



**Oration “Quamvis omnibus” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini  
(16 May 1454, Regensburg). Edited and translated by  
Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 5th version. (Orations of  
Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 21)**

Michael Cotta-Schönberg

► **To cite this version:**

Michael Cotta-Schönberg. Oration “Quamvis omnibus” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (16 May 1454, Regensburg). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 5th version. (Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 21). 2019. hal-01086738

**HAL Id: hal-01086738**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01086738>**

Submitted on 10 Oct 2019

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

**(Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 21)**

**Oration “*Quamvis omnibus*” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini  
(16 May 1454, Regensburg). Edited and translated by  
Michael von Cotta-Schönberg**

**5<sup>th</sup> version**

**2019**

## **Abstract**

The Fall of Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, to the Ottoman Turks in May 1453 created widespread and justified fear in Europe. It might reasonably be assumed that the young Turkish sultan, Mehmed II, would pursue his war of expansion and move further into European territories. The two international institutions of Europe, the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy, were compelled to react, although both incumbents, Emperor Friedrich III and Pope Nicolaus V, were peaceful men, averse to risk taking. After some procrastination, the emperor convened a conference of the European rulers and German princes in the city of Regensburg in May 1454. The driving force at this meeting was his counsellor and senior diplomat, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena. Piccolomini gave the opening speech in which he dramatically described the damage inflicted upon Europe by the Turks and made a rousing appeal for a joint European war against them. The aim of the war would be twofold: firstly to avenge the injuries suffered by the Europeans and regain the territories lost to the Turks and the Arabs, and secondly to protect Europe against a Turkish invasion. Although the audience was moved, caution prevailed, and the only result of the diet was to agree on war in principle and to call for another diet to further discuss the matter.

## **Keywords**

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Kaiser Friedrich III (Habsburg); Emperor Frederick III (Habsburg); Sultan Mehmed II; Sultan Mehmet II; Crusades; Crusade against the Turks; The Ottoman Turks; The Ottomans; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetorics; Diet of Regensburg 1454; Reichstag in Regensburg 1454; Fall of Constantinople 1453; 1453; 15<sup>th</sup> century

## **Editor and translator**

Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg

Mag. Art. (University of Copenhagen)

Bachelier en Philosophie (Université de Louvain)

Emeritus Deputy Director / The Royal Library, Copenhagen

Emeritus University Librarian / University of Copenhagen

e-mail: [typsita@gmail.com](mailto:typsita@gmail.com)

ORCID identity: 000-0001-8499-4142

## Note to the reader

Although Enea Silvio Piccolomini's crusade orations at the German diets in 1454-1455 have been admirably edited in the *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, they could not – of course - be excluded from the present comprehensive, bilingual edition of Pius II's orations. As a matter of principle, they have been collated directly for the purpose of the present edition (but on the basis of a limited number of manuscripts), with special care to differentiate between the various versions of the text.

The RTA-edition of the "*Quamvis omnibus*" was prepared by Helmut Weigel and Henny Grüneisen. All readers interested in this oration should also consult the RTA-edition with its excellent introduction, its comprehensive list of manuscripts and editions, its critical apparatus, and its copious notes.

Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

## Foreword

In 2007, I undertook a project of publishing the Latin texts with English translations of the orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II. Altogether 80<sup>1</sup> orations (including papal responses to ambassadorial addresses) are extant today, though more may still be held, unrecognized, in libraries and archives.

At a later stage the project was expanded to include ambassadors' orations to the pope, of which about 40 are presently known.

I do not, actually, plan to publish further versions of the present volume, but I do reserve the option in case I – during my future studies - come across other manuscripts containing interesting versions of the oration or if important new research data on the subject matter are published, making it appropriate to modify or expand the present text. It will therefore always be useful to check if a later version than the one the reader may have previously found via the Internet is available.

I shall much appreciate to be notified by readers who discover errors and problems in the text and translation or unrecognized quotations.

12 September 2019

MCS

---

<sup>1</sup> 81 orations, if the "*Cum animadverto*" is counted is a Piccolomini-oration, see oration "*Quam laetus*" [18], Appendix

**Table of volumes in *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. 12 vols. Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg**

1. Introduction
2. 1436-1444 (Orations 1-5)
3. 1445-1449 (Orations 6-13)
4. 1450-1453 (Orations 14-20)
5. 1454-1455 (Orations 21-25)
6. 1455-1457 (Orations 26-28)
7. 1458-1459 (Orations 29-42)
8. 1459-1459 (Orations 43-51)
9. 1459-1461 (Orations 52-63)
10. 1462-1464 (Orations 64-77)
11. 1454, 1459 (Orations 78-80). Orthographical profiles. Indices
12. Appendix: Ambassadors' orations to Pope Pius II

# Table of contents

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context
2. Themes
  - 2.1. Fall of Constantinople
  - 2.2. Turkish threat to Europe
  - 2.3. War against the Turks
  - 2.4. Urbs capta
3. Date, place, audience and format
4. Text
  - 4.1. Version A
    - 4.1.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.1.2. Editions
  - 4.2. Version B
    - 4.2.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.2.2. Editions
  - 4.3. Version C
    - 4.3.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.3.2. Editions
  - 4.4. Present edition
5. Sources
  - 5.1. Flavio Biondo
  - 5.2. Niccolò Sagundino
  - 5.3. Francesco Filelfo
  - 5.4. Isidore of Kiev
  - 5.5. Leonardo of Chios
  - 5.6. Jacopo Tedaldi
  - 5.7. Letters of Piccolomini
  - 5.8. Survey of quotations
6. Bibliography
7. Sigla and abbreviations



## **II. VERSION A: TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

- 0. Introduction [1-2]
- 1. Reasons for conference: Turkish attacks on Europe [3-14]
  - 1.1. Fall of Constantinople [4-7]
    - 1.1.1. Non-aggressiveness of Byzantine Emperor [4]
    - 1.1.2. Turkish preparations for war [5]
    - 1.1.3. Conquest of Constantinople [6]
    - 1.1.4. Profanation of holy things [7]
    - 1.1.5. Cultural loss to Christianity [8]
    - 1.1.6. Conclusion: Need for revenge [9]
  - 1.2. Turkish threat to Europe [10-14]
    - 1.2.1. Strategic position of Constantinople [10]
    - 1.2.2. Mehmed's ambition to conquer Europe [11-13]
  - 1.3. Mandate of imperial ambassadors [14]
- 2. Purpose of conference: War against the Turks [15-23]
  - 2.1. Emperor's part [16]
  - 2.2. Need for atonement, prayer and piety [17]
  - 2.3. Islamic conquests [18-19]
  - 2.4. Call for action [20]
  - 2.5. Christian military superiority [21-22]
  - 2.6. The allies [23-24]
- 3. Conclusion [25-27]

## **III. VERSION B AND C: TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

- 0. Introduction [28-29]
- 1. Reasons for conference: Turkish attacks on Europe [30-35]
  - 1.1. Fall of Constantinople [30-31]
    - 1.1.1. Conquest of Constantinople [30]
    - 1.1.2. Profanation of holy things [31]
  - 1.2. Turkish threat to Europe [32-35]
    - 1.2.1. Strategic position of Constantinople [32]
    - 1.2.2. Mehmed's ambition to conquer Europe [33-35]
- 2. Purpose of the conference: War against the Turks [36-45]
  - 2.1. Christian military superiority [37]
  - 2.2. Mandate of imperial ambassadors [38]

- 2.3. Need for atonement, prayer and piety [39]
- 2.4. Emperor's part [41]
- 2.5. Call for action [42]
- 2.6. The allies [43-45]
- 3. Conclusion [46]

**Appendix: Oration of Urban II, after Flavio Biondo**

# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## 1. Context<sup>1</sup>

During the first half of the fifteenth century, it had become quite clear that the Ottoman military expansion constituted a serious threat not only to the Byzantine Empire (or the Greek Empire, as it was called then), but also to Europe as a whole. The Italian humanists had caught on quickly, and their anti-Turkish works in the form of orations, public letters to European rulers, treatises, poems and other writings soon developed into a literary genre.<sup>2</sup>

Already in his first oration, the *“Audivi”* [1], delivered to the fathers of the Council of Basel in November 1436, Piccolomini had addressed the Turkish issue, saying, among other things about the Turks, that

*... great is the realm of the Turks, immense is the power of the Asians and enormous their riches. They have extended their empire from Asia to Europe, and they have occupied the whole of Greece as if they were the avengers of the destruction of Troy. To expel them from Greece would not be the task of a single city or state, but of the entire Christian world.* [Sect. 21]

In his oration to Emperor-Elect Albrecht II, the *“Quid est”* [3], of April 1438 he had designated the Turks as one of the enemies of the Holy Roman Empire, whom the new emperor would have to fight.<sup>3</sup>

In his oration *“Si Putarem”* [5] to Emperor Friedrich III, of April 1444, he referred to Pope Eugenius IV's crusade against the Turks as one of the great merits of this pope.<sup>4</sup>

In his oration *“Et breviter me hodie”* [10] to Pope Eugenius IV in July 1446 he again mentioned the pope's meritorious fight against the Turks:

*Often help has been sent against the Sultan; you are preparing a fleet against the Turks; and you are spending great sums in order to protect the Hungarians, who are like a wall protecting the Christian faith, and to expel the Turks from Europe and free the miserable*

---

<sup>1</sup> CO, I, 26; RTA 19, 1, esp. pp. 1-3, 258-266; Ady, pp. 126-129; Bisaha; Boulting, pp. 204-209; Helmrath: *Pius*; Helmrath: *German*; Meuthen; Mitchell, pp. 113-114; Nowak, pp. 130-131; Reinhardt, p. 162-165; Schwoebel, p. 32-33; Setton, II, ch. 3 and pp. 151-153; Stolf, pp. 282-284; Toews, pp. 261-251; Voigt, II, III, 3, pp. 105-119

<sup>2</sup> See Hankins

<sup>3</sup> Oration *“Quid est”* [3], sect. 3-4

<sup>4</sup> Oration *“Si putarem”* [5], sect. 38

*Greeks from their hands, those who were once the masters of the East but now appear to be slaves.* [Sect. 3]

His first full oration on the Turks was the "*Quamvis in hoc senatu*" [17], in August 1451, to the ambassadors of the Duke of Burgundy at the imperial court. Here he developed some of the themes he would use in later Turkish orations, e.g. the emperor's pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the atrocities of the Turks and the Saracens, their attacks on Christianity, and – not the least – the need for a concerted European military response to the Turkish expansion.

And at the occasion of the imperial coronation in Rome in 1452, Piccolomini had, on behalf of the emperor held the oration "*Moses vir Dei*" [19], in which he formally and officially petitioned Pope Nicolaus V for a crusade with the aim of regaining the territories lost to the Turks and the Arabs, including Jerusalem.

All to no avail. The two leaders of Christian Europe, the emperor and the pope, were both quite unwarlike and averse to risk-taking. And the other kings and princes were engaged in their own wars, both external and internal, and the most important of them, King Charles VII of France, moreover considered the Turkish venture as a unrealistic dream, not to be seriously pursued. The only ruler who truly desired a crusade against the Turks was Duke Philippe III of Burgundy.<sup>1</sup>

In May 1453, Constantinople fell to the onslaught of the Ottoman army under the leadership of the young sultan, Mehmed II. Though the Byzantine Empire lingered on for some years more at Trebizond, the Fall of Constantinople and the killing of its emperor, Constantine XI Dragases Palaeologus, was generally considered to be the end of the Byzantine Empire and the opening of a new phase in the Turkish expansion towards Europe.

The Fall of Constantinople shocked Europe and created a flurry of activity in the chanceries.<sup>2</sup> As the nominal political head of Europe and the champion (*advocatus*) and protector of the Church, the emperor evidently had to do something.

After mature reflection and some procrastination, as was his wont, he decided to call a conference on the matter that would be both a pan-European conference of princes and a German imperial diet. He thus set into motion a procedural machinery that would, if successful, result in a common European military response to Ottoman aggression. In this endeavour he was

---

<sup>1</sup> Paviot; Meuthen, pp. 21-23

<sup>2</sup> Schwoebel, ch. 1

ably assisted by his counsellor and senior diplomat, the Bishop of Siena, Enea Silvio Piccolomini.<sup>1</sup>

2

Though the Ottoman threat was in itself quite real and did require a concerted European military response, a number of other issues actually made the Turkish venture an interesting undertaking both for the empire and the papacy<sup>3</sup> as well as for Piccolomini personally. Politically, both the empire and the papacy would gain from a great and successful enterprise conducted under their auspices. Financially, they might profit from the sale of indulgences to support a crusade. And as for Piccolomini himself, he had an overriding urge to be engaged in important affairs of state, and, moreover, a great cause like a crusade might further his own ecclesiastical ambitions, i.e. the cardinal's hat.

These motives have been unmercifully described by Piccolomini's 19<sup>th</sup> century German, protestant biographer, Georg Voigt.<sup>4</sup> As concerns Piccolomini, Voigt's analysis, however, tends to overlook two things: Firstly, Piccolomini's geopolitical assessment of the enormous Turkish military threat to Europe was, in fact, correct and would shortly be proven to be so.<sup>5</sup> And secondly, Voigt's personal – and quite bigoted - aversion to Piccolomini made him blind to the complexity of his character and the genuineness of his religious development in which the crusade became a guiding theme of faith, devotion, generosity and courage – all other motives notwithstanding, though they were certainly there.

At any rate, after the Fall of Constantinople, the crusade against the Turks became the main focus of Piccolomini's activities, first in his remaining period as a top imperial advisor and diplomat (1453-1456), later as a cardinal of Pope Calixtus III (1457-1458) whose mind was firmly fixed on the crusade, and finally as pope (1458-1464).

The imperial diet, summoned by the emperor to discuss a military response to the Turkish war of expansion, met in Regensburg in May 1454. At the beginning, it as was not well-attended, mostly because the emperor did not participate personally. However, when the Duke of Burgundy

---

<sup>1</sup> Meuthen, p. 16; Toews, p. 242: *The imperial-papal response to the Turkish menace was largely due to the activities of Aeneas Sylvius*

<sup>2</sup> See Piccolomini's own Report on the diet in Regensburg, sometimes called the *Historia de Ratisponensi dieta* (or similarly), published as a letter to Bishop Janos Vitez of Grosswardein (Varad) in Summer 1454 (WO, III, 1, pp.492-563)

<sup>3</sup> Toews, p. 242

<sup>4</sup> Voigt III, pp. 98-118

<sup>5</sup> Setton, II, p. 149

arrived, the conference gained in status<sup>1</sup> – and for Piccolomini personally the ducal presence gave birth to the illusion of having the duke as a strong European partner in the Turkish venture, an illusion that would last for a decade - even forming the basis for his later crusading strategy - until it was shattered, painfully, during the last year of his own pontificate.

By this time, the general scare caused by the Fall of Constantinople almost a year before had abated considerably, and the Europeans were back at their political bickering, their regional conflicts and wars, their discouragement caused by former defeats at the hands of Turks, and – for some, like the emperor - their secret satisfaction that buffer states like Hungary would have to deal with the Turks before these became an imminent threat to themselves.

Piccolomini himself was quite aware that it would not be an easy matter to mobilize the Europeans in a joint military venture against the Turks.<sup>2</sup> But this was the task he wanted and one which the emperor had assigned to him. And if oratorical arts and diplomatic skills could clinch the matter, he was definitely the right person to try to.

Since its purpose was to present arguments for a certain course of action, the oration he gave at the beginning of the congress, the *“Quamvis omnibus”*, belongs to the deliberative genre of the classical division of orations (deliberative, judicial and panegyric). More significantly, however, it may be considered to form part of the genre of crusade orations developed by the Italian humanists.<sup>3</sup>

The main subject of the oration was a plea for the participants to decide on a joint European military response to Turkish aggression, with a view not only to ending Turkish expansion into Europe, but also to recover territories formerly lost to the Turks and the Arabs.

In his report on the Diet in Regensburg, Piccolomini said that his own oration was followed by a *mirum silentium*, whereupon Ulrich Sonnenberger, Bishop of Gurk rose and gave a translation into German.<sup>4</sup> Voigt drily comments *dass der Grund dieses Schweigens war vielleicht der Verlegenheit der Anwesenden, deren viele die Worte Enea's nicht eher verstanden bis sie der Bischof von Gurk in deutscher Sprache zusammengefasst!*<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Du Fresne de Beaucourt, V, 398-399: *Le duc de Bourgogne ne voulut pas perdre l'occasion de manifester hautement ses intentions au sujet de la Croisade: il déclara qu'il était prêt à entrer en campagne à la tête de soixante mille hommes si les autres princes voulaient faire comme lui*

<sup>2</sup> See his letter to Cardinal Carval of 11 April 1454 (WO, III, 1, nr. 272, pp. 459-272)

<sup>3</sup> On Piccolomini's use of the deliberative genre in the case of the oration *“Constantinopolitana clades”* [22], see Helmrath: *Political-Assembly*, pp. 90-91

<sup>4</sup> WO, III, p. 547

<sup>5</sup> Voigt, III, p. 113

In his *Commentaries*, written 8-10 years later, Pius described the oration in these words:

*Aeneas then delivered a speech on behalf of the emperor, in which he stated clearly and simply how great a blow the fall of Constantinople was for all of Christendom, and what terrible dangers would ensue if no action were taken to check the Turks; he then issued a general call to arms in defense of the common good.”<sup>1</sup>*

Piccolomini’s contemporary biographer, Campano, had this to say about the Diet in Regensburg:

*... qua de causa peregit et conventum Ratisponae, ubi progressum in contionem omnibus qui aderant excussisse lacrimas constat, deploratis Graecorum calamitatibus et recenti clade Constantinopolitana in medium exposita.<sup>2</sup>*

And his other biographer, Platina, commented:

*Aeneas non multo post ad conventum Ratisponensem mictitur, ubi imperatorias vices gerens, presente Philippo, Burgundionum duce, et Ludovico Baiovariae, de immanitate Turchorum et de calamitate christiane reipublice tanta contentione dixit, ut omnibus gemitum et lacrimas excusserit.<sup>3</sup>*

Helmrath, who otherwise does not agree<sup>4</sup> with Pertusi’s assessment of the oration as *forse la più interessante* of Piccolomini’s Turkish orations, does say about it that *it both acted as the prelude and established the parameters for what followed* at the later diets.<sup>5</sup>

For though the diet in Regensburg agreed to the war in principle, the only direct result of its deliberations was the decision to hold another diet, which eventually took place in Frankfurt.

It may be mentioned that Piccolomini also gave the concluding oration at the diet, the “*Verba tua*” [78].

---

<sup>1</sup> CO, I, 26 (Meserve, I, p. 26)

<sup>2</sup> Zimolo, p. 23

<sup>3</sup> Zimolo, p. 103

<sup>4</sup> Helmrich: *Pius*, p. 92

<sup>5</sup> Helmrich: *German*, p. 59



## 2. Themes

The major themes of the oration are:

### 2.1 Fall of Constantinople

The first major theme of the oration is the Fall of Constantinople as another terrible injury inflicted upon the Europeans in the long Turkish war of aggression and expansion. This ought to be a cause for sorrow and anger in Europe:

*Oh, what great and intolerable shame on the Christian people! I believe that the heart of every Christian who hears about this will be moved and enflamed with anger. Is there any Christian who will not cry from sorrow when hearing it. [Sect. 31]*

### 2.2 Turkish threat to Europe

But the Europeans ought not only feel sorrow and anger, they should feel fear!

The geographic position of Constantinople had been chosen by Emperor Constantine I the Great, partly to protect the Roman Empire against the incursions and depredations of the Barbarian peoples from Asia and to better control the Mediterranean area. Now, that it had fallen into the hands of those very Barbarian peoples, *in casu* the Turks, it became a mortal strategic threat against Europe, as it provided them with a secure basis for expeditions against the Mediterranean countries and a strong point of access to Balkan and Hungary.

There was no justification for complacency in the face of this threat since the Turkish sultan, Mehmed II, had highly belligerent ambitions.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, he was already mobilizing his armies for a great military expedition towards the West and had begun to conquer the Greek isles, one after the other:

*... he is contemplating even greater things and is gathering large armies and great fleets, intending to invade the Christian lands one after the other, by land and by sea. Indeed, he thinks that he can annihilate the Christian cause. [Sect. 33]*

---

<sup>1</sup> Meuthen, p. 10

## 2.3 War against the Turks

The emperor had convened the meeting in Regensburg in order to invite the Christian European powers to participate in a joint war against the Turks. Apart from revenge against the Turks, this war would have two strategic aims: the first, and foremost, to protect Europe against the Turks, and the second to reclaim the Eastern territories lost to the Turks and Arabs in former wars:

*Let us reach a decision that will allow us not only to defend what remains of Christianity, but even to recover what has been lost.* [Sect. 42]

## 2.4 Urbs capta

To arouse and engage the feelings of the audience in this matter, Piccolomini exploited the Urbs Capta motive of classical literature and the theme of Turkish atrocities, which he developed further in his later Turkish orations:<sup>1</sup>

*The nobles of the city were slaughtered, monks and priests were subjected to horrible torture, holy virgins were taken away to be raped, matrons and girls suffered the pleasure of the victors, boys were killed in the arms of their parents, an infinite number of people were carried into captivity and permanent slavery. Who can talk about such things without tears? I shudder even as I tell them.* [Sect. 30]

## 3. Date, place, audience, and format

The date of the delivery was 16 May 1454.

The venue was the meeting hall used for the diet in Regensburg.

The audience consisted of the participants in the conference of European and German princes, summoned by the emperor to deliberate on a European military response to the Turkish conquest of Constantinople and the destruction of the Byzantine Empire.

The format was a diplomatic and political oration held on behalf of the emperor.

---

<sup>1</sup> See the notes to the oration “*Constantinopolitana Clades*”, RTA, 19, 2, pp. 509. See also Smith, and Meuthen, p. 12

## 4. Text<sup>1</sup>

The text is extant in three versions:

- Version A included in Piccolomini's report on the Diet of Regensburg 1454, in the form of a letter to the Hungarian, Janos Vitez, Bishop of Várad (from whom it would undoubtedly reach the Hungarian court), dated 1 June 1454 i.e. only a couple of weeks after it was delivered on 16 May, often called the *Historia de Ratisponensi Dieta*,<sup>2</sup>
- Version B<sup>3</sup> individually transmitted and included in a number of humanist collective manuscripts, and
- Version C included in the Collected Orations of Pius II, compiled in 1462 under Pius' direct supervision.

The question is how these three versions are related. There are two likely models:

In model one, advanced by the RTA editors of the acts of the Diet of Regensburg, in 1969, there are basically two versions of the text: Firstly, the "original" text of the oration, as individually transmitted e.g. in humanist collective manuscripts (B), and comprising various filiations, due to scribal errors<sup>4</sup>. And secondly, the text in Piccolomini's report on the Diet (A), as a special version composed for that report. The editors wrote: *Eine Überarbeitung liegt unstreitig in der Fassung vor, die Enea der "Historia vom Regensburger Tag" einverleibt hat. Sie erweitert den ersten Teil durch Übernahmen aus anderen von Enea verfassten Schriftstücken und lässt den zweiten Teil so gut wie gänzlich weg.*<sup>5</sup> Mansi appears to support this model, noting in the margin of his edition of Version C: *Integra etiam inseruit Aeneas in sua histor. Diaetae Ratisponensis quam ex Mss. Cod. Lucens. in append. hujus Collectionis ego primus evulgo, sed more solito haec secundis curis ab authore suo reformata est; quare ab illa in verbis dispositione saepe discrepat.*<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II's orations, see *Collected orations of Pope Pius*, vol. 1, ch. 5

<sup>2</sup> Or *Historia de Dieta Ratisponensi*

<sup>3</sup> Further studies of the manuscripts containing this version are necessary to determine if Version B actually covers two or more editorial subversions

<sup>4</sup> The editors only note that the manuscript in Bibl. Ambrosiana, the cod. I92 inf. (see below under Version C), together with the other manuscripts *geben weitere Filiationen dieser Fassung (the "original" version)* (RTA, 19, 1, p. 265)

<sup>5</sup> RTA, 19, 1, p. 265

<sup>6</sup> MA, I, p. 251

In model two, the early version is the one included in Piccolomini's report on the Diet (A). Later Piccolomini, as was his wont, revised the text, producing version (B).<sup>1</sup> And still later, in 1462, the pope made a final revision (C) for inclusion in the Collected Orations. That (B) predates (C) is shown by the pattern of textual variants and by the title in manuscript W, chosen to represent the manuscript containing this version. The title says that the oration was delivered by Piccolomini when Bishop of Siena,<sup>2</sup> which means that the text is not later than December 1456, when Piccolomini was appointed cardinal (and his cardinal's title would somehow have been referred to in the title),<sup>3</sup> whereas (C) dates from the middle of 1462.

The following observations concerning this issue may be made:

- If Piccolomini had rewritten his original version for his Report on the Diet, presumably improving on his original text, it is not clear why he would not use that version in the Collected Orations of 1462.
- The RTA editors present no evidence that the version in the manuscripts collated by them predate Piccolomini's report on the Diet of Regensburg.
- The texts collated for the RTA edition, mostly representing (B), are quite obviously much more closely related to the version from 1462 (C) than the version in the report (A).

To determine the relationship between the various versions of the oration, further study is necessary, including a codicological study of the manuscripts with a view to assess their dates and chronological relationship, and a critical edition of Piccolomini's Report on the Diet with a view to determine if there are various versions of that report and how they might be related to the other versions of the oration.

It is worth noting that the Version A treats much more fully than Versions B and C the chain of the events leading to the Fall of Constantinople (Non-aggressiveness of Byzantine Emperor, Mehmed's military preparations), the conquest of the city itself (Cultural loss to Christianity), and

---

<sup>1</sup> Piccolomini usually revised the text of his orations after delivery, and sometimes several times and importantly so, as is the case with both the *"Audiui"* [1] (1936), the *"Fateor"* [15] (1951), the *"Moyses vir Dei"* [19] (1952), and the *"In hoc florentissimo"* [23] (1455)

<sup>2</sup> Oratio pro parte Invictissimi principis et domini domini Friderici Romanorum Imperatoris etc. in facto Passagii facta in dieta Ratisponensi per Reverendum patrem dominum Eneam Episcopum Senensem etc. que celebrata fuit in mense Maii Anno domini 1454

<sup>3</sup> Or at least not later than August 1458, when Piccolomini was elected pope, which would most certainly be reflected in the title of the oration

the extent of past Islamic conquests. The changes in content deserve further study in the context of a broader analysis of the development of Pius' crusade discourse over the years.

## **4.1. Version A**

### **4.1.1. Manuscripts**

Piccolomini's Report on the Diet of Regensburg, with Version A, is extant in a number of manuscripts in European libraries.

### **4.1.2. Editions**

- *Pius II: Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759 / vol. III, pp. 54-65  
*[According to Mansi, the text was based on a manuscript (unspecified) in Lucca – now probably in the Archivio Diocesano Storico Lucca]*
- *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Hrsg. von Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918 / vol. III, 1, pp. 538-547  
*[Based on Mansi's text]*

## **4.2 Version B**

### **4.2.1. Manuscripts<sup>1</sup>**

Four manuscripts, all collated in the RTA-edition (some selectively), represent Version B, copied individually and included in a number of humanist collective manuscripts:

---

<sup>1</sup> Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in *Collected orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 11, are marked with an asterisk

- **München / Bayerische Staatsbibliothek**  
Clm 8482, ff. 97r-100v
- **Paris / Bibliothèque Nationale**  
F. latin 6225, ff. 2r-6r
- **Venezia / Biblioteca Marciana**  
Lat. XI.80 (3057), ff. 314r-316v
- **Wien / Österreichische Nationalbibliothek**  
Cod. 3420, ff. 167v-170v (**W**) \*

Other manuscripts containing Version B are:

- **Budapest / Országos Széchényi Könyvtár**  
Clmae 372, ff. 31v-39r
- **München / Bayerische Staatsbibliothek**  
Clm 70, ff. 362r-364v  
Clm 8482, ff. 97r-100v
- **Schlägl / Stiftsbibliothek**  
Cpl 54, ff. 167r-170v
- **Trento / Biblioteca Capitolare**  
86, 130v-135v
- **Trieste / Biblioteca Civica A. Hortis**  
II 5, 63v-67r
- **Wien / Österreichische Nationalbibliothek**  
Ser. Nov. 127092, ff. 67r-68v

#### 4.2.2. Editions

Version B has been edited in the

- *Deutsche Reichstagsakten* (RTA). Bd. 19, 1. Göttingen, 1969, pp. 265-270

### 4.3. Version C

#### 4.3.1. Manuscripts

The Version C is included in six of the seven extant manuscripts containing the Collected Orations of Pius II.

- **Mantova / Biblioteca Comunale**  
100 A-IV-26, ff. 87-92v **(F)** \*
- **Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana**  
97 inf., ff. 57v-61v **(E)** \*
- **Rom / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**  
Chis. J.VI.211, ff. 58v-62v **(D)** \*  
Chis. J.VIII 284, ff. 39v-42v **(A)** \*  
Chis. J.VIII 286, ff. 84r-90r **(C)** \*  
Vat. lat. 1788, ff. 54v-58v **(B)** \*

Of these manuscripts, only E was collated (selectively) in the RTA-edition.

The text is not included in the seventh manuscript containing the papal compilation of orations, i.e. the Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana, 544.

#### 4.3.2. Editions

Version C was edited once, by Mansi:

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759 / vol. I, pp. 251-258 **(MA)**  
[Based on the manuscript E in Milan]

#### 4.4. Present edition

For principles of edition (incl. orthography) and translation, see *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 1, ch. 9-10.

##### *Text:*

Version A: The text is the one published by Mansi.

Version B: the text is that of the manuscript Österreichische Nationalbibliothek / Cod. 3420 **(W)**. For the other manuscripts containing this version, the reader is referred to the RTA-edition.

Version C: the text is based on all 6 manuscripts containing the version, with the BAV / Chis. J.VIII.284 **(A)** as the lead text.

##### *Presentation:*

The latin text of Version A and Version B/C are published successively. Identical passages in the two versions (A / BC) are given in bold letters (no account being made of differences in grammatical form, nor of et/ac/atque, nor of word order).

Notes are only given to Version B/C, except for passages only occurring in A.

##### *Pagination:*

Version A: The pagination is that of Mansi's edition of Piccolomini's Report on the Diet.

Version B/C: The pagination is that of the BAV / Chis. J.VIII.284 (A).



## 5. Sources<sup>1 2</sup>

The Fall of Constantinople caused a flurry of reports, orations and treatises. Scholars will have to determine which of those Piccolomini used as sources for his crusade orations at the German diets in 1454-1455 and later. In the present context only certain writings by Flavio Biondo, Niccolò Sagundino, Francesco Filelfo, Cardinal Isidore of Kiev, Archbishop Leonardo of Chios and Jacopo Tedaldi are examined – *exempli gratia*, all of them sources which Piccolomini might conceivably have used.

### 5.1. Flavio Biondo

Piccolomini definitely used Flavio Biondo's description of the Council in Clermont 1495, included in his *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades* <sup>3 4</sup>, and – notably the theme of the Turks forcing Christianity into a corner of Europe. How Piccolomini gained knowledge of this text is not known, but it must have been shortly after its publication (presumably in 1443), since he already used the *angulum* theme in his oration "*Et breviter me hodie*" [10] to Pope Eugenius IV in 1446,<sup>5</sup> and then later in several of his crusade orations, including the "*Quamvis omnibus*". In his treatment of the First Crusade, Biondo to some – small - extent<sup>6</sup> used the *Historia Hierosolymitana* written in 1120 by Robertus Monachus, who had personally participated in the Council of Clermont. Biondo's passage on Christianity being pressed into a corner of Europa was inspired by a passage in the *Historia Hierosolymitana*, which, however, did not address the political and military situation of Christianity, but demographic overpopulation.<sup>7</sup>

In 1452 and 1453, Biondo authored two crusade texts, one being an oration to King Alfonso III and Emperor Friedrich III, held in Naples in April 1452, <sup>8 9</sup> and the other a memorandum dated 1

---

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of Piccolomini's use of sources, see *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*, ch. 8

<sup>2</sup> See also RTA, 19, 2, especially for the contemporary sources

<sup>3</sup> The oration put into the mouth of Urban II by Biondo is published in the Appendix

<sup>4</sup> See Mertens, pp. 70-71. Biondo returned to this theme in his oration to King Alfonso, the "*Jucundum hoc loco*" (Flavio Biondo: *Scritti*, p. 111-112)

<sup>5</sup> Piccolomini may have met Biondo during his stay in Rome in February 1445

<sup>6</sup> See Mertens, p. 69

<sup>7</sup> Mertens, p. 70: *terra haec [...] numerositate vestra coangustatur [...] Inde est, ut vos invicem mordetis et contenditis, bella movetis et plerumque mutuis vulneribus occiditis*

<sup>8</sup> Biondo Flavio: *Scritti*, p. cxxxi-cxxxiii, and pp. 107-114

<sup>9</sup> Helmroth: *Pius*, p. 101: *Eine Türkenrede, die Enea Silvio als kaiserlicher Diplomat persönlich anhörte, hielt der Kuriale und Historiker Flavio Biondo im April 1452 in Neapel vor Kaiser Friedrich III. und König Alfons V.* This must be a lapsus since Piccolomini did not accompany the emperor on his visit to Naples, but stayed in Rome

August 1453<sup>1</sup>, two months after the Fall of Constantinople, to King Alfonso V on a crusade against the Turks.<sup>2</sup> Though, some passages in these texts are similar to some passages in Piccolomini's crusade texts, these similarities may be due to the commonality of the subject and not to direct quotation.<sup>3</sup>

## 5.2. Niccolò Sagundino

Piccolomini met Niccolò Sagundino<sup>4</sup> in Naples in 1456 when he represented the City of Siena in peace negotiations with King Alfonso V, but the two men may have been already been acquainted through a circle of common friends and acquaintances like Cardinal Bessarion and Leonardo Benvoglianti.<sup>5</sup> Two works of Sagundino became important sources for Piccolomini, his *Oration to King Alfonso V* of 25 January 1454,<sup>6</sup> and his *Liber de Familia Autumanorum* from 1456,<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> the last being a work commissioned by Piccolomini himself, but published after he had held his Turkish orations at the German diets in 1454-1455.

## 5.3. Francesco Filelfo

It is not certain how and how closely Piccolomini knew the famous humanist Francesco Filelfo, but in his youth he may have followed his lectures in Florence, and since then they were in intermittent epistolary contact. Since Filelfo's return from Constantinople in 1427, he had written on the Turkish danger to Europe, and after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 he became a veritable propagandist for the crusade cause, writing letters to princes and important people on the need for a crusade and – of course – offering himself as an expert in the matter, though in vain.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Biondi himself calls it "opusculi et orationis compendium", and Nogara calls it a "discorso" (Biondo Flavio: *Scritti*, p. 32 and cxxxiv respectively)

<sup>2</sup> Biondo Flavio: *Scritti*, pp. cxxxiv-cxliv, and pp. 29-58

<sup>3</sup> Similarities are indicated in the notes to each oration

<sup>4</sup> Caselli

<sup>5</sup> Caselli

<sup>6</sup> Niccolò Sagundino: *Oratio*

<sup>7</sup> Niccolò Sagundino: *De familia*

<sup>8</sup> Helmroth: *Pius*, p. 102

<sup>9</sup> Meserve

Two of his letters have special importance in the present context: one to Wladislaw, King of Poland and Hungary, of 5 November 1444, and the other to Charles of France of 14 February 1451.<sup>1</sup> Since they were acquainted and in epistolary contact, Piccolomini may very well have received copies of these letters.

Though he may have known of it, he does not appear to have used the first letter in his crusade orations.

The second one, however, he may very well have used. Indeed, its division of the crusade subject matter into three parts: *necessitas* (mostly *honestas*), *facilitas*, and *utilitas*, based on classical models, could have inspired Piccolomini's division of the "*Constantinopolitana clades*" into *justitia*, *utilitas* and *facilitas*.

#### 5.4. Isidore of Kiev

A number of letters of Cardinal Isidore of Kiev, written shortly after the Fall of Constantinople, witnessed directly by the cardinal, have been published by Pertusi.<sup>2</sup> Copies might conceivably have reached the Imperial Court and Piccolomini, but an examination of the texts shows that Piccolomini apparently did not use them in his Turkish orations, if indeed he knew of them, except possibly for some passages in Isidore's letter to Pope Nicolaus V, dictated to the notary Pasio di Bertipaglia.<sup>3</sup>

#### 5.5. Leonardo of Chios

In August 1453, Archbishop Leonardo of Chios wrote an eyewitness account of the Fall of Constantinople, dated 16 August, to Pope Nicolaus V.<sup>4</sup> It is not known whether Piccolomini had obtained or seen a copy of this report, but his description in the oration "*Constantinopolitana clades*" of Turkish atrocities after the fall of the city certainly matches the archbishop's report.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Filelfo: *Collected*, I, pp. 323-327 and 426-443 respectively

<sup>2</sup> Pertusi, I, 58-119

<sup>3</sup> Pertusi, I, 58-64

<sup>4</sup> Pertusi, I, pp. 120-171

<sup>5</sup> Pertusi, I, p. 164-165. Cf. oration "*Constantinopolitana clades*", [22] sect. 10

## 5.6. Jacopo Tedaldi

Jacopo Tedaldi's eyewitness account of the Fall of Constantinople was written soon after the event and was published together with Nicolaus V's crusade bull of 30 September 1453,<sup>1</sup> which was of course sent to the Imperial Court where Piccolomini must have come to know it.

## 5.7. Letters of Piccolomini

Besides external sources, Piccolomini made extensive use of themes and passages from two important letters he had written himself, right after the Fall of Constantinople, one to Pope Nicolaus V of 19 June / 12 July 1453<sup>2</sup> and the other to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues 21 July 1453.<sup>3 4</sup>

## 5.8. Survey of quotations

In this oration, only 13 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified. Interesting is his – probable – use of contemporary sources.

Biblical: 1

Classical: 2

Patristic and medieval: 2

Contemporary: 8

**All: 13**

---

<sup>1</sup> Pertusi, I, p. 172

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Pope Nicolaus V of 19 June / 12 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 199-202)

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 207-215)

<sup>4</sup> RTA, 19, 2, p. 463 (Helmuth/Annas): *Die Rede* [the Constantinopolitana clades [22]] *is eine der bedeutendsten und wirkmächtigsten Akte, mit denen versucht wurde, im Westen den Fall Konstantinopels am 29. Mai 1453 intellektuell und emotional zu bewältigen. Enea Silvio hatte dies zunächst in Form ausführlicher Briefe getan. Berühmt sind diejenigen an Papst Nikolaus V. (1453 Juni 19) und Kardinal Nikolaus von Kues (1453 Juli 21). In diesen Briefe ist bereits manches Motivmaterial der späteren Reden präsent*

### **Biblical sources: 1**

#### Old Testament: 1

- Psalms: 1

#### New Testament: 0

### **Classical sources: 2**

- Vergilius: 2

### **Patristic and medieval sources: 2**

- Eusebius of Caesarea: 1<sup>1</sup>
- Sozomenos: 1<sup>2</sup>

### **Contemporary sources: 8**

- Flavio Biondo: 6<sup>3</sup>
- Isidore of Kiev: 1
- Niccolò Sagundino: 1<sup>4</sup>

## **6. Bibliography**

Ady, Cecilia M.: *Pius II (Æneas Silvius Piccolomini) – the Humanist Pope*. London, 1913

---

<sup>1</sup> De vita Constantini

<sup>2</sup> Historia ecclesiastica

<sup>3</sup> Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades

<sup>4</sup> Oratio ad regem Alphonsum

Biondo, Flavio: Ad Alphonsum Aragonensem serenissimum regem de expeditione in Turcos [1 August 1453]. In: *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio*. Con introd. di B. Nogara. Roma, 1927. (Studi e testi; 48), pp. 32-58

Biondo, Flavio: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*. [1439-1453]

- Biondo, Flavio: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*. Venezia: Octavianus Scotus, 1483. (Hain, 3248). [Digitized version in Gallica, images 274-276]<sup>1</sup>

Biondo, Flavio: Oratio coram serenissimo imperatore Frederico et Alphonso, Aragonum rege inclito, Neapoli in publico conventu habita [March/April 1452]. In: *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio*. Con introd. di B. Nogara. Roma, 1927. (Studi e testi; 48), pp. 107-114

Biondo, Flavio: *Scritti inediti e rari*. Introd. di B. Nogara. Roma, 1927. (Studi e testi; 48)

Bisaha, Nancy: Pope Pius II and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 39-52

Boulting, William: *Aeneas Silvius (Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini – Pius II) – Orator, man of letters, statesman, and pope*. London, 1908

Caselli, Christian: Sagundino, Niccolò. In: *Dizionario Bibliografico Italiano*, (89) 2017

*Deutsche Reichstagsakten* (RTA). Bd. 19, 1. Göttingen, 1969

Du Fresne de Beaucourt, Gaston: *Histoire de Charles VII*. 6 vols. Paris, 1881-1891

Filelfo, Francesco: *Epistolae*

- Filelfo, Francesco: *Collected letters*. 4 vols. Transl. Jeroen de Keyser. Alessandria, 2015

Hankins, James: Renaissance Crusaders – Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II. In: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 49 (1995) 111-207

Helmuth, Johannes: The German Reichstage and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 53-69

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Gallica&O=NUMM-60241>

Helmrath, Johannes: Pius II. und die Türken. In: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, eds. B. Guthmüller & W. Kühlmann. Tübingen, 2000, pp. 79-138

Helmrath, Johannes: Political-Assembly, German Diets, and Silvius Aeneas Piccolomini. In: *Beyond Reception: Renaissance Humanism and the Transformation of Classical Antiquity*. Berlin, 2019, pp. 71-94

Helmrath, Johannes: *Die Reichstagsreden des Enea Silvio Piccolomini 1454/55 – Studien zur Reichstag und Rhetorik*. Universität Köln, 1994

Leonardo of Chios: Epistola ad Nicolaum papam V. In: Pertusi, Agostino: *Testi inediti o poco noti della caduta di Constantinopoli*. Tom. I. Torino, [1976] 2012, pp. 120-171

Märtl, Claudia: Anmerkungen zum Werk des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini (Historia Austriacalis, Pentalogus, Dialogus). In: *König und Kanzlist, Kaiser und Papst – Friedrich III und Enea Silvio Piccolomini in Wiener Neustadt*, eds. F. Fuchs, P.-J. Heinig, & M. Wagendorfer (eds.). Wien, 2013, pp. 1-30

Mertens, Dieter: Claromontani passagii exemplum. Papst Urban II und der erste Kreuzzug in der Türkenkriegpropaganda des Renaissance-Humanismus. In: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, eds. B. Guthmüller & W. Kühlmann. Tübingen, 2000, pp. 65-78

Meserve, Margaret: Nestor denied – Francesco Filelfo's Advice to Prince on the Crusade against the Turks. In: *Osiris*, 25 (2010) 47-65

Meuthen, Erich: Der Fall von Konstantinopel und der Lateinische Westen. In: *Historische Zeitschrift*, 237 (1983) 1-36

Mitchell, R.J.: *The Laurels and the Tiara – Pope Pius II, 1458-1464*. London, 1962

Niccolò Sagundino: *Oratio ad regem Alfonsum*. [January 1453]<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> According to Jorga, the text is not the oration itself, but a memorandum, which King Alfonso asked Sagundino to write, after he had heard Sagundino's oration: *Le roi, ayant entendu ses paroles, lui demanda de mettre par écrit une information sur le fait des Turcs et Nicolas, auteur de plusieurs autres traités latins, obtempera à cette demande ... En voici, les parties les plus saillantes, d'après le ms. J 28 sup. de la Biblioth. Ambrosienne à Milan* (Jorga, III, p. 316). Cited in the present edition of Pius II's orations as *Niccolò Sagundino: Oratio ad regem Alfonsum*

- Extracts in: Jorga, N.: Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisade au XVe siècle. 3 vols. Paris, 1899-1902 / T. III, 1902, pp. 315-323
- *Ad serenissimum principem et invictissimum regem Alphonsum Nicolai Sagundini oratio.* A cura di C. Caselli, Roma 2012. (Fonti per la storia dell'Italia medievale. Antiquitates; 39)

Nowak, Jessika: *Ein Kardinal im Zeitalter der Renaissance – die Karriere des Giovanni di Castiglione (ca. 1413 – 1460)*. Tübingen, 2011

Paviot, Jacques: Burgundy and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. London, 2004, pp. 71-80

Pertusi, Agostino: *Testi inediti o poco noti della caduta di Constantinopoli*. Tom. I. Torino, [1976] 2012

Pius II: *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt*. [1462-1464]:

- *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt*. Ed. A van Heck. 2 vols. Città del Vaticano, 1984 (Studi e testi; 312-313)
- Pius II: *Commentaries*. Ed. M. Meserve and M. Simonetta. Vols. 1 ff. Cambridge, MA, 2003 ff.

Pius II: *Epistolae*

- *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Hrsg. von Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918

Pius II: *Orationes*. [1436-1464]:

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759
- *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. Ed. and transl. by Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg. 12 vols. 2019-2020

Reinhardt, Volker: *Pius II. Piccolomini – Der Papst, mit dem die Renaissance begann*. München, 2013



Setton, Kenneth M.: *The Papacy and the Levant*. 4 vols. Philadelphia, 1976-1984 (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society; 114+161-162)

Smith, Leslie F.: Pope Pius II's Use of Turkish Atrocities. In: *The Southwestern Social Sciences Quarterly*, 46 (1966) 407-415

Stolf, Serge: *Les Lettres et la Tiare. E.S. Piccolomini, un humaniste au XVe siècle*. Paris, 2012. (Etudes et Essais sur la Renaissance; 98)

Tedaldi, Jacopo: Relazione sulla conquista di Constantinopoli. In: Pertusi, Agostino: *Testi inediti o poco noti della caduta di Constantinopoli*. Tom. I. Torino, [1976] 2012, pp. 172-189

Toews, John B.: *Emperor Frederick III and his Relations with the Papacy from 1440 to 1493*. University of Colorado, Ph.D., 1962

Voigt, Georg: *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter*. 3 vols. Berlin, 1856-63

Zimolo, Giulio C. (ed.): *Le vite di Pio II di Giovanni Antonio Campano e Bartolomeo Platina*. Bologna, 1964. (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores; t. III, p. II)

## 7. Sigla and abbreviations

**A** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.J.VI.211

**B** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Vat. lat. 1788

**C** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.J. VIII 286

**D** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.J.VI.211

**E** = Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana / I. 97 inf

**F** = Mantova / Biblioteca Comunale Feliana / 100

**W** = Wien / Österreichische Nationalbibliothek / cod. 3420

**MA** = Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759

## Abbreviations

**CO** = Pius II: *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt*. [1464]

**HA** = Eneas Silvius Piccolomini: *Historia Austrialis*. Teil 1: Einleitung von Martin Wagendorfer. 1. Redaktion ed. von Julia Knödler. Teil 2: 2./3, ed. Martin Wagendorfer. 2 vols. Hannover, 2009. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum. Nova Series; 24)

**HB** = Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini: *Historia Bohemica*. Herausg. J. Hejnic & H. Rothe. 2 vols. Köln, 2005. (Bausteine zur slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte. Neue Folge. Reihe B; 20)

**MA** = Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759

**MPL** = Migne, Jacques-Paul: *Patrologia latina*. 217 vols. 1841-1865

**RTA** = Deutsche Reichstagsakten

**WO** = *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Hrsg. von Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918

**Decretum** = *Decretum magistri Gratiani*. Ed. Lipsiensis secunda. Eds. A.L. Richter & A. Friedberg. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1879

**Epistolarium** = Enee Silvii Piccolominei *Epistolarium Seculare*. Ed. A. van Heck. Città del Vaticano, 2007

**Rainaldus** = *Annales ecclesiastici ab anno MCXCVIII ubi Card. Baronius desinit*. Auct. Odoricus Raynaldus. Tom. XVIII-XIX. Roma: Varesius, 1659-1663

**Reject** = *Reject Aeneas, accept Pius : Selected letters of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II)*. Intr. and transl. by T.M. Izbicki et al. Washington, D.C., 2006

## **II. VERSION A: TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

[1] {54} **Quamvis omnibus, qui adestis, reverendissimi patres, illustrissimi et nobilissimi principes,** ceterique viri magnifici ac praestantes, etsi **nota est causa vestrae** vocationis, **in litteris enim ad unumquemque transmissis exprimitur, quia tamen res ardua est et universam Christianitatem** respicit, ob **quam divus Caesar Fridericus, Romanorum imperator, in hac urbe celeberrima conventum indixit,** ex usu judicarunt esse **reverendissimi ac** magni potentes **collegae mei** sublimitatis **imperatoriae** legati **causam ipsam,** quae vos accersendos persuasit, in medium vestri **amplius explicari, quodque** Caesareae menti **ad consulendum reipublicae Christianae** propositum sedeat, **in hoc amplissimo auditorio** palam fieri. **Partes autem dicendi ad me, ut cernitis, delatae sunt, qui etsi pareo non invitatus majoribus meis, in hoc tamen negotio,** quod est omnium maximum, non ab re **aliud meo loco suffectum esse voluissem, qui parem rebus potuisset orationem habere.**

[2] Verum quia **turpe est contendere, ubi necesse est oboedire,** munus mihi demandatum pro mea facultate conabor absolvere. **Vos pro vestra mansuetudine ac nobilitate,** quibus ceteris praestare soletis **aures, eas** non dicam mihi, sed **rerum,** quas proponam {55} **magnitudini** atque ipsi, cujus nomine loquar, Friderico Caesari **concedetis. Ego ut quam brevissime res absolvam.** Oratiunculam **meam duas in partes dividam. In prima** referentur **ex ordine** convocati hujus concilii rationes. **In secunda** commissionis nostrae tenor explicabitur. Ac **ne** tempus frustra teram, de priori parte succincte transigam.

[3] Duae fuerunt causae, quibus impulsus est Caesar hunc conventum indicere. Unam praestitit grandis illa atque insignis contumelia, quam **aestate proxime decursa** Turcorum ductor Mahumetus apud Constantinopolim Christiano intulit nomini. Alteram maximus praebuit apparatus, quem ipsi iidem Turci habere dicuntur, ut Christianam gentem funditus perdant. Illa damnum pensitat jam illatum, haec futurum discrimen periculumque metitur. De his est paulo altius conferendum, ut intelligant omnes neque parvam injuriam esse, quam dicimus vindicandam, nec minimum esse periculum, quod suademus vestro consilio praecavendum.

## 0. Introduction

[1] Most Reverend Fathers, Illustrious and Noble Princes, and you other Excellent and Distinguished Men, who are present here today, you already know the reason why you have been invited to this meeting since it was stated in the letter sent to each of you. But as the matter concerning which Holy Roman Emperor Friedrich has summoned a conference in this famous city is of the highest importance and concerns all of Christianity, my Most Reverend and Great Lords and Colleagues, orators of His Imperial Highness, have deemed it useful to explain more fully to this excellent assembly the reasons you have been summoned and to disclose His Imperial Majesty's intention in taking counsel with you concerning the Christian Commonwealth. As you see, the task of speaking has fallen to me: though I gladly obey my betters in this matter, the most important of all, I should rather have wished to be replaced with someone who could give a more suitable oration.

[2] But since it is shameful to argue when you should obey, I shall perform the task requested of me to the best of my ability. And since you are kind and noble, you will - as you use to do to others - lend an ear, not to me but to the important matter concerned, and to Emperor Friedrich in whose name I shall be speaking. I shall perform this task as briefly as possible, dividing my little speech into two parts. In the first, I shall state the reasons why this conference has been summoned. In the second, I shall explain our task [in this assembly]. And so as not to waste time, I shall begin the first part right now.

## 1. Reasons for conference: Turkish attacks on Europe

[3] Two reasons have moved the emperor to summon the present diet. The first one is the great, nay enormous injury that the Turkish leader, Mehmed, inflicted upon the Christian cause last summer, at Constantinople. The second is the reported intensive Turkish military build-up, aiming at the complete destruction of the Christian people.<sup>1</sup> The injury inflicted by the Turks he considers as belonging to the past, whereas the build-up means future risk and danger. In a moment I shall speak of both so that all may understand how serious is the injury, which we claim should be avenged, and how great is the danger which we urge you to prepare for.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Isidore of Kiev: Letter to Pope Nicolas V of 6 July 1453 (Pertusi, I, 62): *comminatur omne christianum nomen radicitus excerpere*

[4] Circa injuriam autem, sicut mihi quidem videtur, nihil est, quod pro magnitudine rei satis dici possit. Nos tamen aliquid pro nostro captu in medium afferremus. Quiescebat Graecorum imperator domi suae apud Constantinopolim, quamvis in fide nostra orthodoxa non satis instructus atque satis fixus, Christianus tamen, Dei ac domini nostri Jesu pro captu cultor, sanguine nobilis, et virtute clarus. Nulla ei cum Turcis lis erat. Ferre potius superbae gentis contumelias, quam inferre cuiquam molestiam in animum induxerat suum: nulli noxius, nulli gravis. Tranquilla suum populum in pace regebat.

[5] Sed est in Thracia locus non longe a Constantinopoli, qui apud veteres Bosphoros nomen habuit, ubi magnus ille Hellespontus in angustias coactus, ut nonnulli tradunt, quingentorum passuum hinc Europam inde Asiam disjungit. Hinc olim Darius, rex Persarum, ponte facto copias transportavit, hic et Sacellum alioquin fuit Michaelis Archangeli miraculis innumerabilibus illustratum. In hoc Europae latere, quod ditionis Graecorum erat, Mahumetus contra foedus jusque castellum erigit, quo et suis {56} trajicientibus sit praesidio, et naves ex Euxino in Propontidem transeuntes ex arbitrio impediatur. Denuntiat imperator novum opus haudquaquam faciundum esse, foedus fidemque commemorat, jus bonumque petit. Ille in proposito perseverans castellum perficit.

[6] Exin magnis copiis terra marique congregatis imperatori bellum indicit, Constantinopolim obsidet, machinas admovet, muros quatit, urbem vehementer oppugnat, capit, diripit. **Constantinus illic imperator** occumbit. Mira Dei judicia et arcana consilia: sub **eo nomine Graecorum extinguitur imperium**, sub **quo sumpsit** exordium. In ipso ingressu mille ferme hominum occiduntur, fit deinde per urbem major caedes. **Nobilitas** omnis extinguitur, **sacerdotes** in ore gladii pereunt. **Virgines** ac matronae ea perpetiuntur, **quae** sunt libita **victoribus**. Filii in amplexu **parentum** enecantur, **infinite animarum numerus in captivitatem ac perpetuam servitutem** arripitur. Miseram ac lacrimabilem urbis fortunam, omnia plena rapinis, flammis, libidinibus, cruore, cadaveribus vidissetis.

## **1.1. Fall of Constantinople**

### **1.1.1. Non-aggressiveness of Byzantine Emperor**

[4] Concerning the injury it is so great that it cannot be expressed in words. Still we shall attempt to do so to the best of our ability. The Greek Emperor was living peacefully at home in Constantinople. Although he may not have been sufficiently instructed and firm in our orthodox faith, he was a Christian and a sincere believer in God and Our Lord, Jesus, and a man of noble blood and excellent virtues. He had no conflict with the Turks. He was convinced that it was better to tolerate being abused by this arrogant people than to cause trouble to others. He harmed no man, threatened no one, and ruled his people in tranquil peace.

### **1.1.2. Turkish preparations for war**

[5] But in Thracia, not far from Constantinople, there is a region called Bosphorus by the ancients. There the great Hellespont narrows so much that some people claim that only 500 passus separate Europe from Asia. Once, the Persian King Darius transported his forces from the other side on a bridge built for this purpose. On the European side there used to be a chapel in honour of the Archangel Michael, famous for countless miracles. On that side, which belongs to the Greeks, Mehmed in contravention of all treaties and rights built a fortress, both to protect his men when they were to be shipped [from the Asian to the European side], and to be able to prevent ships from sailing from Euxinus to Propontis. The emperor protested against the construction of the fortress, reminded Mehmed of their treaty, and demanded what is just and right. But Mehmed pursued his chosen course and finished the fortress.

### **1.1.3. Conquest of Constantinople**

[6] Then, having gathered great forces by land and sea, he declared war on the emperor, besieged Constantinople, deployed his war machines, broke down the walls, made a ferocious attack on the city, captured it and laid it to waste. There Emperor Constantine fell. How wondrous are the judgments of God and how mysterious his designs: the Greek Empire perished under [an emperor] with the same name as [the emperor who] created it. About 1,000 men were killed during the attack itself, and afterwards a general slaughter took place in the whole city. All the nobles were killed, and the priests put to the sword. Virgins and matrons suffered the pleasure of the victors. Boys were killed in the arms of their parents, and an infinite number of people were carried off to captivity and permanent slavery. Oh, the miserable and tearful destiny of that city: everywhere you saw plunder, fire, debauchery, blood and corpses.

[7] Tempia divino dicata nomini nefandis profanantur modis, stabula ac, proh pudor, lupanaria fiunt. Effigies magni Dei, matrisque, praecursorisque beatorumque omnium **delentur. Reliquiae martyrum et aliorum sanctorum jam cum Christo regnantium, quae fuerunt illis in templis pretiosissimae, porcis ac canibus** objiciuntur. Simulacrum ipsum crucifixi praevis tympanis in castra deducitur; pro ludo hinc atque inde rapitur, conspuitur, **luto** provolvitur. Parva ne ista videntur et non dolenda flagitia? **Quis talia fando temperet a lacrimis? Horresco talia referens. O maximam atque intolerabilem ignominiam Christianae gentis!** Et cujus est, obsecro, **pectus Christiani hominis, quod haec audiens non commoveatur,** non incendatur, non ferveat **ira?** Quis est **oculus fidelis hominis, qui non gemat? Amissa enim civitas nobilissima et amplissima, quam quondam Constantinus** primus ejus nominis **Imperator, jussu domini salvatoris sibi per quietem apparentis,** ad aemulationem **Romanae urbis erexit,** quae licet saepe civilibus bellis ac barbaricis incursionibus vastata fuerit, {57} numquam tamen extra manum Christianorum, nisi modo traducta est.

[8] Hic **orientalis imperii solium, hic patriarchalis sedes longo tempore floruit;** hic grande illud et memorabile concilium celebratum est, in quo Dioscorus et Eutyches prava de salvatore sentientes et praedicantes condemnati et in exilium missi sunt. Hic sacratissimae leges, quae constringunt hominum vitas, cum essent antea confusae atque obscurissimae, per Justinianum Caesarem ad compendium claritatemque sunt redactae. Hic oratoria, hic philosophia, et omnium bonarum artium studia, postquam consenuerunt et extinctae sunt Athenae, unicum domicilium et certissimum templum habuere. Hinc, si qua est hodie, apud nostros eloquentia manavit. Sed hanc urbem, adeo memorabilem, adeo gloriosam, Turci nostra tempestate nulla injuria lacessiti bello invadentes ex Christianorum manibus abstulerunt, sanguinem innoxium fuderunt, bibliothecas et libros rerum memorabilium incenderunt, sanctorum loca foedarunt, et opprobria in Christum Deum, quae referre horreo, protulerunt.



#### **1.1.4. Profanation of the holy things**

[7] The temples dedicated to the divine name were profaned in unspeakable ways and turned into taverns and – oh, what shame - brothels. The icons of the Great God, of his Mother, of the Precursor and of all the saints were destroyed. The precious relics of martyrs and other saints now reigning with Christ, that were kept in the temples, were thrown to pigs and dogs. A crucifix was carried into the [Turkish] camp, preceded by trumpets. They made a game of throwing it back and forth, mocked it and dragged it through filth. Does this [outrage] seem small and insignificant? Who can talk about such things without tears? I shudder even as I tell them. Oh, what great and intolerable shame on the Christian people! I believe that the heart of every Christian who hears about this will be moved and burn with anger. Is there any believer who will not cry in sorrow? For lost is the great and noble city built by Constantine, first emperor of that name, at the command of Our Lord and Saviour appearing to him in his sleep. The city he built was to emulate the City of Rome, and though it was often plagued by civil wars and incursions of barbarian peoples, it has never, before today, passed out of Christian hands.

#### **1.1.5. Cultural loss to Christianity**

[8] There the throne of the Eastern Empire and a patriarchal see flourished for a long period. There that great and memorable council was held where the false teachings and preaching of Dioscorus and Eutyches were condemned and they themselves sent into exile.<sup>1</sup> There those holy – but by then confusing and incomprehensible - laws that regulate human life were clarified and edited in one law collection by Emperor Justinian.<sup>2</sup> There oratory, philosophy and the studies of all the good arts<sup>3</sup> found a unique home and a secure temple after they had grown old and disappeared from Athens. There eloquence dwelt – if we can still talk of such in our time. This is the city, so memorable and so glorious, which the Turks without any provocation whatsoever have now conquered and taken from the Christians, shedding the blood of harmless people, burning libraries and important books, polluting the holy places and committing sacrileges against Christ, Our God, which I shudder to relate.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Council of Chalcedon, 451 AD

<sup>2</sup> The corpus juris civilis, issued from 529 to 534 AD

<sup>3</sup> The liberal arts

[9] Haec Caesarem nostrum vehementer urgent et angunt; digna haec scelera suae majestati videntur, digna flagitia, quae vindicemus: minime ille tantam injuriam, tam insignem contumeliam inultam existimat relinquendam. Neque enim solis hic Graecis illusum est, sed omnis Christianitas enormiter laesa est atque contempta. Neque mortales tantum: sed ipsi superi immortales derisi ac provocati sunt. Deus noster indicibili more spretus. Quod si nos pro levibus damnis, pro rusticis nostris modica injuria lacessitis arma sumimus, et ingentibus nos periculis objectamus, quid hic agendum erit, ubi tota Christianitas laesa est? Et ipse Deus, quem colimus, e suis ejectus sedibus? An non aequum est vitam illi offerre, qui dedit, qui pro nobis in ara crucis voluit immolari? Ingratum genus hominum, si ei corpus nostrum tradere negamus, qui nobis corpus et spiritum et animam elargitus est.

[10] Sed neque injuriae vindicandae ratio dumtaxat Caesarem movet, quae sane maxima est. Instare periculum grande videt existimatque cavendum, ne injuria injuriam pariat. Habet {58} jam sibi subjectam Mahumetus **Constantinopolim**. Illic **portus** est **amplissimus** et statio benefida carinis, quae **non** modo **unam** aut alias naves, **sed infinitas paene** classes **capere possit**. **Neque toto Mediterraneo mari situs est ad infestandum omne pelagus magis aptus**. Jacet enim Constantinopolis **supra Propontidem**, ita ut **neque ex ponto Euxino**, quem **mare majus hodie** vocant, **in pelagus** Euboicum, **Jonium** ac Creticum, quae maria unum videri queunt, **nunc quod Archipelagus appellatur**, **neque versa vice ex hoc in illud invitis Turchis transitus esse possit**. **Sunt enim angustiae per Bosphorum Thraciae ac per Hellespontum, quod Bracchium Sancti Georgii** vulgus dictitat, **in potestate Turcorum**. **Nec jam** mercimonia **ex Tanai**, prohibentibus **Turcis**, ad nos deferri queunt. **Facultas nunc illis est in portu Constantinopolis classem parare**, quae **cunctas insulas Archipelagi** vastatum eat, **quarum jam plerasque** captas atque direptas memorant.

### **1.1.6. Conclusion: Need for revenge**

[9] These [events] have shocked the emperor profoundly. His Majesty believes that such crimes and shameful acts must be avenged: this enormous injury, this flagrant abuse must not be left unavenged. It is not only the Greeks who have been scorned, indeed all Christendom has been grievously wounded and mocked. And not only have mortals, but even the immortal beings in Heaven been mocked and provoked. Our God has been scorned in an unspeakable fashion. We go to war and risk terrible dangers in matters of small harm and when our farmers have been only slightly molested. So what should we do now when all Christianity has been injured, and God himself whom we worship, has been thrown out from his dwellings? Is it not just to offer our life to him who gave his life for us and accepted to become a sacrifice on the altar of the Cross? Humankind is indeed ungrateful if we refuse to offer our body to him who granted us both body and spirit and soul.

## **1.2. Turkish threat to Europe**

### **1.2.1. Strategic position of Constantinople**

[10] The emperor, however, is not moved by the motive of avenging this injury, though it is, of course, quite serious. But he sees a great danger threatening us and considers that we must take care to avoid that one injury leads to another. Mehmed has now conquered Constantinople. There he has a large harbour and a site very suitable for ships, which can hold not just one or some ships, but almost immense fleets. No other place on the Mediterranean is more convenient for dominating the whole sea, for Constantinople lies above Propontis, so that you cannot, against the will of the Turks, sail from the Pontus Euxinus (which today is called the Great Sea) to the Euboan, Jonian and Cretan seas, which may be considered as one sea (today called the Archipelago), nor the opposite way. The narrow straits through Thracian Bosphorus and through the Hellespont (that our people call The Arm of Saint George) being now in the power of the Turks, no commercial goods can come from Tanais to our regions against their will. And it will now be possible for the Turks to prepare a fleet in the port of Constantinople with which to lay waste to or conquer all the islands of the Archipelago – actually they are already said to have attacked and plundered a number of them.

[11] Mahumetus autem, ut certo affirmant, **qui ejus** mores vitamque norunt, quique illis ex regionibus ad nos veniunt, **auctus animo, nequaquam se otio atque inertiae tradit, sed** proximam quamque victoriam veluti sequentis instrumentum ducit: **exercitus copiosos classesque** potentissimas extruit **eo proposito, ut amplius Christianitatem** lacescat. Neque aliud dies noctesque meditatur, quam **Christianum nomen funditus** eradicare atque extinguere memoriam Jesu domini nostri. **Nec mirum si tumescit atque insanit illius animus, cum patris sui ac suas victorias mente revolvit.** Genitor ejus Amurates **paucis ante annis bis Christianorum** prostravit **exercitus non parvos neque contemnendos.** Vladislaum, Poloniae regem nobilissimum adolescentem, Julianumque sancti angeli cardinalem, apostolicae sedis legatum, virum sui temporis excellentissimum, ad necem compulit. Hic **vero de Constantinopolitana victoria et imperatore Graecorum caeso** gloriosus majorem se jactitat patre; **et quoniam** falsi et mendosissimi prophetae **Mahumeti, qui sectam** ampliavit atque roboravit **Agarenorum, nomen** gerit, incredibili torquetur siti **Christiani nominis** extinguendi.

[12] {59} Cumque **patriarchalibus** ex sedibus illis **quattuor, super quibus veluti solidissimis** **basibus Christiana** subnixa **fides in totum olim orbem palmites** suos **extendit, jam tres** **obtaineant** Agareni: **Alexandrinam, Antiochenam, et Constantinopolitanam,** nullo jam dubio tenetur, quod **et Romanam nobis** eripiat. Usurpare quoque inter familiares sermones haec **verba** solet: **"Cur ego non totum mihi occidentem armis subjiciam, qui sum Asiae, Thraciae, ac Macedoniae, atque totius Graeciae dominus, quando Alexander, Philippi filius, cum soli Macedoniae** dominaretur, ausus est **cum duobus et triginta millibus militum orientem** invadere et **usque ad Indiam penetrare?** Comparat se Julio Caesari, Hannibali Poeno, Pyrrho Epirotae, ac ceteris illustribus viris, praestareque se omnibus asserit.

### 1.2.2. Mehmed's ambition to conquer Europe

[11] But men, who know Mehmed's character and life well and who come to us from those regions, report that Mehmed has grown bolder and will certainly not want peace and quiet: one victory is the means for the next. He is gathering large armies and strong fleets in order to further assail Christianity. Night and day, he only thinks about how to completely destroy the Christian cause<sup>1</sup> and to destroy the memory of Jesus, Our Lord. Indeed, it is not to be wondered that his mind swells and raves when he considers his father's and his own victories. Only a few years ago, his father, Murad, destroyed large and strong Christian armies, causing the death of Vladislaus, the young and noble king of Poland,<sup>2</sup> and Giuliano, Cardinal of Sant'Angelo, one of the most outstanding men of his time.<sup>3</sup> Proud of his victory at Constantinople and the killing of the Greek Emperor, Mehmed now boasts that he is greater than his father. And since he carries the same name as the false and lying prophet Muhammad, who enlarged and strengthened the sect of the Agarenes, he is tormented by his burning desire to destroy the Christian name.

[12] The Christian Faith was solidly rooted in four patriarchal sees, from where it once spread over the whole Earth, as fingers on a hand. Of these the Agarenes have now taken three: Alexandria, Antiochia and Constantinople. Therefore Mehmed has no doubt that he can also win the Roman patriarchate from us. Indeed, among his intimates he often says: "Why should I not be able to conquer and possess the whole of the West since I am already lord of Asia, Thracia, Macedonia and all of Greece? After all Alexander, son of Philip, was only lord of Macedonia when he invaded the East with [just] 32.000 soldiers and reached as far as India." He actually compares himself to Julius Cesar,<sup>4</sup> Hannibal of Carthage,<sup>5</sup> Pyrrhus of Epirus<sup>6</sup> and other illustrious men, and he claims to surpass them all.

---

<sup>1</sup> "nomen" (*et passim*)

<sup>2</sup> Vladislaus I (Jagiellon) (1424-1444): King of Hungary from 1440 to his death

<sup>3</sup> Giuliano Cesarini (1398-1444). Cardinal (1426), papal legate, President of the Council, mentor and friend of Piccolomini. Little did Piccolomini know that one day he himself would succeed him as Cardinal of Santa Sabina

<sup>4</sup> Gaius Julius Caesar (100-44 BC): Roman general and statesman

<sup>5</sup> Hannibal Barca (247-ca. 183 BC): Carthaginian general and statesman

<sup>6</sup> Pyrrhus of Epirus (ca. 319-272 BC): King of Epirus

[13] Copias sese ait innumeras armare atque in proelium ducere posse. Neque hic **mentitur**. Manifestum enim est ducenta et amplius **milia pugnatorum in bellum** ab eo **educi posse**. **Quod si Tartarus** junctus fuerit, ut legatus regis Poloniae refert et Hungariae gubernator affirmat, exercitum paene innumerabilem conflare valebit. Sed quid ego in re notissima moror? Progenitores hujus Mahumeti, **cum** nihil **citra mare** possiderent, **maximos** saepe populos **in Europam** trajecere. **Quid** modo **is faciat**, qui **usque ad Hungariae metas et usque ad Dalmatiam** protendit imperium? **Non est spernendus hic hostis, qui** et potentia ingens est et **animus ad bella paratus, qui juvenis est** et laudis amans et **sanguine** bulliens, **cui naturali quodam odio ex insita et innata malignitate atque crudelitate Christianos** persequi propositum est, **qui multos habet apostatas** nostri generis, ad audendum provocantes, **ex quibus omnia consilia nostra cognoscit, qui nobis vicinus est et aditum habet, sive in Italiam, sive in Germaniam** non difficilem **per loca propinqua Dalmatiae atque Croatiae**. Nam **et Albani**<sup>1</sup> et **Bosnenses** magna ex parte in ejus sese clientelam dedere. An putandum est quieturum hominem victoria functum, quem tot invitant ad insequendum commoditates? Qui norunt hominem et consilia sua perscrutati sunt, haud dubium censent, quod anno {60} proximo magno impetu in Christianos ruat atque omni conatu vicinos opprimere pergat.

[14] Ob has igitur causas indictum est hujuscemodi concilium: de vindicanda injuria, de vitandis amplioribus malis captanda consilia sunt. Optavit Caesar ad hunc locum **se conferre**, sed compulsus ex causis saepe relatis pro tutela suarum provinciarum **domi** manere, direxit huc hos patres atque procures insignes, meque cum eis, qui vices suas gereremus. **Mandatum nostrum nudiustertius, cum legeretur, audistis**. Quae Caesar in hac re potuisset, eadem quoque et nos possumus, si modo vestrae mentes ad tuendam vindicandamque Christianam religionem erectae sunt. Intelligitis, quae fuerint convocationis vestrae rationes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Albam MA

[13] He claims that he can arm and lead countless forces into war. This is not a lie, for it is evident that he can bring more than 200,000 soldiers into battle. And if the tartars join him, as the legate of the Polish King reports and the Governor of Hungary confirms, then he will be able to mobilize an almost innumerable army. But why dwell on something that is common knowledge? Though his forefathers did not have any land over the sea, they often brought great forces over to Europe. What would he do now when his empire reaches from the frontiers of Hungary to Dalmatia? We should certainly not despise this mighty enemy! His mind is set on war. He is young and hot-blooded. He loves glory. He is determined to pursue Christians - with a kind of natural hate born of ingrained and innate malignity and cruelty. He has many renegades from our people with him who encourage him and from whom he learns of all our plans. He is our immediate neighbour, with direct access to Italy and Germany through the neighbouring regions of Dalmatia and Croatia – for most Albanians and Bosnians have surrendered to him and have become his clients. Do you really believe that this man, enticed by so many advantages, will instead settle down after his victories? Those who well know the man and his intentions are quite certain that next year he will assault the Christians with all his might and do all he can to vanquish his neighbours.

#### **1.4. Mandate of imperial ambassadors**

[14] Therefore, the present meeting has been summoned with the purpose of deliberating on how to avenge the injury and how to avoid even greater evils. The emperor himself wanted to come here, but for reasons that have been stated several times already he had to stay at home to protect his provinces. Instead, he has sent these illustrious fathers and nobles, and me with them, to come here and represent him. You heard our mandate when it was read to you the day before yesterday. We are empowered to do what the emperor would have done in this matter, if only your minds are focused on protecting and avenging the Christian religion. You now understand the reasons you have been summoned to this place.

[15] Nunc, quae sit nostra commissio, paucis expediam. Id est enim, quod secundo loco dicturum me promisi. Munus nostrum hoc potissimum est requisitas atque commonitas facere vestras excellentias, ne quo pacto hinc abeatis, priusquam conclusionem unanimem recipiatis, per quam non modo defendi, quae superat Christianitas, sed et vendicari possit, quae in hostium potestate consistit. Id autem quo pacto quoque ordine faciundum sit, non est nobis certo limite demandatum. Sed jussi sumus audire **consilia** vestra, opiniones vestras agnoscere, **gravia et illuminatissima** sequi **judicia** vestra, discutere **vobiscum, quae opportuna** quaeque necessaria **videantur**, et in communi, quae meliora visa fuerint, amplecti atque concludere.

[16] **Ipse autem** divus Fridericus, **tamquam Romanorum imperator**, tamquam **advocatus et protector ecclesiae, tamquam princeps** religiosissimus, cui cordi est catholica et orthodoxa fides Christiana, **suam operam** suasque vires et omne patrimonium suum **in medium offert**. **Voluntarium** quoque **et promptum** paratumque se dicit, quantum in ejus potestate fuerit, cuncta **executioni** mandare, **quae in hac** conventionem pro tutela **Christiani nominis**, pro augmento fidei Catholicae, **pro honore Romani imperii, pro gloria Germanicae nationis** quoquomodo **deliberata conclusaque fuerint**.

[17] **Illud** nihilominus vel sine consilio necessarium Caesar existimat {61} atque in medium suadet, **ut divinum auxilium** in primis **devotissime imploretur, ut fiant opera digna misericordia ac clementia Dei**. Nam **quemadmodum peccatis et iniquitatibus nostris** **offensa divina majestas** Christianam gentem succumbere atque affligi sinit, ita **piis actibus et orationibus** placata suum tuebitur populum, praebebitque **veniam** omnipotens et misericors Deus, **sine** cujus nutu **nihil est, quod humana potestas valeat explicare**. Exhortatur igitur **imperatoria** sublimitas **reverendissimos ecclesiarum pontifices** ceterosque **praelatos, ut commissos sibi populos ad opera pietatis invitent, atque ipsi per sese cum clero sibi subjecto immaculatas hostias pro peccatis offerant populorum**.



## **2. Purpose of conference: War against the Turks**

[15] Now I shall briefly deal with our mission, for that is what I promised to speak of in the second place. Our most important task is to demand of Your Excellencies not to depart from here before you have made a unanimous decision to not only defend what remains of Christianity, but also to reclaim, as far as possible, what is now in the hands of the enemies. We have not received specific instructions concerning the manner and the order in which this should be done. Rather, we have been ordered to receive your counsel, to hear your views, to follow your serious and enlightened judgment, to discuss with you what would be useful and necessary, and to reach a common agreement on the best course to follow.

### **2.1. Emperor's part**

[16] As Holy Emperor of the Romans, as champion and protector of the Church, as a pious prince who has at heart the catholic and orthodox Faith, Friedrich himself will dedicate all his efforts and resources to this enterprise. He declares that he is prompt and ready, and he will – as far as he is able to – order everything to be done that this assembly may decide for the protection of the Christian cause, for the growth of the Catholic faith, for the honour of the Roman Empire, and for the glory of the German nation.

### **2.2. Need for atonement, prayers and piety**

[17] But he needs no counsel to consider it necessary and urge you first of all to devoutly beg God for help and perform acts worthy of God's mercy and clemency. For just as the divine majesty has been offended by our sins and iniquities and therefore allows the Christian people to falter and be harassed, omnipotent and merciful God will be pleased by pious acts and prayers and therefore protect and forgive his people. For unless He wills it, human power can achieve nothing. Therefore his Imperial Majesty exhorts the reverend bishops and other prelates to urge the people entrusted to them to perform pious acts, and themselves with their clergy to offer up immaculate hosts [in atonement] of the sins of the peoples.

[18] Vos autem, magnanimi proceres, duces, marchiones, equites, quos non minus alti cordis quam clari sanguinis crediderim, commonitos efficit Caesarea majestas, ne Constantinopolitanam cladem dumtaxat, quae recens est et supra modum dolenda, sed vetusta quoque vulnera, et jam vix curabilia, ante mentis oculos revocetis cogitetisque quomodo Deus caeli<sup>1</sup> Jerusalem terram suam, in qua visus est, et annis supra XXX homo cum hominibus conversatus, suam utique quam illustrativt miraculis, quam proprio sanguine dedicavit, in qua primi resurrectionis flores apparuerunt. En Terram Sanctam, terram benedictam, terram lacte et melle fluentem, officinamque nostrae salutis osiores occupant vivificae crucis. Sacrosanctam civitatem nostri possident hostes, pia et sacratissima loca agni immaculati purpurata cruore sceleratissimi calcant pedes.

[19] Advertite, obsecro, viri fortes, en quantum dedecus hoc nostrum est, quod ipsum religionis nostrae sacracrium lectumque illum pretiosissimum, in quo propter nos vita nostra obdormivit in domino nisi Saracenis ostendentibus videre nequimus. Nam illi quaestus causa sepulchrum domini servant illaesum. Itane servos crucis nos esse fatemur, et sanctum canibus margaritasque porcis dimittimus? Non est baptismatis unda renatus, non est verus Christicola, qui haec sine dolore, sine lacrimis audit. En quo redacta est nostra religio! Proh quantum Mahumeti perfidia {62} crevit, dum nos domi sedemus neque vicinis, quid accidit, advertimus. Cornua intumescunt hostium, sociosque nostrae fidei prosternunt, terramque nostram longe lateque sibi subjiciunt. Antiochia, in qua primo auditum est Christianum nomen, a Deo nostro facta est aliena, neque sancti quidquam habent, plena spurcitarum est. Alexandria, in qua tot clarissimi ac sanctissimi viri divinum evangelium praedicarunt ac magnificarunt, nunc Mahumeti fabulas audit: nihil est in Asia, nihil in Africa nostrum. **Europae** maximam partem amisimus; **in angulum** nos Mahumetus coarctavit: **hinc Hungaros, inde Hispanos premit.**

---

<sup>1</sup> *Textus corruptus* [Deest hic aliquid *in marg.* MA]

### 2.3. Islamic conquests

[18] And you, great Nobles, Dukes, Margraves and Knights, whose courage I must believe equals your nobility, you His Imperial Majesty urges to call to mind not only the recent and lamentable Fall of Constantinople, but also those old injuries that may now barely be healed. Consider how the God of Heaven [must love] Jerusalem and his Holy Land where he lived for more than 30 years, as a man together with other men, a land that he ennobled with his miracles and dedicated with his own blood, and where the first flowers of the resurrection appeared. And now those who hate the lifegiving cross occupy the Holy Land, that blessed land, that land overflowing with milk and honey,<sup>1</sup> the workplace of our salvation! Our enemies are in possession of the Holy City, and scoundrels trample the pious and holy places<sup>2</sup> that were empurpled by the blood of the immaculate lamb.

[19] Consider carefully, I beg you, mighty men, how shameful it is for us that, unless the Saracens will show them to us, we are unable to visit the holiest place of our religion and indeed the very couch where He who is our life lay dead for our sake. They keep the tomb of Our Lord intact only for the sake of profit. But, if we claim to be servants of the cross, why do we leave our Holy One to dogs and pearls to swine? Anyone who can hear about this without pain and tears has not been reborn from the baptismal water, and he is not a true follower of Christ. See what our religion has come to! See how Muhammad's false religion has grown while we were staying at home, ignoring what happened to our neighbours. Our enemies raise their horns, they cast down our fellows in the Faith, and they occupy our lands far and wide. Antiochia, the city where the name of Christian was heard first, has now become estranged from our God, nothing is holy there anymore, it is filled with impurity. Alexandria, where so many famous and holy men preached and glorified the gospel, now follows Muhammad's fables. In Asia and in Africa we have nothing left. Of Europe we have lost a large part, and Muhammad has forced us into a corner: at one end he harasses the Hungarians, and at the other the Spaniards.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im. 76]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im. 75]

[20] Evigilare jam tempus est fuissetque plurimos ante annos, et antequam haec vulnera nobis infligerentur, antequam hostis tantum virium accepisset. Immortalis Deus omnia potest, sed non plus vult de nobis quam nostri parentes. At parentes, si pergunt liberi errare, bonis exhaeredant. Quid ergo nos ab optimo Deo nostro amplius expectemus, nisi malis actionibus finem facimus? Verberati sumus propter delicta nostra. Nunc si mentem bonam recipimus et animum fortem, miserebitur nostri Deus noster. Si poenitentiam egerimus de malis nostris, aget et ipse poenitentiam super malum, quod cogitavit, ut faceret nobis. Virtutem immortalis Deus approbare, non prohibere<sup>1</sup> solet. Excitare alter alterum debemus, surgere atque occurrere hostibus, priusquam fines nostros, quos nunc habemus, ingrediantur, ne nos in cubilibus nostris oscitantes ac somnolentos inveniant, nobisque gentem et locum auferant.

[21] Hora est jam, principes, arma sumere atque inimicos crucis in suis laribus quaerere, bellum fortibus animis et unitis **viribus** gerere. Certa est in manibus nostris victoria, si modo pura mente ob Dei honorem salutemque populi Christiani proelium inchoemus; en dataeque mentes nostrae, non quae sua sunt, sed quae Jesu Christi quaerant. **Etenim quamvis est ille – ut ante dixi – ferocissimus et potentissimus hostis**, non tamen par est Germanicis viribus neque Theutonico nomine comparandus. Non est cur formidetis, procures, si **unanimis** bellum amplectimini; neque enim **homines, {63} aut equi, aut arma, aut currus, aut naves vobis desunt. Sed omnia** haec vobis **quam illi meliora** supersunt. Quod si majorum nostrorum gesta memoriae repetamus, **neque terrestri, neque maritimo bello pares umquam fuisse Turcos** progenitoribus vestris invenietis, **quando concordibus animis adversus eos est itum. Possem referre Caroli Magni, Conradi tertii, Friderici primi ac secundi, Romanorum imperatorum, Gotfridi quoque Lotharingiae ducis, ingentes quas de Turchis deque ceteris infidelibus victorias habuere.**

---

<sup>1</sup> *em.*; adhibere MA

## **2.4. Call for action**

[20] It is time to wake up - indeed we should have woken up years ago, before these wounds were inflicted upon us, and before the enemy had grown so powerful. Immortal God can do anything, but he demands no more from us than our own fathers did. If children go astray, their fathers will disinherit them, so what more than that may we expect of Our Best God unless we put an end to our evil doings? We have been scourged because of our sins, but if we now show goodness of mind and strength of soul, God will have mercy upon us. If we repent of our iniquities, He too will repent of the punishment he has devised for us. Immortal God approves of virtue and [certainly] does not forbid it. So, we should urge each other to act and to rise and meet our enemies before they invade the territories we have left still, and find us yawning and sleepy in our bedrooms, and rob us of our peoples and of our lands.

## **2.5. Christian military superiority**

[21] Princes, now it is time to take up weapons and to attack the enemies of the Cross in their own dwellings, to wage war with brave hearts and united forces. Certain victory will be in our hands, if only we go to battle with a pure mind, for the honour of God and for the salvation of the Christian people. May our hearts seek not what is our own, but what is Jesus Christ's. Though Mehmed is - as I said before - a most ferocious and powerful enemy, he does not equal German strength, nor can he be compared to the German name. There is no reason for you, Nobles, to have any fear if only you decide for war unanimously, for you are lacking neither in men, nor horses, weapons, wagons and ships: in all these things you are superior to your enemies. If you think back on the deeds of our forefathers, you will find that the Turks never equalled them in battles at sea or on land if only the Christians acted in concert against them. Just think of the great victories over the Turks and other infidels won by the Roman emperors Charlemagne, Konrad III, Friedrich I, Friedrich II and by Godefroy, Duke of Lorraine.

[22] **Sed parco** defessis **auribus vestris**. Unum **dico: numquam generale passagium contra** hostes nostrae religionis institutum traditur, **quin nostri triumphaverint, nisi** fortasse cum fames, aut pestilentia, aut **discordia** nostros afflixit. Manifestum est igitur nostram esse victoriam, si abdicatis **causis, quae nobis Deum iratum** faciunt, **pro Christi** nomine **bellum suscipiamus**. Sumite igitur, clarissime procures, fortes animos. Nolite hinc prius abire quam gerendum adversus Turcos bellum decernatis. Nolite rem tantam ac tam necessariam in tempus aliud proferre, ne dum vos de bello deliberatis, hostis jam castra tenens, id faciat, quod vos facturos spem gerimus. Etenim quis non intelligit magnum Christianitati instare discrimen, si hoc concilium rebus infectis dissolvatur? **Habet** adversarius noster **exploratores**, non latent eum consilia vestra. Tanto **ferocior** erit, quanto cognoverit vos magis desides.

[23] **Christiani, qui vicini sunt Turcis**, ubi de vestris **auxiliis** desperaverint, in leges Turcorum ibunt. Sic Trapezuntios, Georgianos, Rascianos, Albanos, Bulgaros facile amitemus. Caramannus, qui auxilia contra Turcos pollicetur, quamvis est ejus perfidiae comes, ubi negligentes Christianos acceperit, et ipse sibi consulet. **Hungari, qui** sicut admodum **et annis pluribus suum effundendo sanguinem** tutati sunt nostrum, **indutias cum Turcis habent** non longo **tempore** duraturas. Quod si audiant **dissolutum** esse **sine fructu** conventum, novis se pactionibus obligabunt, **neque cum voluerimus eorum uti** consiliis dabitur.

[22] But I shall spare your tired ears and only say this: never has it been heard that we were defeated in a crusade against the enemies of our religion unless our [troops] were struck by hunger, plague or strife. So it is clear that if we refrain from such things that anger God, we shall be victorious when we go to war for the cause of Christ. Therefore, Excellent Nobles, be courageous. Do not leave from here before you have decided on war against the Turks. Do not put off this great and urgent matter, so that while you are still discussing the war, the enemy, who is already on the move, will actually do what you only hope to do. Who does not understand how dangerous it is for Christianity if our meeting ends with this matter left unfinished? Our adversary has spies, he knows of your plans. The more he sees you vacillate, the more ferocious he will become.

## **2.6. The allies**

[23] If the Christians who are the neighbours of the Turks lose hope of your help, they will accept the terms of Turks. Thus we shall easily lose the peoples of Trebizond, Georgia, Rascia, Albania and Bulgaria.

Karaman is being promised help against the Turks, though he is an infidel like them. If he hears that the Christians are indifferent, then he will look to his own interests.

The Hungarians, who for many years have shed much blood as they protected ours, have an armistice with the Turks which will expire shortly. If they hear that this conference has ended without a result, they will be forced to accept new agreements [with the Turks], and they will not be able to assist us when we want them to.

[24] **Neque** hic rem dubiam proferimus. **Johannes** Huniat, comes Bisticensis, qui rem {64} Hungariae gubernat, vir alti consilii, **Turcorum** metus, Christianorum spes, hoc ipsum novissime Caesari nostro significavit per **oratores**, qui ad se missi fuerant. Ait enim **Turcorum** principem grandes **belli apparatus facere, Tartarorum gentem foedere junctam habere, personam ejus esse in Andrinopoli, exercitus in Sophia** apud **Bulgaros congregari** ibique duces belli convenisse. **Hungaros** autem **nihil magis optare quam Turcorum** conatus infringere, se quoque sumpturum **arma** pugnaturumque totis viribus, si Theutones ceterique **Christiani concurrant. At si** nostrae religionis **principes torpeant**, neque **velle**, neque posse **Hungaros tantam belli molem** subire, **sed accepturos conditiones, quas Turci offerant, daturos transitum, qui ab illis petitur. Quod an sit in rem Christianorum, ipsi reges Christiani viderint.** Sic Hungari regno suo consulere proponunt. Quid Venetos, quid et Genuenses facturos arbitramini? Nemo est qui non sibi quam alteri melius velit; omnes de suo statu solliciti sunt. **Rex autem Franciae Christianissimus, majorum suorum vestigia** premens, teste **reverendissimo cardinali, summo pontifici litteras dedit, quibus** sese arma sumpturum pollicetur, si **Germanos** indixisse Turcis bellum cognoverit.

[25] Quod si vos nihil agitis, deserta Christianitas erit; nemo illam tuebitur: *exterminabit eam aper de silva, et singularis ferus depascetur eam*<sup>1</sup>, vosque tanti mali causam praestabitis, si convenientes in hoc loco {65} ad consulendum reipublicae Christianae infectis negotiis abieritis. Sunt enim omnium oculi in vos conversi, vosque veluti rectores Christiani populi omnes intuentur. Si audetis, omnium erigentur animi. Si torpetis, actum est de nostra religione, Turcorum ferre imperium, Mahumetique parere legibus oportebit.

---

<sup>1</sup> Psalms, 79, 14



[24] Here we are not advancing a doubtful argument, for this is what the Governor of Hungary, Janos Hunyadi, Count of Bistrita, a most perspicacious man, terror of the Turks and hope of the Christians, quite recently told our emperor through ambassadors sent to him. He says that the Turkish prince is making great preparations for war, that he has entered an alliance with the Tartars, that he is now himself in Adrianopolis, that his armies are assembling at Sophia in Bulgaria, and that his generals are gathering there. [Further that] the Hungarians want nothing more than to oppose the Turkish endeavours, and that they will go to war and fight with all their might if the Germans and the other Christians join them. But if the princes of our religion are passive, then the Hungarians neither can nor will shoulder this great burden of war [alone], but shall accept the conditions offered by the Turks and give them the free passage they demand. The Christian kings will have to consider whether that is in the interests of the Christians. This is how the Hungarians intend to provide for their kingdom.

And how do you think the Venetians and the Genoese will react? Nobody wants the other part to fare better than oneself; everyone is most concerned about his own affairs.

The Most Christian King of France follows the example of his forefathers and has, according to the Most Reverend Cardinal, sent a letter to the Supreme Pontiff in which he promises that he, too, will take up arms if he hears that the Germans have declared war on the Turks.

### 3. Conclusion

[25] So, if you do nothing, Christianity will be left defenseless, nobody will protect it. You have assembled here in order to provide for the Christian Commonwealth. If you leave without having done so, *the boar out of the wood will lay it waste: and a singular wild beast will devour it*. All eyes are on you now, and the Christian peoples are looking to you for leadership. If you show resolve, they will be encouraged. If you show apathy, our religion is done for, and we shall have to bear the rule of the Turks and obey the laws of Muhammad.

[26] Agite igitur, consulite in medium, procures; nolite matrem vestram ecclesiam desertam relinquere. Cogitate quo pacto Turcorum rabiem elidatis; non erit hoc difficile, si concordēs estis. Ecce divino nutu et ad nostrum tutamentum **lites Italiae compositae sunt**. Facile jam summus apostolicae sedis praesul ac praestantissimus **ille rex Aragonum cum Venetis**, Genuensibus, **et aliis Italiae** populis ac **principibus adversus Turcos classem maritimam** apparabunt. Quod si vos terrestrem exercitum armaveritis, terra simul ac mari uno tempore superbissimus hostis invasus, adiutore altissimo, nostris ex finibus propulsabitur. Haec sunt, quae pro commissione nostra secundo et ultimo loco de mente Caesaris dicenda fuerunt

[27] Vos igitur, quibus curae est orthodoxa religio nostra, quique bonum commune Christianae plebis exoptatis, **operam dabit**, ne hoc concilium, ex quo spes omnium Christianorum pendet, absque salubri **conclusionē** dissipetur. **Neve tantus et tam altus princeps**, quantus **est Burgundiae dux, de remotissimis** regionibus **vocatu Caesaris ad vestros lares frustra venerit; sed et ipse potius ad propria** laetus jucundusque **redeat, et omnes, qui spem habent in vobis**, sui voti compotes fiant.

[26] So, consult now, Nobles. Do not abandon the Church, your mother. Think on how to overcome the rabid Turks. It will not be difficult, if only you are in agreement. The Italian conflicts have been settled, by divine will and for our safety. It will now be easy for the Supreme Pontiff and the excellent King of Aragon together with the Venetians, the Genoese and the other peoples and princes of Italy to prepare a fleet against the Turk. If you, on your part, mobilize a land army, our arrogant enemy can be attacked both on land and at sea, and with the help of the Most High he will be thrown out of our lands.

This is what we had been commissioned to say, in the second and last place, about the intentions of the emperor.

[27] Now it is up to you, caring for our orthodox religion and desiring the common good of the Christian people, to make sure that this congress, on which hangs the hope of all Christians, does not end without a fruitful conclusion. Nor should the great and exalted prince, the Duke of Burgundy, at the emperor's call have travelled in vain from faraway regions to your homes. No, may he go back happy and joyful, and may all who hope in you be contented.



### **III. VERSION B AND C: TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

Oratio Aeneae Silvii <sup>1</sup> Piccolominei episcopi <sup>2</sup> Senensis qui <sup>3</sup>  
postea pontificatum maximum adeptus Pius II. appellatus est  
habita Ratisponae in conventu praesente Philippo <sup>4</sup> Burgun-  
diae duce <sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *omit.* E

<sup>2</sup> *add. in marg.* A, C

<sup>3</sup> quod B, E

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* E

<sup>5</sup> Oratio ... duce: Enee Silvii episcopi Senensis legati Cesaris oratio habita in conventu Ratisponensi presente Philippo Burgundie duce **D**; Oracio pro parte Invictissimi principis et domini domini Friderici Romanorum Imperatoris etc. in facto Passagii facta in dieta Ratisponensi per Reverendum patrem dominum Eneam Episcopum Senensem etc. que celebrata fuit in mense Maii Anno domini 1454 **W**

**Oration of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena, who was called Pius II after he became pope, given at the diet in Regensburg, in the presence of Duke Philippe of Burgundy<sup>1</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> Philippe III le Bon (1396-1467): Duke of Burgundy from 1419 to his death

[28] {39v} **Quamvis omnibus, qui adestis, reverendissimi patres, illustrissimi et excellentissimi principes<sup>1</sup>, et praestabiles domini honorandi, nota sit causa conventionis vestrae, in litteris enim ad unumquemque transmissis exprimitur, quia tamen res maxima est et universam Christianitatem concernit, propter quam divus Caesar Fridericus, Romanorum imperator Augustus, dominus noster invictissimus, in hoc celeberrimo loco conventum indixit, utile videtur reverendissimis ac magnificis dominis et collegis meis, imperatoriae majestatis oratoribus, causam ipsam conventionis amplius explicare, et quod sit imperatoriae majestatis intentum<sup>2</sup> ad<sup>3</sup> consulendum reipublicae Christianae in hoc amplissimo auditorio exponere. Partes autem dicendi, ut cernitis, ad me, qui sum omnium minimus, delatae sunt, qui etsi pareo libenter majoribus meis, in hoc tamen negotio alium meo loco suffectum esse voluissem, qui parem rebus<sup>4</sup> potuisset orationem habere.**

[29] Sed **turpe est contendere<sup>5</sup>, ubi necesse est oboedire, vosque<sup>6</sup> pro vestra mansuetudine ac nobilitate, quas mihi negavissetis<sup>7</sup> aures, eas rerum magnitudini concedetis. Ego, ut quam<sup>8</sup> brevissime res absolvam. Propositionem<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> meam in duas dividam partes. In prima dicam ex ordine, quae causae moverunt<sup>11</sup> Caesarem ad hunc conventum indicendum<sup>12</sup>. In secunda, quae sint<sup>13</sup> commissa nobis in<sup>14</sup> vestro amplissimo coetu tractanda, narrabo. At<sup>15</sup> ne verba incassum proferam, hinc narrationis initium<sup>16</sup> capiam.**

---

<sup>1</sup> magnifici *add.* W

<sup>2</sup> causam ipsam ... intentum *omit.* W

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* C

<sup>4</sup> parem rebus : rebus parem W

<sup>5</sup> contemnere F

<sup>6</sup> vos W

<sup>7</sup> navigassetis F

<sup>8</sup> que W

<sup>9</sup> proportionem F

<sup>10</sup> Divisio *in marg.* D

<sup>11</sup> moverint W

<sup>12</sup> hunc ... indicendum : hanc dietam indicendam W

<sup>13</sup> sunt D

<sup>14</sup> cum W

<sup>15</sup> ac W

<sup>16</sup> initium D, E, F



## 0. Introduction

[28] Most Reverend Fathers, Illustrious and Eminent Princes and Worshipful Lords, you who are present here today already know the reason why you have been invited to this meeting since it was stated in the letter sent to each of you. But the matter concerning which Holy Emperor Friedrich, August Imperator of the Romans and our Unvanquished Lord, has summoned a conference in this famous place is of the highest importance and concerns all of Christianity, and therefore my Most Reverend and Magnificent Lords and Colleagues, the orators of His Imperial Majesty, have deemed it useful to explain more fully to this august assembly the reasons for the meeting and to set forth the intention of His Imperial Majesty in taking counsel with you concerning the Christian Commonwealth. As you see, the task of speaking has fallen to me, the most insignificant of all, and though I gladly obey my betters, in this matter I should rather have wished to be replaced with someone who could give a more suitable oration.

[29] But it is shameful to argue when you should obey. And since you are kind and noble, you will listen, if not for my sake, then because of the importance of the matter. I shall perform this task as briefly as possible, dividing my presentation into two parts. In the first, I shall state the reasons that led the emperor to summon this assembly. In the second, I shall explain what he has charged us to deal with in this eminent assembly. And so as not to be speaking superfluously, I shall begin my speech right now.

[30] Cum accepisset imperatoria majestas **aestate proxime**<sup>1</sup> **decursa**, quae circa Constantinopolim Turcorum rabies perpetrasset, ingenti maerore affecta fuit, considerans quantum<sup>2</sup> et quale vulnus Christianorum genti esset illatum. **Est enim amissa civitas nobilissima et amplissima, quam quondam Constantinus imperator**, ut refert Eusebius Caesariensis, **jussu domini salvatoris sibi per somnum apparentis ad similitudinem et aequalem {40r} excellentiam Romanae urbis erexit**, ubi<sup>3</sup> **orientalis imperii solium et patriarchalis sedes longo tempore floruit. Illic** occisus est **imperator Constantinus**<sup>4</sup> ejus nominis ultimus. Mirabile dictu, ut in **eo nomine Graecorum imperium sit extinctum**, in **quo sumpsit** initium. **Nobilitas** urbis gladio caesa est, religiosi monachi **sacerdotesque**<sup>5</sup> suppliciis afflicti crudelissimis, sacratae **virgines** ad libidinem raptae, matresfamilias ac puellae passae, **quaeque victoribus** placuerunt. Mares impuberes **in complexu parentum** necati, **animarum infinitus numerus in captivitatem ac perpetuam servitutem** deductus. *Quis talia fando*<sup>6</sup> *temperet*<sup>7</sup> *a lacrimis. Horresco talia referens.*

---

<sup>1</sup> proxima W

<sup>2</sup> est *add.* MA

<sup>3</sup> et *add.* W

<sup>4</sup> Constantinopolitanus B, E, MA

<sup>5</sup> sacerdotes MA

<sup>6</sup> fandi W

<sup>7</sup> temperat W

# 1. Reasons for conference: Turkish attacks on Europe

## 1.1. Fall of Constantinople

### 1.1.1. Conquest of Constantinople

[30] When, last summer, His Imperial Majesty learnt what the rabid Turks had done in Constantinople, he was profoundly shocked at the magnitude and nature of the wound inflicted upon the Christian people. For lost is the great and noble city that, according to Eusebius of Caesarea,<sup>1</sup> was built by Emperor Constantine, at the command of Our Lord and Saviour appearing to him in a dream. The city he built was to resemble and equal the excellence of the City of Rome. There the throne of the Eastern Empire and a patriarchal see flourished for a long time.<sup>2</sup> And there Emperor Constantine, the last of his name, was killed. Remarkably, the Greek Empire perished under [an emperor] with the same name as [the emperor who] created it.<sup>3</sup> The nobles of the city were slaughtered, monks and priests were subjected to horrible torture,<sup>4</sup> holy virgins were taken away to be raped, matrons and girls suffered the pleasure of the victors, boys were killed in the arms of their parents, an infinite number of people were carried into captivity and permanent slavery.<sup>5</sup> *Who can talk about such things without tears?*<sup>6</sup> *I shudder even as I tell them*<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea: *De vita Constantini*, 1, 29; 3, 48; Sozomenos: *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2, 3

<sup>2</sup> From Piccolomini's letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 212), slightly revised

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Isidore of Kiev: Letter to Pope Nicolas V of 6 July 1453 (Pertusi, I, 60): *quae [Constantinopolis] sicut ab ipso Constantino, Elenae filio, fuit tunc fundata, nunc ab isto altero Constantino, alterius Elenae filio, miserabiliter est amisso*

<sup>4</sup> From Piccolomini's Letter to Pope Nicolaus V of 12 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 199) and Letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 207), slightly revised

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im.75]

<sup>6</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.361

<sup>7</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.204

[31] Sed quid dicam de magnificentissimis<sup>1</sup> illius urbis ecclesiis, quarum aliquae incensae aut diruptae<sup>2</sup> fuerunt<sup>3</sup>, aliae **deletis** imaginibus Christi domini nostri Jesu<sup>4</sup> ac sanctorum ad spurcitiam Mahumeti profanatae sunt. **Reliquiae martyrum et aliorum** piorum **jam cum Christo regnantium, quae fuerunt in illa** civitate **pretiosissimae, in lutum**<sup>5</sup> projectae et conculcatae a<sup>6</sup> porcis aut traditae **canibus** enarrantur<sup>7</sup>. **O**<sup>8</sup> **maximam atque intolerabilem ignominiam Christiane gentis!** Nullum arbitror **pectus esse Christiani**<sup>9</sup> **hominis, qui**<sup>10</sup> **hoc audiens non commoveatur** atque ardeat<sup>11</sup> **ira**. Nullum **esse fidelis hominis oculum, qui non gemat?** Et quidem<sup>12</sup> Caesarea majestas hoc intelligens non potuit non vehementissime<sup>13</sup> dolere.

---

<sup>1</sup> magnificis W

<sup>2</sup> dirutae B, F

<sup>3</sup> feruntur W

<sup>4</sup> omit. W

<sup>5</sup> luctum E

<sup>6</sup> aut F

<sup>7</sup> narrantur MA

<sup>8</sup> et W

<sup>9</sup> ~~gentis~~ add. E; gentis add. MA

<sup>10</sup> omit. W

<sup>11</sup> audeat W

<sup>12</sup> et quidem : equidem W

<sup>13</sup> vehementer F

### **1.1.2. Profanation of holy things**

[31] And what shall I say about the magnificent churches of this city? Some were burnt or destroyed, others were profaned with the filth of Mohammedans who destroyed the icons of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the saints. The city's precious relics of martyrs and other pious men now reigning with Christ were reportedly cast into the gutter, trodden under feet by pigs, and thrown to dogs. Oh, the great and intolerable shame on the Christian people! I believe that the heart of every Christian who hears about this will be moved and burn with anger. Is there any believer who will not cry with sorrow when hearing it? Indeed, the emperor was deeply shocked when he did.

[32] Huc accedit quia<sup>1</sup> locus ille **Constantinopolis** situm **habet** nobilissimum et ad nocendum<sup>2</sup> Christianitati aptissimum. Habet enim **portum** tutissimum et **amplissimum**<sup>3</sup> adeo, ut **non unam** classem, **sed infinitas** paene naves **capere possit**, **neque toto Mediterraneo mari situs**<sup>4</sup> est ad **infestandum omne pelagus** magis idoneus. **Jacet**<sup>5</sup> enim supra Propontidem, ita ut neque de **Ponto Euxino**, quod<sup>6</sup> **hodie**<sup>7</sup> Mare Majus appellant, in pelagus Jonium, quod nunc Archipelagus nominatur, neque vice versa ex hoc in illud invitis Constantinopolitanis transitus esse possit. **Sunt enim angustiae freti per Bosforum**<sup>8</sup> Thraciae et<sup>9</sup> **per Hellespontum**, quod Bracchium Sancti **Georgii** nostri vocitant, **in potestate Turcorum**. **Nec**<sup>10</sup> **jam** merces **ex Tanai**, si nolunt<sup>11</sup> **Turci**, ad nostros<sup>12</sup> meare possunt. Facile modo **facultas** Turcis **est classem in portu Constantinopolitano parare**<sup>13</sup>, cum qua **cunctas insulas Archipelagi** devastent<sup>14</sup> aut sibi subjiciant, **quarum jam plerasque** invasisse atque obtinuisse memorantur.

---

<sup>1</sup> qui E; quod F, MA

<sup>2</sup> nocendi E;

<sup>3</sup> habet ... amplissimum *omit.* B, E, MA

<sup>4</sup> ullus *add.* W

<sup>5</sup> licet W

<sup>6</sup> quem B, C, W

<sup>7</sup> hodie *corr. ex moderni* C; moderni W

<sup>8</sup> Borsforum A, B, E, F

<sup>9</sup> ac W

<sup>10</sup> haec F

<sup>11</sup> volunt W

<sup>12</sup> nostras W

<sup>13</sup> ponere W

<sup>14</sup> vastent F

## 1.2. Turkish threat to Europe

### 1.2.1. Strategic position of Constantinople

[32] To this should be added that the city of Constantinople has an excellent location, well suited to harm the Christian world. For its port is very secure and so great that it can hold not just one fleet, but almost an infinite number of ships. No place at the Mediterranean Sea is better situated for infesting the whole sea, for it lies above Propontis,<sup>1</sup> so that against the will of those who possess Constantinople there can be no sailing from Pontus Euxinus<sup>2</sup> (today called the Great Sea) to the Jonian Sea (today called the Archipelage) nor the opposite way. For the narrow straits through Thracian Bosphorus and through the Hellespont (that our people call The Arm of Saint George) are now in the power of the Turks, and no commercial goods can come from Tanais<sup>3</sup> to our regions against the will of the Turks. And it will now be quite easy for the Turks to prepare a fleet in the port of Constantinople with which to lay waste to or conquer all the islands of the Archipelage – actually they are already said to have attacked and taken a number of them.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Sea of Marmara

<sup>2</sup> The Black Sea

<sup>3</sup> The area around the river Don

[33] Turcorum autem princeps<sup>1</sup>, ut fama fert, ut quam<sup>2</sup> certissime referunt, **qui ejus** facta cognoscunt, **auctus animo** ex acquisitione tantae urbis **nequaquam se otio atque<sup>3</sup> inertiae<sup>4</sup> tradit, sed** majora mente cupiens<sup>5</sup> **exercitus copiosissimos<sup>6</sup> classesque** maximas parat, **eo proposito, {40v} ut amplius** atque amplius **Christianitatem** mari ac terra invadere possit, existimans **Christianum nomen funditus** posse delere, nesciens quia salvator noster cum populo suo usque ad finem saeculi sese promisit esse mansurum. **Nec mirum, si tumescit atque insanit illius<sup>7</sup> animus, cum patris sui ac suas victorias mente revolvit.** Scimus patrem ejus memoria nostra **paucis ante annis bis Christianorum exercitus non parvos neque contemnendos** delevisse. Iste<sup>8</sup> **vero de Constantinopolitana victoria et imperatore Graecorum caeso** plurimum se gloriatur<sup>9</sup>. **Et quoniam** eo **nomine** vocatur, quo pseudopropheta dictus est, **qui sectam<sup>10</sup>** firmavit **Agarenorum, Mahumetus** enim appellatur, ad exemplum illius **Christi nomen** exosum habet.

---

<sup>1</sup> dominus W

<sup>2</sup> quem W

<sup>3</sup> aut MA

<sup>4</sup> *se add.* W

<sup>5</sup> concipiens W

<sup>6</sup> exercitus copiosissimos : copiosissimos exercitus C

<sup>7</sup> illi MA

<sup>8</sup> ipse W

<sup>9</sup> se gloriatur : gloriatur se W

<sup>10</sup> sanctam E



### 1.2.2. Mehmed's ambition to conquer Europe

[33] According to gossip and quite reliable reports from people who know him, acquiring this great city has quite emboldened the prince of the Turks, and he will certainly not want peace and quiet. On the contrary, he is contemplating even greater things and is gathering large armies and great fleets, intending to invade the Christian lands one after the other, by land and by sea. Indeed, he thinks that he can annihilate the Christian cause, not knowing that Our Saviour has promised to remain with his people *unto the end of the world*.<sup>1</sup> However, it is not to be wondered that his mind swells and raves when he considers his father's and his own victories. For we know that in our own time and no so many years ago his father twice destroyed a Christian army that was neither small nor insignificant.<sup>2</sup> He himself can boast of his victory at Constantinople and the killing of the Greek Emperor, and since he carries the same name as the false prophet, who strengthened the sect of the Agarenes<sup>3</sup> - for he is called Muhammad - he hates the name of Christ - after the example of his namesake.

---

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 28, 20

<sup>2</sup> The victories of Murad II at Varna (1444) and Amselfeld (1448)

<sup>3</sup> Agarenes, i.e. the Arabs. From Hagar, concubine of Abraham, mother of Ismael, legendary patriarch and ancestor of the Arab people. In the middle ages "Agarenes" was often used for Arabs, synonymously with Saracens

[34] Et quoniam **ex quattuor**<sup>1</sup> **patriarchalibus**<sup>2</sup> ecclesiis, **super quibus velut solidissimis basibus Christiana fides** radicata in **totum olim**<sup>3</sup> **orbem palmites extendit, jam tres**<sup>4</sup> **obtinent** Mahumeti cultores, <sup>5</sup> **Alexandrinam, Antiochenam, et Constantinopolitanam**, non dubitat quin <sup>6</sup> **et Romanam** possit obtinere ac Mahumeto subigere<sup>7</sup>, **soletque**, ut ajunt, qui ejus acta considerant, inter suos saepe illa **verba** proferre: "**Cur non ego mihi totum**<sup>8</sup> **occidentem armis** acquiram atque submittam, **qui sum Asiae, Thraciae, Macedoniae atque Illyrici dominus**<sup>9</sup> **et totius Graeciae**<sup>10</sup>, **quando Alexander Philippi, cum solam Macedoniam** obtineret, totum calcavit **orientem ac cum**<sup>11</sup> **XXX et duobus milibus militum** innumerabiles fudit exercitus Darii ac<sup>12</sup> **usque ad Indiam penetravit?**

---

<sup>1</sup> quattuor *appears to have been inserted later, though in the same hand, in a blank space left for that purpose* A; quinque W

<sup>2</sup> Patriarchales sedes *in marg.* D

<sup>3</sup> urbem enim F

<sup>4</sup> quattuor W [ tres *appears to have been written into the text in a blank space left by the copyist, though in the same hand; the blank space was not filled out completely* A]

<sup>5</sup> Hierosolimitanam *add.* A; Jerosolimatanam *add.* W

<sup>6</sup> quoniam E, MA

<sup>7</sup> subigent F

<sup>8</sup> mihi totum : totum michi W

<sup>9</sup> omit. W

<sup>10</sup> dominus *add.* W

<sup>11</sup> ac cum : cum ac E; cum ad MA

<sup>12</sup> et W

[34] There are four<sup>1</sup> patriarchal sees, solid foundations, in which the Christian faith is rooted, and from where it once spread over the whole Earth, as fingers on a hand. Of these the followers of Muhammad have already taken three: Alexandria, Antiochia and Constantinople. Therefore Mehmed has no doubt that he can also win the Roman patriarchate and subject it to Muhammad. Those who observe him relate that when he is with his intimates he often says: "Why should I not be able to conquer and possess the whole of the West since I am already Lord of Asia<sup>2</sup>, Thracia, Macedonia, Illyria, and all of Greece? After all Alexander<sup>3</sup>, son of Philip<sup>4</sup>, only was lord of Macedonia when he conquered the whole of the East and with only 32.000 soldiers beat the innumerable armies of Darius<sup>5</sup> and reached as far as India."

---

<sup>1</sup> In the texts, there is some fluctuation concerning whether there were four or five main patriarchates (Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Rome – with or without Jerusalem)

<sup>2</sup> Asia Minor

<sup>3</sup> Alexander III the Great (356-323 BC): King of the Greek kingdom of Macedon. Created one of the largest empires of the ancient world, stretching from Greece to Egypt and into present-day Pakistan

<sup>4</sup> Philip II of Macedon (382-336 BC): King of the Hellenic kingdom of Macedon from 359 BC until his assassination in 336 BC

<sup>5</sup> Darius III (ca. 380-330 BC): Last king of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia from 336 BC until his death

[35] Jactatque se numerosissimos exercitus habere, nec **mentitur**. Haud enim dubium est, quin trecenta et<sup>1</sup> quadraginta<sup>2</sup> **milia pugnatorum in bellum possit educere. Quod si Tartaris**, ut fama est, jungatur, multo<sup>3</sup> plures homines congregare valebit. Quanta<sup>4</sup> vero sit ejus potentia exinde licet<sup>5</sup> intueri, quia **cum** sui majores nihil haberent **citra mare**, saepe tamen **maximos** atque innumerabiles exercitus **in Europa**<sup>6</sup> duxere. **Quid nunc is faciat** et<sup>7</sup> quando,<sup>8</sup> cum<sup>9</sup> provincias plures<sup>10</sup> **usque ad Hungariae metas et usque ad**<sup>11</sup> **Dalmatiam** occupavit? Et<sup>12</sup> equidem<sup>13</sup> **non est spernendus hic hostis, qui animum habet ad bella paratum, qui juvenis est sanguine fervens, qui naturali quodam odio ex insita et innata malignitate atque crudelitate insequitur Christianos**, qui potentissimus est et jam recenti victoria insolescit, **qui multos** ex Christianis **habet**<sup>14</sup> **apostas, ex quibus omnia facta nostra**<sup>15</sup> **cognoscit, qui nobis vicinus**<sup>16</sup> **est et aditum habet** sive ad Italiam, sive ad Alamaniam patentem<sup>17</sup> **per loca propinqua Dalmatiae et Croatiae**. Jam enim regnum **Bosniae et Albaniae** regio pro maxima parte illi paret.

---

<sup>1</sup> aut *suprascr.* W

<sup>2</sup> quadringenta W

<sup>3</sup> multos F

<sup>4</sup> quinta E

<sup>5</sup> liceat W

<sup>6</sup> Europam W, MA

<sup>7</sup> *omit.* B, C, E, F, W, MA

<sup>8</sup> *omit.* B, D, E, F, MA

<sup>9</sup> *omit.* A, C, W; qui F

<sup>10</sup> plurimas W

<sup>11</sup> in W

<sup>12</sup> *omit.* W

<sup>13</sup> quidem B, D, E, F, W, MA

<sup>14</sup> ex Christianis habet : habet ex Christianis W

<sup>15</sup> nostra F

<sup>16</sup> vicinius A, C

<sup>17</sup> potentem W

[35] He also boasts of his large armies. This is not a lie for there is no doubt that he can lead 340,000<sup>1</sup> soldiers into battle. And if he allies himself with the Tartars, as rumour has it, he will be able to gather many more men than that. How great his power is, you will understand if you consider that though his forefathers did not have any land over the sea,<sup>2</sup> they often brought enormous armies and countless troops over to Europe. So what would he do now when he has already occupied many provinces right up to the Hungarian border and Dalmatia? He is definitely an enemy who should not be despised and whose mind is set on war. He is young and hot-blooded. He persecutes Christians with a kind of natural hate born of ingrained and innate malignity and cruelty.<sup>3</sup> He is extremely powerful and has become arrogant because of his recent victory. He has many Christian renegades with him from whom he learns of all we do. He is our immediate neighbour with direct access to Italy or Germany through the neighbouring regions of Dalmatia and Croatia. And the Kingdom of Bosnia and the land of Albania now mostly obey him.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the Version A Piccolomini said 200,000

<sup>2</sup> i.e. on the European continent

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Niccolò Sagundio: *Oratio* (Caselli, p. 4): *odio, quo contra gentem nostrum nomenque Christianum flagrare et vexari videtur*

[36] Haec igitur et alia, que referre longum esset, considerans {41r} imperatoria sublimitas nedum utile, sed necessarium existimavit praesentem indicere conventum ac reges et principes exhortari, ut ad restinguendum commune incendium communibus **viribus** concurrerent<sup>1</sup>.

[37] **Etenim quamvis est ille - ut ante dixi<sup>2</sup> - ferocissimus et potentissimus hostis**, nihil erit inde<sup>3</sup> sua potentia, si Christianorum vires coeant, si Romani potestas imperii concors arma capessat<sup>4</sup>, si nobilissimi Germanorum proceres, potentissimae communitates **unanimes** cum gloriosissimo<sup>5</sup> principe duce Burgundiae, qui adest, ad defensionem fidei consurrexerint<sup>6</sup>. Neque enim **aut arma, aut equi, aut currus, aut naves, aut homines desunt** Christianis, **sed omnia** late<sup>7</sup> nobis **meliora quam illis** adsunt. **Neque maritimo neque terrestri bello pares umquam** Christianis **fuerunt Turci, quando concordibus animis adversus eos itum<sup>8</sup> est**. Possem referre Magni Caroli, **Gotfredi Bulionii<sup>9</sup>, Conradi tertii**, Ludovici Francorum regis, **Friderici primi ac secundi, Romanorem imperatorum, ingentes quas de Turcis ac ceteris infidelibus habuerunt<sup>10</sup> victorias**. **Sed parco** fessis **auribus vestris**. Illud tamen<sup>11</sup> **dico: numquam passagium generale contra infideles gestum est, quin nostri<sup>12</sup> triumphaverint<sup>13</sup>**, nisi cum inter se ipsos fuere **discordes**. Itaque certum est, quia concordantibus Christianis incassum ibunt omnes Turcorum conatus, si cum<sup>14</sup> sincera mente et **pro causa Christi bellum suscipiatur** amputatis et penitus remotis **causis**, propter **quod<sup>15</sup> nobis Deus<sup>16</sup>** fortasse<sup>17</sup> **iratus** est.

---

<sup>1</sup> concurrent MA

<sup>2</sup> diximus F

<sup>3</sup> omit. W

<sup>4</sup> capescet W

<sup>5</sup> generosissimo W

<sup>6</sup> consurrexerunt B, E

<sup>7</sup> haec W

<sup>8</sup> actum W ; ac itum A; itum *correct. ex actum* C

<sup>9</sup> Bynono W [*corr. from de Bulioni* A]

<sup>10</sup> habuere W

<sup>11</sup> tamen D

<sup>12</sup> vestri B, E, MA

<sup>13</sup> triumphaverant W

<sup>14</sup> tamen W

<sup>15</sup> quas W

<sup>16</sup> nobis Deus : Deus nobis F

<sup>17</sup> Deus fortasse : fortasse Deus W

## 2. Purpose of the conference: War against the Turks

[36] Considering these and other issues that would take too long to relate here, His Imperial Highness has found it not just expedient, but necessary to summon the present diet<sup>1</sup> and to invite the kings and princes to end the general conflagration with joint forces.

### 2.1. Christian military superiority

[37] For although – as I have said - Mehmed is a most ferocious and powerful enemy, his power will mean nothing if the Christians join forces, if the united power of the Roman Empire goes to war, if the noble magnates and powerful communities of Germany rise to the defense of the faith, unanimously and together with the glorious Prince and Duke of Burgundy. For the Christians are lacking neither in weapons, nor in horses, wagons and ships, and in all things they are far superior to their enemies. The Turks never equalled the Christians in battles at sea or on land if the Christians acted in concert against them. Just think of the great victories over the Turks and other infidels won by Charlemagne,<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> Godefroy de Bouillon,<sup>4</sup> Konrad III,<sup>5</sup> King Louis of France,<sup>6</sup> and the Roman emperors Friedrich I<sup>7</sup> and II.<sup>8</sup> But I shall spare your tired ears. This only I will say that unless there was strife on our side, we have always been triumphant in crusades<sup>9</sup> against the infidels. Therefore it is quite certain that all the efforts of the Turks will be in vain if the Christians stand united, and if they go to war for the cause of Christ with sincere minds, having completely removed and done away with the reasons for which God may be angry with us.

---

<sup>1</sup> "conventum"

<sup>2</sup> Charlemagne [Charles I the Great] (742/747/748-814): King of the Franks from 768, King of Italy from 774. In 800 crowned by the pope as the first emperor in Western Europe since the collapse of the Western Roman Empire three centuries earlier

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im. 75-76]. NB: Charlemagne did not fight the Arabs in Italy or the Holy Land

<sup>4</sup> Godefroy de Bouillon (ca. 1060-1100): one of the leaders of the First Crusade from 1096 until his death. Lord of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine from 1087. After the successful siege of Jerusalem in 1099, Godefroi became the first ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem

<sup>5</sup> Konrad III (1093-1152): first King of Germany of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. Participated in the Second Crusade

<sup>6</sup> Louis VII (1120 -1180): King of France from 1137 until his death. Participated in the Second Crusade

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich I Barbarossa (1122-1190): Holy Roman Emperor from 1155 until his death

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich II (1194 -1250): Crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1220. Head of the House of Hohenstaufen

<sup>9</sup> "passagium generale"

[38] Cum<sup>1</sup> ergo indixisset Caesarea sublimitas hanc conventionem, statuerat huc **se** personaliter **conferre**, sed coacta est pro salute et defensione terrarum suarum **domi** remanere ex causis, quas saepe audivistis. Non est cur illas repetamus. Noluit<sup>2</sup> tamen hujus dietae negotia postergari aut quovis pacto negligi. Misit huc cum pleno **mandato**, quemadmodum **nudiustertius audivistis**. Amplissimam habent domini et<sup>3</sup> collegae mei potestatem cum vestris excellentiis de provisione contra Turcos facienda tractandi et concludendi.

[39] Et quoniam hic conventus indictus est, in quo<sup>4</sup> de re ipsa fiat inceptio, **illud** ex parte majestatis imperatoriae dicimus ante omnia necessarium esse, **ut divinum auxilium devotissime imploretur, ut fiant opera digna misericordia et clementia Dei**, ut **quemadmodum peccatis et iniquitatibus nostris offensa est divina majestas**, ita **orationibus et<sup>5</sup> piis actibus ejus<sup>6</sup> venia** acquiratur, **sine qua nihil est, quod humana potestas valeat explicare**. Exhortatur autem<sup>7</sup> **imperialis auctoritas reverendissimos praesules ecclesiarum pontifices et<sup>8</sup> praelatos**, ut in suis ecclesiis et diocesibus **commissos sibi populos {41v} ad opera pietatis et devotionis invitent, et ipsi per se cum clero sibi subjecto immaculatas hostias pro peccatis offerant populorum**.

[40] Quantum autem ad rem principalem attinet, ut Christianae fidei periclitanti<sup>9</sup> succuratur, modis<sup>10</sup> debitis patribus<sup>11</sup> et collegis meis commissum est, ut vestra super<sup>12</sup> hoc **consilia** et directiones exquirant vestrumque **grave et illuminatum iudicium** audiant, et conferant **vobiscum** super his, quae vobis **visa fuerint** opportuna.

---

<sup>1</sup> cur F

<sup>2</sup> nolens W

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* C

<sup>4</sup> hic ... quo : haec dies electa est, in qua W

<sup>5</sup> ac W

<sup>6</sup> *omit.* B, E, MA

<sup>7</sup> igitur et W

<sup>8</sup> ac W

<sup>9</sup> periclitantur F

<sup>10</sup> mediis W

<sup>11</sup> dominis W; partibus F

<sup>12</sup> semper F



## **2.2. Mandate of imperial ambassadors**

[38] When His Imperial Highness summoned this assembly, he intended to be present in person, but afterwards he has been forced to remain at home in order to safeguard and protect his lands. As you have heard the reasons several times, there is no reason to repeat them. However, he did not wish for the diet's business to be postponed or neglected in any way whatsoever. As you heard the day before yesterday, he has therefore sent [representatives] with a full mandate. My Lords and colleagues have full powers to negotiate and decide with Your Excellencies what should be done against the Turks.

## **2.3. Need for atonement, prayers and piety**

[39] And since this assembly has been summoned to begin the whole enterprise, we tell you - on behalf of His Imperial Majesty - that above all it is necessary to devoutly pray for God's help and to act in a manner worthy of God's mercy and clemency. And just as we have offended the Divine Majesty with our sins and iniquities, we must obtain His grace with prayers and pious works. For without it there is nothing that human power can achieve. His Imperial Majesty therefore exhorts the reverend bishops and prelates to invite, each in his own church and diocese, the people entrusted to them to do works of piety and devotion, while they themselves with their clergy offer up immaculate hosts for the sins of the peoples.

[40] Concerning the principal matter, which is to succour the endangered Christian Faith, the Fathers, my colleagues, have been duly instructed to request your advice and counsel, to hear your considered and enlightened judgment, and to confer with you on the best way to proceed.

[41] Ipse<sup>1</sup> autem tamquam imperator Romanorum, advocatus et protector ecclesiae, ac tamquam princeps catholicus et verae fidei cultor suas operas suamque possibilitatem in medium offert, seque promptum ac<sup>2</sup> voluntarium exhibet ad executionem omnium illorum, quae in hoc loco<sup>3</sup> pro defensione fidei et<sup>4</sup> ad vindicandas injurias nomini Christiano nostro tempore illatas, pro honore Romani imperii, pro gloria nationis Germanicae deliberata atque conclusa fuerint. Quod<sup>5</sup> sibi ex alto dominus concesserit.

---

<sup>1</sup> ante *add.* F

<sup>2</sup> et W; at F

<sup>3</sup> hoc loco : hac dieta W

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* W

<sup>5</sup> pro gloria ... fuerint quod *omit.* B, E, MA; quanto W

## **2.4. Emperor's part**

[41] He himself, as Emperor of the Romans, as champion and protector of the Church, as a catholic prince, and as a true believer, dedicates all his efforts and all his means to that cause, and he declares himself to be willing and ready to undertake everything that may be discussed and decided here for the defense of the Faith and in revenge of the injuries inflicted upon the Christian cause in our time, for the honour of the Roman Empire and the glory of the German nation. May the Lord grant him this from on high.

[42] Illud cum<sup>1</sup> vestris excellentiis vestrisque prudentiis per nos commemorandum esse ac suadendum commisit, ut attendentes, quanta immineant Christianitati pericula, quantum in oriente fideles Christiani sint oppressi, quantum in Graecia nomen Christi<sup>2</sup> blasphemetur<sup>3</sup>, quantum jam Mahumeti perfidia creverit, *quae jam nos in angulum Europae coarctavit, hinc Hungaros, inde<sup>4</sup> et<sup>5</sup> Hispanos premens* et, quomodo sacrum domini sepulchrum<sup>6</sup> ab inimicis crucis possidetur<sup>7</sup>, considerantes et zelum domus Dei induentes, consilium hic et conclusionem recipiatis<sup>8</sup> per quam non solum defendi, quod<sup>9</sup> superest<sup>10</sup> Christianitatis, sed etiam tunc<sup>11</sup> recuperari valeat, quod<sup>12</sup> – pro dolor – est amissum<sup>13</sup>. Neque ullo pacto hinc recedere<sup>14</sup> velitis priusquam opportuna conclusio fiat. Neque rem tam necessariam in tempus aliud proferendam quisquam existimet, ne, dum nos in deliberatione persistimus, hostis in<sup>15</sup> expeditione consurgens damnis nos afficiat gravioribus. Existimat enim sublimitas imperatoria valde damnosum et<sup>16</sup> periculosum<sup>17</sup> esse hunc conventum<sup>18</sup> sine laudabili conclusione dissolvi. Intelligens<sup>19</sup> enim adversarius noster consilia nostra, et<sup>20</sup> animum sumet **ferociorem**. Neque enim dubitandum est, quin **exploratores habeat**, quaecumque inter nos aguntur<sup>21</sup>, sibi manifestantes.

---

<sup>1</sup> tamen W

<sup>2</sup> nomen Christi : Christi nomen W

<sup>3</sup> blasphematur W

<sup>4</sup> hinc F

<sup>5</sup> omit. W

<sup>6</sup> domini sepulchrum : sepulchrum domini W

<sup>7</sup> possiderunt F

<sup>8</sup> recipias F

<sup>9</sup> quae W

<sup>10</sup> superat W

<sup>11</sup> omit. W

<sup>12</sup> quae W

<sup>13</sup> amissa W

<sup>14</sup> discedere D

<sup>15</sup> omit. W

<sup>16</sup> atque E, MA

<sup>17</sup> periculosum : periculo plenum W

<sup>18</sup> hunc conventum : hanc dietam W

<sup>19</sup> intelligeret W

<sup>20</sup> omit. W

<sup>21</sup> agantur W

## 2.5. Call for action

[42] This is what he has required us to take up with Your Excellencies, and he urges you to consider how great are the dangers that threaten Christianity, how much the Christian believers in the East are oppressed, how much the name of Christian is being blasphemed in Greece, how much the false religion of Muhammad has grown *and has forced us into a corner of Europe*,<sup>1</sup> pressuring the Hungarians at the one end and the Spaniards at the other, and how the holy tomb of Our Lord is being held by the Enemies of the Cross. So, let us gird ourselves with the zeal of God's house, and let us take counsel and reach a decision that will allow us not only to defend what remains of Christianity, but even to recover what has been lost – oh, what sorrow! Please do not depart without a favourable conclusion. Let nobody think that this urgent matter may be postponed to another time, for then the enemy may suddenly go to war against us and inflict further damage upon us while we spend our time debating. Indeed His Imperial Highness thinks that it would be greatly harmful and dangerous if this assembly finishes without a positive conclusion. For our adversary undoubtedly has spies who report everything we do to him, and if he hears that the meeting has come to an end without such a decision, his fierceness will only increase.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im.75]: *Melius filii et majori cum gloria nostri progenitores inchoatam - ut altiuscule repetamus – Romae et in Italia et viribus Europae aucta dignitatem ad totius orbis monarchiam extulerunt, per cujus omnes provincias et regiones nomen floruit Christianum. Quod nomen nostris temporibus ad parvum orbis angulum coangustari et quotidie de excidio periclitari videmus.*

[43] **Christiani** quoque, **qui vicini sunt Turcis** et nostra **auxilia** praestolantur, mentem bonam amitterent, et amissa spe praesidii cum hostibus se componerent. **Hungari, qui** sunt potentissimi et a multis **annis** non sine grandi<sup>1</sup> effusione **sui sanguinis** murum se pro {42r} nobis contra inimicos nostrae religionis obtulerunt, quique modo **indutias**<sup>2</sup> **cum Turcis habent**<sup>3</sup> intra breve tempus expiraturas, si quovis pacto sentiant hanc congregationem<sup>4</sup> **sine fructu dissolutam**, ampliores<sup>5</sup> cum Turcis amplectentur, **neque cum voluerimus eorum uti** auxiliis, quovis modo poterimus.

---

<sup>1</sup> *omit.* F

<sup>2</sup> *treugas* W

<sup>3</sup> *debent* F

<sup>4</sup> *dietam* W

<sup>5</sup> *indutias add.* W

## **2.6. Allies**

[43] And the Christians who are the neighbours of the Turks and who are asking for our help would lose courage, and having lost hope of our protection they would come to terms with the enemies.

The Hungarians are strong and have for many years formed a bulwark for us against the enemies of our religion – at great loss of their own blood. Their present truce with the Turks will expire shortly. If they hear that this assembly has ended without success, they will extend it, and then we shall not be able to have their help when we want to.

[44] **Neque** hoc sine fundamento dicit imperatoria majestas. Nam paucis diebus antequam ab ea recederemus, miserat sua sublimitas **oratores**<sup>1</sup> ad **Johannem**, Hungariae gubernatorem, magnum virum et apud **Turcos** formidatum, ut percunctarentur<sup>2</sup> ab eo, si quas ex Turcis novitates habuisset. Ad ea respondit Johannes **Turcorum** dominum magnos **belli apparatus facere**, neque umquam tam numerosas<sup>3</sup> habuisse copias, quam nunc habere proponit; **personam ejus esse in Andrinopoli**<sup>4</sup>, **exercitus** autem apud **Sophiam** in **Bulgaria congregari**, **Tartarorumque gentem** jam sibi foedere **junctam** affirmari. Interrogatus autem, an<sup>5</sup> **Hungari** vellent contra Turcos insurgere, si et<sup>6</sup> Alamani et ceteri concurrerent, **nihil** aliud **optare** dixit Hungaros quam refellere<sup>7</sup> et retundere **Turcorum** insolentiam<sup>8</sup>, promptissimosque Hungaros et seipsum cum omni potentia sua in persona propria contra Turcos **arma** capessere<sup>9</sup>, si modo aliorum **Christianorum concurrere** exercitus intelligant. **At si** videant Christianos reges et **principes torpescere**<sup>10</sup>, nequaquam **velle Hungaros tantam belli molem** sustinere, in qua se videant manifeste succubituros<sup>11</sup>, **sed accepturos**<sup>12</sup> **conditionem, quam** jam sibi **Turci offerant**<sup>13</sup>, **daturos** eis **transitum, quem petunt**. **Quod an sit** in utilitatem **Christianitatis, ipsi reges et principes viderint**. Haec<sup>14</sup> significavit Johannes imperatoriae majestati. Ex quibus liquet manifeste<sup>15</sup>, quod<sup>16</sup> nisi in hoc loco<sup>17</sup> laudabilis conclusio fiat contra Turcorum conatus, timendum est, ne Hungari cum illis se<sup>18</sup> componant, et<sup>19</sup> res Christianorum multo deteriores reddantur. Atque his ex causis apprime necessarium videtur imperiali culmini absque ulteriore<sup>20</sup> mora conclusionem hic<sup>21</sup> captari, per quam universi consolationem recipere possint, qui vicini Turcis eorum potentiam atque superbiam reformidant<sup>22</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> suos *add.* W ; ~~suos~~ *add.* A, C; oratorem B, E, MA

<sup>2</sup> percontarentur A, B, E, MA; percontarentur D, F

<sup>3</sup> universas W; numeras F

<sup>4</sup> Andreopoli E, MA

<sup>5</sup> et *add.* W

<sup>6</sup> *omit.* F

<sup>7</sup> revellere W

<sup>8</sup> insolentiam Turcorum : Turchorum insolentiam F

<sup>9</sup> compescere F

<sup>10</sup> si modo ... torpescere *omit.* F

<sup>11</sup> succumbituros F, W

<sup>12</sup> acceptores E

<sup>13</sup> afferunt W

<sup>14</sup> hoc E, MA

<sup>15</sup> liquet manifeste : manifeste liquet W

<sup>16</sup> quia W

<sup>17</sup> *omit.* F

<sup>18</sup> *omit.* W

<sup>19</sup> ut F

<sup>20</sup> ulteriori D, W

<sup>21</sup> hanc B, E, MA

<sup>22</sup> formidant E, MA



[44] His Imperial Majesty does not say this without good reason, for shortly before we left him, His Highness sent orators to Janos<sup>1</sup>, the regent of Hungary, a great man, feared by the Turks, to ask him if he had any news of them. Janos replied that the lord of the Turks was making great preparations for war and had never before had so large forces as he intends to gather now. The lord himself was now in Adrianopolis<sup>2</sup> whereas his army was assembling at Sophia in Bulgaria. It was said that the Tartar people had entered into an alliance with him. When Janos was asked if the Hungarians would rise and go against the Turks if the Germans and others joined them, he replied that the Hungarians wanted nothing more than to crush and destroy the conceited Turks. If they heard that the armies of the other Christian peoples would join them, the Hungarians would be ready, and he himself would go to war with all his might. But if the Hungarians saw that the Christian kings and princes were passive, they would in no way undertake the great burden of a war, seeing that they would undoubtedly be defeated. On the contrary, they would accept the conditions already offered to them by the Turks and grant them the right of passage they request. Then the Christian kings and princes would see whether this would good for Christianity. This is what Janos told His Imperial Majesty. So, it is evident that if we do not reach a positive conclusion here to counter the endeavours of the Turks, it must be feared that the Hungarians come to terms with the Turks, and then the situation of the Christians would become much worse. For these reasons it seems absolutely necessary to His Imperial Highness that we should reach a decision speedily here that will give comfort to all the neighbours of the Turks who fear their power and arrogance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Janos Hunyadi

<sup>2</sup> Today the Turkish city of Edirne, in Eastern Thracia, close to the borders of Bulgaria and Greece

[45] Datum est autem a Deo, quod **lites Italiae compositae sunt**. Nam et sanctissimus dominus noster et clarissimus **ille<sup>1</sup> rex Aragonum<sup>2</sup> cum Venetis et aliis Italiae principibus de classe maritima<sup>3</sup> adversus Turcos** pro communi salute, ut est verisimile, providebunt. **Rex autem Franciae Christianissimus, suorum majorum vestigia** sequens, ut ex **reverendissimo** domino meo **cardinali** superioribus diebus audistis<sup>4</sup>, **summo pontifici litteras dedit, per quas** se cum **Germanica<sup>5</sup>** natione ad defensionem {42v} fidei concursurum **pollicetur<sup>6</sup>**. Cujus consilium procul dubio plurimum impediretur, si praesens congregatio<sup>7</sup>, quod absit, sine<sup>8</sup> expectata<sup>9</sup> conclusione dissolveretur.

[46] Vestrae igitur excellentiae et circumspectiones, quibus offensa fidei molesta est, quod opportunum et melius fuerit, consilium amplectentur atque **operam dabunt**, ne tantus et **tam altus princeps**, qualis **est** illustrissimus<sup>10</sup> **dux Burgundiae<sup>11</sup>**, **de remotissimis** partibus non sine laboribus et periculis pro salute<sup>12</sup> ac defensione Christianae religionis **ad vestros<sup>13</sup> lares vocatu Caesaris frustra venerit, sed ipse potius ad propria** consolatus **redeat, et omnes, qui spem habent in conventu<sup>14</sup>**, quem postulant<sup>15</sup>, fructum recipiant<sup>16</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> omit. W

<sup>2</sup> rex Aragonum : Aragonum rex B, E, MA

<sup>3</sup> marina F

<sup>4</sup> audivistis C

<sup>5</sup> Germania A, B, D, E, F; Germanica corr. ex Germania C

<sup>6</sup> pollitur B, E

<sup>7</sup> dieta W [A has dieta in main text and in margin congregatio]

<sup>8</sup> laudabili et add. W; et laudabili add. A

<sup>9</sup> expecta F

<sup>10</sup> dominus meus add. W; dominus meus add.. A

<sup>11</sup> excellentissimus add. W; excellentissimus add. A

<sup>12</sup> communi add. W; et F

<sup>13</sup> nostras W

<sup>14</sup> hac dieta W

<sup>15</sup> praestolantur W

<sup>16</sup> accipiant W

[45] [Thankfully,] God has given that the conflicts in Italy have been solved.<sup>1</sup> For Our Most Holy Lord<sup>2</sup> and the noble King of Aragon<sup>3</sup> will, quite probably, together with the Venetians and the other Italian princes make provisions for a fleet to be sent against the Turks – in the common interest of all.

The Most Christian King of France<sup>4</sup> follows in the footsteps of his forefathers and has - as we heard some days ago from the Most Reverend Lord Cardinal<sup>5</sup> - sent a letter to the Supreme Pontiff in which he promises to join the German nation in the defense of the Faith. Most likely, this undertaking will come to naught if the present assembly - God forbid - ends without the expected decisions.

### **3. Conclusion**

[46] At the call of the emperor, the great and exalted prince, the Illustrious Duke of Burgundy, has come from remote regions, through hardship and danger, to your home for the salvation and defense of the Christian religion. May Your Excellencies, abhorring the [Turkish] offenses against the Faith, agree on a favourable and positive plan so that this great and high prince will not have come in vain, but may return satisfied to his own, and so that all who have put their hope in this assembly will receive the result they wish for.

---

<sup>1</sup> Piccolomini here refers to the Peace of Lodi between the Italian powers, of 1454

<sup>2</sup> Nicolaus V [Tommaso Parentucelli] (1397-1455): Pope from 6 March 1447 until his death

<sup>3</sup> Alfonso V (1396-1458): King of Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, Sardinia and Corsica, Sicily and Count of Barcelona from 1416, and King of Naples (as Alfonso I) from 1442 until his death

<sup>4</sup> Charles VII (1403-1461): King of France from 1422 to his death

<sup>5</sup> Cardinal Nikolaus von Kues

## **Appendix: Oration of Urban II, after Flavio Biondo**

## ORATION OF URBAN II IN CLERMONT 1495, AFTER FLAVIO BIONDI: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decas* II, liber III

Reproduced from: Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*. Venezia: Octavianus Scotus, 1483. (Hain, 3248). [Digitized version in Gallica, images 274-276]<sup>1</sup>

*Patribus et ea, quae concilio inerat, ex omni orbe Christiano multitudine ad contionem vocata vir ipse eleganter doctus hujusmodi orationem habuit:*

{Im. 74} Existimatis forte, qui huc loci ad nos acciti convenistis, viri Christiani, solam fuisse rei ecclesiasticae ad normam fidei et religionis componendae causam, quae me ab urbe, ab Italia venire compulerit. Fuitque in eo aliquid causae, sed alia urgentior, et qua major nulla dici, nulla possit excogitari, nos attraxit. Paucos ante annos gens perfida Agarena, quam vos corrupte Sarracenam dicitis, sanctam civitatem Hierosolymam sanctae terrae loca invadens cepit, diripuit, incendit. Sacrosanctum domini Jesu salvatoris sepulcrum - quod sine lacrimis et singultibus dicere nequimus – foedata ecclesiae sacella templaque ritus nostri aut solo aequata sunt aut in profanos usus commutate. Abacti inde Christiani, pars fragilis et cruciatuum impatiens saluti abrenuntians circumciso praeputio facta est Sarracena, pars in fide constans per varias mortis modos lacerati laniatique sunt, ut felix fuerit,

{Im. 75} quem carnifex appetitum gladio obtruncavit. Mulieres vero Christianae, quas aut urbes et oppida frequentissimas habuere, ut ex vestris quorundam, qui adstatis, urbibus et oppidis devotio ad sancta inspicienda et osculanda, adoranda loca per tot maria, tot terras attraxerat, omnia passae sunt, quae dictu obscena crudelis Christi hostis non ad suam magis explendam libidinem quam ad Christianorum dedecus excogitare potuit. Ea, si Christiani, immo si estis viri, nec aequo audire animo nec potestis cum patientia tolerare. In quae omnia ut mentem animumque advertere et illis pro dignitate nominis Christiani providere velitis, majorum exempla maxima, quod imminet negligentibus periculum, et praemiorum spes ingentium vos non ducere magis quam trahere debebunt. Et quidem, quae attinent periculum, priusquam dixerō, cetera facilius ante oculos ponentur. Omnes Romano quondam imperio et post Romano pontifici a Turcis Sarracenisque nostris, immo Christi domini et immortalis Dei hostibus possideri, neminem esse vestrum, qui ignoret, certum habemus. Quas vero Europae provincias, quas urbes iidem premant, occupant lacerentque infideles, si omnes simul ignoratis, unus quisque in sua provincia

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Gallica&O=NUMM-60241>

novit, nisi forte vos Galli remotiores haec non sentitis, qui Hispanorum Aquitanorumque ab ea oppresorum gente, dum in servitutem rapiuntur, in Africam abducuntur, clamores ejulatusque singulos paene per dies audire debetis. Sed numquid vos Germani, Saxones, Poloni, Bohemi, Hungari etsi Turcos et Sarracenos intra viscera saevire vestra nondum sentitis, quantum a vobis distent, quam parvis dirimantur vel fretis vel fluminibus ignoratis? Italiam nunc non alloquor, quam multos ante annos Sarraceni dimidiam paene occuparunt, in eamque usque adeo penetrarunt, ut Christianorum caput Petri apostoli successorum sedem Romanam martyrum sanguine adhuc madentem invasam obsederint, captasque apostolorum Petri et Pauli basilicas inquinaverint. Venetos hic video, Dalmatas, Histros et alios sinus Adriatici accolae, qui dum perpetua cum Sarracenis proelia, ut se tueantur, exercent, quod est de Italia reliquum ab ea gente intactum defensant. Quamquam nescio, Sarraceni ne qui maris Adriatici possessione deturbantur, ab Italia magis an ab Alemannia et Hungaria repellantur. Quid multis in re notissima morer? Fui hactenus in extremis ad septentriones Europae partibus Constantinopolitanum imperium obex et tamquam murus, qui majores omnia prostraturas Turcorum Sarracenorumque alluviones continuit prohibuitque, ne Hungaros, Polonos, Bohemos et ipsos Alemannos primo, deinde ceteros obruerent Christianos. Pulsus vero ante paucos annos Asia imperator de retinendis Constantinopoli propinquis Europae regionibus laborat. Si nunc ea inspicitis consideratisque sola, quae ante oculos sunt, si irruiture brevi Turco et Sarraceno obsistere non pergetis, qui sacrum domini sepulcrum, sacram Jesu Christi pedibus calcata terram a spurcissima gente tot annos inquinari neglexistis, eandem in vestrum ruere caput brevi sentietis. Matronas a complexu vestro, vestras virgines ab earum sinu, pueros et adolescentes vestros in servitutem vobiscum rapi dolentes maestique videbitis. Melius filii et majori cum gloria nostri progenitores inchoatam - ut altiuscule repetamus - Romae et in Italia et viribus Europae aucta dignitatem ad totius orbis monarchiam extulerunt, per cujus omnes provincias et regiones nomen floruit Christianum. **Quod nomen nostris temporibus ad parvum orbis angulum coangustari et quotidie de excidio periclitari videmus. Sed**

{im. 76} propinquiora attingamus. Carolus ille cognomento Magnus, vester Germani paene avita origine, cujus vester Franci rex vestrum ingens decus, Hispaniis, Aquitania et ipsis Franciae finibus Sarracenos infinita mortalium examina deturbavit: Carolus Sarracenos Italia, Carolus, ut fama vos vulgatis, terra sancta et Hierosolymis expulit, ut Christianum nomen ab eo in Europa retentum fuisse gloriabundi dicere soleatis. Et quid - oramus - vos gloriae posthac ducetis? Quo audebitis pacto posthac dicere solam esse vel primariam gentem Francam, quam vere Christianam liceat appellare, si in ea, quae vobis adest opulentia, Sarracenos et Turcos post captum, inquinatum domini et Dei nostri sepulcrum populi etiam Christiani reliquias capi opprimique per ignaviam permittetis. Expergiscimini - quaesumus, obtestamur, et per viscera misericordiae Dei nostri oramus, viri fortes - orbi Christiano exemplum incitamentumque futuri: arma capite, turmas, cohortes, legiones educite, tam multos habituri sequaces adjutoresque quam id ardenti animo facere ostendetis. Aderit vobis omnipotens Deus angelos suos ante faciem vestram, qui gressus

dirigant vestros, qui omni casu locoque vobis assistant, opitulentur, caelo demittet. Praemia vero expeditionis assumpti belli quae sint et qualia, quisquam a nobis audiri cupit, sed sunt omnium maxima, amplissima, et qualia nullo ex alio bello sunt sanae mentis hominibus expectanda. Quicumque enim hanc in expeditionem iturus genitores, filios, uxores, divitias, domesticam gloriam potentatumque relinquet, multo majora et omnino incomparabilia nanciscetur. Quid quod cadentes in proelio et ab hoste caesi aequae ac vincentes opima de hoste ferent spolia et ad paratam in caelis, in aeterno regno cum sanctis gloriam perducti cum nostro hujus expeditionis imperatore Jesu Christo triumphabunt. Si vero sunt, qui terrena expectant praemia, meminerint terram, de cujus liberatione agitur, illam esse, quam Deus ipse, pater populo Israelitico habitandam promisit lacte et melle, id est omnibus, quae dulcia homini et suavia sunt, fluentem. Capite igitur, arripite arma, Christiani, sepulcrum dominicum liberaturi, et tanta taliaque per ipsius domini nostri Jesu Christi misericordiam facturi, ut cum omnes aeternam vobis paretis gloriam, tum etiam saeculi rerum incomparabiles divitias acquiratis.

*Pontifice adhuc dicturiente vox omnium - dictu mirabile - unico, ut apparuit, ore prolata intonuit: "Deus vult, Deus vult." Ad quam vocem cum pontifex pausillum tacuisset illique viderentur iterata ter quaterque verba repetituri, eis, ut tacerent, manu significavit, et gratiis Deo actis, qui tot populorum mentes in sua flexisset beneplacita, subjunxit:*

Viri fortes, ea, quae dominus in os vestrum posuit verba, vobis in bello pro tessera erunt, et ituri in expeditionem perseveraturique in bello sancta cruce ex rubenti panno sagis insuta pectus insignibunt, illique, quos inevitabilis necessitas aut magistratuum jussiones reverti facient, eam in scapulas transferent.