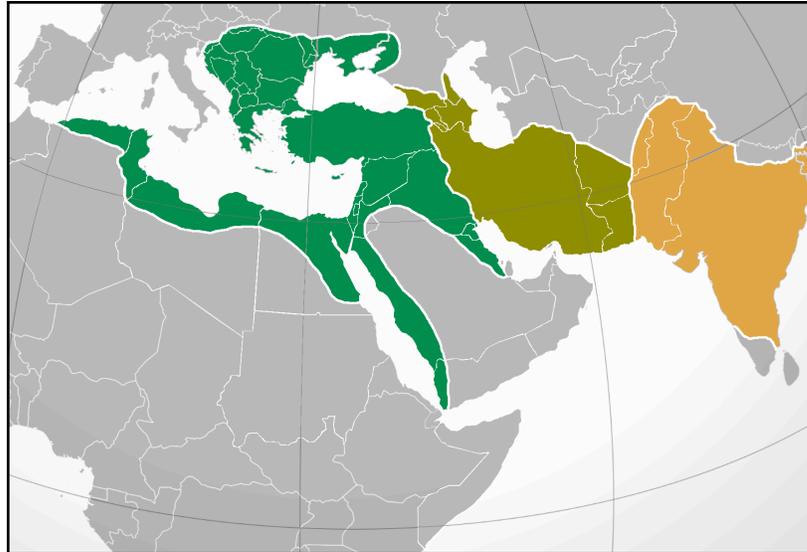


F. The Millennium of Triumphalism (c.622-1683)

1. After the initial explosive expansion of Islam, a period of relative calm set in, during which Islamic culture existed in an equilibrium with its neighboring cultures, especially Europe.
 - a) European culture was barely getting on its feet when the Muslims invaded Iberia c.711 AD.
 - b) The previous civilization known as the Roman Empire had collapsed in **476 AD**. The last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustus, had been deposed by one of the leaders of the barbarian tribes that had invaded Roman territory.
 - c) For centuries, those same barbarians were locked in a contest to claim land for themselves at Rome's expenses and against one another.
 - d) The wars went on almost interminably until one tribe, the Franks, temporarily achieved primacy and almost created a new unitary civilization. The Frankish Empire collapsed after the death of its charismatic leader Charlemagne, however, and Europe began to coalesce into separate countries, most notably France and Germany, which torturously evolved into the nations they are today.
 - e) When the Muslims invaded Iberia c.711 AD, this patchwork of European peoples was barely able to resist their advance, but they did, and the two cultures settled into a pattern of grudging coexistence.
2. During this period, control of the Muslim world shifted from one ethnic group to another. The Arabs who had built the original Islamic empire were not able to create a bureaucratic infrastructure to sustain an organized political system over such a larger area. They lost control of once conquered territories, where new forces arose, including the Turks. These people were originally from the region now known as "Turkmenistan," but migrated to what is now called "Turkey," and claimed it as their new home.
3. During this migration they also claimed control of the Holy Land from the Arabs, and notoriously began to persecute Christians pilgrims. This sparked the *Crusades*—a European military campaign to wrestle control of the Holy Land from Muslim rule that lasted from 1095 to 1291.
4. After an initial success, the Christians were consistently on the defensive, and eventually had to abandon their claim. Thus the *Crusades* did little to discourage *Triumphal Islam* in its belief that it was superior to Christianity and assured of an ultimate religious victory.
5. This continued to be the case, even though the Muslim occupiers of Iberia were eventually repelled in 1492. Triumphalism continued because the Turks were making more progress than ever before in their attacks on eastern Europe, having conquered the city of Constantinople in 1453, which had stood since Roman times as a fortress preventing the invasion of Europe from Asia.
6. In addition, and as we will see in our next segment on India, a Muslim invasion of India was also getting underway that would result in the formation of the Mughal

Empire in South Asia. There were still plenty of reasons to hope for the military triumph of Islam over other faiths.



By 1683, the original Islamic Caliphate had broken up into three empires: the Turkish “Ottoman” Empire (green), the Persian Empire (brown), and the Mughal Empire (orange). Even though it was politically divided, the “House of Islam” was still arguably more successful and triumphal than ever.

G. The Decline of Triumphal Islam (1683-)

1. Everything changed in **1683**, when the Turkish Empire known as the “Ottoman Empire” (named after one of its early leaders) laid siege to the city of Vienna, in the heart of central Europe.
2. On this occasion, however, they were defeated by Polish forces that came from the north to reinforce their Christian neighbors. The Poles and their European allies then drove the Ottomans back consistently during a series of *Euro-Ottoman Wars (1683-99)*.
3. This makes the failed siege of Vienna in **1683** an important “turning point” in history. The idea of an ultimate religious triumph did not die off completely, but the fact that Muslim armies consistently lost to European armies after **1683** caused a new phase of history to begin, in which the question that preoccupied Muslim rulers was how to *restore* their triumphal culture as it declined all around them.
4. Part of this story of setbacks is a set of *twelve* Russo-Turkish wars! These started with Russia aspiring to expand its territory to the Black Sea, and then aiming at control of Constantinople itself. Eventually most of the Black Sea came under Russian control, though Constantinople remained in Turkish control.

5. Meanwhile the British were beginning to take control of India away from its Muslim conquerors. To attempt to counteract this trend, the French conqueror Napoleon briefly took over Egypt in 1798 in a bid to use it as a base of operations to conquer Asia. It was the British who defeated Napoleon in the Battle of the Nile of 1799 and forced him to retreat to Europe.
6. The basic character of the relationship between Islamic culture and Europe had flipped. It was now Europe that had a triumphal character. It was Europe that was now going out into the world, including all the way to China, and imposing its culture (as per the Opium War of 1839-42).
7. In response to Europe's ascendancy, the Ottoman Turkish leaders began an unprecedented initiative to *learn* from the Europeans. They sent embassies to Europe to survey its military, industrial and scientific establishments and recruited wealthy families to send their youth to Europe to study in its universities. This was known as the "Tanzimat Reforms" starting in 1839. (The word "Tanzimat" in Turkish means "reorganization.")
8. Triumphalism was not completely dead. The purpose of the reorganization was precisely to restore the proper, expected balance between Islamic culture and its European adversary. The reformers did not grasp the nature of the scientific and industrial revolutions that Europe was experiencing and how they would give Europe a permanent advantage over them. (Indeed, they still haven't understood it, some two hundred years later, which is why the Islamic world, unlike Japan for instance, continues to be relatively poor and undeveloped.)
9. Unable to truly grasp the nature of Europe's cultural advantage, the Ottoman Empire consistency declined. The French Empire seized Algeria. The British Empire seized Egypt. Greece won its independence. The Mughal Empire was completely overrun. The collapse of all three Islamic empires continued all the way until **World War I (1914-19)**[‡].