



History is Written by Victorious Battles: Glorious Lepanto (1571) and Forgotten Preveza (1538)

Tarihi Muzaffer Muharebeler Yazar: Görkemli İnebahtı (1571) ve Unutulmuş Preveze (1538)

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ABSTRACT

The two battles - Preveza and Lepanto - are recorded in European historical memory in very different ways. In European historical memory, Lepanto has become the symbol of Christian victory over the invincible Ottoman Empire, even though it did not result in any significant tactical or strategic advantage or territorial change. The battle of Preveza, on the other hand, faded into oblivion. What similarities and differences can be drawn between the two battles? The historical context of the two battles provides an opportunity to draw parallels. Neither battle can be considered decisive in terms of military history. On 28 September 1538 and 7 October 1571, both battles saw two large enemy fleets clash. One of the most striking differences from the Holy League of 1538 was that in 1571 the Danubian Habsburg Monarchy did not join. In addition to the tactical and combat differences and analogies, we cannot ignore some technical developments: there are significant differences between the Christian galleys fighting in 1538 and 1571.

Keywords: The Battle of Preveza; The Battle of Lepanto; Mediterranean; 16th Century; Ottoman-Christian Rivalry

ÖZ

Preveze ve İnebahtı deniz savaşları Avrupa'nın tarihsel hafızasında farklı biçimlerde tezahür etmektedir. İnebahtı Deniz Savaşı Avrupa'nın tarihsel hafızasında, herhangi bir mühim taktiksel yahut stratejik getiri ve toprak kazanımı sağlamamasına rağmen, yenilmez Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na karşı Hıristiyan galibiyetinin sembolüdür. Öte yandan Preveze Deniz Muharebesi unutulmaya yüz tutmuştur. Bu iki muharebede ne gibi benzerlikler ve farklılıklar gözlemlenebilir? İki muharebenin tarihsel bağlamları paralellikler kurmaya elvermektedir. Her iki muharebe de oldukça geniş filolar arasında cereyan etmiş olmakla birlikte, askeri tarih bakımından kesin ve büyük sonuçlar yaratmamıştı. En belirgin farklardan biri 1538'deki Kutsal İttifak'a katılan Avusturya Habsburgları'nın 1571'deki ittifaka katılmayıdır. İki muharebenin cereyan edişindeki taktiksel farklara ilaveten, bazı teknik gelişmeler de göz ardı edilemez. 1571 yılında Hıristiyan filolarında savaşan kadirgamlar ile 1538 yılında savaşan kadirgamlar arasında mühim farklar vardır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Preveze Deniz Muharebesi, İnebahtı Deniz Savaşı, Akdeniz; 16. yüzyıl, Osmanlı-Hıristiyan Mücadelesi



Overture

On 28 September 1538, two huge fleets clashed a few miles from ancient Actium, near Preveza. Thirty-two years later, about 100 kilometers to the south, at the entrance to the Gulf of Patras on 7 October 1571, similar-sized Ottoman and Christian fleets clashed in what became known as the Battle of Lepanto. The weather conditions of the Mediterranean were not favourable to galley warfare in the autumn-winter period. Yet, the two largest naval battles of the sixteenth century took place at the beginning of a critical period for naval warfare. The two battles - Preveza and Lepanto - are recorded in European historical memory in very different ways. The latter became one of the most celebrated Christian victories not only of the Spanish Golden Age but also of the Italian Renaissance, through painting, the fine arts, literary works, chronicles, political memoirs, state propaganda, and celebrations¹. Over the centuries, Lepanto has become a reference point of national consciousness in Spain: at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, at the moment of the loss of the last colonies, for the Generation of 1898 Lepanto was a symbol of imperial glory, when Spain was at the height of its historical mission. According to that mission, the Spanish soul played a civilizing role in leading Christianity against the enemies of the Faith, whether it was the war against the “heretics” in the Low Countries and the Holy Roman Empire, against the fifth column of the Moriscos in Granada, or against the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean. After the Spanish Civil War, in Franco’s time, Lepanto took on a political content: Spain acted as a bastion of Christianity, defending Catholicism against the threat from the East, whether the opponent was Islam or the threat of twentieth-century communism². Today, it is more a chapter of history where past conflicts have generated civilizational clashes. But it can also be brought into the political spotlight regarding twentieth-century migration from the Mediterranean and the Balkans or Turkey’s potential membership in the European Union.

With a bit of exaggeration, we know the course of the Battle of Lepanto almost to the minute and even the names of the galleys³. We know not only the names of the commanders and officers who served gloriously on the galleys, but also the names and lives of the

1 See Lara Vila, “El sangriento destroz y crudas muertes. Gloria y miseria en la poesía de Lepanto”, *Lepanto La mar roja de sangre*, ed. Alex Claramunt Soto, Madrid 2021, 494-557. On paintings and tapestries commemorating Lepanto, see Víctor Mínguez, “Doria y Austria en Lepanto. Tapices y pinturas de Luca Cambiaso para una gesta naval”, *Magnificencia y Arte Devenir de los tapices en la Historia*, ed. Migel Ángel Zalama - Jesús F. Pascual Molian - María José Martínez Ruiz, Gijón 2018, 81-98. A particular aspect of the eternalization of the battle 475 years ago is the fact pointed out by the Turkish historian Özlem Kumrular, “Lepanto: Antes y después. La República, la Sublime Puerta y la Monarquía Católica”, *Studia historica. Historia moderna*, Nº 36 (2014), 102: a brand of Spanish brandy, a metro station in Rome, a stamp from Lesotho where Mickey Mouse appears as don Juan de Austria, all still commemorate the Battle of Lepanto.

2 Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, *La batalla de Lepanto. Cruzada, guerra santa e identidad confesional*, Madrid 2008, 9-17.

3 See: *Lepanto La mar roja de sangre*, ed. Alex Claramunt Soto, Madrid 2021, chapter *Apéndice*.

individual soldiers, including the infamous lady warrior María⁴. Of particular significance for the Spanish national consciousness is the fact that in this greatest naval victory of the era the Catholic Monarchy's nobles, soldiers and sailors played a key role and that Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, one of the greatest literary geniuses of the Spanish Golden Age, the author of *Don Quixote*, was wounded at Lepanto⁵. In contrast, the 1538 naval battle of Preveza is a lesser-known engagement. Both the written and artistic sources and the historical memory of the Christian defeat at Preveza are much poorer even though the two battles are comparable in size and importance and that they both were among the greatest naval struggles of the sixteenth century, along with the Battle of Djerba (1560) and the defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588). In fact, until the First World War, no naval engagement in terms of the number of ships and fighting men involved were comparable to the battles of Preveza and Lepanto. If you were to ask the average EU citizen today about the most famous naval events of the early modern era, they would typically mention the Spanish Grand Armada's ocean expedition against the Kingdom of England and Lepanto. However, if one would ask people whether they have heard of the battle of Preveza, the answer is likely to be a resounding no. This lost Christian battle is not part of public education either. The average person cannot be expected to know all the major battles of the early modern period. In European historical memory, Lepanto has become the symbol of Christian victory over the invincible Ottoman Empire, even though it did not result in any significant tactical or strategic advantage or territorial change. The battle of Preveza, on the other hand, faded into oblivion. Even its interpretation is unclear: some European authors present it as a draw, or a minor Christian victory, while others see it as a clear Ottoman victory. It is rarely mentioned that Preveza represented one of the greatest victories for the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean in the sixteenth century⁶.

What parallels and similarities can be drawn between the two battles? This is the question we try to answer in the following pages.

Historical Context

The historical context of the two battles provides an opportunity to draw parallels. The Ottoman Empire's expansion on land and in the Mediterranean brought it into conflict with the leading power of Christianity, the Habsburg Empire. After the Battle of Mohács (1526), the Habsburg dynasty fought a continuous struggle with the Ottomans for hegemony in Central

4 Dancing Mary or *María la Bailaora* See: Luis E. Iñigo Fernández, *Breve historia de la batalla de Lepanto*, 2015, 100-101.

5 Iñigo Fernández, *ibid.*; Alfredo Alvar Ezquerro, *Cervantes Genio y Libertad*, Madrid 2005, 105-149. See also: Anikó Schmidt, "A legjobb alkalom, mit a századok láttak", *A lepantói csata emlékezete William Shakespeare és Miguel de Cervantes munkásságában*, *Keletkutatás*, ősz, 2018, 51-62.

6 John Francis Jr. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder and Galleys. Changing Technology and Mediterranean Warfare at Sea in the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1974, 42-56.

Europe, which lasted for 150 years⁷. In parallel, from the end of the late fifteenth century until the last decade of the sixteenth century, a permanent state of war developed in the western basin of the Mediterranean: The Habsburg viceroyalties of Naples and Sicily, the Castilian garrisons of the Maghreb, the Venetian possessions in the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas, the coasts of Granada and Aragon were threatened by the constant raids and pillaging both by the Ottoman fleet and the North African pirates. In both regions, the devastation caused by wars and raids was immense: the destruction of settlements and the demographic changes in southern and central Hungary are comparable to the losses suffered by the coastal settlements of Granada, Aragon, Sicily and Naples. In the Ottoman-Habsburg theatres of war in the Mediterranean and Hungary there were often synchronized diplomatic and military actions against the Habsburg Dynasty⁸. Following the Battle of Mohács on 29 August 1526, Sultan Suleiman regarded Hungary as a country acquired by right of the sword, with John Szapolyai becoming vassal Hungarian king by his grace. At the same time, Ferdinand I of Hungary and Bohemia was regarded as ‘usurper’, a belittled ‘King of Vienna’, or ‘little king’ (reyezuelo) in Spanish-language Ottoman correspondence. Until the abdication of Charles V in 1556, Sultan Suleiman’s great adversary was the Universal Monarchy of Charles V. Until the latter’s abdication, the dynasty was not yet sharply divided into two branches, Ferdinand I’s subordination to his imperial brother being clear, but the two brothers’ dynastic cooperation was extremely close. From 1556 onwards, however, the dynastic cooperation weakened. From the accession of Philip II to the throne of Spain, we can speak more of the Catholic Monarchy and the Danubian Habsburg Empire. This difference is manifested in military and diplomatic events that are relevant to our subject. It is no coincidence that Ferdinand I of Hungary and Bohemia was a natural member of the Holy League of 1538, whereas his successor, Maximilian II Holy Roman Emperor, king of Hungary and Bohemia, did not join the Holy League of 1571.

7 Pál Fodor, *The Unbearable Weight of Empire: The Ottomans in Central Europe – A Failed Attempt at Universal Monarchy (1390–1566)*, Budapest 2015; Gábor Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest. The Ottoman Empire and its wars in Europe*, Oxford 2021.

8 Barnabás Guitman – Korpás Zoltán – Ferenc Tóth – János B. Szabó, “A magyarországi török várháborúk nemzetközi háttere 1547-1556”, *Világtörténet*, 2 (2019), 253-293; Géza Pálffy, “The Habsburg-Ottoman Rivalry in Hungary and the Mediterranean in the Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent”, *The Habsburg Mediterranean 1500-1800*, ed. Stefan Hanß – Dorothea McEwan, Vienna 2021, 147-174.



Map 1
The Central-Mediterranean Basin

The correlations of the anti-Ottoman struggles in Hungary and the Mediterranean under Charles V started around 1528-1529. The joining of the Genovese Andrea Doria from the service of Francis I to the Habsburg cause significantly increased Charles V's naval knowledge and the Habsburg dynasty's Mediterranean fighting capabilities. On the other hand, the siege of Vienna in 1529 by Sultan Suleiman caused terror in the Holy Roman Empire, but it also provided lessons to be learned. It is no coincidence that during Suleiman's campaign against Vienna in 1532 the Christian fleet led by Andrea Doria briefly captured Koron and Modon at the southern tip of the Peloponnese peninsula, as well as Patras near Lepanto.

At the beginning of 1534, the Ottoman Empire's navy was headed by Khayr ad-Din Barbarossa whose appointment as Kapudan Pasha was a response to Doria's naval successes in 1532⁹. In the Mediterranean, a period of intense naval warfare with many campaigns was ushered in. At the same time, in Hungary, there was a period of calm between the two empires until 1541, and diplomatic solutions were the main means of establishing a new status quo. After 1541, however, and especially in 1542-44 and 1551-53, a clear link developed between the theatres of war in Hungary and the Mediterranean. The forces opposing the Habsburg

9 Ágoston, *op.cit.*, 194.

dynasty tried to synchronize the military activities of the Ottomans and the anti-Habsburg Christian forces on as many fronts as possible – the Empire and Italy as main theatres, and Hungary, Balearic Islands, the Italian coast, etc. Following the external and internal crisis of the Habsburg dynasty in the 1550s and the separation of the two Habsburg dynastic branches, the historical constellation between the two anti-Ottoman theatres of war ceased to exist from 1556. What was conceivable under Charles V in 1538 would no longer be feasible in 1571: the former Holy League wanted to launch a land and sea campaign through Slavonia (part of the Kingdom of Hungary) and the Adriatic. The latter Holy League could not persuade Maximilian II to join the cause, what his father Ferdinand I had done in 1538.

The Formation of the Holy Leagues the Holy League of 1538

The 1530s can be seen as the first intense period of Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry. In the 1520s, the Universitas Christiana suffered a series of blows and was horrified by the advance of the Ottoman forces, which were considered invincible: first by breaking the southern defenses of Hungary (Belgrad, 1521) and capturing Rhodes (1522), then a few years later, by the defeat of the Kingdom of Hungary (Mohács, 1526), and then by two campaigns against Vienna (1529 and 1532). But in 1532, the Christian forces led by Charles V were already able to resist, calling together an international coalition of forces for the defense of Vienna, unprecedented in Europe at the time. They also launched a counter-attack on the Peloponnesian peninsula against the Ottoman Empire. With the appointment of Khajr Ad-din Barbarossa as Kapudan Pasha, the Sultan intended to keep his strategic initiative in the Mediterranean. Following the 1532 campaign against Vienna, Ottoman expansion in Hungary in the 1530s was temporarily halted, and the Sultan's forces did not return to the region until 1541.

In contrast, the Mediterranean basin saw significant naval actions. In 1534, a reinforced Ottoman naval fleet not only plundered the coast of Italy, but Barbarossa captured the Spanish vassal city of Tunis. In 1535, a Christian force of hundreds of ships and tens of thousands of soldiers, personally commanded by Charles V, successfully retook the city. Although the imperial propaganda hailed the victory of the 'African Lion' over the Moors and Barbarossa's troops as an extraordinary success, the opportunity was not followed by further Christian military actions, and the initiative remained in Ottoman hands¹⁰.

The conflict between the Empires became more and more complex and intense, as the "hostis naturalis," the Ottoman Empire formally allied with Francis I of France. The alliance

10 María José Rodríguez Salgado, "Carolus Africanus? El Emperador y el Turco", *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa (1530–1558)*, coord. José Martínez Millán, Madrid 2001, 487-532; Miguel Ángel Bunes de Ibarra, "La conquista de Túnez por los cronistas españoles", *Túnez 1535 Voces para una campaña europea*, ed. M. Á. Bunes de Ibarra - R. González Cuerva, Madrid 2017, 9-28; Zoltán Korpás, "Buda-Algír-Buda. A magyarországi és a mediterrán oszmánellenes küzdelmek kölcsönhatásai 1538-1542", *"Buda oppugnata": 1541 – egy korszakhatár a magyar történelemben. (Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából)*, 2017, 85-102.

also meant coordinating military activities: in 1537, the Ottoman fleet landed briefly in Apulia, and Barbarossa's ships raided the area around Otranto. Although French diplomats, Baron de la Foret and Baron Saint-Blacard all urged Suleiman to land his main force in southern Italy, the Sultan marched as far as Valona, and in late August 1537, the Ottoman army besieged the Venetian-held island of Corfu for nearly three weeks¹¹.

The siege of Corfu, the Ottoman raids on southern Italy, the disembarkation in Apulia, all this, coupled with the Franco-Ottoman alliance and cooperation, provoked an immediate reaction both at the court of Charles V and in the Holy See: on the initiative of Pope Paul III, with the active support of Charles V and the participation of Venice and Florence, the Holy League was founded on 8th February 1538, designing a land and sea campaign against the Ottoman Empire¹². King Ferdinand I of Hungary and Bohemia was an official member of the League. His role illustrates the historical context in which the aims of the Holy League could be placed. The terms of the negotiations included several conditions that hinted at plans for an anti-Ottoman offensive in Europe: on the one hand, Francis I was invited to join the anti-Ottoman alliance, which the French monarch refused to do, and even declared in the period following the signing the treaty, that he would not guarantee the observance of the truce in the event of a possible anti-Ottoman imperial campaign. Moreover, during the talks between the two monarchs, in November 1537, Charles V's Council of State proposed the points of peace with Francis I. Under point 83, the imperial diplomacy asked the French King to stop supporting the Hungarian king John I, an enemy of the Habsburgs, who was considered an Ottoman vassal and used his envoys to urge the counter-reigning Monarch to agree with Ferdinand I in matters of the possession of Hungary. In addition, Francis I should withdraw from the anti-Habsburg alliances (point 80). In points 30 and 31, it was proposed that the Holy League attack the Ottoman Empire by sea and through Slavonia in Hungary. To achieve this goal, they urged that the military force of the Hungarian and Bohemian king Ferdinand I shall be strengthened and that imperial religious matters be settled in a synod¹³. The Habsburg brothers had by then been negotiating for a long time with king John I Szapolyai's representatives about the potential unification of the Kingdom of Hungary under Habsburg rule. In the Treaty of Várad (now Oradea, Romania), concluded

11 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 45-47; Roger Crowley, *Tengeri birodalmak. A kereszténység és az iszlám harca a Földközi-tenger feletti uralomért*, Budapest 2014, 88-90.

12 About the Holy League of 1538 and the Battle of Preveza see: Álvaro Casillas Pérez, "Una certa debileza", Andrea Doria y las campañas de la Prëveza y Castelnuovo ante las embajadas de Génova y Venecia (1538-1539)", *Nuevas perspectivas de investigación en Historia Moderna: Economía, Sociedad, Política y Cultura en el Mundo Hispánico*, ed. M^a Ángeles Pérez Samper – José Luis Betrán Moya, Madrid 2018, 670-679; Simone Lombardo, "Tra Propaganda e realita: una ricostruzione della strana battaglia di Prevesa (1538)", *Studi Veneziani*, N.S. LXXX (2019), 167-192. The terms of the treaty also shared by: Ricardo González Castrillo, "La pérdida de Castelnuovo en 1539 según fuentes españolas", *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes*, vol. 24 (2013), 73-74.

13 Archivo General de Simancas, Secretaría de Estado, Francia, legajo K 1642. fol. 21. *Consulta del Consejo de Estado*, November 1537. See also: Zoltán Korpás, *V. Károly és Magyarország*, Századvég, Budapest 2008, 185.

on Charles V's birthday, 24th February 1538, the parties agreed that the Hungarian crown would be united under Habsburg rule in the event of the death of Szapolyai, which occurred on 22nd July 1540. It was no coincidence that the treaty was ratified by Charles V in Toledo a few months later since both the Treaty of Nice and the Treaty of Várad (besides its local diplomatic importance) had further similar strategic aims: to secure the political backing and the eastern continental flank of the anti-Ottoman Holy League and to keep Francis I neutral. In addition, the members of the League - in case of a land attack against the Ottoman Empire launched through Slavonia - could not be caught unprepared by John I Szapolyai. In the initial phase of the league, land and naval campaigns were planned, which would have included a campaign against the Ottomans to reconquer Hungary and the Balkans. Interesting insights were provided by the letters from Charles V's envoy at the court of King Francis I that John Szapolyai could deploy up to 40,000 cavalymen against the Ottomans and that this cavalry would be the best force to defeat the Ottoman sipahis¹⁴. A phrase often quoted in Hungarian historiography as "proof" of Habsburg political cynicism in the context of the Peace of Várad "... to work in our favour against the Turks is right, but to promise firmly that I would defend them would be a promise that I doubted to keep..."¹⁵ The quoted letter of Charles V to Ferdinand I, can only be correctly interpreted in the international context of the Holy League of 1538, which was planning an anti-Ottoman land and sea campaign. Back in the summer of 1537, when the representatives both of the Habsburg brothers and Szapolyai were negotiating the unification of the Kingdom of Hungary under Habsburg rule, Archbishop Weeze of Lund asked Szapolyai's representative, István Brodarics, a strange question: was King John I willing to go to war on the Habsburg side against the Ottomans? Brodarics answered in the affirmative¹⁶. The above nuances did not mean that the Habsburg brothers had expressed confidence in King John I in the campaign against the Ottomans. Perhaps the most important thing was that in the event of a possible land attack by the Holy League (whether from the south, from Otranto, as mentioned in a memoir of September 1538¹⁷, or from the Venetian 'Terraferma' through Slavonia in Hungary¹⁸), Szapolyai should at least remain neutral.

The above-mentioned members of the Holy League of 1538, the Papal State, Florence, Venice, Pope V. Charles I, and Ferdinand I planned a combined naval and land attack against

14 Jean Hannart to Charles V. 1st January 1539. AGS, Estado Francia, leg. K 1484, fol. 117. On the international importance of the Várad Treaty see: Korpás, *V. Károly*, 183-199.

15 "...et aussi de les favoriser contre le Turc, comme verez mais d'en remectre expressement de les deffendre contre le turc, ce seroit chose douteuse de complir". Quoted by: Árpád Károlyi, *Adalékok a nagyváradi béke s az 1536-1538. évek történetéhez*, Budapest 1878, 59, 134. Gábor Barta, *Az erdélyi fejedelemség születése*, Budapest 1979, 59.

16 Korpás, *V. Károly*, 182.

17 A memoir of the army against the Turks. Rome, 8 September 1538. AGS, Estado Roma, leg 867, fol. 66.

18 Korpás, *V. Károly*, 188-189, quotes a letter of 22 May 1538 by Count Nogueroles regarding a Christian army of more than 30,000 men from Venice, to be sent to Hungary.

the Ottomans¹⁹. A force of 50,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry and 200 galleys, and 100 sailing ships was expected. The costs would be shared 3-2-1 between the parties. Half would have been paid by Charles V, 2/6 covered by Venice, and the remaining 1/6 by Pope Paul III. Of the 200 galleys, 36 were to be provided by the Pope, while 82-82 galleys by Venice and Charles V. The alliance also stipulated that the territory recaptured on the Adriatic coast would belong to Venice. At the start of the campaign, the island of Corfu was designated as the assembly point, and the fleet was to be led by Charles V's famous sailor Andrea Doria²⁰.

Regarding Ferdinand I, it was stipulated that no contribution was expected from the Hungarian monarch, only that he should keep an army of sufficient size in Hungary to oppose the Ottomans²¹. However, for Ferdinand I's participation, and even more so for the possible march of the Holy League army into Slavonia, Szapolyai needed to become an ally, or at least neutral during the planned anti-Ottoman military operations. Besides its local importance, the Peace of Várad was significant in this broader international context. It seemed to have temporarily detached John I from the Ottoman alliance. It is no coincidence that, in 1539, when the secret Treaty of Várad became known through the indiscretion of Ferdinand I at the Sublime Porte²², a small Habsburg force - including one of the famous Spanish old Tercios of the time, led by maestre de Campo Cristóbal de Morales and later called as 'Tercio de Hungría' - marched as far as Debrecen, by the terms of the Treaty of Várad, to the aid of King John I, who was fearing an imminent Ottoman punishment²³.

The Holy League of 1571

It is seldom mentioned in connection with the historical antecedents of the League of 1571 that the primary historical antecedent of both the organization of the League and the tactics that led to the victory at Lepanto was the experience of the League of 1538 the battle of Preveza. The last years of Charles V's reign culminated in a pan-European war where, in addition to an open Franco-Ottoman alliance, the French monarch Henry II successfully allied with the German Protestant princes, some Italian princes, and even the Pope against the Habsburg brothers. The wars of the early 1550s extended to all the major theatres of war in Europe. Not only were wars fought for years in the Low Countries, in the territory of the Holy Roman Empire, or northern Italy, but the Ottomans conquered vast areas in Hungary after the expiration of the Treaty of Edirne in 1547. Also, they plundered the western Mediterranean

19 Emmanuelle Pujeau, "Preveza in 1538: The background of a very complex situation", *Second International Symposium on the History and Culture of Preveza, Sep 2009, Preveza, Greece*, 126 also points out from Paolo Giovo's work that the League's participants in the offensive campaign were considering three possible routes: a land, a sea, and a combined sea-land attack.

20 The full text of the treaty: Pedro Girón, *Crónica del Emperador Carlos V.*, Madrid 1964, 248-252. See also González Castrillo, *op.cit.*, 74-75, and Korpás, *V. Károly*, 184; Korpás, "Buda-Algír-Buda", 85-102.

21 González Castrillo, *op.cit.*, 74.

22 Ágoston, *op.cit.*, 201.

23 On the short expedition of Cristóbal de Morales and the Spanish tercio to Hungary, see: Korpás, *V. Károly*, 236.

basin, destroying Habsburg lands in Italy, Spain, and North Africa in alliance with the French. There was a correlation between these different and distant fronts, as illustrated, for example, by the correspondence of the pasha of Buda with the German imperial princes and the French King. In those years, the Habsburg Empire was threatened by the all-out war on many possible fronts, which was made particularly more complicated by the dispute over the division of the imperial inheritance and the personal psychological, and physical exhaustion of Emperor Charles V.²⁴

After 1556, with both the accession of Philip II to the Spanish throne and the division of the Habsburg inheritance, the separation of the two branches also brought an apparent change in the Habsburg anti-Ottoman policy. During Charles V, the Ottoman question was perceived as an interrelated theatre of wars in the Mediterranean and Central Europe. The partition of Charles V inheritance into the Catholic Monarchy of Philip II and the Danubian Habsburg Monarchy also meant that, despite close dynastic cooperation, the Ottoman question became a separate local issue. Just an example from one of the core topics of Spanish Military History: While under Charles V, three of the first four Spanish old Tercios (units of the *maestres de Campo* Cristóbal de Morales, Álvaro de Sande, and Bernardo de Aldana) were known to have fought in Hungary, after 1556 there would be no elite Spanish military units sent to the Kingdom of Hungary. Philip II was unwilling to provide significant military, diplomatic, and financial resources to the anti-Ottoman continental front. For the Catholic Monarchy, the Ottoman threat manifested primarily in attacks on Spanish and Italian interests in the Mediterranean. But in contrast to the dynastic policy of Charles V, under Philip II the Habsburg dynasty and Spanish, Castilian political interests were, if not entirely, brought closer together. It is no coincidence that, while the League of 1538 cannot be wholly dissociated from events in Hungary, the antecedents of the League of 1571 are exclusively located in the Mediterranean. The liberation of Malta from the Ottoman siege in 1565 had more impact than the death of Sultan Suleiman at the siege of Szigetvár in Hungary in 1566. Following the accession of Sultan Selim II to the throne, the Ottoman Empire and the Danubian Habsburg Empire concluded a peace treaty in Edirne on 17th February 1568. Following the peace, the attention of the Porte turned to Cyprus in Venetian possession. The internal relations of the Sultan's court and individual ambitions there also urged an attack on Venetian possessions. The role of Joseph Nasi, a Sephardic Jew with hostile feelings towards La Serenissima, who, as Prince of Naxos and confidant of Sultan Selim, pressed for the conquest of Cyprus, is noteworthy. Although the existing peace with Venice was renewed in 1567, the campaign against the Island was soon organized. The Sultan appointed

24 On the last years of Charles V and the dynastic crisis, see the classic work of María José Rodríguez Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire: Charles V, Philip II and Habsburg Authority, 1551–1559*, Cambridge University Press, 2008. On the wars of 1547-1556 and their context, see: Guitman – Korpás – Tóth – Szabó, *op.cit.*, 253-293.

Lala Mustafa Pasha to lead the landing force, and Müezzinzade Ali Pasha was appointed as Kapudan Pasha, regardless of his lack of experience in naval affairs. In September 1568, a small Ottoman fleet led by Joseph Nasi paid a seemingly friendly visit to Cyprus, clearly to spy and to evaluate the island's military defenses and strength²⁵.

The events in the western end of the Mediterranean opened a new frontier in the struggle between Islam and Christianity: on 1st January 1567, based on decrees formulated in 1526 under Charles V, but not promulgated that time, Philip II of Spain imposed a complete prohibition of the religious practices, dress, and traditions of the Moriscos in Spain. The Moors tried to reach an agreement with the court via their representatives, but after negotiations failed, on 24th December 1568, the Moorish people in Alpujarras and its surroundings revolted. The rebellion spread throughout the Kingdom of Granada. Much to the fear of Philip II's court, the Moriscos received support from the Moors and Turks in North Africa, especially from the Algiers vilayet, part of the Ottoman Empire. Also, letters from the Moors in Spain reached as far as Istanbul, the divan of Selim II. By 1570, a kind of war fear had taken hold in Philip II's court that the Ottomans would use the rebellion of the Moors to openly aid their coreligionists in Spain, threatening the hinterland and internal order of the Catholic Monarchy as a kind of the fifth column. The Alpujarras uprising was finally defeated with great difficulty by March 1571 under the leadership of the future victor of Lepanto, don Juan de Austria²⁶.

By early 1570 it was clear that an Ottoman invasion of Cyprus was imminent²⁷. By that summer, an Ottoman force of several hundred ships and more than 60,000 men had landed on the island and begun the siege of Nicosia. Venice's appeal for help not won real support from many European courts. Neither the French King nor the Holy-Roman Emperor Maximilian II, nor the Poles or the Russians wanted to go to war against the Ottomans. Under the dual pressure of the revolt in the Low Countries and the Alpujarras uprising, Philip II understandably preferred to launch a campaign against North Africa, particularly against Tunis. Pope Pius V's diplomatic skills were essential to resolve the strategic conflict between La Serenissima and Philip II.²⁸

The Holy League of 25 May 1571 followed the structure of the Holy League of 1538 and adapted the 1538 treaty to the new political constellation. The League undertook to deploy

25 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 236-237. On the accession of Selim to the throne and the preparations against Cyprus, and the role of Nasi, see also Gennaro Varriale, "La batalla de las firmas: La negociación de la Liga Santa", *Lepanto La mar roja de sangre*, ed. Alex Claramunt Soto, Madrid 2021, 85-98. Ágoston, *op.cit.*, 240-242.

26 About the Alpujarras Revolt see: Varriale, *ibid.*, 96-99. Geoffrey Parker, *Felipe II. La biografía definitiva*, Barcelona 2016, 531-538.

27 About the Ottoman claims against Cyprus see: Varriale, *ibid.*, 103. The Ottoman ideological argumentation for the conquest of Cyprus: Anikó Schmidt, "A ciprusi hadjárat (1570-1573) muszlim indoklása", *Levéltári Közlemények*, 89. évf., 2020, 329-338.

28 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 236-237; Parker, *op.cit.*, 538-546. In Hungarian see: Anikó Schmidt, "Egy elszigetelt Győzelem: Lepanto 1571", *Keletkutatás*, 2010 tavasz, 81-87.

200 galleys, 100 ships, and 50,000 men. Not only were the prominent League members identical (Venice, the Papal State, and the Habsburg Monarchy), not only was the size of the forces contracted for the same size, but the cost was shared the same way: half was paid by the Catholic Monarchy, two-sixths by Venice and the remaining one-sixth by the Papal State. In addition, the League of 1571 also included, besides the Catholic Monarchy's possessions in Italy (Viceroyalty of Naples, Viceroyalty of Sicily, Sardinia), certain vassals and allied states such as Genoa, Urbino, Tuscany, the Order of Malta, and the Papal Order of St. Stephen. Philip II appointed don Juan de Austria as commander-in-chief of the League. His deputy was Marcantonio Colonna, appointed by the Pope, and Messina was chosen as the meeting place²⁹.

One of the most striking differences from the Holy League of 1538 was that in 1571 the Danubian Habsburg Monarchy did not join. The hand of Emperor Maximilian II was tied, as he had successfully used the death of Suleiman at Szigetvár (1566) to conclude the new Treaty of Edirne for eight years on 17th February 1568. On the other hand, on 16th August 1570 in Speyer, an agreement was reached between John Sigismund Szapolyai and Hungarian King Maximilian I on the legal status of Transylvania within the Kingdom of Hungary - the Principality of Transylvania, which became a sovereign political power in Europe, and also an Ottoman vassal state, was born. Pope Pius V moved many envoys to make Emperor Maximilian II a member of the League, even suggesting that the League could be used to help reconquer Hungary and some Balkan states for the glory of Christendom³⁰.

League leaders' ambitions, co-operation, and conflicts

In 1571, there were considerable differences in military objectives. For Venice, the liberation of Cyprus and the recapture of Ottoman-held possessions in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas were essential. By contrast, Philip II did not consider it expedient to waste the strength of such a vast fleet on attacks on ports of minor importance. The strategic priority for the Spanish monarch was to eliminate the Ottoman and Moorish threat from North Africa. The commander of the Genoese fleet, Gian Andrea Doria (Andrea Doria's nephew), and Luis de Requesens y Zuñiga – famous sailor, diplomatic, and advisor to don Juan de Austria – both favored a risk-conscious, defensive campaign. In the case of Doria, there also seems to have been an individual motivation: on the one hand, Doria's interests were less served by an

29 On the establishment of the Holy League of 1571 and its relationship with the League of 1538, see, in addition to the above, Braudel, *op.cit.*, vol. III, 1156-1158. Recently: Varriale, *op.cit.*, 80-132, especially 104-119. On the organization of the fleet and the importance of Messina and its strategically ideal position, see Miguel Ángel Bunes de Ibarra, "Reunión en Mesina. Organización, logística y planes de la Liga Santa", *Lepanto La mar roja de sangre*, ed. Alex Claramunt Soto, Madrid 2021, 133-199.

30 For more on Pope Pius V's repeated attempts to include Maximilian II in the Holy League and to launch a campaign from Hungary, see Girodano Altarozzi, "Diplomazia pontificia europea all'indomani di Lepanto", *The Proceedings of the "European Integration - Between Tradition and Modernity" Congress*, 5, 2013, 979-981.

offensive campaign to strengthen Venice, Genoa's great adversary. On the other hand, as an *asentista* to Philip II, a private entrepreneur, the possible loss of the Genoese galleys he financed would have been an excessive economic risk³¹.

The League of 1538 reflected similar personal disagreements. Andrea Doria's views, his interests and even his behavior at the time of the battle of Preveza showed many parallels with those of his nephew in 1571. Andrea Doria was also concerned about leading a campaign for the benefit of Venice. Still less was he interested in putting the Genoese fleet at too significant a risk as an *asentista* who took it upon himself to finance the fleet. The antagonism with the Serenissima was evident around the formation of the League and the way he retreated southwards with the fleet at dawn before the battle of Preveza. When the Christian force landed at Castelnuovo following the lost naval battle, Andrea Doria refused to hand over the captured fortress to Venice, leaving a substantial Spanish contingent to defend the castle. Even though, according to the League's treaty, the Serenissima would have been entitled to the territory³². That said, it seems less historically plausible that some scholars of both battles have tried to portray the Dorias as weak and cowardly commanders fleeing the battle, ad absurdum traitors. However, Andrea Doria's behavior in 1538 is complicated by his negotiations with the Ottoman admiral Khayr ad-Din Barbarossa just days before the battle of Preveza. According to some interpretations, Barbarossa used the negotiations as a distraction, without any real intention to switch to the Christian side. Guilmartin speculates that it was not Barbarossa's allegiance at stake since Charles V had little to offer to the famous Ottoman commander. On the other hand, through Barbarossa, Sultan Suleiman could offer Doria and Genoa considerable advantages, especially regarding importing tin in the Ottoman Empire, which the Genoese merchants controlled. Thus, in the view of the American author, it cannot be ruled out that the secret negotiations were about the Ottoman Empire's relationship with Genoa and Doria, and that Barbarossa's possible defection was a cover story³³.

In 1571, in contrast to 1538, there were two individuals whose enthusiasm, perseverance, and talent were decisive. Pope Pius V persevered in balancing the very different interests of Philip II, Venice and Genoa. The ambitions and talents of Philip II's half-brother, the young don Juan de Austrias, now in his twenties, were also decisive. The successful suppression of the Alpujarras rebellion had a unique inner motivation. In the shadow of Philip II, without royal legitimacy, he could lead one of the most significant expeditions of Christendom. Don Juan's motivation and possible prospects are illustrated by the fact that when Pope Pius V tried to win over Emperor Maximilian II to the League, one of the proposals from the

31 See Guilmartin, *op.cit.* data on the asiento and the cost of Genoese galleys: 32-34.

32 On the hesitation of Andrea Doria and his reservations about Venice, see: Casillas Pérez, *op.cit.*, 671-673. On the question of the possession of Castelnuovo, see González Castrillo, *op.cit.*, 76. On the tensions between the league members, see Lombardo, *op.cit.*, 169-171.

33 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 42-45; Crowley, *op.cit.*, 92-94 also refers to the negotiations with Barbarossa.

Holy See was that if Maximilian joined and large areas of Hungary and the Balkans were recaptured from the Ottomans, a new kingdom should be established in the reconquered territories and offered to don Juan³⁴. While mentioning the role of the Spanish prince, it is important to highlight another general who had lived through the failure of the 1538 League, although he was not present at the battle of Preveza, but whose military experience was perhaps the most significant in providing support to the young don Juan. The Marquis of Villafranca, former Viceroy of Sicily and Catalonia, García Álvarez de Toledo y Osorio had a particular naval experience: he took part in all the major naval campaigns of Charles V and was a key player in the liberation of Malta in 1565. His advice, including that don Juan de Austria, should follow the previous tactics and battle plan of Barbarossa, the victorious opponent at Preveza, had a significant influence on the young man³⁵.

The lack of trust between the Allies, especially between the Genoese and Venetian commanders and soldiers, but also between the Spanish and Venetian leaders, caused problems during both campaigns. In the 1538 campaign, led by Andrea Doria of Genoa, there was no balancing force to resolve the differences between the parties. However, in 1571, Don Juan de Austria managed the situation as well as he could, even when a situation of armed conflict between Spanish and Venetian galleys threatened to arise: in the armada rowing towards the Greek coast, the leader of the Venetian contingent, Sebastiano Venier, hanged one of the captains of the disobedient Spanish soldiers on board his ship. In a meeting of the Council of War held in a tense situation, Gian Andrea Doria proposed that the Genoese and Spanish fleets should sail back and leave the Venetians alone. Don Juan de Austria did not follow the suggestion and, as the authorized commander-in-chief of the Holy League, resolved the situation by replacing Venier with Agostino Barbarigo at the head of the fleet's left flank³⁶.

Impact of Preveza Battle on Lepanto and Tactical Differences

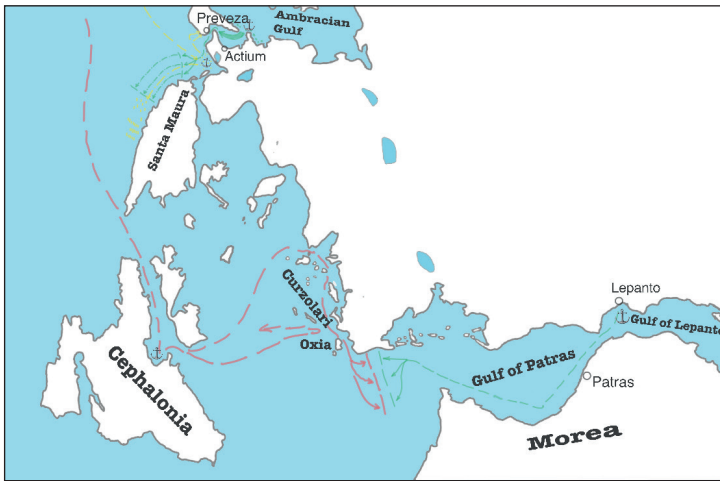
It is not only the organizational and financing conditions of the leagues of 1538 and 1571 that we find significant parallels and possibly differences. As has already been mentioned, at Lepanto, the Christian force adopted the order of battle used by Barbarossa's fleet in 1538. The Mediterranean galley warfare is a plausible and often used formation, that the fleet was divided in a crescent arc into three parts and a reserve unit in 1571, just as Barbarossa had done in 1538. But to be effective, it was also necessary to achieve proper rowing practice so that the galleys could maintain the expected order of battle. On the orders of Don Juan de Austria, the Christian fleet had already rowed from Messina in battle order so that the cooperation between individual ships and squadrons would be as successful as possible. It was not only in this respect that Don Juan made significant improvements. Some decisive changes in the

34 Altarozzi, *op.cit.*, 979-981,

35 Bunes de Ibarra, „Reunión en Mesina“, 181-185, Crowley, *op.cit.*, 318-319.

36 Crowley, *ibid.*, 326-328.

outcome of the two battles under comparison are important to note: in September 1538, the Christian fleet under Andrea Doria had been divided into ‘national’ squadrons and, because of the lack of trust between Genoa and Venice and between Spain and Venice, the units had shown less willingness to cooperate. Each squadron of ships operated under its own national flag, with the Maltese galleys at the right flank, the Genoese ships of Giannettino Doria in the center and the Spanish ships of Ferrante Gonzaga on the left flank. Behind them was the main force of Andrea Doria, followed by other Venetian squadrons led by Marco Grimani and the Papal galleys of Vincenzo Capello. In reserve were the galleys and ships of Francesco Doria.



Map 2

The areas of the two battles

By contrast, in 1571, the Treaty of the Holy League stipulated that the unified commander of the Christian fleet was to be appointed by Philip II and that all participants were to obey him. Don Juan de Austria was placed at the head of the fleet, who seems to have been attentive to the proposals of some experienced Spanish commanders, notably García de Toledo³⁷. Don Juan de Austria’s decision to successfully combine the advantages of Venetian and Spanish galley warfare was a highly effective one: he mixed the well-maneuverable, slightly faster Venetian galleys with the traditionally heavier but better cannoned Spanish galleys in each wing. Typically, the heavy Spanish galleys would reinforce each section of the fleet, and the Venetian galleys would provide mobility. When designing the tactical order of battle, he also considered that the Christian left wing was likely to row close to the coast so that in shallow water more Venetian galleys with lower draughts would be needed than in the center and right wing. The Christian left wing, consisting mainly of Venetian galleys, was thus able to prevent the Ottoman right wing, led by Mehmet Sirocco, from embracing the Christian

37 Bunes de Ibarra, “Reunión en Mesina”, 176-184.

force from the coast, at the cost of heavy casualties. Each fleet unit carried distinctive flags to distinguish the galleys and maneuver uniformly from wing to wing. The right wing, led by Gian Andrea Doria, flew green flags on the masts, the center, led by Don Juan de Austria, carried blue, and the left wing, led by Agustino Barbarigo, yellow. The reserve squadron, led by Álvaro de Bazán, marquis of Santa Cruz raised a white flag. The decision of mixing the contingents was motivated not only by pragmatic combat considerations but also by the need to prevent the fleet of each nation from fleeing the battlefield³⁸.

However, the Venetian galleys had the disadvantage of not meeting the 60 well-armed foot soldiers per galley agreed in the Holy League treaty. In several cases, they had less than 40 infantrymen per ship. Although Venetian commander Venier 5200 hired additional Italian mercenaries early in the campaign, the Venetian galleys still appeared at Messina with the fewest soldiers. Some 1,614 Spanish and 2,489 Italian soldiers, richly equipped with arquebuses and muskets and considered unbeatable in land battles, supplemented the fighting force of the Venetian ships with up to 120 infantrymen/galleys. Although this still fell short of the 150 men ordered on Spanish and Genoese, Papal, and Maltese galleys. Some galleys, such as the Neapolitan, even exceeded this, with 180 infantry³⁹.

The Spanish and Italian infantry had the most significant combat value of all the soldiers fighting on Christian galleys. Not only because of their firearms but also because of their fighting routine and outstanding discipline, the old Spanish tercios were the most effective units. At Lepanto, with 6,560 men, there were four tercios: the so-called Figueroa tercio⁴⁰, created in 1566, the Cerdagne tercio, the Naples tercio and the Sicilian tercio. The Italian infantry was organized in 3 coronelias under the command of Paolo Sforza, Lorenzo Tutavia, and Sigismundo Gonzaga. In addition, 4,987 Landsknecht fought, and some 1,800 volunteers joined. Some 2,000 volunteers from different nations also fought under the Papal banner. In total, the Christian force numbered over 25,000 fighters⁴¹. However, other authors put the number of Christian warriors at about 34,500, and 43,500 oarsmen, other 13,000 sailors served on ships. Different estimates put the total Christian force at between 62,100 and 90,000, although the latter is probably an exaggeration. The total size of the Ottoman force may have been close to 60,000, estimated at 20,000 to 25,000 soldiers and some 13,000 additional oarsmen and 30,000 sailors⁴².

38 Bunes de Ibarra, "Reunión en Mesina", 188.

39 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 242.

40 Some sources called Figueroa's tercio the Tercio of Granada, as soldiers were mainly recruited from Granada. Magdalena de Pazzis Pi Corrales, "Los tercios del mar en los siglos XVI y XVII.", *Historia de la Infantería de Marina. Ciclo de Conferencias junio-julio 2020, Cuaderno Monográfico No. 81*, Madrid 2020, 52.

41 Agustín Ramón Rodríguez González, "La lucha en el Centro: Don Juan contra Ali Pachá", *Lepanto La mar roja de sangre*, ed. Alex Claramunt Soto, Madrid 2021, 292-294.

42 Ricardo Cerezo Martínez, *Las Armadas de Felipe II.*, Madrid 1988, 217; Ágoston, *op.cit.*, 243, the Christian force outnumbered the Ottomans by a few thousand, 62,100 against 57,700.

In the context of the Spanish tercios fighting at Lepanto, it is important to highlight the emergence of a new, modern military unit, the professional marines. According to recent research by Pi Corrales, Figueroa's tercio was created on 27 February 1566 in Cartagena and was known as the *Tercio de la Armada del Mar Océano* (Tercio of the Armada of the Sea Ocean). In 1566, on the same day, a new naval unit was created in Naples, in addition to the existing old tercio of Naples: the *Tercio de Mar y Tierra* (Tercio of the Sea and Land), under the command of maestre de campo Pedro Padilla. In the same year, a third marine unit was created, the *Tercio de Galeras de Sicilia* (Tercio of Sicilian Galleys). The three tercios provided the first standing marine units in history for the three main Spanish naval units and, during Lepanto, acted as a landing professional military troops taking part in the Battle of Lepanto⁴³.

In connection with the innovations, don Juan ordered, on the advice of Gian Andrea Doria, or García de Toledo, as others have stated, that the long bow at the front of the hull of the Christian galleys be sawed off, so that the main guns, which were located in the middle of the platform at the bow of the galleys, could be lowered when firing at close range. In this way, they could fire on the lower Ottoman galleys with literally devastating effect during the Battle of Lepanto. Instead of the shells flying over the enemy galleys, as was often the case with Ottoman artillery, they could demolish the Ottoman decks⁴⁴. The outcome of the battle was also influenced by the fact that, unlike the 1538 battle of Preveza, the Christian fleet at Lepanto was much more united and disciplined. This was due not only to the fact that they sailed from Messina in order of battle and maintained that order throughout the battle but also to the fact that, under strict orders from Don Juan de Austria, the Christian galleys did not open fire from medium or long range. As experienced warriors of the time described it to be devastating, "the roar of the guns must be at about the same time as the galley's bow bores into the enemy ship."⁴⁵

In addition to the tactical and combat differences and analogies, we cannot ignore some technical developments: there are significant differences between the Christian galleys fighting in 1538 and 1571. Almost all descriptions emphasize that at Lepanto, two large Venetian galleasses, six in all, sailed in front of each Christian squadron, reinforced by 500-500 Spanish infantry per galleasses. Spanish historiography attributes to don Juan de Austria the suggestion that the galleasses should advance a quarter of a mile ahead of the fleet in the battle, thus successfully breaking the Ottoman offensive line as a sort of vanguard. This large, slow and heavy galleass had 26 oars, a surprisingly small number of 156 oarsmen compared to the average galley. It was the floating gunboat of the age, reinforced with its guns mounted high on the stern and bow, giving it very considerable firepower. It is only known from galleasses built a few years later that this type of large galleys-type ships carried

43 Pi Corrales, *op.cit.*, 51-52.

44 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 241; Rodríguez González, *op.cit.*, 267.

45 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 73-74.

five full guns, 2-3 half guns, eight pedreros, four culverins, seven sacre, four half-sacre and some 20 smaller caliber guns fixed to the ship's rail⁴⁶. Another advantage was that their high decks were tough to attack from low galleys by infantry. At Lepanto, the galleasses fighting in the Christian left flank and center are known to have sunk just a few ships with their guns. Still, they played a significant role in breaking up the order of battle at the Ottoman right flank and center to get around or out of the galleasses' flanking firing line. The right wing, led by Gian Andrea Doria, had to row a longer distance to deploy to the battle line, and the two slow galleasses attached to the wing understandably did not intervene in the battle in any meaningful way⁴⁷. The Ottomans had no ships comparable to the galleasses.

After Preveza, even more, after the 1550s, Christian galleys, especially Spanish galleys, developed considerably; in fact they reached their peak. The average Spanish galley became heavier and slower, carrying more and heavier guns and thus more firepower. At the same time, its maneuverability and range, due to the increase in numbers and weight, decreased. Also, its supply needs and maintenance costs increased dramatically. Before 1550 the average Mediterranean galley had 24 rows and 144 oarsmen; in the following decades, the number of oarsmen increased significantly. By the 1560s the average Spanish galley still had 24 benches but was now propelled by 160 oarsmen. At Lepanto, the number of oarsmen on Spanish and allied galleys exceeded 174 and even reached 200. In 1571, the average Spanish galley also typically had 112 sailors and 150 infantrymen. Don Juan de Austria's flagship, *La Real*, was propelled by 420 oarsmen on 35 rowing lines and defended by 400 arquebusiers. By contrast, Ottoman galleys were typically smaller and nimble and were less well equipped with cannons and firearms. Three hundred janissaries reinforced Ali Pasha's ship with bows and 100 musketeers⁴⁸.

There were also significant changes in the caliber and number of guns between 1538 and 1571. According to a source from 1536, the average Mediterranean galley had the following artillery on the platform at the bow: a larger 30-40 pound cannon in the center, two smaller 7-10 pound guns on either side (sacres or culverins), and possibly one or two smaller pedrero on the sides. In 1571, an average Venetian galley carried 52-55 pound guns in the center, with a 12-pound gun on each side and a 5-6 pound battle serpent on each side. The heavier Spanish galleys had a two-deck gun platform, with a 40-50 pound heavy gun in the middle of the platform below, a 7-13 pound sacre on each side, an 18-25 pound pedrero on one side, and a 4-5 pound half-sacre on the other. The superstructure above the gun emplacement, the so-called *arrumbada*, contained 6-8 lighter and small caliber guns. This ideal configuration was often not achieved, and many Venetian or Spanish galleys had fewer guns of different quality

46 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 233-234.

47 Bunes de Ibarra, "Reunión en Mesina", 184.

48 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 221-231.

and caliber. The sources point out that the average Christian galley fighting at Lepanto was typically equipped with five guns⁴⁹.

The Venetian doctrine emphasized the agility and speed of the galleys as opposed to the Spanish model. Venetian ships typically carried lighter guns. Although, it is also important to note that Venetian galleys were chronically short of men, including rowers and soldiers and sailors fighting on board. However, Spanish doctrine was based mainly on the experience of fighting the Moors in North Africa, being optimized for coastal raids and landings, where they could disembark with their traditionally strong infantry. The heavier Spanish galleys carried more firepower and were outnumbered by combat troops. These differences were also reflected in naval battles: Spanish galleys favored frontal engagement, while Ottoman and Venetian galleys preferred flank maneuvering and flanking operations⁵⁰.

Geographical Characteristics

It is no coincidence that the battles of Preveza and Lepanto, and even the ancient Battle of Actium, were geographically so close. The Ionian Sea coastline between Italy and Greece was of geostrategic importance for Christian and Ottoman military administrations. Located off the western coast of Greece, not far from the shores of Naples and Sicily, and close to the Ottoman sphere of interest in the eastern Mediterranean, it had excellent large and deep bays, freshwater estuaries, and stationing areas for the vast navies. Major battles were fought there in antiquity: the ancient scene of the Battle of Actium in 31 BC is located at the Gulf of Amvrakia, where the Battle of Preveza in 1538 took place. The two sites are about 5 to 10 kilometers from each other: the eastern side of the headland on the southern edge of the mouth was the site of the ancient clash, the western side of the headland was the site of the 1538 battle. The entrance to the Gulf of Patras, where the Christian and Ottoman fleets clashed again in 1571, lies some 100-120 kilometers to the south. The battle took place in the northern corner of the entrance to the bay, southeast of the island of Oxia. In contrast, Lepanto, today's Naupaktos, lies quite a distance away, some 70-80 km to the east, deep in the bay. Yet, according to historical tradition from the sixteenth century, we call the Battle of Lepanto the great naval battle near the island of Oxia.

The entrance to the Bay of Amvrakia is relatively narrow, and its entrance was protected by the guns of the fortress of Preveza. The narrow entrance, guarded by cannons from both shores, was impenetrable to the Christian fleet. Although the Christians, under Marco Grimani, made several attempts to land between 23 and 25 September 1538 to capture the gun emplacements and the fortress of Preveza, these attempts were repeatedly repulsed by

49 See Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 229-231, especially 298-300.

50 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 214-217.

the Ottomans' considerable land force⁵¹. Thus, Barbarossa's fleet, anchored in the defenses of the bay, waited patiently for the best moment to attack. On the other hand, Doria's fleet was in a much more unfavorable position, having to be stationed south of the entrance to the bay, north of Santa Maura, and could not risk moving within firing range of the Ottoman-controlled coast. The tactical advantage of the Ottoman position could only be reversed if the Christian force gained possession of the fortifications defending the entrance to the bay.

Because of the above geographical and tactical characteristics, Preveza was not a classic naval battle lasting a few hours, as Lepanto was, but a combined land and naval battle. This is a significant difference between the two events. This explains why the battle of Preveza lasted several days between 21 September and 28 September. By contrast, Lepanto was a bloody battle lasting a few hours, where the Christian fleet, unfolding 'en route from the island of Oxia, clashed with the Ottoman fleet sailing out of Patras Bay. The structure of the fleets also differed significantly: at Lepanto, relatively homogeneous galley fleets clashed, where the rowing galleasses did not differ drastically in rowing ship style. At Preveza, a combined Christian force faced the Ottoman galley fleet. Not only were they grouped in different nations, but they involved a significant number of round-hulled sailing vessels in addition to the Christian galleys, the lack of practice of the cooperation between different ship-types and "Nations" also posed a severe synchronization and tactical problem for the Christian command. We shall return to the latter point.

According to the naval doctrine of the time, undertaking a major naval campaign from autumn to spring, during the period of Mediterranean storms and approaching winter weather, was a severe risk to the galleys. One of the most important Christian naval campaigns of the period, the Algiers expedition of 21st October to 1st November 1541, was tragically wrecked precisely because of the autumn Mediterranean storms. At the end of September 1538, the Holy League fleet under Andrea Doria delayed its attack for a long time, complaining of bad weather and unfavorable headwinds, waiting for the ideal wind to blow against a smaller Ottoman fleet, until, taking advantage of the undecided command, it was defeated by a surprise attack on 28th September by Khyar ad-Din Barbarossa. In contrast, on 7th October 1571, Don Juan de Austria showed much more determined leadership, launching a similar headwind attack and succeeding against an opponent larger than the Christian fleet. In the context of Preveza, Guilmartin points out that, in the unfavorable tactical situation, it was not necessarily a bad decision on Andrea Doria's part to sail south with his heterogeneous armada of galleys and sailing ships at dawn on 27th September, taking advantage of the darkness and the rising northerly wind. However, the stoppage of the wind also caused the sailing ships to slow down and the unity of the Christian fleet to be disrupted. This was when

51 About the landing attempts of Marco Grimani see Emmanuelle Pujeau, "How to take a Fortress? The Wrong and the Right Way: Preveza 1538 & 1605", *Prevezanika Chronika 2017* and Lombardo, *op.cit.*, 178.

the Ottoman commander Barbarossa skillfully exploited and struck a successful blow against the larger Christian armada⁵².

Clash and Order of Battle

On 28 September 1538 and 7 October 1571, both battles saw two large enemy fleets clash. The Holy League offered 200 galleys, 100 sailing ships, and some 50,000 soldiers in both cases. This comparative study is not intended to give a detailed account of the two battles but only to provide relevant details.

In the case of Preveza, it is not clear how large the actual forces that clashed were and when they clashed. European historiography typically places the date of the battle on 28th September. However, Simone Lombardo points out that the battle could have taken place on 27th September, also highlighting that the Turkish naval day is the same day, and this celebration is linked to the victory at Preveza⁵³. There are also significant discrepancies between the data available on the Christian Armada. We read of nearly 200 galleys, 140 small barges, and sailing ships. Fernández Duro, in his classic work, mentions 55 Venetian and 27 Papal galleys, while Doria's reaches the number of 49 galleys.



Map 3

Battle of Preveza, based on Guilmartin 1974, 49.

52 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 49-53.

53 Lombardo, *op.cit.*, 188.

In total, the Christian force consisted of 134 galleys, 72 large sailing ships, and small ships, with some 2,500 guns, 50,000 sailors, and oarsmen. The size of the Christian army is put at 16,000. He wrote of a Christian army of more than 60,000 men⁵⁴. According to Guilmartin, the Christian force consisted of 130 galleys of full strength, joined on 22nd September by a fleet of sailing ships carrying some 16,000 soldiers and a considerable supply of cannon⁵⁵. Mercieca, on the other hand, knows of 62 sailing ships in addition to 134 galleys, including two large galleons, one from Genoa and the other from Venice. The number of Maltese galleys in the Christian fleet is not clear either, with some sources reporting ten Maltese galleys and Mercieca four⁵⁶. Lombardo calculates a Christian fleet of 130-140 galleys without the rounded sailing ships⁵⁷.

Either way, the Christian fleet was significantly outnumbered, having the Ottoman fleet under Barbarossa's command 85 Ottoman galleys, 30 galliots and 35 other smaller galleys, and about 22,000 men⁵⁸. The heterogeneous Christian fleet consisted of nearly 200 ships (a mixture of galleys and sailing ships) against a homogeneous Ottoman fleet of almost 150 galleys and small galleys. According to Guilmartin, the Ottoman force did not exceed 122 galleys, while the Christian force, including transport ships, had nearly 350 ships⁵⁹. In the case of Lepanto, we know the names of all the Christian galleys and their commanders, and even the names of the Ottoman galley commanders. In the case of Preveza, we have a much more limited and uncertain knowledge of the size of the fleets.

The Christian forces gathered at Corfu. The first to arrive were the papal fleet led by Marco Grimani and the Venetian commander-in-chief Vincenzo Capello's galleys. The allied fleets of Spain and Genoa, commanded by Andrea Doria, arrived in Corfu after a considerable delay, after 7th September⁶⁰. The delay was caused by a mutiny of Spanish tercios destined for the galleys, which also caused a significant loss of time. The Ottoman fleet, which had plundered the Dalmatian and Greek coasts, was safely stationed in the Gulf of Amvrakia under the protection of the Actium and Preveza fortresses following its campaign. In contrast, Doria's fleet had to anchor far from the forts. The Christian forces made several attempts to land at Preveza (25-26 September), but the Ottoman land forces recruited by Murat Reis thwarted the Christian attack. Due to the unfavorable

54 Cesáreo Fernández Duro, *La Armada Española. Desde la unión de los reinos de Castilla y Aragón*, Tomo I-II, Madrid 1895, 233-234.

55 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 47-48.

56 Simon Mercieca, "The Battle of Preveza 1538: the Knights of Malta's perspective", *Preveza B. Proceedings of the Second International Symposium for the History and Culture of Preveza (16-20 September 2009)*, 109-110.

57 Lombardo, *op.cit.*, 173-174.

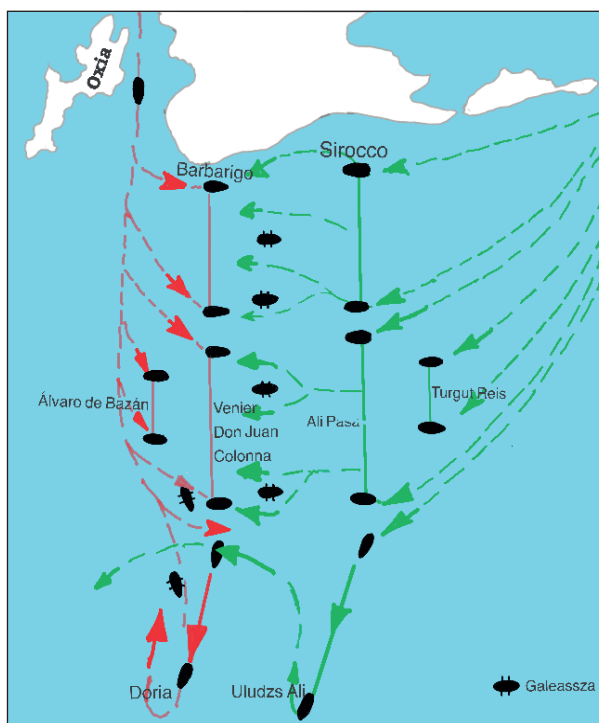
58 Fernández Duro, *op.cit.*, 233-234.

59 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 42-56.

60 Pujeau, "Preveza in 1538", 127; Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 45. The date of Doria's arrival is unclear: some authors say that he arrived in Corfu at the end of August, others after 7th September.

naval position, Doria sailed south to Santa Maura at dawn on the 28th with a favorable northerly wind. The changing wind conditions caused the fleet to break up. Recognizing his positional advantage, Barbarossa sailed out of the bay and attacked the rear of the numerically significantly outnumbered Christian fleet, including the great Venetian galleon, which had resisted the fight for a long time. The memoirs specifically mention that Doria had great difficulty issuing the right orders from the flagship. The Christian galleys, unlike Lepanto, were rather undisciplined in their preparations for the battle and headed back north against the attacking Ottoman fleet. Capello and the Papal ships did not hold the line, they pushed forward, and although Barbarossa deliberately pulled his galleys back, he did not allow the Christian force to regroup. With the change of wind direction, the Christian force was, with difficulty, but in a deep, multi-lined line of battle: Ferrante Gonzaga viceroy of Sicily was on the left flank, Giannettino Doria was placed at the head of the center and on the right flank were the heavy galleys of the Knights of Malta. Then a long and wide line was formed by the galleys of Andrea Doria, followed by the Venetian and Papal galleys with Grimani and Capello at their head. The fleet's rear was formed by Alessandro Condalmiero's Venetian galleys and other sailing vessels and Francesco Doria's Spanish-Portuguese and Genoese ships. The deep and narrow Christian order almost offered the possibility of an outflanking operation to the smaller Ottoman fleet: Barbarossa's galleys were prepared for a crescent-arched flank attack. The weak winds did not favor the Christian forces, and the slow or immobile galleons and sailing vessels at the rear were easy prey for the Ottoman galleys. The battle's outcome is not clear: many European historical works report minimal casualties. On the contrary, according to mainly Turkish sources, some 128 Christian ships were lost, and about 3,000 Christians were taken, prisoner. According to other works, the Ottomans sank two Venetian galleys, a Papal galleys, five Spanish ships, a few other sailing vessels and set fire to 36 different ships. However it is counted, the greatest losses were suffered by round-hulled sailing ships slowed or immobilized by shifting and weakening winds - easy prey for Ottoman galleys that maneuvered successfully and smashed the Christian fleet. The loss of the round-hulled ships is overshadowed by the story of the Venetian Great Galleon, equipped with many guns, which, slowed down and left behind, fought heroically against the Ottoman galleys for almost a full day⁶¹.

61 On the course of the battle, see Pujeau, "Preveza in 1538", 127-129; Mercieca, *op.cit.*, 111-120, also the works of Lombardo and Guilmartin. According to Mercieca's source from the Knights of Malta, Barbarossa had more galleys (about 160) than Doria. On losses, see Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 54-55; Lombardo, *op.cit.*, 181-186 gives a detailed account of the battle, saying that Christian losses were minimal compared to the huge fleets. He argues that the battle is evidence of the tactical superiority of the galleon over the galley.



Map 4
The Battle of Lepanto.

At Lepanto, the Christian fleet had assembled much further away, at Messina, and was already rowing in formation to the entrance to the Gulf of Patras. The military command, especially don Juan de Austria, seemed much more determined and committed to the battle, in contrast to Andrea Doria, who was in command of the galley fleet in 1538 and who, as the maintainer of the Genoese fleets, was not only commander-in-chief but also a financing businessman and had a serious conflict of interest with Venice. On 7th October 1571, the Holy League fleet numbered 206, or 207 galleys and six galleasses, compared with 216 galleys and 56 galliots of the larger Ottoman fleet⁶². According to Bunes de Ibarra, 90 of the Christian galleys were financed by Philip II (including galleys from Genoa, Malta, and other lands), 12 were provided by the Holy See, and 106 by Venice⁶³. On 7 October 1571, the following order of battle was applied: the left flank, which was close to the coast and in shallow waters, was led by Agostino Barbarigo, after the relief of Venier, with 53 galleys

62 Bunes de Ibarra, “Reunión en Mesina”, 173. According to him, 208 galleys took part in the campaign, but in the battle of 7th October no more than 203 or 204 ships fought, because some galleys were given other tasks.

63 Bunes de Ibarra, “Reunión en Mesina”, 174; Cerezo Martínez, *op.cit.*, 217. According to both, 109 galleys and 6 galleasses were provided by Venice, 77 by Spain and 12 by the Holy See. In addition, Malta, Savoy and Genoa provided 3-3-3 galleys.

and two galleasses (2 Venetian galleasses, 39 Venetian galleys, 10 Spanish galleys, 1 Papal galley and 3 Genoese galleys)⁶⁴. Under the command of don Juan de Austria were fighting 2 galleasses and 58 galleys (2 Venetian galleasses, 15 Spanish galleys, 24 Venetian galleys, 9 Genoese galleys, 7 Papal galleys, 3 Maltese galleys)⁶⁵. The right flank, which was developed in a large curve and therefore intervened late in the battle, was led by Gian Andrea Doria with a total of 2 galleasses and 50 galleys. (2 Venetian galleasses, 14 Genoese galleys, 10 Spanish galleys, 24 Venetian galleys, 2 Papal galleys)⁶⁶. The reserve of the Christian force under the command of Álvaro de Bazán consisted of 38 galleys (13 Spanish, 12 Venetian, 3 Papal, 2 Genoese). In addition, the reconnaissance unit of 7 galleys led by Juan de Cardona joined the reserve (3 galleys from Sicily and 4 Venetian galleys)⁶⁷.

The left wing of the Ottoman fleet consisted of 61 galleys and 32 galliots under the command of Uluç Ali. At the head of the Ottoman center, Müezzinzade Ali Pasha commanded 87 galleys in two lines. Mehmed Sirocco's 60 galleys and two galliots were on the right wing, while Turgut Reis led the reserve force with eight galleys and 22 galliots⁶⁸.

The two fleets collided in a very similar formation. The psychic impact of the siege of Cyprus, and in specific the siege of Famagusta, especially the cruel death of Marco Antonio Bragadin, on the participants of the Holy League and the outcome of the battle of Lepanto, the description of the battle itself, all topics go beyond the scope of this comparative work. We will therefore focus instead on the following insights⁶⁹.

At Lepanto, the Christian fleet, sailing by Oxia island, charged into battle without any hesitation. At Preveza, days before the combat, skirmishes were already taking place, and the Christian force made unsuccessful landing attempts. The unity of the allied fleet, which was not cohesive, combined with galleys and sailing ships of a different style of warfare, where tensions between the different naval nations also broke down the discipline, was quickly disrupted by a conscious and successful commander like Barbarossa with his smaller force. However, it was not only the more determined Christian leadership that contributed to the outcome of the Battle of Lepanto but also the fact that the Ottoman command made a mistake:

64 Guido Candiani, "La lucha en el cuerno izquierdo: Barbarigo y Querini contra Suluk Mehmed Pachá", *Lepanto La mar roja de sangre*, ed. Alex Claramunt Soto, Madrid 2021, 314-350.

65 About the clash between the galleys of don Juan and Pasha Ali see: Rodríguez González, *op.cit.*

66 Alex Claramunt Soto, "La lucha en el cuerno derecho: Gian Andrea Doria contra Uluç Ali", *Lepanto La mar roja de sangre*, ed. Alex Claramunt Soto, Madrid 2021, 351-381.

67 The number of galleys differs in some works: Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 242, without the galleasses, gives 53 galleys on the left wing, 64 galleys in the centre, 54 galleys on the right wing and 30 galleys in the reserve. A similar detailed list of ships is given in Fernández Duro, *op.cit.*, t. II, 143-144. See also Cerezo Martínez, *op.cit.*, 218.

68 On both Ottoman and Christian fleet see the book Claramunt Soto, *op.cit.*, especially the Chapter *Apéndice*.

69 From the vast literature about Lepanto, see: Claramunt Soto, *op.cit.*; Rivero Rodríguez, *op.cit.*; Braudel, *op.cit.*, 1155-1177; Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 221-252. Among the classics: Fernández Duro, *op.cit.*, t. II. 131-167, About the siege of Cyprus: Crowley, *op.cit.*, 267-300.

they underestimated the size of the Christian force before entering the battle. Realizing the real size of the Christian fleet that was gradually expanding, leaving behind Oxia Island, there was no turning back, and the battle was taken up by all sides. One factor that may have contributed to the Ottoman miscalculation was that the Christian force still gathering at Messina had been significantly underestimated by the spying Algerian pirate galley of Kara Hodja⁷⁰. Even so, the Christian right flank was still significantly outnumbered by the Ottomans. Although the opposing sides had a similar battle plan, the tactics differed: the Ottoman force was preparing for an outflanking operation with its agile galleys. In contrast, the Christian force preferred a frontal engagement with the heavier Spanish galleys, where the overwhelming firepower of the guns and the endurance of the Spanish-Italian infantry could be an advantage.

In the case of Preveza, a recurrent accusation against Andrea Doria is that his particular interests and the rivalry between Genoa and Venice were decisive in Doria's hesitation and that, despite the clear superiority of the Christian fleet, they were severely defeated by the talented but inferior Ottoman opponent. This shadow over the Doria family was also cast on his cousin Gian Andrea Doria at Lepanto in 1571. There are mainly two views on the younger Doria's actions among the scholars. The Christian right wing had a longer way to row in its development. It was slow to advance to battle, and the two Venetian galleasses there were lagging behind and unable to intervene in any meaningful way. In addition, Doria kept moving his right flank southwards to avoid the encircling maneuver of the equally talented pirate commander Uluç Ali, who was fighting opposite him. This opened up a rather large gap between the Christian center and the right flank, which Uluç Ali took advantage of an unexpected maneuver to slip into the gap and threaten Don Juan's center from the flank. The intervention of Álvaro de Bazán's reserves and the attack of Gian Andrea Doria's ships finally saved the center from the dangerous situation, and Uluç Ali escaped the battle with nearly a dozen ships. But contemporary and later views differed. Doria was accused of hesitating to protect his ships as a private entrepreneur, as his uncle had done in 1538. However, other works point out that Uluç Ali's fleet was considerably larger than Doria's (61 galleys and 32 galliots against 50 galleys and two galleasses), so that it was not, in fact, a case of particular interest or cowardice that led Doria southwards, but a deliberate tactical move on his part⁷¹.

In the Battle of Lepanto, the Ottoman fleet suffered huge losses: 117 galleys, 13 galliots, 117 larger guns, 27 pedreros, and 256 smaller caliber guns were captured by the Christians. More than 65% of the Ottoman ships were sunk. However, the number of prisoners was

70 Bunes de Ibarra, "Reunión en Mesina", 170, Crowley, *ibid.*, 323.

71 Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 249-250. Similar opinion has Philip Williams, "La Guerra en el Mediterráneo durante el siglo XVI", *Lepanto La mar roja de sangre*, ed. Alex Claramunt Soto, Madrid 2021, 69-71. About the clash between Doria and Uluç Ali see: Claramunt Soto, *op.cit.*, 351-381.

relatively low, 3,486, which also meant that many thousands of Ottomans drowned during the battle. Some 12,000 Christian oarsmen were freed. The Christian side also suffered heavy losses: more than 8,000 dead and 14,000 wounded. However, only about 8% of the galleys were lost⁷².

Aftermath

After both Preveza and Lepanto, the Christian forces attempted a land attack. Ironically, the triumph of Lepanto overshadowed the smaller episodes that followed. On 13th October 1571, a few days after the battle, the Christian fleet landed on the Ottoman-held island of Santa Maura. After a few days of battering the fortress, it lifted the siege, which was considered easy prey on 21st October, and sailed for Corfu. The Venetian fleet remained in Corfu, while the Spanish and Papal fleets sailed back to Messina on 1 November. Thus ended the activities of the Holy League for 1571.

It is less well known, but the greatest loss for the Ottomans at Preveza was not caused by the Christian fleet but by the storm that followed the battle, during which, according to some sources, some 50-70 galleys and galliots were sunk⁷³. At the same time, at the end of September 1538, Andrea Doria and the other commanders had a major setback after the ignominious defeat: at the council of war, it was more or less agreed that a successful siege could mitigate the bitterness of defeat. Durazzo in Albania was also considered as a target, and eventually, the Christian fleet sailed north and captured Castelnuovo (now Herceg Novi, Montenegro) in the Gulf of Kotor. Initially, there was a proposal to cede Castelnuovo to Venice by the League's treaty, but Doria refused to do so, with the approval of Charles V.⁷⁴ Under the command of the *maestre de campo* Francisco Sarmiento de Mendoza, a Spanish *tercio* of 2,500 men (other sources say between 3,000 and 4,500) were stationed in the castle⁷⁵. Isolated in hostile territory, the castle could have served as a military beachhead for further Christian campaigns planned for 1539. Still, the distrust between the parties not only led to the dissolution of the League but also left the Spanish contingent in no man's land, with no support from Venice and a slow and difficult supply stream from the Kingdom of Naples. In the spring of 1539, Barbarossa sailed from Istanbul with a fleet of some 200 galleys and

72 Rodríguez González, *op.cit.*, 303-304.

73 According to Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 55 some 70 galleys and galliots. Lombardo, *op.cit.*, 184-185 states that 22-50 ships.

74 Casillas Pérez, *op.cit.*, 671-674; Pujeau, "Preveza in 1538", 129.

75 Some Spanish Chronicles, Martín García Cerezeda, *Tratado de las campañas y otros acontecimientos de los ejércitos del Emperador Carlos V en Italia, Francia, Austria, Berbería y Grecia desde 1521 hasta 1545*, Madrid 1873, II, 345; Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, *El Antijovio*, Bogotá 1952, cap. 42 also lists 2,500 soldiers. The author of *Antijovio* specifically points out that Giovio's work erroneously mentions that there were 4,000 or even 5,000 Spaniards in the castle. Casillas Pérez, *op.cit.*, 674. quotes the subsequent report from the Simancas archives that 4,500 Spanish soldiers, selected from tercios in Florence, Lombard and Nice, remained in the fortress. Pujeau, „Preveza in 1538”, 129; Guilmartin, *op.cit.*, 55. also mentions 4,000 Spaniards.

20,000 warriors to retake Castelnuovo. In the meantime, the Pasha of Bosnia led a blockade of the port city from the mainland with an army of nearly 30,000 men. The defenders of Castelnuovo were not inactive either and transformed the old citadel into the Spanish Fortress that still stands today. The siege began with the arrival of Barbarossa's fleet on 18 July 1539 and lasted for about three weeks⁷⁶. Virtually all the Spanish defenders died heroic deaths. Only about 100-200 were taken prisoner, 25 of whom were freed from Ottoman captivity in 1545 after escaping to Messina on an Ottoman galley. Also, others escaped from captivity in 1541 when the Ottomans occupied Buda in Hungary⁷⁷. Shortly afterward, with the help of Ferdinand I's ambassador to the Sublime Porte, Gianmaria Malvezzi, some Spaniards who had previously been captured at Castelnuovo, escaped from Istanbul in 1550, together with some Italian and Hungarian prisoners⁷⁸.

While the Battle of Preveza has been more or less forgotten, Castelnuovo has become a symbol of Spanish national pride, part of the Spanish military ethos. Following a naval battle -essentially a failure and a defeat- the heroic defense of an isolated, militarily insignificant fortress overshadowed a heavy naval defeat. The sacrifice of Sarmiento's tercio in the protection of Christianity in a hostile environment elevated to the Spanish national heroic pantheon the officers and soldiers of the tercio, as well as the heroic survivors and escaped galley slaves⁷⁹. The siege has become a better-known event in Spanish historiography and national perception than the Holy League of 1538 and the Battle of Preveza itself. Their battle has been compared to the 300 Spartans who fell at Thermopylae, resisting the immense army of the Persian despot Xerxes⁸⁰.

The "reinterpretation" of the defeat of the Holy League in 1538 can already be detected in contemporary historians, including Paolo Giovio, the Venetian historian Paolo Paruta, and Lorenzo Capelloni the Genoese biographer of Doria. As Emanuelle Pujeau points out, they did not rewrite events but highlighted events according to particular interests, which presented a more positive image of the people in the works⁸¹.

76 About the siege see Juan Gil Fernández, "El triste galardón del heroísmo: Castilnovo (1539)", *Erytheia*, 26 (2005), 178-180; González Castrillo, *op.cit.*, 77-84; Manuel Fernández Álvarez, *Carlos V. El César y el Hombre*, Madrid 1999, 576-584. contributed significantly to the ethos of Sarmiento's tercio. In his work, the renowned Spanish historian Fernández Álvarez almost ignores the battle of Preveza and focuses on the self-sacrifice of the Spanish tercio in the context of the Holy League of 1538.

77 It is less well known that one of the defenders, Andrés de Zamora, seems to have escaped from the Ottoman army in Hungary during the siege of Buda in 1541. See his account in: Andrés Zamora: Beszámoló Buda megszállásáról (1541). In: Péter Kasza, *Buda Oppugnata. Források Buda és Pest 1540-1542. évi ostromainak történetéhez*, Budapest 2021, 267-269. For the fate of the Spaniards captured at Castelnuovo, see also: Gil Fernández, *op.cit.*, 177-185.

78 Gil Fernández, *op.cit.*, 180-181.

79 García de Cerezeda and Antijovio chronicles provide a detailed list of the soldiers of the Spanish tercio. See also: Gil Fernández, *op.cit.*; Casillas Pérez, *op.cit.*, Fernández Álvarez, *op.cit.*

80 Gil Fernández, *op.cit.*, 177-178.

81 Pujeau, "Preveza in 1538", 125.

Both leagues were dissolved relatively quickly. The failure of the league in 1538 was due in part to unresolved disagreements between Venice and Genoa. After Andrea Doria, with the support of Charles V, had failed to fulfill the Holy League's point concerning the Venetian possessions, the Serenissima had little confidence in the Habsburgs and their allies. On the other hand, the Ottoman siege of Corfu, the economic consequences of the Ottoman campaigns in the Adriatic also encouraged La Serenissima to make peace with the Ottomans. In 1540, Venice made a disadvantageous peace with the Sublime Porte, ceding more harbors to the Ottomans and committing to pay 300,000 ducats⁸².

But what was decided at Preveza and Lepanto? Neither battle can be considered decisive in terms of military history. The former battle has been completely forgotten in European historical memory, obscured by the heroic defense of the strategically unsustainable siege of Castelnuovo. On the other hand, Lepanto has become one of the best-known events of the modern European era through public discourse, ideology, the visual arts, and literature⁸³. Lepanto's significance does not lie in military history, since the victory was not exploited by the Christians. In time, Venice made peace with the Porte, and the Ottoman Empire was able to build a new fleet of similar size a year later. Under the command of Uluç Ali, the Ottoman galleys remained as active in the western Mediterranean basin during 1572 and 1573 as they had been before Lepanto. At the same time, the Christian world was also consolidating, the Holy League was attempting to hold together in 1572 and 1573, and the Catholic Monarchy also made a truce. The Ottoman and Spanish powers recognized each other's sphere of interest and turned to other strategic areas⁸⁴. Perhaps the most important result was that in 1571 the myth of the Ottomans' invincibility was shattered. After the defense of Malta (1565) and the death of the dreaded conqueror, Sultan Suleiman at Szigetvár (1566), the destruction of the Ottoman fleet at Lepanto gave the Christendom a breathing space. Although the Ottoman Empire remained a feared opponent in Hungary, the fear of a major Ottoman force landing on the shores of Italy or Spain had passed. On Europe's eastern frontiers, the so-called Long Turkish War, which broke out in 1593, would be the historic event that would balance the Habsburg-Ottoman relationship on the mainland and end Ottoman invincibility⁸⁵.

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82 Casillas Pérez, *op.cit.*, 678.

83 On the reaction of the European courts, especially Venice, the Papal State, the court of Philip II and the Sultan's court to the Battle of Lepanto, see Kumrular, *op.cit.*, 108-110; Schmidt, "A legjobb alkalom, mit a századok láttak".

84 On the events after Lepanto and the break-up of the Holy League, see: David García Hernán – Enrique García Hernán, *Lepanto: El día después*, Madrid 1999; Parker, *op.cit.*, 546-572.

85 For a historical evaluation of Lepanto, see: Rivero Rodríguez, *op.cit.*, 9-17, Williams, *op.cit.* In Hungarian: Schmidt, "Egy elszigetelt Győzelem: Lepanto 1571", on the celebration of the battle in Hungary, see: Schmidt, "A legjobb alkalom, mit a századok láttak".

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