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Oration “Si mihi” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (25 March 1455, Wiener Neustadt). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. Final Version. (Collected Orations of Pope Pius II; 24)

Michael Cotta-Schønberg

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Oration “*Si mihi*” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (25 March 1455, Wiener Neustadt). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

(Collected Orations of Pope Pius II; 24)

Final Version

2024

Abstract

Among the important items on the agenda of the imperial Diet of Wiener Neustadt, February to April 1455, was a military response to the Turkish war of aggression and the urgently needed military aid to Hungary, the European frontier state directly facing the Turks. The Hungarian delegation arrived after the diet had opened on 25 February. It was given a special reception at which the Bishop of Várad, Janos Vitéz, gave the oration "*Pulsatis maerore*", followed by an oration on behalf of the emperor, the "*Si mihi*", given by Bishop Enea Silvio Piccolomini. The oration contains little new in relation to Piccolomini's former orations on the crusade against the Turks.

Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Kaiser Friedrich III (Habsburg); Emperor Frederick III (Habsburg); Crusades against the TDiet of Wiener Neustadt, 1455; Reichstag Wiener Neustadt, 1455; Christian ethics of war; Hungary; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetorics; 15th century

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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.

All readers interested in this oration and especially its Early Version should also consult RTA-edition with its excellent introduction, its comprehensive list of manuscripts and editions, its critical apparatus, and its copious notes.

Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context¹

When the Hungarian delegation arrived at the imperial Diet of Wiener Neustadt, in March 1455, it was greeted with an oration on behalf of the emperor, Friedrich III, delivered by his trusted councillor and diplomat, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, who had also delivered the opening speech to the diet a month before.

Relations between the imperial court and the Hungarian court had been tense ever since the King of Hungary, Ladislaus the Posthumous, cousin and ward of the emperor, had been removed from the emperor's wardship by military force two years before. But in view of the central strategic position of Hungary in relation to the empire, being the frontier state between the invading Turks and the empire, it was necessary to maintain some kind of working relationship.

At the imperial diets following the Fall of Constantinople in May 1453, Piccolomini had therefore worked hard to raise a German army to aid Hungary.

The Germans, however, were not keen to engage in an all-out war against the Turks, victors in so many battles against the Europeans, and the imperial court might even, secretly, have been quite happy about the Turks making trouble for Hungary.

In his *Commentarii*, Pius wrote: *At this diet, Aeneas gave a public address at the emperor's command, replying to the ambassadors of Hungary. This was afterwards published and is included among his Orations.*²

Of Pius' contemporary biographers, Campano did not mention the diet or the oration, whereas Platina wrote that at the diet in Wiener Neustadt, Piccolomini endeavoured with all his might to bring the matter to a successful conclusion, privately and publicly exhorting everyone to go to war.³

¹ CO, I, 28; RTA, 19, 3; Ady, pp. 129-131; Bisaha; Boulting, pp. 210-211; Helmrath: *German*, esp. pp. 60; Helmrath: *Pius*, esp. pp. 94; Helmrath: *Reichstagsreden*; Housley, pp. 226-227; Mitchell, pp. 114-115; Nowak, pp. 179-180; Reinhardt, p. 162-165; Schwoebel, p. 33; Setton, II, pp. 157-158; Stolf, pp. 282-285; Toews, pp.

241-262, esp. pp. 258-260; Voigt, III, pp. 142. See also introduction to orations "*Quamvis omnibus*" [21], "*Constantinopolitana clades*" [22] and "*In hoc florentissimo*" [23]

² CO, I, 28 (Merve, I, pp. 138-139). This comment shows that the oration (Early Version) was put into circulation immediately after delivery. It was later (Final

Version) included in the collection of Piccolomini /Pius' orations, which was given final form during his pontificate and under his personal supervision

³ Zimolo 103: *Tertius item eadem de re in Nova Cicitate conventus habetur, in quo Aeneas viribus omnibus ex sententia perficere conatus est, et privatim et publice unumquemque ad id bellum cohortando*

Voigt said about the oration: *“Der Piccolomini ... entfaltetete ... den Glanz der humanistischen Redekunst.”*¹

Helmrath notes that the orations held by Piccolomini in Wiener Neustadt are *so sehr vielmehr als Varianten der Frankfurter Clades*.² Of special interest is his attempt to formulate an ethical code of Christian war – largely built on Cicero! His notion that Turks may be infidels and persecutors of the Christians, but that they are still humans and must be treated humanely when defeated is noteworthy.

2. Themes

In the first part of the oration, Piccolomini, on behalf of the emperor, responded to each of the five issues raised by Janos Vitéz, Bishop of Várad, in his preceding oration, the *“Pulsatis maerore.”*³

These themes were:

- General relations between Hungary and the emperor, which were in fact quite strained
- Fall of Constantinople and the Turkish threat
- Imperial initiatives in defence of the Faith
- Hungarian response
- Implementation of the decisions reached in Frankfurt

In the second part, Piccolomini rehashed his theories of the ethics of war, developed in the oration *“In hoc florentissimo”* [23] delivered at the opening of the Diet, and mostly based on classical authors.

The section on the vices to be avoided by the Christian soldiers has three subthemes: pride, greed, and lust. In the *“In hoc florentissimo”*, Piccolomini had also mentioned the vice of idleness/sloth. Concerning the theme of lust and the claim that Christian soldiers must be chaste, Piccolomini could scarcely build on classical models ...

A number of the subthemes of the oration, e.g., the Fall of Constantinople, are reproduced from Piccolomini’s earlier crusade orations.

¹ Voigt, III, p. 142

² Helmrath: *Pius*, 94

³ RTA, 19, 3, pp. 544-558

3. Date, place, audience, and format

The oration was delivered on 25 March 1455¹ in the royal castle of Wiener Neustadt. Those manuscript titles that contain a date all have 23 March, which is also the date retained by Voigt.²

The audience consisted of the Hungarian delegation, Emperor Friederich III, Georg Podiebrad, Governor of Bohemia, Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg³ and – presumably – some, if not all, the German princes, nobles, envoys, and counsellors participating in the diet.⁴

The format was that of a diplomatic oration held on behalf of His Imperial Majesty in response to the Hungarian ambassadors.

4. Text⁵

As is the case with many of Piccolomini's orations, the text of the "*Si mihi*" is extant in two versions: an Early Version and a Final Version. The Early Version is identical or very similar to the text of the oration as actually delivered at the imperial diet. The Final Version is the version included in the official collection of Pius II's orations, prepared in 1462 under his personal supervision.

The two versions appear to be very similar, implying that the final revision of the text was quite a light one.

4.1. Early Version

4.1.1. Manuscripts⁶

- **Budapest / Mus. Nat.**
Cod. lat. 372, ff. 39v-48r

¹ Helmrath: *Reichstagsreden*, p. 143, and RTA, 19, 3, p. 454

² Voigt, III, p. 143

³ The presence of the governor and the margrave is explicitly mentioned in sect. 23

⁴ RTA, 19/3: pp. 454, 504

⁵ Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II's orations, see COR, 1: ch. 5

⁶ For a more comprehensive list of mss. containing the "*Si mihi*", see

RTA, 19,3: p. 559 and COR, 11: ch. 1

- **Cambridge / University Library**
Hh I 7, ff. 30v-41r
- **Firenze / Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana**
Plut. LIV 54.19, ff. 50r-55v (R)
- **München / Staatsbibliothek**
Clm 4016, ff. 50v-54v
- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**
Chisianus lat. I.V.175, ff. 95v-102r
Ottobon. lat. 347, ff. 74r-81r
Urb. lat. 401, ff. 95r-104v
Vat. lat. 1787, ff. 87r-96v

The manuscripts containing the Early Version have been collated in the RTA-edition, cf. below.

4.1.2. Editions

- Pius II: *Epistolae saeculares et pontificales*. Köln: Arnold te Hoernen, ca. 1480, s 5b - t 4a
- Helmrath, Johannes: *Die Reichstagsreden des Enea Silvio Piccolomini 1454/55 – Studien zur Reichstag und Rhetorik*. Universität Köln, 1994, pp. 473-491
- *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Friedrich III*. Fünfte Abteilung, Dritter Teil: Reichsversammlung zu Wiener Neustadt 1455. Bearb. von Gabriele Annas. München, 2013. (Deutsche Reichstagsakten, ÄR; 19, 3), pp. 559-587

4.2. Final Version

4.2.1. Manuscripts

The Final Version is extant in seven manuscripts¹:

¹ Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in COR, 11, are marked with an asterisk

- **Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana**
544, ff. ff. 95r-101v (**G**) *
- **Mantova / Biblioteca Comunale**
100, ff. 157v-167r (**F**) *
- **Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana**
I. 97 inf., ff. 108v-115r (**E**) *
- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**
Chis. J.VI.211, ff. 105v-112r (**D**) *
Chis. J.VIII.284, ff. 81v-86v (**A**) *
Chis. J.VIII.286, ff. 161v-179r (**C**) *
Vat. lat. 1788, ff. 115v-123r (**B**) *

4.2.2. Editions

The Final Version was published by Mansi, based on the Lucca ms.:

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759 / II, pp. 316-329

It was also collated as part of Helmrath's edition in the *Reichstagsreden*:

- Helmrath, Johannes: *Die Reichstagsreden des Enea Silvio Piccolomini 1454/55 – Studien zur Reichstag und Rhetorik*. Universität Köln, 1994, pp. 474-495

And finally, it was collated as part of the RTA-edition, based on all seven mss., but only with a selective collation of the mss. C, D, F, G¹:

- *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Friedrich III*. Fünfte Abteilung, Dritter Teil: Reichsversammlung zu Wiener Neustadt 1455. Bearb. von Gabriele Annas. München, 2013. (Deutsche Reichstagsakten, ÄR, 19, 3), pp. 559-587

¹ "mit Berücksichtigung nur markanter Varianten", RTA, 19, 3, p. 559

4.3. Present edition

For principles of edition (incl. orthography) and translation, see COR, 1: ch. 9-10.

Text:

The Early Version is based on Firenze / Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana / Plut. LIV 54.19.

The Final Version is based on all seven manuscripts containing that version.

The lead manuscript is the Chis. J.VII.284 **(A)**.

Pagination:

The pagination is from the lead manuscript.

Textual apparatus:

Variants not indicated in the RTA-edition are marked with an asterisk.

5. Sources ¹

In this oration, 37 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified, most from classical sources.

Biblical: 9

Classical: 24

Patristic and medieval: 3

¹ For an analysis of Piccolomini's use of sources, see COR, 1; ch. 8

Contemporary: 1

All: 37

Biblical sources: 9

Old Testament: 8

- Exodus: 1
- 1. Chronicles: 1
- Daniel: 1
- Ecclesiasticus: 2
- Jeremiah: 1
- Psalms: 2

New Testament: 1

- Philippians: 1

Classical sources: 24

- Aristotle: 3¹
- Cicero: 9²
- Claudianus: 1³
- Gellius: 1
- Horatius: 1⁴
- Lucanus: 1⁵
- Quintilianus: 1
- Sallustius: 1⁶
- Suetonius: 1⁷
- Ulpianus: 1⁸
- Valerius: 1
- Vergilius: 3⁹

¹ Nicom. Ethics: 1; Politics: 1; Rhetorics: 1

² De officiis: 1; De oratore: 1; De re publica: 1; Pro lege Manilia 5; Pro M. Marcello: 1

³ De tertio consulate Honorii

⁴ Carmina: 1

⁵ Bellum civile

⁶ Bellum Jugurthinum

⁷ De vitis Caesarum / Titus

⁸ De testamento

⁹ Aeneis

Patristic and medieval sources: 3

- Augustinus: 1¹
- Bede the Venerable: 1²
- Otto von Freising: 1³

Contemporary sources: 1

- Biondo, F.: 1⁴

On Piccolomini's use of contemporary sources in his crusade orations at the German diets, e.g., eyewitness reports from the Fall of Constantinople, see introduction to the oration "*Quamvis omnibus*" [21].

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

Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Friedrich III. Fünfte Abteilung, Dritter Teil: Reichsversammlung zu Wiener Neustadt 1455. Bearb. von Gabriele Annas, 2013. (Deutsche Reichstagsakten, ÄR, 19, 3)

¹ De civitate Dei

² Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum

³ Chronaca

⁴ Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades

Freising, Otto von: *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*. Ed. A. Hofmeister & W. Lammers. Übers. A. Schmidt. Berlin, 1960. (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters; 16)

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Piccolomini, Enea Silvio SEE ALSO Pius II

Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Epistolae*

- *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Hrsg. von Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918
- *Reject Aeneas, accept Pius : Selected letters of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II)*. Transl. by T.M. Izbicki et al.. Washington, D.C., 2006
- *Enee Silvii Piccolominei Epistolarium Seculare*. Ed. A. van Heck. Città del Vaticano, 2007

¹ <http://www.loebclassics.com/>

- *Collected letters of Enea Silvio Piccolomini*. Ed. and transl. by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 10 vols. 2022-2026. [Available in HAL Archives].

Pius II SEE ALSO Piccolomini, Enea Silvio

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

- *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt*. Ed. A van Heck. II vols. Città del Vaticano, 1984 (Studi e testi; 312-313)
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7. Sigla and abbreviations

A = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.I.VIII 284

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

C = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.I. VIII 286

D = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.I.VI.211

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

F = Mantova / Biblioteca Comunale /100

G = Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana / 544

R = Firenze / Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana / Plut. LIV 19

RTA = main text in Deutsche Reichtagsakten, 19, 3

Abbreviations

Works

AC = Acta Cusana

APD = Acta pontificum danica

CAR = Eneas Silvius Piccolomineus (postea Pius II): *Carmina*. Edid. Adrian van Heck. 1994.

CB = *Concilium Basiliense*.

COD = *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta*, ed. G. Alberigo. 1952.

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

COR = *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. Edit. and transl. by Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg. 12 vols. 2019-2020.

CRDM = Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Collected Reports of Diplomatic Missions, 1447-1455*. Edit. and transl. by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 2021.

DBI = Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani.

DGCB = Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *De Gestis Concilii Basiliensis Commentariorum Libri II*. Ed. and transl. by Dennis Hay and W.K. Smith. London, 1967.

DIA = Enea Silvio Piccolomini: *Libellus Dialogorum*. A cura di Simona Iaria. 2015. (Edizione Nazionale dei Testi Umanistici; 12).

DLE = Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *De Liberorum Educatione* [1450]. In: *Humanist Educational Treatises*. Ed. and transl. by C.W. Kallendorf. 2002, pp. 126-259.

DRBG = Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *De Rebus Basiliae gestis Commentarius*. [1450]

DVI = *De Viris Illustribus and other biographical Writings* of Enea Silvio Piccolomini. Edit. and transl. by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 2021.

EPI = Collected Letters of Enea Silvio Piccolomini. 10 vols. Ed. and transl. by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 2022-2026.

EUR = Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Europa*. [1458].

- Enee Silvii Piccolominei postea Pii II *de Europa*. Ed. A. van Heck. Città del Vaticano, 2001. (Studi e testi; 398).
- Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini: *Europe (c. 1400-1458)*. Transl. by Robert Brown. Washington, DC, 2013.

GER = Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Germania*. 1458.

- Aenas Silvius Piccolomini: *Germania*. Edit. A. Schmidt. 1962.
- Aenas Silvius Piccolomini: *Deutschland*. Transl. A. Schmidt. 1962.

HA = Eneas Silvius Piccolomini: *Historia Austriacis*. 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 Historic. Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum. Nova Series; 24).

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

HE = Enee Silvii Piccolominei *Epistolarium seculare*. Complectens De duobus amantibus, De naturis equorum, De curialium miseris. Cur. A. van Heck. Città del Vaticano, 2007. (Studi e testi, 439).

KO = *Epistolae familiares. De duobus amantibus Euryalo et Lucretia. Descriptio urbis Viennensis.* Edit. Nicolaus de Wyle. Nürnberg: Antonius Koberger, 1481. [With later editions of 1486 and 1496].

ME = Enea Silvio Piccolomini: *Briefe. Dichtungen.* Übers. Max Mells. 1966.

MPL = Migne. Patrologia Latina.

RE = Reject Aeneas, Accept Pius. Selected Letters of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II). Edit. Th. M. Isbicki. Washington, 2006.

RTA = Deutsche Reichstagsakten.

SRD = Scriptores rerum danicarum.

ST = Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Les misères des gens de cour. Le songe de Fortune.* Trad. Serge Stolf. 2015.

VO = Voigt, Georg: *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter.* 3 vols. 1856-1863.

WI = Widmer, Berthe (ed.): *Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Papst Pius II. Ausgewählte Texte aus seinen Schriften.* 1960.

WO = Wolkan, Rudolf: *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini.* 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918. (Fontes rerum Austriacarum, II. Abteilung, 61, 62, 67, 68).

Others

** Lead manuscript.

BC = Christian Era

BCE = Before Christian Era

DV = digital version.

II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Responsio Aeneae Silvii Piccolominei episcopi Senensis, qui postea pontificatum maxmimum adeptus Pius II appellatus est, data legatis Hungarorum nomine Caesaris in Nova¹ Civitate Austriae XXIII. Martii MCCCCLV²

[1] {81r} Si mihi, reverendissimi patres, nobiles et magnifici proceres, incltyti regni Hungariae legati, tanta dicendi vel³ copia vel gravitas esset, quantam⁴ hodie facundissimus ac⁵ sapientissimus Varadiensis ecclesiae pontifex, collega vester, in hoc amplissimo auditorio prae⁶ se tulit, nequaquam in praesentiarum divo Caesari Friderico, Romanorum imperatori, Augusto domino nostro piissimo ac gloriosissimo, qui me vestrae legationi respondere jubet, invitus parerem. At cum⁷ res maximae sint, de quibus locuti estis, nec me sive natura produxerit sive industria fecerit eloquentem, veritus ne sub tanto fasce deficiam, necessitate magis quam voluntate demandatum munus accipio: vestra sapientia, quae meis verbis deerunt, ex vultu serenissimo sibi Caesaris adhibebit.

¹ *omit.* A, B, E, F

² Responsio ... MCCCCLV : Aeneae Silvii episcopi Senensis responsio data legatis Hungarorum nomine Caesaris in Nova Civitate Austriae **D, G**; Responsio data legatis Hun-

garorum nomine imperatoris per dominum Æneam episcopum Senensem die XXIII. Martii MCCCCLV in Civitate Nova Austriae ... quomodo sit obtinenda victoria contra Turchos **R**

³ *omit.* E

⁴ quantum R*

⁵ et R

⁶ per E

⁷ tum C*

Oration of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena, who was called Pius II after he became pope, given on behalf of the emperor to the Hungarian legates, in Wiener Neustadt in Austria, on 23 March 1455

0. Introduction

0.1. Captatio benevolentiae

[1] Reverend Fathers, Illustrious and Magnificent Nobles, Legates of the glorious Kingdom of Hungary. Even if I had the proficiency¹ and gravity of speech that your colleague, the eloquent and wise Bishop of Várad,² has shown today, in this illustrious assembly, I should not willingly obey Holy Caesar, Friedrich,³ our pious and glorious August Lord and Emperor of the Romans, who has commanded me to give his reply to your legation. For the matters about which you have spoken⁴ are of the highest importance, and as I am neither eloquent by nature nor have become so through diligent study, I fear that I shall not be able to carry the great burden laid upon me⁵. So, I accept this charge more out of necessity than of my own free will. And what will be lacking in my speech will be revealed to your perspicacity by the emperor's serene demeanour.

¹ "copia"

² Janos Vitéz (ca. 1405-1472): Bishop of Várad from 1445. In 1465, appointed Archbishop of Esztergom

³ Friedrich III (Habsburg) (1415-1493): Duke of Austria (as Friedrich V) from 1424. Elected King of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor in 1440, crowned in Rome in 1452

⁴ In the oration "*Pulsatis maerore*", given on the same day by Bishop Vitez

⁵ "fasce"

[2] Ego quam brevissime potero commissae responsionis partes absolvam. Quinque fuere, si recte¹ memini, quae vestro nomine sunt exposita. Primo relata est illa sinceritas² animi et optima voluntas, quam serenissimus ac³ nobilissimus rex vester necnon et communitas inclyti regni vestri erga Caesarem gerit⁴. Secundo rememorata est Constantinopolitana calamitas; deplorata Graecorum ruina; Turcorum feritas atque intentio in medium deducta⁵⁶; discrimina, quae non solum Hungariae, sed universae Christianitati prope imminent, ante oculos posita. Tertio commendatum est sanctum Caesaris propositum, qui de tuenda {82r} religione nostra hoc tempore sollicitum se praebeuit; demonstrata belli pietas; opportunitas declarata; ostensa necessitas⁷. Quarto deductum est inclyti regni vestri decretum; expositus ardor populi totiusque vestrae nobilitatis contra Turcorum furorem ostensus et publicatus fervor, utque cum Theutonibus atque cum ipso Caesare nostro bellum pro tuenda fide catholica unitis consiliis adversus communes hostes gerere praesto estis.

¹ rite R

² illa sinceritas : sinceritas illa R

³ et G*

⁴ egerit R

⁵ adducta G

⁶ Turcorum feritas ... deducta
omit. R

⁷ demonstrata belli ... necessitas
omit. R

0.1. Issues raised by the Hungarian ambassadors

[2] I shall now, as briefly as possible, set forth the various parts of the response I have been charged with giving.

If I remember correctly, five issues were raised in your name.

Firstly, you expressed the sincerity and kindness that your Most Serene and Noble King¹ as well as your whole illustrious realm feel towards the Emperor.

Secondly, you recalled the catastrophe in Constantinople,² deplored the ruin of the Greeks, related the savageness and the intentions of the Turks, and showed the dangers threatening not only Hungary but all of Christendom.

Thirdly, you praised the pious purpose of the emperor, who has shown how concerned he is with the defence of our religion in our time; you proved the justice³ of the war; and you set forth the [present] opportunities as well as the necessities.⁴

Fourthly, you produced the decree of your glorious realm⁵; you told about the ardour of your people and all your nobility against the ferocious Turks, and you made known your fervent desire and readiness to join up with the Germans and our emperor himself in a war against our common enemies, in defence of the Catholic Faith.

¹ Ladislaus the Posthumous of Habsburg (1440-1457): Archduke of Austria from 1440, King of

Hungary from 1444, and King of Bohemia from 1453 to his death

² The Fall of Constantinople, 29 May 1453

³ "pietas"

⁴ Cf. Quintilianus: *Institutio oratoria*, 3.8.21

⁵ Carried at an earlier diet in Buda

[3] Quinto et ultimo, Caesaream majestatem summis precibus oravistis, ut pium intentum teneat¹; quae Frankfordiae promissa sunt, impleat; arma contra Turcos arripiat, et animo forti pro patriis legibus, pro libertate Christianorum, pro testamento Dei decertet. In qua parte spem non parvam victoriae consequendae conati estis ostendere, si, quemadmodum Frankfordiae decretum fuit, adversus inimicos crucis bellum geratur. Haec sunt, quae reverendissimus Varadiensis episcopus vice vestra in medium protulit. Summam retuli, non verba. Ille namque et ornatissime et copiosissime peroravit, cum multo splendore ac² majestate verborum. Ego nudam sententiam repetii. Nunc responsum divi Caesaris audite.

[4] Gratissima et³ acceptissima est imperatorio culmini legatio vestra, quando⁴ pro his rebus adventastis, quae et⁵ tutelam Christiani populi et honorem domini Dei nostri concernunt. Voluntatem illam praecellentissimi regis vestri ac praelatorum et procerum regni ejus, ut primo loco dixistis, erga se⁶ bonam esse, non sine quadam singulari delectatione Caesarea sublimitas audivit. Nam et suus animus erga regem ac regnum vestrum et sincerus et perfectus est. Quaecumque ab optimo patre bene morato et⁷ amantissimo filio sunt optanda, eadem Caesar inclyto Ladislao regi patrueli suo, vero sanguini suo, et cupit et optat.

¹ *omit.* B, E

² et R

³ *omit.* F*

⁴ quoniam RTA

⁵ *omit.* E

⁶ vestri ac ... erga se *omit.* F*

⁷ *omit.* E

[3] In the fifth and last place, you begged His Imperial Majesty to pursue his pious intentions, to fulfil the promises made in Frankfurt, to take up weapons against the Turks, and to fight strenuously for the laws of our fathers, for the liberty of the Christians, and for the testament of God. You also endeavoured to show that there is great hope of victory if we go to war against the enemies of the Cross¹, as decreed in Frankfurt.

These are the points that the reverend Bishop of Várad set forth on your behalf. I have given a summary of them, not a verbatim rendition, for he spoke in an elegant and elaborate manner and in a splendid and majestic style, while I have just given the bare essence of his speech.

Now, hear the reply of the Holy Emperor.

1. The emperor's response to the issues raised by the ambassadors

1.1. Relations between Hungary and the emperor

[4] Your legation is most welcome and pleasing to His Imperial Highness since you have come in matters concerning the protection of the Christian people and the honour of God, our Lord. And His Imperial Highness has heard with special pleasure what you said first concerning the good will towards himself of your excellent king and the prelates and nobles of his realm. His own sentiments towards your king and realm are sincere and noble. Whatever a loving son may desire from a good and gentle father, that is what the Emperor wishes and desires for the Illustrious King Ladislaus, his cousin, of his own blood.

¹ Moudarres, p. 41-42: The designation of the Turks as the enemies of the Cross (*inimici crucis*) or enemies of the lifegiving Cross (*inimici salutiferae crucis*) had already

been employed by Piccolomini in a letter to Pope Nicholas V of July 1453, on the Fall of Constantinople, but actually goes back to Peter the Venerable. It

may specifically point to the Muslims' refusal to acknowledge Christ's death on the Cross

[5] Quae de Constantinopoli, deflebili ruina totius Graeciae secunda in¹ parte commemorastis, quamvis Caesaris auribus jam² saepius inculcata sint, numquam tamen sine novo dolore suae serenitati referuntur: quotiens de Constantinopoli³ mentio incidit, totiens ululatus illos matronarum ac miserrimas⁴ voces morientium, qui pro Christi nomine caesi sunt, exaudire videtur. Sanguis impie fusus ante oculos ponitur, et atrox injuria salvatoris in mentem revertitur. Et quoniam hostes⁵ habemus numero multos, natura feros, moribus barbaros, mente superbos, animo cupidos, qui, nisi magnis viribus retundantur, totum sibi orbem subacturi ac sanctum evangelium et sacratissimam Christi legem subversuri videntur, sentit vobiscum Caesar, nisi Christiana societas vigilantior⁶ deinceps fuerit, religionem nostram perditum iri. Neque enim cum his⁷ hostibus nobis res est, qui suis in finibus quiescere velint, sed {82v} Alexandrina mente et animo Caesareo⁸ totum sibi orbem et ambiunt et promittunt.

[6] Quod tertio loco sublimitatis imperatoriae curas et studia commendastis, quia de tuenda religione nostra⁹ non parva sollicitudine teneatur, fatetur Caesar inter maxima desideria sua, quibus dies ac noctes urgetur, hoc uno se studio potissime detineri, ut labenti ac paene confractae reipublicae Christianae suo tempore succurratur. Circumspicit sua serenitas mundi climata, et orbis plagas intuetur. Oriens ille, ex quo nobis primum veritatis lumen effulsit, errore caecus a Christo recessit. Africa Mahumeto credit et omnis meridies. Septentrionis maxima portio idola sequitur. Christi cultus in angulum Occidentis ac Septentrionis redactus ex quattuor patriarchalibus sedibus, quibus veluti solidissimis basibus Christiana subnixta fides palmites suos in universum orbem extendit, solam Romanam obtinet. Angunt ista profecto ac¹⁰ vehementer mentem Caesaris expungunt, qui cum se protectorem et advocatum ecclesiae pro suo officio constituerit, scit sibi prae ceteris regibus incumbere, ut religionis nostrae et¹¹ firmitati et augmento consulat.

¹ *omit.* G*

² auribus jam : iam auribus G*

³ deflebili ruina ... de
Constantinopoli *omit.* F*

⁴ miseras R

⁵ *omit.* R

⁶ vigilantur E*

⁷ iis R

⁸ Caesario G*, R*

⁹ tuenda religione nostra :
religione nostra tuenda G*

¹⁰ et R

¹¹ *omit.* G*

1.2. Fall of Constantinople and the Turkish threat

[5] What you said in the second part about Constantinople and the lamentable destruction of all of Greece, the emperor has often heard. Still, every time His Serenity is reminded of them, he feels renewed pain. Whenever Constantinople is mentioned, he seems to hear once again the shrieks of the matrons and the desolate voices of dying people, slaughtered for the name of Christ. Again, he sees the blood that was shed impiously, and again he thinks of the terrible injury to the Saviour. And since our enemies are numerous and savage by nature, entertain barbaric customs, and are arrogant and greedy, they will – if they are not resisted with great force – conquer the whole world and destroy the Holy Gospel and the sacred law of Christ. Therefore, the Emperor agrees with you that unless the Christian world becomes more diligent, our religion will be destroyed. We are not concerned with those enemies who want to live peacefully within their present boundaries, but with those who, with the mind of an Alexander and the courage of a Caesar,¹ want the whole world for themselves and have decided to have it.

1.3. Imperial initiatives in defence of the Faith

[6] In the third place, you praised the efforts and endeavours of His Imperial Highness, who is greatly concerned about the protection of our religion. Indeed, the emperor declares that among the great affairs that occupy him night and day, the most important one is rescuing the Christian Commonwealth, which is floundering and has almost been destroyed in his time. The emperor looks at the various areas and regions of the world [and sees that] the East, where first the light of Truth shone forth upon us, has been blinded by error and abandoned Christ. Africa and all of the South follow Muhammad. The greater part of the North worships idols. The worship of Christ has been reduced to a corner of the West² and the North, and of the four patriarchal sees on which the Christian faith was solidly based, reaching out towards the whole world,³ it has only kept the Roman See. The emperor is concerned and preoccupied by these facts, and since his office has made him protector and champion of the Church, he knows that he, more than other kings, is responsible for ensuring the stability and growth of our religion.

¹ The ruler of the Turks, Mehmed II, was reported to be a great admirer of Alexander and Julius Caesar

² Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im. 75]: *per cu-*

jus [Europae] omnes provincias et regiones nomen floruit Christianum. Quod nomen nostris temporibus ad parvum orbis angulum coangustari et quotidie de excidio periclitari videmus. The passage is

a revised quote from Piccolomini: Letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (EPI, 6: 341).

³ An image used by Piccolomini several times in his crusade orations

[7] Eapropter, cum accepisset anno proxime decurso expugnatam esse Constantinopolim, sacra nostra illic funditus deleta, nobilitatem cum sacerdotio caesam, plebem in servitutem redactam, intelligens quia non quiesceret Turcorum furor, sed habitam victoriam velut sequentis instrumentum duceret, universos reges et principes, majores quoque et potentiores civitates adhortatus est, ut ad consulendum orthodoxae fidei unitis consiliis assurgerent. Ostendit pericula, indicavit remedia. Indixit apud Ratisponam primo, deinde apud Frankfordiam concilia¹. Nunc quoque praesens conventus habetur, ut quae Frankfordiae meditata² sunt, executioni mandentur. In quibus rebus etsi vobis atque omnibus satisfacere Caesar videtur, sibi tamen ipsi minime satisfacit, qui ex officio ad majora sese obnoxium recognoscit. De pietate belli, de opportunitate, de necessitate, quae sunt vestro nomine et prudentissime et ornatissime dicta, commendationem magis quam responsionem merentur.

[8] Quod quarto loco relatam est, regnum scilicet vestrum adversus Turcos in arma promptum atque paratum esse, summopere commendat Caesarea sublimitas, gentemque vestram quavis laude dignam censet, quae licet gravibus afflictis cladibus non tamen ab animi sui magnitudine decidit, sed quanto magis urgetur, tanto *audentior* exurgit. O fortes ac magnanimos proceres! O constantes populos! O regnum vere Christianissimum, quod nulla potest adversitas de³ sancto proposito dimovere! Quis non libenter audiat tam nobile regnum, tam excellens pro communi Christianorum salute tanta sollicitudine {83r} ac tanto fervore teneri? Caesari certe altus et integer animus vester, pium et sanctum regni vestri decretum summae voluptati est, nec dubitat sua serenitas, quin concurrentibus aliis vestra opera res magnae ac gloriosae nostro tempore contra Turcos agantur. Quod autem pro gerendo adversus hostes nostrae fidei bello cum Theutonibus atque cum ipso Caesare unanimes esse decrevistis, nedum laudabile, sed necessarium quoque sublimitas imperatoria ducit.

¹ consilia R

² meditati F*

³ tanto *add.* E*

[7] When last year he heard that Constantinople had fallen, that our shrines there had been completely destroyed, that the nobility had been slaughtered together with the clergy, and that the people had been carried off to slavery, he understood that the frenzy of the Turks would not stop there, but that they would consider this victory as a stepping stone¹ to the next one. Therefore, he invited all kings and princes, as well as the most important and powerful cities, to rise and come jointly to the assistance of the true Faith. He showed the dangers and pointed out the remedies. He summoned diets, first in Regensburg, then in Frankfurt.² Now the present meeting is being held in order to implement what was planned in Frankfurt. Although in these matters the emperor seems to satisfy you and everybody else, he certainly does not satisfy himself, for he considers that by virtue of his office he has an obligation to do even more.

What has been said so wisely and elegantly in your name concerning the justice,³ the feasibility,⁴ and the necessity of the war really merits praise rather than a reponse.

1.4. Hungarian response

[8] In the fourth place, you said that your realm is ready and eager to go to war against the Turks. This His imperial Highness greatly commends. He considers that the Hungarian people is worthy of every praise since it has not lost its courage although it has suffered great disasters. But the more it is afflicted, the bolder it rises up again.⁵ Oh, what strong and brave nobles! Oh, what a steadfast people! Oh, what truly Christian realm, which no adversity can move from its holy purpose. Who does not gladly hear that this noble and excellent realm maintains its great concern and enthusiasm for the common salvation and safety of the Christians? Certainly, the emperor is greatly impressed with your noble and upright character and by the pious and holy decree of your kingdom. His Serenity does not doubt that others will join your efforts and that in our time great and glorious things will be done against the Turks.

That you have decided unanimously to go to war against the enemies of our Faith together with the Germans and with the emperor himself, His Imperial Highness considers not just praiseworthy but even necessary.

¹ "instrumentum"

² The diets in Regensburg May 1454 and Frankfurt October 1454

³ "pietas"

⁴ "opportunitas"

⁵ Cf. Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 6.95

[9] Namque¹ si communibus viribus in Turcos pugnandum est, inter omnes belli socios necessaria *concordia est*², *artissimum*³ *atque optimum*⁴ in omni civitate et in omni exercitu *vinculum incolumitatis*. Ubi concordia, ibi et oboedientia est⁵ et ordo, sine quibus nihil est, quod duces exercitus feliciter valeant explicare. Pulchre heri⁶ ex Sallustio dictum est: *Concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae⁷ dilabuntur*. Infirmus exercitus est, qui seditionibus⁸ agitator. Male in hostem pugnat, cui cum fratre dimicandum⁹ est. Exemplo nobis sunt Conradus, Romanorum imperator, et Ludovicus, rex Francorum, qui contra Turcos et Saracenos exercitum in Asiam trajecere. Namque dum fuere concordēs, res praeclaras gesserunt, et usque Jerusalem penetrarunt; discordes facti, domum inglorii rediere. Neque Sigismundus, rex vester, qui postea Romano praesedit¹⁰ imperio, aliam ob causam in magno proelio victus a Turcis¹¹ fertur, nisi quia¹² diversarum gentium collectum exercitum parum concordem habuit. Idem vulgatum est de Vladislao, rege Poloniae nobilissimo, quem propterea ab hisdem¹³ hostibus captum atque occisum tradunt, quia inter vos et Polonos non fuerit unitum consilium¹⁴.

¹ nam G*

² inter omnes ... concordia est
omit. E

³ artissimum *corr. ex* artissimum
A; artissimum C, F, R

⁴ est *add.* E

⁵ *omit.* R

⁶ enim *corr. ex* heri D*; enim G

⁷ discordia maximae : maximae
vero discordia G

⁸ seditionis E*

⁹ decertandum RTA

¹⁰ precedit E*

¹¹ victus a Turcis : a Turcis victus
G*

¹² quia *corr. ex.* qui A; qui F

¹³ iisdem C*, R

¹⁴ Absint similitates in bello *in*
margin. D, G

[9]¹ For if we are to fight the Turks with united forces, it is necessary that there be harmony between the allies, for in every *city* and in every army, *concord is the very best and strongest bond of safety*.² Where there is harmony, there is also obedience and order, without which no general can achieve anything. Yesterday, Sallust was quoted beautifully³: *Harmony makes small states great, while the mightiest are undone by discord*.⁴ An army is weak plagued by sedition is weak. Anyone who must fight against his brother fights badly against the enemy.

As an example we may take Konrad, Emperor of the Romans, and Louis, King of the French, who brought armies to Asia [to fight] the Turks and the Saracens. While in harmony, they did great things together and reached Jerusalem. But when conflict later arose between them, they had to return in shame.

And your own King Sigismund, who later ruled the Roman Empire, is said to have been defeated by the Turks in a great battle only because there was too much conflict in his army, which consisted of contingents from various countries.

The same is being told about Wladislas, the noble King of Poland, who was reportedly caught and killed by those same enemies because you and the Poles did not make common plans.

¹ See the notes to the oration "*In hoc florentissimo*", sect. 16

² Cicero: *De re publica*, 2.43.69:

³ By the papal legate, Giovanni di Castiglione, in his oration "*Super vacuum puto*", though slightly modified

⁴ Sallustius: *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 10.6

[10] Facessant igitur inter nos¹ quaevis² divisiones ac simultates! Absint et illa vocabula, quae scissionem quovis modo parere possunt! Si fiat exercitus quemadmodum speramus et nitimur, nemo se Gallicum, aut Theutonicum, aut Bohemum, aut Hungarum³ nominet: unum sit omnibus nomen, Christianum se quisque vocitet: cruce signatus servum se crucis appellet, neque pugnaturus pro Christo aliis se⁴ quam Christi titulis ac fascibus ornet. Absit et illud Jasonis vitium, qui sibi fieri putabat injuriam, nisi regnaret. Si quis est virtute ac nobilitate praeditus dignusque qui ceteris praeponatur, postpositus non indoleat. Meminerit ejus⁵ quod Titus, Vespasiani filius, usurpare solebat, *principatum scilicet fato*⁶, idest divina providentia, *dari*. Cogitet id, quod est, se non humano⁷, sed⁸ divino iudicio posthabitu. Sciat in hoc bello se non homini, sed Christo militare ac parere, nec moleste ferat, cum sit homo, humiliare se homini propter Christum, quando et Christus ipse, cum esset Deus, propter hominem *usque ad mortem* humiliatus {83v} est homini, erubescat Christianus superbus, qui de praesidentia litigat. Nam quomodo pugnabimus unanimes in hostes, qui foedera⁹ inter concives et amicos servare¹⁰ nequimus? Libet hic exclamare: O homo, quis tu es? Quem te ipsum facis? Unde superbis? Unde tumes? O caro, o¹¹ lutum, o terra, o pulvis, o cinis¹²? Unde tibi haec¹³ spuma sive mentis elevatio¹⁴ succrevit, ut laesum te putes, nisi principatum obtineas? Emmittendus est hic ventus, conterenda est haec¹⁵ superbia, si contra hostes unanimes esse volumus. Inter inflatas mentes non habitabit concordia.

¹ vos C*, D*, G*, R

² que F*

³ Hungaricum R*

⁴ omit. R

⁵ omit. G*

⁶ Titus principatum fato dari in marg. D, G

⁷ non humano : humano non F*

⁸ se F*

⁹ sedere RTA

¹⁰ servare *poss. corr. ex*

concordes A; concordes RTA

¹¹ omit. F*

¹² o cinis omit. E

¹³ et F*

¹⁴ elatio R

¹⁵ et F*

[10] So, away with all divisions and conflicts between us. Do not use names that may cause any kind of division. If an army is created, as we are hoping and striving for, then let no one call himself French, German, Bohemian, or Hungarian. Let there only be one name: let everyone name himself Christian. Let the crusader call himself the servant of the Cross, and let no one who is going to fight for Christ use other titles and symbols than those of Christ. Avoid the fault of Jason, who considered it an insult if he did not rule.¹ And if somebody has great courage and nobility and is worthy of being set above others, then let him not be aggrieved if he is passed over. Nay, let him remember what Titus, son of Vespasian, used to say: *imperial power is the gift of fate*,² divine providence, that is. Let him consider that he was passed over not by human but by divine judgment. Let him know that in this war he does not fight for or obey any man but Christ himself, and let him not be aggrieved that he, a man, defers to another man in the cause of Christ. If Christ himself, as God, humbled himself for the sake of man, *even unto death*,³ let any proud Christian who struggles for leadership be ashamed of himself. How can we fight our enemies with one mind if we cannot keep our agreements with our fellows and friends? Here we may exclaim: O man, who are you? What do you make of yourself? Why do you swell with pride? Why do you become puffed up? Oh flesh, oh clay, oh earth, oh dust, oh ashes! Whence comes this froth of vanity, whence this conceit of yours that makes you feel slighted unless you get the first place? Vanity must be cast away, and pride must be wiped out, if we want to have a united front against our enemies. There can be no harmony between prideful men.

¹ Cf. Aristotle: *Rhetorica*, 1.12 (1373a); *Politica*, 3, 4 (1277a)

² Suetonius: *De vitis Caesarum* / *Titus*, 9.1

³ Philippians, 2, 7-8

[11] Sed pergo ad illud, quod quinto et ultimo loco expetivistis, Caesarem scilicet suum tenere propositum ac coactis viribus in Turcos impetum facere. Confiditis enim et victoriam nostram esse, si¹ quemadmodum Frankfordiae decretum est, bellum pro nostra religione geratur. Huic parti respondet imperator nequaquam suae mentis esse, quantum in se fuerit, ab inceptis desistere. Compertum habet sua serenitas quaevis consilia nostra per exploratores ad hostes deferri. Quod si didicerint illi conatus nostros irritos fieri, audaciores multo ac terribiliores insurgent vicinosque sibi² Christi cultores crudelibus affligent³ modis. Vobis autem necessarium erit aut pacem ex illis accipere, quam dederint, aut bellum cum eis gerere, in quo longe sitis inferiores. Utrumque malum, utrumque periculosum: in⁴ altero pax damnosa Christiano populo expectanda est, in altero formidanda est Turcorum victoria, quae non potest non crudelis esse. Ingrati profecto fuerimus⁵ genti vestrae auxilium denegantes, quae annis supra septuaginta pro Christi nomine bella gerens, dum suum effudit⁶ sanguinem, tutata est nostrum. Omitto ingratitude: stultia atque insania dicenda est⁷, si eos negligas, sine quibus te ipsum salvare non queas. Clipeus noster Hungaria est murusque nostrae religionis et antemurale fortissimum. Nisi hanc provinciam tuemur, neque Italia, neque Germania quiescet, neque Galliam Rheni fluenta, neque Hispaniam Pyrenei montes salvare poterunt.

¹ et *add.* R

² *omit.* R

³ vicinosque ... affligent *omit.* E

⁴ *omit.* F*

⁵ profecto fuerimus : fuerimus
profecto G*

⁶ effundit B, E, RTA

⁷ *omit.* R

1.5. Implementation of decisions made in Frankfurt

[11] I now come to what, in the fifth place, you requested of the emperor: to pursue his course of action and attack the Turks with united forces. You are confident that victory will be ours if we go to war for our religion, as decided in Frankfurt. To this the emperor replies that it has never entered his mind to abandon this undertaking. His Serenity has learned that spies reveal our plans to our enemies. If they hear that our efforts have failed, they will become more daring and terrible than ever before and savagely strike out at their neighbours who believe in Christ. Then you will have to either accept peace on their terms or fight them in a war in which you will be greatly inferior. Both alternatives are poor; both are perilous. In the first case, the peace may be expected to be harmful to the Christian people. In the second case, it must be feared that the Turks will be victorious and that their victory must be savage. We would indeed be ungrateful if we refused to help the Hungarian people, which has - for more than seventy years - fought in the cause of Christ and protected our blood while shedding its own. But leaving ingratitude aside, it would really be folly and madness to neglect those without whom you cannot save yourself. Hungary is our shield, the wall, and strong bastion of our religion. If we do not support this province, then neither Italy nor Germany will have peace, nor will the waves of the Rhine be able to save France, or the Pyrenees Spain.¹

¹ Piccolomini's domino theory: if Hungary falls, the rest of Europe falls, too

[12] Non est igitur animus Caesaris ea deserere, quae Frankfordiae cogitata sunt, neque dubitandum vobis est, quin sacra majestas imperatoria suo satis officio faciat. Auditae sunt ejus oblationes et in Ratispona et¹ Frankfordia, et his diebus hoc in loco publicitus factae. Quaecumque sibi ut imperatori Romanorum, ut protectori et advocato ecclesiae, ut Germanicae nationis capiti, ut Austriae duci, ut religioso principi, ut homini Christiano incumbunt, pro conservanda et amplianda religione nostra, nullo pacto neglecturus est. Adsint tantum principes ejus et imperatori, quod debent, in tanto negotio non denegent. At {84r} cum sanctissimus urbis Romae pontifex, domini et² salvatoris nostri vicarius, Nicolaus papa quintus, tamquam pius pater et³ optimus pastor de familia sua, de grege suo sollicitus, hujus rei cum sacro senato curam exactam gerat; cum serenissimus ille princeps Alfonsus, rex Aragonum et Siciliae, quem veluti sidus quoddam clarissimum ad illustranda tempora nostra de caelo missum omnes intuentur, classem adversum⁴ Turcos indubiam promittat⁵; cum sublimis ille Burgundorum dux Philippus, nobilitate ac potentia non impar maximis regibus, personam suam et insignem militiam huic bello polliceatur; cum denique multi et magni ex Alania principes magnifice sese⁶ offerant, non diffidit Caesarea sublimitas exercitum, quemadmodum apud Frankfordiam conductum est, posse conflari. Ad quam rem hic nunc conventus habetur. Quae concludentur in eo, audietis et⁷ intelligetis suo tempore. Majestas imperatoria, ut res bene gerantur, summo studio navabit operas.

¹ in *add.* R

² *omit.* E

³ ut E*

⁴ adversus B*, E, G*, R

⁵ promittit R

⁶ se C*

⁷ *omit.* F*

[12] So, the emperor has no intention of giving up the undertaking that was discussed¹ in Frankfurt, and you must not doubt that His Holy Imperial Majesty will perform his office. His offers were heard both in Regensburg and in Frankfurt, and they have also been announced here and now. He will fulfil all his duties as emperor of the Romans, as protector and champion of the Church, as the head of the German Nation, as duke of Austria, as a pious prince, and as a Christian, and he will do all that is necessary to preserve and propagate our religion if only his princes join up and do not refuse to do what they owe the emperor in this great undertaking.

As a pious father and a good shepherd, His Holiness, the Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Our Lord and Saviour, Pope Nicolaus V,² is deeply concerned about his family and his flock, and he is deliberating on this matter together with the Holy Senate.³

His Serene Highness Alfonso, King of Aragon and Sicily,⁴ whom all look to as a brilliant star sent from Heaven to illumine our times, has made a firm promise to provide a fleet against the Turks.

His Highness, Duke Philippe of Burgundy,⁵ equal to the greatest kings in nobility and power, promises his own person and an outstanding army to this war.

And finally, many great princes from Germany magnificently promise to participate in person.

Therefore, His Imperial Highness has no doubts that it will be possible to assemble an army as decided in Frankfurt. It is for this purpose that we are having the present meeting. What it will decide, you will hear and see when the time comes. His Imperial Majesty will work ardently for a successful outcome.

¹ "cogitata"

² Nicolaus V (Tommaso Parentucelli) (1397-1455): Pope from 6 March 1447 to his death

³ I.e., the College of Cardinals

⁴ Alfonso V the Magnanimous (1396-1458): King of Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily and Count of Barcelona from 1416, and King of Na-

ples (as Alfonso I) from 1442 to his death

⁵ Philippe III le Bon (1396-1467): Duke of Burgundy 1419 to his death

[13] Possem hic jam finem facere, tantum est enim quod vestrae legationi respondere sum jussus. Sed quoniam de victoria consequenda, si pugnetur in Turcos, spem maximam facitis, de hoc ipso pauca dicere non erit absurdum. Victoriam prisci Romanorum deam esse putaverunt¹, quam Jupiter optimus maximus mitteret, illam vero tamquam regi deorum parentem ad eos venire, quos jusserit et in eorum parte consistere. Quod ita intelligendum est, quemadmodum Aurelius Augustinus in libro *De civitate dei* quarto declarat: *At hoc, inquit ille, verum est non de illo Jove, quem deorum regem pro sua opinione finxerunt, sed de² illo³ vero rege saeculorum, quod mittat non victoriam, quae nulla est substantia, sed angelum suum⁴, et⁵ faciat vincere, quem velit, cujus iudicium occultum esse potest, iniquum esse non potest⁶.*

¹ Pro victoria deam *in marg.* D;
Romani victoriam deam *in marg.*

G
² *omit.* C*

³ Jove quem ... illo *omit.* F*

⁴ *omit.* B*, E*

⁵ *omit.* E*

⁶ Iudicium occultum non iniquum
in marg. D; Iudicium occultum,
iniquum esse non potest *in marg.*

G

2. War against the Turks

2.1. It is God who grants victories

[13] I could finish now, for this is what I have been commanded to reply to your legation. But since you have great hopes for achieving victory if we fight the Turks, it will be appropriate to say a few words about that. The old Romans thought that victory was a goddess sent by Jupiter Optimus Maximus:¹ obeying the king of the gods, she would come to those to whom he sent her and favour them. How this should be understood is explained by Aurelius Augustine in the fourth book of his *De Civitate Dei* where he says: *This might be said with truth, not of that Jupiter whom they fashion to match their fancy as king of the gods, but of the true King of the ages: that he sends, not Victory (who is no real being), but his angel, and gives victory to the man of his choice. His design may be hidden, but can never be unrighteous.*²

¹ "Jupiter optimus maximus": traditional titles of the Roman God, Jupiter

² Augustinus: *De civitate Dei*, 4, 17

[14] Sive igitur Moysi, sive Josue, sive Saulis, sive David, sive aliorum iudicum¹ ac regum bella mente repetamus, quae veteris testamenti codex exponit, nullum vicisse reperiemus, nisi quem *digitus Dei* iuverit² ac protexerit. Neque sine divino nutu³ Trojam subvertit Agamemnon; neque Graeciam subegit Philippus; neque Indiam penetravit Alexander; neque Italiam sedecim⁴ annis concussit Hannibal; neque duo Scipiones Africam evicere; neque Cimbros extinxit Marius; neque duos ac⁵ viginti reges debellavit Pompejus⁶; neque undecies centena millia hostium trucidavit Julius; neque Aquileiam delevit Attila; neque Odoacrum apud Ravennam occidit Theodericus; neque, ut ad⁷ Germanos veniam, Hispanos et Longobardos edomuit Carolus magnus; neque tres Ottones Italos terruere, duo Friderici concussere; {84v} neque conditor⁸ Austriae domus, divus Rudolfus, Ottokarum, Bohemiae regem, cuius imperium ex mari Balteo usque in sinum Venetorum protendebatur, bello victum interemit; neque maternus Ladislai attavus, Henricus VII., Bohemiam filio Johanni submitit, Wirtembergenses comites humiliavit, Mediolanum subegit, Brixiam ferro⁹ contrivit, Florentiam obsidione cinxit, Romanam coronam armis obtinuit. A Deo igitur quaerenda atque impetranda victoria est.

[15] At cum Deus ipse absolute bonus justusque sit, bonitati studeat oportet, qui ex Deo victoriam quaerit. Et nos ergo, si Turcorum frangere acies ac¹⁰ victores ex bello reverti volumus, ita in aciem descendamus, ut ei grati atque accepti simus, cuius est donare victoriam. Sint ergo nostri et duces et milites non solum rei militaris periti, sed etiam honestatis amatores, neque sceleratis quovis modo, quamvis bellacibus haec pugna committatur: probitas nobis pugnantium magis quam scientia rei bellicae placeat. Neque Aristotelem hoc in loco audiamus¹¹, qui de magistratibus in *Politicis* agens in eo, qui bello praesit, non tam probitatem quam peritiam rei militaris existimat requirendam. Cujus auctoritatem secutus apud Romanos videtur sanctus ille Fabricius¹², qui teste Gellio Publum Cornelium Rufinum, hominem furacem atque avarum, in¹³ temporibus reipublicae difficillimis consulatum petentem enixissime juvat, quoniam esset *manu strenuus ac bellator bonus militarisque disciplinae peritus*.

¹ iudicium E*

² Victoria a digito dei *in marg.* D, G

³ notu E*

⁴ sexdecim B*, E*

⁵ et R

⁶ Victores multi *in marg.* D, G

⁷ omit. G*

⁸ neque conditor *corr. ex* neque C*

⁹ bello R

¹⁰ et R

¹¹ Aristoteles in *Politicis in marg.* D, G

¹² Fabritius Cornelius *in marg.* D, G

¹³ omit. R

[14]¹ Whether we look at the wars of Moses, Joshua, Saul, David, or other judges or kings related in the Book of the Old Testament, we find that each of them was victorious only when he was helped and protected by *the hand of God*.² And it was only with God's permission that Agamemnon conquered Troy, Philip overran Greece, Alexander entered India, Hannibal beset Italy for sixteen years, the two Scipios conquered Africa, Marius destroyed the Cimbrians, Pompey vanquished 22 kings, Julius killed 1.1 million enemies, Attila destroyed Aquileia, Theodoric killed Odoacer at Ravenna, and - passing to the Germans - Charlemagne subdued the Spaniards and the Lombards, the three Ottos struck the Italians with terror, the two Friedrichs crushed them, and in a war Holy Emperor Rudolf, founder of the House of Austria, killed King Ottokar of Bohemia, whose realm reached from the Baltic Sea to the bay of Venice, and Ladislaus' maternal ancestor Heinrich VII subdued Bohemia and gave it to his son Johann, humbled the counts of Württemberg, defeated Milan, put Brescia to the sword, laid siege to Florence, and obtained the Roman crown by arms. Thus, victory must be sought and obtained from God.

2.2. Armies and generals should be pleasing to God

[15] But as God Himself is absolutely just and good, anyone who asks God for victory should strive to be good himself. And if we want to crush the Turkish ranks and return victorious from battle, we should go to war in such a way that we are pleasing and acceptable to Him who grants victory. Let both our leaders and soldiers not just be skilled in war but also love decency, and let us not entrust this war to wicked men, even if they are good fighters. May the moral integrity of the fighters be more important to us than military prowess. And let us not, on this point, heed Aristotle, who, when talking about magistrates in his *Politics*, said that in generals we should look more to military prowess than to moral integrity.³ Among the Romans, his authority was followed by that greatly honourable man Fabricius, who, according to Gellius, helped Publius Cornelius Rufus, a larcenous and greedy man seeking the consulate in a time of crisis for the republic, because Rufus was *a vigorous man, a good fighter, and skilled in military matters*.⁴

¹ See the notes to *In hoc florentissimo*, sect. 11

² E.g. Exodus, 8, 19

³ Aristotle: *Politics*, 5.9 (1309b)

⁴ Gellius: *Noctes atticae*, 4.8.1-8

[16] Sed quo pacto haec et illa conveniunt, quae idem Aristoteles¹ *Ethicis* ait: *Si curam aliquam, inquit ille, dii habent rerum humanarum, ut existimatur et creditur², rationabile est eos gaudere optimo et cognatissimo. Hujusmodi autem est mens et amantibus illam maxime³ honorantibusque favere tamquam rerum sibi carissimarum⁴ curatoribus ac recte ac⁵ bene agentibus?* Asserit hic philosophus, ut videtis, curare superos⁶ res humanas ac favere bene agentibus. Si res humanas curant, ergo et bellicas; si favent⁷ viris bonis, ergo et partes juvant in proelio meliores. Praestat igitur⁸ probos esse et Deo acceptos quam belli peritos, qui proelium committunt. Dicat hic fortasse aliquis: “At ex his, quorum victoriam commemorasti, plerique sceleratissimi fuerunt. Nam et Lucanus accusare victoriam Caesaris videtur, cum ait: *Victrix causa deis⁹ placuit; sed victa Catoni*. His ego respondeo¹⁰ difficile esse¹¹ de hominis probitate iudicium. *Solus Deus scrutatur corda¹² et renes hominum*. Saepe nobis bonus videtur, qui apud Deum reprobus est, sinitque divina providentia nonnumquam vincere malos, ne pessimi superent.

¹ in *add.* D, G

² et *creditur* : *creditur et* F*

³ et *add.* F*

⁴ *castissimarum* R*

⁵ et G*, R

⁶ *superbos* D*

⁷ et *add.* D*

⁸ et *add.* D*, F, G

⁹ *dies* R*

¹⁰ *respondebo* R*

¹¹ *omit.* R

¹² *scrutatur corda* : *scrutator cordium* G*

[16] And how do such views fit with what the same Aristotle says in his *Ethics*: *For if, as generally supposed, the gods have some concern for human affairs, it would be reasonable to believe also that they take pleasure in that part of us which is best and most closely related to themselves (this being the intellect), and that they reward those who appreciate and honour it most highly; for they care for what is dear to them, and what they do is right and good?*¹ Here, as you see, the philosopher states that the heavenly beings are concerned about human affairs and favour those who do good. But if they are concerned about human affairs, then they are also concerned with wars. And if they favour good men, then they will favour the better men in a battle. So, it is preferable that men who go to war be honourable and pleasing to God rather than skilled in military matters.

Maybe some will object that “several of those whose victories you mentioned were actually very wicked men. And Lucan seems to denounce Caesar’s victory when he says: *The victor had the gods on his side, the vanquished had Cato.*² To them I reply that it is difficult to judge the probity of a man. Only God *searches the hearts and reins of men.*³ Often a man whom God considers to be evil seems a good man to us, and Divine Providence sometimes permits bad men to win so that even worse men shall not prevail.

¹ Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*, 10.8 (1179a, 25-27). Quoted after the translation from the Greek by J.A.K. Thompson and H. Treden-

nick, p. 335. Presumably known to Piccolomini through Leonardo Bruni’s translation into Latin

² Lucanus: *Bellum civile*, 1.126

³ 1. Chronicles, 28, 9; Psalms, 7, 10

[17] De victoria vero Caesaris fortasse illud in mente divina fuit, quod Cicero tradit: Si vicisset Pompejus, {85r} nimis *iracundam fuisse victoriam*¹. Nos certe, qui Christiani sumus mundumque desuper regi non dubitamus, victoriam per ministros potius bonos ac Deo placentes quam perniciosos et² odibiles sperare debemus. Nil rei militaris scientia proderit, nisi pugnantium³ vel probitas vel causa Deo placuerit. At contra sine rei bellicae peritia⁴ multum per se ipsam valebit innocentia. *In domino faciemus virtutem et ipse ad nihilum deducet inimicos nostros*, inquit David. Et Flaccus⁵:

*Integer vitae scelerisque purus
non eget Mauris⁶ jaculis nec arcu,
nec venenatis gravida sagittis,
Fusce, pharetra.*

¹ Cicero de victoria Cesaris *in marg.* D

² ac R

³ pugnandum E*

⁴ perita A; peritia *corr.* ex perita C, D*, F*

⁵ Flaccus *in marg.* D, G

⁶ in auris R

[17] In the case of Caesar's victory, God may have had in mind what Cicero says: "If Pompey had won, *passionate excesses would have attended victory.*"¹ At any rate, we who are Christians and who do not doubt that the world is ruled from on high must hope that victory is achieved by good officers who are pleasing to God rather than by evil and odious ones. Knowledge of military matters will not help unless the probity and the cause of the fighters are pleasing to God. On the other hand, moral integrity will achieve much, even if it is not coupled with military skills. *Through God we shall do mightily: and he shall bring to nothing them that afflict us,*² says David. And Flaccus:

*He who is upright in his way of life and unstained by guilt,
Needs not the Moorish darts nor bow nor quiver
Loaded with poisoned arrows,
Fusce.*³

¹ Cicero: *Pro M. Marcello*, 6.17

² Psalms, 59, 14

³ Horatius: *Carmina*, 1.22.1-4

[18] Tam facile et pronum est Deo cum¹ duce imperito vincere peritum quam numerosos exercitus cum parvis copiis superare. Nolo veteris legis exempla referre, res in Christianismo² gestae sufficiunt. Constantino, imperatori piissimo, cum anxius esset belli gerendi, in quo nulla ratione se parem hostibus judicabat, per quietem signum crucis in caelo monstratum est et vox facta, quae diceret: *In hoc, Constantine, vince*³. Nec Theodosius, imperator Christianissimus, Eugenium et Argobastum bellandi peritia, sed manifesto Dei auxilio superavit, cum se orante vis magna ventorum exorta hostium tela retroverterit. Hinc illa non spernendi poetae carmina:

*O nimium⁴ dilecte Deo cui militat aether,
Et conjurati veniunt ad classica venti.*

In Britannia, quae nunc Anglia dicitur, teste venerabili Beda, cujus sepulchrum in Dunelmia vidi cultu mirabili visitatum, cum bellum atrox inter Christianos et infideles instaret, essentque Christiani et pauci et inermes, intervenientibus duobus ex Gallia pontificibus, Germano et Lupo, et in ipso pugnae principio "Alleluja" tertium magno clamore intonari⁵ jubentibus, victoria Christianis fide, non arte neque viribus parta est.

¹ Deo cum : cum deo F*

² Christianismo *corr. ex*
Christianissimo F*;
Christianissimo E, G*

³ vinces B*, E

⁴ o nimium : omnium C*

⁵ intonare G*

[18] It is just as easy for God to make an inexperienced general win over an experienced one as it is for him to make small armies win over large ones. Here I shall not relate examples from the Old Law since events from the Christian age suffice.

When the most pious Emperor Constantine feared going into a battle, considering himself to be quite inferior to his enemies, in the middle of the night he saw the sign of the cross in Heaven and heard a voice saying, *With this you will win, Constantine.*¹

And Theodosius, a most Christian emperor, did not defeat Eugenius and Argobastes through military skills but through God's manifest help, for when he prayed, a powerful wind arose and turned the spears of the enemies against themselves. Thence the verse of an admirable poet:

*Verily God is with thee, when the very elements fight for thee
and the allied winds come at the call of thy trumpets.*²

The Venerable Bede, whose tomb I have seen myself in Durham,³ where it was shown wonderful devotion, relates as follows: When a bitter war between Christians and infidels was imminent in Brittany, now called England, and the Christians were few and defenceless, two bishops from Gaul, Germanus and Lupus, intervened. At the beginning of the battle, they ordered the Christians to sing a loud Hallelujah three times. Because of that, the Christians were victorious - not through skill or force, but through faith.⁴

¹ Otto von Freising: *Chronica*, 6, 1

² Claudian: *De tertio consulatu Honorii*, 96-98: *o nimium dilecte deo,*

*cui fundit ab antris Aeolus armatas
hiemes, cui militat aetheret
coniurati veniunt ad classica venti*

³ CO, I, 6

⁴ Bede: *Historia ecclesistica gentis Anglorum*, 1, 24

[19] Quidni ergo spem nostram in vera fide et¹ pura innocentia reponamus, ac cum duces tum milites probitatis amatores in hoc bellum² mittere studeamus? Divo Caesari quidem, ut eo redeam, unde sum digressus, in eligendis belli ducibus, nec probitas sine scientia rei militaris, nec scientia sine probitate recipienda³ videtur, quod in altero temptare Deum, in altero irritare timuerit. Quod si alterum sine altero cogatur eligere, non auscultabit Aristoteli, temptabit securius quam irritabit Deum. At cum probitas in obscuro sit, faciliusque hunc aut⁴ illum disciplinae militaris peritum quam innocentem asserere valeamus⁵, in constituendo belli ductore atque in tota militia deligenda ita rei bellicae peritiam amplectamur, ut malitia et iniquitas, quantum fieri potest, minime obsit. Propter iniquitates enim nostras recessit a nobis Deus, neque auxiliatur amplius nobis in bello⁶ dextra sua⁷, et brachium suum contra nos est. Quod si favorem ejus optamus, contrario {85v} itinere incedendum est: Audire Jeremiam oportet, cujus haec sunt verba: *Et nunc ergo rectas facite vias vestras⁸ et studia vestra, et audite vocem domini Dei vestri, et poenitebit dominum mali quod locutus est adversum vos.*

¹ in R

² bello * B, E

³ omit. E

⁴ atque R

⁵ asserere valeamus : valeamus

asserere R

⁶ in bello : imbello E*

⁷ suum E*

⁸ omit. R

[19] That is why we should put our hope in true Faith and pure innocence and endeavour to send leaders and soldiers to this war who love moral integrity. I return to my point of departure: when choosing leaders, our glorious emperor will accept neither moral integrity without military expertise nor expertise without integrity, for in the first case he would fear to tempt God and in the second to provoke Him. If he is forced to choose between these two alternatives, he will not follow Aristotle; rather, he will follow the safer course rather than provoke God. But it is not easy to assess moral integrity. It is, actually, easier for us to determine that this man or that one has military expertise than that he has moral integrity. Therefore, in appointing the general and selecting the whole army, we should focus on military expertise, but in such a way that there is a minimum of wickedness and malice. For it is because of our wickedness that God has deserted us, that His right hand no longer helps us in war, and that His arm is [raised] against us. If we want his favour, then we must reverse our course. We must hear Jeremiah, saying: *Now therefore amend your ways, and your doings, and hearken to the voice of the Lord your God: and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath spoken against you.*¹

¹ Jeremiah, 26, 13: *nunc ergo bonas facite vias vestras et studia vestra et audite vocem Domini Dei*

vestri et paenitebit Dominum mali quod locutus est adversum vos

[20] Redeundum est denique in viam, renuntiandum vitiis, virtutibus inhaerendum. Praecipue tamen tria vitia, veluti tres perniciosissimas pestes vitare ac¹ fugare oportet. Atque in primis superbia, ut ante diximus, exterminanda est nobis, quae intractabiles et arrogantes homines facit. *Initium omnis peccati, inquit Sapiens, superbia est, et qui tenuerit illam, adimplebitur maledictis, et subvertet eum in finem.* De Nabuchodonosor inquit Daniel²: *Cum autem elevatum est cor ejus, et spiritus ejus affirmatus³ est ad superbiam, depositus est de solio regni sui, et gloria ejus ablata est, et a filiis hominum ejectus est.* Nobis autem, si fortunari volumus, mites habendi sunt duces, qui privatorum aditus ad se facile admittant, querelas super injuriis benigne audiant, ut qui dignitate principes excellunt, facilitate pares infimis videantur. Fidem non solum sociis, sed etiam hostibus teneant, impetum irae compescant, victoriam temperent; ne saeviant contra victos, nihil crudele committant, neminem extra aciem occidi permittant. Sciant Turcos, quamvis pessimi sint, qui filium Dei blasphemant, homines tamen esse, neque more pecudum trucidandos. Curent, ut Graeci ex victoria nostra libertatem sperent. Turci crudelitatem non timeant, ne desperationem in virtutem convertant, nobisque illud Virgilianum noceat⁴: *Una salus victis nullam sperare salutem. Timeant hostes in bello virtutem nostrorum ducum; victi mansuetudinem diligant.* Haec omnia praestabit nobis illa mansuetissima virgo, quam vocamus humilitatem, si explosa superbia vocem ejus audierimus⁵.

¹ atque B, E*

² David C*

³ affirmatus R

⁴ etc. *add.* R

⁵ audiremus G; audiverimus R

2.3. Military discipline: avoiding three vices

2.3.1. Pride

[20] So we must turn back to the Way; we must renounce vice; we must embrace virtue. Especially three vices must be avoided and shunned like terrible plagues. Firstly, we should, as said before, completely do away with pride, which makes men arrogant and impossible to deal with. The Wise One says that *pride is the beginning of all sin: he that holdeth it, shall be filled with maledictions, and it shall ruin him in the end.*¹ And Daniel said about Nebuchadnezar: *But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit hardened unto pride, he was put down from the throne of his kingdom, and his glory was taken away.*²

If we want to prosper, then we should have humane generals *to whom private persons have easy access and who hear complaints about abuse benignly, so that while they surpass the highest in dignity, they equal the lowest in simplicity.*³ They should keep faith not only with allies but also with enemies; they should control anger and be restrained in victory; they should not rage against the defeated; they should not commit atrocities; and they should allow nobody to be killed outside of battle. They should know that even though the Turks are wicked and blaspheme against the Son of God, they are still men and ought not be slaughtered like cattle. They should take care that the Greeks may hope to gain their liberty from our victory. The Turks should not fear being treated cruelly so that desperation turns into bravery and we are hurt by the fact mentioned by Virgil that *the one chance the vanquished have is to hope for none.*⁴ *Let the enemies fear the bravery of our leaders in war, and when defeated let them love their mildness.*⁵ All this will be given to us by that gentle virgin whom we call Humility, if only we hear her voice and cast pride away.

¹ Ecclesiasticus, 10, 15

² Daniel, 5, 20

³ Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 14, 42

⁴ Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.354: *una salus victis nullam sperare salutem*

⁵ Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 14, 42

[21] Secundo cavendum est, monstrum ne¹ illud inter nos dominetur, quod sub specie Harpyae Virgilius descripsit:

*Virginei volucrum vultus, foedissima ventris
proluvies, uncaeque manus, et pallida semper
ora fame.*

Hoc nos vitium avaritiam appellamus nec duci nec militi permittendum. Avarus capitaneus nec stipendia militibus erogat, quae debentur, nec praedas aequae partitur, neque sumptus exhibet in ulla re necessarios. Quidquid agit, semper tardus, semper morosus est, remque denique publicam et exercitum *et animam suam venalem habet*. Avari milites non solum hostes, sed etiam socios expilant solamque praedam sequuntur in bello, ac propterea saepe ab instituto cursu revocantur, et odia in se provincialium convertunt. Absit ergo in exercitu, quem volumus instituere, sive dux sive miles rapinae cupidus. Praedae, non Christo militat, qui spolia concupiscit. {86r} Pro tutela fidei, pro gloria nominis Christiani, pro divino honore hoc bellum suscipiendum est. Si qua deinde pecuniaria redundat utilitas, non illam veto², dum non sit haec, quae te³ pugnare jubeat. Nam et justum lucrum ex justo bello recipi potest. Non sint tamen militum manus ad *uncae*, aut auri nimium sitibundae mentes. Parcant pauperibus⁴, ignoscant sociis, misereantur etiam victi ac jacentis inimici. Intelligant et socii et hostes temperatos esse, qui nostris copiis imperant. *Neque enim potest exercitum is capitaneus continere, qui seipsum non continet.*

¹ monstrum ne : ne monstrum
C*, R

² vero F
³ quere F*

⁴ pauperibus E*

2.3.2. Greed

[21] Secondly,¹ we must avoid being dominated by that monster, which Virgil described as a Harpy:

*Maiden faces have these birds, foulest filth they drop,
clawed hands are theirs, and faces ever gaunt with hunger.*²

This vice is what we call greed, and it should be permitted neither the general nor the soldiers. The greedy captain does not pay the soldiers their dues, nor does he divide the spoils fairly, nor does he spend money on anything even when necessary. Whatever he does, he is always slow and always reluctant, and ultimately, he is willing to sell his country, his army, and *even his soul*.³ Greedy soldiers despoil not only their enemies but also their allies. In war, they only go after booty, and therefore they often turn away from the chosen course and attract the hatred of the locals. Therefore, in the army that we want to raise, no general and no soldier should be eager for plunder. A man who desires booty fights for spoils and not for Christ. This war should be undertaken for the protection of the Faith, for the glory of the Christian name, and for the honour of God. If any economic benefit accrues from it, I do not forbid it, as long as that is not the reason why you are fighting. For just profits may be gained from a just war. Let not the hands of the soldiers be crooked, and let not their minds be greedy for gold. Let them spare the poor, let them be tolerant towards their allies, and let them show mercy towards an enemy who is defeated and prostrate. Let both our allies and enemies see that the men who govern our armies are moderate. *No commander can control an army if he does not control himself.*⁴

¹ For this section, see Cicero: *De officiis*, 1.20-21; *Pro lege Manilia*, 13 and 14

² Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 3.216-218. Piccolomini had written on the

vice of avarice in his orations “*Si quis me roget*” (2) and “*Non est apud me*” (6), using this Virgilian quote

³ Ecclesiasticus, 10, 10

⁴ Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 13.37-39: *Neque enim potest exercitum is continere imperator, qui se ipse non continet*

[22] Post haec ultimo loco, ut breviter agam, absit et ipsa libido, quae saepe magnos praecipitavit exercitus. Nos¹ hujus loco continentiam et abstinentiam introducamus. Sit pudor in exercitu nostro, nulli turpitudini locus pateat, nulli feminae vis inferatur. Sit salva inter milites non solum nostrarum mulierum, sed etiam captivarum pudicitia. Meminerimus cum quanta severitate junior Africanus ante Numantiam expurgavit exercitum². Nullae deliciae in castris, nullae voluptates sunt³. Scorta procul⁴ atque lenones absint. Neque vini neque cibi nimius indulgeatur usus. Absit pigritia, absit omnis torpedio⁵, libidinis filiae. Sciant in exercitu se milites esse, qui non ex⁶ quiete, sed ab exercitio nomen ducit. Milites ex malo dicti⁷ ⁸, quod perferre⁹ debent¹⁰, ut jureconsulti¹¹ volunt. Sint sedulo in armis, cursitent, onera portent, foveam fodiant, vallum figant¹², agant, instent, vigilant, minimum tempus quieti praebeant. Numquam in otio miles, numquam sine negotio capitaneus inveniatur. Sciant duces exercitus nullum spectaculum dulcius esse militibus, quam si communia secum edentem principem videant, in vili simul jacentem strato, vallum castrorumque metationem communi labore partientem. Longe enim magis ab exercitu ipsi coluntur ductores¹³, qui mutuo labori se ingerunt, quam qui milites pigrescere sinunt.

¹ non E*

² Afr./Aphricanus expurgavit exercitum *in marg.* D, G

³ sumpto E

⁴ simul R

⁵ torpedio A, B, C*, D*, E

⁶ *omit.* R

⁷ *omit.* G*

⁸ Milites ex/a malo dicti *in marg.* D, G

⁹ preferre R*

¹⁰ dicti *add.* G*

¹¹ jureconsulti R

¹² fugant A, B, E; figant *corr. ex* fugant C*, D*, F*

¹³ doctores E*

2.3.3. Lust

[22] And lastly, to be brief, let there be no lust, for lust has often destroyed large armies. Instead, let us call upon continence and abstinence. Let there be decency in our army, and let there be no place for indecency. Let there be no violence against women. Let the chastity not only of our own women but also of captive women be safe with our soldiers. Let us remember how severely the Younger Africanus expurgated his army before Numantia.¹ Let there be no lustfulness nor soft pleasures in our camp. Let us do away with harlots and pimps. Let not the soldiers indulge in wine and food. Let there be no sluggishness and lethargy, the daughters of lust. Let them know that they are soldiers in an army, “exercitus”, named not after peace and quiet but after strenuous exercise, “exercitium”. And according to the law-people, soldiers, “milites”, are named after the evil, “malum”, that they cause.² Let them be occupied in military exercises, let them run, let them carry burdens, let them dig moats, let them build palisades, let them be active, let them press on, let them have guard duties, let them have no time for repose. Never should a soldier be found at peace, and never should the captain be unoccupied. And let the generals know that no sight is sweeter to soldiers than seeing their leader eat the common fare together with them, lie on the same mean bedding, and share the common labour of building palisades and camps. Those generals who participate in the common labour are far more popular with their army than those who allow their soldiers to be idle.

¹ Cf. Valerius Maximus: *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, 4.3.1, but it was about Scipio Africanus Major and at Carthage

² Ulpianus: *De testamento*, Lib. 1 ff.: *Nam et miles a malo dictus quod arcere soleat scilicet*. Cf. also Bruni: *De militia* (Bayley, p.

373, l. 19): *sic et miles a malo quod arcet recte dici miles*

[23] Multa hic de castrensi disciplina referri¹ possent², quae in libris veterum continentur. Scripserunt enim de his primi³, ut⁴ ajunt, Lacedaemones⁵, tum multi Graecorum. Ex Romanis autem Marcus Cato senior, qui et ipse miles peritissimus fuit et bellator fortis. Frontinus quoque divo Trajano *de re militari* librum edidit. Habemus⁶ et Vegetium et Aegidium, et alios plerosque, qui de rebus bellicis ad obtinendam victoriam apte ratiocinantur, quos etsi legerim aliquando, non tamen praesentibus Alberto, marchione Brandenburgensi, ac Georgio Pogiebratio⁷, Bohemiae gubernatore, clarissimis ac fortissimis viris, qui pluribus *proeliis*⁸ *interfuerunt, quam*⁹ *ego legerim*, de hisce rebus disputare ausim. Memini enim, quod de Formione philosopho scribit Cicero¹⁰: oravit {86v} hic aliquando in Rhodo de re militari¹¹ coram Hannibale Poeno, summo illius aetatis imperatore, cujus orationem cum ceteri maximis laudibus prosequerentur, solus Hannibal dignam vituperio censuit, et hominem aetate delirantem putavit, qui se praesente de rebus bellicis disserere praesumpsisset.

[24] Ego, ut hanc reprehensionem devitem, quae castrensia sunt peritiamque militarem requirunt, ad belli duces remittam, et ad rem rediens, ajo: divo Caesari nostro, quemadmodum et vobis, spem bonam esse rerum feliciter agendarum, si caelestem favorem puro corde ac piis operibus impetremus. Nec dubitat imperator in sua causa Deum adiutorem fore, si et nunc in civitatibus et demum in castris superbiam humilitas, avaritiam largitas, libidinem abstinentia procul egerit. Ac tantum de speranda¹² victoria satis fuerit esse locutum.

¹ inferri F

² Scriptores de disciplina militari
in marg. D, G

³ de his primi : primi de his R

⁴ et A, D*; ut *corr. ex* et C, F

⁵ Lacedemonii R

⁶ habemus *corr. ex.* habebimus
A; habebimus R

⁷ Pogiebratio *corr. ex* de
Pogiebrat A, C; de Pogiebrat R

⁸ pluribus proeliis : proeliis
pluribus G*

⁹ qui E*

¹⁰ F/Phormio coram Hanibale *in*
marg. D, G

¹¹ de re militari *omit.* G*

¹² sperata R

3. Conclusion

[23]¹ Concerning army discipline, I could quote extensively from the books of old. Reportedly, the first to write about these matters were the Spartans, and then many other Greeks followed. Among the Roman [authors] should be mentioned Marcus Cato senior, himself an experienced soldier and a strong warrior, and Frontinus who wrote a book *De re militari* to Emperor Trajanus. There are also Vegetius, Aegidius, and many others who write very well about military matters and how to gain victory. Though I have read them at some time, I should not dare talk about such matters in the presence of Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg and Georg Podiebrad, Governor of Bohemia, famous and warhardened men, *who have taken part in more battles than I have read about*.² For I remember what Cicero writes about Formio the philosopher: On a particular occasion, in Rhodes, he lectured on military matters in the presence of Hannibal of Carthage, the most eminent general of that age. When the others highly praised his oration, only Hannibal criticised it, considering the man to be senile since he dared to speak on military matters in his presence.³

[24] Wishing to avoid such blame, I leave matters of war and military expertise to the generals. Returning to the matter at hand, I say that our glorious emperor and you yourselves may have good hopes for success if we obtain the favour of Heaven through a pure heart and pious works. And the emperor does not doubt that God will aid his own cause if, now in the cities and later in the camps, humility prevails over pride, generosity over greed, and abstinence over lust. I have now spoken enough about the hope for victory.

¹ For this section, see notes to *De hoc florentissimo*, section 8

² Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 10.28

³ Cicero: *De oratore*, 2.75-77