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

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Abstract

The fall of Constantinople, 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 crusade against them. The aim of the crusade would be twofold: firstly to avenge the injuries suffered by the Europeans and to regain the territories lost to the Turks and the Arabs, and secondly to protect Europe against a Turkish invasion. Although the audience was moved, caution prevailed, and the only result of the diet was to agree on a crusade 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 rhetorics; Diet of Regensburg 1454; Reichstag in Regensburg 1454; Fall of Constantinople 1453; 1453; 15th century

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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.

Michael von Cotta-Schönberg
Foreword

The reader is advised that I publish – on a yearly basis - new versions of my preliminary editions. It will therefore always be useful to check if a later version than the one the reader may have found previously via the Internet is available in HAL Archives.

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 77 orations - including papal responses to ambassadorial addresses - are extant today, though more may still be held, unrecognized, in libraries and archives). Later the project has been expanded to include ambassadors’ orations to the pope, of which about 40 are presently known.

I have published the preliminary editions of both the individual orations and the collected orations in the French digital research archive, HAL Archives, and I shall gradually be replacing them with the final edition until the whole work – Deo volente - is completed in 2020.

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

23 September 2018
MCS
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I. INTRODUCTION
1. Context

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.²

Already in his first oration, the “Audivi”, 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.³

In his oration to Emperor-Elect Albrecht II, the “Quid est”, 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.⁴

In his oration “Si Putarem” 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.⁵

In his oration “Et breviter me hodie” 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

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¹ CO, I, 26; RTA 19, 1, esp. pp. 1-3, 258-266; Ady, pp. 126-129; Bisaha; Boulting, pp. 204-209; Helmrath: Pius; Helmrath: German; Mitchell, pp. 113-114; Nowak, pp. 130-131; Reinhardt, p. 162-165; Stolf, pp. 282-284; Meuthen; Schwoebel, p. 32-33; Setton, II, ch. 3 and pp. 151-153; Toews, pp. 261-251; Voigt, II, III, 3, pp. 105-119
² Cf. Hankins
³ Oration “Audivi, sect. 21
⁴ Oration “Quid est”, sect. 3-4
⁵ Oration “Si putarem”, sect. 38
Greeks from their hands, those who were once the masters of the East but now appear to be slaves.¹

His first full oration on the Turks was the “Quamvis in hoc senatu”, 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 “Moyses vir Dei”, in which he formally 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 as a unrealistic dream, not to be seriously pursued. The only ruler who truly desired a crusade against the Turks was Duke Philippe III of Burgundy.²

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, was 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.³ 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

¹ Oration “Et breviter me hodie”, sect. 3
² Paviot. Meuthen, pp. 21-23
³ Schwoebel, ch. 1
was ably assisted by his counsellor and senior diplomat, the Bishop of Siena, Enea Silvio Piccolomini.¹ ²

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 both for the Empire and the Papacy³ 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 19th century German, protestant biographer, Georg Voigt.⁴ 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.⁵ 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 Calixtus 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. At the beginning, it as was not well-attended, mostly because the Emperor did not participate personally. However, when the Duke of

¹ Meuthen, p. 16; Toews, p. 242: The imperial-papal response to the Turkish menace was largely due to the activities of Aeneas Sylvius
² Cf. Piccolomini’s own report on the diet in Regensburg, sometimes called the Historia de Ratisponensi dieta (or similarly), published as a letter to Bishop Janos Vitez of Grosswardein (Varad) in Summer 1454, in WO, III, 1, pp.492-563
³ Toews, p. 242
⁴ Cf. Voigt II, III, 3, 98 - 118
⁵ Cf. Setton, II, p. 149
Burgundy arrived, the conference gained in status\(^1\) – 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.

Piccolomini himself was quite aware that it would not be an easy matter to mobilize the Europeans in a joint military venture against the Turks.\(^2\) But this was the task he wanted and one which the Emperor has assigned to him. And if oratorical arts and diplomatic skills could clinch the matter, he was definitely the right person to try to.

Since its purpose was to present arguments for a certain course of action, the oration belongs to the deliberative genre of the classical division of orations into deliberative, judicial, and panegyric orations. More appropriately, however, it may be considered to form part of the genre of crusade orations developed by the Italian humanists.

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 recover 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.\(^3\) Voigt dryly 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”!\(^4\)

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

\(^1\) 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 campagne à la tête de soixante mille hommes si les autres princes voulaient faire comme lui
\(^2\) Cf. his letter to Cardinal Carval of 11 April 1454, in WO, III, 1, nr. 272, pp. 459-272
\(^3\) WO, III, 1, p. 547
\(^4\) Voigt, II, III, 3, p. 113
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 defense of the common good.”¹

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 calamitatis et recenti clade Constantinopolitana in medium exposita.²

And his other biographer, Platina, commented:

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 reipublicae tanta contentione dixit, ut omnibus gemitum et lacrimas excusserit.³

Helmrath, who otherwise does not agree⁴ 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.⁵

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

2. Themes

The major themes of the oration are:

¹ CO, I, 26, 5 (Meserve, I, p. 26)
² Zimolo, p. 23
³ Zimolo, p. 103
⁴ Helmrath: Pius, p. 92
⁵ Helmrath: German, p. 59
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 of this. [Sect. 4]

2.2 Turkish threat to Europe

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

The geographic position of Constantinople had been chosen by Emperor Constantine the Great, partly to protect the Roman Empire against the incursions and depredations of the Barbarian peoples from Asia. Now, that it had fallen into the hands of those very Barbarian peoples, *in casu* the 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 Balkan and Hungary.

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

He is contemplating even greater things and is gathering large armies and great fleets, intending to successively invade the Christian territories by land and sea. Indeed, he wishes to completely destroy the Christian name. [Sect. 6]

2.3 Crusade against the Turks

The Emperor had convened the meeting in Regensburg in order to invite the Christian European powers to participate in a joint crusade against the Turks. Apart from revenge against the Turks,

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1 Meuthen, p. 10
this crusade would have two strategic aims: the first, and foremost, to protect Europe against the Turks, and secondly 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. 10]

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.¹

The nobility of the city was slaughtered, monks and priests were subjected to horrible punishments, 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, an infinite number of people were carried into captivity and permanent slavery. Who can talk about such things without tears? I shudder even as I tell them. [Sect. 3]

3 Date, place, audience, and format

The date of the delivery was 16 May 1454.

The venue 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.

¹ Cf. Helmrath's notes to the oration “Constantinopolitana Clades”, RTA, 19, 2, pp. 509. Cf. also Smith, and Meuthen, p. 12
4 Text

The text is extant in three versions, an Early Version (EV), an Intermediate Version (IV), and a Final Version (FV).

For the purpose of the present edition, it is assumed that the Final Version is the one contained in the Collected Orations of Pius II, compiled in 1462 under his own supervision, whereas the text in Piccolomini’s report to the Emperor on the Diet in Regensburg, written very soon after the diet, is the Early Version. The other extant texts are considered to represent one or more Intermediate versions.

It must be noted, however, that according to the RTA-editors the version in Piccolomini’s report on the Diet in Regensburg is a special version of the oration, revised for inclusion in the report: 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.2

The RTA-editors may be right, but it is worth keeping in mind that Piccolomini usually revised the text of his orations after delivery, and sometimes several times and importantly so, as is the case with both the “Audiui” (1936), the “Fateor” (1951), the “Moyses vir Dei” (1952), and the “In hoc florentissimo” (1455). Secondly, Piccolomini’s report on the diet in Regensburg is dated 1 June 1454, i.e. only a couple of weeks after it was delivered on 16 May. Thirdly, the RTA editors present no evidence that the version in the manuscripts collated by them predate that report. Fourthly, if the RTA editors are right and the version in the report is a heavily overworked version of the original text represented by the manuscripts collated for the RTA, it is curious that Pius would not use that revised version in his Collected Orations from 1462. Fifthly, the texts collated for the RTA edition are obviously much more closely related to the version from 1462 than the version in the report. Under those circumstances, the present editor retains the scenario that the version in the report is the version closest to the original - now lost - text, and that the version in the manuscripts used by the RTA editors represent a later, heavily edited version. Still, the opposite view of the RTA editors must, of course, be kept in mind.

It is worth noting that the Early Version treats much more fully the chain of the events leading to the Fall of Constantinople and the conquest of the city itself, whereas the other versions

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1 Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II’s orations, see Collected orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius, vol. 1, ch. 5
2 RTA, 19, 1, p. 265
describe more fully the ongoing Turkish preparations for war. Otherwise, the differences are mostly differences of style. The important changes in content deserve further analysis in the context of a broader analysis of the development of Pius’ crusade discourse over the years, and especially in the years 1454-1455.

4.1 Early version (EV)

4.1.1. Manuscripts

The report is extant in a number of manuscripts in European libraries.

4.1.2. Editions

As part of the report, the oration has been edited, among others by:

  
  [*Mansi does not indicate on which manuscript his edition is based*]

  
  [*Based on Mansi’s text*]

4.2 Intermediate version (IV)

4.2.1. Manuscripts

Four manuscripts, all collated in the RTA-edition (some selectively), represent the Intermediate Version:

- München / Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

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1 Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in *Collected orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II*, vol. 11, are marked with an asterisk
Other manuscripts containing the Intermediate Version are:

- **Budapest / Országor Szechenyi Könyvtar**
  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

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

### 4.2.2. Editions

The Intermediate Version has been edited in the

4.3. Final Version (FV)

4.3.1. Manuscripts

The Final Version is included in six of the seven extant manuscripts containing the Collected Orations of Pius II.¹

**Mantova / Biblioteca Communale**
100 A-IV-26, ff. 87-92v (F) *

**Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana**
97 inf., ff. 57v-61v (E) *

**Rome / 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 anthology of orations, i.e. the Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana, 544.

4.3.2. Editions

The Final Version was edited once, by Mansi:

  
  *Based on the manuscript E in Milan*

¹ Cf. Collected orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II, ch. 5.2
4.4. Present edition

For principles of edition (incl. orthography) and translation, see Collected Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II, vol. 1, ch. 11-12.

Text:

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

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

Final Version: 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 the Early Version (EV) and the Intermediate/Final Version (IFV) is published synoptically on the left pages, with the Early Version above and the Intermediate/Final Version below whenever possible. Identical passages are given in black, and divergent passages in red. In the identical passages no account is made of differences in grammatical form, nor of et/ac/at, nor of syntax.

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 given in bold types.

The Early Version (EV) is given in cursive letters.

Pagination:

Early Version: The pagination is that of the edition by Mansi (blue).

Intermediate/Final Version: The pagination is that of the BAV / Chis. J.VIII.284 (A) (red).
Textual apparatus:

Early Version: As the text is the one published by Mansi, no variants are indicated.

Final/Intermediate Version: Variants belonging to the Intermediate Version (W) are colour coded in brown. Variants belonging to manuscript D are colour coded in red.

Translation

The Intermediate/Final Version is translated completely. Only those sections of the Early Version are translated which greatly differ from the Intermediate/Final Version.

5. Sources

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 which Piccolomini might have conceivably 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

\[^3\] \[^4\], 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

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\[^1\] For an analysis of Piccolomini’s use of sources, see Collected Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II, ch. 8.

\[^2\] See also RTA, 19, 2, especially for the contemporary sources.

\[^3\] The oration put into the mouth of Urban II by Biondo is published in the Appendix.

\[^4\] Cf. 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)
(presumably in 1443), since he already used the angulum theme in his oration “Et breviter me hodie” to Pope Eugenius IV in 1446, 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 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.

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, and the other a memorandum dated 1 August 1453, two months after the Fall of Constanople, to King Alfonso V on a crusade against the Turks. Though, some passages in these texts are similar to some passages in Piccolomini’s crusade texts, these similarities may be due to the general commonality of the subject and not to direct quotation.

5.2. Niccolò Sagundino

Piccolomini met Niccolò Sagundino in Naples in 1456 when he represented the City of Siena in peace negotiations with King Alfonso V, but the two men may have been already been acquainted through a circle of common friends and acquaintances like Cardinal Bessarion and Leonardo Benvoglienti. Two works of Sagundino became important sources for Piccolomini, his Oration to King Alfonso V of 25 January 1454, and his Liber de Familia Autumnorum from

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1 Piccolomini may have met Biondo during his stay in Rome in February 1445
2 Cf. Mertens, p. 69
3 Mertens, p. 70: terra haec [...] numerositate vestra coangustatur [...] Inde est, ut vos invicem mordetis et contenditis, bella movetis et plerumque mutuis vulneribus occiditis
4 Biondo Flavio: Scritti, p. cxxxi-cxxxiii, and pp. 107-114
5 Cf. 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
6 Biondi himself calls it “opusculi et orationis compendium”, and Nogara calls it a “discorso” (Biondo Flavio: Scritti, p. 32 and cxxxiv repectively)
7 Biondo Flavio: Scritti, p. cxxxiv-cxliv, and pp. 29-58
8 The similarities are indicated in the notes to each oration
9 Caselli
10 Caselli
11 Niccolò Sagundino: Oratio

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1456,\(^1\)\(^2\) the last being a work commissioned by Piccolomini himself, but appearing after he had 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. Since 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.\(^3\)

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.\(^4\) 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.

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 of Cardinal Isidore of Kiew, written shortly after the Fall of Constantinople, witnessed directly by the cardinal, were published by Pertusi.\(^5\) Copies might conceivably have reached the Imperial Court and Piccolomini, but an examination of the texts shows that Piccolomini apparently did not use them, if indeed he knew them, in his Turkish orations,

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\(^1\) Niccolò Sagundino: *De familia*
\(^2\) Helmrath: *Pius*, p. 102
\(^3\) Meserve
\(^4\) Filelfo: Collected, I, pp. 323-327 and 426-443 respectively
\(^5\) Pertusi, I, 58-119
except possibly for some passages in Isidore’s letter to Pope Nicolaus V, dictated to the notary Pasio di Bertipaglia.¹

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.² 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.³

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 1453,⁴ which was of course sent to the Imperial Court where Piccolomini must have come to know it.

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 1453⁵ and the other to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues 21 July 1453.⁶⁷

¹ Pertusi, I, 58-64
² Pertusi, I, pp. 120-171
³ Pertusi, I, p. 164-165. Cf. oration “Constantinopolitana clades”, sect. 10
⁴ Pertusi, I, p. 172
⁵ Letter to Pope Nicolaus V of 19 June / 12 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 199-202)

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5.8. Survey of quotations

In this oration, only 14 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified:
Biblical: 4
Classical: 2
Patristic and medieval: 3
Contemporary: 6
All: 15

Biblical sources: 4

Old Testament: 2
  • Jeremiah: 1
  • Psalms: 1

New Testament: 2
  • Matthew: 2

Classical sources: 2
  • Vergilius: 2

Patristic and medieval sources: 3
  • Decretum Gratiani: 1
  • Eusebius of Caesarea: 1\(^1\)
  • Sozomenos: 1\(^2\)

Contemporary sources: 5
  • Flavio Biondo: 6\(^3\)

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\(^1\) De vita Constantini
\(^2\) Historia ecclesiastica
\(^3\) Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades
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Niccolò Sagundino: *Oratio ad regem Alfonsum*. [January 1453]¹

¹ 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*

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7. Sigla and abbreviations

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


Abbreviations

CO = Pius II: Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt [1462-1464]
EV = Early Version
FV = Final Version
IFV = Intermediate and Final Version
IV = Intermediate Version
II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION
Oratio Aeneae Silvii¹ Piccolominei episcopi² Senensis qui³ postea pontificatum maximum adeptus Pius II. appellatus est habita Ratisponae in conventu praesente Philippo⁴ Burgundiae duce⁵

¹ omit. E
² add. in marg. A, C
³ quod B, E
⁴ omit. E
⁵ Oratio ... duce: Enee Silvii episcopi Senensis legati Cesaris oratio habita in conventu Ratisponensi presente Philippo Burgundie duce D; Oracio pro parte Invictissimi principis et domini domini Friderici 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 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\(^1\)

\(^1\) Philippe III le Bon (1396 – 1467): Duke of Burgundy from 1419 until his death
Quamvis omnibus, qui adestis, reverendissimi patres, illustriissimi et nobilissimi principes, ceterique viri magnifici ac praestantes, etsi nota est causa vestrae vocationis, in litteris enim ad unumque 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.

[1] {EV} {54} Quamvis omnibus, qui adestis, reverendissimi patres, illustriissimi et nobilissimi principes, ceterique viri magnifici ac praestantes, etsi nota est causa vestrae vocationis, in litteris enim ad unumque 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.

[1] {IFV} {39v} Quamvis omnibus, qui adestis, reverendissimi patres, illustriissimi et excellentissimi principes, et praestabiles domini honorandi, nota sit causa conventionis vestrae, in litteris enim ad unumque 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 reverendissimac magnificis dominis et collegis meis, imperatoriae majestatis oratoribus, causam ipsam conventionis amplius explicare, et quod sit imperatoriae majestatis intentum ad 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 potuisset orationem habere.

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1 magnifici add. W
2 causam ipsam ... intentum omit. W
3 omit. C
4 parem rebus : rebus parem W
1. Introduction

[1] [IFV] Most Reverend Fathers, Illustrious and Eminent Princes, Worshipful Lords, all who are present here today already know the reason why you have been called to this meeting since it was stated in the letter sent to each of you. But the matter concerning which Holy Emperor Friedrich, August Imperator 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 should rather have wished to be replaced with someone who could give a more suitable oration.
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 explicantur. Ac ne tempus frustra teram, de priori parte succinte transigam.

Sed turpe est contendere, ubi necesse est oboedire, vosque pro vestra mansuetudine ac nobilitate, quas mihi negavissetis aures, eas rerum magnitudini concedetis. Ego, ut quam brevissime res absolvam. Propositionem meam duas in partes dividam. In prima dicam ex ordine, quae causae moverint Caesarem ad hunc conventum indicendum. In secunda, quae sint commissa nobis in vestro amplissimo coetu tractanda, narrabo. At ne verba incassum proferam, hinc narrationis initium capiam.
[2] [IFV] 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 have 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 so as not to be speaking superfluously, I shall begin my speech right now.

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1 Cf. IFV, sect. 4
2. Damage already inflicted by the Turks

[3] [EV] 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. 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 that the injury, which we claim should be avenged, is serious, and that the danger which we urge you to prepare against is great.

Concerning the injury it seems to me that it cannot be adequately expressed in words. Still we shall attempt to do so to the best 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 and 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 to others. He harmed no man, threatened no one, and ruled his people in tranquil peace. 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. There Mehmed – in contravention of all treaties and rights – built a fortress both to protect his men when they were to be carried [from the Asian to the European side], and to be able to prevent ships from sailing from Euxinus to Propontis.

[cont.]

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1 Cf. Isidore of Kiev: Letter to Pope Nicolas V of 6 July 1453 (Pertusi, I, 62): *comminatur omne christianum nomen radicitus excerpere*
2 I.e. the right, Roman Catholic teaching. Piccolomini here refers to the doctrinal differences between the Greek and Latin churches
3 Passus: Roman measure, about 1.48 metres or 58.1 inches
4 Here Piccolomini does not refer to the Strait of Hellespont, i.e. the Dardanelles, south of the Sea of Marmara, but to the region north of the Sea of Marmara
5 I.e. the Asian side
6 The Black Sea
7 The Sea of Marmara

1 Cf. Flavio Biondo: Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades, II, 3 [Im.75]
[3] [EV] [cont.] The Emperor protested against the construction of the fortress, reminded Mehmed of their treaty, and demanded what is just and right. But Mehmed pursued his chosen course and finished the fortress. Then, having gathered great forces by land and sea, he declared war on the Emperor, besieged Constantinople, deployed his war machines,\(^1\) broke down the walls, made a ferocious attack on the city, captured it, and laid it to waste.\(^2\) There Emperor Constantine fell. How wondrous are the judgments of God and how mysterious his designs: the Greek Empire perished under \[an emperor\] with the same name as \[the emperor who\] created it.\(^3\) \(^4\) 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 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.

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\(^1\) Including big canons constructed with the aid of European specialists
\(^2\) According to Muslim rules of war concerning cities having refused to surrender
\(^3\) Constantinus I, Flavius Valerius Aurelius (c. 272 – 337): Roman Emperor from 306 to his death
\(^4\) Cf. Isidore of Kiev: Letter to Pope Nicolas 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*

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$^1$ proxima W
$^2$ est add. MA
$^3$ et add. W
$^4$ Constantinopolitanus B, E, MA
$^5$ sacerdotes MA
$^6$ fandi W
$^7$ temperat W
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,\(^1\) 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.\(^2\) 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. The nobles of the city were slaughtered, monks and priests were subjected to horrible torture,\(^3\) holy 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, an infinite number of people were carried into captivity and permanent slavery. \textit{Who can talk about such things without tears?}\(^4\) I shudder even even as I tell them.\(^5\)

\(^{1}\) Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea: \textit{De vita Constantini}, 1, 29; 3, 48; Sozomenos: \textit{Historia ecclesiastica}, 2, 3

\(^{2}\) From to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 212), slightly revised

\(^{3}\) From Piccolomini: Letter to Pope Nicolaus V of 12 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 199) and Letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 207), slightly revised

\(^{4}\) Vergilius: \textit{Aeneis}, 2, 6-8

\(^{5}\) Vergilius: \textit{Aeneis}, 2, 204

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1 Cf. IFV, sect. 3
The temples dedicated to the divine name were profaned in unspeakable ways and turned into taverns and – what shame - brothels. The images of the great God, of the Mother,\(^1\) of the Precursor,\(^2\) and of all the saints were destroyed. The precious relics of martyrs and other of saints now reigning with Christ, that were kept in the temples, were thrown to pigs and dogs.\(^3\) The 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 Emperor Constantine, first 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. There the throne of the Eastern Empire and a patriarchal see flourished for a long period. There that great and memorable council\(^4\) was held where the false teachings and preaching of Dioscorus and Eutyches were condemned and they themselves sent in exile.\(^5\) 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. There oratory, philosophy, and the studies of all the good arts\(^6\) found a unique home and a secure temple after they had grown old and disappeared from Athens. There rhetorics 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. [cont.]

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1. The Virgin Mary
2. John the Baptist
3. Cf. Matthew 7, 6
4. The Council of Chalcedon, 451 AD
5. Decretum, 15.3. (col. 36)
6. The liberal arts
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 relinquandam. 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.
[4] [EV] [cont.] These [events] have shocked the Emperor profoundly. His Majesty believes that such crimes and shameful acts must be avenged: this enormous injury and this flagrant effrontery cannot be left unavenged. It is not only the Greeks who have been scorned, indeed, the whole of Christendom has been grievously wounded and harmed. And not only have mortals, but also the immortal beings in Heaven 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 been only slightly molested.¹ So what should we do now when the whole of Christianity has been injured and the God whom we worship has been thrown out from his dwellings?² Is it not just to offer our life to 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 body to him who granted us both body and spirit and soul.

¹ i.e. from neighbouring territories
² i.e. from the churches of Constantinople
Sed quid dicam de magnificentissimis\(^1\) illius urbis ecclesiis, quarum aliquae incensae aut diruptae\(^2\) fuerunt\(^3\), aliae deletis imaginibus Christi domini nostri Jesu\(^4\) ac sanctorum ad spurcitiam Mahumeti profanatae sunt. Reliquiae martyrum et aliorum piorum jam cum Christo regnantium, quae fuerunt in illa civitate pretiosissimae, in lutum\(^5\) projectae et conculcatae a\(^6\) porcis aut traditae canibus enarrantur\(^7\). O\(^8\) maximam atque intolerabilem ignominiam Christiane gentis! Nullum arbitror pectus esse Christiani\(^9\) hominis, qui\(^10\) hoc audiens non commoveatur atque ardeat\(^11\) ira. Nullum esse fidelis hominis oculum, qui non gemat? Et quidem\(^12\) Caesarea majestas hoc intelligens non potuit non vehementissime\(^13\) dolere.

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1. magnificis W
2. dirutae B, F
3. feruntur W
4. omit. W
5. luctum E
6. aut F
7. narrantur MA
8. et W
9. gentis add. E; gentis add. MA
10. omit. W
11. audeat W
12. et quidem : equidem W
13. vehementer F
[4] [IFV] And what shall I say about the magnificent churches of this city? Some were burnt or destroyed, others were profaned with the filth of Mohammedans who destroyed the images 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, and thrown to dogs. Oh, the great and intolerable shame of 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 of this? Even the Emperor was deeply shocked when he heard it.

Huc accedit quia locus ille Constantinopolis situm habet nobilissimum et ad nocendum Christianitati aptissimum. Habet enim portum tutissimum et amplissimum adeo, ut non unam classem, sed in infinitas paene naves capere possit, neque toto Mediterraneo mari situs est ad infestandum omne pelagus magis idoneus. Jacet enim supra Propontidem, ita ut neque de Ponto Euxino, quod Hodie Mare Majus appellat, in pelagus Jonium, quod nunc Archipelagus nominatur, neque versa vice ex hoc in illud invitis Constantinopolitanis transitus esse possit. Sunt enim angustiae freti per Bosphorum ac per Hellespontum, quod Bracchium Sancti Georgii nostri vocitant, in potestate Turcorum. Nec jam merciones ex Tanai, si volunt Turci, ad nostras mane possunt. Facile modo facultas Turcis est classem in portu Constantinopolitano parare, cum qua cunctas insulas Archipelagi devastant aut sibi subjiciant, quorum jam plerasque invasisse atque obtinuisse memorantur.

1 qui E; quod F, MA
2 nocendi E;
3 habet ... amplissimum omit. B, E, MA
4 ullus add. W
5 licet W
6 quem B, C, M, V, W
7 moderni W [del. C; C also has marg. note quod Hodie, with deletion of quod]
8 Bosphorum A, B, E, F
9 ac W
10 haec F
11 volunt W
12 nostras W
13 ponere W
14 vastent F
3. Turkish military threat to Europe

[5] [IFV] To this should be added that the city of Constantinople has an excellent location, well suited to harm the Christian world. For its port is very 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. It lies above Propontis,¹ so that there can be no transport from Pontus Euxinus² (today called the Great Sea) to the Jonian Sea (today called the Archipelago) nor the opposite way against the will of those who possess Constantinople. For the narrow straits through Thracian Bosphorus and through the Hellespont (that our people call The Arm of Saint George) are now in the power of the Turks, and no goods can come from Tanais³ 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 The Sea of Marmara
² The Black Sea
³ The area around the river Don
[6] [EV] 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 duci: exercitus copiosos classesque potentissimas extruit eo proposito, ut amplius Christianitatem lacessat. Neque alius dies noctesque meditatur, quam Christianum nomen funditus eradicare atque extinguere memoriham 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 gloriosum majorem se jactitat patre; et quoniam falsi et mendosissimi prophetae Mahumeti, qui sectam ampliavit atque roboravit Agarenorum, nomen gerit, incredibili torquetur siti Christiani nominis extingendi.

[6] [IFV] Turcorum autem princeps, ut fama furt, ut quam certissime referunt, qui ejus facta cognoscunt, auctus animo ex acquisitione tantae urbis nequaquam se otio atque inertiae tradit, sed majora mente cupiens exercitus copiosissimos classesque maximas parat, eo proposito, {40v} ut amplius atque amplius Christianitatem mari ac terra invadere possit, existimans Christianorum 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 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 vero de Constantinopolitana victoria et imperatore Graecorum caeso plurimum se gloriat. Et quoniam eo nomine vocatur, quo pseudopropheta dictus est, qui sectam firmavit Agarenorum, Mahumetus enim appellatur, ad exemplum illius Christi nomen exosum habet.
[6] [IFV] And - as rumoured and reported quite reliably by people who know him - the prince of the Turks is quite elated at acquiring this great city and 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 wishes to completely destroy the Christian name, not knowing that Our Saviour has promised to remain with his people *unto the end of the world.*\(^1\) 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 no so many years ago his father twice destroyed a Christian army that was neither small nor insignificant.\(^2\) And he himself can brag of his victory at Constantinople and the killing of the Greek Emperor. And since he carries the same name as the false prophet, who created the sect of the Agarenes\(^3\) - for he is called Muhammad - he hates the name of Christ - after the example of his namesake.

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\(^1\) Matthew 28, 20  
\(^2\) The victories of Murad II at Varna (1444) and Amselfeld (1448)  
\(^3\) Agarenes, i.e. the Arabs. From Hagar, concubine of Abraham, mother of Ismael, legendary patriarch and ancestor of the Arab people. In the middle ages "Agarenes" was often used for Arabs, synoymously with Saracens

Et quoniam ex quatuor patriarchalibus ecclesiis, super quibus velut solidissimis basibus Christiana fides radicata in totum olim orbem palmites extendit, jam tres obtinent Mahumetici cultores, Alexandrinam, Antiochenam, et Constantinopolitanam, non dubitat quin et Romanam posit obtinere ac Mahumeto subigere, soletque, ut ajunt, qui ejus acta considerant, inter suos saepe illa verba proferre: "Cur non ego mihi totum occidentem armis acquiram atque submittam, qui sum Asiae, Thraciae, Macedoniae atque Illyrici dominus, quando Alexander Philippi, cum solam Macedoniam obtineret, totum calcavit orientem ac cum XXX et duobus milibus militum innumerabiles fudit exercitus Darii ac usque ad Indiam penetravit?

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1 quatuor appears to have been inserted later, though in the same hand, in a blank space left for that purpose A; quinque M, V, W
2 Patriachales sedes in marg. D
3 urbem enim F
4 quatuor 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]
5 Hierosolimitanam add. A; Hierosolimatanam add. W
6 quoniam E, MA
7 subigent F
8 mihi totum : totum mihi W
9 omit. W
10 dominus add. W
11 ac cum : cum ac E; cum ad MA
12 et W
There are four 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, Antioch, 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, Thracia, Macedonia, Illyria, and all of Greece? After all Alexander, son of Philip only had Macedonia when he conquered the whole of the East and with only 32,000 soldiers beat the innumerable armies of Darius and reached as far as India.”

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1 In the texts, there is some fluctuation concerning whether there were four or five main patriarchates (Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Rome – with or without Jerusalem). The final view was that there were four, since Jerusalem was a late addition. Apparently, Piccolomini reached this view in connection with the writing of the oration “Quamvis omnibus” in manuscript A, probably the original manuscript containing the anthology of Piccolomini/Pius’ orations, prepared and written under the direct supervision of Pius himself, though some lines later the text actually lists four patriarchates, including Jerusalem, conquered by the Turks. Cf. RTA, 19.1, p. 265
2 Asia Minor
3 Alexander III the Great (356 – 323 BC): 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
4 Philip II of Macedon (382–336 BC): King of the Hellenic kingdom of Macedon from 359 BC until his assassination in 336 BC
5 Darius III (c. 380 – 330 BC): Last king of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia from 336 BC until his death
Copias sese ait innumeratas 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 trajectere. Quid modo is faciat, qui usque ad Hungariae metas et usque ad Dalmatiam pretendit 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, ex quibus omnia consilia nostra cognoscit, qui nobis vicinus est et aditum habet, sive in Italiam, sive in Germaniam non difficilem per loca propinquaque Dalmatiae atque Croatiae. Nam et Albani\(^1\) 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 censent, quod anno \(60\) proximo magni impetu in Christianos ruat atque omni conatu vicinos opprimere pergat. 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 proceres 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 tuendum vindicandamque Christianam religionem erectae sunt. Intelligitis, quae fuerint convocationis vestrae rationes. Nunc, quae sit nostra commissio, paucis expediam. Id est enim, quod secundo loco dicturus me promisit. Munus nostrum hoc potissimum est requisitas atque communitas facere vestras excellentias, ne quo pacto hinc abeatis, priusquam conclusionem unamimem recipiatis, per quam non modo defendi, quae superat Christianitas, sed et vendicari possit, quae in hostium potestate consistit. Id autem quo pacto quoque ordine faciendum 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. [cont.]

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\(^1\) Cf. IFV, sect. 10

\(^2\) Albam MA
He claims that he can arm and lead countless forces into war, and he is not lying. 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 mobilize 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 will he do now when his empire reaches from the frontiers of Hungary to Dalmatia? We should not despise a mighty enemy whose mind is set on war; who is young and hot-blooded; who loves glory; who intends to pursue Christians with a kind of natural hate born of ingrained and innate malignity and cruelty; who has many Christian renegades with him egging him on and from whom he learns of all our plans; who is our immediate neighbour, having direct access to Italy and Germany through the neighbouring regions of Dalmatia and Croatia – for most of the Albanians and the Bosnians have surrendered to him and have become his clients. Do you really believe that this man whom so many advantages encourage to pursue his chosen course will, instead, settle down after his victories? Those who know the man and his intentions are quite certain that next year he will attack the Christians with all his might and do all he can to vanquish his neighbours. 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 why you have been summoned to this place. Now I shall briefly deal with the matter of what is demanded of us, for that is what I promised to speak of secondly. 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 the 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 judgment; to discuss with you what would be useful and necessary; and to reach a common agreement on the best course to follow.

[cont.]

1 Janos Hunyadi (1406 – 1456): leading Hungarian military and political figure. Regent of Hungary during the minority of King Ladislaus the Posthumous

2 i.e. on the European continent

3 In his Commentarii, I, 26, 2 (Meserve, I, p. 127-128), Pius actually took a dim view of the Emperor’s absence: The Emperor, seeing what happened [in Constantinople] endeavoured to erase the black mark of this disgrace. But he ended up incurring a greater one, for he did not finish what he had started. He called for a Christian congress to address the problem, but he himself did not attend. And later, p. 131: He also presented the apologies of the emperor, who had been obliged to remain at home, though all his excuses sounded lame.
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 Germaniae nationis quoquomodo deliberata conclusaque fuerint. Illud nihilominus vel sine consilio necessarium Caesar existimat 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, praebetique veniam omnipotens et misericors Deus, sine cujus nutu nihil est, quod humana potestas valeat explicare. Exhortatur igitur imperatoria sublimitas reverendissimos ecclesiaram pontifices ceterosque praelatos, ut commissos sibi populos ad opera pietatis invitent, atque ipsi per sese cum clero sibi subjecto immaculatas hostias pro peccatis offerant populum. Vos autem, magnanimi proceres, 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 cogitatisque quomodo Deus caeli Jerusalem terram suam, in qua visus est, et annis supra XXX homo cum hominibus conversatus; suam utique, quam illustravit miraculis, quam proprio sanguine dedicavit, in qua primi resurrectionis flores apparuerunt. En Terram Sanctam, terram benedictam, terram lacte et melle fluentem, officinamque nostrae salutis osores occupant vivificae crucis. Sacrosanctam civitatem nostri possident hostes, pia et sacratissima loca agni immaculati purpurata cruore sceleratissimi calcant pedes. [cont.]

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1 Textus corruptus [Deest hic aliquid in marg. MA]
[8] [EV] [cont.] As Holy Emperor of the Romans, as champion and protector of the Church, as a pious prince who has at heart the catholic and orthodox\(^1\) 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 he is able to – 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. But he needs no counsel to consider it necessary and urge you to first of all beg God for help and perform acts worthy of God’s 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, 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 do nothing. Therefore his Imperial Majesty exhorts the reverend bishops and other prelates - with their clergy - to offer up immaculate hosts in atonement of the sins of the peoples, and to urge the people in their care to perform pious acts. And you, great Nobles, Dukes, Margraves, and Knights, whose courage equals your nobility, you His Imperial Majesty urges 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 God [must love\(^2\)] 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 lifegiving cross occupy that Holy Land, that blessed land, that land overflowing with milk and honey,\(^3\) the workplace of our salvation! Our enemies are in possession of the Holy City, and scoundrels trample the pious and holy places\(^4\) that were empurpled by the blood of the immaculate lamb. [cont.]

\(^1\) I.e. “right” faith, i.e. that of the Roman Church
\(^2\) Editorial addition in place of some missing word in the Latin text
\(^3\) Cf. Flavio Biondo: Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades, II, 3 [Im. 76]
\(^4\) Cf. Flavio Biondo: Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades, II, 3 [Im. 75]
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 servat 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 intumescent 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 spucitarum 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 amimus; in angulum nos Mahumetus coarvat: Hinc Hungaros, inde Hispanos premit. 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 exhaerant; 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 adhibere\(^1\) 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.

\(^{1}\) Sic!
[8] EV [cont.] 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 see the holiest place of our religion and indeed the very couch where He who is our life lay dead for our sake.\(^1\) For 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\(^2\) 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. Antioch, the city where the name of Christian was heard first, has now become estranged from our God, the saints have no part in it, and it is full of filth. Alexandria, where so many famous and holy men preached and glorified the gospel, hears Muhammad’s fables. In Asia and in Africa we have nothing left. Of Europe we have lost a large part, and Muhammad has forced us into a corner\(^3\): at one end he harasses the Hungarians, and at the other the Spaniards. So, 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 will disinherit them: so, what more should we expect of Our Good God unless we put an end to our iniquities? 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 our iniquities, He too will repent of the punishment that he has devised for us.\(^4\) 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.

\(^1\) The passage “Jerusalem terram ... in domino” [sect. 8-9] is a heavily revised quote from Piccolomini: Letter to Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues of 21 July 1453 (WO, III, 1, p. 211)

\(^2\) “perfidia”

\(^3\) Cf. Flavio Biondo: Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades, II, 3 [Im. 75]: *per cujus [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 (WO, III, 1, p. 211)

\(^4\) Cf. Jeremiah, 18, 9
[8] [IFV] Jactatque se numerosissimos exercitus habere, nec mentitur. Haud enim dubium est, quin trecenta et\textsuperscript{1} quadragesinta\textsuperscript{2} milia pugnatorum in bellum possit educere. Quod si Tartaris, ut fama est, conjungatur, multo\textsuperscript{3} plures homines congregare valebit. Quanta\textsuperscript{4} vero sit ejus potentia exinde licet\textsuperscript{5} intueri, quia cum suis maioribus nihil haberent citra mare, saepe tamen maximos atque innumerabiles exercitus in Europ\textsuperscript{6} duxere. Quid nunc is faciat et\textsuperscript{7} quando,\textsuperscript{8} cum\textsuperscript{9} provincias plures\textsuperscript{10} usque ad Hungariae metas et usque ad\textsuperscript{11} Dalmatiam occupavit? Et\textsuperscript{12} equidem\textsuperscript{13} 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 inequitat Christianos, qui potentissimus est et jam recenti victoria insolescit, qui multos ex Christianis habet\textsuperscript{14} apostatas, ex quibus omnia facta nostra\textsuperscript{15} cognoscit, qui nobis vicinus\textsuperscript{16} est et aditum habet sive ad Italiam, sive ad Alamaniam patenter\textsuperscript{17} per loca propinquas Dalmatiae et Croatiae. Jam enim regnum Bosniae et Albaniae regio pro maxima parte illi paret.

\footnotesize
1 aut suprascr. W
2 quadragesinta W
3 multos F
4 quinta E
5 liceat W
6 Europam W, MA
7 omit. B, C, E, F, W, MA
8 omit. B, D, E, F, MA
9 omit. A, C, W; qui F
10 plurimas W
11 in W
12 omit. W
13 quidem B, D, E, F, W, MA
14 ex Christianis habet : habet ex Christianis W
15 nostra F
16 vicinus A, C
17 patenterem W
He also brags that he has large armies, and he is not lying. For there is no doubt that he can lead 340,000\textsuperscript{1} soldiers into battle. And if he joins up with the tartars, as rumour has it, he will be able to gather many more men than that. How great his power is, you will understand if you consider that though his forefathers did not have any land over the sea,\textsuperscript{2} they often brought enormous armies and countless troops over to Europe. So what will he do now when he has already occupied many provinces right up to the Hungarian border and Dalmatia? He is definitely an enemy who should not be despised and whose mind is set on war; who is young and hot-blooded; who persecutes Christians with a kind of natural hate born of ingrained and innate malignity and cruelty; who is extremely powerful and has become arrogant because of his recent victory; who has many Christian renegades with him from whom he learns of all we do; who is our immediate neighbour with direct access to Italy or Germany through the neighbouring regions of Dalmatia and Croatia; and who has already conquered most of Bosnia and Albania.

\textsuperscript{1} In the Early Version Piccolomini said 200,000

\textsuperscript{2} i.e. on the European continent
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 nostra, non quae sua sunt, sed quae Jesu Christi quaerant. Etenim quamvis est ille – ut ante dixi – ferocissimus et potentissimus hostis, non tamen par est Germanicus viribus neque Theutonio nomine comparandus. Non est cur formidetis, proceres, 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 de que ceteris infidelibus victorias habuere.

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. Etenim quamvis est ille - ut ante dixi – ferocissimus et potentissimus hostis, nihil erit inde sua potentia, si Christianorum vires coeant, si Romani potestas imperii concors arma capessat, si nobilissimi Germanorun proceres, potentissimae communitates unanimes cum gloriosissimo principe duce Burgundiae, qui adest, ad defensionem fidei consurrexerint. Neque enim aut arma, aut equi, aut currus, aut naves, aut homines desunt Christianis, sed omnia late nobis meliora quam illis adsunt. Neque maritimo neque terrestri bello pares umquam Christianis fuerunt Turci, quando concordibus animis adversus eos est itum est. Possem referre Magni Caroli, Gotfredi Bulionii, Conradi tertii, Ludovici Francorum regis, Friderici primi ac secundi, Romanorem imperatorum, ingentes quas de Turcis ac ceteris infidelibus habuerunt victorias.
4. European crusade against the Turks

[9] [IFV] 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 diet¹ and to invite the kings and princes to end the general conflagration with joint forces. 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 defense 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, and ships, and in all things they are superior to the 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,² Godefroi de Bouillon,⁴ Konrad III,⁵ King Louis of France,⁶ and the Roman emperors Friedrich I⁷ and II.⁸

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¹ “conventum”
² 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
³ 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
⁴ Godefroi de Bouillon (c. 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
⁵ Konrad III (1093 – 1152): first King of Germany of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. Participated in the Second Crusade
⁶ Louis VII (1120 – 1180): King of France from 1137 until his death. Participated in the Second Crusade
⁷ Friedrich I Barbarossa (1122 - 1190): Holy Roman Emperor from 1155 until his death
⁸ Friedrich II (1194 - 1250): Crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1220. Head of the House of Hohenstaufen
[10] [EV] But I shall spare your ears and only say this: never has it been heard that we were defeated in a general expedition against the enemies of our religion unless our [troops] were struck by hunger, plague, or conflict. So it is clear that if we refrain from such things that anger God, we shall be victorious when we go to war in Christ’s name. 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, will actually do 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.
Sed parco fessis auribus vestris. Illud tamen dic: numquam passagium generale contra infideles gestum est, quin nostri triumphaerint, nisi cum inter se ipsos fuere discordes. Itaque certum est, quia concordantibus Christianis incassum ibunt omnes Turcorum conatus, si cum sincera mente et pro causa Christi bellum suscipiat et penitus remotis causis, propter quod nobis Deus fortasse iratus est. Cum ergo indixisset Caesarea sublimitas hanc conventionem, statuerat hoc 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 tamen hujus dietae negotia postergari aut quovis pacto negligi. Misit hoc cum pleno mandato, quemadmodum nudiustertius audivistis. Amplissimam habent domini et collegae mei potestatem cum vestris excellentis de provisione contra Turcos faciendi et concludendi. Et quoniam hic conventus indictus est, in quo 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 iniquitibus nostri offensa est divina majestas, ita orationibus et piis actibus ejus venia acquiratur, sine qua nihil est, quod humana potestas valeat explicare. Exhortatur autem imperialis auctoritas reverendissimos praesules ecclesiarum pontifices et praelatos, ut in suis ecclesiis et diocesibus commissos sibi populos ad opera pietatis et devotionis invitant, et ipsi per se cum clero sibi subjecto immaculatas hostias pro peccatis offerant populorum. [cont.]

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1 Cf. EV, sect. 8  
2 tamen D  
3 vestri B, E, MA  
4 triumphaerint W  
5 tamen W  
6 quas W  
7 nobis Deus : Deus nobis F  
8 Deus fortasse : fortasse Deus W  
9 cur F  
10 nolens W  
11 omit. C  
12 hic ... quo : haec dies electa est, in qua W  
13 ac W  
14 omit. B, E, MA  
15 igitur et W  
16 ac W
But I shall spare your tired ears. This only I will say that unless there was disunity on our side, we have always been triumphant in crusades 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 if they 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. When His Imperial Highness summoned this assembly, he intended to be present in person, but afterwards he has been forced to remain at home in order to safeguard and protect his lands. You have heard the reasons several times so there is no reason 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. 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; to act in a manner worthy of God's mercy and clemency; and just as we have offended him 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 and their clergy offer up immaculate hosts for the sins of the peoples. [cont.]
Quantum autem ad rem principalem attinet, ut Christianae fidei periclitantissimae succurratur, modis debitis patribus et collegis meis commissum est, ut vestra super hoc consilia et directiones exquirant vestrumque grave et illuminatum judicium audiant, et conserant vobiscum super his, quae vis fuerint opportuna. Ipse 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 voluntarium exhibet ad executionem omnium illorum, quae in hoc loco pro defensione fidei et ad vindicandas injurias nomini Christiano nostro tempore illatas, pro honore Romani imperii, imperii, pro gloria nationis Germanicae deliberata atque conclusa fuerint. Quod sibi ex alto dominus concesserit. Illud cum vestris excellentiis vestrisque prudentiis per nos commemorandum esse ac suadendum commisit, ut attendentes, quanta imminet Christianitati pericula, quantum in oriente fideles Christiani sint oppressi, quantum in Graecia nomen Christi blasphemetur, quantum jam Mahumeti perfidia creverit, quae jam nos in angulum Europae coarctavit, hinc Hungaros, inde Hispanos premens et, quomodo sacrum domini sepulchrum ab inimicis crucis possidetur, considerantes et zelum domus Dei inductentes, consilium hic et conclusionem recipiatis per quam non solum de fendi, quae superest Christianitatis, sed etiam tunc recuperari valeat, quod pro dolor est amissum. Neque ullo pacto hinc recedere velitis priusquam opportuna conclusio fiat. Neque rem tam necessariam in tempus alid proferendam quisquam existimet, ne, dum nos in deliberatione persistimus, hostis in expeditione consurgens damnis nos afficiat gravioribus.
Concerning the principal matter, which is to succour the endangered Christian Faith, the Fathers, my colleagues, have been instructed to request your advice and counsel, to hear your considered and enlightened judgment, and to confer with you on the best way to proceed. 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 defense of the Faith and in revenge of the injuries inflicted upon the Christian name 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. 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,7 pressuring the Hungarians at the one end and and the Spaniards at the other; and how the holy tomb of Our Lord is being held by the enemies of the cross. 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 go on debating. Indeed His Imperial Highness thinks that it would be greatly harmful and dangerous if this assembly finishes without a positive conclusion. For 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.

1 atque E, MA
2 periculorum : periculo plenum W
3 hunc conventum : hanc dietam W
4 intelligeret W
5 omit. W
6 agantur W
7 Cf. Flavio Biondo: Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decades, II, 3 [Im.75]: Melius filii et majori cum gloria nostris progenitores inchoatam – ut altiuscule repetamus – Romae et in Italia et viribus Europae aucta dignitatem ad totius orbis monarchiam exulerunt, per cujus omnes provincias et regiones nomen floruit Christianum. Quod nomen nostris temporibus ad parvum orbis angulum coangustari et quotidie de excidio periclitari videmus.

[11] [IFV] 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 effusione sui sanguinis murum se pro {42r} nobis contra inimicos nostrae religionis obtulerunt, quique modo indutias cum Turcis habent intra breve tempus expiraturas, si quovis pacto sentiant hanc congregationem sine fructu dissolutam, ampliores cum Turcis amplectentur, neque cum voluerimus eorum uti auxiliis, quovis modo poterimus.

1 omit. F
2 treugas W
3 debent F
4 dietam W
5 indutias add. W
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 shall not be able to have their help when we want to.
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 made an alliance with the Tartars, that he is now personally 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.

According to the Most Reverend Cardinal, the Most Christian King of France follows the example of his forefathers and has 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. So, if you do nothing, Christianity will be left defenseless, 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. 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.

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1 The rival Mediterranean commercial empires of Venice and Genoa were highly dependent on having tolerable relations with the Turks, and in the absence of a resolute military initiative from the European powers, they would sorely tempted to follow the course of the Hungarians
2 Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues
3 King Charles VII
4 Psalms, 79, 14. Slightly adapted
Neque hoc sine fundamento dicit imperatoria majestas. Nam paucis diebus antequam ab ea recederemus, miserat sua sublimitas oratores ad Johannem, Hungariae gubernatorem, magnum virum et apud Turcos formidatum, ut perunctarentur ab eo, si quas ex Turcis novitates habuisset. Ad ea respondit Johannes Turcorum dominum magnos belli apparatus facere, neque umquam tam numerosas habuisse copias, quam nunc habere proponit; personam ejus esse in Andrinopoli, exercitus autem apud Sophiam in Bulgaria congregari, Tartarorumque gentem jam sibi foedere junctam affirmari. Interrogatus autem, an Hungari vellent contra Turcos insurgere, si et Alaman et ceteri concurrerent, nihil aliud optare dixit Hungaros quam refellere et retundere Turcorum insolentiam, promptissimosque Hungaros et se ipsum cum omni potentia sua in persona propria contra Turcos arma capessere, si modo aliorum Christianorum concurre exercitus intelligant. At si videant Christianos reges et principes torpescere, nequaquam velle Hungaros tantam belli molem sustinere, in qua se videant manifeste succubituros, sed accepturos conditionem, quam jam sibi Turci offerant, daturos eis transitum, quem petunt. Quod an sit in utilitatem Christianitatis, ipsi reges et principes viderint. Haec significavit Johannes imperatoriae majestati. Ex quibus liquet manifeste, quia nisi in hoc loco laudabilis conclusio fiat contra Turcorum conatus, timendum est, ne Hungari cum illis se componant, et res Christianorum multo deteriores reddantur. Atque his ex causis apprime necessarium videtur imperiali culmini absque ulteriore mora conclusionem hic captari, per quam universi consolationem recipere possint, qui vicini Turcis eorum potentiam atque superbiam reformidant.
His Imperial Majesty does not say this without good reason, for shortly before we left him, His Highness sent orators to Janos\(^1\), 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 so large forces as he intends to gather now. The lord himself was now in Adrianopolis\(^2\) 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 request. Then the Christian kings and princes would see whether this would help 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 come to terms with the Turks, and then the situation of the Christians would become much worse. For these reasons it seems absolutely necessary to His Imperial Highness that we should reach a decision speedily here that will give comfort to all the neighbours of the Turks who fear their power and arrogance.

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\(^1\) Janos Hunyadi  
\(^2\) Today the Turkish city of Edirne, in Eastern Thracia, close to the borders of Bulgaria and Greece
Agite igitur, consulite in medium, proceres; nolite matrem vestrəm ecclesiam desertam relinquere. Cogitate quo pacto Turcorum rabiem elidatis; non erit hoc difficile, si concordes estis. Ecce divino nutu et ad nostrum tutamentum lites Italiae compositae sunt. Facile jam summus apostolicae sedis praesul ac præstantissimus ille rex Aragonum cum Venetis, Genuensibus, et aliis Italiae populis ac principibus adversus Turcos classem maritimam apparaebunt. Quod si vos terrestrem exercitum armaveritis, terra simul ac mari uno tempore superbissimus hostis invasus, adjutore altissimo, nostris ex finibus propulsabitur. Haec sunt, quae pro commissione nostra secundo et ultimo loco de mente Caesaris dicenda fuerunt. Vos igitur, quibus curae est orthodoxa religio nostra, quique bonum commune Christianae plebis exoptatis, operam dabitis, ne hoc concilium, ex quo spes omnium Christianorum pendet, absque salubri conclusione 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.

Datum est autem a Deo, quod lites Italiae compositae sunt. Nam et sanctissimus dominus noster et clarissimus ille rex Aragonum cum Venetis et aliis Italiae principibus de classe maritimae 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, summo pontifici letteras dedit, per quas se cum Germanicae natione ad defensionem fidei concursurum pollicetur. Cujus consilium procul dubio plurimum impediretur, si praesens congregatio, quod absit, sine expectata conclusione dissolveretur. 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 dux Burgundiae, de remotissimis partibus non sine laboribus et periculos pro salute ac defensione Christianae religionis ad vestros lares vocatu Caesaris frustra veniret, sed ipse potius ad propria consolatus redeat, et omnes, qui spem habent in conventu, quem postulant, fructum recipiant.
[13] [IFV] [Thankfully,] God has given that the conflicts in Italy have been solved.³ For Our Most Holy Lord⁴ and the noble King of Aragon⁵ 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 France⁶ follows in the footsteps of his forefathers and has - as we heard some days ago from the Most Reverend Lord Cardinal⁷ - sent a letter to the Supreme Pontiff in which he promises to join the German nation in the defense of the Faith. Most likely, this undertaking will come to naught if the present assembly - God forbid - ends without the expected decisions.

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 defense of the Christian religion. May Your Excellencies, abhoring the [Turkish] offenses 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.

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¹ præstolantur W
² accipiant W
³ Piccolomini here refers to the Peace of Lodi between the Italian powers, of 1454
⁴ Nicolaus V [Tommaso Parentucelli] (1397 – 1455): Pope from 6 March 1447 until his death
⁵ 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
⁶ Charles VII (1403 – 1461): King of France from 1422 to his death
⁷ Cardinal Nikolaus von Kues (1401 – 1464): Cardinal. German philosopher and theologian
ORATION OF URBAN II IN CLERMONT 1495, AFTER FLAVIO BIONDI: *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii decas II*, liber III


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

{Im. 74} Exstimatis forte, qui huc loci ad nos acciti convenistis, viri Christiani, solam fuisse rei ecclesiasticæ ad normam fidei et religionis componendæ 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 terræ 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 præputio 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, uribus et oppidis devotio ad sancta inspicienda et osculanda, adoranda loca per tot maria, tot terras attraxerat, omnia passae sunt, quae dictu obscura crudelis Christi hostis non ad suam magis explandam 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, pirusquam dixero, cetera facillius ante oculos ponentur. Omnes Romanó 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 Europæ provincias, quas urbes idem premant, occupant lacerentque infideles, si omnes simul ignoratis, unus

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quisque in sua provincia novit, nisi forte vos Galli remotiores haec non sentitis, qui Hispanicorum Aquitanorumque ab ea oppresorum gente, dum in servitutem rapiuntur, in Africam abducentur, clamores ejuslatusque singulos paene per dies audire debetis. Sed numquid vos Germani, Saxones, Poloni, Bohemi, Hungari etsi Turcos et Sarracenos intra viscere 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 accolas, 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 ceterios obruerent Christianos. Pulsus vero ante paucos annos Asia imperator de retinendis Constantinopoli propinquis Europae regionibus laborat. Si nunc ea inspicitis consideratisque sola, quae ante oculos sunt, si irruituro brevi Turco et Sarraceno obsistere non pergetis, qui sacrum domini sepolcrum, sacram Jesu Christi pedibus calcatam 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 Franciae 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 audificis pacto posthac dicere solam esse vel primariam gentem Francam, quam vere Christianam liceat appellare, si in ea, quae vos adest opulentia, Sarracenos et Turcos post captum, inquinatum domini et Dei nostri sepolcrum 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 ardentis animo facere ostendetis. Aderit vobis omnipotens Deus angelos suso ante faciem vestram, qui gressus dirigant vestros, qui omni casus loquuntur vobis assistant, opitulentur, caelo demittet. Praemia vero expeditionis assumpti bellis quae sint et qualia, quisquam a nobis audiri cupit, sed sunt omnium maxima, amplissima, et qualia nullo ex alio bello sunt sanes mentis hominibus expectanda. Quicumque enim hanc in expeditionem iturus genitores, filios, uxores, divitas, domesticam gloriam potentatumque relinquent, modo magna et omnino incomparabilia nanciscetur. Quid quod cadentes in proelio et ab hoste caesi aequo ac vincible 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 agitum, illam esse, quam Deus ipse, pater populo Israelitico habita promisit lactet 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 incomparables divitas acquiratis.

Pontifice adhuc dicturiente vox omnium - dictu mirabile - unico, ut apparuit, ore prolata intonuit: “Deus vult, Deus vult.” Ad quam vocem cum pontifex pausillus tacuisse illique viderentur iterata ter quaterque verba repetituri, eis, ut tacerent, manu significavit, et gratis 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 insita pectus insignibus, illique, quos inevitabilis necessitas aut magistratum jussiones reverti facient, eam in scapulas transieren.