

Ladders, petards and responsibility: retracing the failed Tuscan attempt at capturing Famagusta, 1607-2012

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On the dawn of the 24th of June 1607, a small force comprising of Tuscan, Corsican, Morean, and other soldiers and mercenaries attempted to storm the fort of Famagusta in a surprise attack. Finding that their ladders were too short, their petards ineffective and their numbers cut short by insufficient organisation, the attackers retreated by the end of the day, having lost 21 men. After roaming the south-eastern coast of Cyprus, waiting in vain for the promised support by the local Christian populace, they departed under a cloud of failure, dispute, and blame.

This paper aims to track the progress of this doomed expedition on the map, providing precise information as to its preparations, information, the route it followed, the tactics employed and ultimately assessing the reasons why it failed.

Based on a previously unknown manuscript from the Venetian archives, this paper will focus on the military aspects of the expedition and will go in search of the towers, bastions and gates of Famagusta in order to corroborate documentary evidence based on the extant evidence found today.