

The major confrontation between islam and western christianity

[History](#)



The Major Confrontation between Islam and Western Christianity

Question 1: What was the major confrontation between Islam and Western Christianity from the period of the crusades to the beginning of the Early Modern period?

The relationship between Islam and Christianity in the middle ages was fraught with difficulties. This mostly came about as the Ottoman Empire expanded its territory into Europe, first into Bulgaria and Bosnia and then increasingly westward into Hungary. This resulted in the biggest clash of the civilizations of this period.

In 1529, the Ottoman Empire, led by Suleiman was at the height of its power. It had defeated most of Hungary and all that really stood in its way and stopped it from continuing on into parts of the Holy Roman Empire was Vienna, which was a poorly defended city. Suleiman and his army led siege to the great city with hundreds of thousands of troops. The defenders, however, managed to turn him back. Although he would try again later, he would never come as close to breaking into the Holy Roman Empire. In many ways this would be the high point of the Ottoman Empire. It would be increasingly encroached, and finally defeated by the Europeans.

Who knows how history would have played out if the Ottomans had been able to keep control of Hungary and also to take Vienna? They could have used this city as a base from which to attack Germany and Italy. They would have converted the locals and created Muslim territory in the heart of Europe. Things would look very different today.

Question 2: What were the pivotal developments of the Byzantine Empire in the first millennium AD/CE and the major personalities that shaped its

destiny?

As the Roman Empire (based out of Rome) declined in the early years of the first millennium, in the east the Byzantine Empire began to take shape. At first its capital was in Anatolia, but when the emperor Constantine took over in 324, it was moved to the present site of Istanbul, then called Constantinople. Constantine and other emperors proved to be the main shaping forces of the Empire in its early years.

One of the great legacies of Constantine was not simply moving the capital, it was enshrining state preference for Christianity. He was, perhaps more than any other figure, responsible for the spread of Christianity through this period. He supported the faith, which was his own, with generous subsidies. Another great emperor of Byzantine was Justinian, who took power in 527. He was responsible for the codification of Roman law up to the point, which later became the basis of civil law. This was a huge modernizing achievement as it made the laws much more accessible to ordinary people. He also was instrumental in winning back many of the western territories that had been lost to the barbarians after the collapse of the western empire. This dramatically increased the scope of the Byzantine Empire and brought new nations under its control.