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**Oration “*Quamvis in hoc senatu*” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini
(23 August 1451, Wiener Neustadt). Edited and translated by
Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. Final Version (2025). (Orations
of Pope Pius II; 17)**

Michael Cotta-Schönberg

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Oration “*Quamvis in hoc senatu*” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (23 August 1451, Wiener Neustadt). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

(Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 17)

Final Version (2025)

Abstract

In 1451, the Duke of Burgundy's crusade had matured to the extent that he would attempt to make it a joint European project. Among others, he sent an embassy to the Imperial Court, at the time residing in Wiener Neustadt, where it was given a polite but not enthusiastic reception. In the name of the emperor, his top diplomat, Bishop Piccolomini of Siena, replied to the Burgundian ambassadors with the oration "*Quamvis in hoc senatu*". In this oration, he touched upon a number of themes which he would re-use in his future Turkish orations and ended with the emperor's promise to take up the matter with the pope when he went to Rome for his coronation the next year.

Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Æneas Silvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Responses to ambassadors; 15th century; Crusades against the Turks; Emperor Frederick III (Habsburg); Kaiser Friedrich III (Habsburg); Duke Philip III the Good of Burgundy; Duc Philippe III le Bon de Bourgogne; Bourgogne; 1451; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetoric; Renaissance orations

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II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context

The French dynasty had undoubtedly played an important role in the mediaeval crusades, but whether the House of Burgundy as such had a strong attachment to the crusading idea remains for scholars to determine.¹ There can be no doubt, however, that Philippe III le Bon of Burgundy actually did support a number of crusading initiatives before 1450, and that in 1451 – two years before the Fall of Constantinople - he decidedly took up the cause of the crusade against the Turks.² Paviot says: *Dans les années 1449-1451, Philippe le Bon a complètement modifié son regard sur la croisade. Non que son intérêt ait changé, mais il choisit de prendre une autre voie pour arriver à ses buts.*³ In his later years, his passion for the crusade cooled somewhat due to a combination of old age and the political and military realities of the day, but there is no reason to doubt his authentic desire to go to war against the Turks and his regret at not being able to.⁴ That the Burgundian crusade project was combined with other, political, projects seems most likely, see Enea Silvio Piccolomini's report to the emperor on the Diet of Regensburg.⁵

By 1451, it had become quite clear that the Burgundians could not undertake a military expedition against the Turks alone and that a broader European campaign would be necessary. Since King Charles VII of France was highly sceptical about any Turkish project,⁶ Burgundian diplomacy began to move towards a crusade alliance with the Holy Roman Empire, Aragon, and Portugal. Such an alliance would also have the geopolitical advantage of “encircling” France and relieving French pressure on Burgundy, besides favouring Burgundy's broader political aims.⁷

So, in May 1451, Duke Philippe dispatched embassies to Rome and Naples.⁸ The embassy to the pope was tasked with presenting a request for the pope to arrange a meeting of Christian princes to discuss and plan for a joint crusade against the Turks.⁹ Several weeks later, in July, he sent the knight Pedro Vasquez Saavedra and the Dominican Nicolas Jacquier on a diplomatic mission to the emperor and to the kings of Hungary and Poland.¹⁰

¹ Jacques Paviot's careful research seems to document that the dukes before Philippe III, apart from and possibly because of the disastrous crusade in 1396, actually had a rather limited enthusiasm for the crusading idea, see Paviot: *Les ducs*, pp. 17-116, cf. especially p. 56-57; and Paviot: *Burgundy*, pp. 70-71

² Paviot: *Les ducs*, ch. 2

³ Paviot, *Les ducs*, p. 117

⁴ Müller, ch. 1; RTA, 19, 1, p. 143

⁵ MA, III, pp. 22. See also Paviot: *Les ducs*, p. 61-62, 117-118; RTA, 19, 1, p. 343-345

⁶ Erlanger, p. 365 on Charles' scepticism towards the crusade: *Or Charles tenait à son repos et demeurait inaccessible aux chimères. Jamais le vieux bon sens capétien n'apparut si prosaïque que chez l'héritier du Roi fou. Que le duc de Bourgogne conservât*

seul les traditions aventureuses de la famille et jouât les preux à son aise. See also Müller, p. 51

⁷ Müller, cf. 5

⁸ RTA, 19, 1, p. 143, n. 5

⁹ RTA, 19, 1, p. 143

¹⁰ Müller, p. 54; RTA, 19, 1, p. 104, n. 1; Paviot: *Les ducs*, pp. 125-127; Paviot: *Burgundy*, p. 72, 76

The Burgundian ambassadors were received at the imperial court in Wiener Neustadt on 21 August 1451. In the presence of the King of the Romans, Friedrich III, and his court, Pedro Vasquez delivered an oration¹, probably authored by Jacquier on the basis of a crusade sermon to the Burgundian court by the Bishop of Chalons-sur Saône, Jean Germain, on 3 May 1451.² In the oration, Jacquier spoke on:

- the Turkish attacks against Christianity,
- the readiness of some princes, including the Duke of Burgundy, to undertake a military response to Turkish aggression, and
- previous undertakings in the matter

He concluded with

- an exhortation to the emperor to take up the defence of Christianity against the Turks, and specifically to
- discuss the whole matter with the pope during his coming voyage to Rome.

The emperor's reply to the Burgundian ambassadors was delivered by his senior diplomat, Bishop Enea Silvio Piccolomini, see below.

When next year, in March 1452, Friedrich came to Rome for his coronation, he did take up the crusade with the pope, and in this context Piccolomini gave the famous oration "*Moyses vir dei*" [19] on a European crusade against the Turks.

A year later, in May 1453, Constantinople fell to the Turks, and the emperor – with the Pope's assent and support – summoned a German/European diet to be held in Regensburg in April/May 1454.

In the Emperor's invitation to the Duke of Burgundy, also written by Piccolomini, reference was made to the Burgundian mission to the Emperor two years before:

We remember that some years ago you sent your ambassadors to us who lamented the terrible and horrible injuries which the Saracens and Turks in the East daily inflicted upon

¹ In a manuscript in Budapest containing the oration, it carries the title: *Ad serenissimum Romanorum regem Fridericum etc. pro subsidio fidei catholicae proposi-*

cio domini Petri Visques militis et fratris Nicolai Jaqueri ord. pred. inquisitoris heretice pravitatis, ambasiatorum illustrissimi principis Philippi ducis Burgundie anno

etc. 51. Die 21. Mensis Augusti in opido Nove Civitatis in Austria etc. RTA, 19, 1, p. 104, n. 1; p. 144

² Paviot: *Les ducs*, pp. 120-122

the worshippers of Christ. You reminded us of our special obligation, as Prince of the Romans, to care for the welfare of the Christian people, and you urgently asked of Us to undertake this expedition against the enemies of the Cross and to request the other kings and princes to contribute. You also offered to participate personally in this pious and necessary venture. We commended your proposal, and since We intended to go to Rome very soon afterwards, and since the matter set forth by your ambassadors was highly important, We answered – as was reasonable – that We would discuss this matter with the Supreme Pontiff and follow his advice and instructions. And so We did when a short time afterwards We had come to Rome: We ordered an oration on this matter to be given in a public consistory, and We found the pontiff to be very positive, answering publicly that the importance of the matter required him to also ask the other kings and princes about their views on this serious issue.¹

In 1451, the crusade project would not have seemed an important matter to the imperial court, and the ambassador's delivery of a crusade oration as well as Piccolomini's reply were a matter of court routine. Though Piccolomini referred to the Burgundian embassy in his report on the Diet of Regensburg,² he did not mention it in his *Commentarii*, nor did his biographer Georg Voigt.

The Fall of Constantinople two years later and the continuing Turkish expansion into Europe would radically alter the situation: themes from the Burgundian diplomats' oration as well as from Piccolomini's own response would reappear in his later orations.³ And – very importantly – the notion of a Christian crusade against the Turks as a project dear to the Duke of Burgundy and of the duke as a leader of the crusade would be firmly planted in Piccolomini's mind. This

¹ RTA, 19, 1, p. 104: *Memores sumus te ante nonnullos annos oratores tuos ad nos mississe, per quos diras et acerbissimas molestias, quas in orientis partibus tam Sarraceni quam Turchi cultoribus Christi dietim inferebant, commemorando et condelendo nos veluti Romanorum principem, ad quem potissimum de salute Christiani populi cogitare incumbibat, magnis precibus adhortabare, ut ad passagium contra inimicos crucis instituendum nostras operas impartientes ceteros reges et principes ad id ipsum requisitos redederemus, ad quod tam pium et necessarium opus in propria per-*

sona profecturum te offerebas. Nos tunc propositum tuum commendatum, cum Romam prope diem petere intenderemus cumque res grandis esset per tuos oratores nobis exposita et fidem concerneret, respondimus de tali negotio velle nos, ut par erat, cum summo pontifice verbum facere suaeque sanctitatis et consilium et directionem sequi quemadmodum Paulo post Romam venientes in publico consistorio de hoc ipso negotio sermonem nostro nomine fieri jussimus, ad quam rem non parum inclinatum eundem invenimus pontificem, qui publice nobis respondit etiam

aliorum se regum et principum, ut rei magnitudo videbatur exposcere, mentes perquisiturus ad opus ingens

² MA, III, p. 15: *Legatos ergo ad summum pontificem misit, ad imperatorem, ad plerosque reges, ad Hungariam, ad Bohemos, seque in eam militiam iturum promisit, adjutores si Christianos reliquos inveniret. Quod si monitis ejus auscultatum fuisset, haud modo Constantinopolitana jactura nos angeret, et fortasse jam Turcorum truculentum genus trans Helespontum fugavissemus*

³ Müller, p. 57

notion was confirmed by his meeting and conversations with the duke three years later, at the Diet of Regensburg. It would decisively influence his own crusade project when he became pope – and also cause him bitter disappointment when, in the end, the duke had to pull out. Indeed, the meeting with the Burgundian ambassadors in 1451 and the exchange of Turkish orations, leading up to the delivery of the important oration “*Moyses vir Dei*” [19] in Rome the year after, may reasonably be considered as the beginning of Pius’ great Turkish enterprise, ending only with his death in Ancona 13 years later.

In his oration, Piccolomini does not mention the congress of princes, proposed by Burgundy to deal with the Turkish issue.¹ This proposal, however, would be implemented when, in 1454, after the Fall of Constantinople, the emperor summoned an imperial diet in Regensburg on the crusade, inviting the kings and princes of Europe to participate. And even more importantly, it would later inspire Piccolomini, as Pope Pius II, to summon a congress of the European powers, the Congress of Mantua, held in 1459.

2. Themes

The themes are well known from mediaeval and early humanist Turkish orations:

- The Islamic/Turkish war of aggression against Christian lands
- The sadistic cruelty of the enemies and of their leaders
- The trial of Christians’ permitted by God as punishment for the sins of the Christians

It should be noted that Piccolomini’s description of Islamic atrocities consists of a quotation from the early Christian author, Cyprian, who lived from ca. 200 to 258 AD and was not writing about the Arabs and the Turks but about the Roman Emperor Valerian’s persecution of the Christians, which he experienced personally.²

What is significant in this oration is the acknowledgement of the Burgundian crusade initiative and the emperor’s promise to raise the matter directly with the pope when he went to Rome for his coronation.

¹ RTA, 19, 1, p. 143

² On Pius II’s use of Turkish atrocities, see Smith

Piccolomini also introduces the theme of the emperor's personal knowledge of the miserable situation of the Eastern Christians, derived from the pilgrimage to Jerusalem that he made as a very young man.

And finally, Piccolomini re-uses the notion of the battle against the Turks as necessitating a joint effort of the European powers, which he had already presented in his very first oration, the "Audivi" [1] of 1436.

All in all, the oration may be seen as a polite but not enthusiastic imperial response to the Burgundian initiative. The cautious and unwarlike emperor, Friedrich III, was just as little inclined to indulge in enthusiastic, chivalric, and mediaeval war projects against the infidels as his colleague, King Charles VII of France, and like Charles, he had quite more urgent affairs and conflicts to deal with at home.¹

But the Burgundian project was acknowledged, and the promise to negotiate with the pope was given – and fulfilled the year afterwards, the next phase in the laborious process of preparing a crusade.

3. Authorship

In the title in the manuscripts containing the oration, Piccolomini is not named as the orator, and previous research has apparently not considered the authorship of the oration.

However, a number of indications make it altogether probable, if not certain, that the oration was actually given by Piccolomini.

First of all, Piccolomini was the natural choice for the task. In the preceding year, he had successfully performed three diplomatic missions for the emperor: negotiations with King Alfonso V on the emperor's marriage to Eleonora of Portugal; negotiations with the pope on the emperor's coronation; and finally, Piccolomini's mission to a Bohemian diet in Beneschau on the status of King Ladislaus, with the very important result of creating an understanding or even alliance between the Bohemian regent and the emperor. At his return from Italy, in the

¹ The Burgundian embassies met similar responses at the other European courts visited by the ambassadors, cf., Paviot: *Les ducs*,

p. 127: *Philippe le Bon n'a donc pas réussi à soulever l'enthousiasme dans l'Europe latine pour l'accompagner dans son voeu qui*

n'avait de but précis et qui, surtout, ne répondait à aucune nécessité politique, mais à ses propres convictions personnelles

beginning of the year, Piccolomini had been appointed prince of the Empire¹ and given a seat on the emperor's council. So, he would be a most suitable choice for replying to the Burgundian ambassadors on behalf of the emperor.

Secondly, Piccolomini was at the imperial court on the day of the reception of the ambassadors: his famous letter to Cardinal Juan Carvajal with a report on the Bohemian Hussites is dated 21 August 1451, Wiener Neustadt,² and there is no evidence whatsoever of his absence from the imperial court in that period. Such an absence would also have been highly unlikely in view of his important role in the preparation of the emperor's coronation voyage to Italy, which began in December.

Thirdly, though the oration is not one of Piccolomini's rhetorical masterpieces, very few, if any, at the imperial court at the time would have been able to give an oration in the style employed.

Fourthly, the oration contains oratorical features quite well-known from Piccolomini's earlier orations, e.g., the form of the *captatio benevolentiae* in the beginning, the reference to the tranquil life on earth and the blessed life in heaven, developed at length in his oration "*Non est apud me dubium*" [6] of 1446, and the use of one of his favourite church fathers, Cyprian. To these must be added elements that would recur in his later orations, e.g., the description of the emperor's pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and his use of a quotation from Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, which he used in several of his orations.³

In the absence of direct proof, the present editor considers that the abovementioned features reasonably and sufficiently document Piccolomini's authorship of the oration "*Quamvis in hoc senatu.*"⁴

4. Date, place, audience, and format

In his reply, Piccolomini refers to the Burgundian ambassadors' address to the emperor as having been given a couple of days before [sect. 1]. Since the ambassadors were formally

¹ As Bishop of Siena

² WO, III, pp. 22-57

³ Cicero: *De re publica*, 6.9.13 (Somnium Scipionis): *omnibus, qui patriam conservaverint, adiuv-
erint, auxerint, certum esse in*

*caelo definitum locum, ubi beati
aevo sempiterno fruuntur*

⁴ Also, the oration "*Si ea quam
justa*" [4] from 1438, published by
J. Haller, has no indication of au-
thor in the manuscript. However,

Haller does not hesitate to iden-
tify Piccolomini as it's author,
quoting similar external and in-
ternal evidence

received and delivered their oration on 21 August¹, the oration “*Quamvis in hoc senatu*” was probably delivered on the 23rd or 24th. For the purpose of the present edition, the date of the 23rd August has been retained.

The place was the royal castle in Wiener Neustadt.

The audience consisted of the emperor surrounded by his court and the Burgundian embassy.

The format was a diplomatic address to the Burgundian ambassadors on behalf of Emperor Friedrich III.

5. Text²

5.1. Manuscripts³

According to the RTA, the oration is included in three manuscripts⁴ (all humanist collective manuscripts):

- **Budapest / National Széchényi Library**
Cod. Lat. 211, ff. 38r-38v
- **Venezia / Biblioteca Marciana**
Lat XI, cod. 80, ff. 308v-309v **(V)** *
- **Wien / Österreichische Nationalbibliothek**
Cod. 3420, ff. 160r-161v **(W)** *

It was not included in the Collected Orations of Pius II, prepared under his own supervision during in 1462.

¹ RTA, 19, 1, p. 104, n. 1

² Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II's orations, see COR, 1: 5

³ Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in COR, 1: 11, are marked with an asterisk

⁴ RTA, 19, 1, p. 104, n. 1

5.2. Editions

The oration was not included in Mansi's collection, and apparently it has not been otherwise published.

5.3. Present edition

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

Text:

The present edition is based on the two manuscripts in Venezia and Vienna, with the Vienna manuscript as the lead text.

Pagination:

Pagination is from the lead manuscript.

6. Sources¹

In this oration, altogether 13 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified:

Biblical: 4

Classical: 1

Patristic and medieval: 8

Contemporary: 0

All: 13

The patristic quotations dominate, but only because of eight quotations from Cyprian, one of Piccolomini's favourite patristic authors.

¹ For an analysis of Piccolomini's use of sources, see COR, 1: 8

Biblical sources: 4

Old Testament: 1

- Isaiah: 1

New Testament: 3

- John: 1
- 1. Corinthians: 1
- Romans: 1

Classical sources: 1

- Cicero: 1¹

Patristic and medieval sources: 8

- Cyprianus: 8²

Contemporary sources: 0

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¹ De republica: 1

² Epistola ad Fortunatum de exhortatione martyria: 1; De mort-

litate: 2; De oratione dominica: 3;
De unitate ecclesiae: 1; Liber ad
Demetrianum : 1

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Piccolomini, Enea Silvio SEE ALSO Pius II

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Pius II SEE ALSO Piccolomini, Enea Silvio

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8. Sigla and abbreviations

V = Venezia / Biblioteca Marciana / Lat. XI

W = Wien / Österreichische Nationalbibliothek / Cod. 3420

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 = *Conciliarum 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).

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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].

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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. Izbicki. 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.

CE = Common Era.

BCE = Before the Common Era.

DV = digital version.

II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Responsio illustrissimi et invictissimi principis et domini, domini Friderici Romanorum regis data oratoribus illustris principis domini Philippi ducis Burgundiae super passagio contra Turchos impetrando

[1] {160r} Quamvis in hoc senatu regio complures sint doctrina et facundia praecellentes viri, qui me longe melius hoc¹ dicendi munus absolverent, quia tamen serenissimo ac piissimo divo domino nostro Romanorum regi placitum est hoc oneris mihi committere, ut ejus nomine ad ea respondeam, quae vos praestabiles oratores illustrissimi principis domini ducis Burgundiae suae sublimitati proximis diebus exposuistis, neque me decet neque cuique licet tanti fastigii mandata refugere². Pariturus ergo jussibus regiis quae per vos nuper non minus ornate quam prudenter explicita fuerunt breviter ac succincte repetam responsumque regium deinde³ subnectam.

[2] Quattuor orationis expositionisque vestrae partes fuerunt: in prima quam necessaria sit catholica fides, quam utilis, quam gloriosa quantoque studio defendenda et amplianda dixistis, adducetes ad haec tum novi tum veteris testamenti non minus docte quam memoriter plurima testimonia. In secunda narrastis infestationes ac pressuras multiplices, quas soldanus et Turcus impiissimi Mahumeti sectatores veris Christi cultoribus, fratribus nostris, et in Asia inferunt et in Europa. In tertia retulistis quanta sit cura quamque fervens studium domini vestri ducis, ut illorum retundi violentia possit, domari ferocitas, humiliari superbia, ad quas res jam reges et principes magna cum diligentia coeperit excitare. In quarta et ultima parte ferventi supplicatione regiam serenitatem precati fuistis, ut tamquam Christianorum temporale caput primusque princeps et altior rem hanc tam salubrem tamque necessariam curae menti cordique recipiat, Germaniae principes ad hoc invitet, et quia Romam imperiales infulas susceptura brevi transitura putatur cum sanctissimo domino nostro de tali tantoque negotio conferre tractareque velit. Haec per vos in summa, sed ornatius et diffusius dicta fuerunt multis scripturis et auctoritatibus illustrata.

¹ hec W

² refugere V

³ regium deinde : deinde regium

V

Reply of the illustrious and unvanquished prince and lord, Lord Friedrich, King of the Romans, to the ambassadors of the illustrious prince, Lord Philippe, Duke of Burgundy, on mobilising an expedition against the Turks

1. Introduction

[1] In this royal senate there are many men excelling in learning and eloquence who could perform this task of speaking much better than I. But since Our Most Serene and Pious Lord, the King of the Romans,¹ has seen fit to charge me with answering in his name the speech which you, distinguished ambassadors of the Illustrious Lord and Prince, the Duke of Burgundy, made some days ago to His Highness, I ought not and cannot refuse to comply with the wishes of His Highness.² I shall therefore obey the royal command and briefly summarise what you said so elegantly and wisely, and afterwards give the King's reply.

2. Oration of the Burgundian ambassadors

[2] Your oration had four parts: In the first, you told how necessary the Catholic Faith is, how beneficial, how glorious, and how greatly it ought to be defended and propagated, quoting extensively and with great learning and excellent memory from both the New and the Old Testament. In the second, you spoke about the many attacks and raids that the Sultan and the Turk, impious followers of Muhammad, make on our brothers, true worshippers of Christ, both in Asia and in Europe. In the third, you related your lord and duke's fervent desire to counter their violence, to tame their ferocity, and to humble their arrogance, for which purpose he has now begun to assiduously solicit princes and kings. In the fourth and last, you begged of His Serene Majesty, as secular head of the Christians and as the first and highest-ranking prince, to engage himself in this necessary and salubrious matter and take it to heart; to invite German princes to participate; and, since His Majesty is expected to be going to Rome shortly in order to receive the imperial crown, to take up this great matter with Our Most Holy Lord.³ This is, in sum, what you said so elegantly and copiously with many examples from the scriptures and authoritative writers.

¹ Friedrich III, before his coronation as emperor

² "tanti fastigii"

³ Pope Nicolaus V

[3]{160v} Ad quae majestas regia in hunc modum respondet: Audivit¹ animo laeto, quae primo loco de fide commemorastis. Jucunda est in auribus ejus orthodoxae fidei commendatio. Haec est enim, qua *justi vivunt*. Haec est, sine qua impossibile est Deo placere. Haec nos mystico Christi corpori sociat. Haec participes facit haereditatis aeternae. Haec filios Dei reddit dicente scriptura: *Dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri, his qui credunt in nomine ejus*, nam et fundamentum spei est, nutrimentum cordis, directio itineris, praesidium obtinendae salutis. In hac natus est dominus noster rex, in hac nutritus, in hac adolevit, in hac vixit, in hac mori sepelirique vult, pro cujus defensione ac tutela neque labores ullos neque pericula, cum opus fuerit, recusabit. Neque enim aliud est animi sui propositum nisi *offerre Deo*, dum vivit, *acceptissimum munus, incorruptam fidem mentis, incolumem laudem devotionis illustrem*. Scit enim *omnibus*, qui fidem Christi *juverint, defenderint, auxerint certum esse in caelo diffinitum locum, in quo beati aevo sempiterno fruuntur*.

¹ l.o De fide *in marg.* V

3. Excellence of the Catholic Faith

[3] To this, His Royal Highness answers as follows: He gladly heard what you said, in the first place, about our Faith. All praise of the true Faith makes him happy. For *the just man liveth by Faith*.¹ Without Faith, one cannot please God. It is Faith that unites us with the mystical body of Christ and makes us share the eternal inheritance. It is Faith that makes us sons of God, as Scripture says: *He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name*.² Faith is the foundation of hope and sustenance of the heart. It gives direction to the voyage and means to obtain salvation. Our king has been born, raised, grown up, and lived in this Faith. In it he wishes to die and be buried. When needful, he will refuse no labour nor danger for its protection and defence, and he has no other desire than *to offer to God*, as long as he lives, *the most acceptable gift — an uncorrupted faith, and an unyielding virtue of mind, an illustrious praise of devotion*.³ For he knows that *all those who have preserved, aided, or enlarged the Faith of Christ*⁴ *have a special place prepared where they may enjoy an eternal life of happiness*.⁵

¹ Romans, 1, 17: *justus autem ex fide vivit*

² John, 1, 12

³ Cyprianus: *Epistola ad Fortunatum de exhortatione martyrii*, 13. MPL, IV, col. 675. Translation

quoted after the New Advent edition

⁴ Cicero has "the fatherland" (*patriam*)

⁵ Cicero: *De re publica*, 6.9.13 (*Somnium Scipionis*): *omnibus, qui patriam conservaverint, adiu-*

verint, auxerint, certum esse in caelo definitum locum, ubi beati aevo sempiterno fruuntur. Cicero speaks about those who defend the fatherland, whereas Piccolomini applies the passage to those who protect the Church

[4] Quod¹ vero secundo loco retulistis, novit regia majestas verum esse. Nam et quanta violentia debacchantur in Hungaria et in Graecia Turci frequentibus nuntiis et crebris litteris non sine maerore cordis superioribus annis intellexit, neque soldani blasphemiae ignotae sunt regiae sublimitati, quae magno devotionis fervore accensa cupiens eam terram videre in qua dominus natus et passus est et osculari² loca, ubi fuerunt pedes ejus, non sine magno periculo insulas archipelagi pertransivit, Jerusalem vidit, Syriam perlustravit. Intellexit tunc sublimitas quanta sit illius saevi soldani, magis monstri quam hominis, tyrannica rabies et impietas in Christianos, qui *innoxios, justos Deoque caros homines Christianos domo privat, patrimonio spoliat, catenis premit, carcere includit, bestiis, gladio, ignibus punit, neque contentus dolorum illorum compendio et simplici ac veloci brevitate poenarum admovet laniandis corporibus longa tormenta, multiplicat lacerandis visceribus numerosa supplicia; neque feritas atque immanitas ejus usitatis potest esse contenta, tormentis excogitat novas poenas ingeniosa crudelitas*. Novit ergo, quid agat soldanus, quid machinetur Turcus. Dolet et miseretur populo Christiano, sed sunt haec permissione Dei³. *Datur autem⁴ adversus nos mala potestas secundum nostra peccata, {161v} sicut scriptum est: Venit Nabuchodonosor, rex Babyloniae, Jerusalem et expugnabat eam et dedit eam dominus in manus ejus. Datur vero potestas mala dupliciter adversus nos, ut inquit Cyprianus, vel ad poenam cum delinquimus, vel ad gloriam cum probamur*. Et de primo dicit scriptura: *Quis dedit in direptionem Jacob et Israel eis, qui depredebatur illum? Nonne Deus, cui peccaverunt et nolebant in viis ejus ambulare*. Et de secundo per Moysen inquit *spiritus sanctus: Dominus Deus tuus vexabit te et famem mittet tibi et cognoscetur in corde tuo, si bene custodieris praecepta ejus sive non, quia fides, si temptata praestiterit, coronatur*. Et Paulus, *oportet, inquit, haereses esse, ut probati manifesti sint in vobis. Sic enim probantur fideles, sic⁵ perfidi deteguntur, sic et ante judicii diem hic quoque jam justorum atque injustorum animae deteguntur et a frumento paleae separantur, quia virtus in adversitate perficitur*. Fiunt ergo haec Dei permissione, ut sic corda et mentes nostras veritatis discrimine Deus examinet.

¹ Il.o De turcho et Soldano in
marg. V

² obsculari W
³ divina V

⁴ auctoritate V
⁵ em.; si V, W

4. Turkish attacks against Christianity

[4] As for what you said in the second place, His Royal Highness knows it to be true, for in recent years he has - to his great sorrow - been informed by frequent messages and letters about the Turks laying waste to Hungary and Greece. His Royal Highness also has personal knowledge of the blasphemies perpetrated by the sultan, for inspired by fervent devotion, he desired to see the country where Our Lord was born and suffered and to kiss the earth trodden by His feet. He crossed the archipelago with its islands at great risk, visited Jerusalem, and travelled through Syria. There, His Highness saw the tyrannical frenzy of the savage sultan, a monster more than a man, and his impious treatment of the Christians: *he robs Christian men, innocent, just, and dear to God, of their home; he plunders their estate; he loads them with chains; shuts them up in prison, and punishes them with wild beasts, swords and fire. And not content with a brief sufferings and with a simple and swift infliction of pain, he subjects them to terrible torture by tearing their bodies and multiplies punishments by lacerating their vitals. Nor can his brutality and fierceness be content with ordinary tortures; his ingenious cruelty devises new pains.*¹ So His Royal Highness knows about the doings of the sultan and the plots of the Turk. He suffers and feels with the Christian people. But these things are done with God's permission² for because of our sins our adversary has been given power to cause us grief, as it is written:³ *Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and besieged it; and the Lord delivered it into his hand ... Now power is given against us in two modes, as Cyprian says, either for punishment when we sin, or for glory when we are proved.*⁴ About the first it is written: *Who hath given Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to robbers? hath not the Lord himself, against whom we have sinned? And they would not walk in his ways.*⁵ About the second the Holy Spirit says through Moses: *The Lord your God will afflict you and send you hunger that the things that were in thy heart might be made known, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no.*⁶ For *faith*, if when tried it shall stand fast, is crowned.⁷ And Paul says: *there must be also heresies: that they also, who are approved, may be made manifest among you.*⁸ *This way the faithful are approved, the wicked detected, and even before the Day of Judgement, the souls of the righteous and of the unrighteous are already divided, and the chaff is separated from the wheat,*⁹ for *virtue is perfected through adversity.*¹⁰ So, these things happen with the permission of God so that He may examine our hearts and minds with the test of truth.

¹ Cyprianus: *Ad Demetrianum*, 12. MPL, 4, cols. 553-554: *innosios, justos Deoque caros domo privas, patrimonio spoliatis, cathenis premis, carcere includis, gladio, bestiis, ignibus punis, nec saltem contentus es dolorum nostrorum compendio et simplici ac veloci brevitate poenarum admoves laniandis corporibus longa tormenta, multiplicas lacerandis visceribus numerosa supplicia; nec feritas atque immanitas tua usitatis*

potest contenta esse, tormentis excogitat novas poenas ingeniosa crudelitas

² Cyprianus: *Liber de oratione dominica*, 25. MPL, IV, col. 536

³ Cyprianus: *Liber de oratione dominica*, 25. MPL, IV, col. 537

⁴ Cyprianus: *Liber de oratione dominica*, 26. MPL, IV, col. 537

⁵ Isaiah, 42, 24, quoted in Cyprianus: *Liber de oratione dominica*, 25. MPL, IV, col. 537

⁶ Cyprianus: *Liber de mortalitate*, 11. Deuteronomy, 8, 2. MPL, IV, col. 589

⁷ Cyprianus: *Liber de mortalitate*, 13. MPL, IV, col. 591

⁸ 1 Corinthians, 11, 19.

⁹ Cyprianus: *De unitate ecclesiae*, 10. MPL, IV, col. 507

¹⁰ Variant of well-known proverb: *Virtus in arduo posita*, cf. Walther, 5, p. 791

[5] Tertio¹ loco quod sollicitus, quod anxius sit vester dominus dux de tutela protectioneque nominis Christiani, quod suam omnem curam ad fidei defensionem exaltationemque direxerit, hoc magnopere commendat regia sublimitas. Neque enim res ulla est, in qua possint aut fructuosius aut gloriosius magni principes sua studia collocare. Nam et propterea laudatus David Philistinorum malleus, propterea commendata Machabaeorum constantia Antiocho² Jud[aei] resistentes, propterea gloriosus Ezechias, Sennacherib confusor. Sic multi et in veteri et in nova lege placuerunt Deo, dum fidei protectionem receperunt.

[6] Quarto³ autem loco voluntarius est⁴ et suapte⁵ ingenio praeparatus serenissimus dominus rex de re tam necessaria, tam proficua, tam magna, cum sanctissimo domino nostro consilium participare, et quoniam Romam petere mens sua est quam primum facultas assit hoc potissimum summo pontifici exponet et de hac re secum tractabit. Namque cum dudum perpenderet magnam illam soldani et Turchi potentiam graviter et acerbe Christianorum cervicibus imminere, crescere dietim, et crudelius inolescere sedulo cogitavit, si qua via esset, per quam posset illorum audacia conteri, refrenari furor, potentia minui. Sed cum videret illos admodum crevisse, quamvis Deo par sit et in paucis et in multis vincere, tamen humano consilio non videbatur possibile tantas vires, tantos apparatus hostium, tantas {161v} copias deleri posse, nisi Christianitas tota insurgeret et animo ferventi uno proposito unaque mente adversus inimicos fidei procederet. Idcirco super opportunitatem expectavit, quam posset summum pontificem alloqui et de hoc negotio tractare. Et quia sua nunc mens est quantocius fieri possit et commoditas assit Romam petere ac de hoc et pluribus Christianae reipublicae necessitatibus agere et illius sedis consilia sequi et utiles admonitiones, nunc autem quia etiam vestri principis partes accedunt, eo libentius rem ipsam majestas regia aggredietur et promovebit apud papam, nec quidquam omittet ex his, quae possint ad pacem populi Christiani et defensionem fidei pertinere, quia tota voluntas ejus est, tota intentio, ut *offerat Deo acceptissimum munus, incorruptam fidem, virtutem mentis incolumem, laudem devotionis illustrem*, nihil dubitans quia sic agens et vitam habebit in hac vita tranquillam et in altera felicitatem merebitur sempiternam.

¹ III.o in marg. V

² em.; Antiochi V, W

³ IV.o in marg. V

⁴ omit. V

⁵ suopte V

5. Duke Philippe's concern for the defence of Christianity

[5] In the third place, you explained how concerned and anxious your Lord Duke is for the protection and defence of the Christian name and that he has turned all his attention to the defence and exaltation of the Faith. This His Royal Highness greatly commends. For there is no more fruitful and glorious occupation for great princes than that. This is why David was praised as a hammer against the Philistines. This is why the Machabees' constancy in resisting Antiochus is admired. And this is why Ezechias was glorious in his victory over Sennacherib. Thus, many men in both the Old and the New Law pleased God when they undertook the protection of the Faith.

6. Joint European military campaign against the Turks

[6] In the fourth place, His Serenity, the Lord King is ready and - out of personal conviction¹ - prepared to take counsel with Our Most Holy Lord concerning this necessary, salubrious, and great matter. And since he intends to go to Rome as soon as possible, he will very soon have the opportunity to lay the matter before the Supreme Pontiff and to discuss it with him. Observing - for a long time - how the great power of the Sultan and of the Turk seriously and fatally threatened the necks of the Christians and grew more and more insolent, he has been carefully considering how to contain their audacity, how to tame their fury, and how to reduce their power. But seeing how greatly they have grown [in power] - though God may just as well win with few than with many - it did not seem possible to human reason to be able to destroy the enemies' great strength, their large war apparatus and their great forces unless the whole of Christendom should rise up and go against the enemies with burning courage, common counsel, and one mind. Therefore, he is looking forward to the opportunity to speak with the Supreme Pontiff and to discuss this matter. Indeed, he intends to go to Rome as soon as possible and have consultations on this and on many other urgent affairs of the Christian Commonwealth, and to follow the advice and useful counsels of that See. And now that your prince has declared his vital interest in the matter, His Royal Highness will take it up so much more willingly and recommend it to the pope, and he will do all he can for the peace of the Christian people and the defence of the Faith. His whole desire and intent *is to offer to God the most acceptable gift— an uncorrupted faith, and an unyielding virtue of mind, an illustrious praise of devotion*,² for he does not doubt that thus he shall merit a tranquil life in this world and eternal happiness in the next.³

¹ *suapte ingenio*": as opposed to the exhortation of the ambassadors

² Cyprianus: *Epistola ad Fortunatum de exhortatione martyrii*, 13. MPL, IV, col. 675. Translation

quoted after the New Advent edition

³ Piccolomini had developed the double theme of a tranquil life in

this world and eternal happiness
in the next in his oration to the pa-
rishioners of Aspach, cf. the

oration "*Non est apud me
dubium*" [6]