

When he was not-quite 20 years old, Mehmet (also spelled Mehmed) II inherited the throne of the Ottoman Empire on the 3rd of February, 1451.

Two years later—in one of the world's most-famous battles—the 21-year-old conquered the city of Constantinople (in 1453).

This video documentary, with English subtitles, introduces us to Mehmet II and provides background on the loss of the Byzantine city to the Ottoman Empire (which thereafter renamed it Istanbul, "the city of Islam," although the name-change wasn't "official" until March 28, 1930).

These world-changing events happened at about the time of a man called "Dracula." How were the lives of Dracula, and his family, impacted by the Ottomans who captured Constantinople?

Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg served as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. During the time of his reign, he favored a Wallachian named Vlad who, with his wife, Cneajna, had a son (named Vlad, after his father). The child was born in the Transylvanian town of Sighisoara in 1431.

The Emperor bestowed two great honors on Vlad the year his son was born. Not only inducted into the prestigious Order of the Dragon, Vlad was also made Prince of Wallachia.

Because of his induction into the Order of the Dragon (where, in Romania, "dragon" means, among other things, "Dracul"), Vlad became known as "Vlad Dracul."

After the death of his benefactor Emperor Sigismund, in December of 1437, Dracul became concerned about the ongoing Ottoman conquests. He decided to hedge his bets, switching allegiance from supporting the Holy Roman Emperor to pledging allegiance to Murad II (father of Mehmet II).

In an act of double-dealing, Vlad Dracul tossed-aside his prior oath to protect his countrymen against the Sultan's forces and, instead, signed-on to an alliance against the Holy Roman Empire.

Thinking his actions put him in a light most favorable to the Ottomans, Vlad Dracul quickly realized that his treachery made him suspect to the Turks as well. At the time, he had two sons (Vlad Dracula, meaning "Vlad, son of Dracul," and a younger boy called Radu).

After switching his allegiance, Dracul (the father) had to prove his loyalty to the Sultan. For four years, his two boys had to remain with the Turkish leader. Effectively placed under house arrest, they were sent to Egrigoz (a far-off town in Asia Minor).

Amidst (and after) all of this turmoil, in the family life of the Draculs, the Ottoman conquests continued. They culminated in 1453, when Sultan Mehmet II besieged, then conquered, Constantinople. The city fell on the 29th of May.

That event, world-changing in scope (due to the city's strategic location as a gateway to Europe), gave the Ottoman Empire (whose leaders were Muslims) an opportunity to extend the borders under their control.

On the 17th of June, 1462, Mehmet II did battle with Vlad III (also known as "Vlad the Impaler" and "Vlad Dracula"). The fighting took place at night, at Târgoviste, as imagined by the Romanian artist Theodor Aman (1831-1891) in his painting "The Battle with Torches." The battle was won by Vlad III and his men.



For the next 200-plus years, the Ottomans attempted to conquer all of Europe. Those efforts ultimately failed, and the Ottoman Empire—one of the world's longest-lasting—weakened, then declined. It ended at the close of World War I.

This documentary—"Muhammad al-Faith (Sultan Mehmet al-Fateh) Hero of Islam"—tells the story of the capitulation of Constantinople from the conquering point of view.

Credits:

Embedded documentary, described above, online via YouTube.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Mehmet-II-and-the-Fall-of-Constantinople>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Mehmet-II-and-the-Fall-of-Constantinople>

Media Stream



Vlad III Fights Mehmet II

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