

# History of the Field

- Theological Beginnings
  - mythological view: “Hagarenes”
  - explains non-Jewish/non-Christian monotheists in 7th c.

# Religious Polemics, 800-1100

- **Eastern Christendom** (Byzantine Empire)
  - under Islamic hegemony
  - participation in social life
- **Western Christendom** (Holy Roman Empire)
  - lack of intimate contact (Poitiers 732)
  - viewed as non-Christian enemy

# Crusades and Cluniac Scholarship, 1100-1500

- study of Islam for missionary purposes
  - Peter the Venerable (d.1156)
    - “Cluniac Corpus”
  - beginning of the Crusades (1096)
    - respect for Islamic learning and piety (Saladin)

# Reformation, 1500-1650

- Ottoman Empire (Constantinople, 1453)
- **Protestant Reformers**
  - translations into vernacular languages
  - search for contradictions
  - comparisons between Rome and Islam
  - heresy (not distinct religion in its own right)
  - little new actual scholarship

# Discovery and Enlightenment, 1650-1900

- expansion of markets and military interests
- prelude to colonial ventures
- study no longer confined to theol. disputes
  
- Enlightenment: “religions” of humankind
- study of Arabic language and texts
- new concern for Muhammad’s life

# Nineteenth Century

- Napoleon invaded Egypt (1789)
- accompanied by large team of scholars
- link between scholarly means and political ends

# Historicism

- events historically dependent on previous events
- denial of absolute originality
- *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judentum aufgenommen?* (1833)

# Orientalism and the 20th c.

- Orientalism: separate discipline (19th c.)
- philological interest (historical-critical)
- uncover allegedly essential features
- criticism leads to
  - “Islamic Studies”
  - area studies (e.g., Middle Eastern Studies)

# Said's Criticism

- *Orientalism* (1978)
- not just an academic discipline
- served European imperial designs

# Knowledge and Power

- all knowledge is product of its age
- no knowledge is fully objective
- Orient was/is not free subject of thought

# Orientalism - Style of Thought

- ineradicable distinction: Orient and Occident
- presupposition of *essential* difference
- Western superiority, Oriental inferiority
- small number of general/stereotypical formulas

# Said's Objections

- uncritically essentialist standpoint
- hides historical change
- hides the *interest* of the Orientalist