

The Involvement of the Order of Saint Lazarus in the Siege of Candia (1648-1669)

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Abstract

Because of the 1536 Franco-Ottoman alliance, the King of France was generally reluctant to directly support the Christian forces besieged in Candia. However, after repeated representations in 1667 from the Holy See, the king consented to allow French volunteer troops to participate in the defence of the city. The Order of Saint Lazarus had committed itself to supporting the defending Christian forces by providing the complement of five fully outfitted ships and troops. The defensive 1668-1669 Candia campaigns were to end disastrously for the French contingent that was forced to withdraw after significant losses.

Introduction

The Siege of Candia (modern-day Heraklion, capital city of Crete) was a military conflict in which Ottoman forces besieged the Venetian-ruled city for 21 years. Following the fall of Cyprus in 1573, Venetian Crete assumed an important strategic position for future Ottoman expansion. Careful political relationships enabled Venice to secure over sixty years of peaceful if tenuous relations. The potential for conflict between the Ottomans and Venice was still however present and all that was needed was a political excuse for the Ottomans to initiate the invasion of Crete. This was provided by the capture of an Ottoman convoy by the Knights of Malta in Venetian waters. The Ottomans were enraged at the incident, and the Porte accused the Venetians of deliberate collusion with the Knights, something the Venetians vehemently denied. The incident was seen as a perfect pretext for war. The scene was set for the Ottoman Empire to send forces to invade and occupy Crete. An Ottoman expedition was quickly assembled with over 50,000 troops and reputedly 416 vessels, under Kapudan Pasha Silahdar Yusuf Pasha. The

armada sailed from the Dardanelles on 30 April 1645. The Ottomans were able to quickly establish control over the countryside, and by the beginning of 1648, all of Crete, except the capital city Candia and a few other strongholds, was in Ottoman hands.

The siege of Candia began in May 1648. The Ottomans cut off the water supply to the city, disrupted the sea lanes to the city, and for the next 16 years, bombarded the city to little effect. The defending Venetian forces in Candia, supported by troops from other Western European nations, continued to show unprecedented resistance. The defence of Candia was exhorted by the Pope, Clement IX, who promoted a revival of the crusading spirit in Catholic Europe and advocated the sending of men, ships, and supplies "to defend Christendom". Troops were forthcoming from Germany, Switzerland, several parts of Italy including the Papal States, Savoy, and the Knights of Malta. The French King Louis XIV was reluctant to become directly involved and risk damaging the long-standing scandalous Franco-Ottoman alliance established in 1536 between King Francis I of France and Suleiman the Magnificent, Turkish Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. The treaty notwithstanding, relations between France and the Ottoman Empire started to cool significantly, and in 1664, France had already supported Austria in their battle against the Turks.

By 1665, a stalemate in the invasion of Crete appeared to have been reached. The defenders could not break the siege, while the Ottomans were prevented from sending sufficient troops to Crete to end the conflict because of the ongoing campaigns in the Balkans. The conclusion of a peace treaty in the Balkans in 1665 provided the opportunity for the Ottomans to resume the assault on the fortresses of Crete with new strength and fresh troops. In the spring of 1667, with more than 30,000 Ottoman troops, the final attack on Candia could be launched. Calls from Venice, supported by Pope Clement IX, for help and support of the 'Christian' cause were once more sent to the Catholic European princes. Pope Clement IX contributed the huge sum of 1,800,000 *scudí*. The Western European Catholic countries responded by

sending ships and troops that augmented the defenders of Candia to about 5,000 fighters. With a total of 90 heavy cannons and 300 lighter cannons available to the defenders, the Ottoman forces were clearly superior.¹ From the French side not much support was to be expected. Wishing to retain the good relations with the Ottomans, Louis XIV did not consent to officially send French troops to the Eastern Mediterranean but gave permission that French volunteers could be recruited. In July 1668, King Louis XIV empowered François d'Aubusson de La Feuillade, the Duke of Beaufort, to lead a troop of volunteers in the relief of Candia. These troops included a contingent of volunteers of the *Ordres de Notre-Dame de Mont-Carmel et de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem*. A contingent of about 600 French soldiers arrived in Candia in the latter part of 1668 and participated in successful sallies led by the Marquis St. Andre Montbrun in October and November 1668.²



The Siege of Candia³

¹ *A description of Candia in its ancient and modern state with an account of the Siege thereof, begun by the Ottoman Emperor in the year 1666 continued in 1667 and 1668, and surrendered in the latter end of 1669.* (London: W. Crook, 1670).

² *A description*, *Ibid*, pp.80, 85.

³ Published by Nicolaes Visscher I (1618-1679), possibly based on the work by Jan Janssonius (1588-1664). Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of the Netherlands.

The Ordres de Notre-Dame de Mont-Carmel et de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem

Re-organized by King Henri IV in 1608 with the primary aim of suppressing heretics, the medieval Order of Saint Lazarus was administratively linked to the newly established Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and placed under the protection and administration of the French king acting through an appointed Grand Master.⁴ In the first fifty years of its existence until 1658, the reigning Grand Masters admitted 101 new knights to the organization. Some of these admissions included naval officials in the service of the French crown.⁵

In the latter part of the 17th century, the reigning Grand Master Charles-Achilles Nérestang, during the Chapter General held in April 1666, encouraged the knights of the Order to financially support the outfitting of a number of ships to be placed at the service of the French Crown. The project was left in the management of Knight Louis de La Barre d'Arbouville [admitted 1666 †11.viii.1666]. Two ships, named *Saint-Lazare* and *Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel*, were outfitted, and put under the respective command of Gédéon de La Barre de Grosliou [ad. 1666 †19.ix.1666] and Charles de Laumoy de La Larnieré [ad. 1666]. De Grosliou was soon killed in a naval action that was to see the augmentation of the Order's fleet by two other ships captained by Noel Léons de la Ferté-Bernard [ad. Servant d'Armes 1665] and Georges de Botherel de Beauvais de La Villegeffroy [ad. 1668 †1706]. In 1667, the Grand Master appointed René Champion de Cicé [*1640 ad. 1666 †15.vi.1667] as supreme commander of the fleet. De Cicé died soon after in action to be replaced by Philippe du Coudray de Condé [ad. 1667]. By 1668, the Order had significantly augmented its fleet to ten frigates

⁴ C. Savona-Ventura. *The Hospitaller Knights of Saint Lazarus*. (Malta: Grand Priory of the Maltese Islands – MHOSLI, 2019), pp.171-182.

⁵ A. de Marsy. *Liste des Chevaliers de l'Ordre de Saint-Lazare de Jerusalem et de Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel*. (Paris: J.B. Dumoulin, 1875), pp.3-7; O. Chebrou de Lespinats. *L'Histoire Maritime de l'Ordre de Saint-Lazare de Jerusalem (du XIII^e au XXI^e siècle)*. (Toulouse: Cercle Sancto Lazari, 2012), pp.64-65.

generally deployed in acting against marauding pirates disturbing French commerce. The outfitted ships were commanded respectively by the Grand Master Charles-Achilles Nérestang, Philippe du Coudray de Condé, César Brossin de Meré [ad. 1664], Jacques de Castelnau [ad. 1658], Jean Nicholas Tristan de Saint-Amand [ad. 1666], Charles de Brisai de Denonville [ad. 1666], Georges de Botherel, Jean Piquedefer de Villemorel [ad. 1668 †16.xii.1668], and Etienne de la Borde [ad. Servant d'Armes 1665].⁶

The 1668 French campaign in Candia

The French volunteer troops under the command of Monsieur François d'Aubusson de La Feuillade were divided into four brigades, each led by a commander assisted by a number of sub-brigadiers and aide-majors. The four commanders included the Count de S. Paul, the Duke de Caderousse, the Count de Ville-maur, and the Duke de Chateau Thierry.⁷ The Count de Ville-maur *sive* Jean de Piquerdefer de Villemorel had been admitted a chevalier of the *Ordres de Saint Lazare et de Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel* on the 15 March 1668. He had previously in June 1667, participated in a naval battle against an English ship off the English coast during which battle he was seriously injured. After his admission to the Order, he was given command of one of frigates belonging to the Order.⁸ At Candia, he was put in command of one of the brigades. His sub-brigadiers included his son Monsieur de Ville-maur, de Bois le Comte, de Charmont, and de Virgini. His aide-majors included de la Mondie and de Longuemar; while his ensign was de la Coste. On the 16 December 1668, orders were given for a general assault. The fighting led

⁶ P.E.G. Sibert. *Histoire des ordres royaux Hospitaliers-militaires de Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel et de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem*. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1772), pp.424-441; O. Chebrou de Lespinats, *ibid.*, pp.64-68; A. de Marsy, *ibid.*, pp.7-10. A. de Marsy does not list the admission of Etienne de la Borde and Noel Léons de la Ferté-Bernard.

⁷ *Journal de l'expédition de M. de la Feuillade pour le secours de Candie*. (Lyons, 1669). English edition: *A journal of the expedition of Monsieur de La Feuillade for the relief of Candia*. (London: T. Williams, 1670), p.8-10.

⁸ O. Chebrou de Lespinats, *op. cit.*, p.68; A. de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.8.

to the death of Comte de Ville-Maur together with his sub-brigadier de Bois le Comte and 11 other “persons of quality” of his brigade. The 11 slain “persons of quality” included de Lusignan, de Chinol, Martigny, Chateau Guillaume, de Liran, du Taro, de Chaseras, du Beuil, de Bois Peraux, de la Brueriere, and Chev. De Lusignan. None have been identified as registered members of the *Ordres de Saint Lazare et de Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel*. Twenty other officers were wounded. Out of the 600 soldiers who arrived in Candia, there remained less than 230 soldiers after the assault, of whom 50 were sick or wounded. The heavy losses resulting from this campaign had its toll and the French troops left Candia on the 4 January 1669.⁹

Representations to the Holy See by the Order

In the interim, it appears that throughout 1668 the Order was making representations towards obtaining control of their properties that had been appropriated by the king’s brother Philippe I, Duke of Orléans, of Valois, and of Chartres. These representations were directed to the Papal Legate in France, the Cardinal of Vendôme, who responded by issuing a Bull on the 5 June 1688, addressed to '*Carolus Achilles, Marchio de Neremstang, Magnus Magister*' confirming the rights and privileges of the '*Fratres milites regalium, hospitaliariorum, & militarium ordinum beat<a>e Mari<a>e Virginis de Monte-Carmelo & Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani, tam citra quam ultramare*'.¹⁰ Further representations were made to the King and the Duke of Orléans. These led to an

⁹ *A Journal*, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-49, 55-56, 76.

¹⁰ Cardinal of Vendome, Papal legate in France: *Bull addressed to 'Carolus Achilles, Marchio de Neremstang, Magnus Magister' confirming the privileges of the 'Fratres milites regalium, hospitaliariorum, & militarium ordinum beat<a>e Mari<a>e Virginis de Monte-Carmelo & Sancti Lazari Hierosolimitani, tam citra quam ultra mare' dated 5.vi.1668*. As transcribed in: H.M. de Langle & J.L. de Tréouret de Kerstrat. *Les Ordres de Saint Lazare de Jerusalem & De Notre Dame du Mont Carmel aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siecles*. (Paris: Publications LMTK, 1992), Annex 11, pp.84-86.

agreement being signed on the 13 August 1668, whereby the said properties were returned to the Order's administration.¹¹

The Order had also approached the Holy See about the matter with the delegation actually presenting the request in September 1668. Correspondence between Cardinal Rospigliosi, Prefect of the Tribunal of the Apostolic Segnatura, and Niccolo Pietro Bargellini, the serving Apostolic Nuncio to France, confirmed that the parties had already come to a satisfactory agreement.¹² On their part, the delegation promised the Order's support for the forthcoming campaign to relieve Candia and undertook to send at its own expense a regiment of 800 troops and four armed vessels.¹³ In December, 1668, a delegation representing the Order, composed of the Marquis Claudio Cazelli and the Abbé de S. Victor Chev. Cermelli, travelled from Rome to Venice to reassure the Republic of the support of the Order and a promise to send five vessels, equivalent to half the naval contingent owned by the Order, for the aid of Candia in the subsequent year.¹⁴

¹¹ *De St-Germain, 13.ix.1668*, document imprimé, Nunziatura di Francia [NF], Archives secrètes du Vatican, v. 136, f.30. As reported in: C. Terlinden. *Le Pape Clement IX et a guerre de Candie (1667-1669) d'après les archives secrètes du Saint-Siège*. (Louvain: C. Peeters, 1904), p.99; *Traite entre les commissaires generaux du Duc d'Orleans et ceux de l'Ordre du 13 aout 1668*. As transcribed in: *La Vie Chevaleresque*, December 1938, 21-22, pp.104-106.

¹² *The Apostolic Nuncio Bargellini to Cardinal Rospigliosi, 16.x.1668*, NF, v. 136, f.28; *The Cardinal Rospigliosi to Apostolic Nuncio Bargellini, 30.x.1668*, NF, v. 316, f.256 ; m., v.348. As reported in: C. Terlinden, *ibid*, p.99.

¹³ *Projet de ce que l'ordre Royal de Notre-Dame du Mont Carmel et de Saint-Lazare de Hierusalem peut faire pour le service de la république de Venise*, NF, V. 136, f. 29. As reported in: C. Terlinden, *ibid.*, p.99.

¹⁴ *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, 3 January 1669, issue 1, (Amsterdam: Corneille Jansz Zwoll, 1669). Available at <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1810/131692/amfre69.txt>

The 1669 French campaign

The 1668 French campaign had accomplished little and suffered heavy losses before its return to France in January 1669. Louis XIV subsequently commissioned a larger force under the direction of Philippe de Montault de Bénac, Duke of Navailles [land forces], and the Duke of Beaufort [naval forces]. The land force supposedly consisted of about 6000 men distributed in 57 companies of 12 regiments, three companies of cavalry, 1400 tents, three months provisions and a huge supply of provisions repetition. The naval armament included 15 men-of-war ships equipped with 36 or more broadside cannons and some 27 small craft and transports carrying 7000 soldiers under the command of the duke of Beaufort; and 13 galleys and three galliots under the command of Louis Victor de Rochechouart, count of Vivonne. The 15 ships under the command of the Duc de Beaufort included the *Monarque*, *Thérèse*, *Toulon*, *Fleuron*, *La Sirène* [captain: Seigneur de Cogolin], *Ecureuil*, *Courtisan*, *Soleil d'Afrique*, *Bourbon*, *Provencale*, *Princesse*, *Royale*, *Croissant*, *Lys*, and *Dunkerquois*. The galleys under the overall command of the Count of Vivonne included the *Général* [captain: Count de Vivonne], *Capitane* [de Manse], *Batronne* [de la Brossadière], *Croir de Malte* [d'Depéde], *Fleur de Lys* [de la Breteche], *Victorie* [de Tonnerre], *Dauphine* [Villeneuve], *Force* [de Breteuil], *Saint-Louis* [de Montaulieu], *Couronne* [de Gardenne], *Fortune* [de Janson], *Valeure* [Viviers], and *Nenommée* [de Folleville]. The galleons included the *Vigilante* [Cjpanet], *Subtile* [de Bueil], and *Volante* [de Forestat]. Except for the Count of Vivonne and the Seigneur de Cogolin, none of the other recorded captains have been identified to be registered members of the Order.¹⁵ Financially, France consented to contribute with 400,000 *scudi*.¹⁶ These troops would have included the promised contingent of members of the *Ordres de Notre-Dame de Mont-Carmel et de Saint-*

¹⁵ R.C. Anderson. *Naval wars in the Levant, 1559-1853*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), pp.181-182; W. Bigge. *Der Kampf um Candia in den Jahren 1667-1669*. (Berlin: E.S. Mittler und Sohn, 1899), pp.221-227.

¹⁶ K.M. Setton. *Venice, Austria and the Turks in the Seventeenth century*. (U.S.A.: American Philosophical Society, 1991), vol. 192, pp.222-224.

Lazare de Jerusalem. Some of the participants in the campaign were also eventually admitted to the Order.

Louis Victor de Rochechouart, count of Vivonne (*ad.? Probably b. = born 25.viii.1636; †15.ix.1688; s/o Gabriel de Rochechouart de Mortemart ∞ Diane de Grandseigne) was admitted to the Order after the Candia campaign in 1671. He served as *Général des galères* and Marshal of France. He voluntarily entered the military in 1653 as the Captain of the Royal Guard distinguishing himself in Flanders and in Artois. He was involved in the sieges of Landrecies, Condé-sur-l'Escaut and Valenciennes. He subsequently served in Italy in the rank of Colonel of the Royal Estranger. In 1663, he then requested transfer to the marine service under the command of the Duke of Beaufort. He saw action during the expedition to Jijel in northeastern Algeria and in the 1667 Spanish campaign. In March, 1669, he was appointed *Général des galères*.¹⁷ He led the galley squadron in the Candia campaign enticing his sailors to man the oars since he had insufficient slaves to do so.¹⁸ On his arrival to Candia on the 5 July, 1669, the Count of Vivonne found the fleet without an Admiral, the Duke de Beaufort having been killed in action on the 24 June, and thus assumed the leadership of the French fleet to continue giving battle. He was injured in combat on the 25 July when the French vice-flagship *La Thérèse*, a 900-ton French warship armed with 58 cannons, exploded. The failure of



¹⁷ O. Chebrou de Lespinats. *op. cit.*, p.69-70. The admission of de Rochechouart into the Order is only reported by this source. A. de Marsy, *op. cit.*, does not list this admission. Louis Victor de Rochechouart de Mortemart. In: *Wikipedi – l'encyclopédie libre*. (U.S.A.: Wikimedia Foundation, 2016), available at https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Victor_de_Rochechouart_de_Mortemart

¹⁸ *A description...*, *op. cit.*, p.100.

this battle significantly lowered the morale of the French troops and soured the relations between the French and the Venetians. Augmented by the bad supply situation, the spread of sickness among their troops and the continuous attrition of their forces in the everyday fighting at Candia made the French commanders especially keen to depart. The French contingent eventually departed from Candia on the 20 August.¹⁹ Following the Candia campaign, the count of Vivonne continued his naval career fighting the barbary pirates and participated in the 1672 French War with Holland and the 1673 siege of Maastricht. In 1675, he was sent to Messina to quell a revolt. In August 1675, he was appointed Marshal of France and, in 1676, Viceroy of Sicily. After 1678, he retired from his military career and was appointed “First Gentleman of the King's Bedchamber”. He married Antoinette Louise de Mesmes (*1640; †10.iii.1709) and had one son and five daughters.²⁰



Another member of the *Ordres de Notre-Dame de Mont-Carmel et de Saint-Lazare de Jerusalem* who participated in the second French campaign to relieve the Siege of Candia was Jacques de Cuers, Seigneur de Cogolin (*1620; †14.xi.1700; s/o Henri de Cuers ∞ Marguerite de Vitalis). He was admitted to the Order on the 16 June 1681, after the Candia campaign. Monsieur de Coqolin started his naval career in 1638 as a volunteer, but eventually joined the regiment of guards of the company of Evénos and saw action at Saint-Omer, Renty and Catelet. In 1646, he saw action in the war against the Spanish Habsburgs and was present during the fight of Orbetello in command of the ship *The Whale*. He served the King during the civil wars and was appointed lieutenant of the king of the city and castle of St Tropez. He was to see further action in the Mediterranean, including the Siege of Candia in 1669 when he

¹⁹ *A Journal*, *op. cit.*, pp.101, 110-111.

²⁰ Wikimedia, *op. cit.*

commanded the 40-gun ship *La Syrène* and 220 men. The Duke of Vivonne was to comment that: "M. de Cogoulin, one of the bravest and most alert of our young captains, and one of the best designers and engineers there in ports". He continued with his naval career participating in the War against the Dutch, the Sicilian Campaign, and the War of the League of Augsburg. He was made a chevalier of the *Ordre de Saint Louis*. In 1649, he married Francoise de Villeneuve, and again in 1651 married Diane de Garnier-Julhians. From the latter marriage he had two sons – Jean-Francis and Joseph-Maqdelon, and a daughter Claire.²¹ De Cogolin was well respected by the Minister of Marine Louis Phélypeaux who, on 12 January, 1694, requested advice on the French navy, writing: "As I would be very glad, for my particular instruction, to have memoirs on what concerns the principal points of the navy, and that I know that no one can give me better than you, I thought you at your leisure, would you like me to make one, in accordance with the model you will find attached, and send it to me. I beg you to enter into as many details as you can, and to be perfectly convinced that I will be very much obliged to you for what you will do well on this occasion. I am, etc." De Cogolin responded to this request and sent his report on 4 February.²²

Conclusion

Apparently chastened by their failed relief effort and the loss of so valuable a warship, the French abandoned Candia in August 1669, leaving Captain General Francesco Morosini, the commander of Venetian forces, with only 3,600 fit men and scant supplies to defend the fortress. The leader of the Venetian forces and their Christian allies was then Capitano Generale Francesco Morosini (who in 1688 was to be elected Doge of Venice), assisted by the Piedmontese Marchese

²¹ Jacques de Cuers. In: . In: *Wikipedi – l'encyclopédie libre*. (U.S.A.: Wikimedia Foundation, 2016), available at https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_de_Cuers; A. de Marsy, *op. cit.*, p.23.

²² Adrien Richer, *Les fastes de la Marine Française*. (Paris: Veuve Hérisant, 1787), pp.75-79.

Geronimo Francesco Villa and the German Georg Friedrich, Count of Sparr. The general-provider and commander of the town of Candia was the Venetian Antonio Barbaro who was soon to be succeeded by Bernardo Nani. Morosini was well aware that his troops were much too weak—and continuously reduced by diseases and effects of hunger and bad provisions—to start a counterattack.

Two Ottoman assaults on the 25th were repulsed, but to Morosini, it was clear that the city could no longer be held. After a council of war on 27 August, but without first consulting Venice, it was decided to capitulate. On 5 September 1669, the city was surrendered to the Ottomans, while the survivors of the garrison, the citizens and their treasures were evacuated. On his own initiative, Morosini concluded a permanent peace agreement with the Ottomans, which, under the circumstances, was relatively generous: Venice would retain the Aegean islands of Tinos and Cythera and the isolated island fortresses of Spinalonga, Gramvousa and Souda off the Cretan coast, as well as the gains made in Dalmatia. He, therefore, accepted terms and surrendered to Ahmed Köprülü, the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, on 27 September 1669. However, his surrender without first receiving authorization to do so from the Venetian Senate made Morosini a controversial figure in Venice for some years afterward. As part of the surrender terms, all Christians were allowed to leave Candia with whatever they could carry while Venice retained possession of Gramvousa, Souda and Spinalonga, fortified islands that shielded natural harbours' where Venetian ships could stop during their voyages to the eastern Mediterranean. After Candia's fall, the Venetians somewhat offset their defeat by expanding their holdings in Dalmatia.