

**Worksheet S6.2.4**

Why didn't the Turks win the Maltese Islands in 1565?

**THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE TURKS****Read and answer.***(material collected by George Calleja)*

The Turks had many more soldiers than the Order of St. John. However, they still ended up losing. Why did this happen?

1. The Knights and the Maltese were barricaded inside the fortresses and cities that were surrounded by tall bastions and were strengthened and equipped in the best way possible. So it was not easy for the Turks to capture them.
2. There was a disagreement between the heads of the Turks regarding which fortress to attack first. This lack of agreement confused the Turkish soldiers.
3. During the Siege, the Maltese and the Knights contributed with great bravery and unity. The determination of Christians helped to make the Turks realize that they had a difficult task ahead of them and so, their morale began to decline.
4. The Turks took more than a month to win Fort Saint Elmo. They lost many people (amongst them Dragut) and so, their advantage of having more soldiers than the Maltese and the Knights was being lost.
5. The Turks were frightened for their galleys because these were the only way they could use to go back to their country. For this reason, they ended in a race against time since they wanted to win Malta before the start of bad weather and storms during the winter, which could make it difficult for their galleys to sail in the Mediterranean. Apart from this the Turks were afraid that help would arrive from foreign Christian countries to aid the knights. Therefore, with every day that passed the Turks were becoming more demoralized.
6. Before barricading themselves in the fortresses, the Maltese and the Knights destroyed all the things they could not take in with them. Hence, the Turks found it difficult to find food and water. Lack of water during a time when the weather in Malta is extremely hot, was surely a big disadvantage for the Turks who needed to climb the bastions.
7. The hard rock of Malta made it almost impossible for the Turks to use their tactic of digging tunnels under the bastions of the fortifications. In fact, their tunnel in Vittoriosa was not successful. Hence, the bastions were, in practice, stronger than they appeared.

1. Why do you think the death of Dragut greatly confused the Turks?

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2. Why do you think that the Turks winning Saint Elmo did not dishearten the Maltese and the Knights?

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3. The Turks wanted to win the Siege very quickly. What were they afraid of?

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4. Imagine you are a Turkish soldier on the galley going back home after the defeat in the Great Siege of Malta. Briefly write your thoughts.

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