

# TURNING THE TIDE

## Venetian Contributions to the Battle of Lepanto

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Marco Antonio Bragadin did not set out to be a hero. The middle-aged Venetian commander of the Cypriot city of Famagusta had no intention of becoming an inspiration or a rallying cry for victory and vengeance. He was a Venetian patriot. However stoic and resolved his exterior emotions appeared, there must have been some part of him that filled with apprehension and no small amount of fear when his servants brought him the decapitated head of Nicolas Dandolo, the lieutenant general of Cyprus, in the fall of 1570.<sup>1</sup>

Bragadin had heard by then of the fall of Nicosia, the island's capital city, famed for its circular, almost seamless fortifications. After this defeat, Bragadin knew he must prepare for war. The Ottomans, led by Lala Mustapha Pasha, would soon be camped outside his city. Over the next eleven months, Bragadin and his men defended Famagusta against an army of Ottomans almost ten times their number, until food and supplies had all but vanished. The Pasha, impressed with the Venetians' heroic resistance, offered a ceasefire to the battered defenders on the condition that they surrender the city and retreat to Christian lands, therefore saving their lives. But during the formal surrender of the city, Bragadin, in his undying pride, insulted the Pasha. The Ottoman commander threw away his vows of chivalry and ordered the Christians executed.<sup>2</sup> Hundreds were slaughtered on the spot, but Lala Pasha saved Bragadin from immediate death. The Venetian commander was made to pay for his valiant defense of the ramparts and the death of thousands of the Pasha's soldiers.

The Ottoman troops tortured and beat Bragadin for days before finally binding him to a stone column in the town square and flaying him alive.<sup>3</sup> He died as the torturer reached his waist. As a confirmation of absolute Muslim victory, his skin was stuffed with straw and paraded around the city to the horror of its surviving citizens.

In the wake of Bragadin's demise and the slaughter of Famagusta came the rallying cry that would create a wave of Venetian vengeance against their Muslim enemy, finally culminating in one of the largest Christian naval victories on record: the Battle of Lepanto. Venice, the conqueror of the Adriatic and the mightiest Renaissance naval power in the Mediterranean, was forced into a conflict that drove the Venetians to the ends of their means to survive and emerge victorious. The Battle of Lepanto is an example of two alliances throwing all of their resources into battle in an all-or-nothing attempt at victory. The outcome would resonate throughout the Renaissance Mediterranean world. Although Lepanto was the result of cooperation between many European powers, this paper argues that it was the Venetian Republic's manpower, labor, and superior fighting vessels which ultimately led to Muslim defeat off the shores of Greece in 1571.

Venice was, first and foremost, a naval power: a loyal beneficiary of the Adriatic's rolling waves and swift currents. To understand Venice's journey to becoming a world power is to understand the republic's significance. Founded upon the ideals of mercantilism and trade, the Venetian Republic consisted of a wealthy and powerful collection of islands set in a lengthy lagoon off the Veneto coast. With her roots firmly established in the silt and sand of the Venetian Gulf, one of the greatest maritime powers in the Mediterranean was baptized by fire. Venice of the year 1000 CE was in a bitter struggle to secure the safety of her home waters against the Croat pirates of the Dalmatian coast.<sup>4</sup> For Venetian ships to voyage to and from the prosperous markets of Constantinople, Alexandria, and the Levant, the Adriatic had been clear of home-grown dangers. Doge Pietro Orseolo II suspended the pirates' tribute and set off on a campaign to eliminate the threat once and for all. The Venetian fleet, led by Orseolo, attacked and conquered the pirates' stronghold and secured the Mediterranean. As historian Richard Crowley asserts in *City of Fortune*, "if there is a single moment that marked the start

1. Roger Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 21, no. 3 (April 1, 2009), 66–75.

2. Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," 66–75.

3. Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," 66–75.

4. Roger Crowley, *City of Fortune* (New York: Random House, 2011), 7–14.



of the rise to maritime power, it was now, with the doge's triumphal return to the lagoon.<sup>5</sup>

Every year afterwards, the Republic commemorated this victory with an annual celebration. On this day, with no lack of pomp and circumstance, the Venetian doge and patriarch, along with thousands of the Serene Republic's citizens, noble and merchant alike, took to their boats and sailed to the eastern end of the main *lidi*, the islands separating the Venetian Lagoon from the Venetian Gulf.<sup>6</sup> Religious leaders chanted prayers for the beginning of the sailing season. The doge would then throw a golden ring, a sign of Venice's marriage to the sea, into the brackish water and announce, "We espouse thee, O Sea, as a sign of true and perpetual dominion."<sup>7</sup> The ceremony acted as a very real metaphor. This matrimonial ritual between Venice and the Adriatic reflects the powerful respect and admiration Venice had for the sea, her provider. To the Venetians, the sea was a supplier and source of power, the medieval equivalent of the interstate.

Venice, also known as St. Mark's Republic, lived and died on the white caps of the Adriatic and Mediterranean. To protect its newfound source of prosperity, Venice began bolstering its naval power. With Venice's rise to maritime prominence came the rise of the galley, a powerful naval vessel. Crowley describes Venice as "a republic of wood, iron, rope, sails, rudders, and oars."<sup>8</sup> Venice boasted an expansive shipyard called the arsenal. The arsenal was a massive complex situated in the parish of San Martino and surrounded by large walls, an anomaly among the low-lying buildings of the island.<sup>9</sup> These large walls protected the inner workings of the shipyard from the prying eyes of civilians and foreigners. Sentries walked the length of the ramparts through rain or shine, night and day. These watchmen served to help alert and prevent a possible fire breakout, an ever-constant threat to the dry wood, sail material, and hemp used for ropes and lines lying in the arsenal's warehouses. The watchmen also guarded the area from foreign spies hoping to steal Venetian naval architecture techniques.<sup>10</sup> Here, behind its giant curtains, the manpower of the arsenal came alive.

The *arsenalotti*, the arsenal's workers, worked in unison. They were meticulous in their preparation and material selection. As an island, Venice had to utilize the surrounding regions' lumber, hemp, and sail-making supplies to construct their galleys. Shipbuilders preferred Dalmatian pine; captains also prized the expert seamen of the same region along the coast of modern-day Croatia.<sup>11</sup> In an uncommon acknowledgement for the time, Venetian officials were acutely aware of the dangers of deforestation. Workers kept detailed records of logging areas to prevent themselves from revisiting an area too soon after it had been cut, allowing for greater forest growth. Faster growth also meant larger timbers for construction.<sup>12</sup>

Venice, unlike mainland competitors such as the Papal States and Genoa, could produce both merchant and naval galleys at an astonishing speed. Crowley describes the arsenal and its workers as Venice's "Forge of War."<sup>13</sup> One report, from June 1570, claimed that the *arsenalotti* assembled 127 light galleys and 11 heavy galleys in one month.<sup>14</sup> Historian Jack Beeching asserts in *The Galleys of Lepanto* that the Venetian shipwrights could lay a keel in the morning and, using modern-day assembly line techniques, could launch the new galley's hull by nightfall.<sup>15</sup> Venice's wealth played a vital role in this venture. Out of Venice's total annual revenue—an astounding seven million ducats—at least five hundred thousand ducats were always placed in reserve to accommodate the needs of the fleet and the arsenal in case of Ottoman aggression.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the whole process of their naval build-up, Venetian eyes were wary and ever trained to the East.

The Venetian arsenal's speed and precision was crucial to the armament and deployment of Venetian fleets. The Ottomans knew this and sought to recreate Venetian construction practices in their own shipyards and foundries in Istanbul by copying, and stealing, Venetian building methods. Plans and knowledge were usually brought to the Sultan by defecting Christians.<sup>17</sup> However, the Ottomans were never able to fully comprehend and refabricate the Venetian naval construction techniques and

5. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 10.

6. Thomas F. Madden, *Venice: A New History* (New York: Viking, 2012), 104.

7. Madden, *Venice: A New History*, 104.

8. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 279.

9. David Chambers and Brian Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 18.

10. Chambers and Pullan, *Venice: A Documentary History*, 19.

11. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 233.

12. Madden, *Venice: A New History*, 63.

13. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 278.

14. Roger Crowley, *Empires of the Sea: The Siege of Malta, The Battle of Lepanto, and the Contest for the Center of the World*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 2009), 212.

15. Jack Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982), 152-153.

16. Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, 153.

17. Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, 152.

instead relied on slower, but similarly effective procedures for their galleys. Venice's arsenal continued to produce their fleets with greater speed than their Ottoman counterparts, an advantage that worked in their favor at Lepanto.

Sleek and long, known for their speed, agility, and shallow draft, galleys were capable of roles ranging from main battle line defenders to pirate and corsair hunters. When the galley was assembled, it became the cornerstone of any naval fleet in the Mediterranean. With one or two lateen sails, the Venetian and Ottoman war galleys varied little in appearance and operation. Both were capable of being rowed in times of calm winds or tedious tacking against the ever-changing Mediterranean gusts. Volunteers made up most Venetian galley crews while their Ottoman counterparts used Christian slaves and "an annual levy of men from the provinces of Anatolia and Europe" to row.<sup>18</sup> Ottoman slaves were forced to work long hours and endure harsh conditions:

*It was these wretches, chained three or four to a foot-wide bench who made sea wars possible. Their sole function was to work themselves to death. Shackled hand and foot...The men, naked apart from a pair of linen breeches, were flayed raw by the sun; they endured sleep deprivation on the narrow bench toward lunacy. The stroke keeper's drum and the overseer's lash...whipped them beyond the point of exhaustion.<sup>19</sup>*

Though these warships were well suited for the Adriatic, Renaissance galleys had several drawbacks. Both Ottoman and Venetian crafts, with their shallow draft and low freeboard, were relatively incapable of open-water travel, since the boats flooded easily in rough water. This, combined with the physical limits of their rowers and water stores, confined a galley fleet close to shore during travel, some having to put ashore almost every other day to replenish their supplies.<sup>20</sup> Large naval campaigns had to be planned with these issues in mind. With the galley's long-voyage shortcomings, navies relied on bigger, broader ships to carry supplies and manpower. Venice turned merchant ships into military transport craft. These vessels were round-hulled, slow, and capable of carrying 250 tons of cargo, with some large enough to move twice that.<sup>21</sup> Later on, Venice adapted these ex-merchant vessels into floating gun platforms

called galleasses.<sup>22</sup> The full complement of both galleys and galleasses, along with smaller and more agile boats called galiotes, made the Venetian fleet a force to be reckoned with. This combination of raw naval power, and the rate at which these vessels could be produced, would be an influential factor in the victory at Lepanto.

Advances in gunpowder technology and the introduction of cannon into naval warfare in the centuries before Lepanto brought about new rules for fleet engagements. Cannon could be mounted on the weather, quarter, and poop decks of a galley. However, the cannon was a clumsy, confusing, and often dangerous weapon to operate even on land and away from the constant motion of a ship on open water. Although small guns were used at times, the primary goal of a war galley was to close quickly and either board an enemy ship, using a small bridge stored on the quarterdeck, or to sink their adversary with the bow's ram.<sup>23</sup> Crowley describes how conventional tactics relied on discharging several devastating salvos and then ramming the enemy.<sup>24</sup> Once engaged, sailors and soldiers, and sometimes even the rowers themselves, would race to arms and clamber across to the enemy ship where hand-to-hand combat would commence. At this point, land and sea warfare were no different: the fight became "an infantry battle on floating platforms."<sup>25</sup> Swords, pikes, boarding axes, crossbows, and even grenades were common among the numerous galley clashes of the Mediterranean. Often, men fell overboard and drowned during battle. The slave rowers of the Ottoman galleys were especially vulnerable. They had little hope of survival in battle if their craft were holed or set aflame: "if the crews survived to enter battle, the chained and unprotected rowers could only sit and wait to be killed by men of their own country and creed."<sup>26</sup>

Galley warfare between Ottomans and Venetians had been around since the time of Alexios I Komnenos. Shipping men and equipment by sea was, and still is, the most efficient way to move large bodies of troops and supplies from one destination to another. Fleets of galleys and galleasses commonly delivered armies to the field. Control of the Mediterranean was vital to stemming the flow of enemy movement. For centuries Ottoman

18. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 77.

19. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 77.

20. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 75.

21. Madden, *Venice: A New History*, 60-61.

22. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 259-260.

23. Madden, *Venice: A New History*.

24. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 257-258.

25. William Oliver Stevens and Allan Westcott, *A History of Sea Power* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 2008), 107-108.

26. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 77.

and Venetian sailors and soldiers fought for naval supremacy at the center of the world.

The Byzantine Empire was the strongest bulwark against Ottoman incursion. Slowly, the Ottomans advanced into Anatolia, but the Greeks stood firm. But the Greek resistance could only hold out for so long without aid. On May 29, 1453, Constantinople fell after a fifty-four-day siege. The massive army of Sultan Mehmet II breached the daunting three-tiered Theodosian Land Walls defending Constantinople with a mixture of repetitive assaults, concentrated fire, and high-arching bombard cannons capable of launching projectiles weighing hundreds of pounds. Latins, including economic rivals Genoa and Venice, fought side-by-side with their Greek allies to defend the capital. Hundreds of Venetian soldiers died on the battlements. Emperor Constantine XI discarded his royal garments and charged the advancing Ottoman lines, followed by his personal bodyguards. His body was never found.<sup>27</sup>

With the fall of the Byzantine Empire came a huge flow of Ottoman troops and influence into the western Mediterranean. Ottoman fleets had been in the Aegean before; the first Ottoman-Venetian sea engagement was off the coast of Negroponte in 1416.<sup>28</sup> Their spread remained almost unchecked by any western European power until early 1400. Ottomans had reached the borders of Venetian territory and threatened their coveted maritime trading routes.<sup>29</sup> Over the years, Venice battled on and off with the Ottoman Empire, but there was no stopping the Ottoman sultans from their mission to create a single Muslim empire. By 1570, the garrison at Rhodes had fallen. Cyprus had fallen, culminating in Marco Antonio Bragadin's martyrdom. The only bright side was Malta. The fortifications at Birgu had held, and the troops under the Grand Master of the Order of Saint John, Jean Parisot de la Valette, fought bravely and finally expelled a large Ottoman force, rumored to be upwards of 100,000 strong, from the island in September 1565.<sup>30</sup>

But the Ottomans would not be defeated so easily. They soon gained control of Famagusta. Renaissance Muslim ideology, one of aggressive expansion, had not changed. European Christians needed to take consolidated action

against the advancing Ottomans.<sup>31</sup> For decades political players in Europe had been pleading for such a response, but their advice went unheeded. Pope Pius IV called for a unified Christian army for years during his papacy.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, "unified" was a loosely defined term for Europe at the time. The mainland European kingdoms squabbled when the pope suggested they band together. Money was always the issue. Who would pay for an army; who would contribute soldiers and equipment, and who would lead it?

When Pius V renewed his predecessor's calls for a Christian alliance against the Ottomans, his prayers were answered, and the Holy League was born in the spring of 1571.<sup>33</sup> This conglomeration of states included Spain and all her possessions, including the Low Countries, Sicily, and Naples, the Republics of Genoa and Venice, and the Papal States.<sup>34</sup> The Hapsburgs in Spain provided the monetary foundation for the alliance, as they were the only power that could match the wealth of the Ottomans. Don Juan de Austria was appointed the League's fleet commander. Known as Gerónimo, Don Juan was the Spanish king Philip II's half-brother.<sup>35</sup> Don Juan was a capable captain, but he was young—only twenty-one years old at the time of his appointment—lacked general seamanship skills, and had little tactical knowledge. Instead, Don Juan relied on the advice of veteran sailors like Gian' Andrea Doria and Luis de Requesens.<sup>36</sup> Though many openly questioned his ability to lead such a force against battle-hardened Ottoman sailors, Don Juan took command as planned. In the summer of 1571, the fleet of the Holy League, twenty ships carrying close to 15,800 men, set out to relieve the Cypriots under Ottoman siege.<sup>37</sup>

Despite Pius V's best hopes, the Holy League's fleet was not a unified force. Greed, national rivalries, and general mistrust among the ranks nearly caused the fleet to disintegrate on several occasions. In several incidents, soldiers and sailors attacked and even killed each other on their galleys.<sup>38</sup> Officers were forced to execute troublesome ringleaders to enforce discipline. Supplies were stolen when men deserted their posts. Genoese and Venetians, long-time competitors with a mutual dislike that at times

31. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 195.

32. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 102.

33. T.C.F. Hopkins, *Confrontation at Lepanto: Christendom Vs. Islam* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC, 2006), 59.

34. Hopkins, 59-61.

35. Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, 30-31.

36. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 232.

37. Hopkins, *Confrontation at Lepanto*, 77-78.

38. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 250-251.

27. Roger Crowley, 1453: *The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West* (New York: Hyperion, 2005), 215-234.

28. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 301-303.

29. Crowley, *City of Fortune*, 304.

30. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 86-187.

boiled over into hate, refused to sail with each other. Cooperation between the two merchant powers seemed improbable. Venetians disliked the Genoese commander, Gian' Andrea Doria, while the Genoese sailors openly distrusted one of the Venetian commanders, Sebastiano Venier.<sup>39</sup> Don Juan called the individual states' captains together to restate the need for cohesion. The Holy League could not afford to lose the quick and agile Venetian galleys.

Men were unhappy with the fleet's progress as it sailed eastward, raiding occasionally as it went. Some captains and commanders suggested that it was simply too late in the sailing season to engage the enemy. October was closing in, and the Mediterranean's swells began to chill. Philip of Spain even wrote a letter to Don Juan begging him to abandon the operation, winter his fleet in Sicily, and start again next summer.<sup>40</sup> These men needed to work together, or else a joint European assault on the Ottomans seemed doomed for failure.

That all changed in early October 1571. The Holy League's fleet was weathering a storm off the island of Corfu when they met a small frigate carrying news of Famagusta and the almost complete extermination of its defenders. The story of the courageous sixty-eight day defense of the city and the vicious sacking and pillaging that took place afterwards inspired the Holy League's soldiers.<sup>41</sup> The men looked past their differences as cries to avenge Bragadin and Famagusta's defenders reverberated throughout the Christian fleet.

The primary purpose of the fleet, however, had been negated. Famagusta had fallen. Spanish commanders counseled Don Juan to turn back.<sup>42</sup> It was worthless to sacrifice valuable men, ships, and money for no apparent goal, they argued. What happened next proved to be a pivotal point in the conflict-ridden history between Muslims and Christians. Crowley describes the effect of Marco Antonio Bragadin's death on his fellow Venetians:

*Word of Bragadin's fate had a sudden and electrifying effect on the Christian resolve. The Venetian naval commanders clamored for revenge and declared to Don Juan that they would proceed alone if the Spanish failed to support them. Forward momentum became unstoppable.*<sup>43</sup>

To avenge Bragadin's heroic death, the Venetians were set for the encounter. Nothing could sway their intentions. At last a united Holy League fleet headed for Lepanto to face the Ottomans.

On October 7, 1571, the two fleets met. Arrayed at Lepanto was the largest assortment of vessels ever assembled in the Mediterranean. Over 140,000 soldiers and crewmen perched on the decks of 600 ships, close to seventy percent of the total galleys afloat on the sea between Europe and Asia.<sup>44</sup> The Christian battle line was made up of sixty-two galleys in the center commanded by Don Juan, Gianandrea Doria of Genoa on the right with fifty-two galleys, and the Venetians on the left with fifty-seven galleys commanded by Agostino Barbargio.<sup>45</sup> Most of the left wing's galleys were lighter and more agile than the rest of the battle fleet. Their goal was to use their superior mobility to force their Ottoman counterparts against the lee shore, limiting their movement for the rest of the engagement.

On the eve of battle Don Juan made his rounds to the various squadrons to inspect and inspire. He paused at the Venetian left wing. He called for them to avenge the death of their countrymen, adding: "My children, we are here to conquer or to die as heaven may determine. Do not let our impious foe ask of us 'Where is your God?' Fight in his holy name, and in death or victory you will win immortality."<sup>46</sup> As the eleventh hour approached, the banner of the Holy League flew. In historian T.C.F. Hopkins's words, "the European silence ended."<sup>47</sup> The crew of the Spanish flagship *Real* raised the Crucifix above their decks and Don Juan fired his pistol to signal the fleet's advance.

As the Venetian galleys fought on the left flank, the Venetian galleasses acted as moving gun platforms on the right.<sup>48</sup> These six ships had an advantage in firepower that no contingent of Ottoman ships could match. Two of these vessels were commanded by relatives of Marco Antonio Bragadin, out for Ottoman blood.<sup>49</sup> With the avenging Venetians leading the way, the Holy League began to break through the Muslim lines. Crowley comments on the furiousness of the Venetian sailors and soldiers: "the Venetians had come for revenge; many of their ships were from Crete, the Dalmatian coast, and the islands,

39. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 242-243.

40. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 243-248.

41. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 238.

42. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 252.

43. Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," 74.

44. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 256.

45. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 257.

46. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 261.

47. Hopkins, *Confrontation at Lepanto: Christendom Vs. Islam*, 131.

48. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 259.

49. Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," 74.

all ravaged by Ali Pasha's summer raids.<sup>50</sup> Soon, the Holy league trapped and beached the Ottoman right wing, led by Shuluch Mehmet. With their galleys aground, Muslim sailors fled into mainland Greece. They were followed by the Venetians, who beached several of their own ships in pursuit, calling for revenge for Bragadin and yelling "Famagusta! Famagusta!"<sup>51</sup>

As night fell, the fighting died down. Close to 40,000 men, Ottoman and European, lay dead or dying after just four hours.<sup>52</sup> Venetian casualties numbered around four to five thousand.<sup>53</sup> Only three thousand Ottoman prisoners were taken alive. One hundred thirty-seven of their ships sat burning on the sea's surface or lay floundered on the ocean floor, where seventeen Christian ships joined them. Christendom had its victory, but it was a hard-fought battle.

According to Francis Bacon, quoted by Jack Beeching in *The True Greatness of Kingdoms and States*, "The battle of Lepanto arrested the greatness of the Turk."<sup>54</sup> At Lepanto the Holy League proved that the defenses at Malta were not a fluke, and that victory against the powerful Muslim empire was possible. Christian forces were not inferior to the Ottomans.<sup>55</sup> Though the forges and dry docks of Istanbul could easily replace what had been lost at Lepanto, the battle signaled the beginning of the end for Ottoman sea dominance. For decades, Christians had become accustomed to inferiority at sea against the Ottomans, falling in defeat after defeat. Lepanto changed that. Christian Europe leapt from its naval depressive state in a single bound.<sup>56</sup> Andrew Hess describes the Holy League's victory at Lepanto as the establishment of a permanent limit to Ottoman expansion, one which "ended the fear of Ottoman invincibility."<sup>57</sup> The Ottoman Empire's maritime reign was slowly but surely beginning to subside.

Venetian contributions, although seemingly small in comparison to the financial resources of the Hapsburgs, were indispensable at Lepanto. Venice's swift galleys and imposing galleasses ensured a Holy League victory. The Venetian left flank held strong, protecting the

larger Spanish galleys to their starboard. With the galleasses' guns, the overwhelming number of Muslim vessels stood no chance. Marco Antonio Bragadin's death in Famagusta spurred the soldiers of Venice, as well as many others, to lay down their differences and focus on the elimination of the Ottoman fleet. Bragadin's death was a motivation for revenge. Sometimes a call to action can turn the tide in battle. Without Bragadin's ultimate sacrifice, the Holy League might have fallen apart on that October morning. Marco Antonio Bragadin was a Venetian hero. In turn, without Venetian influence and assistance, Lepanto would have been a failure. The Holy League united in a Venetian cause, and emerged victorious thanks to Venetian vessels. Miguel de Cervantes, the author of the famous Spanish novel *Don Quixote* and a soldier at Lepanto, described the battle as "the most memorable and honorable occasion that could be in the light of past and present centuries."<sup>58</sup> Lepanto changed the course of history.

50. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 267.

51. Crowley, "Bragadin's Defense," 74.

52. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 276-277.

53. Hopkins, *Confrontation at Lepanto: Christendom Vs. Islam*, 150.

54. Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, 11.

55. Andrew C. Hess, "The Battle of Lepanto and Its Place in Mediterranean History," *Past & Present Society* no. 57 (November 1972), 55.

56. Crowley, *Empires of the Sea*, 286.

57. Hess, "The Battle of Lepanto and Its Place in Mediterranean History," 55.

58. Jenny Jordan, "Galley Warfare in Renaissance Intellectual Layering: Lepanto Through Actium," *Viator (Berkeley)* 35 (July 1, 2004), 563.