

# Conquest of Cyprus by the Turks: Divergence of the Early Modern Period and Establishment of Status Quo in the Mediterranean

## Kıbrıs'ın Türkler Tarafından Fethi: Yeniçağ'ın Yol Ayrımı ve Akdeniz'de Statükonun Kuruluşu

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### Abstract

*The victory of the Ottomans at Djerba (1560) and the Great Siege of Malta (1565) were perceived as a serious threat to the West and led the Pope to mobilize the Catholic states to build an alliance against the Ottomans. Although the Malta siege was fended off successfully by the West, it was obvious that the Ottomans would continue their expansion in the Mediterranean. The toppling in 1570 by the governor of Algeria, Uluç Ali Paşa, of the ruler of Tunisia, a vassal of Spain, and his open support for the Morisco revolts in Spain, was the best proof of it. In the face of Ottoman expansion, it did not appear easy to build an alliance which would counter the Turks both on sea and land by incorporating also the Habsburgs' Austrian branch, but at least a Christian fleet could be formed led by Spain and Venice. In this respect, Spain, ruled by Philip II, would obviously not oppose it. The real issue for the Pope was to convince the Republic of Venice, which had a large fleet in terms of sea power. Venice, using its commercial relations with the Ottomans as an excuse, initially opposed the Pope's proposal. However, in the summer of 1570 after the Ottomans had commenced their siege of Cyprus, which was under the domination of Venice, this time it was the Venetians who came up with the proposal of an alliance. Eventually, a Christian alliance (the Holy League) was formed in order to save Cyprus first of all and then to ensure that the Ottomans would no longer be a threat to the West in the Mediterranean. While this study was prepared comparatively from both Turkish and Western sources, rather than describing the anatomy of a war, it examines the relative causes leading to the conquest of Cyprus and their effects.*

**Key words:** Spain, Venice, Papacy, Ottomans, Cyprus

### Öz

*Osmanlıların Cerbe zaferi (1560) ve Malta Muhasarası (1565) Batı'da ciddi bir tehdit olarak algılandı ve Papa'nın Osmanlılara karşı bir haçlı ittifakı meydana getirilmesi hususunda Katolik devletleri harekete geçirmesine yol açtı. Malta kuşatmasının Batı tarafından başarıyla savuşturulmasına rağmen Osmanlıların ilk fırsatta Akdeniz'deki ilerleyişlerini sürdürecekleri ortadaydı. Cezayir Beylerbeyi Uluç Ali Paşa'nın 1570'de Tunus'un İspanya'ya tâbi hükümdarını devirmesi ve İspanya'daki Morisko isyanlarına açıkça destek vermesi bunun en iyi kanıtıydı. Osmanlı ilerleyişi karşısında, Habsbugların Avusturya kolunu da dâhil ederek hem karadan hem de denizden Türklere karşı saldırıya geçecek bir ittifak gücünün kurulması kolay gözükmesine de en azından İspanya ve Venedik'in başını çektiği bir Hıristiyan donanması meydana getirilebilirdi. Bu hususta II. Felipe'nin yönettiği İspanya'nın muhalefet*

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etmeyeceği ortadaydı. Papa için asıl mesele deniz gücü bakımından büyük bir donanmaya sahip olan Venedik Cumhuriyeti'ni ikna edebilmektir. Venedik, Osmanlılarla sahip olduğu ticari ve ekonomik ilişkileri bahane ederek Papa'nın teklifine başlangıçta karşı çıktı. Fakat Osmanlıların 1570 yazında Venedik hâkimiyetindeki Kıbrıs adasını kuşatmaları üzerine bu sefer ittifak önerisi ile sahneye çıkan Venedikliler oldu. Neticede öncelikle Kıbrıs'ı kurtarmak ve Osmanlıları Akdeniz'de Batı'ya karşı bir tehdit unsuru olmaktan çıkarmak adına bir Hristiyan ittifakı kuruldu. Bu çalışma, Türk ve Batılı kaynaklarla karşılaştırmalı olarak hazırlanmış olup bir savaşın anatomisinden çok, tarafları savaşa götüren sebepler ve sonuç ilişkisi irdelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İspanya, Venedik, Papalık, Osmanlılar, Kıbrıs.

## Introduction

The Siege of Malta by the Ottomans in 1565 was embarked upon in order to prevent attacks on the North Africa coast where Muslim populations were living and on Muslim traders, as well as to ensure the safety of pilgrims going to Egypt by sea and from there to Mecca, but it was perceived as a threat to the independence of all Christianity, primarily the Papacy, Venice and other Italian states. A large-scale siege such as this, which can be regarded as a milestone for Catholic Europe, could be repulsed by the defenders with a little bit of luck. The crucial factor in avoiding the fall of the island was the failure of the Ottomans to capture its fortress, which was heavily fortified with the latest engineering developments.<sup>1</sup>

If the Turks captured the island of Malta for use as a base due to its strategic position, they would be able to mount campaigns with the aim of dominating firstly the Italian territories of Naples, Sardinia and Sicily, then under the domination of Spain, followed by the Balearic Islands in the western Mediterranean and the coasts of Spain. Thus, by cutting the military, economic and commercial links between the Kingdom of Spain and its territories in Italy, the rule of Philip II over this region could be ended. Also, it would be easier for the Ottomans to conquer the islands of Cyprus and Crete held by Venice, isolated in the Eastern Mediterranean, and also the coastal fortresses in Mora and Albania. Despite the failure of the siege, it was obvious that this bold threat by the Ottomans would be repeated in coming years. At this point, building an army of the Holy League to face the Turks was inevitable for the Catholic West. To this end, the highest echelons of the Catholic Church came up with the idea of forming a Christian army comprising all Catholic nations, as it was in the past, and counter-attacking the Ottomans on the ground in Hungarian territories and from the sea on the eastern coast of the Adriatic.<sup>2</sup>

1 Anrew Hess, *Unutulmuş Sınırlar: 16. Yüzyıl Akdeniz'inde Osmanlı-İspanyol Mücadelesi*, Transl. Özgür Kolçak, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, pp. 119-122.

2 Luciano Serrano, *La Liga De Lepanto Entre España, Venecia Y La Santa Sede (1570-1573): Ensayo Historico A Base De Documentos Diplomaticos*, Junta Para Ampliación De Estudios E Investigaciones Cientificas Escuela Española En Roma, Tomo I, Madrid 1918, pp. 28-29.

## Quest for an alliance in the West against the Ottomans

Pope Pius IV, the religious and spiritual leader of the Catholic Church, died on December 9, 1565 a few months after the end of the siege of Malta and was replaced by Michele Ghisleri, who was elected Pope Pius V on January 8, 1566. Yearning to canonize and preserve Catholicism against its Muslim and Protestant enemies, Pius V, with the religious diligence he embodied, recalled the spirit of the Medieval crusades. In this way, a new holy alliance attempt to mount a crusade was revived.<sup>3</sup>

The French did not respond to the call of the Pope as they saw their ally the Ottomans as a counter balance against Spain in European power politics. The German Emperor Maximilian II was also indifferent as he had previously learned on many occasions that any attempt against the Ottoman forces through Hungarian territories would not succeed. Moreover, at that time he was trying to find ways to renew the existing ceasefire with the Turks. Venice, on the other hand, an important entity in terms of sea power, did not want to risk its economic relations considering the trade volume it had with the Ottomans, and hence adopted the principle of neutrality. Otherwise, any diplomatic break with the Ottoman Empire might encourage the Turks to direct their military power toward the territories of Venice in the Levant. This would risk the Venetians losing their trade colonies in the eastern Mediterranean, notably the islands of Cyprus and Crete. According to the Venetians, preserving trade zones in the east such as Cyprus and Crete was as essential as Malta, not only for Venice but also for all Christianity.<sup>4</sup>

The peace between Venice and the Ottoman Empire had begun with a treaty signed in 1540 but sporadic events caused by pirates were enough to shake relations with Venice. In addition, there were Ottoman paşas who were trying to benefit from the situation, unwilling to see tensions lowered in the eastern Mediterranean. Not refraining from applying pressure on the sultan, these paşas were hoping to capture easy and valuable booty by conquering domains of the Republic of Venice in the Levant. But Venice, instead of being part of an alliance that would incur the wrath of the Ottomans, sought grounds for an agreement by visiting the Ottoman council for the sake of lowering tensions.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, in order to ward off the risk of a possible war diplomatically, Venice succeeded in renewing the peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire on June 25, 1567.<sup>6</sup>

3 Roger Crowley, *Empires of the Sea: The final Battle for the Mediterranean 1521-1580*, Faber and Faber, London 2009, p. 202.

4 Serrano, *La Liga De Lepanto...*, pp. 30, 35, 37.

5 Tommaso Bertelè, *Venedik ve Kostantiniyye: Tarihte Osmanlı-Venedik İlişkileri*, Transl. Mahmut H. Şakiroğlu, Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul 2012, p. 116.

6 Maria Pia Pedani, *Osmanlı Padişahının Adına: İstanbul'un Fethinden Girit Savaşı'na Venedik'e Gönderilen Osmanlılar*, Transl. Elis Yıldırım, TTK, Ankara 2011, p. 137

Among all anti-Ottoman elements, it was known for a long time that the Venetians were not to be trusted in a possible alliance, to the extent that in a manuscript titled *Viaje de Turquía* (Voyage to Turkey) presented to Philip II of Spain in 1557, it was stated as following that the Venetians were traitors, even though they were Catholic: *These ambassadors* (Venetian ambassadors) *every month send the reports they receive from Venice to the Grand Turk. If the Grand Turk is on a cruise, the report is conveyed to his deputy. The report says: 'The King of Spain, for whatever reason, is in such and such place, with this number of people; the king of France is in such and such place, with this number of people; at the end of the clash that side won; the Pope is busy with this issue; so-and-so prince revolted.'* In this way, the Grand Turk is informed about every hidden thing about us.<sup>7</sup> However, the fact that France and the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs could not be included in the alliance was clarified. Therefore, although the Venetians were untrustworthy, it seemed impossible to stop the Ottoman forces in the Mediterranean without the massive sea power of Venice.

The only country which could change the balance of power in the Mediterranean by joining an alliance such as that designed by the Pope was Spain. However, there were significant obstacles in front of Pope Pius V to convince Philip II. Due to the Protestant revolts which broke out in the Netherlands in 1568, Philip II was still busy with the Low Countries. On the other hand, in the same way that it did not help Spain in Djerbe (1560), Venice had also overlooked the fall of Fort St. Elmo on Malta. Furthermore, as he was continuing the lucrative Levant trade without being at odds with the Ottomans, there was insufficient reason for Philip II to accept such a draft alliance in which Venice would also be included. Then the Morisco revolts, which broke out in the south of Spain, led Philip II to shift his entire attention to the Mediterranean. The Moriscos had been asking for help from the Ottomans for nearly 70 years. At the beginning of the 1570s, Selim II had ordered Algeria to give military aid with troops and weapons to the Moriscos. Sokollu Mehmet Paşa, who was then head of the Ottoman bureaucracy, had explicitly requested from the French king to use Toulon as a base. However, the Ottoman aid that was promised to the Moriscos<sup>8</sup> did not exceed a force of 400 gunmen sent by Uluç Ali Paşa, governor of Algeria,<sup>9</sup> because at the same time, Cyprus, which was held by Venice, was on the agenda of the Ottomans. It was for the moment impossible for the Ottoman Empire, which had prioritized preparations for the conquest of this island, to prepare a large fleet and run to help the Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula. Yet, the Imperial Council (Divân-ı Hümâyün) ordered Uluç Ali Paşa to hasten, without negligence, to assist the needy Muslims with the forces he had in hand.<sup>10</sup>

7 Cristóbal de Villalón, *Türkiye Seyahati (Viaje de Turquía)*, Transl. Yeliz Demirören, Erko Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2011, p. 319.

8 Crowley, *Empires of the Sea...*, pp. 208-210;

9 Hess, *Unutulmuş Sınırlar...*, p. 128.

10 BOA, MD, 9 Nr., Hk. 204.

A large-scale fleet could not be sent but Uluç Ali Paşa succeeded in 1570 in overthrowing the king of Tunisia, who was a vassal of Spain, by taking advantage of the Morisco revolts which erupted in the south of Spain and spread in a short time to a wider area.<sup>11</sup> However, the fortress of Halq al-Wad (La Goletta) was still in the hands of the Spanish and it would continue to support the security of maritime traffic in the Strait of Sicily against a possible attack by Ottoman forces.<sup>12</sup>

### **Birth of the Holy League as a result of the Ottoman Campaign on Cyprus**

Looking at developments in Tunisia, there were now signs that the Ottomans, if the conditions allowed, would at the earliest opportunity continue their expansion in the Mediterranean and the first target would be the island of Cyprus. The Venetians, on the other hand, believed that they had succeeded in protecting their economic and military benefits in the east by renewing peace with the Ottomans in 1567. It would soon be understood this was not the case.

On November 3, 1567, the questions that Kubad Cavus in Venice asked to Michele Membré, dragoman of the Republic of Venice, revealed the real intentions of the Ottomans. Membré was a crafty man who immediately conveyed to the Senate the questions of Kubad Cavus about the revenues coming from Cyprus, the sea and land power of Venice, and the ability of Venice to counter-attack in a possible battle.

On the other hand, beginning from 1567, the arrest of an increasing number of Ottoman spies on the islands of Tremiti<sup>13</sup> and Cyprus was another sign of impending war. The ringleader behind this espionage network was probably Yosef Nasi, who was also accused of inciting the war on Cyprus and who played an important role in organizing an undercover network on the Aegean islands prior to the war. Furthermore, Nasi, who had been held responsible for the fire in the Arsenal of Venice in 1569, was declared a *persona non grata*<sup>14</sup> by the Venetians.<sup>15</sup>

According to the Spanish writer of chronicles Córdoba, on the night of September 23, a 600 feet-high fortification wall and a monastery blew up as a result of the gunpowder igniting inside the ammunition store at the Arsenal of Venice, facing the island of Murano in the lagoon of Venice, and the timber used in building galliots (small galleys) was dispersed all over the sea.

11 H. G. Koenigsberger, "Western Europe and The Power Spain", *The Cambridge Modern History*, V. 3, Ed. R. B. Wernham, Cambridge University Press, London 1971, p. 252.

12 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi: II. Selim'in Tahta Çıkışından 1699 Karlofça Andlaşmasına Kadar*, C. 3, Part I, TTK, Ankara 2009, p. 29.

13 An island belonging to Venice in the Adriatic.

14 Person not appreciated.

15 Pedani, *Osmanlı Padişahının Adına...*, pp. 134, 137.

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According to the authorities of Venice, the Ottomans were responsible for the attack, which targeted their sea power, and they wished to avert the intervention of the Republic of Venice in the attack they would soon make on the island of Cyprus.<sup>16</sup>

Joseph Nasi, who was known as the “Great Jew” and had a powerful influence on the dignitaries of the state, was the sworn enemy of Sokollu Mehmet Paşa according to Gerlach. He won the love and trust of the sultan and was appointed by Selim II as ruler of several islands including Naxos in the Aegean Sea.<sup>17</sup> It was impossible for Nasi, whose greatest ambition was to rise to the top levels in the Ottoman Empire, to be a paşa or rise in rank unless he converted to Islam, as he was descended from the Jews who fled the Inquisition in the Iberian Peninsula and took shelter in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, similar to the Danubian Principalities, he demanded from the sultan a place by the sea and he thus became the Duke of Naxos. In 1569, the French ambassador mentioned Cyprus’ bustling Nasi, and wrote that the Great Jew wanted to become king of the island, which would be a tributary to the Ottomans, or the ruler of it until his death.<sup>18</sup>

We do not know how much Nasi was influential in the background of leading the Ottomans to take on the conquest of Cyprus. More valid reasons for the conquest attempt were to provide security for pilgrims to Mecca traveling by sea between Alexandria and Istanbul, to safeguard commerce against the raids of pirates from Mesina and Malta, to avert possible attacks from Venetian sea power on the island, whether in times of war or peace, and to protect shipments of arms to the Ottomans, who controlled the ports of the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>19</sup> According to the Turkish authorities, Cyprus was a safe port for Maltese and Venetian pirates who showed up in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean and posed a threat to Palestine, Syria and the coasts of Anatolia.

Furthermore, Cyprus was an island to which the rebels and criminals in the Ottoman Empire fled and took shelter. Above all, in the event that Christian states waged war against Ottoman territories on the coast of the Eastern Mediterranean, it would be highly suitable as a military base as it was right in the center. Aside from this, the local Orthodox elements of Cyprus who had been under Catholic Venetian rule for nearly eighty years wanted the island

16 Luis Cabrera de Córdoba, *Felipe Segundo, Rey de España*, Tomo Segundo, Madrid 1876, pp. 29-30.

17 Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, C. 1, Transl. Türkis Noyan, Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul 2007, p. 142.

18 Nicolae Jorga, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, Yeditepe Yayınevi, Transl. Nilüfer Epeçeli, C.3, İstanbul 2005, p. 128.

19 Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli, *Künhü 1-Ahbâr*, Dördüncü Rükün, C. I, TTK, Ankara 2009, pp. 444a-444b; also see. Feris Çerçi, *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli ve Künhü 1-Ahbâr’ında II. Selim, III. Murad ve III. Mehmet Devirleri(I. Cilt)*, Erciyes Üniversitesi Yayınları, Kayseri 2000, p. 116.

to be ruled by the Ottomans. This was because the Venetian authorities, to protect their coasts against the Ottomans, were continuously increasing the tax burden on the poor peasants under the pretext of defense expenditures.<sup>20</sup>

According to an intelligence report submitted to Philip II of Spain in the winter of 1570, there was extraordinary preparation in the shipyards of Istanbul. Philip II, who was aware of developments in the Ottoman Empire by means of his spies in Ottoman territories, learned that the Ottomans were about to launch a large fleet into the Mediterranean in the spring of 1570. In the report it was stated that a total of 304 ships including 190 galliots and four barges of the *çektiri*<sup>21</sup> class had been launched and cannons and ammunition were loaded. Their destination was Cyprus.<sup>22</sup>

Despite all these preparations, which continued throughout the winter, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa was trying in the beginning of 1570 to distract them by telling the Venetian *bailo* Barbaro that they would protect their rights on the island of Cyprus in the event that the tax was increased from 3000 to 4000 gold.<sup>23</sup> By continuing diplomatic and commercial contacts with Venice in Istanbul, the Ottomans managed to conceal their true intentions so successfully that it was not until February 6 that Barbaro understood the real situation.<sup>24</sup> Consequently on March 28, 1570, Kubad Cavus, adviser on Venetian affairs to the Imperial Council, arrived in Venice with the sultan's orders and it was not necessary for the Ottomans to hide their real intentions any more. Transfer of the island of Cyprus was officially requested by the Ottomans. This demand not only annulled the peace treaty; it was also the first war in the history of relations between the Ottoman state and Venice which was officially announced.<sup>25</sup>

The request of the Ottoman Empire left the Venetian Senate in a dilemma. Cyprus was the richest colony of Venice; a unique territory that kept alive the state's treasury with the revenues it provided and the commercial rights it enjoyed. It was the most important base for the presence of Venice in the Mediterranean basin and its commercial expansion into Syria, Anatolia and Egypt. This bold request led to a dispute about the maritime supremacy of the Venetians. Accepting to hand over Cyprus to the Ottoman Empire would also

20 Serrano, *La Liga de Lepanto...*, pp. 39-40; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi...*, pp. 10, 13; For information on the pirate ships taking shelter in Cyprus with booty and prisoners captured from Muslim ships in bad weather, see: BOA, MD, 3 Nr., Hk. 267, 268, 385, 386.

21 the galley-type, oared ships.

22 Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Legajo 1133, Folio 20.

23 Jorga, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, p. 130.

24 Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Desinformación y Rumores en Estambul en el Comienzo de la Guerra de Chipre (1569-1570)", *Si Fuera Cierta? Espías y Agentes en la Frontera (Siglo XVI-XVII)*, Çev. Daniel Montalvo Mena, Edi. Gennaro Varriale, Universidad de Alcalá Servicio de Publicaciones, España 2018, s. 53.

25 Pedani, *Osmanlı Padişahının Adına...*, p. 138; Daniel Goffman, *Osmanlı Dünyası ve Avrupa 1300-1700*, Transl. Ülkün Tansel, Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul 2008, p. 198.

pave the way for the delivery of other colonies such as the islands of Corfu, Cephalonia, Cythera and Crete in a similar manner. On the other hand, in the event of choosing to fight an army as large as that of the Ottoman Empire, trade with the Levant would be interrupted and defense expenditure would impose a serious burden on the treasury. However, this was unimportant compared to the possibility of losing the island. The Venetians were divided into two factions: those who acknowledged war as the only way to save the honor and future of the Republic and merchants favoring peace who accepted giving away Cyprus, hoping in exchange for some compensation in Ottoman territories such as Albania and Dalmatia or commercial concessions. As a result, the proposal of the supporters of war was accepted by a majority.<sup>26</sup>

Again according to a Spanish report, in the March of 1570 a French-flagged ship which had sailed from Marseilles anchored in Crete. It was carrying 5000 harquebusses as well as swords to transport to Anatolia. Learning this, the Venetian officials arrested all the crew and seized the goods. In the same report it was stated that the Imperial Navy (Donanma-yı Hümâyûn) would set sail from Istanbul on April 23. Previously it had weighed anchor to go to Cyprus on March 25 in order to prevent Venetian assistance; also, 20,000 cavalry under the command of the governor of Rumeli would be shipped from the province of Karaman to Cyprus.<sup>27</sup>

In the report of another Spaniard, Andrea Gasparo Corso, Philip II was informed that the number of Ottoman troops to land on the Island of Cyprus would be nearly 40,000 and Selim II had 160 galleys prepared for the Cyprus Campaign. Gasparo stated that Sokollu Mehmed Paşa was against the Cyprus Campaign. The Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, whom he called the Grand Paşa, told the sultan that this campaign would break the peace with Venice and lead to an alliance between Spain, a fierce foe of the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, and Venice. As a result, they would confront the Ottomans with a bigger navy than the Imperial Navy. Instead of Cyprus, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa argued for an advance on Halq al-Wad, held by the Spanish, which was critical for the domination of Tunisia.<sup>28</sup>

Against the militarist stand of the Ottoman Empire, Venice applied immediately to the Pope to save Cyprus. Thus, Pius V, who had been seeking grounds to build a holy league since the Siege of Malta, grasped the opportunity that had come his way. Looking after its own interests, Venice, which until now had turned a deaf ear to the proposal of a military alliance, was now begging the Pope to mediate for the intervention of an actor like Spain against the Ottomans, who had taken action against its fortresses in the Levant. It was

26 Serrano, *La Liga De Lepanto...*, pp. 42-43.

27 AGS, 1133/20

28 Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Legajo 487, Folio 73.



obviously a race against time. The naval forces of Spain, which were already stationed in Naples, Sardinia and Sicily for defense, could be mobilized to help the Venetian fleet protect Cyprus. Moving in this direction, Don Luis de Torres, a Spaniard of Malaga origin who was acknowledged as an esteemed priest in the Vatican, was sent by the Pope to the Spanish palace with the title of legate in order to convince Philip II.<sup>29</sup>

The Pope's envoy arrived in Spain in May and knew the difficulties of convincing Philip II to accept the call for an alliance while the Protestant Uprising in the Low Countries and the Granada-based Morisco Revolts were still continuing. Furthermore, running to the help of Venice at that moment would mean a heavy financial burden that would be hard to overcome for his country. However,, Uluç Ali Paşa's military activities in North Africa supporting the Moriscos and his taking of Tunisia was proof that Philip II would not be able to stay out of Mediterranean power politics for long. Not responding to the call by using the Morisco and Protestant uprisings as an excuse would be inviting the threat of having the Ottomans knocking on the door of Spain. By accepting to join an alliance with Venice, Philip II sought to turn the situation in his favor. His thinking was that after dealing with the Cyprus issue he could attack Algeria, Tunisia and Tripoli, repel the Turks from North Africa, and prevent the Ottoman navy from sailing out beyond the Aegean. Even though the proposal for an alliance was accepted by the war council of Spain, it was obvious that the negotiations would be long-term.<sup>30</sup>

By the time the Papal legate arrived in Spain, the preparations for war in the Ottoman Empire was continuing full steam. According to Selânikî under the command of Piyale Paşa, the third vizier who was appointed as commander (serdar) of the navy, and the Chief Admiral (Kaptan-ı Derya) Muezzinzade Ali Paşa, the Imperial Navy, composed of 84 fully-equipped galleys and bastardas, had weighed anchor from the port of Beşiktaş on April 6, 1570 in advance to provide security for part of the sea route to Cyprus. Twenty days later, the Fifth Vizier Lala Mustafa Paşa, who was appointed as commander for the conquest of Cyprus, departed the Bosphorus for Cyprus in the middle of May along with 224 vessels of the cektiri class carrying horses, weapons and cannons.<sup>31</sup>

The elements of the navy, which was separated into three groups, gathered at Rhodes on June 5.<sup>32</sup> The Imperial Ottoman Navy then stopped at the port of Phoenicia to transport troops from Anatolia. After waiting about 20

29 Serrano, *La Liga De Lepanto...*, pp. 47-50.

30 Serrano, *La Liga De Lepanto...*, pp. 52-57, 62.

31 Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, Haz. Mehmet İpşirli, C. I, TTK, Ankara 1999, pp. 77-78; The number of ships of the cektiri class given by Selânikî is the same as the number in the Spanish report numbered "AGS, 1133/20".

32 Şerafettin Turan, Lala Mustafa Paşa Hakkında Notlar ve Vesikalar, *Belleten*, TTK, C. 22, p. 88, Ankara 1958, p. 576.

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days for the Anatolian troops to arrive, the navy anchored near Larnaca on the southeast coast of Cyprus. From there, land forces commanded by Lala Mustafa Paşa advanced on the castle of Nicosia and besieged it. Meanwhile, Piyale Paşa was with the navy busily preventing ships coming to the aid of the Venetians and in transporting troops from the provinces of Aleppo and Damascus to the island. The Ottomans were aware of the preparations of the Christian navy. Erring on the side of caution, Piyale Paşa had sent five galiots/kalyatas to Cretan waters to gather information. According to the intelligence, they learned that Habsburg fleets had not yet joined the Venetian navy and the Venetian fleet in Kandiye, suffering from disease, was unable to move anywhere.<sup>33</sup> The Ottomans, acting with the comfort of being far from the Christian threat, finally seized Nicosia castle after 44 days of intensive fighting.<sup>34</sup>

The fall of Nicosia Castle was followed by the seizure of Limassol and Larnaca and then the siege of Famagusta Castle, another foot of the Cyprus Campaign, was embarked upon.<sup>35</sup> Famagusta was not located on a plain but on a rocky hill. According to Bishop Ragazzoni in Famagusta, "it could be harassed neither by mines nor axes." As the land was very stony, the Ottoman sappers had a hard time in digging trenches. Instead, barricades were built from logs and sandbags and cannons to batter the walls were placed on artificial hillocks; but as the city's cannons were well situated, the Ottomans were in a lower position than the walls and continuously suffered losses. Ottoman cannons were so ineffective against the walls that in Venice they were saying that "out of four thousand cannon shots, not even one Christian was hit; only a pig and a mule was shot." After obtaining no result for about thirteen days and since the season was ending; Lala Mustafa Paşa lifted the siege to continue in the spring. To spend the winter he moved the camp three miles back from the walls.<sup>36</sup> Piyale Paşa was responsible for defending the sea approaches and the Imperial Navy commanded by Muezzinzade Ali Paşa returned to Istanbul. He was expected to return to assist with the Famagusta siege when the sea season opened the following year. The commander who spent the winter in Famagusta was busy with preparations for the siege. During that period, he had troops and ammunition shipped to the island by barge, trenches dug, and towers erected.<sup>37</sup>

33 Emrah Safa Gürkan, *Sultanın Casusları: 16. Yüzyılda İstihbarat, Sabotaj ve Rüşvet Ağları*, Kronik Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2017, p. 153.

34 Selânikî, p. 78; Kâtip Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibâr Fî Esfârî'l-Bihâr (Deniz Seferleri Hakkında Büyüklere Armağan)*, Haz. İdris Bostan, T.C. Başbakanlık Denizcilik Müsteşarlığı, Ankara 2008, 111.

35 Turan, *Lala Mustafa Paşa*..., p. s. 577.

36 The cannons that the Ottomans used in the siege ranged from 50 lbs to 120 lbs in diameter; some were gigantic with a size of 180 lbs (pounds). Alessandro Barbero, *İnebahtı: Üç İmparatorluğun Savaşı*, Çev. Erdal Turan, Alfa, İstanbul 2016, pp. 312-313.

37 Turan, *Lala Mustafa Paşa*..., p. 577.

As for the West, no conclusion was reached for eight months concerning the alliance and the fall of Nicosia had to be accepted. The Pope gathered cardinals Granvela, Pacheco and Don Juan de Zúñiga in the name of Spain and Miguel Soriano in the name of Venice. Eventually, the ongoing negotiations over the Holy League came to an end and in the meeting at the renowned St. Peter's in Rome, an agreement was reached. According to this, the parties agreed on 200 galleys, 100 ships, 50,000 infantry, and 4500 cavalry to be sent. However, as the cost of this alliance was 600,000 escudos a month, the disagreement over how to split the expenses was still ongoing. While the Venetians did not want to pay more than one fourth, the Spanish king also did not agree to pay more than half.

The Pope, who was not making the same effort for the financial responsibility of the alliance, intended to pay less. After embarking on the military preparations, problems related to the payment would be removed. As Don Juan was appointed as commander of the land and naval forces, the Pope used his authority to have Marco Antonio Colona appointed as the second commander. Setting to work immediately, Philip II had a large number of galleys, ships and vessels constructed during the winter and provided a total of 26,000 mercenaries including 8000 Spanish and 8000 Italian. Furthermore, he ordered his captains to meet with the regents and ministers and provide machines, equipment, ammunition, and provisions, whatever there was, from Sicily, Naples and Genoa for the war. In this way, all the preparations would be completed in a short time and in the event the alliance did not materialize, all these sources and forces would be used to retake Algeria.<sup>38</sup>

The main reason why Spain found the proposal of an alliance with Venice attractive upon the Pope's request was no doubt the presence of Uluç Ali Paşa, governor of Algeria, in Tunisia. Even though during the negotiations the Spanish had accepted that the fleet of the alliance was to move to save Cyprus first, they actually wanted to destroy the forces of Uluç Ali Paşa in North Africa. Uluç Ali Paşa, posing a threat to all ships operating on behalf of Spanish allies or Spain, overtly displayed the reasons for the Spanish to think like this<sup>39</sup> to the extent that in June 1571, Uluç Ali Paşa was preparing to go to Istanbul to convince the sultan to organize a campaign to Halq al-Wad, which remained the incomplete foot of the campaign in Tunisia. His endeavors showed that he was on the same side as Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, who wanted to advance to Halq al-Wad instead of Cyprus. At that moment, a fleet comprising of 24 galleys under his command identified via his watchers four Malta-flagged galleys which were sailing with wheat they had loaded from the port of Licata in

38 Córdoba, *Felipe Segundo...*, pp. 86-87.

39 Emilio Sola Castaño, *Uchali: El Calabrés Tiñoso, o el mito del corsario muladí en la frontera*, Ediciones Bellaterra, Barcelona 2010, p. 175.

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Sicily and attacked them. During the clash, which lasted about two hours, one of the galleys managed to escape to Cape Passaro while the other three were captured with their booty and taken to Algeria.<sup>40</sup>

While the parties of the alliance were busy with preparations of the fleet, the Imperial Navy comprising 184 ships set sail toward Cyprus in the beginning of April 1571 to prevent the Venetians reaching there before the Ottomans and to reinforce the siege of Famagusta. This time, Second Vizier Pertev Paşa was the commander of the navy. In the meantime, before Lala Mustafa Paşa took the offensive on the castle of Famagusta, Ottoman reinforcements reached Cyprus on time and unloaded the required provisions and ammunition.<sup>41</sup>

While this was happening on the Ottoman side, the Rome Agreement which formalized the Holy League was announced to the public by the Pope on May 24, 1571. The Ottomans were aware of movements in the Mediterranean. After the siege of Famagusta was reinforced by the Chief Admiral, the number of ships in the Imperial Navy reached 250 along with ships from Alexandria, the islands of Rhodes and Chios, as well as Anatolia and Algeria.<sup>42</sup>

At that time, part of the Venetian fleet was in Corfu and the other part was in Crete. Vigilant to prevent possible Venetian help reaching Famagusta, which was under siege, the Ottomans were at sea in the Mediterranean in order to strike at the Venetian fleet, islands giving logistical support to it, and the coasts of Dalmatia and Albania. Pertev Paşa first attacked Chania by landing troops around Souda. Then, he entered the waters of Mora and struck the islands of Cythera, Zante and Cephalonia. Against the heavy assaults by the Ottomans in the Adriatic, Sebastiano Veniero, the Venetian commander in Corfu, saw the dangerous consequences of staying there and escaped on July 23 with his nearly 60 ships to Messina, where the ships of the alliance would gather.<sup>43</sup>

Lala Mustapha Paşa began the assault on the Castle of Famagusta beginning from May 15. Although the attacks were conducted from trenches dug by sappers from every direction up to the foundations of the castle, for exactly two and a half months they were repelled every time, and the conquest did not occur. During these advances the Ottomans suffered such great losses that they claimed the lives of nearly 10,000 soldiers as a result of the detonation of gunpowder laid by the defenders under the earth filling the ditches while they were digging sewers. On July 31, however, eventually the defense broke down and the Ottomans captured the castle.<sup>44</sup>

40 Fray Diego de Haedo, *Topografía e Historia General de Argel*, La Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles, Vol I., Madrid 1927, pp. 353-354.

41 Selânikî, p. 81; Kâtip Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibâr Fî 'Esfârî'l-Bihar*, p. 112.

42 Cesareo Fernandez Duro, *Armada Española*, Tomo II, Museo Naval, Madrid 1972, p. 133.

43 M. Cavid Baysun, "Lepanto", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, MEB, C. 7, İstanbul 1993, p. 40.

44 Kâtip Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibâr Fî 'Esfârî'l-Bihar*, pp. 112; Forthe transcription from Künhü'l-Ahbâr

According to the Spanish naval historian Duro, the number of soldiers that the Ottomans lost in the assault on Famagusta was 50,000. As the sea route was held by the Ottomans, difficulty in obtaining provisions and ammunition was the main factor in the surrender of the defenders, who were not able to endure the siege. The reason why Marco Antonio Bragadino, commander of the castle, was taken prisoner and tortured by cutting off his ears and nose was possibly the high losses on the Ottoman side. As if that were not enough, the defeated commander was forced to carry earth to fill the ditches and kiss the earth every time he passed in front of Lala Mustafa Paşa. In the end, he was flayed alive and after being filled with straw, his corpse was hung from the mast of a galley where the pirates could see before it was taken to Istanbul.<sup>45</sup>

With the capture of Famagusta, the ground offensive was over and Lala Mustafa Paşa, who transferred administration of the island to *beylerbeyi* Muzaffer Paşa, eventually returned to Istanbul on September 15, 1571 in triumph.<sup>46</sup>

The conquest of Cyprus ended the colonial regime for the peasantry on the island. Ragazzoni wrote, "By escaping from the battlefield, laying down their arms and leaving them behind, the Cypriots acted treacherously". However, the Venetians' execution of the order to take shelter in the city by destroying the produce of the peasants, who were mostly farmers, aroused rage and led the peasants to take shelter in the mountains by robbing from their landlords, who they already hated due to centuries of exploitation. When the conquest of the island by the Ottomans was over, the people harboring in the mountains without hesitation began to engage in bargaining for surrender. Coming down from the mountains when they were informed that the public would not be enslaved and their religion would remain intact on condition that they paid a poll tax (*cizye*), a tax imposed on non-Muslim citizens, the peasants accepted to be ruled by the Ottomans.<sup>47</sup> Without losing time, the Ottomans engaged in a policy of increasing the population of Turks on the island by sending decrees to the Karaman, Dulkadir and Greek provinces of Anatolia on September 21, 1571.<sup>48</sup>

The jubilation of the Ottomans did not last long. Even though the parties of the Christian alliance were too late to help the defenders in Famagusta, the alliance fleet under the command of Don Juan of Austria won a landslide

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related to the loss as a result of the inflammation of the gunpowder, see. Çerçi, *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli*...pp. 116-117.

45 Duro, *Armada Española*, p. 133-134.

46 Turan, *Lala Mustafa Paşa*..., p. 577.

47 Barbero, *İnebahtı*..., pp. 289-291.

48 M. Akif Erdoğan, Conquest of Cyprus By the Turks and the First Settlement Project (1570\*1571), *Cyprus International Symposium on Her Past and Present*, Number: 9, Publication of Eastern Mediterranean University of T.R.N.C. and Van Yüzüncü Yıl University Of Turkish Republic, Gazi Mağusa 1991, s. 45.

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victory against the Imperial Navy in the Gulf of Lepanto on October 7, 1571.<sup>49</sup> According to information given by Setton based on the book "Historia" of Gianpietro Contarini, the Catholic alliance lost 7656 men in the battle including senior officers. On the Ottoman side, 34 flagship captains including the Chief Admiral Müezzinzâde Ali Paşa, 120 galley commanders, 25,000 janissaries, cavalymen, volunteers and galley slaves lost their lives while 3846 Ottoman soldiers were taken prisoner. Around 20,000 Christian prisoners were freed; and 117 galleys and 13 kalyatas together with their ammunition and provisions were seized. During the battle, 80 Ottoman ships were either put out of action or sank.<sup>50</sup> As a result, the year 1571 was remembered by the Ottomans for this overwhelming defeat, in which the two thirds of their navy was lost, rather than the victory won in Cyprus.

### Conclusion

The victory won against the Turks at Lepanto was welcomed with feasting in the West. But just as its success did not compensate for the expenditure, not long after it also caused Spain to be strapped for cash. When the following year the Ottoman Empire made a strenuous effort and succeeded in launching a much bigger fleet than it had lost, the members of the alliance understood that they were not able to deal a last blow to the Turks. Venice, which understood that the loss of a strategic and economically important island like Cyprus was a greater blow than a naval victory, was the first state to ignore the euphoria of victory. Knowing well that hostility with the Ottoman Empire was economically unsustainable and the existing situation could cause the collapse of the spice and cloth trade, Venice turned its back on the alliance and sought reconciliation with the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman-Venice peace deal signed on March 7, 1573 officialized the fall of Cyprus under the hegemony of the Turks and Venice's leaving the Catholic alliance. This outcome is proof of the expression, 'In international relations, there is no friendship but benefits'. The conquest of Cyprus marked the beginning of a new era in terms of establishing the status quo regarding competition in the Mediterranean. Lepanto, the Tunisian Wars, and the Spanish-English struggle in the Atlantic would be implanted in the memory as full-scale attempts regarding the establishment of a new order.

49 Fernand Braudel, *II. Felipe Döneminde Akdeniz ve Akdeniz Dünyası*, Transl. Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay, Vol. 2, İmge Kitabevi, Ankara 1994, p. 518.

50 Kennot M. Setton, *The Papacy and Levant (1204-1571)*, V. 4, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia 1984, pp. 1059-1060; The Historian Ali states the number of lost ships as 190. For the transcription from Kühnü'l-Ahbârsee Çerçi, *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli...*, p. 117; for its Ottoman copy, also see. Âli, *Kühnü'l-Ahbâr*, p. 445b.

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