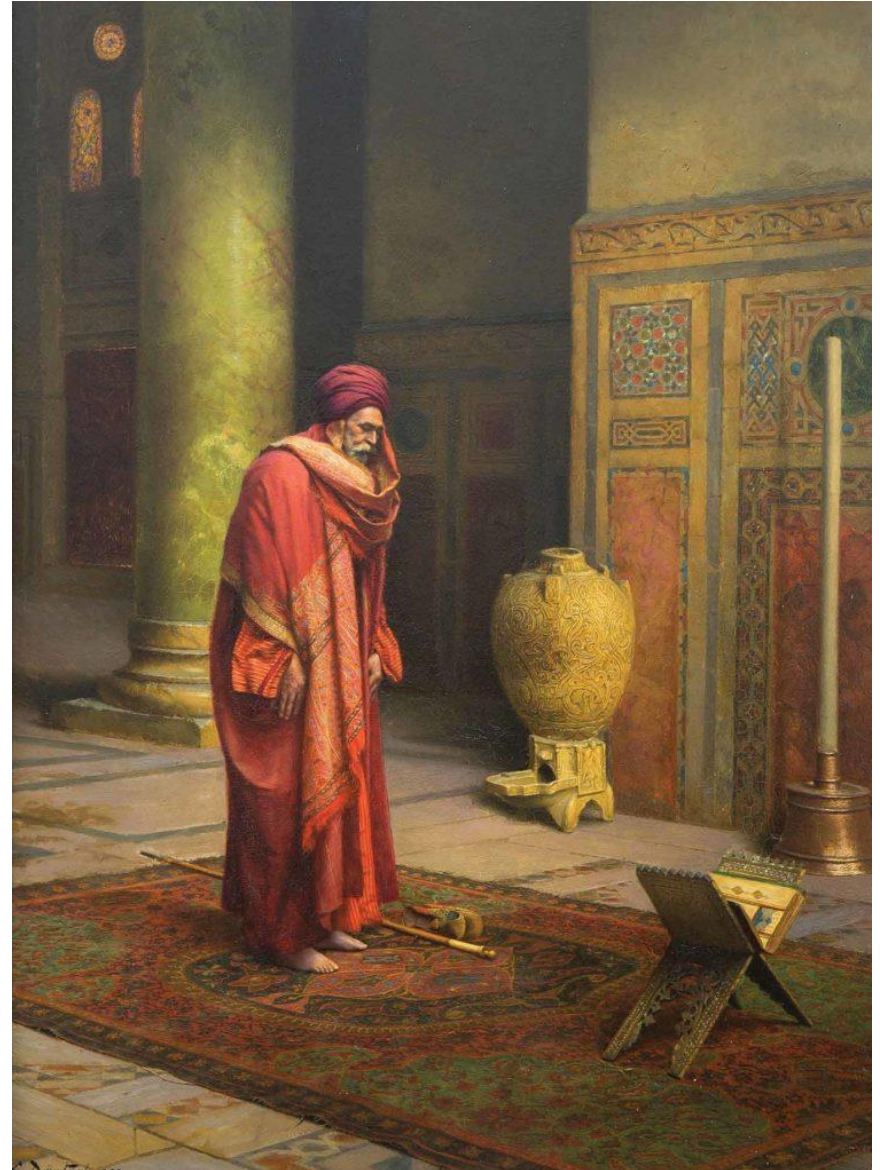
EMPIRE & MISSIONS —
COLONIALISM AND
MUSLIM RESPONSES TO
IMPERIALISM

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD — CRUSADES, KNOWLEDGE, AND TRANSMISSION

In this section, we move swiftly on from the period of the Crusades and begin our journey towards modernity.

In this time period, great changes happen in the relationship between Christian and Islamic societies. While, on leaving the Crusade era, the balance of power rested firmly with Islamic civilization, this next period of history covers a shift in the technological and economic power of Europe relative to that of Muslim lands. As part of this, we see the development of notions of “East” and “West”, which firmly attach themselves to broader ideas about religious identity.

In this section, we will examine this rise of western Christendom, the beginnings of ‘modernity’, aspects of Christian mission to Islamic societies, and the significant impact that colonialism and Empire have had on the relationship between Christianity and Islam.



THE RISE OF EUROPE

THE RISE OF EUROPE

One of the most important periods that we will cover in this section occurs between 1354AD and 1492AD. This is because this period is the fulcrum on which the shifting fortunes of the Christian and Islamic communities can be seen to turn. It is at this point that the power dynamic seen during the period of the Crusades and after, begins to invert, with the rise of European power and the decline in Muslim fortunes.

Why these dates?

They tell the story of the apogee of Muslim power in Europe and the beginnings of European extension beyond the confines of a binary relationship with Islam. They also tell a story of a reversal of political and imperial fortunes that is deeply profound and continues to play a role in the concept of Christian-Muslim relations to this day.



THE RISE OF EUROPE

The Ottoman invasion of Greece in 1354AD, marked the beginning of a long occupation of the Balkans by the Ottoman Empire, lasting through the capture of Constantinople from the Byzantines in 1453AD, the capturing of Hungary in 1540AD, and the sieges of Vienna in 1529AD and 1683AD.

This invasion represented a continuing threat to the Christian kingdoms of Europe, both politically and militarily, but also posed a significant religious challenge in the splendour and power of the Ottoman Empire. Europe had to figure out not only what bound their religious and political identities together in the face of challenge, but also how to understand and negotiate with a superior power.

However, we also see significant exchanges of ideas happen among populations in the Balkans where Christians, Jews, and Muslim lived side by side, as well as a growth in Christian-Muslim trade in the Mediterranean – especially after the Christian victory over the Ottoman fleet at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571AD. Increased trade contact along the Silk Road with Christians in places like Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, brought further knowledge to the West not only about Islam, but also about other religious traditions further afield.



THE RISE OF EUROPE

Yet, in 1492AD / 1497AD, we already see the beginnings of a seismic shift in the tenor of Christian-Muslim relations and the field on which they take place.

1492AD marks the fall of the last Muslim state on the Hispanic Peninsula to the *Reconquista*, the Christian (and crusader influenced) reclamation of Spain under the 'catholic monarchs' Ferdinand and Isabella.

Meanwhile 1492AD and 1497AD are important dates as they mark the discovery of the Americas on behalf of the Spanish Crown by Christopher Columbus, and the passage of Vasco da Gama into the Indian Ocean around the Cape of Good Hope, on behalf of the Portuguese Crown.

Both voyages not only showcase the increasing confidence of the Hispanic kingdoms, but also reshaped the geo-political nature of Christian-Muslim relations – no more did Christendom / Europe feel surrounded by Muslim lands, instead with increasing European influence in South East Asia and the Far East, Muslim communities instead began to feel encircled by European influence.

In addition, no more were Muslim lands the only route by which the riches of Asia could flow to and be exploited by the rapidly growing and industrialising countries of Europe – direct contact could be made and the political and economic influence exerted by Muslim nations declined sharply.



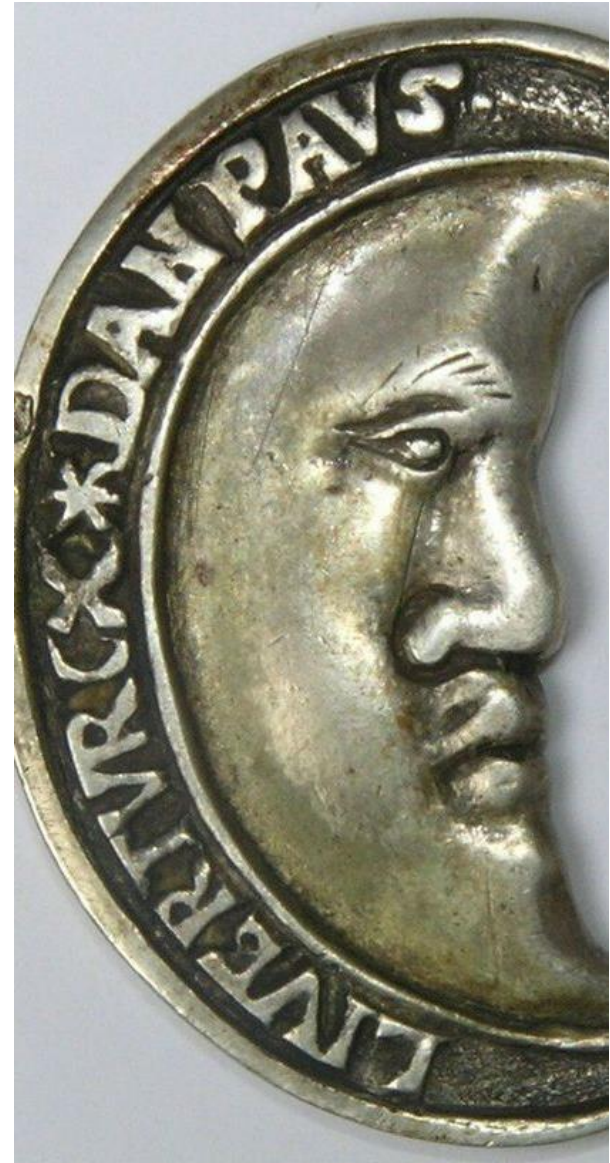
THE RISE OF EUROPE

Of course, even within this rapidly changing form of relationship between Christianity and Islam, there were exchanges on a more personal level, often bound up with internal struggles within the Christian or Muslim communities.

As an example of this, we have the Reformation – where what we now know as Protestants broke from the Catholic Church. In doing so, they rethought the nature of the relationship between Islam and the Christianity of the Catholic Church, seeking contact and allies for their struggle against Catholicism.

This took the form, largely, of political negotiation and diplomacy between newly Protestant states seeking to break from Hapsburg rule like the Dutch, and the Ottoman Empire.

Opposite is a Dutch crescent-shaped Geuzen medal of the time of the anti-Spanish Dutch Revolt, with the slogan "*Liver Turcx dan Paus*" ("Rather Turkish than Pope"), 1570.





 The Religious Divisions of Europe, ca. 1555. Prior to 1520, all of Europe was Roman Catholic.

THE RISE OF EUROPE

Another example of this shifting overlap, spurred by changes in the Christian community, can be found in the theological and religious work of the Reformer themselves.

Luther, for example, viewed Islam as being a secondary evil, behind that of the Antichrist in the Papacy. He argued against the religious tenor of the war against the Ottomans, instead arguing for it solely on secular grounds. In places, he foresees the victory of the Muslim forces as punishment for the usurpation of the Papacy.

In contrast, Calvin argued similarly to those before him that Islam was a heretical form of Christianity, writing:
'When the Turks put their Muhammad in the place of God's Son, and when they do not recognise that God is manifested in the flesh, which is one of the principle articles of our faith, then they are guilty of perversities and are leading so many people astray that they deserve to be put to death'



THE RISE OF EUROPE

As well as this reconfiguring of relations between parts of the Christian community and Islam, we also see broader political, economic, and religious trends in Europe having an impact over the course of this time period.

We see an increase in the centralisation of European states, increased government control over their subjects, and an increased homogeneity of law and custom within geographical areas defined as nations.

We see a boom in transnational and transcontinental trade, with great trading cities like Venice coming to the forefront of both economic and religious expression. This is not just between Christian and Muslim communities across the Mediterranean – new trade routes across Asia and Africa open up.

We also see an increased religious emphasis on individualism in the Protestant Reformation, as well as on the importance of scripture. This change has far reaching consequences for European society (see. Weber!) and in doing so, naturally has a significant impact on Christian-Muslim relations.



CHRISTIAN MISSION TO ISLAMIC LANDS

CHRISTIAN MISSION TO ISLAMIC LANDS

This changing dynamic between the Christian West and the Islamic East can also be seen in the differing and changing attitudes towards mission within the Christian community.

In the early years, the Christian tradition had, by necessity, been focused on mission and the conversion of others to their faith. However, with the imperialization of the faith at the end of the Roman Empire, this focus on mission as the primary component of Christian faith fades, replaced by a strong identification of political belonging with religious belonging. We see this both in the West, where the development of the Papacy and Christendom heightens this, but also in the East, where Byzantium become coterminous with Christian belief in the East.

During these periods, little missionary activity as we would recognise it now had been done towards Islamic communities before the end of the period of the Crusades and even then, it remained fragmentary. The reasons for this are many, but include a stronger focus on pagan conversion, such as the Orthodox missionising of the Slavs in the 800AD's, as well as an increased hostility towards Muslims as hegemonic theological competitors among the Abrahamic faiths.



CHRISTIAN MISSION TO ISLAMIC LANDS

We begin to see a shift in this attitude towards the end of the period of the Crusades, with figures like St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226AD), who travelled with the Fifth Crusade to Damietta in Egypt and engaged in debate with the Ayyubid Sultan Malik Al-Kamil, or Ramon Lull (1232-1316AD), a Spanish friar who both studied Islam and engaged with multiple periods of debate with Muslim scholars in Tunis.

This shift continues, slowly, to build influence with a major boost given to it in 1583AD with the publication of an Arabic Bible by the Vatican.

In addition, the forming of an alliance between France and the Ottoman Empire in 1535AD, against the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, brought the Muslim power firmly into the tangled weave of European and Christian politics. This meant that European powers swiftly fought to gain knowledge about, and influence in, Muslim nations across the Muslim world – for example, both England and the Papacy sent ambassadors (including religious figures) to the Shah of Iran in 1621AD leading to a well reported theological discussion between the Catholic friars, English Anglicans, and the Shah himself on matters of fasting, crosses and images in worship, free-will and predestination, and religious authority.



CHRISTIAN MISSION TO ISLAMIC LANDS

Another example of the acceleration of this trend is the formation of the Jesuits in 1534AD by Ignatius Loyola. The Order, founded as part of the Catholic Church's Counter-Reformation drive to renew and revitalise in the face of Protestantism, placed a strong emphasis not only on pushing back against Protestants, but also on the spreading of Christian beliefs beyond its historical boundaries.

Francis Xavier (1505AD-1552AD) who worked mostly in India and Japan, is the most famous example of these missionaries, but others such as Matthew Ricci (1552-1610AD) in China, and Jerome Xavier (1549-1617AD) in India, engaged in significant missionary work as well.

Jerome is the most important for our purposes, having spent a number of years at the court of the Muslim Mughal emperor in India, particularly during the rule of Emperor Akhbar (1556-1605AD). Having been invited on the personal recommendation of the Emperor, the Jesuit order sought to influence the development of Akhbar's empire, and hoped to convert the Emperor to Christianity.



MUGHAL EMPIRE

1530-1707



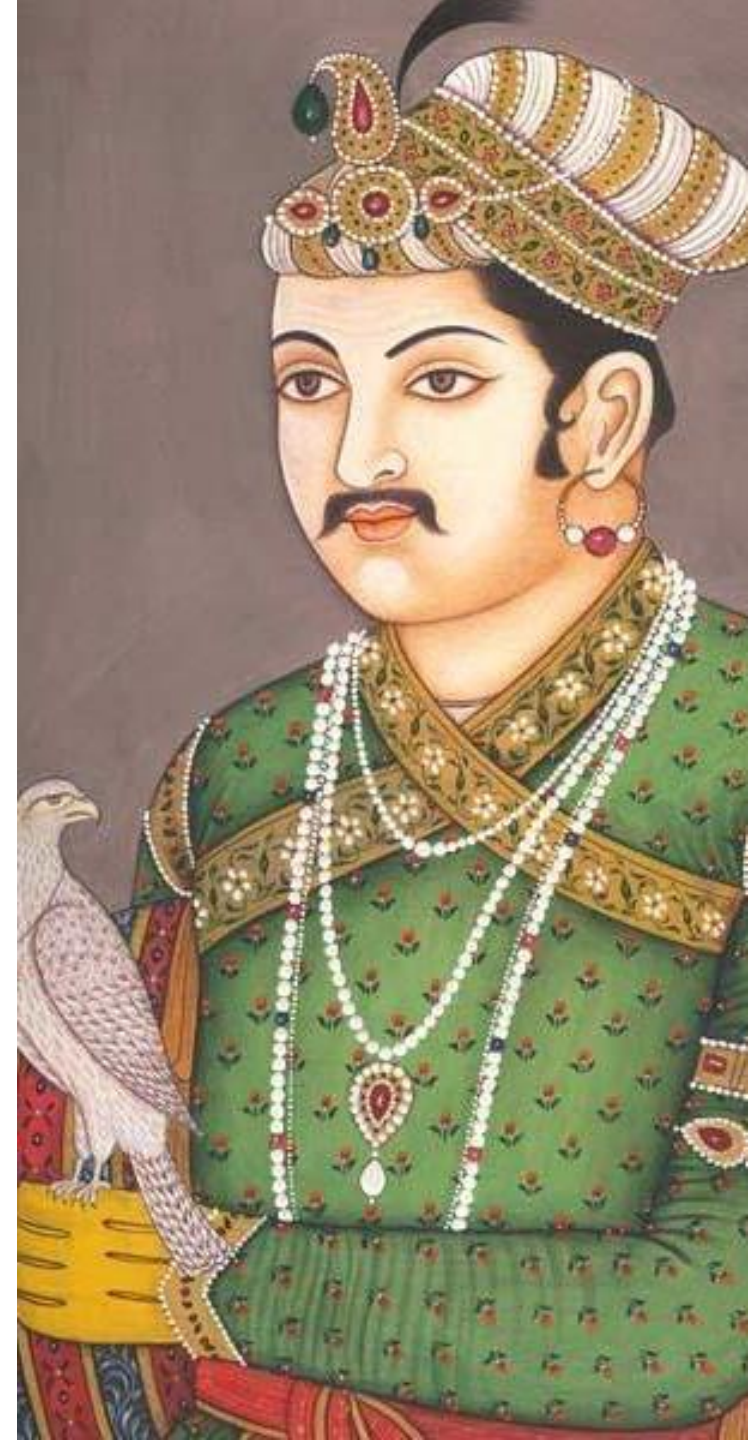
Map not to Scale

CHRISTIAN MISSION TO ISLAMIC LANDS

Having only recently conquered great swathes of India, and ruling over a largely non-Muslim population, the Mughal Empire struggled to form a central identification for its citizens. It appears that Akhbar sought to utilise religious identity as a way of consolidating the imperial power, as well as having a significant and personal interest in religious questions.

Xavier engaged wholeheartedly in this mission, learning Persian, the lingua franca of the court, and sponsoring the translation of multiple pieces of Christian literature into the language. Akhbar's second was given to the Jesuits for his education, and a number of formal religious debates were held.

However, ultimately, and having disagreed with the Christian beliefs about the divine sonship of Jesus and the Trinity, Akhbar sought to unite his Empire around a new invented form of religion, the *din-i-ilahi* or 'religion of God', which attempted a monotheistic synthesis of faiths and included a central place for the person of the Emperor.



CHRISTIAN MISSION TO ISLAMIC LANDS

His death in 1605AD, again raised hopes among the Jesuits that his successor, Jahangir (1605-1627AD) might convert to Christianity but these were ultimately foiled by political tensions between the Portuguese in Goa and the Mughal Empire.

These Jesuit missions are important for our purposes as they represent a significant shift in the context in which Christian-Muslim contact took place, being largely on a religious and political footing, rather than as a consequence of conquest and war. In addition, they showcase the increasingly global context of this interaction, as well as the increased focus on mission as an activity of the (Catholic) Christian faith.

Mission activity is not solely confined to Catholic religious figures, however Protestant missionaries, such as William Carey (1761-1834AD) and Henry Martyn (1781-1812AD) tend to arise significantly later.



**IMPERIALISM,
COLONIALISM, AND
MUSLIM REACTION
(AND MAPS!)**

IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND MUSLIM REACTION

During this period of increased Christian mission to Islamic lands, the gradual change in the balance of political and economic power between Christian and Islamic lands accelerates further with the rise of colonialism and imperialism by the European powers.

This interaction is not just one of political domination, economic exploitation, or geographic expansion – it is driven, at least partly, by a number of religious and theological beliefs, and seeks in its expression to deliver on those beliefs.

Colonialism and imperialism in this period go hand-in-hand with aspects of religious identity, missionary commitments, and broader theological beliefs about the superiority of western (Christian) civilization. In turn, the impact of colonialism and imperialism engenders significant responses from Muslim communities which take a variety of forms.

We will return to this intellectual dynamic of East and West towards the end of the module – for now we are concerned with the historical patterning of the relations between Christian and Muslim communities.



IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND MUSLIM REACTION

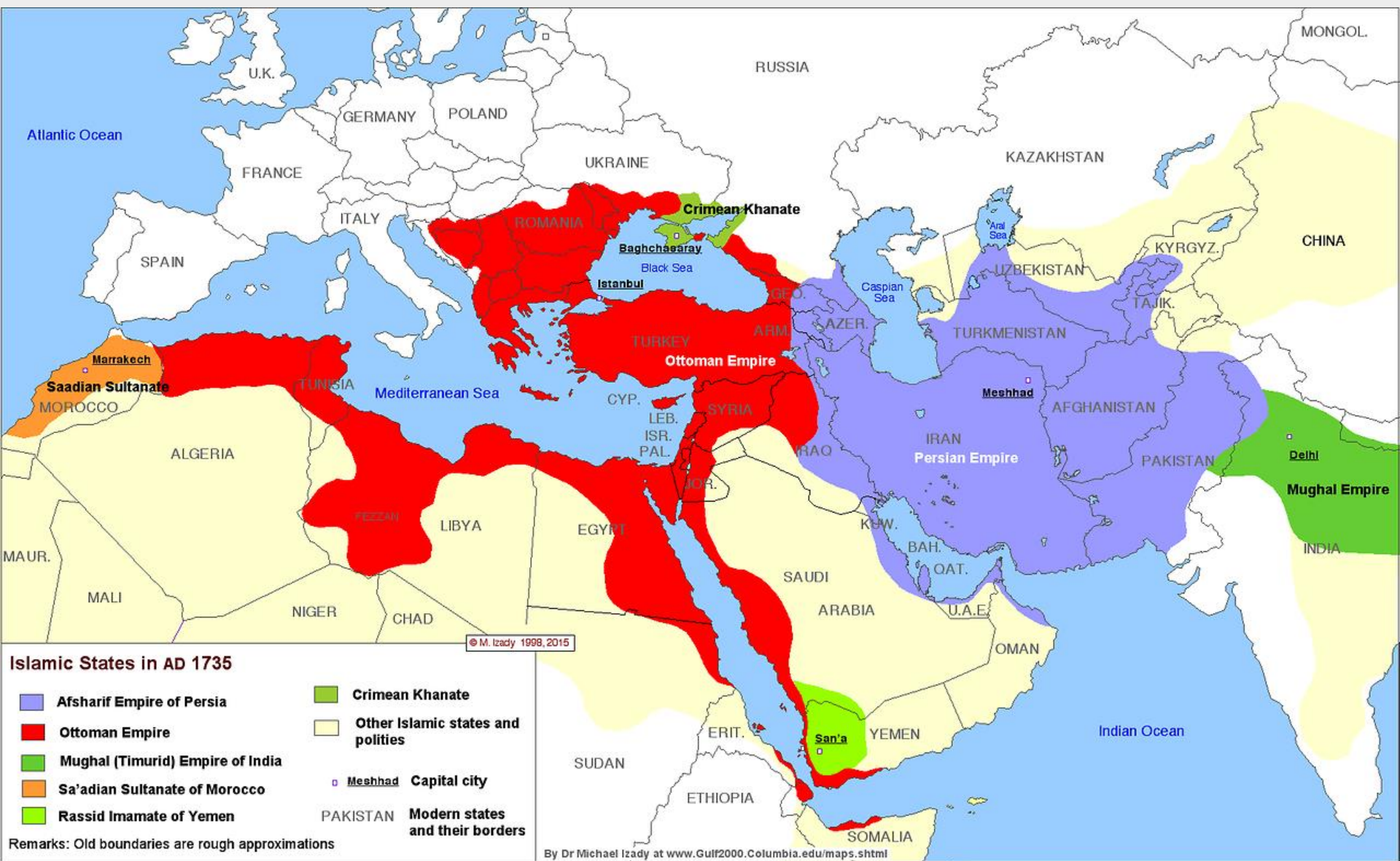
While the various missionary activities covered in the previous section bore little numerical or political fruit in the Muslim world (despite being immensely successful elsewhere around the world), the impact of European imperial and military colonialism on the Muslim world between the French Revolution (1789AD) and World War 1 (1914AD) cannot be overstated.

These dates, the 'long 19th century' of Hobsbawm (1962, 1975, 1987) bookend the inversion of the power dynamic evident throughout earlier history between Christian and Muslim worlds and are the space occupied by a seismic shift in the globalised nature of Christian-Muslim relations.

At the beginning of this period, we have three huge imperial Muslim powers who, together, span from Morocco to Bangladesh, from Sudan to the gates of Vienna.

By the end, we have world-spanning European empires and only three small and disconnected areas of Muslim rule remaining.





IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND MUSLIM REACTION

Perhaps the pre-eminent example of this change is to be found in the Ottoman Empire, which as we have seen, posed a significant threat to the Christian order of Europe from its initial Siege of Vienna in 1529AD and as recently as the Siege of Vienna in 1683AD. At this point the Ottoman Empire spans almost the entirety of North Africa, Egypt and most of the Red Sea coast, Syria and large parts of Iraq, Anatolia and the Caucasus, and the all of the Balkans and Crimea across the Black Sea.

However, the increasing military power of the Christian West and its ability to extend this power across the globe, led to a swift reversal of this state of affairs, with the Ottomans forced to cede Hungary to Austria in 1699AD, Crimea to Russia in 1774AD, Algiers to France in 1830AD, Aden to the British in 1839, Tunisia to the French in 1881AD, Egypt to the British in 1882AD, Libya to the Italians in 1912AD, and Morocco to the French in the same year.

Despite attempts to ape western forms of military and political organization, by 1914AD and the outbreak of WW1, the Ottoman Empire barely extended beyond Anatolia and Arabia, with further partition, colonisation, and the toppling of religious authority following the resolution of the war.



Gençizade

The OTTOMAN Empire





3 THE DIVISION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

 Republic of Turkey after Treaty of Lausanne 1923	 French mandate	 British influence
 Boundary of Turkey after Treaty of Sèvres 1920	 British mandate	1920 Date of mandate
 Boundary of spheres of influence in Turkey 1920-22	 British colony	1922 Date of independence

IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND MUSLIM REACTION

The second of three examples is the Safavid / Qajar Empire, located in Persia and spanning across contemporary Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan.

Over this time period, we see increasing British influence in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, as well as increased Russian influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. This influence, in addition to the modernising reforms of the Qajar government prompted the de-stabilisation of the Persian state, and revolution in 1905AD. This de-stabilisation and the Great Power rivalry between Britain and Russia and between those two and Germany in the lead up to WW1 weakened the ability of the Persian state to resist foreign influence.

Ultimately, the Persian state was divided into British and Russian spheres of influence in the south and north respectively, with a buffer zone between. The Persian state was not involved in this division of the country and was only informed after the terms between Britain and Russia has been agreed – a betrayal of expectations that had a lasting impact on the development of anti-western and anti-Christian attitudes within Iranian nationalism that persists even to this day.

In this period of history, we also see an increased focus on the failure of liberal, secular, reforms in defending aspects of 'tradition' Islamic society and belief – the revolution of 1905 in Iran is heavily influenced by reformist tendencies of the Qajar monarchy, but also liberal secular ideas from the West, yet is unable to preserve the independence of the Persian State.

This relationship between traditional Islamic social norms, and their religious underpinnings, and the preservation of Muslim political and social power, returns as an important factor in the Muslim response to the experience of Western Christian colonialism.







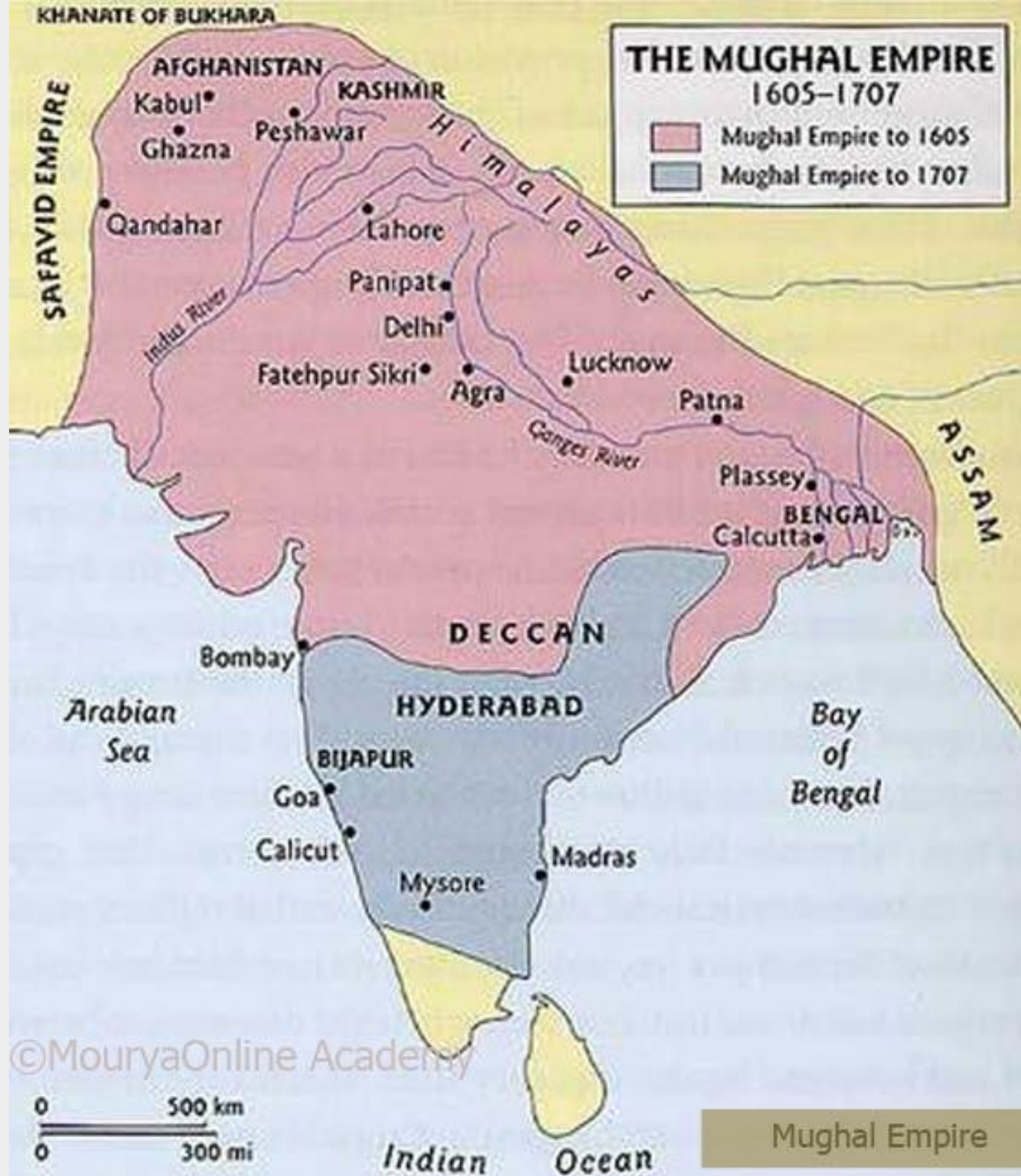
IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND MUSLIM REACTION

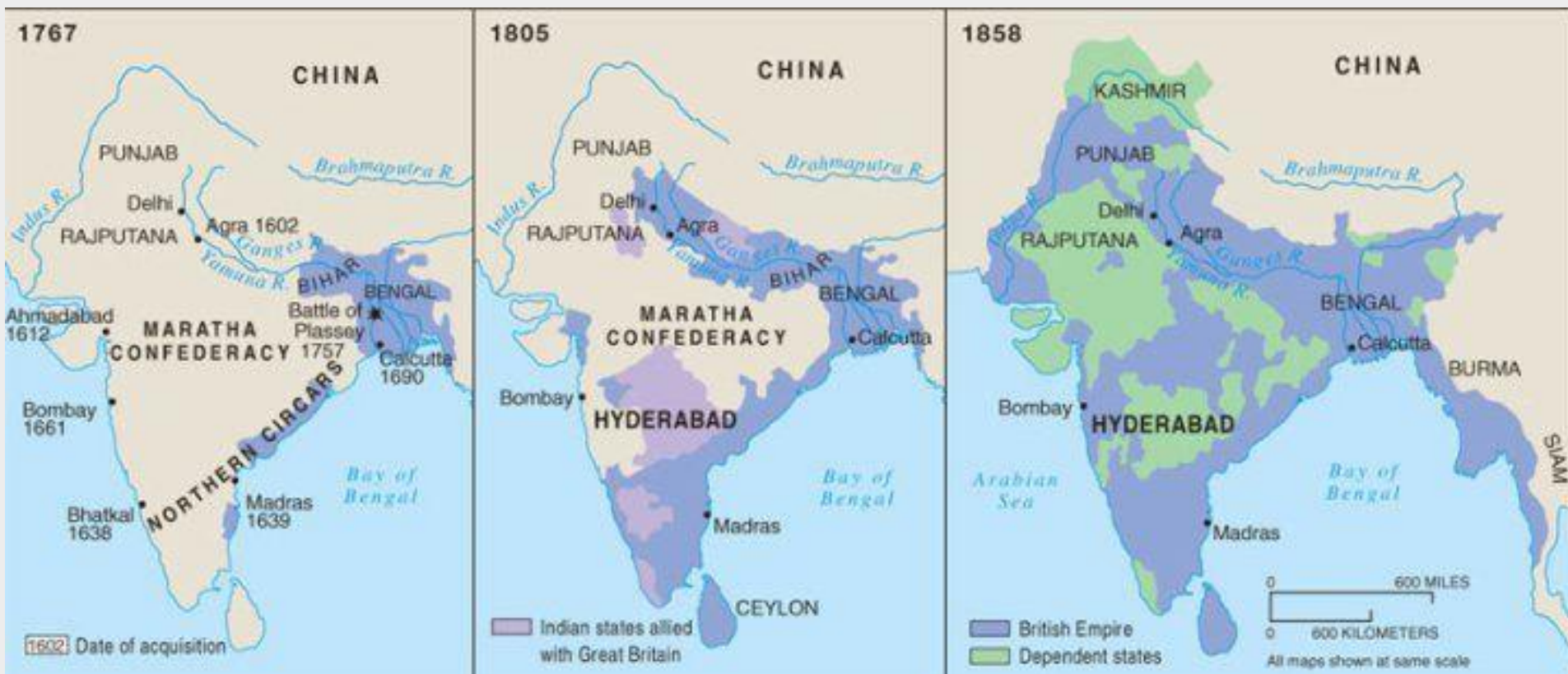
The third and last example of this reversal of fortunes in the face of western Christian imperialism is the Mughal Empire of India, which we have already examined in the context of early Jesuit missions and the Emperor Akhbar in 1556AD. Expanding rapidly across the Gangetic plain, the Mughal Empire came to dominate the entire Indian sub-continent, introducing the Islamic faith prominently into the religious make up of this area.

This expansion and the religious consequences of it continue to have a significant impact on Indian political and religious dynamics even today – with the rise of religious nationalism and inter-religious tension. From 1719AD, the Mughal Empire began to collapse, largely through internecine feuding and pressure from the Hindu Marathra Empire which began to replace it as the imperial power in much of the Indian sub-continent.

However, this change in rulership did not have much of an impact on the complicated religious, social, and cultural differences of the ruled population – a state of affairs ruthlessly exploited by the economic, political, and religious concerns of the burgeoning British Empire. With focus on both economic extraction and Christian missionary conversion, the British Empire swiftly took control of the majority of India, beginning the imperial of India which was to last until partition and independence in 1947.







IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND MUSLIM REACTION

These three examples offer some insight into the swift and significant reversal of fortunes experienced by Muslim communities in their relation with the Christian and European Western powers.

The almost cataclysmic fall of these three significant Muslim empires in such a short period of time provoked a number of responses from Muslim intellectuals and civil society. One of the most prominent and influential figures was Jamal al-din al-Afghani (1839-1897AD) who travelled across the Islamic world and articulated an attempted response to the ravages of Western imperialism based on the adoption of western scientific knowledge and the deployment of Islam as an effective and efficient way of mobilising the Muslim population against further encroachments.

This fusion was based on an understanding of Islam as fundamentally rationalist in its legal and theological bases, and therefore compatible with the scientific basis of western technology, while also provided the disparate and disconnected Muslim communities with a pan-Islamic forms of identity around which to cohere.



IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND MUSLIM REACTION

For the later part of his life, al-Afghani lived and worked as a teacher in Cairo where he strongly influenced a generation of scholars like Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905AD) who gained prominence as part of the reformist tendency within Islam.

In general terms, al-Afghani and Abduh sought to produce an interpretation of Islam that emphasised the modernisation of technology and education along western lines, while also encouraging a strict adherence to Islamic social and ethical principles. As he wrote:

'It is not the religious beliefs, whether right or wrong, which are opposed to culture and material progress, but that belief which prohibits learning of sciences, earning one's livelihood and the ways of culture. I do not believe that there is any religion in the world which opposes these things' (Moazzam, 1984)

Al-Afghani did this not just through teaching, but also by engaging in direct political activism against British colonial rule, producing newspapers and pamphlets, and public speaking across the Muslim world. In a rather peculiar manner, his influence has come to now extend into both liberal reformist and authoritarian conservative streams of thought in the contemporary Muslim world.



READINGS

READINGS

Our readings for this section, again, cover a vast swathe of history and obviously cannot do justice to the changing trends across the borders between Christian and Muslim communities during this time period.

They do attempt to give some sense of the changing form of relations between Christian and Muslim powers during this time, as the changing geographic, political, and technological divide begins to sharpen.



READINGS

Arjana, S. (2015-02-03). Turkish Monsters. In Muslims in the Western Imagination. : Oxford University Press.

This reading aims to provide some insight into the nature of the conception of Islam within Europe at the beginning of this time period.

Green, Nile. 'Parnassus Of The Evangelical Empire.' *Terrains of Exchange: Religious Economies of Global Islam* (2015; pubd online May. 2015).

Sharkey, H. J. (2004). Arabic Antimissionary Treatises: Muslim Responses to Christian Evangelism in the Modern Middle East. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 28(3), 98–104

These two readings offer up the contrasting views present about missionary activity in the Islamic world from Christian and Islamic perspectives. We will return to the intellectual concept that Orientalism is, and its influence on Christian-Muslim relations, towards the end of this module.

Imperialism, Science and Religion: Two Essays by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, 1883 and 1884 1 Nikki R. Keddie via Islamfiche

The last reading offers translations of two documents by al-Afghani which illuminate further the tension in his project between scientific and religious knowledge and how these two can be reconciled.