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Oration “Clarae atque illustres” of Pope Pius II (Spring 1459, Siena). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 5th version. (Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 33)

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(Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 33)

Oration “*Clarae atque illustres*” of Pope Pius II (Spring 1459, Siena). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

5th version

2019

Abstract

In the spring of 1459, during a prolonged stay in Siena, Pope Pius II received a number of embassies from the rulers of Europe declaring their lord's obedience to the newly elected pope and the Apostolic See. One of the embassies was from the Marquess of Monferrat. In his very short reply to the ambassadors' address, the pope mentioned the high and old nobility of the ruling family of Monferrat and its contribution to former crusades. He also, briefly, spoke of obedience to Roman Church as a necessary condition for salvation.

Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Æneas Silvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Responses to ambassadors; House of Monferrat; Crusades; Declarations of obedience to the Papacy; Renaissance rhetorics; 1459; 15th century; Monferrato; Monteferrato

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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 80¹ 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

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

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II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context²

In the spring of 1459, during a prolonged stay in Siena, Pope Pius II received a number of embassies from the rulers of Europe declaring obedience to the Apostolic See and to the new pope on behalf of their lord. One of the embassies was from the Marquess of Monferrat. It is not among the embassies mentioned explicitly in Pius' *Commentarii*.

2. Themes

The relatively small political significance of the Marquisate of Monferrat is reflected in the brevity of the papal reply to the ambassadors.

The oration contains two of the themes which recur in the pope's responses to the ambassadors offering the obedience of their lords³:

One theme, and the main one in this oration, is praise of the House of the prince declaring his obedience. The great and ancient nobility of the ruling house of Monferrat, at the time a branch of the Byzantine Palaeologus dynasty, was known to all. The pope said: *In Italy, there are many famous and illustrious families. But We do not know if any is older and more noble than the family of Monferrat* [Sect. 1].

In the context of the approaching Congress of Mantua, which was to deal with a European military response to the Turkish expansion into Europe, the pope also had a welcome opportunity to praise the participation of the Monferrat family in former crusades.⁴

The other theme is that union with and obedience to the Roman Church and its bishop, the pope, is a necessary condition of salvation: *All kings and all princes who wish to be saved must venerate the Roman Church and bow to it* [sect. 2].⁵

² CO, II, 24 (Meserve, I, pp. 298-303); Ady, p. 162; Boulting, pp. 256-258; Mitchell, p. 146; Pastor, II, p. 38; Strnad, pp. 110-112; Voigt, III, pp. 37-40

³ On the format of Pius' responses to ambassadors' declarations of obedience, see *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 1, sect. 7.7.3

⁴ See *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 1, sect.6.1

⁵ On Pius and papal supremacy, see *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 1, sect.6.3.1

3. Date, place, audience and format

The oration was delivered in March or April 1459, in Siena.

The venue was the cathedral of Siena, which was suitable for papal functions, more so than the Signoria, seat of the Sienese government, would have been.

The audience presumably consisted of the cardinals, curials, and ambassadors with their retinues present in Siena as well as Sienese magnates.

The format was a papal reply from the throne to an address by princely ambassadors.

4. Text⁶

The oration is included in a special Collection of Pius II's Responses from 1459 and 1460), largely consisting of responses to addresses by ambassadors,⁷ which is extant in at least five manuscripts.

4.1. Manuscripts⁸

- **Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana**
544, ff. 174r-174v **(G)** *
- **Roma / Archivio Segreto Vaticano**
Arm. XXXII 1, ff. 53r-53v **(J)** *
- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolic Vaticana**
Barb. lat. 1499, ff. 63v-64r
Barb. lat. 1692, ff. 69r-70v
Chisianus J.VII.251, ff. 169v-170r **(H)**

⁶ On the textual transmission of Pius' oration, see *Collected orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 1, ch. 5

⁷ See *Collected Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II*, ch. 5.2.1

⁸ Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in *Collected orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 11, are marked with an asterisk

The Chisianus is the eldest of the three and identical with or very close to the oration as actually delivered by Pius.

4.2. Editions

The oration was edited by Mansi:

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759 / T. II, p. 200
[Edition based on the manuscript in Lucca (G)]

4.3. Present edition

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

Text:

The present edition is based on the manuscripts from Lucca, the Archivio Segreto Vaticano and the Chisianus, with the Chisianus as the lead manuscript.

Pagination:

Pagination is from the lead manuscript.

5. Sources⁹

In this short oration, no direct and indirect quotations have been identified.

⁹ On Piccolomini's use of sources in general, see *Collected orations of Pope Pius II*, ch. 8.

6. Bibliography

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7. Sigla and abbreviations

G = Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana / 544

H = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolic Vaticana / Chisianus J.VII.251

J = Roma / Archivio Segreto Vaticano / Arm. XXXII 1

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. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Ad oratores¹⁰ Montisferrati

[1] {169v} Clarae atque illustres familiae in Italia non paucae sunt. An vero antiquior ac nobilior ulla sit ea, quae Montisferrati appellatur, et quae nobis hodie more majorum oboedientiam praestat, haudquaquam exploratum habemus. Pervetusta est haec domus et in historiis late vulgata. Postquam Christiani exercitus pro recuperatione terrae sanctae congregari coepere, vix aliquid sine marchionibus Montisferrati gestum est memoria dignum. In Graecia, in Asia, in Syria, in insulis interjacentibus, clarum nomen hujus prosapiae habitum est, fortes enim viros et pro {170r} Christiana religione attentissimos solita est producere.

[2] Et hic quoque,¹¹ qui modo¹² caput gentis est, a progenitoribus suis minime degenerat: in armis strenuus, in consilio providus, justitiae tenax, et religionis zelantissimus, cujus causa et vos praestabiles oratores suos oboedientiam praestituros¹³ ad nos misit, haud ignarus, quia omnes reges, omnes principes terrae venerari¹⁴ ¹⁵ Romanam ecclesiam eique colla submittere debent, si salvi esse volunt. Facit princeps vester, quod sui officii est, et quod suam nobilitatem decet. Commendamus fidelitatem ejus ac devotionem, dignumque ipsum esse fatemur, quem nos et nostri successores acceptissimum et commendatissimum habeant; quod nos sane vita comite minime negligemus.

¹⁰ marchionis *add.* G

¹¹ *omit.* G

¹² qui modo : modo qui G

¹³ praestaturos G

¹⁴ venerunt ad J

¹⁵ sanctam *add.* G

To the ambassadors of Monferrat

[1] In Italy there are many famous and illustrious families, but We do not know if any is older and more noble than the family of Monferrat¹⁶ which in the manner of its forefathers declares its obedience to Us today. That House is ancient, indeed, and often mentioned in the history books. Ever since Christian armies first began to gather in order to reclaim the Holy Land, almost no memorable deed has been done without the margraves of Monferrat. In Greece, Asia,¹⁷ Syria, and the islands in between, the name of this family is famous since it usually brings forth strong men dedicated to the Christian religion.

[2] And the man who is now the head of the family is certainly not inferior to his ancestors: he is strenuous in arms, foresighted in counsel, strict in justice, and greatly devoted to religion. And for the sake of religion he has now sent you, distinguished ambassadors, to Us to declare his obedience, well knowing that all kings and all princes who wish to be saved must venerate the Roman Church and submit to it. Thus, your prince does what he should and what befits his nobility. We recommend his fidelity and devotion, and We declare that he is worthy of being held in the highest regard and esteem by Us and Our successors, which We shall certainly do as long as We live.

¹⁶ The House of Monferrat was indeed ancient. Since its creation in 961, the Marquisate of Monferrat had been ruled by the Aleramic dynasty. In 1306 the marquisate passed, through a nephew, to the Palaeologus dynasty, still reigning at the time of Pius II. Its ruling family was related to the imperial House and the French House, and it participated in the crusades

¹⁷ i.e. Asia Minor