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### [The Siege of Famagusta, Cyprus]. Famagosta

**Stock#:** 38707  
**Map Maker:** Bertelli  
**Date:** 1573 circa  
**Place:** Venice  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 8.25 x 6.25 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



#### Description:

***Exceedingly rare separately issued 'Lafreri School' view of the Siege of Famagusta, Cyprus, published in Venice by Donato Bertelli.***

This rare battle plan depicts the Siege of Famagusta, Cyprus (1570-71), a momentous event that marked the Venetians' last stand on Cyprus, following which the island came under Ottoman rule for over 300 years. The plan is of the utmost rarity. We locate only a single example, at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice.

Famagusta (called 'Famagosto' in Italian) was an important city located on the eastern coast of Cyprus, and which notably possessed the island's deepest harbor. In 1570, the Ottomans invaded Cyprus, which since 1489 had been controlled by the Republic of Venice. After overrunning the island, heavily-fortified Famagusta proved to be the last Venetian stronghold.

As shown on the present map, on September 17, 1570, an immense Ottoman force of between 50,000 to 100,000 troops (historians still argue over the true size of the force, however, even the lower estimate was considered stupendously large for the time!) armed with 150 cannon and backed by a naval flotilla of 150 ships, attacked the town from all directions. They were commanded by the psychologically erratic Lala Kara Mustafa Pasha, who was under immense pressure, as he knew that if he failed to conquer Cyprus, the Sultan would likely have him executed.

The Venetians were held up within the walled city, dominated by the 'Castello' (Castle), which hugged the harbor. Their garrison numbered only 6,000 men and was commanded by Marcantonio Bragadin



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(1523-71), an experienced naval and siege commander.

As shown, the map depicts the various elements of the Turkish forces, including their headquarters (located around the large tent in the upper center with camels), the 'Picchieri turcheschi' (the Turkish Pikemen), two groups of 'Janiseri' (Janissaries, the Sultan's personal elite corps of troops) and the 'Cavallerie' (Cavalry). Meanwhile the "Galere turchesche" (Turkish Galleys) bombarded the city from the sea. Towards the left of the scene, the Turks are shown to have also built improvised forts to pummel the town with heavy artillery.

Bragadin and his men, who received no reinforcements from Venice, mounted an exceptionally brave defense, occasionally even sending parties outside of the relative safety of the city, to walls to harass the Ottomans. To the utter frustration of the Turks, the Venetians held out for almost eleven months, finally suing for terms of surrender on August 1, 1571.

Mustafa Pasha agreed to allow the Venetians to leave the city with safe passage out of Cyprus and agreed to treat the civilian inhabitants of the town mercifully. However, when Bragadin met the Ottoman general for the surrender formalities, Mustafa Pasha suddenly went into a mad rage and accused Bragadin of all sorts of absurdities. He then seized the Venetian commander and subjected him to over two weeks of the most horrific forms of torture before killing him.

In Venice, Bragadin was saluted as one the Serene Republic's great martyrs, for his heroic defense of Famagusta and his brave countenance in the face of Mustafa's sadistic treatment. Bragadin's martyrdom is thought to have inspired Titian's great painting, *The Flaying of Marsyas* (1573).

Donato Bertelli ( fl. 1558-1584) was a Venetian mapmaker and one of the prominent members of the 'Lafreri School' of Italian cartographers working in Rome and Venice during the 16th Century. While he composed his own works, he was also known to issue his own editions of the maps of his colleagues Paolo Forlani and Giovanni Francesco Camocio. Bertelli issued the present map in response to the intense interest that the Siege of Famagusta and its aftermath had generated in the Republic of Venice and throughout Italy.

The present map appears to have been separately issued and is very similar to the map of the siege issued by Giovanni Francesco Camocio's in his rare work, *Isole Famose porti, fortezze, e terre maritime* (Venice, 1572), which was copied by Simon Pinargenti and included in his *Isole che son da Venetia nella Dalmatia let per tutto L'Archipelago* (Venice, 1573).

### **Historical Context: The Battle for Cyprus**



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### **[The Siege of Famagusta, Cyprus]. Famagosta**

During the 16th Century, the Mediterranean world and the Italian audience in particular, was fixated on Cyprus and maps of the island were much in demand. Cyprus had long occupied an outsized role in the politics and military affairs of the region. Located strategically near the coast of the Levant, it was used by the Crusaders as a staging point for their invasions of the Holy Land in the 12th Century. Since then, its largely Greek Orthodox population had been subject to a succession of Latin Roman Catholic rulers. In 1489, the island was formally annexed to the Venetian Republic. However, the Ottoman Empire, centered in nearby Turkey, made frequent raids on Cyprus and notably, in 1539, sacked the key port of Limassol. In response, the Venetians decided to heavily fortify the other main ports, such as Kyrenia and Farmagusta, as well as the inland capital of Nicosia.

In spite of this belligerent history, in the 1540s, the Venetians were able to mollify the Ottomans by agreeing to pay them an annual tribute of 8,000 ducats in return for leaving Cyprus alone. The Venetians highly valued the island's strategic location for trade and the island's approximately 160,000 residents prospered under a flourishing economy.

However, by the late 1560s, a more pugilistic mood prevailed in Istanbul and the Ottoman leadership decided that it was high time to strike their Christian enemies, who were considered to be divided and disorganized. This led to the Fourth Ottoman-Venetian War (1570-73), better known as the 'Guerra di Cipro' (Cypriot War) in Italy. This pitted an alliance of various Italian states, Spain and the Knights of Malta against the Ottoman Empire. On paper, the odds heavily favored the Ottomans, whose military capabilities were built up greatly during the recent rule of Suleiman the Magnificent.

The Ottomans, warning of much carnage if their demands were not met, formally asked the Venetians to peacefully cede Cyprus. They were rebuffed and responded with what could only be deemed overwhelming, if not shocking, force. On July 3, 1570 an Ottoman army under Lala Kara Mustafa Pasha, consisting of 80,000 men, who had sailed aboard 400 ships, landed near Larnaca and promptly marched inland to invest Nicosia.

Nicosia's newly-constructed fortified walls initially frustrated the Ottoman siege but the city eventually fell on September 9, a prelude to much bloodshed. Kyrenia fell on September 15 and Farmagusta, the last Venetian stronghold, was besieged. Farmagusta, held out for almost 11 months until August 1571, after which the Ottomans exacted terrible revenge on the garrison and the town's citizenry. By this time, all of Cyprus was in Ottoman hands.

Meanwhile, on October 7, 1571 at the Battle of Lepanto, in Greece, the main Ottoman naval fleet was annihilated by the Allied Christian fleet, under Don Juan of Austria. In spite of this turn of events, the Venetians had prosecuted the war against the Ottomans very badly and were unable to mount a rescue mission to retake Cyprus. They were forced to end the war on a separate peace from their allies and



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formally ceded Cyprus to Turkey. Cyprus would remain under Ottoman rule, of widely varying degrees of harshness, until 1878, when the island became a protectorate of Great Britain.

Bertelli's view of the Siege of Famagusta is the authoritative contemporary depiction of this seminal event in the history of Cyprus. It is also exceedingly rare, as we are not aware of any sales records for the map dating from the last 25 years and can trace only a single institutional example, at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice.

**Detailed Condition:**