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# Battle of Chesma

Coordinates: 38°19′48″N 26°17′24″E﻿ / ﻿

<b>Battle of Çeşme</b>	
Part of the <u>Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774</u>	
	
The destruction of the Ottoman fleet on 7 July	
<b>Date</b>	5–7 July 1770
<b>Location</b>	<u>Çeşme Bay</u> , <u>Ottoman Empire</u> <span><span><span><span><span>38°19′48″N</span> <span>26°17′24″E</span></span></span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>﻿</span></span><span><span></span></span></span></span>
<b>Result</b>	Russian victory <sup>[1][2][3]</sup>
<b>Belligerents</b>	
<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> Russian Empire	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> Ottoman Empire
<b>Commanders and leaders</b>	
<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> <b>Alexey Orlov</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> <b>Hüsameddin</b>
<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> Grigory Spiridov	<b>Pasha</b>
<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> <span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> Samuel Greig	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> Gazi Hasan
<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> <span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> J. Elphinstone	Pasha
	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> Cafer Bey
<b>Strength</b>	
9 ships of the line, 3 frigates, 1 bomb vessels, 4 fireships, 4 supply ships	16 ships of the line, 6 frigates, 6 xebecs, 13 galleys, 32 small craft, 1,300 guns
<b>Casualties and losses</b>	
1 ship of the line 4 fire ships 534 <sup>[4]</sup> –661 <sup>[5]</sup> killed 40 wounded	16 ships of the line 6 frigates and escort vessels 13 galleys 32 smaller vessels

at least 11,000 men  
killed<sup>[6]</sup>



Location of the battle site in the  
Aegean Sea

The naval battle of Cheshme<sup>[7]</sup> (also **battle of Chesme** or **Chesma**) took place on 5–7 July 1770 during the Russo-Turkish War (1768–1774) near and in Çeşme (Cheshme or Chesma) Bay, in the area between the western tip of Anatolia and the island of Chios, which was the site of a number of past naval battles between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice. It was a part of the Orlov Revolt of 1770, a precursor to the later Greek War of Independence (1821–1829), and the first of a number of disastrous fleet battles for the Ottomans against Russia. Today it is commemorated as a Day of Military Honour in Russia.

## Prelude

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The Russo-Turkish War had begun in 1768, and Russia sent several squadrons from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean Sea to draw Ottoman attention away from their Black Sea fleet, then only six ships of the line strong. Two Russian squadrons, commanded by Admiral Grigory Spiridov and Rear Admiral John Elphinstone,<sup>[8]</sup> a British adviser, combined under the overall command of Count Alexei Orlov, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Fleet, and went to look for the Ottoman fleet.

On 5 July 1770, they came across it, anchored in line just north of Çeşme Bay, western Anatolia. The Ottoman fleet contained about 14 ships of the line, perhaps 6 frigates, 6 xebecs, 13 galleys and 32 small craft, with about 1,300 guns in total. About 10 of the ships of the line, of 70–100 guns, were in the Ottoman main line with a further 6 or so in the second, arranged so that they could fire through the gaps in the first line. Behind that were the frigates, xebecs, etc. The fleet was commanded by Kapudan Pasha Mandalzade Hüsameddin, in the fourth ship from the front (north end) of the line, with Hasan Pasha in the first ship, *Real Mustafa*, and Cafer Bey in the seventh. Two further ships of the line, probably small, had left this fleet for Mytilene the previous evening.

After settling on a plan of attack, the Russian battle line (see Table 1) sailed towards the south end of the Ottoman line and then turned north, coming alongside the Ottomans, with the tail end coming into action last (Elphinstone had wanted to approach the northern end first, then follow the wind along the Ottoman line, attacking their ships one by one – the method used by Nelson at the Battle of the Nile in 1798).

## Battle

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The Ottomans opened fire at about 11:45 a.m., followed by the Russians slightly later. Three of the Russian ships of the line had trouble staying in position; *Evropa* turned around and came back behind *Rostislav*, *Tri Svyatitelya* circled the second Ottoman vessel before coming back into the

Russian line, being attacked in error by *Tri Ierarcha* as she did so, and *Sviatoi Ianuarii* turned around before coming back into the line.

Spiridov, in *Sviatoi Evstafii*, had a close-range battle with Hasan Pasha in *Real Mustafa*, before the latter was suddenly seen to be on fire. Her mainmast came down and landed on *Sviatoi Evstafii*'s deck, causing the Russian ship to blow up immediately. Shortly thereafter, *Real Mustafa* blew up as well.

According to Elphinstone, who claimed the Russians were almost useless, Spiridov and Count Feodor Orlov (brother of the commander), had left *Sviatoi Evstafii* before the fighting became close-range. Spiridov ended up on *Tri Svyatitelya*. *Sviatoi Evstafii*'s captain, Kruse, survived too. At about 2:00 p.m. the fighting ended, as the Ottomans cut their cables and moved south into the bay, forming themselves into a defensive line of eight ships of the line, a second line, and the rest beyond.

On 6 July, the Russians bombarded the Ottoman ships and land positions. At about 12:30 a.m. on the morning of 7 July, Orlov sent Samuel Greig (who transferred to *Rostislav*) to attack with *Evropa*, *Rostislav* and *Ne tron menya* forming a south-north line facing the Ottomans, and with *Saratov* in reserve, *Nadezhda* attacking the batteries at the eastern side of the bay entrance, *Afrika* attacking the batteries on the western side, and *Grom* near *Afrika*. At about 1:30 a.m. or earlier (times were about 90 minutes earlier, according to Elphinstone), fire from *Grom* and/or *Ne tron menya* caused an Ottoman ship of the line to blow up after her main topsail caught fire, and the fire quickly spread to other ships of the line. By 2:00 a.m., two Ottoman ships of the line had blown up and more were on fire, and Greig sent in three fireships (the fourth, seeing the danger, stayed out), which contributed in a small way to the burning of almost the entire Ottoman fleet. At about 4:00 a.m., boats were sent in to save two ships of the line which were not burning, but one of these caught fire while it was being towed. The other, *Semend-i Bahri* 60, survived and was captured along with five galleys. Fighting ended at about 8:00 a.m. Russian casualties on 5 July were 14 killed, plus 636 killed in *Sviatoi Evstafii*, and about 30 wounded, and on 7 July 11 killed. Ottoman casualties were much higher. Hüsameddin, Hasan Pasha and Cafer Bey survived. Hüsameddin was removed from his position, which was given to Cafer Bey. This was the only significant fleet battle during the Russo-Turkish War.



Vladimir Kosov. Chesma battle of 1770

## Significance



Chesma Column

The Battle of Cheshme was fought on the same day as the land Battle of Larga. It was the greatest naval defeat suffered by Ottomans since the Battle of Lepanto (1571). This battle inspired great confidence in the Russian fleet and allowed the Russians to control the Aegean Sea for some time. The defeat of the Ottoman fleet also speeded up rebellions by minority groups in the Ottoman Empire, especially the

Battle line	Guns	Type
<i>Evropa</i> (a)	66	Battleship (ship of the line)
<i>Sviatoi Evstafii</i> (b)	68	Battleship; blew up
<i>Tri Svyatitelya</i>	66	Battleship
<i>Sviatoi Ianuarii</i>	66	Battleship
<i>Tri Ierarcha</i> (c)	66	Battleship
<i>Rostislav</i>	68	Battleship
<i>Ne Tron Menya</i>	66	Battleship

Orthodox Christian nations in the Balkan peninsula, who helped the Russian army in defeating the Ottoman Empire.<sup>[9]</sup>

After this naval victory, the Russian fleet stayed in the Aegean for the following five years. It returned to Çeşme twice more during this time to bombard it. Historians still debate the rationale for the Russian military focus on this small fort town while there were many other more strategic targets along the Aegean coast.

Due to the Ottoman defeat, fanatical Muslim groups proceeded to massacre c. 1,500 local Greeks in nearby Smyrna.<sup>[10]</sup>

Catherine the Great commissioned four monuments to commemorate the victory: Chesma Palace and Church of Saint John at Chesme Palace in St Petersburg (1774–77), Chesma Obelisk in Gatchina (1775), and Chesma Column in Tsarskoe Selo (1778).

## See also

- Timeline of Ottoman history
- Action of 27 May 1770
- Action of 6 November 1772
- Action of 4 July 1773
- Action of 3 September 1773
- Action of 20 June 1774

## Notes

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<i>Svyatoslav</i> (d)	84	Battleship
<i>Saratov</i>	66	Battleship
<b>Other ships</b>	<b>Guns</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>Grom</i>	12	Bomb ship
<i>Sv. Nikolai</i>	26/38?	Frigate
<i>Afrika</i>	32	Frigate
<i>Nadezhda</i>	32	Frigate
<i>Sv. Pavel</i> (e)	8	Pink (store ship)
<i>Potchtalyon</i> (e)	14	Despatch vessel
<i>Graf Tchernyshev</i> (f)	22	Armed merchantman
<i>Graf Panin</i> (f)	18	Armed merchantman
<i>Graf Orlov</i> (f)	18	Armed merchantman
? (captain Dugdale)		Fireship; sunk
? (captain Mackenzie)		Fireship; expended
? (captain Ilin)		Fireship; expended
? (captain Gagarin)		Fireship

**Table 1: Russian ships.** Battleships (ships of the line) are listed in the order they came into action. Orlov's squadron in pink, Spiridov's in blue and Elphinstone's in yellow. Notes: (a) captain Klokatchev; (b) Spiridov's flagship, captain Kruse; (c) Orlov's flagship, captain Greig; (d) Elphinstone's flagship; (e) One or both of these were present; (f) Hired English ships that were supporting the fleet

10. Samatopoulou-Vasilakou, Chrysothemis (1 January 2008). "The Greek Communities in the Balkans and Asia Minor and Their Theatrical Activity 1800-1922" (<https://books.google.com/books?id=kDoMAQAAMAAJ>). *Études Helléniques*. Centre de recherche helléniques = Centre of Hellenic Research. **16** (1–2): 53. Retrieved 4 March 2017. "This was the second biggest slaughter of the Greek population of Smyrna since 1770, when after the Cesme sea battle, fanatic Muslims massacred 1, 500 Greeks."

## References

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## Further reading

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## External links

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- Istanbul Naval Museum official website (<https://web.archive.org/web/20090401162230/http://www.denizmuzeleri.tsk.tr/en/idmk/>)

Retrieved from "[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Battle\\_of\\_Chesma&oldid=1160568462](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Battle_of_Chesma&oldid=1160568462)"

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