

A Brief or Succinct Account of What the Ambassadors of the Holy Roman and Apostolic See Did in the Royal City, attributed to Cardinal Bishop Humbert of Silva Candida

Translated from the Latin by W. L. North from the edition of C. Will, *Acta et Scripta Quae de Controversiis Ecclesiae Graecae et Latinae Saeculo Undecimo Composita Extant* (Leipzig & Marburg 1861), Documents VIII-X, pp. 150-4. © William North 2000.

Presenting a summary of their embassy to Constantinople in 1054, this text is one of the most important witnesses to events during their visit and the texts of the anathemas that were laid upon the altar of Hagia Sophia. Although the date and authors of this composition are uncertain, C. Will thought that the text was probably composed by the legates themselves, in particular Humbert, during or soon after their embassy.

THE TEXT

In the twelfth year of the imperial rule of Constantine Monomachos, the seventh indiction, on the very day of the nativity of blessed John the Baptist, ambassadors of the holy Roman and apostolic see, namely Cardinal Bishop Humbert of Silva Candida, Archbishop Peter of Amalfi, and Frederick, deacon and chancellor [of the Roman Church], came from the Lord Pope Leo IX. At the insistence of these Roman legates, at the monastery of Studios within the city of Constantinople in the presence of the emperor and his princes, the monk Niketas anathematized a certain text against the apostolic see and the entire Latin Church which had been circulated under his name and entitled *On Unleavened Bread, on the Sabbath, and on the marriage of priests*. Furthermore, he anathematized all those who denied that the Roman Church was the first of all churches and who presumed to rebuke its ever-orthodox faith in any respect. After this, at the suggestion of these same Roman legates and in the sight of all, the orthodox emperor ordered that the aforementioned text be burned and so was it destroyed.

II. On the following day, the aforementioned Niketas left the city and approached these legates inside the palace of Πηγῆ. After receiving from them a complete answer to his questions, he willingly anathematized all words, attempts, and deeds against the first and apostolic see. And so, after they had received him into communion, Niketas became their intimate friend. Moreover, the words or writings of these legates against the various calumnies of the Greeks and especially against the writings of Bishop Michael of Constantinople, Metropolitan Bishop Leo of Achrida, and against this same monk Niketas were translated by order of the emperor and are

still preserved in this city.

III. Finally, since Michael was avoiding their presence and conversation and persevering in his stupidity, the aforementioned legates entered the church of Holy Wisdom on July 16 over the opposition of the complaining Michael and, as the clergy was preparing for the Mass in their customary way at the third hour of the morning, they placed the charter of excommunication upon the principal altar under the gaze of the people and clergy who were present. As soon as they left [the church], they knocked the dust from their feet as a sign (*testimonium*) to them, proclaiming in accordance with the saying of the Gospel: *Let God see and judge.* (Mt. 10:14) Then, once the Latin churches in Constantinople had been set in order and an anathema issued against all those who took communion from then on from the hand of a Greek who condemned the Roman sacrifice, they were received in the kiss of peace of the orthodox emperor and with his license and imperial gifts, they started back in haste to St Peter and their homes on July 18. But because of the excessive pressure of the entreaties of Michael, who promised that he would finally debate with them, the emperor was compelled to summon them back on July 20 from Selymbria with his letters. Returning on that very day, they made a detour to the palace of Πηγῆ. When the heresiarch Michael learned that they had returned, he tried to lead them on the following day into the church of Holy Wisdom as if to a council so that, when their charter was displayed, which he had utterly corrupted in translating it, they might be destroyed there by the people. Taking precautions against this, the prudent emperor did not want any council to be held unless he himself was present. And since Michael opposed this in every way, the Emperor ordered that these legates quickly depart. And this was done. In the end, the poisonous Michael, lamenting that his plots did not go forward, aroused a tremendous rebellion against the emperor, inasmuch as his will had aided the legates. Consequently, the emperor was compelled to hand over to Michael the Latins' interpreters, namely Paul and his son Smaragdus, blinded and tonsured. And thus he settled the riots. But after sending his men after the legates, the emperor received an authentic (*veracissimum*) copy of the excommunication which was sent to him from a city of the Russians, showed it to the citizens, and discovered and convicted Michael for having falsified the legates' charter. Thus angered, he expelled Michael's friends and relatives, now deprived of their offices, from the palace and to this very day he still retains a deep hostility against him.

This is the exemplar of the charter of excommunication:

**The Excommunication with which Michael Kerularios and his Followers
are wounded**

Humbert, cardinal bishop of the holy Roman Church by the grace of God; Peter, archbishop of Amalfi; and Frederick, deacon and chancellor, to all the children of the catholic Church.

The holy, primary, and apostolic see of Rome, to which the care of all the churches most especially pertains as if to a head, deigned to make us its ambassadors to this royal city for the sake of the peace and utility of the Church so that, in accordance with what has been written, we might descend and see whether the complaint which rises to its ears without ceasing from this great city, is realized in fact or to know if it is not like this. Let the glorious emperors, clergy, senate, and people of this city of Constantinople as well as the entire catholic Church therefore know that we have sensed here both a great good, whence we greatly rejoice in the Lord, and the greatest evil, whence we lament in misery. For as far as the columns of the imperial power and its honored and wise citizens go, this city is most Christian and orthodox. But as far as Michael, who is called patriarch through an abuse of the term, and the backers of his foolishness are concerned, innumerable tares of heresies are daily sown in its midst. Because like Simoniacs, they sell the gift of God; like Valesians, they castrate their guests and promote them not only to the clergy but to the episcopacy; like Arians, they rebaptize those already baptized in the name of the holy Trinity, and especially Latins; like Donatists, they claim that with the exception of the Greek Church, the Church of Christ and baptism has perished from the world; like Nicolaitists, they allow and defend the carnal marriages of the ministers of the sacred altar; like Severians, they say that the law of Moses is accursed; like Pneumatomachoi or Theomachoi, they cut off the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son; like the Manichaeans among others, they state that

leave is ensouled (*animatum*); like the Nazarenes, they preserve the carnal cleanness of the Jews to such an extent that they refuse to baptize dying babies before eight days after birth and, in refusing to communicate with pregnant or menstruating women, they forbid them to be baptized if they are pagan; and because they grow the hair on their head and beards, they will not receive in communion those who tonsure their hair and shave their beards following the decreed practice (*institutio*) of the Roman Church. For these errors and many others committed by them, Michael himself, although admonished by the letters of our lord Pope Leo, contemptuously refused to repent. Furthermore, when we, the Pope's ambassadors, wanted to eliminate the causes of such great evils in a reasonable way, he denied us his presence and conversation, forbid churches to celebrate Mass, just as he had earlier closed the churches of the Latins and, calling them "azymites," had persecuted the Latins everywhere in word and deed. Indeed, so much [did he persecute them] that among his own children, he had anathematized the apostolic see and against it he still writes that he is the ecumenical patriarch. Therefore, because we did not tolerate this unheard of outrage and injury of the first, holy, and apostolic see and were concerned that the catholic faith would be undermined in many ways, by the authority of the holy and individuated Trinity and the apostolic see, whose embassy we are performing, and of all the orthodox fathers from the seven councils and of the entire catholic Church, we thus subscribe to the following anathema which the most reverend pope has proclaimed upon Michael and his followers unless they should repent.

Michael, neophyte patriarch through abuse of office (*abusivus*), who took on the monastic habit out of fear of men alone and is now accused by many of the worst of crimes; and with him Leo called bishop of Achrida; Constantine, chaplain of this Michael, who trampled the sacrifice of the Latins with profane feet; and all their followers in the aforementioned errors and acts of presumption: Let them be anathema Maranatha with the Simoniacs, Valesians, Arians, Donatists, Nicolaitists, Severians, Pneumatomachoi, Manichaeans, Nazarenes, and all the heretics—nay, with the devil himself and his angels, unless they should repent.
AMEN, AMEN, AMEN.

**Another Excommunication Performed There Out Loud
in the Presence of the Emperor and his Princes**

Whoever has stubbornly opposed the faith of the Roman Church and its sacrifice, let them be anathema Maranatha, nor let them be considered a catholic Christian, but a prozomite heretic. Let it be done, let it be done!