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Oration “Fatemur insignes” of Pope Pius II (24 September 1459, Mantua). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 5th version. (Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 44)

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(Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 44)

Oration “*Fatemur insignes*” of Pope Pius II (24 September 1459, Mantua). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

5th version

2019

Abstract

After the Fall of Constantinople, in May 1453, the major preoccupation of Venice was to protect its merchant empire by establishing friendly relations and even a formal peace with the Turkish Sultan, Mehmed II. The Venetians were therefore not very keen to participate in a military expedition against the Turks in the form a crusade under the pope's aegis. However, when all the other Italian powers had sent their representatives to the Congress of Mantua, which was to discuss such a crusade, the Venetians sent their ambassadors too. In their address to the pope, the ambassadors acknowledged the necessity of a military response to Turkish expansion into Europe and pledged Venetian support to a crusade – on the important condition that all the other European powers would participate. In his reply, the pope rebuked Venice for the late arrival of the ambassadors, but thanked them for their promise of support.

Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Æneas Silvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Renaissance orations; Responses to ambassadors; Venezia; Venice; 15th century; Crusades against the Turks; Congress of Mantua; Mantova; 1459; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetorics

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Foreword

In 2007, I undertook a project of publishing the Latin texts with English translations of the orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II. Altogether 80¹ orations (including papal responses to ambassadorial addresses) are extant today, though more may still be held, unrecognized, in libraries and archives.

At a later stage the project was expanded to include ambassadors' orations to the pope, of which about 40 are presently known.

I do not, actually, plan to publish further versions of the present volume, but I do reserve the option in case I – during my future studies - come across other manuscripts containing interesting versions of the oration or if important new research data on the subject matter are published, making it appropriate to modify or expand the present text. It will therefore always be useful to check if a later version than the one the reader may have previously found via the Internet is available.

I shall much appreciate to be notified by readers who discover errors and problems in the text and translation or unrecognized quotations.

12 September 2019

MCS

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

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II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context¹

After the Fall of Constantinople in May 1453, the major preoccupation of Venice was to protect its merchant empire by establishing friendly relations and even a formal peace with the Turkish Sultan, Mehmed II. The Venetians were therefore not very keen, to say the least, to participate in a military expedition against the Turks in the form of a crusade under the pope's aegis: in the case of defeat they had too much to lose. In his *Commentarii*, Pius II wrote:

From all of Italy, only the Venetians were missing. Though they had sent several messengers and letters to the pope before he left Rome, assuring him that they would be among the first to send delegates, when the summons came they failed to comply. Two factors deterred them: first, they had not secured the church of Padua as they wanted; and second they worried that if they arrived in Mantua and found the other Christian princes unwilling to defend the faith, they would be left to fight the Turks on their own. What is more, the Venetians in the Curia kept sending messages home to their friends which turned popular opinion against this noble endeavor. ... The Venetian state (being a republic and thus prone to suspicion) put the worst interpretation on everything. The merchants were especially skeptical, for it was in their interest to maintain peace with the Turks.²

Thus, they were extremely slow in accepting the pope's invitation to a European Congress in Mantua to plan for a crusade against the Turk. Only when the French, the Duke of Burgundy, and – not the least - Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, announced their participation, did the Venetian Senate finally decide to send their ambassadors³ to the Congress.

They arrived in Mantua on 23 September 1459 and received a correct, but not cordial reception by the pope who was understandably frustrated at Venice's tardy and unwilling response to his summons.

In his *Commentarii*, the pope wrote about the event:

One of these ambassadors, Luigi, then delivered a brilliant speech at a public consistory, for he was not only an accomplished jurist but also an eloquent public speaker. The gist of the oration was this: Venice condemned the aggression of the Turks in invading foreign lands; the Christian states had acted in a cowardly fashion, for they had neither defended their property nor dared to take up arms for the defense of their faith. The pope was to be

¹ CO, III, 25; Pastor, pp. 53-55; Picotti, pp. 181-183; Reinhardt, pp. 259-260; Setton, II, p. 207; Voigt, IV, pp. 69-73

² CO, III, 25 (Meserve, II, pp. 99-101)

³ Luigi Foscarini and Orsatto Giustiniani

*praised: out of concern for the common good, he had spared neither toil nor expense to come to Mantua. A crusade against the Turks was desirable, if it could be mounted by the united forces of Christendom. The Venetians promised to bend all their efforts to that end.*¹

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The poison was in the end: the Venetians would join a crusade only if it could be mounted by the united forces of Christendom. Given the political and military situation of Europe at that time, this condition would be impossible to meet, so the Venetian promises were completely gratuitous.³

Pius understood this very well, as he said in the *Commentarii*:

*Pius then said a few words about the origins of Venice and its glorious history. He praised the Venetians for offering to defend the faith, even though they had set a condition that would be most difficult to meet. He rebuked the ambassadors for being late: they who lived nearest the meeting had been the last to arrive. He reminded them of the great affection Pope Alexander had had for Venice and he assured them that he would hold them in no less regard as long as they played their due part in the defense of the faith.*⁴

The extant text of the oration has no mention of the origins of Venice, though it would quite customary in such an oration, or the difficulty of meeting their demands or his benevolence, so either the text of the oration is an abbreviated version of the oration as actually held, or the

¹ CO, III, 31 (Meserve, II, p. 135)

² See also Picotti, p. 181-182: *E il 24 settembre, il giorno dopo Ventrata in Mantova, Lodovico Foscarini tenne in quell'assemblea solenne un discorso pieno di viva e calda eloquenza: disse che i Veneziani detestavano l'audacia de' Turchi invasori, deploravano l'ignavia de' cristiani, che non sapevano difendere le cose proprie nè pigliar le armi per la fede, erano ammirati dello zelo del papa, che per la comune salvezza era venuto a Mantova senza curare spesa o fatica, consigliavano la guerra contro i Turchi, purché fosse possibile imprenderla con forze unite di tutti i cristiani nel qual caso Venezia prometteva, per mezzo di lui e del collega, di far cose grandi. Erano sincere queste, che agli oratori di Siena parvero grandi et larghe offerte per defensione et „stato de la sancta Romana Ecclesia”? Sincero era, non v'ha dubbio, il Foscarini, che assai desiderava veder la repubblica sua cara pugnar per la fede; ma anche il senato, alle cui istruzioni egli s'era tenuto, augurava sinceramente la guerra nelle sole condizioni in cui gli pareva possibile ch' essa fosse fatta allora con buone speranze*

³ Pastor, pp. 53-55; Picotti, pp. 181-183, 203

⁴ CO, III, 31 (Meserve, II, pp. 136-137)

pope's memory – when he dictated this passage in his *Commentarii* (1462-1463) may reflect later developments.^{1 2}

2. Themes

The pope rebuked the ambassadors for their late arrival, he mentioned Venice's former great deeds and fight against the Turks, and their good relations with the earlier Sienese pope, Alexander III. And he quite forcefully put across the view that the Venetians would be the first to benefit from a war against the Turks:

You are the first whom the Turks will attack after the Hungarians. When we help the Hungarians, do we not help you, too? If you do not help the Hungarians now, you will not get any help when you yourselves ask for it. [Sect. 2]³

3. Date, place, audience, and format

The oration was delivered on 24 September 1459, at the Congress in Mantova.⁴

¹ Picotti, p. 203, believes that the oration *Fatemur insignes* was not the pope's reply to the first address of the Venetian ambassadors, on 24 September, but his reply to their intervention at a meeting of the Italian powers, on 30 September. This view appears difficult to reconcile with the pope's opening remarks of welcome and the fact that speeches of the pope to other Italian – even important – powers participating in that meeting are not included in the collection of Pius' responses to ambassadors

² The oration is not mentioned by Pius' contemporary biographers, see Zimolo, nor by Rainaldus

³ See the report in Picotti, p. 182: *Ma al papa che pure in altro tempo aveva riconosciuto necessario l'accordo di tutta la cristianità contro gl' infedeli e appunto per questo aveva convocato la dieta e di forze unite aveva discorso ancora pochi giorni innanzi, rispondendo agli oratori di Borgogna, pareva ormai tanto lontano quell'accordo comune da non potersi sperare di raggiungerlo e, mentr' egli rammentava le antiche geste gloriose de' Veneziani, gli protestava non minor benevolenza che avesse avuto per loro Alessandro III e ne accoglieva con lodi le offerte, non seppe tacere ch'essi avevano posto condizioni tali che assai difficilmente si potevano adempire, nè si tenne dal rimproverarli del ritardo nell' invio degli oratori*

⁴ Picotti, p. 181. But see also Picotti, p. 204, n. 2: *Il discorso Ad oratores Venetos (vedi Mansi, Pii II... Orationes, II, 182 sg.), nel quale il papa risponde appunto alle giustificazioni de' Veneziani per il loro ritardo, fu certo pronunziato in quest' occasione; ma quella che n' è pubblicata ne sembra solo una scarna traccia, che la facondia di Pio avrà ampliata largamente.* Picotti appears to believe that Pius' oration to the Venetian ambassadors was delivered during a meeting on 30 September, and that the published version was heavily revised. The last claim is quite probable, since Pius customarily revised his orations before publication. But it appears less likely that Pius would not have given a response at the reception of the ambassadors on 24 September. The text of the "*Fatemur insignes*" does fit that occasion quite nicely

It was delivered in a public consistory, presumably with a large attendance of ambassadors, curials and nobles and court officials from Mantua and Milan.

The format was a papal oration from the throne, in response to a formal address by ambassadors.

4. Text¹

The oration is included in a special Collection of Pius II's Responses from 1459 and 1460), largely consisting of responses to addresses by ambassadors,² which is extant in at least five manuscripts:

4.1. Manuscripts³

- **Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana**
544, ff. 178r-179r **(G)** *
- **Roma / Archivio Segreto Vaticano**
Arm. XXXII 1, ff. 60v-62r **(J)** *
- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**
Barb. Lat. 1499, ff. 73v-74v
Barb. Lat. 1692, ff. 93r-94v
Chisianus J.VII.251, ff. 175v-176r **(H)**

The Chisianus is the eldest of the five and identical with or very close to the oration as actually delivered by Pius.⁴

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

² See *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*, ch. 5.1.2

³ Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in *Collected orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 11, are marked with an asterisk

⁴ But see Picotti, above

4.2. Editions

The oration was published twice by Mansi:

- Mansi, Giovanni: *Ad concilia Veneto-Labbeana Supplementum. Sanctorum conciliorum et decretorum collectio nova: seu collectionis conciliorum Supplementum*. 6 vols. Lucca: ex typographia Josephi salani, & Vincentii Junctinii, 1751. / T. 5: 1752, coll. 304-305 [Reproduces the Luccensis]
- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesisticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759. // Vol. 2, pp. 182-183 [Reproduces the Luccensis]

4.3. Present edition

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

Text:

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

Pagination:

Pagination is from the lead manuscript.

5. Sources¹

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

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

6. Bibliography

Annales ecclesiastici ab anno MCXCVIII ubi Card. Baronius desinit. Auct. Odoricus Raynaldus. Tom. XVIII-XIX. Roma: Varesius, 1659-1663¹

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

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

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

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae.* Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759
- *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II.* Edited and translated by Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg. 12 vols. Copenhagen, 2019-2020

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

¹ References to the *Annales* are usually given in this form: (e.g.) **Rainaldus, ad ann. 1459, nr. 67** (without reference to a specific edition). In the bibliographies of the individual orations, the first edition is usually listed, but the Theiner edition is actually the preferred one since it is the easiest available on the web

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

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 and abbreviations

G = Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana / 544

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

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

Abbreviations

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

HA = Eneas Silvius Piccolomini: *Historia Austriacalis*. Teil 1: Einleitung von Martin Wagendorfer. 1. Redaktion ed. von Julia Knödler. Teil 2: 2./3, ed. Martin Wagendorfer. 2 vols. Hannover, 2009. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum. Nova Series; 24)

HB = Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini: *Historia Bohemica*. Herausg. J. Hejnic & H. Rothe. 2 vols. Köln, 2005. (Bausteine zur slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte. Neue Folge. Reihe B; 20)

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

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

RTA = Deutsche Reichstagsakten

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

Decretum = *Decretum magistri Gratiani*. Ed. Lipsiensis secunda. Eds. A.L. Richter & A. Friedberg. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1879

Epistolarium = *Enee Silvii Piccolominei Epistolarium Seculare*. Ed. A. van Heck. Città del Vaticano, 2007

Rainaldus = *Annales ecclesiastici ab anno MCXCVIII ubi Card. Baronius desinit*. Auct. Odoricus Raynaldus. Tom. XVIII-XIX. Roma: Varesius, 1659-1663

Reject = *Reject Aeneas, accept Pius : Selected letters of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II)*. Intr. and transl. by T.M. Izbicki *et al.* Washington, D.C., 2006

II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Venetis¹

[1] {175v} Fatemur, insignes Venetorum oratores, nos superioribus diebus non parum admiratos esse, quod vos, qui primi esse debuissetis in hoc conventu, ultimi omnium de veniendo cogitaretis. Nam quid aliud hic quaeritur, quam eum perdere hostem, qui vestris cervicibus imminet, et qui rempublicam vestram in primis odit? Quippe si cuiuspiam interest Turcos exterminari² et Hungarorum et vestra interest. Dolebamus eo deductas res esse, ut rogari vellent, qui rogare³ deberent. Multa per vos in excusationem dicta sunt, et quidem prudenter atque ornatissime, quae tamen nos facile dissolveremus, ubi contendendum esset. Sed satisfactum est omnibus, postquam venistis et magnificas oblationes facitis. Magnificimus dicta vestra, neque ignari sumus senatum Venetum ad bellum contra Turcos plurimum posse, sive mari sive terra proelietur. Non latet nos, quotiens vestri progenitores magnas classes gessere, et magnas tulerunt ex hoste victorias. Legimus majorum vestrorum gesta, quae cum antiquis comparanda sunt. Nec ignoramus, quae praestitistis Alexandro III., auxilia quae aliis pontificibus, nec nos latent⁴ ornamenta, quae ipse vobis Alexander praebuit. Fuistis et vos ecclesiae faventes, {176r} et ipsa vobis benignissima extitit.

¹ Ad oratores Venetos G

² exterminare J

³ deductas res ... rogare *omit.* J

⁴ latet G, H

To the Venetians

[1] Distinguished ambassadors of Venice, We confess that recently We have greatly wondered why you who ought to be the first to arrive at this congress should have been the last of all to consider coming. For what other purpose do we have here than the destruction of an enemy who threatens your necks and who hates your state above all? Indeed, if anybody should have an interest in the destruction of the Turks it is you and the Hungarians. It pained Us that things had come to the point where those who ought to ask wanted to be asked. You have said many things in your own excuse, both wisely and elegantly – but We could easily tear them apart in case of disagreement. But now that you have come and presented your magnificent offers, all are satisfied. We praise your words, knowing that the Venetian Senate can contribute much to the war against the Turks whether it is fought on land or at sea. We also know how often your ancestors raised large fleets and inflicted great defeats on the enemy. We have read about the deeds of your forefathers – indeed they may be compared to those of Antiquity. And We know how you helped Alexander III¹ and other pontiffs, as well as the marks of esteem that Alexander bestowed upon you. You have helped the Church, and in turn the Church has shown you great favour.

¹ Alexander III [Roland of Siena] (ca. 1100/1105-1181): Pope from 1159 to his death. Cf. Pius II: *Commentaries*, pp. 119-121

[2] Scimus captam a vobis olim Constantinopolim esse. Scimus, quas in Asiam, quas in Syriam contra infideles misistis armatas, idemque vestra¹ res aucta². Voluit enim Deus vos magnos facere³, qui magna pro sua gloria fecistis. Sed advertere vos⁴ oportet, quod *quanto majores estis, tanto majora pro fide Christi facere oportet*, ut Gregorii sententia est. Si enim cum vestrum imperium multo minus esset quam hodie, Mahumetum longe invasistis. Quid nunc facere debetis? Et si hostes longe positos aggredi non timuistis, cur nunc non audetis, quando vicinus est et magis nocere potest? Nunc, nunc⁵ potissime cogitandum est. Vos primi estis, quos illi invadent post Hungaros. Non vestri causa haec agimus, ut occurratur et Hungarorum causae⁶? Si non juvatis modo Hungaros, quaeritis juvari et non juvabimini. Sed animadvertimus vos boni esse animi, laetamur et confidimus vestro auxilio et Dei adjutorio, quando alii multi concurrunt rempublicam non deserendam esse. De consiliis vestris postea⁷ simul conferemus, et putamus quod vestro et aliorum consilio adjuvante domino respublica Christiana magnifice defendetur.

¹ vestras J

² auctas J

³ magnos facere : magnifacere J

⁴ nos G, J

⁵ omit. G

⁶ causa G, H

⁷ post G

[2] We know that you once conquered Constantinople.¹ We know that you sent fleets against the infidels in Asia and Syria and how they contributed to your expansion. For God wanted to make you great since you had done great things for his glory. But you should know that *the greater you are the greater things you must do for the Christian Faith*,² as Gregory³ says. When your realm was much smaller than today, you attacked Muhammad who was far away. So what should you do today? If formerly you did not fear to attack the enemies when they lived far away, why should you not dare to attack them now that they are close by and can do you grater damage? Now, now more than ever, you must think [carefully]. You are the first whom the Turks will attack after the Hungarians. When we help the Hungarians, do we not help you, too? If you do not help the Hungarians now, you will not get any help when you yourselves ask for it. But We see your good intentions, and We rejoice and trust in your assistance and in the help of God, when so many others agree that the Commonwealth should be not be deserted. We shall later talk about your advice, and We believe that, with the help from you and others and the assistance of Our Lord, the Christian Commonwealth will be defended splendidly.

¹ During the disreputable Fourth Crusade, in 1204, Constantinople was taken by the Christian troops under the partial leadership of the Venetian Doge Enrico Dandolo

² Not identified

³ Gregorius I (ca. 540-604): Pope 590 to his death in 604