

Letter of a Member of the Household of Archbishop Isidore of Kiev to Cardinal Dominico Capranica

Trans. W. L. North from the Latin edition by A. Pertusi in *idem, La Caduta di
Constantinopoli I. Le Testimonianze dei Contemporanei*, Milan: pp. 112-119.

Most reverend Father in Christ and most distinguished Lord.

After all due recommendations, etc. Now then, after the holy union had occurred for the sake of which the most reverend Ruthenian Cardinal had left the City,¹ he sold all his property down to his clothing for the sake of supporting the misery-filled city of Constantinople and the needs of Christ's poor. Then, when the City for which he had labored so much was captured, that same lord Father was himself captured in the church of Holy Wisdom where he had gone thinking to find there some armed men prepared to resist Turks; for the Lord Cardinal saw everyone fleeing every which way. It was only when he was forced by some few of his followers, as God is my witness, that he headed for the Church, burning to shed his blood for the faith of Christ. And thus he was captured but he remained unrecognized for two days among the great army of the Turks. In truth, it was a great help to the most reverend Lord Cardinal that a certain old monk had died, for his head was brought to the emperor of the Turks in place of the head of the reverend Lord Cardinal. The word then went out that the Lord Cardinal had died.

Finally, when the Lord [Cardinal] reached Pera, he was redeemed and remained there in hiding for eight days, concealing himself by moving from house to house. But after he learned that the Turk had captured Pera, he decided that he could not remain there since he realized that he could not continue to flee through the houses of Christians. So he boarded a Turkish galley, where he stayed for three days: he had in fact wrapped his face in bandages since he had been wounded by an arrow. He then reached Brusa aboard a Turkish galley. Here he pretended to be a very poor liberated captive who was seeking to redeem his children who had been captured in the city of Constantinople. After a little while, he arrived at a place called Phokaia and was ever in the company of a certain Turk. Then, as the Lord Cardinal was passing through Phokaia, the Genoese recognized him and unthinkingly began to make it known that it was the lord cardinal. As a consequence, the Lord Cardinal grew afraid because this was the land of the Turks and boarded a small boat. He thereby reached Chios and

¹ Rome.

from there he came to Crete. Since then he has been brought from there to Candia where, by the grace of Christ, he is doing well, having been set free by the grace of Christ.

We thought it good to describe for your most reverend lordship the manner of his liberation as if to the protector of our most reverend Lord Cardinal. We are, in fact, also writing because we promised in our letter to give your Lordship more certain information about his death or life.

Candia, 15 July 1453