

Vienna

Tunis

Tripoli

Algiers

Budapest

Mediterranean Sea

Belgrade Varna Sofia

Athens

Black Sea

Constantinopole

Alexandria

Jerusalem

Mecca

Red Sea

Baghdad

# **Before the battle**



The Ottoman Empire 1300-1683

Władysław Warneńczyk, lithography, A.Maurin, 1856

> Small numbers of Teutonic Knights and Czech Hussites took part in the Battle of Varna on the side of the Christian forces.

Que

# orces

The Polish-Hungarian expedition sets off in mid-September. Marching along the river Danube, the Christian troops reach a plain outside Varna. There, the advance of the allies is blocked by Turkish forces. Despite being outnumbered three times by the Turks, the Christians decide to launch a major attack.





The first charge is carried out with lances; after breaking them, the fighting continues with swords, in which archers take equal part.

#### **The Turks**

#### Spahisi

Cheavy cavalry armed with chainmail jacket, shield, bow, short roster, saber, rope and a misiura.

#### Janissaries

Selected infantry, forcibly recruited from among conquered European nations (boys aged 7-14). They were forced to convert to Islam, physically toughened, and taught the art of war. They carried short sabers (yatagan), spears, daggers and initially bows (but later pistols, and then muskets).

#### Akinjayas

abla turecka Kilij

Irregular Ottoman cavalry armed with bows and sabers, used for offensive or reconnaissance operations.

# The battle

### (1)

The battle begins with a charge of Turkish cavalry towards the left flank of the Christian army. The attack is repelled twice by launching stone projectiles from bombards. The Anatolian cavalry joins the Turkish attack which thrashes the Polish-Hungarian force. The Christians attempt to retreat to a small fortress of Galata, but they are further decimated by the Turks.

SPAHIS





na, 1865-1867

## (2)

At this point, Jan Hunyady comes to the rescue, pushing the Turks back. The Polish king, wrongly seeing Hunyady's move as a battle's turning point, chargesinto battle along his 500 knights. He hopes to capture Sultan Murad II.

### (3)

The Jannisaries repel the Polish attack and encircle the king with his knights. The king's horse stumbles, the king is captured and immediately beheaded with a sword by one of the Sultan's warriors.

## (4)

The death of the Christian king wreaks havoc among the Polish-Hungarian troops. The Ottoman army finally overcomes the Christian forces

0

0

0

С

# (5)

Hunyady makes an attempt to retrieve the king's headless corpse, but he is overwhelmed by the Turks and has to retreat.





# After the battle

The military campaign of autumn 1444 and the Battle of Varna are sometimes thought to be the last anti-Turkish crusade of medieval Europe.

Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople The defeat of the Polish-Hungarian forces resulted in the strengthening of the Turkish position in Europe and the final collapse of the Christian kingdoms and principalities in the Balkans and the remnants of the Byzantine Empire.

**1453** – Fall of Constantinople to the Turks.

# Remembrance

For southern Slavs, Władysław III the Jagiellonian became a folk hero, a martyr king for his faith. The Bulgarians recognized King Władysław III as their national hero, giving him the nickname "Varnenczyk" in the 19th century.

1906 – symbolic tombstone commemorating Władysław III of Varna was unveiled in Wawel Cathedral. It shows the king as a knight in full armor holding the Szczerbiec, the coronation sword of Polish kings, in his hands.

A message written in 1722 by the Portuguese historian Henrique Henriques de Noronh suggests that King Władysław survived and went to the island of Madeira. Remembered by the islanders as Henrique Alemão (Henry the German - as people from across the Rhine were known in Portugal), he was supposed to be the true father of... Christopher Columbus.



The head of King Władysław was supposedly preserved in a jar of honey and put on display to the public in the Ottoman Empire. The body of King Władysław III has never been found.



**1935** – in the presence of about 30,000 people, including the Tsar of Bulgaria Boris III, a monument was unveiled - the mausoleum of the fallen king. The ceremony was attended by a group of about 2,000 guests from Poland, including representatives from state authorities.



