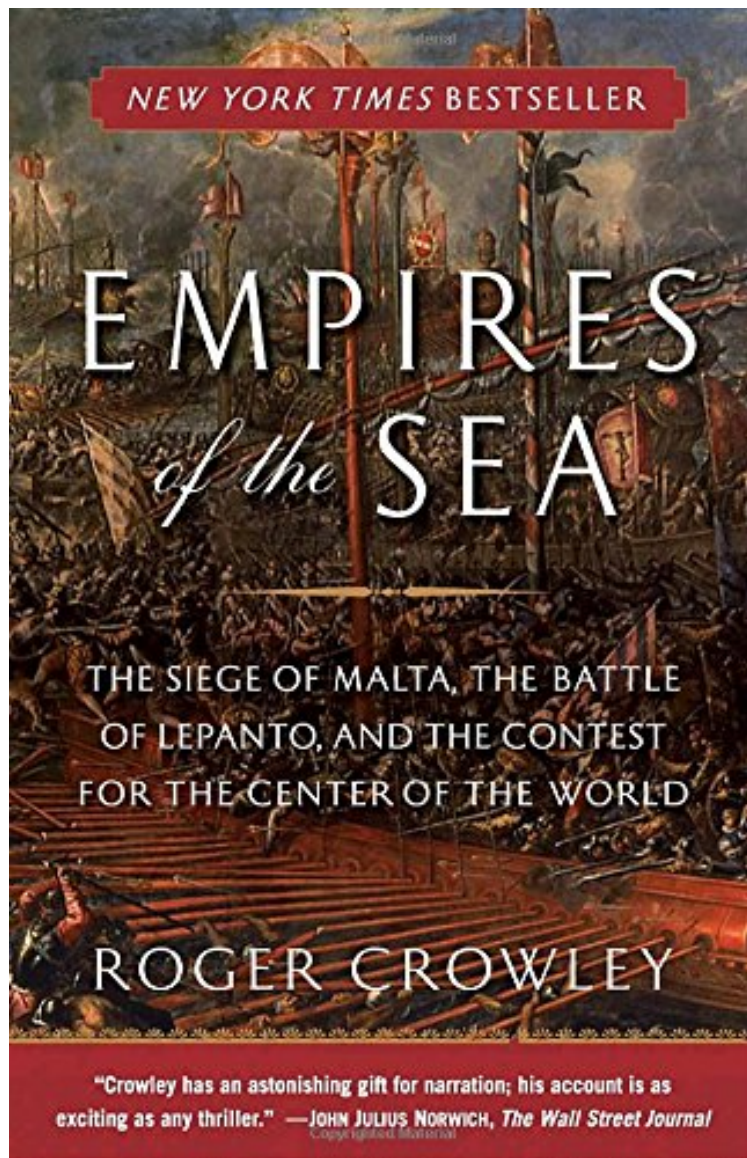


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# Empires of the Sea: The Siege of Malta, the Battle of Lepanto, and the Contest for the Center of the World

Roger Crowley

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**Roger Crowley : Empires of the Sea: The Siege of Malta, the Battle of Lepanto, and the Contest for the Center of the World** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Empires of the Sea: The Siege of Malta, the Battle of Lepanto, and the Contest for the Center of the World:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. *Middle Earth Struggle* By Christian Potholm Roger Crowley, *Empires of the Sea: How Venice Ruled the Seas* (New York: Random House, 2012). A marvelous – and cautionary tale – of how Venice founded, maintained and eventually began to lose its *Stato da Mar*, the commercial and military empire which included Zara, Scutari, Corfu, Crete, Negroponte, Salonika and Kaffir, stretching along the Adriatic, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea on to trading with Mamluks in Palestine and Egypt. Through wars with Genoa, trade with the Mongols and the relentless pressures of the Ottoman Turks, Venice held its own for centuries. Crowley has written a marvelous work showing the need for, and the penalties for failing to protect the capital from people. Everything the city bought, or sold, came by sea during the three periods under review: 1000-1204 “The Merchant Crusaders,” 1204-1500 “The Princes of the Sea” and then 1400-1503 “The Rising Moon” of the Ottoman Turks. And the sea required, at all times, the projection of force to protect commercial interests.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. *A Gripping Naval Political Struggle of the Sixteenth Century* By Alan E. Negrin A description of the century-long naval struggle for control of the Mediterranean between the Ottoman Turks and the West, focusing on 4 major areas, the sieges of Rhodes, Cyprus, and Malta, and the great battle of Lepanto. Many other reviewers criticized this work as providing incomplete descriptions of some very complex military conflicts, but for me the depth of this work was exactly right. Although I have read a great deal of military and naval history, I am not one for recreating the movement of every ship or every battalion. I suppose you could write a whole book, for example, on the siege of Malta, but that's not what the author intends. His idea is to lay out the motivations of the Turks and the struggles of the West—primarily the papacy, the Venetians, Philip II of Spain, and the Knights of Malta to try to bury their many differences to confront the seemingly inevitable thrust of the Ottoman empire. Crowley's narrative sweeps the reader along, describing not only the conflicts but the people behind them and their motivations. The savagery of the fighting is examined in detail, a level of violence and barbarity (on both sides) that will shock modern readers. It's one of the most gripping and comprehensive descriptions of a century-long conflict that I have read. I would award this book only 4 stars, however. The maps (in the Kindle version, anyway) were unreadable, split between pages and undecipherable when expanded. Although the author doesn't seek to delve into enormous detail in terms of military hardware, I found it difficult to understand how galleys functioned and how they were used in battle. The fleets involved also consisted of galleases, galliots, and many other craft which were not explained. I had to study my faithful Wikipedia to gain some insight as to the strengths, weaknesses and uses of all these craft. The author would have been better advised to concentrate some effort here, as it's really not possible to understand naval strategy without some idea of the limitations that were imposed on battle plans by the technology of the era.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. *Essential Reading* By ImageMD This book is essential reading for anyone trying to understand late 16c European history, the Siege of Malta in 1565 and the naval Battle of Lepanto in 1571. The narration is engaging and captures the personalities and geopolitics as well as the brutality and suffering of the times. The author occasionally uses unfamiliar English words like ‘mizzle’ (a mix of drizzle and fog) and ‘debouch’ (a march out of a confined space), so I recommend the Kindle edition which allows for easy lookup of word definitions.

In 1521, Suleiman the Magnificent, Muslim ruler of the Ottoman Empire, dispatched an invasion fleet to the Christian island of Rhodes. This would prove to be the opening shot in an epic clash between rival empires and faiths for control of the Mediterranean and the center of the world. In *Empires of the Sea*, acclaimed historian Roger Crowley has written a thrilling account of this brutal decades-long battle between Christendom and Islam for the soul of Europe, a fast-paced tale of spiraling intensity that ranges from Istanbul to the Gates of Gibraltar. Crowley conjures up a wild cast of pirates, crusaders, and religious warriors struggling for supremacy and survival in a tale of slavery and galley warfare, desperate bravery and utter brutality. *Empires of the Sea* is a story of extraordinary color and incident, and provides a crucial context for our own clash of civilizations.

From Booklist Is the West engaged in a “clash of civilizations” with the Islamic peoples of the Middle East? According to Crowley, that clash occurred in the sixteenth century, when Islam, under the leadership of the Ottoman Turks, seemed poised to dominate most of Europe. The “impregnable city” of Constantinople had been taken in 1453, and by the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Turks were ensconced in the Balkans. The key to the struggle between the Turks and the Christian West was control of the eastern rim of the Mediterranean Sea. The Turks had a formidable fleet, while the divided, quarreling Christian states seemed particularly vulnerable. Yet, through a combination of valor, military skill, and blind luck, the Christian West prevailed. Crowley's exciting saga shows this struggle as grim, heroic, and inspiring. At the siege of Malta, a few hundred knights, remnants of a crusading order, held off 30,000 invading Turks. At Lepanto, Christians and Turks engaged in a naval bloodbath that decisively stemmed the Islamic tide. A beautifully written chronicle of a great and seminal struggle. --Jay Freeman “[Crowley] offers exquisitely delicate insights and undulating descriptive passages. Yet in his descriptions of the battles, his prose is so taut and tense, it is impossible not to be caught up in the harrowing action.”—Christian Science Monitor “A masterly narrative that captures the religious fervor, brutality and mayhem of this intensive contest.”—Kirkus s, starred review “Gripping . . . This is a rare combination of a history book that reads with the detail, insight and pace of a novel.”—Tampa

Tribune“Crowley has an astonishing gift for narration; his account is as exciting as any thriller.”—Wall Street Journal“Crowley’s page-turner history . . . deserves to be this [season’s] most recommended nonfiction book. . . . Rich in character, action, surprise, what transpired in those few desperate weeks is one of history’s best and most thrilling stories.”—Dallas Morning News

About the Author Roger Crowley was born in 1951 and spent part of his childhood in Malta. He read English at Cambridge University and taught English in Istanbul, where he developed a strong interest in the history of Turkey. He has traveled widely throughout the Mediterranean basin over many years and has a wide-ranging knowledge of its history and culture. He lives in Gloucestershire, England. He is also the author of *1453: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West*.