Onur Yildirim

THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO AND ITS IMPACT ON OTTOMAN HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

All the Muslims, shocked and worried about this defeat which, to them, was reminiscent of the day of reckoning, begged to God, sighing «Praise be to the Almighty [and] the Wisest, the Hour of Reckoning is indeed a great event!»[1].

1. Introduction

The triumph of the allied Christian fleet over the Ottoman galleys at Lepanto created great repercussions upon European society and culture, well-covered by a large corpus of literary and historical material since the occurrence of this event. In their scholarly and artistic endeavors, historians, poets, painters, philosophers and theologians celebrated the victory of the Christian alliance against the hereditary enemy, the Ottoman Turk, who championed Islam and defied Christianity. The Ottoman side of the story remained largely an uncharted terrain, covered briefly by a few Ottoman chroniclers and examined only by a small number of contemporary historians. Those Ottoman chroniclers who devoted a few pages to this event in their accounts limited their coverage to the material aspects of the naval confrontation and generally adopted an indifferent attitude towards the broader consequences of this event. Contemporary Turkish historians are divided in their assessment of the event. Some of them, carried away by the paradigm of the golden age, tend to view it as the most concrete manifestation of the beginning of a long decline that was to hold sway over the Ottoman Empire in the centuries to come. Some others, on the other hand, allude to its inhibiting effect on the expansion of the Ottoman Empire rather than

[1] K. Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l Kibar fi Esfari'l Bihar*, Darü't Tıbaati'l Mamureti's Su, İstanbul, 1141 (1728), p. 95.

surmising a definite treatise of demise. By and large, the event failed to receive the kind of recognition and publicity that it found in Europe.

In his seminal work, Braudel considered the victory of the allied Christian fleet at Lepanto as marking «the end of a period of profound depression, the end of a genuine inferiority complex on the part of Christendom and a no less real Turkish supremacy»[2]. Given the fact that what Braudel considers «a genuine inferiority complex on the part of Christendom» reciprocated a genuine feeling of superiority on the part of Islam – championed by the Ottomans – the immediate impact of this event on the Ottoman Empire and on Ottoman society and culture, both official and popular, merits special attention. How did the defeat at Lepanto affect the psychology of the Ottoman political leadership in Istanbul? Did it really do away with the feeling of superiority on the part of the Ottomans? What lessons, if any, did they draw from this event? Since the defeat at Lepanto was the first major defeat of the Ottoman navy vis-à-vis its contemporaneous European rivals and the second greatest military defeat of the Ottoman army since the destruction of the Ottoman land forces in the hands of the Mongols in the opening years of the fifteenth century, the questions of how the Ottomans reacted to the defeat at Lepanto and whether or not they viewed it as a disastrous defeat appear to be legitimate topics of research.

The first defeat in the hands of Mongol conquerors had set going a period of interregnum to be recovered two decades later with the help of political conjuncture as well as special efforts by capable sultans; the defeat at Lepanto, however, took its major toll on Ottoman naval capacity, with effects on the socio-political framework comparable with those of the disastrous defeat at the Battle of Ankara in 1402. Perhaps more importantly the occurrence of this defeat in a long history of victories, before and after the battle, made it look like an anomaly, if not an accident, caused by the miscalculations of an incompetent commander inexperienced in naval affairs. As one Ottoman chronicler put it, «the grand admiral of the Ottoman navy had not commanded a single rowboat in his life»[3] and according to ano-

[2] F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip* II, vol. 2, Harper & Row Books, New York, 1973, p. 1103.

[3] K. Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l Kibar fi Esfari'l Bihar* cit., p. 92.

ther chronicler «he has not seen a naval battle nor was he informed of the science of piracy»[4].

Be that as it may, the battle of Lepanto is one of those rare events that have not received the kind of attention they deserve in Ottoman and Turkish historiography[5]. Thus the questions referred to above remain for the most part unanswered, if not unaddressed. The current paper attempts to fill in this lacuna by looking at the broader implications of this event for Ottoman history and historiography. It starts out with a brief assessment of the place where the battle occurred, then moves on to place the event within the broader context of the post-Suleymanic phase of Ottoman history, and recounts the details of the event from the Ottoman point of view. Then it examines the impact of this event upon Ottoman naval history, which saw with this event its golden age coming to an end. The second part of the paper, which is largely a historiographic assessment of this event, brings the writings of a select group of Ottoman chroniclers under the magnifying lens, showing the elements of continuity and rupture in their respective narratives of this event. This section gauges out the reactions of Ottoman intelligentsia to the disastrous defeat and the way they perceived and represented the Christian world in their accounts. In the final analysis, the present author hopes to provide a thorough assessment of the consequences of the naval defeat on the Ottoman Empire on the one hand, and shed some light on the reactions of the Ottomans to this defeat on the other.

2. The Place, the Context, the Event

Located at the mouth of the Gulf of Patras (Corinth), Lepanto came under Venetian rule in 1407 and remained under it until 1499. It was conquered – after an unsuccessful attempt in 1483 – by the Ottomans in 1499 and turned into one of the eleven districts (*liva*) in the Province of Cezayir (*Eyalet-i Cezayir*) within the Ottoman admi-

[4] M. Solakzade, *Tarih-i Solakzade*, Mahmud Bey Matbaası, Istanbul, 1297 (1879), p. 593.

[5] The only specific treatment of the consequences of the Lepanto defeat upon the Ottoman Empire is by Andrew Hess, who contextualizes the event within its Mediterranean framework, challenging the traditional assumptions of European historiography, including those of Braudel (A. Hess, *The Battle of Lepanto and Its Place in Mediterranean History*, «Past and Present», n. 57, 1972, pp. 53-73).

nistrative system[6]. The conquest of Lepanto, together with Modon, Coron and Navarino, gave the Ottomans not only a new frontier well to the west but also near control of the whole eastern half, except Crete, of the Mediterranean Sea, which was the fundamental basis of fortune and power of the Venetian Republic, the only important Christian power in the region. Upon the conquest, the Ottomans implemented the routine procedures, conducting a census (*tahrir*) with a view to enlisting the resources of the district and making a valuation of the lands therein. The sultan reserved a certain portion of the lands for his personal property and established 13 *zeamet*[7] and 287 *tımar*s[8] After the division of these lands into various fiscal units, the government proceeded with the assignment of these units to the tımariot cavalry (people of *devshirme* origins) in return for military service. The appointment of high-ranking government officials such as *sanjak bey* and *kadı* (judge) etc. completed in due course the annexation of this region into the Ottoman administrative system. Since Lepanto was a strategic frontier – situated on a belt cutting the Mediterranean commercial and cultural space into halves (Muslim/Ottoman and Christian/European) – it was subjected to a special administrative and financial status[9]. Having placed a janissary garrison in each of the Venetian-erected fortifications (Kastro Moréas in the south and Kastro Roumelias in the north), the Ottoman central administration carried out periodic checks on the soldiers and maintained their unremitting provisioning all year long. From the moment the administrative status of Lepanto was conferred, the Ottomans began recruiting oarsmen and warriors for naval and land campaigns. The burden upon the shoulders of the local populations only got worse as time went by. As a maritime district, Lepanto constantly furnished the imperial navy with oarsmen and

[6] H. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire, the Classical Age, 1300-1600*, Phoenix, London, 1994, p. 31.

[7] A prebend bestowed by a sultanic diploma on the commander of timariot sipahis in a district, conventionally from 20,000 to 100,000 *akça* (*Liva-yı Inebahtı: hass-ı mir-i liva üç yüz akçadır. Zeamet on üç, tımar iki yüz seksen yedidir*).

[8] A prebend acquired through a sultanic diploma, consisting as a rule of state taxes in return for regular military service, the amount of which conventionally was below 20,000 *akça*.

[9] For the status of frontiers in the Ottoman Empire see C. Heywood, *The Frontier in Ottoman History: Old Ideas and New Myths*, in D. Power and N. Standen (eds.), *Frontiers in Question, Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700*, Macmillan Press, London, 1999, pp. 228-250.

warriors during the sixteenth century, a period during which the Ottoman fleet was relentlessly in action from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean[10]. Oarsmen were drawn mainly from the local Greek populations who were experienced in maritime affairs (piracy, corsair activity), in return for various tax exemptions (*cizye, kharaj, avariz* etc.). When the need arose, the state authorities demanded the construction of ships with the supplies provided by the populations of the district. Urgent taxes (*akçe-i avariz*), which began to be extracted in the early years of the sixteenth century[11], became regular taxes in maritime districts, such as Lepanto, long before they were turned into regular taxes throughout the imperial territories during the late sixteenth century. On the eve of the naval battle off their coast, the local populations of Lepanto had already become weary of supplying the Ottoman army with men and provisions during the seventy years of continuous warfare[12]. Thus they began to turn a deaf ear to new demands. As attested by several Ottoman chroniclers, the grand admiral of the Ottoman fleet failed to recruit from this traditional center for galley labor warriors and oarsmen in numbers sufficient to staff the ships participating in the campaign[13]. Furthermore, the timariot cavalry of the district, expected to support the navy, failed to attend to their duties since many of them had departed from the district because of the season. The evidence suggests that following the defeat of the Ottoman naval forces at Lepanto the religious leaders of Greek communities in and around Janina and Karlıeri began to communicate with the Venetians[14]. The Ortho-

[10] E. Özveren, O. Yıldırım, *An Outline of Ottoman Maritime History*, in G. Harlaftis and C. Vassallo (eds.), *Research in Maritime History: New Directions in Mediterranean Maritime History*, St. John's, Newfoundland, 2004, pp. 147-170.

[11] K. Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l Kibar fi Esfari'l Bihar* cit., p. 34.

[12] For an imperial order that was sent to the bey of Lepanto for the recruitment of oarsmen (*kürekçi*) in 1565 see Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi/BOA), Registers of Important Affairs (Mühimme Defterleri), Register Book n. 5, p. 247.

[13] Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-Selaniki*, Matbaa-i Amire, İstanbul, 1281 (1864), p. 49: «when the news arrived about the preparedness of the enemy fleet for confrontation and that the confrontation was inevitable, warriors from the fortresses and auxiliary footmen [from the district] were collected with difficulty and by forceful means».

[14] R. M. Dawkins published a note on a colored picture of the battle of Lepanto painted by an ordained monk, one Lawrence, at some monastery of St. Athanasios at the request of a man who attributed his escape from death in the gift to the good offices of St. Spyridon, the great saint of Corfu. The picture dated 1571 has the following inscription on the back: «The Battle of Lepanto in which the Venetians destroyed the

dox bishops of Salonica went one step further and dispatched an envoy to the Russian Tsar and Polish king, asking them to organize a joint action against the Ottomans. The envoy was stopped in Walachia (Eflak) by Ottoman forces[15]. Nevertheless, the leaders of the Orthodox Greek communities disregarded the traditional conflict between the Patriarchate in Istanbul and the Papacy and continued to invest their resources and energy for the purpose of uprooting the Ottoman rule from the region. Although the Battle of Lepanto did not bring an end to the Ottoman rule in the region, that goal was accomplished by the first serious assault of the Venetians during the next century. Lepanto was recaptured by the Venetians in 1687 to be handed back in 1699 to the Ottomans, who lost the place for good during the Greek independence movement in the 1820s.

* * *

The event occurred at a time when the Ottomans were consolidating their imperial power at home and abroad. On the diplomatic plane, they had just signed a truce with Austria (1568), revised the terms of peace with Poland (1568), captured Tunisia (1569) and nearly completed the conquest of Cyprus (1570). Furthermore, the diplomatic relations with Iran, the principal eastern rival, had just begun to smoothen out with the visit of an Iranian delegation (1568)[16]. Last but not the least, a series of victories (Tunisia, Cyprus) that the Ottoman navy won in the Mediterranean had paved the way for rapprochement with the arch-rivals, namely the Venetians, in the early months of 1571, disrupted momentarily with the confrontation in Cyprus. Thus on the eve of the Lepanto defeat, the Ottomans still maintained their diplomatic relations with the principal political powers of their time in terms favorable to enhancing their superiority against their eastern and western neighbors. Much to the dissatisfaction of the Ottomans, however, the negotiations with the Vene-

fleet of the Hagarenes (i.e. the Turks) and [...] was blockaded and St. Spyridon of Kerkyra saved him». The way the Turks were represented in this painting is quite instructive so as to catch a glimpse of the general public opinion of the local populations concerning Ottoman rulers. R. M. Dawkins, *A Picture of the Battle of Lepanto*, «The Journal of Hellenic Studies», vol. 50, Part 1, 1930, pp. 1-3.

[15] Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi/BOA), Registers of Important Affairs (Mühimme Defterleri), Register Book n. 9, p. 228.

[16] R. Mantran, *XVI-XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı Imparatorluğu*, (trans.) M. A. Kılıçbay, İmge Kitabevi, Ankara, 1995, pp. 92-93.

tians were aborted owing to the conquest of Cyprus, alienating the Venetians from their side and stimulating them to join the Holy League (Spain, the Papacy, Princes of Tuscany, Parma, Malta, Savoy, Genoa, Ferrara) organized through the initiative of the Pope Pius V. The crushing Ottoman defeat by the Christian allied fleet at Lepanto occurred in this atmosphere, striking a major blow to the ongoing process of consolidation of Ottoman imperial power on the diplomatic front and thus causing a major disappointment on the part of the Ottoman political leadership. The post-Lepanto era saw a swift change of direction in Ottoman political, economic and diplomatic relations with Europe. The Ottomans turned their eyes away from Latin Christendom to England, France and the Dutch, who were prepared to take over the role of the Venetians in Mediterranean commerce.

On the domestic scene, the consolidation efforts via constant warfare took their toll on the subject populations, placing further financial burdens on their shoulders. The effects of this development, coupled with the impact of the price fluctuations caused by the inflow of American silver, triggered a process of rural-urban migration that altered the dynamics of the Ottoman social and economic system. The peasantry became increasingly squeezed between the demands of the state and obligations to local notables. This dilemma resulted in peasant flight and depopulation of the countryside, which exacerbated the problem of taxation. As an agriculture-based state, the Ottoman Empire failed to maintain its revenue base owing to the depopulation of the countryside despite the demographic upsurge that characterized the whole European continent at the time. Increasing tax burdens on a constantly shrinking rural population also affected the loyalty of the subject populations, particularly the nomads, to the Ottoman dynasty. The Ottoman-Safavid conflict was nurtured for the most part by growing resentment on the part of the Turcoman tribes – forced to settle for tax purposes – as well as the rural populations of central Anatolia towards the Ottoman dynasty. Since the mid years of the century, various segments of the Ottoman society had shown signs of discontent via different forms of reaction. To illustrate the extent of this discontent, one could mention the situation of the religious schools (*madrases*) which produced people to man the bureaucracy. Due to the increasing shortage of positions in bureaucracy and tightening of promotion schemes, the number of students in religious schools had sharply increased since the mid years of the century and

madrase students in major imperial cities like Bursa had begun to show their feelings through different types of actions (e.g., brigandage, kidnapping etc.) that caused havoc and disorder. The movement of students forms only one aspect of the wholesale social movement, the so-called *Celali* Rebellions, which the Anatolian peasants, soldiers and notables would be involved in at the end of the century. To the worsening situation of the tax-paying subjects was added the efforts of the Ottoman central administration to suppress the rebellions in such distant provinces as Yemen and the Hedjaz (1567-1571)[17]. The fiscal burdens on the shoulders of tax payers mounted as time went by. The preparations of the Ottoman land army for the campaigns against the Safavid state in the east and the Habsburgs in the west required vast resources. To the increasing pressure on the tax-paying subjects the Lepanto incident made yet another addition, since immediately after the Lepanto defeat the Ottoman Sultan Selim II and his grand vizier Sokullu Mehmed Paşa launched an ambitious project to rebuild the navy with a view to recouping the losses at Lepanto.

* * *

Having examined the specific conditions of the place where the battle took place and outlined the general context, we will provide a factual survey of the Ottoman side of the naval confrontation at Lepanto, often neglected in the literature on the subject[18]. In the early months of 1571, the Ottomans had intelligence from their sources in Bosnia and Delvina that the Venetians were assembling their forces near Corfu, and waiting for the Spanish fleet. The news about the Christian fleet caused great concern and excitement in Istanbul and the government took drastic measures to meet the imminent danger, since they thought this large allied fleet was bound to break the ongoing siege of Magosa (Famagosta). The following decision, written in a highly religious tone, was taken to attack the Christian

[17] H. İnalcık, *The Ottoman State: Economy and Society, 1300-1600*, in H. İnalcık, D. Quataert (eds.), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, Cambridge Universiy Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 331-335.

[18] For a detailed discussion and documentation of the details in this section see H. İnalcık, *Lepanto in the Ottoman Documents*, in G. Benzoni (ed.), *Il Mediterraneo nella seconda metà del '500 alla luce di Lepanto*, Olschki, Firenze, 1974.

fleet: «when the news about the infidels' intention to attack became known by every body, here the *ulema* (religious scholars) and all the Muslim community found it most proper and necessary to find and immediately attack the infidels' fleet in order to save the honor of our religion and state, and to protect the Land of the Caliphate, and when the Muslims submitted their petition to the feet of my throne I found it good and incontestable. I remain unshakeable in my decision»[19]. As the language of the document suggests, the Ottomans from the beginning saw the confrontation as one between two faiths, reciprocating in this regard the motivations of the architects of the Holy League, Pope Pius V and the Spanish King Philip II. The decision was put into action all at once and all the naval and land forces were summoned to join the operation.

The Ottoman naval forces, misinformed of the whereabouts of the allied fleet, moved on to confront it at Crete where they were joined by the fleet of Uluç Ali Paşa, the governor (beylerbeyi) of Algiers. However, the allied fleet appeared in the Adriatic Sea with a view to attacking the Ottoman possessions on the Adriatic coasts. The Ottoman fleet reached the coast of Lepanto in September – one month before the confrontation – and raided some Venetian-held fortresses (Dulcigno and Antivari in Albania) in the neighboring regions. As we learn from Ottoman chroniclers, many of the Ottoman combatants who had landed to fight deserted and never returned to their ships[20]. Many ships were thus left without soldiers. The land troops that had been recruited from the provinces of Albania and Bosnia in order to support the navy in the case of confrontation began to disband owing to bad weather conditions and a dearth of provisions. Many timariot cavalrymen returned to their home provinces (they would serve as a rule only during the campaign season that is from spring to autumn). The Ottoman political leadership did not intervene to stop the disintegration of military troops. This development is interpreted by a prominent Ottomanist, Halil Inalcık, as meaning that the Ottoman government did not seriously expect an enemy attack at that time and that the battle came rather as a surprise[21]. As a matter of

[19] The document published by İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Kıbrıs Fethi ile Lepanto (İnebahtı) Muharebesi*, «Türkiyat Mecmuası», vol. 3, 1935, doc. 31.

[20] Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit., p. 104; K. Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l Kibar fi Esfari'l Bihar* cit., p. 92.

[21] H. İnalcık, *Lepanto in the Ottoman Documents* cit., p. 190.

fact, one of the Ottoman chroniclers of the time wrote that «the [Ottoman] fleet cruised for a long time on the sea. No one appeared. The Ottomans believed that the Christians lacked the courage and to meet them. The winter approached. The corsairs and beys of the coastal provinces asked the Porte for permission to return home. Thus the army disintegrated»[22]. Be that as it may, the news about the movement of the allied Christian fleet to the bay of Lepanto arrived a little too late. By then many soldiers on the ships and on land had left. Not knowing that they would face such an organized assembly of galleys led by the Papacy, Venice and Habsburg forces under the flag of the Holy Roman Empire, the Ottomans were caught unprepared. The Allied fleet comprised some 200 galleys whose total complement numbered around 44,000 seamen, including rowers. In addition there were some 28,000 soldiers aboard[23]. They were armed with the harquebus, the precursor of the musket. Furthermore, the Holy League fleet was attended by a train of 24 sailing cargo vessels which were there to provide logistic support when needed. The Ottoman fleet (numbering about 224 vessels) succumbed to the Holy League fleet. Some 194 Ottoman ships were either sunk or captured by the Christian alliance. The grand admiral was killed, together with his sons, while another commander saved his own life by simply fleeing. The only commander, who survived the battle was Uluç Ali Paşa, more experienced in maritime affairs than the other two commanders, who managed to bring back to Istanbul a small squadron of galleys. An imperial decree issued on October 28, 1571 has the following reflection on the event: «Now a battle can be won or lost. It was destined to happen this way according to God's will»[24].

3. The Naval Impact

The engagement of the Ottoman fleet with the fleet of the Holy League off the coast of Lepanto on 7 October 1571 gave the Ottoman imperial fleet its first major defeat at sea in the Mediterranean. This

[22] K. Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l Kibar fi Esfari'l Bihar* cit., p. 92.

[23] E. B. Potter (ed.), *Sea Power: A Naval History*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, Inc, N.J., 1960, pp. 16-17. Cfr. F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World* cit., vol. II, pp. 1088-1142.

[24] This document is cited by H. İnalcık, *Lepanto in the Ottoman Documents* cit., pp. 190-191.

event is registered in Mediterranean history as the last major battle of galleys, marking the end of long and heavy oar-ships and the beginning of light and fast rigged sailing ships. But perhaps more importantly, this last major battle of galleys also brought to an end the communication between the Ottoman world and the West in the area of shipping technology. The Ottoman galleys which were pitted against those of their European rivals at Lepanto were found wanting, especially as regards firepower, and as a consequence the Ottoman navy immediately embarked on a measure of restructuring in an effort to retain the control of its possessions in the Mediterranean. The Ottoman Imperial Arsenal worked to its utmost capacity to rebuild the imperial fleet along somewhat improved lines. Within the space of 5-6 months the Ottoman Imperial Arsenal completed the construction of the navy, bringing all the construction material and labor via a harsh policy of taxation from the provinces. All these ships were fully equipped with artillery, guns and other war instruments and manned by oarsmen and warriors. The Grand Vizier, Sokullu Mehmed Paṣa, is quoted as having said «this is such a [powerful] state that if it wishes, it would have no difficulty in casting anchors from silver, making rigging from silk and cutting the sails from satin; if I am unable to prepare on time the equipment and sail of a ship I am here to be held accountable for that»[25]. That the Ottomans rebuilt their navy in a short time after the defeat can be considered a way of confronting the defeat and getting over its effects at once. However, the great financial sacrifices made by the Porte to protect the empire by building a new fleet signaled the end of Ottoman sea power. Andrew Hess, taking into consideration Ottoman naval accomplishments in the Mediterranean after the defeat of Lepanto, asserts that Ottoman sea power survived the defeat[26]. The eventual success of the Tunis campaign (1569-1574) can be considered as a testimony to the quick recovery of the Ottoman navy from the disastrous naval defeat and the restoration of Ottoman control over eastern Mediterranean waters. However, the financial burdens introduced by the crushing defeat and the advent of the English and Dutch on the Mediterranean made a full recovery of Ottoman sea power impossible. As a matter of fact, after the completion of the conquest of Tunis and La Goletta, Ottoman naval affairs entered an

[25] Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevi*, vol. I, Matbaa-i Amire, İstanbul, 1283 (1864), p. 260.
[26] A. Hess, *The Battle of Lepanto and its Place in Mediterranean History* cit., *passim*.

idle period until about the middle of the seventeenth century, when the Ottomans mounted another major expedition against Crete, the last Venetian possession in the eastern Mediterranean. Unlike earlier campaigns, the campaign of Crete lasted for nearly twenty-five years to be completed in 1669 with the capture of Candia. In this regard, the defeat at Lepanto can be considered as a benchmark in Ottoman naval history in that it ended the period of swift naval campaigns that the Ottoman navy had been executing since the later years of the fifteenth century.

The defeat at Lepanto had also had a major impact on the Ottoman policy in the Indian Ocean. Prior to the defeat at Lepanto, the Ottomans had managed to restore their rule over Yemen and Aden (1569-70) and prepared to launch a comprehensive attack against the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. As İnalcık notes, «if the Ottomans had not had a shattering blow to their naval power at Lepanto, they might have continued their aggressive policy in the Indian Ocean» implying that the Ottomans, using Yemen as a strategic base, could extend their authority far into the Indian Ocean[27]. However, the defeat at Lepanto prompted the Ottomans to reconsider such comprehensive naval projects and eventually rule them out in favor of large-scale land campaigns.

As for the immediate impact of the Lepanto defeat on the political situation in the eastern Mediterranean, «it merely reconfirmed a naval stalemate according to which naval supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean remained in Muslim hands while the western Mediterranean remained predominantly under Christian control»[28]. As the late Ronald Jennings states, «none of the parties which emerged victorious out of Lepanto occupied any territories, won any strategic advantages, or were able to follow up that single isolated success. The Ottomans not only stripped Venice of its richest and wealthiest possession, that is Cyprus, and its most important naval bases but also deprived Latin Christian pirates of their most important base»[29].

[27] H. İnalcık, *The Ottoman State: Economy and Society, 1300-1600* cit., p. 334.

[28] R. C. Anderson, *Naval Wars in the Levant, 1559-1853*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1952, pp. 8-54; W. H. McNeill, *Europe's Steppe Frontier, 1500-1800, A Study of the Eastward Movement in Europe*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1964, p. 55.

[29] R. C. Jennings, *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus and the Mediterranean World, 1571-1640*, New York University Press, New York, 1993, p. 5.

4. Ottoman Authors on the Lepanto Defeat

Writing history was considered an official pursuit in the Ottoman world and Ottoman historians – "chroniclers" is perhaps a better word – were exclusively state officials who climbed up the social ladder thanks to their connections (*intisab*) in the Palace milieu. In their writings, Ottoman chroniclers tended to devote more space to individuals and institutions than to the ideas and developments of their times. Where their narration of events is concerned, they adopted a descriptive method and usually shied away from passing judgments on the consequences of events. In their pursuits they were often impeded by a series of concerns which included primarily the risk of being reported to the Sultan or a high-ranking official. Thus they left aside their own reactions to a particular event, and the views of the other parties, who might have been directly involved with this event, remain largely unaddressed. Occasionally the views of the sultans and high-ranking bureaucrats, particularly viziers connected to the causes and effects of events are quoted but usually in a politically correct fashion. Thus, by and large, Ottoman chroniclers, by the nature of their trade, upheld the state and appraised past and present rulers, since criticism of the latter meant exile, if not decapitation.

The dead does not speak; therefore putting the blame on the dead was always an easy way out for Ottoman chroniclers. That is what the early Ottoman narrators of the Lepanto defeat did in their accounts for the most part. They put the whole blame of the defeat on the shoulders of the grand admiral who was killed in action, together with his sons. The only Ottoman commander who managed to escape the battle scene was Uluç Ali Paşa, who was appraised unanimously by all Ottoman authors. This might have been owing to the fact that the Ottoman sultan Selim II promoted him to the rank of grand admiral after the defeat and he proved his skills in the battle field in several campaigns that were organized and won during his tenure. Thus Ottoman authors made a teleological assessment of his performance in the Lepanto Battle and avoided from casting any doubt on the decision of the sultan to promote him to the rank of grand admiral.

Several Ottoman chroniclers, whose writings were surveyed for this paper, seem to have reproduced the narrative of the event from one another. A major difference is observed in the numerical information they give about the size of the Ottoman and Holy League fleet. The size of the Ottoman fleet is given as 170 by Katip Çelebi,

250 by Solakzade, 184 by Selaniki and 300 by Peçevi. The last number is consistent with the number provided by European sources. Although Ottoman chroniclers differ greatly about the number of Ottoman vessels, they all stress the fact that the Ottoman fleet replaced all its losses and sailed out on time the following spring with a fleet that the enemy were unwilling to confront. Here the only different view comes from Peçevi, who maintains that the Ottoman fleet was unwilling to confront the enemy on account of what had happened the previous year.

The chroniclers surveyed for this paper all produced their writings at a time when the Ottoman intelligentsia began to adopt a more critical tone over the current state of affairs. Sometimes motivated by their personal concerns, the Ottoman chroniclers also tried to diagnose the sources of "decline" that, they thought, plagued the empire. Here they focused on the changes in the institutions and practices rather than on the dynamics of the events covered in their narratives. Thus, where the Lepanto defeat was concerned, Katip Çelebi wrote about the failure to fulfill certain conditions before launching a comprehensive expedition. In his view, as it will be shown in the following pages, the Ottoman military leadership failed to prepare properly for such warfare. He also alludes to the composition of oarsmen employed on Ottoman ships, arguing that the number of Muslim oarsmen on a ship should exceed the number of Christians and other non-Muslims in order to maintain discipline and order. Almost all the authors under review emphasize the importance of commanding skills that were required to lead an army to victory. They all seem to agree that none of the commanders, with the exception of Uluç Ali Paşa, possessed those skills. Thus all the chroniclers believe that the grand admiral of the Ottoman navy, Müezzinzade Ali Paşa, was certainly not qualified for this position since he was of janissary background and had no knowledge of maritime affairs, let alone naval warfare. This view should be interpreted as an indirect criticism of the Ottoman sultan who appointed to him to this post but no Ottoman chronicler dared to say a word on the "decision" of the sultan. Certain Ottoman chroniclers used Lepanto as a metaphor to criticize the fiscal policies of the governments of their times. Peçevi, for example, who wrote his history during the early seventeenth century when the Ottoman government was implementing a harsh policy of taxation on subject populations, underscored that the Ottoman Sultan Selim II and his grand vizier Sokullu managed the reconstruction of the entire Ottoman fleet, indeed a

gigantic task, without imposing any urgent taxes on the populations. The slight differences in the representation of the Lepanto incident by Ottoman chroniclers, which will be laid out in the following pages, should be considered against the background of those concerns, since those concerns are embedded in the dynamics of power according to which the sixteenth-century Ottoman state and society were structured and operated.

* * *

The most detailed narrative of the Lepanto incident is found in Katip Çelebi (1609-1658) who completed his work in 1655[30]. Katip Çelebi, a geographer and cartographer, is one of the Ottoman writers who used a special term to designate the battle of Lepanto. He opted for the term «the expedition of the defeated fleet» (*sefer-i sıngın donanma*/ سفر صنغن دوننما) to label the Lepanto defeat. Most of the information found in his narrative on the preparations prior to the campaign and the situation of the navy were derived from earlier chronicles such as those of Peçevi and Selaniki. Unlike Peçevi, Katip Çelebi does not provide any detail concerning the departure of the fleet from Istanbul. He begins his narrative with the naval activities of two commanders, Pertev Paşa and Müezzinzade Ali Paşa, who joined their forces during the siege of Cyprus and moved to Rhodes, and then attacked Crete. When they were plundering those islands, the fleet of Uluç Ali Paşa joined them with twenty ships under his command. Together they attacked the island of Cefalonia and seized three Venetian fortresses; at the time of which they were still uninformed about the activities of the enemy fleet. Since it was winter time, most of the timariot cavalry on Ottoman ships asked for permission to return home, which they were granted. Some oarsmen and warriors on ships also took advantage of the opportunity to leave their ships when the fleet anchored at the port of Lepanto. There the news arrived about the coming of the enemy fleet – the author curses the enemy fleet – to confront the imperial fleet. Unlike the other Ottoman writers, Katip Çelebi provides detailed information about the composition of the allied fleet, that is, the types and conditions of ships, the number of soldiers aboard, the contribution of each participating party, the names of commanders etc. Katip Çelebi is more

[30] K. Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l Kibar fi Esfari'l Bihar* cit.

realistic and neutral in his representation of the discussions between various Ottoman commanders: where Uluç Paşa's resistance to the proposal of confronting the allied Christian fleet close to the coast is concerned, the author makes it clear that Uluç Paşa's objection emanated from his knowledge of the conditions of the ships in the Ottoman fleet. In his view the ships were worn out owing to the six-month campaign that they have been involved in. However, the rhetoric eventually prevailed and the Ottoman fleet engaged the allied Christian fleet in the name of the Sultan and Islam.

Katip Çelebi is one of those rare Ottoman chroniclers who deviate from the traditional narrative and draws lessons from each event. In his view, the defeat at Lepanto showed that the situation of the enemy had not been inspected carefully by frontier commanders. «For future campaigns, the commanders must consider the possibility of peace first even if the power of the enemy is considered sufficient to overcome. If they choose to war, they must consider their decision in detail and base it on the relevant rules and regulations. Those frontier commanders should not attack first but should stay put and promptly use their soldiers. If the defeat is inevitable, survival should be considered as an indication of skill», alluding to the action of Uluç Ali Paşa in the final phase of the Lepanto Battle. He thinks, it is better to lose all the soldiers than losing one commander: «Where sea wars are concerned, they are not like land wars. The commanders should examine maritime laws to the purpose of which they should read books of law and orders».

The second Ottoman chronicler who was surveyed for this paper is Peçevi (1574-1650)[31]. Early in his career Peçevi was in charge of conducting a census in Lepanto, Ağriboz and Karlı İli and was familiar with the writings of Ottoman writers such as Celalzade Nişancı Mustafa, Ramazanzade Ali and Katip Mehmed Efendi. He provides a detailed account of the campaign. He gives the number of ships in the Ottoman fleet as well above 300, twenty of which were under the command of Uluç Ali Paşa. With the participation of the ships owned by the Ottoman statesmen (*ümera)* and the small ships of the levends, the total number of vessels amounted to 400. Having just returned to the Imperial Arsenal from the Cyprus Campaign, the Ottoman fleet was repaired and fitted out with a view to being sent against the enemy fleet which was feared to attack the Ottoman for-

[31] Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevi* cit.

ces on Cyprus, still continuing the siege of the fortress of Magosa (Famagosta). But the number of oarsmen and warriors on the ships was not high due to the fact that the fleet had sailed earlier than the regular season. They sailed to Cyprus, where they recruited further men and obtained provisions. Then the Ottoman sailors attacked and spoiled the island of Cefalonia and several other neighboring islands. Then they anchored in the harbor of Lepanto where they learned that the fleet of the infidels had set out to confront them. The discussion amongst the commanders focused on the issue of man power. Pertev Paşa, the commander of the land forces, argued that the number of oarsmen and warriors was not sufficient to confront the enemy forces and the timariot cavalry in the neighboring districts created different pretexts and got permission to leave their posts. Since the fleet was short of men and provisions it stayed put in the harbor and waited for the enemy fleet to attack. The grand admiral, Müzzinzade Ali Paşa, with his head at stake, invoked the fervor of Islam and the honor of the sultan, to convince the other commanders to proceed with the attack. Despite the objection of the most experienced person, Uluç Ali Paşa, the final decision rested with the Grand Admiral, who underscored the fact that the order to attack had come from Istanbul and he feared not of losing his office but his head. Then the discussion shifted to the issue of positioning during which the commanders once again differed in their views. While Uluç Ali Paşa insisted that the fleet should confront the enemy in open sea, the Grand Admiral preferred to position the fleet close to the shore. Once again the opinion of the Grand Admiral prevailed, sealing the fate of the Ottoman fleet. The allied Christian fleet attacked the Ottoman fleet from the sea side and sent to the bottom of the sea the ship of the Grand Admiral which they had spotted owing to its three distinguishing lights. The Grand Admiral was killed and his sons captured. The oarsmen and warriors on Ottoman ships quickly evacuated their ships and fled, proving the hindsight of Uluç Ali Paşa, who had argued all along that being close to the shore would encourage the soldiers to disembark their ships in the first instance. Pertev Paşa also fled the battle scene to take refugee in the mountains. Uluç Ali Paşa took advantage of the wind and, after some fighting with the enemy ships, managed to sail away from the harbor of Lepanto. Upon his return to Istanbul, he was promoted to the rank of Grand Admiral, the word “Sword” being added to his name to signify the bravery that he had shown in the battle.

In Peçevi's view, the seas of the Islamic states if not those of the whole world had not seen such an unblessed war since the invention of ship by the Prophet Noah. Some 190 pieces of oar-ships with all their oarsmen and warriors numbering 20,000 were lost; though the loss was worth the cause (*din düşmanlarına değdi*). The reaction of the Ottomans to the disastrous defeat was the construction of a new fleet within the space of 5-6 months, the cost of which was paid from the treasury without imposing any urgent taxes (*akçe-i imdadiye*) on the subject populations and without asking private individuals to provide ships. Before concluding his narrative of Lepanto, Peçevi makes a particular reference to the reactions of the "infidel" to the rebuilding of the fleet in such a short time. He says «they did not believe that we would be able to construct those ships let alone finding the necessary manpower to operate them. When they saw such a perfect navy, they said this is such a nation that lost so many ships at once and managed to construct the same number of ships in six months». Before he jumps to the narration of other events, he talks about the limited confrontation of the Muslims (he never uses the word «Ottomans») and the infidel (he never uses the word Christian) once again off the coast of Coron in 1572, when the Muslims decided not to pursue the engagement further due to the fear of the last year's defeat and the infidel sailing away with the pride of last year's victory.

The Third Ottoman chronicler whose narrative of the defeat at Lepanto is examined is Solakzade (d. 1657)[32] who wrote his history between 1058 (1648) and 1099 (1687) which covers the period from the emergence of the Ottoman state to the end of Murad II's reign. His coverage of Lepanto is quite concise and dry. He provides no details concerning the battle. The only interesting aspect of his account is the title of the section: «The defeat of the fleet with the order of God». The story is as follows: a fleet of 250 galleys was sent against the enemy territories to obtain spoils. Since the Grand Admiral was uninformed of the science of sea and Pertev Paşa, the commander of the land forces, lacked experience in warfare and open confrontation, the soldiers of Islam succumbed to the three hundred galleys of the Venetians which they faced somewhere across the fortress of Morea. Most of the galleys were sunk to the bottom of the

[32] M. Solakzade, *Tarih-i Solakzade*, Mahmud Bey Matbaası, İstanbul, 1297 (1879), pp. 593-594.

sea. Only Kılıç Ali Paşa managed to flee the battle scene and return to the World of Islam with thirty-forty galleys. The naval campaign was renowned as the defeated fleet (*Sıngun Donanması*) amongst the people. Solakzade continues to narrate the ensuing developments. «Although in order to take revenge from the enemy of religion, with the initiative of the Grand Vizier Sokullu Paşa and the supervision of Kılıç Ali Paşa, the same year mountainous efforts were put into the construction of 250 pieces of galleys. The newly constructed fleet was then sent to the open sea to show its strength to the enemy of the religion. But they failed to materialize the oat of revenge and only inspected the maritime districts and made sure that no damage was inflicted by the enemy upon the lands of Islam. But then with the mediation of France, the Venetians approached us with a peace proposal which their ambassadors submitted to us. Their peace proposal was accepted and documents were signed to this effect. The Venetians prayed for friendship but this does not mean that they would honor their word and never attack the ships owned by the Muslims.

The forth Ottoman chronicler is Selaniki who starts his seventeenth-century account of the campaign with a brief description of the alliance between the Spaniards and the Venetians[33]. He says «they signed a pact of alliance with an oath on their false religion to take revenge of the defeat at Cyprus and began to collect men and money in order to form a strong fleet against the fleet of the Muslims. They also declared that "somnolence is not allowed"». The Sultan, *hullidet hilafetuhu*, issued a decree to the Serdar (Ahmet Paşa) and the Grand Admiral (Ali Paşa) for the capture of the Zaklise and Çuka islands, authorizing them to allow the soldiers of Islam to take spoils from these places. Having located the place of the fleet of the miserable infidels, you must confront it. As instructed the soldiers of Islam fully spoiled those islands and then proceeded to situate themselves across Venice. Uninformed of the preparations on the part of the Holy League, the oarsmen and warriors on Ottoman ships seem to have disembarked. However, many of the warriors failed to return to their ships which created a major shortage of man power. Accordingly the janissaries and tımariot cavalry on these islands were summoned to embark on the ships. A further order was issued to bring soldiers and *azap*s (auxiliary footmen) from the fortresses in the neighboring dis-

[33] Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki* cit.

tricts by all possible means. Uluç Ali Paşa made a final attempt to convince the commanders to confront the enemy in open sea but to no avail. The Grand Admiral, ignoring the calls about the absence of enough marines, attacked the enemy fleet. Seeing that his ship was destroyed by the Christians and he was shot by an enemy gun, many soldiers on Ottoman ships deserted their positions and fled. Uluç Ali Paşa victoriously sailed away from the battle scene while the other commander, Pertev Paşa received the curses of people and returned home. With this occasion, destruction and defeat showed their face to the people of Islam.

* * *

In none of the accounts referred to above are the consequences of the Battle of Lepanto assessed. The sources of the defeat are put down to the incidental factors such as the unusually early departure of the fleet from Istanbul in the spring, the exhaustion of the crews as a result of a long period of operations on the sea, the desertion of the timariot cavalry, the shortage of man power etc. They unanimously attribute the defeat to commanders in charge of the navy. Between the lines criticism of the appointment procedures of the high ranking military officials is found. None of the sources give any credit to the opponent. They neither talk about the efficiency of the commanding lines nor mention the superior capacity of the ships in the allied fleet. Almost all see the confrontation as one between Muslims and Christians.

5. Conclusions

The development of Ottoman sea power reconfigured the early sixteenth-century balance of power, which culminated in the subordination of the Venetian Republic. A series of naval conquests, starting with Lepanto, Modon, Coron and Navarino in the late fifteenth century, then proceeding with the conquests of Rhodes, Preveza and Cyprus throughout the sixteenth century, stripped the Venetians of all major commercial zones that were pivotal for their merchant networks in long distance trade. True, the Venetians emerged victorious from the confrontation at Lepanto. However, they had consumed all their wealth during their expensive wars with the Ottomans since 1570; thus they accepted a new treaty with the Ottomans in 1573, in which they agreed to cede all the fortresses they had recently conquered in Albania and Bosnia, return all Ottoman prisoners without ran-

som, limit their fleet to 60 galleys and pay 300,000 sequins in reparations. Thus it would not be wrong to argue that the victory at Lepanto bore no fruit nor served any purpose whatsoever for the Venetians. The gradual disappearance of the Venetians from the Ottoman commercial world was made up for initially by the merchants of Marseilles and Ragusa. This development encouraged England, which until then had remained outside the periphery of the Ottoman world, to enter directly into commercial contact with the Ottomans. Although the English celebrated the Ottoman defeat at Lepanto with bonfires and «banqueting and great rejoicing» as the victory of the Venetians and the Spanish was of «so great importance to the whole state of the Christian commonwealth»[34], England's interest in the Ottomans continued to develop despite personal resentment of certain kings such as James I. On the Ottoman side, such interest was not without support. Since the Ottomans saw the Venetian-Spanish-papal coalition as a formidable threat to their very existence, their interest in approaching the Western and Northern countries became a vital policy following the disaster of Lepanto. The Ottoman approach to England went as far as allowing the English pirates to use Ottoman ports in Northern Africa, Albania and Morea, and in certain instances cooperating with them. Only one year after the defeat, the Ottoman Sultan Selim II sent an envoy to the king of France, offering the assistance of the Ottoman fleet against Spain and suggesting a concerted attack by France and England and the princes of the Low Countries[35]. Another major outcome of the defeat was felt on the traditional Ottoman policy of extending capitulary privileges to the Western nations with a view to acquiring an ally within Christendom. Venice had been neutralized via such commercial privileges during the sixteenth century and thus prevented from putting its powerful navy at the service of the crusading popes. Lepanto stands alone as a source of disrup-

[34] James I, who came to the English throne in 1603 wrote a poem on Lepanto in 1583. He defined the conflict as one «Betwixt the babtiz'd race, / And circumcised Turband Turkes» thus gave the poem, as Nebil Matar argues, a religious polorization. James I was known for his anti-Muslim and anti-Catholicism which prompted the English representative in Morocco to urge him to undertake a war against that country. James I did not attack Morocco but signed a peace treaty with Spain in which Spain and England agreed to a common resistance of the Turks, the common enemy of Christendom. N. Matar, *Turks, Moors & Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 143-144.

[35] H. İnalcık, *The Ottoman State: Society and Economy, 1300-1600* cit, p. 365.

tion in this long pragmatic and perhaps somewhat symbiotic relationship. As mentioned above, the Venetians received yet another capitulary document from the Ottomans only two years after the Lepanto incident[36]. However, their share in the foreign trade of the Ottoman Empire sharply declined. As a result of the defeat at Lepanto, the real change came in the fact that the Ottomans now looked to Europe and specifically began to pay more attention to their relations with England, France and the Dutch whom, the Ottomans believed, were "fighting against idolatry" and common enemies, the Habsburgs and the Pope.

As far as the early reaction of the Ottoman political leadership to the defeat at Lepanto is concerned, they were unprepared for such a disastrous defeat, and therefore stunned by it but certainly not overwhelmed by its short-term consequences. They labored to undo its potential long-term effects by mobilizing all their resources to rebuild the fleet in a period of five months. Here the fear of new attacks by the victorious allied fleet on new Ottoman targets, including the capital city, must have prompted the political leadership to direct all its resources and energies to rebuilding the fleet in such a short time. From the naval point of view, the reconstruction of the Ottoman fleet over a period of five months demonstrates the resilience of the Ottoman state in relation to such an incident. The launching of new expeditions to La Goletta and Tunis and the successful conquests of these places testify to the quick recovery of the Ottoman sea power from the effects of such a tragic event. The concern on the part of the political leadership about the general public opinion should also be given some credit in explaining the quick recovery from the defeat. Large festivities and processions were organized to celebrate the completion of the construction of the new fleet with a view to influencing the public opinion. During these celebrations, the newly constructed ships sailed over the sea of Marmara under the leadership of the Grand Admiral to cultivate the confidence of the capital city's populations, who might have been the only group to observe the return of the shattered fleet from Lepanto.

As for the effect of the defeat on Ottoman military activities, the defeat prompted the Ottomans to reconsider their naval projects but it hardly had any effect on the Ottoman policy of expansionism. On

[36] Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi/BOA), Registers of Important Affairs (Mühimme Defterleri), Register Book n. 21, p. 165, 14 Zilkade 980 (April 1573).

the contrary, the event aggravated Ottoman zeal as the Ottoman army intensified its activities towards Central Europe in the west and Iran in the east.

So how important was the defeat of Lepanto to the Ottomans? The best answer to this question is offered by the late Ottomanist Ronald Jennings, who states that «probably the Ottoman commander at Lepanto lacked decisiveness and resolution, for which he was dismissed, but remembering the long, uninterrupted succession of military and naval victories, which had been achieved in the previous century, the success in Cyprus at that very time, and the successes which would occur for the next decade or more, it is hard to adjudge the defeat at Lepanto as decisive in any way, even as a portent of misfortune which might follow later. It seems obvious that the conquest of Cyprus was much more important than the battle of Lepanto»[37]. This is best attested by a conversation between the Ottoman Grand Vizier Sokullu Mehmed Paşa and the Venetian ambassador Barbaro in Istanbul who was not allowed to return to Venice during the Cyprus campaign and the following Lepanto incident. When the Venetian ambassador asked Sokullu about the Ottoman plans after the defeat at Lepanto, Sokullu is quoted as having said: «As you have been observing, our courage has not faded away after the Battle of Lepanto; there is a discrepancy between your losses and ours'. We ceded from you a land [referring to Cyprus] where you can build a kingdom, thus cut off one of your arms. [Whereas] you defeated our fleet which meant nothing more than shaving our beard. A missing arm can not be replaced but a shaved beard grows thicker»[38].

The only major impact of the defeat at Lepanto was on the taxpaying populations of the Empire. The long period of naval warfare culminating in the Lepanto campaign placed constant financial burdens upon the peasantry, particularly those living in the maritime provinces, which contributed immensely to their discontent with the central and provincial authorities. The fact that after the defeat, the Ottomans felt obliged to maintain a powerful fleet in the Mediterra-

[37] R. C. Jennings, *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus and the Mediterranean World* cit., p. 5.

[38] The conversation is quoted by İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi, II. Selim'in Tahta Çıkışından 1699 Karlofça Andlaşmasına Kadar*, vol. III, part I, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara, 1983.

nean as a counterweight to the allied fleet only added to the financial strain. Thus, the defeat at Lepanto was not the prime cause but one of the factors that accelerated the discontent, which turned into one of the most important social movements throughout Ottoman history.

Finally, where the impact of the defeat on the Ottoman perception of Europe, particularly their feeling of superiority, is concerned, the defeat had no major effect. If we need to identify one event that marked the end of the superiority complex on the part of the Ottomans towards Europe, it was more the failure of the second siege of Vienna against a combined Habsburg-Polish army in 1683 than the Battle of Lepanto. The defeat at the gates of Vienna opened the way for a series of humiliating peace treaties that came one after another. The Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 marked the beginning of the long and slow retreat of the Ottomans from their European conquests. By the end of the eighteenth century, Europe, particularly Western Europe, with its military revolution and superior naval technology, was no longer vulnerable to the Ottoman power that had once been considered invincible. Consequently, as the Ottoman Empire became politically and economically dependent on Europe, it began to adapt itself to the challenge of Western superiority.