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The Siege of Constantinople (1453), according to Nicolo Barbaro

Ξένες γλώσσες / In English



The diary of Nicolo Barbaro is perhaps the most detailed and accurate eyewitness account of the siege and fall of Constantinople. Nicolo was a surgeon by profession, and a member of one of the patrician families of Venice. His account often focuses on the activities of his fellow Venetians, sometimes to the detriment of the Greeks and Genoese who were also defending the city. The work is written like a diary, with daily entries. Naval affairs are also prominent in this account. The portion republished below starts after Nicolo discusses the events leading up to the siege and the preparations made by the defenders to fortify the city.

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On the twenty-fifth of May at the hour of Vespers, another tunnel was discovered in the same area of the Calegaria near the first tunnels. It was a strong one and might have been very dangerous indeed, because they had put props underneath a piece of the wall, and when they set fire to their tunnel it would have collapsed, and after this the Turks would quite certainly have been able to get into the city and take it without difficulty. This was the last tunnel which they dug, and…

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