



## **Review of Book 1453: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West**

# Executive Summary of Report

Roger Crowley is the author of the book 1453: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West. This book presents historical facts about the downfall of Constantinople in 1453. It was the epicenter of Roman civilization. It was a city of art, multiculturalism, religious heritage, and wealth. The book represents a series of events about the siege of Constantinople. This siege was led by Sultan Mehmed II of the Ottoman empire and his rival was the 57th Byzantium empire, Constantine XI. The first portion of the book details the events of the siege laid by Mehmed II. It also gives a brief historical overview of the battle of the 4th crusade Manzikert. A reader can fully enjoy the historical details given by the author. Therefore, this report will elaborate on historical events discussed in the aforementioned book.

## Detailed Review of the book

To begin with, Crowley discussed the details of the Turks' siege on Constantinople in the first portion. The writer gives a bird's eye to the battles of the fourth crusade. It was a holy war between Islam and Christianity. It was a precursor to the falling of Constantinople. The book outlines that the holy crusade was an event of religious frenzy and violence. It was a motivating force behind the unification of Muslims and Christians. As a result, the Muslims were united by Mahmud II to regain the city of Constantinople. The writer gives a detailed analysis of factors responsible for the first crusade. He does not go into long details of the Holy crusade. So, the reader can get a holistic idea about

the happening in the first crusade. It doesn't confuse the reader in the nitty-gritty of details. It shows the literary skillset of the writer to attract the audience.

Furthermore, the book explains the siege of Constantinople by Mehmed II. It enlists the events of the siege in a chronological manner. The main reason for sieging Constantinople was the resentment of Muslims. This resentment was a result of losing the third holy crusade. Mehmed II led the Ottoman army to a final religious war. He traveled from central Asian territory to Constantinople. The book beautifully captures the numbers and preparedness of the Ottomans. It states that "Turks led hordes of Islamic jihadists into a religious frenzy and nationalistic resettlement." In contrast, the book compares the military preparedness of the Byzantine empire. It gives an impartial analysis of the Byzantine empire's readiness and preparedness. The writer does not exaggerate the numbers of Roman soldiers. He states that only a few thousand soldiers, including Greeks, Italians, and enthusiastic sailors, were defending the walls of Constantinople. Their military strength and capability were insignificant to the mighty Turk army. The Turks were determined to retake the lost Islamic heritage. They launched an attack on the walls of Constantinople. Likewise, the writer gives a rational overview of the war. He states that the Byzantine army was not fearful of Islamist slogans. This empirical analysis shows that the book shows an impartial approach to historical events. It adds more credibility to the historical narration of the writer.

In the same way, the second section of the book analyzes the outcomes of war. The book adopts a logical path of analysis. It takes into account the prevalent socioeconomic, political, and strategic factors. These factors included military strength, economic

potential, social harmony, and cultural expansion. The book states that “Byzantine Empire was crumbling on its feet. Ottomans were standing at its doorsteps to strike to the final blow.” In the analysis, the author has highlighted the critical points pertaining to the fall of the Byzantine empire. Firstly, lack of military preparedness engendered weak defense of Constantinople. Secondly, Constantine XI had no reliable aid to crush Ottoman attackers. The author blatantly condemns the schisms among Greeks-Italians and Orthodox Protestants-Catholics. In fact, the roman emperor requested aid from European nations to thwart the Ottoman attack. The Europeans were facing the tragedy of religious and ethnic-cultural schism. Protestants hated the influential role of the Catholic church on Constantine XI. They considered it was a war of Catholics, not protestants. The book highlights the neglectful role of Christians nations to prevent the conquest of Constantinople. It shows that book is purely aimed at the narration of historical events without any ethnocultural and religious prejudice. It gives an objective taste of reading to its audience.

Likewise, the book lauds the military innovation and preparedness of the Ottoman empire. Especially the role of Turk cannons to shatter the walls of Constantinople is written in a very lucid manner. It says that Turks pre-empted Romans in military maneuvers. They brought huge cannons to shatter the walls of Constantinople into pieces. Mistakenly, the Romans still relied upon huge fortresses for defense. They did not prepare a contingency plan to defend themselves. As a result, Turkish cannons mercilessly shattered the walls of Constantinople into pieces. Without any secondary support, the roman emperor surrendered to Mehmud II. This statement gives an overview

of Turkish preparedness as compared to Romans. The book has discussed these points in a detailed manner. The reader never misses an event to understand the fall of Constantinople.

Additionally, the author has also expressed the ethnic, cultural, and political traits of Mehmed II and Constantine XI in a very objective manner. He expressed the Mehmed II as an educated, well-dressed, cultured, and wise statesman. He also narrates the future glory of Constantinople under the rule of Mehmed II. He says that Constantinople enjoyed multiculturalism, freedom, and prosperity under Ottoman rule. In the same way, the book expresses the riches of Constantinople in arts, literature, wealth, and culture under Byzantine rule. It might confuse a reader about the dichotomy of the writer. Nonetheless, it is a true representation of Constantinople. This city of desire remains the epicenter of both empires. Ottomans built it as their federal capital as Romans did. It never lost its worth under any empire. This logical analysis increases the curiosity of readers about the city of Constantinople.

Finally, the book uses symbolism and fantasy theaters to narrate events of the siege. The writer has used this technique to add a touch of imagination to history. The story of cannons is very interesting to read. It shows a picture of religious frenzy, nationalistic resentment, and inhumane violence. It depicts the level of hatred and animosity between Muslims and Christians in the 15th century. Moreover, the book is logically organized to narrate the historical events. It does not adopt a traditional approach of chronological order to narrate history. Instead, it wields a mixed approach to narrate history. It expressed the details of one event briefly and analyzes its outcomes on a larger scale. It

increases the interest of the reader in the writing. Above all, it gives an empirical insight in the events. Thirdly, the book is written in an unbiased tone. It does not support or reject a particular school of thought. It considers views from both sides and gives a rational analysis in the end. It is a good read. All those who like medieval history must read this book

## Bibliography

Crowley, R. (2005). 1453 : the holy war for Constantinople and the clash of Islam and the West. *Internet Archive*, 336.

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