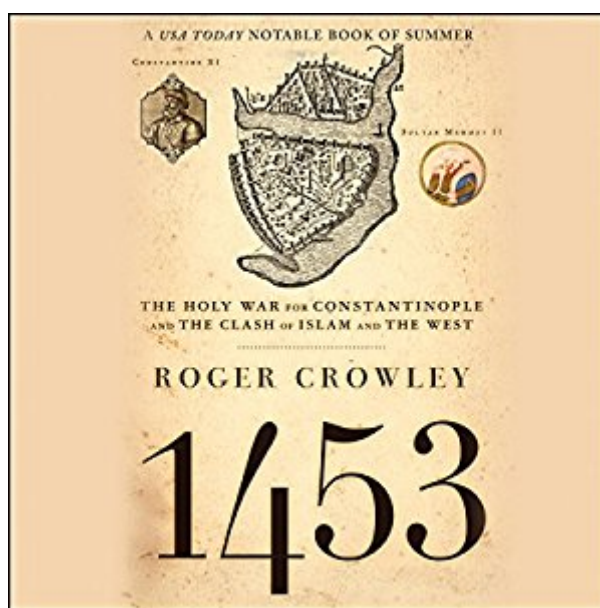


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1453: The Holy War For Constantinople And The Clash Of Islam And The West



Synopsis

Now in audiobook format, a gripping exploration of the fall of Constantinople and its connection to the world we live in today. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 signaled a shift in history and the end of the Byzantium Empire. Roger Crowley's listenable and comprehensive account of the battle between Mehmed II, sultan of the Ottoman Empire, and Constantine XI, the 57th emperor of Byzantium, illuminates the period in history that was a precursor to the current jihad between the West and the Middle East.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

So often it's hard, especially in the time period in question and when dealing with conflicts involving major world religions, to find a book that is completely unbiased in its reporting of the subject matter. This book and this author are the exception to that rule. That to begin with was what I enjoyed about this book. Mr. Crowley's position on the subject at hand is that of objective reporter of historical events. There is no personal or religious/Western bias of any kind (Not that I know anything of his personal beliefs) in this book or any sense that Mr. Crowley belongs to a "side" in the subject matter. As for the subject matter itself, the book starts as a general overview of the emergence of Islam, its conquest of the Arab world and its previous conflicts with the Byzantines. It then generally covers the Byzantines history in the area over the previous 400 years and the way their policies and mutual interactions led up to the events to be covered. The bulk of the book is a straight forward military history of the battle and the siege, covering historical documents as well as

personal accounts of the battle from individuals who fought it. It covers the blood and guts details that you would expect to find in a medieval battle, detailing atrocities committed with no attempt to whitewash or excuse, but also no attempt to judge from a modern perspective. All in all, one of the most enjoying and easy to read books I've read in some time.

Good history - the engaging, fascinating kind that speaks to the human condition - is most effective with riveting details written in lively prose. Crowley does this in *_1453_*. While he is not a trained historian, his account of the seige and conquest of Constantinople in the spring of 1453 is vividly written and historically accurate, drawing from the handful of first-hand accounts and a suprising number of academically sound secondary sources. The drama of the event for both the Islamic world and Christendom is clearly presented - the competing theological, political and economic interests that worked against Constantinople as well as the high stakes the Mehmet II made in his attempt to take the city. The see-saw fighting around the city, at sea and even underneath the city walls puts readers right in the action; the desparate attempts by the vastly outnumbered Byzantines (and a handful of Genoese and Venetian allies) to hold the city make for sympathetic underdogs, while Mehmet's brilliant organization, careful planning and relentless drive makes for a compelling protagonist. Crowley's discussion of the larger importance of the ending of the Byzantine empire and the ascendancy of the Ottomans is also excellent, pointing out not only the changes in warfare that the seige demonstrated, but also the tipping of the commercial scales farther west to Italy. His discussion of the way in which the historical narrative changed with the occupation was also interesting - the "Turk" as the new bogeyman for Christian Europe, the Ottoman's westward expansion evidence of their place as a great power. It is a tremendous book rich with interesting details of the battle itself and the principle personalities on either side. Highly recommended.

If you have ever wondered if Rome and the Western Catholic Church has dropped the ball this book will remove all doubt. It was a leisurly read for me as I had to keep a good dictionart and Google Earth close at hand. It was so very worth the trouble. Though it is very readable and I wanted to rush on and find out what happened I took the time ot learn the terms that were not familliar to me. This was a great help in the complete understanding of the history. This book presents an engaging story of suspense and valiant struggle, and yet it is faithful to history and so it is informative as well.

Well, needless to say, this was an extremely informative read about a city with so much history, bloodshed, violence, religious conflict, political upheaval, etc. I was particularly interested in the war

toys of those days long ago. How inventive human beings are, always improving our methods for doing everything. I loved young Mehmet's cleverness in overall warfare; quite brilliant for such a youngster. And Constantine also was a formidable foe; unfortunately he lacked the resources to win the final battle. I do believe however, that this story could have been shortened by about 150 pages. It was quite tedious many times just to keep reading over and over again the little details of battle. That said, overall it was enjoyable. I was in Istanbul two years ago and found the city completely fascinating for so many reasons. The mix of old vs. new, the magnificent buildings, the interesting people and their cultures. I wish I had read this book before going there. In fact, I have since read three books about Istanbul/Constantinople and would love to return with a better understanding of their history and culture.

Absolutely riveting story of the conquest of Constantinople by Mehmed the Conqueror. Crowley explains the dispute between the churches in Rome and Constantinople, the influence of trade and money (powerhouse Venice's decision not to intervene on behalf of Byzantium after hints from Sultan Mehmed that they would not lose their enclave in the new Istanbul), the genius of Mehmed in organizing his logistics and lines of communication prior to the invasion, and the touch-and-go campaign that saw morale changing on both sides on a daily basis. A must-read book.

I found this to be a fascinating review of the taking of Istanbul. What an amazing time period: the zenith of the Ottoman Empire, the schism between Catholics and Orthodoxy, the rivalry of Christianity vs Islam, and all on the cusp of the West's ascension with the Renaissance. The author made it easy to empathize with the residents of Constantinople. I like history and thoroughly enjoyed this book.

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