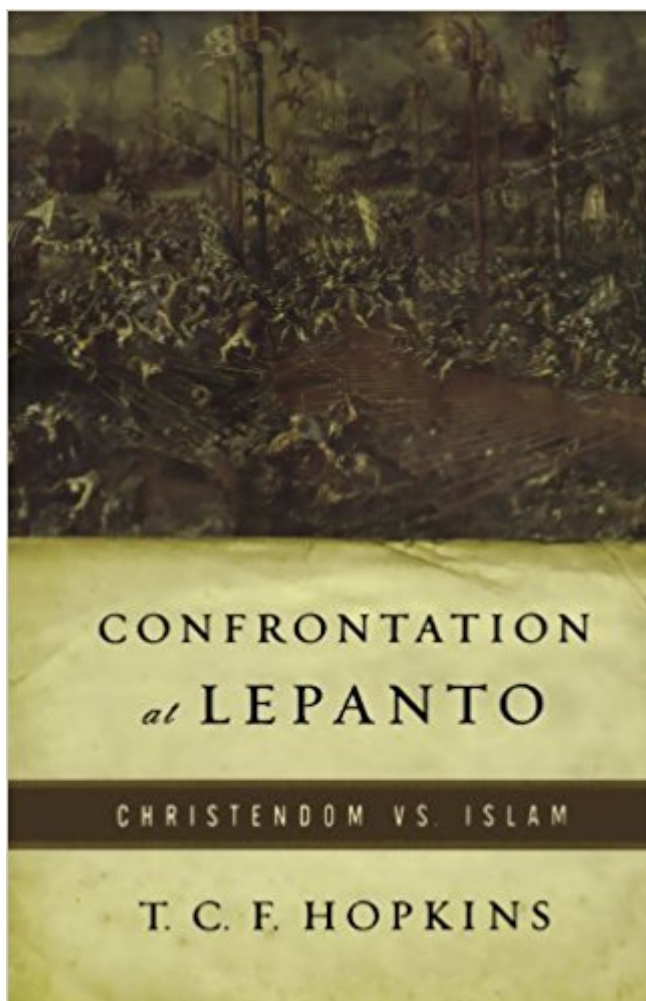


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Confrontation At Lepanto: Christendom Vs. Islam



Synopsis

Like an angry lion, the Turkish menace growled at the frontiers of Europe. In 1453, the last remnant of the mighty Roman Empire was obliterated when Turkish forces overran Constantinople. Western civilization was being threatened by medieval Islam. By 1570, a huge Turkish fleet had begun to turn the Mediterranean into a Muslim lake. A year later Pope Pius V created an anti-Ottoman alliance known as the Holy League--Christendom's answer to Jihad. One morning in October 1571, Don John of Austria, commanding the fleet of the Holy League, met the Ottoman Turks in the waters at the mouth of the Gulf of Patros. The future of a despairing, fragmented Europe was about to be decided....By four o'clock that afternoon the naval battle had become a maelstrom, and the sea had literally turned from blue to red from all the blood shed. When the smoke cleared, the Turkish fleet had been broken. In sheer numbers of casualties there has never been a more costly naval battle than Lepanto. The Crusaders lost 17 ships and 7,500 men; the Muslims lost more than 200 warships and nearly 20,000 men. For the first time in more than a century, West had defeated East. The Christians had successfully taken the offensive. Lepanto was one of the greatest turning points in history, though the centuries to come would see many more battles in the continuing conflict between Christianity and Islam. Confrontation at Lepanto is a fascinating account of that decisive battle on a very human level. Drawing on meticulous research, the author brings to life personalities, tactics, and details, making the narrative as fascinating and compelling as a novel. The result is a book whose lessons resonate today.

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Customer Reviews

The so-called "clash of civilizations" explanation of the current tensions between the Islamic world and the West may be a distortion or exaggeration or an outright myth. But 500 years ago it was an undeniable reality. In the sixteenth century, it was Islam under the aggressive leadership of the Ottoman Turks that appeared to be ascendant. The great Christian citadel of Constantinople had fallen in 1453; a century later, the Turkish navy was poised to gain control of the southern and eastern rims of the Mediterranean. The threat, however, energized Christian nations to form an alliance, the Holy League. In 1571, two fleets met off the coast of Greece in the last great battle of oar-driven ships. The victory of the Holy League was a major turning point in history. Hopkins has provided a compact, fast-moving, and frequently exciting account of the struggle, climaxed by an absorbing blow-by-blow description of the daylong battle, avoiding excessive reliance on naval jargon, enabling general readers to appreciate this excellent recounting of a seminal event. Jay Freeman

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• Booklist on Confrontation at Lepanto

I am a published author who is constantly reading and doing research for my upcoming books. I was recently given this book as a gift by a friend who had not read the book, but purchased it based on the beautiful cover. I found the book quite disturbing due to the author's constant bashing of the Catholic Church. She makes all kinds of malicious allegations, but there are no footnotes, and she references nothing. There is no bibliography, so we are left to wonder what her allegations are based upon. We don't know. She seems to be an authority unto herself. Her assertions can be easily disproven by anyone with an open mind who will actually do the research. The author does not stay focused on her topic, and these false allegations against the Catholic Church have nothing to do with the actual battle of Lepanto. As an example, on page 24, she states: "By contrast to the chaotic German states, Spain was easily the most cohesive - read: repressive - and affluent country in Europe at the time..," She further states that "this gave it a significant advantage in its dealings with other nations, and, for that matter, the Catholic Church, which it strove to direct along its own, very conservative, path." It's interesting that the author doesn't even let the readers draw their own conclusions, she literally tells them what to think. And, since when does being conservative mean

that you're repressive? On the next page, she continues: "For this was the height of the Spanish Inquisition, an institution that defined most of the policies of the Spanish Empire, and where Spain went, so did the Spanish version of Catholicism, carried by hosts of monks whose task it was to convert the heathen in foreign lands, or let the soldiers either enslave or kill them for being unworthy of salvation." Actually, the Spanish monarchs protected the natives in the new world, as much as was in their power to do so. Forced conversions were never the policy of the Spanish government or the Catholic Church, and the government punished those who treated the Indians unfairly. The fact that some men did evil does not make that the policy of the government. In addition, the Catholic Church has never said that anyone or any race of people is unworthy of salvation. Then, as now, there were people who acted outside of the law, and being half-way across the planet, some people took advantage of the fact that they were so far away from government oversight that they thought that they could act with impunity. That does not make the conduct of those individuals the official policy of the Spanish government. Should we apply that notion to our own country? If we did, then it would be just as accurate to say that since we have had, on occasion, mass murderers in our schools that our government somehow advocates that conduct. That's just ridiculous. The author gives the "official" Spanish position as "...since there was no mention of the American natives in Scripture, they were destined for Limbo and could not hope for Heaven, which meant that the Church need not be responsible for their salvation, or their abuse. For the next fifty years, this posture dictated Spanish policy toward all American natives with the sole exception of the Incas." (pg. 25) This is absolutely false in all regards. Christ said to go out and teach all nations. That means that the Church is apostolic by its very nature. Why would He have sent the apostles out to teach all nations if some races of people had no hope of salvation? The very reason that the monks went to the New World was to help them save their souls, and the Spanish government gave the bishop in charge the title of "Protector of the Indians." By this and the special laws that were established at the time by the Spanish monarchs to protect the Indians, we can deduce that the official policy of the Spanish government was indeed the Protection of the Indians. Finally, and most egregiously, she states: "In Spain, persecution of supposed heretics reached levels significantly in excess of those in other countries, and served to feed the witch-frenzy in many Protestant religions. It may be significant that in Spain, the accused heretics were, in nine out of ten cases, women, and it was regarded as proof of female diabolism if an Inquisitor got an erection during the Questioning (read: unofficial torture) of an accused woman." (pg. 25-26) Really? There was someone there keeping these statistics? This is highly offensive and inflammatory. As an author, and student of history, I have never seen these allegations from any authoritative source. I don't believe the author has

either, particularly since there are no footnotes, references or even a bibliography. Literally millions of Indians in the New World converted to the Catholic Faith, and their descendents remain Catholic to this very day. The Catholic faith is a religion adhered to and deeply loved by nearly 25% of the world's population, well over 1 billion people. Surely the author does not think that all of us have been duped, or that we have no right to believe as we do. For some reason, in our politically correct world, it's OK to insult the faith of 1 billion people, while every other cult is demanding respect and inclusion. How do we Catholics get in on that tolerance and inclusion thing? The author's repeated false allegations against the Spanish and the Catholic Church have nothing to do with the battle of Lepanto, so one is left to wonder why she finds it necessary to slander them. I am also left to wonder if she is writing under a pen name because she's unwilling to take responsibility for her statements. I give this book 1 star only because there is no lower rating.

16th century Mediterranean naval warfare has always fascinated me, so when I saw "Confrontation at Lepanto" at my local Borders bookstore, I was initially quite excited. That excitement, however, morphed into considerable disappointment, as I noted that "T.F.C. Hopkins" (aka fantasy author Chelsea Quinn Yarbro) had done a rather poor job in researching her book. The thing I found most irritating was how she got so many basic facts wrong about the battle; for example, on pages 131-133, she described the battle as beginning with the center divisions of the two fleets, when in fact, it was the Christian Left Wing and Ottoman Right Wing, which first clashed (the Centers did not lock horns until about 30 minutes later). Yarbro also failed to point out the superb handling of the Christian Left Wing by the Venetian Second-in-Command, Agostino Barbarigo, who swung back his line of galleys "like a door" to avoid being outflanked by the Turks (see Guilmartin's "Gunpowder and Galleys", for more info). In addition, Yarbro claimed that the Venetian Captain-General, Sebastiano Venier, was with the Christian Left Wing, but actually his galley was in the Christian Center, supporting the flagship of Don John of Austria (and ironically enough, the cover art of "Confrontation at Lepanto" features the famous painting by Michieli Vicentino, which correctly shows Venier's blood-red war galley supporting that of Don John). Yarbro blundered yet again when she wrote that Alessandro Farnese (The Duke of Parma) took Uchiali's flagship (Farnese did indeed take an Ottoman galley--supposedly almost singlehandedly--but it was not Uchiali's ship). There were various interesting details earlier in the book, regarding the events that ultimately led to the Battle of Lepanto, but even this one positive feature of Yarbro's work is marred by the fact that there is no bibliography, and no footnotes or endnotes of any kind. In the final analysis, there are many far better books that cover Lepanto, including John F. Guilmartin's "Gunpowder and Galleys" &

"Galleons and Galleys", W.L. Rodgers' "Naval Warfare Under Oars 4th to 16th Centuries", Time-Life's "The Venetians" (part of their old "Seafarers" series), and Jack Beeching's classic "The Galleys at Lepanto". Chelsea Quinn Yarbro should frankly stick to writing about vampires.

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