

(Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 1)

Oration “*Audivi*” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (16 November 1436, Basel). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

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Abstract

On 16 November 1436, Enea Silvio Piccolomini delivered the oration *Audivi* to the fathers of the Council of Basel, concerning the venue for the Union Council between the Latin Church and the Greek Church. He argued for the City of Pavia in the territory of the Duke of Milan. The oration reflected the tensions between conciliarism and the Papacy, between the European countries, and between the Italian powers including the Papal State. Piccolomini used the occasion to demonstrate his rhetorical skills and humanist learning to the council fathers.

Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Æneas Silvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Pope Eugenius IV; Pope Eugene IV; Duke Filippo Maria Visconti; Milan; Venice; Genoa; Papacy; Papal State; Conciliarism; Council of Basel; Council of Basle; Pavia; Renaissance humanism; France; King Charles VII; Origin of the Turks; Milan; 1436; 15th century; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetorics; Simon Charles; Milan

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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 in HAL Archives.

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

20 July 2019

MCS

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

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context¹

The Council of Basel² opened in 1431. The presidency was soon assumed by the representative of the pope, Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini. Cesarini was torn between his loyalties towards the pope and the council, but as the council became more and more anti-papalist, he finally left it to join the pope.³

Very few participants had come to Basel for the opening of the council, and the pope soon tried to repeat the Pavia-Siena procedure⁴ by dissolving it. However, the council fathers stood firm and gained the support of the emperor and the princes. In 1433, the pope was forced to recognize the council in the bull *Dudum sacrum*.⁵

The council was not structured on the basis of nations as the Council of Konstanz (1414-1418) had been. Still, the national groups had some formalized presence, and the main party at the council was a national group, the French, which eventually came to dominate it completely.⁶ The two other parties were the papal party, which gradually left the council, and the undecided elements, including the Germans.

In his bull of appointment of the papal president of the Council, Martin V had listed five major aims: 1) to deal with the Hussite heresy; 2) to establish peace in Europe; 3) to reform the Church; 4) to reunite the Latin and the Greek churches, and 5) to preserve ecclesiastical independence of secular power.⁷

The Hussite problem was solved by the Hussite Compacts in early 1436. The war between Burgundy, France and England was more or less laid to rest at the Congress of Arras in 1435.⁸ As for Church reform, some decrees were passed, e.g. against the concubinage of priests, but the efforts of the council in this area were mainly directed against the Papacy. In June 1435, the council passed a decree depriving the popes of a considerable part of their revenue in the form of annates, but without assigning other forms of revenue to them.

¹ Ady, pp. 57-59; Boulting, pp. 76-79; Mitchell, pp. 78-81; Paparelli, pp. 63-65; Pastor, I, 232-237; Reinhardt, pp. 63-65; Stolf, pp. 66-67; Voigt, I, pp. 110-121

² Cf. Companion; Helmrath: *Baseler*; Stieber

³ Becker; Christianson

⁴ The Council of Pavia-Siena (1423-1424) was dissolved by Pope Martin V after a short time

⁵ Gill: *Eugenius*, p. 53

⁶ Müller: *France*, p. 391: ... the author who declared in 1945 that Basel was a French council meeting on German soil was completely correct at least in regard to its first decade

⁷ Stieber, p. 10

⁸ Dickinson

As for the reunion with the Greek Church, the council very much wanted the honour of accomplishing this reunion, and so did the pope. The first major issue and a fresh cause for conflict between pope and council was the venue for a Union Council. The pope wanted to transfer the council from Basel to an Italian city so as to better be able to direct and control it. The council itself naturally disagreed, and on 9 September 1434 it passed a decree, *Sicut pia mater*, that the Union Council should take place in a suitable city in Italy, or in Buda, Vienna, or a city in Savoy. The Greeks wanted the council to take place in Italy since it was closer to them, and they also preferred it to take place under the effective presidency of the pope.

After the decree *Sicut pia mater*, the council continued to discuss the venue for the future Union Council with many speeches supporting different cities.

In October/November 1436, the council heard orations in support of various Italian cities,¹ including an – according to Piccolomini – inept oration by Isidoro da Rosate in support of the City of Pavia, in the territory of the Duke of Milan.

Piccolomini saw his chance and speedily prepared a much better speech, the oration “*Audivi*”, in support of the same city, which he delivered at a general session on 16 November 1436. Apparently, this was not the first time he had written orations on conciliar matters. In a letter to Piccolomini of 28 February 1436, i.e. nine months before the delivery of the “*Audivi*”, Francesco Filelfo mentioned two orations against the pope, which Piccolomini had sent to him,² warning Piccolomini not to be mistaken about the Duke of Milan’s real attitude towards the pope³:

Tuas autem duas orationes in Eugenium pontificem maximum lectitavi quam accuratissime, quarum elegantiam probo equidem, sed argumentum ipsum non laudo. Vereor enim tibi fore

¹ These interventions and debates were carefully reported by Juan de Segovia: *Historia*, Bk. IX: *Caput XVII. Oblaciones magnifice Venetorum, ducis Mediolani presertim, Florentinorum et Senensium, si apud eos concilium celebraretur (905-906); Caput XVIII. Multe requisiciones imperatoris Romanorum, ne de Basilea concilium mutaretur, oblatioque ciuitatis Auinionensis pinguior pluribus aliis (pp. 906-908); Caput XIX. Intencio papae circa eleccionem loci explicate per Francie oratores (pp. 908-909); Caput XX. Comparaciones odiosas esse monstrauit grauis contencio secuta ex laudacione locorum, attingens eciam ad publicandum crimina pape (pp. 909-912); Caput XXI. Auinionem non esse locum pro concilio ycumenico, quodque presencia pape sit necessaria, allegat presidens multipliciter (pp. 912-914); Caput XXII. Obligacio presidentis vt reformatio in Germania fieret, et conuencio synodalis cum capitaneo galearum tradito ecclesie vexillo (pp. 914-917)*

² Incidentally, we know from Piccolomini himself (cf. the very first words of the introduction to the Intermediate Version, “*Etsi numquam*”, of the “*Audivi*”), that the “*Audivi*” was the first oration he gave at the council. If he had written other orations before then, either they would not have been delivered, or they would have been written for and delivered by one of the council fathers

³ It is not known if Piccolomini actually held these orations at the council. He may have, since in 1445 he told Pope Eugenius IV – in the oration “*Prius sanctissime praesul*” [7]: *While in Basel, I said, and wrote, and did much against you: I do not deny it*. At any rate the two orations are not extant today: maybe Piccolomini somehow lost them himself, or maybe he suppressed them either because of Filelfo’s criticism or because of his later papalist development and ecclesiastical career

*detrimentosum, quod ut credam auctoritas facit grauissimi huius prudentissimique uiri Iohannis Fagnani, que Sene legatum gerit pro Philippo Marie, inclyto Mediolanensium duce; ait enim ignorare te principis sui mentem erga Eugenium pontificem. Itaque tibi posthac cauendum reor, ne quid scribas, quod ignores.*¹

Later, in 1450, Piccolomini in his *De rebus Basiliae gestis Commentarius* wrote about the Audiui:

*Since we bore sorely the injury to the Duke whom we saw disdained because of this², although we had little eloquence, we wished to make up for the negligence of the man and honor so great a Duke. Rising, therefore, in his place a few days³ later, we delivered an oration in praise of Pavia and the Duke of Milan which was heard for two hours without any annoyance, without inflicting injury on anyone.*⁴

And still later, as Pope Pius II, he wrote about the oration in his *Commentarii*:

*At the time, there was some discussion of transferring the Council to a place where the Greeks would come for a conference. The choice fell between four cities willing to pay the expenses of the Greeks: Florence, Udine, Pavia and Avignon. Eloquent speeches in praise of these cities resounded through the great hall; only Pavia had no one to plead its cause, because Isidoro Rosati, whom the Duke Filippo Maria of Milan had sent for that purpose, had spoken so badly and stupidly that he had been told to hold his tongue. Aeneas was moved by the humiliation of this noble city and its Prince, and that very night he composed a speech. Next day he went into the Council, where Giuliano, the Papal Legate, used his influence to get him permission to speak. For two hours⁵ he declaimed before a most attentive and admiring audience. Afterwards, everyone who had heard his speech had a copy made for himself.*⁶

One of Piccolomini's contemporary biographers, Giannantonio Campano, Bishop of Teramo, a protégé of Piccolomini after he became Pope, wrote about the oration, in his *Vita Pii II Pontificis Maximi*:

*In Basel ... he tried in vain to persuade the Fathers to transfer the Council to Pavia, since the Italians preferred Florence, the Germans Udine, and the French Avignon.*⁷

¹ Epistolarium, ep. 19, p. 47

² I.e. by the inept speech of Isidoro da Rosate

³ Actually 12 days later, see below

⁴ Reject, p. 348

⁵ Notary Bruneti said an hour and a half (*Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 334)

⁶ CO, 1, 8, 1 (Meserve, I, p. 30-33). Note that in 1450 he wrote: "a few days later", and ten years after: "the next day"

⁷ Zimolo, p. 11: *Basileae ... concilium ut Papiam traduceretur frustra suasit, Italis Florentiam, Germanis Utinum, Gallis Avinionem praeferentibus.*

The oration is also mentioned by Bartolomeo Platina, another of Pius' contemporary biographers, who wrote as follows:

He often spoke in the council, but one speech is considered to have been especially good and elegant, i.e. the speech concerning the choice of venue for the future council. In this speech, he showed that Pavia (once called Ticinum) should be preferred to Avignon, Udine, and Florence because of its conditions, convenience, and location, the magnificence of the private houses, the pleasant and mild climate, the ease of importing everything needed by a city, Duke Filippo's generosity, and the proximity of the river Ticino that provides for easy transportation of provisions. He gave this oration when he was commanded to speak in place of the man who had been sent by Filippo and who had been speaking confusedly and ineptly and who had no knowledge of the liberal arts.¹

Georg Voigt, Piccolomini's great 19th century – and not very sympathetic – biographer, said about the speech:

Die Rede, die Enea nun vor dem Concil hielt, ist uns als das erste von ihm ausgehende Zeugnis seiner Fähigkeit und Gewandtheit wichtig.² And later: Wer sich an alle Parteien wendet, wird seiner Sache keinem Freund, aber auch seiner Person keinen Feind erwerben. An der Wahl von Pavia lag dem Redner weniger als an der Gunst des Herzogs, für den er sich aus freien Stücken verwendet, und an der hohen Meinung, die nach einer glänzenden und jedem schmeichelnden Rede alle Väter von ihm fassten.³

In his biography of Piccolomini from 1908, William Boulting wrote about the speech that Piccolomini's

cause, indeed, was hopeless. The French would never consent to give up; the Venetians and Florentines, who belonged to the Papal party were foes of the Duke, and were still less likely to do so ... But it was a great opportunity. He was to appear before the assembled representatives of Europe, and could make his force felt by the most important audience conceivable.⁴

¹ Platina: Vita, p. 98: *In conventu persaepe oravit, sed illa eius oratio egregia et elegans est habita, quam in eligenda concilii sede Avenioni, Utini et Florentiae Papiam, quae olim Ticinum dicebatur, anteferendam ostendit rerum opportunitate, situ loci, aedium privatarum magnificentia, celi benignitate et clementia, commoditate rerum omnium quae urbi possunt importari, liberalitate Philippi ducis, vicinitate fluminis Ticinij quo facillime commeatus subvehuntur. Nec abnuerim eam orationem **ex tempore** habitam, cum eius vices subire sit iussus, qui a Philippo missus ignoratione bonarum litterarum perturbate et inepte omnia dicere videbatur.* As Pius said himself, confirmed by Bruneti, the oration was not given *ex tempore*

² Voigt, I, p. 117

³ Voigt, I, p. 119

⁴ Boulting, p. 78

Cecilia Ady, in her biography of 1913, comments that the speech was

*chiefly remarkable for the zeal with which Æneas set himself to gratify every shade of opinion in turn; but the careful attention to style at once proclaims the author as a disciple of humanism, and the rounded periods of his rhetoric came as a pleasant change from the less polished utterances to which the fathers were wont to listen.*¹

And Gioacchino Paparelli:

*Quando il dotto latino modellato alla scuola del Filelfo uscì dalle sue labbra, un moto di sorpresa si propagò per la sala. Da tempo non s'ascoltava là dentro qualcosa di simile. Bisogna considerare che un concilio non era solo uno scontro d'interessi politici o di dottrine teologiche, ma anche un agone d'oratoria, una palestra di stile: un umanista vi stava a suo agio. Per due ore Enea Silvio parlò. Fu un completo successo. Congratulazioni ed applausi da ogni lato. I padri gli si strinsero intorno: tutti volevano una copia dell'orazione.*²

Johannes Helmrath lists the oration as the earliest surviving oration of Piccolomini and points out that here Piccolomini actually outlined his own life-long program of war against the Turks whose mighty empire could only be fought by a united Europe (Christianity).³

In the end it was all for nothing: even Piccolomini's great rhetorical skills could not persuade the fathers to move to Italy, but he had demonstrated his abilities to the council and soon came to be appreciated as an intelligent and dependable lay official whose gifts for analysis, speaking, and writing were highly esteemed.

Discussions of the venue for the council continued in 1436 and 1437. When the matter came to a vote in a General Congregation on 7 December 1436, Piccolomini voted for Pavia, Parma, Udine (with reservations), and Savoy: *Eneas de Senis Papiam vel Parmam, Utinum cum condicionibus et Sabaudiam*.⁴

Finally, in May 1437, the French-dominated majority at the council decided that it should take place in Avignon. This caused the papal party to leave, a severe loss of prestige for the council, and the beginning of its gradual decline. Later, in 1438, it deposed the pope, and in 1439 it managed to elect an anti-pope, the Duke of Savoy, under the name of Felix V, and it lingered on, condemned

¹ Ady, p. 58

² Paparelli, p. 64

³ Helmrath: *Pius*, p. 89

⁴ *Concilium Basiliense: Protokolle*, p. 357. Voigt's claim that Piccolomini voted otherwise appears to be unwarranted, Voigt, I, 8, p. 146; Haller, I, p. 13

by the pope in Rome and unrecognized by most European powers, until it finally dissolved itself in 1449.

The battle of the venue for the council was won by the pope who succeeded in organizing a “papal” Union Council. It opened in Ferrara in 1438 and was later transferred to Florence. Among its participants were the Greek Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople. A reunion of the Latin and Greek Churches was actually achieved and, although short-lived, it lent great prestige to the Papacy and was a determining factor in its remarkable reconsolidation during the Renaissance.

2. Themes

The major theme of the speech is, of course, the venue for the future council. However, other themes are developed or interwoven in the text, e.g. the conflict between conciliarism and the Papacy, and the burgeoning of humanism in the great debates of Europe.

2.1 Venue of the future Union Council

As we have seen, the council itself had already, in the decree *Sicut pia mater* of 1434, pointed to a number of cities, but the matter was still under free discussion, and the council had, during the previous days, heard arguments in favour of various Italian cities.

The implications of the choice of venue for the council were clear to all: an Italian city meant greater papal influence on the council, whereas a German or French city meant greater conciliarist influence and greater influence for the transalpine princes, among them the King of France.

Evidently, for the conciliarists the most important issue was keeping the pope away from the council, so they did not really want the pope to be present. As the Bishop of Albenga, in Milanese territory, put it: *It was not expedient that the Pope should be personally present in the Council, where he would have pre-eminence and authority.*¹

Apart from being – at the time – a conciliarist, Piccolomini was inveterately pro-Italian and just as inveterately anti-French. The Germans he considered as barbarians. So, he naturally wanted the

¹ Quoted after Gill: *Eugenius*, p. 89

Union Council to take place in Italy. On the other hand, since he was at the time on the anti-papal side, he did not want the council to go to a city in the papal domains.

An Italian city in the territory of the pope's great enemy, the Duke of Milan, was therefore – to Piccolomini – a perfectly logical choice, though he well knew that it was also perfectly impossible.

The pope, of course, would not dream of having the council in the territory of his enemy, the Duke of Milan,¹ who for years had been sending his condottieri against the Papal State² and had even plotted against his person the previous year.³ Everybody knew that the formal peace of 10 August 1435, between Florence, Venice and the pope on the one side and Milan on the other was tenuous,⁴ and that the duke would most likely resume his depredations against the Papal State later, as he did in fact in 1438.⁵

Piccolomini was quite aware of this. A short time before his speech, he wrote to the Senate of Siena:

*The Pope and all the Italians are in favour of an Italian city, but all the rest – enemies of the Latin name – refuse to come to Italy. I do not know whether it will be possible to transfer the Council to Italy, but I hope that our prudence and perseverance may triumph, and that Italy may eventually have the Council.*⁶

Moreover, even if the council members would accept an Italian city, they would be careful about choosing a city belonging to the Duke of Milan. The duke was obviously a friend of the council, but he was known as a devious and conniving prince and *feared alike by his friends at Basel and his enemies of the papal party.*⁷ Nobody would be unaware that his support aimed at creating a counterbalance to the pope. When the duke no longer needed the council, he might very well turn against it. And this was exactly what happened when the duke and his ally, King Alfonso of Naples, became reconciled with the pope in 1442-1443 and immediately afterwards declared themselves enemies of the council.⁸ So, the council fathers would have reasonable cause for concern about choosing a place that would make them even more dependent on the Duke of Milan.

¹ Gill: *Eugenius*, p. 36, 46, 55

² Reject, p. 344

³ Gill: *Eugenius*, p. 82

⁴ Gill: *Eugenius*, p. 82

⁵ Gill: *Eugenius*, pp. 108-109

⁶ WO, I/1, 2 (ep. 20): *Papa et Italici omnes Italiam petunt, reliqui omnes, Latini nominis inimici, venturos se in Italiam negant, nec scio, an erit possibile concilium ad Italiam transmutari, sed spero nostrorum prudentiam pertinaciam istorum superaturam et demum Italiam habituram concilium.* English translation quoted after Ady, p. 57

⁷ Boulting, p. 78; Ady, p. 58

⁸ Stieber, p. 62

And finally, although the French king was diplomatic in his relationship with the pope, whose support for the French candidate for the crown of the Kingdom of Naples he needed,¹ the French party at the council evidently wanted a city in the French sphere, e.g. Avignon² – with the ulterior motive of attempting to draw the Papacy back to that city and consequently under French domination. In the summer of 1436, the French party did in fact propose three French cities for the Council: Vienne, Lyon and Avignon.

But the big question is: if Piccolomini wanted to move the council to Italy, why did he argue in favour of Pavia, a city in Milanese territory that would be completely unacceptable to pope in view of the persistent enmity between the pope and the Duke of Milan?

A number of letters from Piccolomini to the magistrates in Siena³ provide documentation of Piccolomini's real aims with the speech.

In a letter of 9 April 1436⁴, Piccolomini informed the Sienese magistrates that the Greeks did not want the Union Council to be held in Basel, but preferred an Italian city, and he proposed that the magistrates make a bid to host the council in Siena which was in the domains of neither the Duke of Milan nor the pope.

In a letter of 6 August 1436⁵, he reported the positive reception at the council of a speech made by the Sienese envoy, Cione di Battista Orlandi. However, the Sienese offer of 30.000 ducats to provide for the needs of the council fell far short of the offers of other Italian cities, especially Florence and Venice. He therefore urged the magistrates to raise the offer.

On 24 October 1436, he again wrote to the magistrates.⁶ The day before, a messenger had arrived from Siena with a secret letter from the city to the President of the Council, Cardinal Cesarini. Cesarini told Piccolomini that the new offer of the city fell far short of the needs of the council, which was a shame because if the city would make an offer of 70.000 ducats, there were good reasons for the choice to fall on Siena. So, once again Piccolomini exhorted the city fathers to raise their offer, to this amount.

And finally, on 11 December 1436,⁷ he wrote to Siena that the majority of the Council was now favouring Avignon and that Florence had raised their offer to 120.000 ducats. He did not again exhort the magistrates to raise their own offer – the play for Siena was over.

¹ Gill: *Eugenius*, p. 87

² Boulting, p. 78

³ Baldi, p. 21

⁴ Epistolarium, letter 20

⁵ Epistolarium, letter 21

⁶ Epistolarium, letter 22

⁷ Epistolarium, letter 23

From these letters it is clear that the real aim of Piccolomini in November 1436 was not to move the Council to Pavia – that was plainly impossible – but to generally support an Italian venue for the Council and to indirectly prepare the grounds for Siena as a compromise solution.

Apart from that, Piccolomini's line of reasoning in favour of Pavia is clear, logical and sensible. It rests on three main arguments:

- Pavia is acceptable to the Greeks
- Pavia is convenient for the pope
- Pavia can provide board and lodging

All reasonably and credibly argued.

The fourth argument, that Pavia offers security and freedom for all parties including the pope, is the one that would defy belief.

2.2. Conciliarism vs. Papacy

The conflict between council and pope is rather clearly, but politely stated in Piccolomini's speech which is the first extant public declaration of his own adherence to the conciliarist position. He would later abandon it and join the papal party for which he would incur the censure of later historians, especially Georg Voigt. This is quite surprising in view of the fact that many other luminaries of the age, including Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, did exactly the same with no blemish on their reputation.

Even at this time, Piccolomini is quite respectful of the pope. He explicitly states that the pope is

the true successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ. He is our head, which should never be separated from us, for a body cannot be complete without its head. He is the bridegroom of the Church; he is the captain of the ship; he is - as people say - God on earth. Through Peter and Peter's successors, Christ our Saviour, has given him the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, though I do not deny that they have also been given to the Church as a whole. To him has been given so great an authority, so great a power, so great a knowledge of the divine mysteries that he is to be revered above all. Indeed, the papal dignity is so venerable that we must honour and revere the pope – even an evil one. So, whatever lust he may have indulged in, or whatever crime he may have committed, he must not be held in contempt until the Church has passed judgment. [Sect. 33]

And concerning Pope Eugenius himself, Piccolomini mentions *his holy life ... his piety, his clemency, his fairness, his sense of justice, and his goodness*. [Sect. 34]¹

However, entwined in the statements of respect are the defiant tenets of conciliarism:

Firstly, the Church is a body, i.e. a corporation. Granted, the pope is the head, but just as the body cannot function without the head, the head cannot function without the body. The head and the body form an undivisible whole.

Secondly, the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven have not only been given to the pope as the successor of the Apostle Peter, but to the Church as a whole, represented by the council.

And thirdly, though even an evil pope must be respected, he can be judged by the Church, i.e. a council, as happened at the Council of Konstanz. This is in direct opposition to the medieval, papalist maxim that nobody may judge the pope.²

So, at this juncture Piccolomini clearly supported conciliarism.

His moderate or conciliatory words about the pope, in a period where he generally spoke against him, were probably occasioned by a controversy which broke out some days before at the council, when Isidoro de Rosate – in his oration on 3 November for a city in the Duchy of Milan – had spoken disparagingly about the pope, causing considerable indignation among the papalist and even the French council fathers. In a meeting on 5 November, the Bishop of Albenga in Milanese territory, Matteo di Carretto, came to the aid of Isidoro. Bruneti related the episode:

Dominus Albinganensis narravit, quod ad ipsius noticiam pervenerat, quod nonnulli patres de concilio male contentabantur de nonnullis in quodam quaterno per dominum Ysidorum pridie lecto pro commoditatibus patrie subiecte domino duci Mediolani, et presertim in eo quod tetigerat personam sanctissimi domini nostri pape etc. colorando factum suum. Exposuit inter cetera, quod dominus noster adversabatur sacro concilio, qui non tenebat decreta etc. ... Quia dominus Albinganensis in multis notaverat dominum nostrum, pro excusacione dicti domini nostri pape et ut omnes obloquciones cessarent et haberetur bona concordia inter sacrum concilium et eundem dominum nostrum, surrexerunt in medium ambassiatores domini nostri regis³ et per organum magistri Guillermi Charterii⁴ narraverunt multa, que dixerunt habere in mandatis a domino rege, et specialiter quod eligeretur locus, in quo commode dominus noster posset interesse, ubi omnes divisiones terminarentur; petentes

¹ This reflects the general conception of the pope's personality and private life, held even in Basel, cf. Gill, p. 197

² "Papa a nemine judicetur"

³ The King of France

⁴ Guillaume Chartier, later Bishop of Paris

plenius audiri in generali congregacione, in qua specificè intendunt respondere ad proposita per dominum Albinganensem. Dominus Lugdunensis proposuit ad idem. Similiter dominus episcopus Burgensis, requirens quod de cetero tales obloquentes de sanctissimo domino nostro papa in generali congregacione minime audirentur, sed ad partem per deputaciones, antequam in generali congregacione etc. Dominus cardinalis S. Petri hocidem requisivit.^{1 2}

Thus, Piccolomini was forewarned, even by his own employer, Cardinal Cervantes (the Cardinal of San Pietro), to speak agreeably about the pope, which he then did.³

2.3. Humanist learning and rhetorics⁴

The terms “humanist” or “Renaissance” had not yet been invented, but to the council fathers it would have been evident that the speech they were hearing was in that new rhetorical style from Italy: fresh, direct, elegant ... and classical.⁵

Piccolomini knew quite well what he was doing. In the beginning of the speech he directly refers to the persuasive skills of Demosthenes in the Athenian Senate and to the fact that many in the conciliar assembly detested rhetorics. But then he neatly extricates himself from possible embarrassment by referring to Cicero, that revered and towering figure of antiquity.⁶

The fathers would have been reassured by some conventional references to God and the Scriptures and by the direct, traditional invocation of God at the end of the *exordium*. But they would have noticed, too, that all the direct quotations in the speech were from classical authors, mostly from the major works of Cicero, but also from some authors who might not be quite proper in the context, like Juvenal and Terence.

The use of general maxims or statements on morals, geography, and politics drawn from Cicero and other classical authors would be safe. But to the modern mind it is somewhat surprising that a speaker at the Council of Basel would be free to refer to the pagan Gods (*Astrea withdrew to the Gods above*, Juvenal⁷), even if the reference was poetical. And applying pagan attributes to the God of the Christians like Terence’s *The one who shakes the lofty vaults of heaven with his*

¹ *Concilium Basiliense. Protokolle*, p. 322

² Cf. Juan de Segovia’s extensive report on the same episode in his *Historia*, bk. X, cap. XX, pp. 910-912

³ Cf. sect. 33-34

⁴ See also the section on Piccolomini’s rhetorics in: *Collected orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II*, ch. 7

⁵ Voigt, I, p. 117; Boulting, p. 79

⁶ Sect. 6

⁷ Sect. 49

*thunder!*¹ would seem to be risky. However, Piccolomini did it throughout his career and even as a pope when he wrote the liturgical office of Catherine of Siena whom he canonized.

And this is the true hallmark of Piccolomini as a humanist: the going back to classical authors as real, living “authorities”, and not just by way of embellishments or cultured references to a noble past - though that purpose was served as well.

The classical rhetorical models for Piccolomini were Cicero and Quintilian. Piccolomini refers directly to Cicero’s rhetorics in his speech, and from his later writings it is evident that he knew the work of Quintilian.

As for contemporary humanist authors, it seems probable that Piccolomini used materials on the origins of the Turks which he had from one of his teachers in Siena, Andrea Biglia, the Milanese humanist, cf. below. He also has two direct quotations from Leonardo Bruni’s *De Militia*², and two other quotations from Guarino Veronese’s translation of Plutarch’s *De Liberis educandis*.³ Both the Plutarch translation and the *De Militia* he very probably had access to in the collection of one of the council fathers, Archbishop Pizzolpasso of Milan,⁴ who became friend and mentor to Piccolomini, helped him to obtain a prebend in Milan, and asked him to give a sermon on the feastday of Saint Ambrose.⁵ Piccolomini may actually have met both Bruni and Guarino when, as a student, he visited Firenze and Ferrara. In a letter from 1434, two years before he gave the oration “*Audivi*”, he mentions them, together with Ambrogio Traversari, as contemporary luminaries of scholarship,⁶ and he pays tribute to both of them in later writings.⁷ Keeping in touch with the humanist environment in Italy was not easy for someone living north of the Alps, but these early quotations show that this mattered to Piccolomini.

In the oration, Piccolomini used the occasion to exercise his rhetorical skills and humanist competencies.

By this time in his life, Piccolomini was itching to make an impact on public affairs and to do so in the way for which he was eminently suited: as an orator with great persuasive skills and able to draw on an extensive knowledge of major works of classical Latin literature.

¹ Sect. 7

² Sect. 4, 55

³ Sect. 80. Cf. Iaria, p. 2

⁴ Iaria, p. 5, 23

⁵ Oration “*Si quis me roget*” [2]

⁶ WO, I/1, 28-29 (ep. 16)

⁷ I.e. in the section on Leonardo Bruni in his *De Viris Illustribus*, where he even directly mentions Guarino’s translation of Plutarch’s work, *De alendis liberis*, p. 35, cf. Iaria, p. 5, and in his *Commentarii*. NB: Iaria notes that a codex with the *De re militari* only came into the archbishop’s possession in 1439, so Piccolomini may have known it from another source

In the “*Audivi*” he was, so to speak, unfolding his oratorical wings and beginning his career as one of Renaissance Europe’s greatest speakers¹.

Voigt had this to say about the oration:

So sollten sie² denn fühlen lernen, was der Schüler der Alten vermöge. Wie leicht und flüssig rollt die Rede dahin, wie so klar und rund sind ihre Perioden, wie wohlgeordnet und eingetheilt die Gedanken und Argumente, wie lebhaft und eindringlich die Wendungen, wie zierlich die Bescheidenheitsfloskeln, wie wortreich und begeistert die ausgeschütteten Lobeserhebungen! Und doch, die rechten Licht- und Glanzpunkte gab der polirten und eleganten Rede erst die Fülle der classischen Citationen aus Virgilius und Sallustius, aus Ennius und Cicero, aus Livius und Juvenalis, ja irgend ein glücklich aufgegriffener Vers aus dem Homeros oder Euripides, alle verschwenderisch und bunt durcheinander gemischt. Solche Sprüche und Beispiele glänzten, wie am goldenen Geschmeide der Besatz von Edelsteinen, oder wie im silbern-strömenden Bächlein hineingeworfene Blumen. Der Hörer wurde von Wort zu Wort, von Satz zu Satz, von einer Schönheit zu andern mit fortgetragen, er wusste vor Entzücken kaum, wie ihm geschah.³

No doubt he had his convictions and spoke passionately for things he believed in, but he was also quite able to shape his arguments and his rhetorics to suit the particular situation and the interest he had chosen or been chosen to defend.

Even though he may have been impressed by the Duke of Milan, he could not himself have believed in the splendid image of the prince which he held up to the council fathers. He did not truly believe in fanciful classical genealogies,⁴ but nonetheless he exploited the one of the House of Visconti to try to convince the Fathers that the Turk would prefer to let the Greeks go to the duke’s territory. And against better knowledge – we must believe – he downplayed to an absurd degree the enmity between the pope and the duke.

However, all these efforts were rhetorical ploys to persuade the fathers to make the choice he passionately believed in: to move the council to a city in Italy.

¹ Boulting, p. 79

² I.e. the council fathers

³ Voigt, I, p. 225

⁴ Note Mansi’s comment: *Est vero oratio inter Pianas longe gravissima et eloquentissima, quamquam ab aetatis illius vitio, haud omnino immunis, cum quaedam habeat intermixta dubiae fidei, ne dixerim fabulosa, ut illud de Vicecomitum origine, quam commune habere illos cum Turcis affirmat.* Pius II: *Orationes*, I, p. 3 This theory is indeed fanciful, but, as we shall see, Piccolomini quite possibly had it from the learned humanist scholar, Andrea Biglia, whose lectures he had attended in Siena

And he did it in the new humanist way: by drawing on classical literature as an authority and an embellishment of his argumentation.

It is quite remarkable that his speech to the council fathers contained at least 30 quotations from classical authors and only from the Bible and one from the Church Fathers.

2.4. Career promotion

Delivering the oration was also a means to promote his career, both vis-a-vis the Duke of Milan and the council.

2.4.1. Duke of Milan¹

Princes of the Renaissance were keen to enhance their reputation by having humanists extol their praises and act as propagandists in their cause. By his speech, "*Audivi*", Piccolomini gave effective proof that he was quite capable and willing to act in this respect for the Duke of Milan.

The message was heard, the panegyrics of the prince were appreciated, and the reward was not slow in coming: shortly afterwards Piccolomini was granted the provostship of San Lorenzo in Milan² and managed to get effective possession of the office in spite of the chapter of the church already having elected its own candidate.

Piccolomini's view of the duke as expressed in the "*Audivi*" may or may not have been sincere, but undoubtedly it is in stark contrast with his later views.³ There are two possible explanations: either Piccolomini was, in 1436, really an enthusiastic admirer of the great Duke of Milan, or he concealed his negative opinion of him with a view to promoting the general cause of the council and to gain the prince's favour. Those who focus on Piccolomini's opportunism prefer the latter explanation. Others who see him as a young, impoverished person trying to gain a foothold in the world and given to youthful enthusiasms may prefer the former. The truth may be somewhere in the middle ...

2.4.2. Council

¹ Boulting, pp. 78-79

² CO, I, 8, 3-4 (Meserve, I, p. 33-35); Ady, pp. 58-59

³ Boulting, p. 79

Piccolomini also wished to promote his career by making a positive impression on the Fathers through a skillful and well-crafted speech in the new humanist style.

In this, too, Piccolomini succeeded.¹ As he himself wrote in the *Commentarii*:

*For two hours he declaimed before a most attentive and admiring audience. Afterwards, everyone who heard his speech had a copy made for himself. From that time on, Aeneas grew more popular in the Council and in the favor of the Duke of Milan. Although his official title was merely psalmist, he acted as secretary and abbreviator and often sat on the Committee of Twelve. This post ... was extremely influential ...*²

2.5. Origins of the Turks

The conception of the Turks as descendants of the Trojans goes back to the Middle Ages, in particular to a genealogy of the Frankish Kings in the *Chronicles of Fredegar* from the 7th century and to a note in the *Gesta Francorum* from the 12th century.³

It was picked up in a text from 1345 purporting to be a letter from Umur Pasha (Morbisanus) to Pope Clemens VI as a reaction to a crusaders' attack on Izmir. The letter was written in Italian and later translated into Latin and other languages. Over time, it was readressed to various popes, also to Pius II, and it was often published together with that pope's letter to Mehmed II as the sultan's reply to the pope.⁴ The letter implies that the Turks are descended from the Trojans, and the Pasha vows to avenge the fall of Troy by attacking the Greeks who had conquered Troy.

The notion of the Turks descending from the Trojans was probably known to Coluccio Salutati, who was the first to apply the name Teucri (used by Virgil for the Trojans) to the Turks.⁵ However, he did not himself state explicitly that the Turks were the Trojans' descendants.⁶

However, that idea – based on the false etymological approximation of Teucri/Troiani (Trojans) and Turci/Turcae (Turks) – spread to the Renaissance humanists who debated the issue hotly. It did not take long before the idea was rejected, and other forefathers of the Turks were considered to be more likely, e.g. the ancient Scythians, though that theory, too, was incorrect. The Trojan

¹ Baldi, p. 20

² CO, I, 8, 2 (Meserve, I, p. 32-33)

³ Meserve: *Empires*, p. 23; Meserve: *Medieval*; Meserve: *Italian*, pp. 25-31

⁴ Meserve: *Empires*, pp. 35-37

⁵ In the Intermediate Version of the "*Audivi*", Piccolomini consistently used the word Teucri for the Turks. He still did so in an oration of 1447 (cf. the oration "*Tritum est sermone*" [12]), but appears to have abandoned that term by 1450 (cf. the oration "*Quamvis in hoc senatu*" [17])

⁶ Meserve: *Empires*, pp. 26-27; Hankins, p. 136

origins of the Turks nonetheless resurfaced from time to time¹, e.g. in the poem *Amyris* by Giovanni Mario Filelfo, the son of Francesco.²

One of the most influential debaters of the origins of the Turks was our Piccolomini, who quite emphatically rejected the idea of the Turks' descent from the Trojans and propagated the theory of their descent from the Schythians instead.³ According to Meserve, Piccolomini was "*the most important – certainly the most frequent – critic of the idea*" of the Trojans as forefathers of the Turks.⁴ And Schwoebel writes that "*Pius had no time for the theories about the Turks avenging their ancestors or occupying a rightful inheritance*".⁵ Hankins even states that the theme recurred so often in Pius' writings that it amounted to an obsession.⁶ Piccolomini's reasoning was based on his reading of classical authors which certainly did not support the Trojan thesis, but otherwise his theory of their descent from the Scythians was to a great extent motivated by his desire, shared by humanists in general, to assign a barbaric and primitive origin to that great enemy of Europe and of Christianity, the Turks.⁷

In the speech "*Audivi*" from 1436, however, Piccolomini had not yet adopted this line of reasoning. On the contrary, he states that the Duke of Milan *descends from the Turks*⁸ of old and is thus *related to them by a hereditary bond*⁹ which cannot in good faith be disclaimed (*scientes ducem cum Turcis, unde vetustissimam trahit originem, hereditariam habere familiaritatem, quod, salva fide, vituperari non potest*)¹⁰. When Piccolomini states that the duke descends from the Turks, he means the Trojans, cf. below on the Trojan genealogy of the house of Visconti. He thus uses the term "Turks" to mean both the Turks of his own time and the Trojans of antiquity, thereby implying that the contemporary Turks are descendants of the Trojans. This idea is reinforced a little later when Piccolomini calls the Turks *the avengers of the destruction Troy (Troianae ruinae ultores)*¹¹ which is a medieval theme – as seen above – and well-known in the humanist discourse on the Turks.¹² Until now, scholars have not focused on this statement by Piccolomini which seems to support the theory that the Turks were descendants of the Trojans, but in any case Piccolomini

¹ Spencer; Schwoebel, pp. 31-32, 148, 188-189, 204-205; Bisaha, p. 89-90

² Schwoebel, pp. 148-149; Bisaha, pp. 89; Meserve: *Empires*, p. 41-43

³ Piccolomini in the oration "*Constantinopolitana clades*" [22] from 1454, sect. 13: *Neque enim – ut plerique arbitrantur – Asiani sunt ab origine Turci, quos vocant Teucros*. Cf. Bisaha, pp. 75-76; Helmrath: *Pius*, pp. 106-111; Meserve: *Medieval*, pp. 419-425

⁴ Meserve: *Empires*, p. 22

⁵ Schwoebel, p. 70-71

⁶ Hankins, p. 140

⁷ Bisaha, p. 78; Meserve: *Empires*, p. 197

⁸ The Early Version has Trojans, though

⁹ *haereditaria familiaritas*

¹⁰ Sect. 20

¹¹ Cf. below

¹² Moreover, the lead ms. A, probably executed under the direct supervision of Pius, has the margin note: *De imperio Teucrorum*, pointing to the text: *Magnum est imperium Turcorum* [sect. 21], thus supporting the notion of identity between Teucrians (Trojans) and Turks

later gave up that idea. He did, however, use the term Teucri for the Turks as late as January 1447, in the oration "*Tritum est sermone*" [12] to Eugenius IV.

The question of Piccolomini's source for this notion does, however, remain. A most probable source is the Augustinian friar Andrea Biglia¹, who lectured at the University of Siena from 1429² and had Piccolomini as one of his students at least towards the end of 1431.³ Piccolomini may not have seen Biglia's book *Commentarii de defectu fidei in oriente [sive de origine Turcharum]*⁴, completed shortly after May 1433⁵, when Piccolomini had already left Siena for Basel, but he would quite probably have known of Biglia's ideas from lectures and discussions. Biglia's book has been called "the first substantial discussion of early Turkish history by an Italian humanist."⁶ He considered the Turks to be the descendants of a number of peoples in classical Asia Minor, including the Trojans (Teucri), and he uses the term Teucrians for the Turks of his own time.⁷ Though Biglia did not refer to the Turks as the avengers of Troy,⁸ he stated outright that the Turks *love the Visconti [of Milan], because they say they [themselves⁹] were descended from Aeneas the Trojan*¹⁰ – though the Turks, actually, said nothing of the sort. Biglia, who wrote a history of Milan, the *Mediolanensium rerum historia* from 1402-1431,¹¹ knew that Pietro da Casteletto had "glorified the house of Visconti by tracing the ancestry of the duke back to Aeneas,"¹² making that ducal house, like so many others princely families, the descendants of the Trojans. Piccolomini uses the very same theme of Turkish benevolence towards the Viscontis as founded in a common hereditary relationship, i.e. descent from the Trojans, and until evidence to the contrary is produced, it may quite reasonably be assumed that he had taken over this notion from Biglia.

Diana Webb concludes her article on the *Rise and Fall of Eastern Christianity* (1975) with an expression of regret that Piccolomini did not say whether it was Biglia's *Commentarii de defectu fidei in oriente* he was thinking of when he remembered Biglia as a "*historiarum scriptor*."¹³ Piccolomini quite probably knew about a number of Biglia's works, including his history of Milan, and he must also have known about the *Commentarii* and considered it as one of the "histories"

¹ Meserve: *Empires*, p. 34

² Schnaubelt, p. 46 ff.

³ *Andreas Mediolanensis, quem Senis audivi*. Piccolomini: *De viris illustribus* [Leonardo Bruni (Aretino)], 36, 10. See also *Andrea Biglia*. In: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 10 (1968), and Schnaubelt, p. 60

⁴ Helmrath: *Pius*, p. 100, 106-107; Webb

⁵ Meserve: *Empires*, p. 169. Helmrath refers to a *Commentarii historici detrimentio fidei sive de origine Turcharum* from 1432-1435, cf. *Reichstagsreden*, p. 106

⁶ Black: *Benedetto*, pp. 227 ff. Cf. Helmrath: *Reichstagsreden*, pp. 106-107

⁷ *For the ships of the Venetians and Genoese fill that sea, on whose shores the Teucrians possess much land ...* Meserve: *Empires*, p. 182. Piccolomini, too, uses the term Teucri at this time, cf. in a letter to Siena of 6 August, 1436 (Epistolarium, letter 21)

⁸ Meserve: *Empires*, p. 35

⁹ "sese"

¹⁰ Meserve: *Empires*, p. 182

¹¹ Schnaubelt, p. 74

¹² Schnaubelt, p. 30

¹³ Webb, p. 216

that Biglia wrote. Indeed, Biglia's influence on Piccolomini's conception of historians and on his fascination with history¹ may have been quite important and merits further study.

Another possible source for Piccolomini's notion that the Turks were descendants of the Trojans are the contacts and conversations during his wanderings years in the late 1420's with humanists in Florence and elsewhere, and among them Leonardo Bruni, who was much admired by Piccolomini. They would have been familiar with the ideas of their old master Salutati.

Later, Piccolomini's view of the matter was completely reversed, partly because of the growing Turkish threat to Europe culminating in the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and partly because of his reading of Aethicus,² whom he apparently accepted as a real historian and from whom he took over the theory of the Turks having descended from the Scythians – in the mistaken belief that Aethicus was a classical and therefore an authoritative source.³

2.6. French interest

The French interest⁴ was a challenge for a speaker who wanted the council to be held in Italy, in part because the interests of the French Court and the French clergy did not coincide. The prelates wanted to strengthen the status of the Gallican church as a national church and to reduce papal influence over French church affairs. The king supported this policy which would, some years later, be expressed in the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges - but on the other hand the Crown would not want the French church to become too strong and independent of royal power.⁵ Moreover, the high clergy and the king both wanted the council to be transferred to Avignon in order to reinforce French influence over it and – who knows – may be later to effect a return of the Papacy to Avignon and the French sphere of interest. The anti-Italian attitude of the French party was clearly expressed by the Bishop of Tours, Philippe de Coëtquis, who said: *"Either we should snatch the Apostolic See from the hands of the Italians, or we should leave it plucked bare, so that, wherever it remains, it can do nothing."*⁶

But the king himself also wanted the pope's support in the question of the Kingdom of Naples where the House of Anjou, part of the extended royal family of France, was fighting for the Crown with the Spanish House of Aragon. So the French King did not wish to antagonise the pope who

¹ Piccolomini: *De gestis*, p. 3

² Cf. Aethicus Ister

³ Hankins, p. 137; Bisaha, pp. 75-76. Other sources for Piccolomini's later theory were Otto von Freising and Niccoló Sagundino

⁴ Helmrath: *Baseler*, pp. 205-210

⁵ Stieber, pp. 64-71

⁶ Reject, p. 346

had until then favoured the French claims. It is, therefore, not surprising that the king sent one of his seasoned diplomats, Simon Charles,¹ to Basel to ensure that his hotheaded clerics would not jeopardize his relations with the pope and compromise the French cause in Southern Italy.

In the matter of the venue for the council, Simon thus played a subtle role. No doubt he secretly favoured Avignon, but publicly he maintained his role as a cautious adviser and a friend to the council, and as someone who accepted and respected its independence, even as he and his ambassadorial colleagues during council meetings in autumn 1436 also expressed their support for the pope and his preference for an Italian venue.²

In his biography of Charles VII, Du Fresne de Beaucourt writes as follows concerning the activities of Simon Charles at Basel³:

Quand cet important document⁴ fut porté à sa connaissance, Charles VII venait d'envoyer une ambassade au Concile de Bâle.⁵ Les principaux membres de cette ambassade étaient Amédée de Talaru, Archevêque de Lyon; Simon Charles; Alain de Coëtivy et Guillaume Chartier. ... Simon Charles porta la parole devant la congregation des Pères (1er juin 1436). Il protesta du dévouement de son maître envers le Concile ... Enfin il formula les vœux suivants: 1) Que le pape soit traité avec reverence et avec honneur, conformément à l'ordre hiérarchique ... 3) Qu'un lieu étant à la convenance du Pape soit désigné pour traiter avec les représentants de l'Église grecque ... De Bâle, Simon Charles se rendit en Italie près du Pape, pour s'entendre avec lui sur la tenue du futur Concile et tâcher d'apaiser le différend avec les Pères de Bâle. Il était accompagné de Martin Questel. Les deux ambassadeurs remirent au souverain Pontife une lettre dans laquelle Charles VII faisait savoir qu'il appuierait le choix fait par lui de la ville de Florence comme lieu de l'assemblée. ... A la fin d'octobre, Simon Charles était de retour à Bâle. Il prit de nouveau la parole dans une congregation des Pères. Rendant compte de son ambassade, il fit savoir qu'il avait exposé au Pape et aux cardinaux les tribulations, le scandale, le schisme à jamais déplorable qui résulteraient de la persistance

¹ Helmrath: *Baseler*, p. 87; Müller: *Die Franzosen*, I, pp. 329-344

² Müller: *France*, p. 400-401: *There was no question that Eugenius IV would only confer the papal fief of Naples on René d'Anjou if he and his royal brother-in-law would advocate a union council in Italy. Once again strife broke out openly between Basel and Eugenius IV. In addition, the council must have felt duped when, in late summer, 1436, the French court made a radical shift by abruptly backing off from the Avignon project, to which it had given massive support. Henceforth the French court placed itself on the side of Eugenius IV – apparently. Since the end of October the court, through its special envoy in Basel, the royal counselor and knight, Simon Charles, officially supported Florence as the location for the union synod. At the same time, however, the court secretly kept up its earlier Avignon campaign. Thus it made use of a cunningly underhanded dual strategy to gain approval for Avignon with the help of none other than Basel, and at the same time to achieve the sought-after investiture of Naples of the royal brother-in-law by supposedly agreeing with the pope's intention to hold a council with the Greeks in Italy. See also Müller: *Die Franzosen*, II, pp. 500-516*

³ Du Fresne de Beaucourt, III, pp. 338-339

⁴ The *Libellus Apologeticus* sent by the pope to the princes of Europe in June 1436

⁵ Cf. the king's letter of 30 March 1436

du différend entre le Pape et le Concile, en même temps que la nécessité d'une reunion générale pour mettre un terme à la division et traiter avec les représentants de l'Église grecque. ... le Pape avait été informé que le Roi, malgré le vif désir qu'il éprouvait de voir se tenir cette fois dans son royaume le Concile qui jusque-là avait siégé en Italie ou en Allemagne, souhaitait avant tout qu'on choisit le lieu le plus convenable à la reunion avec les Grecs et à l'apaisement de la querelle.

So, Simon Charles did not declare himself unambiguously and openly on the matter of the venue for the Union Council. This ambiguity Piccolomini exploited recklessly in his speech when he exclaimed that what the King's ambassador

asks is good and worthy of being granted. For Simon admonishes us to avoid grounds for a schism, he asks us as to agree a location with the pope, and he does not recommend or reject any place by name. If I am not mistaken, his words advise us to choose Pavia ... [Sect. 48]

The French clergymen at the council were probably quite exasperated at hearing this, and Piccolomini himself at the end of the speech took care to soothe the feelings of the Cardinal of Arles, the most prominent figure among the French party, who certainly did not want to move the council to an Italian city.¹

So, at least there was one party among the audience which Piccolomini did not aim to please, attacking as he did the French position under cover of fulsome praise for the royal House of France and its pretend respect for the independence of the council.

2.7. Other themes

Some other themes may be indicated here:

2.7.1. Democracy

Throughout his life, Piccolomini was no admirer of democracy. Democracy had actually cost his own family its position in Siena when aristocratic government was overthrown and replaced by a – somewhat more – broadly based, democratic regime.

¹ Sect. 84

The Council of Basel itself was a powerful expression of conciliarism and an exponent of a democratic government of the church in opposition to papal, monarchic government, and Piccolomini at the time certainly favoured this movement.

However, this did not translate into his political views: even to the young Piccolomini, the people was a dangerous animal, and those who were boasting of the name of liberty (i.e. democracy), were in reality *slaves ... who believe that freedom is to have many masters*.¹

And later in the speech, he says about the common people that it *is mostly unstable, seditious, quarrelsome, eager for political change, and opposed to peace and quiet*.²

So, Piccolomini – and the princes - would not be deaf to the assertion of the pope that the revolt of the council against the papal monarch was a threat to all monarchic governments. The pope in a *Libellus Apologeticus* from June 1436, sent to the princes of Europe, asked: *Why are they [i.e. the council fathers] so eager to reduce this monarchy,³ which God has established by his own word, to a popular state and to a democracy?*⁴

2.7.2. Dependence on princes

The council considered itself the highest authority in religious matters, and although the council fathers may have solicited the assistance of princes and been grateful for it, they considered it to be their God-given right.

The support of the princes was, in fact, extremely important to the council as the princes could require or forbid their bishops to attend the council.

Furthermore, they could give financial assistance to the council and favour a number of conciliar decisions which required their cooperation, e.g. concerning the provision of ecclesiastical benefices and offices in their respective territories.

Finally, their support was all-important in the conflict between pope and council, and in the end the council would flounder because ultimately the princes would favour their fellow-monarch, the pope.⁵

¹ Sect. 63

² Sect. 85

³ I.e. the Papacy

⁴ Stieber, pp. 27-28: *Cur monarchiam hanc, quam Deus suo ore instituit, ad popularem status et ad democratiam deducere festinant*

⁵ Stieber, p. 71

Not surprisingly, a number of council fathers resented the council's perceived dependence on the princes¹. Piccolomini boldly gave expression to this frustration when he praised the attitude of the French ambassador, Simon Charles, who may have given advice to the council but then left *the decision to the council thus subordinating his own opinion to the view of the universal Church*.²

Piccolomini at this point rebuked the council fathers for unduly deferring to the princes and for not having the courage to do anything that displeased them.

Undoubtedly, the youthful speaker and very junior participant in the council here gave voice to the views of senior churchmen, quite possibly or probably those of Cardinal Cesarini, the President of the Council, with whose permission he was speaking. Cesarini would not have forgotten that one of the five aims of the Council, stated in his letter of appointment, was to preserve the freedom of the Church from secular power.

2.7.3. National stereotypes

In the Renaissance, as in all other ages, national stereotyping was quite widespread, and Piccolomini used it often in his writings. The French whom he disliked were certainly not spared.

In the "*Audivi*" there is one instance of national stereotyping, in this case a positive one.

Commenting on the faithfulness of the people of Pavia, Piccolomini compares them to the Germans, about whose *faithfulness, seriousness and steadfastness* he could never say enough: *They keep their oaths firmly and honestly*.³

2.7.4. Logistics and provisions

The Council of Basel had a large number of members – with their households. Therefore, the matter of logistics, transport and provisions was undoubtedly an important issue in the debates concerning the future location of the council.

Firstly, the matter of transportation: it may surprise a modern reader to learn that transportation as such does not seem to have been perceived as a problem. They could ride, walk or be carried in various types of vehicle, but this was an ordinary and commonplace procedure, and though they

¹ Helmrath: *Baseler*, pp. 92 ff.

² Sect. 49

³ Sect. 65

would even cross mountains on their way to Italy, Piccolomini does not find it necessary to comment on the hardships of traveling by road. He does at some point mention the comforts of transport on river barges, however, so the issue is not quite absent.

Safety from attacks by enemies and robbers was quite another matter, and Piccolomini is careful in outlining how the journey from Basel to Pavia would go through the territories of a friendly prince.

Sea travel may have been a convenient form of transportation, but this form of travel was quite hazardous, as Piccolomini had himself experienced on his way from Piombino to Genoa and later when he went to Scotland.

Secondly, the matter of lodgings: great care is taken in determining the number of houses to be made available to the leading members of the council and their retinues. The others would have to get accommodation as best they could.

Thirdly, the matter of provisions: this is evidently an important issue, and one of the major reasons advanced in favour of Pavia was the ease of provisioning the city with food from the rich agricultural area surrounding it.

2.7.5. News and spies

As always, intelligence was extremely important, and the oration contains a couple of references to how such intelligence was obtained and disseminated.

Speaking of relations between the pope and the Duke of Milan, Piccolomini mentioned a certain Roberto of Florence. We may presume that this Roberto was Roberto Martelli, the manager of the Medici Bank's office in Basel from 1433-1438. Piccolomini called him a *diligent gatherer of news, who is in possession of many letters*.¹ Quite evidently the network of an international bank was an important instrument for gathering and disseminating news on matters affecting its affairs, even including copies of letters between princes.

¹ Sect. 39. Roberto Martelli belonged to an eminent Florentine banking family, allied to the Medici. Since 1436 he diligently worked for the Union Council to take place in Florence, which later happened. In 1437, he was involved in the affair of the seals: the majority of the Council had voted for the Union Council (with the Greeks) to take place in Avignon, while the minority, headed by Cardinal Cesarini, voted for an Italian city, as the pope wished. The decree of the majority was sealed with the great seal of the council. But in the night between 13 and 14 June, a group of men, including Martelli, gained access to the small seal of the council, the leaden seal, with which the decree of the minority was promptly sealed before it was, in all haste, sent off to the pope. Martelli left Basel in 1438. From 1439 to 1464, including the pontificate of Pius II, he headed the Medici bank in Rome, cf. Becker, p. 53, and Crum, pp. 405-406

Another intelligence network is the prince's network of spies (*exploratores*). Among the three things in favour of choosing the territory of the Duke of Milan as the location for the council was the fact that he could eliminate all risk to the council, *for the prince, being placed in a highly dangerous situation, endeavours to know through spies the secrets of many lords and various city states*. Stated quite matter-of-factly! A prince who wants to eliminate every kind of danger must necessarily know about the affairs and plans of his enemies – and of his allies – and a spy network was apparently quite the acceptable thing.

Through his voluminous correspondence Piccolomini was himself a veritable hub of intelligence, and some of his youthful activities might actually have come rather close to spying, cf. his letter to the ruler of Piombino with its detailed information about the fleet and fortifications of Genoa.¹

Elsewhere, Piccolomini mentioned another valued source of information: the couriers who were travelling all over Europe and from whom valuable information, even of remote places, might be obtained.²

And in the oration itself, he refers to those sea maps used by seamen to sail along coasts, probably the so-called portolans.³

3. Date, place, audience and format

The date of the oration is given as May 1436 by Mansi,⁴ Voigt⁵ and Boulting⁶, and as 11 May 1436 by Helmrath⁷. However, this date seems not to agree with events, referred to in the oration, which took place later than May.

Piccolomini mentions the peace between the pope and the Duke of Milan as having been made “*exacto jam anno*”, cf. sect. 37. That peace was concluded on 10 August 1435, which was considerably less than a year ago if the speech was given in May. This objection does not hold, of course, if “*exacto jam anno*” does not mean “a year ago”, but “in the past year”.

¹ WO, I/1, pp. 5-6

² WO, I/1, pp. 590

³ Portolans: navigational maps based on compass directions and distances observed by the pilots at sea. First made in the 13th century in Italy. The oldest extant portolan is from the middle ages

⁴ Pius II: *Orationes* (Mansi), I, p. xiv

⁵ Voigt, I, pp. 116 ff.

⁶ Boulting, p. 80

⁷ Helmrath: *Reichtagsreden*, p. 141

The second objection to the May date concerns key events in the Ligurian war.¹ In 1421 the Republic of Genoa came under the rule of the Duke of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti, but still functioned as a separate state, and not as a part of the Milanese state. It continued its longstanding rivalry and conflict with the Kingdom of Aragon (Barcelona) pursuing an aggressive expansionist policy in the Western Mediterranean and had designs on the Kingdom of Naples which it eventually conquered. On 5 August 1435, at the sea battle of Ponza, the Genoese won a complete victory over King Alfonso of Aragon whom they took prisoner together with his brother. The Duke of Milan had the distinguished prisoners transported directly to Milan where he treated them royally. And, in a complete reversal of policies, he then entered into an alliance with Alfonso, thereby creating a strong North-South power axis in Italy. This was a serious setback for Genoa as well as a mortal insult. So, on 27 December 1435 the Genoese defected from the duke and again became an independent republic. A war resulted which was the background for the Genoese joining forces with Venice and Florence in a league directed against Milan. The League Treaty was signed on 29 May. Piccolomini refers to it in his oration, cf. sect. 38, but he could not have known of it in Basel in May.

Piccolomi also refers to subsequent peace negotiations under the aegis of the pope, cf. sect. 38. These negotiations began in Bologna, in August 1436.

In view of these facts, it is difficult to see how Piccolomini could have delivered the speech in May.

The presumably oldest version of the oration, in the manuscript Chisianus 251, with the initial words *Magnae saepe res*, has the following title: "*Oratio super electione loci pro futuro concilio ad reducendos Graecos habita Basileae in congregatione generali per dominum Eneam Silvium Senensem Kalendas XV Novembris MCCCCXXXVI*", i.e. 17 October 1436.

But in notary Bruneti's protocol from the council, it is quite clearly stated that Piccolomini gave his oration on Friday 16 November 1436:

*Die Veneris XVIa novembris MoIIIIcXXXVIo in generali congregatione ... Dominus Eneas de Senis in scriptis narravit fere per horam cum dimidia commoditates civitatis Papiensis in futuro concilio Grecorum, rationes et motiva aperiendo.*² And later he stated: *Dominus cardinalis legatus regraciatu est domino Enee de Senis de bona oracione ejus.*³

Bruneti's record is confirmed by Juan de Segovia who, in his *Historia Gestorum Generalis Synodi Basiliensis*, noted as follows:

¹ Cf. Pesce, and notes to sect. 37-38

² *Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 334

³ *Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 335

Siquidem in concione ordinaria patrum XVIa die currentis Novembris Eneas Silvius Senensis oratione studiosa allocucione composita, in eius expressione moratus fere trium horarum spacio, cum laudes et commendaciones fecisset de loco Papiensi ad celebrationem oblato per ducem Mediolani, huius magnificencia velut supra cunctos principes abundancius exaltata, die altero posito avisamento ...^{1 2}

So, it must be concluded that date of the oration was 16 November 1436.³

It is worth noting the expression of Bruneti: *Dominus Eneas de Senis in scriptis narravit ...* which may indicate that Piccolomini actually spoke in the assembly on the basis of written notes or a written text which,⁴ according to the *Commentarii*, he produced during the night following Isidoro Rosati's inept speech pleading for a city in the Duke of Milan's territory. As in other cases, Piccolomini's memory failed him to the point of marked exaggeration. According to Bruneti's protocol, Isidoro de Rosate spoke for the Duke of Milan's territory in the general congregation held on 3 November, two weeks before: *Magister Ysidorus de Rosate legit in scriptis⁵ commoditates locorum subiectorum illustrissimo dominio duci Mediolano pro concilio future Grecorum.*⁶ Piccolomini may have decided immediately to make his own speech, and he may have working on it during the nights, but he did not give the speech the day after Isidoro's as he claimed in the *Commentarii*.

The audience consisted of the the council fathers attending the general congregation on 16 November 1436.

As for the format of the text, Pius himself, in the speech itself, clearly designates it as an oration: *Sed jam quid mea velit oratio in medium proferamus.*⁷ The word "oratio" is also directly used in the title.

4. Text⁸

¹ Juan de Segovia, Bk. IX, Cap. XXII, tom. II, p. 915

² Note that Bruneti says the oration lasted one hour and a half, whereas Juan says almost three hours

³ Cf. Baldi: *Cardinale*, p. 20

⁴ This is confirmed by a passage in the Intermediate Version, sect. 6: *Scripsi ergo circa materiam electionis loci quantum nihil visum est oportere. Quare, si placet sive consonum est ea audire, quae commoda vestra concernunt, sinite ut haec mea scripta legantur in medium, quae melius unicuique deliberandi praebeant facultatem*

⁵ An entry in the protocol from 5 November concerning the Bishop of Albenga shows that Isidoro actually read from a *quaternus*: *quodam quaterno per dominum Ysidorum pridie lecto*, cf. *Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 321

⁶ *Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 320

⁷ Cf. sect. 7

⁸ For the textual transmission of Pius II's, see *Collected Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II*, vol. 1, ch. 5

The oration is extant in three versions: an Early Version, an Intermediate Version and a Final Version.

4.1. Manuscripts^{1 2}

4.1.1. Early Version / “*Magnae saepe res*”

The Early Version circulated as individual copies,³ eventually finding its way into a number of humanist collective manuscripts. It has the incipit “*Magnae saepe res*”.

It is contained in two manuscripts:

- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**
Chis. J.VII. 251, ff. 137r-147r **(H)***
- **Venezia / Biblioteca Marciana**
Lat. XI. 77, ff. 27r-65r **(V)***

The Venetian manuscript has some variants in common with the Final Version, so that it might actually be considered as another Intermediate Version.

4.1.2. Intermediate Version / “*Etsi numquam*”

The Intermediate Version has a short introduction with the incipit “*Etsi numquam*”. It has more variants in common with the Final Version than with the Early Version.

It is contained in one manuscript:

- **Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana**
M 44 sup, ff. 102r ff⁴ **(K)***

¹ On the textual history of the *Audivi*, see appendix C

² Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in *Collected orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II*, vol. 11, are marked with an asterisk

³ Cf. Pius’ own information that many council fathers wanted copies of the oration, cf. above

⁴ “Liber olim Lanciani Curtii Artium Scholaris Mediol. Ann. 1484...” Contains a selection of humanist Latin texts, including the *Audivi*

4.1.3. Final Version / “*Audivi*”

The “*Audivi*” is the final version of the oration, stripped of the introduction in the Early and Intermediate Version. It was included in the Collected Orations of Pius II, the first edition of which was compiled in 1462, under the pope’s direct supervision.¹ It is contained in seven manuscripts:

- **Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana**
544, ff. 2v-17r **(G)***
- **Mantova / Biblioteca Comunale**
100, ff. 1v-19v **(F)***
- **Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana**
l. 97 inf., ff. 1r-16v **(E)***
- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**
Chis. J.VI.211, ff. 1r-14v **(D)***
Chis. J.VIII.284, ff. 1r-12v **(A)***
Chis. J.VIII.286, ff. 1r-24r **(C)***
Vat. lat. 1788, ff. 1r-17v **(B)***

4.2. Editions

The oration, in the Final Version, was published by Mansi:

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 2 vols. Lucca, 1755 / I, pp. 5-37 [*Based on the ms. in Lucca*]

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. 9-10.

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

Text:

The text in the present edition is based on all ten manuscripts listed above.¹ The Chis. J.VIII 284 (**A**) has been chosen as the lead manuscript.

Pagination:

Pagination is from Chis. J.VIII 284 (red) and Chis. J.VII. 251 (blue).

Textual apparatus:

Variants from the Early Version (**H** – with or without **K** and/or **V**) are given in bold types.

Variants common to **D** and **G** are colour-coded (red).

5. Sources²

In the “*Audivi*”, altogether 48 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified:

Biblical	2
Classical	40
Patristic and medieval	3
Contemporary	3
All	48

By far the greatest number of quotations are from classical authors, with only two quotations from the Bible.

¹ The text published by Mansi has been collated, too, (MA), with a view to assessing the quality of that edition

² For an analysis of Piccolomini’s use of sources, see *Collected Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II*, ch. 8

Biblical sources

<u>Old Testament</u>	0
<u>New Testament</u>	
Matthew	1
2. Corinthians	1
All	2

Classical sources

Aristotle	1 ¹
Cicero	19
Homer	3
Juvenalis	2
Livius	2
Macrobius	1
Plutarch	5 ²
Sallustius	1 ³
Seneca	1 ⁴
Sophocles	1
Tacitus	1
Terentius	2 ⁵
Vergilius	1
All	40

Patristic and medieval sources

Basil of Caesarea	1
Burley	2 ⁶
All	3

¹ Ethica Nicomac.

² De liberor. educ. 3 (in a Latin translation by G. Veronese); Moralia 2

³ Bellum Catilinae

⁴ Epist. morales

⁵ Eunuch. 1; Heautont. 1

⁶ Lib. de vita et moribus phil.

Contemporary sources

Bruni	3 ¹
All	3

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¹ De militia

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7. Sigla and abbreviations

A = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis. J.VIII.284

B = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Vat. lat.1788

C = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis. J.VIII.286

D = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis. J.VI.211

E = Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana / I. 97 inf.

F = Mantova / Biblioteca Communale / 100

G = Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana / 544

H = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis. J.VII.251

K = Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana / M 44 sup

V = Venezia / Biblioteca Marciana / Lat. XI.77

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

Abbreviations

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

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

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

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

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

RTA = Deutsche Reichstagsakten

WO = *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Hrsg. von Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918. (Fontes rerum Austriacarum, 2 / 61, 62, 67, 68)

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

Epistolarium = Enee Silvii Piccolominei *Epistolarium Seculare*. Ed. A. van Heck. Città del Vaticano, 2007. (Studi e testi; 439)

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II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Orationes Aeneae Silvii Piccolominei Senensis, qui postea pontificatum maximum adeptus Pius Secundus appellatus est. Editae fuerunt ante et post susceptum¹ pontificatum.²

Et haec prima habita fuit ab eo nondum sacris initiato in concilio Basiliensi cum ageretur de loco eligendo pro oecumenico³ concilio cum Graecis habendo.^{4 5}

[1] {1r} {137v} Audiui, patres optimi atque sanctissimi, quae superioribus diebus viri cum eloquentia, tum etiam⁶ bonitate praestantes, Gaspar Perusinus, seu⁷ Florentinus, quod illa sit civitate donatus, ac Simon Venetus⁸ de suis legationibus referebant, quorum, si rite iudico⁹, eo penitus tendebat oratio, ut ad se quisque concilium traheret: hic Venetias, ille Florentiam. Audiui etiam Isidorum Raimundumque¹⁰ suam, ut quisque aestimavit¹¹, legationem anteferentem, et alios esse dicturos propediem non dubito. Itaque ut varia sunt loca, sic variae sunt affectiones concilium hoc sacratissimum diverse trahentes, quod praeter modum patriae quisque suae¹² favet, ut magnopere¹³ formidandum sit, ne privatorum affectibus¹⁴ concilium pessumdetur.

¹ omit. B, C

² Lege feliciter add. A

³ icomenico A, B, C, F

⁴ **Orationes ... habendo : Oratio Enee Silvii Piccolominei Senensis habita Basilee pro loco deligendo pro oecumenico Concilio cum Grecis celebrando D, G**

⁵ Incipit add. B, C, E

⁶ et iam E; et V

⁷ sive V

⁸ de Valle H, V

⁹ iudicio V

¹⁰ Raymundum quod C; et Raymundum K

¹¹ existimavit corr. ex estimavit D; extimavit F, V; existimavit G, H, MA

¹² quisque suae : suae quisque G, MA

¹³ **maxime H, K, V**

¹⁴ corr. ex affectionibus A; **affectionibus H, K, V**

Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini of Siena, who later became Supreme Pontiff under the name of Pius II. They were given before and after his accession to the Papacy

And this the first one was held before he entered holy orders, at the Council of Basel, during the negotiations about the choice of venue for the Ecumenical Council with the Greeks

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

[1] Most excellent and holy fathers, over the last days, I have heard¹ what those eloquent and good men, Gaspare of Perugia (or of Florence whose citizen he has become)² and Simone of Venice³ had to report concerning their missions. If I understood their orations correctly, each of them wanted to draw the council to his own city, Simone to Venice and Gaspare to Florence. I have also heard Isidoro⁴ and Raimondo⁵ favouring their own mission, and I do not doubt that others will speak in the same vein during the next days. It would appear that there are as many sentiments as there are cities. Since everybody excessively favours his home city,⁶ this Holy

¹ Piccolomini had attended meetings of the council where envoys of various Italian cities argued the advantages of their own city as a venue for the impending council with the Greek Church, on union between the Latin Church and the Greek

² Gaspare spoke for Florence on 3 and 5 November, cf. *Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 320-321

³ Simone della Valle, cf. Pius II: *Orationes*, I, p. 35, note 2. He spoke for Udine in Venetian territory in the General Congregations of 30 October and 9 November, cf. *Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 319 and 325: *Dominus Symon de Valle lecta littera Venetorum de oblationibus etc. narravit commoditates loci oblatis per Venetos etc. videlicet civitatis Utinensis / Dominus Symon de Valle inscriptis nomine dominorum Venetorum continuavit commoditates Veneciarum*

⁴ Isidoro da Rosate: envoy of the Duke of Milan who presented the case for Pavia so ineptly that the council fathers bade him be silent. He thereby provided Piccolomini with an opportunity to take over ... and to shine, cf. Pius II: *Orationes*, I, p. 35, note 3. Piccolomini speaks disparagingly about him on other occasions, cf. *De Viris Illustribus*, IV, and a letter to Francesco Pizzolpasso of 5 December 1442. He spoke for the territory of the Duke of Milan in the General Congregation of 3 November, cf. *Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 319 and 320. Also the Archpriest of Pavia spoke for Pavia, in the General Congregation of 7 November, cf. *Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 323

⁵ Raimondo Taloni: the council fathers had delegated the matter of Avignon to him, cf. Pius II: *Orationes*, I, p. 35, note 4. Like Gaspare, he spoke on 5 November, reading the speech (*in scriptis legit*), cf. *Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 323

⁶ "patria"

Council is being drawn in all directions. Thus, it is highly to be feared that the council will fail because of private interests.

[2] Quibus de rebus maxima mecum¹ ipse cogitatione² contendi, facturusne verba in publico essem, an tacitus permitterem³ suo labi flumina impetu. Videbatur homini privato atque inerudito tacendum fore in eruditissimorum coetu virorum, quales hinc⁴ atque hinc⁵ video, quorum consilio et auctoritate universus orbis recte regi gubernarique possit. Neque dignum existimabam, ut ego homuncio os aperirem, ubi non doctores modo scientiarum, sed patres⁶ omnium facultatum adessent.

[3] Ceterum cum me vestro⁷ adstrictum⁸ consortio meminissem, cum jurisjurandi⁹ a me suscepti verba repeterem, loquendum penitus existimavi oportere¹⁰, si juramento vellem satisfacere, cujus antehac numquam contempsim religionem. Namque et ubi potui et ubi licuit semper¹¹ huic concilio favi, vestraque opera¹² ubique gentium {1v} publicavi, atque ubi verbis esse non potui, scriptis interfui. Namque, ita me Deus amet, semper hoc concilium magnifeci, semper esse salutis Christianorum putavi necessarium; atque ideo magno affectu erga ipsum semper accensus¹³ extiti¹⁴, cui me ita¹⁵ dedi, ut corpus et¹⁶ quidquid¹⁷ extra corpus habeo libenter pro eo sim¹⁸ expositurus.

¹ cum C

² ipse cogitatione *corr. ex cogitatione ipse* G; cogitatione ipse MA

³ pretermitterem C; permittere K

⁴ habere V

⁵ **inde** H; *omit.* V

⁶ parentes A-C, E-F, H, K, V

⁷ nostro V

⁸ adscriptum C; **astriatum** H, V

⁹ jurisjurandum V

¹⁰ **omit.** H

¹¹ et *add.* F

¹² *omit.* K

¹³ *omit.* B, C, E

¹⁴ accensus extiti *corr. ex extiti accensus* G; extiti accensus MA

¹⁵ **me ita : ita me** H, V

¹⁶ *omit.* V

¹⁷ est *add.* F

¹⁸ sum C, K

[2] For this reason, I have been thinking intensely about whether I should intervene in the debate, or silently let the river take its own course. On the one hand, it seemed that a private and unlearned man ought to remain silent in the assembly of very learned men I see around me. Indeed, the whole world may be rightly ruled and governed by their counsel and authority! And I thought it would be improper for an insignificant person such as myself to open his mouth in an assembly where not only doctors in the various branches of knowledge,¹ but also council fathers with every kind of qualification² are present.

[3] On the other hand, when I considered my obligations towards your fellowship, and when I repeated to myself the words of my oath,³ I found it necessary to speak up if I were to keep it. For I have always kept that oath religiously and supported this council whenever I could and had the possibility. I have spoken about your works everywhere, and where I could not speak I wrote. Always – and may God love me for it! – did I praise this council; always did I consider it necessary for the salvation of the Christians; and always have I been so passionately engaged in the council, to which I have given myself, that I would gladly sacrifice my own body and everything else I have in its service.

¹ “scientia”

² “parentes [D, M have patres] omnium facultum”. Meaning unclear

³ Oaths: at this time oaths were still being taken very seriously and formed the basis of important contractual engagements, cf. sect. 65

[4] Indignum igitur¹ atque absurdum putabam verba pro eo non effundere, pro quo sententia {138r} sit neque corpori parcere. Quod si quis patriae obnoxius est vitam exponere, quanto magis concilio? Ac² si nullum discrimen concilii causa fugiendum est, quis verba inanemque linguae sonum retineat? Quis taciturnitatem laudet, ubi usui futurus est sermo? “*Mulier,*” ut³ inquit Homerus, “*taciturnitas decus affert, sed non item⁴ viro.*”

¹ itaque *add.* G, MA

² at D, H, G, MA

³ *omit.* F

⁴ *idem* F

[4] Thus it appeared unseemly and absurd not to speak up in favour of something for which I am ready to give my life. If you have an obligation to give your life for your country, you have an even greater obligation to give it for the council. And if you should shun no danger for the sake of the council, then why should you withhold your words and the sound of your voice? Who will praise your silence if your speech would be useful? Homer says that “*silence makes a woman beautiful, but this does not apply to a man.*”^{1 2}

¹ This is a direct quote from Leonardi Bruni: *De Militia*, 1422, p. 384: *Mulier inquit Homerus taciturnitas decus affert, sed non item viro*. The quote refers to Homer: *Odyssey*, 1, 356-359, and is found directly in Sophocles, *Ajax*, 293: *Gynaïksi kósmon è sigé phèrei*. St. Paul alludes to this passage in 1. Corinthians 14, 34. Also quoted by Aristotle, in *Politica*

² Note an example of Piccolomini's frequent use of sentences (*sententiae*) from classical literature to give depth and authority to an argument

[5] Judicavi ergo non solum decere me¹ loqui, sed oportere in tanto hujus sacri concilii periculo, quando² nullum adhuc audivi, qui ea dixerit, quae a me in praesentiarum, si placuerit, audietis. Et quoniam jam vos video³ paratos et promptos ad audiendum, utinam illa⁴ mihi^{5 6} dicendi vis esset eaque persuadendi⁷ auctoritas, qua olim in Atheniensi senatu adversus Aeschinem pro Ctesiphonte⁸ usum ajunt fuisse Demosthenem.

[6] Neque enim ego dicendi artem facundiamque contemno, quemadmodum plerosque in hac congregatione perspexi, qui eam magnopere detestantes nullam omnino se habere aut habere se velle dixerint⁹ eloquentiam. Ego enim ita sentio, et¹⁰ sic testem habeo Ciceronem, *“rerum dominam esse vim eloquendi¹¹, quae sola facit, ut ea quae ignoramus discere, et quae scimus alios docere possimus.”* Quae quantum mihi modo¹² esset opportuna, nemo me melius novit. Multa enim scio et mentis video luminibus, quae non ut vellem vobis possum¹³ insinuare, quando eam¹⁴ mihi video¹⁵ deesse¹⁶, cui soli et orandi et exorandi attributum est¹⁷ munus.

¹ omit. C

² quanto C

³ vos video : video vos K

⁴ omit. C

⁵ illa mihi : mihi illa G, MA, V

⁶ omit. K

⁷ omit. V

⁸ Demophonte H, K, V

⁹ dixerunt H, V

¹⁰ ut K

¹¹ vim eloquendi : eloquendi vim F

¹² mihi modo : modo mihi H]

¹³ vobis possum : possum vobis B, D, E, G, MA

¹⁴ enim G, MA

¹⁵ intelligo H; omit. V

¹⁶ quae non ... deesse omit. K

¹⁷ sit G, MA

[5] I have come to the conclusion that I should, nay I must speak up in this grave danger to the Sacred Council, as I have not as yet heard anyone say the things you shall hear from me now, if you so permit. And as I see that you are ready to listen, I wish that I may have the same power to speak and the same authority to convince as Demosthenes¹ when he spoke, in the Athenian Senate, for Ktesiphon against Aeschines.²

[6] For I do not despise the art of speaking and eloquence even though I am aware that many in this assembly claim to detest them, and do not have any eloquence at all nor want to have it. But in my own opinion – and Cicero is my witness – “*the power of eloquence is the mistress of things ... It is she alone that makes us able to learn what we do not know and to teach others what we do know.*”³ Nobody knows better than I how useful eloquence could be to me, for I know many things and see them in my mind,⁴ but I cannot explain them to you as well as I would since I am lacking that [eloquence] which alone has the power to bestow the gift of speaking.⁵

¹ Demosthenes (384-322 BC): Greek statesman

² Cf. Cicero: *Orator*, 8.8.26: *Demosthenes, who, I said, excels all others, in his masterpiece, the famous oration In Defence of Ctesiphon (hic, quem praestitisse diximus ceteris, in illa pro Ctesiphonte oratione longe optima)*. This speech was considered by Renaissance humanists to be a classical masterpiece of rhetorics

³ Cicero: *De natura deorum*, 2.59.148: *Iam vero domina rerum, ut vos soletis dicere, eloquendi vis quam est praeclara quamque divina: quae primum efficit ut et ea quae ignoramus discere et ea quae scimus alios docere possimus*

⁴ “*mentis luminibus*”: “by the lights of my mind”

⁵ “*orandi et exorandi*”

[7] At¹ tu, Deus, oro, *qui*² *templa caeli summa*³ *sonitu concutis*, qui genus humanum benigne curas, qui et⁴ hoc congregare concilium⁵ voluisti et rem Graecam in medium adduxisti, jam mihi et recte consulendi facultatem et his bene atque utiliter deliberandi mentem concedito. Tuum est hoc negotium, tuaque sunt⁶ opera. In te omnium sita spes, in te conversi omnium oculi sunt. Neque putamus tuam nobis opem⁷ negari, quam nemo petens umquam⁸ non impetravit. Quod nisi putassem, numquam hodie huc loci ratiocinaturus accessissem. Spero enim, patres humanissimi⁹, et daturum mihi Deum, quod loquar, cum de suis rebus agatur, et vestras mentes ad¹⁰ partem per eum flecti ducique meliorem {2r}. Sed jam quid mea velit¹¹ oratio in medium proferamus¹².

¹ Invocatio *in marg.* A, F, K

² per V

³ summo K

⁴ **etiam H, V**

⁵ congregare concilium : concilium congregare G, MA

⁶ **tuaque sunt: tua quae fiunt H, K, V**

⁷ nobis opem : opem nobis K

⁸ numquam K

⁹ patres humanissimi *omit.* K

¹⁰ **in H, V**

¹¹ mea velit : velit mea V

¹² **proferam H, V**

[7] But you, oh God, *the one who shakes the lofty vaults of heaven with his thunder!*¹ who benevolently takes care of the human race, who has wanted to gather this council, and who has caused us to deal with the matter of the Greeks,² I ask you: grant me the ability to give good counsel and grant this assembly to discuss the matter well and profitably. For this matter is Yours, this work is Yours. All our hope is in You; all our eyes are on You. And we believe that we can trust in Your assistance, for anyone who has ever asked for Your help has received it. If I did not think so, I would never have come here today to present my views. For I hope, kind Fathers, that God will let me know what to say in his own cause, and that he will bend and lead your minds towards the best solution. But let us now proceed to the subject of my oration.³

¹ Terentius: *Eunuchus*, 590

² I.e. the project of reunification of the Greek and the Roman (Latin) Church

³ "oratio": note the term used by Piccolomini to designate his text

[8] Tempus¹, ut scitis, prope est, quo de reductione Graecorum naviumque missione agendum a vobis² est. Et quoniam multae illis pecuniae sunt promissae, quibus et duci possint et ali, nonnulli a vobis excogitati sunt modi, quibus hanc summam possetis³ in tempore⁴ habere paratam. Nullam tamen expeditiorem viam censuistis quam ex loco pecunias quaerere, ubi futurum esset concilium. Ut⁵ si qui essent, qui sanctam hanc synodum in suis terris⁶ habere cuperent, mutuam {138v} hanc summam concederent. Misistis, qui diversorum principum ac⁷ communitatum⁸ animos persentirent⁹. Hinc illa Venetorum oblatio nec vobis nec illo illustri¹⁰ dominio¹¹ indigna. Hinc Florentinorum promissiones ab exuberanti quadam magnificentia procedentes. Hinc Avinionensis¹² populi non magna solum, sed amplissima pollicitatio, quae illam urbem non minus fidelem quam devotam ecclesiae filiam manifestat. Hinc principis potentissimi¹³ Filippi Mariae ducis Mediolani mirifica regalisque concessio, cui semper¹⁴ animo fuit nec¹⁵ vestris deesse mandatis, nec petitionibus adversari. Hinc aliorum neque viles neque contemnendae sponsiones. Hinc jam certi estis ea servare Graecis posse, quae vestra decreta decantant.

¹ Narratio in marg. A, K

² agendum a vobis : a vobis agendum G, MA

³ possitis V

⁴ possetis in tempore : in tempore possetis G, MA

⁵ omit. K

⁶ suis terris : terris suis G, MA

⁷ et H

⁸ comitatum V

⁹ presentirent K

¹⁰ illari V

¹¹ domino E, F, K

¹² Ammonensis V

¹³ atque invictissimi add. H, K, V

¹⁴ in add. B, E

¹⁵ neque F

1.2. Preparations for Greek participation in a Union Council

[8] As you know, the time approaches when you will have to act in the matter of reunion with the Greeks and the sending of ships. As great sums have been promised them for their transportation and provisions, you have been considering various ways of having the money ready in time. You have decided that the best way is to ask for money from the city where the council shall be held, so that those who want to have this Holy Synod on their territory would have to lend you the necessary funds. You have sent envoys to explore the minds of various princes and city-states. And now you have an offer from Venice, worthy both of you and of that illustrious realm. You also have magnificent promises from Florence. And you have an offer from the people of Avignon that is more than large, it is actually extremely generous, and it shows that city to be both a devoted and faithful daughter of the Church. You have also received a magnificent and princely offer from the mighty Prince Filippo Maria, Duke of Milan,¹ who has always wished to obey your decrees and grant your petitions. And finally, you have generous and impressive offers from a number of other parties. So, you may now be certain that you can provide the Greeks with the assistance you have decreed.

¹ Filippo Maria Visconti (1392 - 1447): Duke of Milan from 1412 to his death

[9] Socratis tamen verba non absurde vobis insinuaverim^{1 2}, qui cum videret hominem divitiis affluentem eaque de causa fastidio quodam³ gloriabundum: *“Non prius te,”* inquit⁴, *“admirabor, quam⁵ notum mihi⁶ fuerit, quo pacto scias uti fortunis tuis.”* Magno nempe atque admirabili immortalis Dei beneficio usi estis, qui ea⁷ vobis facilia fecerit, quae non solum difficilia, sed impossibilia videbantur. Ob quam⁸ rem magnas habendas Deo⁹ gratias censeo, qui talem de vobis curam gesserit, qui naviculam suam ex altissimis¹⁰ fluctibus ad portum salutis eduxit¹¹, ut navigare deinceps in portu videamini.

¹ vobis insinuaverim : insinuaverim vobis K

² **insinuerim H, V**

³ *omit.* G, MA

⁴ te inquit : inquit te G, MA

⁵ que V

⁶ notum mihi : mihi notum G, MA

⁷ qui ea : quia F

⁸ **hanc H, V**

⁹ habendas deo : deo habendas G, MA

¹⁰ altis F

¹¹ deduxit MA

[9] I think, however, that it is appropriate to remind you of something Socrates¹ once said when he saw a man who was rich and proud of it: *I shall not admire you before I know how you use your fortune.*² For immortal God has made those things easy for you which appeared to be not just difficult, but impossible, and until now you have used this great and wonderful gift well. We owe great thanks to God who has taken such good care of you and who has brought his ship³ from the stormy sea into safe harbour so that you now seem to be sailing calmly within the harbour itself.

¹ Socrates (ca. 469 - 399 BC): Greek philosopher

² Quoted in Basil: *Ad adolescentes*, 9, 23

³ Metaphor for the Church

[10] Quod quamquam ita est, non tamen dimittendum esse clavum arbitror, neque abjiciendam gubernaculi curam. Vidimus enim saepe nautas cum summo gaudio atque ingenti laetitia portum suscepisse, et in ipso seu magistri negligentia, seu maris¹ violentia fecisse naufragium. Quocirca etsi vobis² paene in tuto³ res est, nolite tamen clausis oculis ad ea, quae restant, accedere. Adhuc enim vitandi sunt scopuli, adhuc praevidenda tempestas et cavenda est nobis⁴. Neque enim quocumque pergitis tutum est, sed in ipsa electione⁵ difficultas laborque versatur⁶, ut si bene eligatis, bene succedat, si male, eveniat male.

[11] De huiusmodi⁷ ergo electione loquendum mihi statui, cujus, {2v} ut opinor, verba minime contemnetis. Nec quis dicat, sed quae dicantur, trutinabitis. Notam siquidem vobis illam Ciceronis⁸ *De natura Deorum* sententiam puto, qui ait: *Non tam auctores in disputando quam rationis momenta quaerenda esse*. Quod si quid inepte dixero, repudiate; si quid cum ratione attulero, suscipite. Atque utinam⁹ ea vobis¹⁰ modo convenirent¹¹, quae¹² apud Sallustium¹³ Caesar in consulendo requirit: *Omnes homines, inquit ille, patres conscripti, qui de rebus dubiis consultant, ab odio, amicitia, ira atque misericordia vacuos esse decet*.

¹ navis V

² nobis D, G, MA

³ toto E

⁴ vobis H, V

⁵ omit. K

⁶ vertitur B, E

⁷ cuiusmodi K

⁸ Cicero in marg. A, K

⁹ ut F

¹⁰ nobis D, G, MA

¹¹ conveniret E

¹² et add. K

¹³ Salustius in marg. A, K

1.3. Venue for the council

[10] Still, it is too early to detach the rudder and stop caring about the steering wheel. For often we have seen seamen enter a port, joyful and jubilant, only to be shipwrecked inside the port itself¹ because of the captain's inattention or the violent sea. Therefore, though the matter is almost safely concluded: do not approach what remains to be done with eyes shut. For there are still cliffs to be avoided, and you must still be on guard against storms. Not all directions are safe for you. Choosing a venue for the council is fraught with difficulty and trouble: you will have success if you make a good choice and fiasco if you make a bad one.

1.4. Impartiality of the council

[11] I shall be speaking of this choice, and I trust you not to spurn my words. Do not consider who is saying them, but what is being said. I presume that you know the sentence from Cicero's² *De Natura Deorum*³ to the effect that *in a discussion you should not consider authority of the debaters, but their arguments*.⁴ So, if I say something that is inept, then reject it, and if I say something that is reasonable, then accept it. And may that apply to you which Caesar⁵ - according to Sallust⁶ - required in deliberations: *Members of the Senate,⁷ all men who deliberate upon difficult questions had best be devoid of hatred, friendship, anger and pity*.⁸

¹ Seneca: *Epistulae morales*, 2.14.15: *Perit aliqua navis in portu*

² Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC): Roman statesman

³ Cicero, *De natura deorum* (c. 45 BC). Book on the theology of various schools in antiquity.

⁴ Cicero: *De natura deorum*, 1.5.10: *Non enim tam auctoritatis in disputando quam rationis momenta quaerenda sunt*.

⁵ Gaius Julius Caesar (100- 44 BC): Roman general and statesman

⁶ Gaius Sallustius Crispus (86-34 BC): Roman historian

⁷ "Patres conscripti" = Conscript fathers: the senators of ancient Rome. When a group of new senators were first added (conscripti) to the original assembly of "Fathers" (Patres), the extended assembly was called "Patres et Conscripti". Later, the whole assembly was just called "Patres conscripti"

⁸ Sallustius: *Bellum Catilinae*, 51.1

[12] Quod si modo¹ cernerem, nihil² mali suspicarer. Nec³ {139r} enim loquens aliquis ducalem aut Venetum aut Florentinum se jactitaret, sed conciliarem⁴, sed *mundanum*⁵, ut inquit Socrates⁶, sese exhiberet⁷, cunctaque ad utilitatem concilii mundique commoda referret, nec suae affectioni⁸ publicam postponeret utilitatem. Hinc namque, ni fallor, totius Christianitatis salus dependet, ut si locus aptus eligatur⁹, et Argolicis erroribus mederi et multis latinae linguae deformitatibus providere possitis. Quod si dubium insecure¹⁰ acceptare contingat, dissipetur¹¹ concilium¹², et praelati in praedam ultionemque dentur¹³, quod sine magno Christiani populi malo fieri non potest. Hic igitur aperiendi sunt oculi, hic summis digitis suspendendae oculorum palpebrae, ne quid perperam aut temere incipiat. Sed imitemini sapientem, *cujus proprium*¹⁴ est, ut a Cicerone¹⁵ dicitur¹⁶, *nihil facere quod poenitere possit*.

¹ omit. G, MA

² nil K

³ hec B, E, F; **neque** H, V

⁴ conciliamini V

⁵ mundamini V

⁶ Socrates *in marg.* A, K

⁷ exuberet B, E

⁸ factioni B, E

⁹ deligatur MA

¹⁰ in securum V

¹¹ **dissipabitur** H, V

¹² Christiani populi *add.* K

¹³ **dabuntur** H, V

¹⁴ **preceptum** H; principium V

¹⁵ Cicero *in marg.* A, K

¹⁶ dicetur E

[12] If I perceive such sentiments now, I do not consider them to be of a malicious nature, but I do think that no speaker should present himself as the Duke's man¹ or a man of Venice or of Florence, but rather as the Council's man or as *a man of the World*, as Socrates says.² Everything should be considered in terms of its usefulness to the council and its benefit to the world, and nobody should set his private affections above the common good. Unless I am mistaken, the very salvation of all Christianity depends on this, and if you choose a suitable venue for the council, you can remedy the Argolian³ errors and much that is crude in the Latin language. But if you choose a dubious and unsafe location, the council will be dispersed and the prelates subjected to plunder and revenge – to the great detriment of the Christian people. Indeed you must open your eyes and keep your eyelids apart with your fingertips so that you do not embark upon a reckless and risky course. Let us imitate the wise man whose *nature it is* – as Cicero says – *to do nothing of which he may repent*.⁴

¹ i.e. of Milan

² “mundanus”: Socrates as quoted by Plutarch, *On Exile* in *Moralia*: “... the saying of Socrates is still better, that he was no Athenian or a Greek, but a “cosmian” (as one might say Rhodian or Corinthian), because he did not shun himself up with Sunium or Taenarus and the Ceraunian mountains.” Cicero refers to this saying in *Tusculanae Disputationes*, 5.37.108. Cf. also Burlaeus (Socrates). Piccolomini may have taken over the notion of world citizenship from Francesco Filelfo whose lectures he heard, as a young man, in Florence: ... in his early career Filelfo imagined himself a stoic “world citizen”, attached to no particular city and detached from political concerns (Meserve: Nestor, p. 62, quoting Blanchard)

³ i.e. Greek

⁴ Cicero: *Tusculanae Disputationes*, 5.28.81

[13] Fingamus¹ igitur concilii personam, et quid illam facere deceat examinemus. Eam, si cujatem² se dicat, interroges, neque Italicam, neque³ Gallicam, neque Germanicam aut Hispanicam se vocitabit, sed Christianam⁴ asseverabit, solumque illud se quaerere dicet, quod nomini⁵ Christiano conducat. Hujus erit sentes ex agro dominico, idest haereses eradicare, mores reformare, pacem⁶ ubique statuere⁷. Cavebit ne quid agat injuste, praeceptumque illud Pythagoricum^{8 9} observabit¹⁰, quo praecipit¹¹, “*jugum stateramque ne transcendere*¹².” Studebit¹³ ne adversus quempiam reperiatur ingrata, in libertate se bene vivendi et recta statuendi conservabit. Delinquentes non ita¹⁴ ad desperationem persequetur, neque ita patietur, ut provocet. Deponite igitur haec nationum nomina, patres. Exuite quisque provinciarum affectiones et in medium consulite, quid¹⁵ huic concilio¹⁶ et quid¹⁷ fidei Christianae credatis¹⁸ expedire, eoque vela tendamus, quo melius res geri verisimilius existimatis¹⁹.

[14] Multa de ForoJulii²⁰ ubertate, Venetorumque potentia ac magnificentia Simon Venetus peroravit ac meo iudicio non minus vere quam eleganter. De Florentinorum vero commoditatibus Gaspar explicuit. De urbe vero²¹ illa Avinionensi²² pulcherrima atque optima et hujus sacri concilii devotissima Raimundum {3r} bellissime perorantem accepistis. Atque, ut existimo²³, nihil est ab eis praetermissum, quod trahere concilium ad eorum valeat civitates.

¹ Persona concilii *in marg.* A

² *omit.* K [*blank space*]

³ **aut H, K, V**

⁴ se *add.* G, MA

⁵ more V

⁶ pacemque G, MA

⁷ *omit.* K

⁸ Pictagoricum F; Pictagoricum H, V

⁹ Pythagoras *in marg.* A, D, G, K

¹⁰ **conservabit D, G, MA**

¹¹ praecipit G, MA

¹² **transcendas H, V; trascende MA**

¹³ studebis V

¹⁴ **omit. H;** non ita : vero V

¹⁵ **quod H**

¹⁶ consilio C

¹⁷ **quod H**

¹⁸ **credit H, K, V**

¹⁹ **estimatis H;** estimatis K; extimetis V

²⁰ Forlivii K; Fori-Julii MA

²¹ *omit.* V

²² Ammonensi V

²³ *corr. ex estimo* A; **estimo H, K;** extimo V

[13] Let us imagine that the council is a person and consider what she should do.¹ If you ask her where she is from, she will not call herself Italian or French, German or Spanish, but she will insist that she is Christian and that she only desires what may benefit the Christian name.² Her task will be to remove the thorns from the field of the Lord, that is to eradicate heresy, to reform morals, and to restore peace everywhere. She will take care not to act unjustly, and she will observe the precept of Pythagoras³: “*Step not beyond the beam of balance!*”⁴ She will take pains not to be found ungrateful towards anybody.⁵ She will preserve her liberty to live morally and to make the right decisions. She will not pursue delinquents to the point of making them desperate, nor tolerate them to the point of encouraging them. So, Fathers, let us put aside the names of nations, let everyone free himself of local patriotism, and let us discuss instead what may serve this council and the Christian faith,⁶ and let us set sail in the direction which is the one most likely to advance our cause.

[14] Simone of Venice has said much about the fertility of Friuli and the power and magnificence of Venice, and I consider that he has spoken both truthfully and elegantly. Gaspare has explained to us the advantages of Florence. And you have heard Raimondo speaking gracefully about the beautiful and splendid city of Avignon, a city entirely devoted to this Holy Council. In my opinion, these speakers have advanced all the possible arguments for transferring the council to their respective cities.

¹ Note Piccolomini's use of the classical rhetorical device of *personificatio*

² I.e. cause

³ Pythagoras (ca. 570-c. 495 BC): Greek philosopher and mathematician

⁴ Burley, 17 (Pythagoras), p. 74: *Stateram ne transilias, id est: ne pertransgrediaris iusticiam*. Cf: *Me zygon*, in the sense: Do no injustice. *Symbols of Pythagoras*, nr 14 (recorded by Iamblichus of Chalcis), 1905, p. 65. Quoted from Guarino Veronese's translation from Greek into Latin of Plutarch's *De Liberis educandis*, p. 7: *Jugum stateramque non transcendere*

⁵ Here Piccolomini prepares a later argument, that it would be ungrateful of the council not to accept the Duke of Milan's offer of Pavia

⁶ Piccolomini speaks for a broad, international, i.e. European, approach to solving the problems posed by the negotiations with the Greeks. In this context, the international argument is being used to undermine the position of those speakers who had pointed to their own cities as seat of the council. On the one hand, the argument certainly had merit in itself, but on the other hand Piccolomini's clear ambition to secure an Italian venue for the council or, if possible, even a Sienese one, makes his argument somewhat specious

[15] De duce vero Mediolani, quamvis multa¹ Isidorus, orator vester diligentissimus, explicaverit², neque sufficienter mea sententia³ dictum videtur, neque admiratione dignum est, si ducales oratores, viri gravissimi, episcopus Albiganensis ac Christoforus de Velate⁴, cetera⁵ subticuerunt. Satis namque duxerunt ad illum⁶ principem pertinere, si requisitus responderit, si petita concesserit, si seipsum et quidquid habet obtulerit. Locorum vero comparisonem {139v} facere vestrum esse dixerunt⁷. Certi enim sunt illum ducem, quidquid eligatis, contentum⁸ fore, cupere tamen, ut bene vobis concilioque⁹ succedat.

[16] Vestrum esset¹⁰ igitur¹¹, patres reverendissimi, ducalium terrarum investigare commoditates, quod onus, postquam alii rejiciunt, ego non minus vestra quam ducis causa suscipio, de Venetorum Florentinorumque terris omnino¹² silens, quos adeo promptos paratosque in necessitatibus ecclesiae¹³ comperitis¹⁴, ut laudare ipsos et amplissimis commendare testimoniis¹⁵ teneamini.

¹ *omit.* C

² **explicavit** H, K, V

³ **neque convenienter** *add.* H, V

⁴ Valet E

⁵ ceteri K

⁶ *omit.* K

⁷ duxerunt K; duxerim V

⁸ contemptum B, E

⁹ consilioque C; **quocumque** H, V

¹⁰ erat V

¹¹ *omit.* V

¹² oratio V

¹³ ecce G, MA

¹⁴ comperietis V

¹⁵ **praeconiis** H, V; laudibus K

1.5. Offer of the Duke of Milan

[15] As concerns the Duke of Milan, your diligent envoy, Isidoro, had much to say. But in my opinion he did not say enough, and indeed it is not very impressive that the duke's own ambassadors, the Bishop of Albenga¹ and Cristoforo da Velate, both serious men, remained silent about the rest, believing it to suffice if the prince responded to the solicitations of the council, if he granted its petitions, and if he offered himself and his possessions to it. As for the comparison of the various locations, they said that this is up to you, and they are sure that the duke will be content with whatever choice you make, and that his only desire is for you and the council to be successful.

[16] So, Reverend Fathers, it is your own responsibility to assess the advantages of the ducal territories. Since others² will not assume this charge, I shall do so both for your sake and the duke's. I shall say nothing about the territories of Venice and Florence: you have already heard how eager and ready they are to provide what the Church needs, and we can only praise and extol them.

¹ Matteo del Carretto: Bishop of Albenga in Liguria from 1429 to 1448. Cf. Pius II: *Orationes*, I, p. 37, n. 17

² I.e. the envoys of the duke

[17] De oblatione ducali pergo discutere, quae meo iudicio nulli est inferior, et quae, si verum fateri volumus, omnium est aliarum¹ causa nobisque² ad optimam optionem³ permaxime necessaria. Hujus enim oblationis⁴ locus unus⁵ est, nisi⁶ fallor, ubi ex sententia terminari res⁷ possit. Et ut quod dicimus luce clarius ostendamus⁸, quae requirat bona electio inquirendum est. Ea⁹ licet alii¹⁰ multifariam diviserint, mihi tamen quattuor¹¹ dumtaxat desideranda videntur, quorum si aliquod desit, recte eligere nullatenus valeamus. Illis autem concurrentibus nihil periculi sit acceptareque sine controversia debeamus, quicumque locum¹² illa concedat¹³. Ea¹⁴ sunt, ut locum eligatis, in quo Graecis satisfacere possitis; ut commode papa cum concilio convenire queat; ut domus victualiaque suppetant; ut securitatem libertatemque in¹⁵ loco habeatis electo. Quae omnia, si quis¹⁶ sine passione consideret¹⁷, in urbe Papiensi ducalique territorio suspiciet¹⁸.

¹ alia K

² nobis K

³ **optationem H**

⁴ oblationibus E

⁵ locus unus : unus locus K

⁶ ni MA

⁷ terminari res : res terminari K

⁸ condamus F

⁹ **quae requirat ... ea : quas res boni loci exigit electio trutinemus, quas H, V** [V has trutinemus instead of trutinemus]; **quas res bona exigit electio trutinemus, quas K**

¹⁰ alia B, E

¹¹ **mihi tamen quattuor : quatuor mihi H, K, V**

¹² locus K

¹³ debeamus quicumque locum illa concedat : debemus quemcumque locum illa concedat **H**; debemus quicumque locum illa concedat **V**; debeamus quicumque locum illa concedat **A**; locum debeamus quicumque illa concedat **B, C, D, E, F**; debeamus quicumque illa concedat **G** [NB: there seems to be some kind of grammatical error in **H** (Original Version) which the later texts, **V, A**, and **B/C/D/E/F**, attempt to correct in different ways. It is significant that the **B/C/D/E/F**-solution differs from **A** which points to the possibility of **B, C, D, E, F** deriving from another (now lost or unknown) manuscript than **A**]

¹⁴ Divisio requisitorum quadripartita in marg. A, F, K

¹⁵ omit. C

¹⁶ **recte si quis add. H, K, V**

¹⁷ **considerat H, V**

¹⁸ suspiciet B, E

1.6. Criteria for choosing the venue of the council

[17] I now proceed to discuss the duke's offer, which – as I see it - is in no way inferior to all the other offers made. In truth, it is actually their cause,¹ and it is, indeed, very important for making the right choice. Unless I am mistaken, the venue offered by the duke² is definitely a place where our matter may be brought to the desired conclusion.

To explain more clearly what I am saying, I shall now examine the criteria for a good choice. Others have established a comprehensive set of such criteria, but personally I think that there are only four requirements: if just one of them cannot be fulfilled, the venue in question is unsuitable, but if all four requirements are fulfilled, there is no risk, and we may without controversy accept the venue which meets them.

The criteria for a suitable venue are that

- it is acceptable to the Greeks;
- it is convenient for the pope meeting with the council;
- accommodations and provisions are available;
- and there is security and independence.

If one considers the matter dispassionately, all these conditions are met by the city of Pavia and the duke's lands.

¹ The offer made by the Duke of Milan may have provoked the other North Italian states to make similar offers out of fear or general rivalry

² I.e. Pavia

[18] Prioremque¹ rem, si placet, examinemus, cuius tria sunt membra: ut locus in decreto aut nominetur aut comprehendatur; ut pecuniae necessariae praesto sint; ut trieriae² grossae subtilesque habeantur trecentique³ arcitenentes, sive, ut vos dicere soletis, balistarii.

[19] Contineri vero⁴ Papiam in decreto nemo ambigit, cum omnes fere Italiae⁵ urbes sint eligibiles, nisi quas Graeci expresse⁶ repudiarunt. Atque ut clarius disseramus difficultatem istam⁷ locorum, nonnisi Graecorum causa facimus⁸, ut illum eligamus locum, quem repudiare Graeci non debeant. Sed ipsi jam terras ducis suis litteris petiverunt⁹. Ergo nil¹⁰ est cur Papiam in hac parte contemnamus, Graecisque¹¹ debemus non parum auscultare

¹ Subdivisio ... rebus *in marg.* A; Subdivisio trimembris K

² Trieriae triremes *in marg.* D, G

³ **tricentique H**

⁴ non K

⁵ **Italicae H, V**

⁶ **expressi D, G**

⁷ **difficultatem istam : difficultates istas H, V**

⁸ *Textus corruptus*

⁹ petierunt G, MA

¹⁰ nihil B, K, MA

¹¹ Graecis F

2. Pavia is acceptable to the Greeks

[18] Let us now examine the first requirement. It consists of three parts:

- the location must be mentioned in or covered by the decree;¹
- the necessary funds must be available;
- large and light triremes² must be available as well as 300 archers (you usually employ the term *balistarii*).³

2.1. Pavia is covered by the decree of the Council

[19] Nobody doubts that Pavia is covered by the decree since all Italian cities are eligible except those that have been expressly rejected by the Greeks. To be quite clear on this difficulty concerning the venues: it is only because we are acting in the interests of the Greeks that we must choose a location which they cannot reject. And in their letter, the Greeks themselves already asked for the territories of the Duke so in this respect we have no reason to reject Pavia: we should listen carefully to the Greeks.

¹ I.e. the decree of the Council, *Sicut pia mater*, of September 7, 1434

² Trireme: a galley, developed by the ancient Greeks as a warship, with three banks of oars on each side

³ In a letter to Siena of 25 October 1436, Piccolomini had written: *Indiget ut scitis concilium ingenti pecuniarum summa, opusque est secundum pacta cum Grecis facta ... missime ad Grecos duas galeas subtiles et totidem grossas trecentosque arcitenentes siue, ut aiunt, balistarios* (Piccolomini: *Epistolarium*, ep. 22, p. 57)

[20] neque {3v} enim sine ratione moventur, scientes ducem cum Turcis^{1 2}, unde vetustissimam trahit originem, haereditariam^{3 4} habere familiaritatem, quod salva fide vituperari non potest. Idcirco timens Romeorum imperator⁵ ne se absente Constantinopolim Turci⁶ obsideant, credit ducem unis litteris periculo obviaturum, si Turcorum⁷ principi scripserit, {140r} Graecos non alia quam fidei causa Italiam petisse⁸, de qua ille salvo imperio non curat, crederetque duci ista scribenti, aliis forte non item, a quibus tamquam hostibus dari sibi verba⁹ existimaret et se dolis circumventum opinaretur. Nec illud est non considerandum: Graecos¹⁰ fere omnes imperio Turcorum¹¹ esse subjectos, curareque ne quam rebellionis suspicionem ingerant dominis, a quibus profecto¹² impedirentur¹³. Nec¹⁴ invitis Turcis¹⁵ deducere Graecos quisquam poterit.

¹ Trojanis H, V; Teucris K

² Teucris *in marg.* K

³ unde ... haereditariam *omit.* E

⁴ Philippus originem unde *in marg.* D, G

⁵ Romeorum imperator *in marg.* A, K

⁶ Teucris K

⁷ Thurcorum *corr. ex* Teucrorum H; Teucrorum K, V

⁸ petiisse MA

⁹ dari sibi verba : sibi verba dari G, MA

¹⁰ Graecorum K

¹¹ Teucros K

¹² profectio H, K, V

¹³ impediretur H, K, V

¹⁴ neque K

¹⁵ Teucris K

2.2. Attitude of the Turks

[20] They are indeed acting with good reason since they know that the duke is a descendant of the Turks¹ of old.² Thus, he is related to them by a hereditary bond which cannot be disclaimed in good faith. The Byzantine³ Emperor⁴ fears that the Turks will lay siege to Constantinople in his absence,⁵ but because of that relationship he believes the duke may remove the risk by writing a letter to the Prince of the Turks stating that the Greeks would be coming to Italy purely in a matter of our Faith. As long as his own power is safe, the Turk is indifferent to the matter of the Christian Faith,⁶ and he would believe the duke writing to him to this effect. Others the Turk might not believe, as he would consider their words as coming from enemies and think that he was being deceived. It must also be kept in mind that almost all Greeks⁷ are subject to the power of the Turks. Therefore We must take pains to avoid that their overlords might suspect a revolt and prevent their departure. For, indeed, no one can bring over⁸ the Greeks against the will of the Turks.

¹ Interestingly, in this very early text Piccolomini follows the thesis that the Turks originate from the Trojans, a thesis that he later vehemently – and correctly - rejects, see Helmrath: *Pius*, p. 106-107

² In the style of the times, a classical genealogy had been constructed for the house of the Visconti, making them the descendants of the Trojans. Piccolomini probably knew about this genealogy from Andrea Biglia, cf. the Introduction. If both the contemporary Turks and the Visconti descended from the Trojans, they are related through their common forefathers, and Piccolomini therefore claims that this family bond will make the Turks trust the Visconti Duke. The claim is, of course, completely preposterous, and it is doubtful that any educated person in the assembly would have believed it. See Pius II: *Orationes*, I, p. 36, note 8

³ “Romeorum”

⁴ Johannes VIII Palaiologos (1392 - 1448): Second last Greek Roman emperor, from 1425 to his death

⁵ As well he might, in view of the expansionist policies of the Turks and their former attacks on Constantinople

⁶ An early reference by Piccolomini to the religious toleration practiced by the Turks

⁷ Outside the area around immediately around Constantinople

⁸ Or: bring back the Greeks [to union with the Latin Church]

[21] Magnum est imperium Turcorum^{1 2}, ingentes Asiaticorum vires, et opes ipsae florentissimae, qui ex Asia in Europam imperium prorogarunt³ totamque Graeciam occuparunt⁴ tamquam Troianae ultores⁵ ruinae,⁶ quos Graecia pellere non unius civitatis aut dominii, sed totius esset Christianitatis opus. Non vis, sed gratia⁷ Graecos det nobis⁸ oportet. Ferunt Turci⁹, ut de fide - ut lubet¹⁰ - Argolici sentiant, ideoque fidei causa patientur ad concilium proficisci, si nihil contra se machinari, nullasque ordiri sibi fraudes suspicentur. Ad fugiendas ergo suspiciones ducis¹¹ efflagitant urbes, quem¹² sibi nullo pacto suspectum Turci¹³ arbitrentur. Nec Constantinopolitanos invito Turco¹⁴ venire posse negaverim, sed aliorum etiam habenda est¹⁵ ratio parentium Turcis¹⁶, quos secum trahendos patriarcha confidit. Quo fit, ut Graecorum¹⁷ causa Papia sit maxime accommoda.

¹ De imperio Teucrorum *in marg.* A, K

² Teucrorum K

³ prorogavit V

⁴ occupavit V

⁵ occultores A; ultores B, C, E, F, H, K, V; cultores D, G, MA

⁶ Ruina Troiana *in marg.* A

⁷ Grecia F

⁸ Graecos det nobis : det nobis Graecos G, MA

⁹ Teucris K

¹⁰ libet H; omit. V

¹¹ Mediolani *add.* H, V

¹² quas V

¹³ Teucris K

¹⁴ Teucro K

¹⁵ etiam habenda est : habenda est etiam K

¹⁶ parentium Turcis *omit.* H, V; Teucris K

¹⁷ certorum H [NB: V agrees with Intermediate and Final Version]

[21] For great is the realm of the Turks,¹ immense is the power of the Asians, and enormous their riches. They have extended their empire from Asia² to Europe,³ and they have occupied the whole of Greece as if they were the avengers of the destruction of Troy. To expel them from Greece would not be the task of a single city or state, but of the entire Christian world.⁴ Only [God's] grace – not force – can give us the Greeks. The Turks tolerate that the Argolians⁵ have whatever religious beliefs they want. Therefore, they will allow them come to a council in a religious matter, but only if they do not suspect any deception or intrigue.⁶ In order to allay their suspicions, the Greeks ask for the cities of the duke whom they think the Turks will not suspect. I do not deny that the Constantinopolitans would be able to come against the will of the Turks, but we must also take into account those other people⁷ who are subjects of the Turk and whom the Patriarch⁸ intends to bring with him. In conclusion, as far as the Greeks are concerned, Pavia is a most appropriate choice.

¹ I.e. the Ottoman Turks whose rulers eventually conquered the entire Byzantine Empire and a large part of the Mediterranean world and became a serious threat to Europe

² i.e. Asia Minor

³ Note the use of the term "Europe" as a geopolitical term

⁴ This passage is an early expression of what would be a lifelong and major concern of Piccolomini/Pius: the war and crusade against the Turks to save Europe and Christianity. Piccolomini may very well have picked up the notion of a common European military campaign against the Turks from Filelfo when, during his wandering years, he heard him lecturing in Florence (cf. Meserve: *Nestor*)

⁵ i.e. the Greeks

⁶ This view is completely naïve: the Constantinopolitans wanted Church Union with the Latins not for theological reasons, but in order to obtain financial and military help in the losing battle against Turkish expansion. The Turks would have been aware of this fact, so it is quite surprising that they eventually allowed the Greeks under their control to accompany emperor and patriarch to the council

⁷ Greek theologians and bishops from those areas outside of Constantinople already conquered by the Turks

⁸ Josephos II (1360-1439): Patriarch of Constantinople from 1416 to his death

[22] Nonnulli¹ tamen ad terras, inquiunt, si ducis eatur, non permissuros Venetos² Graecis transitum Genuensesque obstaturos³ ganniunt⁴, quod de florentibus illis civitatibus, duobus⁵, ut⁶ ita dixerim, Christianitatis luminibus, nefas est non solum dicere, sed suspicari, quae solae nos ab orienti⁷ defendunt, quae barbaricos reprimunt impetus, quae terras⁸ Christianorum ab incursione tutantur infidelium, quae⁹ plurimas non dico urbes, sed provincias in media Barbariae¹⁰ bello armisque tenent. Hasne igitur civitates, arma assidue¹¹ pro fide gestantes, venientibus ad unionem Graecis putabimus obstaturas? Nec bonus est, qui ista dicit, neque prudens, qui illa credit.

[23] Ego tam¹² Venetos quam¹³ Genuenses omnia porrecturos opinor auxilia, quibus rem hanc conficiatis, quocumque concilium transferatis. Nec¹⁴ de Venetis ambigo¹⁵, quorum saluum conductum habetis. Genuenses vero brevi se missuros¹⁶ dixere¹⁷. Interim {4r} devotas et benevolentiae plenas miserunt epistolas vestris sese jussibus committentes, qui etiam magna classe, quando oporteret, huic se rei propriis cum corporibus exhiberent. Nihil itaque timeo obstaculi, nihil violentiae Graecis fieri, nisi Turci¹⁸, ut jam praedixi, molesti sint. Christianorum vero neminem neque¹⁹ scio neque puto²⁰ ita scelestum²¹, ita iniquum, ita bonorum omnium {140v} perversorem, ut huic se negotio opponat.

¹ De Venetis et Genuensibus *in marg.* A, K

² ventos F

³ obstituros MA

⁴ *omit.* K; garriunt V, MA

⁵ duabus K

⁶ non K

⁷ oriente C

⁸ **terram H**

⁹ **infideliumque D, G, MA**

¹⁰ Barbaria E, G, H, MA

¹¹ **dietim H, K, V**

¹² *omit.* E

¹³ tamquam E

¹⁴ neque K

¹⁵ amgibo A; angibo F

¹⁶ se missuros : missuros se G, MA

¹⁷ dixisse F

¹⁸ Teucris K

¹⁹ nequam V

²⁰ neque puto *omit.* E

²¹ **scelestem H, K, V**

2.3. Attitude of Genoa and Venice

[22] Some people claim that if you go to the duke's territories, the Venetians will forbid the Greeks to pass through their territory. And they murmur¹ that the Genoese,² too, will oppose this choice. To say, nay just to think thus about these flourishing Christian cities, two lights of Christendom, is a gross injustice. These two cities alone protect us from the East, they defend us against the attacks of the barbarians, they protect the lands of the Christians from the incursions of the infidels, and by military force they hold many cities and even provinces in the middle of Barbary.³ Shall we really believe that these two cities, fighting continuously for the Faith, would hinder the travel of the Greeks to the Union Council? No good man claims this, and no sensible man believes it.

[23] For my own part, I am convinced that both Venice and Genoa will render every assistance to your enterprise wherever you decide to transfer the council. As for the Venetians, you already have their safeconduct, and the Genoese have said that they will send theirs shortly. In the meantime they have sent devoted letters, full of goodwill and commitment to your decisions. They also say that they will make a large fleet as well as their own persons available to this cause, as needed. So, I do not fear any obstacles or that the Greeks will suffer any violence, unless the Turks make trouble, as I have already mentioned. I do not know or think that any Christian could be so wicked, so evil, and so perversely opposed to everything good that he would obstruct this matter.

¹ "ganniunt"

² Genoa (Genova): capital city of Liguria. Merchant state during the Middle Age and traditional rival of Venice ... and Milan

³ Here used to designate the territories held by non-Christian rulers

[24] Et quoniam aliqua de propinquitate maris et itineris brevitatem¹ etiam alii dixerunt, non ab re erit de hoc quoque me² pauca disputasse³. Namque, ut arbitror utque scio, ex locis, qui hodie nominantur, nullus est Graecis quam Papia⁴ accessu facilius, nisi terrestre iter facturi sint, quo casu longe proximius habent Utinum⁵. Mari autem venientes Papiam habent propiorem⁶, sive enim⁷ Utinum, sive Papiam postulent, Ravennae⁸ prius fretum secaturi⁹ sunt, quod non magis Papia¹⁰ quam Utino abest. Graecis vero¹¹ Papiam petentibus ad Ravennam¹² Padus occurrit flumen, ut nostis, ob suam amplitudinem et poetarum carminibus et historiarum¹³ scriptis illustre. Ex Pado¹⁴ in¹⁵ Ticinum¹⁶ ascendent, qui ad portas urbis navigium vectitabit.

¹ breviter V

² non C

³ **disputare** H

⁴ Papia *in marg.* A, K

⁵ Utinum *in marg.* A, K

⁶ **propiorem** H, K; priorem V

⁷ *omit.* E

⁸ Ravenna *in marg.* A, K

⁹ secuturi E; sequuturi K

¹⁰ Papiam E

¹¹ autem V

¹² ad Ravennam *omit.* G, MA

¹³ historiam B, E

¹⁴ Padus *in marg.* A, K

¹⁵ *omit.* V

¹⁶ Ticinum *in marg.* A, K

2.4. Pavia's distance from the sea

[24] Since others have talked about proximity to the sea and the short travel distance, it will be appropriate if I, too, comment briefly on this matter. For I think and know that of the places mentioned today none is easier for the Greeks to reach than Pavia¹ – unless they travel over land in which case Udine is far closer. But if they arrive by sea, Pavia is the nearest. For whether they prefer Udine or Pavia, they must first cross over to Ravenna, which is not farther from Pavia than from Udine. If the Greeks travel to Pavia, they will encounter the River Po² which - as you know - is famed for its size in the songs of poets and the writings of historians. From the Po they will travel up the Ticino River until their ship reaches the gates of the city of Pavia.

¹ Pavia: formerly capital of the Kingdom of the Lombards. At the time it was the second largest city in Lombardy, ca. 35 km. south of Milan. First seat of the preceeding Council of Pavia/Siena, 1423-1424

² Po: the largest river in Northern Italy. Piccolomini may have been referring to Po di Primaro, a deltaic branch of the Po River which no longer carries water

[25] Portus vero Pisanus¹ longe remotior est, Charybdim namque Scyllamque^{2 3}, per quas dubius est transitus, evitantibus⁴ Graecis totus Sicaniae⁵ circuendus⁶ est orbis, cujus, si qua veteribus⁷ fides, non minus quingentis millibus passuum clauditur ambitus. Neque mihi ob hanc rem Florentinus⁸ quisquam⁹ succenseat¹⁰, neque enim hoc ideo dico, quod illi amplissimae urbi memorabilique populo concilium auferre velim, cujus tanta erga concilium cognita est¹¹ caritas, ut nullius magis stupeam oblationes, qui prima requisitione tantam pecuniarum summam tam effuse promiserit¹², ut illius etiam¹³ populi majora in posterum sperare¹⁴ beneficia debeatis. Sed ne caeci omnino et rerum videamur¹⁵ ignari, hoc enim, quod dico, carta illa¹⁶ edocet, qua uti¹⁷ nautae consueverunt. Haec tamen semper ego parvifeci: iter namque duorum triumve¹⁸ dierum nulli¹⁹ dare aut auferre concilium debet.

¹ Portus Pisanus *in marg.* A, K

² Scilla Caribdim *in marg.* A, K

³ Graecis *add. A [Example of A corrected by other mss.]*

⁴ **euntibus H**; civibus V

⁵ Sicania *in marg.* A, K

⁶ circumeundus MA

⁷ vertentibus K

⁸ Florentinis K

⁹ quispiam G, MA

¹⁰ sue censeat K

¹¹ cognita est : est cognita G, MA

¹² **promiserunt H, V**

¹³ **et H, V**

¹⁴ **spectare H, V**

¹⁵ videamini V

¹⁶ *omit.* F

¹⁷ qua uti : quanti K

¹⁸ termine V

¹⁹ **ulli H**

2.5. Alternative route south of Sicily

[25] But the seaport of Pisa is much farther away. If the Greeks [take that route,] they will avoid [the Strait of] Scylla and Charybdis¹ through which the passage is unsafe and sail all around Sicily whose circumference - if the ancients are to be believed - measures at least 500.000 *passus*.² No Florentine needs to be angry with me on this score³ for I do not point out this fact in order to rob their splendid city and famous people of the council: their devotion to the council is well-known and great, and they have made a truly remarkable offer. Already at the time of the council's first request, they promised such a large amount that you may hope for even greater favours from this people in the future.⁴ But so that we may not appear to be completely blind and ignorant: what I am saying⁵ is evident from the maps commonly used by seamen.⁶ On the other hand, I do not attach great importance to this question as the council should not be given⁷ or taken away depending on whether the travel takes three or four days more.

¹ Scylla and Charybdis: two mythological sea monsters, which tradition placed on each side of the Messina strait

² Passus: Roman measure of distance, ca. 1.5 meter

³ Piccolomini points out that if the council were to be held in Florence, the Greeks would then have to take the longer sea route South of Sicily

⁴ Does Piccolomini really believe this, or is he subtly dropping poison into the ears of the council fathers?

⁵ I.e. about the passage south of Sicily to Pisa

⁶ An early reference to nautical charts, probably a "portolan"

⁷ To a city

[26] Illud vero¹ cavendum est, illudque prospiciendum, ne repudiari a Graecis locus possit. Nec ineleganter homo prudentissimus Gaspar dicebat: quae² Graecis promisistis diligentissime adimplenda, qui vel si³ unum iota diminutum invenerint⁴, licitam se judicarent⁵ excusationem habere. Sed illud praecipue ponderat, ut pecuniae habeantur ac navigia, quas res utrum ex duce⁶ obtinueritis, Isidorus ipse plenissime demonstravit: quo ex Mediolano reverso, expendite⁷ quaeso, an diminutas habueritis {4v} responsiones, an aliquid non obtinueritis, an ulla in re difficilem principem experti fueritis?⁸ Quinque et octuaginta millia ducatorum⁹ mutuo flagitastis¹⁰, bono vultu, bonoque animo annuit; terras arcesque consignari vobis^{11 12} requiritis¹³, nulla fit resistentia; duas¹⁴ de quadraginta domos sine pensione petitis¹⁵, concedit facile quod fuerat sine petitione factururus; taxationes domorum victualiumque postulatis¹⁶, {141r} respondet non minus grate quam liberaliter¹⁷. Quidquid denique vultis, publico ille sollemnique chirographo completurum se obligat. O regalem animum, o liberalem principem, o inauditam magnificentiam! Hic est, quem requiris, Enni¹⁸ : *Amicus certus in re¹⁹ incerta²⁰ cernitur*. Talis certe ducalis responsio fuit, ut nulla suppletione²¹ indiguerit, nullo adjumento, nulla rescriptione, cujus locum, si statim elegissetis²², statim erant parata omnia. Utrum alii sic fecerint, vos videritis.

¹ illudque *corr.* ex illud vero G

² qui V

³ **vel si : si vel H, K, V**

⁴ **invenirent H, K, V**

⁵ indicarent G, MA

⁶ ex duce *omit.* K

⁷ **expedite F, H, V**

⁸ Oblationes ducis *in marg.* A

⁹ millia ducatorum : ducatorum milia K

¹⁰ flagitatis C

¹¹ arcesque consignari vobis : vobis arcesque consignari G, MA

¹² **consignari vobis : vobis consignari H**

¹³ **requisivistis H, V**

¹⁴ **decem H, K, V**

¹⁵ **petivistis H, V**

¹⁶ **postulastis H, V**

¹⁷ libenter K, V

¹⁸ Ennius *in marg.* A; Ennius de amico *in marg.* D, G

¹⁹ *omit.* K

²⁰ *em.*; certa codd.; incerta MA [*Error either due to Piccolomini himself, or to some scribe*]

²¹ suppletore V

²² eligissetis F

2.6. Availability of funds

[26] In any case, we must take great pains to avoid that the Greeks may reject the venue for the council. As the wise Gaspare put it very appropriately: your promises to the Greeks must be fulfilled exactly - if they find that just one *iota* has been taken away, they will claim that they have legitimate excuse.¹ It is crucial that they be provided with funds and ships. Both of these may be had from the duke, as Isidoro² has amply demonstrated. For were the offers he brought back from Milan in any way reduced? Was there anything you did not get? Did the prince make difficulties on any point whatsoever? You asked for a loan of 85.000 ducats: he granted it with good grace. You required that certain territories and fortresses be consigned to you: there was no objection. You asked for 38 houses free of charge: he gave it readily, and you would not even have had to ask for it! You demanded price controls for lodging and victuals: he answered gracefully and generously. And finally he committed himself to confirm everything you wish in a public and solemn document.³ Oh regal soul Oh generous prince! Oh extraordinary munificence! This is the one you want, Ennius⁴: *When fortune is fickle the faithful friend is found*.⁵ Such was the duke's reply that no supplementary information was needed, no corroboration, and no further correspondence. If you choose his place now, all will be ready immediately. Consider whether others have done as much.

¹ I.e. for not coming or for increasing their demands

² Isidoro da Rosate

³ "chirographo"

⁴ Quintus Ennius (ca. 239 - ca. 169 BC): Roman poet

⁵ Johannes Vahlen: *Ennianae poesis reliquiae*. 1903. Fragment 210, p. 155. Quoted in Cicero: *De amicitia*, 17.64

[27] Unumque, obsecro, hic advertite, an cautio subdifficilis, an gravia postulentur assignamenta. Non essem, Hercule, increpandus, si hunc principem nullam petere cautionem dixerim. Hujusmodi enim, quae petitur cautio, non est cautio, sed magis appellanda¹ donatio. Ex indulgentiis reddi sibi mutuum petit^{2 3}, ut si nihil indulgentiae⁴ reddant, nihil recuperet. Hic est verus filius, verus servitor, verus amicus vester⁵. Haec est illa, quam quaerit multis in locis Tullius⁶, amicitia: *Amor*, inquit ille, *ex quo amicitia nominata est, princeps est ad benevolentiam conjungendam*. In amicitia autem nihil est fictum, nihil⁷ simulatum. Sed quidquid⁸ id est verum et voluntarium, quemadmodum in hac ducis cernimus⁹ benivolentia, quem si quis vobis neget amicum¹⁰, cunctos quippe faciat inimicos. Cujus tanta est affectio, tantaque in hunc coetum caritas, ut vestrarum nullam petitionum¹¹ abnuat¹² pecuniasque magis donet, quam mutuo dedat.

¹ **appellitanda H**; applicanda K

² peti K

³ reddi sibi mutuum petit : petit sibi mutuum reddi MA

⁴ petant **add. V**

⁵ **omit. H, V**

⁶ Tullius *in marg.* A, D, G, K

⁷ **est add. H**; nil est K

⁸ **est add. H, K, V**

⁹ ducis cernimus : cernimus ducis K

¹⁰ **omit. K**

¹¹ petitionem G

¹² petitionum abnuat: abnuat petitionum B, E

[27] And please take note of this: did the duke require an onerous caution or burdensome sureties?¹ By Hercules, had I said that the prince did not demand any surety at all, I should not be blamed, for the surety he has asked for is not really a surety, but should rather be called a donation! He has asked that the loan be repaid out of the [revenue from the sale of] indulgences² so that if there are no such revenues he will not be repaid. This is your true son! This is your true servant! This is your true friend. This is the friendship which Tullius³ mentions in many places and about which he says: *It is mainly love (amor), from which the word "friendship" (amicitia) is derived, that leads to the establishing of goodwill.*⁴ In friendship nothing is pretence, nothing is simulated. Everything is genuine and everything is voluntary, as illustrated by the duke's benevolence towards you. If anyone denies that the duke is your friend, then indeed he makes everybody your enemy. The duke's affection and devotion to this assembly are so strong that he will agree to all your requests and rather grant money than loans.

¹ I.e. caution for the loan to the council

² Cf. Pius II: *Orationes*, I, p. 36, n. 9. Cf. also letter of 25 October, 1436 to Siena: *Dux enim Mediolani concilium petens omnem pecuniarum summam oportunam concessurum se pollicetur neque aliam cautionem petit nisi ut semidecimarum indulgentiarumque collectores sibi respondeant* (Piccolomini: *Epistolarium*, ep. 22, p.58)

³ I.e. Cicero

⁴ Cicero: *De amicitia*, 8.26

[28] Jamque propter pecunias nihil est, quod Papiae objiciatis¹. Nec illos audio, qui se aureos affirmantes omnibus se Christiculis jactitant ditiores, magnumque auri et argenti pondus habere se² gloriantur. Quorsum enim illa dicuntur³? Forsitan quia vendi concilium putant, ut plus offerenti veneat⁴? Quod probri loco vitandum detestandumque est, ne venditum vulgo concilium dicant. Unum tamen persuasum volo, quod⁵ ducem scilicet⁶ ipsum, ubicumque sit opus, quascumque petieritis, daturum esse pecunias neque necessitatibus vestris umquam defuturum. Namque ut volet, sic etiam poterit invenire pecunias. Habet enim, ut scitis, urbem Mediolanum non solum populosissimam⁷, verum etiam pecuniosissimam⁸, ubi totius Galliae togatae cumulati thesauri sint⁹, ex qua nulla non¹⁰ possit haberi summa pecuniarum.

¹ abiciatis K

² habere se : se habere D, E, G, MA; **omit.** H, V

³ ducuntur F

⁴ veniat V

⁵ *omit.* K, MA

⁶ **omit.** H, K, V

⁷ **solum populosissimam : populissimam solum** H, V

⁸ verum ... pecuniosissimam *omit.* E

⁹ **sunt** H

¹⁰ *omit.* E, K

[28] So, when it comes to funding, there can be no objection to Pavia. And I will not listen to those who claim that they are “golden” and richer than all other Christians, or those who boast that they have a large amount of gold and silver. Why are they saying that? Do they think that the council is up for sale and will go to the highest bidder? This shame must be avoided and abhorred so that people will not say that the council has been sold.¹ I just want to convince you of this one thing: the duke will assist you financially whenever needed and whatever you ask for, and he will never fail you in your need. For he can get all the funds he wants. Not only is his city of Milan very populous - as you well know - but it is also very rich. All the treasures of *Gallia Togata*² are accumulated there so that he may gather any sum needed.

¹ Which would be the sin of simony. Cf. letter to Siena of 6 August, 1436: *si patres de concilio res hujusmodi venales haberent et plus offerenti concederent* (Epistolarium, letter 21)

² Gallia togata: Togate Gaul, i.e. the region between the river Po and the Alps = Cisalpine Gaul = Northern Italy

[29] At si de populo illo Mediolanensi¹ {5r} volumus verum dicere, nullum ego devotio-rem vidi², nullum fideiorem, nullum suo principi oboedientio-rem, nullum denique meliorem, ob cujus, ut arbitror, bonitatem ac sanctimoniam divino munere actum est, ne illam urbem nostris diebus pestifera lues invaserit, cui populo nihil erit gratius quam in sanctissimum usum effudisse pecunias. Nec³ credite illum munificentissimum {141v} principem ob⁴ defectum pecuniarum rem dimissurum, qui non habendi concilii cupiditate argentum modo⁵ pollicetur, sed ne quod⁶ caritate pecuniae in dedecus prolaberemini. Dat ergo, ut satis est, Papia pecuniarum.

[30] De navigio⁷ non magnam vim facio. Vestro enim, ut scitis, sumptu conducendae armandaeque sunt triremes, nec dissimiliter balistarii, neque tam grandis pecuniarum modo⁸ ⁹ quantitas petitur, nisi ut navigio balistariisque sufficiat. Depositis enim decem millibus apud Constantinopolim, Graecisque datis¹⁰ XV millibus, viatico quoque oratoribus concilii praestito, quod superest in naves longas, balistariosque dispensabitur, quos conducere ubique poteritis: habentibusque pecunias neque balistarii¹¹ deerunt neque navigia. Jamque illum Sabaudiensem¹² spectata virtute militem vobis navigia offerentem vidistis, suosque labores promittentem¹³, cujus nobilitas, animique perspicua generositas non est huic¹⁴ inepta negotio. Quare¹⁵ sive istas, sive alias multis in locis conducere naves poteritis.

¹ De Mediolanensibus A; De populo Mediolenensi *in marg.* K

² **unquam add. H, K, V**

³ ne MA

⁴ ad C

⁵ *omit.* K

⁶ *omit.* B, E

⁷ De navigio *in marg.* A, K

⁸ *omit.* G, MA

⁹ pecuniarum modo : modo pecuniarum K

¹⁰ *omit.* F

¹¹ **vobis add. H, V**

¹² Sabaudiensem C

¹³ **promittere H, V**

¹⁴ *omit.* K

¹⁵ **quamquam H, V**

[29] As for the people of Milan,¹ truly, I have never seen a people more devoted, more faithful, and more obedient to their prince: indeed, I have never seen a better one. I believe that it is because of their goodness and faith that, by the grace of God, their city has not been infested with the plague in our days. Nothing would be more welcome to that people than to spend money in your holy cause. Do not believe that this munificent prince will give up the matter later due to lack of money: he promises money not because he wants to have the council, but because he wants to spare us the embarrassment of lacking money. In conclusion: the solution of Pavia will provide enough funding.

2.7. Availability of ships

[30] I shall not go deeply into the matter of the sea voyage. As you know, the triremes and the archers are to be hired and armed at your cost, and the amount required is not large – only as much as is sufficient for the ship and the archers. You have already deposited 10,000 ducats in Constantinople;² 15,000 ducats have been given to the Greeks; and the council's orators have been given travel money. The rest will be spent on long ships and archers, and these you can hire everywhere. As you have money, you will lack neither archers nor ships. You have already seen the knight from Savoy, a man of recognized virtue,³ offering ships to you and promising to work for you.⁴ His nobleness and generous spirit are just what we need in this matter. So, therefore you can either hire his ships or you can hire other ships in many places.

¹ Milan: the capital of Lombardy and a major power in Renaissance Italy

² Constantinople: Capital of the Greek-Roman Empire, founded by the Emperor Constantine in 330, present-day Istanbul. Fell to the Turks 17 years afterwards, in 1453

³ "spectata virtute"

⁴ Nicolas de Menton, governor of Nice, who spoke to the Council in the General Congregation on 9 November: *Accessit ad generalem congregationem [Nicodus] de Mentone gubernator civitatis et comitatus Niciensis pro domino duce Sabaudiae et per organum domini thesaurarii approbavit oblaciones per eundem dominum thesaurarium nomine suo pridie factas et ratificavit, offerens se ad servicia concilii in conducendo galeas pro Grecis tam ad Constantinopolim quam Pisas vel Florenciam, ubi concilium ordinaverit. De expensis necessariis refert se ad dominos de concilio (Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle, p. 325). On 19 November 1436, the Council's formal contract with Nicolas de Menton was read to the General Congregation, whereupon he was solemnly appointed captain [*capitaneus*] of the council's - as yet unexisting - fleet (Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle, p. 337; Paul Becker, p. 50)*

[31] Placet tamen duci, ne qua in parte deficiat, triremes etiam reperire, quas unde habeat aut¹ quomodo habeat indignum est quod vestigemus. Ratum est enim quodcumque promittit. Hoc tamen non tacebo, navium scilicet illi concessionem non esse difficilem. Siquidem magna², ut³ scitis⁴, cum⁵ serenissimo ac magnanimo rege Aragonum⁶ amicitia est, qui, suum⁷ quemadmodum facundissime dixit orator, promptus est tam concilii quam ducis gratia praestare⁸ navigium. Et cui, obsecro, melius haec committi res potest⁹ quam regi Aragonum? Quis eo diligentius rem fidei pertractet, qui diu¹⁰ adversus infideles bella gessit. An ignoratis regem illum catholicum et fidei zelatorem magna saepe manu magnaue classe adversus Afros, Christiani nominis inimicissimos, decertasse? Illa profecto laus illaque huic regi¹¹ gloria tribuatur Mediterraneum mare sua diligentia ab infidelibus piratis esse custoditum. Et quod magno Pompejo decori fuit, huic¹² etiam¹³ concedamus honori¹⁴, cuius nisi frequenter¹⁵ in pelago classica insonaret tuba, ad ipsum usque litus Etruscum, Libycae naves hostilesque classes infidelium crassarentur¹⁶. Sed timent¹⁷ praestantissimum¹⁸ regem Jonii, Tyrrhenique maris custodem, qui Sardiniam, Corsicam, Siciliam, Baleares ac Vulcanias insulas ab omni Saracenorum impetu liberavit: cui {5v} magis erit molestum in tanta re fidei non requiri, quam si totam ejus classem dira tempestas absorpserit. Aut igitur regiae naves compraestabuntur, aut marina aliunde vasa comperientur¹⁹. Ac de primo principalique membro satis sit dictum.

¹ et H

² sibi *add.* H, K, V

³ *omit.* G, MA

⁴ *omit.* G, MA

⁵ *omit.* G, MA

⁶ De rege Aragonum *in marg.* A, K

⁷ suus B, C, E, F, H, K; si vis V

⁸ praeterire V

⁹ committi res potest : committeres MA

¹⁰ dum G, MA

¹¹ *omit.* G, MA

¹² *omit.* G, MA

¹³ ejus MA

¹⁴ honorem H; honore V

¹⁵ nisi frequenter *corr. ex* frequenter nisi G; frequenter nisi MA

¹⁶ grassarentur K, MA

¹⁷ tamen G, MA

¹⁸ paratissimum V

¹⁹ comperientur F

[31] However, so as not to fail you in any way whatsoever, the duke has decided to provide triremes, too. It would be unworthy of us to inquire where and how he will obtain them, for whatever he promises holds true. Still, I shall tell you why it is easy for him to provide ships. As you know, the duke is bound in close friendship¹ with His most Serene and Magnanimous Highness, the King of Aragon,² who would like nothing better – as his orator stated so eloquently – than to make his ships available for the sake of the council and the duke. To whom could this matter be better entrusted than to the King of Aragon? Who would more diligently deal with this matter of the Faith than he who has fought so long against the infidels? Or do you not know that this Catholic King, zealous in matters of the Faith, often and with a large force and a large fleet fought against the Africans, inveterate enemies of Christianity? Indeed, it is his honour and glory to have, by his own efforts, made the Mediterranean Sea safe from the infidel pirates. Pompey the Great³ was equally meritorious, and likewise we honour this king who frequently made his trumpets sound when the Libyan ships and the hostile fleets of the infidels roamed that very sea, even as far as to the Tuscan shore. They fear this excellent King of the Ionian Sea and Guardian of the Tyrrhenian Sea, who has freed Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily, and the Balearic and Volcanian Islands⁴ from all attacks of the Saracens. For him it would be worse not to be asked for assistance in this great cause of the Faith than to have his entire fleet devoured by a terrible storm. In conclusion, either the king's ships will be made available to you or else ships will be provided in another manner.

I have now said enough about the first and most important part of my subject.

¹ The King fell into the hands of the duke when he was defeated by the Genoese fleet in the sea battle of Ponza in 1435. The King was treated honourably by the duke, and then the two princes concluded an alliance which completely upset the political and military balance of Italy

² Alfonso V the Magnanimous (1396-1458): King of Aragon and Sicily from 1416 to his death. As King of Sicily (the island part of the Kingdom of Sicily) he had been adopted as heir to the Queen of Naples (i.e. the mainland part of the Kingdom of Sicily) in 1421 and henceforth campaigned systematically to get effective control of the mainland kingdom, which he acquired in 1442/1443

³ Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (106-48 BC): Roman general and statesman

⁴ Islands in the Mediterranean Sea to the east of Italy

[32] Transeo¹ ad secundum, ubi dicebam talem esse locum oportere, ad quem commode papa² cum concilio {142r} conveniret, nec irrationabiliter. Nam cum Graecos ad unionem sitis vocaturi, dignum est vos prius³ esse unitos, ne quod⁴ schisma, ne quam divisionem, ne quam⁵ inter vos⁶ controversiam Graeci reperiant. Verisimile etenim est facilius reduci Graecos, si vos unanimes quam si⁷ disjunctos agnoscant⁸. Neque ob hanc solum⁹ causam, sed ut multa scandala infinitaque mala cessent, quae nostra divisio suscitavit, quam schisma non injuria¹⁰ vocitabimus. Hoc¹¹ est quod regius orator Simon Caroli, vir non sapientia solum, sed eloquentia singularis, hoc in loco flagitabat enixe¹², cuius verba, patres amplissimi, cum locum eligeretis, vestris debebunt insedere pectoribus, ut summe curetis posse¹³ papam interesse.

¹ Secunda pars orationis *in marg.* A, F, K; Secunda pars *in marg.* D, G

² commode papa : papa commode G, MA

³ primum F

⁴ quid K

⁵ ne quam *omit.* K

⁶ nos F, K

⁷ vos *add.* G, K, MA

⁸ cognoscant F

⁹ solam K

¹⁰ *omit.* V

¹¹ Simon Karoli *in marg.* A

¹² flagitabat enixe : enixe flagitabat K

¹³ *omit.* K

3. Pavia is convenient for the pope

[32] I now move on to the second part.

As I said in the beginning, we need a location that is convenient for the pope to meet with the council. This is quite reasonable. For if you want to invite the Greeks to unite with you, you ought first to be united yourselves so that the Greeks will find no schism, no disunity, and no dispute between you. Obviously, the Greeks will be brought back¹ more easily if they find that you are of one mind than if they find that you are divided. And not just for that reason, but also in order to put an end to all the scandals and countless evils caused by our disunity - or to put it more properly: our schism. This is what the king's² ambassador, Simon Charles,³ a man of singular wisdom and eloquence, urged so brilliantly in this very room.⁴ Honourable Fathers, when you choose the venue, you should heed his words and take great care to make it possible for the pope to participate.

¹ I.e. to the union with the Roman Church

² King Charles VII of France (1403-1461): ruler from 1429 to his death

³ Simon Charles: counselor of King Charles VII of France, ambassador to the Council of Basel

⁴ Simon Charles spoke for the King of France in the General Congregation of 3 November (*iterum vice regia peccit, quod eligatur locus, in quo commode dominus noster possit interesse*), see *Concilium Basiliense: Die Protokolle*, p. 320

[33] Nec¹ enim² sanctissimam illam³ sedem Petrique verissimum successorem ac Christi vicarium debetis contemnere. Hoc est quidem caput nostrum, quod separatum esse nequaquam convenit, quod nullum sine capite corpus potest esse perfectum. Hic est sponsus ecclesiae; hic magister navis; hic, ut vulgo dicunt, in terris Deus, cui claves regni caelorum per Petrum aliosque Petri successores Christus, redemptor noster, contulit, quamquam ecclesiae quoque non inficior datas. Hujus tanta est⁴ auctoritas, tanta potestas, tanta divinorum concessa mysteriorum cognitio, ut omni honore omnique veneratione sit dignus⁵, tantaeque reverentiae papalis est dignitas, ut papam, vel malum, honorare venerarique teneamur⁶. Neque⁷ temnere⁸ papam quisquam⁹ debet, quamcumque libidinem, quodcumque nefas maturaverit, nisi prius ecclesia judicarit.

[34] Quid de praesenti summo dicemus pontifice? Esset mihi de sua nunc sanctimonia sermo, nisi magnifice oratores regii¹⁰ de ipsius pietate¹¹, mansuetudine, aequitate, justitia et bonitate¹² dixissent. Nos illud nequaquam inficiamur, sanctissimum¹³ dominum nostrum in futuro concilio fore necessarium, ut non auctoritate solum, sed etiam¹⁴ morum honestate proficiat¹⁵.

¹ De sede apostolica *in marg.* A, K

² etiam MA

³ sanctissimam illam: illam sanctissimam K

⁴ res K

⁵ sit dignus : dignus sit K

⁶ Papam etiam malum veneremur *in marg.* D, G

⁷ **nec** D, G, M

⁸ **spernere** H, V

⁹ papam quisquam : quisquam papam K

¹⁰ regis G, MA

¹¹ **omit.** H, V

¹² **et bonitate : pietate** H, V

¹³ sed K

¹⁴ **vitae et** H, K, V

¹⁵ perficiat K

3.1. Pope is head of the Church

[33] For you should not despise the Holy See and the true successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ.¹ He is our head which should never be separated from us, for a body cannot be complete without its head. He is the bridegroom of the Church; he is the captain of the ship; he is - as people say - God on Earth. Through Peter and Peter's successors, Christ our Saviour has given him the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven,² though I do not deny that they have also been given to the Church as a whole.³ To him has been given so great an authority, so great a power, so great a knowledge of the divine mysteries that he is to be revered above all. Indeed, the papal dignity is so venerable that we must honour and revere the pope – even an evil one. So, whatever lust he may have indulged in or whatever crime he may have committed, he must not be held in contempt before the Church has passed judgment.⁴

3.2 Pope Eugenius IV

[34] What shall I say about the present Supreme Pontiff?⁵ I would now have to speak about his holy life if the king's ambassadors⁶ had not already spoken splendidly about his piety, his clemency, his fairness, his sense of justice, and his goodness. We do not at all deny that Our Most Holy Lord⁷ will be necessary to the future council⁸ so that it may benefit not only from the authority of his office, but also from his personal moral qualities⁹.

¹ Note how respectfully Piccolomini here speaks about the papal office and the pope personally, cf. Introduction

² Matthew 16, 13-20

³ Piccolomini would return to this theme in his *Libellus dialogorum* (1440), where he wrote: ... *per illa verba iudiciariam potestatem datam esse non solum Petro, sed aliis etiam apostolis et toti ecclesie in episcopis et presbyteris* (Piccolomini: *Libellus*, 72 (Iaria, pp. 48-49). He also referred to it in his *De gestis concilii Basiliensis* from the same year (Hay, p. 66), quoting Augustine's *Sermo natalis Petri et Pauli*: *Has enim claves non ille [Peter] ut homo unus, sed unitas accepit ecclesiae*, and also quoting Augustine's *De agone Christi*: *Huic enim ecclesiae claves regni coelorum datae sunt, cui Petro datae sunt*

⁴ ... but in the end he states the conciliarist position that the council is ultimately above the pope and can pass judgement on him, as the Council of Konstanz had done 20 years before, and the Council of Basel itself were to do some years later. The passage "he [the pope] must not be held in contempt before the Church [i.e. the Council] has passed judgement" is in direct contradiction of the medieval, papalist view that "the pope may be judged by nobody" (*papa a nemine iudicetur*)

⁵ Eugenius IV (1383-1447): Pope from 1431 to his death

⁶ "oratores"

⁷ i.e. the pope

⁸ i.e. The Union Council

⁹ Eugenius IV was generally considered a stubborn and undiplomatic person, pope and statesman, but at the same time a man of great piety and great moral qualities

[35] Nunc videndum commodamne sibi Papiam censeamus. Et quemadmodum mea fert opinio, nihil est quod hic locus papae displiceat, sive commoditatem viarum¹, sive securitatem percipiat². Ex Bononia usque Papiam parum itineris interjacet, via tuta et plana sive terra sive aqua aptissimum iter. Neque locus est aliquis eligibilis, ad quem papae facilius sit accessus.

[36] Tutus praeterea sibi locus est³, {6r} quod neque cum civibus, neque cum principe aliqua sibi lis est. Multumque demiror⁴ nonnullorum temeritatem inter papam ducemque esse⁵ contententium inimicitias. Unde enim hoc dicant⁶, nescio: forsitan utriusque introspiciunt animos, de aliena mente vaticinantes. Ego scio ducem Mediolani numquam inimicum appellasse papam, numquam adversarium, numquam contrarium, numquam minus sobrium de summo pontifice verbum effudisse. Ceterum magna reverentia summaque veneratione semper patrem sanctissimum⁷, semper⁸ dominum clementissimum⁹ vocitasse.

¹ **commoditatem viarum: viarum commoditatem H, V**

² percipiat C; *corr. ex percipiat D*

³ *omit. K*

⁴ *omit. K*

⁵ *corr. ex fore C; fore H, K, V*

⁶ **dictitent H, V;** dubitent K

⁷ patrem sanctissimum : patres sanctissimi V

⁸ semperque G, MA

⁹ patrem ... clementissimum : dominum clementissimum, semper patrem sanctissimum C

3.3. Distance to Pavia for the pope

[35] Let us now look at why Pavia is convenient for him. In my opinion, nothing about Pavia should displease him whether he desires the commodity of the roads or safety: there is only a short distance from Bologna¹ to Pavia, the route is safe and even, and both by road and by river the journey is highly comfortable. No other place is easier for the pope to get to.

3.4. Relations between the pope and the Duke of Milan

[36] Moreover, the place is safe for him because he has no quarrel with the citizens nor with its prince. I am greatly surprised by the temerity of some people who claim that there is enmity between the pope and the duke.² How they can say that, I simply do not know. Maybe they are looking inside their two heads, trying to guess at the minds of others. For my own part, I know for sure that the Duke of Milan has never called the pope an enemy, or an adversary, or an opponent, and he has never spoken less than respectfully about the Supreme Pontiff. On the contrary, he has always spoken with great reverence and deference about the pope and called him Most Holy Father and Most Gracious Lord.

¹ Where the pope was in residence at the time

² In a letter to Siena of 6 August 1436 (Epistolarium, letter 21), Piccolomini had actually written: *As regards the Duke, his enmity with the pope is an obstacle (duci obstat inimicitia papae)*. There had certainly been a serious conflict between pope and duke, as part of the power game in Italy at the time. The pope was perceived as an opponent of Milan for at least two reasons: firstly, he was a Venetian and favouring Venice, the mortal enemy of Milan; secondly, he naturally opposed the expansionist designs of Milan into the Papal State. The duke's support of the council – against the pope – was related to this conflict. Interestingly, Piccolomini himself had probably, in the course of this conflict, some years before been involved in a Milanese plot to seize the pope's person. The man in charge of this conspiracy was Bartolomeo Visconti, Bishop of Novara, in Milanese territory, who was closely connected with the Duke of Milan and who was Piccolomini's employer at the time. Piccolomini obviously downplays what was a very dangerous conflict for the pope, but it is probably true to say that the conflict was a political one, and not the result of personal enmity. It could therefore have been ended by the peace treaty between Milan and the pope in 1435, but later events showed that it had not

[37] Ut si qua umquam indignatio fuerit, victus¹ ducali patientia summus pontifex nil aliud duci {142v} posset dicere², nisi quod solus adversus iram vera arma verasque vires, quibus se tutaretur³, invenisset, sicut⁴ in Tusculano senatu dixisse Camillum⁵ Livius⁶ refert. Numquid praeterea⁷ novimus⁸ inimicitias, si quae fuerant⁹, exacto jam anno per pacem sopitas? Cujus mediatores fuerunt¹⁰ viri optimi atque rarissimi¹¹, cardinales sanctae crucis et sancti Petri, a vestro sacerrimo coetu ob eam rem Florentiam destinati. Conditiones pacis secundum papam dictae. Post eam^{12 13} nihil¹⁴ umquam odiosum inter eos contigit.

[38] Sed ut videatis manifestissima benevolentiae indicia¹⁵, hic animum paulisper intendite. Defecerunt ab¹⁶ duce Genuenses¹⁷, qui cum bello undique premerentur, libertatis servandae gratia cum Venetis ac¹⁸ Florentinis foedera percusserunt. Tum papa ingens duci bellum imminere cognoscens imparemque¹⁹ tantis²⁰ viribus eum²¹ existimans, ne periculoso²² nimis proelio urgeretur, auctorem se pacis obtulit virumque omnium opinione probatissimum, cardinalem sanctae crucis, misit, qui ducem de pace requireret, ipse alios flexurus. Quo inspecto animo omnem dux ipse litem omnemque controversiam sanctissimo domino nostro commisit, arbitrumque et amicabilem compositorem inter se atque hostes papam elegit.

¹ **victrix H**

² dici V

³ **tutaret H; se tutaretur : settaret V**

⁴ **sic H**

⁵ Camillus *in marg.* A, K

⁶ Livius *in marg.* A, K

⁷ non *add.* MA

⁸ nominis V

⁹ **fuerunt H, V; fuerat K**

¹⁰ exacto iam ... fuerunt *omit.* V [NB: confirms that H is not derived from V]

¹¹ clarissimi V

¹² post eam : postea E

¹³ **pacem add. H, K, V**

¹⁴ nil K

¹⁵ iudicia V

¹⁶ a MA

¹⁷ **Januenses H, V**

¹⁸ et F

¹⁹ **impotentemque H; in paceque V**

²⁰ tanti B, E

²¹ **ducem H, K, V**

²² periculo B, E

[37] And when there was a conflict between them, the Supreme Pontiff was overcome by the duke's forbearance: he had to admit that the duke had used legitimate weapons and legitimate force against him and only in self-defense, just as - according to Livy¹ - Camillus² spoke in the Tusculan Senate.³ And do we not know⁴ that this enmity - if you can really call it that - was ended through the conclusion of a peace already more than a year ago?⁵ The mediators of this peace were those two great and distinguished men, the Cardinals of Santa Croce⁶ and of San Pietro,⁷ whom your Holy Assembly sent to Florence for this very purpose. The terms of peace were dictated by the pope himself, and afterwards there has been no enmity between them whatsoever.

[38] But if you want irrefutable proofs of their friendship, then hear this: the Genoese were pressed by war on all sides,⁸ and in order to keep their liberty they defected from the duke and instead concluded a treaty with Venice and Florence.⁹ The pope learned that the duke was threatened by a major war and estimated that he could not match the great forces [of his enemies]. To prevent the duke from being pressed into a war too dangerous for him,¹⁰ the pope then offered himself as a peacemaker and sent the widely respected Cardinal of Santa Croce¹¹ on a peace mission to the duke, while he himself undertook to persuade the other parties. When the duke had considered this offer, he entrusted the whole conflict and controversy to Our Most Holy Lord¹² and chose the pope as mediator and friendly peacemaker between himself and his enemies.¹³

¹ Titus Livius (59 BC-17 AD): Roman historian

² Marcus Furius Camillus (ca. 446-365 BC): Roman general

³ Livius: *Ab urbe condita*, 6.26.1-2. The event took place in 382 BC

⁴ Cf. Pius II: *Orationes*, I, p. 36, n. 11

⁵ 10 August 1435, see Pesce, p. 18

⁶ Niccolò Albergati (1373-1443): Cardinal (1426)

⁷ Juan Cervantes (-1453): Cardinal (1426)

⁸ The Genoese defected from the Duke of Milan on 27 December 1435. The so-called Ligurian war between the duke and Genoa ensued, see Pesce

⁹ 29 May 1436, see Pesce

¹⁰ Cf. Pius II: *Orationes*, I, p. 36, n. 12

¹¹ Niccolò Albergati

¹² I.e. the pope, see Pesce p. 78

¹³ These shifts in alliance were typical of Italian power politics of the time: every state systematically worked against any other state or coalition of states becoming too strong. The pope invited Milan and the league of Venice, Florence and Genoa to peace negotiations in Bologna. They began on 6 August, but did not, at this time, lead to peace, see Pesce, p. 78-79. The war continued, but peace was eventually made, and the Duke of Milan was reconciled with the pope some years later

[39] Cujus rei veritatem^{1 2}, nisi agnitam omnibus scirem, Roberti Florentini, novitatum diligentissimi exactoris, testimonium implorarem³, apud quem non unae litterae reperirentur⁴. Vidi ego hisce oculis apostolicas litteras paternae caritatis et exuberantis plenas dilectionis, quae duci directae fuerant, ut nihil⁵ filiis parentes soleant⁶ scribere dulcius.

[40] Sed ponamus fore inimicitias. Numquid terram⁷ inimici Papiam dicet, quae, cum in vestra futura sit manu, inimici reputari non potest, nisi concilium existimet⁸ inimicum. Libere namque in manibus vestris⁹ daturum se urbem dux pollicetur. Quo facto nihil¹⁰ erit, quod papae timendum sit. Ac¹¹ si quid securius papa exigat, nihil est quod illum principem {6v} negaturum rear¹². Adest orator suus, vir clarus atque facundus, Christoforus de Velate¹³: expetite¹⁴ securitates. An adeo difficilis res ista censetur¹⁵, ut inveniri modus¹⁶ nequeat? Certe non video, cur magis alii quam dux dare papae securitatem valeant¹⁷.

[41] Sunt in hoc concilio cardinales aliique praelati quamplures, sunt etiam in Romana curia, quorum neque vobis, neque papae suspecta est fides. Committite his gubernaculum civitatis; jurent in manibus horum officiales civesque, si oportet¹⁸, fidelitatis exhibeant juramentum. Quo tunc jure aut¹⁹ urbem papa contemnat in manibus suorum positam amicorum, aut quo ibit, si huc non veniat?

¹ *add. in marg. A; omit. B, C, E, F, K*

² **rei veritatem : rem H, V**

³ imploratorem C

⁴ reperientur V

⁵ nil K

⁶ solent G, MA

⁷ tetram B, E

⁸ **existimetur H, K, V**

⁹ in manibus vestris : vestris in manibus K

¹⁰ nil K

¹¹ **at H**

¹² *aut reat A; reat B, F; erat E; reor H*

¹³ Valete E; **Vellate H, K, V**

¹⁴ expedite E

¹⁵ censeatur V

¹⁶ **modum H**

¹⁷ **magis ... valeant : aliorum magis quam ducis oblate securitates accipiende sint H, V**

¹⁸ oporteat G, MA

¹⁹ **hanc H, K, V**

[39] If I did not know that you are all aware of this fact, I would ask for confirmation from Roberto of Florence,¹ that diligent gatherer of news, who is in possession of many letters.² With my own eyes I have seen apostolic³ letters sent to the duke, full of paternal charity and great love. Parents could not write more lovingly to their children.

3.5. Council will have control over Pavia

[40] But let us set this issue of enmity aside. For, after all, how can anybody claim Pavia to be hostile territory when it would be placed in your own hands? Surely, it can only be considered hostile if the council declares it to be so. The duke promises to give the city freely into your hands, and when that happens, the pope will have nothing to fear.⁴ And if the pope demands greater safety, I believe that this prince will deny him nothing. But the duke's ambassador, the esteemed and eloquent Cristorofo da Velate,⁵ is present: demand guarantees from him! Or do you consider this problem to be so difficult that no solution may be found? For my own part, I certainly do not see how other people would be able to provide greater security for the pope than the duke.

[41] In this council as well as at the Roman Curia there are cardinals and many other prelates whose loyalty is well-known both to you and to the pope. Entrust the government of the city to such people; let the city officials and citizens swear an oath between their hands, and, if necessary, let them provide a sworn statement of allegiance. With what right could the pope then reject a city which had been put into the hands of his own friends, and where else could he go if he did not want to come there?

¹ Probably Roberto Martelli, manager of the Medici office in Basel from 1433-1438

² This passage throws an interesting light on dissemination of news and on information gathering at the time, with banks having the function as veritable nodes of information

³ Apostolic, i.e. papal. Piccolomini rarely uses the word "papal"; he prefers the traditional term "apostolic"

⁴ In view of the fact that the preceding council, i.e. the Council of Konstanz, 1414-1418, deposed three popes, it is not quite clear why the pope should feel safe in a city controlled by the council, particularly in view of his conflicts with the council which actually later deposed him

⁵ Cristoforo da Velate: Milanese diplomat

[42] Quod si modus iste¹ non placet, excogitate² alios. Nihil³ negare ducem invenietis, quod⁴ rationi consentaneum⁵ judicabitis. Ceterum si nihil horum recipitis, ostendam vobis {143r} denique, cum requiretis, etiam in civitate Papiensi summi pontificis non abesse consensum. Nunc istud praetereamus. Satis namque mihi fuerit ei locum recusandi abstulisse⁶, quem venire nolentem cogere non possemus. Sat fuit⁷, si venire eum commode posse ostensum est.

[43] Restat concilium quoque cum papa illic commode⁸ monstrare⁹ futurum, quoniam licet cuncti ad reductionem Graecorum papam clamitent necessarium, ego non minus puto concilium opportunum. Concilium namque rem inchoavit. Concilium¹⁰, si omittatur¹¹, dedecus, si perficiatur¹², laus sit secutura¹³. Concilium eligere locum debet. Concilium pecunias invenire ac triremes oportet mittere. Concilium denique totius rei consummationi supereminet. Exigit¹⁴ ergo res ista non minus concilii quam papae praesentiam. Idcirco locum utrisque¹⁵ aptum debetis eligere.

¹ modus iste: iste modus G, MA

² excogitare E

³ nil K

⁴ quem V

⁵ rationi consentaneum : consentaneum rationi F

⁶ fuerit ... abstulisse : videtur si justam repudiandi causam papae auferamus, neque sibi apud Deum mundumve relinquamus sibi excusandi locum H, K, V

⁷ fuerit G, MA

⁸ omit. H, V

⁹ monstrante H, V

¹⁰ omit. F

¹¹ omittant B, E; obmittatur H, V

¹² proficiatur H, V

¹³ segura V

¹⁴ exiget H, V

¹⁵ corr. ex utrique A; utrique H, K, V

[42] But if this solution is unacceptable, then think of others. You will find that the duke will refuse nothing that you consider to be reasonable. And if you do not accept any of this, I shall - if you so require - show that within the city of Pavia itself there is support for the pope. But let us now leave this issue. Evidently, we cannot force the pope to come to a place where he does not want to go, but it is sufficient for me to have removed any grounds for him to reject Pavia and to have shown that he is able to travel there with ease.

3.6. Pavia is convenient for the council

[43] It remains to show that also the council – like the pope - can move to Pavia with ease. For even if all declare that the pope's presence is essential for bringing back¹ the Greeks, I consider that the council is just as important. The council started this whole matter. So, it would be shameful to discontinue the council and meritorious to continue it. It is the responsibility of the council to select the location, to find the money, to send the triremes, and generally to have the final say concerning the completion of the whole matter. So, the presence of both council and pope is required, and you must therefore choose a venue which is convenient for both.

¹ Reject, p. 345: *Most often the Latins used "reduction", leading back, when referring to this union*

[44] Hanc esse Christianissimi regis Francorum¹ ejusque oratorum arbitror intentionem. Quis enim non sanctissimum illius gloriosissimi regis propositum interpretetur? Quis de tali tantoque rege non caste atque optime suspicetur? Etenim sive antecessorum ejus gesta consideramus², sive vitam ipsius ante oculos praeponamus³, regnum illud amplissimum, longe lateque patens, semper fuisse tutamen et ornamentum fidei cognoscemus⁴. De qua re, si dicere velim, prius dies quam verba deficiant⁵, pleni namque sunt codices historiarumque libri, majorumque regum clarissima gesta divinis quasi laudibus ubique gentium celebrantur. Totque fuerunt illius regni egregia pro⁶ fide facinora, ut non solum inter regna principatum obtinuerit, sed Christianissimum quadam ultra cetera excellentia meruerit⁷ appellari.

[45] Sed quid⁸ ego ista⁹ commemoro, quae meis dictis facio viliora? Taceo de illo gymnasio¹⁰ memorabili et famosa schola Parisiensi^{11 12}, cujus doctrina incredibile dictu¹³ est, quantum {7r} fidei praestiterit incrementum, quam veteres reges singulari semper¹⁴ reverentia prosecuti dicuntur. Neque ab¹⁵ praedecessoribus suis modernum regem degenerantem cernimus, sed regibus quibusque superioribus belli pacisque artibus et gloria parem.

¹ De rege Francorum *in marg.* A; Rex Francorum *in marg.* K

² **consideremus H, K, V**

³ **ponamus H, V**; proponamus MA

⁴ **cognoscimus H**

⁵ deficient E; deficerent F; **deficiat H**; difficient V

⁶ egregia pro : egregiaque V

⁷ **meruerunt aut meruerint H**; meruerunt V

⁸ *omit.* F

⁹ **omit. H, V**

¹⁰ **gignasio H, K**; cignasio V

¹¹ Papiensi [*sic!*] V

¹² Schola Parisiensis *in marg.* A, K

¹³ **dictum H**

¹⁴ *omit.* F

¹⁵ a B, D, E, G, MA

3.7. Attitude of the King of France

[44] I perceive that this is also the intent of the Most Christian King of France and his ambassadors. All see the worthy intentions of his glorious Majesty in this matter. And all think well and respectfully about this great king. Whether we consider the achievements of his ancestors or look at his own life, we must acknowledge that this great and vast kingdom has always been a bastion and an ornament of the Faith. If I were to talk about this subject, the day would run out before the words, for the annals¹ and history books are full of them. The magnificent accomplishments of the former kings are celebrated everywhere with almost divine praises.² So many were the illustrious deeds of this kingdom for the Faith that it gained the first place among kingdoms and even merited to be called the Most Christian of many excellent kingdoms.

[45] But why do I dwell on these things when my words cannot do them justice. I pass over that famous gymnasium and wonderful school of Paris³: it is impossible to speak adequately about its scholarship and how much it has contributed to the growth of the Faith. The old kings are said to have always shown it particular respect, and - as we see - the present king lives up to his predecessors and equals the former kings in the arts of war and peace as well as in glory.

¹ "codices"

² A number of Frankish emperors, starting with Charlemagne himself, and French Kings had over the centuries supported the popes militarily and intervened on their behalf

³ I.e. the University of Sorbonne. In this period the term "university" had not yet gained general currency. This university was a strong and highly respected proponent of conciliarism (see Stieber, p. 62). The remark of Piccolomini is therefore both a compliment and a political statement

[46] De cuius inclyta iustitia ac religione, quamvis multa possimus¹ ordiri, illud prae ceteris adnotemus², quod erga universalem ecclesiam sacrosanctumque³ concilium factitavit. Inter papam et vos⁴ olim illa prior dissentio⁵ fuit, quod hic⁶ vos⁷ concilium dicere, ille negare. Ecclesiam Gallicanam⁸ rex consuluit, qua concilium hic esse declarante omni vos favore iuvandos⁹ statuit. Missi e vestigio oratores viri ex archiepiscopali episcopalique dignitate, tum doctrina, tum etiam bonitate praestantes, qui jam quintum vobiscum¹⁰ annum in agro dominico laborantes ducunt. Pecuniae ex regno ad utilitatem concilii detrahi permissae. Mandatum ut praelati proficiscantur ad concilium¹¹; auxilium datum, quodcumque petitus a¹² vobis est.

[47] Et quid aliud de ipso dixerim rege, nisi quod inter alios sibi praecipue teneamur¹³, cuius auxilio defensi servatique¹⁴ sumus. *Et quae melior est, inquit Cicero¹⁵, in hominum genere natura quam eorum, qui se natos ad homines iuvandos, tutandos, conservandos arbitrantur¹⁶?* O regem ergo gloriosissimum, o principem excellentissimum, {143v} o vere Christianissimum fidei defensorem: tu ecclesiam defendis, tu fidei consulis¹⁷, tu concilium veneraris, tu es quem merito honorare perpetuisque praeconiis debemus extollere.

¹ possumus G, MA

² advocemus K

³ sacrosanctum K

⁴ nos V

⁵ **discutio** H, V

⁶ si F

⁷ nos V

⁸ Gallicinam D, G; Gallicam E, V

⁹ iuvandos V

¹⁰ *omit.* K

¹¹ **proficiscantur ad concilium : ad concilium proficiscantur** F, H, K, V

¹² *omit.* B, E

¹³ **tenemur** H

¹⁴ ***omit.*** H, V

¹⁵ Cicero *in marg.* A, K

¹⁶ *Bellissime in marg.* F [*the copyist's comment on the quote from Cicero!*]

¹⁷ tu fidei consulis *omit.* C

[46] We could say much about his elevated sense of justice and his piety, but above all we take note of his achievements for the Universal Church and the Holy Council. At one point there was disagreement between the pope and you: you maintained that the council was to be here,¹ and the pope refused.² The king consulted the Gallican Church, and when it declared that the council was here, he decided to favour your cause in every way. Very soon he sent you his envoys,³ eminently learned and virtuous men of archiepiscopal and episcopal rank who have now been toiling together with you in the field of the Lord for more than four years. He allowed money to be sent from the kingdom for the use of the council; he ordered prelates to go to the council; whatever aid you asked for, he gave.

[47] What else can I say about this king except that we are particularly obliged to him for his help and support. As Cicero says: *What better type of nature therefore can we find among human beings than the men who regard themselves as born into the world to help, guard and preserve their fellowmen?*⁴

Oh glorious King! Oh excellent Prince! Oh truly Most Christian Defender of the Faith! You defend the Church, you care about the Faith, you venerate the council. You we must honour and acclaim with perpetual praise.

¹ i.e. in Basel

² In 1432 and 1433 the pope, Eugenius IV, tried to transfer the council from Basel to a city in Italy, but the council would have none of it, and in the end the pope gave in. However, the venue of the council became an issue again some years later in connection with the negotiations on Church union with the Greeks

³ Among them the Archbishop of Lyon, Amédée de Talaru

⁴ Cicero: *Tusculanae Disputationes*, 1.14.32

[48] Hic cum crebras¹ inter vos² ac³ summum pontificem dissensiones cerneret, saepenumero ad pacem laboravit nunc vobis, nunc summo pontifici supplicans tolli discidium. Nec⁴ aliud⁵ Simon collegaeque⁶ rogitant, nisi ut concilium cum papa conveniat, omnesque discordiarum fomites⁷ amputentur. Quid⁸ hic – obsecro - irascatur? Num⁹ rectae sanctaeque illae sunt voces¹⁰? Num¹¹ omnes idem¹² cupitis? Ego sane, nisi¹³ aliud sentio, non possum militare¹⁴ illum virum non laudare. Rem namque optimam et¹⁵ concessu dignissimam petit. Commonet schismatis evitare causas¹⁶, communem papae locum petit¹⁷, neque specialius quidquam dicit¹⁸, neque locum aliquem nominatim¹⁹ repudiat. Cujus, nisi fallor, verba eligendam²⁰ nobis Papiam²¹ suadent. Vult²² enim papam et concilium simul esse concordiamque utrimque²³ fieri²⁴, cujus non nisi tres²⁵ vias esse²⁶ considero: ut vel papae omnino mos geratur, vel vobis, aut transactio quaedam litigiorum²⁷ fiat. Sperare²⁸ superiora vanum reor. Ad tertiam rem missus est Simon, ut communis utrique locus eligatur. Et quis, obsecro, Papia communior aut aptior atque²⁹ utrique commodior? Gravior forsitan alius papae³⁰ locus esset, qui tamen vobis non esset tutus.

¹ *omit.* K

² nos MA

³ **et H, K;** ad V

⁴ Oratores gallici *in marg.* A, K

⁵ **modo add. H, K, V**

⁶ collegae B, E

⁷ fontes K

⁸ quis *corr.* ex quid D; quis G, H, V, MA; quique K

⁹ **nam H, V;** non MA

¹⁰ **sunt voces : voces sunt H**

¹¹ **non H, K, V, MA**

¹² **omnes idem : idem omnes H, V**

¹³ **nichil H; nil V** [*all the other mss. have nisi which is probably due to an error of transcription somewhere in the line of transmission*]

¹⁴ **omit. H, V**

¹⁵ *omit.* K

¹⁶ dans V

¹⁷ **obsecrat H, K, V**

¹⁸ **neque specialius ... dicit : neque specificè aliud dicit H;** specificè neque alium diem V

¹⁹ **nominatum H, K, V**

²⁰ *omit.* G, MA

²¹ nobis Papiam: Papiam nobis G, MA

²² Quomodo potest fieri concordia inter papam et concilium *in marg.* A; Quomodo potest fieri inter papam et concilium concordia *in marg.* K

²³ **utriusque H, V**

²⁴ **fidei H, V**

²⁵ tris G

²⁶ **vias esse: esse vias D, G, MA**

²⁷ legitimorum V

²⁸ spectare V

²⁹ aut F, V

³⁰ Papiae V

[48] When the King heard about the frequent disagreements between you and the Supreme Pontiff, he repeatedly intervened for the sake of peace and begged now you, now the Supreme Pontiff to end the conflict. What Simon¹ and his colleagues call for is precisely that the council should meet with the pope and that all the fuels of conflict be eliminated. Who – I ask - could take offense at this? Are these words not just and holy? Don't you all desire the same thing? For my own part, I must certainly commend this knight. What Simon asks is good and worthy of being granted. For he admonishes us to avoid the grounds for a schism, he asks us as to agree on a location with the pope, he does not make specific demands, and he does not reject any place by name. If I am not mistaken, his words point to Pavia² for he wants pope and council to be together, joined in concord. This – I think - can be achieved in three ways: either the pope gets his way, or you get your way, or some compromise is reached. To hope for the first two is pointless. Simon's mission concerns the third way: that a location should be chosen in common. And - I ask you - what location is more appropriate than Pavia, what is more suitable or convenient for both parties? Another location might possibly be more welcome to the pope, but then it would not be safe for you.

¹ Simon Charles

² Piccolomini – and his audience - must have known that this contention was quite preposterous. The King of France evidently favoured a French city for the council, in casu Avignon, but for political reasons (the Kingdom of Naples) the French court pretended to accept an Italian city

[49] Sed {7v} nondum Simonem audiui dicentem, ut insecure eligatis locum, quod nec¹ ipse diceret, nec² suo regi in mentem³ caderet, cujus ea semper consuetudo fuit, ut prius consuleret, deinde⁴ concilio iudicium dimitteret, suumque sensum universalis ecclesiae postponeret opinioni. Quamquam⁵, si licet dicere, nimium⁶ vos hodie, patres, defertis principibus, nec quidquam audetis agere, quod principibus non libuerit. Quod ego sane non laudo, quoniam non⁷ sic⁸ maiores nostros invenio factitasse, nec sic se apostolos⁹ habuisse, qui licet¹⁰ totum contra se mundum haberent, veritatem tamen ubique praedicabant, neque minas, neque mortem, aut taeterrimos cruciatus pro veritate diffugiebant. Quibus rebus factum est, ut totum orbem Christianum nomen impleverit. Ubi vero mortis timor invasit, et divitiarum cupido supervenit, deserta veritas et incognita iustitia jacet. Aut¹¹ verius cum Satyro¹² dixerimus¹³:

*Jam dudum ad superos Astraea¹⁴ recessit;
Hac¹⁵ comite atque¹⁶ duae pariter fugere¹⁷ sorores.*

Hinc¹⁸ diminutus populus Christianus, et¹⁹ auctae infidelium sectae.

¹ neque F
² neque F
³ mente F
⁴ **denique H**
⁵ Contra episcopos *in marg.* D, G
⁶ nimius V
⁷ cum K
⁸ sit B
⁹ ad populos V
¹⁰ **etsi H; omit. V**
¹¹ Juvenalis *in marg.* A
¹² satyrio A
¹³ **diximus H**
¹⁴ iustitia *interlin.* E [*in explanation*]; **astra H, K; astrea corr. ex astra V**
¹⁵ **ac H, K**
¹⁶ ac B, E, V
¹⁷ fugiere G, MA
¹⁸ habere V
¹⁹ **omit. H, V**

3.8. Relationship between princes and council

[49] But I have not yet heard Simon say that you should select an unsafe location: he would not say that, of course, and his king would not think of it. His custom has ever been first to give advice and then to leave the decision to the council, subordinating his own opinion to the view of Universal Church.¹

If I may say so, Fathers, today you defer unduly to the princes, and you do not dare do anything that displeases them.² For my own part, I certainly do not approve of this attitude, and I find that our forefathers did not act in this way, and neither did the apostles. Though they had the whole world against them, they preached the truth everywhere, and in the cause of truth they fled neither threats nor death nor cruel torture.³ Thus it came about that the Christian name filled the whole world. But when fear of death and desire for riches came in, truth was deserted, and justice was flung to the ground and ignored. The Satirical Poet⁴ fittingly says that

*It was afterwards that, little by little, Astraea withdrew to the gods above
with Chastity as her companion. The two sisters ran away together.*⁵

Hereafter the Christian people went into decline, and the sects of the infidels⁶ began to grow.

¹ Note the concept of the Universal Church, embodied by the council

² The princes naturally had a keen interest in the councils, the only truly international (European) assemblies at the time, influencing them heavily through their ambassadors. Piccolomini probably expresses a general concern among council members or at least of the presidency of the council, otherwise he would hardly have dared to express this sentiment

³ An early expression of Pius' admiration for the primitive Church, a theme which recurs in his writings and in one of the most important speeches of his papacy, "*Sextus agitur annus*" [75], held towards the end of his life

⁴ Satyrus = Decimus Junius Juvenalis: Roman poet (active in the late 1st and early 2nd century AD). Juvenal was one of Piccolomini's favourite classical authors

⁵ Juvenalis: *Satirae*, 6.19-20

⁶ I.e. Islam

[50] Vere ille riteque olim dicebat archiepiscopus Mediolanensis, quem hoc in templo sepultum habetis (vere multi alii): “Agamus,” inquiebat ille, “quod nobis¹ et justitia dignum est. Quidquid exinde sequatur², aequo patiamur animo.” Cujus vel mortui verba ne contemnite, oro³. Agite quod dignum hac congregatione putatis. Nemo vos deseret, nemo adversus erit. Cuncti vobis principes favebunt bene facientibus. Sic Caesareum culmen Augustalemque majestatem vobiscum habebitis⁴. Sic Francorum, sic alii⁵ ex ordine reges⁶ vobis parebunt. Et quantum ad locum attinet, nemo est principum, qui spernere Papiam debeat, ubi et papa optime et concilium valeat convenire. Nondum tamen⁷ excussimus, {144r} quomodo Papiæ securum possit esse concilium, id enim ad ultimum orationis nostrae membrum reservavimus.

¹ vobis K, V

² sequetur K

³ rogo D, G, MA

⁴ habetis F, V

⁵ omit. H, V

⁶ reges K

⁷ tandem D

[50] An Archbishop of Milan¹ who - like so many others - lies buried in this temple² once said very justly on this subject: *"Let us do,"* he said, *"what is worthy of ourselves and of justice. And whatever follows we shall bear with equanimity"*. I ask you: do not reject his words even if he is dead. Do what you think is worthy of this assembly. Nobody will desert you, nobody will oppose you. All the princes will favour you as long as you pursue a good course. His Imperial Highness and August Majesty³ will support you. The French King and indeed all the other kings will follow you. And concerning the location, no prince would reject Pavia for there pope and council may meet most conveniently.

We have not as yet discussed how the council may have security in Pavia, for this topic we have reserved for the last part of the oration.

¹ Bartolomeo della Capra (1365-1433): Archbishop of Milan from 1411 to his death. Died at the Council of Basel and is buried in the cathedral where the council met for its major sessions

² Cf. Pius II: *Orationes*, I, p. 37, n. 14

³ Sigismund (Luxemburg) (1368-1437): King of Hungary and Croatia from 1387, King of Bohemia from 1419, and crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1433

[51] Nunc¹ ad tertium transeamus. Hujus partis est ostendere non domos solum, sed victualia quoque ubertim suppetere, in qua re² non multum erit negotii. Ipsa enim res se³ manifestat. Ut tamen de hac etiam parte disseramus⁴, ex toto dominio suo duci placet, ut quam velitis urbem eligatis. Quis nescit Galliam ipsam, quae circa Padum jacet, et esse et a Cicerone⁵ dici florem Italiae? Aut quis regionem illam cum aliis aequiparet⁶ agris?⁷ Cum hujus tanta ubertas, tantaque feracitas⁸ sit, ut semper abunde suppleverit⁹, quamvis jam multis non dico annis, sed saeculis continuo sit bello agitata. Alibi vero nonnullae provinciae sunt adeo steriles¹⁰, adeo infecundae, ut non suscepto {8r} bello, sed audito belli nomine exauriantur. Hic vero plurimae sunt urbes recipiendo concilio et alendo sufficientes. Nam ut Mediolanum taceamus, urbem populosissimam, quae, ut semper fuit, sic modo caput est¹¹ Insubrium. Quid de Papia, Placentia, Parma, Cremona dixerimus?

¹ Tertia orationis pars *in marg.* A; Tertium membrum *in marg.* D, G; Tertia pars orationis *in marg.* K

² **omit.** H, V

³ **res se : sese res** H, V

⁴ dixeramus V

⁵ Cicero *in marg.* A, K

⁶ equiperet A, B, C, D, E, F, K; aequiperat V

⁷ Gallia flos Italiae *in marg.* D; Gallia togata, flos Italiae *in marg.* G

⁸ **fertilitas** H

⁹ **suppleverint** H, V

¹⁰ **fertiles** [*sic!*] H

¹¹ caput est: est caput G, MA

4. Pavia can provide lodgings and provisions

[51] Let us now move on to the third part. Since it is self-evident, I shall have no difficulty in showing that Pavia can provide not only lodgings, but also abundant food. But to say just a few words about this issue, the duke has decided that you can choose any city you want within the whole of his dominion. Who does not know that the part of Gaul around the river Po is the flower of Italy? Even Cicero says so! Who will liken this region to other territories? Its fertility and feracity are so great that it has always yielded abundant crops even though it has been plagued continuously by wars not just for years, but for centuries. By contrast, many other provinces are so barren and infertile that they are completely drained by war, nay, by the mere mention of war! In this region, many cities can accommodate and feed the council. We shall not even mention Milan, that populous city, which is - as always - the capital of Lombardy. What shall I say about Pavia, Piacenza, Parma, and Cremona?¹

¹ Other cities in Lombardy

[52] Omissis aliis, Papiam expendamus¹. Est profecto illa urbs splendidis² commodissimisque ornata domibus. Testes voco³ ex hac contione quamplurimos, qui me, si mentiar⁴, reprehendant: Notam namque⁵ rem dico. Hic moderni⁶ genitor ducis⁷ cohabitavit, princeps omnium sua aetate consultissimus. Hic curiam continuo tenuit, quam⁸ magni domini omnisque⁹ fere nobilitas Italiae sequebantur¹⁰. Ob quam rem multa ingentia palatia et amplissimae sunt aedes aedificatae. Curiales namque¹¹, ut fit, certatim¹² sibi magnificas construebant domos, quod¹³ quisque ditior¹⁴, quod¹⁵ quisque mundior videri volebat.

[53] Illic palatium est quod Castellum¹⁶ appellant¹⁷ ingenti fossa circumdatum, de cujus amplitudine illud retulisse sufficiat¹⁸, quod augustalis pontificalisque curiae capax existimetur, cujus pulchritudinem ac commoditatem omnis oratio comminuere¹⁹ videatur. Hinc urbi adjacet, illinc ducali viridario supereminet, operi omnium maximo atque excellentissimo, cui Parco est nomen venationibus piscationibusque constructo, ubi feras innumerabiles XX millia passuum complexus murus²⁰ observat. De cujus rei amoenitate ac voluptate²¹ nonnulla dissererem, nisi omnem a vobis contemni voluptatem²² deliciasque omnes²³ parvi²⁴ aestimari²⁵ cognossem²⁶.

¹ expediamus F

² **splendidissimis** D, G, MA

³ vero F

⁴ **mentior** H, V

⁵ notam namque: notamque C

⁶ modernus V

⁷ Ducis pater *in marg.* A, K

⁸ **quem** H

⁹ omnis C

¹⁰ **sequebatur** H, V

¹¹ *omit.* K

¹² **certatum** H

¹³ quid V

¹⁴ dictior V

¹⁵ quid V

¹⁶ De Castello *in marg.* A, K

¹⁷ **vocant** H, V

¹⁸ **sufficit** H, V

¹⁹ convenire K

²⁰ **omit.** H, V

²¹ **ac voluptate** *omit.* H, V

²² **contemni voluptatem : voluptatem contemni** H

²³ omnis A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, V

²⁴ ... [*sic!*] V

²⁵ *corr. ex* extimari C; existimari D, G, K, MA; **extimari** F, H, V

²⁶ **cognoscerem** E, H, V

4.1. Lodgings

[52] Here, we shall only speak of Pavia. The city is adorned with splendid and commodious buildings. I call to witness many members of this assembly who will rebuke me if I am lying, for it is a well-known fact. Here, the present duke's¹ father,² the wisest prince of his age, had his second residence. Here, he held court continuously, and many great lords and almost the entire nobility of Italy attended it. Therefore, many grand palaces and large houses were built there, for the courtiers – as always - vied with each other in raising stately homes: everyone wanted to appear more wealthy and splendid than others.

[53] Here is a palace called the Castello³, surrounded by an enormous moat. About its size it is enough to say that it is thought capable of accommodating the Imperial or the Papal Court. Its beauty and amenity are so great that words cannot do them justice. On the one side lies the city, on the other the ducal gardens, a large and magnificent establishment called the Parco.⁴ It has been created for hunting and fishing, and it contains innumerable wild animals. The whole complex is surrounded by a wall which measures 20,000 passus. I would speak at length about the charm and the pleasures of this place if I did not know that you scorn pleasure and do not care for enjoyments.⁵

¹ Filippo Maria Visconti

² Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351-1402): Ruler of Milan from 1385 to his death, from 1395 with the title of Duke

³ Castello Visconteo: castle built in 1360

⁴ The famous park where the battle of Pavia between the French and the Spaniards took place in 1525, resulting in the defeat and capture of the French King, Francis I

⁵ Here Piccolomini probably speaks with his tongue in the cheek!

[54] Vino praeterea cunctisque edulibus¹ adjacens patria maxime abundat. Nec² Varronem³ in illa audio prorumpentem verba⁴: *Optima ad victum fert ager⁵ Campanus⁶ frumentum, Falernus⁷ vinum, Casinas oleum, Tusculanus ficum, mel Tarentinus, piscem Tybris.*⁸ Haec suo forsitan tempore ita erant. Modo haec omnia Papienses habent, ceterique Longobardorum populi, foeni et bladi⁹ plus legunt, quam ipsi cupiant¹⁰, cives. Omnis pomi copia est ingens. Quidquid abest, Ticini flumen advectare potest. Sed {144v} quid¹¹ immoror? Insubres, ut scitis, populi numquam externo tritico victitarunt, sed suum¹² ipsi ceteris¹³ provinciis subministrarunt. Quo fit, ut summam semper in Papia victualium copiam sitis habituri. Nec aliquis Italus vobis¹⁴ minori pretio victum dabit. Nolo probare quod per se patet. Sed quaerite alias urbes, et rerum pretia¹⁵ investigate. Quod¹⁶ tribus denariis alibi emetis, duorum hic denariorum pretium habebit. Neque disputatione res indiget, quod¹⁷ taxationem rerum vestro iudicio dux committit, frustra que de fertilitate patriae urbisque commoditate sermonem¹⁸ facio, quod omnia illa majora esse cognoscitis, {8v} quam ego dicam.

¹ *eduliis corr. ex edulibus D; eduliis G, MA*

² haec B, E, F

³ *vatorem H; vaporem V*

⁴ Verba Varronis *in marg.* A, K; Varro *in marg.* C; Varro de Campania *in marg.* D, G

⁵ *agere H*

⁶ Campanisii F; Campanum V

⁷ Falernas V

⁸ Tyberis G, MA; tribus V

⁹ blandi E; pani K

¹⁰ cupiunt F

¹¹ *hic add. H, K, V*

¹² suis V

¹³ ceterisque V

¹⁴ *Italus vobis : vobis Italus H, K, V*

¹⁵ presentia V

¹⁶ quo E; que K

¹⁷ quare MA

¹⁸ *omit.* B, E

4.2. Provisions

[54] The neighbouring country overflows with wine and all kinds of foodstuffs. I will not heed the words gushing forth from Varro¹: *Campanian lands bear the best grain for our use, Falernum the best wine, Casinum the best oil, Tusculum the best figs, Tarentum the best honey, and the Tiber the best fish.*² It may have been so at his time, but today all these things are to be found in Pavia and the other regions of Lombardy. They gather more hay and grain than their own inhabitants need, and there is a great abundance of fruit. If anything should be lacking, it can be imported via the Ticino River. But why do I dwell on this? As you know, the peoples of Lombardy never had to live on imported wheat, but on the contrary they exported their own wheat to the other provinces. Therefore you will always have a veritable abundance of foodstuffs in Pavia, and no other Italian will sell you food more cheaply. It should not be necessary to prove what is evident, but do ask the other cities about their prices: what you buy for three *denarii* elsewhere you will get for two in Pavia. The matter is beyond discussion. Even so, the duke entrusts pricing to your own judgment. But it is superfluous for me to speak about the fertility of the country and the advantages of the city, for you know that they are greater than I can say.

¹ Marcus Terentius Varro (116 BC – 27 BC): Roman writer

² The quote is not directly from Varro, but from Macrobius citing Varro in his *Saturnalia*, 3.16.12: *Quod equidem cur ita illis visum sit ignoro: fuisse autem etiam M. Varro ostendit, qui enumerans, quae in quibus Italiae partibus optima ad victum gignantur, pisci Tiberino palmam tribuit his verbis in libro Rerum humanarum undecimo: Ad victum optima fert ager Campanus frumentum, Falernus vinum, Cassinas oleum, Tusculanus ficum, mel Tarentinus, piscem Tiberis*

[55] Illa vero parvipendo, quae dicuntur, oportere Graecos Latinam ecclesiam magnificam invenire. Quod tamen si quid habet momenti, ubi melius quam in Papia reperietis¹? Quo enim honore, qua magnificentia², qua pompa, quo sumptu Constantinopolitanum imperatorem ab³ duce recipi aestimatis⁴? An quisquam⁵ vivit hoc duce ad sumptum effusior aut ad magnificentiam animatior? De cuius largitionibus stupenda magis quam credibilis narratio videretur. Cui liberalitatem aliquam exercenti sua solum voluntas sufficit. Videbunt hujus principis excellentiam Graeci singulari quadam admiratione ac stupore, idque oculis perspicient, quod auribus aliquando cognoverant⁶. Verumque illud Homeri experientur dicentis: *Famam*⁷ *numquam penitus vanam esse, quam populi multi decantant*. Immo et rem fama majorem invenient. Ibunt nonnumquam Mediolanum, ubi populum numerosum, ubi opulentissimos cives, ubi florentissimas opes agnoscent, ubi alterum paene orbem videre videbuntur. Tot artifices, tot pompas numquam satis spectasse dicent. Quod si magnificentia venerabilem reddit ecclesiam, illa est potissime civitas eligenda.

¹ invenietis MA

² De magnificentia ducis in Grecos *in marg.* K

³ a B, C, E, F, H, V

⁴ estimatis F, V

⁵ est *add.* K

⁶ cognoverunt H, V

⁷ famamque H, V

4.3. Splendour of Pavia and Milan

[55] I do not give much for the argument that the Greeks ought to meet a grandiose Latin Church. But if this argument should carry any weight, then where can you find it better than in Pavia? Just think of how honourably, how splendidly, how solemnly, and how extravagantly the duke would receive the Emperor of Constantinople.¹ Or is there any other man who lives in a more costly and magnificent fashion than this duke? An account of his largess would seem more stupendous than credible. When he shows generosity, he does it at his own behest. The Greeks will behold the grandeur of this prince with admiration and awe, and with their own eyes they shall see what they had already heard. Then they will acknowledge the truth of the Homeric saying that *a reputation is never quite false if it is sung² by many people.*³ Here, indeed, they shall find that reality surpasses reputation. Sometimes the Greeks would go to Milan where they would find a large population, wealthy citizens, and great splendour; they would almost believe that they were seeing another world! They would say that they had never seen so many artists nor so many fabulous events. So, if it is grandeur that makes the Church venerable, Milan would really be the best location.⁴

¹ Johannes VIII Palaiologos

² I.e. praised

³ This is a direct quote from Leonardi Bruni: *De Militia*, 1422: *Fama autem, ut inquit Homerus, nunquam penitus vana est, quam populi multi decantant.* Bruni, p. 384. Cf. Homer: *Odyssey*, 19.333-334: *But if one be blameless and have a blameless heart, his fame do strangers bear far and wide among all men, cf. Peter Thierrmann: Die Orationes Homeri des Leonardi Bruno Aretino*, Leiden 1993, p. 385. According to Thierrmann, the quote refers to Homer's *Odyssey*, 24.196 ff.: *Therefore the fame of her [Penelope's] virtue shall never perish, but the immortals shall make among men on earth a pleasant song in honour of constant Penelope.* The quote is a testimony of Piccolomini's usage of Bruni, whom he much admired

⁴ Here Piccolomini possibly sends up a "test balloon" for the choice of Milan itself as the venue for the council. It would, of course, have been an international scoop for Milan, but it was quite out of the question as the other Italian powers would never agree

[56] Sed vana sunt haec, mihi credite, anilesque¹ delirationes². Non³ sunt Graeci extra orbem positi, qui Latinum genus Latinasque vires ignorent. Mediterranei sunt populi, Jonio⁴ brevi freto ab Italia discreti. Quattuor namque⁵ et viginti horis secandum pelagus secundus facit ventus, quod a Brundusio in Epirum pergit, Siciliamque olim Graeciam⁶ fuisse, totamque Calabriam Magnam Graeciam appellatam, nemo qui veteres lectitat⁷, ignorabit. Romaeque tantam Graecorum fuisse⁸ multitudinem, ut in illa Iuvenalis⁹ verba proruperit¹⁰:

Non possum ferre, Quirites, Graecam urbem.

Sed ne longius a proposito divertamus, illud mihi satis probatum videtur, quod de rerum copia domorumque commoditate requirebatur.

¹ **inanes H, V**

² delectationes V

³ Quibus in locis Graeci sint *in marg.* A, K

⁴ **Adriatico H; omit. V**

⁵ **enim H, V**

⁶ Graecam ex Graeciam A; **Graecam C, H, K, V**

⁷ **lectitarit H, V**

⁸ Graecorum fuisse: fuisse Graecorum G, H, K, MA

⁹ Iuvenalis *in marg.* A, K

¹⁰ prorumperit K; prorumpit E

[56] But, believe me, such concerns are empty and foolish. The Greeks do not live in another world: they know the Latin people and the Latin strength. They are a Mediterranean people, only separated from Italy by the narrow Ionian Strait. With a favourable wind it takes just 24 hours to cross the sea from Brindisi¹ to Epirus.² Everybody who has read the ancients knows that Sicily was once Greek and that the whole of Calabria was called Greater Greece.³ Actually, there were so many Greeks in Rome that Juvenal exclaimed:

My fellow-citizens,⁴ I cannot stand a Greekified Rome.⁵

But so as not to stray further from the subject: I have now sufficiently demonstrated - as required - that there will be abundant provisions and commodious premises in Pavia.

¹ Brindisi: Brindisi is situated at a natural harbor that penetrates deeply into the Adriatic coast of Puglia

² Epiros: a historical and geographical region of the southwestern Balkans, straddling modern Greece and Albania

³ Magna Graecia: the name of the coastal areas of Southern Italy on the Tarentine Gulf that were extensively colonized by Greek settlers

⁴ "Quirites": the earliest term for the citizens of Rome

⁵ Juvenalis: *Satirae*, 3, 60-61

[57] De¹ postremo jam membro tempus admonet disputare: de securitate scilicet² libertateque loci, quae duplici a nobis modo considerata videntur: ut tuti in loco simus³, et ad locum tuti eamus.

[58] Refero⁴ {145r} de secundo, in quo illud non est ignorandum, quod huic urbi nullum propiorem locum nominamus⁵. Septem dierum iter, de cuius securitate nulla - ut opinor⁶ - est ambiguitas. Jacent medii Suizerorum⁷ ⁸ campi sive - ut verius dicamus - Alpes, hominum cum⁹ bellicosissimorum¹⁰, tum etiam pacis et justitiae tenacissimorum, quorum terras percurrentibus¹¹ vobis nulla latronum violentia sit timenda¹². Montem vero sancti Bernardi transituris religiosissimi principis ducis Sabaudiae¹³ territorium occurrit¹⁴, qui pacis semper amator cultorque tranquillitatis {9r} est habitus, quem religio sanctissimaque justitia cunctis subditis miro modo colendum divinisque quodammodo laudibus celebrandum efficit, cuius terras nemo non secure percurrit.

¹ Ultima pars orationis *in marg.* A, K

² *omit.* F

³ sumus V

⁴ **incipio H, V**

⁵ nominavimus G, K, MA

⁶ nulla ut opinor: ut opinor nulla D, G, MA

⁷ Suitensium D, G, MA

⁸ Suizeri *in marg.* A, K

⁹ **tum H, V**

¹⁰ bellicosorum B, E

¹¹ procurrentibus K; precurrentibus V

¹² **per add. H, V**

¹³ Dux Sabaudiae *in marg.* A, K

¹⁴ territorium occurrit: occurrit territorium G, MA

5. Pavia offers security and freedom

[57] It is now time to talk about the last part of my subject, that is the security and the freedom of the place. We shall consider this matter from two angles: firstly, we must be able to stay there in security, and, secondly, we must be able to travel there in safety.

5.1. It is safe to travel to Pavia

[58] I start with the second issue. Everybody knows that the city we have named is very close to us. The journey only takes seven days, and I think that there can be no doubt about its safety. Between Pavia and us lies the territory of the Swiss, or, to be more precise, the Alps. The Swiss are a rather pugnacious people, but they are also fiercely beholden to peace and justice, and you will not have to fear any violence from robbers when you travel through their territory. When you pass over the Mountain of Saint Bernhard,¹ you will enter the territory of that most God-fearing prince, the Duke of Savoy.² He has always been considered a prince who loves peace and cherishes tranquility. His piety and inviolate justice makes him extremely popular with all his subjects and worthy of almost divine praise. Everybody may pass through his territories in complete safety.

¹ Great Saint-Bernard-Pass

² Amedée VIII (1383-1451) : Count, later Duke of Savoy. Three years later, in 1439, he was elected antipope under the name of Felix V by the Council of Basel, after its dissolution by Pope Eugenius IV. Piccolomini himself became his secretary

[59] Ex his duobus territoriis nullo intersecante domino in terras ipsius Filippi¹ descenditis² vobis non modo tutas, sed amicissimas. Ac si cui timendum videtur, offeruntur a principe arces singulae, quas vestrum iter securius aestimabitis³ esse facturas⁴. En cernitis ducale territorium in faucibus Galliarum et Alemanniae constitutum⁵, ut quamprimum intretis Italiam, ducales arces occurrant. Nec procul ab alpibus Papiam inveniatis⁶ jacentem⁷. Quae res faciunt, ut securitatem ad⁸ locum tutissimam⁹ habeatis, qualem si qui alii praestent, ipsi iudicetis.

[60] In¹⁰ loco jam restat securitatem ac libertatem ostendere, quas esse Papias confitebimini, si vestra esse in manu civitatem ostendero; si quietos placidosque cives monstravero; si salubrem aerem docuero; et si vos de principe commonuero¹¹ posse confidere.

¹ Mariae *add.* K

² descendens G; descenditis MA

³ estimabitis F, V

⁴ **omit. H, V**

⁵ **constitutis H**

⁶ **invenietis H, K, V**

⁷ adiacentem K

⁸ ac V

⁹ tutissimum V

¹⁰ Subdivisio quaedam *in marg.* A; Quedam subdivision *in marg.* K

¹¹ compromitto V

[59] From these two territories¹ you will pass directly into Filippo's own country which is not only safe, but also very well-disposed towards you. And if anybody should still have some concerns, the prince offers you any fortresses you think will make your travel safer. You see that the duke's territory lies in the narrow confines between Gaul² and Germany, so that as soon as you enter Italy, you meet the ducal fortresses. And Pavia lies not far from the Alps. For these reasons you may have a very safe journey to Pavia. You can yourselves judge whether it is equally safe to travel to other places.

5.2. It is safe to stay in Pavia

[60] It now remains to deal with the question of security and independence. You will acknowledge that these are to be had in Pavia if I can show you that

- the city will be under your own control;
- its citizens are peace-loving and tranquil;
- the climate is healthy; and
- you can trust the prince.

¹ I.e. the Swiss Alps and Savoy

² I.e. Lombardy

[61] Futuram in manu vestra¹ civitatem jam supra edoctum² est, nec solum urbem, sed adjacentia simul oppida arcesque daturum se ducem intellexistis. Nec dubium est, quin de se quisque magis quam de altero confidat, quamvis³ aliqui dicant non esse praelatos ad regendas urbes accomodos⁴, dominiaque civitatum male a sacerdotibus regi contendunt⁵. Quod a Bohemica dementia tabificoque Hussitarum errore⁶ non multum abest, qui omni - ut scitis - dominio spoliandos sacerdotes asseverabant. Et quis – oro - melius aut rectius urbes gubernavit Martino⁷ V.? Nolo alios numerare pontifices: longus ordo sese praelatorum offerret⁸, qui magnis praesidentes urbibus subditos in pace ac⁹ justitia pulcherrime tenuerunt. Dicere vero¹⁰ ineptos fore ad regimen sacerdotes, nihil est aliud quam vos¹¹ omnes contemnere Constantinumque¹² Caesarem reprehendere, cujus munere civitatum dominia¹³ suscepistis. Sileant ergo, qui talia submurmurant, neque vos¹⁴ condemnent¹⁵, qui petendas arces oratoribus commisistis. In potestate igitur civitatem habebitis, custodes arcibus imponetis, officiales quoslibet ordinabitis, juramentum fidelitatis recipietis. Et ubi, obsecro, liberius esse potestis? Ubi tutius? Aliam quoque securitatem¹⁶, si quam petieritis, facile impetratu erit.

¹ manu vestra : vestra manu K

² dictum MA

³ cum vix MA

⁴ accomodatos V

⁵ **civitatum male ... contendunt : cur tantum malum a sacerdotibus exit H, V** [*V has cui for cur*]

⁶ Error Bohemorum *in marg.* A, K

⁷ Papa Martinus *in marg.* A, K

⁸ **offert H, V**

⁹ atque V

¹⁰ **omit. H, V**

¹¹ **nos H, V**

¹² Constantinus *in marg.* A, K

¹³ divina K

¹⁴ **nos H, V**

¹⁵ contemnunt B, E, F, K; contemnant *corr.* ex contemnunt C

¹⁶ **quoque securitatem : securitatem quoque H**

5.2.1. Council may have control of Pavia

[61] I have already shown that the city itself will be under your control, and you have heard that the duke will also entrust you with the neighbouring towns and fortresses.

There is no doubt that you can trust him more than so many others who claim that prelates are not suitable for ruling cities and who allege that priests govern cities badly.¹ This is not far from the Bohemian madness and the virulent errors of the Hussites,² claiming – as you know – that the clergy should be deprived of all temporal power. But who governed cities better and more justly than Martin V?³ I shall not list other pontiffs, for there is a long line of prelates who governed great cities and ruled their subjects admirably, in peace and justice. Saying that priests are unfit for government is tantamount to showing disrespect towards all of you and to rebuke Emperor Constantine⁴ who granted you the government of cities.⁵ Let those who whisper such things be silent and not blame you because you have asked your envoys to require fortresses.

The city, then, will be in your power; you will assign commanders to the fortresses; you will appoint officials; you will receive an oath of allegiance. So where, I ask, may you have greater freedom? Where will you have greater safety? And should you want even more security you will obtain it easily.

¹ There was widespread dissatisfaction, not least in the Papal State, with priestly rule, i.e. government by popes and bishops, and the secular princes on the Church's lands constantly tried to free themselves of papal rule and become independent rulers. It is remarkable that Piccolomini defends priestly rule since he was at that time not very clerically minded. But speaking to an assembly of prelates, many of whom had the secular government of their territory, he must have felt that it would be politic to speak in favour of priestly rule

² A religious movement in Bohemia following the teachings of Jan Hus (ca. 1369-1415) and challenging many tenets and dogmas of the Roman Church. It became one of the forerunners of the Reformation

³ Martin V (1369-1431): Pope from 1417 to his death. His election at the Council of Konstanz effectively ended the Western Schism (1378–1417)

⁴ Constantine I the Great [Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus Augustus] (ca. 272 – 337): Roman Emperor from 306 to his death

⁵ A falsified medieval document, The Donation of Constantine (probably from the 8th century), purported to be a decree of the Emperor Constantine, by which he donated large territories and Rome itself to the popes. It was considered to constitute the legal base of priestly government. Already during the period of the Council of Basel, the authenticity of the document was being challenged by humanists (Nikolaus von Kues, and later Lorenzo Valla), and Piccolomini soon accepted their arguments. Instead, he began to refer to later donations of land to the popes by other princes

[62] Civium modo naturam examinemus¹, quae pro vestra securitate non est parum consideranda.² Plenum namque {145v} periculi est inter cives vivere, qui ipsi³ inter se divisi discordiosique sint, qui nullo inter se pacto cohaereant. Talibus enim in⁴ civitatibus necesse est saepe immutari regimina: nunc unum esse, nunc alium principatum. {9v} Neque innovari sine discrimine res possunt, et quemadmodum ait Comicus⁵: *Non fit sine periculo magnum facinus et memorabile*. Quod intelligo non solum eorum, qui agunt, sed spectantium etiam.

[63] Sed nihil horum in urbe Papiensi⁶ trepidabit⁷. Est⁸ enim populus pacicolus⁹, quieti et otio deditus, cives perurbani, non belli aut intestinarum avidi discordiarum, sed suis occupati possessionibus, plurimum tempus in agricultura consumunt, et juxta¹⁰ Graecum proverbium¹¹, *quam quisque artem novit, in hac se exercet*. Nec vano libertatis nomine gloriantur quemadmodum aliqui, qui tum se liberos vocant, cum maxime serviunt, et subesse quampluribus¹² liberum fore dicunt. Ego vero quietiorem populo Papiensi nullum adhuc repperi, qui et suo¹³ semper principi oboedivit, et devotissimus ecclesiae fuit.

¹ naturam examinemus : nostram examinemus naturam V

² considerare MA

³ omit. F

⁴ omit. E

⁵ Terentius in marg. A, K; Comicus non sine periculo in marg. D; Comicus in marg. G

⁶ Papiensium G, MA

⁷ trepidabitur MA [misreading of abbreviation for -is in G, cf. also moderni genitor regis, fol. 14v]

⁸ De civibus Papiensibus in marg. A; De Papiensibus in marg. K

⁹ placidus G, MA; **pacificus H, V**

¹⁰ iuxta V

¹¹ Grecum proverbium in marg. A, K

¹² pluribus V

¹³ omit. K

5.2.2. Citizens of Pavia are peace-loving and tranquil

[62] Let us look now at the character of the citizens. This is clearly relevant to your security for it is highly perilous to live among citizens who are divided and contentious and who can in no way become reconciled. In such cities, there must necessarily be frequent political changes: now they have one government, now another.¹ However, political changes are never without risk, and as the Comic Poet² says: *You can't do anything big or brilliant without risk.*³ This applies not only to the actors, but also to the bystanders.

[63] None of this you have to fear in the city of Pavia. It is a peace-loving people, given to quietness and tranquility. The citizens are perfectly civilized and do not want war or civil discord. They are occupied with their own business and spend most of their time on agriculture. They live according to the Greek proverb: *The art which each man knows, in this let he employ himself.*⁴ They do not vainly boast of the name of liberty as others do who call themselves free when in reality they are slaves, and who believe that freedom is to have many masters. Personally, I have never seen a quieter people than the Pavians: they have always been obedient to their prince, and they are greatly devoted to the Church.⁵

¹ This is an early statement of Piccolomini/Pius' inveterate disdain of democratic government and the common people. His views on this matter were probably influenced by the history of Siena, where the popular party in the 14th century expelled the noble families, including the Piccolomini, both from power and from the city itself. Afterwards Enea Silvio's branch of the family fell into poverty and insignificance, from which it was saved only by their illustrious member, our Piccolomini himself, as he rose to be Bishop of Siena, Prince of the Empire and of the Church, and finally pope

² Comicus = Publius Terentius Afer: Roman playwright (195/185-159 BC), better known in English as Terence. He was one of Piccolomini's favourite classical authors

³ Terentius: *Heautontimoroumenos*, 314

⁴ Cicero: *Tusculanae Disputationes*, 1.18.41

⁵ I.e. both to their secular and religious rulers

[64] Aeris nunc salubritas¹ pernoscatur, quem purissimum esse² apud Ticinum reperietis. Nullae ibi foedae paludes exhalant, non maritima stagna putredinem suggerunt, non crebrae pestes invadunt, non aestus³ immensi intemperatique solares radii aut montani venti officiunt sanitati. Quod⁴ si Basileae similem quaerimus civitatem, Papia profecto est, quae Basiliensem⁵ nobis et libertatem et sanitatem praestet, quam hic permaximam sumus experti. Nam sive aeris salubritas fuit, sive miraculosa magni Dei bonitas id⁶ concessit, sextum hinc⁷ jam trahentes annum incredibili omnes sanitate praestitimus⁸. Nec⁹ de libertate expedit disputare: libere enim hic loqui libereque¹⁰ facere, quodcumque libuit, numquam estis prohibiti, nec cives vestris¹¹ se umquam actionibus opposuerunt, ut qui Germanicam nobilitatem redolent.

[65] De Germanorum namque fide¹², gravitate, constantia nihil satis explicare possem. Non sunt ad promittendum faciles, sed promissa inconcusse inviolateque custodiunt. Emori¹³ malunt, quam iuramento deficere. Apud quos facile sit multos¹⁴ Attilio Regulo¹⁵ similes invenire, qui primo Punico bello fidem hostibus prius¹⁶ servare voluit quam¹⁷ mortem et foedum corporis effugere laniatum. Haec profecto constantia Germanorum, haec fides, haec gravitas Alamaniae, ut tenacissime fidem servant.

[66] Cujus rei memores Basilienses nihil¹⁸ vobis promissum commutarunt. Apud quos utinam quod restat negotii consummare possemus, ne¹⁹ aliorum fidem probaturi essemus. Si tamen pericula volumus evitare²⁰, Papiensis nobis²¹ est²² civitas adeunda, ubi, quemadmodum dixi, et civium grata {145Ar} conversatio²³ est et aeris perpetua salubritas.

¹ De salubritate aeris *in marg.* A, K

² **fore** H, K

³ insunt V

⁴ De Basilea et moribus Teutonicorum *in marg.* A, K

⁵ **Basiliensibus** H

⁶ **omit.** H, V

⁷ hic B, E, H, K, V

⁸ perstitimus *corr. ex* prestitimus C

⁹ neque F

¹⁰ **et libere** H, V

¹¹ cives vestris : vestris cives K

¹² Germanorum fides *in marg.* D, G; Mos Germanorum *in marg.* F

¹³ **et mori** H

¹⁴ multo K

¹⁵ M. Atilius Regulus *in marg.* A; Atilius Regulus *in marg.* K

¹⁶ **omit.** D, G, MA

¹⁷ cui C

¹⁸ nil K

¹⁹ ut E

²⁰ **volumus evitare : evitare volumus** H

²¹ vobis K

²² nobis est: est nobis MA

²³ conversatione K

5.2.3. Climate of Pavia is healthy

[64] Now, hear about the healthy air which is very clean around the River Ticino. No swamps exude fetid air; no stagnant waters stink of rottenness; they are not invaded by frequent plagues; their health is not threatened by immense heat or burning sunshine or mountain winds. If we seek a city similar to Basel, then indeed it is Pavia that will provide us with the same great independence and health we have had here.¹ For whether it is an effect of the wholesome climate or the gift of our great God's miraculous goodness, the fact remains that we have now all been living here for more than five years and are in incredibly good health.² It is superfluous to talk about liberty because we really can speak freely here, and everybody can do as he wishes. Nothing has ever been forbidden us, and the citizens have never opposed your actions. In this they reflect the German nobility.

[65] For about the faithfulness, seriousness, and steadfastness of the Germans I could never say enough. They do not make promises readily, and when they make them they keep them firmly and honestly. They would rather die than fail to keep an oath.³ Among the Germans it would be easy to find many like Attilius Regulus⁴, who during the first Punic War⁵ would rather keep faith with his enemies than flee death and horrible torture.⁶ Such, indeed, is the dependability of the Germans, such is the faithfulness and seriousness of Germany: they keep their promises firmly and honestly!

[66] Being mindful of this, the people of Basel always stood by their promises to you. Therefore, I do wish that we could finish the business of the council here in Basel and that we would not have to test the faithfulness of others. But if we wish to avoid danger, we must go to the city of Pavia, where - as I have said - the citizens live peacefully together, and the air is always wholesome.

¹ I.e. in Basel

² Just three years later a violent plague struck Basel, described in dramatic detail by Piccolomini himself in his *De gestis Concilii Basiliensis Commentariorum Libri II*

³ The theme of German faithfulness Piccolomini had from Tacitus: *Annales*, 13.54: *nullos mortalium armis aut fide ante Germanos esse*

⁴ Marcus Atilius Regulus (ca. 307-ca. 250): Roman general and consul. Mentioned in Bruni: *De militia*, p. 384. Cf. Cicero: *De officiis*, 1.13.39

⁵ Punic wars: a series of three wars fought between Rome and Carthage from 264 to 146 BC

⁶ Note this instance of Piccolomini's frequent use of examples (*exempla*) from Antiquity to give depth and authority to an argument

[67] Si quando tamen mutare locum¹ oporteret, non desunt² in territorio principis commodissimae civitates, quarum, sicut de Papia est dictum, {10r} dominium haberetis. Neque enim³ futuri casus sunt a nobis⁴ non cogitandi, sed sicut apud Euripidem Theseus facere nos decet⁵, cuius illa sunt verba a Cicerone^{6 7} in latinum conversa:

*Nam qui haec audita a docto meminissem viro,
Futuras mecum connitabar⁸ miserias,
Aut mortem acerbam, aut exilii moestam⁹ fugam,
Aut semper aliquam molem meditabar mali:
Ut si qua injecta diritas casu foret,
Ne me imparatum cura laceraret repens.*

Quae non ideo solum dicta confirmo¹⁰, ut malum fiat praemeditatione levius, sed ut praevidentes mala diffugiamus. Et quantum ad nos attinet, illud in eligendo loco desideremus, ut venientem pestem aliamve mali molem possimus evitare, sicut in urbe cernimus Papiensi, qua seu peste, seu alia causa dimittenda¹¹, aliam e vestigio urbem inveniamus concilii capacem et rerum abundantem omnium. Ac de aeris salubritate sufficiat.

¹ mutare locum: locum mutare G, K, MA

² desinit F

³ **omit. H, V**

⁴ vobis K

⁵ Euripides. Theseus. Cicero *in marg.* A, K

⁶ **a Cicerone : per Ciceronem H, V**

⁷ *Cicero in marg. D, G*

⁸ commentabar G, H, MA; commutabam V

⁹ incestam F

¹⁰ **estimo H, K;** extimo V

¹¹ devitanda K

[67] If, however, we should have to find another place, there are in the prince's lands other quite convenient cities which you would have under your control, just like Pavia. For we also have to think of future eventualities, as Theseus¹ does in Euripides² whose words Cicero translated into Latin thus:

*I treasured up what some learn'd sage did tell,
And on my future misery did dwell;
I thought of bitter death, of being drove
Far from my home by exile, and I strove
With every evil to possess my mind,
That, when they came, I the less care might find.*³

This means that we should not foresee evils just to make them easier to bear, but to avoid them! In our case, we must choose a city that we can immediately exchange for another city capable of hosting the Council and amply provisioned. This might become necessary in case of the plague or for some other reason. Pavia certainly fulfils this condition. I have now said enough about the wholesome climate.

¹ Theseus: Greek mythological hero

² Euripides: Greek tragedian (c. 480-406 BC). The tragedy itself is lost, but the above passage was quoted in Greek by Plutarch in his *Moralia*, 112D

³ Cicero: *Tusculanae Disputationes*, 3.14.29: *Nam qui haec audita a docto meminissem viro, Futuras mecum commentabar miseras: Aut mortem acerbam aut exsili maestam fugam, Aut semper aliquam molem meditabar mali, Ut, si qua invecta diritas casu foret, Ne me imparatum cura laceraret repens.* Quoted after the translation of C.D. Yonge. New York, 1877

[68] Principis¹ vero fides quanti a vobis², celeberrimi patres, sit habenda, extremo praesentique loco retinui. De qua re abunde putavero dictum³, cum ejus principis erga ecclesiam⁴ devotionem, erga vos ipsos sacrumque⁵ concilium dilectionem, erga subditos justitiam et aequitatem⁶, erga hostes clementiam et mansuetudinem, erga omnes magnificentiam et benignitatem ostendero. Quibus absolutis quis neget summam in hoc⁷ principe fidem habendam⁸? Quas res me nunc peroraturum⁹, utinam digna rebus sequeretur facundia. Meritus¹⁰ es namque, victoriosissime¹¹ princeps, de quo summi oratores et¹² clarissima poetarum ingenia fatigentur.¹³ Sed dabis Aeneae¹⁴ veniam, si non ut vellet, sed ut potest tuam causam perorabit. Vos quoque, patres amplissimi, desinite admirari, si non dignam tanto principe¹⁵ orationem audietis : tot sunt enim illius stupendae virtutes, tot miranda gesta, tot pacis et belli incredibiles artes, ut inferior omnis oratio videri debeat.

¹ Subdivisionis subdivisio *in marg.* A, K

² **nobis** H, V

³ **putavero dictum : dictum putavero** H, K, V

⁴ ecclesiasticam V

⁵ sacrum K; sanctumque V

⁶ **equanimitatem** H, V

⁷ **vos add.** H, K, V

⁸ **habituos** H, K, V

⁹ oraturum V

¹⁰ **veritus** H

¹¹ gloriosissime K

¹² *omit.* K

¹³ Philippi laudes *in marg.* D, G

¹⁴ **ante H;** euge V

¹⁵ principi F

5.3 Council can trust the duke

[68] I have kept for the end the question of how much, celebrated Fathers, you may trust the prince. I shall have said quite enough about this issue, if I show you

- the prince's devotion to the Church,
- his love of yourselves and the Sacred Council,
- his justice and fairness towards his subjects,
- his clemency and mildness towards his enemies, and
- his generosity and benevolence towards all.

If I do that, then who will deny that you can trust this prince implicitly? As I begin to speak about this, I hope that my eloquence will be worthy of the subject

For that is what you merit, oh victorious Prince! Even the greatest orators and the most excellent poets would find it hard to do justice to you, so I hope that you will forgive Aeneas¹ if he speaks on your behalf not as well as he would like to, but as well as he is able to. And you, great Fathers, do not be surprised if you do not hear an oration worthy of this great prince. For, indeed, his admirable virtues, his memorable deeds, and his incredible skills of war and peace are so manyfold that no oration can do them justice.

¹ Piccolomini himself

[69] Sed pergo, ut *in buccam venit*, ac de sua erga ecclesiam devotione duo quam brevissime absolvam. Braccius¹, hostis ecclesiae immanissimus², cum multa Romanae sedis oppida urbesque invasisset, ac multas provincias vi occupasset, urbem insignem Aquilam eo animo obsedit, ut ea capta bellum urbi obsidionemque admoveret, tantusque in urbe metus ac trepidatio fuit, ut non urbis³ defendendae⁴, sed faciendae fugae consilium esse⁵ putarent. Nec minor⁶ agitatio Romae tumultusque⁷ fuit victore⁸ apud Cannas Hannibale⁹ {145Av} omnique Romanorum prostrato exercitu, cum¹⁰ perditam spem fore desperatam comploratamque rempublicam nonnulli juvenes opinati¹¹ de aufugio cogitabant. Tum papae auxilia dux misit, pecuniisque copiisque papam juvit. {10v} Cumque ad manum¹² devenere, ducales copiae plurimum valuerunt eoque proelio victoriam pepererunt, ut victum Braccium duci adscriberent. Omitto classem ingentem rogatu papae Martini in Apuliam destinatam, Cajetamque^{13 14} receptam et alia classis illius spectata facinora.

¹ Bracius *in marg.* A, K

² inhumanissimus K

³ urbem V

⁴ defendere V

⁵ erat V

⁶ **major corr. ex minor H; major V**

⁷ tumultus F; **timorque H, V**

⁸ victorie B, E; *corr. ex victorie A, D, F [and possibly C]*

⁹ Anibal *in marg.* A, K

¹⁰ locus corruptus *in marg.* MA

¹¹ omit. G, MA

¹² **manus H, V**

¹³ Cajetam F

¹⁴ Caieta *in marg.* A, K

5.3.1. Duke's devotion to the Church

[69] But I shall say what *comes into my head*,¹ and concerning the duke's devotion to the Church, I shall briefly mention two points:

[Firstly,] when Braccio,² that terrible enemy of the Church, had invaded many towns and cities belonging to the Roman See and occupied many of its provinces, he laid siege to the splendid city of Aquila.³ His intention was to capture that city and then move the war and the siege to Rome. So great were the fear and trembling in the City⁴ that they thought less about defense than about flight. The uproar and disorder in Rome were just as great as when Hannibal⁵ had won the Battle of Cannae⁶ and the whole of the Roman army had been destroyed: all hope was lost, the situation of the state was desperate and lamented, and many of the young men planned to flee. Then the duke sent aid to the pope and helped him with money and troops. When they joined battle,⁷ the ducal troops prevailed and gained victory, and the duke was credited with the defeat of Braccio.

I shall omit the immense fleet which the duke sent to Puglia at the request of Pope Martin V, the capture of Gaeta, and the other memorable achievements of that fleet.

¹ *"ut in buccam venerit"*: classical expression used by Cicero, Seneca the Younger, Martial, Jerome

² Fortebraccio, Andrea (AKA Braccio da Montone) (1368-1424): Italian nobleman and condottiero

³ Aquila or L'Aquila: capital city of the Abruzzo region

⁴ I.e. Rome

⁵ Hannibal Barca (247-ca. 183 BC): Punic Carthaginian military commander

⁶ Battle of Cannae: a major battle of the Second Punic War, August 2, 216 BC.

⁷ 2 June 1424

[70] Illud quis non summe collaudet Emiliam¹, quam modo² Romandiolam dicimus, ex manibus tyrannorum vi captam, papae sine contradictione restitutam³ esse. Numquam hic princeps summis pontificibus adversatus est, numquam ecclesiae defuit auxilio, numquam apostolica⁴ mandata contempsit, modernoque pontifici ut patri, ut domino, ut Christi vicario semper obtemperavit, primusque omnium principum praestitit oboedientiam. Si quid postea discidii fuit, hinc processit origo. Ipse tamen numquam papae famulatum negavit, quod illa in⁵ sede sedentem numquam contemnendum⁶ censuit.

[71] Qualis vero erga concilium fuerit, vestrum neminem arbitror praeterire, nec me aliquis reprehendat, si hunc defensorem concilii nominaverim, quem non ignoratis⁷ cum magno suorum sumptu semper hic⁸ praelatorum frequentiam⁹ tenuisse curasseque¹⁰, ne defectu suppositorum¹¹ concilium¹² deperiret. Cumque requirendi principes in adhaesionem essent, hujus praelati praesto fuere, qui suis sumptibus obirent¹³ munera legationum, quorum nullus aut labori pepercit aut sumptui.

¹ Emilia *in marg.* A, K

² nunc V

³ *omit.* G, MA

⁴ a papa V

⁵ illa in : in illa E, F

⁶ **contendendum H**

⁷ ignoratur MA

⁸ **hinc H**

⁹ **copiam H, K, V**

¹⁰ **citasseque D, G, M**

¹¹ suorum V

¹² frequentiam ... concilium *omit.* E

¹³ obierunt V

[70] [Secondly], who will not greatly applaud that Emilia, now called Romagnola,¹ was freed from the hands of the local tyrants,² who had conquered it by force, and willingly restored to the pope?

Never did the prince fight the Supreme Pontiffs, never did he refuse to help the Church, and never did he reject the apostolic commands. The present pope he always obeyed as Pontiff, father, lord, and Vicar of Christ, and he was the first of the princes to declare his obedience to him. Even if later there was some disagreement between them, that is how their relationship actually began. The duke never refused to serve the pope since he considers that the person who occupies the Holy See should never be shown disrespect.

5.3.2. Duke's love of the council

[71] I believe that none of you can be unaware of the duke's attitude towards the council, and nobody will rebuke me if I call him Defender of the Council. For everybody knows that from the beginning he required his prelates to attend the council and has kept them here at great cost so that it would not collapse due to lack of participants.

And at the time when the council solicited the support of the princes, his prelates were ready to undertake the necessary missions – even at their own expense: none of them spared any effort or money.³

¹ Romagnola: a region of Northern Italy comprising the two historic regions of Emilia and Romagna and forming an important part of the then papal state. The capital was Bologna

² Not in the sense of cruel rulers, but in the sense of self-made, local rulers without the sanction of the Empire or the Church

³ Piccolomini returned to this theme in other works, e.g. the *De rebus Basiliae gestis commentarius*, written four years later, in 1450 (Reject, p. 332)

[72] Atque ut sileam, quod¹ magna cum diligentia in hoc concilio et extra concilium ab episcopo Albiganensi² est gestum, viro non solum genere, sed animi virtute nobilissimo, quid de aliis dicam³? Hinc episcopus Novariensis ad regem Franciae destinatus, hinc Laudensis in Angliam missus. In remotissimamque⁴ usque Poloniam Parmensis episcopus jussus est ire, quo⁵ tempore ille vivebat, cujus modo insignia viduis depicta⁶ tapetibus cernitis ante oculos, moderni genitor regis⁷, cui Deus adversus infidelium impetus omnes conatus secundos efficiat. Ad regem vero Aragonum Riccius abbas sancti Ambrosii⁸ in Siciliam usque perrexit. Nec tu, potentissime princeps Burgundorum⁹, ab¹⁰ Longobardis praelatis fuisti praetermissus. Abbati namque de Cereto¹¹, patri integerrimo, ea legatio obvenit, quem tu propter patriam propterque dominum laeto vultu et gratissimo animo recepisti¹², non ignarus quantum tibi¹³ dux ille Mediolanensis¹⁴ afficiatur, qui nihil magis exoptat quam {146r} tuae morem gerere voluntati¹⁵. Apostolorum mihi illa¹⁶ tempora videbantur, cum orbis provincias inter se sortiti suam quisque legationem suscepit evangelium praedicaturus. Cujus rei non absimilem¹⁷ curam¹⁸ ducales praelati receperunt, quoniam tunc alii aberant.

¹ quid G, MA

² Episcopus Albiganensis, Episcopus Novariensis, Episcopus Laudensis, Episcopus Parmensis *in marg.* A, K

³ **dicemus H, V**

⁴ remotissimam F, G, MA

⁵ *omit.* V

⁶ depincta K

⁷ Rex Polonie *in marg.* K

⁸ Abbas sancti Ambrosii *in marg.* A, K

⁹ Dux Borgundorum *in marg.* A, K

¹⁰ a B, E, H

¹¹ Abbas Cereti *in marg.* A; Abbas de Cereto *in marg.* K

¹² **suscepisti H**

¹³ *omit.* K

¹⁴ tibi *add.* K

¹⁵ voluptati K

¹⁶ mihi illa : illa mihi E

¹⁷ ad similem V

¹⁸ curalem B, E

[72] Passing over the tireless endeavours, both inside and outside the council, of the Bishop of Albenga,¹ a man distinguished not only by family, but also by his virtue of soul, what shall I say about the other prelates?² The Bishop of Novara³ was sent to the King of France,⁴ and the Bishop of Lodi⁵ to England. The Bishop of Parma⁶ was ordered to far-away Poland when the father⁷ of the present king⁸ was still alive. You see his coat of arms, painted by widows, on the tapestry right in front of you. May God help the present king to successfully resist the attacks of the infidels. To the King of Aragon,⁹ who then resided in Sicily, was sent Abbot Ricci of Saint Ambrose.¹⁰ Nor were you, mighty Duke of Burgundy,¹¹ neglected by the Lombard prelates. This mission fell to the Abbot of Cereto,¹² that upright Father, whom you received with pleasure, both because of his country and because of his lord. For you know how greatly you are esteemed by the Duke of Milan who wants nothing more than to accommodate your wishes. To me that period seemed to resemble that of the apostles when they divided the provinces of the world between them, and each undertook a mission to preach the Gospel there. A similar task was entrusted to the ducal prelates¹³ because at that time many other prelates had not yet arrived.¹⁴

¹ Matteo del Carretto

² They are all prelates from the territory of the Duke of Milan. Piccolomini here shows how the duke – through his prelates - helped the council to obtain the recognition of the European princes

³ Bartolomeo Visconti (1402-1457): Bishop of Novara from 1429 to his death. For some time Piccolomini's own employer

⁴ Charles VII

⁵ Gerardo Landriani: Bishop of Lodi, made cardinal in 1439

⁶ Delfino da Pergola: Bishop of Parma

⁷ Wladislaw II Jagiello (ca. 1362-1434): King of Poland from 1386 to his death

⁸ Wladislaw III Jagiello (1424-1444): King of Poland from 1434 to his death

⁹ Alfonso V

¹⁰ Antonio Ricci: Abbot of Sant'Ambrogio, Milan

¹¹ Philippe III le Bon (1396-1467): Duke of Burgundy 1419 to his death

¹² The abbot of Chiaravalle

¹³ I.e. the bishops of the Duchy of Milan

¹⁴ Reject, p. 332

[73] Repetite {11r} beneficia in vos¹ collata, obsecro. Considerate, si jamdiu hinc abissetis, nisi ipse favisset. Videte, si quid est umquam petatum, quod non sit impetratum. Videte, si hujus concilii bene gesta semper² collaudarit³ observarique jusserit. Videte, si gentes armorum, si pedites, si equites, si pecuniam, si terras, si se ipsum vobis obtulerit. Videte, si quid promiserit, quod non impleverit. Videte, si vos semper magna dilectione fuerit prosecutus. Hic cardinalibus ad concilium venientibus naves dedit. Hic securum transitum omnibus praestitit. Hic omnibus modis⁴ nos⁵ juvit⁶, qui non modo hoc, modo⁷ illud, ut plerique, sed semper idem dixit fecitque. Neque ut exprobrem ista dico, sed ut ejus erga vos fidem recognoscentes⁸ de ipso potius quam de aliis⁹ confidatis, caveatisque ne quam ingratitude ostendatis, quam rem in divina mente almoque illo spiritu, qui praesidere in conciliis¹⁰ creditur, nefas est nominare.

[74] Illudque evitate, ne de¹¹ vobis dici possit, quod dictum esse quondam Cicero narrat. Nam cum C. Laelio¹², bono et spectato viro, consulatum petenti *non esset¹³ mos gestus, magis populus a bono consule, quam a bono populo repulsus consul* dicebatur.

¹ nos H, V

² omit. K

³ collaudaverit C

⁴ omit. K

⁵ vos H, V

⁶ nos juvit : juvit vos K

⁷ omit. F

⁸ cognoscentes C

⁹ alio G, MA

¹⁰ concilio G, MA

¹¹ omit. G, MA

¹² Cicero. G. Lelius *in marg.* A, K

¹³ omit. D, G, MA

[73] I urge you to consider the favours the duke has bestowed upon you: how long would we have been here without his support? Have you ever asked him for something that you did not receive? Has he not always praised the excellent decisions of this council and ordered them to be obeyed?¹ Has he not offered you armed men, foot soldiers, mounted soldiers, money, land, and even himself? Has he not always fulfilled his promises to you? Has he not always shown you great love? When the cardinals travelled to the council, he gave them ships;² he offered safe passage to them all, and he helped us in every way. Many say now this now that, but he always said and did the same thing. I do not say this in order to criticize you, but so that you may acknowledge his fidelity towards you, trust him more than others, and take care not to seem ungrateful. For ingratitude is a sin towards the divine mind and the blessed Holy Spirit who is believed to preside over councils.

[74] Take care that it may not be said about you what, according to Cicero, was said about Gaius Laelius,³ a good and highly respected man, who had sought the consulship: when *contrary to custom he had not been elected*, it was said that it was more *a case of the people being rejected by a good consul, than of the consul being rejected by a good people*.⁴

¹ I.e. in his own duchy

² Piccolomini had actually sailed on one these ships, in the company of his then employer, Cardinal Capranica

³ Gaius Laelius Sapiens (b. ca. 188 BC): Roman statesman

⁴ Cicero: *Tusculanae Disputationes*, 5.19.54: *non populus a bono consule potius, quam ille a populo² repulsam fert*

[75] Pergo ad alia: justitiaeque¹ erga subditos ministrandae aequitatisque² servandae ducale studium vel in eo potestis comprehendere, quod ab omnibus subditis peraeque diligitur³. Percurrite ejus territorium: omnes uno ore videbitis⁴ de suo principe bene dicere sibi bene optare, superosque rogare, ut superstes ac longaevus fiat. Nullum principi male dicere, nullum nisi magnifice amplissimeque de suo sentientes principe invenietis. Quam rem nemo ex justitia natam⁵ negaverit. Eo pertinet, quod de Sperone⁶ aliisque plerisque factum est, quos⁷, cum ipse in subditos graves, acerbos contumeliososque repperisset⁸, ab⁹ sese¹⁰ penitus abdicavit omnique magistratu dejecit. Ex quo fit, ut ejus dominatus altissimis defixus radicibus existat. Est enim in amore ac caritate fundatus, non in timore, qui, ut dicit orator¹¹, *non est diuturnus magister officii*. Nec illud quo praeterire, quod nemo magis mortem hominis abhorret, nemo magis invitatus torqueri homines audit.

¹ **justitiae H, V**

² aequitatisve MA

³ diligere V

⁴ **audietis H, V**

⁵ **et equitate prodire H, V**

⁶ de Petra Sancta *add. interlin. E*; **de Sperone : Speroni H, V**

⁷ quo F

⁸ respuisset V

⁹ **a H**

¹⁰ se MA

¹¹ Cicero *in marg.* A, K

5.3.3. Duke's justice towards his subjects

[75] I now turn to the next item: the duke's diligence in administering justice and fairness to his subjects. From this you will understand that he is loved by all his subjects and with good reason. Travel through his territory, and you will see that all unanimously speak well of their prince. They wish him the best, and they hope and pray to Heaven that he will survive and live long. You will find that no one speaks badly of the prince, and that everybody thinks very highly of him. The reason for this is his sense of justice - nobody can deny that! Just think of what happened to Sperone and many others: when the duke found that they were heavy-handed, harsh, and abusive towards his subjects, he dismissed them, and stripped them of all their offices. Therefore, his government has deep roots: it is based on love and affection and not on *fear*, which – as the orator says – *is not a lasting teacher of duty*.¹ I add that no one abhors the death of a man more than him, and no one is more loath to hear people being tortured.

¹ Cicero: *Philippicae*, 2.36

[76] Sed de sua in hostes mansuetudine jam sermo desideratur, in qua {146v} re non erit absurdum, si ea de hoc principe dixerimus, quae de senatu populoque Romano¹ Scipio² dixit, *quem beneficio quam metu obligare homines malle, exterisque gentes fide ac societate junctas habere, quam tristi subjectas servitio asseverabat*. Qua laude hunc esse dignum ducem paucis colligemus exemplis. Victus adverso proelio Carolus Malatesta captivus³ duci deditur⁴. Expectatis necem aut carceres? Nullo receptus supercilio fortunatius⁵ sibi⁶ fuisse vinci quam vicisse {11v} expertus est. Quid alios exercituum duces commemorem⁷, qui in hujus deducti potestate tantam⁸ clementiam invenerunt, ut jam plerique didicerint tutius esse huic principi adversari quam favere.

¹ populoque Romano : Romanoque populo A [NB: A corrected by the other mss.]

² Scipio *in marg.* A, K

³ **capitaneus** H, V

⁴ Karolus *in marg.* A, K; Carolus Malatesta *in marg.* D, G

⁵ fortunatus B, E

⁶ *omit.* F

⁷ duces commemorem: commemorem duces B, E

⁸ tam E

5.3.4. Duke's clemency towards his enemies

[76] We must now speak about his clemency towards enemies. It would be quite appropriate to say about this prince what Scipio¹ said about the Roman senate and people: *They preferred to hold men by the bonds of kindness rather than by those of fear. They would rather have foreign nations united to them on terms of alliance and mutual good faith than kept down in hard and hopeless servitude.*² We will show, with a few examples, how praiseworthy the duke is in this respect:

Carlo Malatesta³ had been defeated in battle and was brought to the duke as a prisoner. One would now expect death or prison. But no! Instead he was received with no severity at all: he was more fortunate in having been defeated than he would have been if he had been victorious. And I could mention other army commanders who came into his power and were treated so mercifully that they might actually conclude that it was better to be against this prince than to be for him!

¹ Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (235-183 BC): Roman statesman and general also known as Scipio Africanus and Scipio the Elder. Fought in the Second Punic War

² Livius: *Ab urbe condita*, 26.49

³ Carlo Malatesta (1368-1429): Italian condottiere and Lord of Rimini

[77] Sunt enim quidam homines¹, qui velut equi, quanto magis illis indulgetur, tanto majori petulantia sunt. Franciscus Carminiola² ³ sub hoc principe militavit, divitiisque honoreque auctus ad hostes confugit, magnaue clade veterem saepe dominum affecit. Hujus apud hostes defuncti filias⁴ suscepit egregioque⁵ matrimonio copulavit, uxori Carminiolae⁶ bona omnia⁷ restituit. Qualem vero serenissimis⁸ se⁹ Aragoniae¹⁰ Navarraeque regibus¹¹ exhibuerit, nulla terrarum portio non audivit: hoc omnem exsuperat¹² magnificentiam. En dux ipse cum alibi alios hic se ipsum¹³ magnificentia superavit. O genus egregium! O proles verissima Galeazii. Estne hominum ulla conditio, quae non te diligat? Estne *gens ulla tam barbara, tam effera*, tam ab omni humanitate alienata¹⁴, quae tuo nomini non afficiatur? Hic est quem colere omnes debent, *cum propter virtutem et probitatem*, sicut Cicero¹⁵ credit, *etiam eos quos numquam*¹⁶ *vidimus*¹⁷, *diligamus*, quem hostes, sicut ego puto, talia in dies¹⁸ audientes non possunt non laudare.

¹ quidam homines : homines quidam K

² Carmagnola K

³ Carmaniola A; Carmagnola *in marg.* K

⁴ filia E

⁵ egregio B, E

⁶ Carmagnolae K

⁷ bona omnia : omnia bona K, V

⁸ serenissimus F

⁹ *omit.* B, C, E, H, V

¹⁰ Reges Aragonum et Navarrae *in marg.* A, K

¹¹ **sese add. H, V**

¹² exuperat B, C, D, E, G, H

¹³ magnificentiam ... ipsum *omit.* E

¹⁴ aliena V

¹⁵ Cicero *in marg.* A, K

¹⁶ unquam V

¹⁷ maxime *add.* E

¹⁸ **in dies : dietim H, K, V**

[77] Some men, like horses, grow more snappish the more they are indulged. Francesco Carmagnola¹ fought under this prince, who loaded him with riches and honours. He then fled to the duke's enemies² and several times inflicted severe defeats on his former master. When Carmagnola died in enemy country,³ the duke received his daughters, arranged excellent marriages for them, and restored all his property to the widow.

Also, the whole world knows how he behaved towards the Most Serene Kings of Aragon⁴ and Navarra⁵: beyond all conceivable generosity! Indeed, the duke may on other occasions have surpassed everybody else in generosity, but here he surpassed himself.

Oh eminent lineage! Oh true child of Galeazzo!⁶ Is there any sort of man who does not love you?⁷ *Is there any people so barbarous, so obtuse,*⁸ so remote from all humanity that they do not cherish your name? Cicero believes that *on account of their virtue and uprightness we feel a sort of affection even for those whom we have never seen.*⁹ So, here is one whom all should revere, and I believe that even his enemies must praise him as they daily hear such things about him.

¹ Francesco Bussone [AKA Count of Carmagnola] (c. 1382-1432): Italian condottiero

² i.e. the Venetians

³ Executed by his Venetian masters, in 1432

⁴ Alfonso V

⁵ Alfonso's brother, Juan II (1398-1479): King of Navarre from 1425 and King of Aragon from 1458 to his death

⁶ Giangaleazzo Visconti (1351-1402): ruler of Milan from 1385 to his death, from 1395 as duke

⁷ Note Piccolomini's use of the rhetorical device of apostrophe, i.e. directly addressing an absent person

⁸ Cicero: *Pro Sulla*, 76

⁹ Cicero: *De amicitia*, 8.28

[78] Hunc ergo quis neget erga omnes esse benignum, cum benignissimum semper in hostes repperierimus¹? Quis umquam ad eum venit non benigne magnificeque² receptus? Incredibile vobis³ videretur, si pecuniarum illam explicarem summam, qua quotannis⁴ transeuntes dominos et ad se venientes honorat oratores. Cujus rei⁵, si Papiam elegeritis⁶, experimentum principum oratores praelatique videbunt, quorum nemo indonatus abibit. Esset mihi magna copia memorandi plurimos, qui domo extorres patriaque pulsi ducali pecunia vitam agunt.

¹ reperimus/repperimus B, D, E, G; reperuerimus A, H; repererimus/reppererimus C, D, F, G, MA

² **magnificentissimeque H, V**

³ nobis V

⁴ tot annis K

⁵ *omit.* F

⁶ eligeretis D; eligeritis E, H, V

5.3.5. Duke's benevolence towards all

[78] Who will deny that this duke is benevolent towards everybody when we see that he has always been extremely benevolent towards his enemies? Who has ever come to him and not been received pleasantly and generously?¹ You would not believe me if I told you how large sums he spends in honouring the lords who every year pass through his realm, and the ambassadors who come to him. If you choose Pavia, the ambassadors and prelates of the princes shall have the same experience: no one will depart without a gift.² I also ought to mention the many expatriates and people in exile who are presently living on stipends from the duke.

¹ Note Piccolomini's use of the rhetorical question, which he employed frequently

² Here Piccolomini is somewhat indelicate, cf. his own remarks in sect. 28

[79] Sed jam finem nostra poscit¹ oratio. Quod² ea, quae ab initio³ sumus⁴ polliciti, non probasse solum, sed ostendisse planius opinamur. Quare cum hujus principis {146Ar} devotionem erga vos et ecclesiam non minimam neque vulgarem⁵ dinoscatis, cum pium, cum justum, cum clementem, cum magnificentissimum ducem videatis⁶, quid est quod ejus vobis suspectam fidem efficiat⁷? Quis timor, quae dubitatio, quae suspicio de isto⁸ potest concipi duce⁹? Nihil profecto est quod Papiam repudietis. Hic quae ad Graecos opus¹⁰ sunt habetis. Hic papa cum concilio potest convenire. Hic domos egregias. Hic victualium invenietis copiam. Hic securitas, hic libertas ostenditur. Hic principem amicum¹¹ nacti estis, cujus vetus¹² et probata est amicitia, quem si novis postponatis amicis a Ciceronis consilio recedatis, cujus haec de amicitia verba leguntur¹³: {12r} *Existit autem hoc¹⁴ loco quaedam quaestio subdifficilis, numquid amici novi digni¹⁵ amicitia veteribus amicis sint anteponendi.* Homine¹⁶ indigna dubitatio.

¹ possit E

² quare MA

³ ab initio : a principio V

⁴ scimus F

⁵ **vulgantem H**

⁶ **cognoscatis H, V**

⁷ faciat G, M; efficiatur V

⁸ ipso G, M

⁹ principe V

¹⁰ **necessaria H, V**

¹¹ *omit.* G, M

¹² **vera H, V**

¹³ Cicero *in marg.* A, K; Cicero de amicitia *in marg.* D; Tullius de amicitia *in marg.* G

¹⁴ **in add. H, V**

¹⁵ **digna H**

¹⁶ **hinc H**

6. Conclusion

6.1. Pavia is the best choice in all respects

[79] But our oration now approaches the end. We conclude that we have not only shown, but indeed proven what we promised in the beginning. You must acknowledge that the devotion of this prince towards you and the Church is neither small nor ordinary, and that he is a pious, just, clement, and generous duke. Then, how could you doubt his trustworthiness? Why should you fear, doubt, and distrust him? There is simply no reason to reject Pavia. Here¹ you have everything needed in relation to the Greeks. Here the pope can meet with the council. Here you will find stately houses and ample provisions. Here security and independence are manifest. Here you have gained a prince as friend, and one whose friendship is old and proven. If you prefer other, new, friends to him, then you will disregard the advice of Cicero, who has written this about friendship: *But at this point there arises a certain question of some little difficulty: are new friends who are worthy of friendship at any time to be preferred to old ones.*² To doubt him is unworthy of a man!

¹ Note Piccolomini's use of two classical rhetorical devices, which he employed frequently: the *anaphora* (repetition) with dramatic effect ("hic ... hic ... hic ... hic ... hic ..."), and the *accumulatio*, i.e. the piling up of persuasive reasons and arguments

² Cicero: *De amicitia*, 19.67

[80] Non enim debent¹ esse amicitiarum, sicut aliarum rerum satietates², veterrima quaeque³ ut ea vina, quae vetustatem ferunt, esse debent suavissima. Verum illud est quod dicitur: *Modios multos salis simul edendos esse, ut amicitiae munus expletum sit*. Pythagoras⁴ vero *haud*⁵ *injiciendam unicuique dexteram* dicebat, *id est non prompte aut inconsulto conciliari oportere*, sicut Plutarchus⁶ interpretatur. Idem quoque ait, *quae nigrantes habent caudas, gustari non oportere*, quae ideo dicta sunt, ut in rebus agendis illorum conditiones diligenter investigemus, cum quibus contrahimus.

[81] Hoc etiam facit, ut intentiones eorum considerare debeatis, qui concilium petunt. In qua re de aliis vos iudicetis, ego de duce dicam⁷, quem⁸ tres causae potissimum movent⁹: ut requisitus satisfaciatur, ut in re fidei praesto sit, ut ab omni vos periculo subtrahat. Versatus namque in rebus arduis princeps multorum dominorum diversarumque communitatum¹⁰ per sploratores¹¹ secreta cognoscit timetque, ne locum eligatis, qui vobis perditioni fiet. Cupit ab omni vos fraude omnique periculo eripere. In qua re, patres optimi, sic precor excubetis, ut nihil improvisum accidere possit, nihil inopinatum, nihil omnino novum. Atque ita acerrimam in omnes partes¹² aciem intendatis, ne qua fraude capiamini.

¹ debet G, H, V, MA

² satietas D, V; societates F; sacietas G, H; societas K, MA

³ quoque V

⁴ Pithagoras *in marg.* A, K

⁵ **aut H, V**

⁶ Plutarchus *in marg.* A, K

⁷ Quare dux petit concilium *in marg.* A, K

⁸ quae MA

⁹ monent K

¹⁰ diversarumque communitatum : diversorum comitatum V

¹¹ exploratores G, MA; exsploratores ex sploratores D; spoliatores [sic!] H; sproratores [sic!] V [NB: Example of error in the Early/Intermediate Version, corrected in the Final Version]

¹² **mentis add. H, V**

6.2. Appeal to friendship and caution

[80] For though you may grow tired of other things, you should not grow tired of friendship. Indeed, old friendships should be the sweetest ones - like old wines. But it is also true, as they say, that *men must eat many a peck¹ of salt together before the claims of friendship are fulfilled.*² And Pythagoras³ said that *one should not shake hands with everybody*, which Plutarch⁴ interprets in the sense that *one should not make alliances rashly or unthinkingly.*⁵ He also says that *you should not eat things with black tails.*⁶ By this he means that in all our affairs we should carefully consider the circumstances of the people with whom we are dealing.

[81] Therefore, we should examine the intentions of those parties who are seeking to host the council.⁷ You yourselves will assess the other parties, but I shall speak about the duke who is most concerned with three things: to meet your requirements; to be zealous in the matter of the Faith; and to remove all risk to you. For being placed in a highly perilous situation, the prince endeavours to know, through spies, the secrets of many lords and various city states,⁸ and he fears that you will choose a location which will be your ruin.⁹ He wants to remove all danger from you. In this matter, excellent Fathers, I implore you to be vigilant and not to allow anything unforeseen, surprising or wholly new to happen. Keep careful watch in all directions so that you may not be deceived.

¹ Modius: Roman measure of grain, the equivalent of 10,5 lit.

² Cf. Aristotle: *Eth. Eudem.*, 7. 2; *Eth. Nic.*: 8.3.8. Quoted by Cicero: *De amicitia*, 19.67

³ Pythagoras (ca. 570-ca. 495 BC): Greek philosopher

⁴ Plutarch (ca. 46-120): Greek historian

⁵ Verbatim quote from Guarino Veronese's translation from Greek into Latin of Plutarch's *De Liberis educandis*, p. 7

⁶ Verbatim quote from Guarino Veronese's translation from Greek into Latin of Plutarch's *De Liberis educandis*, p. 7

⁷ E.g. Avignon (France), Savoy, Venice, Florence, Perugia, cf. sect. 1 above

⁸ The development of the spying, i.e. intelligence gathering systems of Renaissance rulers was evidently neither secret nor shameful, but on the contrary the mark of a prudent prince

⁹ Piccolomini hints that the duke may have acquired knowledge about the motives of other interested parties, e.g. the King of France, who might not be acting in the best interests of the council

[82] Hic, te precor, humanissime pater cardinalis sanctae Sabinae¹, intendas, ne quam pluribus annis summo labore summaque vigilantia² famam perquisivisti, unus dies eripiat³, quamquam, quidquid eveniat, Bohemicae⁴ reductionis te laus assequatur. Sed majorem tibi Graecia laudem attulerit, si locum periculosum effugiens in eo consenties, in eoque alios {146Av} animabis, ubi sine periculo maturari negotium possit.

[83] Nec te inoratum⁵, integerrime pater, relinquam, cardinalis sancti Petri⁶, qui non tuo solum hic⁷ nomine, sed papali⁸ regioque⁹ praesides: aspice quod te dignum est, quod summo pontifici conveniat, quod regi illi potentissimo victoriosissimoque consentaneum existimas¹⁰. Neque te hic neque tuum regem¹¹ passio ducit¹²: ille pro fide in patria pugnat, de cujus laudibus bellicisque triumphis non nihil explicuisssem, nisi oratores ejus, viros literatissimos atque ornatissimos patres, Concensem Burgensemque praesulem, ante oculos cernerem, qui et ornatius et melius rem valeant absolvere. Tu hic rei fidei curam adhibes: nunc opus, nunc labor est, nunc tua industria viderit, ne loco inepto consentiamus.

¹ Cardinalis sanctae Sabinae *in marg.* A, K

² summaque vigilantia: *omit.* B, E

³ arripiat V

⁴ Bohemiae F

⁵ ignoratum K

⁶ Cardinalis sancti Petri *in marg.* A, K

⁷ tuo solum hic : solum tuo hic D, G, M; tuo hic solum V

⁸ populi MA

⁹ hic *add.* G, MA

¹⁰ estimas A, H

¹¹ Rex Castellae et oratores sui *in marg.* A

¹² passio ducit : sinistra ducit affectio H; affecti sinistra ducit affecti [*sic!*] V

6.3. Appeals to cardinals and prelates

[82] Now, I beseech you, benevolent Father and Cardinal of Santa Sabina¹: take care not to lose in one day the reputation which you have built over many years, with considerable effort and diligence. Whatever happens, you will always be praised for bringing back² the Hussites.³ But Greece will bring you even greater honour if you avoid a perilous location and if you consent - and make others consent - to a location where the whole undertaking may be concluded in safety.

[83] I also appeal to you, honourable Father, Cardinal of San Pietro⁴ who presides⁵ here not only in your own name, but also in the name of the pope and in the name of your king.⁶ Consider what is worthy of you yourself, convenient for the Supreme Pontiff, and agreeable to your mighty and victorious king. Neither you nor your king is moved by passions. He is battling for the Faith⁷ in his own country, and I would have said something about his merits and military triumphs if his own ambassadors, the learned and excellent Bishops of Cuenca⁸ and Burgos,⁹ had not been present. For they are certainly able to speak better and more brilliantly on this subject than I. So, consider the matter of the Faith carefully and make every effort to prevent us from agreeing to an unsuitable place.

¹ Giuliano Cesarini (1398-1444). Cardinal (1426), papal legate, President of the Council, mentor and friend of Piccolomini. Little did Piccolomini know that one day he himself would succeed him as Cardinal of Santa Sabina

² "reductio": i.e. bringing back the Hussites to the fold of the Roman Catholic Church

³ The Hussites were reconciled with the Church at the Council of Basel through the agency of Cardinal Cesarini. The agreement between the Hussites and the council was called the Hussite Compacts. Later in his career, Piccolomini, who had direct knowledge of the Hussites from a visit to Bohemia, defended confirming the agreement (see oration "*Res Bohemicas*" [28], 1455), but as a pope he definitively abrogated it (cf. oration "*Superioribus diebus*" [66], 1462)

⁴ Juan Cervantes (1380/1382-1453): created cardinal by Pope Martin V in 1426. On 27 March 1436, Cardinal Cervantes returned to Basel. In 1436, Piccolomini became his private secretary, and later they became colleagues and friends

⁵ It is uncertain what Piccolomini means by "preside" (praesides) in this context. Cardinal Cervantes was in Basel as the pope's representative, and seemingly also at the same time representing the King of Castile. However, royal ambassadors did not, as such, preside over the council

⁶ Juan II of Castile (1405-1454): King of Castile from 1406 to his death

⁷ I.e. against the Moorish Kingdoms in the South of Spain

⁸ Alvaro de Isorno: Bishop of Cuenca

⁹ Alfonso García de Santa Maria (1384-1456): Archbishop of Burgos (1435)

[84] At te, praestantissime pater cardinalis Arelatensis¹, tanto minus oravero, quanto {12v} magis ad rem ipsam te video animatum. Quod si umquam invigilasti, si semper constans firmusque fuisti, si semper concilii profectum desiderasti, hic aures, hic mentem² arrige: nunc tua probitas, nunc tua diligentia pateat. Idcirco namque cardinales³ vocamini, quod⁴ quasi cardines ecclesiam sustinetis.

[85] Sic vos alios⁵ praelatos oro atque obsecro⁶. Sic vos omnes precor ecclesiasticos: aspicite quae fidei⁷, quae justitiae sunt, abjicite⁸ passiones, regem illum Christianissimum imitemini, qui nulla victus⁹ cupiditate ibi locum eligi¹⁰ rogat, ubi geri negotium melius existimetis¹¹, ubi quae fidei et quae concordiae sunt valeant terminari. Quae secundum alios alibi, secundum me tutius in Papia conficiantur¹². Nec enim video, quo¹³ commodius, aut liberius esse possitis. Itur namque ad principem benignum et vestri¹⁴ coetus amantissimum, qui fraudes non modo non¹⁵ instruit¹⁶, sed prorsus ignorat, cujus animus nihil nisi altum ac magnificum cogitat. Consultius est principi se nobili et nihil praeter honorem cupienti committere quam vulgo¹⁷, quod est plerumque ingenio¹⁸ mobili¹⁹, seditiosum atque discordiosum²⁰, cupidum novarum rerum, quieti et²¹ otio adversum, de quo Virgilius²²:

Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus.

¹ Cardinalis Arelatensis *in marg.* A, K

² mente F

³ Cardinales quare *in marg.* C, D, G

⁴ quia MA

⁵ **aliosque H**

⁶ atque obsecro: atque obtestor G; ac obtestor MA

⁷ et *add.* C

⁸ sunt abjicite : abicitae sunt V

⁹ vobis K

¹⁰ *omit.* B, E

¹¹ **estimetis H, K**; extimetis V

¹² conficiatur K

¹³ **in loco add. H, V**

¹⁴ nostri V

¹⁵ *omit.* A, B, C, E, F [non *interlin.* D] [*example of D correcting A*]

¹⁶ instituit V

¹⁷ De vulgo *in marg.* A

¹⁸ inge... [*sic!*] V

¹⁹ nobili E

²⁰ atque discordiosum *omit.* B, E

²¹ *omit.* F

²² Virgilius *in marg.* A, K

[84] And you, eminent Father, Cardinal of Arles¹: I need not appeal to you as I see how deeply you are engaged in this whole matter.² Be vigilant, constant and firm, and devoted to the council as you have always been: now is the time for you to listen carefully, now you must show your integrity and diligence! For the reason that you cardinals are called Cardinals is that you are the 'Cardines' (hinges) of the Church.

[85] In the same way, I implore and beseech all you other prelates and clergymen³: support Faith and justice, throw off passions, and imitate the Most Christian King.⁴ For this king is not a victim to self-interest, but wants us to choose the location where you think the council can best be held⁵ and where the matter of Faith and concord can be successfully concluded. Others may think differently, but I believe that Pavia is the safest place for this. I really do not see where you could stay in greater comfort and independence, for you would be going to a benevolent prince who fully supports your cause. He does not order others to engage in any deceit, and he himself is entirely without such.⁶ He will only contemplate that which is noble and generous. It is safer to entrust yourselves to a noble prince who desires only what is honourable than to the common people which is mostly unstable, seditious, quarrelsome, eager for political change, and opposed to peace and quiet.⁷ As Virgil⁸ says:

*The wavering crowd is torn into opposing factions.*⁹

¹ Louis Alleman (ca. 1390-1450): Cardinal (1426). Leader of the French party at the council and virulently antipapal

² Appealing directly to the French cardinal in favour of Pavia would not only be futile, but also insolent as the cardinal would certainly want to move the council to France. Piccolomini would later become his friend, only to disappoint him when later again he switched to the papal party

³ Piccolomini seemingly did not appeal to the numerous non-clerical elements of the council to which he himself belonged (though he was later quite critical of the practice of incorporating uneducated laymen, e.g. members of prelates' retinues, into the council for the purpose of bolstering the number of delegates in general and of followers of the individual prelates in particular)

⁴ Charles VII, King of France

⁵ At the risk of further aggravating the French party and the Cardinal of Arles, Piccolomini persists in the hypocritical fiction that the French King is truly neutral and does not desire the council to go to a French city

⁶ Here Piccolomini stretches the credulity of the assembly quite unreasonably: the Duke of Milan was well-known as a scheming, deceitful prince

⁷ Again Piccolomini expresses his contempt of democracy and the common people

⁸ Publius Vergilius Maro [AKA Virgil or Vergil] (70-19 BC): Roman poet

⁹ Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.39

[86] Et cuius vobis fides, quam ipsius principis potest esse securior? Noti sunt vobis mores ejus, neque¹ concipere metum potestis aliquem. Non hic vindictae exactor, non contumeliae illator, non injuriae prosecutor², cuius rei nemo magis didicit oblivisci, qui cum saepe ulcisci potuerit, vindictam tamen semper abhorruit. Hic animum {147r} vincere, iram cohibere, victoriam temperare, adversariosque nobilitate, ingenio et virtute praestantes non modo extollere jacentes, sed etiam amplificare eorum pristinam dignitatem exemplo Caesaris consuevit. Huc ergo ite, huc animos intendite³. Securitatem utilitatemque vestram agnoscite⁴, discrimina non rerum solum, sed personarum etiam⁵ evadite: Accedite⁶ hunc⁷ qui semper vobis benefecit; ostendite gratitudinem et memoriam beneficiorum.

[87] Sicubi tamen utilius aut melius esse potestis, vestri iudicii sit: nihil erit duci molestum, si bene succedere intellexerit, eumque quocumque pergitis oboedientem habebitis. Vestrum tamen est⁸ cavere, ne periculosum eligentes locum et jurisjurandi neglectores suscepti videamini, et - qua nunc apud omnes estis - clarissimam famam amittatis, quo bono nihil est humano generi aut acceptabilius a superis⁹ aut praestantius concessum, cuius contemptores haud scio utrum numero sint habendi aliquo, siquidem famae contemptor suae ab eo prodigus appellatur¹⁰, quem non Apollinis oraculum, sed sacrae litterae¹¹ judicant sapientem. Finis¹².

¹ nec F

² **persecutor** H

³ et *add.* V

⁴ cognoscite G, MA

⁵ *omit.* K

⁶ ad *add. in marg.* C

⁷ huc MA

⁸ tamen est : est tamen K

⁹ aut acceptabilius a superis : **a superis acceptabilis** H, V

¹⁰ appellatus V

¹¹ Apollinis oraculum, Salomon *in marg.* A, K

¹² *omit.* B, D, E, MA

6.4. Final exhortation

[86] And whom can you trust more than this prince? You know his character and cannot possibly fear him. He does not like to pursue vendettas, to raise quarrels, or to repay insults. All such he has learnt, more than any other, to ignore. He could often have sought revenge, but he has always abhorred it. He has perfect self-control, curbs his anger, and is temperate in victory. And when noble, brilliant, and courageous adversaries were lying prostrate and beaten before him, he – after Caesar's example - not only lifted them up again, but he even raised them above their former position. Therefore, consider Pavia; go there! Recognize where your security and advantage lie. Avoid the risks not only to your possessions, but also to your very persons. Go to him who always favoured you. Show your gratitude and remember his favours towards you.

[87] However, it is only you yourselves who can make the best and most advantageous choice. The duke will accept anything if he sees that you are successful. Wherever you want to go, he will accept it. So, it is up to you not to choose an unsafe location, not to seem to fail your oath, and not to lose the excellent reputation which you now enjoy everywhere. For from Heaven mankind receives nothing more agreeable and admirable than an excellent reputation.¹ I honestly think there must very few, if any, who despise such a reputation! But should there be one, he will surely be called profligate by the One who is called wise – not by the oracle of Apollo,² but by the Sacred Scriptures themselves.³

¹ The theme of glory and fame was as dear to the humanists as it was to Antiquity, cf. the introduction to Piccolomini's "autobiography", i.e. his famous *Commentarii*

² Apollo: major God in Roman mythology

³ I.e. God (or Solomon cf. the margin note in A)

Appendix A: Introduction to the oration from mss. BAV / Chis. J.VII.251 (H) and Bibl. Marciana / Lat. XI. 77 (V)

Oratio super electione loci pro futuro concilio ad reducendos Graecos habita Basileae in congregatione generali per¹ dominum Eneam Silvium Senensem XV kalendas Novembris MCCCCXXXVI

[88] {137r} Magnae saepe res atque arduae, patres reverendissimi, in hoc sacro concilio versatae terminataeque sunt, nulla tamen umquam vel major vel periculosior ea fuit, de qua nunc consultatio vertitur. Non enim agitur modo de supplicationibus aut de principibus² invicem conciliandis aut de coercenda nonnullorum contumacia³ clericorum, sed de augmento fidei, de reductione Graecorum, de infinitarum paene animarum recuperatione, quarum consummatio rerum magnum fructum, magnam gloriam sit allatura, omissio vero non solum vos, sed totam Latinam ecclesiam obscura fama denigret. Et cum hujus rei causa⁴ transferendum esse concilium affirmetis, sicuti mea fert opinio, pars non minima totius erit absoluta negotii, si tutum locum et rebus aptum conficiendis⁵ amplectemini⁶.

¹ elegantem et ornatum virum *add.* V

² principatibus V

³ contumelia V

⁴ *omit.* V

⁵ conficiundis V

⁶ amplectemur V

Oration on the choice of venue for the future Council of Union with the Greeks, held in Basel, in a General Congregation, by Enea Silvio of Siena, on 17 October 1436

[88] Reverend Fathers, often have great and difficult matters been treated and concluded in this Holy Council, but none has been greater and more risky than the one we are debating today. For it does not concern petitions, nor the reconciliation of princes, nor curbing the defiance of some or other cleric, but it is about the advancement of the Faith, about reunion with the Greeks, and about the recovery of an almost infinite number of souls. Success in these matters will bring great results and great glory, whereas failure will give not only us, but also the whole Latin Church a bad reputation. Since you declare that the reason for all this is the matter of the relocation of the council, the determining factor in the happy outcome of this matter will be - I think - to agree on a place that is safe and advantageous for the conduct of your affairs.

[89] Quapropter nihil modo magis vellem quam animos omnium in consulendo liberos fore, neque delicto neque libidini obnoxios, ut sine cunctatione locum eligeretis, qui nobis usui securitatis foret, sicque ordinaretis, ut orientali ecclesiae conventiones sine periculo occidentalis servare liceret. In qua re dum saepius ipse considero, dumque rei magnitudinem mecum ipse reputo¹, ex usu fore considero, si quam multi de re hac² sermonem haberent locorumque vobis³ nominatorum conditiones planius aperirent, quibus ex rebus nihil absurdum putavi, si me quoque quamvis indignum ex vestra⁴ contione loquentem audiretis, de nullo alio quam de Papiensi loco verba facientem nullumque omnino injuria lacessentem, nusquam enim, ut puto, fines modestiae⁵ sum egressurus⁶, quamquam veritatis inveniendae causa licitum mihi videatur nonnullis posse contradicere, qui ante dixissent⁷. *Haec est enim*, ut scitis dicere Ciceronem, *vetus et Socratica ratio, contra alterius opinionem disserendi*. Nam ita facillime quod verisimillimum esset inveniri posse, Socrates arbitrabatur. Sed vobis magis oboediendum existimavi⁸ quam Socrati.

¹ repeto V

² omit. V

³ nobis V

⁴ nostra V

⁵ corr. ex molestiae H; molestiae V

⁶ aggressurus V

⁷ docuissent V

⁸ extimavi V

[89] Therefore, I desire nothing more than that, in this discussion, all minds should be free and not influenced by sin or passion, so that you may without hesitation choose a location that will be advantageous and safe for us, and that you may arrange matters in a way that makes it possible to have agreements with the Eastern Church without detriment to the Western Church. I often think on this matter and ponder its importance, and I consider it to be useful that many should speak and describe more clearly the condition of the venues proposed to you. Therefore I find it reasonable that you should also hear me, though unworthy, speak in your assembly: I shall talk only about the location of Pavia, without insulting anybody else and without transgressing the boundaries of propriety¹ – though, for the sake of finding the truth I consider it legitimate to contradict some of those who have spoken before. For as you know, Cicero states that *this is the old Socratic method of arguing against your adversary's position; for Socrates thought that in this way the probable truth was most readily discovered.*² But, of course, I owe greater obedience to you than to Socrates.

¹ As had Isidoro da Rosate some days before, speaking ill of the pope, cf. Introduction

² Cf. Cicero: *Tusculanae disputationes*, 1.4.8

[90] Et licet pater clarissimus, episcopus Albiganensis, vir non solum genere sed animi virtute nobilissimus, qui de rebus arduis se locuturum quamvis gravi confectum valetudine ipse pedibus suis venire non posset, portari se fecit, praestantissimo illi Romano Appio Claudio similem, licet etiam vir consultissimus, dominus Christoforus de Vellate, ducales oratores, licet etiam Isidorus, orator vester diligentissimus, et veri audacissimus explicator, multa de illo Papiensi loco multaque de illo victoriosissimo Mediolanensium duce non minus vere quam eleganter explicaverint¹, tot tamen illius loci commoditates sunt, tot principis erga vos beneficia, ut nihil mirandum sit, si mihi quoque post se dicendi locum reliquerunt. Namque etsi qui post me velint dicere, patentem eis campum materiamque relinquo.

[91] Vos tamen, patres optimi, ne me – oro - contemnate, si privatus {137v} abjectusque homuncio fuerim². Expedit enim in rebus arduis non auctorem³ spectare, sed rationem, neque ita facere decet⁴, quemadmodum de Pythagoricis accepimus, quos ferunt siquid affirmarent in disputando, cum ex his quaereretur, quare ita esset, respondere solitos “Ipse dixit” – ipse autem erat Pythagoras - me namque si non auctoritas, at saltem ratio facit audiendum, nihil enim me dicturum censeo, quod non ex ratione consistat, quare, si placet, si ne⁵ consonum est ea audire, quae commoda vestra concernunt, sinite ut ea, quae cogitavi, proferantur⁶ in medium ut melius unicuique deliberandi praebeant⁷ facultatem, quae omnia iudicio vestro relinquo et vestro mando examini, ut siquid boni verique afferro, amplectamini, siquid mali falsique est, id totum respuatis.

¹ explicaverit V

² fuero V

³ auctoritatem V

⁴ dicet V

⁵ si ne : sive V

⁶ corr. ex scripsi legantur H; cogitavi proferantur : scripsi legantur V

⁷ praebeat V

[90] Until now, three men have said much, both truthfully and elegantly, about the venue of Pavia and about the victorious Duke of Milan. They were the ducal ambassadors, one the illustrious Father, the Bishop of Albenga, a man distinguished not only by his family, but also by his virtue of mind (who, having to speak about grave matters and being too ill to walk, had himself carried to this place, like the eminent Roman, Appius Claudius), and the other Christophoro da Velate, a very able man. The third one was Isidoro, your own very diligent orator and a bold proponent of truth. Still I think that so many are the advantages of that place¹ and so many the favours shown to you by the prince that it is not strange at all if those speakers left something for me to say, too. And if others want to speak after me, I also leave them an open field and matter for discourse.

[91] But you, good Fathers, should not despise me, even though I am a private, insignificant person. For in grave matters one should not look to the speaker, but to the argument. And you should not do as we hear that the Pythagoreans did: if they had made a statement during a disputation and were asked why it was so, they used to reply: "He said so,"² "He" being Pythagoras. For I should be heard not because of my authority, but because of my reasoning. I do believe that I shall not be saying anything contrary to reason. Therefore, even if you wish to hear something that is to your advantage, please allow me to bring forward my thoughts on the matter and let them provide an opportunity for everybody to join the discussion. But my whole contribution I leave to your judgment and submit for your consideration: if what I say is good and true, then please accept it; and if it is bad and false, then reject it all.

¹ I.e. Pavia

² Cicero: *De natura deorum*, 1.5.10

Appendix B: Introduction to the oration from the manuscript Bibl. Ambrosiana / M.44 Sup

Aeneae Sylvii Piccolominei Oratio ad Patres Concilii Basiliensis¹

[92] {102r} Etsi numquam ante, patres reverendissimi, vestra me contio loquentem audiverit, nihil est tamen quod petitiunculae meae negetis assensum. Rebus namque feliciter succedentibus vana penitus erat oratio. Nunc vero cum translationem concilii Graecorumque reductionem in medium video revolutam variasque diverse trahentes aspicio voluntates, maxime timeo, ne discordia vestra magnum aliquod pariat malum. Nec enim ab Latinis solum Graeci secessere, sed cum vestro etiam concilio papa dissentit, et, quod magis abhominor, concilium inter se divisum cerno, quae sane divisio non aliunde procedat quam ex loci nominatione, quod patriae quisque suae nimis afficitur privatisque magis commodis quam publicae studet utilitati. Ob quam rem nihil modo magis vellem quam animos omnium in consulendo liberos fore neque delicto neque libidini obnoxios, ut sine cunctatione locum eligeretis, qui vobis usui ac securitati foret. Sicque ordinaretis in orientali ecclesiae conventiones sine periculo occidentalis servare liceret. In qua re dum saepius ipse considero dumque sententias nonnullorum mecum ipse reputo ex usu fore putavi, si qua ego circa rem scribens diuturnum tandem silentium interrumperem subtilique indagatione locum invenirem, qui tutior ac melior esset, ad quem cuncti sine controversia deberetis accedere. Scripsi ergo circa materiam electionis loci quantum mihi {102v} visum est oportere. Quare, si placet sive consonum est ea audire, quae commoda vestra concernunt, sinite ut haec mea scripta legantur in medium, quae melius unicuique deliberandi praebeant facultatem.²

¹ In another, later hand

² Here follows a clear separation of the introduction from the main text introduced by Audivi

Oration of Enea Silvio Piccolomini to the Fathers of the Council of Basel

[92] Though this assembly has not heard me speak before, Most Reverend Fathers, you should not refuse to hear my small address. For when things were going well, my oration would have been superfluous. But seeing that the transfer of the Council and the Reunion with the Greeks are now under discussion, and noting that various interests¹ are pulling you in different directions, I fear exceedingly that your disagreement will cause some great evil. For not only have the Greeks withdrawn from the Latins,² but the pope is in open conflict with your council, and - what I greatly abhor - the council is even divided internally. This conflict is caused by the choice of the future venue of the council, since everyone excessively favours his own country and is more concerned about private advantages than the public good.

Therefore, I desire nothing more than that in this deliberation all minds should be free and not influenced by sin or passion so that you may without hesitation choose a location that will be advantageous and safe for you, and thus make it possible for you to come to an agreement with the Eastern Church that is not detrimental to the Western. I often think on this matter and, reflecting on the judgments of many others, I considered that it would be useful to write on it and, breaking my long silence, through careful examination determine a place that is safer and better and where you may all go without discord. I have therefore written about the matter of choosing a venue, as much as it has seemed needful to me. Therefore, if it pleases you and is agreeable to hear what is to your own advantage, then allow me to read to you what I have written and which may provide everybody with a better basis for discussion.

¹ "voluntates"

² I.e. from union with the Latin Church

Appendix C: Textual history of the “*Audivi*”

The collation of the various texts of the oration support the hypothesis that there are at least three versions of the text:

An Early Version with a foreword beginning with the words “*Magnae saepe res*” (H, V).

A Middle Version with a foreword beginning with the words “*Etsi numquam*” (K).

And a Final Version forming part of the Collected Orations of Pope Pius II, prepared under his direct supervision, as pope, in 1462, and beginning with the word “*Audivi*” (the seven other manuscripts).

There may, of course, be other versions, not extant or known, and even an earlier one than the “*Magnae saepe res*”.¹

Apart from the introduction, the differences between the three versions of the “*Audivi*” are mostly differences of style (e.g. vocabulary and word order) and not of substance. A notable instance of a difference in substance is the case of ultores vs. occultores and cultores, see below.

The theoretical question may be raised if the “*Magnae saepe res*” version and the “*Etsi numquam*” version could conceivably be later than the “*Audivi*” version prepared at the middle of Pius’ pontificate. Apart from features of the textual transmission, both external and internal features point to “*Magnae saepe res*” being the earlier version.

Firstly, it is difficult to believe that the old and sick pope would, shortly after having supervised the first edition of his collected orations, have written another version of the first oration, adding a new introduction. Secondly, if the “*Magnae saepe res*” was the later version, it is curious that it was not at all picked up in the later manuscript editions of the anthology.² Thirdly, the title of the “*Magnae saepe res*” reflects Piccolomini’s early status (“per dominum Eneam Silvium Senensem...”). If it is a reedited version of the “*Audivi*”, it seems strange that the title of the “*Audivi*” reflecting Pius’ papal status would have been dropped. Fourthly, there are some redundancies between the introduction to the “*Magnae saepe res*” and the main text which would be difficult to explain if they had been added to a version dated subsequently to the already thoroughly edited version prepared for the Collected Orations. And fifthly, in the introduction to

¹ Certain features of the “*Magnae saepe res*”, like repetition of phrases in the introduction and the main text, point to it being an unfinished revision of the original text (e.g. the duplicated compliment to the Bishop of Albenga (*vir non solum genere sed animi virtute nobilissimus*, sect. 72 and 90)

² Cf. *Collected Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II*, ch. 2.5.1

the *"Magnae saepe res"* there is mention of the episode of the Bishop of Albenga being carried into the assembly which might be meaningful in the actual context of the oration, but less so in an edition done almost thirty years later.

The matter has yet to be discussed by scholars. However, a reasonable working hypothesis is that the *"Magnae saepe res"* is or is close to the original version of the oration as held by Piccolomini in Basel, whereas the *"Audiui"* is the final edition.

Apart from the introduction, the one substantial difference between the earlier versions and the final version of the *"Audiui"* concerns the expression **"troianae ruinae ultores"**, used in the *"Magnae saepe res"* and the *"Etsi numquam"*.

Chisianus 284 (A), the oldest manuscript containing the Collected Orations and produced under Pius' direct supervision, has the expression **"troianae ruinae occultores"**, cf. sect. 21.¹ The somewhat later manuscripts, Vaticanus Latinus 1788 and the Chisianus 286, associated with the pope's humanist protégé, Cardinal Piccolomini Ammanati, have **"troianae ruinae ultores"**, while the even later Chisianus 211, associated with the Cardinal Nephew, Francesco Piccolomini Todeschini, has **"troianae ruinae cultores"**.

These variants do not seem to be due to scribal errors, but to intentional editing of the text. Both **occultores** and **cultores ruinae trojanae** are somewhat artificial, whereas **ultores ruinae trojanae** is a well-known Renaissance topos connected with the Turks. Since in 1436 Piccolomini thought that the Turks were descended from or related to the Trojans, he might quite naturally have used the term **ultores ruinae trojanae** about the Turks. This term with its implications of Turkish relatedness to the Trojans he quite emphatically rejected later when he read had Aethicus and Otto von Freising and - under the impression of the Turkish expansion into Europe and the fall of Constantinople - developed the conception of the Turks as a barbaric people descending from those proto-barbarians, the Scythians. And when, as pope, he made this thesis central to his campaign for a crusade against the Turks, it became rather awkward for him to publish an edition of his orations where, in his very first oration, he called the Turks the avengers of Troy, implying that they were the descendants of the Trojans. So, it may reasonably be hypothesized that he had **occ-**added to **ultores**, making the Turks the "occultores" instead of the "ultores" of the destruction of Troy, meaning more or less that they would hide or cover up that destruction.

In the manuscripts associated with the humanist Cardinal Ammanati (Vat. Lat. 1788 and Chis. 286) the occultores was changed back to **ultores**, as being the more correct phrase.

¹ Possibly later corrected to "cultores"

In the manuscript associated with the Pope's nephew, Cardinal Todeschini-Piccolomini (Chis. 211), the **occultores** was changed to **cultores**, meaning "those who cultivate the [former,] ruined lands of the Trojans".

This issue will have to be examined further, but it seems a defensible position that here we have a rare example of an earlier speech being modified to fit the later development of Piccolomini's thought and the political situation of his pontificate.