

Letter of the Knights of St. John on Rhodes which was sent to Jerusalem to the Margrave of Brandenburg

Trans. by W.L. North from the edition of A. Pertusi, *Testi inediti e poco noti sulla caduta di Costantinopoli*, ed. A. Carile. *Il Mondo medievale: sezione di storia bizantina e slava* 4. Bologna: Pàtron Editore 1983, #9, pp. 54-56.

... It is with great heartfelt sorrow that we have decided to make known to your illustrious lordship what follows.

After the great Turk had besieged Constantinople by land and sea, on the twenty-ninth of the May just passed he seized the city by force of arms, killed the emperor of Constantinople, cut off the heads of many nobles, gave the entire city over to plunder, and cruelly tortured many. He then obtained the city of Pera, which the Genoese held, without force of arms, made it a tributary, and tore down its walls. This also happened to the walls of Constantinople.

It is believed that he is preparing a new fleet from scratch, since he intends to make all the islands of the Aegean archipelago subject to him or to destroy them if he can. For his heart swells with pride and he boasts that he has equaled or surpassed the deeds of Alexander of Macedon. He also threatens that he will attempt to do what Alexander never didCpush into Italy and the regions of the West with his arms and might and see whether fortune shall favor him there as it has throughout the East. This is why all Christian kings and princes should turn their minds to some sort of pact so that they may resist the ferocious power of this tyrant who has been roused to destroy Christians, unless God provides otherwise, and turn all their powers to the destruction of the Turk himself. For this would happen easily if they ever met together in peace and unity, came together, or agreed for the sake of the honor of the Catholic faith and protection of Christianity that the sect of Mohammed should no long rage against the worshippers of Christ and at the same time entreated almighty God that His Grace make provision when human powers are not enough, that God who keeps you to your vow and happily leads your company to our city of Rhodes.

Convent of the Order of Saint John on Rhodes, 30 June 1453.