Napoleon’s Invasion of Egypt
HSTAFM 162 Lecture 9.2
March 3, 2016
BRITISH, FRENCH, DUTCH, AND RUSSIAN EMPIRES

of reform in Indian Islam. His aim of creating an Islamic state on liberated territory outside British control was frustrated by the Sikhs, who defeated him at Balakot in 1831. The Northwest Frontier, however, continued to be the focus of resistance to British rule long after Barelwi's death. Between 1847 and 1908 there were no less than sixty rebellions against the British. Many of them had millennarian overtones and nearly all were legitimized as jihads against infidel rule.

Many of these movements against European imperialism were led by men trained in the disciplines and hierarchies of the Sufi tariqas. In the Caucasus the Imam Shamil, a leader in the Naqshbandi tradition, waged a campaign against Russian penetration lasting from 1834 to 1839. Although the Islamic state he founded was eventually incorporated into the tsarist empire, Shamil's memory remained vibrant among the peoples of Daghestan and Chechnya, who mounted successive revolts against the Russians in 1863, 1877, 1917–19, during the Second World War, and against the post-communist administrations of Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin. In Cyrenaica, the Sanusiya order, which had accepted Ottoman suzerainty, became the source of organized resistance after the Italian invasion in 1911.

The British and French encountered similar movements of resistance throughout Muslim Africa. Abd al-Qadir, a shaikh of the Qadiriyya order, led the resistance to French rule after the conquest of Algiers in 1830. He established an Islamic state in the western Sahara. This lasted until 1847, when the French finally overwhelmed it and sent him into exile. In 1881 Muhammad Ahmad, a shaikh of the Sammaniya branch of the Khalwatiya, proclaimed himself Mahdi in the Upper Nile region, and launched a jihad against the Egyptian government and its foreign backers, who were penetrating the region under European command. The defeat of the Mahdi's successor at Omdurman in 1898 was hailed by Winston Churchill, who witnessed the battle, as "the most signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over barbarians." The "arms of science" on this occasion were the British machine guns. Familiar weapons in small-scale punitive expeditions in much of Africa in the 1890s, here they were used for the first time against an army of more than fifty thousand men.
Napoleon's republican army was not the old Christian enemy of the Crusades. Critiquing Napoleon’s proclamation in his 1798 Tarīkh Mudādat al-Fāransīs bi Mīrāz (History of the Period of the French in Egypt), an eyewitness account of the first seven months of the occupation, al-Jabartī notes that Napoleon falls one step shy of embracing Islam in his “miserable letter,” since he elides the second half of the shahāda, the Islamic profession of faith: “Ashadu anna l-ālāha illā Allāh, wa ashadu anna Mūhammadan rasūlu Allāh” (“I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Mūhammad is the messenger of God”).

Al-Jabartī’s account begins not on a note of attraction to the figure...
Sultanate of Mysore
Ṭīpū Sulṭān
(1750–1799)
Napoléon’s Campaign

- A large army of 40,000 troops and 10,000 sailors assembled in 1798 at the port of Toulon.

- French land on the island of Malta in June, 1798, dispersing the Knights of Malta, a Roman Catholic military order formed during the Crusades.
Murād Bey, ca. 1809.
Battle of the Pyramids, July 1798
Battle of the Nile, August 1798
Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904): Napoleon and His General Staff in Egypt (1863).
Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904): Napoleon in Front at Cairo (1886).
Baron Antoine-Jean Gros (1771-1835): La bataille d’Abukir (1806).
Battle of Alexandria, 1801
DESCRIPTION DE L'ÉGYPTE
OU
RECUEIL DES OBSERVATIONS ET DES RECHERCHES QUI ONT ÉTÉ FAITES EN ÉGYPTE PENDANT L'EXPÉDITION DE L'ARMÉE FRANÇAISE
SECONDE ÉDITION
DÉDIÉE AU ROI
PUBLIÉE PAR C. L. F. PANCKOUCKE

ANTiquités
TOME PREMIER

PARIS
IMPRIMERIE DE C. L. F. PANCKOUCKE

M. D. CCC. XX.
Proclamation of Napoléon Bonaparte to the people of Egypt, 2 July 1798.

Copyright © The British Library Board. All rights reserved
In the name of God the beneficent, the merciful, there is no god but God, he has no son nor associate in his reign.

On behalf of the French Republic founded on the basis of Liberty and Equality, General Bonaparte, head of the French army, lets it be known to the people of Egypt that for too long the Beys who govern Egypt have insulted the French nation and have snubbed our merchants: the hour of their punishment has arrived.

For too long this pack of slaves bought in Georgia and the Caucasus have tyrannised most of the world; but God, the Lord of the Universe, the all powerful, has ordered that their empire come to an end.

People of Egypt, you will be told that I have come to destroy your religion; it is a lie, do not believe it! Reply that I have come to restore your rights, to punish the usurpers; that I respect God, his prophet and the glorious Koran more than the Mamelukes.

Tell them that all men are equal before God; wisdom, talent and virtue are the only differences between men.
Now, what wisdom, what talent, what virtues distinguish the Mamelukes so that they have exclusively all that makes life pleasant and agreeable? Are there good lands? They belong to the Mamelukes. Are there beautiful slaves, beautiful horses and beautiful homes? They belong to the Mamelukes. If Egypt is their farm, let them show the lease God has given them. But God is just and merciful towards the people; and with the aid of the All Powerful, from this day on, no Egyptian will be prevented from acceding to an eminent post: the wisest, the most educated and the most virtuous will govern, and the people will be happy.

Once there were great towns among you, large canals, great commerce. Who destroyed all this, if not the greed, the injustice and the tyranny of the Mamelukes?
Cadis [Mohammedan judges], Sheiks, Imams, Tchorbadjis, tell the people that we are the true Muslims. Did we not destroy the pope who said that we have to make war on Muslims? Did we not destroy the Knights of Malta, because those madmen believed that God wanted them to make war on Muslims? Have we not, throughout the centuries, been friends of the Sultan (may God fulfil his desires!) and the enemy of his enemies? Have not the Mamelukes, on the contrary, always rebelled against the authority of the Sultan, whom they still repudiate? They do as they like.

Three times happy those who are with us! They will prosper in fortune and rank. Happy are those who remain neutral! They will have the time to learn to know us, and they will side with us. But misfortune, three times misfortune, to those who take up arms with the Mamelukes and fight us! There will be no hope for them: they will die.