

TURKISH CONQUEST OF VENETIAN NICOSIA

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Armenians played a key role in the Turkish conquest of Venetian Nicosia in 1571. While the Turkish commander (Mustapha Pasha) was advised by a Spanish military engineer, until he was killed by a mine, he had a corps of 40,000 Armenian sappers who dug an enormous mesh of deep trenches all around the town—so big that the whole army, it was said, could be concealed within them, and so deep that tents were pitched inside, and cavalry could move about unseen. At the head of these subterranean approaches they filled in the town ditch and built two forts, of oak and earth, which towered castle-like above Famagusta, so that they could bombard it constantly and at almost point-blank range.

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