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Oration "Ut apertum vobis" of Pope Pius II (10 October 1458, Rome). Edited and translated by Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg. 4th version. With the papal bull "Vocavit nos Pius". (Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 29)

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(Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 29)

Oration *"Ut apertum vobis"* of Pope Pius II (10 October 1458, Rome). Edited and translated by Michael v. Cottaschönberg. With the papal bull *"Vocavit nos Pius"*

4th version

2019

Abstract

Immediately after his election in August 1458, Pope Pius II began to plan for a crusade against the Turks, a cause he had worked for tirelessly since the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. He soon decided that the most effective way would be to summon the European kings and princes to a congress on the matter, to be held in a city in Northern Italy which would be more accessible for the participants from beyond the Alps than the City of Rome. After intense consultations with the cardinals, the pope formally submitted the matter to a conference of ambassadors and curials in the chapel of the Apostolic Palace on 10 October 1458, directly requesting their advice on whether Udine or Mantua should be selected as the venue for the conference.

Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Æneas Silvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; 15th century; Crusades against the Turks; Mantua; Udine; 1458; Papal bull Vocavit nos Pius

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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 is a Piccolomini-oration, see oration "*Quam laetus*" [18], Appendix

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context¹

The Turkish threat against Europe had been a concern of Enea Silvio Piccolomini since his youth.²

His immediate predecessor as pope, Calixtus III, was actually quite eager to start a crusade against the Turks, but he was hampered by a war in Italy, and his energetic preparations came to an end when he died after a brief pontificate of three years.

As his successor the cardinals elected Cardinal Piccolomini who took the name of Pius II.

He now had the opportunity to implement his own proposals to his predecessors on the war against the Turks.

The importance of the crusade matter to the cardinals is shown by the fact that before the conclave began to vote on Calixtus' successor, they all agreed on and signed an electoral capitulation whose first clause obliged the new pope to mount a crusade against the Turks. The clause said:

*First, he will swear and promise to pursue, with all his might, the expedition, already begun, against the infidel enemies of the Cross, for the expansion and propagation of the Faith, until its successful conclusion, according to the means of the Roman Church and on the advice of his brothers, the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, or the majority of them.*³

Elected pope, Pius II signed the capitulation with these words:

*I, Pius II, promise and swear to keep each and all [of the above clauses], as far as I can, with God, and [safeguarding] the honour and the justice of the Apostolic See.*⁴

So, from the beginning it was clear that Pope Pius not only personally supported the idea of a crusade against the Turks, but that he was even bound by a solemn, papal oath to do so.

¹ CO, II, 2 (Meserve, I, pp. 213-217); Rainaldus, ad ann. 1458, nr. 15; Ady, pp. 157-158; Boulting, pp. 248-250; Housley; Mitchell, pp. 138-140; Müller; Paparelli, p. 196; Pastor, II, p. 17-18; Paviot; Picotti, ch. 1; Reinhardt, pp. 232-233; Setton, II, p. 201; Strnad, pp. 77-82; Voigt, IV, pp. 18-20.

² On the development of Pius' engagement in the crusade matter before and after he became pope, see *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 1, ch. 6.1.1.

³ Rainaldus, ad ann. 1458, nr. 5: *Primo jurabit et promittet expeditionem incaeptam contra infideles inimicos crucis Christi pro amplicatione et dilatatione fidei totis viribus usque ad felicem exitum prosequi secundum facultatem Romanae ecclesiae juxta consilium fratrum suorum S.R.E. cardinalium vel majoris partis eorum*

⁴ Rainaldus, ad ann. 1458, nr. 8, p. 160: *Ego Pius II praemissa omnia et singula promitto et juro servarem quantum cum Deo et honestate et justitia sedis apostolicae potero*

There is no doubt that the pope's primary motive for a crusade was a quite realistic assessment of Mehmed II's intentions with regard to Europe¹ and a quite justified fear of the consequences in case the Europeans did not meet the Turkish threat militarily: the collapse of the European powers, the fall of the two international institutions, the Empire and the Papacy, and the reduction of Christianity to a religion for second or third class citizens in the Turkish Empire.

Undoubtedly, there were other motives, too. Pius' personal itinerary of faith made the crusade a worthy and logical expression of his belief in God and of his passionate need to redeem himself after a youth which he in some respects now deeply regretted.

Also, and quite importantly, he saw the crusade as the best means for the restoration of the status of Papacy, as he had openly said in his oration to Pope Calixtus, the "*Solent plerique*" [26] (1455):

And to say openly what I think: the most certain way to have the Christian kings and all the faithful nations submit willingly to you as the Vicar of Christ is to undertake a vigorous and magnificent defense of our faith, just like you have inspired hope by making your vow, by promoting peace in Italy, and by designating wise legates, appearing completely intent on working, with all your power, to destroy the filthy and impious Turkish people. [Sect. 29]

And, finally, there was the personal glory of being the pope who regained Constantinople. As he had also told Pope Calixtus - again in the "*Solent plerique*" [26]:

But the most glorious title which may be written on your sarcophagus is to be called the pope who regained Constantinople, lost under your predecessor, and who avenged the shared injury. [Sect. 29]

One motive was not there: he did not want to organize the crusade in order to improve papal finances – though this was a commonly voiced criticism, which might also have been true in other circumstances. Indeed, Pius later directly stated his acceptance of a procedure for collection crusade money which would keep it separate from the papal finances.

After his coronation, Pius soon decided that the starting point would have to be a meeting with the European princes to decide in common on such a crusade. Here, he is consistent with his own early statement on the necessity of a joint European military response to the Turks, made at the Council of Basel in 1436: *To expel them [The Turks] from Greece would not be the task of a single city or state, but of the entire Christian world.*²

¹ Babinger, p. 571

² Oration "*Audivi*" [1], sect. 21

The idea of European Congress on the crusade was not new. It had been proposed by the Duke of Burgundy in connection with his diplomatic offensive for a European crusade against the Turks already in 1451.^{1 2}

And in his letter of 19 July 1453 to Pope Nicolaus, announcing the Fall of Constantinople, Piccolomini had written that it was incumbent on the pope to organize a joint military action against the Turks and that the pope should ask kings, princes, and cities to send representatives to a congress on this matter.³

A week afterwards, in a letter to Cardinal Nicholas of Cues, of 21 July, he repeated the idea, urging the pope and the cardinals to summon the princes to a meeting on a war against the Turks.⁴

The proposal for a congress of princes was reiterated in a letter from the emperor to the pope of 10 August 1452, written by Piccolomini:

... We believe that Your Clemency⁵ ... should write to the kings, send legates, admonish and exhort princes and communities to come to come personally to or to be represented at a meeting somewhere, ... to speedily take counsel for the Christian cause, to make peace or truce between their fellow Christians, and with joined forces to go to war against the enemies of the Cross of Salvation.⁶

¹ RTA, 19, 1, p. 143. See also Piccolomini: *Historia de dieta Ratisponensi* (WO, III, p. 505), and his oration "Quamvis in hoc senatu" [17] (1451)

² Housley, p. 228

³ WO, III, 1, p. 201: *Quanto melius tantum armorum tantumque militiae in hostes fidei verteremus? Verum, beatissime pater, non scio, cui magis quam vestre sanctitati hec cura debeatur. Vestrum est jam assurgere, scribere regibus, mittere legatos, monere, hortari principes atque communitates in aliquem communem locum aut veniant aut mittant, nuncque dum malum est recens Christianae rei publicae consulere festinent, pacem aut inducias inter socios fidei componant atque junctis viribus adversus salutifere crucis inimicos arma moveant. Spero equidem, si vestra sanctitas suo ex more hoc negotium fervido et ardenti animo totoque corde promovendum acceperit, et deum et homines assensuros, futurumque brevi, ut insolentiae suae Turchos peniteat atque in altum Christiana fides emergat*

⁴ WO, III, 1, p. 214: *Vocent reges et principes in certum aliquem locum, dicant conveniendi diem, mittant legatos de latere summi pontificis, exponant mala, que passa est modo Christiana res publica, dicant que futura timentur pericula, providendi modos aperiant, inter Christianos aut pacem aut inducias belli componant, crucem predicent, remissionem peccatorum polliceantur; intonet apostolica tuba, nihil negligat, nihil hoc tempore omittat. Non est michi dubium, si locus rebus accomodus nominetur, quin reges aut veniant aut mittant bonisque animis hoc fidei negotium amplectantur.* See also Housley, p. 73-74

⁵ A title of the pope, used by Piccolomini

⁶ WO, III, 2, p. 579: *... censemus clementiam vestram ... scribere regibus, legatos mittere, monere, hortari principes ac communitates in aliquem communem locum aut veniant aut mittant, ... Christianae rei consulere festinent, pacem aut inducias inter socios fidei componant atque junctis viribus adversus salutifere crucis inimicos arma promoveant.*

According to Wolkan, this version of the text may not have been the original one

Piccolomini pursued this idea in his *Dialogus*, begun in 1454 and published in 1457, where he had Constantine the Great - in Heaven - make this request of Christ after the Fall of Constantinople, which Constantine himself had established as the capital of the Roman Empire:

Allow me to leave Heaven and go to Earth, and let those [from Heaven], who wish to, come with me to consider the affairs of mortal men and to hold a meeting of Christians to provide for your religion.¹

In April/May 1454, the emperor – with the pope’s assent and support – held a congress on the Turkish matter in Regensburg to which the European kings and princes were invited. The congress, or diet, was followed by two more diets, in Frankfurt and Wiener Neustadt in 1454 and 1455. These meetings did not lead to any mobilization of a joint European or even German military response to the Turkish war of aggression.

Unsuccessful was also a very poorly attended crusade conference of ambassadors summoned by Pope Calixtus III in Rome.² Though Housley appears to downplay Cardinal Piccolomini’s contribution to this initiative,³ it would be very strange if Calixtus had not used the services of the cardinal who had the most experience and interest in this area and who might even have proposed such a conference to him, as he had done previously to his predecessor.

It is therefore not surprising, that shortly after his coronation Pius began to discuss the matter of a congress with the College of Cardinals and to submit it to a forum of curials and envoys of Italian and other European powers present in Rome, on 10 October 1459.

The conference was reported by Lodrisio Crivelli⁴ as part of his unfinished work *De expeditione Papae Pii II adversus Turcos*. Crivelli himself participated in the meeting and gave an address on behalf of his master, the Duke of Milan.⁵ His work contains two orations by the Pope, one the “*Ut apertum vobis*” of 10 October 1459, and the other the “*Magna pars vestrum*”, given at the opening of the Congress in Mantua on 1 June 1459.

In his *Commentarii*, Pius wrote about the conference in Rome:

¹ Piccolomini: *Dialogus*, p. 64: *Sine me de celo in terram ire, descendere qui velint mecum, mortalium facta despicere, Christianorum habere conventum, et que sint ex re tue religioni consulere*

² Rainaldus, ad ann. 1457, nos. 36-37, pp. 112-113; ad ann. 1458, nos. 9, 35, pp. 142, 152. Housley, pp. 212, 228; Picotti, pp. 49-51. Cf. however Pastor, I, p. 682: *Der klägliche Ausgang der unter Nikolaus V. wegen der Türkenfrage abgehaltenen Reichstage bestimmte Kalixtus III., von derartigen Versammlungen ganz abzusehen und direkt mit den einzelnen Herrschern eine Verständigung zu suchen*

³ Housley, p. 212

⁴ Lodrisio Crivelli (1412-1488): Milanese jurist. Early acquaintance of Pius II. In the service of the Duke of Milan (until 1463). Member of the duke’s embassy to congratulate the new pope. See Crivelli, pp. iii-xxiv, and Smith

⁵ Crivelli, pp. 117-120

Pope Pius feared this poison [i.e. the Turks] and determined to take action before it wormed its way in any further. But he would not rely on himself alone (that is, on the power of the Apostolic See), for he saw that the conquest of the Turks was a task not for this or that realm but for all of Christendom. He realized he would have to ask the advice of those whose aid he would soon require, and so decided to convene a congress of princes and republics to discuss the common good. First, however, he must determine where the congress should meet. Some cardinals said it should be at Rome, but other advised a location across the Alps, in Germany or in France.

None of these suggestions satisfied Pius: he did not think it appropriate to summon princes from the North all the way to Rome; on the other hand, holding a council in France or Germany would be pointless, since the pope's health would prevent his attending it. He thought it best to hold the congress someplace near the Alps, halfway between the pope and the northern princes. Two places were suggested: Udine, a town in Friuli subject to Venice, and Mantua in Cisalpine Gaul. If they were denied the use of one, they could turn to the other, for the pope was worried that the Venetians, who were terrified of the Turks, would keep him from coming to Udine – and later on that is exactly what they did. ...

For a long time, the pope and cardinals debated the question in council. Many prelates opposed him, for they were happy enough with the present state of affairs and liked their easy life in the capital, but the pope persevered until his plan was adopted. He then invited various bishops, abbots, notaries, royal ambassadors and all the officials of the Curia to a meeting in the palace chapel so that their advice, too, could be heard. There he made public the project he had long held in his heart. He described the great disasters the Turks had inflicted on Christendom and explained how they were scheming to overthrow the Gospel law. The fall of the Christian nation was for him the bitterest blow imaginable; he was charged with the care of their sacred religion; he had decided to take the offensive against the Turks. Since this could not be done without the help of the princes of Christendom, he was determined to hold a congress either at Udine or at Mantua to hear the opinions of those whose aid he meant to enlist. It would be hard for him to leave Rome, the seat of St. Peter the Apostle and the ark of the Christian faith, but it would be harder still to see the holy gospel destroyed in the course of his reign. To save it, he was resolved to stake not just the city and the patrimony of Peter, but his own health, indeed his very life. And so, though he was old and infirm, he proposed to cross the Apennines and the Po and confer with Christian princes about the rescue of the Christian faith. He went on to declaim on many such topics with great seriousness. Everyone applauded his courage and his purpose and praised him to the skies as the only man on earth who cared for the safety of the faith. Then they convened a public consistory according to established

procedure. An apostolic letter was published¹ setting the date for the congress and summoning the princes to either of the two cities.²

A couple of days after the meeting in Rome, on 13 October, the pope issued the bull *Vocavit nos pius* summoning the European princes and peoples to a Congress in Udine or Mantua on a crusade against the Turks, to be opened on 1 July 1460. The shortness of the time between the meeting with the ambassadors and the release of the bull makes it quite likely that the bull had been written before that meeting.

The text of the oration held on 10 October is presently only known from Lodrisio Crivelli's work *De expeditione Pii Papae II adversus Turcos*.

Lodrisio Crivelli was an acquaintance of Piccolomini from the days of the Council of Basel, where Crivelli was secretary to a mentor and friend of Piccolomini, Archbishop Pizzolpasso of Milan. He represented the Duke of Milan as one of the ambassadors coming to Rome in October 1458 to present the declaration of the duke's obedience to the newly elected pope, Pius II. He managed to further develop his relationship with the pope which incidentally became useful when he later fell into disgrace at the Milanese court. His decision to write a book on Pius' expedition against the Turks was undoubtedly made with the pope's approval, and the curia appears to have made documents concerning the crusade available to Crivelli who used them in his book. On Crivelli's part, the project was certainly a means to ensure the pope's patronage and friendship, so when Pius died in 1464, Crivelli understandably gave up the project, and the book remained unfinished, only covering events until the preliminary opening of the Congress of Mantua, on 1 June 1459.³

2. Themes

After some formal comments on the reason and agenda for the meeting, the pope briefly described the Turkish military expansion into Europe, peppering his report with Turkish atrocities against Christians.

He then clearly stated that the overall responsibility for a war against the Turks in defense of Christendom and Europe would be the responsibility of the Papacy, and – by implication – not of the secular powers, including the Holy Roman Empire: Pius had by now given up on the emperor and the Germans taking a lead in the crusade matter.

¹ The bull *Vocavit nos Pius*, also included in Crivelli's report, see Appendix

² CO, II, 2 (Meserve. I, pp. 213-217)

³ Crivelli, pp. III-XXIV; Petrucci; Smith

However, a crusade against the Turks could not be fought by the Papacy alone, it would have to be a joint military venture for all of Europe, and the contributions of all the major European powers would be essential.¹

The pope and the cardinals had discussed how to mobilize these powers for the common cause. Two major solutions had been considered:

- sending papal legates to kings, princes, and cities to enjoin them to join a common crusade
- holding a joint meeting on the crusade for all.

Concerning the dispatch of papal legates, this method had been tried before, but had not proven effective.

Concerning a joint meeting for all, the failure of the three imperial diets in 1454-1455 and of the conference summoned by Pope Calixtus was not mentioned, but two possibilities had been discussed with the cardinals:

- holding the meeting in Rome
- holding the meeting in some other city.

Summoning the transalpine² kings and princes to a meeting in Rome would impose so great a burden of organization and transportation on the rulers, that it would be quite impossible. A meeting in some other city, closer to the transalpsines, was therefore to be preferred. North of the Alps would be impossible for the old and ailing pope (as well as politically dangerous as the councils in Konstanz, 1414-1418, and in Basel, 1430's, had clearly shown). A city South of the Alps, but close to them would therefore be preferable.

Two cities were considered as fulfilling the requirements: Udine and Mantua.³

¹ This theme is a red thread in Piccolomini's crusade orations, going all the way back to very first oration, the "*Audivi*" [1] of October 1436 to the council fathers at Basel

² Transalpine: from the other side of the Alps — as seen from Rome, i.e. North of the Alps

³ In this respect, too, the oration is reminiscent of Piccolomini's first speech, the "*Audivi*", on the choice of a Northern Italian city as future venue for the council

Having informed the participants – and through them their political masters – of the decision to hold a conference, the pope now asked them for their advice in the matter of choosing between Udine and Mantua.

3. Date, place, audience and format

The oration “*Ut apertum vobis*” was given in Rome on 10 October 1459¹ in the chapel of the Apostolic Palace.²

The audience consisted of the ambassadors present in Rome, together with a number of cardinals and curials.

The format was a papal oration from the throne, though the oration did not have a solemn character but was rather a businesslike and practical speech.

4. Text³

As mentioned, the text of the oration “*Ut apertum vobis*” is only known from Lodrisio Crivelli’s unfinished work *De expeditione Pii Papae II adversus Turcos*. It is possibly a shortened version of the oration as actually delivered.⁴

4.1. Manuscripts

The two manuscripts known to contain the *De expeditione* with the oration “*Ut apertum vobis*” are:⁵

¹ Crivelli, p. 80, n. 4; Voigt, IV, p. 20. Pastor, I, p. 17, has the date 12 October 1458

² Crivelli, p. 80: ... *in sacellum, quod in pontificali palatio iuxta basilicam Principis situm est, convocat*

³ Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II’s orations, see *Collected orations of Pope Pius*, vol. 1, ch. 5

⁴ The *De expeditione* contains another oration of the pope, the “*Magna pars vestrum*”, delivered at the opening of the Congress of Mantua on 1 July 1459. Crivelli’s version of that oration is very similar to the version as known from other sources. The text may have been made available to him by Pius himself or by his officials. See, however, Voigt, IV, p. 19, for this comment: *Die Rede, die Leodrisius Crivelli ... den Papst bei dieser Gelegenheit halten lasst, ist zwar ganz in seiner Weise, aber wohl doch ein glückliches Machwerk des Autors ...*

⁵ For a description of the mss., see Crivelli pp. xxxv-xxxviii

- **Milano / Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana**
Trivulziana 765, ff. 46v-49r **(T)**
- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**
Vat. Lat. 2047, ff. 48r-49v **(V)**

4.2. Editions

- Leodrisii Cribelli libri duo *de expeditione Pii Papae Secundi in Turcas*. In: *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, t. XXIII. Milano, 1733, pp. 66-68 **(MU)**

This edition was based on a manuscript made available to Muratori by Argelati. It is not known which manuscript it was, but according to Zimolo the text of the *De expeditione* in Muratori's edition is quite close to the text in the Trivulziana manuscript.¹

- Leodrisii Cribelli *De expeditione Pii Papae II adversus Turcos*. A cura di Giulio C. Zimolo. In: *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, t. XXIII, pt. V. Bologna, 1950, pp. 85-87

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 two abovementioned manuscripts containing the *De expeditione* and Muratori's edition of 1733, with the Trivulziana as the lead text.

Pagination:

Pagination is from the lead manuscript.

¹ Crivelli, p. XXXVIII

5. Sources¹

In this oration only one quotation has been identified, from Sallust's *De bello Catilinae*.

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¹ On Piccolomini's use of sources in general, see *Collected orations of Pope Pius II*, ch. 8.

² References to the *Annales* is usually given in this form: (e.g.) **Rainaldus, ad ann. 1459, nr. 67** (without reference to a specific edition). In the bibliographies of the individual orations, the first edition is usually listed, but the Theiner edition is actually the preferred one since it is the easiest available on the web

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¹ http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/lodrisio-crivelli_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/

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7. Sigla and abbreviations

T = Milano / Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana / Trivulziana 765

V = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Vat. Lat. 2047

MU = Leodrissi Cribelli libri duo *de expeditione Pii Papae Secundi in Turcas*. (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores; 23)

Abbreviations

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

HA = Eneas Silvius Piccolomini: *Historia Austriasis*. 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

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II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

[1] {46v} Ut¹ apertum vobis faciamus, viri fratres, quam ob causam convocati hunc in locum estis convenire primo loco censemus, tum deinde quantum negotii immineat, et in quo denique consilium, operam opemque vestram requirere summum rei discrimen urgeat, exponemus.

[2] Multa enim per hos dies cum venerabilibus fratribus nostris cardinalibus collocti sumus multisque cogitationibus laborantes, atque invicem disserentes quaesivimus, quonam pacto adversus saevientem in nos omnesque Christianae religionis {47r} cultores Turcorum impurissimorum hostium procellam iri possit, eorumque inflammata vehementius de pessumdanda Christi nostri lege opinio retundi.

[3] Quem enim mortalium latere potest, quorsum tendant tanti eorum conatus, insolenti etiam felicitate aucti, expugnata paulo ante Constantinopoli, tanta urbe, tutissimo hactenus per tot saecula adversus barbaricos furores receptaculo eodemque propugnaculo, Graecia omni subacta, depopulata etiam nuper ab² crudeli hoste Corintho, profanatis per summam contumeliam in singulis urbibus sacris nostris, Hungaris per tot annos tantae molis fascem vix sustinentibus et nunc etiam discordiis inter se laborantibus, et, si diligentius considerare voluerimus, Italia magna ex parte circumvallata.

¹ Oratio Pii pontificis maximi *nota marg.* T

² a MU

0. Introduction

[1] Men and brothers, We intend to tell you firstly the reason why you have been summoned here, and secondly how serious the matter is. Then We shall explain how urgently this great crisis requires your advice, efforts and resources.

1. Reason for the meeting

[2] During these days, We have been speaking at length with Our venerable brethren, the cardinals, pondering and discussing many ideas on how to counter the savage attacks of the filthy Turkish enemies against all those who worship Christ and how to oppose their burning desire to destroy His law.

2. Urgency of the matter

[3] Who does not know what aim they are pursuing so intensely? Quite recently and with insolent luck, this cruel enemy has conquered the great City of Constantinople, for centuries a safe haven and bastion against the fury of barbarian peoples. They have subjugated all of Greece. Lately they have destroyed Corinth,¹ and in all cities they have – oh, supreme injury – profanated our holy shrines. The Hungarians have for many years been staggering under this heavy burden and are even now plagued by internal conflicts.² And a closer look reveals that Italy has almost been encircled.

¹ 6 August 1458. Cf. Crivelli, p.78, n. 4. Cf. also Setton, II, pp. 197-198, and Picotti, p. 65

² One party among the Hungarian magnates wanted Matthias Corvinus as king after the Habsburg King Ladislaus who had died prematurely on 23 November 1457, and another wanted the Habsburg Emperor, Friedrich III

[4] Intelligimus quidem ex hoc denique pontificatus onere, quod invalidis humeris nostris occulto iudicio suo Deus imposuit, expeti a nobis primas hujus rei partes. Et nos quidem id libenter ac studiose facturi sumus, sed excedit supra modum vires nostras tanta sarcina, tantoque impares oneri, ut ingruentem vim repellamus, sufficere soli nullo pacto possumus. Agitur autem non tantum de apostolicae sedis salute, quae etiam si sola pateretur, digna tamen esset, cum sit ecclesiae caput, pro qua principes populique omnes, Christi Dei cultores, decertarent. Verum blasphematur ab¹ nefandis hostibus omnis Christiana religio, nec blasphematur tantum, sed conculcatur, et, nisi auxilio simus, {47v} in ruinam supremumque excidium trahitur.

[5] Itaque, cum de republica Christiana agatur deque communi omnium nostrorum² parente sancta catholica ecclesia, in qua renati et in spe caelestis regni positi sumus, statuimus vos omnes hujus rei consiliique nostri participes facere, cujus tamen causa nunc in locum hunc estis convocati. Nunc inter varias cogitationes nostras, quid potissimum ex communi venerabilium horum fratrum nostrorum sententia censuerimus, animadvertite. Nos in primis in altissimi Dei clementia, cujus ovile sumus, spem nostram collocantes, exponendas in hoc facultates quantaslibet nostras³, exhauriendosque ex intimo sinu ecclesiae thesaurus omnes⁴ caelestes terrenosque proposuimus, confisi non defutura nobis Christicolarum principum populorumque auxilia. Sed ut eos in hanc expeditionem invitantes celerius excitemus - res enim urget - tria nobis remedia⁵ proponebantur.

¹ a MU

² nostrum MU

³ *omit.* T, MU

⁴ omnis T

⁵ remedium *interlin.* V

[4] In His inscrutable wisdom God has decided to place the burden of the Papacy on Our frail shoulders,¹ and as We see it, it is therefore up to Us to take the initiative in this matter. We shall do so gladly and eagerly, but this burden greatly surpasses Our own strength. We are unequal to this great task and not at all strong enough to alone repeal the advancing forces [of the Turks].² This is not just a matter of saving the Apostolic See, but if it was, it would be a worthy cause for all princes and all peoples who worship Christ to fight for her who is the head of the Church.³ But, indeed, it is the whole Christian religion which is now being blasphemed by terrible enemies, nay, not just blasphemed, but crushed, and if we do not come to its assistance, it will be ruined and utterly destroyed.

3. Three alternatives

[5] Therefore, since the whole Christian Commonwealth is at stake, the mother of us all, the Holy Catholic Church, in which we have been reborn and expect the Heavenly Kingdom, We have decided to make all of you partners in this venture and in our consultation. It is for this purpose that you have been summoned here today.

Hear now which of the various ideas [on the matter] We have decided upon, following the common advice of these our venerable brethren.⁴

As, first of all, We put Our hope in the mercy of God whose flock we are, We have decided to use all available resources on this enterprise and to spend all the earthly and heavenly treasures of the Church. We trust that when We do that, the Christian princes and peoples will come to Our aid. As We now invite them to this expedition, We would incite them to join up as quickly as possible, for the matter is truly urgent. To achieve that, three ways have been proposed to Us.

¹ Pius was elected pope on 19 August 1458, less than two months before the meeting where he gave the oration "*Ut apertum vobis*"

² After the Fall of Constantinople, the Turkish sultan, Mehmed II the Conqueror, had conquered Serbia and a number of Greek islands, and initiated the conquest of the Despotate of Morea, i.e. the Peloponnese

³ Already in his oration "*Audivi*" [1] (1436), sect. 21, Pius had said: *For great is the realm of the Turks, immense is the power of the Asians and enormous their riches. They have extended their empire from Asia to Europe, and they have occupied the whole of Greece as if they were the avengers of the destruction of Troy. To expel them from Greece would not be the task of a single city or state, but of the entire Christian world*

⁴ i.e. the cardinals

[6] Horum primum erat, ut missa ad singulos legatione eos adhortaremur contestaremurque et adjurarem, ne communem fidei et religionis nostrae causam desererent, insurgerent omnes Deo auspice pro ea decertaturi, quam regnis omnibus liberisque et vitae demum propriae praeferrere decet. Sed memoria repetentes id ipsum ab antecessoribus nostris factum parum profuisse, velut inefficax in tam urgenti periculo remedium dimittendum censuimus.

[7] Videbatur secundo loco eos omnes in hanc urbem {49r} Romanamque curiam ad nos evocandos esse, ut in commune de ineunda quamprimum expeditione tam sancta, tam necessaria, posthabitis ceteris curis omnibus, consultarem. Sed et in hoc parum spei repositum videbatur. Nam et locus est plerisque principibus, ut se huc conferant, perincommodus, et nos interea quiescentes intra sedem hanc nostram videremur expectationi nostrae minime satisfacere neque solito amplius adniti, paucisque credibile fieret eo nos¹ indefesso flagrantique studio in hanc expeditionem animatos esse, quo profecto sumus, et esse nos, detur modo vita, manifesto documento universus mundus intelliget².

¹ *omit.* MU

² mundus intelligit : mundus intelliget T

3.1. Dispatch of legates

[6] The first one was to send legates to all to exhort, enjoin, and urge them not to fail the common cause of our Faith and religion, so that all may rise up, under God's guidance, to fight for that which must come before all kingdoms, children, and even our own life.¹ But considering that this method has already been tried by Our predecessors to little effect, We believe that it is not an effective means in the present, urgent danger.

3.2. A congress in Rome²

[7] In the second place, We considered summoning all to come to Us, in this city and the Roman Curia, so that we could consult together on how to undertake as soon as possible this holy and necessary expedition, putting all other matters aside. But this method, too, seemed to give too little hope:³ for most princes it is extremely onerous to come here. And in the meantime We Ourselves would be resting peacefully in Our own residence and give the impression of not living up to Our own expectations and of doing nothing out of the ordinary. Therefore, only a few people would believe that We pursue the matter with untiring and burning zeal, and that We are really intent on this expedition. But that We certainly are, and if only We stay alive, all the world will understand it to be so when We prove it in practice.⁴

¹ In 1453, Bishop Piccolomini had urged Pope Nicolaus to send legates to the princes in the matter of a crusade, see above, and in 1455 he had complimented his direct predecessor, Pope Calixtus for having done so, cf. the oration "*Solent plerique*" [26] (1455 : *the most certain way to have the Christian kings and all the faithful nations submit willingly to you as the Vicar of Christ is to undertake a spirited and magnificent defense of our faith, just like you have inspired hope by making your vow, by promoting peace in Italy, and by designating wise legates, appearing completely intent on working, with all your power, to destroy the filthy and impious Turkish people.* [Sect. 22]

² In a letter, Pius' close collaborator and friend, later cardinal, Jacopo Ammanati, stated that the idea of a European congress on the crusade arose spontaneously in Pius' mind at the time, cf. Crivelli, p. 86, n. 4. This is apparently an error, cf. the Introduction

³ Indeed it had failed miserably under Pius' immediate predecessor, Calixtus, earlier in the same year (1458), see the Introduction

⁴ On the unsuitability of a Roman venue for the Congress, see Crivelli, p. 86, n. 2

[8] Restabat igitur, quod tertio loco propositum fuerat, ut non sermone solum, sed opera etiam ipso exemplum de nobis ceteris praeberemus, et relicta hac urbe, summorum pontificum patria, in locum ex omnibus magis idoneum commodumque, ad hostes versum, ad quem ex omni occidua ora convenire principes et magistratus quique possent, nos conferremus. In quo apparatus initiaque gerendi belli jam nunc auspicantes venientes principes praestolaremur a nobis propediem invitandos, cum quibus de ratione belli deque omnis rei administratione consultarem et, ubi consultum esset, *mature* exequeremur. Visa est haec sententia ceteris efficacior, quam nunc ideo vobis communem facimus.

[9] Congregationis locus aut in Utini civitate erit aut Mantuae, propter maximam utriusvis¹ in hoc opportunitatem. Horum uter praeferendus sit {48v} brevi deliberabimus. Qua in re etiam sententiam vestram, si quid visum fuerit, libenter audiemus. Vos modo, oratores, qui principum vestrorum corda nostis, liberis animis iudicium his de rebus vestrum, et quantum spei in unoquoque principum vestrorum ad hanc expeditionem adjuvandam collocare debeamus, in medium depromite, benedictionem ab omnipotenti Deo pro fide operaque hanc in rem vestra multiplicem suscepturi.

¹ utriusque MU

3.3. A congress in a place convenient for all

[8] In the third place there remained the proposal that We should set an example for the others not only in words, but also in acts, by leaving this City, the home of the supreme pontiffs, and travel to a place more suitable and convenient for all, facing in the direction of the enemies, where all princes and leaders¹ from the West may assemble easily. Though We are already considering how to prepare and begin the war, We shall await, there, the arrival of the princes whom We shall be inviting shortly and with whom We may deliberate on the reason for the war and on the conduct of the whole enterprise. After the deliberations, We shall promptly carry out [the decisions].² This course seems to be the more profitable one, and We have now informed you about it.

[9] The congress will take place either in Udine or in Mantua since both of these places are highly convenient.³ Which one is preferable, We shall discuss with you in a moment, and We shall gladly hear any opinions you may have. Ambassadors, you know the minds of your princes: please state your thoughts on these matters freely and let us know what contributions to the expedition We may expect from your princes. [In return] you will receive abundant blessings from omnipotent God for your faith and your efforts in this matter.

¹ “magistratus”

² Cf. Sallustius: *De bello Catilinae*, 1, 6-7: *Nam et prius quam incipias, consulto, et ubi consulueris, mature facto opus est*

³ cf. Crivelli, p. 86, n. 2

Appendix: Papal bull *Vocavit nos pius* of 13 October 1458^{1 2}

¹ After Zimolo's edition, in Crivelli: *De Expeditione*, pp. 91-96. Punctuation and orthography follows Zimolo's edition

² The text of the bull to a great extent builds on Piccolomini's earlier crusade orations

[1] {91}¹ Pius episcopus, servus servorum Dei, universis et singulis Christifidelibus has nostras litteras inspecturis salutem et apostolicam benedictionem.

[2] Vocavit nos pius et misericors Dominus ad sacram beati Petri sedem, vicesque dilectissimi Filii sui Domini nostri Iesu Christi debilibus humeris nostris commisit in terris. Pasturam gregis sui credidit, et alte fluctuantem pelago fidelis populi regere naviculam iussit. Gravis haec quidem nobis sarcina est, nec nostrae vires sunt, quae tanti regiminis ferre molem sufficiant. Procellosum est valde mare atque infestum, per quod nobis navigandum est. Nutat ac fatiscit carina, qua vehimur, trepidant ac deficient remiges, venti adversi sunt, et in horrida tempestate iactamur.

[3] Nam postquam Constantino principe pax reddita est ecclesiis, nunquam ea dominici gregis pressura fuit, quam modo cernimus. Nunquam adeo coartatos catholicae fidei limites superior aetas vidit. *Exiit olim in omnem terram sonus Apostolorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum.* Subiecerunt omnes fere reges terrae, omnes tribus, omnes populi colla sua Christo Domino, et salutaris fidei sacramentis imbuti, *gloriam in excelsis Deo per Unigenitum Filium eius et in terris pacem hominibus bonae voluntatis* acclamavere. Surrexit deinde annos iam supra octingentos pseudopropheta Mahomet, qui, blasphemans sacratissimam Trinitatem, non solum contribules suos, sed Aegyptios atque omnem Syriam a vera et orthodoxa religione avertit. Officinam² nostrae salutis, in qua Deus noster pro nostra redemptione pretiosum Sanguinem fudit, barbarus hostis invasit. Lectum illum purpureum et suavissimis fragrantem odoribus, in quo propter nos vita nostra obdormivit in Domino, spurcissimae Sarracenorum manus obtrectavere atque obtrectant, et quaestus tamen causa Christianis ostendunt.

[4] Recuperavit ea sancta loca Christiana virtus, aliquando zelo fidei atque armis potens, mox desidia atque ignavia perdidit. Paulatim deinde omnis Asia est amissa, et Libiae populi defecerunt. Ecclesiae pulcherrimae, quae invocabant Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, illique psalmos dies noctesque decantabant, nunc horridum atque abominandum Mahomet nomen implorant, et, relicto veri Dei cultu, nefandis {92} imbutae sacris obscoenis serviunt cerimoniais. Transmissum est Gaditanum fretum, et ad Hispanos usque Mahometis penetravere venena. Magna pars Baeticae a nobis aliena est, in qua regnum Sarraceni obtinent, quod Granatae vocant, nomini Cristiano apprime infensum.

¹ Pagination after Zimolo's edition

² *em. after Pius II: Constantinopolitana clades, sect. 24; officium G, H, MU*

[1] Pius, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God, to all Christians who see and read this letter: greetings and apostolic benediction.

[2] Pious and merciful God has called Us to the Holy See of Saint Peter and laid upon Our weak shoulders the task of representing here on Earth his beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. He has entrusted to Us the pasture of his flock and ordered [Us] to steer the ship of the faithful people as it is being tossed around upon the open sea. This is a heavy load for Us, and Our strength is not sufficient to carry the burden of this great charge. The sea We have to navigate is stormy and hostile, the boat we are sailing wavers and leaks, the rowers tremble and grow tired, the winds are against Us, and we being thrown around by a terrible storm.

[3] For since at the time of Emperor Constantine peace was given to the churches, the pressure on the Lord's flock has never been so great as we see today. No former age has seen the Catholic Faith reduced to so narrow boundaries. Once *the sound of the apostles hath gone forth into all the Earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world.*¹ Almost all the kings of the Earth, all tribes and all peoples bowed their necks to Christ the Lord, and provided with the sacraments of salutary Faith they praised *the glory of God in the highest through his Only Begotten Son and on Earth peace to men of good will.*² Then, more than 800 years ago there arose a false prophet, Muhammad, who blasphemed the Holy Trinity and turned not only his fellow tribesmen, but also the Egyptians and all of Syria away from the true and orthodox religion. A barbaric enemy has entered the workplace of our salvation, where our God shed his precious blood for our salvation. Dirty Saracen hands have defiled and still defile that purple and sweet-smelling couch where He who is our life *slept in the Lord*³ and they only show it to the Christians for money.

[4] Later, when Christian power was strong in fervent faith and weapons, it regained those holy places, but soon lost them again through indolence and weakness. Afterwards, all of Asia⁴ was gradually lost, and the peoples of Libya⁵ defected. The beautiful churches where they prayed to Our Lord Jesus Christ and where they sang psalms day and night are now used to invoke the terrible and abominable name of Muhammad, and - rejecting the worship of the true God - people have filled them with the horrible objects of their religion and use them for disgusting ceremonies. Having crossed the Strait of Cadiz, Muhammad's poison has now reached Spain. A large part of Baetica has been taken from us: there the Saracens have a kingdom called Granada, which is completely hostile to the Christian name.

¹ Psalms, 18, 5; Romans, 10, 18

² Luke, 2, 14

³ Acts, 7, 59

⁴ I.e. Asia Minor and the Middle East

⁵ I.e. Africa

[5] Ex altera parte, qua versus orientem Europa porrigitur, non potuit mare christianam religionem tueri. Barbara Turcorum gens, Deo et hominibus odiosa, ex orientali Scythia progrediens, Cappadociam, Pontum, Bithyniam, Troadam, Pisidiam, Ciliciam, et omnem, quam vocant, Minorem Asiam occupavit. Neque contenta his, impotentia et dissensionibus Graecorum freta, Hellespontum transmisit, omnesque ferme Graecanicas urbes Acticae, Boeotiae, Phocidos, Achaiae, Macedoniae et Thraciae occupavit. Restabat urbs regia Constantinopolis totius orientis columnae atque caput, patriarchalis atque imperatoria sedes, unicum Graeciae sapientiae domicilium, ubi tot magnificentissima templa, tot sacraria, tot palatia principum, tot nobilissimae civium aedes olim fuere, tot publica et privata opera ingenti sumptu, singulari industria constructa, ut exteri eo venientes, admirati splendorem urbis, non tam mortalium quam coelestium eam esse patriam dixerint. Hanc quoque diebus nostris, dum Latini inter se divisi Graecos deserunt, Turcorum crudelissima natio invasit, expoliavit, deque ea urbe triumphavit, quae toti Orienti leges dedit. Peloponnesus quoque, hac urbe devicta, armis capta est, et christianus populus in servitutem ductus. Acarnania nunc vastatur et Epirus, Servia, quae quondam Superior Moesia dicta, paucis exceptis, in potestatem hostium venit. Bosnenses, sivi Illirii, Dardani et Paeones tributa Turcis pendunt.

[6] Neque hoc modo quiescit efferata Turcorum rabies. Iniustae gentis dominus, taetra potius bellua quam rex appellandus, virosissimus draco potius dicendus quam imperator, sanguine humanum sitiens, coactis ingentibus copiis Ungaros urget; hinc Epirotas Albanosque vexat; et tumens opinione sui, sacrosanctum Evangelium omnemque Christi legem eversurum se iactitat; Christianis vero, ubicumque fuerint, vincula, verbera, caedes et horribiles cruciatus minatur. Non dormit hostis humani generis, sed *circuit quaerens quem devoret*. Hinc Turci premunt, inde insultant Saraceni.

[5] Also in the other direction, where Europe meets the East, the sea could not protect the Christian religion. The barbaric Turkish people, odious to God and to men, left Eastern Scythia and seized Cappadocia, Pontus, Bithynia, Troy, Pisidia, Cilicia, and all the so-called Asia Minor.

Not content with these [areas] and relying on the impotence and dissensions of the Greeks, they crossed the Hellespont and occupied almost all the Greek cities of Attica, Boetia, Phocis, Achaia, Macedonia, and Thracia. [Only] the royal city of Constantinople remained, pillar and head of the whole East, seat of patriarchs and emperors, unique home of Greek wisdom and learning, where there were so many magnificent temples, so many chapels, so many palaces of princes and noble mansions of the citizens, so many public and private works built at such immense cost and with such great labour that foreigners coming there would admire the splendid city and said that it was the home not of mortal, but heavenly beings. Now, in our days, while the divided Latins desert the Greeks, the cruel Turkish nation has invaded, conquered, and triumphed over that city, which once gave laws to the whole East. And when the city was defeated, the Peloponnese was conquered, too, and the Christian people carried off to slavery. Now they lay waste to Acarnania, and Epirus and Serbia – once called Superior Moesia – have with a few exceptions fallen into the enemies' power. Bosnia (or Illyria), Dardania, and Paeonia now pay tribute to the Turks.

[6] But still the frenzied Turks will not rest. The lord of this lawless people, who should rather be called a sinister monster than a king, or a foul dragon rather than a ruler, thirsts for human blood: having gathered immense forces, he now threatens Hungary. In the other direction he beleaguers Epirus and Albania. Arrogantly he boasts that he will destroy the Holy Gospel and all the law of Christ. He threatens Christians everywhere with chains, whips, murder, and horrible torture. The enemy of the human race¹ does not sleep, but *goeth about seeking whom he may devour*.² On one side the Turks are attacking,³ on the other side the Saracens.⁴

¹ The Devil

² 1. Peter, 5, 8

³ I.e. in the East, the Balkans

⁴ I.e. in the West, Spain

[7] Christiani principes, quibus Turci nulla ratione pares esse possent, inter se discordes, suas potius iniurias, quam Christi contumelias ulcisci contendunt, et privatas utilitates praeferunt publicis. Alii, marcentes otio, deliciis indulgent. Alii cumulantibus opibus inhiant. Neque sacerdotes, neque populares suum satis officium faciunt. Cultus divinus ubique imminutus est. Neque superiores iustitiae semitam tenent, neque inferiores obedientiae colla submittunt. Confusa omnia et turbata sunt. Blasfematur passim divina pietas, et in mandatis suis contemnitur Deus. Nullus timor, nulla reverentia legum. Hanc ob rem nobis iratus coeleste Numen prosperari adversum nos Turcorum arma permittit, et qui reliquis gentibus imperare solebant, Christianos infidelibus barbaris tributarios vectigalesque fecit.

[8] Ad haec nos tempora vocati sumus. Ut his malis obviamus, in Romano solio collocavit nos Deus. Difficilis sane provincia commissa {93} est nobis. Scimus imbecillitatem nostrum, et sub tanto dignitatis pondere mirum in modum trepidamus. Non tamen diffidimus animo, nec de Christi misericordia desperamus. Sed quanto inferior est minor virtus dignitate credita, tanto maius ex alto auxilium praestolamur. Etsi enim *inscrutabilia sunt magni Dei iudicia et investigabiles viae eius* (nec potest humana curiositas eius arcana pertingere), illud tamen exploratissimum est, *veritatem nostram, quae Christus est, non posse mentiri*.¹ Exstant eius oracula, ac in Evangelio sancto certa promissa, quibus affuturum se Dominus *usque ad consumationem seculi cum suo grege testatus est*. Confidimus in eius potentia, quia recte vadentibus non deerit. *Coelum et terra transibunt: verba eius promissaque numquam deficient, neque a lege sua praeteribit unus apex*. Fluctuat saepenumero apostolica navis, sed non demergitur; concutitur, sed non frangitur; oppugnatur, sed non expugnatur. Temptari sinit Deus electos suos, vinci non sinit.

¹ 1. John, 5, 6: *Christus est veritas*; Hebrews, 6, 18: *impossibile est mentiri Deum*; Titus, 1, 18: *qui non mentitur, Deus*

[7] The Christian princes, whom the Turks can in no way equal, quarrel with each other and would rather avenge their own injuries than the offenses against Christ, preferring their own private advantage to the public. Some live in idleness, others indulge in pleasures, and others again strive to gather riches. Neither priests nor laymen fulfil their duties. The worship of God is on the decline everywhere. Superiors do not follow the path of justice, and their subjects refuse to bow their necks in obedience. All is confusion and turmoil. The Divine Piety is being blasphemed everywhere, and God's commandments are scorned. No one fears or respects the laws. Therefore the Divinity has grown angry with us and permits the Turkish arms to prevail against us, and it has made the Christians who used to rule the other peoples pay tribute and tax to infidel barbarians.

[8] To such times have We been called. God has placed Us upon the Roman throne in order to confront these evils. It is indeed a difficult task that has been laid upon Us. We know Our own weakness, and we tremble greatly under the great weight of this office. But We do not become discouraged, and We do not lose faith in Christ's mercy. The smaller Our strength is, compared to the office bestowed upon Us, the greater is the help that We may expect from on High. For though *God's judgments are inscrutable and His ways unsearchable*¹ - human inquisitiveness can never penetrate them – it is absolutely certain that *our truth which is Jesus Christ cannot lie*. We have his oracles and his certain promises in the Gospel where the Lord declared that He will be with his flock *even to the consummation of the world*.² We trust in His power which will not fail those who walk in justice. *Heaven and Earth shall pass, but His words and promises shall never pass*,³ and *one tittle shall not pass of the law*.⁴ The apostolic ship is often thrown about, but it does not sink. It is hit, but it does not break. It is attacked, but not conquered. God allows his chosen ones to be tried, but not to be defeated.

¹ Romans, 11, 33: *quam incomprehensibilia sunt judicia ejus, et investigabiles viae ejus*

² Matthew, 28, 20: *ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem saeculi*

³ Matthew, 24, 35 (synopt.)

⁴ Matthew, 5, 18: *donec transeat caelum et terra, jota unum aut unus apex non praeteribit a lege, donec omnia fiant*

[9] Ob eam rem, quamvis tempestate nostra turbidum Ecclesiae statum invenerimus, et naufragosum nimis circa fidele navigium mare, non tamen fiducia deest, quin eo iuvante, qui de suis thesauris produxit ventos et illis imperat atque mari, salutis portum pertingere valeamus. Non possumus certa de futuris polliceri, quae Divina maiestas caeca caligine occulit. Illud nobis fas est promittere et palam praedicare, quia non derelinquit Deus sperantes in se. Extant in Sacris Literis exempla innumerabilia spem nobis optimam offerentia. Praeterimus mirabilia facta Moysi, et qui ei successit Iosue. Transimus Gedeonem, Iepthem, Sansonem et quos libri Iudicum memorant, parva saepe manu innumerabiles fudisse, cum ad divinum confugissent auxilium. Adolescentulum David adversus ferocientem Goliath manus nequaquam divina destituit. Ezechiae regi obsidionis mala ferenti non defuit angelus Domini, qui Sennacherib potentissimi regis trucidaret exercitum. In parva Bethuline civitate Iudaeos adversus Olophernem per manus pauperulae viduae tutatus est Dominus. Machabaei quamsaepe numerosas deleverunt Antiochi copias, quamvis essent ipsi paucissimi et inermes.

[10] Affuerunt in Domino confidentibus divina prasidia. *Non est abbreviata manus Domini*, quamvis nostra peccata creverint, quae oculos eius a nobis averterunt. Propter peccata nostra evenerunt nobis mala. Scelera nostra nos odiosos fecere. Iniquitates nostrae pessundaverunt nos. Aggravata est manus Domini super populum peccatorem, et tradita est flagellis christiana superbia. More suo agit nobiscum Deus. Quos diligit, corrigit atque castigat. Paterna haec sunt verbera, emendationem magis quam poenam exigentia. Quod si revertamur ad clementiam eius, emendantes opera nostra, et dolentes {94} super iniquitatibus poenitentiam faciamus, mutabit et ipse Deus sententiam suam, et furorem, quo erat in nos accensus, in amorem vertet et gratiam. Nunquam sua misericordia implorantibus denegatur. Pronus est ad veniam Dominus, neque nos aequa lance cum Turcis expendit. Nos filii adoptivi, illi emancipati; nos suae civitatis cives, illi hostes; nos intra Ecclesiam, illi extra. Nos sacramenta sua recipimus, illi contemnunt. Nihil nobis obstat, nisi quod divinam legem negligentes humana vincimur fragilitate, et ad peccandum proni saepe timorem Dei postponimus, neque, ut obligati sumus, divina praecepta servamus. Quod si convertamur, et corde simplici Dei misericordiam imploremus, non est dubium quin secunda omnia nobis fiant, et reconciliatus nobis Dominus super hostes nostros furorem suum extendat.

[9] Therefore, though We may have found the Church being buffeted by the storm and the ship of Faith close to floundering in the sea, We still trust that we shall be able to reach the harbour of salvation with the help of Him who from his repositories brought forth those winds and who commands them as well as the sea.¹ We cannot make sure promises about the future, which Divine Majesty has hidden in blind darkness.² But this We may justly promise and proclaim that God does not desert those who put their hope in Him. In Holy Scripture there are countless examples which give us excellent hope. We pass over the miraculous deeds of Moyses and his successor Joshua, and pass on to Gideon, Jephtha, Samson and those who are mentioned in the Books of Judges: often they took refuge in the help of God and defeated innumerable [enemies] with only a small force. God's hand did not fail young David when he fought ferocious Goliath.³ The angel of the Lord did not desert King Ezechias when he fought the siege, but slew the army of mighty King Sennacherib.⁴ And in the small city of Bethulia, the Lord protected the Jews against Holofernes by the hands of a poor little widow.⁵ And though the Machabees were few and weaponless, they often destroyed the great armies of Antiochus.⁶

[10] Those who trusted in the Lord had divine help. *The hand of the Lord is not shortened*,⁷ though our sins have grown and turned His eyes away from us. These evils have happened to us because of our sins. Our crimes have made us odious. Our iniquities have destroyed us. The hand of the Lord has grown heavy upon a sinful people,⁸ and Christian arrogance has been handed over to be flogged. [In this] God acts as is His wont: those whom he loves, he corrects and chastises.⁹ But this is the rod of a father, it is for improvement rather than punishment. If we turn back to His mercy, correct our ways, repent of our iniquities and make penance, then the Lord will turn his judgment and the anger he felt towards us into love and grace. Never is his mercy denied to those who pray for it. The Lord is prompt to forgive, and he does not treat us the same way as the Turks. We are the adopted sons, they are the ones who were sent away. We are citizens of His city, they are its enemies. We are inside the Church, they are outside. We receive His sacraments, they despise them. Nothing stands against us, unless we neglect divine law, are overcome by human weakness, fail to fear God being always prone to sin, and do not keep the divine commandments as we should. If we turn back and pray for God's mercy with a simple heart, there is no doubt that we shall prosper in all things, and that the Lord will be reconciled with us and turn His anger against our enemies.

¹ Luke, 8, 25: *et ventis, et mari imperat*

² Horatius: *Carmina*, 3.29: *prudens futuri temporis exitum caliginosa nocte permit deus*. The pope applies Horace's dictum to the Christian God

³ Samuel, 1, 27

⁴ Kings, 19, 35

⁵ Judith, 8 ff

⁶ Machabees, 1, 3, 16 ff

⁷ Isaiah, 59,1: *Behold the hand of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear. (Ecce non est abbreviata manus Domini, ut salvare nequeat; neque aggravata est auris ejus, ut non exaudiat.)*

⁸ 1. Kings, 5, 6: *Aggravata est autem manus Domini super Azotios*

⁹ Hebrews, 12, 6: *Quem enim diligit Dominus, castigat: flagellat autem omnem filium, quem recipit*

[11] Factum est periculum superioribus diebus. Nam cum intrasset Hungariam Turcorum ductor in manu potenti et in numerosissimo peditum equitumque exercitu, et confideret in potentia sua, cunctaque prosternere non dubitaret, passim tunc Crucesignati inermes et nudi, sola fide armati et coelesti muniti praesidio, tantum exercitum delevere. Quid sperandum fuerit, si convenientes in unum Christiani principes pro defensione catholicae fidei concorditer arma capessant? Non est tanta Turcorum potentia, quanta vulgo creditur, nec pares illorum vires nostris existunt. Quippe et numero militum ac robore splendoreque armorum et rei bellica peritia Christiani semper superiores fuere quam Turci. Quod si aliquando nostri exercitus victi sunt, divina magis permissione id actum est propter delicta nostra quam virtute hostium, nec unquam illis incruenta victoria obvenit. Nec nostri totis viribus ut illi pugnaverunt, sed pauci ex nostris adversus omnem illam eorum potentiam commiserunt certamen. Et tamen saepe felicem exitum invenere, quemadmodum paulo ante in Hungaria contigisse rettulimus.

[12] Et nunc ergo, si oculos nostros dirigamus in coelum, si renuntiantes nequitiae, clipeum fidei sumentes, adversus vivificae Crucis hostes cum bona fiducia militaverimus, certabit Dominus, et vexillum suum faciet nobiscum signum in bonum, et victoriam dabit in manu nostra, nec ultra permittet Christianis imperare Turcos. Hac nos spe ducti et animati, quae praedecessores nostri pro defensione catholicae religionis adversus Turcos ceterosque barbaros, christiani nominis hostes, inchoaverunt, totis conatibus prosequi decrevimus, et adjuvante Altissimo complere et perficere confidimus. Nam etsi fuit illis prudentia maior, consilium perspicacius, experientia diuturnior, desiderio tamen ac fervore tantae rei nulli eorum cedimus. Deus, qui tribuit voluntatem bene agentibus, potestatem prosequendi pro sua benignitate non deneget. Bellum adversus Turcos terra marique nostri praedecessores indixere. Hoc nunc gerere nostrum est. Neque detrectamus laborem, neque sumptus fugere animus est. Nihil erit in potestate nostra, quod in expeditionem tam sanctam, tam utilem, tam necessariam profundere recusemus. Nec nobis expensae graves erunt, nec taediosi labores.

[13] Verum, quia rem magnam sumus aggressuri, et {95} causa communis est quam prosequimur (agitur enim de tutela christianae fidei, in qua omnes renati sumus, et sine qua salvari non possumus), necessarium nobis visum est, quod communibus opibus atque viribus est agendum, id communi consilio tractandum esse. Volventes igitur animo, et sedula meditatione pensantes, quoniam pacto christianae vires ad decertandum tam utile bellum in unum coire possent, nullam expeditiorem viam reperimus, quam si christianos principes ac potentatus in unum aliquem locum convocemus, in quo, cum ipsis aut eorum oratoribus pleno mandato suffultis, per nos ipsos conveniamus, ac de tali expeditione tractemus, et tandem aliquid christiano dignum nomine concludamus.

[11] Actually, we have had a demonstration of this quite recently: a Turkish general entered Hungary with a powerful force and a very large army of infantry and horse. Trusting in his own power he was certain that could destroy all opposition. But then the crusaders, weaponless and bare, only armed with faith and Heaven's protection, destroyed his great army.¹ So, what may we not hope for if the Christian princes unite in the defense of the Catholic Faith and join arms? The power of the Turks is not so great as is commonly believed, and their strength is not as large as ours. Indeed, both in number and strength of soldiers, in splendour of arms, and in knowledge of war the Christians have always been superior to the Turks. If sometimes our armies have been defeated, this happened by divine permission because of our sins rather than because of the strength of the enemies, and all the victories they actually had have cost them much blood. Moreover, ours never fought with all their strength – as the Turks did – but only few of ours went to war against all their forces. Nonetheless, ours were often victorious in battle, as we just mentioned happened in Hungary.

[12] But now, if we look to Heaven, if we renounce evil and seize the shield of Faith, and if we fight the enemies of the life-giving Cross with confidence, then the Lord will fight, too, and his standard will become to us a sign for good, he will give the victory into our hands, and he will no longer allow the Turks to rule Christians. Led and inspired by this hope, We have decided to pursue with all our might what our predecessors undertook for the defense of the catholic religion against the Turks and other barbarians, enemies of the Christian name. And We trust that with the help of God on High We shall bring it to completion. For though their wisdom was greater, their intellect more acute, and their experience longer, we are at least their equal in desire and zeal for this great venture. In his kindness, God, who gives the will to men who do good, shall not deny Us the means to pursue this matter. Our predecessors declared war on land and at sea against the Turks. It is now Our [task] to direct this venture. We shall not decline this labour, nor do We intend to avoid the expenses. There is nothing in our power which We shall refuse to use on this holy, useful and necessary expedition. The expenses will not be too heavy or the labours irksome.

[13] But since We are undertaking a great venture in a common cause – for it concerns the protection of the Christian Faith in which we have all been reborn and without which we cannot be saved – We have found it necessary to deliberate in common about what must be done with joint resources and forces. Having considered and carefully reflected on how the Christian forces could be united in this useful war, We have come to the conclusion that the best way is to invite the Christian princes and powers to a place where We can meet with them or their plenipotentiary ambassadors and deliberate on the expedition and then decide on something which is worthy of the Christian name.

¹ Zimolo: *De expeditione*, p. 94, n. 2. Cf. Picotti, p. 68

[14] Cogitantibus autem de conventionis loco, duo nobis occurrerunt, vix trium dierum itinere inter se distantia, quae, pensatis rerum ac temporum conditionibus, satis opportuna esse videntur, Mantua scilicet ad Mincium sita fluvium, haud procul a lacu Benaco, et Utinum in agro Foroiuliensi. Nam Mantua, vicina montibus qui Galliam ac Germaniam ab Italia disterminant, eum situm habet, ut facile transalpini principes et Italiae potentatus eo conferre se possint. Ampla insuper est urbs, et rerum abundans, quae ad usum humanum sunt necessariae. Utinum quoque insigne oppidum est et magni populi capax, fertilitate circumiacentis agri et maris vicinitate ad conventus aptissimum celebrandos, rei etiam, quae tractanda est, comodissimum. Nam qui ex Italia contra Turcos terrestri profecturi sunt itinere, his Foroiulii primum occurrit. Galliarum quoque et Hispaniarum gentes, ac Rhenani Theutones hac iter in eandem expeditionem haud inconvenienter habuerunt. Huc accredit, quia Hungari, de quorum salute potissimum est agendum (sunt enim praecipui, qui tempestate nostra Turcorum vexantur armis, et murum se pro nostra religione constituunt), ab hoc oppido non procul absunt, facileque conventui Christianorum, ibidem celebrando, suas necessitates exponere poterunt, et inde consolationem opportunius commodiusque recipere. Nec carissimo in Christo filio nostro Friederico Romanorum imperatori semper augusto difficilis in eum locum transitus fuerit, si, quemadmodum de sua in commune bonum optima voluntate confidimus, eo transferre se voluerit, cum paterna eius dominia Foroiuliensi agro contigua sint.

[15] Volentes ergo cum divina ope, sicut ex debito pastoralis officii sumus obnoxii, christianae plebis saluti consulere, ac pro tutela nostrae religionis undique auxilia praesidiaque contrahere, de consilio et assensu venerabilium fratrum nostrorum Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae cardinalium, in altero ex locis praedictis ad Kalendas proximas lunias, pro capienda in hac re defensione, de communi deliberatione inter nos et cunctos Christifideles, qui principatu aliquot notabili potiuntur, conveniendi diem constituimus, et harum serie constitutum decernimus. Universos et singulos carissimos ac dilectos in Christo filios nostros, Romanorum imperatorem praefatum, ceterosque reges, et principes ecclesiasticos et seculares, duces, marchiones, communitates quoque, quae suis legibus vivunt et ad defensionem fidei aliquid praesidii afferre possunt, per viscera misericordiae {96} Domini nostri Iesu Christi obnixe hortamur, requirimus et monemus, ut ad praefixum diem in altero dictorum locorum per se ipsos, si aliquomodo queant, sin autem per legatos suos, viros graves et auctoritate insignes ac plena potestate munitos, prorsus adesse curent ac festinent; nec domi remaneant, nisi necessitas inevitabilis urgeat, sed nostrum potius sequantur exemplum.

[14] When We considered the venue of the conference, two places came to mind, barely three days distant from each other, which – when one thinks about the circumstances and the times – appear to be quite suitable, viz. Mantua at the River Mincio, not far from Lake Garda, and Udine in the region of Friuli.¹ For Mantua is close to the mountains that separate France and Germany from Italy and has a location which makes it easily accessible both for the transalpine princes and the Italian powers. Moreover, the city is big and abundantly provided with everything needful for human consumption. Udine is also an outstanding city, capable of housing a large population and - because of the fertility of the surrounding territory and the vicinity of the sea - very suitable for holding conferences and even most convenient with regard to matter to be discussed. For those from Italy who go over land against the Turks will first pass Friuli. Also the French and the Spanish and the Germans from the Rhinish territories going on the same expedition will have an easy route there. Moreover, the Hungarians are not far from this city. Their safety is the most important item on the agenda [of the conference] - for they are the people who in our time are most threatened by the Turkish arms and they form a bulwark for our religion. Thus, they will be easily be able to explain their difficult situation at a conference held in that city and to receive timely and suitably comforting [offers of help]. And since his paternal dominions are bordering upon Friuli, it will not be difficult for our beloved son in Christ, Friedrich, Emperor of the Romans, always August, to travel there if he intends to come, as We trust he will because of his excellent disposition regarding the common good.²

[15] Desiring with the help of God to take counsel for the safety of the Christian people, as We are obliged to by virtue of Our pastoral office, and to mobilize help and protection from all sides in defense of our religion, We have, on the advice and with the assent of Our venerable brothers, the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, decided and formally decree that the [opening] date of the conference to be held in one of the two aforesaid locations should be the First of next June. The purpose [of the conference is] to deliberate in common between Us and all Christians holding an important rulership concerning the defense in this matter. We urgently and by the mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ exhort, require and admonish all and sundry of Our dear and beloved sons in Christ, the aforesaid Emperor of the Romans, the other kings, the ecclesiastical and secular princes, the dukes, the margraves and those communities, which live by their own laws and may contribute to the defense of the Faith, to take care to be present on the aforesaid date in one of the two places mentioned, either in person or - if they are unable to [come themselves] - through ambassadors, important men of high rank provided with full powers. They should not stay at home except in case of absolute necessity, but rather follow Our own example.

¹ Picotti, pp. 60-65

² Picotti, p. 58

[16] Nos enim, ne quid ad res bene gerendas ex latere nostro desit, quamvis necessaria sit nostra praesentia in urbe Roma, nec possimus, sine magno incommodo nostro et terrarum Romanae Ecclesiae subiectarum damno et periculo, in alienas migrare provincias, quia tamen pluris facimus catholicae fidei defensionem quam Ecclesiastici Patrimonii tutelam, et spiritualia praeponimus temporalibus, relinquere ad tempus almam Romam nostramque sedem, carissimam sponsam, decrevimus, atque in die designato aut Mantuae aut Utini, concedente Altissimo, constituemur. Nec recusabimus ardua quaevis onera subire supportabilia nostris humeris, quae ad prosecutionem tam sacrosancti et necessarii operis nobis et iis, qui ad constitutum diem convenerint, expedientia visa fuerint aut quomodolibet opportuna. Neque enim nos sumus, qui pro rebus Ecclesiae Catholicae bene gerendis, pro tutanda religione, pro magnificando Christi nomine aut sumptus formidemus aut labores. Faxit tantum divina pietas, ne pro desiderio nostro praestetur impedimentum, quin ea mens nostra est, id stabile propositum ac certum quaevis incommoda, quaevis pericula parvi facere, ut necessitati orthodoxae fidei, cum Dei honore et christiani populi salute quieteque, consulamus.

[17] Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, tertio Idus Octobris, pontificatus nostri anno primo, 1458.

[16] Our own presence in the city of Rome is quite important, and We cannot travel to other provinces without great inconvenience to Ourselves and harm and peril to the lands subject to Roman Church. But we deem the defense of the Catholic Faith to be even more important than the security of the Patrimony of the Church, and We value the spiritual above the temporal.

To ensure that We have, on Our part, done all We can for the good management of this whole matter, We have therefore decided to leave, when the time comes, the pleasant City of Rome, Our See, Our dear bride, and with the permission of God on High to come to Mantua or Udine on the designated day. We shall not decline to bear any, even heavy, burdens if only Our shoulders can carry them and they seem to Us and those who assemble on the fixed date to be appropriate and in any way useful for the this holy and necessary venture. For We do not fear any labour or expense necessary for the good government of the affairs of the Church, for the protection of religion, and for the glorification of the name of Christ. May Divine Piety grant that Our desire be [fulfilled] without hindrance, for it is Our intention and Our firm and certain resolve to ignore all inconveniences and dangers in order to take counsel for the needs of the orthodox Faith, the honour of God, and the security and peace of the Christian people.

[17] Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the 13th of October, in the first year of Our pontificate, 1458.