Oration “Si sacrosancto” of Pope Pius II (March 1459, Siena). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 5th version (Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 38)

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(Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 38)
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5th version

2019
Abstract

During a prolonged stay in Siena in the spring of 1459, Pope Pius II received a number of embassies from the rulers of Europe declaring obedience to the Apostolic See and to the new pope. One of the embassies was from four German princes: Friedrich I, Count Palatine; Friedrich II, Margrave and Elector of Brandenburg; Albrecht VI, Archduke of Austria; and Albrecht Achilles, Margrave (Brandenburg). In his short reply to the oration of the ambassadors, the pope mostly spoke about papal supremacy and the legitimacy of papal elections, and afterwards he accepted the dukes’ obedience, praised them, expressed his gratitude for their offers of aid to the crusade against the Turks, and assured them of his goodwill.

Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Æneas Silvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Renaissance orations; Responses to ambassadors; Declarations of obedience to the pope; Count Palatine Frederick the Victorious; Pfalzgraf Friedrich I der Siegrieche; Margrave Friedrich II of Brandenburg; Margrave Albrecht Achilles of Brandenburg; Papal supremacy; Crusades against the Turks; Archduke Albrecht VI of Austria; Renaissance rhetorics; Renaissance oratory

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**Foreword**

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

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

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

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

12 September 2019

MCS

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¹ 81 orations, if the “Cum animadverto” is counted is a Piccolomini-oration, see oration “Quam laetus” [18], Appendix
Table of volumes in *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. 12 vols. Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

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

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context
2. Themes
3. Date, place, audience, and format
4. Text
   4.1. Manuscripts
   4.2. Editions
   4.3. Present edition
5. Sources
6. Bibliography
7. Sigla and abbreviations

II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

1. Papal supremacy [1]
2. Legitimacy of papal elections [2]
3. Obedience of the German princes [3]
5. Crusade against the Turks [5]
I. INTRODUCTION
1. **Context**¹

In the spring of 1459, during a prolonged stay in Siena, Pope Pius II received a number of embassies from the rulers of Europe declaring obedience to the Apostolic See and to the new pope on behalf of their lord. One of the embassies was a joint embassy from the Friedrich I, Count Palatine Duke of Bavaria, the two Margraves of Brandenburg, Friedrich II and Albrecht III Achilles, and Albrecht VI, Archduke of Austria.

One of the ambassadors was Hertnidt vom Stein, court official of Margrave Albrecht Achilles of Brandenburg. According to Thumser, Hertnidt vom Stein arrived at the Papal Court, then residing in Siena, probably in the beginning of March 1459, to present Margrave Albrecht Achilles’ declaration of obedience to the new pope. Afterwards, he stayed with the court and followed the pope to Mantua. He left Mantua before September 1459, only to return in December together with the margrave.²

2. **Themes**

The oration contains five themes which recur in the pope’s responses to the ambassadors offering obedience of behalf of their princes.³ To these comes the theme of the legitimacy of papal elections including Pius’ own which mostly replaces the recurrent, traditional theme of personal unworthiness for papal office.⁴

The first theme is papal supremacy. In the oration “*Si Sacrosancto*”, Pius gives a somewhat more extensive argumentation for this supremacy than in most other orations to the ambassadors.

The chain of arguments runs like this [Sect. 1]:

a) the Holy Gospel and the Doctors of the Church teach and Christians must of necessity recognize that on Earth there is one power, granted by God, from whom all other powers derive.

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¹ CO, II, 24 (Meserve, I, pp. 298-303); Ady, p. 162; Boulting, pp. 256-258; Mitchell, p. 146; Pastor, II, p. 38; Voigt, III, pp. 37-40
² See Thumser, p. 36, and personal communication of 2 July 2019. See also oration “*Advenisse te citius*” [53]
³ See *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*, sect. 7.7.3.
⁴ Cotta-Schönberg & Modigliani, p. 287, sect. 12
b) This power Christ gave to the Apostle Peter, first Bishop of Rome, when he made him the Prince of the Apostles and his own Vicar on Earth.

c) It was transmitted to Peter’s successors as Bishops of Rome who inherited it successively.¹

So, the primacy and supreme authority of the Roman See derive from Christ’s appointment of the Apostle Peter as his Vicar and the transmission of Peter’s office to the Bishops of Rome through Apostolic Succession. Pius added a restriction on this authority, that it applies to matters concerning the edification of the Church. This expression refers to religious matters as such, but from other such orations it is known that it also may cover certain secular matters in which the final judgment is the pope’s.²

The second theme is the legitimacy of an elected pope. This theme replaces the usual – and customary - declaration of the pope’s personal unworthiness for the exalted papal office. The reason for the substitution may have been some unfortunate remarks by one of the ambassadors concerning Pius’ antecedents. The pope declares that under the present system of electing the popes, the election by cardinals make the chosen cardinal a legitimate pope notwithstanding humble origins, ignorance of canon law, affiliation to any religious order, married state, or immorality in former life. The only thing which prevents a man from being legitimately elected pope is his being a heretic or an unbeliever. As Pius II fulfills the criteria for election, he is now the rightful and undoubted pope, having the rights and supreme power as pope and God’s Vicar on Earth [Sect. 2].

The third theme is praise of the princes presenting their obedience. In the case of Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg, Pius mentions that when as a younger man he served at the Imperial Court, he heard Albrecht being called Achilles. Actually, it was Pius himself who gave him this sobriquet [Sect. 3].

The fourth theme is the needful contribution of the princes to the projected crusade against the Turks: Now ... great dukes offer their assistance, help, and advice. This gives Us comfort and hope [Sect. 4].

The fifth theme is an assurance of the benevolence of the pope towards the princes declaring their obedience.

¹ This expression was not directly used by Pius
² Oration “Dominatorem caeli” [35]
3. Date, place, audience and format

The oration was delivered in March 1459, in Siena.

The venue was the cathedral of Siena, which was suitable and appropriate for papal functions.¹ The audience consisted of the cardinals, curials, and ambassadors with their retinues present in Siena as well as Sienese magnates.

The format was a papal reply from the throne to an address by princely ambassadors.

4. Text²

The oration is included in a special Collection of Pius II’s Responses from 1459 and 1460), largely consisting of responses to addresses by ambassadors,³ which is extant in at least five manuscripts:

4.1. Manuscripts⁴

- **Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana**
  544, ff. 174v-175v (G) *

- **Roma / Archivio Segreto Vaticano**
  Arm. XXXII 1, ff. 53v-56r (J) *

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¹ That Pius used the cathedral of Siena as the venue for official papal functions during his stay there is shown by his own remark in a later oration to Castilian ambassadors, the “Claritudo sanguinis”, from the autumn 1460, sect. 1: "Claritudo sanguinis et morum elegantia singularisque virtus carissimi in Christo filii nostri Henrici, Legionis et Castellae regis illustris, cum anno jam revoluto hoc ipso templo nobis et apostolicae sedi suo nomine praestaretur obedientia pluribus verbis recensita et explicata fuit"

² Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II’s orations, see *Collected orations of Pope Pius*, vol. 1, ch. 5

³ See *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 1, sect. 5.1.2

⁴ Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in *Collected orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 11, are marked with an asterisk
The Chisianus is the eldest of the five and identical with or very close to the oration as actually delivered by Pius.

4.2. Editions

The oration was edited by Mansi:

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759 / T. II, pp. 221-203
  
  *Edition based on the manuscript in Lucca*

4.3. Present edition

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

**Text:**

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

**Pagination:**

Pagination is from the lead manuscript.
5. Sources

In this short oration, 5 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified, 4 from the Bible and 1 from medieval sources.

Biblical: 4
Classical: 0
Patristic and medieval: 1
Contemporary: 0
All: 5

Biblical sources: 4

Old Testament: 0

New Testament: 4
• Matthew: 1
• John: 1
• Acts: 1
• 2. Corinthians: 1

Classical sources: 0

Patristic and medieval sources: 1

• Jacobus de Voragine: 1

Contemporary sources: 0

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1 On Piccolomini’s use of sources in general, see Collected orations of Pope Pius II, vol.1, ch. 8.
6. Bibliography

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

- Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt. Ed. A van Heck. 2 vols. Città del Vaticano, 1984 (Studi e testi; 312-313)


Pius II: Orationes. [1436-1464]

- Pius II: Oratone politicae et ecclesiasticae. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759


References to the Annales are usually given in this form: (e.g.) Rainaldus, ad ann. 1459, nr. 67 (without reference to a specific edition). In the bibliographies of the individual orations, the first edition is usually listed, but the Theiner edition is actually the preferred one since it is the easiest available on the web.
Thumser, Matthias: *Hertnidle vom Stein (ca. 1427-1491). Bamberger Domdekan und markgräflich-
(Veröffentlichungen der Gesellschaft für fränkische Geschichte. Reihe IX; 38)

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

Voragine, Jacobus de: *Legenda aurea [ca. 1260]*


7. Sigla and abbreviations

**G** = Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana / 544
**H** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolic Vaticana / Chisianus J.VII.251
**J** = Roma / Archivio Segreto Vaticano / Arm. XXXII 1

**Abbreviations**

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

24)

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

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

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


II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION
Oratoribus Bavariae ducis, marchionis Brandeburgensis, et Austriae ducis

[1] {170r} Si sacrosancto credimus evangelio, quod divinum esse oraculum\(^1\) constat, si sanctis doctoribus fidem habemus, qui tamquam sol et luna ecclesiam illustrarunt, si denique Christiani sumus, quo nomine gloriamur ac salvamur, necesse est unam in terris potestatem fateamur a summo Deo concessam, a qua reliquae omnes dependeant, hanc vero {170v} apud Romanum praesulem inveniri ex\(^2\) ordinatione salvatoris Christi, qui Petrum apostolorum principem et vicarium suum\(^3\) divina voce constituit, cui et\(^4\) pascendi suas oves et aperiendi claudendique\(^5\) caeli portas\(^6\) curam et potestatem commisit. Hic post domini ascensionem\(^7\) prius in Antiochia septem annis plebem docuit, ubi primum Christiani nominis appellatio audita est. Exinde\(^8\) Romam se contulit; sed persecutionem\(^9\) infidelium veritus fugam arripiens, non procul ab Appia porta salvatorem obvium habuit, quem cum interrogasset: “Domine, quo vadis?” et ille respondisset: “Vado Romam iterum crucifigi”, intellexit sanctus apostolus voluntatem esse divinam, ut Romae moreretur. Reversus\(^10\) igitur in\(^11\) urbem sub Nerone, saevissimo imperatore, passus est, atque una et eadem die cum beato Paulo, ejusdem fidei professore, martyrio coronatus est, et suo sanguine Romanam consecravit ecclesiam. Hinc primatus et auctoritas summa Romani solii. Nam quod Petrus hoc et successores fuere\(^12\), impares aliquando meritis, potestate semper pares.

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\(^{1}\) esse oraculum : oraculum esse  
\(^{2}\) et  
\(^{3}\) omit.  
\(^{4}\) omit.  
\(^{5}\) claudendi  
\(^{6}\) caeli portas : portas caeli  
\(^{7}\) domini ascensionem : ascensionem domini  
\(^{8}\) exinde  
\(^{9}\) persecutione  
\(^{10}\) reverso  
\(^{11}\) ad  
\(^{12}\) facere
To the ambassadors of the Duke of Bavaria\(^1\), the Margrave of Brandenburg\(^2\), and the Duke of Austria\(^3\)

1. Papal supremacy

[1] If We believe the Holy Gospel which is in fact the word of God, if We have faith in the holy doctors who illumined the Church like the sun and the moon, and if, finally, We are Christians, in which name We are given glory and salvation, then we must of necessity recognize that on Earth there is One power, which is granted by supreme God and from which all the other powers derive. And this power is invested in the Roman Pontiff, by the ordination of Christ the Saviour, who by his divine word made Peter the Prince of the Apostles and His own Vicar, giving him power and charge to guard his sheep\(^4\) and to open and close the gates of Heaven.\(^5\) After the Ascension of the Lord, Peter first [stayed] for seven years in Antioch, teaching the people. Here, the name of “Christian” was heard for the first time.\(^6\) Then he went to Rome. [Later,] he fled [that City], fearing persecution from the unbelievers. Not far from Porta Appia he met the Saviour. He asked him: “Where are you going, Lord.” Jesus replied: “I am going to Rome to be crucified once again.” Then the holy apostle understood that it was the will of God that he should die in Rome. He returned to the City, and suffered under savage Emperor Nero. Together with and on the same day as Saint Paul, a believer in the same Faith, he was crowned with martyrdom and consecrated the Roman Church with his blood.\(^7\) From this derives the primacy and supreme authority of the Roman See. For what Peter was, his successors were too: sometimes of unequal merit, but always of equal power.

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\(^1\) Friedrich I. der Siegrieche (Wittelsbach) (1425-1476): Count Palatine and Prince Elector

\(^2\) Actually, the ambassadors represented two Margraves of Brandenburg: Friedrich II der Eiserne (Hohenzollern) (1413-1471: Margrave and Prince Elector; Albrecht Achilles von Brandenburg (Hohenzollern) (1414-1486): Margrave and later Prince Elector

\(^3\) Albrecht VI of Austria (Habsburg) (1418-1463): Duke of Inner Austria from 1424 and of Austria from 1457 to his death

\(^4\) John, 21, 15-17

\(^5\) Matthew, 6, 19

\(^6\) Acts, 11, 26

\(^7\) Jacobus de Voragine: *Legenda aurea / S. Petrus*
Successio vero etsi multifarie\textsuperscript{1} multisque modis apud veteres concessa est, ad extremum tamen in melius reformato reipublicae statu ex\textsuperscript{2} cardinalium arbitrio pendere coepit, qui postquam vacante sede in unum aliquem duarum consensu partium consensere Romanum praesulem et indubitatum Christi vicarium efficiunt. Non hic\textsuperscript{3} generis obscuritas objici potest, non ignorantia canonum, non religionis nexus, non conjugii ligamentum, non prioris vitae lubricitas: papa est quemcumque cardinales elegerunt\textsuperscript{4}, si modo fidelis est. Haereticus autem et infidelis, cum sit extra ecclesiam, caput ecclesiae esse non potest. Cum igitur venerabiles fratres nostri unanimi consensu nos in summum pontificem elegerunt, qui divinis\textsuperscript{5} Christi sacramentis sumus imbuti et evangelium sacrosque canones et generalium conciliorum decreta veneramur, et catholicam fidem usque ad sanguinem et animam tueri proponimus, non est dubium quin nostris jussionibus in aedificationem ecclesiae manantibus parere omnis oporteat, etsi sumus aliquin indigni hoc tam sublimi honore.

\textsuperscript{1} multifariam J
\textsuperscript{2} et J
\textsuperscript{3} huic J
\textsuperscript{4} elegerint J
\textsuperscript{5} divini J
2. Legitimacy of papal elections

[2] In the old days, the succession [to the Roman See] was conferred in many different ways. In the end, the government of the Church was reformed – for the better - and the succession began to depend on the choice of the cardinals:¹ when the [Holy] See becomes vacant, the cardinals agree – [often] by consensus between two factions - on who should become the Bishop of Rome and the undoubted Vicar of Christ. There may be no objection to his [election] on the basis of humble origins, ignorance of the canons, affiliation to a religious order, bond of marriage, or immorality in his former life: he is pope whom the cardinals elect, if only he is a believer. Heretics and unbelievers are outside the Church and therefore cannot be its head. Since Our venerable brethren have unanimously elected Us Supreme Pontiff - a man who is imbued with the divine sacraments of Christ, who reveres the Gospel, the holy canons, and the decrees of the general councils, and who intends to defend the Catholic Faith with his life and soul – there is no doubt that all must obey the decrees issued by Us for the edification of the Church, though, on occasion, We may not be worthy of this exalted honourable office.

¹ Since 1059

[4] Clari et potentes hi principes sunt. Fridericus, comes Palatinus, dux Bavariae, princeps elector, in armis exercitatus, animi et corporis dotibus\(^1\) excellens, non eget laude nostra, quippe qui generis claritudine et propria virtute apud omnes ubique gentes late cognitus est. Alter Fridericus, marchio Brandeburgensis, et ipse quoque imperii elector, optimis praeditus moribus, clarum tota Germania nomen habet, cujus in primis illud moderationis suae illustre praeficonum fertur, quod vocatus in regem a Polonis regnum recusavit, quod jure gentium per successionem alteri deberetur. Albertus, Austriaci natus prosapia, ex qua quinque imperaverunt, Friderici Caesaris germanus est, magnanimitate ac liberalitate insignis, et ad grandia quaeque negotia cupidus atque aptus. Secundus Albertus, Friderici marchionis germanus est, de cujus praestantia tacere consultius ducimus, ne modum responsionis excedamus. Illud tamen referre non piget, plura hunc gessisse proelia, plures ex hoste victorias reportasse, quam credibile cuiquam videatur, ob quam rem cum inter Germanos ageremus, in minoribus constituti, Teuthonicum eum appellari Achillem a nonnullis rei militaris peritissimis audivimus.

\(^1\) corporis dotibus : dotibus corporis G
3. Obedience of the German princes

[3] This belief is shared by Our beloved sons in whose name, today, you have declared obedience to Us and the Apostolic See.

4. Praise of the German princes

[4] Famous and mighty are these princes.

Friedrich, Count Palatine, Duke of Bavaria, and Prince Elector, trained in weapons and with excellent qualities of soul and body, does not need Our praise: indeed he is known among all peoples for the nobility of his family and for his own courage and fortitude.

The other Friedrich, Margrave of Brandenburg, is an Imperial Elector, too, with an excellent character and famous in all of Germany. Above all, his moderation is praised for the reason that having been named King of Poland he refused the kingdom because by the law of the peoples another man had the right of succession.

Albrecht is of the exalted line of Austria, from which five men have held the empire. He is brother of Emperor Friedrich, distinguished by his magnanimity and liberality, and both desiring and able to do great things.

The second Albrecht is the brother of Margrave Friedrich. We better remain silent on his outstanding excellence so as to not to exceed the limits of a response. But this We shall not omit: he has fought more wars and obtained more victories over his enemies than anyone would believe credible. Therefore, when We had not yet attained high rank and lived in Germany, We heard him being called Achilles by men who were specialists in military matters.¹

¹ Indeed, Pius himself was the first to call Albrecht Achilles, and he had done so publicly at the imperial diet of Wiener Neustadt in 1455, in the oration “In hoc florentissimo” [23]: Quid de Theutonico Achille dicam? Quam volens, quam promptus, quam fervens ad tuendam ecclesiam nunc Ratisponae, nunc Frankfordiae visus est? Quaeritis, quis sit hic Achilles? Albertum ego marchionem Brandeburgensem, Germanicae nationis singulare lumen, Achillis nomine designo


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<sup>1</sup> patris J
<sup>2</sup> clades J
<sup>3</sup> faciat G
5. Crusade against the Turks

[5] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort: Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.¹ We are worried and burdened by the ferocity of the Turks who day and night wreak grave damage on the Christians living in Greece, Illyria and Hungary. But now, from the other side, brave and strong dukes offer their assistance, help and advice. This gives Us comfort and hope that We shall be able to achieve something for the protection of the Christian people and the praise of the divine name, for these powerful princes rule a large part of Bavaria, Austria, Swabia, Franconia and Saxony. May the Divine Piety grant that they fulfil their purpose and do not fail in this necessary enterprise.

6. Papal goodwill

[6] We shall always show favour and grace to them, their children, friends and relatives, and all their subjects.

¹ 2 Corinthians 1, 3-4