(Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 8)
Oration "Nisi satis exploratum" of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (13 October 1445, Vienna). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

Final edition, 1st version

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Abstract

In autumn 1445, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, secretary in the Imperial Chancery of Emperor Friedrich III and poet laureate, was invited to give two academic lectures at the University of Vienna. The first one, the “Nisi satis exploratum”, was most probably delivered at the beginning of the winter semester at the Faculty of Law, in October. It is an oration in praise of all the arts and sciences taught at a contemporary university, belonging to a well-established rhetorical genre developed at Italian universities. It has two main sections: in the first Piccolomini outlines the benefits (utilitas) of each art and science, in the second he speaks of their enjoyments and distinction (voluptates et ornamentum). Noteworthy in the oration are Piccolomini’s treatment of history as a distinct art, his description of the pleasure of scholarship, and his insistence on the interrelationship between research and teaching.

Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Æneas Silvius Piccolomini; Kaiser Friedrich III Habsburg; Emperor Frederick III Habsburg; Pope Pius II; Papa Pius II; Vienna University; Wien Universität; University of Vienna; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetorics; Liberal arts; Praise of liberal arts; 1445; 15th century; History of universities; History as an academic subject; Pleasure of research; Interrelationship of research and teaching; Academic curricula; Inaugural lectures

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Foreword

This is the first version of the final edition of the present text. I do not, actually, plan to publish further versions of this text, but I 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 or necessary 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 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 or unrecognized quotations.

10 September 2018
MCS
Table of volumes in *Collected Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II*. 12 vols. Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 

[Available on the web in HAL Archives]

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I. INTRODUCTION
1. Context

On 27 July 1442, Emperor Friedrich III crowned Enea Silvio Piccolomini as poet. The emperor had not known Piccolomini before, and he was little interested in poetry, but he was solicitous to perform the traditional ceremonials of emperorship, and the coronation of poets was one such. Piccolomini, at the time secretary of antipope Felix V, had been recommended to the emperor by influential courtiers like Bishop Silvester of Chiemsee, and some months afterwards Piccolomini joined the Imperial Chancery as a secretary. He was to have a meteoric career as counsellor and diplomat at the Imperial Court and later a career in the Church leading him to the papal throne in 1458.

By autumn 1445, Piccolomini had been member of the Imperial Chancery for almost three years, and he had already been on his first, very important, mission on behalf of the emperor to Pope Eugenius IV in Rome, from where he returned to the Imperial Court in early summer 1445.

In the autumn of 1445, Piccolomini was invited twice to give a lecture at the University of Vienna.

Apparently, he had not finished his university studies in Siena (1423-1430) with an academic degree, but his diploma of poet laureate conferred on him the right of “legendi, disputandi, interpretandi et componendi poemata liberam ubique locorum facultatem.” The circumstances of the university’s invitation are somewhat obscure and various interpretations have been given.

The university may have been interested in a fresh humanist input from Italy, but at any rate the invitation to a member of the Imperial Chancery would have been a gesture of politeness to the Court, and it was appreciated to the extent that the emperor was personally present when Piccolomini was presented with the topics for his second lecture.

The first lecture was probably given at the beginning of the winter semester of the university, cf. below.

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1 Kisch, pp. 41-65; Lhotsky: Aeneas, pp. 32-33; Lhotsky: Wiener, p. 138; Strnad, pp. 80-81; Wagendorfer, pp. 22-23, 51
2 Or more precisely, King of the Romans and Emperor-elect until his imperial coronation which took place in Rome in 1452
3 Kisch, p. 41; Lhotsky: Wiener, p. 138
4 Helmrath, p. 108
5 Voigt, I, II, 6 , p. 343
6 Lhotsky: Wiener, p. 33; Wagendorfer, p. 22
7 Kisch, p. 41; Lhotsky: Wiener, p. 138; Strnad, p. 80; Wagendorfer, p. 22
8 E.g. Kisch, p. 57-58
9 Participation in solemn academic functions might already in that age have been part of the extended ceremonial “system” of royalty. During his coronation travel in 1452, Emperor Friedrich III also assisted at the doctoral promotion at the University of Padua of another of his officials, Johannes Hinderbach, cf. Strnad, p. 134
The lecture consisted in a praise (*laudatio*) of all the arts and sciences practiced at a contemporary university.

This type of oration was well-known from Italy, where laudatory lectures initiated both academic years, semesters, and even individual courses. Indeed, they had become so common and well-rehearsed that the great Argyropoulos dismissed them scornfully.

Piccolomini himself would presumably have heard a number of such lectures, and maybe not only at the University of Siena, but also at other universities in Italian cities visited by him during his *Wanderjahren* in the late 1420s. He may even have heard the lecture given by the Milanese scholar and historian, Andrea Biglia, whom he greatly respected, at the University of Siena in 1430.

The reactions of the professors and masters to Piccolomini’s lecture are not known, but they were sufficiently favourable for him to have been invited back to the university, the following month, to give a quod-libet lecture at the annual celebration of the Feast of Saint Catherine of Alexandria.

2. Themes

2.1. Liberal arts vs. other arts

It is sometimes said - and stated even in the colophon to the text of the oration in ms. Basel Univ.bibl. F IV 14 - that the “*Nisi satis exploratum*” is an oration in praise of the liberal arts.

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1. Cf. Müllner, pp. iv ff.; Kisch, p. 54
2. Four examples of lectures in *initio studorum* may be mentioned: (1) Andrea Biglia’s *Oratio de laudibus disciplinarum*, delivered at the University of Siena in 1430, and possibly heard by Piccolomini. Printed in Müllner, pp. 64-70; (2) Ugo Benzi’s *Oratio quam recitavit in principio studii Florentiae*, delivered at the University of Florence in 1421. Printed in Müllner, pp. 107-115; (3) Giulelmus Fichet: [*Oratio*] in laudem artium liberalium. In: Basel UB, F IX 5, ff. 252r-54r; (4) Gianantonio Campano’s *Oratio de scientiarum laudibus Perusiae initio studii habita anno MCCCCLV*. A lecture “in initio studiorum” at the University of Ferrara is also mentioned by the Dutch humanist, Rudolph Agricola: *Necque quicquam est, quod de Ferraria optius verisque dici potest quam quod in initio studiorum in oratione mea posui*. (Agricola: *Epistolae* (Laan/Akkerman), ep. 13, p. 94)
4. Müllner, pp. 4, 32-33
5. Cf. Piccolomini’s oration “*Audivi*”, Introduction, 4.1
6. The oration “*Nuper aderat*”. For literature on Piccolomini’s importance for the development of the humanities in Austria, Germany and Central Europe, and especially his relations with the University of Vienna, see the bibliography
The liberal arts (the *artes liberales*) comprise the *trivium* (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and music), and these are included in Piccolomini’s oration. However, they only take up a third of the section on the benefits of the arts and sciences, whereas two thirds deal with the other arts and sciences, i.e. philosophy, medicine, law, and theology. Indeed Piccolomini barely mention the four arts in the quadrivium, he gives very scant attention to grammar and logic, and the starting point of the oration is not the liberal arts at all, but law:

*This is the time that our forefathers decided upon for the beginning of studies, and they also established [the custom] that even the smallest course of lectures should begin with a praise of the subject matter. ... Not [wishing] to be considered the only one to have neglected this ancient custom, I have decided to perform the task as appropriate to the venue chosen [for the occasion], and thus to praise the science of law. But, so as not to appear to enter [this subject] with completely dry feet (as they say), I have decided to add and append something in praise of the other arts. [Sect. 2-3]*

So, it is not correct to consider the “*Nisi satis exploratum*” as belonging to the rhetorical genre of an oration in praise of the liberal arts.

Rather, the oration is in praise of all the arts and sciences taught at a complete university in the middle of the 15th century, even including a discipline not taught in Vienna at that time, i.e. Civil Law, since the Faculty of Law at that time only taught Canon Law.  

As mentioned, Piccolomini may have heard just such an inaugural lecture by one of his teachers at the University of Siena in 1430. In the lecture, Biglia said: “*De disciplinarum atque artium laudibus sermo expetitur,*” and the text of the lecture makes it evident that it was not only about the liberal arts, but about the whole spectrum of arts and sciences known at that time, corresponding closely to the those arts and sciences which Piccolomini covered in his lecture in Vienna, 15 years later.”

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1 Lhotsky: *Wiener*, p. 143: *Die ars artium war für ihn [Piccolomini] die “Rhetorik” – sein lebhaft leichter lateinischer Stil, den er sich ohne Zweifel schon durch seine ersten Übungen in Studentenzeiten angenehmt hatte, um ihn allmählich zum schmiegsamen Instrument seiner individuellen Ausdrucksfähigkeiten zu machen, und eben dieser war unlernbar, wenn er nicht zur Selbsttäuschung führen sollte*

2 Lhotsky: *Wiener*, p. 143: *So kommt es dass er die Grammatik meist nur kurz, in jener Rede vor der Universität gar nur mit einem Satze von kaum zwei Zeilen abtat. Sie war nicht seine Stärke: das wusste er selbst und die anderen merkten es*

3 i.e. the building housing the faculty of law

4 i.e. the praise of law

5 Kisch, p. 57

6 Müllner, p. 65
It may be noted, that in this oration Piccolomini does not speak about poetry as one of the arts, though other humanists were by now including it among the liberal arts. Some months later he would be speaking extensively on poetry in his second lecture at the University of Vienna, the “Nuper aderat”.

2.2. History

Piccolomini’s treatment of history in the oration merits special attention.

Firstly, he considers it as an art growing out of the liberal art of rhetoric, but having a separate status vis-a-vis this discipline:

   And under the guidance of rhetoric we are led to the knowledge of history which our forefathers – excellently - called mother of virtue and teacher of life. These arts concern morals and excellent precepts and they have been handed down in order make the lives and deeds of noble men better known. [Sect. 7]

This concept of history as growing out of or especially related to rhetorics Piccolomini may have had from Cicero, e.g. the Orator, where Cicero says that the orator “should also be acquainted with the history of the events of past ages, particularly, of course, of our state, but also of imperial nations and famous kings.”

Secondly, it is remarkable that in this early period of Piccolomini’s literary activity, before he had begun to write his historical works, he seems to have considered history as a pedagogical instrument, a device for inspiring people with examples from the lives of great men from old days.

   Who doubts that the deeds of other men which we have learnt to be admirable are easier for us to imitate and more readily stimulate us to be honourable than such things which are taught in cumbersome lectures? I declare that knowledge of history makes us want to eagerly imitate the best of men whom we greatly admire and esteem. [Sect. 7]

Piccolomini would eventually develop a much richer concept of history, but in the “Nisi satis exploratum” from 1445 he apparently considered it mainly as a discipline closely related to rhetorics, aiming at inspiration and edification – and rhetorical embellishment.

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1 Cicero: Orator, 120
In 1445, history was not yet established as a proper scholarly discipline, and it is tempting to see the passages on history in Piccolomini’s oration as a testimony to its gradual emergence as an academic discipline.

2.3. Law

During his studies at the University of Siena Piccolomini had acquired some grounding in law, among others from the law professor, Antonio Rosselli, whose teachings influenced Piccolomini’s view of imperial power. Seven years later, in the – probably never held - oration “Sentio”, he also developed a comprehensive legal argumentation concerning the papal monitoryum to the Austrian rebels against the emperor and concerning inappropriate use of appeals in the legal system.

Nonetheless, in the scholarly literature, Piccolomini has some reputation for having a strong prejudice against law and lawmen. This view is gainsaid by Kisch, partly on the basis of Piccolomini’s statements on law in the “Nisi satis exploratum.”

And indeed these statements, on the two branches of law, civil law and canon law, are very positive:

I should have to say more about this, but since I have not yet turned to praising civil and pontifical law, I have been called to order by the task I have undertaken. To praise them adequately is so difficult that it surpasses and excels the eloquence of even the most learned of men. ... For who is so eminently eloquent that he can praise these disciplines as they merit? Through them the life of all men is being constantly developed and improved through salutary and divine precepts, and through them cities, peoples, and nations are being ruled, protected, and multiplied, united by law. ... Lactantius Firmianus, that most learned man, is author [of the statement that] even primitive and uncultured men desire wisdom, since – by immortal God – our nature wants and craves nothing more than wisdom and religion. To the first of these [two] we are brought by civil law, and the second we are taught by pontifical or canon law. In this human life, no other discipline may be considered more noble, eminent, and admirable than these two disciplines, and no other discipline should be better able to attract young men and enflame the souls of men than this discipline [whose subject] is the government of cities and the rule and government of the clergy. [Sect. 12 and 14]
However, given the circumstances in which Piccolomini delivered his academic lecture, it is uncertain to what extent these positive statements really reflect a personal, positive view of law as an academic discipline and of the law profession.

2.4. Enjoyment of scholarship

The arts and sciences are not only useful, they are also enjoyable, highly enjoyable:

*By immortal God, what pleasure or delight can be greater than to ponder the reason for something ...? No food is sweeter to the mind, which nature has given us, and no fare more pleasant than acquiring knowledge of things, and the more often we have this food, the greater is the pleasure. Therefore, all we who have associate with the Muses*¹ lead a life of pleasure. [Sect. 17]

Piccolomini’s statements on the joy of arts and sciences do not appear to be part of the standard praise of the arts.² They reveal, in a glimpse, a character which is open to life’s joys and enjoyments, and a view of life and the world which is far remote from the negative view of the middle ages and its fear of the world and its flight from the world. It was the same positive attitude which formed the oration, or rather the sermon, “Non est apud me dubium”, to the parishioners of Aspach, from the same period. That oration is really a moral treatise, and one of its main teachings is that men must not only seek paradise in Haven and in afterlife, but create a paradise on Earth and in their present life.

2.5. Sharing of knowledge

Inaugural academic lectures then, as now, are replete with exhortations to students to study hard. However, Piccolomini also had words for the teachers: it is not enough for oneself to acquire knowledge, this knowledge must also be shared: here he was directly addressing the doctors and masters seated in front of him:

*What is more delightful than to transmit and communicate to others what you have found through your own studies? It was nature herself who taught and formed us for this, so that we...*

¹ Cicero: *Tusculanae disputationes*, 5, 66: *Who in all the world, who enjoys merely some degree of communion with the Muses (Quis est omnium, qui modo cum Musis, id est cum humanitate et cum doctrina, habeat aliquod commercium)*

² Cf. Lhotsky: *Wiener*, p. 144: *Aeneas Sylvius ist vielleicht nicht der erste Entdecker, aber doch der erste folgerichtige Vertreter der ... Genusskomponente in der geistigen Arbeit*
should with the greatest eagerness and alacrity share with others what is fruitful to all. [Sect. 17]

Piccolomini’s writings reveal a clear pedagogical interest which already came to the fore in his academic lecture of 1445, and his insistence on the close interrelationship between academic research and academic teaching prefigures public policy of much later ages with its insistence that academic teaching should be based on research.

Further studies are necessary to assess to which degree Piccolomini, in the present oration, expresses original viewpoints on enjoyment of scholarship and the interrelationship between research and teaching, but at any rate they are remarkable – and remarkably modern - elements of a 1445 view of the arts and sciences.

3. Date, place, format, and audience

As an inaugural (initium studiorum) lecture at the University of Vienna in 1445, the “Nisi satis exploratum” was either held either at the opening of the Summer Semester on 14 April or of the Winter Semester on 13 October.

Piccolomini was in Rome from January to March, on an important diplomatic mission for Emperor Friedrich III, and according to Voigt he left Rome on 1 April. He could not possibly have returned to Vienna, agreed to address the university, and prepare an inaugural lecture before 13 April.

According to Heinig’s itinerary of Friedrich III, the emperor, whose court Piccolomini followed as an increasingly important imperial secretary, was in Wiener Neustadt on 1 March and 8 May with no recorded stay in Vienna in between. On the other hand, the emperor was present in Vienna on 11 August and 13 December with no recorded stay in any other place between those two dates.

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1 Lhotsky, Kisch, Wagendorfer
2 “From 1384 until 1629, there was no academic year in a strict sense, since all holders of academic offices (rectors, deans, heads of the four academic nations) were elected at the beginning of each semester. Thus their respective terms lasted for one semester only. Summer semester started on April 14th (the day of the saints Tiburtius and Valerianus), winter semester on October 13th (the day of St. Coloman).” Personal communication of 24 May 2016 from Mag. Thomas Maisel, University of Vienna
3 Voigt, I, II, 6, p. 343
4 Heinig: Chronologisches, p. 1357
In conclusion, Piccolomini most likely delivered the “Nisi satis exploratum” in connection with the opening of the Winter Semester of the University of Vienna on 13 October 1445, and this is the date retained in the present edition.

Since it took place in the building of the Faculty of Law, as Piccolomini himself states, and not in the aula of the university, some have assumed that the lecture was given to teachers and students at that faculty. On the other hand, the colophon only states that the oration was delivered to the doctors and magisters of the University of Vienna without special mention of the Faculty of Law, and Piccolomini speaks not just about law, but about all the disciplines of the university, though he does this as if taking a liberty.

The statutes of the Faculty of Law of 1389 stated as follows: “De modis, locis et horis legendi, statuimus, ut in crastino sancti Colomanni legens Decretum principium facere tenetatur, ad quod omnes doctores, nobiles, licentiati, baccalarii et scolares convenire tenetur. Die vero sequenti incipient omnes alii legentes seu regentes.” This confirms that the winter semester at the Faculty of Law began on 14 October, with a lecture by the professor who taught the Decree (of Gratian, presumably), whereas the other teachers began their lectures on the following day. It does not say anything about a general academic lecture which might even be given by an outsider, but such practice could have developed in the period since 1389.

On the basis of present evidence it may be concluded that: a) either the university had decided that the inaugural lecture for the whole university should – for some reason or other – be held in the building of the Faculty of Law, the audience being doctors and magisters from the whole university b) or the event at which Piccolomini spoke was not the opening of the university semester, but the opening of the Faculty of Law semester, the audience being doctors and magisters of that faculty.

The format was an academic lecture at the inauguration of an academic semester.

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1 cf. the passage in which Piccolomini says: A quo pro vetusto more ne unicus descivisse puter, faciendum mihi esse sum ratus, ut illius munerae perfungar, quod susceptus hic locus jure suo videtur postulare, hoc est sapientiae juris commendationem. [Sect. 2]. Cf. Kisch, p. 57
2 In the Nova Structura built 1423-1425
3 Strnad, p. 80-81; Wagendorfer, p. 23
4 The text of the colophon is: Explicit recommendatio artium liberalium Enee Silvii facta Wienne coram doctoribus et magistris felicer
5 14th October, the Feast of Saint Coloman being the 13th
6 Kink, II, p. 141
7 As Kisch appears to believe, p. 55. Cf. Also Lhotsky: Wiener, p. 143
4 Text

For unknown reasons, the “Nisi satis exploratum” is not mentioned in Pius’ Commentarii, and it was not included in the Collected Orations of Pope Pius II, compiled under his direct supervision in 1462. Possibly, the text had disappeared from his personal files at some point during his many travels as imperial secretary and diplomat.

It is only known to be extant in two manuscripts, both from Basel Universitätsbibliothek. The two manuscripts are rather difficult to read and the text is corrupt in several places.¹

4.1 Manuscripts

Basel / Universitätsbibliothek

F IV 14, ff. 312r-313r (dig. pp. 269-271) (L)² ³
F IX 5, ff. 238r-242r (dig. pp. 472-481) (K)⁴

4.2. Editions⁵ ⁶

Probably due to the difficulties of the extant texts, the oration has not as yet been published in its entirety,⁷ though excerpts, particularly the sections on law, were published by Kisch:

² Cf. Kisch, p. 55
³ http://aleph.unibas.ch/F/?local_base=DSV05&con_lng=GER&func=find-b&find_code=SYS&request=000117230
⁴ http://aleph.unibas.ch/F/?local_base=DSV05&con_lng=GER&func=find-b&find_code=SYS&request=000117387
⁵ Pius II: Epistolae de laude poetica, de differentia inter scientiam et prudentiam et de poetis, de laude litterarum, cur libri cumulentur. Köln, Dictys / Arnold ter Hoernen, 1470-1471: the de laude poetica is Piccolomini’s letter to Wilhem Stein of 1 June 1444, and the de laude litterarum is his letter to his nephew Antonio Piccolomini Todeschini of November 1442
⁶ Johannes Presbyter: De ritu et moribus Indorum. Add.: Pius II: Commendatio Ladislai Regis Hungariae; De laude litterarum. Deventer: Richardus Pafraet, between 29 June 1490 and 25 Jan. 1492. The de laude litterarum is his letter to his nephew Antonio Piccolomini Todeschini of November 1442
⁷ Kisch, p. 49; Wagendorfer, p. 23; Helmrath, p. 110
4.3. 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:

The present edition is based on both the Basel manuscripts.

Pagination:

Pagination is from both manuscripts, in the digitized version, the F IX 5 in red, and the F IV 14 in blue. Line numbers (5, 10, 15 ...) are given in italics (in the same colours).

5. Sources

In this oration, altogether 27 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified:

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<td>Biblical</td>
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<td>Contemporary</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The classical quotations dominate heavily, and there is only one quotation from the bible. This distribution may be due to the character of the oration as an academic lecture.
Biblical sources: 1

Old Testament: 0

New Testament: 1

- 2. Corinthians: 1

Classical sources: 22

- Cicero: 13
- Ovidius: 2
- Plutarch: 2
- Terentius: 1
- Vergilius: 2
- Valerius Maximus: 2

Patristic and medieval sources: 4

- Lactantius: 3
- Petrus Hispanus: 1

Contemporary sources: 0

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1 De finibus bonorum et malorum 1; De inventione 1; De oratore 3; De senectute 2; Pro Archia 1; Tusculanae disputationes 5
2 Metamorphoses
3 Parallel lives
4 Adelphoe
5 Aeneid 1; Georgica 1
6 Institutiones divinae
7 Summulae logicales
6. Bibliography

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Piccolomini: *Epistolarum*


Rijk, L.M. de (ed.): *Peter of Spain, Tractatus, called afterwards Summulae Logicales*. Assen, 1972


### 7. Sigla and abbreviations

K = Basel / Universitätsbibliothek / F IX 5
L = Basel / Universitätsbibliothek / F IV 14

**Abbreviations**


**Kisch** = Kisch, Guido: *Enea Silvio Piccolomini und die Jurisprudenz*. Basel, 1967
MPL = Migne, Jacques-Paul: *Patrologia latina*. 217 vols. 1841-1865

II TEXT AND TRANSLATION
Eneae Silvii poetae ad universitatem Wiennensem de commendatione artium oratio incipit

[1] {238r / dig. p. 472} {312r / dig. p. 269} Nisi satis exploratum haberem, patres amplissimi, ea, quae a me dici oportere video, non modo patienter sed beneigne (5) vos audituros, suscepti profecto muneris magnitudo me prorsus attonitum efficeret stupentemque ³ exaninaret. Ea enim mihi dicenda forent, quae eloquentissimo cuique³ haud parvam, sed uberem dicendi materiam suppeditarent. Humanitate tamen vestra fretus in bonam spem venio (5) facillime a vobis me veniam posse (10) impetrare, si minus accurate quam rei dignitas postulet a me fuerit peroratum, cum non sim unus ex his, qui⁴ vitam in eloquentiae⁵ exercitatione continent⁶.

[2] Et quoniam hoc est tempus, quo majores⁷ nostri instituerunt esse studiorum initium, ita eorum eorum institutis introductum est, ut non ante vel ad minimum quodcumque⁸ legendum (15) descendatur quam in ipsius rei, de qua fuerit agendum, laudatio anteiaret. Praeclare profecto haec⁹, ut omnia, statuerunt¹⁰. Futurum enim esse putabant¹¹ eo ardentius studiis (10) nostris intentos¹² [nos]¹³ esse, quo¹⁴ majorem laudem ex ipsis nos consequi speramus. A quo pervestusto more ne unicus deseruisset¹⁵ puter, faciendum mihi esse sum ratus, ut illius munieris perfungar, quod (20) susceptus hic locus jure suo videtur postulare, hoc est sapientiae juris commendationem.

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¹ Eneae ... incipit omit. L
² stupentem L
³ illeg. add. K
⁴ per L
⁵ admodum add. in marg. K
⁶ em.; continere K, L
⁷ quo majores omit. L
⁸ quodcumque Kisch
⁹ omit. K
¹⁰ fuerunt add. L
¹¹ ut add. L
¹² mutemur L
¹³ intentos nos em.; illeg. L
¹⁴ putabant ... quo omit. K
¹⁵ descivisse K
Here begins an oration in praise of the arts by Enea Silvio, Poet, to the University of Vienna

1. Introduction

1.1 Captatio benevolentiae

[1] Honourable Fathers, I know quite well that you will listen not only patiently, but even kindly to what I should say. If I did not know it, the greatness of the task I have undertaken would completely overwhelm and baffle me. For I shall be talking on a subject which gives even the most eloquent [speaker] not little, but abundant matter for speech. But trusting in your kindness, I have good hope that I shall easily obtain you forgiveness if I speak less stringently than the importance of the matter requires, as I am not one of those who spend their life in the exercise of eloquence.

1.2 Subject of oration

[2] This is the time that our forefathers decided upon for the beginning of studies, and they also established [the custom] that even the smallest course of lectures should begin with a praise of the subject matter. This was excellently done - as everything [they did] - for they believed that the more we hope to gain praise from our studies, the more fervently we shall apply ourselves to them. Not [wishing] to be considered the only one to have neglected this ancient custom, I have decided to perform the task as appropriate to the present venue, chosen [for the occasion], and thus to praise of the science of law.

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1 In this instance, 13 October 1445
2 “iure suo”
3 “sapientia”
4 The lecture took place in the building housing the Faculty of Law
[3] Sed ne omnino sicco - ut ajunt - pede videar incessisse, statui adjicere\(^1\) atque appendicere quandam aliorum quoque artium laudationem. Qua in re ita diverso orationis genere mihi video esse utendum\(^2\), ut ferme a quo potissimum (25) incipiam prorsus ignorem. (15) In hoc vero convenire videntur, quod non voluptatem\(^3\), sed immensam etiam utilitatem parturiunt. Quare si placet, ipsarum artium simul et\(^4\) juris\(^5\) utilitatem conspiciamus. Deinde quanta ex ipsis voluptas et ornamentum percipi possit, considerabimus.


[5] Logicae vero sive dialecticae si non fueris\(^7\) nescius, quod verum in primis, quod falsum, quod antecedens, quod\(^8\) consequens, (20) quod\(^9\) syllogismus, quod enthymema ubi libet facile cognoscites, ut\(^10\) nullo fallaciaraem laqueo implicari, (238v) nullo\(^11\) errore labi, nulla falsitate arripi possis, quae usque adeo necessaria est, ut omnium paene scientiarum sit adminiculum et multorum judicio scientia scientiarum judicatur\(^12\).

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\(^1\) statui adjicere \textit{omit.} L
\(^2\) utandum K
\(^3\) volioptatem K
\(^4\) a K
\(^5\) jurum L
\(^6\) \textit{em.; add. si} K, L
\(^7\) \textit{em.; fuerit} K, L
\(^8\) quid K
\(^9\) quid K
\(^10\) \textit{omit.} L
\(^11\) nulle L
\(^12\) \textit{iudicetur} L
[3] But, so as not to appear to enter [this subject]¹ with completely dry feet² as they say - I have decided to add and append something in praise of the other arts. As here I must use a different oratorical genre, I almost do not know where to begin at all. However, they [all] have this in common that they do not give pleasure only, but also immense benefit. Therefore, we shall - with your permission - [first] look at the benefit of the [liberal] arts and law together, and thereafter we shall consider the great pleasure and ornament to be gained from them.

2. Benefits of arts and sciences

2.1. Trivium

2.1.1. Grammar

[4] Firstly, anyone who is not sufficiently grounded in grammar should know that he lacks the guidance necessary for access to the other disciplines³, because he stumbles [already in the beginning of] his undertaking, both with regard to the basics and with regard to the rules to follow.

2.1.2. Logic

[5] And if you know logic (or dialectic), you will easily recognize first of all what is true and what is false, and what is an antecedent⁴, a consequent⁵, a syllogism, and an enthymeme, whenever they they occur, so that you will not be ensnared by fallacies, misled by error, and caught by false statements. Logic is so necessary that it is the support of almost all sciences, and many consider it as the science of sciences.⁶

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¹ I.e. the praise of law
² I.e. abruptly and without any lead-up
³ Note Piccolomini’s use of the the terms arts, disciplines, and sciences
⁴ I.e. a premise
⁵ I.e. a conclusion
⁶ The notion of logic as the science of sciences derives from Petrus Hispanus (fl. 13th c.), author of a treaty on logic, later called Summulae Logicales, cf. Rijk, p. 1

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(7) Qua etiam duce ad historiae cognitionem perducimur, quae optimo jure a majoribus nostris virtutis parens vitaeque magistra¹¹ est vocitata. Quaevis¹² enim artes, (15) quae de moribus¹³ et prestantissimis institutis traditae sunt, quo plus vita et facta¹⁴ clarissimorum virorum illustrantur. Quis¹⁵ enim ambigat ea, quae ab aliis gesta didicimus (30) quam¹⁶ admirabilia sunt, facilita nobis imitatu videri¹⁷ et promptius ad honestatem incitare quam si praeeptione (20) solum lentius disputentur. Hoc, inquam, historiae notitia facit, ut summos homines, quos tantopere et admiramur et probamus magno studio imitari velimus. Sic Alexandrum Caesar, sic Marcus Brutus Junium illum, gentilem suum, sic Tullius Demosthenem, sic denique multi incredibili (25) ardore admirandos praestantissimos viros historiae veritate¹⁸ incensi magnas et honestissimas res gesserunt.

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¹ rethorica K, L
² subsequetur L
³ vel add. K
⁴ profereat L
⁵ quosque K
⁶ scripturos K
⁷ cernite add. K; carnute add. L
⁸ em.; quod K; que L
⁹ omit. L
¹⁰ antecellant L
¹¹ moram K
¹² illeg. L
¹³ de moribus omit. L
¹⁴ em.; factis K, L
¹⁵ quomodo K
¹⁶ quamquam K
¹⁷ omit. L
¹⁸ vitatu K

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2.1.3. Rhetoric

[6] Now follows rhetoric which is the splendour and elegance combined with gravity of both single words and sentences. Why rhetoric should be sought – so that [someone] will not express himself or write or speak ineptly (like eloquence itself teaches even the most eloquent writers of the arts), but know and understand how much it should be treasured – may be understood from [the fact] that, as Tullius¹ says, “men differ from animals in that they are able to speak.”² So, how greatly greatly should we not praise him who excels others in that very area where we men excel animals.”³

2.1.3.1. History

[7] And under the guidance of rhetoric we are led to the knowledge of history which our forefathers – excellently called mother of virtue and teacher of life.⁴ These arts concern morals and excellent precepts and they have been have been handed down in order make the lives and deeds of noble men better known. Who doubts that the deeds of other men which we have learnt to be admirable are easier for us to imitate and more readily stimulate us to be honourable than such things which are taught in cumbersome lectures? I declare that knowledge of history makes us want to eagerly imitate the best of men whom we greatly admire and esteem. Thus Caesar⁵ [imitated] Alexander,⁶ ⁷ thus Marcus Brutus⁸ [imitated] his [distant] relative Junius,⁹ thus Tullius¹⁰ Tullius¹¹ [imitated] Demosthenes,¹² and thus many others, inspired by true history, enthusiastically performed great and honourable deeds in imitation of admirable and eminent men.

¹ Cicero, Marcus Tullius: (106-43 BC): Roman statesman and author
² Cicero: De inventione, 1, 5: Ac mihi quidem videntur homines, cum multis rebus humiliores et infirmiores sint, hac re maxime bestiis praestore, quod loqui possunt.
³ Cicero: De oratore, 1, 32-33: Hoc enim uno praestamus vel maxime feris, quod colloquimur inter nos, et quod exprimere dicendo sensa possimus. Quam ab rem quis hoc non iure miretur, summeque in eo elaborandum esse arbitretur, ut, quo uno homines maxime bestiis praestent, in hoc hominibus ipsis antecellat?
⁴ Cicero: De oratore, 2, 9, 36
⁵ Julius Caesar, Gaius (100– 44 BC): Roman general and statesman. Imitated Alexander in endeavouring the create a world empire
⁶ 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
⁷ Plutarch: Parallel Ifes / Julius Caesar, 5
⁸ Marcus Junius Brutus the Younger (85 – 42 BC): politician of the late Roman Republic. One of Caesar’s assassins
⁹ Lucius Junius Brutus: founder of the Roman Republic and one of the first consuls in 509 BC. He was claimed as an ancestor of the Roman gens Junia, including the most famous of Julius Caesar’s assassins. He overthrew the Tarquinian monarchy, as his descendant overthrew the monarchy of Julius Caesar
¹⁰ Cicero
¹¹ Demosthenes (384–322 BC): Greek statesman and orator of ancient Athens. Fought for the Greek republics against King Philip of Macedonia, as Cicero fought for the Roman republic, opposing Julius caesar and Octavian Augustus
[8] Sed ad rhetoricam\(^1\) (35) revertamur, quae si ita frivola res esset, ut eam multi aestimant, non usque adeo apud veteres culta et celebrata et in summo honore habita esset, (30) nec eloquentissimis\(^2\) solum ferme viris regendarum urbium et moderandarum rerum publicarum cura fuisset demandata.

[9] [239r] Verum ut etiam de astrarum, numerorum\(^3\), et mensurarum ac etiam melodiae\(^4\) scientiae\(^5\) a\(^6\) propontione dicam, reliquum\(^7\) est quae sane omnia ex quattuor aliis\(^8\) artibus habentur: habentur: astronomia verum, arithmetica\(^9\), geometria, et musica. Ea profecto (5) in his sit artibus utilitas, (40) ut sine his ducibus atque magistris nihil divinum sive humanum, nullus\(^10\) perfectus nec imperfectus, nihil superius, nihil inferius, nihil rectum nec obliquum, nihil denique\(^11\) suave\(^12\) nec\(^13\) absonum\(^14\) perfici aut cognosci paene quaeat, quo fit, ut optimo sane jure majoribus (10) nostris liberales appellatae sunt artes, sive quod ab omni ignorantiae nubilo studiosorum mentes immersas\(^15\) liberare consueverunt, sive quod eas utpote\(^16\) dignissimas ac nii\(^17\) servile redolentes nulli nisi libero liberaliterque\(^18\) enutrito homini ediscere\(^19\) licebat.

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1 retorica K, L
2 eloquentissimos K
3 numerorum K
4 etiam melodiae : geometriae L
5 scientiae L
6 et K
7 antequam K
8 em.; aliquis K, L
9 arismetica K, L
10 minus add. K; numquam L
11 omit. L
12 mane L
13 neque L
14 obscenum L
15 immensas L
16 utpute K
17 omit. L
18 liberaliter esset L
19 adiscere K
But let us return to rhetoric. If it was so frivolous as many believe, it would not have been so greatly cultivated, celebrated, and honoured as it was in Antiquity, and the charge of governing cities and ruling states would not have been entrusted almost exclusively to very eloquent men.

2.2. Quadrivium: Astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and music

But to speak fittingly\(^1\) also about the science of stars, numbers, measures, and melody, almost all the rest comes from the four other arts: astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and music.\(^2\) Indeed the benefit of these arts is so great that without them as guides and teachers almost nothing can be done or known that is divine or human, perfect or imperfect, above or below, straight or crooked, pleasant or unpleasant. Therefore it was completely justified when our forefathers called these arts the liberal arts,\(^3\) whether it was because they used to free the minds of students from all the cloud of ignorance in which they were immersed, or because it was only allowed to teach these noble arts, having nothing servile about them, to someone who was a free man and raised as such.

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\(^1\) \textit{"a proportione"}

\(^2\) I.e. the four arts of the quadrivium

\(^3\) Artes liberales: the common of studies in Antiquity. The classification of the liberal arts has varied over the centuries. The one established by Martianus Capella (5th c. AD), comprising the three “human” arts of the trivium and the four “natural arts” of the quadrivium, lasted until the renaissance when the humanists began to use the term “studia humanitatis” about the disciplines of the trivium, adding history, Greek, ethics, and poetry.
[10] Jam vero harum omnium (15) (45) artium matrem et procreatorem quandam et omnium reginam philosophiam quis satis pro dignitate laudare valeat, quando ipsam Cicero, oratorum\(^1\) princeps, in Tusculanis “virtutis ducem et indagatorem, donum deorum, morum magistrum” appellaret\(^2\); quando denique ipsa\(^3\) causarum omnium ratio et explicatio unaque (20) omnium voce atque sententia praedicetur, asseratur, atque comprobetur\(^4\). Et non immerito\(^5\) in ejus laudem poeta protulerit in secundo Georgicarum\(^6\):

\[
\text{Felix qui}\(^7\) potuit rerum cognoscere causas} \\
\text{atque metus omnis et}\(^8\) inexorabile fatum subiecit\(^9\) pedibus} \\
\text{strepitumque}\(^{10}\) Acherontis (50) avari.
\]

Per ipsam (25) namque omnium generabilium et\(^{11}\) corruptibilium, vegetalium, sensibilium, rationabilium, superrationaliumque corporum, nobis\(^{12}\), ut dici solet, ad unguem causae, rationes, et effectus exprimuntur atque distribuuntur.

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\(^{1}\) aratorum L  
\(^{2}\) appellaret L  
\(^{3}\) ipsarum L  
\(^{4}\) comprobatur K  
\(^{5}\) in merito K, L  
\(^{6}\) Georgicorum K  
\(^{7}\) que K  
\(^{8}\) omit. K, L  
\(^{9}\) subiecerit L  
\(^{10}\) strepitum illeg. L  
\(^{11}\) omit. L  
\(^{12}\) ubi L
2.3. Philosophy

[10] And now, who can adequately praise philosophy, mother, creator, and queen of all the arts. In the Tusculanae, Cicero, prince of orators, named her “the guide to virtue as well as its explorer, explorer, gift of the gods, and teacher of morals.” All agree to proclaim and accept her as the reason and explanation of all causes. And in the second book of the Georgica, the poet justly said in her praise:

\[\textit{Blessed is he who has succeeded in learning the laws of nature’s working, has cast beneath his feet all fear and fate’s implacable decree, and the howl of insatiable Death.}\]

Through her, the causes, reasons, and effects of all created and corruptible, vegetal, sensible, rational and superrational bodies are expressed and distributed to us – to the fingernail, as they say.

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1 Cicero: Tusculanae disputationes, 26, 64
2 Cicero: Tusculanae disputationes, 4, 33
3 Cicero: Tusculanae disputationes, 26, 64
4 Cicero: Tusculanae disputationes, 5, 6
5 Vergilius Maro, Publius (70 – 19 BC): Roman poet
6 Vergilius: Georgica, 2, 490-492
7 i.e. exactly
[11] Deinde\textsuperscript{1} philosophiae effectum\textsuperscript{2}, medicinam ipsum, mirae utilitatis esse quis\textsuperscript{3} dubitet, quandoquidem (30) ea est ars, qua nobis\textsuperscript{4} corpus humanum bene affectum reddatur\textsuperscript{5}, sanetur\textsuperscript{6} et et incolume praeservetur? Quemadmodum enim philosophia animorum, (239v) quos sanat, morbos tollat, ita et ea corporibus ipsis, quorum servationem\textsuperscript{7} proficit,\textsuperscript{8} medeatur quadruplici utilitate. Nihil\textsuperscript{9} sane ad vitam salutemque\textsuperscript{10} homini praestantius inveniri possit et profecto nullo\textsuperscript{11} dubio aliquo affici puto medicum (312v) (5) ipsum Dei ministrum esse, ut, quos omnium conditor Deus creavit hac arte divina divinitusque exhibita\textsuperscript{12} conservet incolumes, lapsus curet, et paene a mortuis mortales\textsuperscript{13} saepe ad vitam reducat\textsuperscript{14}, ut verum comprobetur, quod Aesculapio ipsi prognosticatum\textsuperscript{15}:

\begin{quote}
Tibi se mortalia (10) saepe corpora debent
anima tibi reddere ademptas fas erit.
\end{quote}

Quo ex merito\textsuperscript{16} et prisci illi medici ob suam admirandam utilitatem in deorum (5) numerum sunt\textsuperscript{17} collocati. Sic Apollinem\textsuperscript{18}, sic Aesculapium vetustas divinis honoribus est prosecuta.

\begin{flushleft}
\footnotesize
1 demum K
2 et add. K
3 quod L
4 nos K
5 reddant L
6 sanent L
7 em.; surationem K, L
8 profitetur K; proficere L
9 nil K
10 salutem esset L
11 nullum K
12 exhabita K
13 mortale K
14 inducat L
15 pronosticatum K
16 meriti K, L
17 omit. K
18 Apolline L
\end{flushleft}
2.4. Medicine

[11] Next, who doubts the marvellous benefits of medicine, an outcome of philosophy? She is the art through which our human body is cared for, healed, and preserved undamaged. For just as philosophy removes and heals illnesses of the souls, medicine heals the bodies whose care it assures, with quadruple benefit. Indeed nothing can be found that is more beneficial to a man’s life and health, and I believe that there can be no doubt whatsoever that the physician is God’s servant since with his divine and divinely revealed art he preserves those whom God, the creator of all, has created, he cures illnesses, and often restores people who are almost dead to life. Thus it may be seen to be true what was foretold about Aesculapius\(^1\):

\[
\text{Often shall mortal bodies owe their lives to thee,} \\
\text{and to thee shall it be counted right to restore the spirits of the departed.}^2
\]

Therefore it was quite justified that the physicians of old were counted among the gods because of their admirable usefulness. And thus Antiquity gave Apollo\(^3\) and Aesculapius divine honours.

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\(^1\) Hero and god of medicine, representing the healing aspect of the medical arts

\(^2\) Ovidius: *Metamorphoses*, 2, 640

\(^3\) Apollo (Gk. Myth.): and one of the deities of the Greek and Roman pantheon, recognized as a god of healing, but also as god of music, truth prophecy, the sun and light, plague, poetry, and more
Plura de hac re mihi (15) superessent dicenda, nisi me suscepti munus officium ad civilis pontificiique juris commendationem non omnino convertentem provocaret. Quorum utrumque tam explicandum difficile est, ut disertissimi cujusque hominis facundiam exuperet atque excelleit. Quare illud Virgilianum cogor erumpere:

Major rerum mihi nascitur ordo, majus opus moneo.

Quis enim tam insignite eloquens, (10) ut harum disciplinarum debitas laudes efferre possit, quippe per eas omnium mortalium vita salutiferis ac divinis praepceptis (25) excolitur, per eas civitates, populi, nationes sanctissimo inter se jure sociati regunt, protegunt, amplificant.

Soleo equidem, viri ornatissimi, saepenumero mecum cogitare atque animo mecum repetere, quibus rebus civitates ab initio constitutae sint aut postea (30) conservatae et in hanc ipsam, quam videmus, fabricam erectae. (240r) Nulla mihi alia videtur ratio hoc efficisse quam ipsa vis justitiae aut nostri juris timor quidam vel reverentia. Quae enim alia virtus vel quae artes quivissent homines locis silvestribus dissipatos vitamque ferarum agentes conducere unum in locum et eos imbue, ut his, qui virtute et sapientia praestarent, oboedire atque temperare mallent quam passim ferarum et ita vitam trahere, ni ratio ipsa et sapientia juri consentanea eos a consuetudine sua revocasse et ad cultum quandam normamque vivendi incendere potuisset.

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1 convertentem K
2 em. tamquam K, L
3 excellat L
4 protegunt L
5 amplificant L
6 illeg. K
7 cogitariam K
8 sunt K
9 vidimus L
10 et L
11 que K, L
12 in add. L
13 prestarunt K
14 em.; mallant K, L
15 em.; omit. K; eo L
2.5. Law

[12] I should have to say more about this, but since I have not yet turned to praising civil and pontifical law, I have been called to order by the task I have undertaken. To praise them adequately is so difficult that it surpasses and excels the eloquence of even the most learned men. Therefore I am forced to say, with Virgil¹:

Greater is the story that opens before me; greater is the task that I attempt.²

For who is so eminently eloquent that he can praise these disciplines as they merit? Through them, indeed, the life of all men is being constantly developed and improved through salutary and divine precepts, and through them cities, peoples, and nations are being ruled, protected, and multiplied, united by law.

[13] Indeed, distinguished men, I often consider and ponder how cities were formed in the beginning, how they were preserved afterwards, and how they developed the structure³ we see today. I can see no other reason why this happened than the force of justice itself or fear of justice or respect for it. For what other virtues or what other arts could make men scattered in forests and living like wild animals come together in one place and make them prefer to obey and submit to those who excelled in virtue and wisdom rather than to live like animals?⁴ Indeed, this could only happen because reason itself and wisdom consistent with justice could bring them away from their customs and incite them to live a cultured life based on rules.⁵

¹ Vergilius, Publius Vergilius Maro (70 – 19 BC): Roman poet
² Vergilius: Aeneid, 7, 44-45
³ “fabrica”
⁴ Cf. Cicero: De oratore, 1, 8, 33-34: To come, however, at length to the highest achievements of eloquence, what other power could have been strong enough either to gather scattered humanity into one place, or to lead it out of its brutish existence in the wilderness up to our present condition of civilization as men and as citizens, or, after the establishment of social communities, to give shape to laws, tribunals, and civic rights? (Ut vero iam ad illa summa veniamus; quae vis alia potuit aut dispersos homines unum in locum congregare, aut a fera agrestique vita ad hunc humanum cultum civilemque deducere, aut, iam constitutis civitatibus, leges, iudicia, iura describere?). Note that Cicero is here speaking about the power of eloquence, not about justice!
⁵ Piccolomini also treated this theme in his treaty De ortu et auctoritate imperii Romani, finished half a year later on 1 March 1446, where he wrote i.a.: Cum ergo premeretur ab initio multitudo ab his, qui viribus erant editores, ad unum aliquem configurare placuit, virtute praestantem, qui et injurias prohiberet inferri tenuioribus, et aequitater constituta summos cum infimis pari jure teneret (Wolkan, II, nr. 3, p. 8)
[14] (10) Agrestes autem et incultos homines sapientiam quoque desiderare Lactantius Firmianus, (20) vir doctissimus, auctor est, qui¹ - [per²] immortalem Deum - nullius rei naturam nostram tam cupidam esse et³ appetentem voluisse affirmavit quam sapientiae et religionis, ad quorum primum jus civile (15) nos perducit, secundum vero jus pontificium sive canonicum affatim docet, quibus duabus disciplinis nulla certe dignior, praestabilior aut admirabilior hac in vita humana censeri debet, nec est ulla, quae magis juventutem ad se allicere atque animos hominum flammare debeat (20) quam haec de gubernandis urbibus deque clero (25) coercendo gubernandoque⁴ est⁵. Haec enim civitates in perpetua pace continet. Illa⁶, quo pacto ecclesia ceremonias suas instituere debet⁷, edocet. Haec homines inter se mutuo societatis et amicitiae vinculo conciliat. Illa sacerdotes (25) praesulibus subjicit et observantia vult esse prosequendos⁸. Haec homicidia⁹, furta, adulteria, et omne aliud genus scelerum prohibit. [Illa¹⁰] simoniam, usuram voracem, clandestina matrimonia vetat. Haec denique aut metu poenae homines ab iniquitate deterret aut praemio (30) ad honorem virtutis et gloriae (30) allicit. Illa demum {240v} aut anathemate in contumaces saevit aut suis professoribus uberem spem et aditum ad dignitates spondet, qua utilitate quid¹¹ sit praestabilius aut optatius nullus vel ingenio hebes ignorat. Longe plura quam attigi (5) de duabus his disciplinis dicenda mihi video superesse.
Lactantius Firmianus,\(^1\) that most learned man and author, stated that even primitive and uncultured men desire wisdom, since – by immortal God – our nature wants and craves nothing more than wisdom and religion.\(^2\) To the first of these [two] we are brought by civil law, and the second we are taught by pontifical or canon law.\(^3\) In this human life, no other discipline may be considered more noble\(^4\), eminent, and admirable than these two disciplines, and no other discipline should be more able to attract young men and enflame the souls of men than this discipline [whose subject] is the government of cities and the rule and government of the clergy. Civil law keeps cities in permanent peace. Pontifical law teaches how the church should perform its ceremonies. Civil law unites men with bonds of society and friendship. Pontifical law subjects the priests to their bishops and desires them to live according to [its rules]. Civil law forbids murder, theft, adultery, and all other kinds of crime. Pontifical law forbids simony, voracious usury, and clandestine marriages. And, finally, civil law deters men from evil by fear of punishment and inspires them to the honour of virtue and glory by rewards, and pontifical law either severely punishes insubordinate men with excommunication or gives its adherents abundant hope and promises access to important offices. All, even the weakminded, know that nothing is more excellent and desirable than this benefit.

I still have much more to say [today] about these two disciplines than I have managed to [so far].

\(^1\) Lactantius Firmianus (c. 240 – c. 320): early Christian author
\(^2\) Lactantius: *Institutiones divinae*, 3, 11, 2
\(^3\) At the time law was divided into civil law, deriving from Roman law, and pontifical or canon law, consisting of the laws passed by the Church
\(^4\) “dignior”
Verum omnium scientiarum regina theologia me currentem subsistere cogit nec vult silentio praeteriri. Qua in re in quo animo fero mihi eam vim dicendi deesse, ut eam pro ejus splendore et majestate dignis (10) (35) praecorius posse commendare. Quis autem est ita optimarum artium studio praeditus, ut hanc omnium scientiarum facile principem non modo meritis laudibus proseque nequeat, sed ne minimum quidem ejus decorem attingere posse confidat, quae eo illustrior et praestantior habeatur, quo magis (15) ad veram et ingenuam naturam hominis accedat. Nam, ut ait Ovidius,

pronaeque cum spectent animalia cetera terram,  
os homini sublime dedit caelumque videre iussit  
et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.

2.6. Theology

[15] But as I am rushing forward, theology, queen of all sciences, forces me to stop and will no longer be ignored. However, I am aware that in this matter I am lacking that power of speaking to adequately praise its splendour and majesty. And no one is so gifted with the best of arts that he may adequately praise theology, which is easily the most important of all sciences, or even its smallest ornament. It is considered to be so illustrious and eminent because it reaches the true and authentic nature of man. As Ovid says:

And, though all other animals are prone, and fix their gaze upon the earth,  
he gave to man an uplifted face and bade him stand erect and turn his eyes to heaven.¹

[16] For no one may doubt that, as Lactantius says, we were taught by nature to turn the mind in the same direction to which the countenance is raised,² and to which the nature of the body calls us.³ The science we are talking about now is the only one which leads us to the Heavenly Kingdom. It teaches us to view the high throne of omnipotent God and all the ranks of the celestial hierarchy. It propels us to contemplate that which, as Paul⁴ says, “it is not granted to man to utter.”⁵ It promises immortality to its adherents and followers. But those who stray from her commandments, she makes go straight to punishment and torture in Hell’s horrible abyss.

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¹ Ovidius: Metamorphoses, 1, 84  
² Lactantius: Institutiones divinae, 3, 10. MPL, VI, c. 375, B. Translation quoted after the Advent edition  
³ Lactantius: Institutiones divinae, 3, 10. MPL, VI, c. 375, B. Translation quoted after the Advent edition  
⁴ The Apostle Paul  
⁵ 2. Corinthians, 12, 4: Quoniam raptus est in paradisum: et audivit arcana verba, quae non licet homini loqui
[17] Nunc postquam artium (29) liberalium, philosophiae, medicinae et una cum theologia singulares (241r) praedixerimus utilitates, jam celeri passu prope rationem, ut eam voluptatem et ornamentum non silentio praetereamus. “Officium animi esse,” ait Lactantius, “ea subtilius cernere, quae acies corporalis nequit intueri.” Afferenda ergo modo est mens et ad cognitionem rerum occultarum sublimanda. Quae autem - per deum immortalem - major voluptas aut defectatio esse potest, (50) quam dum cujusque rei rationem nobiscum consideramus aut cum aliis communicamus? Nam cum animo, quam nobis dedit natura, nullus sit cibus dulcior, nulla esca juicundior, nullum suavius pabulum quam rerum cognitio, et quo frequentius eo utatur cibo, eo majore fruatur voluptate, quo fit, ut omnes cum musis commercium habentes voluptuariam vitam ducamus. Et existimemus, quod non voluptuosius fieri possit (54) quam ex ipsa sapientiae fonte (15) vel nos ipsos potare vel alios potare. Quid dulcior quam, quod studio ipse inveneris, id alteri impertire atque communicare. Ad quam quidem rem natura ipsa nos instituit et formavit, ut quod omnibus fructuosum esset, id in medium summa cum ardore [et alacritate profunderemus].
3. Enjoyment and distinction\(^1\) of arts and sciences

[17] Now that we have spoken of the individual benefits of the liberal arts, philosophy, medicine, and theology, our oration must move along with all speed so that we do not pass over, in silence, their enjoyment and distinction. According to Lactantius, “it is the office of the soul to perceive those things more clearly which the eye of the body cannot behold.”\(^2\) So now mind must be brought forward and raised to the knowledge of those things which are hidden.

By immortal God, what pleasure or delight can be greater than to ponder the reason for something or share it with others? No food is sweeter to the mind, which nature has given us, and no fare more pleasant than acquiring knowledge of things, and the more often we have this food, the greater is the pleasure. Therefore, all we who have associate with the Muses\(^3\) lead a life of pleasure. And let us consider that nothing can be more pleasant than that we and others drink from the fountain of wisdom itself. What is more delightful than to transmit and communicate to others what you have found through your own studies? It was nature herself who taught and formed us for this, so that we should with the greatest eagerness and alacrity share with others what is fruitful to all.

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\(^1\) “ornamentum”

\(^2\) Lactantius: *Institutiones divinae*, 2, 3. MPL, VI, c. 265, A. Translation quoted after the Advent edition

\(^3\) Cicero: *Tusculanae disputationes*, 5, 66: *Who in all the world, who enjoys merely some degree of communion with the Muses (Quis est omnium, qui modo cum Musis, id est cum humanitate et cum doctrina, habeat aliquod commercium)*
[18] Inde est Homerus ille, primus et summus poetarum, non prius se ad scribendum (20) contulit, quam ad majorem orbis partem¹ videndam ivisset, quod plus se voluptatis inde capturum putavit, si haec oculis visisset, de quibus sibi² scribendum constituit. Hinc etiam est, quod (5) Gallus ille, Scipionis familiaris, tanta geometricarum ac astronomicarum descriptionum voluptate tenebatur, (25) ut cum noctu ad aliquid scribendum ingressum lux saepe deprehendetur³, vel cum mane coepisset nox eum (27) opprimet⁴ potissimum cum mirum⁵ in modum eum delectaret (241v) solis et lunae defectiones aequalibus suis multo ante praedicere.

¹ orbis partem : partem orbis L
² omit. K
³ deprehenditur K
⁴ opprimeret K
⁵ miris K
This is why Homer, first and greatest among poets, did not begin to write before he had gone to visit most of the world, for he thought that he would gain more pleasure [from writing] if he had seen with his own eyes what he had decided to write about.

And this is why Gallus, an intimate friend of Scipio, took such pleasure in describing geometrical [issues] and astronomical [phenomena] that often the morning sun surprised him working on some chart which he had begun at night, and often night surprised him at a task begun at the break of day, taking much joy in telling his companions, long in advance, of eclipses of the sun and moon!¹

¹ Homer: In the Western classical tradition, Homer is the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Most modern researchers place Homer in the 7th or 8th centuries BC
² Gallus, Gaius Sulpicius: general, statesman and orator of the Roman Republic. Studied astronomy and gained great reputation for having predicted a lunar eclipse on the night before the Battle of Pydna (168 BC)
³ Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Numantinus, Publius Cornelius [Scipio Africanus the Younger] (185–129 BC): politician of the Roman Republic, twice consul. As general he destroyed Carthage in 146 BC
⁴ Cicero: *De Senectute*, 13, 49: Videbamus in studio dimetiendi paene caeli atque terrae C. Gallum, familiarem patris tui, Scipio. Quotiens illum lux noctu aliquid describere ingressum, quotiens nox oppressit, cum mane coepisset! Quam delectabat eum defectiones solis et lunae molto ante nobis praedicere
Hinc est quod Archimedes, summus ille mathematicus, captis a Claudio Marcello Syracusi ac hostili concessis, tanta cupiditate formis in pulvere scriptis intentus quod supervenientis militia, a quo interfecit quod impetum et diruptionem non senserit. Inde est, quod Solon, unus ex Graeciae septem sapientibus, gloriari solebat se addiscendo senem fieri. Hinc etiam factum fuit, quod Carneades tantam voluptatem ex crebra lectione aucupabatur, ut etiam inter comedendum, quemadmodum ait Valerius Maximus, se comedere debere fuisse oblitus. Quae haec, patres amplissimi, existimanda est voluptas, ut etiam nos illius muneris immores facit, quod natura potissimum in nobis produxit.

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1 hostili directe in add. K
2 senam K
3 omit. K
4 voluptas ut : ut voluptas K
5 in memores K
[19] And this is why Archimedes,¹ the greatest of mathematicians, [died]. For when Claudius Marcellus² conquered Syracuse³ and treated it as a hostile city, Archimedes was so occupied in studying the figures he had written in the sand that he did not notice the enemy soldier who approached and killed him, after having tried [in vain] to interrupt and warn him.⁴

This is why Solon,⁵ one of the seven wise men of Greece, used to boast that he grew old learning.⁶

And this is why Carneades⁷ took such delight in frequent reading that when eating, as Valerius Maximus⁸ tells, he forgot that he had to eat.⁹ Honourable fathers, how greatly should we not estimate a pleasure which makes us forget even the greatest gift that nature has bestowed on us?¹⁰

¹ Archimedes of Syracuse (c. 287 – c. 212 BC): Greek mathematician, physicist, engineer, inventor, and astronomer. Generally considered the greatest mathematician of Antiquity
² Claudius Marcellus, Marcus (c. 268 – 208 BC): Roman statesman and general. Conquered the fortified city of Syracuse in a protracted siege during which Archimedes was killed
³ 212 BC
⁴ Plutarch: Parallel lives / Marcellus, 19, 4: But what most of all afflicted Marcellus was the death of Archimedes. For it chanced that he was by himself, working out some problem with the aid of a diagram, and having fixed his thoughts and his eyes as well upon the matter of his study, he was not aware of the incursion of the Romans or of the capture of the city. Suddenly a soldier came upon him and ordered him to go with him to Marcellus. This Archimedes refused to do until he had worked out his problem and established his demonstration, whereupon the soldier flew into a passion, drew his sword, and dispatched him. Others, however, say that the Roman came upon him with drawn sword threatening to kill him at once, and that Archimedes, when he saw him, earnestly besought him to wait a little while, that he might not leave the result that he was seeking incomplete and without demonstration; but the soldier paid no heed to him and made an end of him
⁵ Cicero: De finibus bonorum et malorum, 5, 19: What an ardour for study, think you, possessed Archimedes, who was so absorbed in a diagram he was drawing in the dust that he was unaware even of the capture of his native city! (Quem enim ardores studi censetis fuisse in Archimede, qui dum in pulvere quaedam describit attentius, ne patriam quidem caperet esse senserit!)
⁶ Cicero: De Senectute, 8, 26: Quid, qui etiam addiscunt aliquid, ut et Solonem versibus gloriantem videmus, qui se cotidie aliquid addiscat dicit senem fieri
⁷ Carneades (214/3–128/9 BC): Greek philosopher belonging to the Academic skeptic school
⁸ Valerius Maximus (flourished in the 1st c. under Emperor Tiberius): Roman writer and author of a collection of historical anecdotes
⁹ Valerius Maximus: Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri, 8, 5: So marvellously had he devoted himself to the operations of learning that when he had lain down to take a meal, wrapped in thought he would forget to stretch out his hand to the table. (Idem illi vivendi ac philosophandi finis fuit, ita se mirificum doctrinae operibus addixerat, ut cum cibi copiandi causa recubuisset, cogitationibus inhaerens manum ad mensam porrigere oblisceretur)
¹⁰ In his oration to the parishioners of Aspach, written in 1445-1446, Piccolomini said: Moreover, God and Nature have given men nothing more precious than the mind, for through the mind we know what is good and what is evil, and through the mind we are like God. But nothing is more harmful to this divine gift and present than bodily pleasures: when lust prevails there is no place for moderation, and virtue cannot survive in the realm of pleasure. Whoever is immersed in the pleasures of sex, food, and drink cannot use his mind properly nor achieve anything through reason and thought. [Sect. 53]
[20] Quantum vero ornamenti afferant haec artes se coalentibus¹ (15) nobis² huic plusquam³ (15) (15) omnes sui studiosos aut ex ignobilibus claros aut ex claris clarissimos et celebritissimos viros reddant, ...⁴ ut ignores plusne ornamenti possesoribus suis addiderint⁵, aut plus ipsae a suis possesoribus accipiant. Ex quo innumerables⁶ artium scriptores recenseri possunt, (20) quorum nomina una cum corporibus delesset vetustas, nisi illos⁷ artes ipsae immortalitati dicassent⁸. Quod Quod intelligens Alexander ille magnus momenti non minus ponebat in bonarum⁹ artium cognitione quam¹⁰ in tanto suo imperio, quo maximam orbis partem occupavit. Verum etiam suarum (25) expeditionum comites et commilitones semper habuit cum praeclaros philosophos tum¹¹ et praecellarissimorum¹² auctorum¹³ (242r) codices, quibus omne ab armis otiosum tempus impenderet.

[21] Qua re illud Demetrii¹⁴ Phalerii praeceptum semper magnificum¹⁵ ac¹⁶ praeclarum putavi, quo vir sapentissimus Ptolomaeum, regem Aegyptiarum, admonuit, ut quam creberrime¹⁷ (5) libros legeret et nunquam, quod posset¹⁸, ex manibus dimitteret¹⁹. Laudatus etiam semper est²⁰ ab optione quoque Alexandriæ Caesar, quod historicis obeundis²¹ viris²² tamquam sapientissimos²³ consiliarios consulebat, (25) ut si quid²⁴ hujuscemodi superiori²⁵ aetate bene factum esse²⁶ id vel usu probatum²⁷ vel (10) melius ac prudentius decerneret.

¹ nolentibus L
² vel K
³ quod L
⁴ text missing K, L
⁵ addiderunt K
⁶ in naturalibus K
⁷ illas K, L
⁸ ditassent L
⁹ bonorum K
¹⁰ quod L
¹¹ omit. L
¹² em.; preclarissimum K, L
¹³ auctorem L
¹⁴ Themetrii L
¹⁵ omit. K
¹⁶ atque K
¹⁷ ut quam crebre : creberiorem L
¹⁸ passim L
¹⁹ dimittet K
²⁰ esset L
²¹ obeundis K
²² viribus L
²³ sapientissimam K
²⁴ quam L
²⁵ omit. L
²⁶ vel add. K
²⁷ probans K
[20] How great a distinction these arts are to us who cultivate them and how much they transform their students from lowly men to noble men, or from noble men to very noble and famous ... that you do not know whether the arts adorn their possessors more than they are adorned by them. Thus very many writers of the arts may be listed whose names would have been destroyed by age together with their bodies unless these arts had granted them immortality.¹ This was understood by Alexander the Great² who valued the knowledge of the good arts as highly as his great empire, occupying most of the world. For on his expeditions he always had as his companions and comrades in war famous philosophers as well as books of the most eminent writers³ on whom he spent all the time he was not fighting.⁴

[21] This is why I have always considered the precept of Demetrius of Phalerum⁵ as magnificent and noble. That wise man admonished King Ptolemy⁶ of Egypt to read books as often as possible and never to leave them out of his hands. In Alexandria, Caesar⁷ was praised by a certain officer for treating historians he met as learned counsellors, so that if something had been well done in a former age he would consider it either to be proven by use or to be [otherwise] better and wiser.

¹ A favourite theme of the humanists for whom an important source of patronage was the praise of princes
² 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
³ Possibly a garbed version of this passage from Cicero: Pro Archia, 10, 24: Quam multis scriptores rerum suarum magnus ille Alexander secum habuisse dicitur
⁴ Source not identified
⁵ Demetrius of Phalerum (c. 350 – c. 280 BC): Athenian orator originally from Phalerum, one of the first Peripatetics. Ruled Athens for ten years. Exiled by his enemies in 307 BC, he stayed, after 297 BC, at the court of Alexandria. Wrote on the subjects of history, rhetoric, and literary criticism.
⁶ Ptolemy I Soter (c. 367 – 283 BC): Macedonian general of Alexander the Great, Ptolemy became ruler of Egypt (323–283/2 BC) and founded a dynasty
⁷ Julius Caesar, Gaius (100–44 BC): Roman general and statesman
[22] Dies me profecto deficet, si hanc ipsam rem exemplis afferre conabor. Verum cum jure minime dubia testibus, id est exemplis, non egeamus, cumque jam ad exitum festinat oratio, illud pro confessis\textsuperscript{1} relinquimus, quod jam\textsuperscript{2} vel tritum (15) sit sermone proverbium, nihil esse\textsuperscript{3} inter mortales, quod adeo\textsuperscript{4} repente\textsuperscript{5} exornet et nobilitet et demum viros claros et immortales reddat quam haec opera disciplinarum\textsuperscript{6}, de quibus jam longiorem sermonem habuimus.

\textsuperscript{1} confess K; eius add. L
\textsuperscript{2} omit. L
\textsuperscript{3} est L
\textsuperscript{4} eo K
\textsuperscript{5} inpente L
\textsuperscript{6} em.; discipline K, L
[22] A whole day, however, would not be long enough to attempt [to document] this matter with examples. So, though we are certainly not lacking testimonies, that is examples, and our oration is hastening towards its end, we shall leave this matter, taking it for granted - as if it was a well-known proverb\(^1\) - that nothing so quickly adorns and ennobles men and make them famous and immortal as the exercise of these disciplines about which we have now spoken extensively.

\(^1\) In January 1447, Piccolomini began an oration to Pope Eugenius IV with the words *Tritum est sermone*
[23] Qua re, (30) amplissimi1 viri, cum tantam utilitatem, voluptatem, ornamentum (20) his praedictis2 artibus inesse intelligatis, quis non3 animari4, quis non mirari5, quis non inflammari ad illas pro sua virili capescendas7 debeat, quibus assiduis comitibus et tamquam ducibus nobis honores, emolumenta, gratiam et observantiam vendicare possumus? (25) Omnia vere haec pulchra assequamur, si omnia studio, cura, diligentia, et8 vigilantia atque (242v) omne9 conatu, quae in has optimas artes et disciplinas incumbemus, talesque esse studebimus quales et haberi velimus et desideremus, nobisque10 ante oculos doctissimos viros (35) proponamus et in vitas (5) aliorum tamquam in speculum, quod vel ex usu fiet11 inspiramus, ut idem Terentianus ille senex in Adelphis jussit filium facere, imitandumque12 nobis esse putemus tum Pythagoram tum Platonem, qui cognoscendae veritatis gratiam (10) non solum Graeciam, sed Aegyptum et Asiae (10) magnam partem lustrare et summis laboribus atque sudoribus praeexcellentias evasere13, compluresque alios priscos philosophos, praeertim Cleanthem14 illum, qui cum mirandae15 philosophie sibi16 ardet nec quemquam unum, [qui17] sibi18 victum suppeditaret, haberet, noctu, ut ait Valerius (15) Maximus, ad exhauriendam aquam operam (40) locabat suam, ut diurno19 Chrysippi, summi per id tempus philosophorum20, praeeptis capescendis vacaret21.

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1 ornatissimi L
2 preditum K
3 omit. L
4 amari L
5 mirandi K, L
6 quis non omit. L
7 capessandas K
8 studio cura ... et : cura studio et diligentia K
9 nisi add. K
10 illeg. nobisque add. L
11 sciet K
12 imitandosque K, L
13 et vases L
14 em.; clamitum K, L
15 jubilende K
16 sui K
17 em.
18 unicum add. L
19 em.; interdiu K, L
20 philosophie L
21 vacare K
4. Conclusion

[23] Therefore, distinguished men, as you see the great benefit, pleasure, and distinction deriving from these arts that we have spoken of, who ought not be impressed and enflamed by them and inspired to pursue them with all their might? With them as constant companions and guides, we shall be able to claim honourable offices, emoluments, favour, and respect. For all these we shall acquire successfully if we pursue these excellent arts and disciplines with energy, dedication, diligence, and zeal. So let us endeavour to be such as we wish and desire to be perceived, and let us put before our eyes the most learned of men and look at their lives as in a mirror in order to be inspired by them, just as the old man from Terence’s The Brothers bade his son to do. And let us imitate both Pythagoras and Plato who in order to acquire knowledge of the beauty of truth not only visited Greece and Egypt and most of Asia and reached eminence through much labour and sweat. And let us also imitate many other of the old philosophers, and especially Cleanthes who so burnt for admirable philosophy that he, not having anybody who would provide him with food, earned money by working at night drawing water, as Valerius Maximus tells, so that during the day he might be free to study the teachings of Chrysippus, the greatest philosopher at that time.

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1 Terentius Afer, Publius (195/185–159 BC): Roman playwright
2 Adelphoe, written 60 BC
3 Terentius: Adelphoe, 410
4 Pythagoras (c. 570-c. 495 BC): Greek philosopher and mathematician
5 Plato (428/427 or 424/423 BC – 348/347 BC): Greek philosopher. Student of Socrates
6 “gratia”
7 Cleanthes (c. 330 – c. 230 BC): Greek Stoic philosopher. Originally a boxer, he came to Athens where he took up philosophy, following Zeno’s lectures. He supported himself by working as water-carrier at night. After the death of Zeno, c. 262 BC, he became head of the Stoic school
8 Error for Zeno, deriving from Valerius Maximus. Chrysippus was a pupil of Cleanthes whom he succeeded as head of the Stoic school in Athens
9 Valerius Maximus: Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri, 8, ext. 11: You too, Cleanthes, so laboriously taking in wisdom and so perseveringly handing it on, did the divine power of Diligence herself admire. She saw you as a young man sustaining your poverty at night by drawing water for money, leaving time to study the teachings of Chrysippus by day, and instructing your pupils with the closest care until your ninety-ninth year
[24] Prius quos quidem si diligenti (40) imitatione sequemur ... ¹ ². Est enim hoc³ certamine minime minime deliciarum, sed sudoris eas profecto nancendas⁴ facultates, (20) quae nos facile humo tollent, quae nobis commendatisque⁵ nostris laetitiam, quam⁶ prius nosces⁷, gloriam, et ornamentum affere⁸ possint, quod, ut faciatis, vos ita rogo, ut nil majori studio a vobis oratum vellem.

(25) Explicit recommendatio artium liberalium Enee Silvii⁹ facta Wienne¹⁰ coram (27) doctoribus et et magistris¹¹ feliciter.

¹ sequimur L
² text missing K, L
³ ac K
⁴ nancendas K
⁵ em.; commendataque K, L
⁶ em.; que K, L
⁷ nostre L
⁸ afferi K
⁹ artium ... Silvii with Greek letters L
¹⁰ Vienne L
¹¹ illeg. add. K
So let us begin by carefully imitating these men. For the acquisition of these abilities is indeed a fight not of pleasure, but of sweat. They will easily lift us up from the earth, and they may bring us and ours\textsuperscript{1} joy, glory, and distinction before you know it. To make this happen, I ask you to care for nothing more than this.

Here ends, happily, the praise of the liberal arts by Enea Silvio, made in Vienna before the doctors and masters.

\begin{footnote}{"commendatisque nostris"}
\end{footnote}