

0. DOUBLE-DEALING - Story Preface

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2. DOUBLE-DEALING

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8. THE LEGEND OF DRACULA



Fausto Zonaro (1854-1929), an Italian who served as an artist for the Ottoman court, created this painting entitled "Mehmed II at the siege of Constantinople." It depicts his view of events which occurred just before the fall of a city which had been the capital of the Roman and Byzantine Empires for more than a thousand years.

These were times of extraordinary double-dealing.

When Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg died, Dracul became concerned about the Ottoman onslaught. His concerns were well-founded. It wasn't long before Sultan Mehmet II besieged and conquered Constantinople.

For more than a thousand years (330-1453) the city had been the capital of the Eastern Holy Roman Empire. But, with Mehmet II's victory, the city fell and Byzantine rule was no more.

Some years before the fall of Constantinople, Vlad Dracul had hedged his bets in favor of Mehmet's father, Murad II. The Romanian prince signed an alliance *against* the Holy Roman Empire. A previous oath, to protect his countrymen against the Sultan's forces, was ostensibly tossed aside.

Despite (or perhaps *because* of) this alliance, the Turks did not trust Vlad Dracul. To prove his loyalty to the Sultan, Dracul left two of his sons (Dracula and his younger brother Radu) with the Turkish leader. The boys were placed under house arrest and sent to far-off Egrigoz in Asia Minor.

During his 4-year imprisonment, Dracula experienced true political amorality. He learned two things really well:

- To trust no one but himself; and
- To seek revenge.

And ... what revenge it was!

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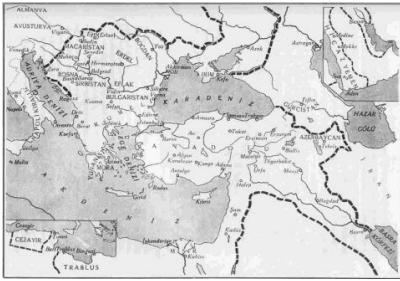


Egrigoz

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Asia Minor - Map

Map from *Büyük Osmanlı Tarihi*, published by Hürriyet Yayınları (İstanbul, 1999).

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Dracula - Vlad III

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