

The Image of Empire: Stephano Gibellino's Print of the Siege of Famagusta, 1571

Allan Langdale

Stephano Gibellino's 1571 print depicting the siege of Famagusta is one of the best known representations of the city. This paper deals with the print as an exemplar of late sixteenth-century Venetian print culture and the ways in which the Venetian state generated myths about empire, heroic military expeditions, and history. The print is positioned in an historical, art historical and historiographic context, taking its place alongside the books and broadsheets published by the prolific Venetian printing industry. The print is also understood as working in concert with the literary products of contemporaneous Venetian history writers and the monumental series of paintings depicting feats of Venetian military valour such as those created in the Palazzo Ducale in the 1570s. The paper will also address issues around the Venetians' portrayals of the Turks in both literary and visual arts, since through the 16th century the Venetians increasingly began to define themselves as cultural foils to the Ottomans, thus generating an early form of state-generated Orientalism.