



**Collected Orations of Pope Pius II. Edited and translated by  
Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. Vol. 5: Orations 21-25  
(1453-1455). Final Version (2025)**

Michael Von Cotta-Schönberg

**► To cite this version:**

Michael Von Cotta-Schönberg. Collected Orations of Pope Pius II. Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. Vol. 5: Orations 21-25 (1453-1455). Final Version (2025). Scholars' Press. 2019, 9786138916178. <hal-01588941v4>

**HAL Id: hal-01588941**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01588941v4>**

Submitted on 14 Aug 2025

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



HAL Authorization

# **Collected Orations of Pope Pius II. Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg**

**Vol. 5: Orations 21-25 (1454-1455)**

**Final Version (2025)**

## Abstract

Volume 5 of the *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II* contains five orations from the three-year period 1454-1455. They were delivered by Piccolomini in his capacity as imperial ambassador at three imperial diets held after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. They are generally considered to be some of the most outstanding and influential orations belonging to the genre of Renaissance (anti)Turkish orations, though in the end they proved to be unsuccessful.

## Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini; Aenas Sylvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetoric; 1450-1452; Holy Roman Empire; German Roman Empire; Imperial diets; German imperial diets; Deutsche Reichstage; 15<sup>th</sup> century; Papacy; Crusades against the Turks; Wars against the Turks; Humanist Turkish orations; Emperor Frederick III (Habsburg); Kaiser Friedrich III (Habsburg); Papa Pio II

## Editor/translator

Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg

Mag. Art. (University of Copenhagen)

Bachelier en Philosophie (Université de Louvain)

Emeritus Deputy Director / The Royal Library, Copenhagen

Emeritus University Librarian / University of Copenhagen

ORCID identity: 000-0001-8499-4142

e-mail: typsita@gmail

**Table of volumes in *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. 12 vols. Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg.**

1. General introduction
2. 1436-1444 (Orations 1-5)
3. 1445-1449 (Orations 6-13)
4. 1450-1453 (Orations 14-20)
5. 1454-1455 (Orations 21-25)
6. 1455-1457 (Orations 26-28)
7. 1458-1459 (Orations 29-42)
8. 1459-1459 (Orations 43-51)
9. 1459-1461 (Orations 52-63)
10. 1462-1464 (Orations 64-77)
11. 1454, 1459 (Orations 78-80). Orthographical profiles. Indices
12. Appendix: Ambassadors' orations to Pope Pius II



## Table of contents

Abbreviations	5
21. Quamvis omnibus (16 May 1454, Regensburg)	9
22. Constantinopolitana clades (15 October 1454, Frankfurt)	89
23. In hoc florentissimo (25 February 1455, Wiener Neustadt)	223
24. Si mihi (25 March 1455, Wiener Neustadt)	329
25. Optasset (23 Apr 9 April 1455, Wiener Neustadt)	385

## Abbreviations

### Works

**AC** = Acta Cusana

**APD** = Acta pontificum danica

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

**CB** = *Concilium Basiliense*.

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

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

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

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

**DBI** = Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**HA** = Eneas Silvius Piccolomini: *Historia Austriacis*. Teil 1: Einleitung von Martin Wagendorfer. 1. Redaktion ed. von Julia Knödler. Teil 2: 2./3, ed. Martin Wagendorfer. 2 vols. Hannover, 2009. (Monumenta Germaniae 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).

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

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

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

**MPL** = Migne. Patrologia Latina.

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

### Others

**\*\*** Lead manuscript

**CE** = Common Era

**BCE** = Before the Common Era

**DV** = Digital version

Editions A: Editions from 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> c.

Editions B: Modern critical editions.



**Oration “*Quamvis omnibus*” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (16 May 1454, Regensburg). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg**

**(Collected Orations of Pope Pius II; 21)**

## **Abstract**

The Fall of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, to the Ottoman Turks in May 1453 created widespread and justified fear in Europe. It might reasonably be assumed that the young Turkish sultan, Mehmed II, would pursue his war of expansion and move further into European territories. The two international institutions of Europe, the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy, were compelled to react, although both incumbents, Emperor Friedrich III and Pope Nicolaus V, were peaceful men, averse to risk-taking. After some procrastination, the emperor convened a conference of the European rulers and German princes in the city of Regensburg in May 1454. The driving force at this meeting was his counsellor and senior diplomat, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena. Piccolomini gave the opening speech, in which he dramatically described the damage inflicted upon Europe by the Turks and made a rousing appeal for a joint European war against them. The aim of the war would be twofold: firstly, to avenge the injuries suffered by the Europeans and regain the territories lost to the Turks and the Arabs, and secondly, to protect Europe against a Turkish invasion. Although the audience were moved, caution prevailed, and the only result of the diet was to agree on war in principle and to call for another diet to further discuss the matter.

## **Keywords**

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Kaiser Friedrich III (Habsburg); Emperor Frederick III (Habsburg); Sultan Mehmed II; Sultan Mehmet II; Crusades; Crusade against the Turks; The Ottoman Turks; The Ottomans; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetoric; Diet of Regensburg, 1454; Reichstag in Regensburg, 1454; Fall of Constantinople, 1453; 1453; 15<sup>th</sup> century

## Note to the reader

Although Enea Silvio Piccolomini's crusade orations at the German diets in 1454-1455 have been admirably edited in the *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, they could not – of course - be excluded from the present comprehensive, bilingual edition of Pius II's orations. As a matter of principle, they have been collated directly for the purpose of the present edition, with special care to differentiate between the various versions of the text.

The RTA-edition of the "*Quamvis omnibus*" was prepared by Helmut Weigel and Henny Grüneisen. All readers interested in this oration should also consult the RTA-edition with its excellent introduction, its comprehensive list of manuscripts and editions, its critical apparatus, and its copious notes.

Michael von Cotta-Schönberg



## Table of contents

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context
2. Themes
  - 2.1. Fall of Constantinople
  - 2.2. Turkish threat to Europe
  - 2.3. War against the Turks
  - 2.4. Urbs capta
3. Date, place, audience, and format
4. Text
  - 4.1. Version A
    - 4.1.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.1.2. Editions
  - 4.2. Version B
    - 4.2.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.2.2. Editions
  - 4.3. Version C
    - 4.3.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.3.2. Editions
  - 4.4. Present edition
5. Sources
  - 5.1. Flavio Biondo
  - 5.2. Niccolò Sagundino
  - 5.3. Francesco Filelfo
  - 5.4. Isidore of Kiev
  - 5.5. Leonardo of Chios
  - 5.6. Jacopo Tedaldi
  - 5.7. Letters of Piccolomini
  - 5.8. Survey of quotations
6. Bibliography
7. Sigla

## **II. VERSION A: TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

- 0. Introduction [1-2]
- 1. Reasons for the conference: Turkish attacks on Europe [3-14]
  - 1.1. Fall of Constantinople [4-7]
    - 1.1.1. Non-aggressiveness of the Byzantine Emperor [4]
    - 1.1.2. Turkish preparations for war [5]
    - 1.1.3. Conquest of Constantinople [6]
    - 1.1.4. Profanation of holy things [7]
    - 1.1.5. Cultural loss to Christianity [8]
    - 1.1.6. Conclusion: Need for revenge [9]
  - 1.2. Turkish threat to Europe [10-14]
    - 1.2.1. Strategic position of Constantinople [10]
    - 1.2.2. Mehmed's ambition to conquer Europe [11-13]
  - 1.3. Mandate of imperial ambassadors [14]
- 2. Purpose of the conference: War against the Turks [15-23]
  - 2.1. The emperor's part [16]
  - 2.2. Need for atonement, prayer, and piety [17]
  - 2.3. Islamic conquests [18-19]
  - 2.4. Call for action [20]
  - 2.5. Christian military superiority [21-22]
  - 2.6. The allies [23-24]
- 3. Conclusion [25-27]

## **III. VERSION B AND C: TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

- 0. Introduction [28-29]
- 1. Reasons for the conference: Turkish attacks on Europe [30-35]
  - 1.1. Fall of Constantinople [30-31]
    - 1.1.1. Conquest of Constantinople [30]
    - 1.1.2. Profanation of holy things [31]
  - 1.2. Turkish threat to Europe [32-35]
    - 1.2.1. The strategic position of Constantinople [32]
    - 1.2.2. Mehmed's ambition to conquer Europe [33-35]
- 2. Purpose of the conference: War against the Turks [36-45]
  - 2.1. Christian military superiority [37]
  - 2.2. Mandate of imperial ambassadors [38]
  - 2.3. Need for atonement, prayer, and piety [39]
  - 2.4. The emperor's part [41]

- 2.5. Call for action [42]
- 2.6. The allies [43-45]
- 3. Conclusion [46]

**Appendix: Oration of Urban II, after Flavio Biondo**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

## 1. Context<sup>1</sup>

During the first half of the fifteenth century, it had become quite clear that the Ottoman military expansion constituted a serious threat not only to the Byzantine Empire (or the Greek Empire, as it was called then) but also to Europe as a whole. The Italian humanists had caught on quickly, and their anti-Turkish works in the form of orations, public letters to European rulers, treatises, poems, and other writings soon developed into a literary genre.<sup>2</sup>

Already in his first oration, the *“Audivi”* [1], delivered to the fathers of the Council of Basel in November 1436, Piccolomini had addressed the Turkish issue, saying, among other things about the Turks, that

*... 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.* [Sect. 21]

In his oration to Emperor-Elect Albrecht II, the *“Quid est”* [3], of April 1438, he had designated the Turks as one of the enemies of the Holy Roman Empire, whom the new emperor would have to fight.<sup>3</sup>

In his oration *“Si Putarem”* [5] to Emperor Friedrich III of April 1444, he referred to Pope Eugenius IV’s crusade against the Turks as one of the great merits of this pope.<sup>4</sup>

In his oration *“Et breviter me hodie”* [10] to Pope Eugenius IV in July 1446, he again mentioned the pope’s meritorious fight against the Turks:

*Often help has been sent against the Sultan; you are preparing a fleet against the Turks; and you are spending great sums in order to protect the Hungarians, who are like a wall protecting the Christian faith, and to expel the Turks from Europe and free the miserable Greeks from their hands, those who were once the masters of the East but now appear to be slaves.* [Sect. 3]

---

<sup>1</sup> CO, I, 26; RTA 19, 1, esp. pp. 1-3, 258-266; Ady, pp. 126-129; Bisaha; Boulting, pp. 204-209; Helm-rath: *Pius*; Helm-rath: *German*; Meuthen; Mitchell, pp. 113-114; Nowak, pp. 130-131; Reinhardt,

p. 162-165; Schwoebel, p. 32-33; Setton, II, ch. 3 and pp. 151-153 ; Stolf, pp. 282-284; Toews, pp. 261-251; Voigt, II, III, 3, pp. 105-119

<sup>2</sup> See Hankins

<sup>3</sup> Oration *“Quid est”* [3], sect. 3-4

<sup>4</sup> Oration *“Si putarem”* [5], sect. 38

His first full oration on the Turks was the “*Quamvis in hoc senatu*” [17], in August 1451, to the ambassadors of the Duke of Burgundy at the imperial court. Here he developed some of the themes he would use in later Turkish orations, e.g., the emperor’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the atrocities of the Turks and the Saracens, their attacks on Christianity, and – not the least – the need for a concerted European military response to the Turkish expansion.

And at the occasion of the imperial coronation in Rome in 1452, Piccolomini had, on behalf of the emperor, held the oration “*Moses vir Dei*” [19], in which he formally and officially petitioned Pope Nicolaus V for a crusade with the aim of regaining the territories lost to the Turks and the Arabs, including Jerusalem.

All to no avail. The two leaders of Christian Europe, the emperor and the pope, were both quite unwarlike and averse to risk-taking. And the other kings and princes were engaged in their own wars, both external and internal, and the most important of them, King Charles VII of France, moreover, considered the Turkish venture an unrealistic dream, not to be seriously pursued. The only ruler who truly desired a crusade against the Turks was Duke Philippe III of Burgundy.<sup>1</sup>

In May 1453, Constantinople fell to the onslaught of the Ottoman army under the leadership of the young sultan, Mehmed II. Though the Byzantine Empire lingered on for some years more at Trebizond, the Fall of Constantinople and the killing of its emperor, Constantine XI Dragases Palaeologus, were generally considered to be the end of the Byzantine Empire and the opening of a new phase in the Turkish expansion towards Europe.

The Fall of Constantinople shocked Europe and created a flurry of activity in the chanceries.<sup>2</sup> As the nominal political head of Europe and the champion (*advocatus*) and protector of the Church, the emperor evidently had to do something.

After mature reflection and some procrastination, as was his wont, he decided to call a conference on the matter that would be both a pan-European conference of princes and a German imperial diet. He thus set into motion a procedural machinery that would, if successful, result in a common European military response to Ottoman aggression. In this endeavour, he was ably assisted by his counsellor and senior diplomat, the Bishop of Siena, Enea Silvio Piccolomini.<sup>3 4</sup>

Though the Ottoman threat was in itself quite real and did require a concerted European military response, a number of other issues actually made the Turkish venture an interesting undertaking

<sup>1</sup> Paviot; Meuthen, pp. 21-23

<sup>2</sup> Schwoebel, ch. 1

<sup>3</sup> Meuthen, p. 16; Toews, p. 242: *The imperial-papal response to the Turkish menace was largely*

*due to the activities of Aeneas Sylvius*

<sup>4</sup> See Piccolomini’s own Report on the diet in Regensburg, sometimes called the *Historia de Ratis-*

*ponensi dieta* (or similarly), published as a letter to Bishop Janos Vitez of Grosswardein (Varad) in Summer 1454 (WO, III, 1, pp.492-563)

both for the empire and the papacy<sup>1</sup> as well as for Piccolomini personally. Politically, both the empire and the papacy would gain from a great and successful enterprise conducted under their auspices. Financially, they might profit from the sale of indulgences to support a crusade. And as for Piccolomini himself, he had an overriding urge to be engaged in important affairs of state, and, moreover, a great cause like a crusade might further his own ecclesiastical ambitions, i.e., the cardinal's hat.

These motives have been unmercifully described by Piccolomini's 19<sup>th</sup>-century German, protestant biographer, Georg Voigt.<sup>2</sup> As concerns Piccolomini, Voigt's analysis, however, tends to overlook two things: Firstly, Piccolomini's geopolitical assessment of the enormous Turkish military threat to Europe was, in fact, correct and would shortly be proven to be so.<sup>3</sup> And secondly, Voigt's personal - and quite bigoted - aversion to Piccolomini made him blind to the complexity of his character and the genuineness of his religious development, in which the crusade became a guiding theme of faith, devotion, generosity, and courage – all other motives notwithstanding, though they were certainly there.

At any rate, after the Fall of Constantinople, the crusade against the Turks became the main focus of Piccolomini's activities, first in his remaining period as a top imperial advisor and diplomat (1453-1456), later as a cardinal of Pope Callixtus III (1457-1458), whose mind was firmly fixed on the crusade, and finally as pope (1458-1464).

The imperial diet, summoned by the emperor to discuss a military response to the Turkish war of expansion, met in Regensburg in May 1454.<sup>4</sup> At the beginning, it was not well-attended, mostly because the emperor did not participate personally. However, when the Duke of Burgundy arrived, the conference gained in status<sup>5</sup> – and for Piccolomini personally, the ducal presence gave birth to the illusion of having the duke as a strong European partner in the Turkish venture, an illusion that would last for a decade - even forming the basis for his later crusading strategy - until it was shattered, painfully, during the last year of his own pontificate.

By this time, the general scare caused by the Fall of Constantinople almost a year before had abated considerably, and the Europeans were back at their political bickering, their regional conflicts and wars, their discouragement caused by former defeats at the hands of Turks, and – for some, like the emperor - their secret satisfaction that buffer states like Hungary would have to deal with the Turks before these became an imminent threat to themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Toews, p. 242

<sup>2</sup> Voigt III, pp. 98-118

<sup>3</sup> Setton, II, p. 149

<sup>4</sup> Piccolomini wrote a lengthy report on the diet, see CRDM, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Du Fresne de Beaucourt, V, 398-399: *Le duc de Bourgogne ne voulut pas perdre l'occasion de manifester hautement ses intentions au sujet de la Croisade: il déclara qu'il était prêt à entrer en cam-*

*pagne à la tête de soixante mille hommes si les autres princes voulaient faire comme lui*

Piccolomini himself was quite aware that it would not be an easy matter to mobilise the Europeans in a joint military venture against the Turks.<sup>1</sup> But this was the task he wanted, and one that the emperor had assigned to him. And if oratorical arts and diplomatic skills could clinch the matter, he was definitely the right person to do it.

Since its purpose was to present arguments for a certain course of action, the oration he gave at the beginning of the congress, the "*Quamvis omnibus*", belongs to the deliberative genre of the classical division of orations (deliberative, judicial, and panegyric). More significantly, however, it may be considered to form part of the genre of crusade orations developed by the Italian humanists.<sup>2</sup>

The main subject of the oration was a plea for the participants to decide on a joint European military response to Turkish aggression, with a view not only to ending Turkish expansion into Europe but also to recovering territories formerly lost to the Turks and the Arabs.

In his report on the Diet in Regensburg, Piccolomini said that his own oration was followed by a *mirum silentium*, whereupon Ulrich Sonnenberger, Bishop of Gurk rose and gave a translation into German.<sup>3</sup> Voigt drily comments *dass der Grund dieses Schweigens war vielleicht der Verlegenheit der Anwesenden, deren viele die Worte Enea's nicht eher verstanden bis sie der Bischof von Gurk in deutscher Sprache zusammengefasst!*<sup>4</sup>

In his *Commentaries*, written 8-10 years later, Pius described the oration in these words:

*Aeneas then delivered a speech on behalf of the emperor, in which he stated clearly and simply how great a blow the fall of Constantinople was for all of Christendom, and what terrible dangers would ensue if no action were taken to check the Turks; he then issued a general call to arms in defence of the common good.*"<sup>5</sup>

Piccolomini's contemporary biographer, Campano, had this to say about the Diet in Regensburg:

*... qua de causa peregit et conventum Ratisponae, ubi progressum in contionem omnibus qui aderant excusisse lacrimas constat, deploratis Graecorum calamitatibus et recenti clade Constantinopolitana in medium exposita.*<sup>6</sup>

And his other biographer, Platina, commented:

---

<sup>1</sup> See his letter to Cardinal Carvajal of 11 April 1454 (EPI, 7: 501)

<sup>2</sup> On Piccolomini's use of the deliberative genre in the case of the

oration "*Constantinopolitana clades*" [22], see Helmrath: *Political-Assembly*, pp. 90-91

<sup>3</sup> WO, III, 1, p. 547

<sup>4</sup> Voigt, III, p. 113

<sup>5</sup> CO, I, 26 (Meserve, I, p. 26)

<sup>6</sup> Zimolo, p. 23



*Aeneas non multo post ad conventum Ratisponensem mictitur, ubi imperatorias vices gerens, presente Philippo, Burgundionum duce, et Ludovico Baiovariae, de immanitate Turchorum et de calamitate christiane reipublice tanta contentione dixit, ut omnibus gemitum et lacrimas excusserit.*<sup>1</sup>

Helmrath, who otherwise does not agree<sup>2</sup> with Pertusi's assessment of the oration as *forse la più interessante* of Piccolomini's Turkish orations, does say about it that *it both acted as the prelude and established the parameters for what followed* at the later diets.<sup>3</sup>

For though the diet in Regensburg agreed to the war in principle, the only direct result of its deliberations was the decision to hold another diet, which eventually took place in Frankfurt.

It may be mentioned that Piccolomini also gave the concluding oration at the diet, the "*Verba tua*" [78].

## 2. Themes

### 2.1 Fall of Constantinople

The first major theme of the oration is the Fall of Constantinople as another terrible injury inflicted upon the Europeans in the long Turkish war of aggression and expansion. This ought to be a cause for sorrow and anger in Europe:

*Oh, what great and intolerable shame on the Christian people! I believe that the heart of every Christian who hears about this will be moved and enflamed with anger. Is there any Christian who will not cry from sorrow when hearing it.* [Sect. 31]

### 2.2 Turkish threat to Europe

But the Europeans ought not only to feel sorrow and anger; they should feel fear!

---

<sup>1</sup> Zimolo, p. 103

<sup>2</sup> Helmcrath: *Pius*, p. 92

<sup>3</sup> Helmcrath: *German*, p. 59

The geographic position of Constantinople had been chosen by Emperor Constantine I the Great, partly to protect the Roman Empire against the incursions and depredations of Barbarian peoples from Asia and to better control the Mediterranean area. Now that it had fallen into the hands of the Barbarian Turks, it became a mortal strategic threat against Europe, as it provided them with a secure basis for expeditions against the Mediterranean countries and a strong point of access to the Balkans and Hungary.

There was no justification for complacency in the face of this threat since the Turkish sultan, Mehmed II, had highly belligerent ambitions.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, he was already mobilising his armies for a great military expedition towards the West and had begun to conquer the Greek islands one after the other:

*... he is contemplating even greater things and is gathering large armies and great fleets, intending to invade the Christian lands one after the other, by land and by sea. Indeed, he thinks that he can annihilate the Christian cause. [Sect. 33]*

## 2.3 War against the Turks

The emperor had convened the meeting in Regensburg in order to invite the Christian European powers to participate in a joint war against the Turks. Apart from revenge against the Turks, this war would have two strategic aims: the first, and foremost, to protect Europe against the Turks, and the second to reclaim the Eastern territories lost to the Turks and Arabs in former wars:

*Let us reach a decision that will allow us not only to defend what remains of Christianity but even to recover what has been lost. [Sect. 42]*

## 2.4 Urbs capta

To arouse and engage the feelings of the audience in this matter, Piccolomini exploited the Urbs Capta motive of classical literature and the theme of Turkish atrocities, which he developed further in his later Turkish orations:<sup>2</sup>

*The nobles of the city were slaughtered, monks and priests were subjected to horrible torture, holy virgins were taken away to be raped, matrons and girls suffered the pleasure of the victors, boys were killed in the arms of their parents, and an infinite number of people were*

---

<sup>1</sup> Meuthen, p. 10

<sup>2</sup> See the notes to the oration "Constantinopolitana Clades",

RTA, 19, 2, pp. 509. See also Smith, and Meuthen, p. 12

*carried into captivity and permanent slavery. Who can talk about such things without tears? I shudder even as I tell them.* [Sect. 30]

### 3. Date, place, audience, and format

The date of delivery was 16 May 1454.

The venue was the meeting hall used for the diet in Regensburg.

The audience consisted of the participants in the conference of European and German princes, summoned by the emperor to deliberate on a European military response to the Turkish conquest of Constantinople and the destruction of the Byzantine Empire.

The format was a diplomatic and political oration held on behalf of the emperor.

### 4. Text<sup>1</sup>

The text is extant in three versions:

- Version A included in Piccolomini's report on the Diet of Regensburg 1454, in the form of a letter to the Hungarian, Janos Vitez, Bishop of Várad (from whom it would undoubtedly reach the Hungarian court), dated 1 June 1454, i.e., only a couple of weeks after it was delivered on 16 May, often called the *Historia de Ratisponensi Dieta*,<sup>2</sup>
- Version B<sup>3</sup> individually transmitted and included in a number of humanist collective manuscripts, and
- Version C included in the Collected Orations of Pius II, compiled in 1462 under Pius' direct supervision.

The question is how these three versions are related. There are two likely models:

---

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II's orations, see COR, 1: 5

<sup>2</sup> Or *Historia de Dieta Ratisponensi*

<sup>3</sup> Further studies of the manuscripts containing this version are

necessary to determine if Version B actually covers two or more editorial subversions

In model one, advanced by the RTA editors of the acts of the Diet of Regensburg in 1969, there are basically two versions of the text: Firstly, the “original” text of the oration, as individually transmitted, e.g., in humanist collective manuscripts (B), and comprising various filiations, due to scribal errors<sup>1</sup>. And secondly, the text in Piccolomini’s report on the Diet (A) as a special version composed for that report. The editors wrote: *Eine Überarbeitung liegt unstreitig in der Fassung vor, die Enea der “Historia vom Regensburger Tag” einverleibt hat. Sie erweitert den ersten Teil durch Übernahmen aus anderen von Enea verfassten Schriftstücken und lässt den zweiten Teil so gut wie gänzlich weg.*<sup>2</sup> Mansi appears to support this model, noting in the margin of his edition of Version C: *Integra etiam inseruit Aeneas in sua histor. Diaetae Ratisponensis quam ex Mss. Cod. Lucens. in append. hujus Collectionis ego primus evulgo, sed more solito haec secundis curis ab autore suo reformata est; quare ab illa in verbis dispositione saepe discrepat.*<sup>3</sup>

In model two, the early version is the one included in Piccolomini’s report on the Diet (A). Later, Piccolomini, as was his wont, revised the text, producing version (B).<sup>4</sup> And still later, in 1462, the pope made a final revision (C) for inclusion in the Collected Orations. That (B) predates (C) is shown by the pattern of textual variants and by the title in manuscript W, chosen to represent the manuscript containing this version. The title says that the oration was delivered by Piccolomini when Bishop of Siena,<sup>5</sup> which means that the text is not later than December 1456, when Piccolomini was appointed cardinal (and his cardinal’s title would somehow have been referred to in the title),<sup>6</sup> whereas (C) dates from the middle of 1462.

The following observations concerning this issue may be made:

- If Piccolomini had rewritten his original version for his Report on the Diet, presumably improving on his original text, it is not clear why he would not use that version in the Collected Orations of 1462.
- The RTA editors present no evidence that the version in the manuscripts collated by them predate Piccolomini’s report on the Diet of Regensburg.

<sup>1</sup> The editors only note that the manuscript in Bibl. Ambrosiana, the cod. I92 inf. (see below under Version C), together with the other manuscripts *geben weitere Filiationen dieser Fassung (the “original” version)* (RTA, 19, 1, p. 265)

<sup>2</sup> RTA, 19, 1, p. 265

<sup>3</sup> MA, I, p. 251

<sup>4</sup> Piccolomini usually revised the text of his orations after delivery, and sometimes several times and importantly so, as is the case with both the “*Audivi*” [1] (1936), the “*Fateor*” [15] (1951), the “*Moyses vir Dei*” [19] (1952), and the “*In hoc florentissimo*” [23] (1455)

<sup>5</sup> Oratio pro parte Invictissimi principis et domini domini Fride-

rici Romanorum Imperatoris etc. in facto Passagii facta in dieta Ratisponensi per Reverendum patrem dominum Eneam Epicopum Senensem etc. que celebrata fuit in mense Maii Anno domini 1454

<sup>6</sup> Or at least not later than August 1458, when Piccolomini was elected pope, which would be reflected in the title of the oration

- The texts collated for the RTA edition, mostly representing (B), are quite obviously much more closely related to the version from 1462 (C) than the version in the report (A).

To determine the relationship between the various versions of the oration, further study is necessary, including a codicological study of the manuscripts with a view to assessing their dates and chronological relationship, and a critical edition of Piccolomini's Report on the Diet with a view to determining if there are various versions of that report and how they might be related to the other versions of the oration.

It is worth noting that Version A much more fully than Versions B and C treats the chain of events leading to the Fall of Constantinople (non-aggressiveness of the Byzantine emperor, Mehmed's military preparations), the conquest of the city itself (cultural loss to Christianity), and the extent of past Islamic conquests. The changes in content deserve further study in the context of a broader analysis of the development of Pius' crusade discourse over the years.

## 4.1. Version A

### 4.1.1. Manuscripts

Piccolomini's Report on the Diet of Regensburg, with Version A, is extant in a number of manuscripts in European libraries.

### 4.1.2. Editions

- *Pius II: Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759 / vol. III, pp. 54-65  
[According to Mansi, the text was based on a manuscript (unspecified) in Lucca – now probably in the Archivio Diocesano Storico Lucca]
- *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Hrsg. von Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918 / vol. III, 1, pp. 538-547  
[Based on Mansi's text]

## 4.2 Version B

### 4.2.1. Manuscripts<sup>1</sup>

Four manuscripts, all collated in the RTA-edition (some selectively), represent Version B, copied individually and included in a number of humanist collective manuscripts:

- **München / Bayerische Staatsbibliothek**  
Clm 8482, ff. 97r-100v
- **Paris / Bibliothèque Nationale**  
F. latin 6225, ff. 2r-6r
- **Venezia / Biblioteca Marciana**  
Lat. XI.80 (3057), ff. 314r-316v
- **Wien / Österreichische Nationalbibliothek**  
Cod. 3420, ff. 167v-170v (**W**) \*

Other manuscripts containing Version B are:

- **Budapest / Országos Széchényi Könyvtár**  
Clmae 372, ff. 31v-39r
- **München / Bayerische Staatsbibliothek**  
Clm 70, ff. 362r-364v  
Clm 8482, ff. 97r-100v
- **Schlägl / Stiftsbibliothek**  
Cpl 54, ff. 167r-170v
- **Trento / Biblioteca Capitolare**  
86, 130v-135v
- **Trieste / Biblioteca Civica A. Hortis**  
II 5, 63v-67r

---

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

- **Wien / Österreichische Nationalbibliothek**  
Ser. Nov. 127092, ff. 67r-68v

#### 4.2.2. Editions

Version B has been edited in the

- *Deutsche Reichstagsakten* (RTA). Bd. 19, 1. Göttingen, 1969, pp. 265-270

### 4.3. Version C

#### 4.3.1. Manuscripts

Version C is included in six of the seven extant manuscripts containing the Collected Orations of Pius II.

- **Mantova / Biblioteca Comunale**  
100 A-IV-26, ff. 87-92v **(F)** \*
- **Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana**  
97 inf., ff. 57v-61v **(E)** \*
- **Rom / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**  
Chis. J.VI.211, ff. 58v-62v **(D)** \*  
Chis. J.VIII 284, ff. 39v-42v **(A)** \*  
Chis. J.VIII 286, ff. 84r-90r **(C)** \*  
Vat. lat. 1788, ff. 54v-58v **(B)** \*

Of these manuscripts, only E was collated (selectively) in the RTA-edition.

The text is not included in the seventh manuscript containing the papal compilation of orations, i.e., the Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana, 544.

#### 4.3.2. Editions

Version C was edited once, by Mansi:

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759 / vol. I, pp. 251-258 **(MA)**  
[Based on the manuscript E in Milan]

#### 4.4. Present edition

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

*Text:*

Version A: The text is the one published by Mansi.

Version B: the text is that of the manuscript Österreichische Nationalbibliothek / Cod. 3420 **(W)**. For the other manuscripts containing this version, the reader is referred to the RTA-edition.

Version C: the text is based on all 6 manuscripts containing the version, with the BAV / Chis. J.VIII.284 **(A)** as the lead text.

*Presentation:*

The latin text of Version A and Version B/C are published successively. Identical passages in the two versions (A / BC) are given in bold letters (no account being made of differences in grammatical form, nor of et/ac/atque, nor of word order).

Notes are only given to Version B/C, except for passages only occurring in A.

*Pagination:*

Version A: The pagination is that of Mansi's edition of Piccolomini's Report on the Diet.

Version B/C: The pagination is that of the BAV / Chis. J.VIII.284 (A).



## 5. Sources<sup>1 2</sup>

The Fall of Constantinople caused a flurry of reports, orations, and treatises. Scholars will have to determine which of those Piccolomini used as sources for his crusade orations at the German diets in 1454-1455 and later. In the present context, only certain writings by Flavio Biondo, Niccolò Sagundino, Francesco Filelfo, Cardinal Isidore of Kiev, Archbishop Leonardo of Chios, and Jacopo Tedaldi are examined, *exempli gratia*, all of them sources that Piccolomini might conceivably have used.

### 5.1. Flavio Biondo

Piccolomini definitely used Flavio Biondo's description of the Council in Clermont 1495, included in his *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*,<sup>3 4</sup> and - notably - the theme of the Turks forcing Christianity into a corner of Europe. How Piccolomini gained knowledge of this text is not known, but it must have been shortly after its publication (presumably in 1443), since he already used the *angulum* theme in his oration "*Et breviter me hodie*" [10] to Pope Eugenius IV in 1446,<sup>5</sup> and then later in several of his crusade orations, including the "*Quamvis omnibus*". In his treatment of the First Crusade, Biondo to some – small - extent<sup>6</sup> used the *Historia Hierosolymitana* written in 1120 by Robertus Monachus, who had personally participated in the Council of Clermont. Biondo's passage on Christianity being pressed into a corner of Europa was inspired by a passage in the *Historia Hierosolymitana*, which, however, did not address the political and military situation of Christianity but demographic overpopulation.<sup>7</sup>

In 1452 and 1453, Biondo authored two crusade texts, one being an oration to King Alfonso III and Emperor Friedrich III, held in Naples in April 1452<sup>8 9</sup> and the other a memorandum dated 1 August

---

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of Piccolomini's use of sources, see COR, 1: ch. 8

<sup>2</sup> See also RTA, 19, 2, especially for the contemporary sources

<sup>3</sup> The oration put into the mouth of Urban II by Biondo is published in the Appendix

<sup>4</sup> See Mertens, pp. 70-71. Biondo returned to this theme in his oration to King Alfonso, the "*Jucundum hoc loco*" (Flavio Biondo: *Scritti*, p. 111-112

<sup>5</sup> Piccolomini may have met Biondo during his stay in Rome in February 1445

<sup>6</sup> See Mertens, p. 69

<sup>7</sup> Mertens, p. 70: *terra haec [...] numerositate vestra coangustatur [...] Inde est, ut vos invicem mordetis et contenditis, bella movetis et plerumque mutuis vulneribus occiditis*

<sup>8</sup> Biondo Flavio: *Scritti*, p. cxxxi-cxxxiii, and pp. 107-114

<sup>9</sup> Helmrath: *Pius*, p. 101: *Eine Türkenrede, die Enea Silvio als kaiserlicher Diplomat persönlich anhörte, hielt der Kuriale und Historiker Flavio Biondo im April 1452 in Neapel vor Kaiser Friedrich III. und König Alfons V.* This must be a lapsus since Piccolomini did not accompany the emperor on his visit to Naples but stayed in Rome

1453<sup>1</sup>, two months after the Fall of Constantinople, to King Alfonso V on a crusade against the Turks.<sup>2</sup> Though, some passages in these texts are similar to some passages in Piccolomini's crusade texts, these similarities may be due to the commonality of the subject and not to direct quotation.<sup>3</sup>

## 5.2. Niccolò Sagundino

Piccolomini met Niccolò Sagundino<sup>4</sup> in Naples in 1456, when he represented the City of Siena in peace negotiations with King Alfonso V, but the two men may have already been acquainted through a circle of common friends and acquaintances like Cardinal Bessarion and Leonardo Benvoglianti.<sup>5</sup> Two works by Sagundino became important sources for Piccolomini, his *Oration to King Alfonso V* of 25 January 1454,<sup>6</sup> and his *Liber de Familia Autumanorum* from 1456,<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> the last being a work commissioned by Piccolomini himself but published after he had held his Turkish orations at the German diets in 1454-1455.

## 5.3. Francesco Filelfo

It is not certain how and how closely Piccolomini knew the famous humanist Francesco Filelfo, but in his youth he may have followed his lectures in Florence, and since then they were in intermittent epistolary contact. After Filelfo's return from Constantinople in 1427, he had written on the Turkish danger to Europe, and after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, he became a veritable propagandist for the crusade cause, writing letters to princes and important people on the need for a crusade and – of course – offering himself as an expert in the matter, though in vain.<sup>9</sup>

Two of his letters have special importance in the present context: one to Wladislaw, King of Poland and Hungary, of 5 November 1444, and the other to Charles of France of 14 February 1451.<sup>10</sup> Since they were acquainted and in epistolary contact, Piccolomini may very well have received copies of these letters.

Though he may have known of it, he does not appear to have used the first letter in his crusade orations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Biondi himself calls it "opusculi et orationis compendium", and Nogara calls it a "discorso" (Biondo Flavio: *Scritti*, p. 32 and cxxxiv respectively)

<sup>2</sup> Biondo Flavio: *Scritti*, pp. cxxxiv-cxlv, and pp. 29-58

<sup>3</sup> Similarities are indicated in the notes to each oration

<sup>4</sup> Caselli

<sup>5</sup> Caselli

<sup>6</sup> Niccolò Sagundino: *Oratio*

<sup>7</sup> Niccolò Sagundino: *De familia*

<sup>8</sup> Helmrath: *Pius*, p. 102

<sup>9</sup> Meserve

<sup>10</sup> Filelfo: *Collected*, I, pp. 323-327 and 426-443 respectively

The second one, however, he may very well have used. Indeed, its division of the crusade subject matter into three parts: *necessitas* (mostly *honestas*), *facilitas*, and *utilitas*, based on classical models, could have inspired Piccolomini's division of the "*Constantinopolitana clades*" into *justitia*, *utilitas* and *facilitas*.

#### 5.4. Isidore of Kiev

A number of letters from Cardinal Isidore of Kiev, written shortly after the Fall of Constantinople, witnessed directly by the cardinal, have been published by Pertusi.<sup>1</sup> Copies might conceivably have reached the imperial court and Piccolomini, but an examination of the texts shows that Piccolomini apparently did not use them in his Turkish orations, if indeed he knew of them, except possibly for some passages in Isidore's letter to Pope Nicolaus V, dictated to the notary Pasio di Bertipaglia.<sup>2</sup>

#### 5.5. Leonardo of Chios

In August 1453, Archbishop Leonardo of Chios wrote an eyewitness account of the Fall of Constantinople, dated 16 August, to Pope Nicolaus V.<sup>3</sup> It is not known whether Piccolomini had obtained or seen a copy of this report, but his description in the oration "*Constantinopolitana clades*" of Turkish atrocities after the fall of the city certainly matches the archbishop's report.<sup>4</sup>

#### 5.6. Jacopo Tedaldi

Jacopo Tedaldi's eyewitness account of the Fall of Constantinople was written soon after the event and was published together with Nicolaus V's crusade bull of 30 September 1453,<sup>5</sup> which was, of course, sent to the imperial court where Piccolomini must have come to know it.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pertusi, I, 58-119

<sup>2</sup> Pertusi, I, 58-64

<sup>3</sup> Pertusi, I, pp. 120-171

<sup>4</sup> Pertusi, I, p. 164-165. Cf. oration "*Constantinopolitana clades*", [22] sect. 10

<sup>5</sup> Pertusi, I, p. 172

## 5.7. Letters of Piccolomini

Besides external sources, Piccolomini made extensive use of themes and passages from two important letters he had written himself right after the Fall of Constantinople, one to Pope Nicolaus V of 19 June / 12 July 1453<sup>1</sup> and the other to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues 21 July 1453.<sup>2 3</sup>

## 5.8. Survey of quotations

In this oration, only 13 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified. Interesting is his – probable – use of contemporary sources.

Biblical: 1

Classical: 2

Patristic and medieval: 2

Contemporary: 8

**All: 13**

### **Biblical sources: 1**

Old Testament: 1

- Psalms: 1

New Testament: 0

### **Classical sources: 2**

- Vergilius: 2

---

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Pope Nicolaus V of 19 June / 12 July 1453 (EPI, 6 / 340).

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (EPI, 6 / 341).

<sup>3</sup> RTA, 19, 2, p. 463 (Helmrauth/Annas): *Die Rede* [the Constantinopolitana clades [22]] *is eine*

*der bedeutendsten und wirkmächtigsten Akte, mit denen versucht wurde, im Westen den Fall Konstantinopels am 29. Mai 1453 intellektuell und emotional zu bewältigen. Enea Silvio hatte dies zunächst in Form ausführlicher*

*Briefe getan. Berühmt sind diejenigen an Papst Nikolaus V. (1453 Juni 19) und Kardinal Nikolaus von Kues (1453 Juli 21). In diesen Briefe ist bereits manches Motivmaterial der späteren Reden präsent*

### Patristic and medieval sources: 2

- Eusebius of Caesarea: 1<sup>1</sup>
- Sozomenos: 1<sup>2</sup>

### Contemporary sources: 8

- Flavio Biondo: 6<sup>3</sup>
- Isidore of Kiev: 1
- Niccolò Sagundino: 1<sup>4</sup>

## 6. Bibliography

Ady, Cecilia M.: *Pius II (Æneas Silvius Piccolomini) – the Humanist Pope*. London, 1913

Biondo, Flavio: Ad Alphonsum Aragonensem serenissimum regem de expeditione in Turcos [1 August 1453]. In: *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio*. Con introd. di B. Nogara. Roma, 1927. (Studi e testi; 48), pp. 32-58

Biondo, Flavio: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*. [1439-1453]

- Biondo, Flavio: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*. Venezia: Octavianus Scotus, 1483. (Hain, 3248). [Digitized version in Gallica, images 274-276]<sup>5</sup>

Biondo, Flavio: Oratio coram serenissimo imperatore Frederico et Alphonso, Aragonum rege inclito, Neapoli in publico convent habita [March/April 1452]. In: *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio*. Con introd. di B. Nogara. Roma, 1927. (Studi e testi; 48), pp. 107-114

Biondo, Flavio: *Scritti inediti e rari*. Introd. di B. Nogara. Roma, 1927. (Studi e testi; 48)

---

<sup>1</sup> De vita Constantini

<sup>2</sup> Historia ecclesiastica

<sup>3</sup> Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades

<sup>4</sup> Oratio ad regem Alphonsum

<sup>5</sup>

<http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualise>

[ur?Destination=Gallica&O=NUMM-60241](http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Gallica&O=NUMM-60241)

Bisaha, Nancy: Pope Pius II and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 39-52

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

Caselli, Christian: Sagundino, Niccolò. In: *Dizionario Bibliografico Italiano*, (89) 2017

*Deutsche Reichstagsakten* (RTA). Bd. 19, 1. Göttingen, 1969

Du Fresne de Beaucourt, Gaston: *Histoire de Charles VII*. 6 vols. Paris, 1881-1891

Filelfo, Francesco: *Epistolae*

- Filelfo, Francesco: *Collected letters*. 4 vols. Transl. Jeroen de Keyser. Alessandria, 2015

Hankins, James: Renaissance Crusaders – Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II. In: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 49 (1995) 111-207

Helmrath, Johannes: The German Reichstage and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 53-69

Helmrath, Johannes: Pius II. und die Türken. In: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, eds. B. Guthmüller & W. Kühlmann. Tübingen, 2000, pp. 79-138

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

Leonardo of Chios: Epistola ad Nicolaum papam V. In: Pertusi, Agostino: *Testi inediti o poco noti della caduta di Constantinopoli*. Tom. I. Torino, [1976] 2012, pp. 120-171

Märthl, Claudia: Anmerkungen zum Werk des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini (Historia Austriacis, Pentalogus, Dialogus). In: *König und Kanzlist, Kaiser und Papst – Friedrich III und Enea Silvio Piccolomini in Wiener Neustadt*, eds. F. Fuchs, P.-J. Heinig, & M. Wagendorfer (eds.). Wien, 2013, pp. 1-30

Mertens, Dieter: Claromontani passagii exemplum. Papst Urban II und der erste Kreuzzug in der Türkenkriegpropaganda des Renaissance-Humanismus. In: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, eds. B. Guthmüller & W. Kühlmann. Tübingen, 2000, pp. 65-78

Meserve, Margaret: Nestor denied – Francesco Filelfo’s Advice to Prince on the Crusade against the Turks. In: *Osiris*, 25 (2010) 47-65

Meuthen, Erich: Der Fall von Konstantinopel und der Lateinische Westen. In: *Historische Zeitschrift*, 237 (1983) 1-36

Mitchell, R.J.: *The Laurels and the Tiara – Pope Pius II, 1458-1464*. London, 1962

Niccolò Sagundino: *Oratio ad regem Alfonsum*. [January 1453]<sup>1</sup>

- Extracts in: Jorga, N.: Notes et extraits pour servir à l’histoire des croisade au XVe siècle. 3 vols. Paris, 1899-1902 / T. III, 1902, pp. 315-323
- *Ad serenissimum principem et invictissimum regem Alphonsum Nicolai Sagundini oratio*. A cura di C. Caselli, Roma 2012. (Fonti per la storia dell’Italia medievale. Antiquitates; 39)

Nowak, Jessika: *Ein Kardinal im Zeitalter der Renaissance – die Karriere des Giovanni di Castiglione (ca. 1413 – 1460)*. Tübingen, 2011

Paviot, Jacques: Burgundy and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. London, 2004, pp. 71-80

Pertusi, Agostino: *Testi inediti o poco noti della caduta di Constantinopoli*. Tom. I. Torino, [1976] 2012

Piccolomini, Enea Silvio:

- *Collected Reports on Diplomatic Missions, 1447-1455, of Enea Silvio Piccolomini*. Edited and Translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 2021.<sup>2</sup>

Pius II: *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt*. [1462-1464]:

---

<sup>1</sup> According to Jorga, the text is not the oration itself, but a memorandum, which King Alfonso asked Sagundino to write, after he had heard Sagundino’s oration: *Le roi, ayant entendu ses paroles, lui demanda de mettre par écrit une*

*informazione sur le fait des Turcs et Nicolas, auteur de plusieurs autres traités latins, obtempéra à cette demande ... En voici, les parties les plus saillantes, d’après le ms. J 28 sup. de la Biblioth. Ambrosienne à Milan* (Jorga, III, p.

316). Cited in the present edition of Pius II’s orations as *Niccolò Sagundino: Oratio ad regem Alfonsum*

<sup>2</sup> <https://hal.science/hal-03337393v1>

- *Commentarii rerum memorabilium que suis temporibus contigerunt*. Ed. A van Heck. 2 vols. Città del Vaticano, 1984 (Studi e testi; 312-313)
- Pius II: *Commentaries*. Ed. M. Meserve and M. Simonetta. Vols. 1 ff. Cambridge, MA, 2003 ff.

Pius II: *Epistolae*

- *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Hrsg. von Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918

Pius II: *Orationes*. [1436-1464]:

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759
- *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. Ed. and transl. by Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg. 12 vols. 2019-2020. [Final version, 2024-2025][Available on the Internet in HAL Archives].

Reinhardt, Volker: *Pius II. Piccolomini – Der Papst, mit dem die Renaissance begann*. München, 2013

Setton, Kenneth M.: *The Papacy and the Levant*. 4 vols. Philadelphia, 1976-1984 (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society; 114+161-162)

Smith, Leslie F.: Pope Pius II's Use of Turkish Atrocities. In: *The Southwestern Social Sciences Quarterly*, 46 (1966) 407-415

Stolf, Serge: *Les Lettres et la Tiare. E.S. Piccolomini, un humaniste au XVe siècle*. Paris, 2012. (Etudes et Essais sur la Renaissance; 98)

Tedaldi, Jacopo: Relazione sulla conquista di Constantinopoli. In: Pertusi, Agostino: *Testi inediti o poco noti della caduta di Constantinopoli*. Tom. I. Torino, [1976] 2012, pp. 172-189

Toews, John B.: *Emperor Frederick III and his Relations with the Papacy from 1440 to 1493*. University of Colorado, Ph.D., 1962

Voigt, Georg: *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter*. 3 vols. Berlin, 1856-63

Zimolo, Giulio C. (ed.): *Le vite di Pio II di Giovanni Antonio Campano e Bartolomeo Platina*. Bologna, 1964. (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores; t. III, p. II)



## 7. Sigla

**A** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.J.VI.211  
**B** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Vat. lat.1788  
**C** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.J.VIII.286  
**D** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.J.VI.211  
**E** = Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana / I. 97 inf  
**F** = Mantova / Biblioteca Communale Feliana / 100  
**W** = Wien / Österreichische Nationalbibliothek / cod. 3420

**MA** = Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759

**II. VERSION A: TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

[1] {54} **Quamvis omnibus, qui adestis, reverendissimi patres, illustrissimi et nobilissimi principes,** ceterique viri magnifici ac praestantes, etsi **nota est causa vestrae vocationis, in litteris enim ad unumquemque transmissis exprimitur, quia tamen res ardua est et universam Christianitatem** respicit, ob **quam divus Caesar Fridericus, Romanorum imperator, in hac urbe celeberrima conventum indixit,** ex usu judicarunt esse **reverendissimi ac magni potentes collegae mei** sublimitatis **imperatoriae** legati **causam ipsam,** quae vos accersendos persuasit, in medium vestri **amplius explicari, quodque** Caesareae menti **ad consulendum reipublicae Christianae** propositum sedeat, **in hoc amplissimo auditorio** palam fieri. **Partes autem dicendi ad me, ut cernitis, delatae sunt, qui etsi pareo non invitus majoribus meis, in hoc tamen negotio,** quod est omnium maximum, non ab re **alium meo loco suffectum esse voluissem, qui parem rebus potuisset orationem habere.**

[2] Verum quia **turpe est contendere, ubi necesse est oboedire,** munus mihi demandatum pro mea facultate conabor absolvere. **Vos pro vestra mansuetudine ac nobilitate,** quibus ceteris praestare soletis **aures, eas** non dicam mihi, sed **rerum,** quas proponam {55} **magnitudini** atque ipsi, cujus nomine loquar, Friderico Caesari **concedetis. Ego ut quam brevissime res absolvam.** Oratiunculam **meam duas in partes dividam. In prima** referentur **ex ordine** convocati hujus concilii rationes. **In secunda** commissionis nostrae tenor explicabitur. Ac **ne** tempus frustra teram, de priori parte succincte transigam.

[3] Duae fuerunt causae, quibus impulsus est Caesar hunc conventum indicere. Unam praestitit grandis illa atque insignis contumelia, quam **aestate proxime decursa** Turcorum dux Mahumetus apud Constantinopolim Christiano intulit nomini. Alteram maximus praebuit apparatus, quem ipsi iidem Turci habere dicuntur, ut Christianam gentem funditus perdant. Illa damnum pensitat jam illatum, haec futurum discrimen periculumque metitur. De his est paulo altius conferendum, ut intelligant omnes neque parvam injuriam esse, quam dicimus vindicandam, nec minimum esse periculum, quod suademus vestro consilio praecavendum.

## 0. Introduction

[1] Most Reverend Fathers, Illustrious and Noble Princes, and you other Excellent and Distinguished Men, who are present here today. You already know the reason why you have been invited to this meeting since it was stated in the letter sent to each of you. But as the matter concerning which Holy Roman Emperor Friedrich has summoned a conference in this famous city is of the highest importance and concerns all of Christianity, my Most Reverend and Great Lords and Colleagues, orators of His Imperial Highness, have deemed it useful to explain more fully to this excellent assembly the reasons you have been summoned and to disclose His Imperial Majesty's intention in taking counsel with you concerning the Christian Commonwealth. As you see, the task of speaking has fallen to me. Though I gladly obey my betters in this matter, the most important of all, I would have wished to be replaced with someone who could give a more suitable oration.

[2] But since it is shameful to argue when you should obey, I shall perform the task requested of me to the best of my ability. And since you are kind and noble, you will - as you usually do to others - lend an ear, not to me but to the important matter concerned, and to Emperor Friedrich, in whose name I shall be speaking. I shall perform this task as briefly as possible, dividing my little speech into two parts. In the first, I shall state the reasons why this conference has been summoned. In the second, I shall explain our task [in this assembly]. And so as not to waste time, I shall begin the first part right now.

## 1. Reasons for the conference: Turkish attacks on Europe

[3] Two reasons have moved the emperor to summon the present diet. The first one is the great, nay enormous, injury that the Turkish leader, Mehmed, inflicted upon the Christian cause last summer at Constantinople. The second is the reported intensive Turkish military build-up, aiming at the complete destruction of the Christian people.<sup>1</sup> The injury inflicted by the Turks he considers as belonging to the past, whereas the build-up means future risk and danger. In a moment, I shall speak of both so that all may understand how serious the injury is, which we claim should be avenged, and how great the danger is, which we urge you to prepare for.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Isidore of Kiev: Letter to Pope Nicolas V of 6 July 1453 (Pertu-

si, I, 62): *comminatur omne christianum nomen radicitus excerpere*

[4] Circa injuriam autem, sicut mihi quidem videtur, nihil est, quod pro magnitudine rei satis dici possit. Nos tamen aliquid pro nostro captu in medium afferremus. Quiescebat Graecorum imperator domi suae apud Constantinopolim, quamvis in fide nostra orthodoxa non satis instructus atque satis fixus, Christianus tamen, Dei ac domini nostri Jesu pro captu cultor, sanguine nobilis, et virtute clarus. Nulla ei cum Turcis lis erat. Ferre potius superbae gentis contumelias, quam inferre cuiquam molestiam in animum induxerat suum: nulli noxius, nulli gravis. Tranquilla suum populum in pace regebat.

[5] Sed est in Thracia locus non longe a Constantinopoli, qui apud veteres Bosphoros nomen habuit, ubi magnus ille Hellespontus in angustias coactus, ut nonnulli tradunt, quingentorum passuum hinc Europam inde Asiam disjungit. Hinc olim Darius, rex Persarum, ponte facto copias transportavit, hic et Sacellum alioquin fuit Michaelis Archangeli miraculis innumerabilibus illustratum. In hoc Europae latere, quod ditionis Graecorum erat, Mahumetus contra foedus jusque castellum erigit, quo et suis {56} trajicientibus sit praesidio, et naves ex Euxino in Propontidem transeuntes ex arbitrio impediat. Denuntiat imperator novum opus haudquaquam faciundum esse, foedus fidemque commemorat, jus bonumque petit. Ille in proposito perseverans castellum perficit.

[6] Exin magnis copiis terra marique congregatis imperatori bellum indicit, Constantinopolim obsidet, machinas admovet, muros quatit, urbem vehementer oppugnat, capit, diripit. **Constantinus illic imperator** occumbit. Mira Dei judicia et arcana consilia: sub **eo nomine Graecorum extinguitur imperium**, sub **quo sumpsit** exordium. In ipso ingressu mille ferme hominum occiduntur, fit deinde per urbem major caedes. **Nobilitas** omnis extinguitur, **sacerdotes** in ore gladii pereunt. **Virgines** ac matronae ea perpetiuntur, **quae** sunt libita **victoribus**. Filii **in** amplexu **parentum** enecantur, **infinitus animarum numerus in captivitatem ac perpetuam servitatem** arripitur. Miseram ac lacrimabilem urbis fortunam, omnia plena rapinis, flammis, libidinibus, cruore, cadaveribus vidissetis.

## **1.1. Fall of Constantinople**

### **1.1.1. Non-aggressiveness of the Byzantine emperor**

[4] Concerning the injury, it is so great that it cannot be expressed in words. Still, we shall attempt to do so to the best of our ability. The Greek Emperor was living peacefully at home in Constantinople. Although he may not have been sufficiently instructed and firm in our orthodox faith, he was a Christian, a sincere believer in God and Our Lord, Jesus, and a man of noble blood and excellent virtues. He had no conflict with the Turks. He was convinced that it was better to tolerate being abused by this arrogant people than to cause trouble for others. He harmed no man, threatened no one, and ruled his people in tranquil peace.

### **1.1.2. Turkish preparations for war**

[5] But in Thracia, not far from Constantinople, there is a region called Bosphorus by the ancients. There, the great Hellespont narrows so much that some people claim that only 500 *passus* separate Europe from Asia. Once, the Persian King Darius transported his forces from the other side on a bridge built for this purpose. On the European side, there used to be a chapel in honour of the Archangel Michael, famous for countless miracles. On that side, which belongs to the Greeks, Mehmed, in contravention of all treaties and rights, built a fortress, both to protect his men when they were to be shipped [from the Asian to the European side] and to be able to prevent ships from sailing from Euxinus to Propontis. The emperor protested against the construction of the fortress, reminded Mehmed of their treaty, and demanded what was just and right. But Mehmed pursued his chosen course and finished the fortress.

### **1.1.3. The conquest of Constantinople**

[6] Then, having gathered great forces by land and sea, he declared war on the emperor, besieged Constantinople, deployed his war machines, broke down the walls, made a ferocious attack on the city, captured it, and laid it to waste. There, Emperor Constantine fell. Wondrous are the judgements of God and mysterious His designs! the Greek Empire perished under [an emperor] with the same name as [the emperor who] created it. About 1,000 men were killed during the attack itself, and afterwards, a general slaughter took place in the whole city. All the nobles were killed, and the priests were put to the sword. Virgins and matrons suffered the pleasure of the victors. Boys were killed in the arms of their parents, and an infinite number of people were carried off to captivity and permanent slavery. Oh, the miserable and tearful destiny of that city: everywhere you saw plunder, fire, debauchery, blood, and corpses.

[7] Templum divino dicata nomini nefandis profanantur modis, stabula ac, proh pudor, lupanaria fiunt. Effigies magni Dei, matrisque, praecursorisque beatorumque omnium **delentur. Reliquiae martyrum et aliorum sanctorum jam cum Christo regnantium, quae fuerunt illis in templis pretiosissimae, porcis ac canibus** objiciuntur. Simulacrum ipsum crucifixi praevis tympanis in castra deducitur; pro ludo hinc atque inde rapitur, conspuitur, **luto** provolvitur. Parva ne ista videntur et non dolenda flagitia? **Quis talia fando temperet a lacrimis? Horresco talia referens. O maximam atque intolerabilem ignominiam Christianae gentis!** Et cujus est, obsecro, **pectus Christiani hominis, quod haec audiens non commoveatur,** non incendatur, non ferveat **ira?** Quis est oculus fidelis hominis, qui non **gemat? Amissa enim civitas nobilissima et amplissima, quam quondam Constantinus** primus ejus nominis **Imperator, jussu domini salvatoris sibi per quietem apparentis,** ad aemulationem **Romanae urbis erexit,** quae licet saepe civilibus bellis ac barbaricis incursionibus vastata fuerit, {57} numquam tamen extra manum Christianorum, nisi modo traducta est.

[8] Hic **orientalis imperii solium, hic patriarchalis sedes longo tempore floruit;** hic grande illud et memorabile concilium celebratum est, in quo Dioscorus et Eutyches prava de salvatore sentientes et praedicantes condemnati et in exilium missi sunt. Hic sacratissimae leges, quae constringunt hominum vitas, cum essent antea confusae atque obscurissimae, per Justinianum Caesarem ad compendium claritatemque sunt redactae. Hic oratoria, hic philosophia, et omnium bonarum artium studia, postquam consenuerunt et extinctae sunt Athenae, unicum domicilium et certissimum templum habuere. Hinc, si qua est hodie, apud nostros eloquentia manavit. Sed hanc urbem, adeo memorabilem, adeo gloriosam, Turci nostra tempestate nulla injuria lacessiti bello invadentes ex Christianorum manibus abstulerunt, sanguinem innoxium fuderunt, bibliothecas et libros rerum memorabilium incenderunt, sanctorum loca foedarunt, et opprobria in Christum Deum, quae referre horreo, protulerunt.

#### 1.1.4. Profanation of the holy things

[7] The temples dedicated to the divine name were profaned in unspeakable ways and turned into taverns and - oh, what shame! - brothels. The icons of the Great God, of his Mother, of the Precursor<sup>1</sup> and of all the saints were destroyed. The precious relics of martyrs and other saints now reigning with Christ, kept in the temples, were thrown to pigs and dogs. A crucifix was carried into the [Turkish] camp, preceded by trumpets. They made a game of throwing it back and forth, mocked it, and dragged it through filth. Does this [outrage] seem small and insignificant? Who can talk about such things without tears? I shudder even as I tell them. Oh, what great and intolerable shame on the Christian people! I believe that the heart of every Christian who hears about this will be moved and burn with anger. Is there any believer who will not cry in sorrow? For lost is the great and noble city built by Constantine, the first emperor of that name, at the command of Our Lord and Saviour, appearing to him in his sleep. The city he built was to emulate the City of Rome, and though it was often plagued by civil wars and incursions of barbarian peoples, it has never, before today, passed out of Christian hands.

#### 1.1.5. Cultural loss to Christianity

[8] There, the throne of the Eastern Empire and a patriarchal see flourished for a long period. There, that great and memorable council was held where the false teachings and preaching of Dioscorus and Eutyches were condemned, and they themselves were sent into exile.<sup>2</sup> There, those holy - but by then confusing and incomprehensible - laws that regulate human life were clarified and edited in one law collection by Emperor Justinian.<sup>3</sup> There, oratory, philosophy, and the studies of all the good arts<sup>4</sup> found a unique home and a secure temple after they had grown old and disappeared from Athens. There, eloquence dwelt – if we can still talk of such in our time. This is the city, so memorable and so glorious, which the Turks, without any provocation whatsoever, have now conquered and taken from the Christians, shedding the blood of harmless people, burning libraries and important books, polluting the holy places, and committing sacrileges against Christ, Our God, which I shudder to relate.

---

<sup>1</sup> John the Baptist.

<sup>2</sup> The Council of Chalcedon, 451 AD

<sup>3</sup> The corpus juris civilis, issued from 529 to 534 AD

<sup>4</sup> The liberal arts



[9] Haec Caesarem nostrum vehementer urgent et angunt; digna haec scelera suae majestati videntur, digna flagitia, quae vindicemus: minime ille tantam injuriam, tam insignem contumeliam inultam existimat relinquendam. Neque enim solis hic Graecis illusum est, sed omnis Christianitas enormiter laesa est atque contempta. Neque mortales tantum: sed ipsi superi immortales derisi ac provocati sunt. Deus noster indicibili more spretus. Quod si nos pro levibus damnis, pro rusticis nostris modica injuria lacessitis arma sumimus, et ingentibus nos periculis objectamus, quid hic agendum erit, ubi tota Christianitas laesa est? Et ipse Deus, quem colimus, e suis ejectus sedibus? An non aequum est vitam illi offerre, qui dedit, qui pro nobis in ara crucis voluit immolari? Ingratum genus hominum, si ei corpus nostrum tradere negamus, qui nobis corpus et spiritum et animam elargitus est.

[10] Sed neque injuriae vindicandae ratio dumtaxat Caesarem movet, quae sane maxima est. Instare periculum grande videt existimatque cavendum, ne injuria injuriam pariat. Habet {58} jam sibi subjectam Mahumetus **Constantinopolim**. Illic **portus** est **amplissimus** et statio benefida carinis, quae **non** modo **unam** aut alias naves, **sed infinitas paene classes capere possit**. **Neque toto Mediterraneo mari situs est ad infestandum omne pelagus magis aptus**. Jacet enim Constantinopolis **supra Propontidem**, ita ut neque ex **ponto Euxino**, quem **mare majus** hodie vocant, **in pelagus** Euboicum, **Jonium** ac Creticum, quae maria unum videri queunt, **nunc quod Archipelagus appellatur**, neque versa vice ex hoc in illud invitis Turchis transitus esse possit. **Sunt enim angustiae per Bosphorum Thraciae ac per Hellespontum, quod Bracchium Sancti Georgii vulgus dictitat, in potestate Turcorum**. **Nec jam mercimonia ex Tanai**, prohibentibus **Turcis**, ad nos deferri queunt. **Facultas nunc illis est in portu Constantinopolis classem parare**, quae **cunctas insulas Archipelagi** vastatum eat, **quarum jam plerasque captas atque direptas memorant**.

### **1.1.6. Conclusion: Need for revenge**

[9] These [events] have profoundly shocked the emperor. His Majesty believes that such crimes and shameful acts must be avenged! This enormous injury, this flagrant abuse, must not be left unavenged. It is not only the Greeks who have been scorned; indeed, all of Christendom has been grievously wounded and mocked. And not only have mortals, but even the immortal beings in Heaven have been mocked and provoked. Our God has been scorned in an unspeakable fashion. We go to war and risk terrible dangers in matters of small harm and when our farmers have only been slightly molested. So what should we do now that all Christianity has been injured and God Himself, whom we worship, has been thrown out of His dwellings? Is it not right to offer our lives for Him who gave His life for us and accepted to become a sacrifice on the altar of the Cross? Humankind is indeed ungrateful if we refuse to offer our bodies for Him who granted us both body, spirit, and soul.

## **1.2. Turkish threat to Europe**

### **1.2.1. Strategic position of Constantinople**

[10] The emperor, however, is not moved by the motive of avenging this injury, though it is, of course, quite serious. But he sees a great danger threatening us and considers that we must take care to avoid one injury leading to another. Mehmed has now conquered Constantinople. There, he has a large harbour and a site very suitable for ships, which can hold not just one or some ships but almost immense fleets. No other place on the Mediterranean is more convenient for dominating the whole sea, for Constantinople lies above Propontis, so that you cannot, against the will of the Turks, sail from the Pontus Euxinus (which today is called the Great Sea) to the Euboan, Ionian, and Cretan seas, which may be considered one sea (today called the Archipelage), nor the opposite way. With the narrow straits through Thracian Bosphorus and through the Hellespont (that our people call the Arm of Saint George) now in the power of the Turks, no commercial goods can come from Tanais to our regions against their will. And it will now be possible for the Turks to prepare a fleet in the port of Constantinople with which to lay waste to or conquer all the islands of the Archipelage – actually, they are already said to have attacked and plundered a number of them.

[11] Mahumetus autem, ut certo affirmant, **qui ejus** mores vitamque norunt, quique illis ex regionibus ad nos veniunt, **auctus animo, nequaquam se otio atque inertiae tradit, sed** proximam quamque victoriam veluti sequentis instrumentum ducit: **exercitus copiosos classesque** potentissimas extruit **eo proposito, ut amplius Christianitatem** lacescat. Neque aliud dies noctesque meditatur, quam **Christianum nomen funditus** eradicare atque extinguere memoriam Jesu domini nostri. **Nec mirum si tumescit atque insanit illius animus, cum patris sui ac suas victorias mente revolvit.** Genitor ejus Amurates **paucis ante annis bis Christianorum** prostravit **exercitus non parvos neque contemnendos.** Vladislaum, Poloniae regem nobilissimum adolescentem, Julianumque sancti angeli cardinalem, apostolicae sedis legatum, virum sui temporis excellentissimum, ad necem compulit. Hic **vero de Constantinopolitana victoria et imperatore Graecorum caeso** gloriosus majorem se jactitat patre; **et quoniam** falsi et mendosissimi prophetae **Mahumeti, qui sectam** ampliavit atque roboravit **Agarenorum, nomen** gerit, incredibili torquetur siti **Christiani nominis** extinguendi.

[12] {59} Cumque **patriarchalibus ex sedibus illis quattuor, super quibus veluti solidissimis basibus Christiana** subnixa **fides in totum olim orbem palmites** suos **extendit, jam tres obtineant** Agareni: **Alexandrinam, Antiochenam, et Constantinopolitanam,** nullo jam dubio tenetur, quod **et Romanam nobis** eripiat. Usurpare quoque inter familiares sermones haec **verba solet: "Cur ego non totum mihi occidentem armis subjiciam, qui sum Asiae, Thraciae, ac Macedoniae, atque totius Graeciae dominus, quando Alexander, Philippi filius, cum soli Macedoniae** dominaretur, ausus est **cum duobus et triginta millibus militum orientem** invadere et **usque ad Indiam penetrare?** Comparat se Julio Caesari, Hannibali Poeno, Pyrrho Epirotae, ac ceteris illustribus viris, praestareque se omnibus asserit.

### 1.2.2. Mehmed's ambition to conquer Europe

[11] But men who know Mehmed's character and life well and who come to us from those regions report that Mehmed has grown bolder and will certainly not want peace and quiet: one victory is the means for the next. He is gathering large armies and strong fleets in order to further assail Christianity. Night and day, he only thinks about how to completely destroy the Christian cause<sup>1</sup> and the memory of Jesus, Our Lord. Indeed, it is no wonder that his mind swells and raves when he considers his father's and his own victories. Only a few years ago, his father, Murad, destroyed large and strong Christian armies, causing the deaths of Vladislaus, the young and noble king of Poland,<sup>2</sup> and Giuliano, Cardinal of Sant'Angelo, one of the most outstanding men of his time.<sup>3</sup> Proud of his victory at Constantinople and the killing of the Greek Emperor, Mehmed now boasts that he is greater than his father. And since he carries the same name as the false and lying prophet Muhammad, who enlarged and strengthened the sect of the Agarenes, he is tormented by his burning desire to destroy the Christian name.

[12] The Christian Faith was solidly rooted in four patriarchal sees, from where it once spread over the whole Earth as fingers on a hand. Of these, the Agarenes have now taken three: Alexandria, Antiochia, and Constantinople. Therefore, Mehmed has no doubt that he can also win the Roman patriarchate from us. Indeed, among his intimates, he often says, "Why should I not be able to conquer and possess the whole of the West since I am already lord of Asia, Thrace, Macedonia, and all of Greece? After all, Alexander, son of Philip, was only lord of Macedonia when he invaded the East with [just] 32,000 soldiers and reached as far as India." He actually compares himself to Julius Caesar,<sup>4</sup> Hannibal of Carthage,<sup>5</sup> Pyrrhus of Epirus<sup>6</sup>, and other illustrious men, and he claims to surpass them all.

---

<sup>1</sup> "nomen" (*et passim*)

<sup>2</sup> Vladislaus I (Jagiellon) (1424-1444): King of Hungary from 1440 to his death

<sup>3</sup> Giuliano Cesarini (1398-1444). Cardinal (1426), papal legate, President of the Council of Basel,

mentor and friend of Piccolomini. Little did Piccolomini know that one day he himself would succeed him as Cardinal of Santa Sabina

<sup>4</sup> Gaius Julius Caesar (100-44 BCE): Roman general and statesman

<sup>5</sup> Hannibal Barca (247-ca. 183 BCE): Carthaginian general and statesman

<sup>6</sup> Pyrrhus of Epirus (ca. 319-272 BCE): King of Epirus

[13] Copias sese ait innumeras armare atque in proelium ducere posse. Neque hic **mentitur**. Manifestum enim est ducenta et amplius **milia pugnatorum in bellum** ab eo **educi posse**. **Quod si Tartarus** junctus fuerit, ut legatus regis Poloniae refert et Hungariae gubernator affirmat, exercitum paene innumerabilem conflare valebit. Sed quid ego in re notissima moror? Progenitores hujus Mahumeti, **cum** nihil **citra mare** possiderent, **maximos** saepe populos **in Europam** trajecere. **Quid** modo **is faciat**, qui **usque ad Hungariae metas et usque ad Dalmatiam** protendit imperium? **Non est spernendus hic hostis**, qui et potentia ingens est et **animus ad bella paratus**, **qui juvenis est** et laudis amans et **sanguine** bulliens, **cui naturali quodam odio ex insita et innata malignitate atque crudelitate Christianos** persequi propositum est, **qui multos habet apostatas** nostri generis, ad audendum provocantes, **ex quibus omnia consilia nostra cognoscit**, **qui nobis vicinus est et aditum habet**, **sive in Italiam, sive in Germaniam** non difficilem **per loca propinqua Dalmatiae atque Croatiae**. Nam **et Albani**<sup>1</sup> et **Bosnenses** magna ex parte in ejus sese clientelam dedere. An putandum est quieturum hominem victoria functum, quem tot invitant ad insequendum commoditates? Qui norunt hominem et consilia sua perscrutati sunt, haud dubium censeant, quod anno {60} proximo magno impetu in Christianos ruat atque omni conatu vicinos opprimere pergat.

[14] Ob has igitur causas indictum est hujuscemodi concilium: de vindicanda injuria, de vitandis amplioribus malis captanda consilia sunt. Optavit Caesar ad hunc locum **se conferre**, sed compulsus ex causis saepe relatis pro tutela suarum provinciarum **domi** manere, direxit huc hos patres atque procures insignes, meque cum eis, qui vices suas gereremus. **Mandatum** nostrum **nudiustertius**, cum legeretur, **audistis**. Quae Caesar in hac re potuisset, eadem quoque et nos possumus, si modo vestrae mentes ad tuendam vindicandamque Christianam religionem erectae sunt. Intelligitis, quae fuerint convocationis vestrae rationes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Albam MA

[13] He claims that he can arm and lead countless forces into war. This is not a lie, for it is evident that he can bring more than 200,000 soldiers into battle. And if the Tartars join him, as the legate of the Polish king reports and the governor of Hungary confirms, then he will be able to mobilise an almost innumerable army. But why dwell on something that is common knowledge? Though his forefathers did not have any land over the sea, they often brought great forces over to Europe. What would he do now when his empire reaches from the frontiers of Hungary to Dalmatia? We should certainly not despise this mighty enemy! His mind is set on war. He is young and hot-blooded. He loves glory. He is determined to pursue Christians with a kind of natural hatred born of ingrained and innate malignity and cruelty. He has many renegades from our people with him who encourage him and from whom he learns of all our plans. He is our immediate neighbour, with direct access to Italy and Germany through the neighbouring regions of Dalmatia and Croatia – for most Albanians and Bosnians have surrendered to him and have become his clients. Do you really believe that this man, enticed by so many advantages, will instead settle down after his victories? Those who well know the man and his intentions are quite certain that next year he will assault the Christians with all his might and do all he can to vanquish his neighbours.

#### **1.4. Mandate of imperial ambassadors**

[14] Therefore, the present meeting has been summoned with the purpose of deliberating on how to avenge the injury and how to avoid even greater evils. The emperor himself wanted to come here, but for reasons that have been stated several times already, he had to stay at home to protect his provinces. Instead, he has sent these illustrious fathers and nobles, and me with them, to come here and represent him. You heard our mandate when it was read to you the day before yesterday. We are empowered to do what the emperor would have done in this matter if only your minds are focused on protecting and avenging the Christian religion. You now understand the reasons you have been summoned to this place.

[15] Nunc, quae sit nostra commissio, paucis expediam. Id est enim, quod secundo loco dicturum me promisi. Munus nostrum hoc potissimum est requisitas atque commonitas facere vestras excellentias, ne quo pacto hinc abeatis, priusquam conclusionem unanimem recipiatis, per quam non modo defendi, quae superat Christianitas, sed et vendicari possit, quae in hostium potestate consistit. Id autem quo pacto quoque ordine faciundum sit, non est nobis certo limite demandatum. Sed jussi sumus audire **consilia** vestra, opiniones vestras agnoscere, **gravia et illuminatissima** sequi **judicia** vestra, discutere **vobiscum**, quae **opportuna** quaeque necessaria **videantur**, et in communi, quae meliora visa fuerint, amplecti atque concludere.

[16] **Ipse autem** divus Fridericus, **tamquam Romanorum imperator**, tamquam **advocatus et protector ecclesiae**, **tamquam princeps** religiosissimus, cui cordi est catholica et orthodoxa fides Christiana, **suam operam** suasque vires et omne patrimonium suum **in medium offert**. **Voluntarium** quoque **et promptum** paratumque se dicit, quantum in ejus potestate fuerit, cuncta **executioni** mandare, **quae in hac** conventione pro tutela **Christiani nominis**, pro augmento fidei Catholicae, **pro honore Romani imperii**, **pro gloria Germanicae nationis** quoquomodo **deliberata conclusaque fuerint**.

[17] **Illud** nihilominus vel sine consilio necessarium Caesar existimat {61} atque in medium suadet, **ut divinum auxilium** in primis **devotissime imploretur**, **ut fiant opera digna misericordia ac clementia Dei**. Nam **quemadmodum peccatis et iniquitatibus nostris offensa divina majestas** Christianam gentem succumbere atque affligi sinit, ita **piis actibus et orationibus** placata suum tuebitur populum, praebebitque **veniam** omnipotens et misericors Deus, **sine** cujus nutu **nihil est, quod humana potestas valeat explicare**. Exhortatur igitur **imperatoria** sublimitas **reverendissimos ecclesiarum pontifices** ceterosque **praelatos**, **ut commissos sibi populos ad opera pietatis invitent**, atque **ipsi per sese cum clero sibi subjecto immaculatas hostias pro peccatis offerant populorum**.

## **2. Purpose of the conference: War against the Turks**

[15] Now I shall briefly deal with our mission, for that is what I promised to speak of in the second place. Our most important task is to demand of Your Excellencies not to depart from here before you have made a unanimous decision to not only defend what remains of Christianity but also to reclaim, as far as possible, what is now in the hands of the enemies. We have not received specific instructions concerning the manner and order in which this should be done. Rather, we have been ordered to receive your counsel, to hear your views, to follow your serious and enlightened judgement, to discuss with you what would be useful and necessary, and to reach a common agreement on the best course to follow.

### **2.1. Emperor's part**

[16] As Holy Emperor of the Romans, as champion and protector of the Church, and as a pious prince who deeply cares about the Catholic and orthodox Faith, Friedrich himself will dedicate all his efforts and resources to this enterprise. He declares that he is prompt and ready, and he will, as far as possible, order everything to be done that this assembly may decide for the protection of the Christian cause, for the growth of the Catholic faith, for the honour of the Roman Empire, and for the glory of the German nation.

### **2.2. Need for atonement, prayers, and piety**

[17] But he needs no counsel to consider it necessary and to urge you first of all to devoutly beg God for help and perform acts worthy of His mercy and clemency. For just as the divine majesty has been offended by our sins and iniquities and therefore allows the Christian people to falter and be harassed, the omnipotent and merciful God will be pleased by pious acts and prayers and therefore protect and forgive his people. For unless He wills it, human power can achieve nothing. Therefore, his Imperial Majesty exhorts the reverend bishops and other prelates to urge the people entrusted to them to perform pious acts and, with their clergy, to offer up immaculate hosts [in atonement] for the sins of the people.



[18] Vos autem, magnanimi procures, duces, marchiones, equites, quos non minus alti cordis quam clari sanguinis crediderim, commonitos efficit Caesarea majestas, ne Constantinopolitanam cladem dumtaxat, quae recens est et supra modum dolenda, sed vetusta quoque vulnera, et jam vix curabilia, ante mentis oculos revocetis cogitetisque quomodo Deus caeli<sup>1</sup> Jerusalem terram suam, in qua visus est, et annis supra XXX homo cum hominibus conversatus, suam utique quam illustrativum miraculis, quam proprio sanguine dedicavit, in qua primi resurrectionis flores apparuerunt. En Terram Sanctam, terram benedictam, terram lacte et melle fluentem, officinamque nostrae salutis oculos occupant vivificae crucis. Sacrosanctam civitatem nostri possident hostes, pia et sacratissima loca agni immaculati purpurata cruore sceleratissimi calcant pedes.

[19] Advertite, obsecro, viri fortes, en quantum dedecus hoc nostrum est, quod ipsum religionis nostrae sacrarium lectumque illum pretiosissimum, in quo propter nos vita nostra obdormivit in domino nisi Saracenis ostendentibus videre nequimus. Nam illi quaestus causa sepulchrum domini servant illaesum. Itane servos crucis nos esse fatemur, et sanctum canibus margaritasque porcis dimittimus? Non est baptismatis unda renatus, non est verus Christicola, qui haec sine dolore, sine lacrimis audit. En quo redacta est nostra religio! Proh quantum Mahumeti perfidia {62} crevit, dum nos domi sedemus neque vicinis, quid accidit, advertimus. Cornua intumescunt hostium, sociosque nostrae fidei prosternunt, terramque nostram longe lateque sibi subjiciunt. Antiochia, in qua primo auditum est Christianum nomen, a Deo nostro facta est aliena, neque sancti quidquam habent, plena spurcitiarum est. Alexandria, in qua tot clarissimi ac sanctissimi viri divinum evangelium praedicarunt ac magnificarunt, nunc Mahumeti fabulas audit: nihil est in Asia, nihil in Africa nostrum. **Europae** maximam partem amisimus; **in angulum** nos Mahumetus **coarctavit: hinc Hungaros, inde Hispanos premit.**

---

<sup>1</sup> *Textus corruptus* [Deest hic aliquid *in marg.* MA]

## 2.3. Islamic conquests

[18] And you, great Nobles, Dukes, Margraves, and Knights, whose courage I must believe equals your nobility, His Imperial Majesty urges you to call to mind not only the recent and lamentable Fall of Constantinople but also those old injuries that may now barely be healed. Consider how the God of Heaven [must love] Jerusalem and his Holy Land, where he lived for more than 30 years as a man together with other men, a land that he ennobled with his miracles and dedicated with his own blood, and where the first flowers of the resurrection appeared. And now those who hate the life-giving cross occupy the Holy Land, that blessed land, that land overflowing with milk and honey,<sup>1</sup> the workplace of our salvation! Our enemies are in possession of the Holy City, and scoundrels trample the pious and holy places<sup>2</sup> that were empurpled by the blood of the immaculate lamb.

[19] Consider carefully, I beg you, mighty men, how shameful it is for us that, unless the Saracens will show them to us, we are unable to visit the holiest place of our religion and indeed the very couch where He who is our life lay dead for our sake. They keep the tomb of Our Lord intact only for the sake of profit. But if we claim to be servants of the cross, why do we leave our Holy One to dogs and pearls to swine? Anyone who can hear about this without pain and tears has not been reborn from the baptismal water, and he is not a true follower of Christ. See what our religion has come to! See how Muhammad's false religion has grown while we were staying at home, ignoring what happened to our neighbours. Our enemies raise their horns, they cast down our fellows in the Faith, and they occupy our lands far and wide. Antiochia, the city where the name of Christian was first heard, has now become estranged from our God; nothing holy is left there; it is filled with impurity. Alexandria, where so many famous and holy men preached and glorified the gospel, now follows Muhammad's fables. In Asia and in Africa, we have nothing left. In Europe, we have lost a large part, and Muhammad has forced us into a corner: at one end, he harasses the Hungarians, and at the other, the Spaniards.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im. 76]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im. 75]

[20] Evigilare jam tempus est fuissetque plurimos ante annos, et antequam haec vulnera nobis infligerentur, antequam hostis tantum virium accepisset. Immortalis Deus omnia potest, sed non plus vult de nobis quam nostri parentes. At parentes, si pergunt liberi errare, bonis exhaeredant. Quid ergo nos ab optimo Deo nostro amplius expectemus, nisi malis actionibus finem facimus? Verberati sumus propter delicta nostra. Nunc si mentem bonam recipimus et animum fortem, miserebitur nostri Deus noster. Si poenitentiam egerimus de malis nostris, aget et ipse poenitentiam super malum, quod cogitavit, ut faceret nobis. Virtutem immortalis Deus approbare, non prohibere<sup>1</sup> solet. Excitare alter alterum debemus, surgere atque occurrere hostibus, priusquam fines nostros, quos nunc habemus, ingrediantur, ne nos in cubilibus nostris oscitantes ac somnolentos inveniant, nobisque gentem et locum auferant.

[21] Hora est jam, principes, arma sumere atque inimicos crucis in suis laribus quaerere, bellum fortibus animis et unitis **viribus** gerere. Certa est in manibus nostris victoria, si modo pura mente ob Dei honorem salutemque populi Christiani proelium inchoemus; en dataeque mentes nostrae, non quae sua sunt, sed quae Jesu Christi quaerant. **Etenim quamvis est ille – ut ante dixi – ferocissimus et potentissimus hostis**, non tamen par est Germanicis viribus neque Theutonico nomine comparandus. Non est cur formidetis, procures, si **unanimes** bellum amplectimini; neque enim **homines, {63} aut equi, aut arma, aut currus, aut naves vobis desunt. Sed omnia** haec vobis **quam illi meliora** supersunt. Quod si majorum nostrorum gesta memoriae repetamus, **neque terrestri, neque maritimo bello pares umquam fuisse Turcos** progenitoribus vestris invenietis, **quando concordibus animis adversus eos est itum. Possem referre Caroli Magni, Conradi tertii, Friderici primi ac secundi, Romanorum imperatorum, Gotfridi quoque Lotharingiae ducis, ingentes quas de Turchis deque ceteris infidelibus victorias habuere.**

---

<sup>1</sup> *em.*; adhibere MA

## **2.4. Call for action**

[20] It is time to wake up! Indeed, we should have woken up years ago, before these wounds were inflicted upon us and before the enemy had grown so powerful. Immortal God can do anything, but he demands no more from us than our own fathers did. If children go astray, their fathers disinherit them, so what more may we expect of Our Best God unless we put an end to our evil doings? We have been scourged because of our sins, but if we now show goodness of mind and strength of soul, God will have mercy upon us. If we repent of our iniquities, He too will repent of the punishment he has devised for us. Immortal God approves of virtue and [certainly] does not forbid it. So, we should urge each other to act and to rise and meet our enemies before they invade the territories we have left still and find us yawning and sleepy in our bedrooms and rob us of our peoples and of our lands.

## **2.5. Christian military superiority**

[21] Princes, now it is time to take up weapons and attack the enemies of the Cross in their own dwellings, to wage war with brave hearts and united forces. Certain victory will be in our hands if only we go to battle with pure minds for the honour of God and the salvation of the Christian people. May our hearts seek not what is our own but what is Jesus Christ's. Though Mehmed is - as I said before - a most ferocious and powerful enemy, he does not equal German strength, nor can he be compared to the German name. There is no reason for you, Nobles, to have any fear if only you decide for war unanimously, for you are lacking neither in men nor horses, weapons, wagons, and ships; in all these things you are superior to your enemies. If you think back on the deeds of our forefathers, you will find that the Turks never equalled them in battles at sea or on land if only the Christians acted in concert. Just think of the great victories over the Turks and other infidels won by the Roman emperors Charlemagne, Konrad III, Friedrich I, and Friedrich II, and by Godefroy, Duke of Lorraine.

[22] **Sed parco** defessis **auribus vestris**. Unum **dico**: **numquam generale passagium contra** hostes nostrae religionis institutum traditur, **quin nostri triumphaverint, nisi** fortasse cum fames, aut pestilentia, aut **discordia** nostros afflixit. Manifestum est igitur nostram esse victoriam, si abdicatis **causis, quae nobis Deum iratum** faciunt, **pro Christi** nomine **bellum suscipiamus**. Sumite igitur, clarissime procures, fortes animos. Nolite hinc prius abire quam gerendum adversus Turcos bellum decernatis. Nolite rem tantam ac tam necessariam in tempus aliud proferre, ne dum vos de bello deliberatis, hostis jam castra tenens, id faciat, quod vos facturos spem gerimus. Etenim quis non intelligit magnum Christianitati instare discrimen, si hoc concilium rebus infectis dissolvatur? **Habet** adversarius noster **exploratores**, non latent eum consilia vestra. Tanto **ferocior** erit, quanto cognoverit vos magis desides.

[23] **Christiani, qui vicini sunt Turcis**, ubi de vestris **auxiliis** desperaverint, in leges Turcorum ibunt. Sic Trapezuntios, Georgianos, Rascianos, Albanos, Bulgaros facile amitemus. Caramannus, qui auxilia contra Turcos pollicetur, quamvis est ejus perfidiae comes, ubi negligentes Christianos acceperit, et ipse sibi consulat. **Hungari, qui** sicut admodum **et annis** pluribus **suum effundendo sanguinem** tutati sunt nostrum, **indutias cum Turcis habent** non longo **tempore** duraturas. Quod si audiant **dissolutum** esse **sine fructu** conventum, novis se pactionibus obligabunt, **neque cum voluerimus eorum uti** consiliis dabitur.

[22] But I shall spare your tired ears and only say this: never has it been heard that we were defeated in a crusade against the enemies of our religion unless our [troops] were struck by hunger, plague, or strife. So it is clear that if we refrain from such things that anger God, we shall be victorious when we go to war for the cause of Christ. Therefore, Excellent Nobles, be courageous. Do not leave from here before you have decided on war against the Turks. Do not put off this great and urgent matter so that while you are still discussing the war, the enemy, already on the move, actually does what you only hope to do. Who does not understand how dangerous it is for Christianity if our meeting ends with this matter left unfinished? Our adversary has spies; he knows of your plans. The more he sees you vacillate, the more ferocious he will become.

## **2.6. The allies**

[23] If the Christian neighbours of the Turks lose hope of your help, they will accept their terms. Thus, we shall easily lose the peoples of Trebizond, Georgia, Rascia, Albania, and Bulgaria.

Karaman promises help against the Turks, though he is an infidel like them. If he hears that the Christians are indifferent, then he will look to his own interests.

The Hungarians, who for many years have shed much blood as they protected ours, have an armistice with the Turks, which will expire shortly. If they hear that this conference has ended without a result, they will be forced to accept new agreements [with the Turks], and they will not be able to assist us when we want them to.

[24] **Neque** hic rem dubiam proferimus. **Johannes** Huniat, comes Bisticensis, qui rem {64} Hungariae gubernat, vir alti consilii, **Turcorum** metus, Christianorum spes, hoc ipsum novissime Caesari nostro significavit per **oratores**, qui ad se missi fuerant. Ait enim **Turcorum** principem grandes **belli apparatus facere**, **Tartarorum gentem foedere junctam habere**, **personam ejus esse in Andrinopoli**, **exercitus in Sophia** apud **Bulgaros congregari** ibique duces belli convenisse. **Hungaros** autem **nihil** magis **optare quam Turcorum** conatus infringere, se quoque sumpturum **arma** pugnaturumque totis viribus, si Theutones ceterique **Christiani concurrant**. **At si** nostrae religionis **principes torpeant**, neque **velle**, neque posse **Hungaros tantam belli molem** subire, **sed accepturos conditiones**, **quas Turci offerant**, **datuos transitum**, **qui ab illis petitur**. **Quod an sit in rem Christianorum**, **ipsi reges Christiani viderint**. Sic Hungari regno suo consulere proponunt. Quid Venetos, quid et Genuenses facturos arbitramini? Nemo est qui non sibi quam alteri melius velit; omnes de suo statu solliciti sunt. **Rex autem Franciae Christianissimus**, **majorum suorum vestigia** premens, teste **reverendissimo cardinali**, **summo pontifici litteras dedit**, **quibus** sese arma sumpturum pollicetur, si **Germanos** indixisse Turcis bellum cognoverit.

[25] Quod si vos nihil agitis, deserta Christianitas erit; nemo illam tuebitur: *exterminabit eam aper de silva, et singularis ferus depascetur eam*, vosque tanti mali causam praestabitis, si convenientes in hoc loco {65} ad consulendum reipublicae Christianae infectis negotiis abieritis. Sunt enim omnium oculi in vos conversi, vosque veluti rectores Christiani populi omnes intuentur. Si audetis, omnium erigentur animi. Si torpetis, actum est de nostra religione; **Turcorum ferre imperium**, **Mahumetique parere legibus** oportebit.

[24] Here we are not advancing a doubtful argument, for this is what the Governor of Hungary, Janos Hunyadi, Count of Bistrita, a most perspicacious man, terror of the Turks and hope of the Christians, quite recently told our emperor through ambassadors sent to him. He says that the Turkish prince is making great preparations for war, that he has entered an alliance with the Tartars, that he is now himself in Adrianopolis, that his armies are assembling at Sophia in Bulgaria, and that his generals are gathering there. [Further that] the Hungarians want nothing more than to oppose the Turkish endeavours and that they will go to war and fight with all their might if the Germans and the other Christians join them. But if the princes of our religion are passive, then the Hungarians neither can nor will shoulder this great burden of war [alone] but shall accept the conditions offered by the Turks and give them the free passage they demand. The Christian kings will have to consider whether that is in the interests of the Christians. This is how the Hungarians intend to provide for their kingdom.

And how do you think the Venetians and the Genoese will react? Nobody wants the other part to fare better than oneself; everyone is most concerned about his own affairs.

The Most Christian King of France follows the example of his forefathers and has, according to the Most Reverend Cardinal, sent a letter to the Supreme Pontiff in which he promises that he, too, will take up arms if he hears that the Germans have declared war on the Turks.

### 3. Conclusion

[25] So, if you do nothing, Christianity will be left defenceless; nobody will protect it. You have assembled here in order to provide for the Christian Commonwealth. If you leave without having done so, *the boar out of the wood will lay it waste: and a singular wild beast will devour it.*<sup>1</sup> All eyes are on you now, and the Christian peoples are looking to you for leadership. If you show resolve, they will be encouraged. If you show apathy, our religion is done for, and we shall have to bear the rule of the Turks and obey the laws of Muhammad.

---

<sup>1</sup> Psalms, 79, 14



[26] Agite igitur, consulite in medium, procures; nolite matrem vestram ecclesiam desertam relinquere. Cogitate quo pacto Turcorum rabiem elidatis; non erit hoc difficile, si concordēs estis. Ecce divino nutu et ad nostrum tutamentum **lites Italiae compositae sunt**. Facile jam summus apostolicae sedis praesul ac praestantissimus **ille rex Aragonum cum Venetis**, Genuensibus, **et aliis Italiae** populis ac **principibus adversus Turcos classem maritimam** apparabunt. Quod si vos terrestrem exercitum armaveritis, terra simul ac mari uno tempore superbissimus hostis invasus, adiutore altissimo, nostris ex finibus propulsabitur. Haec sunt, quae pro commissione nostra secundo et ultimo loco de mente Caesaris dicenda fuerunt

[27] Vos igitur, quibus curae est orthodoxa religio nostra, quique bonum commune Christianae plebis exoptatis, **operam dabit**, ne hoc concilium, ex quo spes omnium Christianorum pendet, absque salubri **conclusionē** dissipetur. **Neve tantus et tam altus princeps**, quantus est **Burgundiae dux**, de remotissimis regionibus **vocatu Caesaris ad vestros lares frustra venerit; sed et ipse potius ad propria** laetus jucundusque **redeat, et omnes, qui spem habent in vobis**, sui voti compotes fiant.

[26] So, consult now, Nobles. Do not abandon the Church, your mother. Consider how to overcome the rabid Turks. It will not be difficult if only you are in agreement. The Italian conflicts have been settled by divine will and for our safety. It will now be easy for the Supreme Pontiff and the excellent King of Aragon, together with the Venetians, the Genoese, and the other peoples and princes of Italy, to prepare a fleet against the Turk. If you, on your part, mobilise a land army, our arrogant enemy can be attacked both on land and at sea, and with the help of the Most High, he will be thrown out of our lands.

This is what we had been commissioned to say, in the second and last place, about the intentions of the emperor.

[27] Now it is up to you, caring for our orthodox religion and desiring the common good of the Christian people, to make sure that this congress, on which hangs the hope of all Christians, does not end without a fruitful conclusion. Nor should the great and exalted prince, the Duke of Burgundy, have travelled in vain at the emperor's call from remote regions to your lands. No, may he return happy and joyful, and may all who hope in you be content.



**III. VERSION B AND C: TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

**Oratio Aeneae Silvii<sup>1</sup> Piccolominei episcopi<sup>2</sup> Senensis qui<sup>3</sup> postea pontificatum maximum adeptus Pius II. appellatus est habita Ratisponae in conventu praesente Philippo<sup>4</sup> Burgundiae duce<sup>5</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> *omit.* E

<sup>2</sup> *add. in marg.* A, C

<sup>3</sup> quod B, E

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* E

<sup>5</sup> Oratio ... duce: Enee Silvii episcopi Senensis legati Cesaris oratio

habita in conventu Ratisponensi praesente Philippo Burgundie duce **D**; Oratio pro parte Invictissimi principis et domini domini FridERICI Romanorum Imperatoris etc. in facto Passagii facta in dieta Ra-

tisponensi per Reverendum patrem dominum Eneam Epicopum Senensem etc. que celebrata fuit in mense Maii Anno domini 1454 **W**

**Oration of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena, who was called Pius II after he became pope, given at the diet in Regensburg, in the presence of Duke Philippe of Burgundy<sup>1</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> Philippe III le Bon (1396-1467):  
Duke of Burgundy from 1419 to  
his death

[28] {39v} **Quamvis omnibus, qui adestis, reverendissimi patres, illustrissimi et excellentissimi principes<sup>1</sup>, et praestabiles domini honorandi, nota sit causa conventionis vestrae, in litteris enim ad unumquemque transmissis exprimitur, quia tamen res maxima est et universam Christianitatem concernit, propter quam divus Caesar Fridericus, Romanorum imperator Augustus, dominus noster invictissimus, in hoc celeberrimo loco conventum indixit, utile videtur reverendissimis ac magnificis dominis et collegis meis, imperatoriae majestatis oratoribus, causam ipsam conventionis amplius explicare, et quod sit imperatoriae majestatis intentum<sup>2</sup> ad<sup>3</sup> consulendum reipublicae Christianae in hoc amplissimo auditorio exponere. Partes autem dicendi, ut cernitis, ad me, qui sum omnium minimus, delatae sunt, qui etsi pareo libenter majoribus meis, in hoc tamen negotio alium meo loco suffectum esse voluissem, qui parem rebus<sup>4</sup> potuisset orationem habere.**

[29] Sed **turpe est contendere<sup>5</sup>, ubi necesse est oboedire, vosque<sup>6</sup> pro vestra mansuetudine ac nobilitate, quas mihi negavissetis<sup>7</sup> aures, eas rerum magnitudini concedetis. Ego, ut quam<sup>8</sup> brevissime res absolvam. Propositionem<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> meam in duas dividam partes. In prima dicam ex ordine, quae causae moverunt<sup>11</sup> Caesarem ad hunc conventum indicendum<sup>12</sup>. In secunda, quae sint<sup>13</sup> commissa nobis in<sup>14</sup> vestro amplissimo coetu tractanda, narrabo. At<sup>15</sup> ne verba incassum proferam, hinc narrationis initium<sup>16</sup> capiam.**

---

<sup>1</sup> magnifici *add.* W

<sup>2</sup> causam ipsam ... intentum *omit.* W

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* C

<sup>4</sup> parem rebus : rebus parem W

<sup>5</sup> contemnere F

<sup>6</sup> vos W

<sup>7</sup> navigassetis F

<sup>8</sup> que W

<sup>9</sup> proportionem F

<sup>10</sup> Divisio *in marg.* D

<sup>11</sup> moverint W

<sup>12</sup> hunc ... indicendum : hanc dietam indicendam W

<sup>13</sup> sunt D

<sup>14</sup> cum W

<sup>15</sup> ac W

<sup>16</sup> initium D, E, F

## 0. Introduction

[28] Most Reverend Fathers, Illustrious and Eminent Princes and Worshipful Lords. You who are present here today already know the reason why you have been invited to this meeting since it was stated in the letter sent to each of you. But the matter concerning which Holy Emperor Friedrich, August Emperor of the Romans and our Unvanquished Lord, has summoned a conference in this famous place is of the highest importance and concerns all of Christianity, and therefore my Most Reverend and Magnificent Lords and Colleagues, the orators of His Imperial Majesty, have deemed it useful to explain more fully to this august assembly the reasons for the meeting and to set forth the intention of His Imperial Majesty in taking counsel with you concerning the Christian Commonwealth. As you see, the task of speaking has fallen to me, the most insignificant of all, and though I gladly obey my betters, in this matter I would have wished to be replaced with someone who could give a more suitable oration.

[29] But it is shameful to argue when you should obey. And since you are kind and noble, you will listen, if not for my sake, then because of the importance of the matter. I shall perform this task as briefly as possible, dividing my presentation into two parts. In the first, I shall state the reasons that led the emperor to summon this assembly. In the second, I shall explain what he has charged us to deal with in this eminent assembly. And lest I speak superfluously, I shall begin my speech right now.



[30] Cum accepisset imperatoria majestas **aestate proxime<sup>1</sup> decursa**, quae circa Constantinopolim Turcorum rabies perpetrasset, ingenti maerore affecta fuit, considerans quantum<sup>2</sup> et quale vulnus Christianorum genti esset illatum. **Est enim amissa civitas nobilissima et amplissima, quam quondam Constantinus imperator**, ut refert Eusebius Caesariensis, **jussu domini salvatoris sibi per somnum apparentis ad similitudinem et aequalem {40r} excellentiam Romanae urbis erexit**, ubi<sup>3</sup> **orientalis imperii solium et patriarchalis sedes longo tempore floruit. Illic** occisus est **imperator Constantinus<sup>4</sup>** ejus nominis ultimus. Mirabile dictu, ut in **eo nomine Graecorum imperium sit extinctum**, in **quo sumpsit** initium. **Nobilitas** urbis gladio caesa est, religiosi monachi **sacerdotesque<sup>5</sup>** suppliciis afflictis crudelissimis, sacratae **virgines** ad libidinem raptae, matresfamilias ac puellae passae, **quaeque victoribus** placuerunt. Mares impuberes in complexu **parentum** necati, **animarum infinitus numerus in captivitatem ac perpetuam servitutem** deductus. **Quis talia fando<sup>6</sup> temperet<sup>7</sup> a lacrimis. Horresco talia referens.**

[31] Sed quid dicam de magnificentissimis<sup>8</sup> illius urbis ecclesiis, quarum aliquae incensae aut diruptae<sup>9</sup> fuerunt<sup>10</sup>, aliae **deletis** imaginibus Christi domini nostri Jesu<sup>11</sup> ac sanctorum ad spurcitiam Mahumeti profanatae sunt. **Reliquiae martyrum et aliorum piorum jam cum Christo regnantium, quae fuerunt in illa civitate pretiosissimae, in lutum<sup>12</sup> projectae et conculcatae a<sup>13</sup> porcis** aut traditae **canibus** enarrantur<sup>14</sup>. **O<sup>15</sup> maximam atque intolerabilem ignominiam Christiane gentis!** Nullum arbitror **pectus esse Christiani<sup>16</sup> hominis, qui<sup>17</sup> hoc audiens non commoveatur** atque ardeat<sup>18</sup> **ira**. Nullum **esse fidelis hominis oculum, qui non gemat?** Et quidem<sup>19</sup> Caesarea majestas hoc intelligens non potuit non vehementissime<sup>20</sup> dolere.

<sup>1</sup> proxima W

<sup>2</sup> est *add.* MA

<sup>3</sup> et *add.* W

<sup>4</sup> Constantinopolitanus B, E, MA

<sup>5</sup> sacerdotes MA

<sup>6</sup> fandi W

<sup>7</sup> temperat W

<sup>8</sup> magnificis W

<sup>9</sup> dirutae B, F

<sup>10</sup> feruntur W

<sup>11</sup> *omit.* W

<sup>12</sup> luctum E

<sup>13</sup> aut F

<sup>14</sup> narrantur MA

<sup>15</sup> et W

<sup>16</sup> ~~gentis~~ *add.* E; *gentis add.* MA

<sup>17</sup> *omit.* W

<sup>18</sup> audeat W

<sup>19</sup> et quidem : equidem W

<sup>20</sup> vehementer F

# 1. Reasons for the conference: Turkish attacks on Europe

## 1.1. The Fall of Constantinople

### 1.1.1. The conquest of Constantinople

[30] When, last summer, His Imperial Majesty learnt what the rabid Turks had done in Constantinople, he was profoundly shocked at the magnitude and nature of the wound inflicted upon the Christian people. For lost is the great and noble city that, according to Eusebius of Caesarea,<sup>1</sup> was built by Emperor Constantine at the command of Our Lord and Saviour, appearing to him in a dream. The city he built was to resemble and equal the excellence of the City of Rome. There, the throne of the Eastern Empire and a patriarchal see flourished for a long time.<sup>2</sup> And there, Emperor Constantine, the last of his name, was killed. Remarkably, the Greek Empire perished under [an emperor] with the same name as [the emperor who] created it.<sup>3</sup> The nobles of the city were slaughtered, monks and priests were subjected to horrible torture,<sup>4</sup> holy virgins were taken away to be raped, matrons and girls suffered the pleasure of the victors, boys were killed in the arms of their parents, and an infinite number of people were carried into captivity and permanent slavery.<sup>5</sup> *Who can talk about such things without tears?*<sup>6</sup> *I shudder even as I tell them*<sup>7</sup>.

### 1.1.2. Profanation of holy things

[31] And what shall I say about the magnificent churches in this city? Some were burnt or destroyed; others were profaned with the filth of Mohammedans who destroyed the icons of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the saints. The city's precious relics of martyrs and other pious men now reigning with Christ were reportedly cast into the gutter, trodden under feet by pigs, or thrown to dogs. Oh, the great and intolerable shame on the Christian people! I believe that the heart of every Christian who hears about this will be moved and burn with anger. Is there any believer who will not cry with sorrow when hearing it? Indeed, the emperor was deeply shocked when he did.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea: *De vita Constantini*, 1, 29; 3, 48; Sozomenos: *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2, 3

<sup>2</sup> From Piccolomini's letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 212), slightly revised

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Isidore of Kiev: Letter to Pope Nicolaus V of 6 July 1453 (Pertusi,

I, 60): *quae [Constantinopolis] sicut ab ipso Constantino, Elenae filio, fuit tunc fundata, nunc ab isto altero Constantino, alterius Elenae filio, miserabiliter est amisso*  
<sup>4</sup> From Piccolomini's Letter to Pope Nicolaus V of 12 July 1453 (EPI, 6: 430) and Letter to Cardinal Ni-

kolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (EPI, 6: 431), slightly revised

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im.75]

<sup>6</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.361

<sup>7</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.204

[32] Huc accedit quia<sup>1</sup> locus ille **Constantinopolis** situm **habet** nobilissimum et ad nocendum<sup>2</sup> Christianitati aptissimum. Habet enim **portum** tutissimum et **amplissimum**<sup>3</sup> adeo, ut **non unam** classem, **sed infinitas** paene naves **capere possit**, neque **toto Mediterraneo mari situs**<sup>4</sup> est ad **infestandum omne pelagus** magis idoneus. **Jacet**<sup>5</sup> enim supra Propontidem, ita ut neque de Ponto Euxino, quod<sup>6</sup> hodie<sup>7</sup> Mare Majus appellant, in pelagus Jonium, quod nunc Archipelagus nominatur, neque vice versa ex hoc in illud invitis Constantinopolitanis transitus esse possit. Sunt enim angustiae freti **per Bosforum**<sup>8</sup> Thraciae et<sup>9</sup> **per Hellespontum**, quod Bracchium Sancti Georgii nostri vocitant, **in potestate Turcorum**. Nec<sup>10</sup> jam merces **ex Tanai**, si nolunt<sup>11</sup> **Turci**, ad nostros<sup>12</sup> meare possunt. Facile modo **facultas** Turcis **est classem in portu Constantinopolitano parare**<sup>13</sup>, cum qua **cunctas insulas Archipelagi** devastent<sup>14</sup> aut sibi subjiciant, **quarum jam plerasque** invasisse atque obtinuisse memorantur.

[33] Turcorum autem princeps<sup>15</sup>, ut fama fert, ut quam<sup>16</sup> certissime referunt, **qui ejus** facta cognoscunt, **auctus animo** ex acquisitione tantae urbis **nequaquam se otio atque**<sup>17</sup> **inertiae**<sup>18</sup> **tradit**, **sed** majora mente cupiens<sup>19</sup> **exercitus copiosissimos**<sup>20</sup> **classesque** maximas parat, **eo proposito**, **{40v}** **ut amplius** atque amplius **Christianitatem** mari ac terra invadere possit, existimans **Christianum nomen funditus** posse delere, nesciens quia salvator noster cum populo suo usque ad finem saeculi sese promisit esse mansurum. **Nec mirum, si tumescit atque insanit illius**<sup>21</sup> **animus**, **cum patris sui ac suas victorias mente revolvit**. Scimus patrem ejus memoria nostra **paucis ante annis bis Christianorum exercitus non parvos neque contemnendos** delevisse. Iste<sup>22</sup> **vero de Constantinopolitana victoria et imperatore Graecorum caeso** plurimum se gloriatur<sup>23</sup>. Et quoniam eo **nomine** vocatur, quo pseudopropheta dictus est, **qui sectam**<sup>24</sup> firmavit **Agarenorum**, **Mahumetus** enim appellatur, ad exemplum illius **Christi nomen** exosum habet.

<sup>1</sup> qui E; quod F, MA

<sup>2</sup> nocendi E;

<sup>3</sup> habet ... amplissimum *omit.* B, E, MA

<sup>4</sup> ullus *add.* W

<sup>5</sup> licet W

<sup>6</sup> quem B, C, W

<sup>7</sup> hodie *corr. ex* moderni C; moderni W

<sup>8</sup> Borsforum A, B, E, F

<sup>9</sup> ac W

<sup>10</sup> haec F

<sup>11</sup> volunt W

<sup>12</sup> nostras W

<sup>13</sup> ponere W

<sup>14</sup> vastent F

<sup>15</sup> dominus W

<sup>16</sup> quem W

<sup>17</sup> aut MA

<sup>18</sup> *se add.* W

<sup>19</sup> concipiens W

<sup>20</sup> exercitus copiosissimos : copiosissimos exercitus C

<sup>21</sup> illi MA

<sup>22</sup> ipse W

<sup>23</sup> *se gloriatur : gloriatur se* W

<sup>24</sup> sanctam E

## 1.2. Turkish threat to Europe

### 1.2.1. Strategic position of Constantinople

[32] To this should be added that the city of Constantinople has an excellent location, well suited to harm the Christian world. Its port is most secure and so great that it can hold not just one fleet but almost an infinite number of ships. No place at the Mediterranean Sea is better situated for infesting the whole sea, for it lies above Propontis,<sup>1</sup> so that against the will of those who possess Constantinople, there can be no sailing from Pontus Euxinus<sup>2</sup> (today called the Great Sea) to the Ionian Sea (today called the Archipelago) nor the opposite way. For the narrow straits through Thracian Bosphorus and through the Hellespont (that our people call the Arm of Saint George) are now under Turkish rule, and no commercial goods can come from Tanais<sup>3</sup> to our regions against the will of the Turks. And it will now be quite easy for the Turks to prepare a fleet in the port of Constantinople with which to lay waste to or conquer all the islands of the Archipelago – actually, they are already said to have attacked and taken a number of them.

### 1.2.2. Mehmed's ambition to conquer Europe

[33] According to gossip and quite reliable reports from people who know him, acquiring this great city has quite emboldened the prince of the Turks, and he will certainly not want peace and quiet. On the contrary, he is contemplating even greater things and is gathering large armies and great fleets, intending to invade the Christian lands one after the other, by land and by sea. Indeed, he thinks that he can annihilate the Christian cause, not knowing that Our Saviour has promised to remain with his people *unto the end of the world*.<sup>4</sup> However, it is not to be wondered that his mind swells and raves when he considers his father's and his own victories. For we know that in our own time and not so many years ago, his father twice destroyed a Christian army that was neither small nor insignificant.<sup>5</sup> He himself can boast of his victory at Constantinople and the killing of the Greek Emperor, and since he carries the same name as the false prophet, who strengthened the sect of the Agarenes<sup>6</sup> – for he is called Muhammad – he hates the name of Christ after the example of his namesake.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Sea of Marmara

<sup>2</sup> The Black Sea

<sup>3</sup> The area around the river Don

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 28, 20

<sup>5</sup> The victories of Murad II at Varna (1444) and Amselfeld (1448)

<sup>6</sup> Agarenes, i.e., the Arabs. From Hagar, concubine of Abraham, mother of Ismael, legendary patri-

arch and ancestor of the Arab people. In the Middle ages, "Agarenes" was often used for Arabs, synonymously with Saracens

[34] Et quoniam **ex quattuor<sup>1</sup> patriarchalibus<sup>2</sup> ecclesiis, super quibus velut solidissimis basibus Christiana fides** radicata in **totum olim<sup>3</sup> orbem palmites extendit, jam tres<sup>4</sup> obtinent** Mahumeti cultores,<sup>5</sup> **Alexandrinam, Antiochenam, et Constantinopolitanam,** non dubitat quin<sup>6</sup> **et Romanam** possit obtinere ac Mahumeto subigere<sup>7</sup>, **soletque**, ut ajunt, qui ejus acta considerant, inter suos saepe illa **verba** proferre: **"Cur non ego mihi totum<sup>8</sup> occidentem armis** acquiram atque submittam, **qui sum Asiae, Thraciae, Macedoniae atque Illyrici dominus<sup>9</sup> et totius Graeciae<sup>10</sup>, quando Alexander Philippi, cum solam Macedoniam** obtineret, totum calcavit **orientem ac cum<sup>11</sup> XXX et duobus milibus militum** innumerabiles fudit exercitus Darii ac<sup>12</sup> **usque ad Indiam penetravit?**

[35] Jactatque se numerosissimos exercitus habere, nec **mentitur**. Haud enim dubium est, quin trecenta et<sup>13</sup> quadraginta<sup>14</sup> **milia pugnatorum in bellum possit educere. Quod si Tartaris,** ut fama est, jungatur, multo<sup>15</sup> plures homines congregare valebit. Quanta<sup>16</sup> vero sit ejus potentia exinde licet<sup>17</sup> intueri, quia **cum** sui majores nihil haberent **citra mare**, saepe tamen **maximos** atque innumerabiles exercitus **in Europa<sup>18</sup>** duxere. **Quid nunc is faciat** et<sup>19</sup> quando,<sup>20</sup> cum<sup>21</sup> provincias plures<sup>22</sup> **usque ad Hungariae metas et usque ad<sup>23</sup> Dalmatiam** occupavit? Et<sup>24</sup> equidem<sup>25</sup> **non est spernendus hic hostis, qui animum habet ad bella paratum, qui juvenis est sanguine fervens, qui naturali quodam odio ex insita et innata malignitate atque crudelitate insequitur Christianos,** qui potentissimus est et jam recenti victoria insolescit, **qui multos ex Christianis habet<sup>26</sup> apostatas, ex quibus omnia facta nostra<sup>27</sup> cognoscit, qui nobis vicinus<sup>28</sup> est et aditum habet sive ad Italiam, sive ad Alamaniam patentem<sup>29</sup> per loca propinqua Dalmatiae et Croatiae.** Jam enim regnum **Bosniae et Albaniae** regio pro maxima parte illi paret.

<sup>1</sup> quattuor *appears to have been inserted later, though in the same hand, in a blank space left for that purpose* A; quinque W

<sup>2</sup> Patriachales sedes *in marg.* D

<sup>3</sup> urbem enim F

<sup>4</sup> quattuor W [ *tres appears to have been written into the text in a blank space left by the copyist, though in the same hand; the blank space was not filled out completely* A]

<sup>5</sup> Hierosolimitanam *add.* A; Jerosolimatnam *add.* W

<sup>6</sup> quoniam E, MA

<sup>7</sup> subigent F

<sup>8</sup> mihi totum : totum michi W

<sup>9</sup> *omit.* W

<sup>10</sup> dominus *add.* W

<sup>11</sup> ac cum : cum ac E; cum ad MA

<sup>12</sup> et W

<sup>13</sup> aut *suprascr.* W

<sup>14</sup> quadringenta W

<sup>15</sup> multos F

<sup>16</sup> quinta E

<sup>17</sup> liceat W

<sup>18</sup> Europam W, MA

<sup>19</sup> *omit.* B, C, E, F, W, MA

<sup>20</sup> *omit.* B, D, E, F, MA

<sup>21</sup> *omit.* A, C, W; qui F

<sup>22</sup> plurimas W

<sup>23</sup> in W

<sup>24</sup> *omit.* W

<sup>25</sup> quidem B, D, E, F, W, MA

<sup>26</sup> ex Christianis habet : habet ex Christianis W

<sup>27</sup> nostra F

<sup>28</sup> vicinius A, C

<sup>29</sup> potentem W

[34] There are four<sup>1</sup> patriarchal sees, solid foundations, in which the Christian faith is rooted and from where it once spread over the whole Earth, as fingers on a hand. Of these, the followers of Muhammad have already taken three: Alexandria, Antiochia, and Constantinople. Therefore, Mehmed has no doubt that he can also win the Roman patriarchate and subject it to Muhammad. Those who observe him relate that when he is with his intimates, he often says, “Why should I not be able to conquer and possess the whole of the West since I am already Lord of Asia<sup>2</sup>, Thrace, Macedonia, Illyria, and all of Greece? After all, Alexander<sup>3</sup>, son of Philip<sup>4</sup>, was only lord of Macedonia when he conquered the whole of the East and, with only 32,000 soldiers, beat the innumerable armies of Darius<sup>5</sup> and reached as far as India.”

[35] He also boasts of his large armies. This is not a lie, for there is no doubt that he can lead 340,000<sup>6</sup> soldiers into battle. And if he allies himself with the Tartars, as rumour has it, he will be able to gather many more men than that. You will understand how great his power is if you consider that though his forefathers did not have any land over the sea,<sup>7</sup> they often brought enormous armies and countless troops over to Europe. So what would he do now that he has already occupied many provinces right up to the Hungarian border and Dalmatia? He is definitely not an enemy to despise; his mind is set on war. He is young and hot-blooded. He persecutes Christians with a kind of natural hatred born of ingrained and innate malignity and cruelty.<sup>8</sup> He is extremely powerful and has become arrogant because of his recent victory. He has many Christian renegades with him, from whom he learns of all we do. He is our immediate neighbour, with direct access to Italy or Germany through the neighbouring regions of Dalmatia and Croatia. And the Kingdom of Bosnia and the land of Albania now mostly obey him.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the texts, there is some fluctuation concerning whether there were four or five main patriarchates (Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Rome – with or without Jerusalem)

<sup>2</sup> Asia Minor

<sup>3</sup> Alexander III the Great (356-323 BC): King of the Greek kingdom of Macedonia. Created one of the

largest empires of the ancient world, stretching from Greece to Egypt and into present-day Pakistan

<sup>4</sup> Philip II (382-336 BC): King of the Hellenic kingdom of Macedonia from 359 BC until his assassination in 336 BC

<sup>5</sup> Darius III (ca. 380-330 BC): Last king of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia from 336 BC until his death

<sup>6</sup> In Version A Piccolomini said 200,000

<sup>7</sup> i.e., on the European continent

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Niccolò Sagundio: *Oratio* (Caselli, p. 4): *odio, quo contra gentem nostrum nomenque Christianum flagrare et vexari videtur*

[36] Haec igitur et alia, que referre longum esset, considerans {41r} imperatoria sublimitas nedum utile, sed necessarium existimavit praesentem indicere conventum ac reges et principes exhortari, ut ad restinguendum commune incendium communibus **viribus** concurrerent<sup>1</sup>.

[37] **Etenim quamvis est ille - ut ante dixi<sup>2</sup> - ferocissimus et potentissimus hostis**, nihil erit inde<sup>3</sup> sua potentia, si Christianorum vires coeant, si Romani potestas imperii concors arma capessat<sup>4</sup>, si nobilissimi Germanorum procures, potentissimae communitates **unanimes** cum gloriosissimo<sup>5</sup> principe duce Burgundiae, qui adest, ad defensionem fidei consurrexerint<sup>6</sup>. Neque enim **aut arma, aut equi, aut currus, aut naves, aut homines desunt** Christianis, **sed omnia** late<sup>7</sup> nobis **meliora quam illis adsunt**. **Neque maritimo neque terrestri bello pares umquam** Christianis **fuerunt Turci, quando concordibus animis adversus eos itum<sup>8</sup> est**. Possem referre Magni Caroli, Gotfredi Bulionii<sup>9</sup>, **Conradi tertii**, Ludovici Francorum regis, **Friderici primi ac secundi, Romanorem imperatorum, ingentes quas de Turcis ac ceteris infidelibus habuerunt<sup>10</sup> victorias**. **Sed parco** fessis **auribus vestris**. Illud tamen<sup>11</sup> **dico: numquam passagium generale contra infideles gestum est, quin nostri<sup>12</sup> triumphaverint<sup>13</sup>, nisi cum inter se ipsos fuere discordes**. Itaque certum est, quia concordantibus Christianis incassum ibunt omnes Turcorum conatus, si cum<sup>14</sup> sincera mente et **pro causa Christi bellum suscipiatur** amputatis et penitus remotis **causis**, propter **quod<sup>15</sup> nobis Deus<sup>16</sup>** fortasse<sup>17</sup> **iratus** est.

---

<sup>1</sup> concurrant MA

<sup>2</sup> diximus F

<sup>3</sup> omit. W

<sup>4</sup> capescet W

<sup>5</sup> generosissimo W

<sup>6</sup> consurrexerunt B, E

<sup>7</sup> haec W

<sup>8</sup> actum W ; ac itum A; itum  
*correct. ex actum C*

<sup>9</sup> Bynono W [*corr. from de*  
Bulioni A]

<sup>10</sup> habuere W

<sup>11</sup> tamen D

<sup>12</sup> vestri B, E, MA

<sup>13</sup> triumphaverant W

<sup>14</sup> tamen W

<sup>15</sup> quas W

<sup>16</sup> nobis Deus : Deus nobis F

<sup>17</sup> Deus fortasse : fortasse Deus  
W

## 2. Purpose of the conference: War against the Turks

[36] Considering these and other issues that would take too long to relate here, His Imperial Highness has found it not just expedient but necessary to summon the present diet<sup>1</sup> and invite the kings and princes to end the general conflagration with joint forces.

### 2.1. Christian military superiority

[37] For although - as I have said - Mehmed is a most ferocious and powerful enemy, his power will mean nothing if the Christians join forces, if the united power of the Roman Empire goes to war, if the noble magnates and powerful communities of Germany rise to the defence of the Faith unanimously and together with the glorious Prince and Duke of Burgundy. For the Christians are lacking neither in weapons nor in horses, wagons or ships, and in all things they are far superior to their enemies. The Turks never equalled the Christians in battles at sea or on land if the Christians acted in concert against them. Just think of the great victories over the Turks and other infidels won by Charlemagne,<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> Godefroy de Bouillon,<sup>4</sup> Konrad III,<sup>5</sup> King Louis of France,<sup>6</sup> and the Roman emperors Friedrich I<sup>7</sup> and II.<sup>8</sup> But I will spare your tired ears. I will only say that unless there was strife on our side, we have always been triumphant in crusades<sup>9</sup> against the infidels. Therefore, it is quite certain that all the efforts of the Turks will be in vain if the Christians stand united and go to war for the cause of Christ with sincere minds, having completely removed and done away with the reasons for which God may be angry with us.

---

<sup>1</sup> "conventum"

<sup>2</sup> Charlemagne [Charles I the Great] (742/747/748-814): King of the Franks from 768, King of Italy from 774. In 800, crowned by the pope as the first emperor in Western Europe since the collapse of the Western Roman Empire three centuries earlier

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im. 75-76]. NB: Charlemagne did not fight the Arabs in Italy or the Holy Land

<sup>4</sup> Godefroy de Bouillon (ca. 1060-1100): one of the leaders of the First Crusade from 1096 until his death. Lord of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine from 1087. After the successful siege of Jerusalem in 1099, Godefroi became the first ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem

<sup>5</sup> Konrad III (1093-1152): first King of Germany of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. Participated in the Second Crusade

<sup>6</sup> Louis VII (1120 -1180): King of France from 1137 until his death.

Participated in the Second Crusade

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich I Barbarossa (1122-1190): Holy Roman Emperor from 1155 until his death

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich II (1194 -1250): Crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1220. Head of the House of Hohenstaufen

<sup>9</sup> "passagium generale"



[38] Cum<sup>1</sup> ergo indixisset Caesarea sublimitas hanc conventionem, statuerat huc **se** personaliter **conferre**, sed coacta est pro salute et defensione terrarum suarum **domi** remanere ex causis, quas saepe audivistis. Non est cur illas repetamus. Noluit<sup>2</sup> tamen hujus dietae negotia postergari aut quovis pacto negligi. Misit huc cum pleno **mandato**, quemadmodum **nudiustertius audivistis**. Amplissimam habent domini et<sup>3</sup> collegae mei potestatem cum vestris excellentiis de provisione contra Turcos facienda tractandi et concludendi.

[39] Et quoniam hic conventus indictus est, in quo<sup>4</sup> de re ipsa fiat inceptio, **illud** ex parte majestatis imperatoriae dicimus ante omnia necessarium esse, **ut divinum auxilium devotissime imploretur, ut fiant opera digna misericordia et clementia Dei**, ut **quemadmodum peccatis et iniquitatibus nostris offensa est divina majestas**, ita **orationibus et<sup>5</sup> piis actibus ejus<sup>6</sup> venia** acquiratur, **sine qua nihil est, quod humana potestas valeat explicare**. Exhortatur autem<sup>7</sup> **imperialis** auctoritas **reverendissimos** praesules **ecclesiarum pontifices et<sup>8</sup> praelatos**, **ut** in suis ecclesiis et diocesibus **commissos sibi populos {41v} ad opera pietatis** et devotionis **invitent, et ipsi per se cum clero sibi subjecto immaculatas hostias pro peccatis offerant populorum**.

[40] Quantum autem ad rem principalem attinet, ut Christianae fidei periclitanti<sup>9</sup> succuratur, modis<sup>10</sup> debitis patribus<sup>11</sup> et collegis meis commissum est, ut vestra super<sup>12</sup> hoc **consilia** et directiones exquirant vestrumque **grave et illuminatum iudicium** audiant, et conferant **vobiscum** super his, quae vobis **visa fuerint** opportuna.

[41] **Ipse<sup>13</sup> autem tamquam imperator Romanorum, advocatus et protector ecclesiae, ac tamquam princeps catholicus et verae fidei cultor suas operas suamque possibilitatem in medium offert**, seque **promptum ac<sup>14</sup> voluntarium** exhibet ad **executionem** omnium illorum, **quae in hoc loco<sup>15</sup> pro defensione fidei et<sup>16</sup> ad vindicandas injurias nomini Christiano** nostro tempore illatas, **pro honore Romani imperii, pro gloria nationis Germanicae deliberata atque conclusa fuerint**. Quod<sup>17</sup> sibi ex alto dominus concesserit.

---

<sup>1</sup> cur F

<sup>2</sup> nolens W

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* C

<sup>4</sup> hic ... quo : haec dies electa est, in qua W

<sup>5</sup> ac W

<sup>6</sup> *omit.* B, E, MA

<sup>7</sup> igitur et W

<sup>8</sup> ac W

<sup>9</sup> periclitantur F

<sup>10</sup> mediis W

<sup>11</sup> dominis W; partibus F

<sup>12</sup> semper F

<sup>13</sup> ante *add.* F

<sup>14</sup> et W; at F

<sup>15</sup> hoc loco : hac dieta W

<sup>16</sup> *omit.* W

<sup>17</sup> pro gloria ... fuerint quod *omit.* B, E, MA; quanto W

## **2.2. Mandate of the imperial ambassadors**

[38] When His Imperial Highness summoned this assembly, he intended to be present in person, but afterwards he was forced to remain at home in order to safeguard and protect his lands. As you have heard the reasons several times, there is no need to repeat them. However, he did not wish for the diet's business to be postponed or neglected in any way whatsoever. As you heard the day before yesterday, he has therefore sent [representatives] with a full mandate. My Lords and colleagues have full powers to negotiate and decide with Your Excellencies what should be done against the Turks.

## **2.3. Need for atonement, prayers, and piety**

[39] And since this assembly has been summoned to begin the whole enterprise, we tell you - on behalf of His Imperial Majesty - that above all, it is necessary to devoutly pray for God's help and to act in a manner worthy of God's mercy and clemency. And just as we have offended the Divine Majesty with our sins and iniquities, we must obtain His grace with prayers and pious works. For without it, there is nothing that human power can achieve. His Imperial Majesty therefore exhorts the reverend bishops and prelates to invite, each in his own church and diocese, the people entrusted to them to do works of piety and devotion, while they themselves, with their clergy, offer up immaculate hosts for the sins of the people.

[40] Concerning the principal matter, which is to safeguard the endangered Christian Faith, the Fathers, my colleagues, have been duly instructed to request your advice and counsel, to hear your considered and enlightened judgement, and to confer with you on the best way to proceed.

## **2.4. The emperor's part**

[41] He himself, as Emperor of the Romans, as champion and protector of the Church, as a Catholic prince, and as a true believer, dedicates all his efforts and all his means to that cause, and he declares himself to be willing and ready to undertake everything that may be discussed and decided here for the defence of the Faith and in revenge of the injuries inflicted upon the Christian cause in our time, for the honour of the Roman Empire and the glory of the German nation. May the Lord grant him this from on high.

[42] Illud cum<sup>1</sup> vestris excellentiis vestrisque prudentiis per nos commemorandum esse ac suadendum commisit, ut attendentes, quanta immineant Christianitati pericula, quantum in oriente fideles Christiani sint oppressi, quantum in Graecia nomen Christi<sup>2</sup> blasphemetur<sup>3</sup>, quantum jam Mahumeti perfidia creverit, *quae jam nos in angulum Europae coarctavit, hinc Hungaros, inde<sup>4</sup> et<sup>5</sup> Hispanos premens* et, quomodo sacrum domini sepulchrum<sup>6</sup> ab inimicis crucis possidetur<sup>7</sup>, considerantes et zelum domus Dei induentes, consilium hic et conclusionem recipiatis<sup>8</sup> per quam non solum defendi, quod<sup>9</sup> superest<sup>10</sup> Christianitatis, sed etiam tunc<sup>11</sup> recuperari valeat, quod<sup>12</sup> – pro dolor – est amissum<sup>13</sup>. Neque ullo pacto hinc recedere<sup>14</sup> velitis priusquam opportuna conclusio fiat. Neque rem tam necessariam in tempus aliud proferendam quisquam existimet, ne, dum nos in deliberatione persistimus, hostis in<sup>15</sup> expeditione consurgens damnis nos afficiat gravioribus. Existimat enim sublimitas imperatoria valde damnosum et<sup>16</sup> periculosum<sup>17</sup> esse hunc conventum<sup>18</sup> sine laudabili conclusione dissolvi. Intelligens<sup>19</sup> enim adversarius noster consilia nostra, et<sup>20</sup> animum sumet **ferociorem**. Neque enim dubitandum est, quin **exploratores habeat**, quaecumque inter nos aguntur<sup>21</sup>, sibi manifestantes.

[43] **Christiani** quoque, **qui vicini sunt Turcis** et nostra **auxilia** praestolantur, mentem bonam amitterent, et amissa spe praesidii cum hostibus se componerent. **Hungari, qui** sunt potentissimi et a multis **annis** non sine grandi<sup>22</sup> effusione **sui sanguinis** murum se pro {42r} nobis contra inimicos nostrae religionis obtulerunt, quique modo **indutias<sup>23</sup> cum Turcis habent<sup>24</sup>** intra breve tempus expiraturas, si quovis pacto sentiant hanc congregationem<sup>25</sup> **sine fructu dissolutam**, ampliores<sup>26</sup> cum Turcis amplectentur, **neque cum voluerimus eorum uti** auxiliis, quovis modo poterimus.

<sup>1</sup> tamen W

<sup>2</sup> nomen Christi : Christi nomen W

<sup>3</sup> blasphematur W

<sup>4</sup> hinc F

<sup>5</sup> omit. W

<sup>6</sup> domini sepulchrum : sepulchrum domini W

<sup>7</sup> possiderunt F

<sup>8</sup> recipias F

<sup>9</sup> quae W

<sup>10</sup> superat W

<sup>11</sup> omit. W

<sup>12</sup> quae W

<sup>13</sup> amissa W

<sup>14</sup> discedere D

<sup>15</sup> omit. W

<sup>16</sup> atque E, MA

<sup>17</sup> periculosum : periculo plenum W

<sup>18</sup> hunc conventum : hanc dietam W

<sup>19</sup> intelligeret W

<sup>20</sup> omit. W

<sup>21</sup> agantur W

<sup>22</sup> omit. F

<sup>23</sup> treugas W

<sup>24</sup> debent F

<sup>25</sup> dietam W

<sup>26</sup> indutias add. W

## 2.5. Call for action

[42] This is what he has required us to take up with Your Excellencies, and he urges you to consider how great are the dangers that threaten Christianity, how much the Christian believers in the East are oppressed, how much the name of Christian is being blasphemed in Greece, how much the false religion of Muhammad has grown *and has forced us into a corner of Europe*,<sup>1</sup> pressuring the Hungarians at the one end and the Spaniards at the other, and how the holy tomb of Our Lord is being held by the Enemies of the Cross. So, let us gird ourselves with the zeal of God's house, and let us take counsel and reach a decision that will allow us not only to defend what remains of Christianity but even to recover what has been lost – oh, what sorrow! Please do not depart without a favourable conclusion. Let nobody think that this urgent matter may be postponed to another time, for then the enemy may suddenly go to war against us and inflict further damage upon us while we spend our time debating. Indeed, His Imperial Highness thinks that it would be greatly harmful and dangerous if this assembly finished without a positive conclusion. Our adversary undoubtedly has spies who report everything we do to him, and if he hears that the meeting has come to an end without such a decision, his fierceness will only increase.

## 2.6. Allies

[43] And the Christians who are the neighbours of the Turks and who are asking for our help would lose courage, and having lost hope of our protection, they would come to terms with the enemies.

The Hungarians are strong and have for many years formed a bulwark for us against the enemies of our religion – at great loss of their own blood. Their present truce with the Turks will expire shortly. If they hear that this assembly has ended without success, they will extend it, and then we will not be able to have their help when we want to.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im.75]: *Melius filii et majori cum gloria nostri progenitores inchoatam - ut altius-*

*cule repetamus – Romae et in Italia et viribus Europae aucta dignitatem ad totius orbis monarchiam extulerunt, per cujus omnes provincias et regiones nomen floruit*

*Christianum. Quod nomen nostris temporibus ad parvum orbis angulum coangustari et quotidie de excidio periclitari videmus.*

[44] **Neque** hoc sine fundamento dicit imperatoria majestas. Nam paucis diebus antequam ab ea recederemus, miserat sua sublimitas **oratores**<sup>1</sup> ad **Johannem**, Hungariae gubernatorem, magnum virum et apud **Turcos** formidatum, ut percunctarentur<sup>2</sup> ab eo, si quas ex Turcis novitates habuisset. Ad ea respondit Johannes **Turcorum** dominum magnos **belli apparatus facere**, neque umquam tam numerosas<sup>3</sup> habuisse copias, quam nunc habere proponit; **personam ejus esse in Andrinopoli**<sup>4</sup>, **exercitus** autem apud **Sophiam** in **Bulgaria congregari**, **Tartarorumque gentem** jam sibi foedere **junctam** affirmari. Interrogatus autem, an<sup>5</sup> **Hungari** vellent contra Turcos insurgere, si et<sup>6</sup> Alamani et ceteri concurrerent, **nihil aliud optare** dixit Hungaros quam refellere<sup>7</sup> et retundere **Turcorum** insolentiam<sup>8</sup>, promptissimosque Hungaros et seipsum cum omni potentia sua in persona propria contra Turcos **arma** capessere<sup>9</sup>, si modo aliorum **Christianorum concurrere** exercitus intelligant. **At si** videant Christianos reges et **principes torpescere**<sup>10</sup>, nequaquam **velle Hungaros tantam belli molem** sustinere, in qua se videant manifeste succubituros<sup>11</sup>, **sed accepturos**<sup>12</sup> **conditionem, quam** jam sibi **Turci offerant**<sup>13</sup>, **daturos eis transitum, quem petunt. Quod an sit** in utilitatem **Christianitatis, ipsi reges et principes viderint**. Haec<sup>14</sup> significavit Johannes imperatoriae majestati. Ex quibus liquet manifeste<sup>15</sup>, quod<sup>16</sup> nisi in hoc loco<sup>17</sup> laudabilis conclusio fiat contra Turcorum conatus, timendum est, ne Hungari cum illis se<sup>18</sup> componant, et<sup>19</sup> res Christianorum multo deteriores reddantur. Atque his ex causis apprime necessarium videtur imperiali culmini absque ulteriore<sup>20</sup> mora conclusionem hic<sup>21</sup> captari, per quam universi consolationem recipere possint, qui vicini Turcis eorum potentiam atque superbiam reformidant<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> suos *add.* W ; ~~suos~~ *add.* A, C;  
oratore B, E, MA

<sup>2</sup> perconctarentur A, B, E, MA;  
percontarentur D, F

<sup>3</sup> universas W; numeras F

<sup>4</sup> Andreopoli E, MA

<sup>5</sup> et *add.* W

<sup>6</sup> *omit.* F

<sup>7</sup> revellere W

<sup>8</sup> insolentiam Turcorum :  
Turchorum insolentiam F

<sup>9</sup> compescere F

<sup>10</sup> si modo ... torpescere *omit.* F

<sup>11</sup> succumbituros F, W

<sup>12</sup> acceptores E

<sup>13</sup> afferunt W

<sup>14</sup> hoc E, MA

<sup>15</sup> liquet manifeste : manifeste  
liquet W

<sup>16</sup> quia W

<sup>17</sup> *omit.* F

<sup>18</sup> *omit.* W

<sup>19</sup> ut F

<sup>20</sup> ulteriori D, W

<sup>21</sup> hanc B, E, MA

<sup>22</sup> formidant E, MA

[44] His Imperial Majesty does not say this without good reason, for shortly before we left him, His Highness sent orators to Janos<sup>1</sup>, the regent of Hungary, a great man, feared by the Turks, to ask him if he had any news of them. Janos replied that the lord of the Turks was making great preparations for war and had never before had such large forces as he intends to gather now. The lord himself was now in Adrianopolis,<sup>2</sup> whereas his army was assembling at Sophia in Bulgaria. It was said that the Tartar people had entered into an alliance with him. When Janos was asked if the Hungarians would rise and go against the Turks if the Germans and others joined them, he replied that the Hungarians wanted nothing more than to crush and destroy the conceited Turks. If they heard that the armies of the other Christian peoples would join them, the Hungarians would be ready, and he himself would go to war with all his might. But if the Hungarians saw that the Christian kings and princes were passive, they would in no way undertake the great burden of a war, seeing that they would undoubtedly be defeated. On the contrary, they would accept the conditions already offered to them by the Turks and grant them the right of passage they requested. Then the Christian kings and princes would see whether this would be good for Christianity. This is what Janos told His Imperial Majesty. So, it is evident that if we do not reach a positive conclusion here to counter the endeavours of the Turks, it must be feared that the Hungarians will come to terms with the Turks, and then the situation of the Christians will become much worse. For these reasons, it seems absolutely necessary to His Imperial Highness that we reach a decision quickly here that will give comfort to all the neighbours of the Turks who fear their power and arrogance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Janos Hunyadi

<sup>2</sup> Today, the Turkish city of Edirne, in Eastern Thrace, close

to the borders of Bulgaria and Greece

[45] Datum est autem a Deo, quod **lites Italiae compositae sunt**. Nam et sanctissimus dominus noster et clarissimus **ille<sup>1</sup> rex Aragonum<sup>2</sup> cum Venetis et aliis Italiae principibus de classe maritima<sup>3</sup> adversus Turcos** pro communi salute, ut est verisimile, providebunt. **Rex autem Franciae Christianissimus, suorum majorum vestigia** sequens, ut ex **reverendissimo** domino meo **cardinali** superioribus diebus audistis<sup>4</sup>, **summo pontifici litteras dedit, per quas** se cum **Germanica<sup>5</sup>** natione ad defensionem {42v} fidei concursurum **pollicetur<sup>6</sup>**. Cujus consilium procul dubio plurimum impediretur, si praesens congregatio<sup>7</sup>, quod absit, sine<sup>8</sup> expectata<sup>9</sup> conclusione dissolveretur.

[46] Vestrae igitur excellentiae et circumspectiones, quibus offensa fidei molesta est, quod opportunum et melius fuerit, consilium amplectentur atque **operam dabunt**, ne tantus et **tam altus princeps**, qualis est illustrissimus<sup>10</sup> **dux Burgundiae<sup>11</sup>, de remotissimis** partibus non sine laboribus et periculis pro salute<sup>12</sup> ac defensione Christianae religionis **ad vestros<sup>13</sup> lares vocatu Caesaris frustra venerit, sed ipse potius ad propria** consolatus redeat, et omnes, qui spem habent in conventu<sup>14</sup>, quem postulant<sup>15</sup>, fructum recipiant<sup>16</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> omit. W

<sup>2</sup> rex Aragonum : Aragonum rex  
B, E, MA

<sup>3</sup> marina F

<sup>4</sup> audivistis C

<sup>5</sup> Germania A, B, D, E, F;  
Germanica corr. ex Germania C

<sup>6</sup> pollitur B, E

<sup>7</sup> dieta W [A has dieta in main text and in margin congregatio]

<sup>8</sup> laudabili et add. W; et laudabili add. A

<sup>9</sup> expecta F

<sup>10</sup> dominus meus add. W;  
~~dominus meus~~ add.. A

<sup>11</sup> excellentissimus add. W;  
~~excellentissimus~~ add. A

<sup>12</sup> communi add. W; et F

<sup>13</sup> nostras W

<sup>14</sup> hac dieta W

<sup>15</sup> praestolantur W

<sup>16</sup> accipiant W

[45] [Thankfully,] God has given that the conflicts in Italy have been solved.<sup>1</sup> For Our Most Holy Lord<sup>2</sup> and the noble King of Aragon<sup>3</sup> will, quite probably, together with the Venetians and the other Italian princes, make provisions for a fleet to be sent against the Turks in the common interest of all.

The Most Christian King of France<sup>4</sup> follows in the footsteps of his forefathers and has - as we heard some days ago from the Most Reverend Lord Cardinal<sup>5</sup> - sent a letter to the Supreme Pontiff in which he promises to join the German nation in the defence of the Faith. Most likely, this undertaking will come to naught if the present assembly - God forbid - ends without the expected decisions.

### 3. Conclusion

[46] At the call of the emperor, the great and exalted prince, the Illustrious Duke of Burgundy, has come from remote regions, through hardship and danger, to your home for the salvation and defence of the Christian religion. May Your Excellencies, abhorring the [Turkish] offences against the Faith, agree on a favourable and positive plan so that this great and high prince will not have come in vain but may return satisfied to his own, and so that all who have put their hope in this assembly will receive the result they wish for.

---

<sup>1</sup> Piccolomini here refers to the Peace of Lodi between the Italian powers of 1454

<sup>2</sup> Nicolaus V [Tommaso Parentucelli] (1397-1455): Pope

from 6 March 1447 until his death

<sup>3</sup> Alfonso V (1396-1458): King of Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, Sardinia and Corsica, Sicily and

Count of Barcelona from 1416, and King of Naples (as Alfonso I) from 1442 until his death

<sup>4</sup> Charles VII (1403-1461): King of France from 1422 to his death

<sup>5</sup> Cardinal Nikolaus von Kues



## **Appendix: Oration of Urban II, after Flavio Biondo**

## ORATION OF URBAN II IN CLERMONT 1495, AFTER FLAVIO BIONDI: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decas II, liber III*

Reproduced from: Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*. Venezia: Octavianus Scotus, 1483. (Hain, 3248). [Digitized version in Gallica, images 274-276]<sup>1</sup>

*Patribus et ea, quae concilio inerat, ex omni orbe Christiano multitudine ad contionem vocata vir ipse eleganter doctus hujusmodi orationem habuit:*

{Im. 74} Existimatis forte, qui huc loci ad nos acciti convenistis, viri Christiani, solam fuisse rei ecclesiasticae ad normam fidei et religionis componendae causam, quae me ab urbe, ab Italia venire compulerit. Fuitque in eo aliquid causae, sed alia urgentior, et qua major nulla dici, nulla possit excogitari, nos attraxit. Paucos ante annos gens perfida Agarena, quam vos corrupte Sarracenam dicitis, sanctam civitatem Hierosolymam sanctae terrae loca invadens cepit, diripuit, incendit. Sacrosanctum domini Jesu salvatoris sepulcrum - quod sine lacrimis et singultibus dicere nequimus - foedata ecclesiae sacella templaque ritus nostri aut solo aequata sunt aut in profanos usus commutate. Abacti inde Christiani, pars fragilis et cruciatuum impatiens saluti abrenuntians circumciso praepotio facta est Sarracena, pars in fide constans per varias mortis modos lacerati laniatique sunt, ut felix fuerit,

{Im. 75} quem carnifex appetitum gladio obtruncavit. Mulieres vero Christianae, quas aut urbes et oppida frequentissimas habuere, ut ex vestris quorundam, qui adstatis, urbibus et oppidis devotio ad sancta inspicenda et osculanda, adoranda loca per tot maria, tot terras attraxerat, omnia passae sunt, quae dictu obscena crudelis Christi hostis non ad suam magis explendam libidinem quam ad Christianorum dedecus excogitare potuit. Ea, si Christiani, immo si estis viri, nec aequo audire animo nec potestis cum patientia tolerare. In quae omnia ut mentem animumque advertere et illis pro dignitate nominis Christiani providere velitis, majorum exempla maxima, quod imminet negligentibus periculum, et praemiorum spes ingentium vos non ducere magis quam trahere debebunt. Et quidem, quae attinent periculum, priusquam dixero, cetera facilius ante oculos ponentur. Omnes Romano quondam imperio et post Romano pontifici a Turcis Sarracenisque nostris, immo Christi domini et immortalis Dei hostibus possideri, neminem esse vestrum, qui ignoret, certum habemus. Quas vero Europae provincias, quas urbes iidem premant, occupant lacerentque infideles, si omnes simul ignoratis, unus quisque in sua provincia novit, nisi forte vos Galli remotiores haec non sentitis, qui Hispanorum Aquitanorumque ab ea oppresorum gente, dum

<sup>1</sup>

<http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualise>

ur?Destination=Gallica&O=NUM  
M-60241

in servitutem rapiuntur, in Africam abducuntur, clamores ejulatusque singulos paene per dies audire debetis. Sed numquid vos Germani, Saxones, Poloni, Bohemi, Hungari etsi Turcos et Sarracenos intra viscera saevire vestra nondum sentitis, quantum a vobis distent, quam parvis dirimantur vel fretis vel fluminibus ignoratis? Italiam nunc non alloquor, quam multos ante annos Sarraceni dimidiam paene occuparunt, in eamque usque adeo penetrarunt, ut Christianorum caput Petri apostoli successorum sedem Romanam martyrum sanguine adhuc madentem invasam obsederint, captasque apostolorum Petri et Pauli basilicas inquinaverint. Venetos hic video, Dalmatas, Histros et alios sinus Adriatici accolae, qui dum perpetua cum Sarracenis proelia, ut se tueantur, exercent, quod est de Italia reliquum ab ea gente intactum defensant. Quamquam nescio, Sarraceni ne qui maris Adriatici possessione deturbantur, ab Italia magis an ab Alemannia et Hungaria repellantur. Quid multis in re notissima morer? Fui hactenus in extremis ad septentriones Europae partibus Constantinopolitanum imperium obex et tamquam murus, qui majores omnia prostraturas Turcorum Sarracenorumque alluviones continuit prohibuitque, ne Hungaros, Polonos, Bohemos et ipsos Alemannos primo, deinde ceteros obruerent Christianos. Pulsus vero ante paucos annos Asia imperator de retinendis Constantinopoli propinquis Europae regionibus laborat. Si nunc ea inspiciatis consideratisque sola, quae ante oculos sunt, si irruituro brevi Turco et Sarraceno obsistere non pergetis, qui sacrum domini sepulcrum, sacram Jesu Christi pedibus calcata terram a spurcissima gente tot annos inquinari neglexistis, eandem in vestrum ruere caput brevi sentietis. Matronas a complexu vestro, vestras virgines ab earum sinu, pueros et adolescentes vestros in servitutem vobiscum rapi dolentes maestique videbitis. Melius filii et majori cum gloria nostri progenitores inchoatam - ut altiuscule repetamus – Romae et in Italia et viribus Europae aucta dignitatem ad totius orbis monarchiam extulerunt, per cujus omnes provincias et regiones nomen floruit Christianum. **Quod nomen nostris temporibus ad parvum orbis angulum coangustari et quotidie de excidio periclitari videmus.** Sed

{im. 76} propinquiora attingamus. Carolus ille cognomento Magnus, vester Germani paene avita origine, cujus vester Franci rex vestrum ingens decus, Hispaniis, Aquitania et ipsis Francia finibus Sarracenos infinita mortalium examina deturbavit: Carolus Sarracenos Italia, Carolus, ut fama vos vulgatis, terra sancta et Hierosolymis expulit, ut Christianum nomen ab eo in Europa retentum fuisse gloriabundi dicere soleatis. Et quid - oramus - vos gloriae posthac ducetis? Quo audebitis pacto posthac dicere solam esse vel primariam gentem Francam, quam vere Christianam liceat appellare, si in ea, quae vobis adest opulentia, Sarracenos et Turcos post captum, inquinatum domini et Dei nostri sepulcrum populi etiam Christiani reliquias capi opprimique per ignaviam permittetis. Expergiscimini – quaesumus, obtestamur, et per viscera misericordiae Dei nostri oramus, viri fortes – orbi Christiano exemplum incitamentumque futuri: arma capite, turmas, cohortes, legiones educite, tam multos habituri sequaces adjutoresque quam id ardenti animo facere ostendetis. Aderit vobis omnipotens Deus angelos suos ante faciem vestram, qui gressus dirigant vestros, qui omni casu locoque vobis assistant, opitulentur, caelo demittet. Praemia vero expeditionis assumpti belli quae sint et qualia, quisquam a nobis audiri cupit, sed sunt omnium maxima, amplissima, et qualia nullo ex alio bello sunt sanae mentis hominibus expectanda. Quicumque enim hanc in

expeditionem iturus genitores, filios, uxores, divitias, domesticam gloriam potentatumque relinquet, multo majora et omnino incomparabilia nanciscetur. Quid quod cadentes in proelio et ab hoste caesi aequae ac vincentes opima de hoste ferent spolia et ad paratam in caelis, in aeterno regno cum sanctis gloriam perducti cum nostro hujus expeditionis imperatore Jesu Christo triumphabunt. Si vero sunt, qui terrena expectant praemia, meminerint terram, de cujus liberatione agitur, illam esse, quam Deus ipse, pater populo Israelitico habitandam promisit lacte et melle, id est omnibus, quae dulcia homini et suavia sunt, fluentem. Capite igitur, arripite arma, Christiani, sepulcrum dominicum liberaturi, et tanta taliaque per ipsius domini nostri Jesu Christi misericordiam facturi, ut cum omnes aeternam vobis paretis gloriam, tum etiam saeculi rerum incomparabiles divitias acquiratis.

*Pontifice adhuc dicturiente vox omnium - dictu mirabile - unico, ut apparuit, ore prolata intonuit: "Deus vult, Deus vult." Ad quam vocem cum pontifex pausillum tacuisset illique viderentur iterata ter quaterque verba repetituri, eis, ut tacerent, manu significavit, et gratiis Deo actis, qui tot populorum mentes in sua flexisset beneplacita, subjunxit:*

Viri fortes, ea, quae dominus in os vestrum posuit verba, vobis in bello pro tessera erunt, et ituri in expeditionem perseveraturique in bello sancta cruce ex rubenti panno sagis insuta pectus insignibunt, illique, quos inevitabilis necessitas aut magistratuum jussiones reverti facient, eam in scapulas transferent.



**Oration “*Constantinopolitana clades*” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (15 October 1454, Frankfurt). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg**

**(Collected Orations of Pope Pius II; 22)**

## Abstract

After the Fall of Constantinople on 29 May 1453, three imperial diets were held to discuss a crusade against the Turks. At all three diets, the main spokesman for the emperor, Friedrich III, was Enea Silvio Piccolomini, a seasoned imperial diplomat and Bishop of Siena. The first of the diets was held in Regensburg in May 1454, where Piccolomini gave the oration "*Quamvis omnibus*". The second was held in Frankfurt in October. Here, Piccolomini gave the oration "*Constantinopolitana clades*", one of the most important humanist Turkish orations of that period - and indeed one of the period's most remarkable orations generally. In the oration, Piccolomini spoke of the legitimacy (*justitia*), the benefits (*utilitas*), and the feasibility (*facilitas*) of the war. Though he may have managed, for a time, to revive flagging German enthusiasm for the crusade, the only result of the diet in this respect was the decision to hold another one in Wiener Neustadt, in the presence of the emperor, and a specific offer of military help to the Hungarians.

## Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II Papa Pio II; Kaiser Friedrich III (Habsburg); Emperor Frederick III (Habsburg); Crusades against the Turks; Ottoman Turks; Ottomans; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetoric; Diet of Frankfurt, 1454; Reichstag Frankfurt, 1454; Origin of the Turks; Fall of Constantinople; 1454; 15<sup>th</sup> century

## Note to the reader

Although Enea Silvio Piccolomini's crusade orations at the German diets in 1454-1455 have been admirably edited in the *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, they could not – of course - be excluded from the present comprehensive, bilingual edition of Pius II's orations. As a matter of principle, they have been collated directly for the purpose of the present edition, with special care to differentiate between the various versions of the text.

The RTA-edition was prepared by professor Johannes Helmrath and Gabriele Annas. All readers interested in the "*Constantinopolitana Clades*" and especially its Early Version should also consult this edition with its excellent introduction, its comprehensive list of manuscripts and editions, its critical apparatus, and its copious notes.

Michael von Cotta-Schönberg



## Table of contents

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Context
2. Themes
3. Date, place, audience, and format
4. Text
  - 4.1. Early Version
    - 4.1.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.1.2. Editions
  - 4.2. Final Version
    - 4.2.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.2.2. Editions
  - 4.3. Present edition
5. Sources
6. Bibliography
7. Sigla

### **II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

1. Introduction [1-7]
2. Justice of the war (Justitia) [8-17]
3. Benefits of the war (Utilitas) [18-30]
4. Feasibility of the war (Facilitas) [31-44]
5. Conclusion [45-52]

**I. INTRODUCTION**

## 1. Context<sup>1</sup>

At the Diet of Regensburg held in May 1454, the representatives of the German nation and of other princes had in principle decided to go to war against the Turks and to hold another diet to plan for the crusade.

After the diet, Piccolomini returned to the emperor and asked to be released from his service in order to return to Italy and to his Sienese diocese. The emperor refused and instead required Piccolomini to represent him at the next diet, to be held in Frankfurt. In his *Commentarii* Piccolomini wrote:

*Aeneas ... had made up his mind to return to Italy and live out his life in his native city, but when he asked the emperor's permission, Frederick refused. He kept Aeneas on to serve as his spokesman at the Diet of Frankfurt, for he seemed the only man at court who cared at all about the defence of the faith, and the only one whose rhetoric was at all effective.*<sup>2</sup>

That Piccolomini himself entertained no illusions as to the possibility of mobilising the German nation for a crusade, is manifest in his own letters from the period.<sup>3</sup>

The enthusiasm for the crusade displayed in Regensburg turned out to be short-lived:

*By this point, the Commentarii say, the Germans had changed their minds: none of them now favored the idea of a crusade. It was as if someone had dripped poison in their ears: the slightest mention of the emperor or the pope was insufferable. Both were greedy liars, they said, more interested in profit than holy war. It was a fine trick, to swindle the Germans of their treasure by proclaiming a crusade against the Turks – as though the Germans were mere barbarians! The lords of the world were greedily scheming to divide the spoils between them. But things would turn out very differently at the Diet than they expected, for the people of Germany would contribute neither money nor men for military service. All were persuaded of this opinion; they cursed the emperor and the pope, abused the ambassadors, jeered at the Burgundians (who seemed inclined to favour the expedition) and harshly assailed the Hungarians for first failing to defend their kingdom and now trying to involve Germany in their*

---

<sup>1</sup> CO, I, 27; RTA, 19, 2; Ady, pp. 129; Bisaha; Blusch (from a rhetorical point of view); Boulting, pp. 209-210; Helmrath: *German*, esp. pp. 60-62; Helmrath: *Pius*, esp. pp. 93-94; Helmrath: *Poli-*

*tical Assembly*, pp. 83-94; Housley, esp. pp. 219, 224-227; Kaiser; Mitchell, pp. 113-114; Nowak, pp. 178-185; Reinhardt, p. 162-165; Schwoebel, p. 33; Setton, II, pp. 153-154; Stolf, pp.

282-285; Toews, pp. 241-26, esp. pp. 251-253; Voigt, III, pp. 119-131; Introduction to oration "*Quamvis omnibus*" [21]

<sup>2</sup> CO, I, 27 (Meserve, I, 133)

<sup>3</sup> Voigt, III, pp. 118-120

*misfortune. The resolutions passed at Regensburg were being rejected out of hand, and it seemed impossible to imagine that matters would turn out well.*<sup>1</sup>

Matters were not improved by the absence of the emperor and by the fact that the pope, in spite of Piccolomini's proposal to send a cardinal legate, was only represented by a bishop.<sup>2</sup>

The crusade was not the only matter on the diet's agenda, and behind the scene, an intense power struggle took place, involving even the possibility of effectively replacing the emperor with his own brother, Archduke Albrecht.<sup>3</sup>

But the Turkish threat was undeniable, and its seriousness was shown by the presence of envoys from Bohemia and Hungary and their urgent requests for help against the Turks.<sup>4</sup>

Piccolomini's oration to the Diet, the "*Constantinopolitana clades*", is one of the most famous of his orations.<sup>5</sup>

According to the *Commentarii*, Piccolomini's speech was well received by the audience:

*But when the Diet formally convened and Aeneas made his speech – wonderful to relate – the old enthusiasm for a crusade suddenly revived in every heart. His oration lasted nearly two hours; but the audience was so utterly absorbed that no one even cleared his throat or took his eyes off the speaker's face. No one thought the speech too long, and all were sorry to hear it end<sup>6</sup> ... Aeneas' speech was praised by all and written down by many, and because of it the declaration of war passed at Regensburg was reaffirmed; the Hungarians were promised aid (some 10,000 cavalry and 32,000 infantry) and it was agreed that the imperial electors and the other German princes should meet with the emperor at the approaching feast of Pentecost to make final arrangements for the expedition.*<sup>7 8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> CO, I, 27 (Meserve, I, 133)

<sup>2</sup> Voigt, III, p. 119. Voigt believed that Piccolomini only made this proposal to be appointed cardinal himself. This may be true, though it is difficult to see how such an appointment could be made and have effect within the given timeframe. At any rate, Piccolomini's proposal turned out to be quite sensible since, at the diet itself, the German princes were piqued at the low-grade repre-

sentation of the pope (Voigt, III, p. 125)

<sup>3</sup> Voigt, III, pp. 120-122; Toews, p. 255-256

<sup>4</sup> Voigt, III, p. 122-123

<sup>5</sup> Helmrath: *Political-Assembly*, p. 83

<sup>6</sup> That others, too, thought highly of the oration is known from the great number of copies extant in European libraries and by its many later editions (RTA, 19, 2, pp. 469 ff.) as well as by remarks by the Franciscan preacher, Gio-

vanni da Capistrano and the Bavarian envoy, Konrad Rottenauer (Voigt, III, pp. 124-125, and RTA, 19, 2, p. 467)

<sup>7</sup> CO, I, 27 (Meserve, I, pp. 135-137)

<sup>8</sup> Of Pius' contemporary biographers Campano wrote: *Profectus eodem studio Frankfordiam, quod in Ratisponensi conventu fecerat, ad suscipiendum in Turchas bellum excitavit, ita ut passim arma caperentur, constitutis ex ejus sententia ducibus, qui essent*

In view of the reluctance of the German princes to commit themselves genuinely to a crusade, the decision to send concrete military aid to Hungary was actually a victory for the imperial diplomats,<sup>1</sup> first among them Piccolomini.

And as a piece of oratory in itself, the “*Constantinopolitana clades*” is, in the words of Johannes Helmrath: ...*eine der bedeutendsten und wirkmächtigsten Akte, mit denen versucht wurde, im Westen den Fall Konstantinopels am 29. Mai 1453 intellektual und emotional zu bewältigen.*<sup>2</sup> It was also, again according to Helmrath, *one of the most widely copied orations from the last phase of manuscript production.*<sup>3</sup> And Housley called it “*a virtuoso display of his learning and oratorical elegance.*”<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Themes

The main topic of the oration is obviously the war against the Turks, as decided upon at the Diet in Regensburg. Says Piccolomini in the speech: *The whole issue is whether or not to go to war* [Sect. 7], and: *Your primary task is to consider and discuss the articles approved in Regensburg* [sect. 5].

In Regensburg, six months earlier, Piccolomini had provided a double motivation for the crusade: firstly to avenge the injuries inflicted upon the Christians by the Turks, and secondly to protect Europe against future attacks.

In Frankfurt, the motive of revenge was barely mentioned, and Piccolomini’s focus was now purely on the need for protection, e.g.:

- *His Serene Highness has therefore found it worthwhile to summon an assembly of the princes and cities of the German nation in order to take counsel on how to protect Christianity.* [Sect. 4]<sup>5</sup>

---

*publico nomine rerum summas praefuturi* (Zimolo, p. 24). And Platina: *Missus itaque ob eam rem ad Franckfordiensem conventum, Germanos principes, qui ex tota provincia eo convenerant, gravissima et longa oratione ad bellum periculosum et necessarium multis rationibus adhortatur. Visus*

*est omnes vehementer commovere. Verum hoc natura comperitum est eorum animos cito residere, quorum affectus facillime moventur.* (Zimolo, p. 103)

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, III, p. 127

<sup>2</sup> RTA, 19, 2, p. 463. On Piccolomini’s Turkish orations as a rhetorical innovation at the Ger-

man diets, see RTA, 1, 2, p. 464, and Helmrath: *Reichstagsreden*. On Piccolomini’s rhetoric in the oration, see also Blusch and Kaiser

<sup>3</sup> Helmrath: *German*, p. 62

<sup>4</sup> Housley, p. 225

<sup>5</sup> Christianity in the broad sense of Christian Europe

- ... in this case, where you come to the defence not only of the fatherland, the weak, and the allies, but also of faith, religion, and the honour of God. [Sect. 16]
- Your fathers entered savage battles in order to protect their lands. Should you then refuse to take up arms in order to protect your religion and faith? [Sect. 47]

In his oration, Piccolomini, following classical models, deals with three main issues of the war, i.e., the justice (*justitia*), the benefits (*utilitas*), and the feasibility (*facilitas*) of the war.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the **justice (*justitia*)** of the war, Piccolomini refers to the injuries and damages inflicted upon the Christian religion by the Turks, the need for the Christians to protect themselves against further attacks, and the fact that the war is requested by the two heads of Christianity, the emperor and the pope – and even by God himself! [Sect. 9]

Concerning the **benefits (*utilitas*)** of the war, Piccolomini first points to the need for self-defence:

*If you take up arms in defence of the Hungarians, the Albanians, the Serbians, and the other peoples who are neighbours of the Turk and who share our Faith, you will protect not only your allies but also yourselves, your wives, and your children from this terrible danger. This is, Princes, the great benefit of the war as I see it.* [Sect. 22]

Secondly, he points to the benefits of showing gratitude, in this case to God, who has not only created the Germans as men but has also given the German Nation empire over the Latin Christian World [Sect. 24-26]. And finally, though advising against them as a motive for war, Piccolomini describes the spoils of war that will fall to the victors [Sect. 29].

Concerning the **feasibility (*facilitas*)** Piccolomini claims that the Germans are, in all matters, better suited for war than the Turks:

*You have an abundance of all that is considered necessary for war; you are strong soldiers; and you have experienced leaders who are lucky in war. Moreover, it is reasonable to hope that God will favour his own cause. Since your enemies are so greatly inferior to you, there is absolutely no reason for you to shy away from a war that is so just and so advantageous.* [Sect. 36]

---

<sup>1</sup> Though he knew the classical models directly from the sources (e.g., Quintilian: *honestum, utile, facile*), Piccolomini's division of the "*Constantinopolitana clades*"

into *justitia, utilitas, and facilitas* may well have been inspired by Francesco Filelfo's division of his crusade letter to Charles VII of France into *necessitas* (mostly *honestas*), *facilitas*, and *utilitas*,

cf. Filelfo: *Collected*, I, pp. 429. A similar division had also been used by Georg of Trapesunt in his oration to King Alfonso V, 1452 (RTA, 19, 2, p. 505, n. 35)

A subtheme worth mentioning is the need for the study of letters and learning, which figures significantly in Piccolomini's description of what was lost to the Christians with Constantinople. This matter might not seem very important to princes, nobles, and soldiers. But Piccolomini, developing a common and classically inspired theme of the humanists, points to nobles' need for glory, fame and reputation, which can only be assured in literature. Therefore, the nobility and the warrior class greatly need literate people who alone can give them eternal fame:

*The stronger, the braver, and the more powerful you are, Noble Knights, the more you will benefit from intellect and letters. For it is those that can make your forefathers, famous men who died a long time ago, stay alive, so to say, and transmit your name to posterity. [Sect. 15].<sup>1</sup>*

### 3. Date, place, audience, and format

The RTA gives the date of delivery of the oration as 15 October 1454.

The location was the Town Hall of Frankfurt (Römer).<sup>2</sup>

The audience consisted of the participants in the diet.

The format was that of a diplomatic speech on behalf of the emperor.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a topos frequently used by humanists, e.g., Poggio Bracciolini, who, in his *Historiae de Varietate Fortunae*, I (Opera Omnia, II, p. 34-35) regretted that many

princes did not have court humanists to pass on their fame to posterity: *Quotus enim quisque reperitur, qui virum doctum aut eloquentem secum habeat aut quic-*

*quam de se literis commendari velit?*

<sup>2</sup> RTA, 19, 2, p. 464

## 4. Text<sup>1</sup>

The text is extant in two versions: the Early Version, identical or very close to the oration as delivered in Frankfurt, and the Final version, as included in the Collected Orations of Pius II, compiled in 1462 under the direct supervision of Pius himself. Further studies are required to determine if one or more intermediate versions are documented by the manuscripts.

For a comprehensive survey of the manuscript versions and the editions of the oration, see the RTA edition, pp. 477 ff. Below are only mentioned the two manuscripts and one edition used here for the Early Version and the six manuscripts containing the Final Version.

### 4.1. Early version (EV)

#### 4.1.1. Manuscripts<sup>2</sup>

- **Paris / Bibliothèque Nationale**  
Ms. lat. 4314, ff. 135r-158v (**P2**) \* [*Collated in RTA as P1*]  
Ms. lat. 5565A, ff. 41r-70v (**P1**) \* [*Collated in RTA as P*]

#### 4.1.2. Editions

- [Pius II: *Epistolae familiares*]. Nürnberg: Koberger, 1486 / nr. 131 [= Hain, nr. 154] (**KO**)
- *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, Ältere Reihe, Bd. 19, 2. München, 2013, pp. 494-565

The edition in the *Opera Omnia* has not been used as it appears to be a reproduction of the text in the early printed editions of Piccolomini's letters, the *Epistolae familiares*.

The edition of Mansi has not been used since it appears to be a reproduction of the text in the *Opera Omnia*.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II's orations, see COR, 1: 5

<sup>2</sup> Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in COR, 1: 11, are marked with an asterisk

<sup>3</sup> For other editions, see the RTA-edition COR, 1: 11



## 4.2. Final version (FV)

### 4.2.1. Manuscripts

The Final Version is included in six of the seven extant manuscripts containing the Collected Orations of Pius II:

- **Mantova / Biblioteca Comunale**  
100 A-IV-26, ff. 138v-154v
- **Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana**  
97 inf., ff. 95r-106v
- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**  
Chis. J.VI.211, ff. 94v-105v **(D)** \*  
Chis. J.VIII.284, ff. 98v-106v **(A)** \*  
Chis. J.VIII.286, ff. 142v-158v **(C)** \*  
Vat. lat. 1788, ff. 140v-153r **(B)** \*

### 4.2.2. Editions

Manuscripts containing the Final Version were selectively collated by Helmrath in his *Reichstagsreden* and in the *RTA*.<sup>1</sup>

## 4.3. Present edition

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Helmrath: *Die Reichstagsreden*;  
*RTA*, 19, 2

### *Text:*

In view of the RTA-edition, the Early Version is based only on the two manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale and the *Epistolae familiares*-edition listed above. The Final Version is based on the four manuscripts in the Vatican Library.<sup>1</sup>

In the text of the Early Version, the lead ms. is the Paris 5665A (P1). In the text of the Final Version, the lead manuscript is the Chis. J.VIII.284 (A).

### *Presentation:*

The Early Version and the Final Version are presented synoptically, the Early Version above and the Final Version below. Identical words and passages in the two versions are marked in bold (with no regard to differences in grammatical form and syntax, and et/ac/atque-variations).

In the Final Version, passages taken from Piccolomini's letters to Pope Nicolaus V and Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 19 July and 21 July, respectively, are underlined.

### *Textual apparatus:*

Variants not indicated in RTA-edition (where they have the sigla P and P1 respectively) are marked with an asterisk.

### *Pagination:*

Pagination is from the Chis. J.VIII.284 (A).

---

<sup>1</sup> The Milano ms. is derived from B, and the Mantova ms. is a late

copy from 1472 without interest in terms of establishing the origi-

nal text or the transmission of the text

## 5. Sources<sup>1 2</sup>

In this oration, 103 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified, less than half from the Bible. The number of quotations is much greater than in the previous oration, the "*Quamvis omnibus*" [21], which had only 13, possibly indicating a greater level of preparation.

Biblical: 43

Classical: 36

Patristic and medieval: 13

Contemporary: 11

**All: 103**

### **Biblical sources: 43**

#### Old Testament: 25

- Genesis: 1
- Exodus: 1
- Deuteronomy: 3
- Baruch: 1
- Ecclesiasticus: 1
- Ezekiel: 1
- Isaiah: 4
- Job: 1
- Judges: 1
- Judith: 1
- 1. Kings: 1
- 4. Kings: 1
- Psalms: 5
- 1. Samuel: 2

---

<sup>1</sup> On Piccolomini's use of sources in general, see COR, 1: 8. On his use of contemporary sources concerning the Fall of Constantinople, see the oration "*Quamvis*

*omnibus*" [21], Introduction, sect. 5

<sup>2</sup> For a closer analysis of Piccolomini's sources in the Constantinopolitana clades", especially

Cicero's *Pro lege Manilia*, see Helmrath: *Political-Assembly*, pp. 88-94; Kaiser, pp. 89 ff.

- Wisdom: 1

### New Testament: 18

- Matthew: 9
- Luke: 2
- Apocalypse: 1
- 1. Corinthians: 1
- Galatians: 2
- Hebrews: 1
- 1. Peter: 1
- Philippians: 1

### **Classical sources: 36**

- Aethicus Ister: 2
- Cicero: 14<sup>1</sup>
- Horatius: 2<sup>2</sup>
- Jordanes: 1
- Julius Caesar: 1<sup>3</sup>
- Juvenalis: 1
- Livius: 1
- Quintilianus: 1
- Sallustius: 2<sup>4</sup>
- Suetonius: 3<sup>5</sup>
- Vergilius: 8<sup>6</sup>

### **Patristic and medieval sources: 13**

- Ambrosius: 2<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ad familiares: 1; Pro lege Manilia: 5; De officiis: 2; De re publica: 1; Pro Archia: 4; Tusculanae disputationes: 1

<sup>2</sup> Carmina: 1; Epistulae: 1

<sup>3</sup> De bello Gallico

<sup>4</sup> Bellum Catilinae

<sup>5</sup> De vitis Caesarum

<sup>6</sup> Aeneis: 6; Georgica: 1

<sup>7</sup> De officiis ministrorum

- Augustinus: 1<sup>1</sup>
- Otto von Freising: 9<sup>2</sup>
- Tertullianus: 1<sup>3</sup>

#### Contemporary sources: 11

- Flavio Biondo: 5<sup>4</sup>
- Francesco Filelfo: 1
- Jacopo Tedaldi: 1
- Leonardo of Chios: 2
- Niccolò Sagundino: 2

## 6. Bibliography

Ady, Cecilia M.: *Pius II (Æneas Silvius Piccolomini) – the Humanist Pope*. London, 1913

Aethicus Ister: *Cosmographia*.

- *The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister*. Ed., transl. and comment. By Michael W. Herren. Turnhout, 2011 (Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin; 8)

Biondo, Flavio: Ad Alphonsum Aragonensem serenissimum regem de expeditione in Turcos [1 August 1453]. In: *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio*. Con introd. di B. Nogara. Roma, 1927. (Studi e testi; 48), pp. 32-58

Biondo, Flavio: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*. [1439-1453]

- Biondo, Flavio: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*. Venezia: Octavianus Scotus, 1483. (Hain, 3248). [Digitized version in Gallica, images 274-276]<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Contra Faustum

<sup>2</sup> Chronaca: 2; Gesta Friderici: 8

<sup>3</sup> Liber apologeticus

<sup>4</sup> Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades

<sup>5</sup> <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiser?Destination=Gallica&O=NUMM-60241>

ur?Destination=Gallica&O=NUMM-60241

Biondo, Flavio: Oratio coram serenissimo imperatore Frederico et Alphonso, Aragonum rege inclito, Neapoli in publico convent habita [March/April 1452]. In: *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio*. Con introd. di B. Nogara. Roma, 1927. (Studi e testi; 48), pp. 107-114

Biondo, Flavio: *Scritti inediti e rari*. Introd. di B. Nogara. Roma, 1927. (Studi e testi; 48)

Bisaha, Nancy: Pope Pius II and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 39-52

Blusch, J.: Enea Silvio Piccolomini und Giannantonio Campano – die unterschiedlichen Darstellungsprinzipien in ihren Türkenreden. In: *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, 28 (1979) 78-138

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

Bracciolini, Poggio: *Historiae de varietate fortunae*. [1447]

- In: Poggius Bracciolinus: *Opera Omnia*. 4 vols. Torino, 1964-1969. (Monumenta politica et philosophica rariora; ser. 2, nr. 5). / T. II

*Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Friedrich III. Fünfte Abteilung, Zweiter Teil: Reichsversammlung zu Frankfurt 1454*. Bearb. von J. Helmrath unter Mitarb. von Gabriele Annas. München, 2013, pp. 461-565. (Deutsche Reichstagsakten, ÄR; 19, 2) **(RTA)**

Filelfo, Francesco: *Epistolae*

- Filelfo, Francesco: *Collected letters*. 4 vols. Transl. Jeroen de Keyser. Alessandria, 2015

Hack, Achim Thomas: Pius II. und der Empfang des heiligen Andreas 1462 in Rom. In: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 48 (2015) 325-387

Hain, Ludwig: *Repertorium bibliographicum, in quo libri omnes ab arte typographica inventa usque ad annum MD. typis expressi, ordine alphabetico vel simpliciter enumerantur vel adcuratius recensentur*. Stuttgart, 1831

Helmrath, Johannes: The German Reichstage and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 53-69

Helmrath, Johannes: Pius II. und die Türken. In: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, hrsg. von B. Guthmüller & W. Kühlmann. Tübingen, 2000, pp. 79-138

Helmrath, Johannes: Political-Assembly, German Diets, and Silvius Aeneas Piccolomini. In: *Beyond Reception: Renaissance Humanism and the Transformation of Classical Antiquity*. Berlin, 2019, pp. 71-94

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

Jorga, Nicolae.: *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisade au XVe siècle*. 6 vols. Paris, 1899-1916

Kaiser, Ronny: Antiketransformationen in Enea Silvio Piccolominis Clades-Rede (15. Oktober 1454). In: *Europa, das Reich und die Osmanen : die Türkenreichstage von 1454/1455*, ed. by Marika Bacsóka. Frankfurt a.M., 2015, pp. 87-109

Leonardo of Chios: Epistola ad Nicolaum papam V. In: Pertusi, Agostino: *Testi inediti o poco noti della caduta di Constantinopoli*. Tom. I. Torino, [1976] 2012, pp. 120-171

Loeb Classical Library. Digital Edition. Harvard University Press

Manetti, Giannozzo: *De vita ac gestis Nicolai Quinti summi pontificis*

- Ianottii Maneti De vita ac gestis Nicolai Quinti summi pontificis. Ed. Anna Modigliani. Roma, 2005

Mertens, Dieter: Claromontani passagii exemplum. Papst Urban II und der erste Kreuzzug in der Türkenkriegpropaganda des Renaissance-Humanismus. In: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, eds. B. Guthmüller & W. Kühlmann. Tübingen, 2000, pp. 65-78

Meserve, Margaret: *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*. Cambridge, MA., 2008

Meuthen, Erich: Der Fall von Konstantinopel und der Lateinische Westen. In: *Historische Zeitschrift*, 237 (1983) 1-36

Migne, Jacques-Paul: *Patrologia latina*. 217 vols. 1841-1865 **(MPL)**

Mitchell, R.J.: *The Laurels and the Tiara – Pope Pius II, 1458-1464*. London, 1962

Moudarres, Andrea: Crusade and Conversion. Islam as Schism in Pius II and Nicholas of Cusa. In: *MLN*, 128 (2013) pp. 50-52

Niccolò Sagundino: *Oratio ad regem Alphonsum*. [January 1453]<sup>1</sup>

- Extracts in: Jorga, N.: Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisade au XVe siècle. 3 vols. Paris, 1899-1902 / T. III, 1902, pp. 315-323
- *Ad serenissimum principem et invictissimum regem Alphonsum Nicolai Sagundini oratio*. A cura di C. Caselli, Roma 2012. (Fonti per la storia dell'Italia medievale. Antiquitates; 39)

Nowak, Jessika: *Ein Kardinal im Zeitalter der Renaissance – die Karriere des Giovanni di Castiglione (ca. 1413 – 1460)*. Tübingen, 2011

Otto von Freising: *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*.

- Ed. A. Hofmeister & W. Lammers. Übers. A. Schmidt. Berlin, 1960. (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters; 16)

Otto von Freising: *Gesta Friederici seu rectius Cronica*.

- *Die Taten Friedrichs oder richtiger Cronica*. Übersetzt von Adolf Schmidt. Herausg. von Franz-Joseph Schmale. Darmstadt, 1974. (Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutsche Geschichte des Mittelalters; 17)

Pertusi, Agostino: *Testi inediti o poco noti della caduta di Constantinopoli*. Tom. I. Torino, [1976] 2012

Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Epistola de ortu et auctoritate Romani imperii ... ad Friedericum Romanorum regem*. [1446]

---

<sup>1</sup> According to Jorga, the text is not the oration itself, but a memorandum, which King Alfonso asked Sagundino to write, after he had heard Sagundino's oration: *Le roi, ayant entendu ses paroles, lui*

*demanda de mettre par écrit une information sur le fait des Turcs et Nicolas, auteur de plusieurs autres traités latins, obtempéra à cette demande ... En voici, les parties les plus saillantes, d'après*

*le ms. J 28 sup. de la Biblioth. Ambrosienne à Milan* (Jorga, III, p. 316). Cited in the present edition of Pius II's orations as *Niccolò Sagundino: Oratio ad regem Alphonsum*



- Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Epistola de ortu et auctoritate Romani imperii ... ad Friedericum Romanorum regem*. In: *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*, hrsg. von Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918 // Tom II, pp. 6-24. (Fontes rerum Austriacarum, II, 67)

Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Epistolae*

- *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Ed. Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien. (Fontes rerum austriacarum; 61-62, 67-68)
- Enee Silvii Piccolominei *Epistolarium Seculare*. Ed. A. van Heck. Città del Vaticano, 2007.
- *Collected Letters of Enea Silvio Piccolomini*. Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 10 vols. 2022-2026. ].[Available on the web in HAL Archives]

Pius II: *Orationes*. [1436- 1464]

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759
- *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. Ed. and transl. by Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg. 12 vols. 2019-2020. [Final Version, 2024-2025] [Available on the Internet in HAL Archives].

Schwoebel, Robert: *The Shadow of the Crescent – the Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453-1517)*. Nieuwkoop, 1967

Setton, Kenneth M.: *The Papacy and the Levant*. 4 vols. Philadelphia, 1976-1984 (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society; 114+161-162)

Stolf, Serge: *Les Lettres et la Tiare. E.S. Piccolomini, un humaniste au XVe siècle*. Paris, 2012. (Etudes et Essais sur la Renaissance; 98)

Tedaldi, Jacopo: *Relazione sulla conquista di Constantinopoli*. In: Pertusi, Agostino: *Testi inediti o poco noti della caduta di Constantinopoli*. Tom. I. Torino, [1976] 2012, pp. 172-189

Toews, John B.: *Emperor Frederick III and his Relations with the Papacy from 1440 to 1493*. University of Colorado, Ph.D., 1962

Voigt, Georg: *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter*. 3 vols. Berlin, 1856-63

Zimolo, Giulio C. (ed.): *Le vite di Pio II di Giovanni Antonio Campano e Bartolomeo Platina*. Bologna, 1964. (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores; t. III, p. II)

## 7. Sigla

**A** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.I.VI.211

**B** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Vat. Lat. 1788

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

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

**P1** = Paris / Bibliothèque Nationale / ms. lat. 5565A

**P2** = Paris / Bibliothèque Nationale / ms. lat. 4314

**KO** = *Epistolae familiares*. Nürnberg: Koberger, 1486



## II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

**Oratio Aeneae Silvii Piccolominei episcopi Senensis, qui postea pontificatum maximum adeptus<sup>1</sup> Pius Secundus appellatus est, habita in conventu Frankfordiensi ad suadendum Germanos<sup>2</sup> bellum<sup>3</sup> contra Turcos<sup>4</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> pontificatum ... adeptus *omit.* B

<sup>2</sup> *omit.* B

<sup>3</sup> Germanos bellum : bellum Germanis C

<sup>4</sup> Oratio ... Turcos : Enee Silvii, episcopi senensis, legati Caesaris, oratio habita Francfordiae ad sua-

dendum Germanos bellum contra Turcos **D**; Oratio Enee episcopi Senensis legati Caesaris habita in conventu Frankfordiensi die Martis XVa Octobris anno MoCCCC-oLIIIlo **P1**; Oratio admonitoria de bello gerendo pro Christi nomine

contra Turchum et infideles habita ab Enea Silvio in consilio Francfordiensi omnium nobilium ... ... *[illeg.]* Alamaniae **P2**; Oratio Enee de Constantinopolitana clade et bello contra Thurcos congregando **KO**

**Oration of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena, who was called Pius II after he became pope, delivered at the diet in Frankfurt to persuade the Germans to go to war against the Turks**

[1] [EV] {41r} Constantinopolitana clades, reverendissimi patres, illustrissimi principes, ceterique viri genere ac<sup>1</sup> doctrina praestabiles<sup>2</sup>, quoniam Turcorum grandis victoria, Graecorum extrema ruina, Latinorum summa infamia fuit, unumquemque vestrum, ut arbitror, tanto magis angit magisque cruciat, quanto et nobiliores estis et meliores. Quid enim viro bono et nobili magis congruit<sup>3</sup>, quam curam gerere fidei orthodoxae, favere religioni, Christi nomen salvatoris pro {41v} sua virili magnificare atque extollere? Sed amissa nunc Constantinopoli, tanta urbe in potestatem<sup>4</sup> hostium redacta, tanto Christianorum sanguine fuso<sup>5</sup>, tot animabus in servitutem abductis<sup>6</sup> vulnerata est miserabiliter<sup>7</sup> catholica fides, confusa turpiter nostra religio, Christi nomen damnificatum nimis atque oppressum<sup>8</sup>.

[1] [FV] {98v} Constantinopolitana clades, reverendissimi patres, illustrissimi principes, ceterique viri generosi ac praestabiles, quoniam Turcorum grandis victoria, Graecorum extrema ruina, Latinorum summa infamia fuit, unumquemque vestrum, ut arbitror, tanto magis angit magisque cruciat, quanto et nobiliores estis et meliores. Quid enim viro bono ac nobili magis congruit, quam fidei orthodoxae curam gerere, religioni favere, Christi salvatoris nomen pro sua virili extollere atque amplificare? Sed amissa nunc Constantinopoli, tanta urbe in potestatem hostium redacta, tanto Christianorum sanguine fuso, tot animabus in servitutem abductis, vulnerata est miserabiliter catholica fides, confusa turpiter nostra religio, Christi nomen damnificatum nimis atque oppressum.

---

<sup>1</sup> et KO

<sup>2</sup> spectabiles P2

<sup>3</sup> ingruit P2

<sup>4</sup> potestate KO

<sup>5</sup> sanguine fuso : fuso sanguine  
P2\*

<sup>6</sup> adductis P2\*

<sup>7</sup> mirabiliter P2\*

<sup>8</sup> oppressum *omit.* P2

## 1. Introduction

[1] [FV] Reverend fathers, illustrious princes, and you others, Noble and Eminent Men. The Fall of Constantinople was a great victory for the Turks, a total disaster for the Greeks, and a complete disgrace for the Latins, which - I trust - will pain and hurt each of you, and the more so, the more noble and good you are. For what is more proper for a good and noble man than to care for the true faith, to favour religion, and to extol and spread the name of Christ, Our Saviour, as much as you can? But now that Constantinople is lost, and this great city has fallen into the power of our enemies, now that so much Christian blood has been shed, and so many people<sup>1</sup> have been carried off into slavery, the Catholic Faith has been grievously injured, our religion has suffered a shameful reverse, and the name of Christ has been grievously harmed and abused.

---

<sup>1</sup> "animae"



[2] [EV] **Neque si verum fateri volumus, multis ante saeculis maiorem ignominiam passa est, quam modo Christiana societas. Retroactis<sup>1</sup> namque temporibus in Asia atque in Africa, hoc est in alienis terris, vulnerati fuimus<sup>2</sup>: nunc vero in Europa, id est in patria, in domo propria, in sede nostra percussi caesique<sup>3</sup> sumus. Et licet dicat aliquis ante plurimos annos ex Asia Turcos in Graeciam transivisse, Tartaros citra Tanaim in Europa<sup>4</sup> consedisse, Saracenos {42r} Herculeo mari trajecto Hispaniae portionem occupasse, numquam tamen aut urbem aut locum<sup>5</sup> amisimus in Europa, qui Constantinopoli possit aequari. Est enim civitas illa totius terrae, quae commode colitur, paene centrum, portumque habet et amplissimum<sup>6</sup> et tutissimum, in quo non dicam naves, sed numerosae classes armari sustentarique possunt atque inde per Bosforum, hinc per Hellespontum ad omnia Mediterranei maris sive tuenda, sive<sup>7</sup> vexanda<sup>8</sup> littora transmitti. At hic locus tam commodus<sup>9</sup>, tam utilis, tam necessarius, nobis tacentibus, ne dicam dormientibus, amissus Christo salvatori, lucrifactus Mahumeto seductori est.**

[2] [FV] **Neque si verum fateri volumus, multis ante saeculis maiorem ignominiam passa est, quam modo Christiana communitas. Patres nostri in Asia et in Africa, id est in alienis terris, nonnumquam vulnerati fuerunt: nos in Europa, in patria, in domo propria, in sede nostra percussi caesique sumus. Quod si dicat aliquis ante plurimos annos ex Asia Turcos in Graeciam transivisse, Tartaros citra Tanaim in Europa consedisse, Saracenos Herculeo mari trajecto Hispaniae portionem occupavisse stragesque multas Christianis intulisse<sup>10</sup>, numquam tamen aut urbem amisimus aut locum, qui Constantinopoli posset aequari<sup>11</sup>, numquam in Europa tantum Christiani et nobilissimi sanguinis quantum modo ab infidelibus fusum accepimus. Est enim Constantinopolis totius terrae, quae commode colitur, paene centrum, portumque habet amplissimum et tutissimum, in quo, non dicam naves, sed ingentes ac numerosae classes armari<sup>12</sup> sustentarique possint. Inde per Bosforum in Euxinum mare, quod nostri majus appellant, ad omnes septentrionis et orientis oras iter patet. Hinc per Hellespontum, quem nunc Brachium Sancti Georgii vocamus, sive occidentis cupias seu meridiana littora facile penetrabis. At hic locus tam commodus, tam utilis, tam necessarius, nobis tacentibus, ne dicam dormientibus, amissus Christo salvatori, Mahumeto seductori lucrifactus est.**

<sup>1</sup> ratioactis P1

<sup>2</sup> sumus P2\*

<sup>3</sup> omit. P2

<sup>4</sup> Europam KO

<sup>5</sup> urbem aut locum : locum aut urbem P2

<sup>6</sup> et amplissimum omit. P2\*

<sup>7</sup> sive ... sive : seu ... seu P2

<sup>8</sup> tuenda seu vexanda : vexanda seu tuenda P2\*

<sup>9</sup> tam commodus omit. P2\*

<sup>10</sup> Tartaros ... intulisse omit. B

<sup>11</sup> adequari B

<sup>12</sup> ac add. C

[2] [FV] Truly, for many centuries, the Christian community has suffered no greater disgrace than today. Our forefathers often experienced setbacks in Asia and Africa, that is, in other regions, but we, today, have been beaten and struck in Europe<sup>1</sup> itself, in our fatherland, in our own home and seat. If somebody says that it has been many years since the Turks came from Asia<sup>2</sup> to Greece, the Tartars settled in Europe on this side of Tanais,<sup>3</sup> and the Saracens crossed the Herculean Sea,<sup>4</sup> occupied a part of Spain,<sup>5</sup> and inflicted many defeats upon the Christians, [my answer is that] until now we have never lost a city or a place equal to Constantinople, and never have we, in Europe, lost so much Christian and noble blood to the infidels as now.

Constantinople is almost at the centre of all lands<sup>6</sup> that may be easily cultivated, and it has a very large and safe harbour where ships, nay immense fleets, can be armed and provisioned. In one direction, the way is open through the Bosphorus to the Euxine Sea, which we today call the Great Sea<sup>7</sup>, and all its northern and eastern coasts. And in the other direction, you may easily pass through the Hellespont,<sup>8</sup> which we now call the Arm of Saint George, to the West and to the coasts of the Mediterranean. This place, so advantageous, so useful, and so important, has now been lost to Christ, Our Saviour, and gained by Muhammad, the Seducer, while we were silent, not to say asleep.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note Piccolomini's geopolitical use of the concept of Europe

<sup>2</sup> I.e., Asia Minor. The Battle of Gallipoli 1354 (Turks)

<sup>3</sup> I.e., the river Don. In Antiquity, considered to be the frontier river

between Asia and Europe. The Battle of Liegnitz, 1241 (Mongols)

<sup>4</sup> I.e. the Strait of Gibraltar. Cf. the Pillars of Hercules

<sup>5</sup> 711 AD (Arabs)

<sup>6</sup> "terrae"

<sup>7</sup> I.e., the Black Sea

<sup>8</sup> I.e., the Dardanelles

[3] [EV] Quid quod<sup>1</sup> ibi ex **duobus imperatoribus Christianis** alter occisus est? Nonne ex **duobus Christianitatis oculis {42v}** erutum esse alterum dicere possumus<sup>2</sup>, **ex duabus manibus alteram amputatam**<sup>3 4</sup>? Addite, quod **ex quattuor** sedibus **illis** patriarchalibus primis et **principalibus**, quibus veluti solidissimis basibus Christiana subnixa fides in omnem terram ramos suos extendit, **majores nostri duas simul cum Jerosolymitana per ignaviam atque secordiam perdiderunt; nos tertiam, et illam quidem, cui omnes**<sup>5</sup> **Ruteni**<sup>6</sup>, **multi ad Boream, multi ad orientem Tanaim jacentes**<sup>7</sup> **populi serviebant, non minori desidia, majori tamen infamia prorsus amisimus. Nimirum, principes, si doletis**<sup>8</sup> **omnes**<sup>9</sup> **ac de tanto Christianitatis vulnere, quo cecidisse Graecos, superasse Turcos, confusos esse Latinos animadvertitis, consternati atque attoniti estis.**

[3] [FV] **Duos** insuper **Christiani** habuerunt **imperatores**: alterum Latinum, alterum Graecum. Quid nunc Graeco cum sua nobilitate necato dicetis, nisi **ex duobus Christianitatis oculis erutum** esse **alterum, ex duabus manibus alteram amputatam**? Quattuor imperia totus orbis, quae maxima et praecipua dicerentur, habuit: Assyriorum, Graecorum, Carthaginensium, et Romanorum: et orientale primum, boreale alterum, australe tertium, occidentale ultimum dictum est. Pari modo quattuor patriarchales sedes nostri veteres erexerunt: et Antiochenam orientalibus, Constantinopolitanam septentrionalibus, Alexandrinam meridiei, Romanam vespero et occidenti tradiderunt. Jerosolymitana {99r}, Aquilegiensis, et, quae nunc Venetias translata est, Gradensis longo post tempore constitutae sunt nec pares prioribus habitae. At **ex quattuor illis principalibus majores nostri duas simul cum Jerosolymitana per ignaviam atque secordiam**<sup>10</sup> **perdiderunt; nos tertiam et illam quidem, cui omnes Ruteni, cui multi ad Boream et ad orientem Tanaim jacentes populi serviebant, non minori desidia, majori tamen infamia prorsus amisimus. Nimirum, procures, si doletis omnes ac de tanto Christianitatis vulnere consternati estis atque attoniti, cum cecidisse Graecos, superasse Turcos, confusos esse Latinos unico vulnere animadvertatis.**

<sup>1</sup> quidque P2\*

<sup>2</sup> erutum esse .. possumus :  
alterum erutum KO

<sup>3</sup> dicere possumus *add.* KO

<sup>4</sup> sed *add.* P2

<sup>5</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>6</sup> Pruteni KO

<sup>7</sup> adjacentes P2

<sup>8</sup> doleatis P2\*

<sup>9</sup> *omit.* P2\*

<sup>10</sup> socordiam B

[3] [FV] Moreover, the Christians have had two emperors, one Latin and one Greek. Now that the Greek emperor has been killed together with his nobles, will you not say that one of the two eyes of Christianity<sup>1</sup> has been plucked out and one of its two hands cut off?

In the whole world, four empires have been considered great and outstanding: the empire of the Assyrians, the empire of the Greeks, the empire of the Carthaginians, and the empire of the Romans. The first one may be called the Eastern Empire, the second the Northern Empire, the third the Southern Empire, and the fourth the Western Empire.

In the same way, our forefathers established four patriarchal sees: the Antiochene See they gave to the Eastern people, the Constantinopolitan See to the Northern people, the Alexandrian See to the Southern people, and the Roman See to the Western people. The patriarchal sees of Jerusalem, Aquileja, and Grado, now translated to Venice, were founded long afterwards and are not to be considered equal to the first four. Of the four principal patriarchates, our forefathers lost two, together with the See of Jerusalem, due to passivity and mutual conflicts.<sup>2 3</sup> Because of the same passivity, but to our greater shame, we ourselves have now lost the third one, the one that is followed by all the Ruthenians and many peoples to the north and east of Tanais. No wonder, Nobles, that you are all grieving, shocked, and stupefied by this great blow to Christianity, seeing that at one stroke the Greeks have fallen, the Turks are victorious, and the Latins have been thrown into confusion and disorder.

---

<sup>1</sup> The image of Rome and Constantinople as the two "eyes" of the world was coined by Themistius (4<sup>th</sup> century)

<sup>2</sup> Sallustius: *Bellum Catilinae*, 58.4: *socordia atque ignavia Lentuli quantam ... cladem attuleri*

<sup>3</sup> Alexandria 641; Jerusalem 1187 (final conquest); Antioch 1268

[4] [EV] {43r} Sed non est minor divi Caesaris Friderici, domini nostri gloriosissimi, quam vester maeror. Vidissetis eum<sup>1</sup>, cum tanti mali factus est primum certior, in cubiculo<sup>2</sup> flentem, in aula maestum, in consilio sollicitum, in ecclesia supplicem, in quovis loco turbatum et anxium<sup>3</sup>. Verum, cum res Christianae non tam dolorem et lacrimas quam vigorem et arma requirerent<sup>4</sup>, nam Turci majora in dies mala<sup>5</sup> Christianis minabantur, operae pretium existimavit sua serenitas tum<sup>6</sup> principum, tum<sup>7</sup> civitatum accersiri<sup>8</sup> conventum, in quo de tuenda Christiana republica consilia caperentur<sup>9</sup>. Nam priusquam incipias, consulto<sup>10</sup>; et ubi consulueris<sup>11</sup> mature, facto opus est<sup>12</sup>. Fuit itaque concilium<sup>13</sup> apud Ratisponam convocatum. Quae ibi gesta sunt, omnes tenetis. Ex auctoritate {43v} illius congregationis hic nunc conventus habetur. Cur non fuerit apud Nurembergam indicta<sup>14</sup> conventio<sup>15</sup>, et cur nequiverit ad haec negotia Caesar ascendere<sup>16</sup>, satis his diebus expositum est. Ille quidem pro tanta Christianitatis necessitate in hoc conventu minime defuisset, si domum tutam<sup>17</sup> relinquere potuisset.

[4] [FV] Sed non fuit minor divi Friderici Caesaris quam vester maeror. Vidissetis illum, cum tanti mali factus est primum certior, in cubiculo flentem, in aula maestum, in consilio sollicitum, in ecclesia supplicem, in quovis loco turbatum et anxium. Diu sibi neque cibus voluptati neque somnus quieti fuit. At cum res Christianae non tam dolorem et lacrimas quam vigorem et arma requirerent, nam Turci majora in dies mala minabantur, operae pretium existimavit sua serenitas cum principum tum civitatum Germanicae<sup>18</sup> nationis accersiri conventum, in quo de tuenda Christianitate<sup>19</sup> consilia caperentur, memor illius dicti: *Nam priusquam incipias, consulto; et ubi consulueris, mature facto opus est*<sup>20</sup>. Fuit itaque concilium apud Ratisponam convocatum. Quae gesta ibi sunt, omnes tenetis. Ex auctoritate illius congregationis hic nunc conventus habetur. Cur non fuit<sup>21</sup> apud Norimbergam indicta convocatio, et cur imperator nequiverit ad nos<sup>22</sup> sese conferre, abunde his diebus dictum est. Ille namque omnino in tanto negotio superiores imperii partes visitasset, si domum tutam relinquere potuisset.

<sup>1</sup> enim P2

<sup>2</sup> cubili P2

<sup>3</sup> annexum P2\*

<sup>4</sup> requirent KO

<sup>5</sup> omit. KO

<sup>6</sup> tam P2

<sup>7</sup> quam P2

<sup>8</sup> arcessiri P2

<sup>9</sup> cuperentur KO

<sup>10</sup> consulta KO

<sup>11</sup> consulere P2

<sup>12</sup> facto opus est : opus est facto P2

<sup>13</sup> consilium P2

<sup>14</sup> indita P2

<sup>15</sup> conventia KO

<sup>16</sup> accedere P2

<sup>17</sup> tantam P2

<sup>18</sup> Germanie corr. from Germanice A

<sup>19</sup> Christianitatis D

<sup>20</sup> omit. C

<sup>21</sup> fuerit C

<sup>22</sup> vos corr. from nos C

[4] [FV] The grief of Holy Emperor Friederich was just as great as yours. You should have seen him when he was first informed about this catastrophe, crying in his chamber, sorrowful in court, worried in council, praying in church, and everywhere downcast and anxious. For a long time, food gave him no pleasure and sleep no rest.<sup>1</sup>

But since the Turks are daily threatening Christendom with greater evils, we need moaning and tears less than vigour and weapons. His Serene Highness has therefore found it worthwhile to summon an assembly of princes and cities of the German nation in order to take counsel on the protection of Christianity. Indeed, he remembered the saying: *For, before you begin, there is need for deliberation, and for prompt action after you have deliberated.*<sup>2</sup> An assembly was therefore summoned in Regensburg, and you all know what happened there. The present meeting is held at the decision of that assembly. During the last few days, it has been amply explained why this meeting is not held in Nürnberg and why the emperor is unable to be present, for he would most certainly have come to the upper parts of the empire in such an important matter if he had been able to leave his lands safe.

---

<sup>1</sup> Piccolomini probably exaggerates the distress of the emperor,

who was not generally given to strong expressions of emotion

<sup>2</sup> Sallustius: *Bellum Catilinae*, 1.6

[5] [EV] Sed cum ejus desiderium ab his impediretur<sup>1</sup>, quibus non tam pax et otium quam contentiones et bella sunt usui, misit hosce praestantissimos et celeberrimos legatos, qui suum locum tenerent suasque vices implerent, cum plena et ampla potestate: sive res imperii, sive commune fidei<sup>2</sup> tuendae<sup>3</sup> negotium tractare libet, praesto erunt. Ceterum quia super articulis Ratisponae meditatis haec potissimum {44r} congregatio consultura<sup>4</sup> est, vosque<sup>5</sup> Caesaris animum circa illos<sup>6</sup> cognoscere cupitis. Quae sit ejus mens, quae sententia, quae voluntas, aperire me nunc collegarum meorum auctoritas jubet. Ego qui malo per oboedientiam parum prudens quam per contumaciam videri sapiens, onus meis humeris paene intolerandum subivi, confisus in ejus auxilio, qui victimis<sup>7</sup> oboedientiam praetulit<sup>8</sup>. Nec timeo sub tanto fasce deficere, quando praesto sunt, qui cadenti mihi manum porrigant. Pareo quoque in hac re tanto libentius, quanto et conspectum vestrum frequentiore intueor, et mihi benigniorem autumo.

[5][FV] At cum ejus desiderium ab his impediretur, quibus non tam pax et otium quam contentiones et bella sunt usui<sup>9</sup>, noluit hunc conventum negligere: misit hos principes, qui suum locum teneant vicesque suas impleant, potestatem plenam atque amplissimam eis dedit. Sive res imperii, sive commune fidei negotium<sup>10</sup> tractare placebit, praesto erunt. Verum quia super articulis Ratisponae meditatis haec potissimum congregatio consultura est, vosque Caesaris animum cognoscere cupitis. Quae sit circa illos mens ejus, quae sententia, quae<sup>11</sup> voluntas, aperire me modo collegarum meorum auctoritas jubet. Ego, qui malo per oboedientiam parum prudens quam per<sup>12</sup> contumaciam videri sapiens, onus meis humeris paene intolerandum subivi, confisus in ejus auxilio, qui victimis oboedientiam praetulit<sup>13</sup>. Nec timeo sub tanto fasce deficere, quando praesto sunt, qui cadenti *manum porrigant*. Pareo quoque in hac parte tanto libentius, quanto et conspectum vestrum frequentiore intueor, et mihi benigniorem autumo.

---

<sup>1</sup> impediatur P2

<sup>2</sup> omit. P2

<sup>3</sup> tuendi P2

<sup>4</sup> consulta P2

<sup>5</sup> vos qui P2

<sup>6</sup> circa illos omit. P2

<sup>7</sup> victurus P1\*

<sup>8</sup> pertulit P1

<sup>9</sup> add. in marg. A, C

<sup>10</sup> negotii B

<sup>11</sup> mens add. A

<sup>12</sup> omit. B

<sup>13</sup> corr. from pertulit A, C

[5] [FV] Though his desire was frustrated by those who benefit more from strife and war than from peace and tranquillity, he still wanted this meeting to be held. Therefore, he sent these princes<sup>1</sup> to act in his place and to represent him, and he has given them full and ample powers. They are prepared to negotiate both the affairs of the Empire and the common matter of the Faith. But since your primary task is to consult and deliberate on the articles considered in Regensburg, you wish to know the emperor's mind on the matter. Therefore, by the authority of my colleagues, I am now requested to explain his mind, his opinion, and his intentions on these issues. As I would rather seem stupid through obedience than clever through defiance, I have taken this almost unbearable burden upon my shoulders, trusting in help from Him, who would rather have *obedience than sacrificial victims*.<sup>2</sup> And I do not fear faltering under this great burden since some here will readily *lend me a hand* if I stumble.<sup>3</sup> And I obey so much more gladly that I see your assembly being numerous and kindly disposed.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Ulrich Sonnenberger of Gurk; Henrich von Pappenheim; Hartung von Cappel; Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg; Margra-

ve Karl of Baden; and Piccolomini himself

<sup>2</sup> 1. Kings, 15, 22: *Domini melior est enim oboedientia quam victimae*

<sup>3</sup> Ecclesiasticus, 7, 36: *et pauperi porrige manum tuam*

<sup>4</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 1.1: *mihi semper frequens conspectus vester ... jucundissimus*



[6] [EV] Nec ego de omnibus articulis verba faciam, sed illum, qui est principalissimus, aggredior<sup>1</sup>, hoc est an contra Turcos, qui Constantinopolim {44v} per injuriam invaserunt, nobilitatem cum principe Graecorum occiderunt, sacra nostra<sup>2</sup> omnia polluerunt, et ultra vincula, verbera, caedes Christianis omnibus<sup>3</sup> minitantur<sup>4</sup>, sit bellum suscipiendum? Quo persuaso quantas habere copias sit<sup>5</sup> necesse, quomodo legendi milites, quae stipendia danda, quae privilegia concedenda, unde commeatus habendi, quae bellica instrumenta paranda, quo tempore, qua via sit eundum facile concordabimus. Capitaneum quoque seu belli ducem, quem prisci Romanorum imperatorem appellare consueverunt, non erit arduum nominare. Neque dubitabitis illum eligere, in quo sit scientia rei militaris eximia, virtus excellens, auctoritas evidens<sup>6</sup>, praesumpta felicitas, qui sit laboriosus in negotiis, fortis in periculis, industrius {45r} in agendo, celer in conficiendo, consultus in providendo, qualem reperiri apud vos minime dubitaverim. Nec de pace domi tenenda<sup>7</sup> multum laborabitis, si foris bellum gerere<sup>8</sup> decreveritis, ut postea suo loco dicemus.

[6] [FV] Tum res ipsa me hortatur, de qua sermo futurus est, et magna et necessaria, hoc est, an contra Turcos, qui Constantinopolim per injuriam expugnaverunt, {99v} nobilitatem cum principe Graecorum occiderunt, sacra omnia polluerunt, et ultra vincula, verbera, caedes, dura supplicia Christianis omnibus minitantur, sit bellum suscipiendum? Quo<sup>9</sup> persuaso quantas habere copias sit necesse, quomodo legendi milites, quae stipendia danda, quae privilegia concedenda, unde commeatus habendi, quae bellica instrumenta paranda, quo tempore, qua via sit eundum facile reperiemus. Capitaneum quoque seu belli ducem, quem<sup>10</sup> prisci Romanorum imperatorem vocabant, non erit arduum nominare. Neque illum eligere dubitabitis, in quo sit *scientia rei militaris eximia, virtus excellens, auctoritas evidens, praesumpta felicitas*,<sup>11</sup> qui sit laboriosus in negotiis, fortis in periculis, industrius in agendo, celer in conficiendo, consultus in providendo, qualem apud vos esse minime dubitaverim. Neque de pace domi tuenda laborabitis, ut suo loco dicam, si foris bellare decreveritis.

<sup>1</sup> aggrediar P2

<sup>2</sup> omit. P2\*

<sup>3</sup> vincula verbera ... omnibus :  
Christianis omnibus vincula  
verbera cedet P2\*

<sup>4</sup> unitantur P1\*

<sup>5</sup> omit. KO

<sup>6</sup> ac add. P2

<sup>7</sup> tuenda KO

<sup>8</sup> pugnandum esse P2

<sup>9</sup> Que bello necessaria in marg. D

<sup>10</sup> omit. B

<sup>11</sup> Quae duci necessaria in marg.  
D

[6] [FV] I am also moved by the fact that the matter on which I am to speak is important and urgent: should we go to war against the Turks who have unjustly conquered Constantinople, who have killed the Greek nobles and their emperor, who have polluted all the holy places, and who are threatening all Christians with chains, whips, murder, and atrocious torture? If I convince you to do this, we shall easily settle the issues of how large a force is necessary, how the soldiers should be found, what wages to pay, which privileges to grant, how to provision the army, what war machines to prepare, as well as the time of departure, and the route to follow.<sup>1</sup> It will also be easy to appoint a captain or leader of the war - whom the ancient Romans called *imperator*. You will not hesitate to choose someone who *has expert knowledge of military affairs, great bravery, evident authority and luck*,<sup>2</sup> and who shows *application to duty, courage in danger, thoroughness in operation, rapidity in execution, wisdom in strategy*.<sup>3</sup> I do not doubt that there is such a man among you. And as I shall explain later, you will not have to worry about keeping peace at home if you decide to go to war abroad.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 2.6

<sup>2</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 10.28:  
*Ego enim sic existimo, in summo*  
*imperatore quattuor has res inesse*

*oportere, scientiam rei militaris,*  
*virtutem, auctoritatem, felicitatem*

<sup>3</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 11.29:  
*in negotiis, fortitudo in periculis,*

*industria in agendo, celeritas in*  
*conficiendo, consilium in*  
*providendo*

[7] [EV] Intelligitis jam, principes, oratio mea quibus in rebus radices agat, et, quae sit causa, in manibus videtis: de bello gerendo tota consultatio est. Ego, qui nomine Caesaris bellum venio suasurus, nequaquam hoc oneris<sup>1</sup> accepiissem, nisi rem dignam vestra virtute, vestra nobilitate, vestraque natione manifestissime<sup>2</sup> prius intellexissem. Agite igitur, audite, ac<sup>3</sup> cognoscite, an bellum hoc pro fide vestra<sup>4</sup> Christiana suscipere debeatis. Omnis senatus omnisque populus, cui de bello gerendo consultatio est, clarissimi principes, tria diligenter ac rigide {45v} ac<sup>5</sup> presse discutere debet<sup>6</sup>, ne quid agat, cujus denique poenitudo sequatur. Turpe est<sup>7</sup> enim, ut Scipionis proverbium fuit, postquam erratum est dicere: non putaram<sup>8</sup>. Bellum ergo gesturus primo quaerat<sup>9</sup>, an sit justum; secundo, an utile; tertio, an facile. Nisi enim haec tria concurrant, non est cur bonis atque<sup>10</sup> prudentibus viris belligerendum sit. Discutiamus et nos haec<sup>11</sup> ex ordine, principes, ac primum de belli justitia cognoscamus.

[7] [FV] Intelligitis jam, principes, oratio mea quibus in rebus *radices agat*, et quae causa sit, in manibus videtis: de suscipiendo bello tota est controversia. Ego, qui nomine Caesaris bellum venio suasurus<sup>12</sup>, minime hoc oneris accepiissem, nisi rem dignam vestra virtute, vestra nobilitate, vestraque natione manifestissime prius intellexissem. Agite igitur, audite, ac cognoscite, an bellum hoc pro fide catholica suscipere debeatis. Omnis senatus omnisque populus, cui de bello gerendo consultatio est, clarissimi principes, tria diligenter, rigide ac presse discutere debet, ne quid agat, cujus denique poenitudo sequatur. *Turpe est enim*, ut Scipionis proverbium fuit, postquam erraveris, *dicere: non putaram*. Bellum ergo gesturus primo quaerat, an justum sit; secundo, an utile; tertio, an facile. Nisi enim haec concurrant, non est cur bonis viris belligerandum sit. Discutiamus et nos haec<sup>13</sup>, principes, ac primum de belli justitia<sup>14</sup> cognoscamus.

---

<sup>1</sup> onus P2

<sup>2</sup> manifeste P2

<sup>3</sup> et KO, WY

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>5</sup> et KO

<sup>6</sup> debeatis KO

<sup>7</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>8</sup> putarem KO

<sup>9</sup> querit P2\*

<sup>10</sup> et P2

<sup>11</sup> *omit.* P2\*

<sup>12</sup> Bellum suasurus *in marg.* D

<sup>13</sup> hoc B

<sup>14</sup> De belli justitia *in marg.* D

[7] Now you understand, Princes, the substance of my oration and what the matter is all about.<sup>1</sup> The whole issue is whether or not we should go to war. I have come to persuade you, in the name of the emperor, to go to war, and I have only accepted this burden because I see that the matter is clearly worthy of your courage, your nobility, and your nation. So, do now consider, hear, and examine the issue of undertaking this war for the sake of the Catholic Faith. Noble princes, every senate and every people that has to deliberate on going to war should discuss carefully and stringently three things lest it do anything that it will later regret. For, as the saying of Scipio goes, it is shameful to err and then afterwards to say: *I had not thought of that!*<sup>2</sup> So, anyone who is going to war should first ask: Is the war just? Secondly: Is it useful? And thirdly: Is it feasible?<sup>3</sup> If these conditions are not met, there is no reason for good men to go to war.

Let us now discuss this matter, Princes, and first let us examine the justice of the war.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cicero: *De officiis*, 2.12

<sup>2</sup> Widely used saying, cf. Cicero: *De officiis*, 1.81

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Quintilianus: *Institutio oratoria*, 3.8.22: *honestum, utile, necessarium/facile*. Commonly used

division of classical orations of the deliberative kind

[8] [EV] **Bellum, quod<sup>1</sup> pro tuenda religione, pro salvanda<sup>2</sup> patria, pro conservandis sociis ex auctoritate superioris gereretur<sup>3</sup>, nemo umquam veterum<sup>4</sup> reputavit<sup>5</sup> injustum.** Hinc **Moysi**, hinc **Josuae**, hinc **Saulis**, hinc **Davidis**,<sup>6</sup> hinc **Maccabaeorum proelia commendantur.** Hinc illi<sup>7</sup> **Demosthenis<sup>8</sup> clamores, quibus plenum exultabat<sup>9</sup> {46r}** apud Athenas **theatrum, in Marathone, in Arthemisio, in Salamina pro patria defunctos commendantis.** Hinc ex Romanis<sup>10</sup> **Horatii, Decii, Fabii, et alii paene innumerabiles celebrantur, qui pro salute suorum civium se devovere.** Hinc ex vestris Germanis **Caroli, Rolandi, Rainaldi, Conradi, Ottones, Henrici, Friderici aeternis praeconiis extolluntur, qui pro tutandis Christianorum finibus maximis<sup>11</sup> se periculis objectarunt.** Numquam tamen vestris progenitoribus tam justa pugnandi causa quam vobis objecta est. Numquam illi tam atrocem injuriam, tam insignem contumeliam ab<sup>12</sup> infidelibus<sup>13</sup> acceperunt<sup>14</sup>, quemadmodum **perpressa est hoc<sup>15</sup> nostro tempore Christiana** communitas. **Repetenda est breviter hoc loco Constantinopolitana calamitas. {46v}** Sic<sup>16</sup> enim et injuriae magnitudo notior, et<sup>17</sup> belli justitia manifestior erit.

[8] [FV] **Bellum, quod pro tuenda religione, pro conservanda patria, pro juvandis sociis ex auctoritate superiorum gereretur, nemo umquam veterum reputavit injustum.** Sic **Moysi**, sic **Josuae**, sic **Saulis**, sic **David**, sic **Maccabaeorum proelia commendamus.** Hinc illi **Demosthenis clamores, quibus plenum exultabat theatrum in Marathone, in Arthemisio, in Salamina pro patria defunctos commendantis.** Hinc ex Romanis **Horatii, Decii, Fabii, alii paene immemorabiles<sup>18</sup> memorantur, qui<sup>19</sup> pro salute suorum civium se<sup>20</sup> devoverunt.** Hinc ex vestris<sup>21</sup> **Caroli, Rolandi, Rainaldi, Conradi, Ottones, Henrici, Friderici, Rudolphi aeternis praeconiis extolluntur, qui nunc Tartaros, nunc Saracenos non solum ex suis domibus, verum etiam ex sociorum et amicorum finibus pepulerunt.** “At illos,” dicat aliquis, “injuriarum provocavit acerbitas.” Quid hic, principes, an levis injuria est, quam **perpressa est hoc tempore Christiana** societas? An non meministis eorum, quae gesta apud Constantinopolim referuntur? **Repetenda est vobis, ut arbitror, quam brevissime Constantinopolitana calamitas<sup>22</sup>.** Sic enim et injuriae magnitudo notior, et belli justitia manifestior erit.

<sup>1</sup> si *add.* P2\*

<sup>2</sup> servanda P2

<sup>3</sup> gerentur P1; geretur P2

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>5</sup> reputabit P2\*

<sup>6</sup> David P2\*

<sup>7</sup> illius P2

<sup>8</sup> Greci *in marg.* D

<sup>9</sup> exaltabat P1

<sup>10</sup> Romani *in marg.* D

<sup>11</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>12</sup> a P2\*

<sup>13</sup> fidelibus Christianis P2\*

<sup>14</sup> receperunt P2

<sup>15</sup> *omit.* P2; hec KO

<sup>16</sup> si P2\*

<sup>17</sup> est P2

<sup>18</sup> [possibly a scribal error for innumerabiles in A, repeated in the other mss.]

<sup>19</sup> se *add.* C

<sup>20</sup> *omit.* C

<sup>21</sup> Germani *in marg.* D

<sup>22</sup> Calamitas Constantinopolitana *in marg.* B; Constantinopolitana calamitas *in marg.* D

## 2. Justice of the war

[8] [FV] None of the ancients ever doubted the justice of a war conducted on the authority of superiors with the purpose of protecting religion, saving the fatherland, or helping allies.<sup>1</sup> Thus, we remember the battles of Moses, Joshua, Saul, David, and the Machabees, as well as the harangues of Demosthenes,<sup>2</sup> when he filled the whole theatre with enthusiasm, praising those who had died for the fatherland at Marathon<sup>3</sup>, Artemisium<sup>4</sup>, and Salamis<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup>. Of the Romans, we remember the Horatii, the Decii, the Fabii, and almost countless<sup>7</sup> others who gave their lives for the salvation of their countrymen. And of your own, we shall always praise [those named] Charles, Roland<sup>8</sup>, Rainald<sup>9</sup>, Konrad, Otto, Heinrich, Friederich, and Rudolf who drove now the Tartars, now the Saracens, not just from their own homes but also from the lands of their allies and friends. Here someone may say, "But these men were provoked by savage injuries." But, Princes, is it a slight injury that the Christian community has suffered now? Or have you forgotten the reports from Constantinople? I must tell you again<sup>10</sup> about the catastrophe in Constantinople, for thus the magnitude of the disaster will be better known and the justice of the war will be made more evident.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ambrosius: *De officiis ministrorum*, 1, 27, 129 (MPL 16)

<sup>2</sup> Probably Demosthenes' *Epitaphion* oration on those who had fallen at Charoneia in 338 BC

<sup>3</sup> 490 BCE

<sup>4</sup> 480 BCE

<sup>5</sup> 480 BCE

<sup>6</sup> Piccolomini may have known Leonardo Bruni's translation of Demosthenes

<sup>7</sup> "immemorabiles"

<sup>8</sup> The legendary hero Roland

<sup>9</sup> Uncertain whom Piccolomini refers to

<sup>10</sup> Cf. his oration "*Quamvis omnibus*" [21], given half a year before at the earlier diet in Regensburg

[9] [EV] Nulla pulsatus injuria Mahumetus (sic enim vocatur, qui Turcis imperat), bellum Graecis indixit<sup>1</sup>, Constantinopolim obsedit ac male defensam expugnavit. Ibi<sup>2</sup> Constantinus, Graecorum imperator, intransitibus urbem Turcis in extremo patriae<sup>3</sup> suae periculo<sup>4</sup> fortissime pugnans obtruncatur. Caput ejus lancea infixum spectaculo fertur. Fit miseranda Graecorum caedes: occiduntur non solum, qui se tueri conantur, verum etiam qui projectis armis sese dedunt<sup>5</sup>. Nec ego hoc<sup>6</sup> magni duco in ipso furore primi introitus trucidatos esse quamplurimos: illud horreo, illud abhominor, illud omnino detestor, capta civitate<sup>7</sup>, depositis armis, coniectis in vincula civibus, tum maxime saevitum<sup>8</sup> {47r} est, tum filii ante ora parentum occisi, tum viri nobiles velut bestiae<sup>9</sup> mactati, tum sacerdotes laniati, tum monachi excarnifiati, tum sacrae virgines incestatae, tum matres ac<sup>10</sup> nurus ludibrio habitae. O miseram urbis faciem! O infelicem populum! O sceleratum Mahumetum! Quis talia fando temperet a lacrimis? Omnia luctu plena, caede, cruore, cadaveribus erat cernere.

[9] [FV] Nulla pulsatus injuria Mahumetus (sic enim vocatur, qui Turcis imperat) bellum Graecis induxit<sup>11</sup>, Constantinopolim obsedit ac male defensam expugnavit. Ibi Constantinus imperator intransitibus urbem Turcis in extremo patriae periculo fortissime pugnans obtruncatur. Caput ejus lancea infixum spectaculo fertur. Fit<sup>12</sup> miseranda Graecorum caedes; occiduntur non solum, qui se tueri conantur, verum etiam qui projectis armis sese dedunt. Nec ego magni hoc<sup>13</sup> duco in ipso furore primi introitus trucidatos esse quamplurimos<sup>14</sup>: illud horreo, illud abhominor capta civitate, positis armis, coniectis in vincula civibus, tum maxime saevitum est, tum filii ante ora parentum occisi, tum viri nobiles instar hostiarum mactati, tum sacerdotes laniati, tum monachi excarnificati, tum sacrae virgines incestatae, tum matres atque nurus ludibrio habitae. O miseram urbis faciem! O infelicem populum! O sceleratum Mahumetum! *Quis talia fando temperet a lacrimis?* Omnia luctu plena, caede, cruore, cadaveribus erat<sup>15</sup> cernere<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> induxit P2\*

<sup>2</sup> ubi KO

<sup>3</sup> et vite add. P2

<sup>4</sup> omit. P2

<sup>5</sup> dederunt P2

<sup>6</sup> hec P2\*

<sup>7</sup> capta civitate : captivitate P2

<sup>8</sup> insanitum P2

<sup>9</sup> hostie P2

<sup>10</sup> et P2\*

<sup>11</sup> indixit corr. ex induxit C

<sup>12</sup> sit B

<sup>13</sup> magni hoc : hoc magni D

<sup>14</sup> qui plurimos B, E

<sup>15</sup> erant C [corr. from erat]

<sup>16</sup> erat cernere : cernere erat B, D

[9] [FV] Without any provocation whatsoever, Mehmed<sup>1</sup> (as the ruler of the Turks is called) went to war against the Greeks and besieged and conquered the poorly defended Constantinople. There, in the final peril of his fatherland, Emperor Constantine<sup>2</sup> was killed, fighting desperately against the Turks as they entered the city. His head was set on a spear and carried around for all to see. The Greeks were slaughtered miserably. Not only those who tried to defend themselves, but also those who had thrown down their weapons and surrendered were killed. I accept that many were killed in the first furious assault. But I find it horrible and revolting that when the city had been conquered,<sup>3</sup> the arms laid down, and the citizens enchained, then the worst atrocities took place, then sons were killed before the eyes of their parents, then noblemen were butchered like cattle, then priests were tormented and monks tortured,<sup>4</sup> then holy virgins were ravished, then matrons and daughters-in-law were abused. Oh, miserable city! Oh, unhappy people! Oh, accursed Mehmed! *Who can tell this without shedding tears?*<sup>5</sup> Everywhere, you would see mourning, murder, blood and corpses.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mehmed II (1432-1481): Ottoman sultan who ruled first for a short time from August 1444 to September 1446, and later from February 1451 to his death

<sup>2</sup> Constantine XI Dragases Palaeologus (1405-1453): Emperor from

1449 to his death. The last reigning Byzantine emperor

<sup>3</sup> Concerning the description of the *urbs capta*, Piccolomini may have been inspired by Quintilian: *Institutio oratoria*, 8.3.67-70

<sup>4</sup> From Piccolomini: Letter to Pope Nicolaus V of 12 July 1453 (EPI, 6:

340) and Letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (EPI, 6: 341), slightly revised <sup>4</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*

<sup>5</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.361-362: *quis funera fando explicet aut possit lacrimis aequare labores?*



[10] [EV] Mahumetus ipse, terribili<sup>1</sup> facie, taetris oculis, horribili<sup>2</sup> voce, crudelibus verbis, nefandis nutibus<sup>3</sup> homicidia mandat, nunc istum, nunc illum<sup>4</sup> ad caedem<sup>5</sup> poscit, manus in sanguine Christianorum lavat; omnia foedat<sup>6</sup>, omnia polluit. Tempa Dei nostri pseudo-prophetae traduntur, divina altaria proteruntur<sup>7</sup>, ossa martyrum et aliorum sanctorum jam cum Christo {47v} regnantium aut porcis aut canibus objiciuntur, franguntur statuae, picturae delentur. Nec matris<sup>8</sup> domini, reginae caelorum, gloriosae Mariae virginis imagini<sup>9</sup> parcitur; quin et ipsum salvatoris Christi<sup>10</sup> crucifixi simulacrum cum magno clamore, majori irrisione, praecedentibus tympanis ac tubis in castra defertur, huc atque illuc ludibrio<sup>11</sup> rapitur, conspuitur, luto provolvitur. O nefas in expiandum! O ignominiam<sup>12</sup> Christianae gentis! O dedecus nostri nominis sempiternum! Huic signo, in quo redempti et salvati sumus, Turcorum foetidum genus<sup>13</sup> illudit, et quasi nos signum non signatum colamus: "Hic est," inquit, "Christianorum deus."

[10] [FV] Mahumetus ipse, facie horribili, taetris oculis, voce terribili, crudelibus verbis, nefandis nutibus homicidia mandat, nunc istum, nunc illum ad caedem poscit, manus in sanguine Christianorum lavat; omnia foedat, omnia polluit. Tempa Dei nostri pseudoprophetae traduntur, divina altaria proteruntur, ossa martyrum et aliorum sanctorum jam cum Christo regnantium aut *porcis* aut *canibus* objiciuntur, franguntur statuae, picturae delentur. Nec matris domini, reginae caelorum, gloriosae Mariae virginis imagini parcitur; quin et ipsum salvatoris Christi crucifixi simulacrum cum clamore magno, irrisione majori, praecedentibus tympanis ac tubis in castra defertur, huc atque illuc ludibrio rapitur, conspuitur, luto provolvitur. O nefas in expiandum! O ignominia<sup>14</sup> Christianae gentis! O dedecus nostri nominis sempiternum! Huic signo, in quo redempti ac salvati sumus, Turcorum foetidum genus illudit, et quasi nos signum non<sup>15</sup> signatum<sup>16</sup> colamus: "Hic est", inquit, "Christianorum Deus."

<sup>1</sup> terribilis P1

<sup>2</sup> terribili KO

<sup>3</sup> militibus P2

<sup>4</sup> istum nunc illum : illum nunc istum P2

<sup>5</sup> omit. P1 [with blank space]

<sup>6</sup> omnia foedat omit. P1\*

<sup>7</sup> prosternuntur P2

<sup>8</sup> matri P2

<sup>9</sup> Mariae virginis imagini : virgini Marie P2

<sup>10</sup> omit. P2\*

<sup>11</sup> omit. P1, KO

<sup>12</sup> ignominia P2\*

<sup>13</sup> foetidum genus : genus fetidum P1

<sup>14</sup> ignominiam D

<sup>15</sup> non corr. ex nos A, C

<sup>16</sup> Signum signatum in marg. C; Quasi nos signatum non signatum in marg. D

[10] [FV] Mehmed himself - with fearsome face, wild eyes, terrible voice, cruel words, and horrible gestures - demands murder, and now he orders this one, now that one, to be killed. He washes his hands in the blood of Christians. He defiles everything. He pollutes all. The temples of our God are given over to the false prophet,<sup>1</sup> the divine altars are torn down, the bones of martyrs and other saints now reigning with Christ *are thrown to pigs and dogs*,<sup>2</sup> the statues are smashed, and the paintings destroyed. Not even the icon of the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, the glorious Virgin Mary, is spared. A crucifix is brought to the camp with much shouting and scornful laughter, to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets. There it is mocked, spat upon, and soiled. Oh, unatonable crime! Oh, dishonour to the Christian people! Oh, eternal shame to our name: the sign under which we have been redeemed and saved was mocked by the rotten people of the Turks, [putting up a sign saying]: "This is the God of the Christians!"<sup>3</sup> in order to show that what we are venerating is an empty symbol.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Apocalypse, 19, 20. "Pseudo-prophet" was often used about Muhammad in Christian polemics against Islam

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Matthew, 7, 6. Cf. Otto von Freising: *Gesta Friderici*, I, 44 (Schmidt, p. 214): *dabitur sanctum canibus et margaritas porcis*? From a letter of Bernard of Clairvaux sent to the East Frankish people, read to an imperial diet in Bavaria on 4 or 6 April 1147

<sup>3</sup> An allusion to the inscription on the cross of Christ, cf. Luke, 23, 38: *erat autem et superscriptio in-*

*scripta super illum litteris graecis et latinis et hebraicis hic est rex iudaeorum*

<sup>4</sup> Passages in sect. 9-10 may have been inspired, directly or indirectly, by Leonardo of Chios' eyewitness account of the Fall of Constantinople to Pope Nicolaus V of 16 August 1453, cf. Pertusi, I, p. 164-166: *Cruces ex templorum apicibus parietibusque evulsae pedibus conculcantur; violantur mulieres, virgines deflorantur, mare juvenes in turpitudine maculantur, sanctimoniales reli-*

*quae et quae apparentes fuerant luxu foedantur. ... Sacras Dei et sanctorum effigies humo prosterunt, quibus super non modo crapulam, sed luxuriam complent. Crucifixum posthac per castra praevis tympanis deludendo deportant: sputis, blasphemis, obprobriis iterum processionaliter crucifigunt, pileum heucrale, quod zarchula vocant, capiti superponentes deridendo clamabant: "Hic est Deus Christianorum"*

[11] [EV] Sentio quia commovemini, principes, dum salvatoris injuriam refero, dum tantae civitatis damna commemoro: {48r} sed quis cladem illius urbis, quis funera fando explicet, aut possit lacrimis aequare labores? Horret animus talia meminisse, luctumque refugit. O nobilis Graecia, ecce nunc tuum finem. Nunc demum mortua es, nunc sepulta jaces<sup>1</sup>. Heu, quot olim urbes fama rebusque potentes in Graecia<sup>2</sup> sunt extinctae. Ubi nunc Thebae, ubi Athenae, ubi Mycenae<sup>3</sup>, ubi Larissa, ubi Lacedaemon, ubi Corinthiorum civitas, ubi alia memoranda oppida, quorum si muros<sup>4</sup> quaeras, nec ruinam<sup>5</sup> invenias? Nemo solum, in quo jacuerunt, queat ostendere. Graeciam saepe nostri in ipsa Graecia requirunt. Sola ex tot cadaveribus civitatum Constantinopolis superat<sup>6</sup>, quae<sup>7</sup> de<sup>8</sup> parvo ambitu Bizantii a Pausania quondam edita<sup>9</sup>, per Constantinum primum imperatorem ejus {48v} nominis<sup>10</sup> in aemulatione<sup>11</sup> Romanae urbis<sup>12</sup> erecta, tantum mirabilium operum<sup>13</sup>, tantum armorum, tantum litterarum, tantum gloriae habuit, ut omnium civitatum damna haec sola urbs recompensare ac resarcire videretur.

[11] [FV] Sentio quia commovemini, principes, dum salvatoris injurias refero, dum tantae civitatis damna commemoro: sed *quis cladem* totius urbis, *quis funera fando explicet, aut possit lacrimis aequare labores?* Horret animus meus talia meminisse luctumque refugit. Heu, quot olim urbes fama rebusque potentes in Graecia<sup>14</sup> sunt {100v} extinctae. Ubi nunc Thebae, ubi Athenae, ubi Mycenae<sup>15</sup>, ubi Corinthiorum civitas, ubi Lacedaemon, ubi aliae memorabiles urbes? **Nemo jam solum, in quo jacuerunt, queat ostendere. Saepe Graeciam nostri in ipsa Graecia requirunt. Sola ex tot *cadaveribus* civitatum Constantinopolis superabat, quae de parvo ambitu Bizantii a Pausania quondam edito, per Constantinum primum ejus nominis imperatorem, in aemulationem Romanae urbis erecta, tantum mirabilium operum, tantum armorum, tantum litterarum, tantum gloriae habuit, ut omnium civitatum damna haec sola urbs recompensare ac resarcire videretur.**

<sup>1</sup> nunc sepulta jaces *omit.* P1, KO

<sup>2</sup> in Graecia *omit.* KO

<sup>3</sup> Nicenae P2, KO

<sup>4</sup> murum P2

<sup>5</sup> ruinas KO

<sup>6</sup> supererat P2

<sup>7</sup> quem KO

<sup>8</sup> *omit.* KO

<sup>9</sup> editi P2\*

<sup>10</sup> imperatorem ejus nominis :

eius nominis imperatorem P2\*

<sup>11</sup> emulationem P2

<sup>12</sup> Romanae urbis : urbis

Romanae P2

<sup>13</sup> tantum operum mirabilium :  
tantum mirabilium operum P2\*,  
KO

<sup>14</sup> Gretiae urbes *in marg.* D

<sup>15</sup> Nicenae B

[11] I feel how moved you are<sup>1</sup>, Princes, as I speak about the insult to Our Savior and as I relate the harm done to this great city. *Who could unfold in speech the fall of that city, and the carnage? Who could match the toils with tears?*<sup>2</sup> *My mind shudders to remember these things and recoils in pain.*<sup>3</sup> Alas, how many Greek cities, once rich and famous, have now disappeared? Where now is Thebes, where is Athens, where is Mycene, where is the city of the Corinthians, Sparta, and all those other once famous cities? Nobody can point to the place where they were in former times.<sup>4</sup> Often, our people are searching for Greece in Greece itself. Out of so many of cities,<sup>5</sup> now corpses, only Constantinople survived. In the very old days, it was a small settlement founded by Pausanias.<sup>6</sup> Then Constantine, first emperor of that name, raised it in imitation of the city of Rome.<sup>7</sup> Constantinople had so many wonderful works, so many armaments, and so much learning and literature<sup>8</sup> that it could, on its own, compensate for and mend the loss of all the other cities.

---

<sup>1</sup> In his Turkish orations and other orations like the “*Advenisti tandem*” [67], delivered at the reception of Saint’ Andrew’s Head in Rome in April 1462, Piccolomini/Pius played heavily on the emotions of the listeners, following classical rhetorical models, cf. Hack, p. 359

<sup>2</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.361-362. On the fall of Troy

<sup>3</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.12: ... *animus meminisse horret luctuque refugit*

<sup>4</sup> The passage “*memorabiles urbes ... videretur*” is an almost verbatim quote from Piccolomini’s letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (EPI, 6: 341)

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Cicero: *Ad familiares*, 248.4: *tot oppidum cadavera projecta jacent*

<sup>6</sup> 478 BCE

<sup>7</sup> 330 CE

<sup>8</sup> The topos of *arma* and *litterae* was dear to the humanists

[12] [EV] Hinc<sup>1</sup> post pacem cum Gratiano factam et a Theodosio confirmatam, veniens Constantinopolim rex Gothorum Athanaricus, cum regiae urbis amplitudinem<sup>2</sup> splendoremque contemplatus esset, veluti stupens dixisse fertur: “Vere Deus terrenus est imperator hic habitans; et quisquis adversus eum manus moverit, ipse sui sanguinis reus<sup>3</sup> existit<sup>4</sup>”. Et quamvis post imperium ad vos, o Germani<sup>5</sup>, translatus, saepe Constantinopolis capta direpta<sup>6</sup> fuerit, numquam tamen in potestatem Christi hostium,<sup>7</sup> nisi modo, {49r} devenit; numquam basilicae sanctorum diruptae<sup>8</sup>, numquam bibliothecae combustae, numquam monasteria desolata, numquam sacra nostra ex toto, nisi nunc, deleta fuere. Itaque mansit apud Constantinopolim usque ad nostrum tempus vetustae sapientiae monumentum ac velut ibi domicilium esset litterarum<sup>9</sup> et arx<sup>10</sup> summa<sup>11</sup> philosophiae, nemo Latinorum satis doctus videri poterat, nisi Constantinopoli aliquamdiu studuisset, quodque florente Roma doctrinarum nomen habuerunt Athenae, hac<sup>12</sup> tempestate nostra Constantinopolis obtinebat; unde et multa veterum<sup>13</sup> sapientum volumina suscepimus et in futurum suscipere sperabamus. At nunc vincentibus Turcis et omnia possidentibus, quae Graeca potentia tenuit, vereor, ne de litteris Graecis omnino sit actum.

[12] [FV] Hinc<sup>14</sup> post pacem cum Gratiano factam et a Theodosio Caesare confirmatam, veniens Constantinopolim rex Gothorum, Athanaricus, cum regiae urbis amplitudinem splendoremque contemplatus esset, veluti stupens dixisse fertur<sup>15</sup>: “Vere Deus terrenus est imperator, cui tanta civitas paret; et quisquis in eum manus moverit, ipse sui sanguinis reus existit.” Et quamvis post imperium ad vos, o Germani, translatus, saepe Constantinopolis capta direpta<sup>6</sup> fuerit, numquam tamen in potestatem Christi hostium devenit, numquam basilicae sanctorum dirutae, numquam bibliothecae combustae, numquam sacra nostra violata nisi nunc fuere. Itaque mansit apud Constantinopolim usque in hanc diem vetustae sapientiae monumentum ac velut ibi domicilium esset<sup>16</sup> litterarum et arx summa philosophiae, nemo Latinorum satis videri doctus poterat, nisi per tempus Constantinopoli studuisset, quodque florente Roma litterarum nomen habuerunt Athenae, hoc tempestate nostra Constantinopolis obtinebat. Unde et multa veterum sapientum volumina sanctitatis et doctrinae plena suscepimus et in futurum suscipere spes erat. At nunc vincentibus Turcis et omnia possidentibus, quae Graeca potentia tenuit, vereor ne de Graecis litteris omnino sit actum.

<sup>1</sup> huic P1\*

<sup>2</sup> magnitudinem P1\*

<sup>3</sup> sui sanguinis reus : reus sui sanguinis P1

<sup>4</sup> existet P2\*

<sup>5</sup> a Romanis add. P2

<sup>6</sup> diruptaque P2\*

<sup>7</sup> Piccolomini: Letter to Pope Nicolaus V of 12 July (EPI, 6: 340):

*urbs, que post Constantinopolim in annos 1100 et ultra duraverat neque unquam in potestatem venerat infidelium, spurcissimum Turchorum*

<sup>8</sup> dirutae KO

<sup>9</sup> esset litterarum : litterarum

esset P1, P2\*, KO

<sup>10</sup> ars P2

<sup>11</sup> summae KO

<sup>12</sup> hoc KO

<sup>13</sup> virorum P2\*

<sup>14</sup> Laudes Constantinopolis in marg. D

<sup>15</sup> Gotorum regis verba in marg.

D

<sup>16</sup> domicilium esset : esset domicilium D

[12] [FV] After peace had been concluded with Gratian and confirmed by Emperor Theodosius, Athanaricus, King of the Goths, [came to visit Constantinople].<sup>1</sup> When he had seen the size and splendour of the royal city, he was deeply impressed and reportedly said, “*Truly, the emperor is God on earth* since he is obeyed by such a great city. *And whoever raises his hand against him is guilty of his own blood.*”<sup>2</sup> And though Constantinople was conquered and pillaged several times<sup>3</sup> after the empire had been transferred to you,<sup>4</sup> oh, Germans, it never before fell into the power of the enemies of Christ, never were the basilicas destroyed, never were the libraries burned, and never were our holy things profaned. Thus, to this day, Constantinople has remained a monument to the old wisdom, and since it was like a home to letters and a high citadel of philosophy, none of the Latins appeared to be truly learned if he had not studied for some time in Constantinople. For the reputation of learning that Athens had when Rome flourished<sup>5</sup> was taken over, in our age, by Constantinople. From there, we received many volumes written by the wise men of old, full of holiness and learning, and we hoped to receive more in the future.<sup>6</sup> But now that the Turks are victorious and possess everything that mighty Greece possessed, I fear that the days of Greek letters are over.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> 778 AD

<sup>2</sup> Jordanes: *De origine actibusque Getarum*, 28: *Deus, inquit, sine dubio terrenus est imperator et quisquis adversus eum manu moverit, ipse sui sanguinis reus existit*

<sup>3</sup> During the infamous 4<sup>th</sup> crusade, in 1203 and 1204

<sup>4</sup> In Piccolomini’s political thinking, the Roman Empire had been translated from the Greeks to the Germans, cf. his *De ortu et auctoritate imperii*

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Aethicus Ister: *Cosmographia*, 72a, 2

<sup>6</sup> The threat to the transmission of Greek literature had actually been

felt so keenly by Pope Nicholas V that, during his last years, he accelerated his collecting of Greek manuscripts, see Manetti, p. LIX

<sup>7</sup> This whole section is a somewhat revised quote from Piccolomini’s letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (EPI, 6: 341)

[13] [EV] Neque enim, ut {49v} plerique arbitrantur, Asiani sunt ab origine Turci, quos vocant Teucros, ex quibus est Romanorum origo<sup>1</sup>, et<sup>2</sup> quibus litterae non essent odio. Scytharum genus est ex media barbaria profectum, quod ultra<sup>3</sup> Euxinum Pirrichiosque montes, ut Aethico philosopho placet, ad septentrionalem<sup>4</sup> oceanum sedes habuit: gens immunda et ignominiosa, fornicaria in cunctis stuprorum generibus, quae, ut tradit vester Otto, Frisingensis episcopus, non futilis auctor, regnante apud Francos Pipino, montes Caspios exivit ac longo itinere in Asiam se recepit, ibique posthac morata est. Et quamvis sub miti<sup>5</sup> caelo et mundiori terra per tot saecula parumper excultam se praebuerit<sup>6</sup>, sapit tamen adhuc multum pristinae deformitatis, neque omne barbariem<sup>7</sup> {50r} deterisit. Carnes adhuc equorum, vesontium vulturumque<sup>8</sup> comedit, libidini servit<sup>9</sup>, crudelitati succumbit, litteras odit, humanitatis studia persequitur. In cujus manus venisse nunc doctam eloquentemque Graeciam, nescio quis satis deflare queat.

[13] [FV] Neque enim, ut plerique arbitrantur, Asiani ab origine Turci sunt, quos vocant Teucros<sup>10</sup>, quibus litterae non essent odio, sed Scytharum genus est ex media barbaria profectum, quod ultra Euxinum Pirrichiosque montes, ut Aethico philosopho placet, ad oceanum septentrionalem sedes habuit: gens immunda et ignominiosa<sup>11</sup>, fornicaria in cunctis stuprorum generibus, quae, ut tradit vester Otto, Frisingensis episcopus, regnante apud Francos Pipino, ex montibus Caspiis egressa longo itinere in Asiam se recepit, ibique posthac morata est. Et quamvis sub miti caelo et mundiori terra per tot saecula parumper excultam se praebuerit, sapit tamen adhuc multum pristinae deformitatis, neque omnem barbariem tersit. Carnes adhuc equorum, vesontium vulturumque comedit, libidini servit, crudelitati succumbit, litteras odit, humanitatis studia persequitur. In cujus manus venisse doctam eloquentemque {101r} Graeciam, nescio quis satis deflare queat.

<sup>1</sup> omit. P1

<sup>2</sup> omit. KO

<sup>3</sup> ex add. KO

<sup>4</sup> septentrionale P2

<sup>5</sup> sub miti : submitti KO

<sup>6</sup> prebuit P2

<sup>7</sup> barbariam P1

<sup>8</sup> vesontium vulturumque :  
recentium multumque P2

<sup>9</sup> inservit P2

<sup>10</sup> Turci non Theucrici in marg. D

<sup>11</sup> ignominiosa A, B, D

[13] [FV] Many believe that the Turks come from Asia Minor and call them Teucrians (though the Teucrians certainly did not hate letters).<sup>1</sup> But [this is not so:] the Turks are a Scythian people that have come from the middle of Barbary.<sup>2</sup> According to the philosopher Aethicus,<sup>3</sup> they dwelled beyond Euxinum<sup>4</sup> and the Pirrichian Mountains<sup>5</sup> by the Northern Sea. It was an unclean, inglorious people, debauched and practising all kinds of sexual excesses. According to your Otto, Bishop of Freising,<sup>6</sup> the Turkish people came out of the Caspian Mountains at the time when Pippin ruled the Franks,<sup>7</sup> set off on the long road to Asia Minor, and stayed there ever since. Having lived for many centuries under a pleasant sky and in a gentler country, they have acquired some culture, but still they reek of their former uncouthness, and they have not completely put off their barbarous manners. They still eat the flesh of horses, bison, and vultures;<sup>8</sup> they are slaves of lust; they indulge in cruelty; they hate letters, and they persecute the studies of humanity. Now, learned and eloquent Greece has fallen into their hands. How anybody can deplore this enough, I do not know.<sup>9 10</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Actually, Piccolomini himself was one of them, e.g., his oration “*Audivi*” [1] of 1436 and later orations, as late as 1447, where he directly used the term Teucri for the Turks

<sup>2</sup> Meuthen: *Fall*, p. 13

<sup>3</sup> Aethicus Ister: *Cosmographia*, 32. Helmuth: *German*, n. 76: *Enea scheint den Ister-Text unmittelbar zu kennen, vermutlich aus einem Handschriftenfund in Österreich*

<sup>4</sup> The Black Sea

<sup>5</sup> It is uncertain which mountains are meant, but possibly the Caucasus. In a note Mansi refers to Piccolomini’s work *De Asia*, c. 100, where he uses the term Birichian Mountains located, together with the isle of Taraconta, close to the Black Sea

<sup>6</sup> Otto von Freising: *Chronica*, 5, 25

<sup>7</sup> On the notion of the Caspian Gates, see Meserve: *Empires*, pp. 249-256

<sup>8</sup> Aethicus Ister: *Cosmographia*, 32

<sup>9</sup> The passage “*Et quamvis ... queat*” is a heavily revised quote from Piccolomini’s letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (EPI, 6: 341)

<sup>10</sup> Meuthen: *Fall*, p. 7: Die Humanisten akzentuierten dann gerne noch die Kulturlosigkeit und den Bildungshass der Türken. So Enea Silvio in seiner grossen Rede auf dem Frankfurter Türkenreichstag im Oktober 1454



[14] [EV] **Sed dicitis, milites: Quid tu nobis litterarum detrimenta<sup>1</sup> commemoras? Quid nobis et<sup>2</sup> litteris? Nos hastas gladiosque versamus. Vos, genus ignavum, tecto gaudetis et umbra. Immo vero, fortissimi equites, nullius quam vestri magis<sup>3</sup> interest studia litterarum esse quam florentissima. Quid enim vos, viri excellentes, aliud quaeritis, cum praestanti animo et alto corde proelium committitis, ac nunc viribus hostem, nunc ingenio superatis, quid, inquam, aliud quaeritis<sup>4</sup> quam famae dulcedinem? Laudari<sup>5</sup> vultis, scio, et gaudetis, {50v} cum de vobis bonos esse rumores<sup>6</sup> auditis. Trahimur omnes studio laudis, et optimus quisque gloria ducitur, inquit Cicero. Sed quae laus vestra diuturna esse potest, nisi litteris consecratur? Brevissima est fama<sup>7</sup>, quae humanae vitae<sup>8</sup> spatio terminatur. Vivunt nomine perenni, quos litterae insertos habent:**

**Fortunati ambo, si quid<sup>9</sup> mea carmina possunt.  
Nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo,**

**in Euryalum<sup>10</sup> et Nisum inquit Maro.**

[14] [FV] **Sed dicitis, milites: "Quid tu nobis litterarum detrimenta connumerat? Nos hastas gladiosque versamus. Nil nobis et litteris." Immo vero, fortissimi equites, nullius quam vestra magis interest studia litterarum esse quam florentissima. Quid enim, viri magnanimi, vos aliud quaeritis, cum praesenti animo et alto corde proelium committitis, ac nunc viribus hostem, nunc ingenio superatis, quid aliud, inquam, quaeritis quam famae dulcedinem? Laudari vultis, scio, et gaudetis, cum de vobis rumores esse bonos auditis. *Trahimur omnes studio laudis, et optimus quisque gloria ducitur.* Sed quae laus vestra diuturna esse potest, nisi litteris consecratur<sup>11</sup>? *Eripiunt quemvis a mortis dente camoenae. Vivunt fama perenni, quos litterae insertos habent.***

**O fortunati ambo, si quid mea carmina possunt.  
Nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo,<sup>12</sup>**

**in Euryalum et Nisum inquit Maro.**

<sup>1</sup> omit. P2\*

<sup>2</sup> ex P2; de KO

<sup>3</sup> quam vestri magis : magis quam vestri P2

<sup>4</sup> ac nunc... quaeritis omit. KO

<sup>5</sup> laudare KO

<sup>6</sup> rumores esse bonos : esse rumores bonos P2

<sup>7</sup> nisi litteris ... fama omit. P2

<sup>8</sup> humanae vitae : vite humane P2

<sup>9</sup> que P2\*

<sup>10</sup> Curialum KO

<sup>11</sup> consecratur A, B; consecratur corr. ex consecratur C; consecratur corr. ex. consecratur D

<sup>12</sup> This verse is also quoted in Piccolomini: Letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 210)

[14] [FV] But, soldiers, here you say, “Why do you talk so much about the losses to letters? We fight with spears and swords. We have no interest in letters.” Not so, Mighty Knights, for you are actually those who have the greatest need for flourishing letters. When you rush into battle, courageously and daringly, and overcome the enemy with your physical and mental strength, what are you seeking, my brave men, other than sweet fame? You want to be praised – I know - and you are happy when you hear that people speak well of you. *Ambition is a universal factor in life, and the nobler a man is, the more susceptible is he to the sweets of fame.*<sup>1</sup> But your glory will not last long if it is not consecrated by letters. *The muses can free anybody from the tooth of death.*<sup>2</sup> Men’s fame is eternal if it is written in letters:

*Happy! If my poetry has any power,  
no day shall ever blot you from the memory of time,*

said Maro<sup>3</sup> to Euryalus and Nisus.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cicero: *Pro Archia*, 9.26: *trahimur omnes studio laudis et optimus quisque maxime gloria ducitur*

<sup>2</sup> Quotation not identified. Possibly a loan from a poem by Antonio Beccadelli (Il Panormita)

<sup>3</sup> Vergilius Maro, Publius (70-19 BCE): Roman poet

<sup>4</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 9.446-447

[15] [EV] Nec<sup>1</sup> nos<sup>2</sup> aut Samsonis, aut Gedeonis, aut Jeptae, aut aliorum iudicum fortitudinem regumque magnifica gesta sciremus, nisi litteris edocti essemus. **Quanto ergo quisque vestrum, nobilissimi equites, aut industrius est aut fortior, aut<sup>3</sup> animosior, tanto favere ingeniis ac litteris magis debet. Haec sunt enim, quae progenitores vestros {51r} virtute praestantes, quamvis iamdudum mortuos, memoriae tamen hominum quasi viventes exhibent, et quae<sup>4</sup> vestrum nomen, si viriles fueritis, ad posterum deferre cum laude queant<sup>5</sup>. Senserat hoc<sup>6</sup> Alexander Macedo, qui cum in Sigaeo sepulchrum vidisset Achillis: O fortunate, inquit, adolescens, qui tuae virtutis praeconem Homerum inveneris. Et vere, inquit orator, nam nisi illi ars illa fuisset, idem tumulus, qui corpus<sup>7</sup> ejus contexerat, nomen etiam obruisset. Themistocles<sup>8</sup> autem<sup>9</sup> ille, summus Athenis vir, cum ex eo quaereretur, cujus vocem libentissime audiret: A quo summa virtus, inquit, optime laudatur. Quo dicto nimirum<sup>10</sup> humanitatis et eloquentiae<sup>11</sup> studia<sup>12</sup> magnopere<sup>13</sup> commendavit<sup>14</sup>.**

[15] [FV] **Quanto ergo quisque vestrum, nobilissimi equites, fortior est, animosior, industrius, tanto favere ingeniis ac litteris magis debet. Hae sunt enim, quae majores vestros, clarissimos viros, iamdudum mortuos, quasi viventes et quae vestrum nomen ad posterum deferre queunt. Noverat Alexander Macedo, quantus inesset litteris vigor ad praebendam famam, qui cum in Sigaeo sepulchrum vidisset Achillis O fortunate, inquit, adolescens, qui tuae virtutis praeconem Homerum inveneris. Et vere, inquit Cicero, nam nisi illi ars illa extitisset, idem tumulus, qui corpus ejus contexerat, nomen etiam obruisset. Themistocles autem, clarus ille Athenis vir, cum ex eo quaereretur, cujus vocem libentissime audiret: A quo summa virtus, inquit, optime praedicatur. Quo dicto nimirum humanitatis et eloquentiae studia magnopere commendavit.**

---

<sup>1</sup> hec P1

<sup>2</sup> non P2

<sup>3</sup> omit. KO

<sup>4</sup> omit. P2

<sup>5</sup> queunt P2

<sup>6</sup> hec P1\*, KO

<sup>7</sup> omit. KO

<sup>8</sup> Themistodes P1, P2;

Themoscenes KO

<sup>9</sup> omit. P1

<sup>10</sup> omit. P2\*

<sup>11</sup> et eloquentiae omit. P2

<sup>12</sup> studiis quam P2

<sup>13</sup> magno opere P2

<sup>14</sup> omit. P2

[15] [FV] The stronger, the braver, and the more active you are, Noble Knights, the more each of you will benefit from intellect and letters. For it is those that can make your forefathers, famous men, though dead for many years, stay alive - so to speak - and transmit your name to posterity. Alexander of Macedonia<sup>1</sup> knew the power of letters to ensure fame, for when he saw the tomb of Achilles<sup>2</sup> in Sigeum,<sup>3</sup> he said: *Fortunate youth, to have found in Homer a herald of thy valour!*<sup>4</sup> Cicero<sup>5</sup> adds that *well might he so exclaim, for if that art had never existed, the same mound which covered Achilles' bones would also have overwhelmed his memory.*<sup>6</sup> And Themistocles,<sup>7</sup> the famous Athenian, when asked what voice he loved best to hear, replied, *That which bears most eloquent testimony to supreme prowess.*<sup>8</sup> In these words, he highly recommended the study of humanities and eloquence.

---

<sup>1</sup> Alexander III the Great (356-323 BCE): King of the Greek kingdom of Macedon. Created one of the largest empires of the ancient world, stretching from Greece to Egypt and into present-day Pakistan

<sup>2</sup> Achilles: (Greek myth.) Hero of the Trojan War and the central character and greatest warrior of Homer's *Iliad*

<sup>3</sup> Sigeum: ancient Greek city in the north-west of the Troad region of Anatolia, located at the mouth of the Scamander (the modern Karamenderes River)

<sup>4</sup> Cicero: *Pro Archia*, 10.24

<sup>5</sup> Cicero, Marcus Tullius (106-43 BCE): Roman statesman and author

<sup>6</sup> Cicero: *Pro Archia*, 10.24: *Et vere. Nam nisi Ilias illa exstisset, i-*

*dem tumulus, qui corpus eius contexerat, nomen etiam obruisset*

<sup>7</sup> Themistocles (ca. 524–459 BCE): Athenian politician and general

<sup>8</sup> Cicero: *Pro Archia*, 9.20. *Themistoclem illum, summum Athenis virum, dixisse aiunt, cum ex eo quaereretur, quod acroama aut cuius vocem libentissime audiret, eius, a quo sua virtus optime prae-dicaretur.* Note that Piccolomini omitted “sua”, i.e., “his own”

[16] [EV] **At contrita** nunc<sup>1</sup> deletaque **Graecia**, quanta<sup>2</sup> sit facta<sup>3</sup> litterarum {51v} jactura cuncti cognoscitis, qui Latinorum omnem doctrinam<sup>4</sup> **ex Graecorum fontibus** derivatam non ignoratis. **Quid ergo in tanto damno, in tanta injuria dicemus, principes?** An de justitia **belli adversus haec monstra hominum dubitabimus, qui** nulla humanitatis studia<sup>5</sup> colunt, **qui foedera nulla custodiunt, qui sanguinem nostrum<sup>6</sup> sitiunt, qui caedibus saturari non possunt, qui sacra Dei nostri omnia polluunt et exterminant?** **Fortitudo, inquit Ambrosius in Officiis, quae bello tuetur a barbaris patriam, vel domi<sup>7</sup> defendit infirmos, vel a latronibus socios<sup>8</sup>, plena justitia est.**

[16] [FV] **At contrita Graecia** aut mortua sunt aut certe plurimum diminuta eloquentiae bonarumque omnium artium studia. Fateor multis in locis apud Latinos vigere studia litterarum, sed rivuli sunt ex Graecorum fontibus derivati, quos fonte siccato necessarium est non parum arescere. **Quid ergo in tanto damno, in tanta injuria dicemus, principes?** Bellum ne justum esse **dubitabimus adversus haec monstra hominum, qui** litteras odiunt, **qui foedera nulla custodiunt,** qui tantam nobis<sup>9</sup> civitatem abstulerunt, **qui sanguinem vestrum sitiunt, qui caedibus saturari non possunt, qui sacra vestra polluunt<sup>10</sup> et exterminant,** qui omnibus Christianis ultima supplicia minitantur? **Fortitudo, inquit Ambrosius, quae bello tuetur a barbaris patriam, vel domi defendit infirmos, vel a latronibus socios, plena justitia est.** Quid hic putandum est, ubi non solum patria, socii, vel infirmi, sed fides, sed religio, sed honor Dei nostri in defensionem veniunt?

---

<sup>1</sup> contrita nunc : nunc contrita

KO

<sup>2</sup> at contrita ... quanta *omit.* P2

<sup>3</sup> factura P2

<sup>4</sup> omnium P2

<sup>5</sup> humanitatis studia : studia

humanitatis P2

<sup>6</sup> vestrum P2

<sup>7</sup> domum P2

<sup>8</sup> sacros P2

<sup>9</sup> vobis C

<sup>10</sup> pollunt C

[16] [FV] But now that Greece has been overrun, the studies of eloquence and all the good arts are either dead or have been greatly reduced. I admit that such studies exist in many places in the Latin world, but they are rivulets flowing from Greek springs.<sup>1 2</sup> Now that the spring has dried out, these studies will, to some extent, dry up too. What, Princes, shall we say about such a great loss, such great damage? Will we doubt that it is just to wage war against these human monsters who hate letters, who do not respect treaties, who have taken that great city from us, who are thirsting for your blood, who cannot get enough slaughter, who profane and destroy our holy things, and who threaten all Christians with the direst punishments? Ambrose<sup>3</sup> says that *the use of force in a war to protect one's country from the barbarians, the weak at home, or allies from robbers is absolutely legitimate*.<sup>4</sup> So what shall we think in this case where you come to the defence not only of the fatherland, the weak, and the allies, but also of Faith, religion, and the honour of our God?

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cicero: *Tusculanae disputationes*, 1.1-4

<sup>2</sup> The passage "Fateor multis ... a-rescere" is a heavily revised quote from Piccolomini's letter to Cardi-

nal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (EPI, 6: 341)

<sup>3</sup> Ambrosius, Aurelius (ca. 340-397). Archbishop of Milan. Doctor of the Church. Saint

<sup>4</sup> Ambrosius: *De officiis ministrorum*, 1, 27, 129. MPL XVI, col. 61

[17] [EV] **Quod si ordo ille naturalis paci accomodatus, Augustino teste, id poscit<sup>1</sup>, ut suscipiendi belli auctoritas atque consilium penes principes sit, neque bellum alioquin justum existimetur, videte {52r} quanta est<sup>2</sup> hujus belli justitia, cujus non solum papa et<sup>3</sup> imperator, duo maxima luminaria, duo primi in terra principes, sed ipse rector orbis, mundique fabricator Deus est auctor, qui sponsam suam<sup>4</sup> ecclesiam, matrem nostram, ut pupillam oculi nobis tuendam commendat. Monstravimus belli justitiam fortasse<sup>5</sup> pluribus verbis, quam necesse fuit, sed<sup>6</sup> traxit me injuriarum acerbitas. Parcite subirato, date veniam laeso.**

[17] [FV] **Quod si ordo ille naturalis paci accomodatus, {101r} teste Augustino, id poscit, ut suscipiendi belli auctoritas atque consilium penes principes sit, neque bellum alioquin justum existimatur, videte quanta est hujus belli justitia, cujus non solum Romanus pontifex et imperator, sed ipse rector orbis mundique fabricator Deus est auctor, qui vobis sponsam suam ecclesiam ut pupillam oculi tuendam commendat. Monstravimus belli justitiam fortasse pluribus verbis, quam necesse fuit.**

---

<sup>1</sup> id poscit : deposcit P2

<sup>2</sup> sit P2\*

<sup>3</sup> omit. P2

<sup>4</sup> sub KO

<sup>5</sup> forte sed P2\*

<sup>6</sup> omit. P2\*

[17] [FV] According to Augustine,<sup>1</sup> *the natural order which seeks the peace of mankind, ordains that the monarch should have the power of undertaking war*,<sup>2</sup> and a war can only be considered just when this is the case. You see, then, how great is the justice of this war, whose author is not just the Roman pontiff and the emperor but God Himself, the ruler and creator of this world. To you, He entrusts His spouse, the Church, to be cared for as the *apple of the eye*<sup>3</sup>.

We have now demonstrated the justice of the war – though maybe with more words than necessary.

---

<sup>1</sup> Augustinus, Aurelius (Augustine) (354 – 430): Bishop of Hippo. Theologian. Doctor of the Church. Saint

<sup>2</sup> Augustinus: *Contra Faustum*, 22, 75. Translation quoted after the New Advent ed.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy, 32, 10; Psalms, 16, 8



[18] [EV] **Nunc ex bello, quae sequatur<sup>1</sup>, utilitas breviter exponendum est. Cur enim se bello quisquam immisceat<sup>2</sup>, nisi et bellasse<sup>3</sup> juvet<sup>4</sup>? Vos igitur, principes, si fructum hujus belli contra Turcos suscipiendi cognoscere cupitis, damna quae toti Christianismo<sup>5</sup> imminet, nisi Turcorum frangatur impetus, pensitate. Audivistis, quae passi sunt Constantinopolitani. {52v} Idem nunc multae civitates expectant, nisi<sup>6</sup>, dum tempus est<sup>7</sup>, opitulamini. Serpit in dies hoc virus magis ac magis; nunc una provincia, nunc alia nobis deficit. Rascia jam novissime occupata est. Despotus ejus provinciae cum conjuge et liberis in Hungariam se recepit.**

[18] [FV] **Nunc ex eo, quae sequatur, utilitas<sup>8</sup> exponendum est. Quis enim bello se implicet, nisi bellasse juvet? Vos igitur, principes, si fructum hujus belli contra Turcos gerendi cognoscere cupitis, damna quae imminet toti Christianismo, nisi Turcorum frangatur impetus, pensitate. Audistis, quae passi sunt Constantinopolitani. Idem nunc multae civitates expectant, nisi, dum tempus est, opitulamini. Serpit in dies hoc virus magis ac magis; nunc una provincia, nunc altera nobis deficit. Rascia jam novissime occupata refertur. Despotus relicta patria in Hungariam se recepit.**

---

<sup>1</sup> sequitur P2

<sup>2</sup> immiscet P2

<sup>3</sup> debellasse P2\*; bello se KO

<sup>4</sup> juvat P1, KO

<sup>5</sup> cetui Christianissimo P2\*

<sup>6</sup> ubi P2

<sup>7</sup> omit. P2\*

<sup>8</sup> Utilitas *in marg.* D

### 3. Benefits of the war (Utilitas)

[18] [FV] Now, I shall make clear the benefits<sup>1</sup> of the war. Who wants to go to war if there is no benefit to it? Princes, if you want to know the benefits of a war against the Turks, then consider carefully the losses that threaten all of Christianity if the assault of the Turks is not broken. You have heard what the Constantinopolitans have suffered. The same [destiny] now awaits many other cities if you do not bring them help in time. This virus is spreading from day to day; one region after another is lost to us. There are reports that Serbia has recently been occupied and that the ruler has left his country and gone to Hungary.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "utilitas"

<sup>2</sup> Spring 1454

[19] [EV] **Hungari**, qui hactenus fidei nostrae<sup>1</sup> clipeus, nostrae<sup>2</sup> religionis murus fuere, **bis victi bello post mortem Alberti regis, bis capti a Turcis sunt, centum milia hominum aut eo plus, duobus<sup>3</sup> proeliis amisere. Non tulerunt integri Turcorum vires; quomodo fracti ferent? Succubuerunt auxiliantibus Polonis, quomodo vincent<sup>4</sup> soli? Magna est Turcorum potentia et in Asia et in Graecia. Tartarorum ferocem gentem foedere junctam habent. Ducenta et trecenta<sup>5</sup> milia pugnatorum, ne dicam plura, in armis {53r} cogere possunt. Quamvis sint Hungari strenui et potentes viri atque omni laude digni, non tamen tantis viribus pares habentur. Sive vincitur Hungaria, sive coacta jungitur Turcis, neque Italia neque Germania tuta erit, neque satis Rhenus Gallos securos reddet.**

[19] [FV] **Hungari bis victi bello post mortem Alberti regis, bis capti a Turcis sunt, plus centum millia hominum duobus proeliis amisere. Non tulerunt integri Turcorum vires; quomodo fracti ferent? Succubuerunt auxiliantibus Polonis, quomodo vincent soli? Magna est Turcorum potentia et in Asia et in Graecia. Tartarorum ferocem gentem foedere junctam habent. Ducenta et trecenta millia pugnatorum in armis cogere possunt. Quamvis sunt Hungari strenui et potentes viri, non tamen tantis viribus pares habentur. Sive vincitur Hungaria, siva jungitur Turcis, neque Germania neque Italia tuta erit, neque Rhenus tuebitur Gallos.**

---

<sup>1</sup> fidei nostrae : nostrae fidei  
P2\*, KO

<sup>2</sup> *omit.* P2  
<sup>3</sup> *in add.* P2

<sup>4</sup> *vincerent* P2  
<sup>5</sup> *tercenta* KO

[19] [FV] After the death of King Albrecht,<sup>1</sup> the Hungarians have been defeated twice in war; twice they have been overcome by the Turks, losing more than 100,000 men just in these two battles.<sup>2</sup> Even when the Hungarians were at full strength, they could not stand against the forces of Turks. How can they resist them now that they are beaten? Even when they had help from the Poles, they were broken.<sup>3</sup> How can they now win on their own? Great is the power of the Turks<sup>4</sup> both in Asia Minor and in Greece, and they now have an alliance with the savage Tartar people. They can mobilise an army of 200,000 to 300,000 soldiers.<sup>5</sup> Though the Hungarians are vigorous and strong, they cannot equal forces of that size. And if Hungary is defeated or joins up with the Turks, neither Germany nor Italy will be safe, and the Rhine will not protect the French.

---

<sup>1</sup> Albrecht II, King of the Romans, King of Hungary and Bohemia, 1438-1439. Piccolomini himself had attended the event of Albrecht's acceptance of his election to the Roman Empire, see the oration "*Quid est*" [3], written by him for the bishop of Novara, representing the Duke of Milan

<sup>2</sup> Varna 1444 and Amsselfeld 1448

<sup>3</sup> At the battle of Varna, 1444, where a Polish/Hungarian army was commanded by Wladislaw, King of Poland and Hungary

<sup>4</sup> Oration "*Audivi*" [1] (1436), sect. 21: *Magnum est imperium Turcorum*

<sup>5</sup> Francesco Filelfo's crusade letter to Charles VII of France in Filelfo: *Collected*, I, pp. 437: *Nam quod audiamus ducenta et trecenta millia hominum complere Turcorum exercitus*

[20] [EV] At nonnulli, quia suis diebus non videre<sup>1</sup> similia, nec<sup>2</sup> fieri posse confidunt. Nos saepe Tartaros<sup>3</sup> protrita Hungaria Germaniae fines ingressos ad Rhenum usque<sup>4</sup> debacchatos novimus. Hungari, priusquam Christum colerent, saepe Austriam, Bavariam, Sueviam<sup>5</sup>, Franconiam, Saxoniam percurrerunt<sup>6</sup>. Attila, rex Hunnorum, ab Hungaria, quae tunc Pannonia dicebatur, digressus, quantas Italiae, quantas Germaniae, quantas remotiori Galliae atque Hispaniae turbas intulerit, non ignoramus. Quid {53v} Gothos, quid Vandalos, quid Gepidas, quid Herulos, quid Longobardos, quid Burgundiones referam<sup>7</sup>? Omnes hi populi per Hungariam ab ulteriori Scythia venientes, hanc nostram Christianitatem miris afflixerunt modis.

[20] [FV] At nonnulli, quia suis diebus non videre similia, nec fieri posse confidunt. Nos saepe Tartaros protrita Hungaria Germaniae fines ingressos ad Rhenum usque novimus pervagatos. Hungari saepe Austriam, Baioariam, Sueviam, Franconiam, Saxoniam percurrerunt. Attila, rex Hunnorum, ab Hungaria digressus, quantas Italiae, quantas Germaniae, quantas *remotiori Galliae* atque Hispaniae turbas intulerit, non ignoramus. Quid Gothos, quid Vandalos<sup>8</sup>, quid Gepidas, quid Longobardos<sup>9</sup> referam? Omnes hi populi per Hungariam venientes nunc Germaniam, nunc Italiam, nunc ceteras nationes horrendis afflixerunt modis.

---

<sup>1</sup> viderunt P2

<sup>2</sup> neque P2\*

<sup>3</sup> Barbarorum incursiones *in marg.* D

<sup>4</sup> usque ad P2

<sup>5</sup> Suetiam P2

<sup>6</sup> preterierunt P2

<sup>7</sup> referatur KO

<sup>8</sup> Vandales C, D, F

<sup>9</sup> Longobarbos C

[20] [FV] But since they have not seen anything like it in our own time, many do not think that this is possible. We do know, however, that often the Tartars overran Hungary, entered Germany, and pushed forward as far as the Rhine. And often the Hungarians themselves raided Austria, Bavaria, Swabia, Francony, and Saxony. We know how large forces King Attila<sup>1</sup> of the Huns brought to Italy, Germany, and the *farther regions of France*<sup>2</sup> and Spain when he came out of Hungary. And what about the Goths, the Vandals, the Gepids, and the Longobards? All these peoples, passing through Hungary, inflicted terrible sufferings upon Germany, Italy, and the other nations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Attila (~453): ruler of the Huns from 434 until his death 453. Leader of the Hunnic Empire, which stretched from the Ural River to the Rhine River and from the Danube River to the Baltic Sea

<sup>2</sup> Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im.74]: *nisi forte vos Galli remotiores haec non sentitis* (from the oration “*Existimatis*

*forte*”, put into the mouth of Pope Urban II by Biondo)

[21] [EV] Expectabimus igitur et nunc venire Turcos atque accersitis Tartaris nobilem atque<sup>1</sup> potentem Hungariam sui juris efficere, ac deinde reliquam Christianitatem locustarum more corrodere? Pugnandum est vobis omnino, principes, si liberi, si Christiani vitam ducere cupitis. Existimatote nunc, an salvis et integris sociis, an fractis atque amissis<sup>2</sup> id<sup>3</sup> agere magis expediat. Romani, quos fama<sup>4</sup> sapientissimos fuisse<sup>5</sup> praedicat, sociorum tutelam semper suam salutem esse ducebant<sup>6</sup>, atque<sup>7</sup> foris quam domi pugnare malebant. Nam foris, si qua fuerit accepta calamitas, {54r} emendari potest; quae domi excipiuntur clades, exitiales habentur. Hinc<sup>8</sup> Hannibal, maximus ille Poenorum imperator, cum regi Syriae Antiocho adversus Romanos bellum suaderet, non in Asia sive in Graecia, sed in Italia pugnandum esse dicebat.

[21] [FV] Expectabimus igitur et nunc venire Turcos atque accersitis Tartaris Hungariam sui juris efficere, ac deinde Christianitatem reliquam locustarum more corrodere? Pugnandum est omnino, principes, si Christiani, si liberi vitam ducere cupitis. Existimatote nunc, an salvis atque integris {102r} sociis, an fractis atque amissis id agere magis expediat. Romani, quos fama sapientissimos fuisse praedicat, sociorum tutelam suam esse salutem ducebant, ac foris quam domi pugnare malebant. Nam foris, si qua fuerit accepta calamitas, emendari potest; quae domi suscipiuntur clades, exitiales habentur. Atque hinc Hannibal, maximus ille Poenorum imperator, regi Syriae Antiocho suadebat ne in Asia neve in Graecia, sed in Italia bellum Romanis inferret.

---

<sup>1</sup> et P2\*

<sup>2</sup> admissis P2; dimissis KO

<sup>3</sup> vel P2

<sup>4</sup> omit. P1

<sup>5</sup> fama sapientissimos fuisse :

sapientissimos fuisse fama P2\*

<sup>6</sup> dicebant P2

<sup>7</sup> ac P2

<sup>8</sup> nunc P1\*

[21] [FV] So, shall we now just wait for the Turks to summon the Tartars and then come upon us as a swarm of locusts<sup>1</sup> to overwhelm Hungary and afterwards subdue the rest of Christendom? [No!] We must fight, Princes, if you want to live as Christians and as free men. Consider now if it will be more useful to do so with your allies safe and unbroken rather than destroyed and lost. The Romans, reputed to have been rather wise, regarded the protection of their allies as vital to their own security,<sup>2</sup> and they preferred to fight abroad rather than at home. For if something goes wrong abroad, it can be set right, whereas defeats suffered at home are disastrous. This is why the great Carthaginian general, Hannibal,<sup>3</sup> persuaded King Antiochus<sup>4</sup> of Syria to fight the Romans not in Asia Minor nor in Greece, but in Italy.<sup>5 6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Judges, 6, 5

<sup>2</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 2, 6

<sup>3</sup> Hannibal Barca (247-ca. 183 BCE): Punic Carthaginian military commander

<sup>4</sup> Antiochus III the Great (ca. 241-187 BCE): from 222 BC to his death. 6th ruler of the Seleucid

Empire (the region of Syria and large parts of the rest of western Asia)

<sup>5</sup> Livius, 34, 60

<sup>6</sup> Flavio Biondo had touched upon this theme in his crusade memorandum of 1 August 1453 to King

Alfonso V, quoting Scipio and Themistocles (Flavio Biondo: *Scritti*, p. 43)



[22] [EV] Et vos<sup>1</sup> ergo, Theutones, si – quemadmodum spero – sapientes eritis, majores vestros imitiabimini, qui remota semper a domo bella gerere ac vicinorum fines non minus quam suos tueri consueverunt. Quod si vos, Germani, hoc tempore Hungaros neglexeritis, non erit denique, cur vos ex Gallis auxilia praestolemini<sup>2</sup>, nec rursus illi apud Hispanos opem invenient. Atque ita fiet, ut cum singulis semper gentibus pugnaturi<sup>3</sup> hostes facile, quod cupiunt, orbis imperium assequantur<sup>4</sup>. Quod si acceptis armis et Hungaris, et Rascianis, {54v} et aliis Christianis, qui vicini sunt Turcorum potentiae<sup>5</sup>, opem tuleritis, non solum vicinos vestros tuebimini, sed vos ipsos, uxores ac liberos vestros ex maximo periculo liberabitis. Atque haec<sup>6</sup> est – ut mihi videtur – maxima utilitas belli gerendi. Cum exploratum sit ad vos<sup>7</sup> dietim Turcos properare, prius occurrere<sup>8</sup> quam vestros fines<sup>9</sup> ingrediantur<sup>10</sup>, et auxilia vicinis afferte<sup>11</sup>. Nam

tunc tua res agitur, ut ille ait<sup>12</sup>, paries cum<sup>13</sup> proximus ardet.

[22] [FV] Vos quoque, Theutones, majores vestros imitiabimini, qui remota semper a domo bella gerere nec minus sociorum quam suos agros tueri studuerunt. Quod si vos Hungaros neglexeritis, non erit denique, cur vos Gallorum auxilia praestolemini, nec rursus illi apud Hispanos opem invenient. Atque ita fiet, ut semper cum singulis gentibus pugnaturi hostes facile, quod quaerunt, orbis imperium assequantur. At si receptis armis et Hungaris et Albanis et Rascianis et ceteris, qui vicini sunt potentiae Turcorum, nostrae fidei participes, auxilium tuleritis, non solum socios tuebimini, sed vos ipsos, uxores ac liberos vestros ex maximo periculo liberabitis. Haec est, principes, ut mihi videtur, non parva utilitas belli gerendi. Cum Turcos in dies magis ad vos properare sit exploratum, prius occurrere quam fines vestros ingrediantur, et opem ferre vicinis. Certum est ille Horatii:

*Tunc tua res agitur, paries cum proximus ardet.*

<sup>1</sup> nos WY

<sup>2</sup> praestolamini KO

<sup>3</sup> cum singulis semper pugnaturi :  
pugnaturi semper cum singulis  
P2

<sup>4</sup> assequantur P2, KO

<sup>5</sup> Turcorum potentiae : potentie

Turchorum P2

<sup>6</sup> hoc P1

<sup>7</sup> nos P2, KO

<sup>8</sup> occurrere P2

<sup>9</sup> fratres P2\*

<sup>10</sup> ingrediuntur KO

<sup>11</sup> afferre P2

<sup>12</sup> ut KO

<sup>13</sup> dum P2

[22] [FV] You, Germans, should imitate your forefathers, who always endeavoured to fight their wars far from home and to protect the territories of their allies as much as their own. And if you do not help the Hungarians, there is no reason why you should, in your turn, expect help from the French or why the French, in their turn, should get help from the Spaniards.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it will happen that our enemies always fight each people separately and thus easily obtain the lordship over the whole world they desire. But if you take up arms in defence of the Hungarians, the Albanians, the Serbians, and the other peoples who are neighbours of the powerful Turks and who share our faith,<sup>2</sup> then you will protect not only your allies but also yourselves, your wives, and your children<sup>3</sup> from this terrible danger.

This, Princes, is the great benefit of the war, as I see it. When we hear that the Turks are marching towards you with all speed, you should go to oppose them before they enter your region, and help your neighbours. The words of Horace<sup>4</sup> certainly apply here:

*Tis your own safety that is at stake, when your neighbour's wall is in flames*<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> A Renaissance domino theory!

<sup>2</sup> Galatians, 6, 10: *domesticos fidei*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im.75]: *Matronas a*

*complexu vestro, vestras virgines ab earum sinu, pueros et adolescentes vestros in servitute vobiscum rapi dolentes maestique videbitis* (from the oration "Existi-

*matris forte*", put into the mouth of Pope Urban II by Biondo)

<sup>4</sup> Horatius Flaccus, Quintus (65-8 BC): Roman poet

<sup>5</sup> Horatius: *Epistulae*, 1.18.84. Horace has "nam" instead of "tunc"

[23] [EV] **Quod si certissimi essetis, numquam illos ad vos esse venturos, pro debito tamen baptismi vestri<sup>1</sup>, quo estis initiati, pro maximis beneficiis, quibus vos divina pietas<sup>2</sup> cumulavit, adversus hos evangelii corruptores et Christi perfidos inimicos, ejusque<sup>3</sup> crucis osiores<sup>4</sup> bellum gerere deberetis. Equidem, praestantissimi principes, cum omnibus virtutibus affecti sitis, nihil tamen arbitror vos magis velle quam gratos esse atque<sup>5</sup> {55r} videri. Haec est enim una virtus, non solum maxima, sed mater omnium reliquarum virtutum<sup>6</sup>. Quid est enim pietas, nisi voluntas grata erga parentes? Qui sunt, qui libenti animo pro patria pugnant, nisi qui patriae beneficia meminerunt<sup>7</sup>? Qui sunt, qui fidem erga principes inviolatam custodiunt, nisi qui eos in se beneficos recordantur? Qui sunt, qui praeceptores honorant, nisi qui se doctrinam ab his accepisse non sunt obliti? Qui sunt, qui amicos omni<sup>8</sup> studio proseguuntur, nisi qui fructum amicitiae tenaci memoria tenent?**

[23] [FV] **Quod si certi essetis, numquam illos ad vos esse venturos, tamen pro debito baptismi vestri, quo estis initiati, pro maximis beneficiis, quibus divina pietas vos cumulavit, ad vindicandas injurias Dei vestri bellum gerere deberetis. Equidem, praestantissimi procures, cum omnibus virtutibus sitis affecti, nihil tamen arbitror vos magis velle quam gratos esse atque videri. Haec est enim una virtus non solum maxima, sed etiam mater virtutum omnium reliquarum. Quid est enim pietas, nisi voluntas grata in parentes? Qui sunt, qui pro patria libenti animo pugnant, nisi qui patriae beneficia meminerunt? Qui sunt, qui fidem erga principes inviolatam custodiunt, nisi qui eos in se fuisse beneficos non obliviscuntur? Qui sunt, qui praeceptores honorant, amicis inserviunt, nisi qui fructuum praeceptorum memoriam indelibilem gerunt?**

---

<sup>1</sup> nostri P1\*

<sup>2</sup> vos divina pietas : pietas divina vos P2

<sup>3</sup> omit. P2

<sup>4</sup> derisores KO

<sup>5</sup> gratos esse atque : esse gratos et P2

<sup>6</sup> reliquarum virtutum : virtutum reliquarum P2, KO

<sup>7</sup> meruerunt P1, KO

<sup>8</sup> omnium P1

[23] [FV] Even if you could be certain that the Turks would never come to you, you still ought to fight for the sake of the baptism through which you were initiated, for the great gifts that Pious God has granted you in abundance, and to avenge the insults against your God. Indeed, Eminent Nobles, though you are endowed with all virtues, I believe that the thing you want most is to be and to be seen as grateful. For the virtue of gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues; it is also the mother of all the others. What, indeed, is piety other than a grateful disposition towards parents? Who will fight willingly for their country other than those who remember the benefits received from it? Who will keep their oaths to their princes unfailingly other than those who remember the favours received? Who will honour their teachers and help their friends other than those who have a lasting memory of the benefits received from them?

[24] [EV] Quod si erga patriam, erga parentes<sup>1</sup>, principes, praeceptores, amicos grati esse debemus, quanto magis erga Deum nostrum? Et cujus, obsecro, pinguiora<sup>2</sup>, quam Dei nostri beneficia sumus experti? Ille, cum nihil essemus, nos in esse produxit; neque lapides, aut arbores, aut equos, {55v} sed homines rationis participes nos creavit. Nobis ingenium, sermonem, virtutem, vires corporis atque animi dedit. Et cum primi parentis culpa inferni mancipia<sup>3 4</sup> facti essemus, ut nos redimeret, descendit de caelo, exinanivit semetipsum<sup>5</sup>, formam servi accepit, hominem induit<sup>6</sup>, factus<sup>7</sup> oboediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis, inquit Apostolus.

[24] [FV] Quod si erga patriam, erga parentes, erga principes, praeceptores, amicos grati esse debemus, quanto magis erga Deum nostrum? Et cujus, obsecro, pinguiora in nos quam Dei nostri beneficia sumus experti? Ipse<sup>8</sup>, cum nihil essemus, neque lapidem, neque plantam, neque brutum animal, sed homines rationis participes nos<sup>9</sup> creavit. Nobis ingenium, sermonem, virtutem, vires praebuit. Et cum primi parentis culpa inferni mancipia {102v} facti essemus, *ut nos redimeret, de caelo descendit, exinanivit semetipsum, formam servi accepit, hominem induit, factus oboediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis*, inquit Apostolus.

---

<sup>1</sup> parentes *omit.* P1

<sup>2</sup> majora pignora P2\*; pignora KO

<sup>3</sup> mancipium P1, KO

<sup>4</sup> inferni mancipia : mancipia inferni P2\*

<sup>5</sup> seipsum P1, KO

<sup>6</sup> et *add.* P2\*

<sup>7</sup> est *add.* P2

<sup>8</sup> Quales nos Deus creavit *in marg.* D

<sup>9</sup> nos *corr.* ex non A, C; non B

[24] [FV] And if we should be grateful to our country, parents, princes, teachers, and friends, then how much more should we not be grateful to our God? For who has bestowed greater benefits on us than our God? When we were still nothing, He created us - not as stones, or plants, or dumb animals, but as men partaking in reason. He gave us intelligence, speech, virtue, and strength. And when we had become the servants of Hell through the fault of our first parent,<sup>1</sup> *he came down from Heaven<sup>2</sup> that he might redeem us.<sup>3</sup> But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross,<sup>4</sup>* the Apostle says.

---

<sup>1</sup> Genesis, 1

<sup>2</sup> Nicene Creed: *descendit de caelo*

<sup>3</sup> Galatians 4, 5

<sup>4</sup> Philippians, 2, 7-8

[25] [EV] Sub ipsa autem passione et cruce, priusquam ad crudelitatem necis et effusionem sanguinis perveniretur<sup>1</sup>, quae convitiorum probra, quae contumeliarum ludibria tulit? Sputamina insultantium excepit<sup>2</sup>, qui sputo suo caeci oculos aperuerat. Flagellatus est, qui potestatem flagellandi daemones habet. Spinis coronatus est, qui sanctos suos floribus coronat aeternis. Palmis in faciem caesus est, qui veras palmas mundum {56r} vincentibus<sup>3</sup> tribuit. Spoliatus est terrena et caduca veste, qui caelesti atque immarcessibili candidas animas vestit. Cibatus est felle, qui se cibum homini<sup>4</sup> praebuit. Potatus est aceto, qui populo suo nectaria pocula repromittit. Agnus ille innocens<sup>5</sup>, immo ipsa innocentia, ipsa justitia inter facinorosos computata est. Pependit inter latrones Deus noster. Viderunt faciem ejus, et non erat species, neque decor: a vertice capitis usque ad plantam pedis non erat in eo sanitas. Sed passus est, ut nos redderet impassibiles. Mortuus est, ut nos redderet<sup>6</sup> immortales. Passus est<sup>7</sup>, quia ipse voluit. Iniquitates nostras ipse portavit. O bonitatem! O clementiam magni Dei! O<sup>8</sup> miserationes divinae pietatis incredibiles! Quam maxima et inextimabilia sunt<sup>9</sup> Christiano populo praestita beneficia!

[25] [FV] Sub ipsa autem passione et cruce, priusquam ad crudelitatem necis et effusionem sanguinis veniretur, quae convitiorum probra, quae contumeliarum ludibria tulit? Sputamina insultantium excepit, qui sputo suo caeci oculos aperuerat. Flagellatus est, qui potestatem flagellandi daemones habet. Spinis coronatus est, qui sanctos suos floribus coronat aeternis. Palmis in faciem caesus est, qui veras palmas mundum vincentibus tribuit. Spoliatus est terrena et caduca veste, qui pios omnes caelesti et immarcescibili vestit. Cibatus est felle, qui se cibum homini dedit. Potatus est aceto, qui populo suo nectarea pocula repromittit. Innocens ille agnus, immo ipsa innocentia, ipsa justitia inter facinorosos deputata est. *Viderunt faciem ejus, et non erat species, neque decor: a vertice usque ad plantam pedis non erat in eo sanitas.* Sed passus est, ut redderet nos impassibiles. Passus est, quia ipse voluit. Iniquitates nostras ipse portavit. O bonitatem! O clementiam magni Dei! O miserationes divinae pietatis incredibiles! Quam maxima sunt haec et inextimabilia populo Christiano concessa beneficia!

---

<sup>1</sup> perveniret P2

<sup>2</sup> accepit P2

<sup>3</sup> mundum vincentibus : munde viventibus P2

<sup>4</sup> hominum P1, P2

<sup>5</sup> agnus ille innocens : innocens

ille agnus P2

<sup>6</sup> impassibiles mortuus ...

redderet *omit.* P1

<sup>7</sup> *omit.* P1, KO

<sup>8</sup> *omit.* KO

<sup>9</sup> sint KO

[25] [FV] During His passion and crucifixion, before the cruel killing and shedding of blood, what abuse and mockery did He not suffer from the attendants? He, who had opened the eyes of the blind man with his own spit, was spat upon himself.<sup>1</sup> He was scourged, who has the power to scourge demons. He was crowned with thorns, who crowns His saints with eternal flowers. He was beaten with the palms of hand, who gives true palms to those who conquer the world. He was robbed of his earthly and frail clothes, who dresses all the pious with heavenly and imperishable garments. He ate gall, who gave Himself as food to man. He drank vinegar, who promises cups of nectar to his people.<sup>2</sup> He, the innocent lamb, innocence and justice itself, was placed among thieves.<sup>3</sup> *They saw his face, and there was no beauty in him, nor comeliness.*<sup>4</sup> *From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there was no soundness therein.*<sup>5</sup> But he suffered in order to free us from suffering. He suffered because he chose to. He *bore our iniquities*.<sup>6</sup> Oh, the goodness of our Great God! Oh, the clemency! Oh, the incredible mercy of Pious God! How great and immeasurable are his favours towards the Christian people.

---

<sup>1</sup> Matthew, 26, 67 *et al.*

<sup>2</sup> Matthew, 27, 34

<sup>3</sup> Luke 23, 33

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah, 53, 2

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah, 1, 6

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah, 53, 11



[26] [EV] Sed communia<sup>1</sup> sunt haec in omnes fideles {56v} dona Dei. Vos autem, o<sup>2</sup> Germani, peculiarior quaedam honoris ratio reddit obnoxiores. Nam qui vobis imperium dedit, is vos<sup>3</sup> omnibus populis, gentibus<sup>4</sup>, nationibus praetulit. Haec est enim prima in saeculo dignitas, cui omnes principes, omnes reges cedunt, quam salvator dominus<sup>5</sup> secundum carnem<sup>6</sup> nascendo, peregrinando, moriendo dignam censuit quovis honore. Quae in prophetis promissa, in evangelio comprobata, in apostolorum scriptis<sup>7</sup> magnifice commendata existit. Haec est illa excellentissima dignitas, qua stante non est, cur Antichristi formidemus adventum, quemadmodum et Tertullianus, et Cyprianus, et Augustinus, et multi veterum ex verbis doctoris gentium Pauli colligere videntur. Hinc<sup>8</sup> antiqui nostri spiritu sancto pleni, quamvis adhuc idola colerent {57r} imperatores prosequerenturque<sup>9</sup> Christianos, vitam tamen illis<sup>10</sup> prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitum fortem, senatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum<sup>11</sup> optabant.

[26] [FV] Sed communia haec inter omnes fideles dona Dei. Vos autem Germanos praeter haec peculiarior quaedam honoris ratio reddit obnoxiores. Nam qui vobis imperium dedit, is vos omnibus populis, gentibus, nationibus praetulit. Est enim haec dignitas prima in saeculo, cui omnes principes, reges cedunt, quam salvator dominus secundum carnem nascendo, peregrinando, moriendo dignam censuit quovis honore. Quae in prophetis promissa, in evangelio comprobata, in apostolorum scriptis magnifice commendata existit. Haec est illa excellentissima dignitas, qua stante non est, cur Antichristi formidemus adventum, quemadmodum Tertullianus, Cyprianus, Augustinus, et multi veterum ex verbis Pauli, doctoris gentium, colligere videntur. Hinc nostri veteres spiritu sancto pleni, quamvis adhuc imperatores idola colerent, vitam<sup>12</sup> tamen illis prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitum fortem, senatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum optabant.

---

<sup>1</sup> coram KO

<sup>2</sup> omit. P1

<sup>3</sup> vos corr. ex vobis P1\*

<sup>4</sup> gentilibus P1\*

<sup>5</sup> omit. KO

<sup>6</sup> secundum carnem : similiter  
carnem assumendo P2

<sup>7</sup> scripturis P2

<sup>8</sup> huic P1

<sup>9</sup> prosequerenturque P2

<sup>10</sup> omit. P2

<sup>11</sup> quietem KO

<sup>12</sup> Oratio pro imperatoribus in  
marg. D

[26] [FV] These gifts of God are shared by all the faithful. But you, O Germans, have a greater obligation towards God because He has shown you a special honour. For in giving you the empire, He raised you above all the other peoples and nations. This dignity is the first in the world, and all princes and kings bow to it. Even Our Saviour, when He was born, travelled, and died according to the flesh, considered it worthy of every honour.<sup>1</sup> It was promised by the prophets, approved in the Gospel, and magnificently commended in the writings of the apostles. This is the supreme dignity, and so long as it stands firm, we need not fear the coming of the Antichrist, as Tertullian,<sup>2</sup> Cyprian,<sup>3</sup> Augustine, and many of the ancients appear to infer from the words of Paul, Doctor of the Gentiles. Therefore, our forefathers, filled with the Holy Spirit, wished *a long life, a secure empire, a safe home, a strong army, a loyal senate, an honest people, and a quiet world*<sup>4</sup> for the emperors, even when these still worshipped pagan idols.

---

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Matthew, 22, 21

<sup>2</sup> Tertullianus, Quintus Septimius Florens (ca. 160-ca. 225): early Christian author from Carthage

<sup>3</sup> Cyprianus, Thascius Caecilius (ca. 200-258): Bishop of Carthage

and an important early Christian writer

<sup>4</sup> Tertullianus: *Liber apologeticus*, 30. *Denique*, inquit ille, *sine monitore pro omnibus semper*<sup>4</sup> *imperatoribus Deum precantes sumus*.

*Vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum orbem quietum optamus*

[27] [EV] **Vos** igitur **magni**, vos incliti, o **Germani**, quibus tanta dignitas credita<sup>1</sup> est, curare prae ceteris debetis, **ne vobis imperantibus Christianae religionis majestas intereat**. Sed quid<sup>2</sup> vos ad haec Deo<sup>3</sup> rependitis<sup>4</sup>? Immo quid **nos omnes Christiani pro tantis beneficiis agimus? Ubi<sup>5</sup> tantorum bonorum<sup>6</sup> memoria est, principes? Ubi gratitudo vestra<sup>7</sup> est, viri potentes? Terram illam<sup>8</sup> sacratissimam<sup>9</sup>, in qua visus est Deus noster et annis supra triginta homo cum hominibus conversatus, Agareni occupant. Officinas nostrae salutis Mahumetus obtinet, sacrosanctum<sup>10</sup> domini sepulchrum lectumque {57v} illum veneratu dignissimum, in quo propter nos vita nostra obdormivit in domino, Saracenorum impuratae manus obtrectant; loca illa sancta, loca benedicta, loca pretiosa, et agni immaculati purpurata cruore, dum nos silemus, hostes fidei nostrae conculcant<sup>11</sup>.**

[27] [FV] **Vos** ergo, **magni** ac sublimes **Germani**, quibus tanta dignitas credita est, curare prae ceteris oportet, **ne vobis imperantibus Christianae religionis majestas intereat**. Sed quid vos aut nos omnes Christiani pro tantis beneficiis agimus? Ubi tantorum donorum memoria est, principes? Ubi gratitudo nostra, viri potentes? **Terram illam sacratissimam, in qua visus est Deus noster, et annis supra triginta homo cum hominibus conversatus, occupant {103r} Saraceni. Officinam nostrae salutis Mahumetus obtinet, sacrosanctum sepulchrum, lectum illum veneratu dignissimum, in quo propter nos vita nostra obdormivit in domino, loca illa sancta et benedicta, agni immaculati purpurata cruore,** immundissimae manus Agarenorum tractant, sceleratissimi calcant pede.

---

<sup>1</sup> tradita P2

<sup>2</sup> qui P1

<sup>3</sup> duo P2\*

<sup>4</sup> respondetis P2

<sup>5</sup> ut P1\*

<sup>6</sup> donorum P2

<sup>7</sup> omit. P1, KO; nostra P2\*

<sup>8</sup> omit. KO

<sup>9</sup> sanctissimam P1

<sup>10</sup> sanctissimum P2

<sup>11</sup> calcant P2\*

[27] [FV] Thus, you, great and exalted Germans, to whom so grand a dignity has been entrusted, should above all take care that the majesty of the Christian religion does not perish while you hold charge of the empire. What should you - and all of us Christians - do in return for such great favours? Where is our memory of these great gifts, Princes? Where is our gratitude, Mighty Men? *The Holy Land, where our God appeared and lived as a man among men for more than 30 years*,<sup>1</sup> is occupied by the Saracens. *The workshop of our salvation* is held by Muhammad. The Holy Sepulchre, that glorious *bed where He who is our life slept in the Lord, the holy and blessed places, made purple by the blood of the immaculate lamb*,<sup>2</sup> are held by the filthy hands of the Agarenes and trodden underfoot by villains.<sup>3 4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Otto von Freising: *Gesta Friederici*, I, 44 (Schmidt, p. 212). From a letter of Bernard of Clairvaux, cf. above. Baruch, 3, 38

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem. Cf. 1. Peter, 1, 19

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im.75]: *Si nunc ea*

*inspiciatis consideratisque sola, quae ante oculos sunt, si irrituro brevi Turco et Sarraceno obsistere non pergetis, qui sacrum domini sepulcrum, sacram Jesu Christi pedibus calcata[m] terram a spurcissima gente tot annos inquinari neglexistis* (from the oration “Exi-

*stimatis forte*”, put into the mouth of Pope Urban II by Biondo)

<sup>4</sup> The passage “Terram illam ... pede” is a heavily revised quote from Piccolomini’s letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (EPI, 6 / 341)

[28] [EV] Et quid ad haec aitis, principes? Cur haec<sup>1</sup> accidisse putatis? *Abbreviatamne manum domini creditis aut impotentem factum, qui est omnipotens? Numquid non potest mittere plusquam XII legiones angelorum, qui Saracenos, Turcos, et<sup>2</sup> Tartaros se blasphemantes exterminent? Aut certe tantum verbo dicere, et fiat<sup>3</sup>, quod voluerit? An qui ferocientem<sup>4</sup> Sennacherib angelo dimicante contrivit, qui furibundum Holofernem in manum<sup>5</sup> mulieris viduae dedit, qui percussit reges magnos et {58r} occidit reges fortes, qui clausit Aegyptiis mare, qui Sodomitis sulphur pluit<sup>6</sup> et ignem, qui ventis imperat et mari, qui fecit caelos in<sup>7</sup> intellectu<sup>8</sup>, Mahumeti superbiam frenare<sup>9</sup> non<sup>10</sup> poterit? Omnino<sup>11</sup> subest ei, cum voluerit, posse. Quid igitur opinamini? Quid creditis, principes? Temptat vos dominus Deus noster, experiri vult, an se diligatis, an virtute praestetis, an religiosi, an grati sitis<sup>12</sup>. Quaerit<sup>13</sup> inter vos<sup>14</sup>, si sit aliquis, qui sapiat, et intelligat<sup>15</sup>, ac requirat haec et indoleat vicem ejus.*

[28] [FV] Et quid ad haec aitis, principes? Cur haec accidisse putatis? *Abbreviatamne manum domini creditis aut impotentem factum, qui omnia potest? Numquid non potest mittere plusquam duodecim legiones angelorum, qui Saracenos et Turcos se blasphemantes exterminent? Aut certe tantum verbo dicere, et fiet, quod voluerit? An qui mare clausit Aegyptiis, qui Sodomitis<sup>16</sup> sulphur pluit et ignem, qui ferocientem Sennacherib<sup>17</sup> angelo dimicante contrivit, qui furentem Holofernem in manum viduae dedit, qui percussit reges magnos et occidit reges fortes, qui ventis imperat et mari, qui fecit caelos in intellectu, Mahumeti superbiam frenare non<sup>18</sup> poterit? Omnino subest ei, cum voluerit, posse. Quid igitur opinamur? Quid credimus? Temptat<sup>19</sup> vos Deus vester, experiri vult, an se diligatis, an virtute praestetis, an religiosi, an grati sitis. Quaerit inter nos<sup>20</sup>, si sit aliquis, qui sapiat, qui intelligat, ac requirat haec, et doleat vicem ejus.*

---

<sup>1</sup> hoc P1

<sup>2</sup> aut P2

<sup>3</sup> fiet P2

<sup>4</sup> ferocem P2; ferocitatem KO

<sup>5</sup> manu P2

<sup>6</sup> qui clausit ... sulphur omit. P2\*

<sup>7</sup> omit. P2

<sup>8</sup> et add. P2

<sup>9</sup> refrenare P2

<sup>10</sup> omit. P2

<sup>11</sup> omne KO

<sup>12</sup> sicut P2

<sup>13</sup> convenit P2; quid KO

<sup>14</sup> an add. P1; nos KO

<sup>15</sup> et intelligat omit. P2

<sup>16</sup> Sogdomitis B; Sobdomitis D

<sup>17</sup> Sennecharib A, C, D;

Sennacharib B

<sup>18</sup> omit. B

<sup>19</sup> tentat C

<sup>20</sup> vos corr. ex nos D

[28] [FV] What do you say to this, Princes? Why do you think it has happened? Do you believe that *the arm of the Almighty Lord has been shortened or lost its power*.<sup>1</sup> *Can he not send more than 12 legions of angels*<sup>2</sup> to destroy the Saracens and the Turks blaspheming against Him? Or *just say a word*, and His will shall be done? He closed the sea to the Egyptians;<sup>3</sup> He rained sulphur and fire on the Sodomites; He crushed savage Sennacherib through a fighting angel;<sup>4</sup> He gave ferocious Holofernes into the hands of a widow;<sup>5</sup> He *smote great kings*<sup>6</sup> and *slew mighty kings*;<sup>7</sup> *He commands the winds and the sea*<sup>8</sup>; He *made the heavens in understanding*.<sup>9</sup> Then, should He not be able to curb the arrogance of Mehmed, *He who is able to do anything he wants to*.<sup>10</sup> So what shall we think? What shall we believe? *The Lord your God trieth you*. He wants to see *whether you love him*,<sup>11</sup> excel in virtue, revere religion, and are grateful. He is looking to see *if there is anyone* among us who is wise and *understanding and seeks to do this, and who is sorrowful on his behalf*.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Otto von Freising: *Gesta Friderici*, I, 44 (Schmidt, 214): *Numquid abbreviata est manus Domini au impotens facta*. From a letter of Bernard of Clairvaux, cf. above. Cf. Isaiah, 50, 2

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Cf. Matthew, 26, 53

<sup>3</sup> Exodus, 14, 22-31

<sup>4</sup> 4 Kings, 19, 35 ff

<sup>5</sup> Judith, 10-13; 16, 7

<sup>6</sup> Psalms, 135, 17

<sup>7</sup> Psalms, 134, 10

<sup>8</sup> Matthew, 8, 26

<sup>9</sup> Psalms, 135, 5: *qui fecit caelos in sapientia* (Vulgata)

<sup>10</sup> Wisdom, 12, 18. Otto von Freising: *Gesta Friderici*, I, 44 (Schmidt, 214). From a letter of Bernard of Clairvaux, cf. above

<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy, 13, 3 - also in Bernhard

<sup>12</sup> Otto von Freising: *Gesta Friderici*, I, 44 (Schmidt, p. 214): *Temptat vos dominus Deus vester. Respicit super filios hominum, ut, si forte sit qui intelligat et requirat et doleat vicem ejus*. From a letter of Bernard of Clairvaux, cf. above

[29] [EV] **Quid ergo moramini? Quid statis? An non est hic maximus bellandi fructus, maxima utilitas vestra? Si proelium adversus inimicos crucis committentes<sup>1</sup> vos accepti<sup>2</sup> beneficii memores ostenditis, Deo<sup>3</sup> nostro<sup>4</sup> placetis, animas vestras lucrificatis, et habitaturi<sup>5</sup> cum angelis, triumphaturi {58v} cum sanctis martyribus<sup>6</sup>, regnaturi cum Christo caelum acquiritis<sup>7</sup>? Omitto hic, principes, id emolumenti<sup>8</sup>, quod plerique omnes milites nostri temporis ex bello quaerunt: aurum et argentum, theuromata<sup>9</sup>, pictas tabulas, equos, vestes, servos<sup>10</sup>, ancillas. Nam quamvis multa hujusmodi<sup>11</sup> haec expeditio repromittit, nolo tamen vos, Christi milites, haec ambire, nolo vos rapinas quaerere, nolo vos spoliis gaudere. Pusilli est animi lucris inhiare terrenis. Mens generosa et alta caelestes aspirat in<sup>12</sup> thesauros.**

[29] [FV] **Quid moramini ergo, principes? An non erit haec maxima vestra utilitas, si bellum gerentes adversus Christi blasphemos vos accepti beneficii memores ostenditis, Deo vestro placetis, animas vestras lucrificatis, et triumphaturi cum sanctis, habitaturi cum angelis, regnaturi cum Christo caelum acquiritis. Omitto hic, principes, id emolumenti<sup>13</sup>, quod plerique omnes milites hoc tempore ex bello quaerunt: aurum, argentum, theuromata, pictas tabulas, vestes, equos, servos, ancillas. Nam quamvis haec expeditio multa hujusmodi repromittit, nolo tamen vos, Christi milites, haec ambire, nolo vos rapinas quaerere, nolo vos spoliis gaudere. Pusilli animi est lucris inhiare terrenis. Mens celsa<sup>14</sup> et generosa caelestes aspirat in thesauros.**

---

<sup>1</sup> committetis KO

<sup>2</sup> *omit.* KO

<sup>3</sup> enim *add.* P1

<sup>4</sup> vestro P2\*

<sup>5</sup> habituri P1\*

<sup>6</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>7</sup> acquiritis P1

<sup>8</sup> emolumentum P2; emolimenti KO

<sup>9</sup> theuromata P1, P2; teuromata KO

<sup>10</sup> vestes servos : servos vestes

P2\*

<sup>11</sup> hujusmodi P2, KO

<sup>12</sup> *omit.* P1

<sup>13</sup> Emolumentum militum *in marg.* D

<sup>14</sup> alta B

[29] [FV] So why do you hesitate, Princes? Will it not be greatly worthwhile to go to war against those who blaspheme against Christ?<sup>1</sup> Thus, you will show that you remember the favour done to you, that you please God, that your souls benefit, and that you gain Heaven, where you will triumph together with the saints, live together with the angels, and reign together with Christ.

Here I pass over, Princes, the gains that most soldiers today seek in war: gold, silver, tapestries, paintings, clothes, horses, slaves, and slave girls. For though this expedition promises much of that, I do not want you, as soldiers of Christ, to desire such things. I do not want you to seek plunder. I do not want you to rejoice in the spoils of war. It is the small mind that covets earthly gains. The great and noble mind seeks treasures in Heaven.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Moudarres, pp. 42-53



[30] [EV] Brevis est vita hominis super terram. Fugiunt anni<sup>1</sup> nostri; litium<sup>2</sup> vitae nostrae<sup>3</sup> sicut<sup>4</sup> araneorum tela cito dirumpitur. Festinat enim decurrere<sup>5</sup> velox flosculus, angustae miseraeque brevissimae<sup>6</sup> vitae portio<sup>7</sup>, dum vina<sup>8</sup>, cibos, somnosque<sup>9</sup> poscimus, obrepit non intellecta senectus. Nemo scit, quid {59r} vesper<sup>10</sup> vehat. Curriculum aevi<sup>11</sup> nostri<sup>12</sup> incertum est. Peregrini in terra sumus. Spes nostra in caelum tendenda<sup>13</sup> est, ubi, evangelio teste, nec fures<sup>14</sup> fodiunt, nec tineae rodunt. Multae sunt viae, quae nos eo deducunt, sed hoc profecto tempore, principes, nullum iter certius, nullum securius, nullum expeditius, nullum gloriosius est, quo possumus<sup>15</sup> caelum scandere, quam si contra Turcos caelestis patriae nostrae et<sup>16</sup> aeternae<sup>17</sup> civitatis, supernae<sup>18</sup> Jerusalem, perfidos<sup>19</sup> inimicos arma sumentes puris et constantibus animis bellum geramus. Cognoscitis, ut arbitror, jam, principes, huius belli, quod suademus, non honestatem modo, verum etiam<sup>20</sup> utilitatem.

[30] [FV] *Brevis est vita hominis super terram. Fugiunt anni nostri. Spatium vitae nostrae sicut araneorum tela cito dirumpitur. Festinat enim decurrere velox flosculus, angustae miseraeque brevissima vitae portio, dum vina, cibos, somnosque poscimus, obrepit non intellecta senectus. Nemo scit, quid vesper vehat. Curriculum aevi nostri incertum est. Peregrini in terra<sup>21</sup> sumus. Spes nostra in caelum tendenda est, ubi neque fures fodiunt, neque tineae rodunt. Multae sunt viae, quae nos eo deducunt, sed hoc profecto tempore, principes, nullum iter certius, nullum securius, nullum expeditius, nullum gloriosius est, quo possimus in caelum tendere, quam si contra Turcos caelestis patriae nostrae, aeternae civitatis, supernae Jerusalem perfidos inimicos arma et scutum sumentes puris et constantibus animis bellum geramus. Cognoscitis, ut arbitror, jam, principes, {103r} huius belli, quod suademus, non honestatem modo, verum etiam utilitatem.*

<sup>1</sup> animi KO

<sup>2</sup> lituri P2\*

<sup>3</sup> finem add. P2

<sup>4</sup> sunt KO

<sup>5</sup> defficare P2

<sup>6</sup> brevissima P2\*

<sup>7</sup> pretio KO

<sup>8</sup> manu P2; una KO

<sup>9</sup> ciphosque P2; somniaque KO

<sup>10</sup> vespere KO

<sup>11</sup> enim P2

<sup>12</sup> nostrum P2

<sup>13</sup> tenenda P2

<sup>14</sup> fores P2

<sup>15</sup> possumus P1, KO

<sup>16</sup> omit. P1\*

<sup>17</sup> et aeternae omit. KO

<sup>18</sup> omit. P2

<sup>19</sup> perfidissimos P2

<sup>20</sup> et P2

<sup>21</sup> terras D

[30] [FV] Short is the life of man on earth.<sup>1</sup> Our years are fleeing away. *Quickly, the fabric of our life will be torn apart, as a web of spiders.*<sup>2</sup> *Swiftly the flower passes away. Short is the allotted period of a lowly and miserable life. While we call for wine, food, and sleep, old age is creeping on us unperceived.*<sup>3</sup> Nobody knows what evening will bring. Uncertain is the course of our life. *We are strangers on earth,*<sup>4</sup> and our hopes should be set on Heaven, *where thieves do not break through and moths do not consume.*<sup>5</sup> Many are the ways leading to Heaven, but today, Princes, the most certain, the safest, the easiest, the most glorious way to go to Heaven is to take up arms and shield against the Turks, the infidel enemies of our celestial fatherland - the eternal city, Jerusalem on high - and to make war with pure and constant hearts.

I believe that now you understand, Princes, that the war I am advocating is not only, just but also useful.

---

<sup>1</sup> General maxim

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Job, 8, 14

<sup>3</sup> Juvenalis, 9.126-129

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hebrews, 11, 13

<sup>5</sup> Matthew, 6, 20

[31] [EV] Nunc de facultate<sup>1</sup> gerendi belli<sup>2</sup> pauca subnectam. Hoc est enim, de quo tertio loco dicturum me promisi. Frustra enim justum bellum<sup>3</sup>, frustra {59v} commodosum<sup>4</sup> probaverimus, nisi etiam<sup>5</sup> factu facile, ne dicam possible, demonstremus. In hac parte illud<sup>6</sup> meo iudicio animadvertendum est, optimi procures, ne major hostibus quam vobis<sup>7</sup> sit scientia<sup>8</sup> rei militaris, ne frequentior usus, ne pecunia copiosior, ne<sup>9</sup> potentia superior, ne Deus ipse faventior; quinimmo<sup>10</sup> neque, si pares utrimque<sup>11</sup> vires fuerint, bellum suaserim. Nam, teste Octaviano Caesare, qui proelium sine certa praerogativa committit, similis ei est<sup>12</sup>, qui hamo piscatur aureo; facile namque plus amittere<sup>13</sup> quam lucrari potest.

[31] [FV] Nunc de facultate gerendi belli pauca subnectam. Hoc est enim, de quo loco ultimo dicturum me promisi. Frustra enim justum bellum, frustra commodosum probaverimus, nisi<sup>14</sup> et factu facile, ne dicam possible, demonstremus<sup>15</sup>. In hac parte illud meo iudicio animadvertendum est, optimi procures, ne major hostibus quam vobis sit scientia rei militaris, ne frequentior usus, ne pecunia copiosior, ne potentia major, ne Deus ipse propitior; neque, si pares utrimque vires fuerint, bellum suaserim. Nam teste Octaviano Caesare, qui proelium sine certa praerogativa committit, similis ei est, qui *hamo piscatur aureo*; facile namque plus amittere quam lucrari potest.

---

<sup>1</sup> facilitate KO

<sup>2</sup> bellum P2

<sup>3</sup> frustra enim ... bellum : sed ne P2

<sup>4</sup> commodum P2

<sup>5</sup> et P2

<sup>6</sup> in hac parte illud : illud in hac parte P2

<sup>7</sup> nobis KO

<sup>8</sup> sit scientia : scientia sit P1\*

<sup>9</sup> copiosior ne : ne copiosior KO

<sup>10</sup> omit. P2

<sup>11</sup> utriusque P2

<sup>12</sup> ei est : est ei P2\*, KO

<sup>13</sup> amittetur P1\*

<sup>14</sup> Da facilitate belli *in marg.* D

<sup>15</sup> monstremus D

#### 4. Feasibility of the war (Facilitas)

[31] [FV] Now I shall say something about the feasibility of the war,<sup>1</sup> for that is what I promised to address last. In vain would I have shown you that the war is just and useful if I cannot also show that it is easy, not to say possible. Excellent Nobles, I believe that here we must consider whether the military skills, experience in war, funds, and strength of our enemies are greater than yours, and whether God favours them more than you. If the two sides had equal resources, I would not counsel war. For, according to Octavian Caesar<sup>2</sup>, anyone who goes to battle without a sure advantage is like a man who *fishes with a golden hook*<sup>3</sup>: it is easy to lose more than you can gain.

---

<sup>1</sup> Flavio Biondo had touched upon the theme of *facilitas* in his oration “*Jucundum hoc loco*” (Naples, April 1452) to King Alfonso V and Emperor Friedrich III: *Adest vero, serenissimi reges, nedum facultas, sed maximi conficiendi facilitas, si*

*modo curas in id vestras cogitationesque omnes, sicut debetis, conferre volueritis.* However, he did not develop the theme concretely (Flavio Biondo: *Scritti*, p. 110-111)

<sup>2</sup> Augustus, Gajus Octavianus (63 BCE - 14 CE): Adoptive son of

Julius Caesar. Founder of the Roman Empire and its first emperor, ruling from 27 BCE until his death

<sup>3</sup> Suetonius: *De vitis Caesarum / Augustus*, 25

[32] [EV] At mihi seu nova consideranti, seu vetera mente repetenti inter omnes nationes, quas bello idoneas judicant<sup>1</sup>, nulla expeditior, nulla fortior, nulla peritior, nulla audatior<sup>2</sup> quam vestra videtur<sup>3</sup>. Vobis homines, vobis equi, {60} vobis arma, vobis pecuniae sunt. Nulla natio tam grandis sub caelo est, quae habeat deos appropinquantés sibi, sicut adest vobis dominus Deus noster. Et<sup>4</sup> ubi, obsecro, tot clarissimi principes? Tot generosi procures? Tot equites fortissimi<sup>5</sup>? Tot potentes civitates? Tot divitiae? Tot auri? Tot argenti? Tot ferri minerae<sup>6</sup>? Ubi tanta populi multitudo? Tanta juventus? Tantum<sup>7</sup> animi? Tantum roboris? [cont.]

[32] [FV] At mihi seu nova consideranti seu vetera mente repetenti inter omnes nationes, quas bello idoneas judicant, nulla mihi expeditior, nulla fortior, nulla peritior, nulla audentior quam vestra videtur. Vobis homines, vobis equi, vobis arma, vobis pecuniae sunt. Nulla *natio tam grandis* sub caelo est, *quae habeat deos appropinquantés sibi, sicut adest vobis dominus Deus vester*. Ubi, obsecro, tot clarissimi principes? Tot generosi procures? Tot fortissimi equites? Tot potentes civitates? Tot divitiae? Tot auri, argenti, cupri, ferri minerae? Ubi tanta populi multitudo? Tanta juventus? Tantum animi? Tantum roboris? [cont.]

---

<sup>1</sup> indicant P1

<sup>2</sup> audentior KO

<sup>3</sup> omit. P2

<sup>4</sup> omit. P2

<sup>5</sup> equites fortissimi : fortissimi  
equites P2, KO

<sup>6</sup> mine P2

<sup>7</sup> tanti P2\*

[32] [FV] But whether I consider the new state of things or ponder the old, it seems to me that among all the nations considered to be warlike, none is more ready, none more powerful, none more skilled, and none more daring than yours. You have men, horses, weapons, and money. There *is no grander nation* under the sky *that hath gods so nigh them, as your Lord God* is with you.<sup>1</sup> Where - I ask - are there so many famous princes? Where so many eminent noblemen? Where so many strong knights? Where so many powerful cities? Where so much wealth? Where so much gold, silver, copper, and iron? Where so large a population? Where so many youths? Where so much courage? Where such great strength? *[cont.]*

---

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy, 4, 7

[32] [EV] [cont.] Germaniae fines, ut veteres tradunt, ab oriente<sup>1</sup> Viscela<sup>2</sup> fluvius<sup>3</sup> et Hungariae limes fuere, ab occidente<sup>4</sup> Rhenus, a meridie Danubius, a septentrione Oceanus<sup>5</sup> et mare Balteum, quod Prutenicum vocare possumus. Nunc quantum extra hos terminos possideatis, ipsi videtis. Vos Angliam pulsas Britannias occupavistis<sup>6</sup>, vos Belgarum Helvetiorumque {60v} fines<sup>7</sup> ejectis Gallis obtinuistis. Vos Retiam et Noricum invasistis. Vos usque in<sup>8</sup> Italiam pedem<sup>9</sup> extendistis. Vos Hulmerigos, qui nunc Pruteni vocantur, ex manibus infidelium detraxistis. Soli<sup>10</sup> ex<sup>11</sup> alienis in vestro solo Bohemi sedent, potentissimi et nobilissimi populi. Sed et<sup>12</sup> illi vestro imperio parere<sup>13</sup> se ajunt, regemque habent<sup>14</sup> vestri sanguinis, nobilissimum Ladislaum<sup>15</sup>.

[32] [FV] [cont.] Germaniae fines<sup>16</sup>, ut veteres tradunt, ab orienti Viscela fluvius et Hungariae limes fuere, ab occidenti Rhenus, a meridie Danubius, a septentrione Oceanus et mare Balteum. Nunc quantum extra hos terminos possideatis, ipsi videtis. Vos Angliam pulsas Britannias occupavistis, vos Belgarum Helvetiorumque fines ejectis Gallis obtinuistis. Vos Retiam ac<sup>17</sup> Noricum invasistis et usque in Italiam manus extendistis. Vos Hulmerigos, qui nunc Pruteni vocantur, ex manibus infidelium detraxistis. Soli Bohemi ex alienis in vestro solo sedent, sed illi patriam incultam acceperere, ut eorum historiae probant, non Germanos expulere.

---

<sup>1</sup> orienti P2

<sup>2</sup> in stella P2

<sup>3</sup> flumen P2

<sup>4</sup> occidenti P2\*

<sup>5</sup> Oceanum P2\*

<sup>6</sup> occupastis P1, KO

<sup>7</sup> omit. P2

<sup>8</sup> ad P1

<sup>9</sup> pedes P1\*

<sup>10</sup> solis P2

<sup>11</sup> in P2

<sup>12</sup> omit. P2

<sup>13</sup> pares P2

<sup>14</sup> omit. P1

<sup>15</sup> nobilissimum Ladislaum omit.

P2

<sup>16</sup> Germanie termini *in marg.* A;  
Germaniae fines D

<sup>17</sup> et C

[32] [FV] [cont.] The ancients tell us that these were the borders of Germany: to the east the river Veisel and the land of Hungary, to the west the Rhine, to the south the Danube, and to the north the Ocean and the Baltic Sea. You can see for yourselves how much territory beyond these limits you now possess. You have expelled the Britons and occupied England. You have expelled the Gauls and gained the lands of the Belgae and the Helvetii. You have invaded Rhetia and Noricum and pushed towards Italy. You have wrested the Ulmerigi - now called the Prussians - from the hands of the infidels. Of foreign peoples, only the Bohemians now dwell in your country, but according to their own history books, they took over lands that were uninhabited; they did not expel any Germans.



[33] [EV] Vos igitur magni, vos bellicosi, vos potentissimi, vos fortunatissimi<sup>1</sup> ac<sup>2</sup> Deo accepti Germani estis, quibus adeo fines extendisse licuit, et super<sup>3</sup> omnes mortales Romanae<sup>4</sup> potentiae datum fuit obsistere. Nam terrarum ille calcator omnium et orbis domitor<sup>5</sup>, Julius Caesar, quamvis subactis Gallis saepe<sup>6</sup> Rhenum transiverit resque maximas in Germania gesserit, bellicosam tamen et asperam Suevorum {61r} gentem dimisit indomitam. Augustus Octavianus, cui et Parthorum et Indorum reges munera miserunt, qui unus omnium Romanorum fortunatissimus creditus est, de quo illa sunt metra: Augustus Caesar, divum genus, aurea condet<sup>7</sup> / Saecula, qui rursus<sup>8</sup> Latio regnata<sup>9</sup> per arva / Saturno quondam, superat<sup>10</sup> Garamantas et Indos. / Proferet imperium, jacet extra sidera tellus / Extra anni solisque vias, ubi caelifer Atlas / Axem humero premit<sup>11</sup> stellis ardentibus aptum,

Ille, inquam<sup>12</sup>, felicissimus imperator<sup>13</sup>, nullibi umquam nisi apud Germanos succubuit; nam Lollianam et Varianam cladem in Germania perpessus est, Lollianam majoris infamiae quam detrimenti, Varianam paene exitialem, tribus legionibus cum duce, legatis et auxiliis omnibus caesis.

[33] [FV] Magna est vestra potentia, vestra virtus, vestra experientia, vestra gloria, Germani, quibus adeo fines extendisse licuit, ut supra omnes mortales Romanae potentiae obsistere datum fuerit. Nam terrarum ille calcator omnium et orbis domitor, Julius Caesar, quamvis subactis Gallis saepe Rhenum transiverit, bellicosam tamen et asperam Suevorum gentem dimisit indomitam. Augustus Octavianus, cui et Parthi et Indi munera miserunt, qui unus omnium Romanorum fortunatissimus<sup>14</sup> creditus est, de quo illa sunt metra: *Augustus Caesar, divum genus, aurea condet / Saecula, qui rursus Latio regnata per arva / Saturno quondam, superet Garamantas et Indos. / Proferet imperium, jacet<sup>15</sup> extra {104r} sidera tellus / Extra anni solisque vias, ubi caelifer Atlas / Axem humero premit stellis ardentibus aptum,*

ille inquam, felicissimus imperator, nullibi umquam nisi apud Germanos succubuit; nam *Lollianam et Varianam* cladem in Germania<sup>16</sup> perpessus est, Lollianam majoris infamiae *quam detrimenti*, *Varianam paene exitialem<sup>17</sup>*, *tribus legionibus cum duce, legatis, et auxiliis omnibus caesis.*

---

<sup>1</sup> fortunati P2

<sup>2</sup> vos P1

<sup>3</sup> supra P2\*

<sup>4</sup> ratione P2

<sup>5</sup> dominator P2

<sup>6</sup> se P2

<sup>7</sup> condit P2\*

<sup>8</sup> reversus KO

<sup>9</sup> renata P2

<sup>10</sup> super et P2

<sup>11</sup> torquet P1

<sup>12</sup> quisquam P2

<sup>13</sup> felicissimus imperator :

imperator felicissimus P2\*

<sup>14</sup> fortissimus C

<sup>15</sup> latet B, D

<sup>16</sup> Clades in Germania *in marg.* D

<sup>17</sup> exitiabilem A, D

[33] Great is your power, Germans, great are your courage, your experience, and your glory. Because of them, you were able to extend your frontiers so much that you could resist Roman power better than any other people. Even Julius Caesar,<sup>1</sup> who defeated all other countries and conquered the whole world, subdued the Gauls, and often crossed the Rhine, had to leave the warlike and fierce tribe of the Swabians undefeated.<sup>2</sup>

Augustus Octavian, who received gifts from the Parthians and the Indians, was considered to be the most fortunate of all Romans, as said in these verses:

*Augustus Caesar, son of a god<sup>3</sup>, who will again establish a  
Golden age in Latium amid fields once ruled by  
Saturn; he will advance his empire beyond the  
Garamants and Indians to a land which lies beyond our  
Stars, beyond the path of year and sun, where sky-bearing  
Atlas wheels on his shoulders the blazing star-studded sphere.<sup>4</sup>*

But even he, the most fortunate of emperors, was defeated nowhere else but in Germany. For he suffered the *defeats of Lollius<sup>5</sup> and Varus<sup>6</sup> in Germany*. Of these, that of Lollius was more humiliating *than serious, but that of Varus was almost fatal, since three legions were cut to pieces with their general, his lieutenants, and all the auxiliaries.*<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Julius Caesar, Gaius (100-44 BCE): Roman general and statesman

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Julius Caesar: *De Bello Gallico*, 4.1.3; 6.10

<sup>3</sup> Julius Caesar adopted Augustus. He was deified after his death

<sup>4</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 6.792-797. With some variants in the Latin text

<sup>5</sup> Marcus Lollius (ca. 55 BC - 2 CE): Roman politician, military officer and supporter of the first Roman emperor Augustus

<sup>6</sup> Publius Quinctilius Varus (46 BC-9 CE): Roman general and politician under the first Roman emperor Augustus. Lost the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest and took his own life

<sup>7</sup> Suetonius: *De vitis Caesarum / Augustus*, 23: *Graves ignominias cladesque duas omnino nec alibi quam in Germania accepit Lollianam et Varianam, sed Lollianam maioris infamiae quam detrimenti, Varianam paene exitiabilem tribus legionibus cum duce legatisque et auxiliis omnibus caesis*

[34] [EV] Longum esset referre, {61v} quas intulerunt Romanae reipublicae molestias Germani, qui etsi Romanorum fortunae aliquando cesserunt, postea tamen et ipsi de Romanis, de Gallis, de Hispanis, de Hungaris, deque aliis diversis gentibus saepenumero<sup>1</sup> triumpharunt<sup>2</sup>. Nec Romani, cum rerum potirentur, res magnas sine Germanis auxiliantibus peregerunt<sup>3</sup>, quorum tanta in bello virtus, tanta in domo fides fuit, ut Caesarei<sup>4</sup> corporis custos cohors ex Germanis potissime legeretur.

[34] [FV] Longum esset referre, quas intulerint<sup>5</sup> Romanae reipublicae molestias Germani, qui etsi Romanorum fortunae aliquando cesserunt, postea tamen sub Carolo, sub Ludovico, sub Ottonibus, sub Henricis, sub Fridericis de Romanis ipsi, de Gallis, de Hispanis, de Hungaris saepenumero triumpharunt. Nec Romani, cum rerum potirentur, res magnas sine Germanis auxiliaribus egerunt, quorum tanta in bello virtus, tanta in domo fides fuit, ut Caesarei corporis custos legio ex Germanis potissime legeretur.

---

<sup>1</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>2</sup> triumpharunt P2\*

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* P1; egerunt P2\*

<sup>4</sup> Cesari P1

<sup>5</sup> intulerunt D

[34] [FV] It would, indeed, take too long to relate the troubles inflicted on the Roman state by the Germans. For a period, they had to give way to Roman fortune, but later, under emperors like Charles, Ludwig, Otto, Heinrich, and Friedrich, they often triumphed over the Romans, the Gauls, the Spaniards, and the Hungarians. And even when the Romans were the lords, they performed their great feats with the help of German auxiliary troops. So great was the Germans' courage in war and their loyalty at home that the legion guarding the emperor's body was mostly chosen from among the Germans.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Suetonius: *De vitis Caesarum*  
/ *Augustus*, 79

[35] [EV] Conferamus nunc Turcos ac vos invicem, et quid sperandum sit, si cum illis<sup>1</sup> pugnetis, examinemus. Vos nati ad arma, illi tracti. Vos armati, illi inermes. Vos gladios versatis, illi cultris utuntur. Vos balistas tenditis, illi arcus trahunt. Vos loricae thoracesque protegunt, illos culcitra<sup>2</sup> tegit. Vos equos regitis, illi ab equis reguntur. Vos nobiles in bellum {62r} ducitis, illi servos aut artifices cogunt. Vestri milites nati atque nutriti in armis sunt<sup>3</sup>, illi copias suas, exceptis quindecim milibus pugnatorum, quos expeditos habent, ex agris<sup>4</sup> atque<sup>5</sup> officinis eruunt<sup>6</sup>. Vobis flectere ludus<sup>7</sup> equos et tendere spicula<sup>8</sup> cornu, vos omne aevum ferro<sup>9</sup> teritis, vestra juvenus aut<sup>10</sup> torneamentis<sup>11</sup> intenta est aut quatit oppida bello, nec tarda senectus vestras vires debilitat mutatque<sup>12</sup> vigorem. Canitiem galea premitis, semperque recentes bellorum habere causas cupitis<sup>13</sup> et vivere in armis<sup>14</sup>. Illis picta<sup>15</sup> croco et fulgenti murice<sup>16</sup> vestis desidiaeque cordi sunt; summa voluptas<sup>17</sup> est indulgere choreis.

[35] [FV] Conferamus nunc Turcos ac vos invicem, et quid sperandum sit, si manus conferatis, examinemus. Vos nati ad arma, illi tracti. Vos armati, illi inermes. Vos gladios versatis, illi cultris utuntur. Vos balistas tenditis, illi arcus trahunt. Vos loricae thoracesque protegunt, illos culcitrae tegunt. Vos equos regitis, illi ab equis reguntur. Vos nobiles in bellum ducitis, illi servos aut artifices cogunt. Vestri milites nati atque nutriti in armis, illi copias suas, exceptis quindecim milibus, quos expeditos habent, ex agris atque officinis eruunt. Vobis *flectere ludus equos et spicula tendere cornu*, vestra juvenus aut torneamentis intenta est aut *quatit oppida bello*. Vos *omne aevum ferro teritis*, nec *tarda senectus vestras vires debilitat mutatque vigorem*. *Canitiem galea premitis*, semperque recentes bellorum habere causas *juvat et vivere in armis*. *Illis picta croco et fulgenti murice vestis desidiaeque cordi sunt; summa voluptas est indulgere choreis*.

---

<sup>1</sup> illo P1

<sup>2</sup> calcitra KO

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>4</sup> aquis P2

<sup>5</sup> et P2

<sup>6</sup> erunt KO

<sup>7</sup> ludos KO

<sup>8</sup> tendere spicula : spicula  
tendere P2

<sup>9</sup> ferore KU

<sup>10</sup> *omit.* KU

<sup>11</sup> tormentis P1

<sup>12</sup> nec mutat P2

<sup>13</sup> juvat P2

<sup>14</sup> et vivere in armis *omit.* P2

<sup>15</sup> pictis KO

<sup>16</sup> miricae KO

<sup>17</sup> voluntas KO

[35] [FV] Let us now compare you with the Turks to see what we may hope for in a battle between you. You are born to weapons; they are forced to them. You are armed; they are unarmed. You use swords; they use knives. You draw crossbows; they use simple bows. You are protected by coats of mail and cuirasses; they are covered by padded doublets. You master your horses; they are mastered by theirs. You are led to war by generals; they force servants and artisans to go to war. Your soldiers are born and raised in arms; they draw their troops from the fields and the workshops – except for a standing army of 15,000 soldiers whom they always have at the ready.<sup>1</sup> Your *sport is to rein the steed and shoot arrows from the bow*. Your young men wish for tournaments or *shake cities in battle*. *All your life is worn down with iron's use, and sluggish age does not weaken your hearts' strength or change your vigour*. *On to white hair you press the helmet*, and you are content when you have fresh causes for war and live under arms. *But they wear embroidered saffron and gleaming purple; sloth is their joy*, and their greatest pleasure is *the dance*.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Janitshars

<sup>2</sup> The last passages of this section, from *Vobis flectere ludos* to

*indulgere choreis* are based on Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 9.606-616

[36] [EV] Solus Mahumetus et quos dixi quindecim milia expediti sunt<sup>1</sup>, quos sonus delectat armorum<sup>2</sup>, et animus in bella paratus exhibet audaces. Ceteros inexpertos, timidos, {62v} effeminatos<sup>3</sup> nullius pretii judicetis. Quod si manus cum illis conferatis, nihil est, quod de victoria dubitetis, si modo, quam gesturi estis pro Deo pugnam, adversus Deum non convertatis<sup>4</sup>, mala mente procedentes. Cum ergo majores vestri<sup>5</sup>, principes, omnes vicinos ac longe positos populos armorum gloria superaverint, cum timentes ipsi nullos omnibus terrori fuerint, cum vos ipsi nihilo minores vestris progenitoribus sitis, cum omnibus his rebus abundetis, quas bello necessarias putant, cum vobis fortissimi milites, peritissimi duces ac satis fortunati sint, cum Deum in sua causa<sup>6</sup> propitium sperare par sit, cum vestri hostes longe inferiores vobis existant, non est, cur tam honestum tamque utile bellum pro Deo vestro gerendum detractare<sup>7</sup> quoquo modo debeatis.

[36] [FV] Solus Mahumetus et quos dixi XV milia expediti sunt, quos sonus delectat armorum, et animus in bella paratus exhibet audaces. Ceteros inexpertos, timidos, effeminatos nullius pretii judicetis. Quod si manus cum illis conferatis, nihil est, quod de victoria dubitetis, si modo quam gesturi estis pro Deo pugnam, adversus Deum non convertatis. Cum ergo majores vestri, principes, omnes vicinos ac longe positos populos armorum gloria superaverint, cum timentes ipsi nullos omnibus terrori fuerint, cum vos ipsi nihilo minores vestris progenitoribus sitis, cum omnibus his rebus abundetis, quas bello necessarias putant, cum vobis fortissimi milites, duces peritissimi ac satis fortunati sint, cum Deum in sua causa propitium sperare par sit, cum vestri hostes longe inferiores vobis existant, non est, cur tam honestum {104v} tamque utile bellum detractare quoquo modo debeatis.

---

<sup>1</sup> omit. P1

<sup>2</sup> omit. P2

<sup>3</sup> effrenatos KO

<sup>4</sup> committatis P1

<sup>5</sup> nostri P1

<sup>6</sup> causa sua KO

<sup>7</sup> detractare P1

[36] [FV] Only Mehmed and those fifteen thousand I mentioned before delight in the din of weapons,<sup>1</sup> and their warlike spirit makes them fearless in battle. The others, as you will see, are inexperienced, timid, effeminate,<sup>2</sup> and worthless. When you fight these people, you will undoubtedly win, if only you do not turn your fight for God into a fight against God. Your forefathers, Princes, conquered all peoples, both those living close by and those living far away, in glorious war, and fearing nobody, they were feared by everybody. You yourselves are in no way inferior to your forefathers; you have an abundance of all things considered necessary for war; you have strong soldiers and experienced leaders, fortunate in war. Moreover, it is reasonable to hope that God will favour his own cause. Since your enemies are so greatly inferior to you, there is absolutely no reason for you to shy away from a war that is so just and so advantageous.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vergilius: *Georgica*, 3, 83

<sup>2</sup> Piccolomini: Letter to Pope Nicolaus V of 12 July (EPI, 6: 340): *proh*

*pudor, ab effeminatis Turcis incli-  
tam urbem Constantinopolim capi  
permittimus*

<sup>3</sup> "utile"



[37] [EV] Dicat hic fortasse quispiam rem non esse cum Turcis tantum, {63r} sed cum Tartaris simul ac<sup>1</sup> Saracenis cumque omnibus gentibus, quas illi<sup>2</sup> subjectas habent. Huic<sup>3</sup> ego contra insto<sup>4</sup>: nec<sup>5</sup> vos soli, Theutones, inquam, pugnabitis. Ex Italia, ex Gallia<sup>6</sup>, ex Hispania multi concurrent<sup>7</sup>, nec Hungari deerunt, nec Bohemi<sup>8</sup>, fortissimae gentes. Rasciani, Bulgari<sup>9</sup>, omnes Illyrienses, omnes Graeci sumpta occasione consurgent. Vicini quoque in Asia dabunt manus. Nolite existimare, principes, ita omnem Asiam Mahumeto parere<sup>10</sup>, ut non multi sint<sup>11</sup> Christo servientes: multi in Cilicia<sup>12</sup>, Bithynia, Cappadocia, Ponto, Syria Christiani sunt<sup>13</sup>, quamvis iugo servitutis oppressi. Hiberi<sup>14</sup>, qui et Georgiani vocantur, Trapezuntii, Armeni Christum colunt, nec cunctabuntur arma sumere, si vos viderint audentes.

[37] [OV] Dicat hic fortasse quispiam rem non esse cum Turcis tantum, sed cum Tartaris simul ac Saracenis, cum omnibus gentibus, quas illi subjectas habent. Huic ego contra insto: nec vos soli, Theutones, inquam, pugnabitis. Ex Italia, ex Gallia, ex Hispania multi concurrent, nec Hungari deerunt, nec Bohemi. Rasciani, Bulgari, omnes Illyrienses, omnes Graeci sumpta occasione consurgent. Vicini quoque in Asia dabunt manus. Nolite existimare, principes, ita omnem Asiam Mahumeto parere, ut non multi<sup>15</sup> sint Christo servientes, multi in Cilicia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, Ponto, Syria Christiani sunt, quamvis iugo servitutis oppressi. Georgiani, Trapezuntii, Armeni Christum colunt, nec tardabunt arma sumere, si vos viderint audentes.

---

<sup>1</sup> atque P2\*, et KO

<sup>2</sup> ibi P2

<sup>3</sup> hinc KO

<sup>4</sup> insisto P2

<sup>5</sup> ego *add.* KO

<sup>6</sup> ex Gallia *omit.* P2

<sup>7</sup> corruent P2

<sup>8</sup> vestrae P2

<sup>9</sup> vulgari P2

<sup>10</sup> patere P1

<sup>11</sup> multi sint : sint multi P1

<sup>12</sup> Sicilia P1; Scithia P2

<sup>13</sup> similiter P1

<sup>14</sup> haberi P1; Hyuni P2

<sup>15</sup> multa D

[37] [FV] Here somebody may object that “we shall not only have to do with the Turks but also with the Tartars, the Saracens, and all the peoples they have subjugated.” My reply is that neither will you Germans be fighting alone. Many men from Italy, France, and Spain will join you, and the Hungarians and the Bohemians will not be missing. The Serbians, the Bulgarians, all the Illyrians,<sup>1</sup> and all the Greeks will seize the moment and rise against the Turks. And even the neighbours [of the Turks<sup>2</sup>] in Asia Minor will come to our help.<sup>3</sup> Do not think, Princes, that the whole of Asia Minor obeys Mehmed; many people there serve Christ, and in Cilicia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Syria there are many Christians, though they live under the yoke of slavery. The Georgians, the Trapezuntians, and the Armenians worship Christ, and they will not hesitate to take up arms if they see your bold courage.

---

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the other peoples in the Balkans

<sup>2</sup> i.e., the Turkish principedom of Caraman, potential allies of the West against the dominant Osman Turks, cf. (Flavio Biondo: *Scritti*, p. 45)

<sup>3</sup> Flavio Biondo had touched upon this theme in his crusade memorandum of 1 August 1453 to King Alfonso V: ... *quanta erit apud oppressos prostratos et conculcatos a Turchis in Europa populos christianos laetitia! Quanta ani-*

*morum erectio! Ruent, non venient, miserrimi illi in nostrorum amplexus, et vexilla cruce salutifera insignita gaudentes exultantesque sequentur.* (Flavio Biondo: *Scritti*, p. 43)

[38] [EV] Veneti quoque et Januenses, potentes populi, quamvis pacem cum Turcis habent<sup>1</sup>, {63v} partes tamen vestras<sup>2</sup> classibus adjuvabunt. Coacti namque, ne civitates orientis amitterent<sup>3</sup>, pacem fecere<sup>4</sup>. At quod<sup>5</sup> homines inviti ac<sup>6</sup> necessario faciunt, neque diu, neque diligenter facere possunt. Veneti certe<sup>7</sup> fidem imperatori dedere facturos se, quod deceat Christianos, si bellum communi fidelium consilio contra Turcos decernatur. Ego, etsi certe scio, proceres, vobis arma sumentibus ex tota Christianitate affutura praesidia, nihilominus et illis domi manentibus, huic bello solam Germaniam sufficere non dubitaverim. Scio enim Gothfridum, qui fuit Lotharingiae dux, cum solis transrhenanis Theutonibus et aliquibus Gallicis, paucis<sup>8</sup> Italis<sup>9</sup> Hungariam percurrisse<sup>10</sup>, Graeciam penetrasse, Hellespontum transisse, Asiam permeasse, Jerusalem {64r} ex potestate infidelium vindicasse<sup>11</sup>, victis ac prostratis omnibus, quae occurrerent in medio, gentibus, quamvis et Turci et Saraceni numerosi resistere conarentur. In ejus exercitu ducenta milia pugnatorum fuisse traduntur, atque multo majores copias sola Germania cogere potest.

[38] [FV] Veneti quoque et Genuenses, potentes populi, quamvis pacem cum Turcis habent, partes vestras classibus adjuvabunt. Coacti namque, ne civitates orientis amitterent, pacem fecere. At quod homines inviti ac necessario faciunt, neque<sup>12</sup> diu, neque diligenter facere possunt. Veneti certe fidem imperatori dedere<sup>13</sup> facturos se, quod deceat Christianos, si bellum communi fidelium consilio contra Turcos decernatur. Ego, etsi certe scio, proceres, vobis arma sumentibus ex tota Christianitate affutura praesidia, nihilominus et illis domi manentibus, huic bello solam Germaniam sufficere non dubitaverim. Scio enim Gothfridum<sup>14</sup>, qui fuit Lothoringiae dux, cum solis Transrhenanis Theutonibus et aliquibus Gallicis, paucis Italis<sup>15</sup> Hungariam percurrisse, Graeciam penetrasse, Hellespontum transisse, Asiam permeasse, Jerosolymam pervenisse, victis ac prostratis omnibus, quae occurrerunt in medio, gentibus, quamvis et Turci et Saraceni numerosi resistere conarentur. In ejus exercitu ducenta millia pugnatorum fuisse traduntur, atqui multo majores copias sola Germania cogere potest.

<sup>1</sup> habeant P1

<sup>2</sup> partes tamen vestras : pares  
classes vestris P2

<sup>3</sup> perderent P2; admitterent KO

<sup>4</sup> facere KO

<sup>5</sup> atque P1\*

<sup>6</sup> et P2

<sup>7</sup> Veneti certe : certe Veneti P2

<sup>8</sup> pariter P2

<sup>9</sup> Italicis P1; Italiam P2

<sup>10</sup> percussisse KO

<sup>11</sup> vindicasse P1\*

<sup>12</sup> nec C

<sup>13</sup> dederunt B

<sup>14</sup> Gothfridus *in marg.* A

<sup>15</sup> Italicis C

[38] [FV] Also the Venetians and the Genoese,<sup>1</sup> those mighty peoples, will help you with fleets, though they are presently at peace with the Turks.<sup>2</sup> But they were forced to make peace, lest they lose their Eastern cities, and what people do unwillingly and out of necessity, they cannot do for long and diligently. The Venetians have made a sure promise to the emperor that they will act as Christians should if the believers decide on a common war against the Turks. I am quite certain, Nobles, that if you take up arms, then all Christianity will support you. But should they stay at home, I do not doubt that Germany is strong enough to undertake this war on its own. For I know that Duke Godefroy of Lorraine<sup>3</sup> together with a force consisting only of the Germans from across the Rhine and some French and a few Italians passed through Hungary, entered Greece, crossed the Hellespont, went through Asia Minor, and reached Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> On the way, they defeated and crushed all the peoples who came against them, though many Turks and Saracens tried to oppose them. His army is reported to have had 200,000 soldiers – and Germany can muster much greater forces than that.

---

<sup>1</sup> The two great seapowers of the Mediterranean, having extensive possessions in that area and therefore being highly dependent on Turkish goodwill

<sup>2</sup> Peace treaty of 21 April 1454

<sup>3</sup> Godefroy de Bouillon (ca. 1060-1100): one of the leaders of the first crusade and first Latin king of Jerusalem

<sup>4</sup> Note that in the Final Version, as edited in 1462 for the Collected Orations of Pius II, the text says that they reached Jerusalem (*per-venerint*), not – as in the Early Version – that they reclaimed Jerusalem (*vendicasse*). This change may be due to the fact that by 1462 any ambition of recovering Jerusalem was deemed complete-

ly illusory and had disappeared from Pius' crusade rhetoric. This development actually happened between the beginning of the Congress of Mantua in September 1459 (see oration "*Cum bellum hodie*" [45], sect. 7) and the end of the congress in January 1460 (see oration "*Septimo jam exacto mense*" [54], sect. 2)

[39] [EV] Sed dicitis, ut existimo: "Quomodo foris bellum geremus, qui domi contendimus? Nec portio est<sup>1</sup> Germaniae ulla quieta! Sit pax intus, non recusabimus extra bellare." Prius Turci Rhenum attingant, quam lites omnes vestrae provinciae<sup>2 3 4</sup> extirpentur. Idcirco sapientes illi, qui Ratisponae fuerunt, indicendas<sup>5</sup> tota Germania quinquennales indutias putaverunt; id nunc explendum est. Omnes<sup>6</sup>, qui contendunt<sup>7</sup> imperii principes ac vasalli aut subditi sunt. Nisi Caesaris mandata custodiant<sup>8</sup>, fidem frangunt, honorem maculant, rempublicam {64r} laedunt, sibi ipsis nocent: quod ego de tanta nobilitate minime putaverim. Nam quis erit adeo durus, adeo obstinatus, adeo<sup>9</sup> bonis<sup>10</sup> aversus moribus, ut treugas pro communi Christianorum salute indictas<sup>11</sup> praesumat infringere? Est hic legatus apostolicus, qui censuras ecclesiasticas interponet. Legati Caesaris imperiale bannum et alias poenas adjicient<sup>12</sup>.

[39] [FV] Sed dicitis, ut existimo: "Quomodo foris bellum geremus, qui domi contendimus? Nec portio est Germaniae ulla quieta! Sit pax intus, non recusabimus extra bellare." Prius Turci Rhenum attingant, quam lites omnes vestrae, principes, extirpentur. Idcirco sapientes illi, qui Ratisponae fuerunt, indicendas tota Germania quinquennales indutias putaverunt. Id nunc explendum est. Omnes, qui contendunt, aut imperii principes aut vassalli aut subditi sunt. Nisi Caesaris mandata custodiunt, fidem frangunt, honorem maculant, rempublicam laedunt, sibi ipsis nocent: quod ego de tanta nobilitate minime putaverim. Nam quis erit adeo durus, adeo obstinatus, adeo bonis aversus<sup>13</sup> moribus, ut treugas pro communi Christianorum salute indictas praesumat infringere? Est hic legatus apostolicus, qui censuras ecclesiasticas interponet. {105r} Legati Caesaris imperiale bannum et alias poenas adjicient.

---

<sup>1</sup> portio est : est portio P1\*

<sup>2</sup> omnes vestrae provinciae :  
nostrae P1

<sup>3</sup> vestrae provinciae : nostre  
patrie P2

<sup>4</sup> vestrae provinciae *omit.* KO

<sup>5</sup> in *add.* KO

<sup>6</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>7</sup> aut *add.* P2

<sup>8</sup> custodiunt P1, P2\*

<sup>9</sup> ac P2\*

<sup>10</sup> adeo bonis : bonis adeo KO

<sup>11</sup> indutas P2\*

<sup>12</sup> adiment KO

<sup>13</sup> adversus B

[39] [EV] Here you will say, I presume, “How can we make war abroad, when we are fighting at home and no part of Germany is quiet? Let there be peace at home, then we can fight abroad.” Princes, the Turks will reach the Rhine before all your conflicts have been solved. Therefore, the wise men who were in Regensburg considered it necessary to declare a five-year armistice in all of Germany; this should now be put into effect. All those who are warring are either princes, vassals, or subjects of the empire. If they do not obey the commands of the emperor, they break faith, sully their honour, damage the state, and harm themselves. I will absolutely not believe that of such great nobles. For who will be so hard, so obstinate, and so averse to proper conduct that he will presume to break a truce instituted for the common salvation of the Christians? The apostolic legate<sup>1</sup> is present; he will intervene with ecclesiastical censures. And the imperial legates will add the ban of the empire and other punishments.

---

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Castiglione (1420-1460): Bishop of Pavia, later a cardinal

[40] [EV] Proh<sup>1</sup>, Germani nobiles, gens bellicosa, gens alti cordis! An modo in tanta et vestra<sup>2</sup> et omnium Christianorum necessitate deficietis? Eritisne adeo incauti, adeo caeci, ut ranae murisque fabulam in vobis<sup>3</sup> impleri sinatis, qui dum invicem se<sup>4</sup> morderent<sup>5</sup>, praeda milvi fuere? Nonne cernitis, dum simul contenditis, venientem Turcum et omnia rapientem, quae vos litigare compellunt? Expellite<sup>6</sup> prius {65r} communem<sup>7</sup> hostem; tum, si pacem tenere nequitis, de terra, de dominio, de ceteris bonis pugnate, quae non Turcis, sed vestris filiis relinquere valeatis.

[40] [FV] Proh, Germani nobiles, gens bellicosa, gens alti cordis, an modo in tanta et<sup>8</sup> vestra et omnium Christianorum necessitate deficietis? Eritisne adeo incauti, adeo caeci, ut ranae murisque fabulam in vobis impleri sinatis, qui dum se invicem mordent, praeda milvi fuere? Nonne cernitis, dum simul contenditis, venientem Turcum et omnia rapientem, quae vos litigare compellunt? Expellite prius communem hostem; tum, si pacem tenere nequitis, de terra, de dominio, de ceteris bonis pugnate, quae non Turcis, sed vestris filiis relinquere valeatis.

---

<sup>1</sup> propterea P2

<sup>2</sup> nostra P1

<sup>3</sup> nobis P1

<sup>4</sup> invicem se : se invicem P2

<sup>5</sup> mordent P2

<sup>6</sup> compellite P2

<sup>7</sup> domesticum P2

<sup>8</sup> *omit.* D

[40] [FV] Will you, Nobles of Germany, a warlike people, a courageous people, fail in this great crisis, which is not only your own but also that of all Christians? Will you be so incautious and so blind that you will do as the frog and the mouse in the fable, who, while fighting each other, became the prey of the kite?<sup>1</sup> Don't you see that while you are fighting each other, the Turk is coming to rob you of all that you are fighting about? First expel the common enemy; then, if you cannot keep peace, fight about land, lordship, and what other property you may be strong enough to leave to your sons - and not to the Turks.

---

<sup>1</sup> This fable was well-known in Antiquity, but it did not belong to the

Aesop collection. Piccolomini used it in a letter to Pietro da Noce-

to af September 18, 1453 (EPI, 6: 367)



[41] [EV] Equidem, si has indutias amplectimini, principes, non est mihi dubium, quin validissimum et copiosum exercitum comparare possitis, quo educto pacem in Alania necessario relinquetis: latrones enim<sup>1</sup> et raptores omnes<sup>2</sup> exhibunt, agricolae<sup>3</sup> et artifices domi<sup>4</sup> manebunt, pacatum<sup>5</sup> genus hominum, quemadmodum tempore Conradi Caesaris evenisse constat, cum ille copias adversus Saracenos et<sup>6</sup> Turcos eduxit. Et fortasse haec una est pacandae Germaniae via: nescio, an vos alias habeatis.

[41] [FV] Equidem, si has indutias amplectimini, principes, non est mihi dubium, quin validissimum et copiosum exercitum comparare possitis, quo educto pacem in Alania necessario relinquetis: latrones enim et raptores omnes exhibunt, agricolae et artifices domi manebunt, pacatum genus hominum, quemadmodum tempore Conradi Caesaris evenisse constat, cum ille copias adversus Saracenos ac Turcos eduxit. Et fortasse haec una est pacandae Germaniae via: nescio, an vos alias habeatis.

---

<sup>1</sup> omnes P2

<sup>2</sup> omit. P2

<sup>3</sup> agricola KO

<sup>4</sup> omnes add. P2

<sup>5</sup> paratum KO

<sup>6</sup> ac P2\*

[41] [FV] Indeed, Princes, if you accept this truce, I do not doubt that you can muster a very strong and numerous army and that when you bring it out of Germany, you will leave the country at peace. For all thieves and robbers will leave, while the peasants and artisans, a peaceful kind of people, will stay at home. This is what happened at the time of Emperor Konrad, when he led his troops against the Saracens and the Turks. And maybe this is the only way to bring peace to Germany. I do not know if you can think of any other.

[42] [EV] Sed dicitis: "Quid cum Prutenis agemus, qui rebellantes suis dominis, relicta religione<sup>1</sup> Theutonica, ad magnum {65v} regem Poloniae defecerunt<sup>2</sup>?" Tria hic remedia sunt: duo dicam, tertium in aliud tempus retinebo. Aut serventur<sup>3</sup> hic<sup>4</sup> indutiae, sicut<sup>5</sup> in ceteris<sup>6</sup> Germaniae litibus, aut si hoc durum religioni videtur, sinite fratres religiosos<sup>7</sup> cum Saxonibus, Bohemis, et aliis, quos possunt allicere, suam provinciam vindicare<sup>8</sup>. Neque enim propterea vester exercitus magnopere impediatur<sup>9</sup>. Nam et imperante Conrado, de quo paulo<sup>10</sup> ante dixi, cum tertius<sup>11</sup> Eugenius, Romanus pontifex, Christianos excitaret pro tutela terrae sanctae<sup>12</sup>, quam Saraceni evertere conabantur, Pruteni cum ceteris ulterioribus idola colebant ac crebris excursionibus nunc Saxoniam, nunc alios vicinos Christi cultores infestabant. Conradus autem, dimissis Saxonibus et<sup>13</sup> ceteris vicinis, qui domi cum Prutenis ac reliquis barbaris decertarent, ipse cum Rhenanis<sup>14</sup>, Suevis, Franconibus<sup>15</sup>, Bavaris Jerusalem penetravit. Idem et<sup>16</sup> nunc vobis agere licet.

[42] [FV] "Sed quid cum Prutenis agemus, qui rebellantes suis dominis, relicta religione Theutonica, ad regem Poloniae defecerunt?" Tria hic remedia<sup>17</sup> sunt: duo dicam, tertium in aliud tempus retinebo. Aut serventur hic indutiae, sicut in ceteris Germaniae litibus, aut si hoc durum religioni videtur, sinite fratres cum Saxonibus, Bohemis, et aliis, quos possunt allicere, suam provinciam vindicare<sup>18</sup>. Neque enim propterea vester exercitus magnopere impediatur. Nam et imperante Conrado, de quo paulo ante dixi, cum Eugenius, Romanus pontifex, Christianos excitaret pro tutela terrae sanctae, quam Saraceni evertere conabantur, Pruteni cum ceteris ulterioribus idola colebant ac crebris excursionibus nunc Saxoniam, nunc alios vicinos Christi cultores infestabant. Conradus autem, dimissis Saxonibus et ceteris vicinis, qui domi cum Prutenis ac reliquis barbaris decertarent, ipse cum Rhenanis, Suevis, Franconibus, ac Baioariis Jerosolymam penetravit. Idem et nunc vobis agere licet.

<sup>1</sup> regione P2

<sup>2</sup> desciverunt P2\*; destinerent KO

<sup>3</sup> struentur P2

<sup>4</sup> he P1\*

<sup>5</sup> ut P1

<sup>6</sup> terrarum P2

<sup>7</sup> omit. P1

<sup>8</sup> vindicare P2\*

<sup>9</sup> impediretur P1; impeditur P2\*

<sup>10</sup> paulum P2

<sup>11</sup> omit. P2

<sup>12</sup> terrae sanctae omit. P2

<sup>13</sup> aut KO

<sup>14</sup> Renensibus KO

<sup>15</sup> ac add. P1\*

<sup>16</sup> omit. P1

<sup>17</sup> Remedia pro Pru. reli. *in marg.*

D

<sup>18</sup> vindicare B

[42] [FV] “But what shall we do about the Prussians who have rebelled against their lords and defected from the German Order to the King of Poland?”<sup>1</sup> There are three remedies to this: two I shall speak about now, the third one I shall keep for later. Either our truce will be kept there, too, as in the other German conflicts, or – if this is unacceptable to the order – then allow the brethren to fight for their province together with the Saxons, Bohemians, and whoever else they may be able to attract to their cause. This will not be a great problem with regard to your army, for when Konrad, whom I spoke of a moment ago, was emperor and the Roman Pontiff, Eugenius,<sup>2</sup> urged the Christians to protect the Holy Land that the Saracens were striving to conquer, the Prussians, like other peoples living beyond them, were worshipping idols. Frequently, they attacked now Saxony, now their other neighbours who worshipped Christ. Therefore, Konrad let the Saxons and other neighbours stay at home so that they could fight the Prussians and other barbarians while he himself went to Jerusalem together with the Rhinish, the Swabians, the Franconians, and the Bavarians.<sup>3</sup> The same you can do now.

---

<sup>1</sup> Piccolomini here refers to the standing conflict between the Prussian population and the Ger-

man Order, which had possession of their territory

<sup>2</sup> Pope Eugenius III (-d. 1153): Pope from 1153 to his death

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Otto von Freising: *Gesta Friederici*, I, 47 ff

[43] [EV] Ceterum, quia nonnullos esse audio, qui Mahumetum deinceps<sup>1</sup> quieturum existimant, neque, ut ego dico, tantopere festinandum censent<sup>2</sup>, reserabo vobis aliqua de consuetudine et natura<sup>3</sup> hujus hominis, quae mihi per eos nota sunt, qui secum aliquando<sup>4</sup> conversati fuere, ut quid sperandum, quidve<sup>5</sup> timendum sit<sup>6</sup> eo certius habeatis. Est autem Mahumetus adolescens annos natus<sup>7</sup> XXIV<sup>8</sup>, animo truci et gloriae cupido, robusto corpore ac laboris<sup>9</sup> patiente, neque vino neque cenis<sup>10</sup> indulget, et<sup>11</sup> quamvis more gentis libidinosus, non tamen inter uxores ritu paterno<sup>12</sup> languescit, choreas fugitat, unguenta devitat, raro induitur mollibus, {66v} non cantu, non sono delinitur, non canes alit, non aves nutrit: una ei voluptas est arma tractare. [cont.]

[43] [FV] Ceterum, quia nonnullos esse audio, qui Mahumetum deinceps quieturum existimant, neque, ut ego dico, tantopere festinandum censent, reserabo<sup>13</sup> vobis aliqua de consuetudine ac natura hujus hominis<sup>14</sup>, quae mihi per eos nota sunt, qui secum aliquando conversati fuere, ut quid sperandum, quidve timendum sit certius habeatis. Est autem Mahumetus adolescens annos natus quattuor et viginti, animo truci et gloriae cupido, robusto corpore ac laboris patiente. Neque vino neque cenis indulget. Quamvis more gentis libidinosus, non tamen {105v} inter uxores ritu paterno languescit, choreas fugitat, unguenta devitat, non induitur mollibus, non cantu, non sono delinitur, non canes alit, non aves nutrit: una ei<sup>15</sup> voluptas est arma tractare. [cont.]

---

<sup>1</sup> Mahumetum deinceps :  
deinceps Maumethum P1\*

<sup>2</sup> cessent KO

<sup>3</sup> consuetudine et natura : natura  
et consuetudine P2

<sup>4</sup> aliquandiu KO

<sup>5</sup> vel P2

<sup>6</sup> de add. P2

<sup>7</sup> nactus P2\*

<sup>8</sup> et add. P2

<sup>9</sup> laborem P2

<sup>10</sup> indiget KO

<sup>11</sup> omit. P1\*

<sup>12</sup> omit. KO

<sup>13</sup> resarabo A, D

<sup>14</sup> Maumeti mores *in marg.* D

<sup>15</sup> omit. B

[43] [FV] Moreover, I hear many people express the belief that Mehmed will now take a period of rest and not move forward as quickly as I have said. I shall therefore tell you something about the habits and character of this man, as I have heard from people who had dealings with him.<sup>1</sup> Then you will better know what to hope for and what to fear.

Mehmed is a young man of 24 years. He is fierce and desires glory, robust of body and enduring of labour, and he does not indulge in wine and banquets. Though, like all his people, he is given to sexual pleasure, he does not, as his forefathers, spend his time among his wives. He avoids dancing<sup>2</sup> and balms, and he does not wear soft clothes. He is not fond of singing or music, and he does not raise dogs or birds.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, he has only one pleasure: all things military. *[cont.]*

---

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Niccolò Sagundino

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Horatius: *Carmina*, 2.3.13

<sup>3</sup> Niccolò Sagundino: *Oratio* (Casselli, p. 5): *non luxu neque lascivia admodum delectari videtur, non*

*ventri deditus ... non epulis et ebrietati pro more gentis indulget*

[43] [EV] [cont.] Honorat<sup>1</sup> milites<sup>2</sup>, equos amat; naves, currus<sup>3</sup>, machinas bellicas formosis mulieribus praefert. Et quamvis est natura barbarus abhorretque litteras, gesta tamen majorum cupide audit ac Julium Caesarem et Alexandrum magnum omnibus anteponit, quorum illustria facta superare posse confidit atque contendit, nec se minus aptum ad subjugandum<sup>4</sup> orbem dicit, quam illi fuerunt, cum sua sint longe<sup>5</sup> majora principia, quam illorum referantur. Et quoniam falso prophetae suo Mahumeto, ex quo nomen habet<sup>6</sup>, Constantinopolim<sup>7</sup> subjecit, non dubitat, quin et<sup>8</sup> Romam submittere<sup>9</sup> possit, barbara temeritate et Asiana superbia plenus. Hic est vester<sup>10</sup> hostis, proceres. Existimatote<sup>11</sup> {67r} nunc<sup>12</sup>, an talem naturam quiescere sit verisimile.

[43] [FV] [cont.] Honorat milites, equos amat; naves, currus, machinas bellicas formosis mulieribus praefert. Et quamvis est natura barbarus abhorretque litteras, gesta tamen majorum cupide audit, ac Julium Caesarem et Alexandrum magnum omnibus anteponit, quorum illustria facta superare posse confidit atque contendit, nec se minus aptum ad subigendum orbem dicit, quam illi fuerunt, cum sua sint longe majora principia, quam illorum referuntur. Et quoniam falso prophetae Mahumeto, ex quo nomen habet, Constantinopolim subjecit, non dubitat quin et Romam submittere possit, barbara temeritate et Asiana superbia plenus. Hic est vester hostis, proceres. Existimate nunc, an talem naturam quiescere sit verisimile.

---

<sup>1</sup> honorem ac P2

<sup>2</sup> et *add.* P2

<sup>3</sup> curros KO

<sup>4</sup> subiendum KO

<sup>5</sup> multa P1

<sup>6</sup> nomen habet *omit.* KO

<sup>7</sup> Constantino KO

<sup>8</sup> ad KO

<sup>9</sup> subicere P2

<sup>10</sup> noster P1

<sup>11</sup> estimate P2\*

<sup>12</sup> et *add.* P2

[43] [FV] [cont.] He honours soldiers, he loves horses, and he prefers ships, wagons, and war machines to beautiful women. Though he is a barbarian by nature and abhors letters, he avidly hears about the deeds of great men, and he puts Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great above all.<sup>1</sup> He is confident that he will be able to surpass their illustrious deeds and is striving to do so. And he claims that he is just as capable of conquering the world as they were since he starts from a much more advantageous position than they reportedly did.<sup>2</sup> And since he has won Constantinople for the false prophet, Muhammad, after whom he was named, he does not doubt that he shall be able to do the same with Rome,<sup>3</sup> full, as he is, of barbarian audacity and Asian arrogance.<sup>4</sup> Such is your enemy, Nobles! Consider now if such a character is likely to rest.

---

<sup>1</sup> Niccolò Sagundino: *Oratio* (Casselli, p. 6): *Alexandrum Macedonem et C. Caesarem praecipue sibi imitandos delegit*

<sup>2</sup> Mehmed's supposed fascination with Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great was frequently commented upon in contemporary Western writings, but the present passage may likely have been adapted from Jacopo Tedaldi's eyewitness account of the Fall of Constantinople to Pope Nicolaus V of 16 August 1453, in Pertusi, I, p. 186-187: *Si sa da coloro che sono scampati dal Turco e che sono a conoscenza delle sue con-*

*dizioni e della sua Potenza che egli ha ventitré o ventiquattro anni ... pieno di coraggio e dedideroso di signorreggiare e di convertire tutto il mondo, assai più che Alessandro o Cesare o altro potente che viene ricordato, poichè egli stima dio avere una Potenza ed una signoria assai più grande di quell'ache sia mai stata posseduta da altri. E si faceva sempre leggere le loro storie ...* See also Setton, II, p. 137

<sup>3</sup> Niccolò Sagundino: *Oratio* (Casselli, p. 57): *ubi ...Constantinopolitana potitus est Victoria ... ita inolescere coepit et in nomen in-*

*saevire Christianum ... principes tandem Christianos extinguere putat et imperium orbis vindicare sibi audeat somnietque ... innixus vaticiniis et praedictionibus quibusdam quam sibi regnum Italiae et Urbis Romae expugnationem promittunt*

<sup>4</sup> See Leonardo of Chios' eyewitness account of the Fall of Constantinople to Pope Nicolaus V of 16 August 1453, in Pertusi, I, p. 168: *Alias scito in tantam iam hostem superlatam pompam, ut non erubescat dicere sinum Adriaticum penetrare Romamque venturum.* Cf. Setton, II, p. 137



[44] [EV] Sed quid conjecturis aut argumentis in rebus utimur<sup>1</sup> manifestis<sup>2</sup>? Nonne hic victa Constantinopoli mox Peram delevit, propinquas civitates oppressit, Cyclades insulas maris Aegei magna ex parte diripuit<sup>3</sup>, despotum ex Rascia pepulit? Et quamvis essent cum Hungaris indutiae, eorum tamen fines ingressus, nonnullos agros depopulatus est. Ecce pacem Turcorum, optimi principes<sup>4</sup>, ecce quietem, quam sperare potestis! Nolite confidere<sup>5</sup>! Nolite differre<sup>6</sup>! Consulite vobis ipsis et utilitati libertatique vestrae, dum tempus habetis<sup>7</sup>. Causa belli, ut intelligitis, et justa est et necessaria et maxima: vobis ad pugnam omnia quam Turcis meliora supersunt.

[44] [FV] Sed quid conjecturis aut argumentis in rebus utimur manifestis? Nonne hic victa Constantinopoli mox Peram delevit, propinquas civitates oppressit, Cyclades insulas maris Aegei magna ex parte diripuit, despotum ex Rascia pepulit? Et quamvis essent cum Hungaris indutiae, eorum fines ingressus agros depopulatus est. Ecce pacem Turcorum, procures, ecce quietem, quam sperare potestis! Nolite confidere! Nolite differre! Consulite vobis ipsis et utilitati libertatique vestrae, dum tempus habetis. Causa belli, ut intelligitis, et justa est et necessaria et maxima; vobis ad pugnam omnia quam Turcis meliora supersunt.

---

<sup>1</sup> veterum P2

<sup>2</sup> opus est *add.* P2

<sup>3</sup> disruptit P2

<sup>4</sup> optimi principes : procures P2

<sup>5</sup> confideri P1

<sup>6</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>7</sup> adest P2

[44] [FV] Yet why should we rely on conjecture and arguments in matters that are evident? When this man had conquered Constantinople, did he not immediately destroy Pera,<sup>1</sup> fall upon the cities in the area, lay waste to the Cycladean Isles in the Aegean Sea, and expel the ruler from Serbia? And though the Turks had a truce with the Hungarians, they entered their lands and wasted their fields.<sup>2</sup> This is the peace of the Turks, Noble Men, this is the quiet that you can hope for! Do not be confident! Do not procrastinate! See to your own affairs, your advantage, and your liberty while you still have time.

As you see, the cause of the war is just, necessary, and great, and you are in all ways better prepared for war than the Turks.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Genoese colony of Pera surrendered to Mehmed shortly af-

ter the Fall of Constantinople. It was not destroyed

<sup>2</sup> Actually, at the instigation of a papal legate, Hungary itself had broken a truce with the Turks

[45] [EV] Orat vos Caesar, ne Christianae reipublicae, ne<sup>1</sup> vobis ipsis<sup>2</sup> hoc tempore desitis, sed, quemadmodum {67v} Ratisponae condictum<sup>3</sup> est, quos potestis milites, equos, arma, currus<sup>4</sup>, instrumenta bellica, commeatus praeparetis, nam et ipse, quae sunt in sua potestate, ad hoc opus omnia promittit. Quaecumque sibi ut imperatori<sup>5</sup> Romanorum, ut<sup>6</sup> Austriae duci, ut religioso principi, ut homini Christiano incumbunt, exequi<sup>7</sup> praesto est et volens<sup>8</sup>, tantum vos, principes, in hoc loco de bello gerendo concordēs sitis. Nam si umquam pugnandi tempus<sup>9</sup> fuit, profecto nunc<sup>10</sup> est, quando non solum honor et status vester<sup>11</sup>, sed ipsa libertas vestra, ipsa fides, ipsa vita in dubio ponitur. Neque enim, si Turcos progredi ad vos<sup>12</sup> sinitis, quaerendum erit, in quo statu, in qua fide vivere, sed utrum<sup>13</sup> vivere debeatis.

[45] [FV] Orat vos Caesar, ne Christianae reipublicae, ne vobis ipsis hoc tempore desitis, sed, quemadmodum Ratisponae condictum est, quos potestis milites, equos, arma, currus, instrumenta bellica, commeatus praeparetis, nam et ipse, quae sunt in sua potestate, ad hoc opus omnia promittit. Quaecumque sibi ut imperatori, ut Austriae duci, ut religioso principi, ut homini Christiano incumbunt, exequi praesto est<sup>14</sup> et volens, tantum vos, principes, in hoc loco de bello gerendo concordēs sitis. Nam si umquam pugnandi tempus fuit, nunc profecto est, quando non solum honor et status vester, sed ipsa libertas vestra, ipsa fides, ipsa vita in dubio ponitur. Neque enim, si Turcos progredi ad vos sinitis, quaerendum erit, in quo statu, in qua fide vivere, sed utrum vivere debeatis.

---

<sup>1</sup> nec P2\*

<sup>2</sup> *omit.* P1

<sup>3</sup> indictum P2

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>5</sup> imperator P1

<sup>6</sup> et P1

<sup>7</sup> et eque P2

<sup>8</sup> valens KO

<sup>9</sup> pugnandi tempus : tempus

pugnandi P1

<sup>10</sup> profecto nunc : nunc profecto

*omit.* P2

<sup>11</sup> status vester : vester status P2

<sup>12</sup> progredi ad vos : ad vos

progredi P2

<sup>13</sup> *omit.* KO

<sup>14</sup> *omit.* B

## 5. Conclusion

[45] The emperor asks you not to fail the Christian commonwealth and yourselves. Instead, you should, as much as you are able to and as decided in Regensburg, mobilise soldiers, horses, weapons, wagons, war machines, and provisions. On his part, the emperor promises all the resources at his disposal for this purpose. Whatever is incumbent upon him as emperor, as Duke of Austria, as a God-fearing prince, and as a Christian, he will do promptly and gladly, provided that you, Princes, now come to an agreement on waging the war. For if ever there was a time for fighting, it is indeed now, when not only your honour and state but even your very liberty, faith, and life are at stake. And if you let the Turks come to you, we shall not have to ask in what state or faith you live, but whether you will be allowed to live at all.

[46] [EV] **Mementote patrum vestrorum, generosi proceres<sup>1</sup>! Ponite ante oculos illustria facta majorum! Recolite quotiens progenitores vestri cum magnis exercitibus Alpes Italiae {68r} transiere<sup>2</sup>. Astulfum<sup>3</sup>, Longobardorum regem<sup>4</sup>, Stephano papae molestum, Pipinus coercuit. Desiderium, ejus<sup>5</sup> provinciae regem Hadriano insultantem Carolus magnus compescuit. Romanos Formoso pontifici rebelles Arnolfus<sup>6</sup> edomuit. Berengarium, qui se regem Italiae jactitabat, vocatu Johannis papae Otto primus magno bello contrivit. Longum esset referre<sup>7</sup>, quotiens vestri antecessores pro Romana ecclesia, pro fide catholica, pro salute communi decertaverunt. Illi quidem, dum parato et forti animo Christianam religionem tuerentur<sup>8</sup>, Romanum imperium ad se traxere.**

[46] [FV] **Mementote patrum vestrorum, generosi proceres! Ponite ante oculos illustria facta majorum! Recolite<sup>9</sup> quotiens progenitores vestri cum magnis exercitibus Alpes Italiae transiere Romanam ecclesiam defensuri. Aystulfum, regem Longobardorum, {106r} Stephano papae molestum, Pipinus coercuit. Desiderium Hadriano insultantem Carolus magnus compescuit. Romanos Formoso pontifici rebelles Arnolfus edomuit. Berengarium, qui se regem Italiae jactitabat, vocatu Johannis papae Otto primus bello contrivit. Longum esset referre, quotiens vestri antecessores pro Romana ecclesia, pro fide catholica, pro salute communi decertaverunt.**

---

<sup>1</sup> principes P2

<sup>2</sup> Romanam ecclesiam defensuri  
*add.* P2\*

<sup>3</sup> Alfonsum KO

<sup>4</sup> Longobardorum regem : regem  
Longobardorum P2

<sup>5</sup> eiusdem P2

<sup>6</sup> Arnoldus P2

<sup>7</sup> longum ... referre : referre  
gravius fueri P1\*; referre quidem  
gravius fuerit KO

<sup>8</sup> tuentur P1

<sup>9</sup> Germanorum in Italiam  
expeditiones *in marg.* D

[46] [FV] Remember your forefathers, Nobles, and consider their glorious achievements! Think of how often they crossed the Italian Alps with great armies in order to defend the Roman Church. Pippin<sup>1</sup> restrained<sup>2</sup> Aistulf, King of the Longobards,<sup>3</sup> when he was causing trouble for Pope Stephen.<sup>4</sup> Charlemagne<sup>5</sup> checked Desiderius<sup>6</sup> when he abused Adrian.<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> Arnulf<sup>9</sup> subdued the Romans,<sup>10</sup> who rebelled against Pope Formosus.<sup>11</sup> At the call of John,<sup>12</sup> Otto I.<sup>13</sup> defeated Berengarius,<sup>14</sup> who bragged of being King of Italy. It would take too long to relate how often your predecessors fought for the Roman Church, for the Catholic Faith, and for the salvation of all.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Pippin the Short (ca. 714 - 768): King of the Franks from 751 until his death. Father of Charlemagne

<sup>2</sup> 754 and 756

<sup>3</sup> Aistulf (-756): Duke of Friuli from 744, King of the Lombards from 749, and Duke of Spoleto from 751

<sup>4</sup> 756 and 756 AD

<sup>5</sup> Stephanus II (715-757): Pope from 752 to his death

<sup>6</sup> Desiderius (-ca. 786): last king of the Lombard Kingdom of northern Italy, ruling from 756 to 774

<sup>7</sup> Hadrianus I (ca. 700-795): Pope from 772 to his death

<sup>8</sup> Charlemagne fought the Lombards in a series of campaigns stretching from 757-773, in 773 in aid of Pope Hadrian

<sup>9</sup> Arnulf of Carinthia (850-899): Carolingian King of East Francia from 887, disputed King of Italy from 894, and disputed Holy Roman Emperor from 896 until his death

<sup>10</sup> 894 and 896

<sup>11</sup> Formosus (ca. 816-896): Pope from 891 to his death

<sup>12</sup> Johannes XII (ca. 930/937-964): Pope from 955 until his death

<sup>13</sup> Otto I the Great (912 -973): German king from 936 and emperor of the Holy Roman Empire from 962 until his death

<sup>14</sup> Berengar II (ca. 900-966): King of Italy from 950 until his deposition in 961

<sup>15</sup> The events related in this section would be known to Piccolomini from his study of Otto von Freising: *Chronica*, 5-6, also used by him in his *Pentalogus* from 1444

[47] [EV] Videte<sup>1</sup> nunc, quem vobis animum suscipiendum<sup>2</sup> esse putetis. Patres vestri pro suis non dicam civibus, sed agricolis paulo contumeliosius tractatis saepe bella gesserunt. Vos<sup>3</sup> uno imperatore cum tota Graeciae<sup>4</sup> nobilitate crudelissime necato non putabitis esse pugnandum? {68v} Illi frequenter suis ministris parum reverenter compellatis non dubitarunt arma recipere<sup>5</sup>. Vos Deo vestro probrose contempto non armabimini<sup>6</sup>? Illi pro ampliandis<sup>7</sup> Christianorum finibus durissimis<sup>8</sup> se proeliis commiserunt; vos pro tuenda religione<sup>9</sup> fideque vestra recusabitis arma capessere? Non est de rebus levioribus hoc bellum: pro patria, pro liberis, pro uxoribus, pro focis<sup>10</sup>, pro libertate, pro vita, pro fide, pro religione, pro sanctis martyribus, pro magnis apostolis, pro gloriosa matre Dei, advocata nostra, regina caeli, Maria, pro filio Dei, pro redemptore, pro salvatore, pro maximo et<sup>11</sup> certissimo Deo vestro<sup>12</sup>, pro spiritu sancto directore, pro patre aeterno, pro divinissima trinitate, quam spurcidus ille Mahumetus persequitur, committendum est proelium. Cogitate<sup>13</sup>, principes, quo redacta est Christiana religio, quantum in oriente<sup>14</sup>, quantum in meridie diminuta est nostra fides. Sumite alta corda, induite fortes animos! Defendite matrem vestram ecclesiam, quae vos Christo regeneravit! {69r} Accingimini gladio super femora vestra, potentissimi<sup>15</sup>, occurrите inimicis Christi<sup>16</sup>!

[47] [FV] Videte nunc, quem vobis animum suscipiendum esse putetis. Patres vestri pro suis non dicam civibus, sed agricolis paulo contumeliosius tractatis saepe bella gesserunt. Vos uno imperatore cum tota Graeciae nobilitate crudelissime necato non putabitis esse pugnandum? Illi frequenter suis ministris inreverenter compellatis non dubitarunt arma recipere. Vos Deo vestro probrose contempto non armabimini? Illi pro tuendis agris durissimis se proeliis commiserunt; vos pro tuenda religione fideque vestra recusabitis arma capescere? Non est de rebus levioribus hoc bellum: pro patria, pro liberis, pro uxoribus, pro focis, pro libertate, pro vita, pro fide, pro religione, pro sanctis martyribus, pro magnis apostolis, pro gloriosa matre Dei, advocata nostra, regina caeli, Maria, pro filio Dei, pro redemptore, pro salvatore, pro maximo et certissimo Deo vestro, pro spiritu sancto directore, pro divinissima trinitate, quam spurcidus ille Mahumetus persequitur, committendum est proelium. Cogitate, principes, quo redacta est Christiana religio, quantum in orienti, quantum in meridie diminuta est nostra fides. Sumite alta corda, induite fortes animos! Defendite matrem vestram ecclesiam, quae vos Christo regeneravit! Accingimini gladio super femora vestra, potentissimi, occurrите inimicis Christi!

<sup>1</sup> videtis P2

<sup>2</sup> animum suscipiendum :  
suscipiendum animum P2

<sup>3</sup> pro *add.* P2\*

<sup>4</sup> Graecia KO

<sup>5</sup> suscipere P1

<sup>6</sup> illi frequenter ... armabimini

*omit.* P2

<sup>7</sup> amplectendis KO

<sup>8</sup> diversissimis P2

<sup>9</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>10</sup> sociis KO

<sup>11</sup> ac P1\*

<sup>12</sup> nostro P1

<sup>13</sup> cogitare KO

<sup>14</sup> orienti P2

<sup>15</sup> potentissima P2

<sup>16</sup> *omit.* P1

[47] [FV] See now in what spirit you should act. Your fathers went to war not just for their citizens but even for their peasants if they had just been treated rudely. So, should you not consider it worth fighting when an emperor has been killed cruelly, together with all the nobility of Greece? Your fathers did not hesitate to take up weapons if their officials had been treated insultingly. So, should you not arm yourselves when your God has been shamefully scorned? Your fathers entered savage battles in order to protect their lands. So, should you refuse to take up arms in order to protect your religion and faith? This war is not about trifles. You must go to war for your country, for your children, for your wives, for your homes, for your liberty, for your life, for your faith, for your religion, for the holy martyrs, for the great apostles, for Mary, glorious Mother of God, our patron, Queen of Heaven, for the Son of God, for the Saviour, for your great and undoubted God, for the Holy Spirit who leads us, and for the divine Trinity, persecuted by that filthy Muhammad.<sup>1</sup> Consider, Princes, to what state the Christian religion has been brought, and how greatly our Faith has been reduced in the East and the South. Take courage! Be brave! Defend your mother, the Church, through whom you were reborn in Christ. *Gird your swords upon your thighs, o Mighty Men,*<sup>2</sup> go to meet the enemies of Christ!

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Moudarres, p. 43: ... in book 2 of his *Commentaries*, Pius II underscores Muhammad's tendencies towards Nestorianism and Ari-

anism, heresies that called into question the divine nature of Christ and the doctrine of the Tri-

nity: "The Turkish nation despises the Trinity..."

<sup>2</sup> Psalms, 44, 4



[48] [EV] Nolite ultimi<sup>1</sup> esse<sup>2</sup>, quos imperii dignitas jubet exire priores! Carolus, rex Francorum<sup>3</sup> nobilissimus et potentissimus, pugnaturum se dicit, si vos armamini<sup>4</sup>. Quae sit mens inclyti Ladislai, regis Hungariae et<sup>5</sup> Bohemiae, ex suis<sup>6</sup> oratoribus audietis. Regis Daciae, Sueciae<sup>7</sup>, ac<sup>8</sup> Norvegiae litteras habemus, quae<sup>9</sup> mentem illius optimam exponunt. Alfonsus, rex Aragonum et Siciliae, nostri saeculi clarissimum sidus, etiam silentibus ceteris, hoc magnificum bellum, hanc gloriosam expeditionem pro Christi nomine ultro suscepturum se pollicetur. Philippus, Burgundiae dux, non minus animo quam sanguine clarus, potentatu ac dominatu<sup>10</sup> par magnis regibus, non modo se<sup>11</sup> <sup>12</sup> iturum ad hoc bellum<sup>13</sup> promittit, sed alios quoque, ut se accingant, magnopere adhortatur<sup>14</sup>.

[48] [FV] Nolite ultimi esse, quos imperii dignitas jubet exire priores! Carolus, rex Francorum et nobilissimus ac potentissimus, pugnaturum se dicit, si vos armamini. Alfonsus, rex Aragonum et Siciliae, nostri saeculi clarissimum sidus, etiam silentibus ceteris, hoc magnificum bellum, hanc gloriosam expeditionem pro Christi nomine ultro suscepturum se pollicetur. Philippus, Burgundiae dux, non minus animo quam sanguine clarus, potentatu ac dominatu par magnis regibus, non modo se iturum ad hoc bellum promittit, sed alios quoque, ut se accingant, magnopere adhortatur.

---

<sup>1</sup> ultiores P2

<sup>2</sup> ultimi esse : esse ultimi KO

<sup>3</sup> rex *add.* P1; et *add.* KO

<sup>4</sup> armemini KO

<sup>5</sup> ex P1; ac P2

<sup>6</sup> ex suis *omit.* P1

<sup>7</sup> Sareciae P1\*

<sup>8</sup> et P1\*

<sup>9</sup> qui P2\*

<sup>10</sup> dominatione P1

<sup>11</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>12</sup> modo se : se modo P1

<sup>13</sup> se *add.* P2\*

<sup>14</sup> hortatur P2\*

[48] [FV] Do not be the last whom imperial dignity requires to leave as the first. The noble and puissant King Charles of France<sup>1</sup> says that he will fight if you go to war.<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> King Alfonso of Aragon and Sicily,<sup>4</sup> brilliant star of our time, promises to take up this magnificent war and this glorious crusade for the name of Christ, even if others remain passive. Duke Philippe of Burgundy,<sup>5</sup> renowned both for his courage and for his line and equal to great kings in might and power, not only promises to go to war himself, but he also urges others to prepare for war.

---

<sup>1</sup> Charles VII (1403-1461): King of France from 1422 to his death

<sup>2</sup> King Charles' attitude towards the war against the Turks was actually quite ambiguous, if not directly negative

<sup>3</sup> In the original version of the oration held in 1454, Piccolomini also mentions the positive attitude of King Ladislás of Hungary and of King Christian of Denmark/Nor-

way/Sweden, but when the final version was prepared *under his own* supervision, as pope, King Ladislás had died and the promises of the Danish king had turned out to be quite empty. King Christian was represented at the diet by Archbishop Heinrich Kalteisen

<sup>4</sup> Alfonso V the Magnanimous (1396-1458): King of Aragon, Va-

lencia, Majorca, Sardinia and Corsica, Sicily, and Count of Barcelona from 1416, and King of Naples (as Alfonso I) from 1442 until his death

<sup>5</sup> Philippe III le Bon (1396 -1467): Duke of Burgundy from 1419 until his death

[49] [EV] Intueamini<sup>1</sup> hos duos principes, Alfonsum et<sup>2</sup> Philippum, maximos dominos, terra marique potentes: {69v} ambo aetate provec<sup>3</sup>ti sunt, ambo sexagesimum annum transiere. Ambo tamen certamini sese offerunt neque in propriis personis pro Deo suo pugnare recusant. Quid vos faciatis<sup>4</sup>, lectissimi<sup>5</sup> principes, quibus aetas florida est, quibus ebullit sanguis, quibus Martius labor jucundus quidam<sup>6</sup> ludus videri debet<sup>7</sup>? En milites! En duces<sup>8</sup>! En robustissimi juvenes! Sinetisne senibus majorem quam vobis animum<sup>9</sup> esse? Dormietisne domi, dum<sup>10</sup> illi foris<sup>11</sup> militent? Marcebitisne otio, dum illi in negotio vigent<sup>12</sup>? Minime de vobis talia suspicor. Degeneres animos timor arguit, vos autem erecto animo alacres intueor. Incipio bene sperare. Sentio jam titillare<sup>13</sup> pectora vestra ac flagrare amore bellandi. Nec miror vos aetate integra militiae sectatores hujus belli cupidos esse.

[49] [FV] Intueamini hos duos principes, Alfonsum ac Philippum, maximos dominos, terra marique potentes. Ambo aetate provec<sup>3</sup>ti sunt, ambo sexagesimum annum transiere. Ambo tamen certamini sese offerunt neque in propriis corporibus pro Deo suo pugnare recusant. Quid vos faciatis, lectissimi principes, quibus aetas florida est, quibus ebullit sanguis, quibus {106v} Martius labor jocundus quidam ludus videri debet? En milites! En duces! En robustissimi juvenes! Sinetisne senibus majorem quam vobis animum esse? Dormietisne domi, cum illi foris militent? Marcebitisne otio, dum illi vigent in negotio? Minime talia de vobis suspicor. *Degeneres animos timor arguit*, vos autem erectos alacresque intueor. Incipio bene sperare. Sentio jam titillare pectora vestra ac fragrare amore bellandi. Nec miror vos aetate integra militiae sectatores hujus belli cupidos esse.

---

<sup>1</sup> imitamini P2

<sup>2</sup> ac P2\*

<sup>3</sup> profecti KO, WY

<sup>4</sup> facietis P2

<sup>5</sup> letissimi P2; electissimi KO

<sup>6</sup> quidem P1, KO

<sup>7</sup> deberetur P2

<sup>8</sup> en duces *omit.* P2

<sup>9</sup> quam vobis animum : animum

quam vobis P2

<sup>10</sup> cum P1, P2, KO

<sup>11</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>12</sup> in negotio vigent : vigent in negotio P2\*

<sup>13</sup> corda vestra *add.* P2\*

[49] [FV] Look to those two princes, Alfonso and Philippe, great lords, powerful on land and at sea. Both are ageing and more than sixty years old, but nonetheless, they offer to go to war, and they do not refuse to fight in person for their God. So, what should you do, Excellent Princes? Your age is perfect<sup>1</sup>, your blood is young, and martial labours seem like a joyful sport to you. Behold, Soldiers! Behold, Leaders! Behold, strong Youths! Will you allow old men to have greater courage than you? Will you sleep at home when they fight abroad? Will you be feeble and inert while they are strong and active? No, I certainly do not believe this about you: *It is fear that proves souls base-born*.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, I see that you are attentive and eager. I begin to hope for the best. I already feel your hearts quicken and burn with the love of battle. And I do not wonder that, at your youthful age, you delight in military matters and are enthused by this war.

---

<sup>1</sup> "florida"

<sup>2</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 4, 13

[50] [EV] Nam et ego ipse, quamvis senio gravis, quamvis ecclesiae deditus, incendor et aestuo nimio fervore talis visendae pugnae. Veteribus {70r} illis, ex quibus vobis origo est, principes, cum essent adhuc gentiles, nullum fuit grave bellum, quod pro patria suscepissent, nullam illi mortem miseram putavere, quae pro republica subiretur. Sed quae respublica major aut melior quam nostra Christiana? Quae patria dulcior aut nobilior quam nostra illa caelestis, ad quam cuncti aspiramus, formosa Jerusalem? Illi, cum pro patria morerentur<sup>1</sup>, tamen<sup>2</sup> maxime exulabant<sup>3</sup>; nos, cum morimur, tum<sup>4</sup> finimus exilium, tum patriam ingredimur. O felix mors, quae vitam finit<sup>5</sup> temporalem, concedit aeternam! O faustum ac desiderabile bellum, in quo, si vincis, in terra, si vinceris, in caelo triumphas! Quidni ergo ardenti pugnemus animo, quibus tanta<sup>6</sup> promittuntur emolumenta?

[50] [FV] Nam et ego ipse, quamvis senio gravis, quamvis ecclesiae deditus, incendor et aestuo nimio fervore talis belli. Veteribus illis, ex quibus vobis origo est, principes, cum essent adhuc gentiles, nullum fuit grave bellum, quod pro patria suscepissent, nullam illi mortem miseram putavere, quae pro republica subiretur. Sed quae respublica major aut melior quam nostra Christiana? Quae patria dulcior aut nobilior quam nostra illa caelestis, ad quam cuncti aspiramus, formosa Jerusalem? At illi, cum pro patria morerentur, tum maxime exulabant; nos, cum morimur, tum finimus exilium, tum patriam ingredimur. O felix mors, quae vitam finit temporalem, concedit aeternam! O faustum ac desiderabile bellum, in quo, si vincis, in terra, si vinceris, in caelo triumphas! Quidni ergo ardenti pugnemus animo, quibus tanta promittuntur emolumenta?

---

<sup>1</sup> morerentur P2\*

<sup>2</sup> tum P2

<sup>3</sup> exultabant P2\*

<sup>4</sup> cum P2

<sup>5</sup> premit KO

<sup>6</sup> tot P2

[50] [FV] For I myself, though burdened with age and dedicated to the Church, am burning and inflamed with enthusiasm for this war. Those peoples of old from whom you descend, Princes, when they were still pagan, considered no war as a burden if they fought for their country, and no death as misery if they died for their state. And what state is greater or better than our Christian Commonwealth? What country is more sweet or noble than our fatherland in Heaven, the beautiful Jerusalem, where we all want to go? When your forefathers died for their country, they really went into exile. But when we die, our exile ends, and we enter our own country. Oh, happy death that ends earthly life and gives us eternal life instead. Oh, happy and desirable war in which you triumph on Earth if you win and in Heaven if you lose.<sup>1</sup> Should we not fight with burning courage when we are promised such rewards?

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im.76]: *Quid quod cadentes in proelio et ab hoste caesi aeque ac vincentes opima de*

*hoste ferent spolia ad ad paratam in caelis, in aeterno regno cum sanctis gloriam perducti cum nostro hujus expeditionis imperatore Jesu Christo triumphabunt.*

(From the oration “*Existimatis forte*”, put into the mouth of Pope Urban II by Biondo)

[51] [EV] Ecce dominus noster sanctissimus, Christianorum summus pater, Nicolaus papa V., ovium Christi pastor, Romanorum<sup>1</sup> pontifex, successor beati Petri, Christi Dei nostri vicarius, omnibus, qui hanc expeditionem sequuntur<sup>2</sup>, delicta remittit, culpas abluit, {70v} veniam praebet, caelum promittit. Nec de promisso est dubium, quoniam hic<sup>3</sup> est, qui potestatem habet ligandi et<sup>4</sup> solvendi, qui locum illius tenet, cui datae sunt claves regni caelorum. Ecce nunc caeli aperti sunt. Ecce nunc iter in<sup>5</sup> patriam! Ecce<sup>6</sup> scalam, qua super omnes planetarum orbis scandere valeatis atque ad ipsam galaxiam pervenire, quae nos<sup>7</sup> ad regiam magni Dei recto tramite ducat. Quod si omnibus, ut inquit orator, qui patriam auxerint<sup>8</sup>, juverint, defenderint, certum est in caelo esse<sup>9</sup> diffinitum locum, in quo beati aevo *aeterno* fruuntur, quid de vobis putandum est, principes, qui non<sup>10</sup> pro terrena<sup>11</sup>, sed pro caelesti patria pugnaturi estis?

[51] [FV] Ecce dominus noster sanctissimus, Christianorum summus pater, Nicolaus papa V., ovium Christi pastor, Romanus pontifex, successor Petri, Christi Dei nostri vicarius, omnibus, qui hanc expeditionem sequuntur, delicta remittit, culpas abluit, veniam praebet, caelum promittit. Nec de promisso est dubium, quando hic est, qui potestatem habet *ligandi* ac *solvendi*, qui locum illius tenet, cui datae sunt *claves regni caelorum*. Ecce, nunc *caeli aperti sunt*. Ecce nunc iter in patriam! Ecce scalam, qua cunctas planetarum orbis transire atque ad ipsam galaxiam, quae vos in ultimum caelum ducat, pervenire possitis. Etsi enim *omnibus*, ut inquit orator, *qui rempublicam auxerint, juverint, defenderint, certum est esse in caelo diffinitum locum, in quo beati aevo sempiterno*<sup>12</sup> fruuntur, quid de vobis putandum est, principes, qui religionem Christianam matremque omnium fidelium ecclesiam tueri et augere conabimini?

<sup>1</sup> Romanus summus P2

<sup>2</sup> sequuntur P2\*

<sup>3</sup> is KO

<sup>4</sup> ac P2, KO

<sup>5</sup> ad P2

<sup>6</sup> nunc *add.* P2

<sup>7</sup> vos P2

<sup>8</sup> allexerint KO

<sup>9</sup> in caelo esse : esse in caelo P2

<sup>10</sup> qui non : non qui KO

<sup>11</sup> eterna P1

<sup>12</sup> sempiterno *corr. ex eterno* A, C

[51] [FV] To all who go on this crusade, our Most Holy Lord, Pope Nicolaus V, supreme father of the Christians, pastor of the sheep of Christ, Roman Pontiff, successor of Peter, vicar of Christ our God, forgives their sins, cleanses their guilt, offers forgiveness, and promises Heaven.<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt concerning this promise, for it is he who has the power *to bind and to loose*,<sup>2</sup> and who holds the place of him to whom were given *the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*.<sup>3</sup> See, *the Heavens are opened*!<sup>4</sup> Here is the way to your fatherland! Here is the ladder by which you can cross the spheres of the planets and reach the galaxy that takes you to Heaven. The Orator says that *all those who have preserved, aided, or enlarged their fatherland have a special place prepared for them in the heavens, where they may enjoy an eternal life of happiness*.<sup>5</sup> So what should we think about you, Princes, when you will be striving to protect and extend the Christian religion and the mother church of all the faithful?

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Pope Nicolaus' crusade bull of 30 September 1453

<sup>2</sup> Matthew, 18, 18

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Matthew, 16, 19

<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel, 1, 1

<sup>5</sup> 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*



[52] [EV] **Quid dicam?** Multa dicere possum, sed hoc tempore **apostoli** Pauli, doctoris gentium, **verba**<sup>1</sup> commemorasse sat erit: **Quia**<sup>2</sup> **neque**<sup>3</sup> **oculus vidit neque**<sup>4</sup> **auris audivit, neque**<sup>5</sup> **in cor hominis ascendit**<sup>6</sup>, **quae promisit dominus diligentibus se. Quales vos** futuros esse, o<sup>7</sup> **Germani nobiles, nemo dubitaverit, si hoc bellum, ut imperator admonet, papa petit, Christus jubet, pro divino honore atque amore suscipietis. Amen.**<sup>8 9</sup>

[52] {FV} **Quid dicam?** Apostoli verba commemorasse sat erit. Quia *neque oculus vidit neque auris audivit, neque in cor hominis ascendit, quae promisit dominus diligentibus se. Quales vos esse, Germani nobiles, nemo dubitaverit, si hoc bellum, ut imperator admonet, papa petit, Christus jubet, pro divino honore atque amore suscipietis.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *omit.* P2\*

<sup>2</sup> *quae* P2

<sup>3</sup> *nec* P2\*

<sup>4</sup> *nec* P2\*

<sup>5</sup> *nec* P2\*

<sup>6</sup> *descendit* P2

<sup>7</sup> *omit.* P2

<sup>8</sup> *Amen omit.* P1, P2, KO

<sup>9</sup> *Finis. Explicit add.* P1; *Finis add.*

P2\*

[52] [FV] What shall I say? It is enough to remember the words of the Apostle: *That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard: neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.*<sup>1</sup> Germans Nobles, no one will doubt your worth if, for the sake of God's honour and out of love for Him, you take on this war that the emperor requests, the pope desires, and Christ commands.

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians, 2, 9



**Oration “*In hoc florentissimo*” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini  
(25 February 1455, Wiener Neustadt). Edited and  
translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg**

**(Collected Orations of Pope Pius II; 23)**

## Abstract

After the Fall of Constantinople on 29 May 1453, three imperial diets were held to discuss a crusade against the Turks. At all three diets, the main spokesman for the emperor, Friedrich III, was Enea Silvio Piccolomini, a seasoned imperial diplomat and Bishop of Siena. The first of the diets was held in Regensburg in May 1454, where Piccolomini gave the oration "*Quamvis omnibus*." The second was held in Frankfurt in October. Here Piccolomini gave the oration "*Constantinopolitana clades*", a major piece of humanist oratory. The third one was held at the imperial court in Wiener Neustadt and began in February 1455. That diet was to decide on the practicalities of the crusade. In his oration, the "*In hoc florentissimo*", Bishop Piccolomini only dealt peripherally with the organisation of the crusade and mainly focused on the ways in which a war ought to be conducted by Christians and on the spiritual preparation for a crusade.

## Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Kaiser Friedrich III (Habsburg); Emperor Frederick III (Habsburg); Crusades against the Turks; The Ottomans; Diet of Wiener Neustadt, 1455; Reichstag Wiener Neustadt, 1455; Christian ethics of war; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetoric

## Note to the reader

When the imperial diet of Wiener Neustadt opened in February 1455, it was quite natural that Bishop Piccolomini should give the formal opening speech to the Diet in Wiener Neustadt, and that he actually did so is attested by independent sources.

In 2013, an edition of the three texts documenting the oration, the “*Astantes*”, the “*In hoc florentissimo*”, and the “*Frequentissimus*”, was published in the *Reichstagsakten* (RTA), which will quite probably be the definitive edition. For the purpose of the present edition – within the framework of a complete bilingual edition of all Pius’ orations – it has therefore been considered sufficient to collate three manuscripts containing the version of the oration included in the Collected Orations of Pius II prepared under the pope’s direct supervision in 1462. All readers interested in this oration should also consult the RTA-edition with its excellent introduction, its comprehensive list of manuscripts and editions, its critical apparatus, and its copious notes.

Michael von Cotta-Schønberg

## Table of contents

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context
2. Themes
  - 2.1. Conduct of the war according to Christian ethics
  - 2.2. Unimportance of Turkish superiority in numbers
3. Date, place, audience and format
4. Text
  - 4.1. Manuscripts
  - 4.2. Editions
  - 4.3. Present edition
5. Sources
6. Bibliography
7. Sigla

### II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

#### 1. In hoc florentissimo

- 1.1. Introduction [1-7]
  - 1.1.1. Diets of Regensburg and Frankfurt [1]
  - 1.1.2. Promises of the princes [2-5]
  - 1.1.3. Agenda of the diet [6]
  - 1.1.4. Captatio benevolentiae [7]
- 1.2. General military issues [8-9]
- 1.3. All victories come from God [10-11]
- 1.4. God gives victory to those who are just and good [12-17]
- 1.5. Christians suffer defeats because of their sins [18-19]
- 1.6. Necessity of repentance [20]
- 1.7. Doing away with vice [21-31]
  - 1.7.1. Pride [21-25]
  - 1.7.2. Greed [26-27]
  - 1.7.3. Cruelty and licentiousness [28]
  - 1.7.4. Idleness [29-31]
- 1.8. Christians need not fear Turkish superiority in numbers [32-36]

**2. Astantes [37-43]**

**3. Frequentissimus [44-62]**





## **I. INTRODUCTION**

## 1. Context<sup>1</sup>

After the Fall of Constantinople in May 1453, the leaders of the two international institutions in Europe, Holy Roman Emperor Friedrich III and Pope Nicolaus V, endeavoured to organise a joint European crusade against the Turks. Two imperial diets discussed the matter, in May 1454 in Regensburg and in October 1454 in Frankfurt. Both of these diets supported the idea of a crusade in principle, but in practice only lukewarmly. The organisation of the crusade was left to a third diet, to be held in the presence of the emperor at the imperial court in Wiener Neustadt.

Though the main object of the diet was the Turkish matter, it was to some extent overshadowed by other issues: affairs of the empire, conflict between the courts of the emperor and King Ladislaus of Hungary, machinations of the Archbishop of Trier in favour of German ecclesiastical independence from the papacy, and so forth.

At the opening of the diet on 25 February 1455, Bishop Piccolomini delivered an oration. Remarkably, he does not mention that oration in his *Commentarii*, but only his later oration to the Hungarian ambassadors, the “*Si mihi*” [24], of 25 March:

*The time appointed for the next diet soon approached. Archbishop Jacob of Trier, Margrave Albert of Brandenburg, Margrave Karl of Baden, and a few of the other German princes joined the emperor at Wiener Neustadt; the remaining princes sent delegations. The bishops and chief barons of Hungary came seeking aid; they spoke at length about the crusade against the Turks and the prospects of victory. From Italy there came the Apostolic Legate - the same as at Regensburg and Frankfurt - Bishop Giovanni of Pavia, who thought himself extremely wise and eloquent, though in the opinion of others the best that could be said for him was that he was not exactly a fool nor entirely unversed in speaking. He was followed by Michele Riccio, representing King Alfonso of Sicily and Aragon, an orator with a greater passion for invective than for praise. Giovanni da Capistrano was also there, tirelessly preaching sermons to arouse the people to arms against the Turks. At this diet, Aeneas gave a public address at the emperor's command, replying to the ambassadors of Hungary. This was afterwards published and included among his Orations.<sup>2</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> CO, I, 28; RTA, 19, 3, esp. pp. 454-508; Ady, pp. 129-130; Boulting, pp. 210-211; Helmrath: *German*, esp. pp. 60; Helmrath: *Pius*, esp. pp. 94-95; Helmrath: *Reichstagsreden*, pp. 265 ff.; Housley, esp. pp. 222, 227; Mit-

chell, pp. 114-115; Nowak, pp. 178-185; Pastor, I, pp. 480-483; Reinhardt, p. 162-165; Schwoebel, p. 33; Setton, II, pp. 157-158; Stolf, pp. 284-285; Toews, pp. 241-246, esp. pp. 254-260; Voigt, III, pp. 132 ff; Introduction to

orations “*Quamvis omnibus*” [21] and “*Constantionopolitana clades*” [22]

<sup>2</sup> CO, I, 28 (Meserve, II, pp. 137-139)

The German princes were not interested, to put it mildly, in the crusade, but rather desired reforms of the empire which would further curtail the powers of the emperor, placing him in a serious dilemma: *If he gave way to the Electors, the scanty remnants of his power were gone; if he refused, the Diet would not vote troops for the crusade. Imperial policy, both religious and political, was in danger of receiving a blow from which it could not recover.*<sup>1</sup>

This was the rather unfavourable political setting of Piccolomini's orations at the Diet of Wiener Neustadt.

## 2. Themes

Apart from a recapitulation of the results and themes of the previous diets in Regensburg and Frankfurt, the main themes of the "*In hoc florentissimo*" are:

- The conduct of war according to Christian ethics
- The unimportance of Turkish superiority in numbers

### 2.1. Conduct of the war according to Christian ethics

In his early oration, the "*Non est apud me*" [6] of 1446, to his parishioners in Aspach, Piccolomini had - with help from Cicero! - given a summary of Christian morals as applying to laymen, saying that:

*in war, you must keep your word to your enemies. Moreover, you should not treat them cruelly, for they, too, are men, and they may even think that they are fighting a just war. On our part, we should take care not to engage in war without reasonable cause, and the counsels of peace should always prevail over arms. When necessary, we should not decline to fight for our faith, country, and truth, but we should show moderation so as not to be regarded as cruel, faithless, and inhuman. We should not thirst for blood. After a victory, the authors of evil should be punished, with moderation, but the many should be spared. And though civil law declares that the victor may legitimately keep the spoils of war, a Christian should not take any such, he should not destroy cities, plunder, or slaughter the crowd, but consider it sufficient to get peace through war. [Sect. 129]*

---

<sup>1</sup> Toews, p. 260

In 1455, he again dealt with Christian morality as applying to the conduct of war.

Most importantly, he underscored that *all victories are from God, who gives victory to whom he wills* [Sect. 10]. And since *God is absolutely just and good*, He will give victory to *men who are themselves just and good* [Sect. 12].

It follows that if Christians are sometimes defeated by unbelievers, it is not because God favours the unbelievers but because he punishes the Christians for their sins [Sect. 18].

Therefore, Christians going to war against the infidels must repent of their sins and change their evil ways:

*But since we are sinners and God does not listen to sinners, we must renounce sins and change our evil ways. Who doubts that we have all sinned? We have turned away from the testament of God; we have been wicked, and therefore we have been visited by evils without number. Therefore, the City of Jerusalem has been lost, Antiochia has been surrendered, Alexandria has been profaned, Constantinople has been conquered, all the East and the South have fallen to strangers, the glory of the Greeks has been destroyed, the liberty of the Latins is threatened, our religion has been pushed into a corner of Europe, and we have been made a scoff and derision to the gentiles. Our God has turned away from us because of our sins; his right hand will no longer help us in battle, and his arm is against us.* [Sect. 20].

This means that Christians should do away with:

- the vice of pride, which causes fatal divisions in armies [Sect. 21];
- greed, which makes soldiers fight for booty instead of Christ – and which alienates the very peoples to be liberated by the Christian troops [Sect. 26];
- cruelty and licentiousness, which turn defeated enemies into desperate fighters [Sect. 28]; and
- idleness, which is detrimental to the necessary discipline in the army [Sect. 30].

Abandoning vice, the soldiers should embrace the Christian virtues of humility, generosity, chastity, mercy, solicitude, and abstinence:

*So, all these beasts should be driven out of the camp if we want to be victorious: pride, greed, lust, cruelty, laziness and luxury. Instead of these, we should call upon those noble and*

*beautiful maidens: humility, generosity, chastity, mercy, solicitude, and abstinence. It is those who can make the Divine Piety accept us and summon the angel of victory from the summit of Heaven.* [Sect. 30].

The German captains and their *Landsknechte* would presumably have been surprised - and horrified - by such demands ...

In between his moral counsels and in spite of his own reference to foolish Formio lecturing the great general Hannibal on military strategy,<sup>1</sup> Piccolomini cannot refrain from dispensing various pieces of advice on military issues proper, based on historical examples and classical authors on military matters, especially Vegetius.<sup>2</sup>

At some point, he takes up the question, discussed by Aristotle, of what is the most important quality in a general: high moral standards or great military skills. Aristotle prefers the man with great military skills, a viewpoint with which Piccolomini is bound to disagree, in view of his conception of victories as granted by God to good and just men [Sect. 13]. Piccolomini later extricates himself from this uncomfortable position by pointing out that it is difficult for men to judge the moral integrity of other men, including generals, and therefore the safer course is to prefer competence and to choose captains who combine a maximum of military competence with a minimum of wickedness. [Sect. 19]

## 2.2. Unimportance of Turkish superiority in numbers

Among the German princes, there was an understandable concern about Turkish superiority in numbers. Piccolomini himself calculated that the total Christian force would number 80,000 soldiers<sup>3</sup> against a Turkish force of 200,000 to 300,000 [Sect. 32].<sup>4</sup>

His answer to this problem was that large armies are unmanageable and cannot be properly commanded and fed [Sect. 33]: history shows that such forces may easily be defeated by smaller armies [Sect. 34-35]. In conclusion, a smaller Christian army, with experienced leaders and strong and disciplined soldiers, would not have to fear a larger, unwieldy, and unskilled Turkish army:

*An army that is too large is always at risk of being slaughtered. But if your army gathers in the numbers that have been decided, it will neither be contemptible because of its smallness nor defeated because of its great numbers. You will have experienced leaders and strong and*

---

<sup>1</sup> See sect. 9

<sup>2</sup> See Helmrath: *Pius*, p. 94

<sup>3</sup> Composed of 40,000 German troops and 40,000 troops from other nations, see section 32

<sup>4</sup> On the desirable size of the Christian army, see Housley, pp. 222, 227

*disciplined soldiers, ready for the signals. You will be fighting armed against unarmed, skilled against unskilled, and brave against cowards. For, as Aristotle testifies, the Asians are not warlike. Add to this that the Turks are not loved by the Greeks. They will be fighting surrounded by enemies, and once they begin to flee, they will have to fear not only you but also their Greeks. So, since you will be fighting for God's cause, there is no reason for you to fear the numbers of the Turks, for God can just as easily win with small forces as with large ones. Indeed, he would rather win with few soldiers so that the victory will be seen as His entirely.*  
[Sect. 36]

### 3. Date, place, audience, and format

The oration was delivered on 25 February 1455 in the royal castle in Wiener Neustadt.

The audience consisted of Emperor Friederich III, Georg Podiebrad, Governor of Bohemia, and a number of German princes, nobles, envoys, and counsellors participating in the diet.<sup>1</sup>

The format was that of a formal oration held on behalf of His Imperial Majesty.

### 4. Text<sup>2</sup>

Five texts document the oration given by Bishop Piccolomini at the opening of the Imperial Diet in Wiener Neustadt on 25 February 1455.

One is the full-length text "*In hoc florentissimo*". Another is a preliminary but unused version of the introduction to that text with the incipit "*Astantes*". A third one is a different but unfinished version of the oration with the incipit "*Frequentissimus*." The fourth is a letter from Piccolomini to Cardinal Carvajal of 12 March 1455. And the fifth is a report of the representatives of Nürnberg, written immediately after 25 February.<sup>3</sup>

How are these texts related to each other, and how are they related to the oration as actually delivered at the diet?

---

<sup>1</sup> RTA, 19, 3, p. 454, 504

<sup>2</sup> Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II's orations, see COR, 1: ch. 5

<sup>3</sup> RTA, 19, 3, pp. 503-509

Voigt believed that the "*Frequentissimus*" was the text of the oration as delivered at the diet. The reason for its incompleteness would be that the missing parts, on the Christian ethics of war, were simply taken from the draft version of the "*In hoc florentissimo*".<sup>1</sup> Voigt may have been right, but some problems in the texts must be taken into account in determining their mutual relationship:

Firstly, in the "*In hoc florentissimo*", Piccolomini explicitly mentions the presence of Janos Hunyadi, Governor of Hungary during King Ladislaus' minority. However, Hunyadi was not in Wiener Neustadt at the time. The later arrival of the Hungarian delegation in Wiener Neustadt occasioned another Piccolomini-oration of welcome, the "*Si mihi*" [24] of 25 March, addressed to the Hungarians on behalf of the emperor. This appears to prove that the "*In hoc florentissimo*" was written before it was known that Hunyadi would not attend the opening of the diet in Wiener Neustadt on 25 February.

Secondly, the summary of the main points of Piccolomini's oration sent back to Nürnberg by its envoys Niklas Muffel and Hans Pirckheimer, who heard it in person, differs on various points from the text of the "*In hoc florentissimo*."<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, it is somewhat strange that the title of the "*Astantes*" / "*In hoc florentissimo*" gives the incorrect location as Vienna, whereas the title of the "*Frequentissimus*" gives the correct location of [Wiener] Neustadt.

Fourthly, in a letter to Cardinal Carvajal of 12 March 1455, Piccolomini wrote about his opening address to the diet<sup>3</sup>:

*The day was spent on such disputes, but when evening came and all were standing, the emperor requested that someone speak in his name. This task fell to me, which was as difficult as it was unexpected, for it had previously been decided to have the oration in German, and the task had been assigned to Ulrich Riederer. But since that decision was changed and I had to speak, I obeyed because I had to and not because I wished to. Having to improvise, I said that there are four motives that draw sensible men into war: acquiring profit, avoiding harm, avenging injuries, and gaining praise. I showed that each of these is at play in the war against the Turks. Then I said that the emperor had been greatly affected by the disaster in Constantinople and that he, therefore, convoked the diets in Regensburg and Frankfurt to defend the Christian commonwealth. I mentioned what had been done in Frankfurt and the willingness of the princes and the legates to protect the Catholic Faith. On behalf of the emperor, I asked all to discuss how the promises of Frankfurt could be implemented. I showed that there were four possible obstructions: the shortness of time since some thought the army could not be gathered as soon as expedient; the*

---

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, III, pp. 138-139, note 1

<sup>2</sup> RTA, 19, 3, p. 504

<sup>3</sup> In the letter, Piccolomini mentions that the oration was held be-

fore Archbishop Sierck left for Vienna (sect. 24). The ambassadors from Nürnberg stated that the

archbishop left on 27 February (RTA, 19/3, p. 349, n. 74).



*insufficient aid promised since many said it was useless to mobilise such small a force against the immense multitude of the Turks; the conflicts in Germany that could not send an army abroad while fighting at home; and the uncertainty about the fleet since there was no news about the peace in Italy. Then I countered the objections and argued that the matter could be resolved in time and usefully so. I asked them to only be willing and told them that His Imperial Majesty would not omit anything that his office demanded<sup>1</sup> (EPI, 8: 607, 22).*

Piccolomini's description closely fits that of the Nürnberg envoys (see above),<sup>2</sup> which means that it is independently verified and must be considered the most authentic witness to the contents of his opening address to the diet.

Fifthly, it may be noted that in his *Commentarii* Pius only mentions his oration "*Si mihi*" to the Hungarians and not the "*In hoc florentissimo*". This is quite strange since Pius was otherwise careful to note his major public orations, of which an oration on behalf of the emperor and in his presence, at the opening of an imperial diet, must certainly have been such.

The truth of the matter cannot be settled on the basis of present evidence, but the interpretation proposed by the present editor is that, believing he would be asked to give the opening address to the diet, as was done in Regensburg and Frankfurt, Piccolomini wrote a first draft of the oration with the incipit "*Astantes*", which was replaced when he wrote the full text of the "*In hoc florentissimo*", mentioning the presence of Janos Hunyadi – who eventually would not appear. After the text of the "*In hoc florentissimo*" was finished, it was apparently decided that Ulrich Riederer would give the opening address and in German. Piccolomini was, therefore, surprised when, at the meeting itself, he was required to give the opening address instead of Riederer and in Latin. So, he had to improvise an oration, drawing, of course, on his memory of the earlier addresses and texts. This is the address

---

<sup>1</sup> *Cum dies disputando tereretur jamque nox adventasset, iussit Caesar stantibus omnibus suo nomine verba fieri. Id oneris mihi demandatum est, quod tanto gravius fuit quanto minus praecogitatum, nam prius placuerat verbis Teutonicis orationem haberi, quae provincia Ulrico Riderio debebatur. At cum mutato consilio me loqui oporteret, necessitate magis quam voluntate parui. Dixi ergo ex tempore quattuor esse causas, propter quas homines rationis participes in bella trahi solerent, scilicet aut propter lucrum captandum aut propter injurias ulciscendas aut propter laudem consequendam, easque in hoc uno bello contra Turcos*

*gerendo singulas continere monstravi. Dixi deinde, quantam molestiam Caesar accepisset de clade Constantinopolitana utque pro tuenda re publica Christiana concilium et apud Ratisponam et apud Frankfordiam indixerit. Commemoravi, quae gesta fuissent Frankfordiae, quam volentes illic principes atque legati sese ostenderint ad consulendum catholicae fidei. Rogavi vice caesaris, omnes in medium consulere vellent, ut, quae Frankfordiae promissa fuissent, executioni mandari possint. Ostendi quattuor esse difficultates, quae possent opponi: temporis brevitate, quia non videretur aliquibus tam cito quam esset expediens exercitum congregari*

*posse; paucitatem auxilii promissi, quia frustra nonnulli dicerent tam parvas copias contra infinitam Turcorum multitudinem armandam esse; discordias Alamaniae, quae, cum domi pugnaret, extra non posset exercitum mittere; incertitudinem maritimae classis, cum nihil de pace Italica compertum haberetur. Dissolvi deinde quaevis objecta resque et in tempore et utiliter edocui fieri posse. Solum, ut animo volenti essent, rogavi. Imperatoriam majestatem nihil eorum, quae sibi ex officio incumberent, praetermissuram dixi.*

<sup>2</sup> Nowak, p. 192, n. 107; RTA, 19/3, p. 348, n. 66

summarised in his letter to Caraval of 16 March 1454 and documented by the Nürnberg representatives. Later, Piccolomini decided to write a completely new version, the “*Frequentissimus*”, which, however, he never managed to finish. Thus, the “*Astantes*” and the “*In hoc florentissimo*” represent an Early Version of the oration, drafted before the opening of the diet. The version actually delivered at the diet, would be an Intermediate Version, summarised by Piccolomini in the letter of 16 March. And the “*Frequentissimus*” is a later version, the Final Version, which was never completed.

The “*In hoc florentissimo*” is included in all seven manuscripts containing the papal collection of Piccolomini/Pius’ orations from 1462. The draft introduction “*Astantes*” is omitted in D and G (which derives from D), whereas the alternative, unfinished version “*Frequentissimus*” is omitted in the Milan manuscript E. One manuscript G, (Mantova) has the “*In hoc florentissimo*” twice!

Apparently, the three texts are not known from other manuscripts, indicating that the oration was not – like Piccolomini’s orations at the preceding diets in Regensburg and Frankfurt – disseminated individually after the diet.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.1. Manuscripts

The seven manuscripts containing the oration are, as mentioned, all the manuscripts containing the Collected Orations of Pope Pius II from 1462<sup>2</sup>:

- **Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana**  
544, ff. 103r-115v<sup>3</sup> (G) \*<sup>4</sup>
- **Mantova / Biblioteca Comunale**  
100, ff. 59v-69r, 167r-188v<sup>5</sup> \*
- **Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana**  
I 97 inf., ff. 120v-131v<sup>6</sup> \*

<sup>1</sup> See also the lists of manuscripts containing the three texts in RTA, 19, 3, pp. 454, 458, and 491

<sup>2</sup> Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II’s orations, see COR, 1: ch. 5

<sup>3</sup> ff. 103r-112r “*In hoc florentissimo*”; ff. 112r-115v “*Frequent-*

*tissimus*”. The ms. does not have the “*Astantes*”

<sup>4</sup> Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in COR, 11, are marked with an asterisk

<sup>5</sup> ff. 59r-69r “*In hic florentissimo*”; ff. 167r-169r “*Astantes*”; ff. 169r-

183v “*In hoc florentissimo*” (twice!); ff. 183v-188v “*Frequentissimus*”

<sup>6</sup> ff. 120v-122r “*Astantes*”; ff. 122r-132r “*In hoc florentissimo*”. The ms. does not have the “*Frequentissimus*”

- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**

Chis. J.VI.211, ff. 113v-126v<sup>1</sup> **(D)** \*

Chis. J.VIII 284, ff. 90r-98r, 143v-146v<sup>2</sup> **(A)** \*

Chis. J. VIII 286, ff. 171r-193v<sup>3</sup>

Vat. lat. 1788, ff. 128r-140r, 201v-205r<sup>4</sup>

## 4.2. Editions

Former editions of the texts are:

- Pius II: *Orationes politica et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759. / T. III, pp. 288-364
- Helmuth, Johannes: *Die Reichstagsreden des Enea Silvio Piccolomini 1454/55 – Studien zur Reichstag und Rhetorik*. Universität Köln, 1994, pp. 425-463
- *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Friedrich III*. Fünfte Abteilung, Dritter Teil: Reichsversammlung zu Wiener Neustadt 1455. Bearb. von Gabriele Annas. München, 2013. (Deutsche Reichstagsakten, ÄR; 19, 3), pp. 454-502

## 4.3 Present edition

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

---

<sup>1</sup> ff. 113v-123r “*In hoc florentissimo*”; ff. 123r-126v “*Frequentissimus*”. The ms. does not have the “*Astantes*”

<sup>2</sup> ff. 90r-92r “*Astantes*”; ff. 92r-98r “*In hoc florentissimo*”; ff. 143v-146v “*Frequentissimus*”

<sup>3</sup> ff. 171r-173r “*Astantes*”; ff. 173v-187v “*In hoc florentissimo*”; ff. 187v-193v “*Frequentissimus*”

<sup>4</sup> ff. 128r-129v “*Astantes*”; ff. 129v-140r “*In hoc florentissimo*”; ff. 201v-205r “*Frequentissimus*”

*Text:*

In view of the RTA-edition, the present edition is based only on A, D, and G, representing the main versions of the papal collection of 1462, with A as the lead manuscript.

*Pagination:*

The pagination is that of the BAV / Chis.I.VIII 284 **(A)**.

*Textual apparatus:*

Passages occurring in both the "*In hoc florentissimo*" and in the "*Astantes*" are given in bold types.

## 5. Sources<sup>1</sup>

In this oration, altogether 83 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified.

Biblical: 29

Classical: 46

Patristic and medieval: 7

Contemporary: 1

**All: 83**

The classical quotations dominate over the biblical. There are few patristic quotations<sup>2</sup> and only one quotations from contemporary authors.

---

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of Piccolomini's use of sources, see COR, 1: 8

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Helmrath: *Pius*, p. 94, n. 49: *Vorbild und vorsichtig benutzte Quelle ist unter anderem Ambro-*

*sius' "De officiis ministrorum".* The basis for this assertion is unclear

## **Biblical sources: 29**

### Old Testament: 21

- Exodus: 2
- 1. Chronicles: 1
- Daniel: 2
- Ecclesiasticus: 2
- Isaiah: 1
- Jeremiah: 1
- Joshua: 1
- Judges: 1
- Judith: 2
- 1. Machabees: 1
- 2. Machabees: 1
- Psalms: 5
- Wisdom: 1

### New Testament: 8

- Matthew: 1
- Luke: 3
- James: 2
- Philippians: 1
- Romans: 1

## **Classical sources: 46**

- Aristotle: 3<sup>1</sup>
- Arrianus: 1
- Cicero: 12<sup>2</sup>
- Claudianus: 1<sup>3</sup>
- Gellius: 1
- Horatius: 1<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ethica Nicom.; 1; Politica: 2

<sup>2</sup> De officiis: 2; De oratore: 1; De republica: 1; Pro lege Manilia: 9

<sup>3</sup> De tertio consulatu Honorii

<sup>4</sup> Carmina

- Justinus: 7<sup>1</sup>
- Juvenalis: 3
- Lucanus: 2<sup>2</sup>
- Plutarch: 1<sup>3</sup>
- Sallustius: 1<sup>4</sup>
- Suetonius: 2<sup>5</sup>
- Tacitus: 1<sup>6</sup>
- Ulpianus: 1
- Valerius Maximus: 1
- Vegetius: 7<sup>7</sup>
- Vergilius: 1

#### **Patristic and medieval sources: 7**

- Augustinus: 1<sup>8</sup>
- Bede the Venerable: 1<sup>9</sup>
- Otto von Freising: 5<sup>10</sup>

#### **Contemporary sources: 1**

- Biondo, F.: 1<sup>11</sup>

## **6. Bibliography**

Ady, Cecilia M.: *Pius II (Æneas Silvius Piccolomini) – the Humanist Pope*. London, 1913

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Epitoma

<sup>2</sup> Bellum civile

<sup>3</sup> Parellel lives / Marius

<sup>4</sup> De vitis caesarum / Titus

<sup>5</sup> De bello Jugurthino

<sup>6</sup> Annales

<sup>7</sup> Epitoma rei militaris

<sup>8</sup> De civitate Dei

<sup>9</sup> Historia ecclesiastica

<sup>10</sup> Chronica

<sup>11</sup> Historiarum ab inclinatione  
Romanorum Imperii decades

Bruni, Leonardo: *De militia* (= *De re militari*). 1422

- Bayley, C.C.: *War and Society in Renaissance Florence. The De Militia of Leonardo Bruni*. Toronto, 1961, pp. 360-397

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

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

Helmrath, Johannes: The German Reichstage and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 53-69

Helmrath, Johannes: Pius II. und die Türken. In: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, hrsg. von B. Guthmüller & W. Kühlmann. Tübingen, 2000, pp. 79-138

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

Housley, Norman: Pope Pius II and Crusading. In: *Crusades*, 11 (2012) 209-247

*Loeb Classical Library*. [Digital Version]<sup>1</sup>

Mitchell, R.J.: *The Laurels and the Tiara – Pope Pius II, 1458-1464*. London, 1962

Nowak, Jessika: *Ein Kardinal im Zeitalter der Renaissance – die Karriere des Giovanni di Castiglione (ca. 1413 – 1460)*. Tübingen, 2011

Pastor, Ludwig: *Geschichte der Päpste im Zeitalter der Renaissance*. 16 vols. Freiburg i.B., 1886-1933 [and later editions]

Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Epistolae*

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

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.loebclassics.com/>

Pius II: *Commentarii rerum memorabilium que suis temporibus contigerunt*. [1462-1464]

- *Commentarii rerum memorabilium que suis temporibus contigerunt*. Ed. A van Heck. II vols. Città del Vaticano, 1984 (Studi e testi; 312-313)
- *Commentaries*. Ed. M. Meserve and M. Simonetta. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003 ff.
- *The Commentaries of Pius II*. Tr. By Florence Alden Gragg. Northampton, Mass.: 1937 - 1957 (Smith College Studies in History; 22, 25, 30, 35, 43)

Pius II: *Orationes*. [1436-1464]

- *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759
- *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. Ed. and transl. by Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg. 12 vols. 2019-2020 [Final Version, 2024-2025.] [ Available on the web in HAL Archives]

Reinhardt, Volker: *Pius II. Piccolomini – Der Papst, mit dem die Renaissance begann*. München, 2013

Schwoebel, Robert: *The Shadow of the Crescent – the Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453-1517)*. Nieuwkoop, 1967

Setton, Kenneth M.: *The Papacy and the Levant*. 4 vols. Philadelphia, 1976-1984 (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society; 114+161-162)

Toews, John B.: *Emperor Frederick III and his Relations with the Papacy from 1440 to 1493*. University of Colorado, Ph.D., 1962

Voigt, Georg: *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter*. 3 vols. Berlin, 1856-63

## 7. Sigla

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



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

**G** = Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana / 544

## **1. In hoc florentissimo**

## Oratio Aeneae Silvii Piccolominei, episcopi Senensis, qui postea pontificatum maximum adeptus Pius II appellatus est in conventu Viennensi jussu Caesaris<sup>1</sup>

Hic incipit oratio<sup>2</sup>:

[1] {91r} In hoc florentissimo atque amplissimo conventu vestro, **reverendissimi patres, illustrissimi principes, ceterique viri magnanimi ac praestantissimi, non est cur hodie disseramus an bellum indicere Turcis expediat.** Id namque et in Ratispona super Danubium et in Frankfordia super Muganum abunde discussum atque determinatum est. In his enim locis ex jussione divi Caesaris Friderici, **Romanorum imperatoris, domini nostri piissimi** ac gloriosissimi, post amissam Constantinopolim ad consulendum reipublicae Christianae duo concilia celebrata sunt, in quibus satis superque satis deplorata est Constantinopolitana calamitas. **In Ratispona** putaverunt omnes, qui aderant, **necessarium esse pugnare in Turcos**, si religionis nostrae decus obtinendum est. **In Frankfordia re pressius examinata ac digesta decretumque est contra Turcos bellum. Repromissa sunt Hungaris**, quae petierunt<sup>3</sup> **auxilia, statutus militum numerus qui ex Almania deducatur; classis ex Italia comparandae cura ad sanctissimum urbis Romae pontificem Nicolaum quintum remissa qui per legatum suum id oneris acceptavit.** Inclytus Hungariae ac Bohemiae rex Ladislaus neque pacem neque indutias belli cum Turcis habiturum se medio tempore affirmavit viresque suas omnes adversus illorum collecturum se ait.

---

<sup>1</sup> Enee Silvii episcopi Senensis oratio in conventu Viennensi Ce-

saris nomine de modo belligerendi contra Turcos **D, G**

<sup>2</sup> Hic ... oratio *omit.* D, G

<sup>3</sup> quae petierunt *omit.* G

# Oration of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena, who was called Pius II after he became pope, in the Diet of Vienna, at the Emperor's command

## 1.1. Introduction

### 1.1.1. Diets of Regensburg and Frankfurt

[1] Reverend Fathers, Illustrious Princes and you others, great and eminent men. Today, in this excellent<sup>1</sup> and grand assembly, we do not have to talk about whether to declare war on the Turks, for that has already been abundantly discussed and decided in Regensburg on the Danube and in Frankfurt on the Main. At the command of Holy Roman Emperor Friedrich,<sup>2</sup> our pious and glorious lord, two diets<sup>3</sup> have been held in these cities to take counsel concerning the Christian Commonwealth<sup>4</sup> after the loss of Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> At these meetings, the catastrophe in Constantinople has been lamented enough - and even more than enough!<sup>6</sup> In Regensburg, all present considered it necessary to fight the Turks in order to maintain the honour of our religion. In Frankfurt, the matter was examined and pondered in greater detail, and it was formally decided to go to war against the Turks. The Hungarians were promised the aid they sought. It was decided how many soldiers should be sent from Germany. The charge of mobilising a fleet from Italy was entrusted to His Holiness, the Bishop of the City of Rome, Nicolaus V,<sup>7</sup> who accepted it through his legate<sup>8</sup>. The Illustrious King Ladislaus<sup>9</sup> of Hungary and Bohemia declared that in the meantime he would make neither peace nor truce with the Turks and said that he would mobilise all his forces against theirs.

---

<sup>1</sup> "florentissimo"

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich III of Habsburg (1415-1493): Duke of Austria (as Friedrich V) from 1424. Elected King of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor in 1440, crowned in Rome in 1452

<sup>3</sup> "concilia"

<sup>4</sup> "respublica"

<sup>5</sup> To the Turkish sultan, Mehmed II, in May 1453

<sup>6</sup> A great and most eloquent lamentor had actually been Piccolomini himself

<sup>7</sup> Nicolaus V (Tommaso Parentucelli) (1397-1455): Pope from 1447 to his death

<sup>8</sup> Giovanni da Castiglione: Bishop of Pavia, later cardinal

<sup>9</sup> Ladislaus the Posthumous of Habsburg (1440-1457): Archduke of Austria from 1440, King of Hungary from 1444 and King of Bohemia from 1453 to his death

[2] Haec serenissimus imperator certissima putat, nec promissa tot procerum, tot principum, tot communitatum quovis pacto ruitura credere potest. Scit inclytam nationem suam semper constantem ac sui dicti tenacem fuisse, neque ambigit, quin modo potissimum dicto suo faciat satis, quando de statu totius Christianitatis agitur. Nisi enim promissus progrediatur exercitus, Hungariam amittimus, ne dicam prodimus, cui Turci infensi sunt. Ea perdita nec Italia neque Alamania tuta est. Intellexit divus imperator noster, quam liberaliter ac magnifice sanctitatis domini nostri papae<sup>1</sup> in Frankfordiensi concilio per legatum suum sese obtulit, qui non modo pecuniae, sed ne vitae quidem suae parsurus est, ut Christianae plebi subveniat. Rex Ladislaus, quem paulo ante honoris gratia nominavi, Alberto patre et avo Sigismundo dignissima progenies, {91v} missis oratoribus suis, exposito regni sui discrimine, quamvis adhuc puer, aetatulam suam bello pro Christi fide gerendo, si vos sibi adiumento fueritis, consecraturum se ait. Theodericus Maguntinus et Jacobus Treverensis archiepiscopi, sacri Romani imperii principes electores, qui praesentes in conventu fuere, cognita Christiani populi necessitate, ad gerendum contra Turcos bellum omnes vires suas obtulere. Neque Theodericus, Coloniensis ecclesiae pontifex, per legatos suos<sup>2</sup> minora promisit. Fridericus autem, comes Palatinus, altus Baioariae sanguis generosaque Caesarum soboles, non modo se missurum in hoc bellum auxilia testatus est, sed iterum se quoque, si fortis exercitus instituatur, et in propria persona militaturum se ait.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Sic!*

<sup>2</sup> *omit. G*

### 1.1.2. Promises of the princes

[2] The Most Serene Emperor considers this to be firmly concluded, and he does not believe that so many nobles, so many princes, and so many cities will in any way fail their promises. He knows that his glorious nation has always been steadfast and kept its word,<sup>1</sup> and he does not doubt that it will fulfil its promises, especially now that all of Christianity is at stake. And unless the promised army sets out, we shall lose, not to say betray Hungary, the enemy of the Turks. And when Hungary is lost, neither Italy nor Germany are safe.<sup>2</sup>

Our Holy Emperor has seen how generously and magnificently His Holiness, Our Lord Pope, through his legate to the Diet of Frankfurt, has committed himself to the cause, declaring that he would spare neither funds nor even his own life in assisting the Christian people.

King Ladislaus, whom for honour's sake I mentioned a moment ago, the worthy offspring of his father Albrecht and his grandfather Sigismund,<sup>3</sup> has sent ambassadors to explain the danger to his realm and to declare that - although still a boy – he dedicates his tender age to fighting for the Christian Faith – if only you will help him.

Archbishops Dietrich of Mainz<sup>4</sup> and Jakob of Trier,<sup>5</sup> prince electors of the Holy Roman Empire, attended the diet<sup>6</sup>: recognising the urgent need of the Christian people, they offered all their resources to the war against the Turks. Through his legates, Archbishop Dietrich of Cologne made similar promises.

And Friedrich,<sup>7</sup> Count Palatine, of the high blood of Bavaria and a noble descendant of emperors, has declared that if a strong army is mobilised, he will not only send troops to the war but even fight in person.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tacitus: *Annales*, 13.54: *nullos mortalium armis aut fide ante Germanos esse exclamant*

<sup>2</sup> Piccolomini's "domino theory"

<sup>3</sup> Ladislas was the son of the King of the Romans, Albert II. (d. 1438)

and Elisabeth, whose father was emperor Sigismund (d. 1437)

<sup>4</sup> Dietrich von Erbach (d. 1459): Archbishop of Cologne from 1434 to his death

<sup>5</sup> Jakob von Sierck (d. 1455): Archbishop of Trier from 1440 to his death

<sup>6</sup> "conventu"

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich I der Siegfriede (1425-1476): Count Palatine, Prince Elector

[3] Quid Philippum, Burgundiae ducem, commemorem, nobilissimum Franciae sanguinem, cor Deo dignum, mentemque caelo deditam, et animum in obsequia Christi paratissimum? Referamne, quae praesens ille Ratisponae pollicitus est<sup>1</sup>? Modestius existimo de tanta promissione silere, ne magnificentissimas oblationes tenui atque incompta oratione mea comminuam. Oratores certe ipsius, cum apud Frankfordiam rogarentur, an auxilia sibi deputata Philippus missurus esset, non modo missurum eum dixere, sed indigne laturum, quia exiguus ex eo militum numerus peteretur. Nec germanus Caesaris, Albertus, sublimis Austriae sanguis, tantis rebus defuturum se quovis modo confirmavit. Ludovicus, Baioariae dux excellens, paternis opibus ac sua virtute potentissimus, Ratisponae per se ipsum, Frankfordiae per legatos Christianae necessitati magnifice subventurum se dixit.

---

<sup>1</sup> et *add.* G

[3] What shall I say about Duke Philippe of Burgundy,<sup>1</sup> of the most noble blood of France, a heart worthy of God, a spirit dedicated to Heaven, and a soul ready to obey Christ? Should I tell you what he promised in Regensburg? No, I think it will be more seemly to remain silent about his magnificent offers so as not to diminish his promise with my insignificant and unpolished oration. When in Frankfurt his orators were asked if Philippe would send the troops allotted to him, they replied that not only would he send troops, but that his dignity would be slighted if such a small number of soldiers were requested of him.<sup>2</sup>

And the emperor's brother, Albrecht,<sup>3</sup> of the high blood of Austria, has declared that he will certainly not fail this great cause.

Ludwig, excellent Duke of Bavaria,<sup>4</sup> mighty by virtue of paternal wealth and strong by virtue of his own qualities, has said, personally in Regensburg and through his legates in Frankfurt, that he would contribute generously to aid Christianity in its urgent need.

---

<sup>1</sup> Philippe III le Bon (1396-1467): Duke of Burgundy from 1419 to his death

<sup>2</sup> In Frankfurt, it had been stipulated that the contingent from

Burgundy would consist of 6.000 foot and 3.000 horsed soldiers

<sup>3</sup> Albrecht VI of Habsburg (1418 - 1463): Archduke of Austria, ruling Inner Austria (i.e. the duchies of

Styria, Carinthia and Carniola) from 1424 and Austria from 1457 to his death

<sup>4</sup> Ludwig IX der Reiche (1417-1479: Duke of Bayern-Landshut from 1450 to his death



[4] Quid de Theutonico Achille dicam? Quam volens, quam promptus, quam fervens ad tuendam ecclesiam nunc Ratisponae, nunc Frankfordiae visus est? Quaeritis, quis sit hic Achilles? Albertum ego marchionem Brandeburgensem, Germanicae nationis singulare lumen, Achillis nomine designo. Appellassem hunc Hectorem - ita equitationes, pugnas atque consilia illius Trojani et insuperabilem animum imitatur - nisi timuissem invictum principem victi herois nomine minorem reddere. Nam Hectorem bello superatum novimus: Albertum marchionem ex maximis ac periculosissimis proeliis victorem semper virtus eduxit. Carolus, marchio Badensis, cui Caesarea soror nupta est, laudatissimam illam in Frankfordia<sup>1</sup> vocem edidit: "Quamvis minor est mea potentia quam nobilitas, in obsequio tamen fidei nobilitatem magis quam potentiam intuebor, {92r} neque me Christianum putaverim, nisi laborantibus ceteris et ipse laboraverim." Praetereo, ne sim taedio, reliquos principes ac nobiles. Praetereo potentissimas ac magnificas civitates, quarum legati palmas ad caelum sustulere, cum de parando adversus infideles exercitu mentionem fieri audivere.

[5] Alfonsus, rex Aragonum et Siciliae, inter principes aevi nostri clarissimum sidus, victoriis ac triumphis illustratum, quem Christianorum spem maximam, barbarorum ingentem formidinem non injuria vocaverimus, praestantes<sup>2</sup> legatos Frankfordiam direxerat. Sed alter morbo in via decessit, alter in tempore comparere nequivit. Venit tamen hic ad Caesarem atque ea locutus est de rege suo, quae de principe magnanimo ac Christianissimo speranda fuerunt. Quid igitur est, quod jam hoc in loco perficiendum sit, quando et principes et civitates gerendi belli desiderio fervent? Quae placita atque conclusa sunt Frankfordiae apud omnes habentur rata; **sed quomodo, quove ordine executioni mandentur, id nunc in medium consulendum est.**<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> illam in Frankfordia *omit.* G

<sup>2</sup> *em.*; praestantis A, D, G

<sup>3</sup> Hic disputat quod promissa executioni mandentur *in marg.* D, G

[4] And what shall I say about the German Achilles, so willing, so ready, so eager to protect the Church, both in Regensburg and in Frankfurt? You ask: Who is this Achilles? It is Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg,<sup>1</sup> that remarkable light of Germany, whom I designate as Achilles.<sup>2</sup> I could have called him Hector<sup>3</sup> – so greatly does he resemble that Trojan with regard to riding, battles, counsels, and indomitable spirit – but I feared to belittle this unvanquished prince by giving him the name of a defeated hero. For we know that Hector was defeated in battle, whereas the bravery of Margrave Albrecht has always brought him victory, even in the greatest and most perilous battles.<sup>4</sup>

As for Karl, Margrave of Baden, spouse of the emperor's sister,<sup>5</sup> he made this praiseworthy statement in Frankfurt: "Since my nobility is greater than my might, I shall fulfil my duties to the Faith nobly rather than mightily. And I shall not consider myself a Christian unless I share the burdens of all."

So as not to bore you, I pass over the other princes and nobles and the powerful and magnificent cities whose legates raised their hands to Heaven when they heard about the army being mobilised against the infidels.

[5] Distinguished legates had also been sent to Frankfurt by Alfonso,<sup>6</sup> King of Aragon and Sicily, a shining star among the princes of this age, famous for his victories and triumphs, one whom we may justly call the greatest hope of the Christians and an enormous threat to the barbarians. However, one of the legates died from an illness on the way, and the other could not reach Frankfurt in time. Therefore, he came to the emperor here and gave a report from his king that fulfilled the expectations we have of such a magnanimous and most Christian prince.

So, as it is clear that both the princes and the cities are burning with desire for going to war, what is it that we should achieve now, in this place? All that was decided and concluded in Frankfurt has been confirmed. Now, we must discuss how to put it into effect and in what order.

---

<sup>1</sup> Albrecht III of Brandenburg (1414-1486): Margrave of Ansbach and Kulmbach as Albrecht I. From 1470, Prince Elector of Brandenburg to his death. Given the byname Achilles by Pius II

<sup>2</sup> Achilles: (Greek myth.) hero of the Trojan War and the central character and greatest warrior of Homer's *Iliad*

<sup>3</sup> Hector: (Greek myth.) Son of King Priam of Troy, crown prince

<sup>4</sup> See also the orations of Pius II "*Si sacrosancto*" [38] and "*Advenisse te citius*" [53] which very clearly point to Albrecht of Brandenburg as the military leader of the crusade against the Turks

<sup>5</sup> Katarina (1424-1493): sister of Emperor Friedrich III. Margravine of Baden

<sup>6</sup> Alfonso V the Magnanimous (1396-1458): King of Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily, Count of Barcelona from 1416, and King of Naples (as Alfonso I) from 1442 to his death

[6] Danda est opera, ut exercitus quantocius congregetur; eligendus est dux belli; quem capitaneum nominamus; Romani imperatorem appellavere; dicenda dies, qua progrediendum; nominandum iter, quo sit eundum; statuenda belli gerendi sedes; res frumentaria procuranda; inter Hungaros, Bohemos ac Theutones unitas facienda; **habenda cum Italis intelligentia certior: sciendum, quid illa natio gerat, quantam classem instruat, quem bello maritimo praeficiat, quo tempore sit exitura, quo loco Turcos invasura.** Super his ergo uti cogitetis atque attenti sitis, orat imperator, qui cum vestro consilio cuncta disponere decrevit.

[7] Verum quia summa omnium est, ut ita nos praeparemus, quatenus exercitum educentes vincere ac pacem Christiano populo parare possimus, jubet me Caesar nonnulla dicere, quae ad victoriam consequendam nedum idonea, sed etiam necessaria ducit: quam rem difficillimam reddit gravissimus ac frequentissimus conspectus vester. Illustrium namque virorum conventus, quanto disertissimis oratoribus animum elevatiorem efficit, tanto rudibus ac mihi similibus depressiorem reddit. Cumque nihil aures vestrae sustinere queant, nisi *perfectum ingenio, elaboratum industria*, nitidum eloquentia, vereor ne, dum Caesari pareo, mihi ipsi confusionem acquiram. Sed quis ego sum, qui tanti principis imperium devitem? Feram ignorantiae maculam, dum vitem contumaciae notam. Vos, si non mihi, at saltem Caesari, cujus nomine {92v} loquar, praebebitis aures.

### 1.1.3. Agenda of the Diet

[6] We must see to it that the army is gathered as soon as possible. We should elect a general – we call him captain, but the Romans called him *imperator*. We should set the date for the departure and decide on the route. It must be determined where the war should be fought. Provisions must be procured. We must ensure concord between Hungarians, Bohemians, and Germans. We should get more reliable information from the Italians so that we may know what that nation will do, how large a fleet it will commission, who will be its admiral, when the fleet will set sail, and where it will attack the Turks. The emperor asks you to consider these issues attentively and has decided to arrange all matters according to your counsel.

### 1.1.4. Captatio benevolentiae

[7] But, most importantly, we must prepare ourselves in such a way that when we go to war, we shall be victorious and win peace for the Christian people. Therefore, the emperor bids me to say some things that he considers not only to be useful but indeed necessary for gaining victory. However, this is somewhat of an embarrassment for me as I look at the many important men assembled here. For a meeting of such illustrious men quickens the spirit of accomplished speakers but dampens the spirit of unskilled speakers like me. Since your ears can tolerate nothing but *the mature outcome of talent, the finished product of industry*,<sup>1</sup> shining with eloquence, I fear that in obeying the emperor I shall bring shame on myself. But who am I to disobey the command of this great prince? So, I shall bear the shame of ignorance as I avoid the blemish of pride. And you, if you will not lend your ears to me, then hear the emperor on whose behalf I shall be speaking.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 1.1:  
*nihil huc nisi perfectum ingenio,*

*elaboratum industria adferri  
oportere*

[8] Nec ego in hoc amplissimo auditorio illa tangam, quae fortasse multi expectant, id est quam robusti legendi milites; quo modo servandi ordines; quae arma induenda; qui currus apparandi; quae machinae ducendae; quae castris optanda loca, ut vitanda palus, salubritas aeris eligenda, ut aquandi, lignandi, pabulandi quaerenda commoditas; quadratam, rotundam, an trigonam castrorum formam esse oporteat; quanta commeatus habenda cura; quomodo plectenda delicta militum; quam diligenter exploranda hostium consilia, occultanda nostra; quomodo exercitus cornua, quomodo alas, quomodo medias acies struere sit necesse; quo pede praemisso jaciendum pilum<sup>1</sup>, quo vibrandus ensis. Nam etsi haec ad victoriam magni momenti sint, librique de his scripti habeantur - scripserunt enim primi de his Laecedamones, tum multi Graecorum, ac ex Romanis<sup>2</sup> Marcus Cato senior, deinde Frontinus ad Trajanum Caesarem, et postremo noster Vegetius, nec Aegidius Romanus hanc partem reliquit intactam,

---

<sup>1</sup> *em.* [after RTA]; palum A, D, G

<sup>2</sup> Qui de re militari scripsere *in marg.* D, G

## 1.2. General military issues

[8] For, before this eminent auditory, I shall not touch on the issues that many may be expecting to hear about: how to pick strong soldiers; how they should be organised; how they should be armed; what wagons should be prepared; what war machines should be brought; how suitable camp locations should be chosen, free of marshy areas,<sup>1</sup> but with clean air and easy access to water, wood, and grazing; whether the camp should be built as a square, a circle, or a triangle; how to organise provisioning; how soldiers' crimes should be punished; how the plans of the enemies should be spied out, whereas our own should be concealed from them; how you should organise the battle order of the army in wings and centre; and what foot the soldiers should put forward when they throw their spears or brandish their swords.<sup>2</sup> Though these matters are very important for victory and whole books have been written about them<sup>3</sup> (first the Spartans wrote about them, then many other Greeks, and of the Romans, Marcus Cato Senior,<sup>4</sup> then Frontinus<sup>5</sup> to Emperor Trajan, and finally our own Vegetius,<sup>6</sup> nor did Egidio Romano<sup>7</sup> leave this matter untouched),

---

<sup>1</sup> "palus"; RTA has the emendation *palum* = *hölzener Pfahl*, p. 466, n. 31

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vegetius: *Epitoma rei militaris*, 1

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vegetius, 1, Prol.; 3, Prol.

<sup>4</sup> Marcus Porcius Cato the Elder (234-149 BC). His Comments on military matters have been lost

<sup>5</sup> Sextus Julius Frontinus (ca. 40-100). His "*De re militari*" is lost but was used by Vegetius

<sup>6</sup> Flavius Vegetius Renatus (late 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD). He wrote his *Epitoma rei militaris* around 400 AD.

<sup>7</sup> Egidio Romano (Colonna) (ca. 1243-1316). He wrote about military matters in his *De regimine principum* from ca. 1280

[9] non tamen ego, praesentibus Alberto marchione, Johanne comite Bistricensi, ac Georgio, Bohemiae gubernatore, clarissimis ac fortissimis viris, qui ab ineunte aetate in armis nutriti sunt, pluribusque proeliis interfuerunt, quam ego legerim<sup>1</sup>, de his rebus ausim verba facere, ne cum Formione philosopho sim derisui. Oravit hic aliquando in Rhodo, ut Cicero tradit, de re militari coram Hannibale Poeno, summo illius aetatis imperatore. Cujus orationem, cum ceteri maximis laudibus prosequerentur, solus Hannibal dignam vituperio censuit et hominem aetate delirantem putavit, qui se praesente de rebus bellicis disserere praesumpsisset. Commoniti ergo nos hoc exemplo, qualia esse debeant militum corpora, qualesve armaturae aut ordines, quive castrorum modi, quae pugnandi regulae atque cautela, ad capitaneum, qui nominandus est, remitemus. Longe alia sunt, quae proferre jubemur, et ipsa tamen ad victoriam obtinendam accomodata<sup>2</sup> et necessaria. Neque enim congregato forti exercitu, delectis peritissimis ducibus, quaesitis utilibus armis, provisus abunde com meatibus, occupato loco pugnandi idoneo, structis prudenter aciebus, commisso viriliter proelio mox victoria datur, nisi victoriarum distributor dominus hoc nos munere donet.

---

<sup>1</sup> legererim G

<sup>2</sup> accomodanda A; accomodata  
*corr. ex accomodanda* D

[9] I shall certainly not dare to speak about them in the presence of Margrave Albrecht, Count Janos of Bistrita<sup>1</sup>, and Georg,<sup>2</sup> the Governor of Bohemia, famous and mighty men,<sup>3</sup> who have been taught military skills from an early age and have been in more battles than I have even read about.<sup>4</sup> For I would not like to be laughed at like the philosopher Formio<sup>5</sup> who, according to Cicero,<sup>6</sup> once, in Rhodes,<sup>7</sup> spoke on military matters before Hannibal of Carthage,<sup>8</sup> the foremost military commander of that age.<sup>9</sup> When the others praised his oration highly, only Hannibal criticised it and thought that the man must be senile since he presumed to discuss military matters in his presence.<sup>10</sup> Admonished by this example, we shall leave the issues of the physical condition of the soldiers, their weapons and organisation, the design of the camps, as well as the rules and precautions to be followed in fighting, to the captain to be appointed. What we have been bidden to discuss is something completely different, though it is still useful and even necessary for achieving victory. For victory will not just come because you assemble a strong army, select highly skilled leaders, get suitable weaponry, gather abundant provisions, occupy a location well suited to fighting, design an ingenious battle order, and enter the battle bravely; no, you will only be victorious if the Lord, the giver of victories, grants it to you.

---

<sup>1</sup> Janos Hunyadi (1406-1456): a leading Hungarian military and political figure. Regent of Hungary during the minority of King Ladislaus the Posthumous

<sup>2</sup> Georg of Poediebrad (1420-1471): Governor of Bohemia during the minority of Ladislaus Posthumous. King of Bohemia from 1458 to his death. Leader of the Hussite party. Some years later, Piccolomini suspected him of poisoning Ladislaus

<sup>3</sup> Of these three, Janos Hunyadi, the governor of Hungary, was not present, which supports the notion that the oration was not actually held in this version

<sup>4</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 10.28: *plura bella gessit, quam ceteri leg-erunt*

<sup>5</sup> Phormio (2nd century BCE): philosopher belonging to the peripatetic school

<sup>6</sup> Cicero, Marcus Tullius (106-43 BCE): Roman statesman and author

<sup>7</sup> In Ephesos, not in Rhodes. The oration was given before King Antiochos the Great in the presence of the Carthaginian general Hannibal

<sup>8</sup> Hannibal Barca (247-ca. 183 BCE): Punic Carthaginian military commander

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Flavio Biondo: *Scritti*, p. 31

<sup>10</sup> Cicero: *De oratore*, 2.18.75-77



[10] Dicendum est igitur hodie non quomodo manus castrenses, sed quomodo castrensiū animi ad obtinendam ex Deo victoriam disponi pararique debeant, atque in hoc {93r} omnis nostra consumetur oratio. Victoria<sup>1</sup>, quemadmodum nostri tradunt, omnis ex Deo est, neque id dubium quidem, quando *omne datum optimum, et omne donum perfectum desursum est, descendens a patre luminum*. Neque sperare victoriam adversante Deo, neque ipso propitio timere ruinam fas est. *Juxta voluntatem enim suam*, ut est in Daniele, *facit Deus tam in virtutibus caeli quam in habitatoribus terrae, et non est qui resistat manui ejus et dicat ei: quare fecisti?* Victoria, et triumphus, et regnum in manu Dei est, et cuicumque voluerit ille, hoc dabitur. Ab eo igitur Pharaonis victor efficitur Moyses. Sive Josue, sive ceterorum judicum, ac regum bella respiciamus, quae veteris testamenti codex exponit, nullum superasse comperiemus, nisi quem *digitus Dei* tutatus est.

---

<sup>1</sup> Victoria ex Deo est *in marg. D*,  
G

### 1.3. All victories come from God

[10] So, today we shall not speak about how the troops should be organised, but about how their souls should be prepared so that God will grant them victory. Our whole oration will be about this matter. For, as our own<sup>1</sup> say, all victories come from God,<sup>2</sup> and this is undoubtedly true since *every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights*.<sup>3</sup> We may not hope for victory if God is against us, and we need not fear defeat if he is with us. For as it is said in the Book of Daniel: *God doth according to his will, as well with the powers of heaven, as among the inhabitants of the earth: and there is none that can resist his hand, and say to him: Why hast thou done it?*<sup>4</sup> Victory, triumph, and domination are in the hands of God, and He gives them to whom He wills. Thus, he made Moses defeat Pharaoh. When we read in the Book of the Old Testament about the wars of Joshua, or of the other judges, or of the kings, we learn that only those whom the *finger of God* protected were victorious.

---

<sup>1</sup> i.e., Christian writers as opposed to classical pagan writers

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 1. Corinthians, 15, 57. Piccolomini is usually quite reticent

with regard to divine intervention in the form of miracles, but here he seems to believe that the out-

come of battles is directly dependent on the intervention of God

<sup>3</sup> James, 1, 17

<sup>4</sup> Daniel, 4, 32

[11] Neque sine Dei nutu Trojam subvertit Agamemnon; neque Graeciam subegit Philippus; neque Asiam domuit Alexander; neque Italiam concussit Hannibal; neque uterque Scipio Carthaginiensium attrivit imperium; neque duos ac XX reges debellavit Pompejus; neque undecies centena millia hostium occidit Julius; neque Constantinus civilia bella barbaricaque confecit; neque Aquileiam delevit Attila; neque, ut ad Germanos veniam, Longobardos Carolus magnus edomuit, Otto primus compescuit, secundus castigavit, tertius extinxit; neque conditor Austriae domus divus Rudolfus Ottokarum magnum Bohemiae regem bello superavit atque occidit. A Deo igitur quaerenda atque impetranda victoria est.

[12] At cum Deus ipse absolute justus bonusque sit, quis non intelligit eos potissime donandos ab eo victoria esse, qui sint ipsi et boni et just? Si quis ergo vincere hostes externos cupit, ante omnia internos inimicos, hoc est mentis vitia superet. Vincat se ipsum necesse est, qui superare adversarium<sup>1</sup> cupit. Et nos ergo, si Turcorum frangere acies cupimus, ita in campum veniamus, ut ei grati atque accepti simus, cujus est donare victoriam. Et milites igitur vel exercitus et belli duces, quos eligimus, virtutis amatores, osores vitii sint, neque scelerati, quamvis manu prompti et rei militaris periti, ad pugnam recipiantur.

---

<sup>1</sup> superare adversarium :  
adversarium superare G

[11] It was only because God allowed it that Agamemnon<sup>1</sup> destroyed Troy, Philip<sup>2</sup> overran Greece, Alexander<sup>3</sup> tamed Asia, Hannibal thundered through Italy, each Scipio<sup>4</sup> laid waste to the Carthaginian Empire, Pompey<sup>5</sup> vanquished 22 kings, Julius<sup>6</sup> killed 1,1 million enemies, Constantine<sup>7</sup> successfully fought both civil wars and wars against barbarians, Attila destroyed Aquileia, and - passing to the Germans - Charlemagne<sup>8</sup> subdued the Lombards, Otto I<sup>9</sup> held them in check, Otto II<sup>10</sup> punished them, and Otto III<sup>11</sup> destroyed them, and glorious<sup>12</sup> Rudolf,<sup>13</sup> founder of the House of Austria, defeated and killed King Ottokar the Great<sup>14</sup> of Bohemia. Thus, victory must be sought and obtained from God.

#### 1.4. God gives victory to those who are just and good

[12] But as God is absolutely just and good, who does not understand that he will give victory especially to those men who are themselves good and just? So, if anybody wishes to vanquish external enemies, he should first defeat the internal enemies, that is, the vices of the mind. The man who wants to overcome his adversary must first overcome himself. And if we want to destroy the ranks of the Turks, then we should go to war in such a way that we are pleasing and acceptable to Him, who is the giver of victory. Let those soldiers and leaders of armies and war, whom we choose, love virtue and hate vice, and let us not take wicked men into the army even though they are vigorous and skilled in fighting.

---

<sup>1</sup> Agamemnon: (Greek myth.): King of Mycenai. Commander of the Greek armies in the Trojan War

<sup>2</sup> Philip II of Macedon [Philippos] (382-336 BCE) : King of the Hellenic kingdom of Macedon from 359 BCE to his assassination in 336 BCE

<sup>3</sup> Alexander III the Great (356-323 BCE): King of the Greek kingdom of Macedon. Created one of the largest empires of the ancient world, stretching from Greece to Egypt and into present-day Pakistan

<sup>4</sup> Scipio Africanus, Publius Cornelius (236-183 BCE): general in the Second Punic War and statesman of the Roman Republic. Defeated Hannibal at the final battle of the

Second Punic War at Zama, a feat that earned him the agnomen Africanus

<sup>5</sup> Pompeius Magnus, Gnaeus (106-48 BCE): military and political leader of the late Roman Republic

<sup>6</sup> Julius Caesar, Gaius (100-44 BCE): Roman general and statesman

<sup>7</sup> Constantine I the Great [Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus Augustus](ca. 272-337): Roman Emperor from 306 to his death

<sup>8</sup> Charlemagne (742/747/748 - 814): also known as Charles I the Great. King of the Franks from 768, King of Italy from 774. In 800 crowned by the pope as the first Emperor in Western Europe since the collapse of the Western Roman Empire three centuries earlier

<sup>9</sup> Otto I the Great (912-973): German King from 936 and Holy Roman Emperor from 962 to his death

<sup>10</sup> Otto II the Red (955-983): Holy Roman Emperor from 973 to his death

<sup>11</sup> Otto III (980-1002): Holy Roman Emperor from 996 to his death

<sup>12</sup> "divus"

<sup>13</sup> Rudolf I (1291): Originally a Swabian count. King of the Romans from 1273 to his death. Raised the Habsburg dynasty to a leading position. The first Habsburg to acquire the duchies of Austria and Styria

<sup>14</sup> Ottokar II (ca. 1233-1278): King of Bohemia from 1253 to his death

[13] Aristoteles<sup>1</sup> tamen in hac parte adversus mihi videtur, qui de magistratibus civitatum agens in quinto *Politicorum* libro: *Si facienda sit electio ex duobus, quorum alter ad rem militarem aptus sed improbus, nec reipublicae amator habeatur, alter vero justus et amator, sed pugnandi parum peritus sit*, ad peritiam putat, magis quam ad probitatem esse respiciendum. Quod {93v} secutus apud Romanos Fabricius<sup>2</sup>, magna gloria vir magnisque rebus gestis, videtur, qui teste Gellio Publium Cornelium Rufum, hominem furacem atque avarum, in temporibus reipublicae difficillimis consulatum petentem adjuvit, quoniam esset *manu strenuus ac bellator bonus militarisque disciplinae peritus*. Sed mihi neque Aristotelis sententia placet, neque digna, quam sequamur in hac parte, Fabricii videtur auctoritas. Namque si Dei est, ut diximus, omnis victoria, quis dubitet illam per ministros potius bonos ac Deo placentes, quam per odiosos concedi hominibus?

---

<sup>1</sup> Aristotelis sententia *in marg.* D, G

<sup>2</sup> Fabritii factum *in marg.* D, G

[13] Aristotle<sup>1</sup> appears to take the opposite view when he discusses the magistrates of cities in the fifth book of his *Politics*: *If there is an election between two men, one skilled in war, but morally unsound and not a lover of the republic, and the other a just man, who loves the republic, but has very little knowledge of fighting*, then greater weight should be given to military skill than to moral integrity.<sup>2</sup> Among the Romans, this view was followed by Fabricius<sup>3</sup>, a man of great honour and great achievements, for - according to Gellius<sup>4 5</sup> - Fabricius helped Publius Cornelius Rufus<sup>6</sup>, a thieving and greedy man, who sought the consulate in a time of crisis for the republic. His reason was that Rufus was *a vigorous man, a good fighter, and skilled in military matters*. But for my part, I do not agree with Aristotle, and I think that we should not bow to Fabricius' authority in this matter.<sup>7</sup> For if, as we have said, all victory is from God, who will doubt that it is granted through good officers pleasing to God rather than through despicable ones.

---

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle (384-322 BCE): Greek philosopher

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Aristotle: *Politika*, 5.9 (1309B)

<sup>3</sup> Fabricius Luscinus Monocularis, Gaius: Roman consul (278 BCE) and censor (275 BCE). Tradi-

tionally known for his austerity and incorruptibility

<sup>4</sup> Aulus Gellius (ca. 125-after 180): Roman author and grammarian

<sup>5</sup> Aulus Gellius: *Noctes Atticae*, 4.8.1-2

<sup>6</sup> Publius Cornelius Rufinus II: Roman consul 277 BCE

<sup>7</sup> Note this example of Piccolomini not accepting classical authorities where they disagree with Christian morality

[14] Nihil rei militaris scientia proderit, nisi ducis probitas Deo placuerit. At contra sine rei bellicae peritia plurimum per se ipsam valebit innocentia.

*Integer vitae scelerisque purus  
Non eget Mauris jaculis nec arcu  
Nec venenatis gravis sagittis,  
Fusce, pharetra,*

Flaccus inquit. Sicut enim maximae copiae parva manu, cum Deus voluit, consternatae sunt, ita et cum imperito duce peritum vincere Deo pronum est. Nolo veteris testamenti exempla referre. Res novae et in Christianismo gestae sufficiunt. Julianus Apostata et scientia pugnandi et militum numero Parthis multo superior, victus tamen occiditur, nec moriens hosti victoriam, sed Christo imputat, quem persecutus fuerat. Nam cum vulneratus esset neque mortali, sed divina se percussus manu<sup>1</sup> cognosceret: *Vicisti, inquit, Galilae, vicisti*. Constantino, cum anxius esset futuri belli, quo se imparem hostibus existimabat, per quietem signum crucis in caelo monstratum est, et vox facta, quae diceret: *In hoc, Constantine, vince*. Neque Theodosius Arbagastum aut Eugenium bellandi peritia, sed manifesto Dei auxilio superavit. Hinc illa non spernendi poetae<sup>2</sup> carmina:

*O nimium dilecte Deo, cui militat Aether  
Et conjurati veniunt ad classica venti.*

---

<sup>1</sup> se percussus manu :  
percussus manu se G

<sup>2</sup> Claudianus *in marg.* G

[14] Military skills in a general are useless if he does not please God through moral integrity. But moral integrity<sup>1</sup> will achieve much even if the person in question is not skilled in war.

*He who is upright in his way of life and unstained by guilt,  
Needs not the Moorish darts nor bow nor quiver  
Loaded with poisoned arrows,  
Fusce,<sup>2</sup>*

says Flaccus.<sup>3</sup> Just like large armies have been defeated by a small force when God wanted it, thus God can easily let an inexperienced general defeat an experienced one. I shall not quote examples from the Old Testament since more recent events from the Christian age will suffice. Though Julian the Apostate<sup>4</sup> was greatly superior to the Parthians both in military skill and in size of army, he was defeated and slain. When he was dying, he did not acknowledge the enemy as victor but Christ, whom he had persecuted. For when he was wounded, he recognised that he had not been struck down by a mortal hand but by the hand of God, and he exclaimed, *“You have won, Galilean, you have won.”*<sup>5</sup>

And in the night when Constantine feared the coming battle, believing that he was not equal to his enemies, the sign of the cross was shown to him in the sky, and a voice said, *In this [sign] you will win, Constantine.*<sup>6</sup>

And Theodosius<sup>7</sup> defeated neither Arbogastes<sup>8</sup> nor Eugenius<sup>9</sup> through military skill, but because of the manifest help from God.<sup>10</sup> Thus, these verses of a poet are not to be laughed at:

*Verily God is with thee, when the very elements fight for thee  
and the allied winds come at the call of thy trumpets.<sup>11</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> “innocentia”

<sup>2</sup> Horatius: *Carmina*, 1.22.1-4

<sup>3</sup> Horatius Flaccus, Quintus (65-8 BCE): Roman poet

<sup>4</sup> Julian the Apostate [Flavius Claudius Julianus Augustus] (ca. 331-363): Roman Emperor from 361 to his death. Philosopher and writer

<sup>5</sup> Otto von Freising: *Chronica*, 4, 10

<sup>6</sup> Otto von Freising: *Chronica*, 6, 1

<sup>7</sup> Theodosius I the Great (Flavius Theodosius Augustus) (347-395): Roman Emperor from 379 to his death

<sup>8</sup> Arbogastes, Flavius (d. 394): Frankish general in the Roman Empire

<sup>9</sup> Eugenius (d. 394): usurper in the Western Roman Empire against Emperor Theodosius I

<sup>10</sup> Otto von Freising: *Chronica*, 6, 18: including quote from Claudian

<sup>11</sup> Claudianus: *De tertio consulatu Honorii*, 96-98: *o nimium dilecte deo, cui fundit ab antris Aeolus armatas hiemes, cui militat aether et coniurati veniunt ad classica venti*



[15] Apud Britanniam, quae nunc Anglia nuncupatur, testante venerabili Beda, viro sanctissimo, cuius ego sepulchrum in Dunelmia vidi, cum proelium inter Christianos atque gentiles periculosum instaret, essentque Christiani et pauci et inermes, neque ullo pacto hostibus pares, intervenientibus duobus ex Gallia pontificibus, sanctis viris Germano ac Lupo, et in ipso pugnae principio “Alleluja” tertio grandi voce intonari jubentibus victoria Christianis fide, non arte neque viribus parta est. Pleni sunt nostri codices exemplorum: victrix frequenter probitas est, succumbit impietas. *Ego sum, qui sum*, dicit {94r} dominus, *et consilium meum non est cum impiis*. Neque hoc fugit Aristotelem, cujus in *Ethicis* haec sunt verba: *Nam si dii curam aliquam habent humanarum rerum, ut existimatur et creditur, rationabile est eos gaudere optimo et cognatissimo; huiusmodi vero est mens, et amantibus illam maxime honorantibusque favere, tamquam rerum carissimarum sibi curatoribus ac recte et benigne agentibus. Quod autem haec omnia sapienti maxime competant, non est obscurum. Amicissimus ergo deorum, eundemque felicissimum esse decens est*. Eccum Aristotelis testimonium, qui<sup>1</sup> curant superi mortalia facta hisque favent, qui mentem colunt. At hi virtutis amatores sunt, osores vitii. Sic ergo et victoriae porta nutu Dei bonis aperta est, malis clausa.

[16] Quod et gentiles ipsi manifeste senserunt, qui victoriam deam esse dixerunt, quam Jupiter optimus maximus mitteret: illam vero tamquam regi deorum obtemperantem, ad quos jussu venire et in eorum parte consistere. Et *hoc*, inquit Augustinus in libro *De Civitate Dei* IIII., *vere dicitur non de illo Iove, quem deorum regem pro sua opinione confingunt, sed de illo vero rege saeculorum, quod mittat non victoriam, quae nulla est substantia, sed angelum suum, et faciat vincere, quem velit, cujus consilium occultum esse potest, iniquum non potest*.

---

<sup>1</sup> quod D, G

[15] In Brittany, now called England, Venerable Bede<sup>1</sup>, a holy man whose tomb I have seen in Durham,<sup>2</sup> had the following to report: once a perilous battle between Christians and pagans was imminent. The Christians were few and badly armed and in no way equal to their enemies. Then, at the beginning of the battle, Germanus<sup>3</sup> and Lupus<sup>4</sup>, two holy bishops from Gaul, intervened and bade them sing “Halleluja” three times, loudly. Thereafter, the Christians gained victory - by faith and not by skill or strength.<sup>5</sup> Our books are full of such examples: moral integrity is often victorious, and impiety succumbs. *I am who am*, says the Lord, *and my counsel is not with the godless*.<sup>6</sup> This is known to Aristotle, who says in his *Ethics*: *For if, as generally supposed, the gods have some concern for human affairs, it would be reasonable to believe also that they take pleasure in that part of us which is best and most closely related to themselves (this being the intellect), and that they reward those who appreciate and honour it most highly; for they care for what is dear to them, and what they do is right and good. It is clear that all this applies to the wise man, and it stands to reason that the one who is most dear to the gods is also a very happy man*.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Aristotle testifies that the heavenly beings<sup>8</sup> care about the doings of men and favour those who cultivate the soul.<sup>9</sup> These are the people who love virtue and hate vice. So, at the nod of God, the gate to victory is opened for good men and closed for evil men.

[16] That the gentiles had the same notion is shown by the fact that they called Victory a goddess who was sent by the Good and Great Jupiter.<sup>10</sup> Obeying the king of the gods, she came to those to whom he sent her and stayed on their side. In book 4 of his *De Civitate Dei* Augustine comments: *This might be said with truth, not of that Jupiter whom they fashion to match their fancy as king of the gods, but of the true King of the ages: that he sends, not Victory (who is no real being), but his angel, and gives victory to the man of his choice. His design may be hidden, but can never be unrighteous*.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Bede the Venerable (ca. 672-735). English monk, author, and scholar

<sup>2</sup> Visited by Piccolomini on his return from Scotland in 1435, cf. *Commentarii*, 1, 6

<sup>3</sup> Germanus (ca. 378-ca. 448): Bishop of Auxerre in Late Antique Gaul. He is best remembered for his journey to combat Pelagia-

nism in Britain in or around 429 AD

<sup>4</sup> Lupus (ca. 383-ca.478): Bishop of Troyes. Accompanied Germanus of Auxerre on his visit to Britain

<sup>5</sup> Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, 1, 24

<sup>6</sup> Exodus, 3, 14

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle: *The Nicomachean Ethics*, X, 8 (1179a 25-27). Quoted after the translation from the

Greek by J.A.K. Thompson and H. Tredennick, p. 335. Presumably known to Piccolomini through Leonardo Bruni's translation into Latin

<sup>8</sup> “superi”

<sup>9</sup> “mentem”

<sup>10</sup> “Jupiter optimus maximus”

<sup>11</sup> Augustinus: *De civitate Dei*, 4, 17

[17] Expedit ergo pugnantes in primis pios esse atque innocentiae scuto munitos, sic enim Deo grati atque accepti facile victoriam consequentur. Quod si dicat aliquis meliores aliquando succumbere victoresque fieri pessimos, atque illud Lucani commemoretur *victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni*, melioremque Julio Pompejum asseramus, respondebo non esse facile de probitate hominis judicare. *Deus solus est, qui scrutatur corda et renes hominum*. Nullum animal versutius est homine<sup>1</sup>, multae in eo latebrae: *Multae insidiae dolosi*, inquit Sapiens. Saepe apud Deum reprobatus est, quem nos optimum credimus.

---

<sup>1</sup> Versutum animal homo in  
*marg.* D, G

[17] So, those who fight should, above all, be pious and protected by the shield of innocence. Thus, they shall be pleasing and acceptable to God and will easily gain victory. Here somebody may object that the better men have often been defeated in battle, whereas very bad men have been victorious. He may even quote Lucan<sup>1</sup> who said that *the victor had the gods on his side, the vanquished had Cato*.<sup>2 3</sup> And he may add that we consider Pompey to have been a better man than Julius. To this, I will answer that it is not easy to judge the morals of any man. *Only God searches the hearts and reins of men*.<sup>4</sup> No animal is more cunning than man, and he has many subterfuges: *Many are the snares of the deceitful*, says the Wise One.<sup>5</sup> God often rejects someone whom we consider to be among the best of men.

---

<sup>1</sup> Lucanus, Marcus Annaeus (39-65): Roman poet, born in Cordoba

<sup>2</sup> Cato, Marcus Porcius (Cato the Elder) (234-149 BC): Roman statesman and censor

<sup>3</sup> Lucanus: *Bellum civile*, 1.126

<sup>4</sup> 1. Chronicles, 28, 9

<sup>5</sup> Ecclesiasticus, 11, 31

[18] De stragibus autem, quas ab infidelibus majores nostri perpessi sunt, et nos in dies patimur, non est quod divinam pietatem religioni nostrae adversam putemus faventemque sectae hostium. Sed odit Deus illos, quia sine fide impossibile est Deo placere. Corrigit nos quia *fidem sine operibus mortuam* habemus, illisque victoriam praebet ad mortem, nobis captivitatem immittit ad vitam. Sicut enim Maccabaeorum II. scriptum est: *Multo tempore non sinere peccatoribus ex sententia agere, sed statim ultiones adhibere magni {94v} beneficii est indicium. Non enim sicut in aliis nationibus dominus patienter expectat, ut eas, cum judicii dies venerit in plenitudine peccatorum puniat. Ita et in nobis statuit, ut peccatis nostris in finem devolutis, ita demum in nos judicet, propter quod numquam quidem misericordiam suam a nobis amovet. Corripuens vero in adversis populum suum non derelinquit.* Sed dicitis saepe victos Dei cultores ab his, qui Deum nesciunt. Quod factum esse propter peccata nostra manifestum est; numquam tamen modo apertum mare, modo clausum in favorem infidelium legimus, neque *columnam ignis in nocte* fulsisse, in die *columnam nubis* adversus calorem datam, nec stetisse solem, neque fluminum impeditum cursum, neque oppidorum moenia solis orationibus cecidisse, quemadmodum haec ad utilitatem eorum, qui Deo serviebant, facta traduntur. Quidni ergo spem nostram et in vera fide et pura innocentia reponamus? Expectemus victoriam, si boni fuerimus, si mali, captivitatem mortemque timeamus.

## 1.5. Christians suffer defeats because of their sins

[18] Concerning the defeats that our forefathers suffered at the hands of the infidels and those that we are now suffering daily, we should not believe that Divine Piety is against our religion and favours the sect of our enemies. For them God hates since nobody can please God without Faith. The reason that he castigates us is that *faith without works is dead*.<sup>1</sup> God gives our enemies victory unto death, but to us he sends captivity unto life. In the second Book of the Machabees it is written that *it is a token of great goodness, when sinners are not suffered to go on in their ways for a long time, but are presently punished. For, not as with other nations, (whom the Lord patiently expecteth, that when the day of judgement shall come, he may punish them in the fullness of their sins:) Doth he also deal with us, so as to suffer our sins to come to their height, and then take vengeance on us. And therefore he never withdraweth his mercy from us: but though he chastise his people with adversity he forsaketh them not.*<sup>2</sup> "But," you say, "worshippers of God have often been defeated by people who do not know God." This evidently happens because of our sins. For we never read about God now opening the sea, now closing it for the sake of infidels. Nor has a *pillar of fire* burned for them in the night, nor has a *pillar of cloud* been given to them as protection against the heat;<sup>3</sup> nor has the sun stood still, nor has the flow of rivers stopped, nor have the walls of cities fallen because of prayers alone,<sup>4</sup> as it is reported to have happened for those who served God. So why should we not place our hope in true Faith and pure innocence? Let us expect victory if we are good, and let us fear captivity and death if we are wicked.

---

<sup>1</sup> James, 2, 20

<sup>2</sup> 2. Machabees, 6, 13-16

<sup>3</sup> Exodus, 13, 21

<sup>4</sup> Joshua, 6: on the walls of Jericho

[19] Ego igitur, ut at id redeam, quod de Aristotelis auctoritate praemisum est, si eligendus mihi dux belli fuerit, neque probitatem sine scientia rei bellicae neque scientiam sine probitate receperim, quoniam in altero temptare Deum, in altero irritare timuerim. At si alterum omnino sit eligendum, non auscultabo Aristoteli: temptabo libentius quam irritabo divinam pietatem, dum potius bonum quam peritum sequar. Hoc inquam, si certa atque indubitata sit probitas. Verum quia haec *rara avis in terris est nigroque simillima cygno*, neque cognosci potest, si qua est, oportet peritiam sequi. Nam quod ait Aristoteles, omnino falsum est, quia pauciores sint rei militaris periti, plures vero probitatis. Contra enim est, multi res callent bellicas, probitatis pauci sectatores. Erit ergo inter duces eligendus, qui scientiae militaris plurimum, malitiae minimum habuerit. *Non est qui faciat bonum, non est usque ad unum*, inquit psalmista. At cum Dei sit, quem velit, ex pugnantis victorem efficere, non est ambiguum, quin meliores praeferat, nisi latens aliqua ratio sit, quae aliud suadeat. Nos autem, quibus incognita sunt iudicia Dei, generalem sequi regulam debemus, quoniam impios exterminat Deus, *justi autem in perpetuum vivent*. Suadet igitur Caesar, quoniam vincere volumus, eos in bellum mittamus, per quos donare nobis victoriam divina pietas non dedignetur.

[19] Therefore, to return to what was said above on the authority of Aristotle, if I had to choose a general, I would accept neither moral integrity without military competence nor military competence without integrity, for in the first case I would fear to tempt God and in the second to provoke him. But if I were forced to choose one of these alternatives, I would not listen to Aristotle, for I would rather tempt Divine Piety by choosing the good man than provoke Him by choosing the skilled one. I say this on the condition that the candidate possesses indubitable moral integrity. But *such a bird is rare on earth and very similar to a black swan*,<sup>1</sup> and it cannot be recognised as such even if it should exist somewhere. Therefore, the safer course is to choose competence. For Aristotle's claim that few people have military competence and many more people have moral integrity is completely false. On the contrary, many people have military experience, but few people care about moral integrity. So, among the military leaders, you will have to choose the one who combines a maximum of military competence with a minimum of wickedness. *There is none*, says the Psalmist, *that doth good: no not one*.<sup>2</sup> But since it is God who makes one of the contestants the victor, there is no doubt that he will prefer the better men, unless some hidden reason points in another direction. But we who do not know the judgements of God should act according to the general rule that *God destroys the impious*,<sup>3</sup> *but the just shall live for evermore*.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, since we want to win, the emperor urges you to send such people to war, through whom Divine Piety will deign to grant us victory.

---

<sup>1</sup> Juvenalis: *Satirae*, 6.165

<sup>2</sup> Psalms, 13, 1

<sup>3</sup> Cf. e.g., 1. Machabees 9, 73

<sup>4</sup> Wisdom, 5, 16



[20] At quia {95v} peccatores sumus, peccatores autem non audit Deus, criminibus renuntiare oportet vitamque mutare perversam. Peccavimus omnes, quis dubitet? Recessimus a testamento Dei, iniquitatem fecimus, idcirco invenerunt *nos mala, quorum non est numerus*. Hinc Jerosolymorum amissa civitas, Antiochia perdita, Alexandria profanata, Constantinopolis occupata, omnis oriens, omnis meridies alienatus, Graecorum contrita gloria, Latinorum in dubio libertas posita, religio nostra in angulum Europae redacta, *in derisum ac subsannationem* gentibus dati sumus. Recessit a nobis Deus propter peccata nostra, neque auxiliatur amplius nobis in bello dextera sua, et brachium suum contra nos est. Quod si rursus in gratiam redire volumus ac flagella divina vitare, contrario itinere incedendum est, abjicienda sunt omnia, propter quae venisse super nos credunt iram Dei. Audiendus est clarus ille propheta Jeremias: *Nunc ergo, inquit ille, bonas facite vias vestras et studia vestra, et audite vocem domini Dei vestri, et poenitebit dominum mali, quod locutus est adversum vos*. Audiendus est et alius propheta ac plus quam propheta, major homine, par angelis, Johannes Baptista, qui constitutus in heremo *fructus fieri dignos poenitentia* docet. Audiendus est et alter Johannes, de Capistrano, verax verbi Dei praedicator, qui diebus singulis nobis evangelizat. Sequenda sunt ejus monita: redeundum est denique in viam, renuntiandum vitiis, virtutibus inhaerendum.

## 1.6. Necessity of repentance

[20] But since we are sinners, and God does not listen to sinners, we must renounce sin and change our evil ways. Who doubts that we have all sinned? We have turned away from the testament of God. We have been wicked, and therefore we have been visited by *evils without number*.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the City of Jerusalem has been lost, Antiochia has been surrendered, Alexandria has been profaned, Constantinople has been conquered, all the East and the South have fallen to strangers, the glory of the Greeks has been destroyed, the liberty of the Latins is threatened, our religion has been pushed into a corner of Europe,<sup>2</sup> and we have been made *a scoff and derision*<sup>3</sup> to the gentiles. Our God has turned away from us because of our sins; His right hand will no longer help us in battle, and His arm is against us.<sup>4</sup> If we want to return to His grace and avoid His scourge, then we must go the opposite way and cast all that away from us, which we believe to have brought the anger of God upon us. We should heed the noble prophet Jeremiah, who says: *Now therefore amend your ways, and your doings, and hearken to the voice of the Lord your God: and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath spoken against you*.<sup>5</sup> We should also hear another prophet, nay more than a prophet, who is greater than men<sup>6</sup> and the equal of angels, John the Baptist. When he lived in the desert, he taught us to *bring forth fruit worthy of penance*.<sup>7</sup> And, finally, we should hear another John, John of Capistrano,<sup>8</sup> a truthful preacher of the word of God, who daily preaches the gospel to us. We should follow his admonitions: reverse our ways, renounce vice, and follow virtue.

---

<sup>1</sup> Psalms, 39, 13

<sup>2</sup> Flavio Biondo: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades*, II, 3 [Im.75]: *Melius filii et majori cum gloria nostri progenitores inchoatam - ut altiuscule repetamus - Romae et in Italia et viribus Europae aucta dignitatem*

*ad totius orbis monarchiam extulerunt, per cujus omnes provincias et regiones nomen floruit Christianum. Quod nomen nostris temporibus ad parvum orbis angulum coangustari et quotidie de excidio periclitari videmus*

<sup>3</sup> Psalms, 43, 14

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Psalms, 43, 4

<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah, 26, 13

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Luke, 7, 28

<sup>7</sup> Matthew, 3, 8

<sup>8</sup> Giovanni da Capistrano (1386-1456): Franciscan friar and preacher

[21] Et quamvis omnia vitia detestatur Deus, praecipue tamen eliminanda est a nostro exercitu ea bestia septicornis, quam superbiam nominamus. *Initium enim omnis peccati*<sup>1</sup>, ut inquit sapiens, *superbia est, et qui tenuerit illam, adimplebitur maledictis, et subvertet eum in finem*. De Nabuchodonosor inquit Daniel: *Cum autem elevatum est cor ejus, et spiritus illius obfirmatus est ad superbiam, depositus est de solio regni sui, et gloria ejus ablata est, et a filiis hominum ejectus est*. Abjiciamus igitur hanc pestiferam et venenatam bestiam, ne quid in exercitu nostro possit officere, ne principes inter se committat, ne milites invicem dividat, ne schismata inter nos nutriet, aut nationem nationi reddat infestam. Expositus est ruinae *omnis exercitus intra se divisus*. Impossibile est adversus hostem bene pugnare, cui cum fratre litigandum est. *Non potest veritas nostra mentiri*, quae in evangelio<sup>2</sup> omne {95v} *regnum in se divisum* ruiturum affirmat.

[22] Conradus<sup>3</sup> imperator - ne vetustiora commemorem - rexque Francorum Ludovicus cum maximas copias contra Turcos ac Saracenos in Asiam deportassent, dum fuere concordēs, usque Jerusalem clari atque victores perrexerunt. At seditionibus postmodum agitati exercitum inglorium reduxere. Et ut ad nostra tempora propius accedam, Sigismundus, rex Hungariae, qui postea Romano imperio praesedit, non alia de causa in magno proelio victus a Turcis creditur, nisi quia variarum gentium collectum exercitum minus concordem habuerit. Idem quoque de Vladislao, Poloniae rege, vulgatum est, quem propterea victum atque occisum tradunt, quia non fuerit inter Polonos, Hungaros ac Valaccos unitum consilium.

---

<sup>1</sup> Initium peccati superbia in  
marg. D, G

<sup>2</sup> Euangelium in marg. D, G

<sup>3</sup> Discordie in marg. D, G

## 1.7. Doing away with vice

### 1.7.1. Pride

[21] Though God hates all vices, there is one especially that must be removed from our army: the seven-horned beast we call pride. For as the Wise One says, *Pride is the beginning of all sin: he that holdeth it, shall be filled with maledictions, and it shall ruin him in the end.*<sup>1</sup> And Daniel says about Nebuchadnezzar: *But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit hardened unto pride, he was put down from the throne of his kingdom, and his glory was taken away, and he was driven out from the sons of men.*<sup>2</sup> Let us drive out this pestilential and poisonous beast so that it cannot trouble our army, set the princes against each other, cause divisions among the soldiers, foster divisions among us, or cause enmity between the nations [represented in the army]. For every army *divided against itself*<sup>3</sup> is threatened with destruction. It is impossible to fight well against an enemy if you also have to fight your brother. *Out truth cannot lie,*<sup>4</sup> and in the Gospel, it tells us that *every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation.*<sup>5</sup>

[22] In the not too remote past, Emperor Konrad<sup>6</sup> and the French King Louis<sup>7</sup> brought great forces to Asia to fight the Turks and the Saracens. While they were in harmony, they managed to reach Jerusalem as glorious conquerors. But when conflicts arose between them, they had to bring back the army in shame.<sup>8</sup>

Closer to our own time, Sigismund, King of Hungary and later ruler of the Roman Empire, is believed to have been defeated by the Turks in a great battle<sup>9</sup> only because of dissensions in his army, which consisted of contingents from various countries.

In the same way, it is being rumoured that Wladislas, King of Poland, was defeated and killed because the Poles, the Hungarians, and the Wallachians did not have a common plan.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus, 10, 15

<sup>2</sup> Daniel, 5, 20-21

<sup>3</sup> Luke, 11, 17

<sup>4</sup> Romans, 9, 1

<sup>5</sup> Luke, 11, 17

<sup>6</sup> Konrad III (1093-1152): first King of Germany of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. Participated in the First Crusade

<sup>7</sup> Louis VII (1120-1180): King of France from 1137 to his death. Participated in the Second Crusade

<sup>8</sup> Piccolomini is alluding to the Second Crusade (1147-1149), which was quite disastrous

<sup>9</sup> The Battle of Nicopolis, 25. September 1396 lost, in great part,

because of a lack of coordination among the Christian forces

<sup>10</sup> The Battle of Varna, 10. November 1444, where lack of coordination also seems to have played a role in the defeat of the Christians

[23] Vobis ergo, principes ac viri potentes, quibus in Turcos pugnare decretum est, concordiam super omnia Caesar commendat. *Concordia namque, ut ait Crispus, parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae dilabuntur.* Arctissimum *atque optimum in omni exercitu vinculum incolumitatis est concordia.* Inexpugnabilis est exercitus, qui nexu caritatis est unitus. Ubi concordia est, ibi et ordo et oboedientia, sine quibus nihil est, quod duces exercitus valeant explicare. Facessant ergo inter vos omnes divisiones, nulli contentioni sit locus, absint illa nomnia, quae scissionem sapere possunt. Nemo se Gallicum, nemo se Theutonicum, nemo se Bohemum, aut Hungarum dicat. Unum sit omnibus nomen, Christianum se quisque vocitet, neque pugnaturus pro Christo aliis se quam Christi titulis ac fascibus ornet. Sint omnes milites cruce signati. Ament invicem. Inferiores superioribus pareant; superiores his, qui sibi subjecti sunt, moderata imperent. Nemo de se majora, quam sint, existimet. Si quis est virtute praestans ac Jasoni similis, qui sibi fieri injuriam credidit, nisi regnaret - erat enim ille ad gubernandum aptissimus - persuadeat sibi, quia non semper, qui melior est, eligitur. Titus, Vespasiani filius, quem *delicias generis humani* vocaverunt, *principatum* dicere solitus erat *fato dari*, inanesque curas illorum, qui suis studiis imperaturos se crederent. Nec male sentiebat, si fatum pro divina ordinatione, quae gubernat mundum, accipiebat.

[23] To you, Princes and mighty men, who have decided to fight against the Turks, the emperor recommends harmony above all. For, as Crispus<sup>1</sup> says, *Harmony makes small states great, while the mightiest are undone by discord.*<sup>2</sup> In every army, *harmony is the strongest and closest bond of permanent union.*<sup>3</sup> An army united by charity is invincible. Where there is harmony, there is also order and obedience, without which no general can achieve anything. So, away with all divisions between you. Leave no room for conflict. Do not use names that reflect divisions. Let no one call himself French, German, Bohemian, or Hungarian. Let there only be one name: let everyone call himself Christian. Let no one who is going to fight for Christ use other titles and symbols than those of Christ. Let all soldiers wear the sign of the cross<sup>4</sup> and let them love each other. Inferiors should obey their superiors, and superiors should govern their subordinates with moderation. Let no one have a higher opinion of himself than is reasonable. If anyone has great courage and is like Jason,<sup>5</sup> who considered it an insult if he did not rule<sup>6</sup> (for he was highly fit for governing), then let him convince himself that it is not always the best one who is chosen. Titus,<sup>7</sup> the son of Vespasian,<sup>8</sup> whom they called *the darling of the human race*,<sup>9</sup> used to say that *imperial power is the gift of fate*,<sup>10</sup> and those who believe they shall come to govern through their own efforts trouble themselves in vain. And his notion was quite correct, though he believed in fate rather than in the divine providence that governs the world.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sallustius Crispus, Gaius (86-ca. 35 BC): Roman historian and politician

<sup>2</sup> Sallustius: *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 10.6

<sup>3</sup> Cicero: *De re publica*, 2.43.69: *artissimum atque optimum omni in re publica vinculum incolumitatis, eaque sine iustitia nullo pacto esse potest*. Piccolomini applies

Cicero's dictum about the state to the army

<sup>4</sup> i.e., the symbol of a crusader

<sup>5</sup> Jason: (Greek myth.) Hero famous for his role as leader of the Argonauts and their quest for the Golden Fleece

<sup>6</sup> Apollonius Rhodius: *Argonautica*, 1.340-350.

<sup>7</sup> Titus Flavius Caesar Vespasianus Augustus (39-81): Roman Emperor from 79 to his death

<sup>8</sup> Vespasianus Augustus, Titus Flavius (9-79): Roman Emperor from 69 to his death

<sup>9</sup> Suetonius: *De vitis Caesarum / Titus*, 1.1: *amor ac deliciae generis humani*

<sup>10</sup> Suetonius: *De vitis Caesarum / Titus*, 9.1.

[24] Si quis ergo est, qui eum sibi praelatum dolet, cui se praeficiendum putavit, existimet, quia non humano, sed divino iudicio id factum est. Cogitet id, quod est in hoc bello, non se homini, sed Christo militare ac parere, nec gravetur, cum sit homo, humiliare se homini propter Christum, quoniam Christus ipse, cum esset Deus, propter hominem *usque ad mortem crucis se ipsum exinanivit*. O homo, quis tu es? Quem te ipsum facis? O caro, o terra, o pulvis, {96r} o cinis, unde ista tua superbia est? Unde tumescis? Unde est, ut homini subesse nolis, cum Deus ipse propter te homini se subjecerit? Abjiciamus, obsecro, hanc mentis elevationem, absit haec inanis spuma, recedat hic periculosissimus ventus. Sit nobiscum illa modestissima et pulcherrima virgo, quam vocamus humilitatem, quae sola divinam meretur gratiam, quae in terris sublimat homines et in caelis coronat angelos. Hanc, si totis affectibus complexi fuerimus, erit in nostro exercitu concordia, pax, tranquillitas, oboedientia, ordo. Nullum odium nos vexabit, nullis agitabimur contentionibus, unitum exercitum atque insuperabilem efficiemus.

[25] Dicat hic fortasse quispiam: “Quid est, quod ais? Ducibus ac militibus humilitatem praedicas, quos fortes ac magnanimos esse oportet. Humilitas autem his contraria virtutibus habetur.” Immo vero, principes, nemo humilis est nisi fortis ac magnanimus. Fortitudini contraria est imbellicitas, magnanimitati pusillanimitas, non humilitas. Animus certe illi magnus est neque fortitudine caret, qui cum sit genere clarus, virtute praestans, ingentibus dignus honoribus: si vocatur ad res magnas, praesto est suoque satis officio facit. Si postponitur, non turbatur, neque propterea seditiones excitat, sed animo sedato fortunam fert atque illa spernit, quae alii magna ducunt. Ceterum quia in omni procuratione negotii et muneris publici caput est, ut avaritiae tollatur vel minima suspicio, eum belli ducem eumque capitaneum assumere oportet, quem summa temperantia commendatum reddat. *Neque enim potest<sup>1</sup> exercitum is continere imperator, qui seipsum non continet, neque severus esse in iudicando, qui alios in se severos esse iudices non vult*. Nullum vitium deterius est quam avaritia et praesertim in eo, qui ducit exercitum. Nam rem publicam venalem habet, nec enim debita militibus stipendia elargitur, nec praedas juste partitur, saepeque propter avaritiam ab instituto cursu revocatur.

---

<sup>1</sup> oportet G

[24] If anybody gets frustrated because another has been placed in command over him when he thought that he himself should be placed in command over the other, then let him acknowledge that it has been done not by human but by divine judgement. Let him consider that in this war he should not fight for and obey a man but Christ. Let him not be aggravated that he, who is a man, should defer to another man because of Christ, for Christ himself, though God, *emptied himself even to the death of the cross*.<sup>1</sup> Oh man, who are you? What do you make of yourself? Oh flesh, oh earth, oh dust, oh ashes, from where comes this conceit of yours? Why do you swell with pride? Why do you not want to obey a man when God made himself subject to men for your sake? So, please, let us cast away this arrogance. Away with this froth of vanity. Let this dangerous flutter subside. May our companion be that modest and beautiful maiden whom we call Humility: only she merits divine grace. On Earth, she raises up men, and in Heaven, she crowns the angels. If we embrace her with all our heart, our army will have harmony, peace, tranquillity, obedience, and order. We shall not be disturbed by enmities nor troubled by conflicts; rather, we shall form one united and invincible army.

[25] Here, someone may object: “What are you saying? You demand humility of leaders and soldiers, who should rather be strong and bold. But humility is the very opposite of these virtues!” On the contrary, Princes, only the strong and brave man can be humble. The opposite of strength is not humility, but weakness, and the opposite of courage is not humility but timidity. That man, of noble blood, of eminent virtue, and worthy of great honours, is brave and strong, who, when called to great things, is ready and performs his office well, and who, when he is passed over, is not upset nor raises trouble, but carries his fortune with equanimity and has little regard for things that others consider important. Moreover, in all conduct of business and public affairs, it is very important that there be not even the slightest hint of greed. Therefore, as leader and captain you should take a man who is commended by great moderation. *No commander can control an army if he does not control himself, nor can he be a strict judge if he is unwilling that others should judge him strictly*.<sup>2</sup> For there is no greater vice than greed,<sup>3</sup> especially in one who leads an army. [A greedy general] is corrupt; he does not pay the soldiers their due salaries; he does not divide the spoils fairly, and often he turns from the chosen course because of greed.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Philippians, 2, 7-8

<sup>2</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 13.38

<sup>3</sup> On greed, cf. Piccolomini's orations "*Si quis me roget*" [2]

and "*Non est aoud me dubium*"

[6]

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 13.37



[26] Verum non solum capitaneo, sed universo exercitui prohibenda est haec pestis, ne, dum per agros amicorum sociorumque transit, rapinas agat. Neque ego hunc exercitum praedae cupidum esse voluerim. Auro namque, non Christo militat, qui spolia concupiscit. Pro tutela fidei, pro gloria Christiani nominis, pro *zelo domus Dei* hoc bellum suscipiendum est, non praedae causa. Non tamen parta victoria, si quid praedarum est, recipiendum prohibeo, nam et justum lucrum ex justo bello provenit. Cavendum tamen est, ne rapiamus, unde non decet, ne pauperes Graecos atque alios Christianos, qui coacti sub Turco degunt, suis bonis spoliemus. Quae res non modo invisae Deo esset, sed ipsos quoque nobis alienaret, qui spem in nobis habent. Cogitemus, quia ad liberandam<sup>1</sup> ex manu<sup>2</sup> Turcorum Graeciam, non ad spoliandam pergimus. Quod si vulgatum Graeci audiant, mirabilem hinc favorem consequimini. Alioquin non minus Graecos quam Turcos {96v} infestos patiemini.

[27] Praeterea, ut de capitaneo amplius aliquid dicam, sint ad eum *faciles aditus privatorum, sint liberae querimoniae de injuriis, ut qui dignitate principes excellit, facilitate infimis par esse videatur*. Fidem autem non ad socios solum, sed etiam ad hostes inviolatam custodiat.

---

<sup>1</sup> liberandum G

<sup>2</sup> manibus G

### 1.7.2. Greed

[26] But this evil must be forbidden not only to the captain but also to the whole army, lest we pass through the territories of our friends and allies as robbers. I wish that this army should be devoid of all hunger for spoils; the man who wants spoils does not fight for Christ but for gold. This war should be undertaken for the defence of the Faith, for the glory of the Christian name, and out of *zeal for the house of God*,<sup>1</sup> not for the sake of booty. If there are any spoils after victory has been won, I do not forbid [the soldiers] to receive them, for the spoils of a just war are just, too. But we should take care not to plunder where it is inadmissible and not to despoil the poor Greeks and other Christians who are forced to live under the Turks. For that would not only be hateful to God, but it would also alienate from us the very people who put their trust in us. Let us bear in mind that we are setting out to free Greece from the hand of the Turks, not to plunder it. If the Greeks hear that you do not rob them, then you will become very popular with them. In the opposite case, the Greeks will hate you just as much as the Turks.

[27] I will say something more about the captain. Let him be *so easy of access to ordinary people, so open to hear their complaints of wrongs done them by others, that he whose greatness surpasses that of princes appears in accessibility the equal of the lowest*.<sup>2</sup> And let him keep his oaths not only to his allies but also to his enemies.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Psalms, 68, 10: *zelus domus tuae comedit me*

<sup>2</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 14.41: *Iam vero ita faciles aditus ad eum*

*privatorum, ita liberae querimoniae de aliorum iniuriis esse dicuntur, ut is, qui dignitate principibus*

*excellit, facilitate infimis par esse videatur*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 14.42

[28] Absit ex nostro exercito omnis libido, omnis crudelitas. Nulli feminae vis inferatur. Pudicitia non modo nostrarum, sed etiam captivarum salva sit. In proelio robustos milites, in pace mansuetos velim. Parta victoria furor armorum cesset. Nemo nisi in acie occidatur. Parta victoria gladium vagina claudes, nudum videat nemo. *Hostes imperatoris virtutem pugnantes timeant, victi mansuetudinem diligant.* Etenim quamvis sunt<sup>1</sup> Turci omni malo digni, qui filium Dei abnegant, Jesum Christum, nihil tamen in eos temere ac crudeliter agendum est. Illud curandum omnino existimo, ut Graeci, si vincimus, libertatem sperent, Turci crudelitatem mortis non timeant, *ne desperationem in virtutem vertant.* Saepe *salus victis nullam sperare salutem* fuit. Modestia igitur ac providentia capitanei hoc curabit, ne crudelis exercitus existimetur, ne libidinosus, quod nulla re facilius aget, quam si et ipse continentia atque abstinencia valuerit. Oportet esse quidem milites animo plenos, sed non minus<sup>2</sup> libidinis quam Turcorum hostes omneque turpe nomen horrere, ne maritis uxores, ne patribus filias, ne sorores fratribus auferant. Temperanda est ipsa victoria. Nemo idcirco vincere velit, ut libidinem expleat. Expellatur haec immanis ac taeterrima bestia, quae saepe victores exercitus pervictos reddidit.

---

<sup>1</sup> sint G

<sup>2</sup> minor D

### 1.7.3. Cruelty and licentiousness

[28] In our army, there should be no lustfulness, no cruelty, and no violence against women. The chastity of our female captives should be as safe as that of our own women. I want our soldiers to be forceful in battle and gentle in peace. When victory has been achieved, the fury of weapons should cease. No one should be killed except in battle. When victory has been achieved, the sword should be kept in its sheath; no one should see it bared. *When our enemies fight, they should fear the courage of the general, when they have been defeated they should love his mildness.*<sup>1</sup> For though the Turks, who reject Jesus Christ, the Son of God, are worthy of every chastisement, they should not be treated rashly or cruelly. And in my opinion, we should take special care that, if we win, the Greeks should hope for freedom, and the Turks should not fear cruel death and *turn desperation into bravery.*<sup>2</sup> Often, the one *chance the vanquished have is to hope for none.*<sup>3</sup> So through modesty and prudence, the captain will see to it that the army shall not have a reputation for cruelty or for licentiousness. And the easiest way for him to do that is to be both continent and abstinent. The soldiers should be lively but fear lust as much as their Turkish enemies. They must avoid a reputation for indecent behaviour and not rob husbands of their wives, fathers of their daughters, or brothers of their sisters. Victory should be tempered, and nobody should wish for victory in order to indulge in lust. Let us drive out this cruel and horrible beast that often crushes victorious armies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 14.42: *hostes magis virtutem eius pugnantibus timuerint an mansuetudinem victi dilexerint*

<sup>2</sup> Justinus: *Epitoma*, 2.13.6: *nec spem fuge adimet, ne desperatio in virtutem vertatur*

<sup>3</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.354: *una salus victis nullam sperare salutem*

[29] Est quoque et alia bestia ex nostro exercitu procul abjicienda, quae desidia seu pigritia nuncupari potest. Decet enim “milites” sui nominis meminisse, quos<sup>1</sup> a<sup>2</sup> “malo”, quod perferunt, dictos jurisconsultus ait. Sciat se quisque miles in exercitu esse, qui non a quiescendo<sup>3</sup>, sed ab exercitando nomen accepit. Sint sedulo in armis, cursitent, foveam fodiant, vallum figant, agant, instent<sup>4</sup>, vigilant<sup>5</sup>, nullum tempus laboris vacuum habeant. Numquam in otio miles, numquam imperator inveniatur, sciatque capitaneus nullum *dulcius* spectaculum esse militibus, *quam* ductorem exercitus *panem communem milite coram edere, in vili simul jacere strato, vallum castrorumque metationem communi labore simul partiri*. Non enim tam fasces pecuniasque sortiri colendos capitaneos facit, quam laboris periculique vices subire. Praeterea magis ab exercitu ipsi coluntur duces, qui mutuo labori se ingerunt, quam qui pigrescere milites sinunt. Neque enim cibariis uti debet delicatis sive miles, sive imperator, ac longe *quaesitis*. *Luxuria* igitur omnis absit, et *lautae gloria mensae*. Scipio militem mulctavit, qui artocream ediderat, quam “Carthaginem” vocavit.

---

<sup>1</sup> Milites a malo dictos *in marg.* D

<sup>2</sup> *omit.* G

<sup>3</sup> a quiescendo : acquiescendo D

<sup>4</sup> instant A

<sup>5</sup> et *add.* G

#### 1.7.4. Idleness

[29] Another beast, too, must be cast far away from our army: it may be called idleness or indolence. Soldiers should remember the meaning of their name "*miles*", which, according to a legal expert,<sup>1</sup> comes from the damage, "*malum*", they do.<sup>2</sup> Every soldier should keep in mind that he is in an army, "*exercitus*", which gets its name not from idleness but from "*exercise*". Let them do weapons exercises tirelessly, let them run, dig trenches, build bulwarks, be moving, press on, keep guard, and have no leisure time. Never should the soldier or the general be found idle. And the captain should know that no sight is sweeter to soldiers than when the general *eats the common bread in front of them, lies on a simple couch, and joins in the common labour when trenches and camps are under construction*.<sup>3</sup> For sharing labour and danger does more than the *fascēs*<sup>4</sup> and the distribution of money to make captains popular. And generals who participate in the common labour are more popular with the army than those who let the soldiers be idle. Neither soldiers nor generals should eat exquisite foods brought from afar. Let there be no *luxury* or *delicate eating*.<sup>5</sup> Scipio fined a soldier who had eaten a dish of bread and meat<sup>6</sup>, "*artocream*", that he called "*Carthage*" ("*Carthaginem*").

---

<sup>1</sup> Ulpianus, Gnaeus Domitius Annius (ca. 170-223): Roman jurist

<sup>2</sup> Ulpianus: *De testamento*, Lib. 1 ff.: *Nam et miles a malo dictus quod arcere soleat scilicet*. Cf. also Bruni: *De militia* (Bayley, p. 373, l. 19): *sic et miles a malo quod arcet recte dici miles*

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch: *Parallel lives / Marius* (Bibl. Ambros. H 37 sup, f. 23v), cf. Piccolomini: *Pentalogus* (Schingnitz, p. 234)

<sup>4</sup> A bound bundle of wooden rods, sometimes including an axe with its blade emerging. In ancient Ro-

me, it symbolised a magistrate's power and jurisdiction

<sup>5</sup> Lucanus: *Bellum civile*, 4.376

<sup>6</sup> "*artocrea*". See RTA, 19, 3, p. 484, n. 146

[30] Sunt igitur omnes hae bestiae a nostris procul castris expellendae, si victores esse cupimus: superbia, avaritia, libido, crudelitas, {97r} ignavia, luxuria, proque his advocandae sunt nobilissimae ac speciosissimae virgines: humilitas, liberalitas, castitas, misericordia, sollicitudo, abstinencia. Hae sunt enim, quae divinam nobis pietatem placare possunt et angelum, qui victoriam praebeat, ex ipso caeli summo vertice advocare. Cumque his fortitudinem ac magnanimitatem, tum vero spem et alacritatem concurrere oportet. Aggrediantur milites alto corde, quae necessaria instant, pericula, neque terreantur subitis casibus, *non perturbentur in rebus asperis, neque tumultuantes<sup>1</sup> de gradu dejiciantur*, ut dicitur. Potissime vero capitaneus praesenti animo consilioque utatur nec a ratione discedat. Sed omnia, quae possunt evenire, in utramque partem libret ac percipiat cognitione futura, ut jam sciat, quid agendum sit, cum hoc aut illud evenerit, ne aliquando turpe illud dicere habeat: *“Non putaram.”* Cumque omnino periclitandum est, volo fortem militem servituti ac turpitudini mortem praeferre. Numquam spes, numquam alacritas militi desit; credat se omnis exercitus victurum cum pugnare oportet. Caveat imperator milite titubante committere proelium<sup>2</sup>, ad quam rem duo necessaria sunt: alterum, ut ita munita sint castra, ne cogatur invitus pugnare; alterum, ut ratione ostendatur militibus victoriam esse sperandam, in qua re multum valet capitanei eloquentia, atque ingenium, ac *dicendi gravitas, et copia, in quo ipso est quaedam dignitas imperatoria*.

[31] In primo adjutus est Gaius Marius, qui contra Cimbros profectus, cum sensisset milites timere multitudinem ac proceritatem hostium, tam diu in castris se continuit, donec contumeliis provocatus miles proelium posceret. Antea vero petentibus hostibus pugnam respondit non esse Romani moris pugnandi consilium ex hostibus capere. Neque hic imitandi sunt aliqui, qui sibi dedecus reputant, nisi pugnent provocati. Timent enim rumores hominum, ne pusillanimes appellentur. Imitandus est potius Fabius Maximus, quem cum multi reprehenderent, quia non pugnaret cum Hannibale, *non ponebat rumores ante salutem*, neque pugnare sine certa victoriae spe<sup>3</sup> volebat, quod illi facere possunt, qui castra opportune muniunt et his rebus fulciunt, quae sunt ad victum necessaria. Sed haec cura capitanei erit.

---

<sup>1</sup> tumultuante A, D; tumultuantes  
corr. ex tumultuante G

<sup>2</sup> committere proelium : prelium  
committere G

<sup>3</sup> victoriae spe : spe uictorie G

[30] So, all these beasts should be driven out of the camp if we want to be victorious: pride, greed, lust, cruelty, laziness, and luxury. Instead of these, we should call upon those noble and beautiful maidens: humility, generosity, chastity, mercy, solicitude, and abstinence. It is they who can make Divine Piety accept us and summon the angel of victory from high Heaven. They should be joined by fortitude and courage, as well as by hope and ardour. The soldiers should fearlessly take on all necessary risks and not be frightened by sudden setbacks. Let them not become *disconcerted in times of difficulty or ruffled and thrown off one's feet*, as the saying goes.<sup>1</sup> Most of all, the captain should be alert, prudent, and sensible. He should foresee and weigh all contingencies so that he may know what to do when they occur and not – shamefully – have to say: “*I had not expected*” that.<sup>2</sup> Since theirs is a life of risk and danger, I want the soldiers to be strong and to prefer death to slavery and shame. Never should hope and ardour fail the soldiers. When it must fight, the whole army should believe that it will win. The general should be careful about engaging in battle when his army is faltering. And with regard to the battle itself, two things are necessary: one is a well-fortified camp, lest the general be forced to fight against his will, and the other is that soldiers be shown why they may reasonably hope for victory. In this matter, it is highly important that the captain be well-spoken and intelligent and have that *weight and eloquence in his oratory, which is characterised by the dignity appropriate to a commander*.<sup>3</sup>

[31] One who greatly profited from this policy was Gaius Marius when he marched against the Cimbrians. Hearing that his soldiers feared the numerical strength and the tallness of the enemies, he remained so long in camp that the soldiers themselves, irritated by the insults of the enemies, demanded to fight. When, earlier, the enemies asked for battle, he replied that it was not the Roman custom to take advice on fighting from enemies. There is no reason to imitate those men who consider it shameful not to fight when insulted, fearing what people say, and not wanting to be called timid. Rather, we should imitate Fabius Maximus: when many criticised him for not fighting with Hannibal, *not in the least did fame with him take precedence of safety*,<sup>4</sup> and he did not want to fight without certain hope of victory. This may be done by those who fortify their camp properly and have abundant provisions. But that is the responsibility of the captain.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cicero: *De officiis*, 1.23.80: *Fortis vero animi et constantis est non perturbari in rebus asperis nec tumultuantem de gradu deici, ut dicitur*

<sup>2</sup> Valerius Maximus: *Facta ac dicta memorabilia*, 7.2.2. Quoting Scipio

<sup>3</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 14.42: *quantum dicendi gravitate et*

*copia valeat, in quo ipso inest quaedam dignitas imperatoria*

<sup>4</sup> Ennius, quoted by Cicero: *De officiis*, 1.24.84: *Noenum rumores ponebat ante salutem*



[32] Nos hic pauca de spe instituimus dicere. Sentio enim multos dicere, quibus non videtur verisimile cum eo exercitu, qui promissus est, vincere. “Namque cum fama sit trecenta aut saltem ducenta millia pugnatorum in armis habituros Turcos, quid,” inquiunt, “adversus haec quadraginta millia bellantes agant? Quae proportio ista? Quid nostra paucitas adversus tantam multitudinem?<sup>1</sup> Si fuerint hinc viri, inde oves, mactando nostros fatigari oportet.” His ego respondeo quadraginta millia ex sola Alamania mittenda esse, Hungari suum exercitum, Bohemique suum habebunt extra hunc numerum. Neque Austria, Moravia, Sclesia, quantum ad haec, inter Alamanos habentur<sup>2</sup>. Ex Gallia quoque ceterisque Christianorum {97v} provinciis nonnulli sua sponte concurrent. Itaque facile, ut arbitror, octuaginta millia pugnatorum terrestris exercitus continebit. In mari quoque classis erit nostra inimica Turcis, quae illorum agros undique vexabit, et ad tuendam patriam remanere nonnullos coget. Non est parvus neque contemnendus exercitus, qui octuaginta millia virorum educentium gladios continet. Neque dux, qui sapiat, majorem desideret. Romani, teste Vegetio<sup>3</sup>, numquam tantam belli molem imminere posse putarunt, quin quattuor legiones una cum auxiliis ad resistendum sufficerent. Auxilia vero numquam majora voluerunt quam legiones essent. Et licet Octavianus Augustus quattuor et quadraginta legiones habuisse tradatur, non tamen his omnibus uno bello usus est, sed ad tutelam provinciarum legiones alias aliis in locis distribuit.

[33] Aristoteles<sup>4</sup> in *Politicis* eam quippe civitatem non laudat, quae adeo magna est, ut cives inter se non sint cogniti. Negat enim ejus civitatis regimen posse subsistere, in qua non sint omnia ex ordine disposita. Civitates autem nimis amplas nimisque populosas recte disponi posse non putat. At haec ratio in exercitu potentior est. Civitas enim non semper hostes habet, et pacis tempore, quae gerenda sint imminente bello, disponere potest. Exercitus semper hostem insidiantem habet, et nunc impetum, nunc insidias cavere cogitur. Discrimina ex momentis occurrunt, quibus, nisi subito succurratur, funditus intereundum est. Sed quomodo ipso puncto temporis provideri atque occurri potest, nisi ad ipsum imperatoris nutum universi milites praesto sint? Quomodo praesto erunt, ignotus ignoto cum imperat? Maximi et numerosissimi exercitus neque regi neque pasci possunt, neque loca facile reperiuntur, in quibus pugnare multitudines hujusmodi possint: facile quoque minor exercitus aut colles aut palustria<sup>5</sup> loca reperit, ne undique circumdari a multitudine possit. Impossibile est maximum exercitum ordinatum esse, neque enim multitudo rei militaris perita potest esse: vix paucos doctos invenias.

<sup>1</sup> que proportio ... multitudinem  
omit. G

<sup>2</sup> neque add. G

<sup>3</sup> Vegetius de numero militum in  
marg. D, G

<sup>4</sup> Aristoteles de magnitudine  
civitatis in marg. D, G

<sup>5</sup> palustra G

## 1.8. Christians need not fear Turkish superiority in numbers

[32] Here, we propose to say something about what we may hope for. I hear many say that it is unlikely that you can win with the forces that have been promised, “for if the Turks are going to have 300,000 or at least 200,000 soldiers under arms, as it is rumoured, then what can our 40,000 soldiers achieve? What kind of odds are those? What can so few do against so many?”<sup>1</sup> Even if those on our side are men and those on the other side sheep, we shall still be overcome by exhaustion just by slaughtering them.” To them, I answer that the 40,000 applies only to the soldiers sent from Germany. The armies raised by the Hungarians and by the Bohemians are not included in this number, and - in so far as Germany is concerned - neither are those from Austria, Moravia, and Silesia. From France and the other Christian lands, there will be many volunteers. Thus, I believe, the land army will easily have 80,000 soldiers. At sea, our navy, too,<sup>2</sup> will fight the Turks and attack their lands everywhere, forcing them to keep many men at home in order to defend their country. An army with the swords of 80,000 men is neither small nor contemptible. Nor will an experienced general desire a larger army. According to Vegetius,<sup>3</sup> the Romans thought they would never be seriously threatened by a force so great that four legions with their corresponding auxiliary troops would not suffice to counter it.<sup>4</sup> And they did not want the auxiliary troops to be more numerous than the legions. Even if Emperor Augustus is said to have had 44 legions, he did not use them all in a single campaign but distributed them in many places for the defence of the provinces.

[33] In his *Politics*, Aristotle certainly does not praise the city, which is so big that its citizens do not know each other. He says that no government can survive in a city where everything is not done in an orderly fashion, and he thinks that cities that are too large and populous cannot be well-ordered.<sup>5</sup> This is even more true of armies. For a city does not always have enemies, and if war threatens at a time of peace, there is time to make proper preparations. But an army always has an enemy lurking somewhere, and it always has to be on guard against attacks or traps. Dangers may arise at any moment, and if they are not countered immediately, there will be total disaster. But how can dangers be countered and met at any time unless all soldiers are ready to obey the orders of the general? And how will they be ready if the general and soldiers do not know each other? Very large armies can neither be commanded nor fed, and it is difficult to find places where such large numbers can fight. A small army, however, can easily find hills or marshy areas<sup>6</sup> where they cannot be surrounded by a larger army. A large army cannot be well-ordered. And the large majority cannot be skilled in war - you will barely come across a few experts.

---

<sup>1</sup> Vegetius: *Epitoma rei militaris*, 2,

4

<sup>2</sup> To be provided by the Italians

<sup>3</sup> Vegetius Renatus, Publius Flavius (late 4th c.): Roman writer

<sup>4</sup> Vegetius: *Epitoma rei militaris*, 7.4

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle: *Politics*, 7.4 (1326b)

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Vegetius: *Epitoma rei militaris*, 3.6

[34] Legi ego non paucas veterum historias, neque fortunatos invenio exercitus numerosos<sup>1</sup>. Nostis cum quanto fastu missus Holofernes contra Judaeos incesse, cujus copiae terram cooperiebant, et *profectus est ipse*, inquit scriptura, *et omnis exercitus cum quadrigis et equitibus et sagittariis, qui cooperuerunt faciem ejus sicut locustae*. Ac hic viduae manu truncatus est. Rapsaces contra Ezechiam missus regem Aegypti deridet quasi *baculum arundineum*, cadit tamen exercitus ejus. Cyrum, Cambysis filium, qui condidit<sup>2</sup> imperium Persarum, cum ducentis millibus pugnatorum ingressus Scythiam regina Tamiris interficit<sup>3</sup>. Darius, Hystaspis filius, qui primus ejus nominis regnavit in Persis, cum septingentis millibus hominum ingressus Scythiam *amissis LXXX millibus* turpi fuga recessit. Eundem cum sexcentis millibus bellatorum Graeciam oppugnare nitentem Melchides<sup>4</sup> Atheniensis in campis Marathoniis cum<sup>5</sup> X millibus fugat.

---

<sup>1</sup> Numerosi exercitus infortunati

*in marg.* D, G

<sup>2</sup> condit D, G

<sup>3</sup>interfecit D, G

<sup>4</sup> Alcibiades *in marg.* D;

Melchides *in marg.* G

<sup>5</sup> *omit.* G

[34] I have read a number of historical works from old times, and I find that large armies were not successful.<sup>1</sup> You know with what magnificence Holofernes was sent against the Jews, and how his troops overran their land. *And he went forth, says Scripture, he and all the army, with the chariots, and horsemen, and archers, who covered the face of the earth, like locusts.*<sup>2</sup> Still he died at the hand of a widow.<sup>3</sup>

Rapsaces was sent against Ezechias<sup>4</sup> and scorned the King of Egypt as a *staff of reed*.<sup>5</sup> Still, his army was defeated.

Cyrus,<sup>6</sup> the son of Cambyses<sup>7</sup> who founded the Persian Empire, invaded Scythia with 200,000 soldiers, but was killed by Queen Tamyris.<sup>8</sup>

Darius I of Persia,<sup>9</sup> the son of Hystaspes,<sup>10</sup> entered Scythia with 700,000 troops; he lost 80,000 men and had to flee ignominiously.<sup>11</sup> The same Darius tried to conquer Greece with 600,000 soldiers, but on the plain at Marathon he was defeated and forced to flee by the Athenian Miltiades,<sup>12</sup> who had only 10,000 soldiers.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vegetius: *Epitoma rei militaris*, 3.1

<sup>2</sup> Judith, 2, 11

<sup>3</sup> Judith, 13

<sup>4</sup> Hezekiah: 13th king of Judah. The commonly received computation reckons his reign from 726 to 697 BCE

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah, 36, 6

<sup>6</sup> Cyrus II the Great (ca. 576-530 BCE): King of Persia. Founder of the Achaemenid Empire

<sup>7</sup> Cambyses I the Elder (ca. 600 - 559 BCE): King of Anshan in Iran

<sup>8</sup> Tamyris (fl. c. 530 BC): Eastern Iranian empress who reigned over the Massagetes, a Scythian people. Defeated and killed Cyrus I the Great. See Justinus: *Epitoma historiarum Philippicarum*, 1, 8

<sup>9</sup> Darius I the Great (ca. 550-476 BCE): King of Persia. Third King of the Persian Achaemenid Empire

<sup>10</sup> Hystaspes [Vistaspa] (fl. 550 BCE): Persian satrap of Bactria and Persis

<sup>11</sup> Otto of Freising: *Chronica*, 2, 16

<sup>12</sup> Miltiades (550-489 BCE): One of the Greek generals at the Battle of Marathon

<sup>13</sup> Otto of Freising: *Chronica*, 2, 16

[35] Xerxes, qui post eum<sup>1</sup> Persis imperavit, septies centena *millia* Persarum, {98r} auxiliarium vero *trecenta millia*, in Graeciam trajecit tantasque copias congregavit, ut *non immerito proditum sit flumina ab ejus exercitu siccata Graeciamque omnem vix ejus exercitum capere potuisse*. Superbus ille atque inflatus tanti ductor exercitus, *veluti naturae dominum se agebat, montes in planum deducebat, convexa vallium aequabat et maria quaedam pontibus sternebat, quaedam ad navigationis commodum coaptabat. Sed qualis rediit? Nempe una nave cruentis fluctibus et tarda per densa cadavera prora. Quam terribilis ejus introitus, tam turpis et foedus discessus fuit*. Terrestri proelio cum quattuor millibus militum a Leonida, rege Spartanorum, in angustiis Thermopylarum triduo debellatur, navali pugna in angustiis Salamini freti a Themistocle superatur, piscatoria scapha diffugit. *Res spectaculo digna et expectatione rerum humanae sortis varietate miranda; scilicet in exiguo latentem videre navigio, quem paulo ante vix aequor omne capiebat, carentem etiam omnium servorum ministerio*. Quid alter Darius, qui ante Codomanus dictus est? Non cum Alexandro magno duobus in proeliis dimicavit, apud Issum, deinde in Gangamelis? In primo bello sexcenta millia pugnatorum habuit, in secundo decies centena millia peditum, equitum quinquaginta millia, currus falcatos ducentos. Victus tamen utrobique est. Alexandro VII millia equitum, quadraginta millia peditum fuere. Gaius Marius cum sexaginta millibus militum trecenta millia Cimbrorum fudit atque delevit, nec majorem exercitum habuit Julius Caesar, cum quadringenta millia Gallorum contrivit.

---

<sup>1</sup> post eum : postea G

[35] Xerxes,<sup>1</sup> who ruled the Persians after him, brought 700,000 Persians and 300,000 auxiliary troops to Greece,<sup>2</sup> gathering there such a large force *that it may rightly be said that the rivers dried up because of his army and that all of Greece could barely contain it.*<sup>3</sup> The general was so arrogant and proud of his great army that *as, if he had been lord of nature itself, he levelled mountains, filled up valleys, covered some seas with bridges, and contracted others for the convenience of navigation.*<sup>4</sup> *In what plight did he return? Why, in a single ship; on blood-stained waves, the prow slowly forcing her way through waters thick with corpses.*<sup>5</sup> His departure was just as ignominious and shameful as his arrival was terrible.<sup>6</sup> In the terrestrial battle that took place in the narrow confines of Thermopylae and lasted three days, he was defeated by Leonidas,<sup>7</sup> King of Sparta, who had only 4,000 men.<sup>8</sup> And in the naval battle that took place in the narrow confines of Salamis, he was defeated by Themistocles<sup>9</sup> and had to flee in a fishingboat.<sup>10</sup> *It was a wondrous spectacle and a remarkable example of the instability of the human condition: the one who had filled more than the whole sea<sup>11</sup> was now hiding in a small boat, without any servants!*<sup>12</sup> And what about the other Darius,<sup>13</sup> who was formerly called Codomanus? Did he not fight with Alexander in two battles, at Issos<sup>14</sup> and at Gaugamela<sup>15</sup>? In the first battle, he had 600,000 soldiers, in the second, one million foot soldiers, 50,000 horse soldiers, and 200 chariots armed with scythes. Nonetheless, he was defeated in both battles.<sup>16</sup> Alexander had only 7,000 horse soldiers and 40,000 foot soldiers.

Gaius Marius fought 300,000 Cimbrians with 60,000 soldiers, and still he crushed them.<sup>17</sup>

And Julius Caesar did not have a larger army when he destroyed 400,000 Gauls.

<sup>1</sup> Xerxes I the Great (519-465 BCE): King of Persia. Fourth Achaemenid dynasty. His invasion of Greece in 480 BCE failed

<sup>2</sup> Justinus Trogus Pompejus: *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum*, 2.10: *Iam Xerxes septingenta milia de regno armauerat et trecenta milia de auxiliis*

<sup>3</sup> Justinus Trogus Pompejus: *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum*, 2.10

<sup>4</sup> Justinus Trogus Pompejus: *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum*, 2.10 *denique ante experimentum belli fiducia uirium ueluti naturae ipsius dominus et montes in planum deducebat et conuexa ual-*

*lium aequabat et quaedam maria pontibus sternebat, quaedam ad nauigationis commodum per conpendium ducebat.*

<sup>5</sup> Juvenalis: *Satirae*, 10.185-186

<sup>6</sup> Justinus Trogus Pompejus: *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum*, 2.11

<sup>7</sup> Leonidas I (d. 480 BCE): King of Sparta

<sup>8</sup> Otto von Freising: *Chronica*, 2,17; Justinus Trogus Pompejus: *Historiarum Philippicarum Epitoma*, 2.11

<sup>9</sup> Themistocles (ca. 524-459 BCE): Athenian politician and general

<sup>10</sup> Otto von Freising: *Chronica*, 2, 17

<sup>11</sup> Juvenalis: *Satirae*, 10.175-186

<sup>12</sup> Justinus Trogus Pompejus: *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum*, 2,13

<sup>13</sup> Darius III (ca. 380-330 BCE): Last king of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia from 336 BC to his death

<sup>14</sup> 333 BC

<sup>15</sup> 331 BC

<sup>16</sup> Arrianus: *Anabasis*, 3.8. Translated into Latin by Pier Paolo Vergerio. Piccolomini had a copy of this translation, cf. Helmrath, note 157. See also EPI, 5 / 152

<sup>17</sup> Battle of Vercellae, 30 July 101 BCE

[36] Exposita semper ad caedem est nimia numerositas. Vester autem exercitus si, quemadmodum statutum est, congregabitur neque paucitate contemnendus neque numerositate confundendus. Duces peritos, milites fortes et ad signum paratos habebitis. Pugnabitis armati contra inermes, experti contra rudes, animosi contra timidos. Asiani<sup>1</sup> namque, ut ipse testis est Aristoteles, imbelles sunt. Huc accedit, quia non sunt a Graecis amati<sup>2</sup> Turci. Inter medios hostes pugnabunt: si semel fugere coeperint, et vos et suos timere habebunt. Non est igitur, quod multitudinem illorum formidetis, quando pro causa Dei pugnaturi estis, cui tam facile in paucis quam in multis vincere pronum est. Immo vult ille potius in paucis, ut sua omnino victoria videatur, quemadmodum Gedeoni contigit, quem cum CCC viris pugnare dominus voluit, cum congregasset XXX millia. *Dixitque dominus ad Gedeon: multus est tecum populus, nec tradetur Madian<sup>3</sup> in manus ejus, ne gloriatur Israel contra me, et dicat: "Meis viribus liberatus sum"*. Confidite igitur, principes, neque multitudine hostium terreamini, quando pro eo pugnaturi estis, in cujus manu victoria est atque triumphus. Haec voluit Caesarea majestas me nunc<sup>4</sup> dicere, ut ad futura, quamvis cauti estis, tamen cautiores redderemini. Vos igitur cogitate super his atque, ut Caesar confidit, boni consulite.

---

<sup>1</sup> Asiani imbelles *in marg.* D, G

<sup>2</sup> amati *corr. ex armati* A; armati  
D

<sup>3</sup> Madiam A, D

<sup>4</sup> me nunc : nunc me G

[36] An army that is too large is always at risk of being slaughtered. But if your army gathers in the numbers that have been decided, it will neither be contemptible because of its smallness nor defeated because of its great numbers. You will have experienced leaders and strong and disciplined<sup>1</sup> soldiers, ready for the signals. You will be fighting armed against unarmed, skilled against unskilled, brave against cowards. For, as Aristotle testifies,<sup>2</sup> the Asians are not warlike. To this should be added that the Turks are not loved by the Greeks. They will be fighting surrounded by enemies, and once they begin to flee, they will have to fear not only your troops but also their own.<sup>3</sup> So, since you will be fighting for God's cause, there is no reason for you to fear the numbers of the Turks, for God can just as easily win with small forces as with large ones. Indeed, He would rather win with few soldiers so that the victory will be seen as entirely His. This is what happened to Gideon, whom the Lord wanted to fight only with 300 men when he had already gathered 30,000. *And the Lord said to Gideon: The people that are with thee are many, and Madian shall not be delivered into their hands: lest Israel should glory against me, and say: I was delivered by my own strength.*<sup>4</sup> So, be confident, Princes, and do not fear the great numbers of the enemies since you will be fighting for Him in whose hand is victory and triumph.

This is what His Imperial Majesty desired me to say, so that with regard to future events, you will be even more careful than you are now. Reflect on these matters and plan well, as the emperor trusts you will.

---

<sup>1</sup> "ad signum paratos"

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle: *Politica*, 7.7 (1327).

<sup>3</sup> I.e., troops raised from the subject peoples, like the Greeks

<sup>4</sup> Judges, 7, 2





**2. Astantes**

[37] {90r} Hoc fuit principium orationis Aeneae Silvii Piccolomominei, episcopi Senensis, qui postea pontificatum maximum adeptus Pius secundus appellatus est, quam statuerat habere in conventu Viennensi jussu Caesaris, et durat usque “Erigite animos vestros, date operam, ut quam celerrime in bellum veniatis.” Postea mutuavit et usus est alio prohemio quod incipit “In hoc florentissimo atque amplissimo conventu”.

[38] Astantes hodie, **reverendissimi patres, illustrissimi principes, ceterique viri magnanimi ac praestantissimi**, coram serenissimo **domino nostro Romanorum imperatore piissimo ac gloriosissimo** de statu religionis nostrae ac fidei catholicae consulturi, illud jam persuasum certumque tenetis, quia **necessarium est pugnare in Turcos**, si rem publicam Christianam cupimus esse salvam. Sic enim visum est omnibus, qui **Ratisponae** conventum ex jussione nostri Caesaris habuere. **In Frankfordia vero re pressius examinata ac digesta decretum est bellum** terra ac mari **contra Turcos** gerendum esse. **Promissa sunt Hungaris auxilia, statutus militum numerus, qui ex Alania deducatur. Classis ex Italia comparandae cura ad sanctissimum urbis Romae pontificem Nicolaum quintum remissa, qui per legatum suum id oneris acceptavit.**

[39] Non est igitur, cur hodie disputemus, **an bellum indicere Turci expediat, sed quomodo quoque ordine, quae Frankfordiae placita ac conclusa sunt, executioni mandentur, in medio consulendum est.** Danda est opera, ut exercitus quantocius congregetur. Eligendus est hoc in loco **dux belli**, quem **capitaneum nominamus, Romani imperatorem appellavere.** Dicenda dies, qua **progrediendum; nominandum iter, quo sit eundum; statuenda belli gerendi sedes; res frumentaria procuranda; habenda cum Italis intelligentia certior.** Sciendum, quid illa natio gerat, quantam classem instruat, quem bello maritimo praeficiat; quo tempore sit exitura; quo loco **Turcos** invasura. Super his ergo, uti cogitetis atque attenti sitis, magnopere vos oratos efficit imperatoria sublimitas, **quae cum vestro consilio cuncta disponere decrevit.**

[37] {90r} Here follows the introduction to an oration by Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena, who was called Pius II after he became pope, which he intended to give at a meeting in Vienna at the emperor's request. It ends with the words "*Erigite animos vestros, date operam, ut quam celerrime in bellum veniatis.*" Later, he changed it and used another introduction beginning with the words "*In hoc florentissimo atque amplissimo conventu*".

[38] Reverend fathers, Illustrious Princes, and you others, great and eminent men. You are assembled here today, to discuss – in the presence of our Serene Lord, the pious and glorious Emperor of the Romans - the situation of our religion and the Catholic Faith. You are already fully aware that it is necessary to fight the Turks if we want the Christian commonwealth to be safe. For that was the judgement of all those who met in Regensburg at our emperor's command. In Frankfurt, the matter was examined and considered in greater detail, and it was decided to make war against the Turks both on land and at sea. The Hungarians were promised help, and a decision was reached concerning the number of troops to be brought from Germany. The Holy Father and Bishop of Rome, Nicolaus V, was entrusted with the preparation of a fleet to sail from Italy, accepting this charge through his legate.

[39] Thus, there is no reason for us to discuss today whether it is expedient to declare war against the Turks. Rather, we should discuss how and in what order the decisions made in Frankfurt should be implemented. We must see to it that the army is gathered as soon as possible. We must choose a general whom we call captain and the Romans called *imperator*. The day of departure must be appointed. The itinerary should be announced. It must be decided where the war will be fought. Provisions should be arranged for. More certain information from Italy should be obtained. We must know what that nation will do: how great a fleet it will provide; whom they will appoint as the admiral; when the fleet will sail; where it will attack the Turks. His Imperial Highness urgently requests that you consider and focus on these matters, as he has decided to arrange everything as you advise.

[40] Ceterum, quia Turcis jam explorata sunt consilia nostra illosque copias ingentes congregare, vigilare, instare studiisque omnibus niti, certum est, ut aestate proxima Hungariae nobilem terram ingrediantur ac sibi subjiciant. Eo vestras curas intentas esse convenit, idque Caesar ex vobis petit, ut quantocius fieri potest, promissus exercitus habeatur instructus. Nisi enim promissa subsidia suo tempore in Hungariam {90v} mittantur, timendum est, ne regnum illud amplissimum, quod pluribus saeculis nostrae fidei clipeus fuit, in potestatem hostium deveniat. Quod si divina ultio permiserit, nihil est, quod deinceps in Christianitate tutum relinquatur. Inde ad Italiam, inde ad Alamaniam ceterasque nostri orbis provincias facilis exitus patet. Sane cum Hungari nostra ac patrum nostrorum memoria plurima cum Turcis varia fortuna bella gesserint, fundendoque per multos annos suum sanguinem tutati sint nostrum, indignum fuerit eos quoquo modo a nobis relinqui. Ostendenda gratitudo est; subveniendum est sociis nostrae fidei; juvandi sunt in suis periculis, qui nos in nostris numquam reliquere.

[41] Et quoniam jam promissa sunt auxilia, cavendum, est, ne quo pacto deficiamus. Namque si privatis hominibus turpe est fidem fallere, multo magis his, qui sunt in dignitate, multo magis principibus ac populis. Hungaris addicta sunt subsidia non per unum, sed per multos principes, non per unam civitatem, sed per multas. Tota natio Theutonica in Frankfordiensi concilio ad tutelam Hungariae bellum contra Turcos gerendum statuit. Inauditum est nationem hanc promisso antehac defuisse. Cavendum est, ne in futurum quidem audiatur. Nihil est enim, quod Germanico nomini gloriosius habeatur quam promissi dictique tenax custodia. Servanda est haec a patribus vobis relicta haereditas, ut qui constantes semper habiti estis, et fixi nunc atque solidissimi reperiamini. Etenim cum omnes virtutes laudari soleant, sola tamen constantia coronatur. Quod si ceteris in rebus vestra natio solida et inconcussa reperta est, neque umquam suum dictum irritum fecit, nunc potissime studendum est, ut, quae promisistis, observetis, quando non solum his, quibus promissa sunt auxilia, sed nobis ipsis ad salutem observantia, ad interitum fractura promissi cedat.

[42] Nisi enim hoc tempore Hungariae opem fertis, non solum illi pereunt, sed vos quoque ruitis, ac vobiscum tota Christianitas interit. Actum est de religione nostra; extirpatur radicitus nostra fides; obruitur Christi nomen. Surgit in omnem terram Mahumethi perniciosum dogma, nisi sumptis armis Hungaros adjuvetis.

[43] Deplorata est satis in Ratispona atque in Frankfordia Constantinopolitana calamitas; demonstratum est, quo redacta est Christiana societas; expositum est, quid Turci cogitent, quantum nobis periculum immineat, quibus modis obviandum sit. Nunc gerendi tempus est. Cavere oportet, ne dum nimium consultamus, hostes nimium agant, ne dum nos curiam tenemus, illi campum occupent. Nisi praesto in armis sumus, Hungariam hostibus prodimus. Agite igitur, principes, erigite {91r} animos vestros! Date operam, ut quam celerrime in bellum veniatis.

[40] Moreover, since the Turks already know our plans and are gathering immense troops and are alert and completely focused on their undertaking, it is certain that they will invade and subjugate the noble country of Hungary next summer. This is a matter you have to deal with, and for his part, the emperor asks you to provide the promised army as soon as possible. If the promised help is not sent to Hungary in time, we must fear that this great realm, for centuries the bulwark of our Faith, will fall into the power of our enemies. If the God of revenge allows it, nothing will be safe in the Christian world. The road to Italy, Germany, and the other lands of our world will lie open. For generations, the Hungarians have fought the Turks with varying fortune. Shedding their own blood, they protected ours for many years. It would be unworthy if we failed them now. Rather, we must show gratitude. We must help our companions in the Faith. And in their hour of peril, we must help those who never deserted us in ours.

[41] And since help has already been promised to the Hungarians, it is our responsibility not to fail them in any way whatsoever, for if breaking faith is shameful for private persons, it is all the more shameful for those in high office and even more shameful for princes and peoples. Hungary has been promised help not just by one prince but by many princes, and not just by one city but by many cities. At the Diet of Frankfurt, the whole German nation decided to go to war against the Turks for the protection of Hungary. Never before has this nation been heard to fail its promise. Take care that this will also be so in the future. Indeed, nothing brings greater glory to the German name than keeping your promise and your word. This heritage from your fathers you must keep alive so that you, who have always been seen as most reliable, will also now be found solid and dependable. For though all virtues are praised, only constancy is crowned. In all other matters, your nation has, to this day, been found solid and unshakeable, and it has never gone back on its word. But now – more than ever – you should keep your promises. Keeping them will save not only those who have been promised help but also yourselves, whereas breaking them will lead to disaster.

[42] Indeed, unless you help Hungary now, it is not only the Hungarians who will perish; you, too, will be destroyed, and the whole of Christendom together with you. Our religion will be finished, our Faith will be completely uprooted, and the name of Christ will be forgotten. The pernicious teachings of Muhammad will spread everywhere unless you take up arms and help the Hungarians.

[43] The catastrophe in Constantinople has been sufficiently lamented in Regensburg and Frankfurt. It has been shown how greatly the Christian Commonwealth has been reduced. It has been explained what the Turks intend to do, how great the danger threatening us is, and how it may be countered. Now is the time for action. Let us ensure that our enemies do not do too much while we talk too much and that they do not occupy the field while we hold meetings. If we do not take up arms quickly, we betray Hungary to the enemy. So, act, Princes, show courage! And endeavour to go to war as quickly as possible!



**3. Frequentissimus**



## **Oratio Aeneae Silvii Piccolominei, episcopi Senensis, qui postea pontificatum summum adeptus Pius II appellatus est habita in conventu Novae Civitatis Austriae, non finita<sup>1</sup>**

[44] {143v} *Frequentissimus et amplissimus* hic conventus vester hodie, reverendissimi patres, illustrissimi principes, ceterique viri magnimi ac praestantissimi, quamvis hoc in loco verba facientibus alacritatem quandam miramque jucunditatem praestare videatur, mihi quoque non parva felicitas objecta sit, qui vestram hodie nobilitatem de rebus maximis sum allocuturus. Non tamen mea me voluntas ad dicendum impulit, namque cum mente revolve {144r} hujus auditorii dignitatem majestatemque tanti coetus, intelligo minus me aptum esse, qui coram tanta doctrina tantoque splendore nobilitatis orationem habere debeam. Neque enim huc afferendum quidquam censeo nisi *elaboratum ingenio*, eloquentia tersum, doctrina referctum<sup>2</sup>, quod quidem praestari a me nullatenus potest. Sed vicit me auctoritas divi Caesaris Friderici, Romanorum imperatoris, domini nostri piissimi atque invictissimi, qui, etsi plurimos habet penes se viros facundia ac doctrina praeditos, nescio tamen qua ratione motus hanc mihi potissime dicendi provinciam demandavit.

[45] Mihi ergo, cum notum esset imperium, non cur mandaretur, sed quomodo tanto principi oboediretur, cogitare necesse fuit. Namque si praesidentis reipublicae rogationes veluti mandata suscipi debent, quid de mandatis ipsis dicendum erit? Injecta est igitur mihi dicendi necessitas, quamvis desit orandi facultas. Sed videat ille, quid mandaverit. Vos certe, ut arbitror, mihi aures minime denegabitis, quando non meo nomine, sed ipsius verba facio, quem vos omnes veneramini, deque his rebus loquar, quae vestram et omnium Christianorum salutem concernunt.

---

<sup>1</sup> Oratio ... finita : Aeneae Silvii episcopi Senensis oratio habita nomine Caesaris in conventu Nove Civi-

tatis de bello Turconico, non finita  
**D, G**

<sup>2</sup> refectum A; refertum G

## Oration of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena, who after he became pope was called Pius II, held at the Diet in Neustadt, Austria, unfinished

[44] Reverend Fathers, Illustrious Princes, and you others, great and eminent men, *your numerous and grand assembly* here today seems to the speakers both eager and remarkably joyful, and I ought to be happy to be speaking to you, Noble Men, on very important matters. However, [I must say that] in this I am not following my own inclination, for when I reflect on the dignity and majesty of this great audience, I see that I am not qualified to give an oration to men of such learning and splendid nobility as are assembled here. I believe that any oration to be given here should be *intelligent*, eloquent, and learned, something that I can in no way achieve.<sup>1</sup> But I have been overruled by the authority of Holy Caesar Friedrich, Emperor of the Romans, our pious and unvanquished lord. Though he has many eloquent and learned men in his service, he has charged me with this – I do not know why!

[45] However, when I was given this command, I had to consider not why it was given but only how to obey this great prince. For if the requests of the leader of the state should be accepted as if they were orders, then what could I say about the orders themselves? So, now I am faced with the necessity of speaking, even though I do not have the qualifications. But this is a matter for him who commanded it. As for you, I believe that you will not deny me your ears since I am not speaking in my own name but in the name of him whom you all honour and about matters that concern your own safety and the safety of all Christians.

---

<sup>1</sup> In this introduction, Piccolomini freely uses Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 1.1

[46] Bis ego, quemadmodum pars vestrum<sup>1</sup> maxima non ignorat, de hoc ipso negotio sum locutus, de quo modo sermonem instituo, in Ratispona primum, deinde in Frankfordia. Haec sunt enim duo concilia, quae jussu majestatis imperatoriae ad consulendum reipublicae Christianae hoc anno gesta sunt. Etenim, cum accepisset, Caesarea sublimitas, quae Turcorum feritas circa Constantinopolim perpetrasset, quaeve deinceps adversus Christi fideles perpetrare instituisset, decrevit quantum in se foret, Christianae reipublicae, ne diebus nostris deleri posset, consulere. Id enim sibi velut ecclesiae protectori et advocato ex officio incumbere non dubitavit, memor illius sententiae Platonicae<sup>2</sup>, quoniam qui reipublicae praesunt, quaecumque agunt, ad eorum, qui sibi commissi sunt, utilitatem referre debent, obliti commodorum suorum. Eadem quoque cura, idem studium, idem fervor sanctissimo domino nostro inesse videbatur, qui misso legato suo, episcopo Papiensi, docto et ornatissimo viro, Caesaream mentem ad tutelam reipublicae jam ardentem inflammare conatus est. Sed cum esset res ipsa grandis multorumque auxilia deprecere videretur, vocati sunt reges ac principes, excitatae communitates, invitati populi, celebrata, quae dixi, concilia.

---

<sup>1</sup> pars vestrum : vestrum pars G

<sup>2</sup> Sententia Platonica *in marg.* D,  
G

[46] As most of you know, I have already spoken twice on the matter that I am to speak about now,<sup>1</sup> first in Regensburg, then in Frankfurt. For, in that year,<sup>2</sup> His Imperial Majesty ordered two diets to be held in these cities, with the purpose of deliberating on the Christian commonwealth. For when his Imperial Highness heard about the cruel deeds of the Turks in Constantinople and what they planned to do against the believers in Christ afterwards, he resolved to do everything in his power to obviate the ruin of the Christian Commonwealth in our time. He did not doubt that this was his obligation by virtue of his position as protector and champion of the Church, remembering the words of Plato,<sup>3</sup> who said that those who lead the state should do everything they do for the sake of those who are entrusted to them, and not for their own advantage.<sup>4</sup> The same preoccupation, zeal, and eagerness were seen in Our Most Holy Lord,<sup>5</sup> who sent his legate, the Bishop of Pavia, a learned and distinguished man, to endeavour to further inflame the emperor's mind to protect the commonwealth – though indeed it was already burning! But since the matter was extremely important and the contributions of many were necessary, the kings and princes were invited, the cities were summoned, the peoples were called to participate, and the two aforementioned diets were held.

---

<sup>1</sup> The orations "*Quamvis omnibus*" [21] (14 May 1454) and "*Clades Constantinopolitana*" [22] (15 October 1454)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. RTA, p. 494, n. 8

<sup>3</sup> Plato (428/427 or 424/423-348/347 BCE): Greek philosopher. Student of Socrates

<sup>4</sup> Plato: *Republic*, 342e, 345d-e, 346e-347a

<sup>5</sup> I.e., the pope

[47] In Frankfordia denique conclusum est exercitus terra ac mari contra Turcos instituendos esse. Decretum est bellum pro defensione fidei {144v} gerere. Haec inclyta natio Germanica quadraginta millia pugnatorum in armis expeditorum in hoc proelium missuram se statuit. Hungari ac Bohemi cum ceteris gentibus inclyto Ladislao regi parentibus suas seorsum copias in armis habere promiserunt. Summus Romanus pontifex ex Italia classis armandae curam suscepit. Nunc<sup>1</sup> hoc in loco dandus est rebus ordo; eligendi sunt duces exercitus; unitas inter gentes, quae diversorum morum conventurae sunt, perquirenda; distribuenda inter provincias onera; statuenda dies, qua<sup>2</sup> copiae deducantur; nominandum iter, quo sit eundum; eligendi belli sedes, qua Turcos aggredi expediat - non dicam Teucros, numquam enim foedissimae conditionis gentem tam claro nomine honestabo; neque Asianos dicam, Romani populi patres, qui ex barbarica Scytharum faece originem ducunt<sup>3</sup>. Providendum est classem Italicam cum Germanico exercitu concurrere, ut duobus simul locis hostium territoria impetantur, quaerendi commeatus, pecuniae investigandae. De his omnibus non est, cur multa dicamus, neque Caesaris in hac parte anxius est animus. De rebus Italicis audietis apostolicae sedis legatum, audietis et inclyti regis Aragonum oratorem, audietis reliquos, qui ex illa provincia hic<sup>4</sup> adsunt, et quis sit datus ordo ex Italia cognoscetis.

---

<sup>1</sup> Quae agenda pro expeditione *in marg.* D, G

<sup>2</sup> quo G

<sup>3</sup> Turci unde *in marg.* D, G

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* D, G

[47] In the end, it was resolved in Frankfurt to raise both a land army and a naval army against the Turks. It was decreed to go to war for the defence of the Faith. This glorious German nation decided to contribute 40,000 armed soldiers<sup>1</sup> to the war. On their part, the Hungarians and the Bohemians, ruled by the glorious King Ladislaus, promised to send their armed troops. The Supreme Pontiff undertook the mobilisation of a fleet from Italy. Here and now, we must make concrete plans for this whole venture: the leaders of the army must be chosen; ways must be found to create harmony between people coming from different cultures;<sup>2</sup> the burdens should be distributed between the provinces; the date of the troops' departure must be appointed; the itinerary must be settled; a suitable place for fighting the Turks should be chosen (I do not call them Teucrians,<sup>3</sup> for I shall never honour that disgusting people with such a distinguished name. Nor shall I call them Asians,<sup>4</sup> fathers of the Roman people, for they take their origin from the barbaric dregs of the Scythians). We must coordinate the activities of the Italian fleet with those of the German army so that the enemy territories are attacked in two different places at the same time. Provisions must be arranged for; money must be found. But I shall not myself be saying much about these matters, and the emperor is not worried about them. Concerning the Italian matter, you shall be hearing the legate of the Apostolic See as well as the orator of the glorious King of Aragon and others from that region present here today. Thus, you will know the plans of the Italians.

---

<sup>1</sup> 30,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 horse soldiers

<sup>2</sup> "mores"

<sup>3</sup> Piccomini had earlier, like other humanists, believed that the Turks were descendants of the

Trojans or the Asians and called them Teucrians

<sup>4</sup> i.e., from Asia Minor

[48] Super his vero, quae circa campestrum exercitum disponenda sunt, intuetur Caesarea sublimitas plurimos ex vobis, qui adestis, rei bellicae peritissimos, quorum aetas semper in armis versata. Quid pediti, quid equiti, quid curribus, quid machinis conducat optime novit. Scitis quibus modis in acie, quibus in castris agendum sit. Multi ex vobis hostium naturam ac consuetudinem cognitam habent. Quae sint illius copiae, quae insidiae, quae artes, quae armaturae, quae vires, qui animi non ignorant. Vestrum erit igitur, quae ad bellum pertinent, ordinare. Caesari nihil hodie aliud incumbit nisi commonefacere vos ad tuendam religionem Christianam praesto et forti animo esse. Non est modo de bello gerendo suasio intemptanda, id enim jam decretum est.<sup>1</sup> Non est de numero militum disputandum, nam et ipse statutus est. Non est de capitaneo nominando disceptandum, nam et hunc cum vestro consilio Caesar dabit, virum fortem et tanto munere dignum. Non est de provisionibus faciendis circa exercitum concertandum, nam et has vestrae industriae Caesar dimittit.

[49] Quid ergo est, de quo hodie dicendum est? Sunt profecto et aliqua non parum {145r} expedientia, quae Caesareo nomine exponenda sunt vobis. Namque cum mens vobis omnibus sit bellum contra Turcos gerere – id est enim, ut dixi, jam decretum – ea omnia quaerenda sunt, per quae pugnantibus vobis victoria cedat. Victoriarum autem distributor est Deus; in ejus manu omnis triumphus est. Nemo vincit nisi donante Deo<sup>2</sup>; nemo triumphat nisi divina pietate juvante. Cum vult ille, corruunt magni exercitus; cum dat ille, parvae manus superant magnas.

---

<sup>1</sup> Que in aliis dietis conclusa fuere  
*in marg. A*

<sup>2</sup> Victores volenti Deo *in marg. D*

[48] Concerning the land army, His Imperial Highness will look to those many among you, present here today, who are specialists in military matters and have spent your whole life in warfare. You know what is best concerning foot soldiers, horse soldiers, wagons, and war machines. You know what arrangements to make both on the battlefield and in camp. Many of you are familiar with the character and the customs of the enemies, and you are aware of their numbers, their ploys, their techniques, their weaponry, their strengths, and their mentality. So, it will be up to you to make arrangements for the war. Today, the emperor only intends to entreat you to be ready to protect the Christian religion and to show courage. We shall not try to persuade you to go to war, for that has already been decreed. We shall not discuss the number of soldiers, for that has also been settled. We shall not consider the appointment of the captain, for the emperor will follow your advice and appoint a man who is strong and worthy of this great charge. And we shall not talk about the provisions for the army, for this matter, too, the emperor leaves to you.

[49] So, what should we talk about today? There are indeed some other, quite important matters that we shall speak about in the name of the emperor. Since you are all intent on going to war against the Turks – that has already been decreed, as I have said - we should search for all the things that will make you victorious in battle. But it is God who distributes victories; in his hand are all triumphs. Nobody wins unless God grants it; nobody triumphs without the assistance of Divine Piety. When he so desires, great armies collapse; when he grants it, small forces conquer great ones.



[50] Ille cum parva manu Hebraeorum ingentes prostravit hostium copias. Ille Samsonem, ille Gedeonem, ille Jephtam, ille Saulem, ille David, ille Salomonem, ille Maccabaeos, ille Constantinum, ille Justinianum, ille Theodosium ex<sup>1</sup> hostibus victorem fecit. Neque Alcibiades, neque Themistocles, neque Philippus sine hujus praesidio victor evasit. Neque Alexander, victo Dario, penetravit Indiam. Neque Achilles occidit Hectorem. Neque Agamemnon Trojam diripuit. Neque Hannibal per Hispaniam atque Galliam usque ad urbis Romae moenia victoria praecedente discurrit. Neque prior Scipio tributariam Carthaginem fecit, neque secundus delevit. Neque Pompejus Orientem domuit ac XXII reges bello vicit. Neque Julius Caesar Gallos subegit<sup>2</sup>, Britannos domuit, Suevos terruit, Pompejum vicit, rerum potitus est. Neque Judaeos Vespasianus cum filio Tito delevit. Neque Nerva, neque Trajanus de Persis triumpharunt. Neque Attila, rex Hunnorum, delevit Aquileiam. Neque Theodericus, rex Gothorum, subjecit<sup>3</sup> Italiam. Neque Carolus magnus de Saracenis triumphos egit, nisi magni Dei pietas hoc illis concessisset.

---

<sup>1</sup> et D, G

<sup>2</sup> omit. G

<sup>3</sup> subegit D, G

[50] With a small troop of Hebrews, he conquered immense enemy forces. He made Samson defeat his enemies, as he did with Gideon, Jephthah, Saul, David, Solomon, the Machabees, Constantine, Justinian, and Theodosius. Alcibiades<sup>1</sup>, Themistocles, and Philip would not have been victorious without his assistance. Nor would Alexander have defeated Darius and reached India.<sup>2</sup> Nor would Achilles have killed Hector. Nor would Agamemnon have destroyed Troy.<sup>3</sup> Nor would Hannibal have come through Spain and Gaul and reached the walls of Rome, preceded by victory.<sup>4</sup> Nor would the first Scipio have subjugated Carthage, nor would the second have destroyed it.<sup>5</sup> Nor would Pompey have conquered the Orient and defeated 22 kings.<sup>6</sup> Nor would Julius Caesar have vanquished the Gauls, subdued the Britons, terrified the Swabians, defeated Pompey and become the lord of all.<sup>7</sup> Nor would Vespasian, together with his son Titus, have destroyed the Jews.<sup>8</sup> Nor would Nerva and Trajan<sup>9</sup> have triumphed over the Persians. Nor would Attila, King of the Huns, have destroyed Aquileia.<sup>10</sup> Nor would Theoderic, King of the Goths, have subdued Italy.<sup>11</sup> Nor would Charlemagne have triumphed over the Saracens,<sup>12</sup> if the piety of our great God had not granted it.

---

<sup>1</sup> Alcibiades as victor in the sea battle at Cyzicos, 411 BCE

<sup>2</sup> 326/325 BCE

<sup>3</sup> Note that Piccolomini's logic pushes him to claim that God intervened directly in the Trojan war

<sup>4</sup> 218-203 BCE

<sup>5</sup> 146 BCE

<sup>6</sup> 66-59 BCE

<sup>7</sup> 58-48 BCE

<sup>8</sup> 70 CE

<sup>9</sup> 113-117 CE

<sup>10</sup> 452 CE

<sup>11</sup> 488-493 CE

<sup>12</sup> 778 CE. Could not really be called a triumph

[51] Est igitur omnibus his, qui bellum gerere volunt, divinus favor impetrandus, caelestis muneris impetranda gratia. Desursum quaerendum est auxilium. *Omne donum optimum et omne datum perfectum desursum est, descendens a patre luminum.* Et quid nos miseri sumus, qui vel minimos populos sine ope magni Dei sternere posse credamus? Omnia illius sunt: *Domini est terra et plenitudo ejus.* Non solum homines, sed etiam bestiae in campis et ferae silvarum illius sunt. Non est nostrum vel minima animalia tangere, ne dicam homines, nisi Deus ipse voluerit. Nos igitur, qui pugnare cum Turcis statuimus, conari omni studio debemus, ut manus Dei dextra nos protegat nostrosque dirigat enses. Si placebimus majestati suae, remeabimus victores; sin autem, timendum est, ne praeda inimicorum simus. Deus ipse, si voluerit, Turcos in manus nostras dabit. Si minus, nos illis dabit, quia *calix in manu Domini vini meri plenus mixto et inclinabit* {145v} *ex hoc in hoc.* Agamus igitur opera Deo digna.

[51] Thus, all who want to make war should obtain God's favour and the grace of the gift of Heaven. Help must be sought on high. *Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.*<sup>1</sup> And how can wretched people like us believe that we can overthrow even the smallest peoples without help from our great God? Everything is His: *The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.*<sup>2</sup> Not only men, but also the beasts of the fields<sup>3</sup> and the wild animals in the forests are his. We cannot touch even the smallest animals, not to say men, unless God wills it. So, now that we have decided to fight the Turks, we should strive with all our might to ensure that God's right hand protects us and guides our swords. If we please God's majesty, we shall return as victors. If not, we must fear becoming the victims of our enemies. If God wills it, He will give the Turks into our hands. If not, He will give us into theirs. *For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup of strong wine full of mixture; sometimes it turns this way, and sometimes that way.*<sup>4</sup> Therefore, let us do works that are worthy of God.

---

<sup>1</sup> James, 1, 17: *Omne donum optimum et omne datum perfectum desursum est, descendens a patre luminum*

<sup>2</sup> Psalms, 23, 1

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Judith, 11, 5

<sup>4</sup> Psalms, 23, 9: *quia calix in manu Domini est et vino meraco usque*

*ad plenum mixtus et propinabit ex eo*

[52] Habetis hic religiosum venerandumque patrem Johannem Capistranium, qui vobis diebus singulis evangelizat. *Ipsam audiamus*, ejus monita sectemur, redeamus in viam, reconciliemus nos Deo, avertamus iram ejus! Quod tunc fiet, cum opera illa reliquerimus, propter quae provocatam caelestem potentiam non dubitamus. Audiamus Johannem *in heremo praedicantem* ejusque vocibus auscultemus, qui *fructus faciendos dicit poenitentiae dignos*. Neque enim dubium est, quin nobis poenitentibus malefacere et dominum ipsum poeniteat nos corrigere.

[53] Insurgant igitur pontifices et officio sibi commissio utantur. Ostendant se bonos esse pastores, qui juxta<sup>1</sup> Ezechielem dispersa colligant et contrita sanent; imitenturque magnum illum et optimum *pastorem, qui animam suam pro ovibus suis* posuit. Offerant hostias Deo immaculatas, orent assidue, jejunia indicant, elemosynas non solum verbo, sed etiam, exemplo suadeant.

[54] Vos autem, fortissimi proceres, quibus arma tractanda sunt, qui stringere gladios in hostes proponitis, nolite rapinas concupiscere, nolite ex hoc bello divitias quaerere, nulla vos ambitio ducat, nulla vos teneat avaritia. Ponite crudelitatem, abjicite saevitiam, induite modestiam, magnanimitatem, fortitudinem. Scitote vos hoc in proelio non pro terreno, sed pro caelesti imperatore pugnatos. Nolite praemia hujus belli in terris sperare. Scitote vos Deo militari et ab eo mercedem expectate, qui pro temporalibus aeterna, pro caducis perpetua, pro terrenis caelestia, pro parvis maxima bona<sup>2</sup> daturus est. Dei est causa, quam defenditis, Deo irrogata est injuria, quam vindicatis, Deo subtracta est terra, quam vindicare curatis.

---

<sup>1</sup> hi add. A; hñ add. D

<sup>2</sup> dona G

[52] With us we have the pious and venerable father, Giovanni da Capistrano, preaching the gospel to you every day. *Let us hear him*<sup>1</sup>; let us follow his admonitions; let us find back to the way; let us be reconciled with God,<sup>2</sup> and let us turn away His anger!<sup>3</sup> This will happen when we stop doing those things that have undoubtedly provoked the wrath of Heaven. Let us hear Giovanni, *preaching in the desert*.<sup>4</sup> He tells us to bring forth *fruits worthy of penance*.<sup>5</sup> If we repent of our evil doings, our Lord himself will undoubtedly repent of punishing us for them.

[53] Let the bishops rise up and perform the office entrusted to them. Let them show themselves as good shepherds who, like Ezekiel<sup>6</sup> says, gather what has been scattered and heal what has been broken.<sup>7</sup> Let them imitate that great and good *shepherd who gave his life for his sheep*;<sup>8</sup> let them offer up immaculate sacrifices to God;<sup>9</sup> let them pray continuously; let them declare days of fasting; and let them encourage almsgiving not only by words but also by example.

[54] But you, oh valiant nobles, who are to fight and who intend to draw your swords against the enemy: do not desire plunder, do not seek riches from this war, do not allow ambition to lead you, and do not be dominated by greed. Put away cruelty; cast off brutality; and put on modesty, magnanimity, and fortitude. Know that in this battle you are fighting not for your emperor on Earth but for your emperor in Heaven. Do not hope for earthly gains from this war. Know that you are fighting for God and expect your reward from Him, who will grant you rewards that are heavenly, not earthly; eternal, not transient; and great, not small. It is God's cause that you are fighting for; it is a wrong done to God that you are avenging; and it is land taken from God that you are striving to win back.

---

<sup>1</sup> Luke, 9, 35: *ipsum audite*

<sup>2</sup> 2. Corinthians 5, 20

<sup>3</sup> Psalms 77, 38

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Matthew, 3, 1: *Johannes Baptista praedicans in deserto*

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Matthew, 3, 8: *facite ergo fructum dignum paenitentiae*

<sup>6</sup> Error for Zachariah

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Zachariah, 11, 16

<sup>8</sup> John, 10, 11

<sup>9</sup> Cf. 1. Peter, 2, 5

[55] Deus noster, ut scitis evangelio teste, cum esset universus orbis culturae daemonum deditus, solus Israel verum ritum teneret, misertus humanum genus descendit de caelo, carnem induit nostram, praedicavit salubria, iter in caelum docuit et viam vitae in veritate; utque redimeret universos, mortem pro nobis ferre non dubitavit. Multi ad ejus sermonem conversi sunt. Crediderunt in eum apostoli et discipuli ejus, qui postea in orbem dispersi omnes gentes ad Christum traxere. *In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum*. Tulerunt et ipsi mortem ac magistrum secuti sermonibus ac miraculis orbem impleverunt: nam profecti praedicaverunt ubique domino cooperante et sermone confirmante sequentibus signis. Secuti sunt et {146r} martyres et confessores, accesserunt clarissima doctorum ingenia, quae sanam doctrinam ubique<sup>1</sup> gentium seminarunt. Atque ita factum est, ut totus orbis Christo crederet.

[56] Sed videte nunc, quo<sup>2</sup> redacta est nostra fides: Jerusalem, in qua primum salvator noster apparuit, et in qua nostram salutem operatus est, ubi et sepulchrum ejus demonstratur, Saraceni occupant, neque illis invitis eo nobis est aditus. Antiochia, in qua primum est auditum Christi nomen, aliena est a ritu nostro. Alexandria, quam Marcus sacris nostris initiavit, magnus Origenes instruxit, sanctus Athanasius confirmavit, Mahumeti fabulas audit. Carthago, quae magnum Augustinum sanctumque Cyprianum audivit, ipsa deleta est atque ipsius loco subrogata Tunes. Nihil de Christo sentit tota Aegyptus. Tota Libya alienata est a nobis. Oriens universus Christi crucem abominatur. Possemus haec perferre, nisi nostram Europam in praeceps ire videremus. Sed amissa est nobis Graecia, Achaia, Peloponnesus, Epirus, Macedonia et maxima pars Illyridis. Perdita est novissime memorabilis illa Constantini civitas. Deleti sunt Galatae.

---

<sup>1</sup> ubicunque D, G

<sup>2</sup> Quo redacta est fides Christiana  
*in marg.* D, G

[57] You know from the Gospel that when the whole world worshipped demons and only Israel practised the true religion,<sup>1</sup> our God took pity on the human race: He descended from Heaven, put on our flesh, preached salvation, and taught the road to Heaven and the way of life in truth. And in order to save all men, He did not hesitate to die for us. Many were converted by His preaching. His apostles and disciples believed in Him, and afterwards they scattered over the Earth and drew all peoples to Christ. *Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world.*<sup>2</sup> They, too, suffered death, and following their master, they filled the Earth with sermons and miracles. Having set out, they preached everywhere, with the help of the Lord, who confirmed their words with signs<sup>3</sup>. Afterwards came the martyrs and the confessors, and then the brilliant intellects of the doctors of the Church, who sowed the right doctrine among all the peoples. And thus the whole world came to believe in Christ.

[58] But see now the reduced circumstances of our faith: Jerusalem, where Our Lord first made an appearance, where He effected our salvation, and where His tomb is shown, is occupied by the Saracens, and we only have access at their pleasure. Antioch, where the name of Christ<sup>4</sup> was first heard, is now a stranger to our religion.<sup>5</sup> Alexandria, which was initiated into our Faith by Mark, taught by the great Origenes, and confirmed in the Faith by Saint Athanasius, now hears the fables of Muhammad. Carthage, which followed the great Augustine and Saint Cyprian, has been destroyed, and in its place has come Tunis. The whole of Egypt is ignorant of Christ. The whole of Libya<sup>6</sup> is estranged from us. The whole Orient reviles the cross of Christ. This we could bear with if we did not also see our own Europe falling into the abyss. But now Greece has been lost to us, as have Achaea, the Peloponnese, Epirus, Macedonia, and the greater part of Illyria. And quite recently, Constantine's famous city has been lost, and Galata has been destroyed.

---

<sup>1</sup> "ritus"

<sup>2</sup> Romans, 10, 18

<sup>3</sup> "signis": i.e., miracles

<sup>4</sup> Rather: the name of "Christian" for followers of Christ

<sup>5</sup> "cultu"

<sup>6</sup> Presumably Africa



[59] Quae gesserint<sup>1</sup> apud Constantinopolim hostes fidei, non est cur modo deploremus. Satis apud Ratisponam et apud Frankfordiam conquesti omnes sumus. Satis ploratum est, satis clamatum. Non est modo aut lacrimis aut singultibus opus. Vindicanda est salvatoris injuria. Facto nunc opus est, non verbo<sup>2</sup>. Expediit tamen vos, generosos equites, dum bellum geritis, ponere ante oculos opprobria, quae Deo nostro apud Constantinopolim illata sunt, meminisse quomodo salvatoris simulacrum turpiter habitum est, quomodo gloriosae virginis caelorum deturbatae sunt imagines, quomodo foedata sanctorum delubra, atque reliquiae martyrum objectae canibus, utque ipsa divinissima eucharistia conculcata pedibus est. Nam etsi divinae substantiae nihil est, quod humana vis<sup>3</sup> possit officere, si beati jam spiritus nihil detrimenti perferre possunt, non est tamen, quin nefarii conatus plecti debeant infidelium.

[60] Vos igitur, cum pugnabitis, mementote, quantum Deo vestro debetis, deinde qua poena digni sunt, qui majestati divinae sese opponunt. Sic enim et animus vester fortior erit et vobis Deus<sup>4</sup> propitior, cum neque lucri causa, neque inanis gloriae, aut alterius mundanae voluptatis vos belligerantes viderit. Est praeterea necessarium, si favere nobis Deum<sup>5</sup> volumus, ne superbi simus, aut inflati opinione nostra, ut sit concordia in exercitu, benivolentia inter principes, oboedientia subditos regat, ut pareant {146v} imperatori milites. Imperatores autem justii sint, censuram teneant<sup>6</sup>, vigilent, laborent, neque enim re ulla magis oblectat exercitum quam ducem suum<sup>7</sup> videre aequae cum commilitibus<sup>8</sup> laborantem. Cavete ne sint inter vos discordiae, nemo dicat: "Ego Theutonicus," "Ego Gallicus," "Ego Hungarus," "Ego Bohemus." Sit unum genus hominum, omnes Christiani estote, omnes cruce signati, omnes fratres.

[61] Vidimus aliquando propter dissensiones nostrorum vicisse Turcos, neque ulla res magis quam nostra divisio infidelium juvit causam. Galli ac Germani sub Conrado imperatore ac Ludovico, rege Francorum, propter aemulationem victoriam hostibus pepererunt. Sigismundo Caesare regnante idcirco Christiani a Turcis victi sunt, quia non erat inter nostros unitas. Sunt et qui propterea cecidisse regem Poloniae in bello dicant, quia non fuerunt unanimes Poloni simul et Hungari. Nihil est, quod tantum in bello noceat quantum divisio. Pugnare malim cum paucis unitis quam cum multis discordibus. Oportet in bello unum esse rectorem, quem cuncti respiciant, cujus nutu cuncta gerantur. Miles decano, decanus centurioni, centurio tribuno, tribunus imperatori pareat, sive alio nomine haec officia vocare velimus.

---

<sup>1</sup> gesserunt D, G

<sup>2</sup> verbis G

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* D, G

<sup>4</sup> vobis Deus : Deus vobis G

<sup>5</sup> favere nobis Deum : Deum vobis

favere G

<sup>6</sup> censuram teneant : teneant cen-

suram G

<sup>7</sup> ducem suum : suum ducem G

<sup>8</sup> commilitonibus G

[59] But now is not the time to deplore what the enemies of the Faith have done in Constantinople. We have all grieved enough in Regensburg and Frankfurt. We have lamented enough; we have clamoured enough. Now, there is no more need for crying or sobbing. The offence to Our Saviour must be avenged. What is needed now is action, not words. But when you, noble knights, are warring, it is fitting that you should see before you the terrible things done to our God in Constantinople and remember how shamefully the image of Our Saviour was treated, how the icons of the glorious Virgin of Heaven were desecrated, how the shrines of the saints were defiled, the relics of the martyrs thrown to the dogs, and the divine Eucharist trodden under feet. Though the divine substance cannot be harmed by human strength and the blessed spirits can no longer suffer any injury, there is no reason why we should tolerate the wicked deeds of the infidels.

[60] Remember, when you are fighting, how much you owe to God and how greatly those who oppose the divine majesty are worthy of punishment. Thus, your spirit will be stronger, and God will be more well-disposed when he sees that you are not fighting for gain, for empty glory, or for any other worldly gratification. Moreover, if we want God to favour us, we must not be prideful or have an inflated opinion of ourselves. There must be harmony in the army and mutual benevolence between the princes. Obedience should rule the subjects so that the soldiers obey their generals. The generals should be just, keep discipline, and be vigilant and industrious. Nothing pleases an army more than seeing their leader labour together with his fellow soldiers as an equal. Strive to avoid conflicts between you and let no one say, "I am a German," "I am a Frenchman," "I am a Hungarian," or "I am a Bohemian." Let there be only one kind of men; let all be Christians; let all be crusaders; let all be brethren!

[61] Sometimes we have seen the Turks be victorious because of our own internal conflicts, and nothing has helped the cause of the infidels more than our divisions. Under Emperor Konrad and King Louis of France, the French and the Germans handed the victory to their enemies through their mutual jealousy.<sup>1</sup> During the reign of Emperor Sigismund, the Christians were vanquished by the Turks because our troops were disunited. And some people claim the King of Poland fell in battle because of Polish and Hungarian disagreements. Nothing causes so much harm in a war as internal conflict. I would rather fight with few but united troops than with many but disunited. In a war, there should be only one leader whom all respect and at whose command<sup>2</sup> everything is done. The soldier should obey the *decanus*, the *decanus* the centurion, the centurion the tribune, and the tribune the *imperator* – or whatever names we use for these offices.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Second Crusade, 1147-1150

<sup>2</sup> "nutu"

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vegetius: *Epitoma rei militaris*, 2.7-8

[62] Sed quomodo erimus uniti? Erimus quidem, si superbiae fomitem abjecerimus, si cedere alter alteri voluerimus, si duci potius quam ducere. Cogitemus, in quo periculo sumus, quo<sup>1</sup> Christianitas ipsa submergitur, nisi juvetur. Faveamus alter alteri in honore. Non quaeramus tantum, per quem vincat, sed quomodo vincat Christianitas. Volumus quisque salvatoris nomen, salutem omnes appetamus. Extrahamus de naufragio navem, neque curemus, cui salvatae navis honor detur. Namque si volumus omnes videri duces, timendum est, ne simul omnes capiamur.

---

<sup>1</sup> quomodo D, G

[62] But how shall we become united? We shall become united if we cast off the motives for pride, if we are willing to yield to each other and to be led rather than to lead. Let us consider the danger we are in and how Christianity will be overcome unless it finds help. Let us support each other with honour. Let us seek not just the man through whom Christianity will win but the way to win. No one should want to be called saviour; no, what we all should desire is salvation itself. Let us save this ship from shipwreck, and let us not worry about who will be given the honour of having saved it. For if we all want to be leaders, it must be feared that we shall all become losers.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The rest of the text is lacking



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

**(Collected Orations of Pope Pius II; 24)**

## Abstract

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

## Keywords

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

## Note to the reader

Although Enea Silvio Piccolomini's crusade orations at the German diets in 1454-1455 have been admirably edited in the *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, they could not – of course - be excluded from the present comprehensive bilingual edition of Pius II's orations. As a matter of principle, they have been collated directly for the purpose of the present edition.

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

Michael von Cotta-Schönberg



## Table of contents

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context
2. Themes
3. Date, place, audience, and format
4. Text
  - 4.1. Early Version
    - 4.1.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.1.2. Editions
  - 4.2. Final Version
    - 4.2.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.2.2. Editions
  - 4.3. Present edition
5. Sources
6. Bibliography
7. Sigla

### II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

0. Introduction [1-3]
  - 0.1. Captatio benevolentiae [1]
  - 0.2. Issues raised by the Hungarian ambassadors [2-3]
1. The emperor's response to the issues raised by the ambassadors [4-12]
  - 1.1. Relations between Hungary and the emperor [4]
  - 1.2. Fall of Constantinople and the Turkish threat [5]
  - 1.3. Imperial initiatives in defence of the Faith [6-7]
  - 1.4. Hungarian response [8-10]
  - 1.5. Implementation of decisions made in Frankfurt [11-12]
2. War against the Turks [13-22]
  - 2.1. It is God who grants victories [13-14]
  - 2.2. Armies and generals should be pleasing to God [15-19]
  - 2.3. Military discipline: avoiding three vices [20-22]
    - 2.3.1. Pride [20]
    - 2.3.2. Greed [21]
    - 2.3.3. Lust [22]
3. Conclusion [23-24]

**I. INTRODUCTION**

## 1. Context<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

Voigt said about the oration: "*Der Piccolomini ... entfaltete ... den Glanz der humanistischen Redekunst.*"<sup>1</sup>

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

## 2. Themes

In the first part of the oration, Piccolomini, on behalf of the emperor, responded to each of the five issues raised by Janos Vitéz, Bishop of Várad, in his preceeding oration, the "*Pulsatis maerore*."<sup>3</sup>

These themes were:

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, III, p. 142

<sup>2</sup> Helmcrath: *Pius*, 94

<sup>3</sup> RTA, 19, 3, pp. 544-558

### 3. Date, place, audience, and format

The oration was delivered on 25 March 1455<sup>1</sup> in the royal castle of Wiener Neustadt. Those manuscript titles that contain a date all have 23 March, which is also the date retained by Voigt.<sup>2</sup>

The audience consisted of the Hungarian delegation, Emperor Friederich III, Georg Podiebrad, Governor of Bohemia, Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg<sup>3</sup> and – presumably – some, if not all, the German princes, nobles, envoys, and counsellors participating in the diet.<sup>4</sup>

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

### 4. Text<sup>5</sup>

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

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Helmrath: *Reichstagsreden*, p. 143, and RTA, 19, 3, p. 454

<sup>2</sup> Voigt, III, p. 143

<sup>3</sup> The presence of the governor and the margrave is explicitly mentioned in sect. 23

<sup>4</sup> RTA, 19/3: pp. 454, 504

<sup>5</sup> Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II's orations, see COR, 1: 5

## 4.1. Early Version

### 4.1.1. Manuscripts<sup>1</sup>

- **Budapest / Mus. Nat.**  
Cod. lat. 372, ff. 39v-48r
- **Cambridge / University Library**  
Hh I 7, ff. 30v-41r
- **Firenze / Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana**  
Plut. LIV 54.19, ff. 50r-55v (R)
- **München / Staatsbibliothek**  
Clm 4016, ff. 50v-54v
- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**  
Chisianus lat. I.V.175, ff. 95v-102r  
Ottobon. lat. 347, ff. 74r-81r  
Urb. lat. 401, ff. 95r-104v  
Vat. lat. 1787, ff. 87r-96v

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

### 4.1.2. Editions

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

---

<sup>1</sup> For a more comprehensive list of mss. containing the "*Si mihi*", see

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

## 4.2. Final Version

### 4.2.1. Manuscripts

The Final Version is extant in seven manuscripts<sup>1</sup>:

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

### 4.2.2. Editions

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

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

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

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

And finally, it was collated as part of the RTA-edition, based on all seven mss., but only with a selective collation of the mss. C, D, F, G<sup>2</sup>:

---

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

<sup>2</sup> "mit Berücksichtigung nur markanter Varianten", RTA, 19, 3, p. 559

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

### 4.3. Present edition

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

#### *Text:*

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

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

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

#### *Pagination:*

The pagination is from the lead manuscript.

#### *Textual apparatus:*

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



## 5. Sources<sup>1</sup>

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

Biblical: 9

Classical: 24

Patristic and medieval: 3

Contemporary: 1

**All: 37**

### **Biblical sources: 9**

#### Old Testament: 8

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

#### New Testament: 1

- Philippians: 1

### **Classical sources: 24**

- Aristotle: 3<sup>2</sup>
- Cicero: 9<sup>3</sup>
- Claudianus: 1<sup>4</sup>
- Gellius: 1

---

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of Piccolomini's use of sources, see COR, 1; 8

<sup>2</sup> Nicom. Ethics: 1; Politics: 1; Rhetorics: 1

<sup>3</sup> De officiis: 1; De oratore: 1; De re publica: 1; Pro lege Manilia 5; Pro M. Marcello: 1

<sup>4</sup> De tertio consulate Honorii

- Horatius: 1<sup>1</sup>
- Lucanus: 1<sup>2</sup>
- Quintilianus: 1
- Sallustius: 1<sup>3</sup>
- Suetonius: 1<sup>4</sup>
- Ulpianus: 1<sup>5</sup>
- Valerius: 1
- Vergilius: 3<sup>6</sup>

### Patristic and medieval sources: 3

- Augustinus: 1<sup>7</sup>
- Bede the Venerable: 1<sup>8</sup>
- Otto von Freising: 1<sup>9</sup>

### Contemporary sources: 1

- Biondo, F.: 1<sup>10</sup>

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Carmina: 1

<sup>2</sup> Bellum civile

<sup>3</sup> Bellum Jugurthinum

<sup>4</sup> De vitis Caesarum / Titus

<sup>5</sup> De testamento

<sup>6</sup> Aeneis

<sup>7</sup> De civitate Dei

<sup>8</sup> Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum

<sup>9</sup> Chronica

<sup>10</sup> Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades

## 6. Bibliography

Ady, Cecilia M.: *Pius II (Æneas Silvius Piccolomini) – the Humanist Pope*. London, 1913

Bisaha, Nancy: Pope Pius II and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 39-52

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

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

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

Helmrath, Johannes: The German Reichstage and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 53-69

Helmrath, Johannes: *Pius II. und die Türken*. In: B. Guthmüller & W. Kühlmann (eds.): *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*. Tübingen, 2000, pp. 79-138

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

Housley, Norman: Pope Pius II and Crusading. In: *Crusades*, 11 (2012) 209-247

*Loeb Classical Library*. [Digital Version<sup>1</sup>]. Harvard University Press

Mitchell, R.J.: *The Laurels and the Tiara – Pope Pius II, 1458-1464*. London, 1962

Moudarres, Andrea: Crusade and Conversion - Islam as schism in Pius II and Nicholas of Cusa. In: *MLN* 128 (2013) 40-52

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.loebclassics.com/>

Nowak, Jessika: *Ein Kardinal im Zeitalter der Renaissance – die Karriere des Giovanni di Castiglione (ca. 1413 – 1460)*. Tübingen, 2011

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

- *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt*. Ed. A van Heck. II vols. Città del Vaticano, 1984 (Studi e testi; 312-313)
- *Commentaries*. Ed. M. Meserve and M. Simonetta. Cambridge, MA, 2003 ff.

Pius II: *Orationes*. [1436-1464]

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca, 1755-1759
- *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. Ed. and transl. by Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg. 12 vols. 2019-2020

Reinhardt, Volker: *Pius II. Piccolomini – Der Papst, mit dem die Renaissance begann*. München, 2013

Schwoebel, Robert: *The Shadow of the Crescent – the Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453-1517)*. Nieuwkoop, 1967

Setton, Kenneth M.: *The Papacy and the Levant*. 4 vols. Philadelphia, 1976-1984 (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society; 114+161-162)

Stolf, Serge: *Les Lettres et la Tiare. E.S. Piccolomini, un humaniste au XVe siècle*. Paris, 2012. (Etudes et Essais sur la Renaissance; 98)

Toews, John B.: *Emperor Frederick III and his Relations with the Papacy from 1440 to 1493*. University of Colorado, Ph.D., 1962

Voigt, Georg: *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter*. I-III. Berlin, 1856-63

Zimolo, Giulio C. (ed.): *Le vite di Pio II di Giovanni Antonio Campano e Bartolomeo Platina*. Bologna, 1964. (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores; t. III, p. II)

## 7. Sigla

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

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

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

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

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

**F** = Mantova / Biblioteca Communale /100

**G** = Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana / 544

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

**RTA** = main text in Deutsche Reichtagsakten, 19, 3

# II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

**Responsio Aeneae Silvii Piccolominei episcopi Senensis, qui postea pontificatum maximum adeptus Pius II appellatus est, data legatis Hungarorum nomine Caesaris in Nova<sup>1</sup> Civitate Austriae XXIII. Martii MCCCCLV<sup>2</sup>**

[1] {81r} Si mihi, reverendissimi patres, nobiles et magnifici proceres, inclyti regni Hungariae legati, tanta dicendi vel<sup>3</sup> copia vel gravitas esset, quantam<sup>4</sup> hodie facundissimus ac<sup>5</sup> sapientissimus Varadiensis ecclesiae pontifex, collega vester, in hoc amplissimo auditorio prae<sup>6</sup> se tulit, nequaquam in praesentiarum divo Caesari Friderico, Romanorum imperatori, Augusto domino nostro piissimo ac gloriosissimo, qui me vestrae legationi respondere jubet, invitus parerem. At cum<sup>7</sup> res maximae sint, de quibus locuti estis, nec me sive natura produxerit sive industria fecerit eloquentem, veritus ne sub tanto fasce deficiam, necessitate magis quam voluntate demandatum munus accipio: vestra sapientia, quae meis verbis deerunt, ex vultu serenissimo sibi Caesaris adhibebit.

---

<sup>1</sup> *omit.* A, B, E, F

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

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

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* E

<sup>4</sup> quantum R\*

<sup>5</sup> et R

<sup>6</sup> per E

<sup>7</sup> tum C\*

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

## 0. Introduction

### 0.1. Captatio benevolentiae

[1] Reverend Fathers, Illustrious and Magnificent Nobles, Legates of the glorious Kingdom of Hungary. Even if I had the proficiency<sup>1</sup> and gravity of speech that your colleague, the eloquent and wise Bishop of Várad,<sup>2</sup> has shown today, in this illustrious assembly, I should not willingly obey Holy Caesar, Friedrich,<sup>3</sup> our pious and glorious August Lord and Emperor of the Romans, who has commanded me to give his reply to your legation. For the matters about which you have spoken<sup>4</sup> are of the highest importance, and as I am neither eloquent by nature nor have become so through diligent study, I fear that I shall not be able to carry the great burden laid upon me<sup>5</sup>. So, I accept this charge more out of necessity than of my own free will. And what will be lacking in my speech will be revealed to your perspicacity by the emperor's serene demeanour.

---

<sup>1</sup> "copia"

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

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

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

<sup>5</sup> "fasce"



[2] Ego quam brevissime potero commissae responsionis partes absolvam. Quinque fuere, si recte<sup>1</sup> memini, quae vestro nomine sunt exposita. Primo relata est illa sinceritas<sup>2</sup> animi et optima voluntas, quam serenissimus ac<sup>3</sup> nobilissimus rex vester necnon et communitas inclyti regni vestri erga Caesarem gerit<sup>4</sup>. Secundo rememorata est Constantinopolitana calamitas; deplorata Graecorum ruina; Turcorum feritas atque intentio in medium deducta<sup>5 6</sup>; discrimina, quae non solum Hungariae, sed universae Christianitati prope imminet, ante oculos posita. Tertio commendatum est sanctum Caesaris propositum, qui de tuenda {82r} religione nostra hoc tempore sollicitum se praebuit; demonstrata belli pietas; opportunitas declarata; ostensa necessitas<sup>7</sup>. Quarto deductum est inclyti regni vestri decretum; expositus ardor populi totiusque vestrae nobilitatis contra Turcorum furorem ostensus et publicatus fervor, utque cum Theutonibus atque cum ipso Caesare nostro bellum pro tuenda fide catholica unitis consiliis adversus communes hostes gerere praesto estis.

---

<sup>1</sup> rite R

<sup>2</sup> illa sinceritas : sinceritas illa R

<sup>3</sup> et G\*

<sup>4</sup> egerit R

<sup>5</sup> adducta G

<sup>6</sup> Turcorum feritas ... deducta  
*omit.* R

<sup>7</sup> demonstrata belli ... necessitas  
*omit.* R

## 0.1. Issues raised by the Hungarian ambassadors

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

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

Firstly, you expressed the sincerity and kindness that your Most Serene and Noble King<sup>1</sup> as well as your whole illustrious realm feel towards the Emperor.

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

Thirdly, you praised the pious purpose of the emperor, who has shown how concerned he is with the defence of our religion in our time; you proved the justice<sup>3</sup> of the war; and you set forth the [present] opportunities as well as the necessities.<sup>4</sup>

Fourthly, you produced the decree of your glorious realm<sup>5</sup>; you told about the ardour of your people and all your nobility against the ferocious Turks, and you made known your fervent desire and readiness to join up with the Germans and our emperor himself in a war against our common enemies, in defence of the Catholic Faith.

---

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

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

<sup>2</sup> The Fall of Constantinople, 29 May 1453

<sup>3</sup> "pietas"

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Quintilianus: *Institutio oratoria*, 3.8.21

<sup>5</sup> Carried at an earlier diet in Buda

[3] Quinto et ultimo, Caesaream majestatem summis precibus oravistis, ut pium intentum teneat<sup>1</sup>; quae Frankfordiae promissa sunt, impleat; arma contra Turcos arripiat, et animo forti pro patriis legibus, pro libertate Christianorum, pro testamento Dei decertet. In qua parte spem non parvam victoriae consequendae conati estis ostendere, si, quemadmodum Frankfordiae decretum fuit, adversus inimicos crucis bellum geratur. Haec sunt, quae reverendissimus Varadiensis episcopus vice vestra in medium protulit. Summam retuli, non verba. Ille namque et ornatissime et copiosissime peroravit, cum multo splendore ac<sup>2</sup> majestate verborum. Ego nudam sententiam repetii. Nunc responsum divi Caesaris audite.

[4] Gratissima et<sup>3</sup> acceptissima est imperatorio culmini legatio vestra, quando<sup>4</sup> pro his rebus adventastis, quae et<sup>5</sup> tutelam Christiani populi et honorem domini Dei nostri concernunt. Voluntatem illam praecellentissimi regis vestri ac praelatorum et procerum regni ejus, ut primo loco dixistis, erga se<sup>6</sup> bonam esse, non sine quadam singulari delectatione Caesarea sublimitas audivit. Nam et suus animus erga regem ac regnum vestrum et sincerus et perfectus est. Quaecumque ab optimo patre bene morato et<sup>7</sup> amantissimo filio sunt optanda, eadem Caesar inclyto Ladislao regi patrueli suo, vero sanguini suo, et cupit et optat.

---

<sup>1</sup> *omit.* B, E

<sup>2</sup> et R

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* F\*

<sup>4</sup> quoniam RTA

<sup>5</sup> *omit.* E

<sup>6</sup> vestri ac ... erga se *omit.* F\*

<sup>7</sup> *omit.* E

[3] In the fifth and last place, you begged His Imperial Majesty to pursue his pious intentions, to fulfil the promises made in Frankfurt, to take up weapons against the Turks, and to fight strenuously for the laws of our fathers, for the liberty of the Christians, and for the testament of God. You also endeavoured to show that there is great hope of victory if we go to war against the enemies of the Cross<sup>1</sup>, as decreed in Frankfurt.

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

Now, hear the reply of the Holy Emperor.

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

### **1.1. Relations between Hungary and the emperor**

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

---

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

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

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

[5] Quae de Constantinopoli, deflebili ruina totius Graeciae secunda in<sup>1</sup> parte commemorastis, quamvis Caesaris auribus jam<sup>2</sup> saepius inculcata sint, numquam tamen sine novo dolore suae serenitati referuntur: quotiens de Constantinopoli<sup>3</sup> mentio incidit, totiens ululatus illos matronarum ac miserrimas<sup>4</sup> voces morientium, qui pro Christi nomine caesi sunt, exaudire videtur. Sanguis impie fusus ante oculos ponitur, et atrox injuria salvatoris in mentem revertitur. Et quoniam hostes<sup>5</sup> habemus numero multos, natura feros, moribus barbaros, mente superbos, animo cupidos, qui, nisi magnis viribus retundantur, totum sibi orbem subacturi ac sanctum evangelium et sacratissimam Christi legem subversuri videntur, sentit vobiscum Caesar, nisi Christiana societas vigilantior<sup>6</sup> deinceps fuerit, religionem nostram perditum iri. Neque enim cum his<sup>7</sup> hostibus nobis res est, qui suis in finibus quiescere velint, sed {82v} Alexandrina mente et animo Caesareo<sup>8</sup> totum sibi orbem et ambiunt et promittunt.

[6] Quod tertio loco sublimitatis imperatoriae curas et studia commendastis, quia de tuenda religione nostra<sup>9</sup> non parva sollicitudine teneatur, fatetur Caesar inter maxima desideria sua, quibus dies ac noctes urgetur, hoc uno se studio potissime detineri, ut labenti ac paene confractae reipublicae Christianae suo tempore succurratur. Circumspicit sua serenitas mundi climata, et orbis plagas intuetur. Oriens ille, ex quo nobis primum veritatis lumen effulsit, errore caecus a Christo recessit. Africa Mahumeto credit et omnis meridies. Septentrionis maxima portio idola sequitur. Christi cultus in angulum Occidentis ac Septentrionis redactus ex quattuor patriarchalibus sedibus, quibus veluti solidissimis basibus Christiana subnixa fides palmites suos in universum orbem extendit, solam Romanam obtinet. Angunt ista profecto ac<sup>10</sup> vehementer mentem Caesaris expungunt, qui cum se protectorem et advocatum ecclesiae pro suo officio constituerit, scit sibi prae ceteris regibus incumbere, ut religionis nostrae et<sup>11</sup> firmitati et augmento consulat.

---

<sup>1</sup> *omit.* G\*

<sup>2</sup> auribus jam : iam auribus G\*

<sup>3</sup> deflebili ruina ... de  
Constantinopoli *omit.* F\*

<sup>4</sup> miseras R

<sup>5</sup> *omit.* R

<sup>6</sup> vigilantur E\*

<sup>7</sup> iis R

<sup>8</sup> Caesario G\*, R\*

<sup>9</sup> tuenda religione nostra :  
religione nostra tuenda G\*

<sup>10</sup> et R

<sup>11</sup> *omit.* G\*

## 1.2. Fall of Constantinople and the Turkish threat

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

## 1.3. Imperial initiatives in defence of the Faith

[6] In the third place, you praised the efforts and endeavours of His Imperial Highness, who is greatly concerned about the protection of our religion. Indeed, the emperor declares that among the great affairs that occupy him night and day, the most important one is rescuing the Christian Commonwealth, which is floundering and has almost been destroyed in his time. The emperor looks at the various areas and regions of the world [and sees that] the East, where first the light of Truth shone forth upon us, has been blinded by error and abandoned Christ. Africa and all of the South follow Muhammad. The greater part of the North worships idols. The worship of Christ has been reduced to a corner of the West<sup>2</sup> and the North, and of the four patriarchal sees on which the Christian faith was solidly based, reaching out towards the whole world,<sup>3</sup> it has only kept the Roman See. The emperor is concerned and preoccupied by these facts, and since his office has made him protector and champion of the Church, he knows that he, more than other kings, is responsible for ensuring the stability and growth of our religion.

---

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

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

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

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

<sup>3</sup> An image used by Piccolomini several times in his crusade orations

[7] Eapropter, cum accepisset anno proxime decurso expugnatam esse Constantinopolim, sacra nostra illic funditus deleta, nobilitatem cum sacerdotio caesam, plebem in servitutem redactam, intelligens quia non quiesceret Turcorum furor, sed habitam victoriam velut sequentis instrumentum duceret, universos reges et principes, maiores quoque et potentiores civitates adhortatus est, ut ad consulendum orthodoxae fidei unitis consiliis assurgerent. Ostendit pericula, indicavit remedia. Indixit apud Ratisponam primo, deinde apud Frankfordiam concilia<sup>1</sup>. Nunc quoque praesens conventus habetur, ut quae Frankfordiae meditata<sup>2</sup> sunt, executioni mandentur. In quibus rebus etsi vobis atque omnibus satisfacere Caesar videtur, sibi tamen ipsi minime satisfacit, qui ex officio ad majora sese obnoxium recognoscit. De pietate belli, de opportunitate, de necessitate, quae sunt vestro nomine et prudentissime et ornatissime dicta, commendationem magis quam responsionem merentur.

[8] Quod quarto loco relatum est, regnum scilicet vestrum adversus Turcos in arma promptum atque paratum esse, summopere commendat Caesarea sublimitas, gentemque vestram quavis laude dignam censet, quae licet gravibus afflicta cladibus non tamen ab animi sui magnitudine decedit, sed quanto magis urgetur, tanto *audentior* exurgit. O fortes ac magnanimos proceres! O constantes populos! O regnum vere Christianissimum, quod nulla potest adversitas de<sup>3</sup> sancto proposito dimovere! Quis non libenter audiat tam nobile regnum, tam excellens pro communi Christianorum salute tanta sollicitudine {83r} ac tanto fervore teneri? Caesari certe altus et integer animus vester, pium et sanctum regni vestri decretum summae voluptati est, nec dubitat sua serenitas, quin concurrentibus aliis vestra opera res magnae ac gloriosae nostro tempore contra Turcos agantur. Quod autem pro gerendo adversus hostes nostrae fidei bello cum Theutonibus atque cum ipso Caesare unanimes esse decrevistis, nedum laudabile, sed necessarium quoque sublimitas imperatoria ducit.

---

<sup>1</sup> consilia R

<sup>2</sup> meditati F\*

<sup>3</sup> tanto *add.* E\*

[7] When last year he heard that Constantinople had fallen, that our shrines there had been completely destroyed, that the nobility had been slaughtered together with the clergy, and that the people had been carried off to slavery, he understood that the frenzy of the Turks would not stop there, but that they would consider this victory as a stepping stone<sup>1</sup> to the next one. Therefore, he invited all kings and princes, as well as the most important and powerful cities, to rise and come jointly to the assistance of the true Faith. He showed the dangers and pointed out the remedies. He summoned diets, first in Regensburg, then in Frankfurt.<sup>2</sup> Now the present meeting is being held in order to implement what was planned in Frankfurt. Although in these matters the emperor seems to satisfy you and everybody else, he certainly does not satisfy himself, for he considers that by virtue of his office he has an obligation to do even more.

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

#### 1.4. Hungarian response

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

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

---

<sup>1</sup> "instrumentum"

<sup>2</sup> The diets in Regensburg May 1454 and Frankfurt October 1454

<sup>3</sup> "pietas"

<sup>4</sup> "opportunitas"

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 6.95



[9] Namque<sup>1</sup> si communibus viribus in Turcos pugnandum est, inter omnes belli socios necessaria *concordia est*<sup>2</sup>, *arctissimum*<sup>3</sup> *atque optimum*<sup>4</sup> in omni civitate et in omni exercitu *vinculum incolumitatis*. Ubi concordia, ibi et oboedientia est<sup>5</sup> et ordo, sine quibus nihil est, quod duces exercitus feliciter valeant explicare. Pulchre heri<sup>6</sup> ex Sallustio dictum est: *Concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae*<sup>7</sup> *dilabuntur*. Infirmus exercitus est, qui seditionibus<sup>8</sup> agitator. Male in hostem pugnat, cui cum fratre dimicandum<sup>9</sup> est. Exemplo nobis sunt Conradus, Romanorum imperator, et Ludovicus, rex Francorum, qui contra Turcos et Saracenos exercitum in Asiam trajecere. Namque dum fuere concordēs, res praeclaras gesserunt, et usque Jerusalem penetrarunt; discordes facti, domum inglorii rediere. Neque Sigismundus, rex vester, qui postea Romano praesedit<sup>10</sup> imperio, aliam ob causam in magno proelio victus a Turcis<sup>11</sup> fertur, nisi quia<sup>12</sup> diversarum gentium collectum exercitum parum concordem habuit. Idem vulgatum est de Vladislao, rege Poloniae nobilissimo, quem propterea ab hisdem<sup>13</sup> hostibus captum atque occisum tradunt, quia inter vos et Polonos non fuerit unitum consilium<sup>14</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> nam G\*

<sup>2</sup> inter omnes ... concordia est  
*omit.* E

<sup>3</sup> arctissimum *corr. ex* artissimum  
A; artissimum C, F, R

<sup>4</sup> est *add.* E

<sup>5</sup> *omit.* R

<sup>6</sup> enim *corr. ex* heri D\*; enim G

<sup>7</sup> discordia maximae : maximae  
vero discordia G

<sup>8</sup> seditionis E\*

<sup>9</sup> decertandum RTA

<sup>10</sup> precedit E\*

<sup>11</sup> victus a Turcis : a Turcis victus  
G\*

<sup>12</sup> quia *corr. ex.* qui A; qui F

<sup>13</sup> iisdem C\*, R

<sup>14</sup> Absint simultates in bello *in*  
*marg.* D, G

[9]<sup>1</sup> For if we are to fight the Turks with united forces, it is necessary that there be harmony between the allies, for in every *city* and in every army, *concord is the very best and strongest bond of safety*.<sup>2</sup> Where there is harmony, there is also obedience and order, without which no general can achieve anything. Yesterday, Sallust was quoted beautifully<sup>3</sup>: *Harmony makes small states great, while the mightiest are undone by discord*.<sup>4</sup> An army plagued by sedition is weak. Anyone who must fight against his brother fights badly against the enemy.

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

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

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

---

<sup>1</sup> See the notes to the oration "*In hoc florentissimo*", sect. 16

<sup>2</sup> Cicero: *De re publica*, 2.43.69:

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

<sup>4</sup> Sallustius: *Bellum Jugurthinum*, 10.6

[10] Facessant igitur inter nos<sup>1</sup> quaevis<sup>2</sup> divisiones ac simultates! Absint et illa vocabula, quae scissionem quovis modo parere possunt! Si fiat exercitus quemadmodum speramus et nitimur, nemo se Gallicum, aut Theutonicum, aut Bohemum, aut Hungarum<sup>3</sup> nominet: unum sit omnibus nomen, Christianum se quisque vocitet: cruce signatus servum se crucis appellet, neque pugnaturus pro Christo aliis se<sup>4</sup> quam Christi titulis ac fascibus ornet. Absit et illud Jasonis vitium, qui sibi fieri putabat injuriam, nisi regnaret. Si quis est virtute ac nobilitate praeditus dignusque qui ceteris praeponatur, postpositus non indoleat. Meminerit ejus<sup>5</sup> quod Titus, Vespasiani filius, usurpare solebat, *principatum scilicet fato*<sup>6</sup>, idest divina providentia, *dari*. Cogitet id, quod est, se non humano<sup>7</sup>, sed<sup>8</sup> divino iudicio posthabitu. Sciat in hoc bello se non homini, sed Christo militare ac parere, nec moleste ferat, cum sit homo, humiliare se homini propter Christum, quando et Christus ipse, cum esset Deus, propter hominem *usque ad mortem* humiliatus {83v} est homini, erubescat Christianus superbus, qui de praesidentia litigat. Nam quomodo pugnabimus unanimes in hostes, qui foedera<sup>9</sup> inter concives et amicos servare<sup>10</sup> nequimus? Libet hic exclamare: O homo, quis tu es? Quem te ipsum facis? Unde superbis? Unde tumes? O caro, o<sup>11</sup> lutum, o terra, o pulvis, o cinis<sup>12</sup>? Unde tibi haec<sup>13</sup> spuma sive mentis elevatio<sup>14</sup> succrevit, ut laesum te putes, nisi principatum obtineas? Emittendus est hic ventus, conterenda est haec<sup>15</sup> superbia, si contra hostes unanimes esse volumus. Inter inflatas mentes non habitabit concordia.

---

<sup>1</sup> vos C\*, D\*, G\*, R

<sup>2</sup> que F\*

<sup>3</sup> Hungaricum R\*

<sup>4</sup> omit. R

<sup>5</sup> omit. G\*

<sup>6</sup> Titus principatum fato dari in marg. D, G

<sup>7</sup> non humano : humano non F\*

<sup>8</sup> se F\*

<sup>9</sup> sedere RTA

<sup>10</sup> servare poss. corr. ex

concordes A; concordis RTA

<sup>11</sup> omit. F\*

<sup>12</sup> o cinis omit. E

<sup>13</sup> et F\*

<sup>14</sup> elatio R

<sup>15</sup> et F\*

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

---

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

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius: *De vitis Caesarum* / *Titus*, 9.1

<sup>3</sup> Philippians, 2, 7-8

[11] Sed pergo ad illud, quod quinto et ultimo loco expetivistis, Caesarem scilicet suum tenere propositum ac coactis viribus in Turcos impetum facere. Confiditis enim et victoriam nostram esse, si<sup>1</sup> quemadmodum Frankfordiae decretum est, bellum pro nostra religione geratur. Huic parti respondet imperator nequaquam suae mentis esse, quantum in se fuerit, ab inceptis desistere. Compertum habet sua serenitas quaevis consilia nostra per exploratores ad hostes deferri. Quod si didicerint illi conatus nostros irritos fieri, audaciores multo ac terribiliores insurgent vicinosque sibi<sup>2</sup> Christi cultores crudelibus affligent<sup>3</sup> modis. Vobis autem necessarium erit aut pacem ex illis accipere, quam dederint, aut bellum cum eis gerere, in quo longe sitis inferiores. Utrumque malum, utrumque periculosum: in<sup>4</sup> altero pax damnosa Christiano populo expectanda est, in altero formidanda est Turcorum victoria, quae non potest non crudelis esse. Ingrati profecto fuerimus<sup>5</sup> genti vestrae auxilium denegantes, quae annis supra septuaginta pro Christi nomine bella gerens, dum suum effudit<sup>6</sup> sanguinem, tutata est nostrum. Omitto ingratitude: stultia atque insania dicenda est<sup>7</sup>, si eos negligas, sine quibus te ipsum salvare non queas. Clipeus noster Hungaria est murusque nostrae religionis et antemurale fortissimum. Nisi hanc provinciam tuemur, neque Italia, neque Germania quiescet, neque Galliam Rheni fluentia, neque Hispaniam Pyrenei montes salvare poterunt.

---

<sup>1</sup> et *add.* R

<sup>2</sup> *omit.* R

<sup>3</sup> vicinosque ... affligent *omit.* E

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* F\*

<sup>5</sup> profecto fuerimus : fuerimus  
profecto G\*

<sup>6</sup> effundit B, E, RTA

<sup>7</sup> *omit.* R

## 1.5. Implementation of decisions made in Frankfurt

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

---

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

[12] Non est igitur animus Caesaris ea deserere, quae Frankfordiae cogitata sunt, neque dubitandum vobis est, quin sacra majestas imperatoria suo satis officio faciat. Auditae sunt ejus oblationes et in Ratispona et<sup>1</sup> Frankfordia, et his diebus hoc in loco publicitus factae. Quaecumque sibi ut imperatori Romanorum, ut protectori et advocato ecclesiae, ut Germanicae nationis capiti, ut Austriae duci, ut religioso principi, ut homini Christiano incumbunt, pro conservanda et amplianda religione nostra, nullo pacto neglecturus est. Adsint tantum principes ejus et imperatori, quod debent, in tanto negotio non denegent. At {84r} cum sanctissimus urbis Romae pontifex, domini et<sup>2</sup> salvatoris nostri vicarius, Nicolaus papa quintus, tamquam pius pater et<sup>3</sup> optimus pastor de familia sua, de grege suo sollicitus, hujus rei cum sacro senato curam exactam gerat; cum serenissimus ille princeps Alfonsus, rex Aragonum et Siciliae, quem veluti sidus quoddam clarissimum ad illustranda tempora nostra de caelo missum omnes intuentur, classem adversum<sup>4</sup> Turcos indubiam promittat<sup>5</sup>; cum sublimis ille Burgundorum dux Philippus, nobilitate ac potentia non impar maximis regibus, personam suam et insignem militiam huic bello polliceatur; cum denique multi et magni ex Alania principes magnifice sese<sup>6</sup> offerant, non diffidit Caesarea sublimitas exercitum, quemadmodum apud Frankfordiam conductum est, posse conflari. Ad quam rem hic nunc conventus habetur. Quae concludentur in eo, audietis et<sup>7</sup> intelligetis suo tempore. Majestas imperatoria, ut res bene gerantur, summo studio navabit operas.

---

<sup>1</sup> in *add.* R

<sup>2</sup> *omit.* E

<sup>3</sup> ut E\*

<sup>4</sup> adversus B\*, E, G\*, R

<sup>5</sup> promittit R

<sup>6</sup> se C\*

<sup>7</sup> *omit.* F\*

[12] So, the emperor has no intention of giving up the undertaking that was discussed<sup>1</sup> in Frankfurt, and you must not doubt that His Holy Imperial Majesty will perform his office. His offers were heard both in Regensburg and in Frankfurt, and they have also been announced here and now. He will fulfil all his duties as emperor of the Romans, as protector and champion of the Church, as the head of the German Nation, as duke of Austria, as a pious prince, and as a Christian, and he will do all that is necessary to preserve and propagate our religion if only his princes join up and do not refuse to do what they owe the emperor in this great undertaking.

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

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>1</sup> "cogitata"

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

<sup>3</sup> I.e., the College of Cardinals

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

ples (as Alfonso I) from 1442 to his death

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



[13] Possem hic jam finem facere, tantum est enim quod vestrae legationi respondere sum jussus. Sed quoniam de victoria consequenda, si pugnetur in Turcos, spem maximam facitis, de hoc ipso pauca dicere non erit absurdum. Victoriam prisci Romanorum deam esse putaverunt<sup>1</sup>, quam Jupiter optimus maximus mitteret, illam vero tamquam regi deorum parentem ad eos venire, quos jusserit et in eorum parte consistere. Quod ita intelligendum est, quemadmodum Aurelius Augustinus in libro *De civitate dei* quarto declarat: *At hoc, inquit ille, verum est non de illo Jove, quem deorum regem pro sua opinione finxerunt, sed de<sup>2</sup> illo<sup>3</sup> vero rege saeculorum, quod mittat non victoriam, quae nulla est substantia, sed angelum suum<sup>4</sup>, et<sup>5</sup> faciat vincere, quem velit, cujus iudicium occultum esse potest, iniquum esse non potest<sup>6</sup>.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Pro victoria deam *in marg.* D;  
Romani victoriam deam *in marg.*

G  
<sup>2</sup> *omit.* C\*

<sup>3</sup> Jove quem ... illo *omit.* F\*

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* B\*, E\*

<sup>5</sup> *omit.* E\*

<sup>6</sup> Iudicium occultum non iniquum  
*in marg.* D; Iudicium occultum,  
iniquum esse non potest *in marg.*  
G

## 2. War against the Turks

### 2.1. It is God who grants victories

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

---

<sup>1</sup> "Jupiter optimus maximus": traditional titles of the Roman God, Jupiter

<sup>2</sup> Augustinus: *De civitate Dei*, 4, 17

[14] Sive igitur Moysi, sive Josue, sive Saulis, sive David, sive aliorum judicum<sup>1</sup> ac regum bella mente repetamus, quae veteris testamenti codex exponit, nullum vicisse reperiemus, nisi quem *digitus Dei* juverit<sup>2</sup> ac protexerit. Neque sine divino nutu<sup>3</sup> Trojam subvertit Agamemnon; neque Graeciam subegit Philippus; neque Indiam penetravit Alexander; neque Italiam sedecim<sup>4</sup> annis concussit Hannibal; neque duo Scipiones Africam evicere; neque Cimbros extinxit Marius; neque duos ac<sup>5</sup> viginti reges debellavit Pompejus<sup>6</sup>; neque undecies centena millia hostium trucidavit Julius; neque Aquileiam delevit Attila; neque Odoacrum apud Ravennam occidit Theodericus; neque, ut ad<sup>7</sup> Germanos veniam, Hispanos et Longobardos edomuit Carolus magnus; neque tres Ottones Italos terruere, duo Friderici concussere; {84v} neque conditor<sup>8</sup> Austriae domus, divus Rudolfus, Ottokarum, Bohemiae regem, cujus imperium ex mari Balteo usque in sinum Venetorum protendebatur, bello victum interemit; neque maternus Ladislai attavus, Henricus VII., Bohemiam filio Johanni submitit, Wirtembergenses comites humiliavit, Mediolanum subegit, Brixiam ferro<sup>9</sup> contrivit, Florentiam obsidione cinxit, Romanam coronam armis obtinuit. A Deo igitur quaerenda atque impetranda victoria est.

[15] At cum Deus ipse absolute bonus justusque sit, bonitati studeat oportet, qui ex Deo victoriam quaerit. Et nos ergo, si Turcorum frangere acies ac<sup>10</sup> victores ex bello reverti volumus, ita in aciem descendamus, ut ei grati atque accepti simus, cujus est donare victoriam. Sint ergo nostri et duces et milites non solum rei militaris periti, sed etiam honestatis amatores, neque sceleratis quovis modo, quamvis bellacibus haec pugna committatur: probitas nobis pugnantium magis quam scientia rei bellicae placeat. Neque Aristotelem hoc in loco audiamus<sup>11</sup>, qui de magistratibus in *Politicis* agens in eo, qui bello praesit, non tam probitatem quam peritiam rei militaris existimat requirendam. Cujus auctoritatem secutus apud Romanos videtur sanctus ille Fabricius<sup>12</sup>, qui teste Gellio Publium Cornelium Rufinum, hominem furacem atque avarum, in<sup>13</sup> temporibus reipublicae difficillimis consulatum petentem enixissime juvat, quoniam esset *manu strenuus ac bellator bonus militarisque disciplinae peritus*.

---

<sup>1</sup> iuditium E\*

<sup>2</sup> Victoria a digito dei *in marg.* D, G

<sup>3</sup> notu E\*

<sup>4</sup> sexdecim B\*, E\*

<sup>5</sup> et R

<sup>6</sup> Victores multi *in marg.* D, G

<sup>7</sup> omit. G\*

<sup>8</sup> neque conditor *corr. ex* neque C\*

<sup>9</sup> bello R

<sup>10</sup> et R

<sup>11</sup> Aristoteles in *Politicis in marg.*

D, G

<sup>12</sup> Fabritius Cornelius *in marg.* D, G

<sup>13</sup> omit. R

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

## 2.2. Armies and generals should be pleasing to God

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

---

<sup>1</sup> See the notes to *In hoc florentissimo*, sect. 11

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Exodus, 8, 19

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle: *Politics*, 5.9 (1309b)

<sup>4</sup> Gellius: *Noctes atticae*, 4.8.1-8

[16] Sed quo pacto haec et illa conveniunt, quae idem Aristoteles<sup>1</sup> *Ethicis* ait: *Si curam aliquam, inquit ille, dii habent rerum humanarum, ut existimatur et creditur*<sup>2</sup>, *rationabile est eos gaudere optimo et cognatissimo. Huiusmodi autem est mens et amantibus illam maxime*<sup>3</sup> *honorantibusque favere tamquam rerum sibi carissimarum*<sup>4</sup> *curatoribus ac recte ac*<sup>5</sup> *bene agentibus?* Assertit hic philosophus, ut videtis, curare superos<sup>6</sup> res humanas ac favere bene agentibus. Si res humanas curant, ergo et bellicas; si favent<sup>7</sup> viris bonis, ergo et partes juvant in proelio meliores. Praestat igitur<sup>8</sup> probos esse et Deo acceptos quam belli peritos, qui proelium committunt. Dicat hic fortasse aliquis: “At ex his, quorum victoriam commemorasti, plerique sceleratissimi fuerunt. Nam et Lucanus accusare victoriam Caesaris videtur, cum ait: *Victrix causa deis*<sup>9</sup> *placuit; sed victa Catoni*. His ego respondeo<sup>10</sup> difficile esse<sup>11</sup> de hominis probitate iudicium. *Solus Deus scrutatur corda*<sup>12</sup> *et renes hominum*. Saepe nobis bonus videtur, qui apud Deum reprobus est, sinitque divina providentia nonnumquam vincere malos, ne pessimi superent.

---

<sup>1</sup> in *add.* D, G

<sup>2</sup> et *creditur* : *creditur et* F\*

<sup>3</sup> et *add.* F\*

<sup>4</sup> *castissimarum* R\*

<sup>5</sup> et G\*, R

<sup>6</sup> *superbos* D\*

<sup>7</sup> et *add.* D\*

<sup>8</sup> et *add.* D\*, F, G

<sup>9</sup> *dies* R\*

<sup>10</sup> *respondebo* R\*

<sup>11</sup> *omit.* R

<sup>12</sup> *scrutatur corda* : *scrutator cordium* G\*

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Lucanus: *Bellum civile*, 1.126

<sup>3</sup> 1. Chronicles, 28, 9; Psalms, 7, 10

[17] De victoria vero Caesaris fortasse illud in mente divina fuit, quod Cicero tradit: Si vicisset Pompejus, {85r} nimis *iracundam fuisse victoriam*<sup>1</sup>. Nos certe, qui Christiani sumus mundumque desuper regi non dubitamus, victoriam per ministros potius bonos ac Deo placentes quam perniciosos et<sup>2</sup> odibiles sperare debemus. Nil rei militaris scientia proderit, nisi pugnantium<sup>3</sup> vel probitas vel causa Deo placuerit. At contra sine rei bellicae peritia<sup>4</sup> multum per se ipsam valebit innocentia. *In domino faciemus virtutem et ipse ad nihilum deducet inimicos nostros*, inquit David. Et Flaccus<sup>5</sup>:

*Integer vitae scelerisque purus  
non eget Mauris<sup>6</sup> jaculis nec arcu,  
nec venenatis gravida sagittis,  
Fusce, pharetra.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Cicero de victoria Cesaris *in marg.* D

<sup>2</sup> ac R

<sup>3</sup> pugnandum E\*

<sup>4</sup> perita A; peritia *corr.* ex perita C, D\*, F\*

<sup>5</sup> Flaccus *in marg.* D, G

<sup>6</sup> in auris R

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

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Cicero: *Pro M. Marcello*, 6.17

<sup>2</sup> Psalms, 59, 14

<sup>3</sup> Horatius: *Carmina*, 1.22.1-4



[18] Tam facile et pronum est Deo cum<sup>1</sup> duce imperito vincere peritum quam numerosos exercitus cum parvis copiis superare. Nolo veteris legis exempla referre, res in Christianismo<sup>2</sup> gestae sufficiunt. Constantino, imperatori piissimo, cum anxius esset belli gerendi, in quo nulla ratione se parem hostibus judicabat, per quietem signum crucis in caelo monstratum est et vox facta, quae diceret: *In hoc, Constantine, vince*<sup>3</sup>. Nec Theodosius, imperator Christianissimus, Eugenium et Argobastum bellandi peritia, sed manifesto Dei auxilio superavit, cum se orante vis magna ventorum exorta hostium tela retroverterit. Hinc illa non spernendi poetae carmina:

*O nimium*<sup>4</sup> dilecte Deo cui militat aether,  
*Et conjurati veniunt ad classica venti.*

In Britannia, quae nunc Anglia dicitur, teste venerabili Beda, cujus sepulchrum in Dunelmia vidi cultu mirabili visitatum, cum bellum atrox inter Christianos et infideles instaret, essentque Christiani et pauci et inermes, intervenientibus duobus ex Gallia pontificibus, Germano et Lupo, et in ipso pugnae principio “Alleluja” tertium magno clamore intonari<sup>5</sup> jubentibus, victoria Christianis fide, non arte neque viribus parta est.

---

<sup>1</sup> Deo cum : cum deo F\*

<sup>2</sup> Christianismo *corr. ex*  
Christianissimo F\*;  
Christianissimo E, G\*

<sup>3</sup> vinces B\*, E

<sup>4</sup> o nimium : omnium C\*

<sup>5</sup> intonare G\*

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

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Otto von Freising: *Chronica*, 6, 1

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

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

<sup>3</sup> CO, I, 6

<sup>4</sup> Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, 1, 24

[19] Quidni ergo spem nostram in vera fide et<sup>1</sup> pura innocentia reponamus, ac cum duces tum milites probitatis amatores in hoc bellum<sup>2</sup> mittere studeamus? Divo Caesari quidem, ut eo redeam, unde sum digressus, in eligendis belli ducibus, nec probitas sine scientia rei militaris, nec scientia sine probitate recipienda<sup>3</sup> videtur, quod in altero temptare Deum, in altero irritare timuerit. Quod si alterum sine altero cogatur eligere, non auscultabit Aristoteli, temptabit securius quam irritabit Deum. At cum probitas in obscuro sit, faciliusque hunc aut<sup>4</sup> illum disciplinae militaris peritum quam innocentem asserere valeamus<sup>5</sup>, in constituendo belli ductore atque in tota militia deligenda ita rei bellicae peritiam amplectamur, ut malitia et iniquitas, quantum fieri potest, minime obsit. Propter iniquitates enim nostras recessit a nobis Deus, neque auxiliatur amplius nobis in bello<sup>6</sup> dextra sua<sup>7</sup>, et brachium suum contra nos est. Quod si favorem ejus optamus, contrario {85v} itinere incedendum est: Audire Jeremiam oportet, cujus haec sunt verba: *Et nunc ergo rectas facite vias vestras<sup>8</sup> et studia vestra, et audite vocem domini Dei vestri, et poenitebit dominum mali quod locutus est adversum vos.*

---

<sup>1</sup> in R

<sup>2</sup> bello \* B, E

<sup>3</sup> omit. E

<sup>4</sup> atque R

<sup>5</sup> asserere valeamus : valeamus

asserere R

<sup>6</sup> in bello : imbello E\*

<sup>7</sup> suum E\*

<sup>8</sup> omit. R

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

---

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

*vestri et paenitebit Dominum mali  
quod locutus est adversum vos*

[20] Redeundum est denique in viam, renuntiandum vitiis, virtutibus inhaerendum. Praecipue tamen tria vitia, veluti tres perniciosissimas pestes vitare ac<sup>1</sup> fugare oportet. Atque in primis superbia, ut ante diximus, exterminanda est nobis, quae intractabiles et arrogantes homines facit. *Initium omnis peccati*, inquit Sapiens, *superbia est, et qui tenuerit illam, adimplebitur maledictis, et subvertet eum in finem*. De Nabuchodonosor inquit Daniel<sup>2</sup>: *Cum autem elevatum est cor ejus, et spiritus ejus affirmatus<sup>3</sup> est ad superbiam, depositus est de solio regni sui, et gloria ejus ablata est, et a filiis hominum ejectus est*. Nobis autem, si fortunari volumus, mites habendi sunt duces, *qui privatorum aditus ad se facile admittant, querelas super injuriis benigne audiant, ut qui dignitate principes excellunt, facilitate pares infimis videantur*. Fidem non solum sociis, sed etiam hostibus teneant, impetum irae compescant, victoriam temperent; ne saeviant contra victos, nihil crudele committant, neminem extra aciem occidi permittant. Sciant Turcos, quamvis pessimi sint, qui filium Dei blasphemant, homines tamen esse, neque more pecudum trucidandos. Curent, ut Graeci ex victoria nostra libertatem sperent. Turci crudelitatem non timeant, ne desperationem in virtutem convertant, nobisque illud Virgilianum noceat<sup>4</sup>: *Una salus victis nullam sperare salutem. Timeant hostes in bello virtutem nostrorum ducum; victi mansuetudinem diligant*. Haec omnia praestabit nobis illa mansuetissima virgo, quam vocamus humilitatem, si explosa superbia vocem ejus audierimus<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> atque B, E\*

<sup>2</sup> David C\*

<sup>3</sup> affirmatus R

<sup>4</sup> etc. add. R

<sup>5</sup> audiremus G; audiverimus R

## 2.3. Military discipline: avoiding three vices

### 2.3.1. Pride

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

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus, 10, 15

<sup>2</sup> Daniel, 5, 20

<sup>3</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 14, 42

<sup>4</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.354: *una  
salus victis nullam sperare  
salutem*

<sup>5</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 14, 42

[21] Secundo cavendum est, monstrum ne<sup>1</sup> illud inter nos dominetur, quod sub specie Harpyae Virgilius descripsit:

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

Hoc nos vitium avaritiam appellamus nec duci nec militi permittendum. Avarus capitaneus nec stipendia militibus erogat, quae debentur, nec praedas aequè partitur, neque sumptus exhibet in ulla re necessarios. Quidquid agit, semper tardus, semper morosus est, remque denique publicam et exercitum *et animam suam venalem habet*. Avari milites non solum hostes, sed etiam socios expilant solamque praedam sequuntur in bello, ac propterea saepe ab instituto cursu revocantur, et odia in se provincialium convertunt. Absit ergo in exercitu, quem volumus instituere, sive dux sive miles rapinae cupidus. Praedae, non Christo militat, qui spolia concupiscit. {86r} Pro tutela fidei, pro gloria nominis Christiani, pro divino honore hoc bellum suscipiendum est. Si qua deinde pecuniaria redundat utilitas, non illam veto<sup>2</sup>, dum non sit haec, quae te<sup>3</sup> pugnare jubeat. Nam et justum lucrum ex justo bello recipi potest. Non sint tamen militum manus ad *uncae*, aut auri nimium sitibundae mentes. Parcant pauperibus<sup>4</sup>, ignoscant sociis, misereantur etiam victi ac jacentis inimici. Intelligant et socii et hostes temperatos esse, qui nostris copiis imperant. *Neque enim potest exercitum is capitaneus continere, qui seipsum non continet.*

---

<sup>1</sup> monstrum ne : ne monstrum  
C\*, R

<sup>2</sup> vero F

<sup>3</sup> quere F\*

<sup>4</sup> pauperibus E\*

### 2.3.2. Greed

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>2</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 3.216-218. Piccolomini had written on the

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

<sup>3</sup> Ecclesiasticus, 10, 10

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



[22] Post haec ultimo loco, ut breviter agam, absit et ipsa libido, quae saepe magnos praecipitavit exercitus. Nos<sup>1</sup> hujus loco continentiam et abstinentiam introducamus. Sit pudor in exercitu nostro, nulli turpitudini locus pateat, nulli feminae vis inferatur. Sit salva inter milites non solum nostrarum mulierum, sed etiam captivarum pudicitia. Meminerimus cum quanta severitate junior Africanus ante Numantiam expurgavit exercitum<sup>2</sup>. Nullae deliciae in castris, nullae voluptates sunt<sup>3</sup>. Scorta procul<sup>4</sup> atque lenones absint. Neque vini neque cibi nimius indulgeatur usus. Absit pigritia, absit omnis torpedo<sup>5</sup>, libidinis filiae. Sciant in exercitu se milites esse, qui non ex<sup>6</sup> quiete, sed ab exercitio nomen ducit. Milites ex malo dicti<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup>, quod perferre<sup>9</sup> debent<sup>10</sup>, ut jureconsulti<sup>11</sup> volunt. Sint sedulo in armis, cursitent, onera portent, foveam fodiant, vallum figant<sup>12</sup>, agant, instent, vigilant, minimum tempus quieti praebeant. Numquam in otio miles, numquam sine negotio capitaneus inveniatur. Sciant duces exercitus nullum spectaculum dulcius esse militibus, quam si communia secum edentem principem videant, in vili simul jacentem strato, vallum castrorumque metationem communi labore partientem. Longe enim magis ab exercitu ipsi coluntur ductores<sup>13</sup>, qui mutuo labori se ingerunt, quam qui milites pigrescere sinunt.

---

<sup>1</sup> non E\*

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

<sup>3</sup> sumpto E

<sup>4</sup> simul R

<sup>5</sup> torpedo A, B, C\*, D\*, E

<sup>6</sup> *omit.* R

<sup>7</sup> *omit.* G\*

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

<sup>9</sup> preferre R\*

<sup>10</sup> dicti *add.* G\*

<sup>11</sup> jureconsulti R

<sup>12</sup> fugant A, B, E; figant *corr. ex* fugant C\*, D\*, F\*

<sup>13</sup> doctores E\*

### 2.3.3. Lust

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

---

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

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

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

[23] Multa hic de castrensi disciplina referri<sup>1</sup> possent<sup>2</sup>, quae in libris veterum continentur. Scripserunt enim de his primi<sup>3</sup>, ut<sup>4</sup> ajunt, Lacedaemones<sup>5</sup>, tum multi Graecorum. Ex Romanis autem Marcus Cato senior, qui et ipse miles peritissimus fuit et bellator fortis. Frontinus quoque divo Trajano *de re militari* librum edidit. Habemus<sup>6</sup> et Vegetium et Aegidium, et alios plerosque, qui de rebus bellicis ad obtinendam victoriam apte ratiocinantur, quos etsi legerim aliquando, non tamen praesentibus Alberto, marchione Brandeburgensi, ac Georgio Pogiebratio<sup>7</sup>, Bohemiae gubernatore, clarissimis ac fortissimis viris, qui pluribus *proeliis*<sup>8</sup> *interfuerunt, quam*<sup>9</sup> *ego legerim*, de hisce rebus disputare ausim. Memini enim, quod de Formione philosopho scribit Cicero<sup>10</sup>: oravit {86v} hic aliquando in Rhodo de re militari<sup>11</sup> coram Hannibale Poeno, summo illius aetatis imperatore, cujus orationem cum ceteri maximis laudibus prosequerentur, solus Hannibal dignam vituperio censuit, et hominem aetate delirantem putavit, qui se praesente de rebus bellicis disserere praesumpsisset.

[24] Ego, ut hanc reprehensionem devitem, quae castrensia sunt peritiamque militarem requirunt, ad belli duces remittam, et ad rem rediens, ajo: divo Caesari nostro, quemadmodum et vobis, spem bonam esse rerum feliciter agendarum, si caelestem favorem puro corde ac piis operibus impetremus. Nec dubitat imperator in sua causa Deum adiutorem fore, si et nunc in civitatibus et demum in castris superbiam humilitas, avaritiam largitas, libidinem abstinentia procul egerit. Ac tantum de speranda<sup>12</sup> victoria satis fuerit esse locutum.

---

<sup>1</sup> inferri F

<sup>2</sup> Scriptores de disciplina militari  
*in marg.* D, G

<sup>3</sup> de his primi : primi de his R

<sup>4</sup> et A, D\*; ut *corr. ex* et C, F

<sup>5</sup> Lacedemonii R

<sup>6</sup> habemus *corr. ex.* habebimus  
A; habebimus R

<sup>7</sup> Pogiebratio *corr. ex* de  
Pogiebrat A, C; de Pogiebrat R

<sup>8</sup> pluribus proeliis : proeliis  
pluribus G\*

<sup>9</sup> qui E\*

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

<sup>11</sup> de re militari *omit.* G\*

<sup>12</sup> sperata R

### 3. Conclusion

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

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

---

<sup>1</sup> For this section, see notes to *De hoc florentissimo*, section 8

<sup>2</sup> Cicero: *Pro lege Manilia*, 10.28

<sup>3</sup> Cicero: *De oratore*, 2.75-77



**Oration “*Optasset*” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (23 April 1455, Wiener Neustadt). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg**

**(Collected Orations of Pope Pius II; 25)**

## Abstract

The imperial diet in Wiener Neustadt, which opened in February 1455, was to decide on the practical implementation of earlier decisions concerning a military response to the Turkish war of aggression against Europe. For various reasons, neither the emperor nor the German princes were keen on this venture, and the news of the death of Pope Nicolaus V in reality dealt the final blow to the plans since that pope had been responsible for mobilising a strong Italian fleet in support of the German land army. It fell to the imperial diplomat, Bishop Piccolomini of Siena, to announce, in the oration "*Optasset*" of 23 April, the formal postponement of the military expedition until May 1456, but everyone would have been aware that this might be tantamount to a cancellation of the whole venture.

## Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Kaiser Friedrich III (Habsburg); Emperor Frederick III (Habsburg); Crusades against the Turks; Diet of Wiener Neustadt, 1455; Reichstag Wiener Neustadt 1455; Pope Nicholas V; Pope Nicolaus V; Papa Niccolò V; Hungary; King Ladislaus the Posthumous; König Ladislaus Postumus; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetorics; 1455; 15<sup>th</sup> century

## Note to the reader

Although Enea Silvio Piccolomini's crusade orations at the German diets in 1454-1455 have been admirably edited in the *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, they could not – of course - be excluded from the present comprehensive, bilingual edition of Pius II's orations. As a matter of principle, they have been collated directly for the purpose of the present edition.

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

Michael von Cotta-Schönberg



## Table of contents

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Context
2. Themes
  - 2.1. Obstacles to a military campaign 1455
  - 2.2. Postponement of the military campaign
  - 2.3. Conditions for a military campaign 1456
3. Date, place, audience, and format
4. Text
  - 4.1. Early Version
  - 4.2. Final Version
    - 4.2.1. Manuscripts
    - 4.2.2. Editions
  - 4.3. Present edition
5. Sources
6. Bibliography
7. Sigla

### **II TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

1. Postponement of the military expedition against the Turks [1]
2. Reasons for the postponement [2]
  - 1.1. Time needed for mobilisation of the land army [2]
  - 1.2. The impossibility of gathering an Italian fleet due to the pope's death [2]
  - 1.3. Ongoing conflicts in Germany [2]
3. The German army to meet on Ascension Day 1456, at Belgrade [3]
4. Conditions for the mobilisation of the army [4]
  - 4.1. Peace in Germany [4-6]
  - 4.2. Italian fleet [7]
  - 4.3. Hungarian contribution [8]

**I. INTRODUCTION**

## 1. Context<sup>1</sup>

At the Diet of Wiener Neustadt, February to April 1455, which was to decide on the practical organisation of a European military expedition against the Turks and especially on military aid to Hungary, the frontline state, negotiations had for various reasons reached an impasse.

One major obstacle was a number of unresolved conflicts between the King of Hungary and Bohemia, the emperor's own cousin and former ward, King Ladislaus the Posthumous, on the one side, and the Emperor, the Saxons, and the Duke of Burgundy on other sides. These conflicts were rather important, as Hungary would be the main direct beneficiary of an imperially organised auxiliary army.

The final event leading to the failure and dissolution of the diet was the announcement of the death of Pope Nicolaus V, received at the Imperial Court on April 12.<sup>2</sup> The pope had been responsible for the mobilisation of an Italian fleet, which would attack the Turks jointly with the land army, and without the certainty of this fleet being ready when needed, the two-pronged strategy fell apart.

In his *Commentarii*, Pius wrote:

*Then, just as everything seemed on the point of being settled, and there was every reason to hope that a great army would march out the following summer to meet the enemy, they received the news that Pope Nicholas V was dead. In an instant, the web so long in weaving was torn to shreds, proving that the thoughts of men are but a breath, and hardly worth the trouble ... All human endeavours fail unless helped by the hand of God. Divine mercy decreed that this was not the time for the Turkish empire to fall. For the rebuking of our sins, it will last a little longer.<sup>3</sup>*

Of his two contemporary biographers, Campano did not mention the Diet of Wiener Neustadt at all,<sup>4</sup> whereas Platina wrote, without directly mentioning Piccolomini's orations at the diet:

*A third diet, on the same subject, was held in Wiener Neustadt. There, Aeneas with all his might endeavoured to bring the matter to a successful end, privately and publicly exhorting*

---

<sup>1</sup> CO, I, 28; RTA, 19, 3; Ady, pp. 129-131; Bisaha; Boulting, pp. 210-211; Helmrath: *Pius*, esp. pp. 94; Helmrath: *German*, esp. pp. 60; Helmrath: *Reichstragsreden*; Housley, pp. 226-227; Mitchell, pp. 114-115; Nowak, pp. 203;

Reinhardt, p. 162-165; Schwoebel, p. 33; Setton, II, pp. 157-158; Stolf, pp. 282-285; Toews, pp. 241-262, esp. pp. 258-260; Voigt, III, pp. 143-148. See also introduction to orations "*Quamvis omnibus*" [21], "*Constantinopo-*

*litana clades*" [22], "*In hoc florentissimo*" [23], and "*Si mihi*" [24]

<sup>2</sup> Voigt, III, p. 146

<sup>3</sup> CO, I, 28 (Meserve, I, p. 139)

<sup>4</sup> Zimolo, p. 26

*everybody [to undertake] this war for the safety of Europe, the freedom of princes and peoples, and the dignity of the Christian name. He had almost succeeded in this, when suddenly the news of the death of Pope Nicolaus brought everything to a standstill.<sup>1</sup>*

Probably, the emperor and most of the other participants in the diet – except the Hungarian delegates<sup>2</sup> and Piccolomini himself – breathed a sigh of relief,<sup>3</sup> but as a matter of form, the emperor did go ahead and make some decisions concerning the land army. It was clear to all, however, that the prospects for an imperially organised crusade had grown very dim indeed.

It fell to the imperial diplomat, Bishop Piccolomini of Siena, the main spokesman for the emperor at the diets, to finally announce to the Hungarian embassy that the military expedition was postponed to the next year. He did so on 23 April 1455, in the oration “*Optasset*”.

In the face of opposition from powerful German princes, like the Archbishop of Trier, who wanted to use the change in popes to obtain more freedoms for the German Church, the emperor – on Piccolomini’s advice – decided to send him to Rome to present the imperial obedience to the new pope, Callixtus III. The emperor thus effectively released Piccolomini from his services at court and freed him for the next phase in his career, the cardinalate, which the emperor himself would ask the pope to bestow on him. He would also be able to pursue the crusade project, now as a papal project, since it was already known that the new pope was a fervent believer in the necessity of a crusade against the Turks.

---

<sup>1</sup> Zimolo, p. 103: *Tertius item eadem de re in Nova Civitate conventus habetur, in quo Aeneas viribus omnibus rem ex sententia perficere conatus est, et privatim et publice unumquemque ad id bellum cohortando, quo salus Europae, principum ac populorum libertas, dignitas christiani nominis continebatur. Nec multum aberat a spe perficiendae rei, cum*

*subito numptiatum est Nicholaum pontificem e vita migrasse, cuius morte disturbata sunt omnia*

<sup>2</sup> They wrote in July to Pope Callixtus: *At the Diet of Neustadt all that has been achieved, besides loss of precious time and disappointment of high hopes, is that, to the joy of our enemies nothing has been done* (Ady, p. 130)

<sup>3</sup> Voigt, III, p. 146: *Den zu Neustadt Versammelten war sein [the pope’s] Tod ein willkommener Vorwand, um die Erfolglosigkeit des Tages einem traurigen Zufall aufzuwürden.* And Ady, p. 130: *... the Death of Pope Nicholas V (24 March 1455) offered an unexpected way of escape ...*

## 2. Themes

### 2.1. Obstacles to a military campaign in 1455

In his oration, Piccolomini outlined three obstacles to a military expedition in the summer of 1455 [Sect. 2]:

- Collecting and training a land army would not be possible before the end of the summer: *Summer will pass away before the troops can be gathered and trained.*
- The pope's death made it impossible to prepare an Italian fleet in time: *the death of the Roman Pontiff makes it impossible to get a fleet from Italy to join up with the land army*
- The conflicts in Germany made it *highly difficult to lead out an army.*

### 2.2. Postponement of the military campaign

Because of the obstacles, the emperor had decided to postpone the military expedition. Instead, *His Majesty<sup>1</sup> will endeavour to gather the forces that should have been assembled now, next year, on the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord,<sup>2</sup> in that region of Hungary where the river Sava joins the Danube, i.e., spring 1456 at Belgrade* [Sect. 3].

### 2.3. Conditions for a military campaign 1456

The emperor set three conditions for a military campaign the following year:

- *The first is that there be peace in Germany:* the conflicts between Hungary/Bohemia and a number of other parties, including the emperor himself and the Duke of Burgundy, must be settled [Sect. 4].
- *The second is reliable information that there will be a large and strong fleet from Italy* [Sect. 4].

---

<sup>1</sup> "mansuetudo"

<sup>2</sup> 15 May 1456

- The third condition is that Hungary, too, must do its part, including *to gather a large and powerful army, not agree on a peace or a truce with the Turks, grant rights of transit, ensure reasonable food prices, and provide for fair money transactions* [Sect. 8].

### 3. Date, place, audience, and format

The oration was delivered on 23 April 1455, which is the date retained by the RTA, in the royal castle in Wiener Neustadt. On the basis of one manuscript, Voigt gives the alternative date as 22 April.<sup>1</sup>

The audience was mainly the Hungarian embassy to the Emperor and the diet, and the format was that of a formal oration held on behalf of His Imperial Majesty.

### 4. Text<sup>2</sup>

As is the case with many of Piccolomini's orations, the text of the "*Optasset*" is extant in two versions: an Early Version and a Final Version.

The Early Version is identical or close to the text of the oration as actually delivered at the imperial diet.

The Final Version is the version included in the official collection of Pius II's orations, prepared in 1462 under his personal supervision.

The Final Version is actually very close to the Early Version, and the revision undertaken in connection with the Final Version must clearly have been very slight.

---

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, III, p. 142

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

## 4.1. Early Version

The Early Version is documented by those manuscripts used for the RTA-edition, which do not belong to the group of seven manuscripts containing the Final Version. For a list of these manuscripts, the reader is referred to the RTA-edition.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that some of these manuscripts really constitute an Intermediate Version.<sup>2</sup>

Two contemporary German manuscript versions of the oration are extant and have been published in the RTA.<sup>3</sup>

The text has been edited twice:

- Helmrath, Johannes: *Die Reichstagsreden des Enea Silvio Piccolomini 1454/55 – Studien zur Reichstag und Rhetorik*. Universität Köln, 1994, pp. 492-501
- *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Friedrich III. Fünfte Abteilung, Dritter Teil: Reichsversammlung zu Wiener Neustadt 1455*. Bearb. von Gabriele Annas. München, 2013. (Deutsche Reichstagsakten, ÄR; 19, 3), pp. 581 - 600.

RTA also lists some older editions.<sup>4</sup>

## 4.2. Final Version

### 4.2.1. Manuscripts

The manuscripts containing the final version are:

- **Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana**  
544, ff. 101v – 103r **(G)** \*<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> RTA, 19, 3, pp. 581-582.

<sup>2</sup> cf. RTA, p. 585, n. 4

<sup>3</sup> RTA, pp. 590-600. In the introductory note, it is stated that the German versions are closer to a group of German manuscripts

containing the Latin Early Version than to the Italian manuscripts containing the Final Version. The two versions being very similar in content, this issue merits further examination

<sup>4</sup> RTA, 19, 3, p. 582

<sup>5</sup> Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in COR, 11, are marked with an asterisk

- **Mantua / Biblioteca Comunale**  
100, ff. 155r - 157v **(F)** \*
- **Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana**  
I. 97 inf., ff. 106v - 108v **(E)** \*
- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**  
Chis. J.VI.211, ff. 112r - 113v **(D)** \*  
Chis. J.VIII.284, ff. 80r - 81v **(A)** \*  
Chis. J.VIII.286, ff. 159v - 161v **(C)** \*  
Vat. lat. 1788, ff. 113v - 115v **(B)** \*

#### 4.2.2. Editions

The Final Version, as such, has only been published once, by Mansi, as based on the manuscript in Lucca.

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca; Benedini, 1755-1759 // II, pp. 330-334

The manuscripts containing the Final Version were also collated (some selectively) in the editions by Helmrath and RTA, cf. above.

#### 4.3. Present edition

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

*Text:*

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

The lead manuscript is the BAV Chis. J.VI.211 **(A)**.



### *Pagination:*

The pagination is that of the lead manuscript.

### *Textual apparatus:*

Significant variants in the Final Version from the Early Version as published in the RTA have been listed in the textual apparatus with the siglum **RTA**.

## **5. Sources<sup>1</sup>**

In this very businesslike oration, only one citation has been identified, i.e. from Vegetius.

## **6. Bibliography**

Ady, Cecilia M.: *Pius II (Æneas Silvius Piccolomini) – the Humanist Pope*. London, 1913

Bisaha, Nancy: Pope Pius II and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 39-52

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

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

Du Fresne de Beaucourt, Gaston: *Histoire de Charles VII.* 6 vols. Paris, 1881-1891

---

<sup>1</sup> On Piccolomini's use of sources in general, see COR, 1: ch. 8.

Helmrath, Johannes: The German Reichstage and the Crusade. In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley. Houndmills, 2004, pp. 53-69

Helmrath, Johannes: Pius II. und die Türken. In: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, hrsg. B. Guthmüller & W. Kühlmann: Tübingen, 2000, pp. 79-138

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

*Loeb Classical Library*. [Digital Version<sup>1</sup>]. Harvard University Press

Mitchell, R.J.: *The Laurels and the Tiara – Pope Pius II, 1458-1464*. London, 1962

Nowak, Jessika: *Ein Kardinal im Zeitalter der Renaissance – die Karriere des Giovanni di Castiglione (ca. 1413 – 1460)*. Tübingen, 2011

Pius II: *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt* [1462-1464].

- *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt*. Ed. A. van Heck. II vols. 2 vols. Città del Vaticano, 1984 (Studi e testi; 312-313)
- *Commentaries*. Ed. M. Meserve and M. Simonetta. Vols. 1 ff. Cambridge, MA, 2003 ff.

Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Epistolae*

- *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Ed. Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien. (Fontes rerum austriacarum; 61-62, 67-68)
- *Enea Silvii Piccolominei Epistolarium Seclare*. Ed. A. van Heck. Città del Vaticano, 2007.
- *Collected Letters of Enea Silvio Piccolomini*. Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 10 vols. 2022-2026. [Available on the web in HAL Archives]

Pius II: *Orationes*. [1436- 1464]

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

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.loebclassics.com/>

- *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. Ed. and transl. by Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg. 12 vols. 2019-2020. [Final Version, 2024-2025] [Available on the Internet in HAL Archives].

Schwoebel, Robert: *The Shadow of the Crescent – the Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453-1517)*. Nieuwkoop, 1967

Setton, Kenneth M.: *The Papacy and the Levant*. 4 vols. Philadelphia, 1976-1984 (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society; 114+161-162)

Stolf, Serge: *Les Lettres et la Tiare. E.S. Piccolomini, un humaniste au XVe siècle*. Paris, 2012. (Etudes et Essais sur la Renaissance; 98)

Toews, John B.: *Emperor Frederick III and his Relations with the Papacy from 1440 to 1493*. University of Colorado, Ph.D., 1962

Voigt, Georg: *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter*. 3 vols. Berlin, 1856-63

Zimolo, Giulio C. (ed.): *Le vite di Pio II di Giovanni Antonio Campano e Bartolomeo Platina*. Bologna, 1964. (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores; t. III, p. II)

## 7. Sigla

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

**B** = Roma, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Vat. Lat. 1788

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

**D** = Rom, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis.I.VI 211

**E** = Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana / 97 inf.

**F** = Mantova, Biblioteca Comunale / 100. A-IV-26

**G** = Lucca, Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana / 544

**RTA** = one or more mss. containing the Early Version, listed in the Deutsche Reichtagsakten

**II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

**Responsio data nomine<sup>1</sup> Caesaris legatis Hungarorum in Nova Civitate Austriae<sup>2</sup> per Aeneam Silvium Piccolomineum episcopum Senensem, qui postea pontificatum maximum adeptus Pius II. appellatus est, XXIII. Aprilis MCCCCLV<sup>3</sup>**

[1] {80r} Optasset sacra majestas imperatoria, reverendissimi patres ac magnifici proceres, inclyti regni Hungariae legati<sup>4</sup>, quae Frankfordiae conclusa et conscripta fuerunt, executioni hoc in loco, ut institutum erat, potuisse mandari. Sic enim et impetus hostium nostrae religionis compesci, et respublica Christiana, quae nimium aevo nostro lacerata est, vires resumere potuisset. Sed intelligit circumspectio vestra eo deductas<sup>5</sup> res esse<sup>6</sup>, ut hac aestate juxta<sup>7</sup> condictum exercitus haberi non queat.

---

<sup>1</sup> nomini C

<sup>2</sup> Austria A

<sup>3</sup> Responsio ... MCCCCLV. : Aeneae Silvii episcopi Senensis

responsum datum legatis

Hungariae nomine Caesaris **D, G**

<sup>4</sup> legatique A, F

<sup>5</sup> deductas B, E

<sup>6</sup> deductas res esse : res esse

deductas G

<sup>7</sup> iusta F

# **Response to the Hungarian legates on behalf of the Emperor by Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena, who after he became pope was called Pius II, in Wiener Neustadt, Austria, on 23 April 1455**

## **1. Postponement of the military expedition against the Turks**

[1] Reverend Fathers, Magnificent Nobles, Legates of the illustrious Kingdom of Hungary. His Holy Imperial Majesty would have wished to put the resolutions [of the Diet of] Frankfurt<sup>1</sup> into effect here and now, as was the plan. Thus, the attacks of the enemies of our religion would have been checked, and the Christian Commonwealth<sup>2</sup> that has suffered greatly in our time would have been able to regain its forces. But, as you understand, matters have come a the point<sup>3</sup> when an army cannot realistically be mobilised this summer as stipulated.

---

<sup>1</sup> At the Diet of Frankfurt, about half a year before

<sup>2</sup> "respublica"

<sup>3</sup> "eo deducta res": classical expression

[2] Namque<sup>1</sup> cum vocandi<sup>2</sup> sint milites {80v} ex longinquis partibus etiam ultra Rhenum, prius abeat<sup>3</sup> aestas, quam copiae congregari atque instrui valeant. Exinde cum omnium iudicio necessarium putaretur pro felici exitu rerum terrestrem simul et navalem exercitum contra Turcos armari, manifestum est, quia in vanum terrestres copiae hac<sup>4</sup> aestate congregarentur, cum propter obitum Romani pontificis classis Italica<sup>5</sup>, quae concurrat, haberi non possit. Nec rursus tempore hiemis educendus<sup>6</sup> videtur exercitus, tum quia castrametari pruina rigente durissimum est, tum quia nautae impredientibus tempestatibus altum petere pelagus et se ventis credere non audent. Cernitis tertio aliam difficultatem propter differentias, quae in diversis partibus<sup>7</sup> Alamaniae vigent, quibus durantibus perdifficile esset exercitum educi. Neque enim quemadmodum sperabatur et optandum fuerat, Germaniae partes paratae<sup>8</sup> sunt<sup>9</sup>. Oportet igitur, si contra Turchos bellum gerere volumus, in aliud tempus idoneum ac possibile negotia proferre. Habita igitur exacta consideratione rebusque diligenter pensatis ad petitionem vestram, quam nunc repetere supervacaneum fuerit, hoc modo respondet Caesarea sublimitas.

---

<sup>1</sup> nam G

<sup>2</sup> advocandi RTA

<sup>3</sup> habeat E

<sup>4</sup> ac E

<sup>5</sup> classis Italica : certitudo classis Italicae RTA

<sup>6</sup> aducendus F

<sup>7</sup> omit. G

<sup>8</sup> parate *aut* pacate A; pacate *corr. ex* parate C, F; pacate RTA

<sup>9</sup> sint RTA

## 2. Reasons for the postponement

### 2.1. Time needed for mobilising the land army

[2] For, as soldiers are to be called up from remote regions and even from beyond the Rhine, summer will be over before the troops can be gathered and trained.

### 2.2. The impossibility of gathering an Italian fleet due to the pope's death

Moreover, all agree that the condition for a successful outcome is the simultaneous mobilisation of a land army and a naval army against the Turks. But, evidently, it would be fruitless to gather a land army this summer since the death of the Roman Pontiff makes it impossible to get a fleet from Italy to join up with it. And winter is not a time to lead out the army, both because frost<sup>1</sup> makes it extremely difficult to build a camp and because sailors do not dare to head out upon the open sea and brave the winds when storms make it very difficult.

### 2.3. Ongoing conflicts in Germany

Thirdly, you are aware of yet another difficulty: the conflicts prevailing in various parts of Germany. So long as these conflicts continue, it is extremely difficult to bring forth an army. And, contrary to our hopes and expectations, the German regions are not yet ready.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, if we want to make war on the Turks, the matter must be postponed to a better and more suitable time.

So, after careful consideration and close examination of the issues, His Imperial Highness responds to your petition<sup>3</sup> - which we need not repeat now - as follows:

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vegetius: *De re militari*, 3, 2

<sup>2</sup> Or: at peace (*pacatae*), according to the Early Version

<sup>3</sup> Presented by the Hungarian legate, Bishop Janos Vitéz, in

speeches given on March 23 and 27



[3] Quae Frankfordiae<sup>1</sup> pro communi utilitate populi Christiani excogitata<sup>2</sup>, conscripta, et conclusa sunt, intendit gloriosissimus imperator, quoad fieri possit, executioni mandare. Et quoniam, ut ante<sup>3</sup> dictum est, hac aestate et sequenti<sup>4</sup> hieme neque faciliter<sup>5</sup> neque utiliter exercitus educeretur<sup>6</sup>, conabitur sua mansuetudo, ut copiae, quae hoc tempore congregari atque emitti debebant, in festo ascensionis dominicae, quod ex proximo festo ad annum immediate<sup>7</sup> futurum est<sup>8</sup>, in partibus Hungariae circa Savum fluvium, quo Danubio miscetur, constituentur, exinde sine dilatione paratae et instructae contra Turcos profecturae.

[4] Quae res ut<sup>9</sup> fructuose geri possint, duo necessaria<sup>10</sup> requirunt<sup>11</sup>. Primum est, ut sit<sup>12</sup> pax in Alania. Alterum, ut de maritima magna et valida classe indubitata notitia habeatur. Quantum ad pacem attinet, necessarium est inter imperatoriam majestatem et serenissimum Hungariae ac Bohemiae regem compositis omnibus differentiis et amputatis litibus, bonam et certam intelligentiam esse, ad quam rem perficiendam in Caesare ipso<sup>13</sup> nihil deerit. Nam qui patrueli suo<sup>14</sup> tamquam filio carissimo<sup>15</sup> est affectus, libenti animo sese cum eo<sup>16</sup> intelliget, et facile unius erit cum eo<sup>17</sup> voluntatis, cum quo est unius<sup>18</sup> sanguinis. Praeterea contentio quaedam neque parva neque contemnenda esse dinoscitur inter duas illas florentissimas et bellicosissimas gentes, Bohemos scilicet et Saxones, quae, nisi simul componantur, totam<sup>19</sup> Germaniam commoverent, et opus hoc sanctum, quod quaeritur, defendendae catholicae fidei penitus impedirent. Est igitur advertendum<sup>20</sup>, ut et hujusmodi controversiae de {81r} medio tollantur, et, si fieri posset, hoc in loco, cum partes adsint pleno mandato fulcitae.

<sup>1</sup> que *add.* F

<sup>2</sup> *advisata* RTA

<sup>3</sup> ut ante : ante ut F

<sup>4</sup> et sequenti : sequenti et F

<sup>5</sup> facile *corr.* ex faciliter C

<sup>6</sup> *aduceretur* E

<sup>7</sup> in mediate D, E, F, G

<sup>8</sup> in festo ... futurum est : de festo Ascensionis domini ad annum RTA

<sup>9</sup> commodum et *add.* RTA

<sup>10</sup> *omit.* C

<sup>11</sup> requirit A, B, C, D, E, F [*NB: incongruence with preceding possint*]

<sup>12</sup> fiat RTA

<sup>13</sup> *omit.* G

<sup>14</sup> Patrueli suo *in marg.* D

<sup>15</sup> filio carissimo : charissimo filio G

<sup>16</sup> sese cum eo : cum eo sese RTA

<sup>17</sup> unius erit cum eo : cum eo unius erit G

<sup>18</sup> erit cum ...quo est unius *omit.* E

<sup>19</sup> *omit.* G

<sup>20</sup> *adnitendum* RTA

### 3. The German army to meet on Ascension Day 1456 at Belgrade

[3] Our glorious emperor intends to implement, as far as possible, the resolutions passed in Frankfurt for the common good of the Christian people. Since, as already mentioned, the army cannot be led out easily or usefully this summer or next winter, His Majesty<sup>1</sup> will endeavour to gather the forces, which should have been assembled and sent off by now, next year on the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord<sup>2</sup> in that region of Hungary where the river Sava joins the Danube.<sup>3</sup> Then they can, without delay, march against the Turks ready and trained.

### 4. Conditions for the mobilisation of the army

[4] For this to happen successfully, two things are necessary. The first is that there will be peace in Germany. The second is reliable confirmation that there will be a large and strong fleet.

#### 4.1. Peace in Germany

Concerning peace, it is necessary to compose all the differences and solve the conflicts between His Imperial Majesty and His Serene Majesty, the King of Hungary and Bohemia, so that they can have a good and firm understanding between them. The emperor will contribute wholeheartedly to this, for he loves his cousin as a dear son and will gladly come to an understanding with him; indeed, he will easily become of one mind with one with whom he shares one blood.

Moreover, it must be recognised that there exists a great and momentous conflict between those two flourishing and warlike peoples, the Bohemians and the Saxons.

If these two conflicts are not solved at the same time, they will stir up all of Germany and hinder the holy enterprise of defending the Catholic Faith, which we are pursuing. So we must address the issue of ending these conflicts, and if possible, we must do so here and now when the various parties are present and endowed with full powers.

---

<sup>1</sup> "mansuetudo"

<sup>2</sup> 6 May 1456. The Feast of the Ascension is a mobile feast, depending on the date of Easter. For

,the Early Version, the RTA proposes an alternative, i.e., a calendar year from Ascension Day in

1455, i.e., 15 May 1456, cf. RTA, p. 586, n. 6

<sup>3</sup> i.e. at Belgrade

[5] Expedit etiam controversias inter serenissimum regem vestrum et illustrissimum Burgundiae ducem super ducatu Luczenburgensi, similiter et contentiones illas super ecclesia Monasteriensi, necnon<sup>1</sup> inter dominum Coloniensem et civitatem ejus<sup>2</sup> Susatensem, et alias circa Rhenum<sup>3</sup> pendentes amovere; et in ceteris<sup>4</sup> Alamaniae quibusque litibus finem imponere, illis praesertim, quae ad exercitum conficiendum impedimento esse possunt<sup>5</sup>. Eam ob causam decrevit majestas imperatoria sub gravissimis et formidabilibus poenis, quemadmodum Frankfordiae conclusum est, pacem biennalem per totum imperium<sup>6</sup> in partibus Germaniae ac Galliae servandam mandare, et in locis opportunis ejus conservatores instituere cum plena potestate coercendi eos, qui violatores quovis modo reperiantur. Ubi autem majores contentiones fuerint, sive per se<sup>7</sup>, sive per legatos et<sup>8</sup> alios modos opportunos illas sopire conabitur.

[6] Mandabit<sup>9</sup> principibus ac civitatibus imperio sacro subjectis, ut ad diem praedictam Ascensionis domini ad annum milites sibi conscriptos, paratos atque instructos habeant in loco praenominato. Et casu quo sua majestas personaliter ad exercitum ire non posset, eligeretur belli dux, sive, ut dicimus<sup>10</sup>, supremus capitaneus, princeps aliquis expertus rei militaris et tantis rebus idoneus. Et ut exercitus<sup>11</sup>, supra quam<sup>12</sup> Frankfordiae decretum est, numerosior et fortior haberi possit, serenissimos atque potentissimos Franciae et Angliae reges, ut et<sup>13</sup> ipsi ad tam sanctum opus concurrere velint, convenientibus modis adhortabitur: et sperandum est, quod omnes volenti animo ad rem tam piam et necessariam manus apponant. Nam qui praestare auxilia hoc tempore contra Turcos negaverit, infidelitatis proculdubio et inimicorum crucis Christi fautorem se declaraverit.

---

<sup>1</sup> ac differencias RTA

<sup>2</sup> civitatem ejus : ejus  
communitatem RTA

<sup>3</sup> partes Reni RTA

<sup>4</sup> partibus *add.* RTA

<sup>5</sup> possent C

<sup>6</sup> *omit.* F

<sup>7</sup> sive per se *omit.* RTA

<sup>8</sup> sive RTA

<sup>9</sup> mandavit E

<sup>10</sup> diximus G

<sup>11</sup> ut exercitus : exercitus ut F

<sup>12</sup> quem C, RTA

<sup>13</sup> ut et : et ut F

[5] It will also be necessary to end the conflict between His Serene Majesty, your king, and the Illustrious Duke of Burgundy concerning the Duchy of Luxembourg,<sup>1</sup> and likewise the disagreement concerning the Church of Münster,<sup>2</sup> as well as the conflict between his Lordship of Cologne<sup>3</sup> and his City of Soest and the other unresolved conflicts in the Rhine region. An end should also be put to the other conflicts in Germany, especially those that may hinder the mobilisation of the army.

Therefore, as decided in Frankfurt, His Imperial Majesty has - on pain of severe and fearful punishments - decreed a two-year imperial peace applying to the imperial parts of Germany and Gaul, and he has set up guardians of the peace in appropriate places with full powers to coerce those who violate the peace in any way. And if major conflicts arise, he will endeavour to solve them either personally, through legates, or by other means.

[6] He will require the princes and the cities subject to the Holy Empire to bring the contingents of soldiers assigned to them, ready and trained, to the aforesaid place and on the aforesaid day of the Ascension next year. In case his Majesty is unable to come to the army in person, a prince will be chosen who is an expert on military matters and qualified for this great task to be general, or supreme captain, as we say. And so that the army may be even larger and stronger than decided in Frankfurt, he will, in appropriate ways, invite their Serenities, the mighty Kings of France and England, to join in this holy enterprise. It is to be hoped that all will support this pious and necessary venture willingly. For there is no doubt that whoever now refuses to provide troops<sup>4</sup> against the Turks thereby declares himself to be a partisan of faithlessness and of the enemies of the cross of Christ.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Du Fresne de Beaucourt, VI, pp. 156-158

<sup>2</sup> i.e., a conflict between two contenders for the See of Münster,

Walram von Moers and Heinrich von Hoya

<sup>3</sup> i.e., the Archbishop of Cologne, Dietrich von Mörs (1385-1463)

<sup>4</sup> "praestare auxilia" – or the meaning may be more general: to provide help

[7] Quantum vero ad classem Italicam pertinet, est propositum Caesareae sublimitatis mittere oratores suos ad novum Romanum praesulem, quem jam electum putat esse, similiter ad serenissimum Aragonum regem, fratrem et affinem suum carissimum, necnon ad illustres Venetiarum, Januae, et Mutinae duces, ad magnificum comitem Franciscum, ad Florentinos, Senenses<sup>1</sup>, et ad ceteros Italiae potentatus, omnemque operam adhibere, ut classis Italica magnifica et potens eo tempore Hellespontum, sive, ut vulgo dicimus, Brachium Sancti Georgii, aut strictum Galipolis<sup>2</sup> ingrediatur Turcos invasura, quo terrestres copiae eosdem hostes aggredientur.

[8] Quae cum ita per gloriosissimum imperatorem nostrum gerenda sint, restat, quod serenissimus rex vester ex regnis ac<sup>3</sup> dominiis suis simili modo se<sup>4</sup> disponat, tueatur se medio tempore, quantum {81v} fieri potest, ab invasione Turcorum, pacem sive treugam cum eis non amplectatur, quae ordinationi praedictae nocere possit. Congreget et ipse suum exercitum juxta tractatum Frankfordiae habitum, copiosum et potentem, qui cum Theutonicis concurrat, mittat<sup>5</sup> oratores suos ad promovendam Italiae classem, mittat<sup>6</sup> ad reges et principes atque auxilium postulet, transitum praebeat per dominia sua iter habentibus securum et quietum. Mercatum rerum, quae ad victum sunt, aequo pretio faciat; super monetis recipiendis, ne qui graventur, provideat; et reliqua faciat, quae ad bellum contra Turcos gerendum suae serenitati incumbunt. Hoc facto<sup>7</sup>, si faverit, ut credibile est, divina pietas<sup>8</sup>, et regnum vestrum magnifice defendi, et honor Christiani nominis salvari, ac ecclesiae catholicae status ad pristinum decus reduci poterit.

---

<sup>1</sup> illustres ... Senenses : illustre dominium Venetorum, ad Mediolanenses, ad Florentinos RTA

<sup>2</sup> aut ... Galipolis *omit.* RTA

<sup>3</sup> et C

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* B, E

<sup>5</sup> et ipse *add.* RTA

<sup>6</sup> et ipse *add.* RTA

<sup>7</sup> pacto RTA

<sup>8</sup> divina pietas *omit.* B, E

## 4.2. Italian fleet

[7] As far as the Italian fleet is concerned, His Imperial Highness intends to send orators to the new Bishop of Rome, whom he believes must have been elected by now,<sup>1</sup> and similarly to His Serenity the King of Aragon, his brother and relative, to the illustrious Doges of Venice and Genoa, to the illustrious Duke of Modena,<sup>2</sup> to the magnificent Count Francesco,<sup>3</sup> to the Florentines, to the Sienese, and to all the other powers of Italy. He will do all he can to ensure that a splendid and powerful fleet will enter the Hellespont or, as we commonly say, The Arm of Saint George, or simply Gallipolis, to assault the Turks at the same time they are attacked by the land army.

## 4.3. Hungarian contribution

[8] This is what our glorious emperor will do. For His Serenity, your king, it remains to make similar arrangements in his own realms and dominions. In the meantime, he should, as far as possible, protect himself against a Turkish invasion and not agree to a peace or a truce with those who may spoil the plan agreed upon. He himself should gather a large and powerful army to join up with the Germans, as decided in Frankfurt. He should send his orators to urge the mobilisation of the Italian fleet. He should also send orators to the kings and princes to ask for help. He should grant rights to secure and peaceful transit to those who have to pass through his territories. He should ensure reasonable food prices and provide for fair money transactions so that no one is taken advantage of. And he should do all the other things that fall under his responsibility in the war against the Turks. If he does so and Divine Piety is favourable, as may reasonably be believed, your kingdom will be defended magnificently, the honour of the Christian name will be saved, and the Catholic Church will be restored to its former glory<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>11</sup> The new pope, Callixtus III, had indeed been elected on April 8, but the news had not yet reached the Imperial Court. Piccolomini

himself would be one of the imperial orators sent to the pope

<sup>2</sup> Borso d'Este

<sup>3</sup> The Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza

<sup>4</sup> "decus"