

On assuming office, he issued a number of directives to the officials all over the Muslim dominions, ordering them to hold fast to the laws of Islam. He also sent prominent Companions ﷺ as his personal deputies to the various areas and provinces to scrutinise the conduct of the officers and condition of the people.

Battles Fought During the Caliphate of Uthman ﷺ

During the caliphate of Uthman ﷺ, the Muslim empire extended in the west to Morocco, in the south east to present day Pakistan and in the north to Armenia and Azerbaijan.

1. Revolt in Alexandria

The region of Egypt was an important part of the Roman empire because of its fertility. It was conquered in the era of Umar ﷺ. Heraclius who had left Syria was desperate to take it back as a large number of Romans still lived there. In 25 A.H., soon there was an uprising in Alexandria. Byzantine was at the back of this revolt. Heraclius sent an army by sea. Uthman ﷺ sent Amr bin al-Aas ﷺ to Egypt, who defeated the Romans and successfully put down the uprising.

2. Revolts in Armenia and Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan and Armenia were conquered in Umar's ﷺ time. But later, these provinces revolted against the Muslim empire. Both the provinces were under Sa'ad bin Waqas ﷺ the Governor of Kufah. When Sa'ad ﷺ was removed from governorship, Azerbaijan rebelled. Uthman ﷺ appointed Waleed bin Aqaba ﷺ as the new governor who took military action and Azerbaijan once again came under the Muslim flag. To re-conquer Armenia, Uthman ﷺ deputed Salman bin Rabia ﷺ. He successfully overcame the revolt and re-established law and order in Armenia.

3. Occupation of North Africa

In 26 A.H., Uthman ﷺ appointed Abdullah bin Sa'ad ﷺ as the Governor of Egypt. In 27 A.H., he got orders from the Caliph ﷺ to advance towards North Africa. The first attack was made at Tripoli. The governor of Tripoli, Jarjeer marched to fight with an army of 120,000. The two armies fought for a long time without any decisive result.

Do you know ?

There are two cities by the name, Tripoli. Tripoli (of the West) is the capital city of Libya. While, Levantine Tripoli (in Arabic, Tarabulus al-Sham) is in Lebanon.

At last, the Caliph ﷺ sent an army from Madinah under the command of Abdullah bin Zubair ﷺ to help his Egyptian governor. After consecutive attacks, Jarjeer made truce and agreed to pay *Jizya* of 25,000 *Dirhams* yearly. After Tripoli, the Muslims occupied Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria.

5. The Conquest of Iran (Persia)

During the caliphate of Umar ؓ, Yazdgard, the emperor of Persia had fled to Turkistan after the conquest of Iran. He had been constantly trying to create an uprising in Iran but failed. Eventually he got the opportunity after the death of Umar ؓ. In the year 29 A.H., there was an uprising in Iran. Basra was the military base where Abu Musa Ashari ؓ was the governor. He was dismissed and replaced by Abdullah bin Amir ؓ. The new governor marched against the rebels who were defeated and punished. Once again peace and order was restored in Iran.

6. The Conquest of Tabristan

In 30 A.H., Sa'eed bin al-Aas ؓ was appointed as the governor of Kufah. The people of Tabristan had made a peace treaty in the era of Umar ؓ. They also broke the treaty when revolts took place in Iran. Sa'eed ؓ led a huge army to Tabristan and finally conquered it.



Some of the places that were conquered during the caliphate of Uthman ؓ.

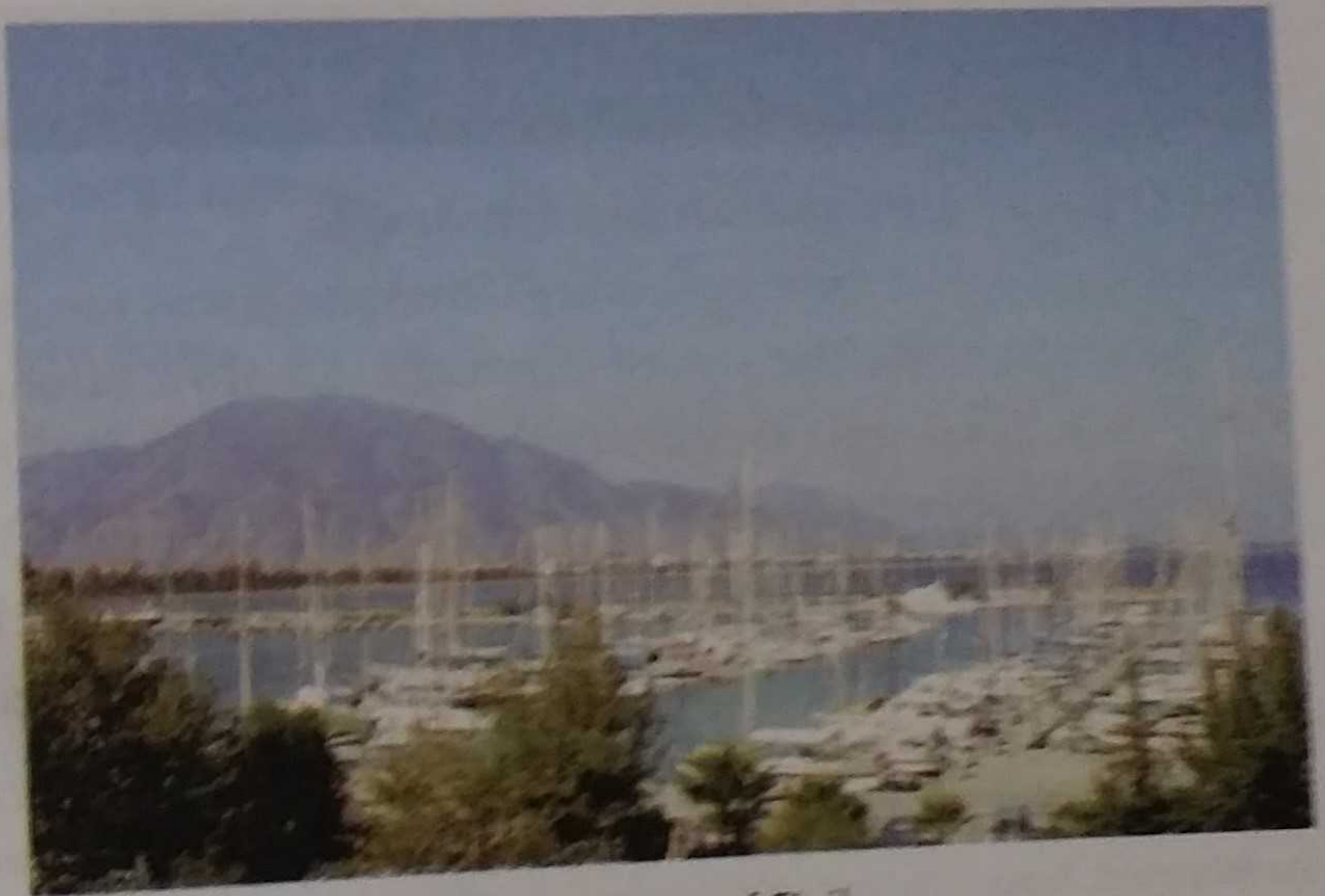
7. The Conquest of Khurasan, Takharistan, Kirman, Sistan and Kabul

After that, Abdullah bin Amir ؓ and Sa'eed bin al-Aas ؓ marched to Khurasan and conquered it. Then they besieged the city of Nishapur. After a whole month, Marzaban, the governor of Nishapur, made truce. Yazdgard, the former king of Iran who had been wandering from place to place, had at last settled in Nishapur in those days. When he got news of the Muslims' occupation of Khurasan and Nishapur, he fled but was killed by a villager. Now Ibn-e-Amir ؓ appointed different commanders for invading Takharistan, Kirman, and Sistan. They were successful in their missions and also conquered Kabul and Ghazni. They even reached the borders of India.

8. The Battle of the Masts

In the year 31 A.H. (651 C.E.), the Arabs fought their first naval battle. The Emperor of Byzantine was very desperate to regain his lost kingdom. Thus, he made a daring bid to take back Alexandria. He sent a fleet of 500 ships which sailed off to the coast of Syria. The Muslims got ready to counter the attack.

Muawiyah's ؓ fleet set sail from Syria. Abdullah bin Sa'ad ؓ, the governor of Egypt also advanced with his fleet. The two fleets met in mid-sea. Together, they sailed on till the enemy's fleet was sighted. The two forces met off the coast of Mount Phoenicus in Lycia*, near the harbour of Phoenicus (present day, Finike).



The Coast of Finike.

A terrible naval battle was fought. Though it was the first experience of sea-fighting for the Arabs, they found no difficulty in proving their superiority. The sea around them was soon cluttered with the dead bodies of the Byzantine troops. So much blood flowed in the sea that the water became red all around. The Byzantine fleet was crippled. The remaining ships of the enemy's fleet took refuge on the island of Sicily**. The Muslims' fleet returned victorious. This fateful sea battle laid the foundation of Muslim naval power. This battle is also known as The Battle of Phoenicus.

* Trmmis, a district in the Roman province on the Mediterranean coast.

** Historical facts prove that the island of Sicily was also conquered by the Muslim naval force. ref. Page 118 (second paragraph).

4. The Conquest of Cyprus

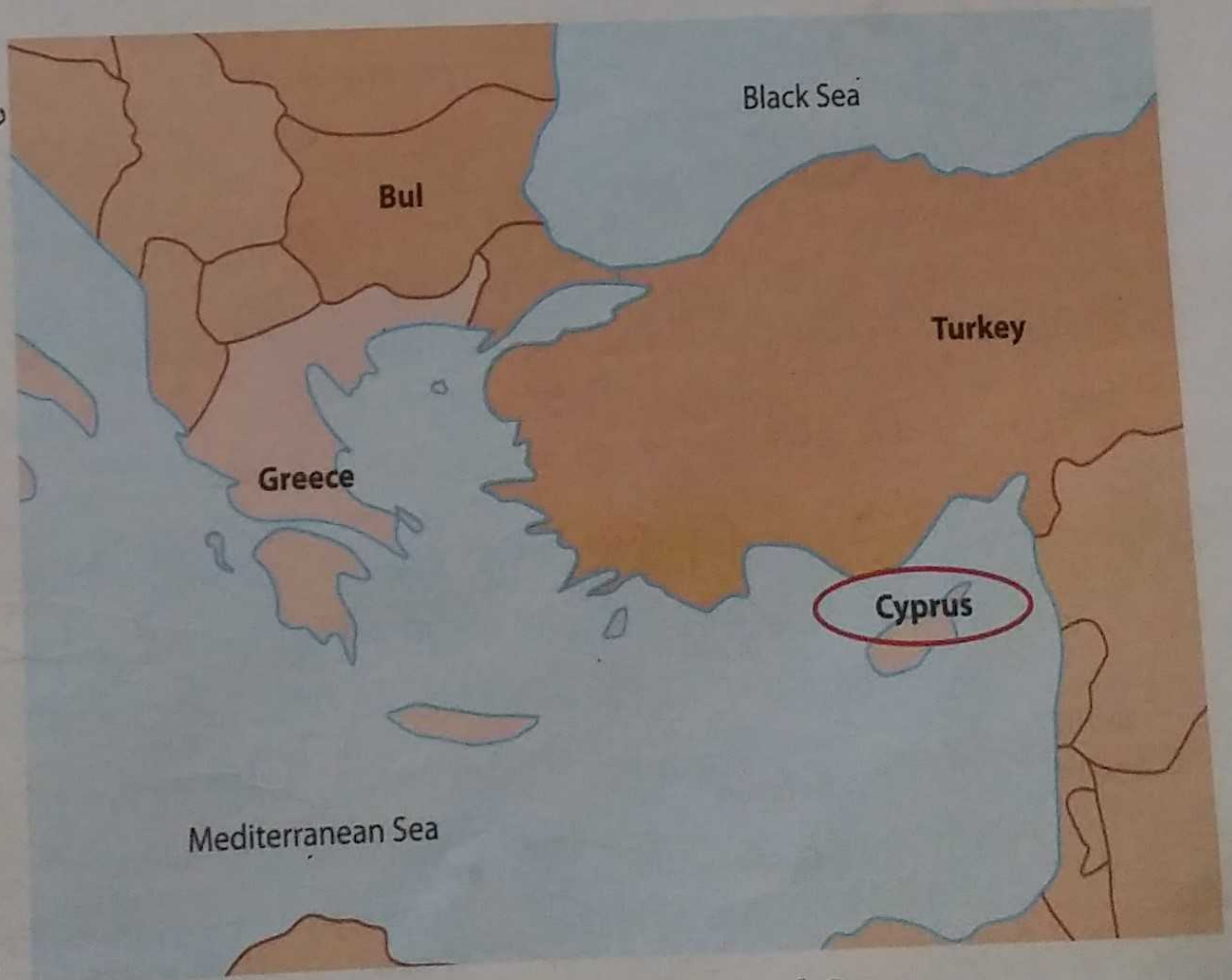
In the era of Umar رضي الله عنه, Muawiyah رضي الله عنه was the governor of Damascus. Later, Uthman رضي الله عنه made him the governor of the whole of Syria. At that time, Anatolia was still under the Byzantine empire. In the year 26 A.H., Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan رضي الله عنه led an army into Anatolia and took over the city of Amuria. Cyprus is an island which is near the Mediterranean. Muawiyah رضي الله عنه now turned his attention to the Mediterranean. He saw the importance of the island because of its fertility. During Umar's رضي الله عنه caliphate, he asked permission to invade Cyprus but Umar رضي الله عنه was opposed to naval warfare.



A bird's eye view of Cyprus Island.

He did not think it wise to risk Muslims' lives in sea-battles. So he did not approve of Muawiyah's رضي الله عنه plan. When Uthman رضي الله عنه became the Caliph, Muawiyah رضي الله عنه again took up the question of the navy with the Caliph رضي الله عنه. He foresaw that Islam could not be strong without a powerful navy. Uthman رضي الله عنه agreed to Muawiyah's رضي الله عنه plan, on the condition that no one was to be forced against his will to take part in naval campaigns.

In 28 A.H., Muawiyah رضي الله عنه prepared a fleet of ships. Abdullah bin Sa'ad رضي الله عنه, the governor of Egypt joined him with his own fleet. The two fleets jointly invaded Cyprus. The people of Cyprus were scared of battles so they made a treaty of peace and agreed to pay *Jizya* of seven thousand *Dirhams* yearly. They also promised the Muslims that they would inform them about the Romans' activities. In return, the Muslims got the right to use the island as a military base and promised to protect them.



Geographical location of Cyprus.