(Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 41)
Oration “Ingentes vobis gratias” of Pope Pius II (15 April, 1459, Siena). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

4th version
Abstract

During his prolonged stay in Siena, in the spring of 1459, Pope Pius II endeavoured to reform the political system of the city republic. In his oration, “Ingentes vobis gratias”, to the ruling parties, he requested the reintegration of the noble families into the government of city-state, but with little success.

Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Æneas Silvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Siena; City government; The nobles; 15th century; 1459; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance orations; Renaissance rhetorics

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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 80\(^1\) 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 is a Piccolomini-oration, see oration “Quam laetus” [18], Appendix
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II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION
I. INTRODUCTION
1. Context

During his stay in his home city, Siena, in the spring of 1459, Pius II sought to reform the political system of the city, requesting the ruling coalition of parties to reintegrate the noble families into the government of the city, from which they had been excluded for more than fifty years. Among the noble families excluded from government office were the Piccolominis, but they had already been reintegrated into the government system as a special honour shown to the new Sienese pope.²

Pius probably had at least three motives for this initiative: firstly he may have desired to favour a political class to which his own family had belonged for generations and whose exclusion from the city government had hurt it badly. Secondly, he wished to make the Republic of Siena an important part of his political power base as pontiff.³ And thirdly, there is no reason to doubt that the pope had a genuine concern for his home city and clearly saw that its political divisions threatened its peace and development.

After a series of preliminary negotiations - and even public relations exercises like bestowing the papal Golden Rose on the city government - the pope, towards the end of his stay, directly addressed the city government on this thorny issue.

The oration is mentioned by Bernardo Malavolti in his history of Siena:

*Come il dì 15. d’Aprile 1459 havendolo il Papa con lunga oratione domandato, mostrando quanto fusse per esser profitevole a quella Republica, si come comporta la Giustitia, se contribuissono gli honorì secondi i meriti così à Nobili, dalli Antichi de’ quali fù edificata da principio quella Città , come à Populari, riempiendo i luoghi di quelli, che ultimamente havevan confinati, morti, e fatti ribelli, con acquistar tanti amici, che superassono il numero di quei, che per le dette cagioni, cercando di tornare in casa loro,*

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¹ CO, II, 21-22; Boulting, pp. 256-259; Cerasoli; Mitchell, p. 145; Pastor, II, p. 38; Reinhardt, pp. 240-242; Stolf, pp. 345-349; Voigt, IV, p. 36
² Malavolti, f. 60v; Voigt, IV, pp. 32-37
³ Baldi: Pio, p. 93-94: *La nomina del nipote Antonio Piccolomini a castellano di Castel San’Angelo...; il favore accordato a parenti e amici; la stessa politica papale nei confronti della propria città Siena, a favore della reintegrazione dei nobili alla vita politica cittadina; la graduale creazione di una “consorteria familiare”, e il tanto lungo condannato nepotismo di Pio II, corrispondono chiaramente all’esigenza, avvertita con forza dal pontifice, di trovare dei punti di sostegno fidati e securi su cui fare affidamento nella concreta gestione del governe papale. La città di Siena, in particolare, sembra destinata a poter diventare la base della forza politica di Pio II: e, da questo punto di vista, la partecipazione dei nobili alla vita politica – da tempo auspicata dal Piccolomini – avrebbe, secondo il pontifice, non solo garantito alla città maggiore stabilità politica interna, ma avrebbe anche portato al rafforzamento delle famiglie più vicino allo stesso pontifice*
The pope’s intervention met with obstinate opposition from the ruling class of Siena, as is evident from his own description of the event in the *Commentarii*.\(^2\)

2. Themes

The main theme of the oration is that the government of Siena suffers from a basic imbalance due to the exclusion of some of the essential parties and stakeholders in the republic, i.e. the Nobles and the Twelwe. This is the cause of permanent political disunity, threatening the state both with civil disorder and with foreign intervention and domination\(^3\):

... having been called to the Supreme Pontificate by divine counsel, We have preserved your freedom, your cause, and your dignity that were direly threatened. For nothing is more important to Us than the safety and liberty of Our fatherland which are now yours by the divine gift of Our elevation ... But this happy state will not last long unless you change your ways and reform your [system of] government. For the One who is our Truth itself cannot lie, and He says in the Gospel that Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation. And what city was ever more divided than yours? In other cities there have often been two parties which, fighting each other, brought ruin. But in your [city], a part of the people has lost all hope of [sharing] government. [Sect. 1-2]

The solution is to integrate the Nobility – and the Twelwe – into the government of the city.

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1 Malavolti, f. 62r
2 The oration is not specifically mentioned by Pius’ two contemporary biographers, Campano and Platano, see Zimolo
3 Cf. Gamberini & Lazzarini, p. 103: *Nove constituted the council that governed the city; turnover of its members was frequent, but it was socially quite homogeneous, being constituted of the mezzana gente, that is the large elite of a merchant city. Meanwhile, the Parte Guelfa opted for an alliance with Florence and ensured a long period of external stability. The Mercanzia consolidated the hegemony of trade in the urban economic system. Under the close direction of the Nove, the Consiglio Generale continued to ensure wide participation in public discussions, even if the most important functions were frequently assigned to special short-term commissions, the balìe. Despite the proud representation of the Buon governo, Siena’s political system was in many ways vulnerable. The Nove were at the middle of a social chain whose ends were on one side the lower classes, and on the other the ancient nobility of the Gentiluomini, the great clans who were excluded from public offices, but who were still powerful thanks to their financial wealth and political networks (the Piccolomini, Salimbeni and Tolomei). Maintaining the internal balance between the different social actors was not an easy task for the Nove regime, not least because outside the city walls conflicts over territorial hegemony were worsening*
3. Date, place, audience and format

The oration was held on 15. April 14591 at the pope’s residence2 in Siena.

The audience was the members of the city’s ruling class.

The format was mixed: partly a papal, partly a fatherly address to the government of a city with whom the papacy was closely allied - and whose devoted son he was.

4. Text3

The oration “Ingentes vobis gratias” belongs to a group of orations and responses to ambassadors – mostly from after 1462 - which were included directly in Pius Commentarii and not in the official collection of his orations produced in 1462.4 Since the Commentarii were intended to present a positive image of Pius’ pontificate, the orations and responses included in them were probably heavily edited in this sense.

In the Commentarii, the oration forms part of Book 2, Chapter 21, which relates the pope’s visit to Siena in Spring 1459 and his political negotiations with the city government.

4.1. Manuscripts5

The text of the oration is only extant in the manuscripts containing the Commentarii, the two most important being:

Roma / Accademia dei Lincei
Corsinianus 147, ff. 58r-59r (C) *

Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
Reginensis Latinus 1995, ff. 88v-90r (R) *

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1 According to Malavolti, see above
2 “accersito ad se urbis senatu”
3 Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II’s orations, see Collected orations of Pope Pius, vol. 1, ch. 5
4 See Collected orations of Pope Pius II, vol. 1, sect. 5.1.4
5 Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in Collected orations of Pope Pius II, vol. 11, are marked with an asterisk
4.2. Editions and translations


  [With an Italian translation]

  [With an English translation]

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 both manuscripts, with the Lincei manuscript as the lead text.²

Pagination:

Pagination is from the Chisianus.

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¹ For a more comprehensive list of editions and translations of the Commentarii, see Collected Orations of Pope Pius II, vol. 1, ch. 11

² The Lincei manuscript represents the final version of the text as it represents what Pius intended to be the final version of the Commentarii (Meserve, I, p. 379)

³ Though the text has already been admirably edited, it has – as a matter of principle – been collated directly from the principal manuscripts
5. Sources

In this short oration, 3 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified.

Biblical: 1
Classical: 2
Patristic and medieval: 0
Contemporary: 0
All: 3

Biblical sources: 1

Old Testament: 0

New Testament: 1
• Luke: 1

Classical sources: 2

• Sallustius: 1
• Vergilius: 1

Patristic and medieval sources: 0

Contemporary sources: 0

6. Bibliography

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1 On Piccolomini’s use of sources in general, see Collected orations of Pope Pius II, ch. 8.
2 Bellum Jugurthinum
3 Aeneis
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### 7. Sigla and abbreviations

C = Roma / Accademia dei Lincei / Corsinianus 147
R = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Reginensis Latinus 1995

**Abbreviations**

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


**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


II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION


\[\text{1 omit. C}\]
\[\text{2 labantem C}\]
[1] Men of Siena, We thank you from Our heart for admitting our familiy, the Piccolomini, to share in the government [of the city]. Before attaining Our present high office,¹ We Ourselves often received your help and support, but We have neither been ungrateful nor burdensome to our country. For a long time We lived far from home and among foreign nations: in Milan with Filippo Maria², in Basel at the General Council;³ in Savoy with Amedeo whom part of the world revered as Vicar of Christ under the name of Felix,⁴ in Austria with Emperor Friedrich,⁵ in Naples with King Alfonso,⁶ and in the City of Rome with Pope Calixtus.⁷ Both before⁸ and during our cardinalate, We took great pains to help and defend your cause. And now, too, having been called to the Supreme Pontificate by divine counsel, We have preserved your freedom, your cause, and your dignity that were direly threatened. For nothing is more important to Us than the safety and liberty of Our fatherland which are now yours by the divine gift of Our elevation⁹.

[2] But this happy state will not last long unless you change your ways and reform your [system of] government. For the One who is Our Truth itself cannot lie, and He says in the Gospel that Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation.¹⁰ And what city was ever more divided than yours? In other cities there have often been two parties¹¹ which fighting each other brought them to ruin. But in your [city], a part of the people has lost all hope of [sharing] government. For though the nobles have been given share in some offices, they are excluded from the palace [of government]. And those [parties] that are in power, called the Nine, the Reformers, and the People¹², live in mutual jealousy and conflict. Each wants to surpass the others and be seen as the better one. This diversity of names in itself undoubtedly creates factions¹³ in the people and pushes it in various directions.¹⁴

¹ “cum in minoribus ageremus”: not “minor orders” as one translation has it
² Filippo Maria Visconti (1392-1447): Duke and ruler of Milan from 1412 until his death
³ Council of Basel, 1430-1439
⁴ Felix V = Amedée VIII (1383-1451) : Count, later Duke of Savoy. In 1439 elected antipope under the name of Felix V by the Council of Basel, after its dissolution by Pope Eugenius IV
⁵ 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
⁶ Alfonso V the Magnanimous (1396-1458): King of Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, Sardinia and Corsica, Sicily and Count of Barcelona from 1416, and King of Naples (as Alfonso I) from 1442 to his death
⁷ Calixtus III [Alfons de Borja] (1378-1458): Pope from 1455 to his death in 1458. The first Borgia Pope
⁸ E.g. at the peace negotiations in Naples in 1456 ending the condottiero Jacopo Piccinino’s attempt to conquer the State of Siena and make it his own duchy, as the condottiero Francesco Sforza had done with Milan
⁹ I.e. to the Papacy
¹⁰ Luke, 11, 17
¹¹ Often the Guelphs and the Ghibellines
¹² The Popolari
¹³ Piccolomini had also touched on the theme of diversity of names leading to conflict in his oration “Audivi”[1] (1436), sect. 13: So, Fathers, let us put aside the names of nations, let everyone free himself of local patriotism, and in his oration “Si mihi” [24] (1455), sect. 10: So, away with all divisions and conflicts between us. Do not use names that may cause any kind of division
¹⁴ Vergil: Aeneis, 2.39


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1 benivolentia R
2 e R
3 sunt R
4 firmissimum add. R
[3] And, what is more serious, short time before We became pope a new conflict arose.¹ Some citizens who governed the city together with you were executed, or exiled, or fined and banished.² Maybe their punishments were just, but they were a loss to the city: a number of your own people died, and those who were exiled or banished are planning to return and are plotting against you day and night, and there is no lack of people in the city who favour them because of ties of family or friendship. Indeed, the more people you have driven out of the city, the greater is the number of those who oppose you and plot political change.

[4] Internally, Your body politic is suffering from these and many other evils. Externally, you yourselves know how many conflicts you are involved in. Your neighbours hate you, your friends are far away. Who can have good hopes for a city that has security neither within nor without? But God gave you safety from external forces when He placed Us upon the Chair of Saint Peter: as long as We are occupying it, nobody will dare to wage open war against you. Your enemies are aware of the strength of the Apostolic See, and knowing that We are a citizen of this city, they fear to go to war against you just as much as against Us. Under Our shadow, you are safe enough from those outside. But we cannot defend you against those who are inside. We can only advise you and urge you to love each other and to govern your state in harmony since that is the only sure protection of all cities. For the love of the citizens is a strong and invincible defense. You know the words of Sallust: Harmony makes small states great, while the mightiest are undone by discord.³ It is concord that preserves cities. If justice, mother and queen of virtues, reigns among you, you will always be united and this city secure. Justice is the essence of equity which distributes punishments and rewards among men according to their deserts. Blessed is the city that is governed by justice.

¹ The ruling parties accused a number of citizens of collusion with the condottiero Jacopo Piccinino to overthrow the governing class. see Banchi
² Among them Pius’ own cousin, Goro Lolli
³ Sallustius: Bellum Jugurthinum, 10
[5] Et vos, Senenses, beati eritis, si honores publicos inter merentes partiemini. Quod jam diu a vobis neglectum est, qui civibus nobilitate praestantibus, quorum majores hanc urbem condidere, et qui non coacti, sed sponte sua civitatis regimen in vos transtulere annos supra quinquaginta tamquam mancipiis usi estis. Redeundum est jam denique ad justitiam, et honorandi sunt (90r) nobiles et eorum loco sufficiendi, quos ejecistis necastisque. Implendus est, qui vacat locus, et tot amici assumendi, quot\(^1\) inimicos fecistis. Aut enim cavendum est, ne quis nos oderit, aut, si hoc non possumus assequi, parandae sunt amicitiae, quae odia superent. Hoc abunde praestabunt nobiles, si damnatorum loca conscenderint. Utilitas hoc et honestas suadet. Nam quomodo grati eritis, nisi hos honoratis, quorum parentes vobis rempublicam commisere et patriam hanc fundavere, et qui licet contumeliis a vobis affecti quampluribus\(^2\) fuerint, numquam tamen rebellarunt, aequo animo cuncta tulerunt, et ad omne imperium vestrum praesto fuere? Potuissent aliquando per divisiones vestras cornua erigere: maluerunt in civitate per quietem servire quam per seditionem dominari.


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\(^1\) quos C
\(^2\) quamplurimis C
\(^3\) minoris C
[5] And you, Sienese, will be happy if you share the public offices with those who merit it. This you have failed to do for a long time. Instead you have been treating the eminent nobles of the city as slaves even though it was their forefathers who founded this city and who more than fifty years ago on their own initiative transferred the government of the city to you, without having been forced to do so. Now you must turn back to the path of justice: you should honour the nobles and put them in the place of those you have driven out or killed. The empty places should be refilled, and you should make as many new friends as you have made enemies. For we should all see to it that nobody hates us, and if that is not possible, then to forge friendships that are stronger than the enmities. Such friendship you will have abundantly from the nobles if they step into the places of the condemned. This is advantageous as well as honourable. For how can you show gratefulness if you do not honour those whose fathers entrusted the state to you and founded this city. They never rebelled even though you treated them outrageously. Indeed, they bore all with equanimity and were ever ready to obey your orders. Because of your internal divisions there were times when they could have raised their horns, but they would rather serve the city in peace than master it by sedition.

[6] Who would not consider such citizens as worthy of governing? The well-ordered city desiring to grow deeper roots punishes the bad citizens and rewards the good. No wise man will want to stay in a city where virtue is not rewarded. So, if you are wise, you will accept the nobles as partners in governing the city and not let them be inferior to yourselves, since by now the tumour of wealth has been removed and they have become like yourselves – and somewhat more humble! This is the best means to preserve your liberty and to preserve your city.

[7] This is the advice that We lovingly give to Our country. If you reject Our exhortations, We cannot have good hopes for this republic. Ruin threatens a divided city, and peace cannot dwell where justice is in exile. If you give the nobles their due, you will not only get ready help from Us, should misfortune arise, but you will also be assisted and protected by the omnipotent hand of God, who always favours the just party.

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1 “honores”  
2 “patria”