

Reconsidering the Campaign of Dnieper Liman

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The naval campaign of the Dnieper Liman, fought from the autumn of 1787 to the end of 1788, was one of the most decisive maritime confrontations in the modern history of the Eastern Mediterranean. Fought in conjunction with two major siege operations, the campaign between the naval forces of the Ottoman and Russian empires decided the fate of the key Turkish fortress of Özi (Ochakov), which controlled the mouth of the Dnieper. The campaign was part of the Russian empress Catherine II's second war with the Ottomans, a confrontation initiated by the Porte in response to Catherine II's provocative "Greek Project" and fought with the aim of liberating the Crimean Khanate, annexed by Russia through force of arms in 1783. For the Ottoman side, the decisive operation was the storming and reduction of the Russian fortress of Kinburn, which blocked access to the Crimean interior. Since both Russians and Turks were fighting at the furthest point from their supply lines, gaining naval support and superiority was of paramount importance. Conscious of the role of sea power, Ottomans had prepared the greatest armada they ever put to the seas since the Morean Wars of 1684–1718, greatly outnumbering their adversary, the nascent Russian Black Sea Fleet. The protracted campaign of Liman resulted in the most shattering and costly Ottoman naval defeat of the Russo-Turkish Wars. Russia's much trumpeted but in reality barren victory at Chesma in 1770 pales in comparison regarding the strategic results of the Liman campaign. The incident also serves as a perfect case study to reassess the Age of Sail in the Mediterranean.

Keywords: Catherine II, Russo-Turkish Wars, Russian Navy, Ottoman Navy, Black Sea Fleet, sea power, amphibious warfare, naval technology, siege warfare.

Новый взгляд на кампанию в Днепровском лимане

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Морской поход Днепровского флота России, проходивший с осени 1787 до конца 1788 г., был одним из самых решающих морских столкновений в Новейшей истории Восточного Средиземноморья. В ходе двух крупных осадных операций кампания между военно-морскими силами Османской и Российской империй решила судьбу ключевой турецкой крепости Ози (Очаков), которая контролировала устье Днепра. Кампа-

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ния была частью второй войны российской императрицы Екатерины II с османами — противостояния, инициированного Портой в ответ на провокационный «греческий проект» Екатерины II и направленного на освобождение Крымского ханства, аннексированного Россией силой оружия в 1783 г. Для османской стороны решающей операцией стал штурм и взятие русской крепости Кинбурн, перекрывшей доступ вглубь Крыма. Поскольку турецкие и русские войска сражались в наиболее отдаленных от линий снабжения позициях, получение военно-морской поддержки и достижение превосходства имело первостепенное значение. Осознавая важность морских сил, османы подготовили величайшую армаду, которую они когда-либо выводили в море со времен Морейских войн 1684–1718 гг., значительно превосходя численностью своего противника — зарождающийся российский Черноморский флот. Затянувшаяся Лиманская кампания привела к самому сокрушительному и дорогостоящему поражению османского флота в русско-турецких войнах, по сравнению с которым широко известная, но на самом деле бесплодная победа русских при Чесме в 1770 г. меркнет в сравнении со стратегическими результатами данной кампании, которая также служит прекрасным примером для переосмысления эпохи парусного судоходства в Средиземноморье.

Ключевые слова: Екатерина II, русско-турецкие войны, русский флот, османский флот, Черноморский флот, десантная война, военно-морская техника, осадная война.

The Russo-Ottoman wars of the 18th century could be regarded as the crucible from which modern Eastern Europe arose. The Romanov state eventually emerged from this struggle as the clear victor, adding the vast territories of Ukraine, Poland, and Crimea to its domains, while the Ottomans encountered military disaster, refugee crisis, and financial collapse¹. During these fateful events, sea power played a crucial role. Although the Russo-Ottoman confrontation was caused by different factors, since Peter the Great's reign, Russia's desire for unfettered access to the non-freezing Black Sea and demand for the right of passage through the Turkish Straits rapidly eclipsed all other causes of friction². Considering the central place of the sea and the navies in these events, the modern English language military historiography tends to demonstrate an odd underestimation of the “influence of sea power upon the Russo-Turkish Wars”. In this paper, I will try to redress the balance to some degree by focusing on the decisive naval campaign in the Dnieper Firth (*Liman*) in 1787–1788. And in doing so, I will try to demonstrate that even at the end of the 18th century, the amphibious warfare of the galley era was still the linchpin of Levantine naval strategies.

Despite adopting the high sea sailing ships at the end of the 17th century, Ottomans continued to consider the navy mainly an extension of the mobile field army as long as they saw attack or counterattack as a feasible grand strategy. Oar propelled landing ships (galleys and other types) and the sail driven “floating fortresses” with large numbers of guns were not mutually exclusive but by necessity symbiotic. The situation only changed at the end of the 18th century, as the Porte lost the initiative for good and adopted a strictly defensive strategy. Such a reconsideration of the 18th century Ottoman sea power had profound implications for the traditional understanding of the Russo-Turkish naval balance as well: the oft-cited battle of Çeşme (Chesma, 1770) arguably loses all its attributed relevance and relinquishes its place to the rather obscure, protracted and far more bloody

¹ Aksan V.H. Ottoman Wars 1700–1870: An Empire Besieged. New York, 2007. P. 129–180.

² Grebenshchikova G.A. Chernomorskii Flot v Period Pravlennia Ekateriny II. Vol. II. St Petersburg, 2012. P. 95–111.

clash in the Dnieper estuary which actually decided the ultimate outcome of the struggle for naval supremacy between the two empires.

Catherine II and the Ottoman Empire

On 8 July 1762, Russia's tsar Peter III was overthrown in a coup engineered by his German born wife Sophia Fredericka, who usurped the throne with the reigning name of Catherine II. Although the new empress owed her success to the nobility's resentment of Peter's fervent admiration for Prussia, she nevertheless upheld peace with the Prussian king, Frederick II "the Great". Her foreign policy was to dominate Poland and pursue southward expansion, into Ukraine and the Black Sea. This policy inevitably put Russia into a collision course with the alarmed Ottoman Empire, which culminated with the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774. At the start of the war, Empress Catherine sent an expeditionary fleet to the Mediterranean, through an enormous logistical and diplomatic effort, to incite a widespread revolt in Greece to divert major Ottoman resources from the main Pontic theater of the war. The result was the so-called Orlov Revolt in Morea, which was quickly crushed by local Ottoman forces, and then, the battle of Çeşme (5–7 July 1770), where the Russian fleet burnt a badly equipped and manned Ottoman squadron³.

However, this much feted Russian victory hardly produced any decisive result because the victors lacked the crucial land force to convert the tactical success into a strategic decision. A blockade of the Dardanelles could still deliver a mortal blow to the Ottoman war effort but even this option was denied to Russians as they were unable to conquer and hold a base in close proximity to the Straits, the essential prerequisite for an extended blockade. The only serious threat by the Russian fleet was interception of the supply convoys which cruised from Egypt (Alexandria) to Istanbul; however, Ottomans quickly eliminated this menace as well; by shifting the provisioning of the capital to neutral shipping — especially to the French. Thereafter the Russian expeditionary fleet was essentially reduced to a nuisance only; conducting annoying raids all along the Levantine littoral, but in no way able to sway the balances in the conflict. Actually, just a year after Çeşme, Ottomans were already sending squadrons down the Dardanelles back to the Mediterranean⁴. Despite all the fanfare and mythology around it, the battle of Çeşme was a barren victory for Russia⁵.

At the main, Pontic, front of the war, Ottomans received a mauling which few expected or imagined in Europe, and the peace of Kuchuk Kainardja (Küçük Kaynarca) became a disastrous turning point in Ottoman history. Territorial losses were, on paper, not very large: Russia had acquired the area between the Dnieper and Bug rivers, the ports of Kerch and Yenikale on the eastern coast of Crimea, and the Kılburun spit on the north western Crimean coast, at the mouth of Dnieper — which was then renamed as Kinburn.

³ *Davies B. L.* The Russo-Turkish War 1768–1774: Catherine II and the Ottoman Empire. London, 2016. P. 1–13, 150–160; *Lebedev A. A.* Khiosskoe i Chesmenskoe Srazhenia 1770 goda v svete novykh dannykh // *Novyi Chasovoi*. 2020. No. 21. P. 81–106.

⁴ *Talbot M.* Protecting the Mediterranean: Ottoman Responses to Maritime Violence 1718–1770 // *Journal of Early Modern History*. 2017. Vol. 21. P. 313–314.

⁵ Ottoman governor of Rhodes had lucidly summarised the true effect (or rather the ineffect) of the Russian expeditionary squadron during the 1768–1774 War, when he had assessed prospects of a second Russian expedition to the Mediterranean in the 1787–1792 War (*Çınar A. O.* Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi'nin Hayati ve Tarihi (Tarih-i Edip): PhD dis. Marmara University, 1999. P. 47). Contrasting traditional interpretation can be best read in *Davies (Davies B. L.* The Russo-Turkish War 1768–1774. P. 178–181).

The small Caucasian Principality of Kabardia was also annexed. The real scale of the Ottoman disaster was in the legal-political concessions: The Crimean Khanate was declared independent from the Sultan's sovereignty, and unlimited Russian control over the Sea of Azov was recognized. Most critically, Russian ships were free to navigate in the Black Sea and use the Turkish straits, while Orthodox subjects of the Porte were allowed to sail their ships under the Russian flag⁶.

The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardja thus ended three centuries of Ottoman dominance over the Black Sea. For the first time in Ottoman history, a Muslim majority territory was snatched away from the Sultan's authority. The situation was psychologically so unacceptable that, for most of the Ottoman elite, Kuchuk Kainardja was only a temporary ceasefire until the deficiencies in the Ottoman armed forces were rectified and a counterattack was launched. The Russian Empress was equally eager for more aggression. Crimean independence was only the first step towards full occupation of the Khanate. Employing the same divide and conquer tactics as in Poland, pro and counter-Russian factions in the Tatar population were provoked into a vicious civil war, to which the Empress injected herself as the "pacifier". An alarmed Porte attempted to intervene on behalf of counter-Russian factions in 1779, but the move nearly ended in disaster and brought both empires to the brink of war again. However, the Ottoman armed forces were still woefully inadequate, rendering the prospects of a military confrontation hopeless. The result was another Ottoman humiliation in the form of the Convention of Aynalikavak, according to which, all Ottoman troops were withdrawn from the territory of the Khanate, and the Russian contender for the throne, Şahin Giray, was recognized as khan. In March 1783, Catherine II finally annexed Crimea, which became the Taurida Governorate of the Russian Empire⁷.

The ambitions of the Russian Empress were still not quelled. The unexpectedly great victory of 1774 had pushed her to think that Ottomans were tottering and ripe for easy conquests. Although the so-called "Greek Project" attributed to her — according to which, the Danubian Principalities and much of the Ottoman Balkans were to be partitioned with the Austrian Empire — seem to have been somewhat exaggerated, it was by no means a baseless rumor⁸. When talk of Russian designs reached the Porte, they created uproar. War now seemed inevitable. In January 1787, the Empress set out on a six-month inspection voyage to Crimea. A large army and a flotilla also accompanied her. The Habsburg Emperor Joseph II travelled incognito to meet Catherine II and concluded an alliance against the Ottoman Empire. This unsubtle display of raw power became the last drop for the Porte. Already on the edge due to the talk about the Greek Project, Ottoman policymakers were convinced that this so-called "voyage" was nothing but a ruse to launch a surprise attack into their territories. Therefore, an ultimatum was presented to the Empress, demanding the immediate evacuation of Crimea. Naturally the demand was rejected, and the Porte declared war on 19 August⁹.

⁶ Davies B. L. *The Russo-Turkish War 1768–1774*. P. 205–208.

⁷ Ibid. P. 230–235; Soucek S. *Ottoman Maritime Wars 1700–1914*. Istanbul, 2013. P. 45–48.

⁸ Davies B. L. *The Russo-Turkish War 1768–1774*. P. 225–228.

⁹ Soucek S. *Ottoman Maritime Wars 1700–1914*. P. 51–52.

Opposing Forces

At the beginning of Catherine II's Turkish wars (1768), the Ottoman Navy possessed one 114-gun three decker (*üç ambarlı*), four 70–74 gun and four 64-gun “large” (*kebir*) ships of the line (*kalyon*), eleven “small” (*sagir*) ships of 56–60 guns, eight large mercantile ships (*karavele*) of 36–48 guns, one large pram (*tombaz*), and ten galleys (*kadirga*). However, of the 29 sail vessels perhaps only half were fit for duty¹⁰. After the battle of Çeşme, an urgent naval expansion started, and gained momentum after 1783 as Catherine II's annexation of Crimea made a new war inevitable. From 1772 to 1791, six 70–74-gun and ten 64–66-gun *kebir kalyons*; twelve *sagir kalyons* and five or six *karaveles* were completed or refitted¹¹. One important novelty after 1774 was the introduction of the frigate (*firkateyn*) and the ship-sloop (*korvet*) as two new ship types into the Ottoman navy (starting in 1778). Yet at this stage, almost all warships of these two classes were either bought from foreign merchants (another novel approach) or were obtained by razing some ships of the line and *karaveles*. Thus, some 10 frigates of 26 to 44 guns and another 10 sloops of 18–22 guns were made available for the campaigns of 1787–1788. Completing the effectives were four large xebecs along with four large and a single small bomb vessels¹².

The Russian Empire's navy was a relatively new institution, established only in 1696; and from 1711 to 1783, it had nothing but oar propelled river boats and small schooners in the Black Sea. That year, with the annexation of Crimea, the well sheltered Aktyar Bay on the southern tip of the peninsula was selected as a new base to house a new branch of the Russian Navy: the Black Sea Fleet. The military city founded there, Sevastopol, and the fleet it was destined to harbor were to become formidable military assets in time; however, in 1787, it was only a poorly developed anchorage, and all shipbuilding for the fleet had to take place in Kherson at the Dnieper and in Taganrog, at the Don. From the technological point of view, there was a significant difference between the Ottoman and Russian shipbuilding. Ottoman vessels were constructed according to a method which went back to the Byzantine era and called as “single frame system” (*ad ordinata unica*) by the Venetians, who also used exactly the same method until 1775¹³. Hulls constructed according to this tradition were lightly built and thinly planked; optimized for speed but came off the worst in a sustained firefight. By contrast, Russian ships were stoutly built and planked according to English construction methods. However, Southern Russia's shipyards suffered from a dearth of suitable oak timber and were forced to make heavy use of fir and pine which were prone to rot away rather quickly.

The backbone of high sea squadrons on either side was the 62–66 gun ship-of-line but whereas the Ottoman units had 24-pounder lower deck (or main) artillery, Russian vessels had 30-pounders. There was also an ace card in the Black Sea Fleet's deck: the

¹⁰ Ottoman navy's official table of organization: *İşipek A. R., Aydemir O. 1770 Çeşme Deniz Savaşı. İstanbul, 2006. P. 122.*

¹¹ For more about Ottoman sail warship classes and technology in late 18th century see: *Yener E. Osmańska potęga morska oraz technika marynarki wojennej podczas wojen Katarzyny II z Turcją w latach 1768–1792 // Okrety Wojenne. 2021. Vol. XXXI, issue 4. P. 2–14.*

¹² *İşipek A. R. Cezayirli Gazi Hasan Paşa. İstanbul, 2009. P. 392–393; Magazin Für die Neue Historie und Geographie. Halle, 1788. P. 34–39; Archives Nationales de Paris, Affaires Etrangères B. I 446 Apperçu sur la situation de la Marine Ottomane (1784); Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii MID RF. F. 89. Op. 8. D. 614. L. 4–5; Deniz Müzesi Arşivi. Trs. D. 27. Kalyon Masraf Defteri. H. 5 Safar 1203 (5 November 1787) — H. 1 Safar 1204 (21 October 1788).*

¹³ *Archivo Stato di Venezia. Dispacci Ambasciatori Constantinopoli. Filza 180. P. 522–523.*

“battle frigate”. This was a large 50–54 gun frigate armed with 24-pounder heavy guns and thus able to fight toe to toe with Turkish *kalyons* in the line of battle. However, overarming came at a price, manifest in the reduction of speed and shortened service life for hulls overstressed under extra weight¹⁴. All in all, in 1787, the Black Sea Fleet could muster one 80-gun flagship, four 66-gun ships, two battle frigates, 14 frigates with 40 guns and three smaller frigates with 24 to 32 guns¹⁵.

A defining feature of the Russo-Ottoman naval wars in the 18th century was the central role played by the coastal fleets of oared vessels. The barren Pontic steppe frontier between the two empires and the extremely difficult, forested and mountainous Danubian basin constituted the battleground; a situation which ensured that sustainable supply of armies was nearly impossible overland. The only remaining option was seaborne and river borne supply along the Black Sea littoral and the watery “highways” of Don, Dniester, Dnieper, Bug, and Danube. As a result, large numbers of rowing inshore craft had to be used by both sides and command of the littoral and inland waters was a prerequisite for both successful offense and defense. In 1737, at the height of the war against the Austro-Russian alliance, the Ottoman Navy sent an armada of 258 rowing craft bearing 16,328 men to Azov, which had successfully engaged Field Marshal Lacy’s invasion army¹⁶. During the 1768–1774 War, it was again the oared vessels which bore the brunt of fighting in the Black Sea front.

After 1774, the Ottoman Navy allocated resources to modernize its small ships. From 1784 to 1788, with French technical assistance, some 71 sloop or brig rigged gun and mortar boats first supplemented and then replaced the older, more traditional craft¹⁷. The last six remaining galleys were also refitted. Russians were equally aware and by 1787–1788, they had some 61 flotilla craft ready for war. An important difference between the two inshore fleets was how they were administered: whereas the Ottoman “Slim Fleet” (*İnce Donanma*) was firmly under Capitan Pasha’s unified command, the Russian “River Flotilla” (*Grebnaia Flotilia*) was separated from the sailing squadron with its own commander¹⁸. Although the Russians’ separate administration initially caused a command crisis at the battle for Dnieper Liman in 1788, in the later stages of the war it proved to be more effective in its main role, which was cooperation with the army.

The Campaign

As a result of relentless preparations to annul Kuchuk Kainardja, Ottomans had established a considerable naval superiority, which was crucial for their plans. The Ottoman strategy was based on the recent intelligence: most of the available Russian troops in the

¹⁴ For a monograph about the Russian battle frigates, see: *Lebedev A. A. Fregaty Protiv Korablei*. St Petersburg, 2011.

¹⁵ *Tredrea J., Sozaev E. Russian Warships in the Age of Sail 1696–1860*. London, 2009. P. 264–284.

¹⁶ *Danış İ. 1736–1739 Savaşlarında Karadeniz’de Osmanlı Donanması*. Istanbul, 2007. P. 46–48.

¹⁷ Detailed breakdown of the Ottoman flotilla construction is: 1 galliot with two 12-inch mortars and ten 8-pounder guns; 1 pram with one 12-inch mortar and ten 12-pounder guns; 12 × 68-foot long bomb shallops with a 10-inch mortar and a 36-pounder gun; 41 × 58-foot long gun shallops with a single 24-pounder; 16 × 50-foot long gun shallops with a single 24-pounder. See: *Kaçar M. Tersâne Hendesehânesi’nden Bahriye Mektebi’ne // Osmanlı Bilimi Araştırmaları*. 2007–2008. Vol. IX, issue 1–2. P. 59.

¹⁸ *Anderson R. C. Naval Wars in the Levant 1559–1853*. Liverpool, 1952. P. 322–324; *Panzac D. La Marine Ottomane*. Paris, 2009. P. 225.

Pontic theater were stationed along the Kuban River, leaving Crimea largely undefended. Therefore, a three-stage strategy was contemplated: first, the Ottoman navy would assault and destroy the Russian naval base at Kherson on the Dnieper; secondly, troops would be massed at Özi (after 1792, Ochakov) in the West and at Anapa in the East; and finally, Crimea would be liberated through an all-round assault from three directions, including seaborne landing of an army from the south¹⁹. Speed was essential; everything depended on a decisive victory before Austrians entered the war; and the Danube front siphoned off available troops and supplies.

The single physical obstacle to the Ottoman plan was the Russian fortress on the Kinburn spit. This small, sandy extension of land was the westernmost tip of the Kinburn Peninsula. The peninsula formed the southern coast of the Dnieper “Liman”, a shallow firth constituted by the Dnieper estuary. The northern coast of the Liman was Ottoman territory, on which the great fortress Özi was situated. This fortification, which commanded all traffic over the Dnieper, was strategically so vital that it was called “the bulwark of Islam” (*Sedd-i Sedid-i Islam*) or “the lock on Istanbul’s door”²⁰. Likewise, the new Russian fortress in Kinburn was of equally crucial importance as it effectively blocked all entry to Crimea from the western coast. Therefore, each side had a pivot point of decisive importance for its respective strategy.

As part of the Ottoman war preparations, Özi was strongly garrisoned, and a considerable fleet to assist the fortress was prepared. According to the fortress Özi rolls in the Ottoman archives, at the beginning of the war the garrison totaled 6906 soldiers, under the command of the castellan Ismail Pasha. Although — for now — we lack comparable information from the Ottoman naval records, Samuel Bentham, the groundbreaking naval architect who built the Russian *Grebnaia Filotilia* and brother of the philosopher Jeremy Bentham, provides what looks like a very reliable roster of the Ottoman naval forces in support of Özi. According to Bentham’s personal and on the spot observation, these Turkish vessels were four 66-gun battleships, three 26-gun frigates, three sloops, ten galleys [sic] and a bomb vessel²¹. That small fleet was under the command of Çelebi Seyyid Ahmed Capitan²².

Opposing Russian forces, land and naval, were under the authority of Prince Grigorii Potemkin, the governor of Taurida and Catherine II’s most famous favourite. Potemkin was based in Ekaterinoslav (today Dnipro, Ukraine), the administrative capital of “New (Southern) Russia”. In Kinburn, there was a garrison of 319 guns and 1500 infantry; with a further 2500 infantry, 38 field guns and Cossack cavalry in reserve some 50 kilometers away from the fortress. These local troops were under the command of General in Chief Alexander Suvorov, the up-and-coming legendary Russian generalissimo. His supporting naval forces of the Southern Admiralty at Kherson consisted of two 50-gun frigates along with one 80-gun and one 60-gun battleships nearly completed. However, because of the

¹⁹ Moriss R. *Science, Utility and Maritime Power: Samuel Bentham in Russia, 1779–91*. New York, 2016. P. 198; *Fedakar C. 1787–1792 Osmanlı Rus Harplerinde Kilburun, Özi Nehri ve Hocabey Muhareberleri // Karadeniz Araştırmaları*. 2015. Sayı 46. P. 122–123.

²⁰ Soucek S. *Ottoman Maritime Wars 1700–1914*. P. 35; *Fedakar C. 1787–1792 Osmanlı Rus Harplerinde Kilburun...* P. 120.

²¹ Moriss R. *Science, Utility and Maritime Power: Samuel Bentham in Russia, 1779–91*. P. 184. — By “galleys”, Bentham must be referring to Ottoman oared gunboats rather than the six last true galleys which were being refitted in Istanbul at that time.

²² *Fedakar C. 1787–1792 Osmanlı Rus Harplerinde Kilburun...* P. 126.

extreme shallowness of Liman, these deep-draft vessels could not be of much use. Fortunately for Potemkin, Bentham managed to transform seven pleasure galleys, six barges and six transport ships from Empress Catherine's "Southern Voyage Fleet" into relatively heavily armed shallow draught warships under Rear-Admiral Nikolai Mordvinov²³.

The struggle for Kinburn started on 30 August 1787, when 10 Ottoman gunboats ("galleys") and the bomb vessel chased away two Russian warships anchored there (the 60-gun ship and a frigate, both very lightly armed), back to Kherson. However, Turks lost two of their numbers in the running firefight. Until 12 October, the Ottoman naval forces regularly bombarded the Kinburn fortress to soften it up. Then, on that day, Ismail Pasha made his move and landed some 2500 men under the command of Turnacı Ağa (Ağa), to storm the fortress. The ensuing battle was terribly violent and bloody, during which Suvorov famously escaped from death at the last moment. However, in the end, Russian reserves decided the day, and the attackers were almost annihilated with 850 dead.

During these operations, a single warship, the galley *Desna* under the Maltese sub-lieutenant Lombard, was the only naval support available to Suvorov. The lethargic Mordvinov arrived only on the morning of 14 October, with two battleships (66 and 54 guns), two frigates (42 and 40 guns), a 24-gun sloop, five galleys, two floating batteries and two gunboats. His attempt to engage the Ottoman fleet ended badly, when the floating battery under commander Verevkin was cut off and then chased by Ottoman ships westward to Hocabay (pronounced as Khodjabei; current Odessa), where she surrendered to the Ottoman land forces. By 17 October, the naval operations came to a halt when the Ottoman fleet retired to Istanbul for winter. Mordvinov ineffectively engaged the Turkish fortress until 31 October; then he also retired to the winter quarters at Kherson²⁴. Displeased with his performance, the Empress relieved him from command. Russian sources claim that one Ottoman battleship, two gunboats and two "xebecs" were destroyed by coastal artillery in the battle of 12 October; however, these claims are not supported by Ottoman sources.

While the battle for Kinburn was raging on, on 11 September, the main body of the Russian Black Sea Fleet under the Dalmatian Admiral Count Mark Voinovich sailed from Sevastopol with three 66-gun battleships, two 50-gun battle frigates and five 44-gun frigates. Voinovich's target was Varna. On 19 September, when the fleet was some 25 miles northeast of Varna, a disaster struck: a violent gale decimated the inadequately equipped and manned ships. The 44-gun *Krym* sank with all hands, while the 66-gun *Maria Magdalena*, under the command of an English naval officer, V.F. Tisdale, lost her masts and rudder, and after six days, drifted to the Büyükdere anchorage at Bosphorus. Despite angry protests of his Russian officers who wanted to blow up the ship, Captain Tisdale surrendered his command to the Ottoman authorities. Other ships, all heavily damaged, returned to Sevastopol only by October 1²⁵. This disaster devastated Prince Potemkin, who suffered a nervous breakdown. "God punishes us, not the Turks!" he wrote to Empress Catherine.

²³ Moriss R. Science, Utility and Maritime Power: Samuel Bentham in Russia, 1779–91. P. 185–186.

²⁴ Fedakar C. 1787–1792 Osmanlı Rus Harplerinde Kilburun... P. 125–126; Anderson R. C. Naval Wars in the Levant 1559–1853. P. 320–321.

²⁵ Soucek S. Ottoman Maritime Wars 1700–1914. P. 52–53. — *Maria Magdalena* was repaired and incorporated into the Ottoman fleet under the name *Kerem-Bâdi*, but the most unusual circumstances of her acquisition led her earning an unofficial name: *Hüdaverdi* (Given by Allah).

The unusual, late season campaign of 1787 had ended with a draw. The Ottoman attempt to reduce Kinburn had failed, but on the sea the Ottoman fleet had ended the year clearly with more success than its adversary. Now, with the Austrian entry to the war being imminent, in 1788 it was going to be Russians' turn to attack Özi. As the pivotal stronghold was practically like an island, totally dependent on sea routes for reinforcements and supply, the Ottoman Navy was going to play the leading role in the defense. According to the Ottoman court chronicler Seyyid Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi (1747–1801), the Black Sea Squadron “was possibly unprecedented in armament and equipment, surpassing those fitted out in previous years”. As the stakes were so high, none other than Capitan Pasha Cezayirli Gazi Hasan, the hero who foiled the Russian plans to blockade the Dardanelles after Çeşme in 1770, rebuilt the navy and pacified the rebellious Albania and Egypt after 1774, would command these forces²⁶.

The Habsburgs finally declared war in February 1788. At the end of March, an initial flotilla under El-Hajj Abdurrahman Agha was dispatched to the battle zone. The main force raised its flags at Galata on 4 April. Then, the squadron anchored at Büyükdere, both to complete munitions supply and to wait until the end of May, when the last winter storms were over. However, Hasan Pasha was overruled by the anxious Grand Vizier Yusuf Pasha and was forced to set sail on 3 May. Unfortunately, as he had predicted, a sudden squall on the day of departure forced him back to Büyükdere with the loss of one *kebir sal*²⁷. The fleet could set sail for the second time only on 20 May, with good weather²⁸. Nevertheless, before proceeding to Dnieper Liman, Hasan Pasha had to spend about a week more, visiting the North Anatolian ports to collect contingents of troops for reinforcing the fortress Özi. Again, we lack Ottoman documents specifying the exact size of the Ottoman fleet. The most reasonable numbers are given in a Russian report. When this Russian intelligence is cross-read with available Ottoman sources, an order of battle comprising two 74-gun ships, six 66-gun ships, eight 40–48-gun *karaveles* and frigates, four large xebecs, three bomb vessels, eight *kırlangiç*²⁹, 21 gunboats and six galleys³⁰ appear as a most probable estimation.

While the Ottoman main body was being fitted out, Potemkin sent the reinforced *Grebnaia Filotilia*³¹ to the Dnieper Liman under a new commander: Prince Charles of Nassau-Siegen, a famous French adventurer. Nassau-Siegen reached his destination on 24 April and immediately blockaded the Ottoman fortress by deploying his vessels in a

²⁶ Aydın M. Cezayirli Gazi Hasan Paşa // Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi. Vol. VII. İstanbul, 1993. P.501–503.

²⁷ *Kebir sal* was a large gunboat, the Ottoman equivalent of the Russian double-sloop.

²⁸ Çınar A. O. Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi'nin Hayatı ve Tarihi (Tarih-i Edip). P. 8–9, 32. — Edib Efendi's exact description of the squadron is: “sinin-i sâ'ireden birkaç kat ve belki misli nâ-mesbûk vechle techîz ve âmâde kılınan...” however this might be a stylistic exaggeration.

²⁹ *Kırlangiç* (“swallow”, often latinized as *kırlangichi*), was a small xebec or pink, armed with 12–14 4-pdr cannons and mainly used as a courier ship or for scouting.

³⁰ *Grebenshchikova* G. A. Chernomorskii Flot v Period Pravlénia Ekateriny II. P.127–128; DMA. Trs. D. 27.

³¹ About 80 shallow draught warships in six divisions; carrying two Jager (Rifle) and one Grenadier battalions and four infantry companies. S. Bentham was second in command to Nassau-Siegen with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and commanded one division; another Englishman, Lt.-Col. Henry Fanshawe, and the Dutch Captain Winter each commanded one division, while the Russians Akhmatov (Lieutenant) and Godletshi (Major) were in charge of two other divisions. The sixth division comprised Zaporizhian Cossacks under Sidor Belyi (*Moriss R. Science, Utility and Maritime Power: Samuel Bentham in Russia, 1779–91*. P.192).

line which stretched from Kinburn (Southern Liman) to Özi (Northern Liman). A month later, on May 30, the Russian naval presence in the Liman was strengthened with the arrival of a small sailing flotilla. This force, comprised of a 40-gun frigate, 10 armed merchant ships and a bomb vessel, was under the command of John Paul Jones, the legendary Scottish-American privateer of the American Revolutionary War, who had become a mercenary for Catherine II. This divided command structure, exacerbated by the mutual hatred between Nassau-Siegen and Jones, was to cause serious problems to Empress Catherine's military efforts.

The first battle was fought on the very day Hassan Pasha arrived. Combined with Abdurrahman Agha's advance guard, the Ottoman *İnce Donanma* at Özi now comprised "14 brigs, about 50 gunboats, five galleys and some xebecs", according to Bentham. *Grebnaia Filotilia* lagged too long before retreating, and the double-sloop *No. 2*, under the command of the 32-year-old German Captain Reinhold von Osten-Sacken, was overtaken and sunk following a heroic fight (or Osten-Sacken blew his ship up to avoid surrender). In return, a small Ottoman shallop with a 40-man crew was destroyed by a shell hit, and 17 of the crew perished. Daylight waning, Hasan Pasha called his ships back. A two-week-long lull followed the action of 31 May, during which Hasan Pasha made preparations for his next push. After a minor action on 17 June, the next morning five Turkish galleys and 36 small craft crept along the Özi shore to cut off and overwhelm the Russian right flank. Nassau-Siegen and Jones answered by advancing the offshore ends of the blockade line to bring their whole forces into action. Bentham's insistence in arming the *Grebnaia Filotilia* with heaviest available guns (18- and 36 pounder-long guns, 8- and 13-inch howitzers) paid off handsomely during the engagement: Ottomans lost one gunboat and a "xebec" along with numerous heavily damaged small craft, while their light caliber ship guns and inept gunners inflicted very little damage to the enemy³².

Hasan Pasha launched the next major push on 27 June. First, he sealed off the mouth of the Liman by forming his whole force — some 96–100 ships of all types and sizes — into an intimidating line and then detached two squadrons against both Russian flanks in a classic pincer movement. According to Edib Efendi, this time he also sent "eight large *karaveles* [sic]" to support the *İnce Donanma*. As Nassau-Siegen and Jones retreated into the shallows approaching Kinburn to avoid encirclement, Ottomans followed up to mark suitable channels with stakes and buoys to facilitate their ships' movements in the morning. At sunrise, Turkish troops began to land in Kinburn to assault the fortress. Suvorov, supported by shore batteries, launched a violent counterattack with his ground troops, drove the attackers back to their ships and forced the retirement of the *İnce Donanma*. Moreover, Russian boats had dislocated all the Ottoman depth markers during the night. As a result, one large Turkish ship ran aground, and the whole Ottoman line dropped anchor in panic. At that moment, Hasan Pasha's own flagship also grounded on a sandbank, and the Capitan Pasha was forced to leave the stranded vessel to take refuge in the fortress.

Despite ferocious resistance, the combined Russian fleet seized the chance to attack and burn those two grounded vessels; only three Turkish sailors survived the conflagration. In turn, the armed transport *Malyi Aleksandr* from Jones' squadron was burnt by shellfire from the Özi batteries as these frantically engaged to cover the grounded Turkish ships. When the low tide also started to make itself felt over all this distress, surviving

³² Moriss R. Science, Utility and Maritime Power: Samuel Bentham in Russia, 1779–91. P. 192–193.

Ottoman warships tacked to get out of the shallow firth. However, there was a newly built Russian battery on the Kinburn Spit, and to avoid its lethal fire, they closely hugged the Özi shore. They were too close for comfort, and 'two line of battleships, five large frigates and an armed brig' went aground. When all efforts to refloat them failed, the 58-gun *Ejder Başlı* ("Dragon Figurehead", a *karavele*) and the brig were cut off and captured, three ships were scuttled after their crews were taken off, and the remaining two were burnt by enemy action³³.

The two-day long battle of the Dnieper Liman was an unmitigated disaster for the Ottoman Navy. Ottoman losses were enormous; the latest Russian academic research state that 15 Turkish vessels of all sizes were destroyed. The reported human losses are too lopsided to be accepted without suspicion. Against the Russian claim of killing 2,000 Ottoman sailors and taking 1,673 as prisoners, Russian forces reported just 19 dead and 57 wounded³⁴. Unfortunately, Ottoman sources are currently silent about their exact losses to verify or falsify the Russian claims.

Upon the disaster, Hasan Pasha pulled his ships back to Berezan (Prezen) Island west of the Liman, but left 'a frigate, five galleys and about twenty-five other small craft' behind as a rearguard. He also punished the captains whom he deemed unsuccessful. Then, upon receiving news about a sortie of the Sevastopol Fleet, he raised anchor on July 9 and sailed away to meet the enemy. The same day, Russian land forces commenced operations to besiege Özi and the *Grebnaia Filotilia* fell upon the fortress with full force. Of the aforementioned Ottoman naval rearguard, almost all vessels were destroyed, and the flag-galley (*baştanda*) was captured; only a few small shallows managed to escape to Istanbul. When the dispatches of battle reached the Porte, the Sultan gave orders to levy new soldiers and coastal ships in Istanbul with the greatest urgency to renew the efforts³⁵.

In the meantime, Hasan Pasha met Admiral Voinovich's two battleships, two battle frigates and eight frigates with his remaining large ships on 14 July, off Fidonisi Island and fought an anti-climactic sparring action, in which both sides claimed victory³⁶. Hasan Pasha returned to Sulina after this engagement and sent new dispatches stating the fleet had anchored to replenish water stocks; while also reporting a serious manpower shortage (no doubt due to the Liman disaster), outbreak of sickness and perilously leaky condition of some sail warships, which stayed afloat only by working their pumps round the clock. He requested replacements to the crews and urged the fitting out of a *kebir sal* and fifteen shallows without delay; but his final verdict was the need to return the worn-out squadron to the Imperial Arsenal. When these dispatches were read in the state council (*meclis-i meşveret*), the decision was that the return of the fleet at that moment would have a great many dire consequences; and the best course of action was to do everything possible to supply Özi with reinforcements and victuals. Also, it was remarked that, except for the *ke-*

³³ Ibid. P. 194–197; Çınar A. O. Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi'nin Hayatı ve Tarihi (Tarih-i Edip). P. 39–40. — *Ejder Başlı* joined the Black Sea Fleet under the name *Leontiy Muchennik* while the brig sank soon after capture.

³⁴ *Grebenshchikova* G. A. Chernomorskii Flot v Period Pravleniya Ekateriny II. P. 139.

³⁵ Çınar A. O. Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi'nin Hayatı ve Tarihi (Tarih-i Edip). P. 46. — According to Lt.-Col. Henry Fanshawe, the besieging "Army of Ekaterinoslav" (*Ekaterinoslavkaia Armiia*) consisted of 32 battalions of infantry, 72 squadrons of cavalry and 60 guns; altogether more than 40,000 men (*Moriss R. Science, Utility and Maritime Power: Samuel Bentham in Russia, 1779–91*. P. 198).

³⁶ Çınar A. O. Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi'nin Hayatı ve Tarihi (Tarih-i Edip). P. 41–42; *Anderson R. C. Naval Wars in the Levant 1559–1853*. P. 328–329.

bir sal, all the requested coastal fleet ships had already been sent. As for the leaky sail ships, those in the most precarious condition were allowed to return to Istanbul, and Capitan Pasha had to bring the rest back to the Liman. As the situation deemed extremely critical, an inspector from the court (*tebdil hasekisi*) was sent, bearing the decisions of the council.

Upon receiving these new orders, Hasan Pasha set course to Özi and anchored at Berezan on 9 August. In the intervening month, Russian forces had thoroughly invested the fortress. Edib Efendi describes the Russian activities in some detail: a new redoubt was erected at some distance from the Kinburn, and gun platforms were established at the water's edge in front of it. Between this redoubt and the Özi pier, ten gunboats (also described as *kebir sal*) bearing large-calibre guns were anchored so as to block the approaches to the fortress. Similarly, on the Ottoman side of the coast, all suitable anchorage points were blocked with newly erected redoubts. Finding no way to bring help, Capitan Pasha wrote to Istanbul that if any attempt to raise the siege from the landward side was going to be made, at least 20,000–30,000 soldiers would be necessary; while if the seaward option was to be attempted again, a rebuilt coastal fleet and newly levied soldiers were needed. His suggestion was to recruit anew a thousand elite Janissary assault troops (*dalkılıç*)³⁷.

By now, the campaign season was fast drawing to a close, and the weather started to worsen, with strong southerly winds rendering naval operations increasingly difficult. The Sevastopol Squadron sortied again on 3 September, but was driven off by bad weather on the 6th. Upon the arrival of the long-awaited reinforcements, Hasan Pasha attempted to run the gauntlet on the evening of 19 October with three shallows full of soldiers and ammunition. One of them was blown up by the Russian artillery but the other two managed to reach the fortress. The next day, worsening weather finally turned into a storm with more unpleasant results for the besiegers. According to Edib Efendi's lively prose:

when a God-sent severe storm herded the Russian gunboats and drove them right in front of the fortress and the Hasan Pasha palanka, the ghazis of Islam in the fortifications fired every gun, musket and hand grenade they could bring to bear; some even threw stones.

One Russian galley was blown up, with 33 dead and 23 wounded, while others were paralyzed or 'turned into lame ducks' (*üftan-ü hizan gürizan oldular*) in the chronicler's words³⁸. Ottoman sources indicate that in the weeks which followed the attempt of 19 October, altogether 1500 troops and supplies eventually trickled to Özi. This string of setbacks cost Nassau-Siegen his job: an angry Potemkin relieved him of his command. The final inconclusive naval activity of the 1788 campaign took place with Voinovich's final

³⁷ "Moskov-ı lain bu ana gelince Özi kal'asını berren ve bahren tazyık ve muhasara edüp bir taraftan imdad olmadıgından Kılburundan berüde bir cedit tabya dahi ihdas ve suya beraber toplar vaz ettiğinden başka Kılburun açıklarından tabya hizasından ta içerüye Özi iskelesi mukabiline varınca kebir toplar ile memlu on mikdarı kebir sallar dizüp rah-ı imdadı sedd ve Özi sahili tarafından dahi sefayın müruru imkanda olacak mahallere cedit tabyalar ihdas ve ol tarafı dahi münstedid etmeğle..." (*Çınar A. O. Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi'nin Hayatı ve Tarihi* (Tarih-i Edip). P. 49–50).

³⁸ *Anderson R. C. Naval Wars in the Levant 1559–1853*. P. 331. — "Meded-i gaybiyye-i ilahiyye yüz gösterüb, bir şedid kay ve furtına zuhur ve cümlesini birbiri üzerine zamm ederek pişgah-ı kal'aya ve Hasan Paşa palankası canibine sıkışdırdıkta derun-ı kal'a ve palankada olan guzat-ı müslimin tob ve tüfenk ve el humbaraları ve taş ve toprak makulesiyle bir meretebe ceng-ü perhaş etdiler" (*Çınar A. O. Mehmed Emin Edib Efendi'nin Hayatı ve Tarihi* (Tarih-i Edip). P. 46). Palanka was the term with which Ottomans called a wood-and-earth stockade.

sortie on 13 November, only to miss making contact with his opponents who had abandoned Berezan on the 15th to belatedly return to winter quarters.

The protracted and the bloody campaign of 1788 was the most significant naval defeat suffered by Ottomans in the 18th century. The repulse in the Liman doomed the crucially important fortress Özi. Cut off from all help and hope, the stronghold met its end on 17 December, the day when Suvorov stormed its walls giving no quarter. Overall casualties were staggering for both sides: 9000 inhabitants and soldiers of the fortress were slaughtered without mercy, while less than 14,500 Russian soldiers were left alive out of the initial 40,000 who began the siege. From the Ottoman point of view, fall of Özi was nothing less than a full-blown strategic catastrophe. *İnce Donanma* was practically destroyed. It is said that the last casualty of Özi's fall was Sultan Abdülhamid himself: allegedly, he suffered a stroke upon receiving details of the Russian victory and died on 7 April 1789. The disaster in the Dnieper Liman also marked an ignominious end to Cezayirli Gazi Hasan Pasha's long career. The new Sultan, Selim III, who had already disliked him for a long time, relieved Hasan Pasha from sea service and appointed him commander in chief (*serasker*) of the Ottoman land forces in the Balkans. When the 77 years old former Capitan Pasha realized that he wouldn't be able to hold the Russian forces, he committed suicide by swallowing poison in the town of Şumnu (Shumen, now in Bulgaria) in March 1790³⁹.

The Austro-Russo-Ottoman war dragged on until 1791. However, after the fall of Özi, for the Ottomans there was no hope of achieving any favorable peace. The Porte scrambled to recruit help from Britain and Prussia, both extremely alarmed by Catherine II's aggressive expansionism⁴⁰. Until the web of alliances was ready, the Russian army had conquered the coastal area between the Dniester and the Dnieper (the Yedisian region) and then took the important fortress Izmail on the Danube, with invaluable help from the *Grebnaia Filotilia*⁴¹. The Black Sea Fleet was strengthened by continuous shipbuilding and under the first of the Russian born great admirals, Fedor Ushakov, had established moral superiority over the Ottoman battlefleet by the end of 1790⁴². Facing exhaustion and military collapse, Ottomans sued for peace, and the treaty of Jassy, signed on 9 January 1792, ended hostilities. Territorial losses were minimal, limited to Yedisian; but strategic and moral outcome, as it will be analyzed in the conclusion, was far more profound.

Conclusion

The campaign of the Dnieper Liman (September 1787 — November 1788) is highly illuminating about the naval warfare in the Eastern Mediterranean and about the nature of the Ottoman Navy in 18th century. The pattern of amphibious warfare exercised in the

³⁹ *Philiou C. M.* Biography of an Empire. Berkeley, 2011. P. 46. — In 1785, Hasan Pasha had foiled a conspiracy by the then grand vizier, Halil Hamid Pasha, who wanted to depose Sultan Abdülhamid and put Selim, then the heir apparent, to the throne. As result, Hasan had made Selim an enemy.

⁴⁰ *Webb P. C.* Seapower in the Ochakov Affair 1791 // The International History Review. 1980. Vol. 2, no. 1. P. 13–33; *Beydilli K.* 1790 Osmanlı-Prusya İttifakı. İstanbul, 1981.

⁴¹ *Anderson R. C.* Naval Wars in the Levant 1559–1853. P. 332–334. — Potemkin had finally found a worthy commander for the *Grebnaia Filotilia*: the Italo-Spanish expatriate José de Ribas y Boyons.

⁴² The Battle of Tendra (8–9 September 1790), during which Ottomans lost two large battleships, was especially damaging for the Turkish morale: *Anderson R. C.* Naval Wars in the Levant 1559–1853. P. 338–341; *Dümen E.* Yüzyıllar Boyu Denizde Anadolu Türkleri 1081–1922 (On Sekizinci Yüzyıl). İstanbul, 1993. P. 114–115.

Liman dated back into the Antiquity and its continued preponderance well in the early modern era was ably demonstrated by John Guilmartin Jr.⁴³ In a political geography dominated by narrow seas and heavily fortified strategic bottlenecks, amphibious “inshore” warfare was invariably paramount, and all Mediterranean powers with offensive strategies continued to maintain sizeable oar propelled inshore fleets.

What can be said about the Ottoman naval effectiveness? The Porte’s marines were able to occasionally score some successes against the Russian foe but overall, the heavily outnumbered rival had thoroughly bested them both in material and manpower quality. In explaining this want of Turkish military skill, Virginia Aksan’s arguments about the Ottoman land forces in the 18th century are quite relevant. According to Aksan, the Ottoman army maintained more or less a parity with its immediate rivals, the Habsburgs and Russians, until 1750s. Nor its military technology was by any means inferior. However, the experience of the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763), in which both Austria and Russia fought, was the formative catalyst of military reform but Ottomans, who were neutral in the conflict, had missed it. Daniel Panzac methodically applied “deterioration through disuse” line of thought to the 18th century Ottoman naval history, and leading Turkish maritime historians who particularly studied the period came to similar conclusions⁴⁴.

Especially damaging was the lack of “militarization” or, in other words, lack of a rigorous, systematic discipline and drill regime for the men and professionalization for the officer corps. Although an Algebra School (*Hendesehâne*) for naval captains was opened at Gazi Hasan Pasha’s initiative in 1775, the curriculum was limited to basic mathematics, and the number of students (10–12) indicates that it was not a real naval college in any meaning of the word. It was only in 1797, during Nizâm-i Cedid, that a serious initiative would take place in the eventual establishment of a proper naval school.⁴⁵ By contrast, since 1752 the Russian naval officers had started their careers in a fully militarized educational institution: the Naval Noble Cadet Corps (*Morskoi Shliaketnyi Kadetskii Korpus*). As soon as Catherine II usurped power in 1762, she set about to improve naval education further and sent some 21 naval cadets to the British Royal Navy for advanced training. By 1783, the Naval Cadet Corps had some 600 students, and by 1791, a full thousand⁴⁶.

Russia’s ultimate victory in 1791 and the establishment of the Russian dominance over the Black Sea brought a fundamental change in the Porte’s military posture. With the abandonment of all revanchist counterattack aspirations, a purely defensive strategy

⁴³ With his classic *The Influence of Sea Power on Ancient History* (Oxford, 1989), American historian Chester G. Starr was arguably the first to oppose the abuse of Antiquity by the disciples of another American historian, Alfred T. Mahan. In contrast to Mahanists’ universal navalism, Starr’s work established the subordinate role of the Mediterranean galley fleets vis-a-vis the armies. John Guilmartin convincingly demonstrates that Starr’s criticism was valid for the early modern Mediterranean as well but he somewhat caves in to the ship of the line centric approach when the period after 1650 is concerned (*Guilmartin J. Galleons and Galleys*. London, 2002. P. 106–158, 206–213).

⁴⁴ *Aksan V. H. Ottoman Wars 1700–1870: An Empire Besieged*. P. 130–135; *Panzac D. La Marine Ottomane*. P. 202–203. — Y. A. Aydın’s research demonstrate that, with the exception of 1736–1739 War, from 1718 to 1768 the navy’s sole activities were the yearly tribute gathering summer cruise in the Aegean and pirate hunt (*Aydın Y. A. 18. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Devleti’nin Ege (Adalar) Denizi ve Doğu Akdeniz’e Yönelik Güvenlik Parametreleri // The Journal of Ottoman Studies*. 2015. Vol. XLV. P. 161–184).

⁴⁵ *Kaçar M. Tersâne Hendesehânesi’nden Bahriye Mektebi’ne*. P. 53–56, 59–72; *Beydilli K. İstanbul’da Deniz ve Kara Mühendishanelerinin Kuruluşu ve Faaliyetleri (1775–1839) // Büyük İstanbul Tarihi*. Vol. 8. İstanbul, 2016. P. 380–400.

⁴⁶ *Davies B. Russia: The Officers of the Baltic Fleet // Eighteenth Century Naval Officers: a Transnational Perspective*. [s. l.], 2019. P. 201, 205–207.

was adopted. This transformation brought the end of the Turkish oared warship tradition: after all, amphibious forces are mainly offensive tools. With the French help (until Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798), Selim III commissioned a new and eye-catching Ottoman navy based on the ships of the line and heavy frigates⁴⁷. Broadside armed sail warships were far more suitable for defensive action with their concentrated firepower. The main objective became "area denial" according to the modern military jargon.

However, the Empire's "centrifugal" power structure continued to block a satisfactory militarization of the Ottoman armed forces and achieving an even level of drill and discipline in any of the war institutions remained elusive until Mahmud II re-established absolutism after 1826⁴⁸. The resulting want of naval gunnery and seafaring skills increasingly forced Turkish admirals to try improving their chances by operating under the protection of coastal fortifications. In early 20th century, offensive minded American naval theoretician A. T. Mahan had coined a derisive term, the "Fortress Fleet", to describe naval forces which shared the same posture and tactics with the post-1791 Ottoman Navy⁴⁹. Throughout the wars of 18th century, Ottoman Navy had aggressively sought battle on the high seas. After the Çeşme battle of 1770 one of the most persistent accusations against the vanquished Capitan Pasha was accepting battle at anchor and trying to seek safety under land artillery; in 1790–1791, whenever contact was established with the Russian Fleet, Ottomans sought battle on the open sea even if they were sheltered under coastal batteries. The attitude of the 19th century Ottoman admirals was to be the complete opposite, as the battles of Dardanelles (1807), Navarino (1827) and Sinop (1853) bear witness. Becoming a "Fortress Fleet" was arguably the Ottoman Navy's ultimate legacy from its experience in Catherine II's Turkish Wars.

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⁴⁷ Selim III's naval reforms were studied in depth by Tuncay Zorlu. See: *Zorlu T. Innovation and Empire in Turkey: Sultan Selim III and the Modernisation of the Ottoman Navy*. Bloomsbury, 2011.

⁴⁸ Archer C. I., Ferris J. R., Herwig H. H., Travers T. E. *World History of Warfare*. Lincoln, 2002. P. 474.

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