

An Overview of Byzantine Response to Ottoman Advance

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Abstract

In the 13th century, a crisis emerged in Anatolia deriving from the Mongol invasion. The devastation of the Seljuk rule led to a power vacuum in Anatolia, and the Ottomans existed as a small principality in such a milieu. The Ottomans desired to expand their control from the beginning and become a major power in the region in a short time. The direction of the Ottomans was Byzantine, so; they raided Byzantine lands. The Latin invasion of Constantinople had devastated the empire, and it could never regain its strength. In time, the Ottoman raids were systematically replaced by sieges of the cities. Even the Ottomans started to pose a threat to Constantinople. As the Ottomans maintained their advance, the Byzantine Empire tried to protect, but the Byzantine Empire was aware that it could not be dealt with the Ottomans unless support was provided. The remedy for this situation was the West, but there was a separation between East and West. To protect the Byzantine Empire, the unification of the churches came to the fore, and the Council of Ferrara-Florence gathered. However, the short-lived unification led the chaos in the Patriarchate. Finally, the attempts failed, and the conquest of Constantinople brought the Byzantine Empire to an end.

Keywords: Byzantine Empire, Ottoman Principality, Union of the Churches, Constantinople, Council of Ferrara-Florence

Bizans'ın Osmanlı İlerlemesine Karşı Tepkisine Genel Bir Bakış

Öz

13. yüzyılda Anadolu'da Moğol istilasından kaynaklanan bir buhran baş gösterdi. Selçuklu hakimiyetinin tahribi Anadolu'da bir iktidar boşluğuna yol açtı ve Osmanlı böyle bir ortamda küçük bir beylik olarak ortaya çıktı. Osmanlıların hedefinde ise Bizans vardı, bu yüzden, akınlarını Bizans topraklarına düzenlediler. Konstantinopolis'in Latinler tarafından istilası imparatorluğa büyük zarar vermiş ve imparatorluk bir daha eski gücüne kavuşamamıştı. Zamanla

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Osmanlı akınları yerini sistematik olarak şehirlerin kuşatılmasına bıraktı ve Osmanlılar Konstantinopolis için tehdit oluşturmaya başladı. Osmanlı ilerleyişini sürdürürken Bizans, İmparatorluğu korumak için çaba sarf ediyordu, fakat destek sağlanmadıkça Osmanlı ile başa çıkılamayacağını da farkındaydı. Batıdan gelecek yardım Bizans için çare olabilirdi, ama Doğu-Batı kiliseleri arasında bir bölünme vardı. İşte bu yüzden, Bizans İmparatorluğu'nun korunması için kiliselerin birleşmesi gündeme geldi ve Ferrara-Floransa Konsili toplandı. Ancak kısa süren birlik Patrikhane'de kaosa yol açtı. Sonunda girişimler başarısız oldu ve Konstantinopolis'in fethi yüzyıllardır süren Bizans hakimiyetine son verdi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bizans İmparatorluğu, Osmanlı Beyliği, Kiliselerin Birleşmesi, Konstantinopolis, Ferrara-Floransa Konsili

Introduction

“O City, City, head of all cities! O City, City, the center of the four corners of the earth! O City, City, the boast of Christians and the ruin of barbarians! O City, City, a second Paradise planted in the West and containing within many plants, laden with spiritual fruit.”²

These words belonged to Doukas and were the reflection of his sorrow after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453. The young sultan of the Ottomans, Mehmed II, was the conqueror and the master of the city, and the city's conquest was the result of a long process. The defeat in August 1071 of the Byzantine Emperor Romanos Diogenes by the Turkomans at the battle of Manzikert is taken as a turning point in the history of Anatolia and the Byzantine Empire. From this time, the Byzantines could not stem the flow of the Turks into Anatolia, and the slow process of Turkification had begun.³ Seljuk Sultanate established its rule over Anatolia, although the Mongol invasion disrupted it. After half the 13th, the Seljuk rule was only symbolic, and the Mongols had absolute power. On the other hand, the Byzantine Empire, which regained its capital in 1261, which the Latins invaded in 1204, was

² Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, trans. Harry J Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), 236.

³ Kate Fleet, “Introduction,” in *Cambridge History of Turkey: Byzantium to Turkey*, ed. Kate Fleet, vol. I (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

occupied with the destruction left by the invasion. This was the general framework of the environment in which the Ottomans formed a principality.

In the beginning, the Ottomans, a noncrucial principality, expanded their sphere of influence quickly and eventually became one of Anatolia's most important determinant factors. They managed to control almost all Balkans, Northern Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, and Bulgaria within 150 years.⁴

The motivations behind this development are open to discussion, but what the important here is that this small principality had the capacity to pose a threat to the Byzantine Empire. The Ottomans, which followed an expansionist policy, put pressure on the Byzantine Empire with their raids since the early days of the principality. In time, they started to capture the places where critical for the Byzantine Empire; and they had the power to besiege the capital city of Byzantium. The Ottomans were advancing step by step. Meanwhile, the Byzantine Empire made an effort to protect its territories from the Ottomans. However, as mentioned above, the sack of Constantinople in 1204 weakened the Byzantine Empire severely⁵, and the Empire was no longer at its glorious times. The Byzantine Empire needed support to deal with the Ottoman threat, and the necessary support could be provided by the West. The help sent by the West would lead by the Pope, but a split had existed between Eastern and Western Churches for centuries. In this article, the Byzantine Empire's demand for help from the West in the process of the Ottoman expansion, and the idea of "unification" and its effects in general framework will be tried to be explained.

The Ottoman Threat to the Byzantine Empire

Osman Beg, the state's founding father; defeated the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Bapheus, which was highly important for the Ottomans in 1302. After the Byzantine defeat at Bapheus, the new direction of the Osman was Prousa (Bursa) and Nicaea (Iznik); he sieged these cities but could not take them. At the time of his death

⁴ Donald MacGillivray Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium*, The Birkbeck Lectures 1977 (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1.

⁵ Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Western Civilization*, 7th ed (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2009), 367.

in the mid-1320s, Nicaea (Iznik), Prousa (Bursa), Nicomedia (Izmit), and Pegai (Biga) had still not fallen.⁶

Osman was succeeded by his son Orhan, and Orhan completed the works whose father could not. Prousa surrendered in 1326. Three years later, the Ottomans could defeat the Byzantine Empire in the Battle of Pelekanon. Nicaea followed Bursa in 1331, and Orhan proclaimed his independence in a short while. The fall of Bursa and Nicaea showed that the Ottoman Principality had become a force that directly threatened the Byzantine.⁷ Meanwhile, the Ottomans were not only occupied with the Byzantine, but they were also in a struggle with the Anatolian Principalities. The emirate of Karasi, a Western Anatolian Principality, was one of the principalities annexed by the Ottomans in the early period. The annexation of Karasi to the Ottomans was not quick, but it continued between 1334 and 1361. The importance of Ottoman domination of this emirate was that Karasi served as an essential point in the Ottoman's advance towards Byzantium. The emirate of Karasi had a long frontier with Byzantium, which stretched from the region of Kyzikos on the southwest coast of the Propontis to the Gulf of Edremit; therefore, controlled the Asiatic coast of the Dardanelles.⁸

The Ottoman Principality was not only an enemy but also an ally of the Byzantine Empire. It should be stated that being an ally means political and economic privileges, but the crucial point here is that Ottomans had the ability to exploit when the Byzantines had an internal problem through diplomacy. For example, the alliance of Orhan Beg and Cantecuzenus was the result of the chaos in the Byzantine Empire. Orhan Beg was an ally whose aid would provide the superiority of Cantecuzenus over his rivals. To consolidate this alliance, a marriage was offered, and the daughter of Cantacuzenus, Theodora, married Orhan Beg in 1346. Through this marriage, Orhan made peace with the Greeks.⁹ As a result of this help, Cantacuzenus established his

⁶ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 9.

⁷ İnalçık Halil, *Devlet-i Aliyye: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar I* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009), 44.

⁸ Elizabeth Zachariadu and Elizabeth Zachariadu, "The Emirate of Karasi and That of the Ottomans: Two Rival States," in *The Ottoman Emirate: 1300-1389* (Rhytymnon: Crete University Press, 1993), 225.

⁹ Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *The Histories*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2014), 37.

authority over the whole of Thrace and went on to crown himself emperor with the aim of securing Constantinople.¹⁰

Orhan Beg's support continued to his father-in-law, but this meant the Ottoman advance to the Byzantine territories on the other hand. When Cantacuzenus demanded help against the Serbian King Stephen Dushan, the enemy of the Byzantine Empire, Suleyman Pasha succored the Byzantines, but the outcome of this aid was the Ottoman control of Tzympe Castle in 1352. After Ottoman rule was established, Ottomans' troops left, and Turcomans were settled there. The next target of the Ottomans was Gallipoli, and Suleyman Pasha was the commander again. However, an earthquake brought success to the Ottoman side rather than military success. After the city's walls fell due to the earthquake, the Ottomans could seize the city. With Suleyman's occupation of Gallipoli, a systematic Turkish advance began in Thrace.¹¹ Likewise, Gallipoli was settled by Muslim residents. Asıkpashazade transferred us "because of the necessity of the Muslim residents; Suleyman Pasha demanded ghazis were sent there, and Orhan accepted it."¹² In order to make their new conquest secure used an elaborate system of colonization,¹³ and this became an Ottoman policy throughout the centuries.

The Efforts to Unify the Churches: The Council of Ferrara-Florence

The Gallipoli was under Ottoman control, and it seemed difficult to stop the Ottoman advance into the region. The direction of significant numbers of Ottoman settlers was Thrace to find land in conquered territories.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Stephen Dushan died in 1355, so the Ottomans became more threatening since there was no powerful political authority in the Balkans.¹⁵ By the second half of the 14th century, the Ottomans had captured crucial points for Byzantium.

¹⁰ Julian Chrysostomides, "The Byzantine Empire from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century," in *Cambridge History of Turkey: Byzantium to Turkey*, ed. Kate Fleet, vol. I (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 34.

¹¹ Julian Chrysostomides, 37.

¹² Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman* (İstanbul: Tabhane-i Amire, 1332), 49.

¹³ Halil Inalcik, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," *Studia Islamica*, no. 2 (1954): 103–29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1595144>.

¹⁴ Timothy E. Gregory, *A History of Byzantium, 306-1453*, Blackwell History of the Ancient World (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Pub, 2005), 316.

¹⁵ Şerif Baştav, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluşu Esnasında Bizans ve Avrupa," *Belleten* 68, no. 251 (2004): 63–104.

The resort of Byzantine Emperor with this was the West, and he hoped for aid from the Pope. To protect the empire from the Turkish threat, the solution of Ioannes V was proposing the union of the churches. A letter was sent to Pope Innocent VI, and if the Pope agreed to send military help, the emperor made extravagant promises.¹⁶ The unification of the churches was the key element for bargaining with the papacy. The critical point here is that an emperor proposed to bring his own church under the authority of Rome for the first time.¹⁷ The tension between the churches had concluded with a major split, called the Great Schism in 1054. The idea of the crusade had been surviving for several centuries, but the matter of the unification of the churches had never come to the fore. It was the papacy that would provide help against the Ottomans, so the Byzantine Emperor did not hesitate to make concessions. However, the emperor's efforts fell flat, and the unification did not occur.

The Ottomans controlled Adrianopolis (Edirne) in 1361, made it their capital city, and used it as a military base to attack the Balkans.¹⁸ Around the 1380s, the Ottomans consolidated their rules in Anatolia and maintained their expansion to the Balkans. It is surely beyond doubt that the Balkans were highly important for the Byzantine Empire; however, the Ottomans now had directly targeted Constantinople. After the Battle of Kosovo, Constantinople became isolated and Ottoman territories surrounded the city from both Europe and Asia.¹⁹ The end of the fourteenth and the first years of the fifteenth century were marked by the first major Ottoman effort to capture Constantinople.²⁰ Constantinople was under siege by Bayezid I between 1394 and 1402. Bayezid not only besieged Constantinople but also intervened in the internal affairs of Byzantium and benefited from the dispute between the dynasties. He could not grab the city; however, when Bayezid had placed Constantinople under siege, it became clear that the city could not survive without assistance from foreign powers.²¹

¹⁶ Gregory, *A History of Byzantium, 306-1453*, 318.

¹⁷ Donald M. Nicol, *Bizans'ın Son Yüzyılları:1261-1453*, trans. Bilge Umar, Second (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009), 319.

¹⁸ Donald Quatert, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu:1300-1700*, trans. Ayşe Berktaç (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), 50.

¹⁹ Gregory, *A History of Byzantium, 306-1453*, 319.

²⁰ Dionysios Bernicolas Hatzopoulos, "The First Siege of Constantinople by the Ottomans(1394-1402) and Its Repercussions on the Civilian Population of the City," *Byzantine Studies* 1, no. 10 (1983): 39–51.

²¹ Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, 15.

After the Ottoman defeat in 1402, the Ottoman State experienced a stagnation period, which provided diplomatic superiority to the Byzantine Empire. That is, the Byzantine Empire exploited the struggle between the heirs to the throne to secure the Byzantine side. Meanwhile, the city was once again besieged by Musa Chelebi in 1412. After the stagnation period, Mehmed I established Ottoman control again, and his son Murad II sieged the city again in 1422. The reason why Murad's attack on the city was accepted as the Byzantine intervention to the Ottoman's internal matters by supporting the princes' heir to the Ottoman throne. The Byzantine chronicler Laonikos Chalkokondyles transmits the siege of the city by Murad II so:

“Murad, then, set out and besieged Byzantium from sea to sea, striking at the walls with cannons. Yet despite his efforts, he did not bring them down. The rocks thrown by his cannons weighed three half-talents each, but the walls were fortified against such cannons and withstood them; no where did they give way.

In the first half of the 15th century, most of the lands under the rule of the Byzantine Empire passed under Ottoman control. Although they could not take the city, the Ottoman sieges of Constantinople showed the determination of the Ottomans to conquer the city. On the other hand, the Byzantine Empire had no capacity to defend itself without external support. Meanwhile, the Ottoman pressure was not the only problem; the Byzantines were also occupied with internal matters. The treasury was empty, so it was found impossible to raise mercenaries.²² The hope for Byzantines was aid coming from the West; however, the schism between East and West Churches prevented political unity. In 1054, the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Pope excommunicated each other. It was never purely an ecclesiastical problem²³, and the Eastern Orthodox Church was unwilling to accept the Pope's claim that he was the sole head of the church.²⁴ The reason for split was not just religious; therefore, outcome was not just religious, after all. That is, the Byzantine Empire had an isolated situation from the West. To win papal support would be possible only with the union

²² Patrick O'Connell, "The Greeks and Reunion up to the Fall of Constantinople," *An Irish Quarterly Review* 49, no. 193 (1960): 68–81.

²³ Patrick O'Connell.

²⁴ Spielvogel, *Western Civilization*, 295.

of the churches.²⁵ Ioannes VIII hoped that aid might be forthcoming from the West and started efforts to negotiate with the papacy.²⁶ He sent an embassy to the Pope, whose name was Eugenius IV. The emperor mentioned they could meet and solve the differences. Actually, the aim of the emperor was to test the western opinion about unification.²⁷ The papacy was willing to unification in the first half of the 15th century. Martin's successor Eugenius IV was also desirous of uniting the Churches of East and West.²⁸ Constantinople was accepted as the first Christian capital of the first Christian empire by the Christian world²⁹, and the city should have been protected.

The delegates of the papacy came to Constantinople to invite the Byzantine side, which was a truly formidable diplomatic mission.³⁰ It was decided the council would hold in Italy, so it started in Ferrara in 1438; then transferred to Florence because the Pope needed the prosperousness of the Medici to host his guests. The Byzantine delegates sailed to Italy, and Emperor Ioannes VIII attended personally. The important point here is not that the Byzantine emperor personally went to Italy, but that a patriarch also accompanied him.³¹

The Council of Florence was last great opportunity to end the split between Eastern and Western Christendom³² The unification would mean that the papacy would establish its superiority over the East, while the isolation of the Byzantine Empire from the West would end. The first destination of Byzantine sails was Venice; after spending time there, they arrived at Ferrara.³³ The emperor and the Pope met

²⁵ J. Gill, "The Sincerity of Bessarion the Unionist," *The Journal of Theological Studies* XXVI, no. 2 (January 1, 1975): 377–92, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jts/XXVI.2.377>.

²⁶ Gregory, *A History of Byzantium, 306-1453*, 328.

²⁷ Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *The Histories*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis, vol. 6 (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2014), 11.

²⁸ Joseph Gill, "The Greeks in the Council of Florence," *Blackfriars* 41, no. 481 (1960): 155–64.

²⁹ Feridun Emecen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluş ve Yükseliş Tarihi(1300-1600)* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015), 136.

³⁰ Maarten Halff, "The Pope's Agents in Constantinople: Eugenius IV's Legation on the Eve of the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1439)," *Mediterranea. International Journal on the Transfer of Knowledge* 5 (March 20, 2020): 91–151, <https://doi.org/10.21071/mijtk.v5i.12254>.

³¹ Donald M. Nicol, *Bizans'ın Son Yüzyılları:1261-1453*, 434.

³² Deno J. Geanakoplos, "The Council of Florence (1438–1439) and the Problem of Union Between the Greek and Latin Churches," *Church History* 24, no. 4 (December 1955): 324–46, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3162003>.

³³ Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *The Histories*, 2014, 6:11.

there, started formal discussions and examinations about their differences, and tried to find the most beneficial way for both sides.³⁴

Despite the efforts of both sides, tension emerged at the beginning of the council. The Patriarch, Joseph II, refused to salute the Pope; that is, he did not kiss his foot; rather, he preferred to embrace each other. It is possible to say this act was a message, which was emphasizing equality among two poles. Eventually, the debates started and the Greeks were fully representative of their church. The Patriarch Joseph II was present as representatives of the other Patriarchs, who were not allowed to travel.³⁵ Even though there were several matters on the agenda; the most debated was Filioque, a word that the Latins had added to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed to express their belief that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father from the son.³⁶ The discussion on this issue took longer than any other discussed issue.³⁷ At the end, both sides managed to negotiate and reached an agreement. The union was proclaimed on 6 July 1439. The sectarian division between East and West for centuries ceased.

Cardinal Bessarion of Trebizond was one of the main figures of the Council of Ferrara-Florence and tried to unify the churches during the council. Cardinal Bessarion of Trebizond as envoyed both sides to reconcile them to each other and their differences.³⁸ A church chronicle dated 1373-1513 mentioned Bessarion so;

“Bessarion was a good speaker and a first-rate philosopher; he even became cardinal and enjoyed honor and considerable glory of men rather than of God.”³⁹

At this point, it should be stated that there were different opinions on the Byzantine side. An opposition was presented against the union. Mark of Ephesus had refused to approve the unification. It was a prophetic remark, as on the return of the Greek delegation to Constantinople, Mark became the soul of Orthodox opposition to

³⁴ Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *The Histories*, 2014, 6:17.

³⁵ Patrick O’Connell, “The Greeks and Reunion up to the Fall of Constantinople.”

³⁶ Gill, “The Sincerity of Bessarion the Unionist.”

³⁷ Donald M. Nicol, *Bizans’ın Son Yüzyılları: 1261-1453*, 439.

³⁸ Laonikos Chalkokondyles, trans. Anthony Kaldellis, vol. 8 (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2014), 251.

³⁹ Marios Philippides, trans., *Emperors, Patriarchs and Sultans of Constantinople(1373-1573): An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the Sixteenth Century* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Hellenic College Press, 1990), 35.

the union.⁴⁰ The unification was a hope for saving the Byzantines themselves, but it did not happen as planned. The Eastern Patriarchs announced that they were not bound by anything their representatives had signed and rejected the union.⁴¹ Others who supported the Union at Florence, once they were at home in their familiar environment, seemed to feel that they had betrayed their church.⁴² Latins were unpopular among the Byzantines because they left destruction behind after the Fourth Crusade from the point of Byzantines. Even the word attributed to Loukas Notaras, one of the most prominent names in Constantinople, “*I would rather see in the middle of our city, the reigning of turban at the Turk than the Latin tiona*”⁴³ might be interpreted as the reflection of this unpopularity.

The Patriarch Joseph II had died during the council, and a new patriarch was elected in 1440. The Pope's name was mentioned in Hagia Sofia after centuries. This did not welcome by anti-unionist. Emperor Ioannes VIII died in 1448, and Demetrius was supported by anti-unionist, but Constantine XI became emperor. Meanwhile, the ecclesiastical situation grew more tense, the anti-unionist would not attend the unionist church; indeed, they considered themselves as debarred from them and as exiles and persecuted though there is no evidence at all any forcible measures were taken in Constantinople to make them conform.⁴⁴ While these disputes were maintained, Sultan Murad died, and his son, Mehmed II ascended the throne. Mehmed II, like his predecessors, had a desire for Constantinople. Also, it was the second time Mehmed II acceded to the throne, which was a humiliating event for him. Of course, the reasons why Constantinople was conquered are open to discussion; but this situation can be considered as one of the main factors of the desire of the young sultan. He ordered the construction of a castle on the Bosphorus; once castle had been finished, he marched to Adrianople, saying, “*I will return next April let the people of the city know.*”⁴⁵ On

⁴⁰ Geanakoplos, “The Council of Florence (1438–1439) and the Problem of Union Between the Greek and Latin Churches.”

⁴¹ Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 110.

⁴² Patrick O’Connell, “The Greeks and Reunion up to the Fall of Constantinople.”

⁴³ Marios Philippides, *Emperors, Patriarchs and Sultans of Constantinople(1373-1573): An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the Sixteenth Century*, 5.

⁴⁴ Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 355.

⁴⁵ Marios Philippides, *Emperors, Patriarchs and Sultans of Constantinople(1373-1573): An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the Sixteenth Century*, 45.

the other hand, Cardinal Isidore was in Constantinople to proclaim unity and was the highest cleric now since there was no patriarch, the last occupant of the post Gregory Mammias.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the city had been sieged in April 1453, and Laonikos Chalkokondyles the event so:

“At dawn, the sultan decided that it was time to attack it was the day of Ares, and he sounded the cymbals; the flutists and trumpeters joined in too. At dawn, he attacked, and everywhere along the city walls, the barbarians joined battle, attacking and fighting fiercely. The Greeks defended vigorously along the harbor walls and repulsed the Turks. They held the walls and decapitated those who climbed up on the ladders.”⁴⁷

The city fell in May of 1453; the Eastern Roman Empire disappeared de facto. The fall of Constantinople put a stem foreclosure on the rivalries of the unionist and anti-unionists in favour of latter.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Constantinople, the city which was the symbol of the Byzantine Empire, was under the control of the Ottomans and became the symbol of Mehmed’s passion for the world empire.⁴⁹ Throughout his reign, Mehmed II made an effort to become Constantinople a political and religious metropolitan like in Roman times.⁵⁰

The Byzantine emperor was the visible head of the Empire, of all Christians oikumene the inhabited world, and the defender of the faith and the church as a God-protected ruler. The institution of the church implied the existence of an emperor who could not be divorced from it.⁵¹ Yet, the Byzantine Emperor disappeared; instead, a Muslim emperor existed in Constantinople. Not only was the emperor also there was no patriarch in the city because when Mehmed II took Constantinople, the ecumenical

⁴⁶ Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence*, 160.

⁴⁷ Laonikos Chalkokondyles, 8:193.

⁴⁸ Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence*, 389.

⁴⁹ Donald Quataert and Halil İnalçık, eds., *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi* (Beyoğlu, İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 2000), 12.

⁵⁰ Quataert and İnalçık, 12.

⁵¹ Marios Philippides, *Emperors, Patriarchs and Sultans of Constantinople(1373-1573): An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the Sixteenth Century*, 8.

throne had also been vacant for two years.⁵² Mehmed's first duty to the Christians was to establish a new pattern for their administration.⁵³ He was intended to maintain the Greek Orthodox Church under the Ottoman domain.

After making some inquiries, Mehmed II decided that the Patriarch should be George Scholarius, known as monk Gennadius.⁵⁴ According to Steven Runciman, Mehmed II was well aware that the Greeks would be the value of his Empire, so the emperor kept the Patriarchate⁵⁵ while Halil Inalcık argues that the population of the city was indeed among the major motivations of the conqueror's renewal of the Patriarchate.⁵⁶ Of course, the motivations might be various, but the important point here is that the church served as a unifying force, but this unity might not have been only social, but might have been a political unity. As mentioned above, having unified the churches meant political support. However, Gennadius was an anti-unionist, and so it prevented a possible Latin intervention or cooperation with the Patriarchate. The Greek clergy were no longer united, or rather divided, by clear lines of doctrine and policy but were open rather to divisions caused by personal resentment and jealousies.⁵⁷

Consequently, after the political chaos of the mid-13th century, the Ottomans established their rule, and this small principality created a problem for the Byzantine Empire from its beginning. In a short span of time, it started to become a threat rather than a problem, and the territories of the Byzantine Empire passed into the Ottoman domain step by step. A unification between the churches might have been key to the necessary aid for the Byzantine Empire. This time, East and West Churches were aware of the threat, and Constantinople should have been kept. Therefore, the Council of Ferrara-Florence gathered to resolve the disagreements and the Pope expressed his gratitude to God for the unification at the end. However, this unification led to a

⁵² G. Georgiades Arnakis, "The Greek Church of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of Modern History* 24, no. 3 (September 1952): 235–50, <https://doi.org/10.1086/237518>.

⁵³ Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence*, 167.

⁵⁴ Steven Runciman, 168.

⁵⁵ Steven Runciman, 168.

⁵⁶ Inalcık, Halil, "The Status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch under the Ottomans," *Turcica*, no. 0 (1991): 407–36, <https://doi.org/10.2143/TURC.23.0.2014212>.

⁵⁷ C. J. G. Turner, "The Career of George George-Gennadius Scholarius," *Byzantion* 39 (1969): 420–55.

division in the Patriarchate of Constantinople since one group thought that the unification as the last resort to protect themselves from the Ottomans, another group did not want to be under the command of the those whom they thought were torturing them. Meanwhile, the Ottomans were determined to take the city and Byzantine efforts to protect the city failed. Although the Byzantine Empire was destroyed, the institution of Patriarchate, which was co-existed with the institution of the empire, was maintained by the new emperor of the city, which was a Muslim.

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