The Holy Rosary, The Battle of Lepanto and Intercessory Prayer

Cor Gathering

8 November 2026

Spread of Islam

- Muslim expansion in “The Levant” began with Mohammad in 624 AD and spread across North Africa and Spain by 750 AD
  - Battle of Covadonga in 718 AD began the “Reconquista” of the Iberian Peninsula and ended with the fall of Grenada in 1492
- The Crusades (1096 – 1291) involved costly and violent conflicts
  - Probably did more for the expansion of Islam in Eastern Europe than if they did not happen
    - The Fourth Crusade ended up being a conflict between the Catholic West and the Byzantine (Orthodox) East that severely weakened Christian states
    - Led to the rise of the Ottoman Empire in 1299 and the fall of Constantinople in 1453


EXPANSION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE
Ottoman Turks, 1300
Acquisitions, 1300–59
Acquisitions, 1359–1451
Acquisitions, 1451–81 (Mehmed II)
Acquisitions, 1512–20 (Selim I)
Acquisitions, 1520–66 (Süleyman I the Magnificent)
Acquisitions, 1566–1683
Boundary of the Ottoman Empire at its greatest extent, 1683–99
0 250 500 mi
0 250 500 750 km
Danube
Vienna
Venice
Rome
Otranto
Algiers
Tunis
MALTA
Tripoli
ADRIATIC SEA
Belgrade
Nicopolis
WALACHIA
Kosovo
Niš
Sofia
Gallipoli
Salonika
MOREA
AEGEAN SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Varna
BLACK SEA
Kafa
Don
ARAL SEA
CASPIAN SEA
Tabrīz
Sinop
Istanbul
Üsküdar
İznik
Bursa
İzmit
Ankara
Chāldirān
Aydın
Konya
Dulkadir
Adana
Antalya
RHODES
Tigris
Euphrates
Basra
PERSIAN GULF
Jerusalem
Alexandria
Cairo
Suez
Nile
RED SEA
Medina
Mecca
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Leaders leading up to Lepanto

- Charles V – Holy Roman Emperor
  - Spain and most of Central Europe
  - Died in 1556





- Suleiman I (the Magnificent) – Sultan of the Ottoman Empire
  - Expanded into the Balkan region and controlled the Eastern Mediterranean
  - Died in 1566

- Charles and Suleiman had great respect for each other and had many agreements on trade and diplomacy


The Holy Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire in Eastern Europe
1571
Holy Roman Empire (under Charles V)
Imperial boundary
Ottoman Empire (territory in 1571)
Ottoman vassal / tributary states
Neighboring states
Other state boundaries
Capital (selected)
Major city
Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth
Brandenburg
Saxony
Palatinate
Bohemia
Holy Roman Empire
France
Bavaria
Austria
Vienna
Transylvania (Ottoman vassal)
Moldavia (Ottoman vassal)
Crimean Khanate (Ottoman vassal)
Wallachia (Ottoman vassal)
Bucharest
Venetian Republic
Belgrade
Kingdom of Spain
Bosnia
Serbia
Black Sea
Papal States
Adriatic Sea
Sofia
Constantinople (Istanbul)
Montenegro
Salonika (Thessaloniki)
Albania
Kingdom of Naples
Bursa
Greece
Ottoman Empire
Aegean Sea
Anatolia
Ionian Sea
Athens
Izmir
N
W
E
S
Mediterranean Sea
Cyprus (Ottoman Empire)
Damascus
Alexandria
0 250 500 750 1,000 km
0 250 500 miles

Events Leading to Lepanto

- Sulieman led an attack on Malta in 1565
  - Turkish forces landed on the island, but the Knights of Malta defended Fort St. Angelo and eventually repelled the Ottoman forces to retreat
    - Assisted by a Spanish fleet
- Cyprus was part of the Ottoman Empire but was managed by by Venice, who paid an annual tribute
  - Vast majority of residents were ethnic Greeks who practiced the Greek Orthodox faith
- In 1570, Sulieman's son, Selim II, invaded the island and brutalized populus
  - Executed most of the men and enslaved women and children

Pope Pius V

- Pius assumed the Papacy in 1566 at the height of Protestant Reformation
- Instituted the “Counter Reformation” that included
  - Institution of the Jesuits
  - Initiated the Council of Trent
  - Took firm control of the hierarchy and enforced religious and moral standards
  - Released a new catechism that clarified Church position on faith and morals
  - Reformed the sacrament of Reconciliation and instituted the Tridentine Mass



The Leadership

The Holy League

- John of Austria (aka, “Don Juan”)
  - Half-brother of Spanish King Philip II
  - Though only age 24, he distinguished himself as a naval strategist and tactician
  - Was able to deal with egos and personal agendas of subordinate commanders to form a unified fighting force

The Ottoman Empire

- Ali Pasha
  - Grand Admiral – commander of the fleet that invaded Cyprus
    - Prevented Christian relief forces from rescuing defenders
  - At the war council the night prior to the engagement, he discounted all recommendations from his commanders
    - Not the right thing to do

Order of Battle

Holy league

- 200 ships, including 6 “galleasses,” 34 galleys and many smaller vessels
  - Different countries had different configurations
- The Galleas was a new ship from Venice
  - Much larger than a galley and capable of immense firepower with newly developed Venician artillery
    - Over 50 guns on each ship
- Tactics to engage from afar and then board after the target ships are disabled
  - Shipboard combatants used defensive long spears (picks) and muskets (arquebus)
- 181 artillery guns

The Ottomans

- Total of 274 ships
  - Battle galleys were fast and maneuverable and capable of operating in shallow waters
    - Each ship had over 300 rowers
    - Ships had one forward firing cannon that were fired while at “ramming speed”
  - Tacts were to “ram and board”
    - Archers and swordsmen – the Janissaries – were ruthless fighters
      - Limited number of muskets
- Ottoman crews were in poor health following the sea campaigns of 1570 and 1571
  - Cramped quarters facilitated disease
- 750 artillery guns

Combat Objectives

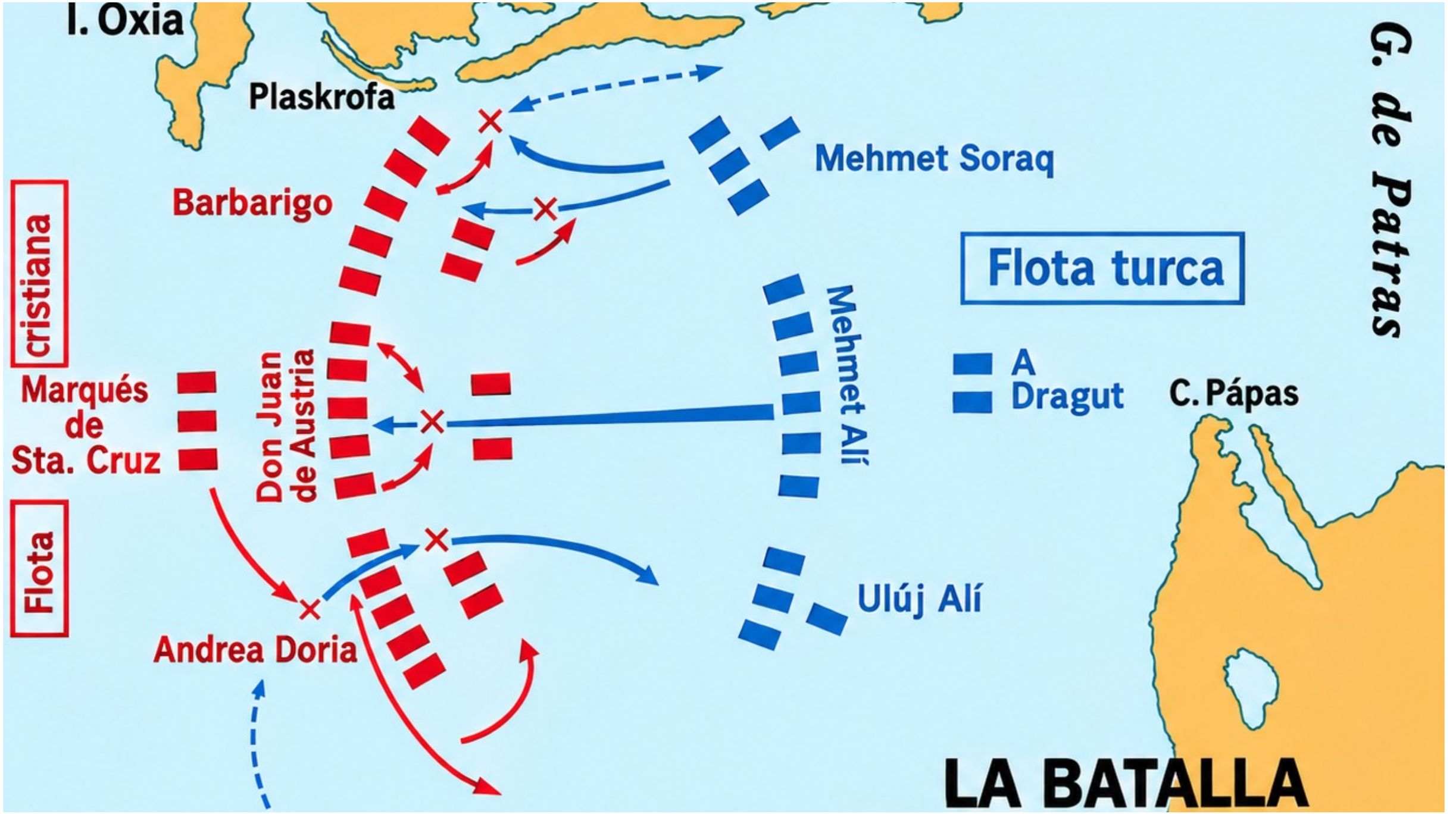
The Holy League

- Find the Ottoman Fleet and destroy it
- The Holy League did not have any territorial desires

The Ottomans

- Wait for the Christians to sail
  - They were convinced that the Holy League was looking to invade Ottoman territory
    - Possibly Tunis or retake Cyprus
- Encircle the Holy League Fleet as their ships were engaged in “shore ops”


Corsica
Rome
Naples
Sardinia
Bari
Durazzo
Constantinople
Thessalonika
Tyrrhenian Sea
Aegean Sea
Palermo
Messina
Ionian Sea
Smryna
Athens
Sicily
Tunis
Battle of Lepanto Oct. 7, 1571
Malta
Crete
Mediterranean Sea


I. Oxia
Plaskrofa
G. de Patras
Mehmet Soraq
Barbarigo
cristiana
Flota turca
Mehmet Alí
A
Dragut
Marqués de Sta. Cruz
Don Juan de Austria
C. Pápas
Flota
Ulúj Alí
Andrea Doria
LA BATALLA




ACARNANIA & ÆTOLIA
Krukhori
Lombótina
Vrakhori L.
Anatoliko
Missolonghi
Naupaktos
(Lepanto)
Oxia I.
(Kiarzolari)
Oxia
Sosti I.
Rumelia
Samos
Elato
PATRAS
C. Kiparissi
C. Kalogria
Voidia
Mt. Enos
C. Monda
Manolada
Kato Achaia
Olenos
Skinari
Lekhoena
ELIS & ACHAIA
Gastúni
Divri
Khelmitsi
Katarlariu
Zante
Pyrgos
Dukla
Keri
C. Hieraki
Olympia
Katakolo
Rupnia
Gulf


Dardanelli
Dardanelli
Patras
Isole de Curzolari

The Outcome

- Lepanta was a decisive Holy League victory
- The galleases overpowered smaller and less maneuverable Ottoman galleys with their longe-range cannons.
  - The days of the galleys as instruments of naval warfare ended at Lepanto
- 15,000 Christian galley slaves were freed
- Christians lost 7500 – 10,000 men and 13 galleys
- Ottomans lost 20K – 40K men and 200 ships

Aftermath

- The Spanish/ Holy Roman Empire was dismantled by continuous wars with protestant states
  - 1568 – 1648 – 80-years/ 30-years wars carved up the Habsburg empire with the north/ central continent ruled by protestants
  - 1588 – Spanish Armada defeated by English navy
    - Ships based on designs from Lepanto were insufficient
      - Spanish were out-maneuvered and out-gunned
  - Diversion of forces (and money) defending its Western Hemisphere colonies
- Venice lost influence due to the rise of France and Spain
  - Economic focus shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic
  - Dutch mariners no longer depended on Venician trade routes

Aftermath II

- The Ottoman Empire attempted to take Venice again in 1642 and failed
- The Baltic lands of the Habsburg grew in strength and gradually, the empire reduced in area until its final demise in 1922



The Ultimate Winners from Lepanto

- The Catholic Church
  - Even though the Protestant Reformation claimed much of Europe and Britian, the Church's Counter-reformation aided in its reemergence
  - The Council of Trent encouraged culture to assert Church authority and teachings
    - Paintings, sculpture, architecture combined "classical beauty" with evangelical themes
    - Growth of Baroque artwork throughout Europe for 200+ years
  - Bishops discussed need for art to communicate within local cultures
  - Religious orders spread the Gospel through education
    - Schools, books, arts



Tintoretto

Questions

- To what extend did European Catholics praying the Rosary have on the outcome of the battle?
- Discuss Pope Leo's declaration that nation-states should never invoke God's name to aid in a military conflict
  - When is it appropriate to ask Mary to intercede in "our cause"?
- Compare Lepanto with these events:
  - D-Day
  - Battle of the Bulge
  - Cuban Missile Crisis
  - Ukraine/ Russia conflict



Date	7 October 1571
Location	Gulf of Patras, Ionian Sea 38°15′N 21°15′E
Result	Holy League victory
Belligerents	
Holy League • **Spanish Empire** • **Venice** • Genoa • Savoy • Tuscany • Order of Saint Stephen • Order of Malta • Papal States	**Ottoman Empire** • Regency of Algiers
Commanders and leaders	
John of Austria **Álvaro de Bazán** Luis de Requesens Sebastiano Venier Agostino Barbarigo (DOW) Gianandrea Doria Marcantonio Colonna Pietro Giustiniani	**Ali Pasha** † Mahomet Sirocco † Occhiali Caracossa[1]
Strength	
85,900 men[a] 212 ships[b]	88,000 men[c] 274 ships[d]
Casualties and losses	
7,500[9]–10,000 killed[10] 13 galleys sunk or destroyed[11]	20,000[9]–40,000 killed[10] 200 galleys sunk, destroyed, or captured[9][10]
15,000 Christian slaves freed[9]	

Lepanto was a battle between the Catholic European states.

- Protestant states, including England did not participate
  - This was likely for strategic political reasons as well as religious