

Item #17 of Hildebrand Nachlass – **no date – probably spring 1788**

Translation and Notes by Edwin D. Hoepfner 2004 Oct 04

My dear esteemed H[err] Bartsch.

Your valued letter of the 1st of this [month] gave me much pleasure because I noted your good and upright attitude toward Russia and your love to me with great satisfaction. I ask you remain firm in this disposition and you will [see] that you will not repent of it. I thank you very much that you brought my farewell-epistle among the people so well. Admittedly the children of Russia will have bleated through their teeth about it however I laugh heartily about that. I'm glad that the 13 Mennonites and all the other people with the Russian wagon driver arrived safely at Riga. Later on I will be happy if I also hear that about Heppner and his group as well.

The Mennonites in Holland are, in part, so well disposed toward Russia that, if God only gives us peace and quiet again, I hope to live to see that the Crimea will become as populated again as it was in the time of the Genueser [note 1]. I flatter myself that with the cooperation of the Mennonites, after peace is restored, to bring it about that a lovely stone church will be built on the bank of the Dnieper for the Danzig Mennonites in which, God willing, many a Tartar mother's child can be baptized. I imagine it thus, and believe God will give that I do not deceive myself about this. I thank you that You accept so well the farm girl who was enjoined on you. Tell her for me that, if she continues to conduct herself well, things will go well for her and even in Russia as an orphan she will not be abandoned. It would please me if you could arrange a suitable opportunity for the girl to marry a young man whom she would like and who is hard-working, quiet and orderly, just not with the seaman who would gladly have her and who is already in Riga. A young industrious peasant is always better. If, on my return, I hear that she has conducted herself very well take her on if possible. I think that she knows how to do all peasant work for that reason.

You are quite right that young Nadler is a good person and will get on well. You do well to send your family on ahead, for which I wish good fortune and blessings, and ask to greet your dear good wife heartily for me. I commend you and all your dependents to the protection of God, await further news and remain, with the most sincere affection my dear H[err] Bartsch, your most loyal and benevolent Trappe.

Note 1: Italian merchant organizations established trading colonies in the Crimea after the Fourth Crusade of 1204. Both Venice and Genoa had trading colonies there and established slave markets in Kaffa by the 14th century. The Genoese apparently dominated these colonies. The Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople in 1453 and by the 15th century were in control there and in 1475 they expelled the Itallians.