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Oration “Quamvis grandes materias” by Enea Silvio Piccolomini (10 December 1450, Naples). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. Final Version. 2024.(Orations of Pope Pius II; 14)

Michael Cotta-Schønberg

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Oration “*Quamvis grandes materias*” by Enea Silvio Piccolomini (10 December 1450, Naples). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg

(Collected Orations of Pope Pius II, 14)

Final Version

2024

Abstract

In October 1450, Bishop Enea Silvio Piccolomini, a high-ranking imperial diplomat and Bishop of Trieste, was sent by Emperor Friederich III to the Court of Naples. His mission was to negotiate the contract of marriage between the emperor and Princess Leonora of Portugal and sister of the King of Portugal, and niece of King Alfonso V of Aragon and Sicily. His oration, in the genre of the classical *epithalamium*, i.e., wedding oration, revived by the Italian Renaissance humanists, praised the two royal personages and their respective houses. Piccolomini also presented a view of women remarkable for its opposition to traditional misogynist views. And, finally, he praised marriage for its dignity as a God-given institution, for its utility for society and for the spouses themselves, and for its joys, including the comfort and love of one's wife, the delights of women, and - remarkably - the pleasures of sex.

Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Kaiser Friedrich III (Habsburg); Emperor Frederick III (Habsburg); King Alfonso V Aragon; Empress Leonora of Portugal; Empress Eleonora of Portugal; Princely marriages; History of sexuality; History of women; Misogyny; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetoric; 1450; 15th century; Wedding orations; Epithalamium; Epithalamia; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II

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Table of contents

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context
2. Themes
 - 2.1. Praise of the two royal houses
 - 2.2. Women
 - 2.3. Marriage
 - 2.4. Sexuality
3. Date, place, audience, and format
4. Text
 - 4.1. Manuscripts
 - 4.2. Editions
 - 4.3. Present edition
5. Sources
6. Bibliography
7. Sigla and abbreviations

II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

1. Introduction [1-2]
2. Against misogyny [3-8]
 - 2.1. Marriage is a perfect union of male and female [3]
 - 2.2. Traditional negative views on women [4]
 - 2.3. Arguments against the traditional view [5-7]
3. Marriage [8-13]
 - 3.1. Dignity of marriage [9]
 - 3.2. Benefits of marriage [9-10]
 - 3.3. Joys of marriage [12-13]
4. The royal spouses [14-24]
 - 4.1. Leonora [15-19]
 - 4.2. Friedrich [20-24]
5. Conclusion [25]
6. Verses in praise of King Alfonso

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context¹

The first decade of the reign of Friedrich III had been passed in extinguishing one conflict after another. By 1450, some of the conflicts had been solved, i.e., the schism in the Church, the Swiss problem, and the Hungarian troubles, and the family problems were somewhat in abeyance.²

The time had come to become crowned in Rome and to marry. Both projects were politically important in terms of the legitimacy and stability of the dynasty, but at the same time, they naturally fulfilled intense, personal desires.

The marriage project was initiated in 1449 when Friedrich sent envoys to Portugal to examine the possibilities for a matrimonial alliance with the House of Portugal, closely related to the houses of Castile, Aragon, England, and Burgundy, and to report on the beauty of the king's sister, Princess Leonora.

The reports were satisfactory, and it was agreed that the negotiations and the conclusion of the marriage contract should take place under the aegis of Leonora's uncle, Alfonso V the Magnanimous, powerful and much admired King of Aragon and Sicily, who in 1442 had ousted the House of Anjou from the Kingdom of Sicily (Naples) and set up his own court in Naples.

The emperor's expert on Italian affairs, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Trieste, was recalled from a brief period of semi-retirement in Trieste³ and sent to Italy with two missions: one to negotiate the wedding contract in Naples and the other to obtain an agreement with the pope concerning the emperor's coronation in Rome. Piccolomini would also have to obtain guarantees of the emperor's safety from those territories he would be passing through, since he would not be arriving at the head of an army in order to assert his imperial rights in Italy.

Piccolomini arrived in Naples at the end of October 1450. The negotiations lasted for 40 days and were concluded successfully on 10 December 1450, whereupon a religious ceremony of thanksgiving was held. On this occasion, Bishop Piccolomini gave the oration "*Quamvis grandes materias*".

¹ CO, I, 20 (Meserve, I, pp. 94-96); HA / 1. version (Knödler, I, p. 88); Ady, p. 112; Boulting, pp. 184-185; D'Elia; Koller, p. 111, 116-118; Mitchell, pp. 107-108; Papparelli, pp. 131-133; Reinhardt, p. 149; Stolf, p. 243; Voigt, III, pp. 17-18

² Already in his *Pentalogus* of 1443, Piccolomini has given advi-

ce to the emperor on his choice of bride, see Piccolomini: *Pentalogus* (Schingnitz, p. 130): *Tu ex uxore, quam duces, aliquam domum illustrem tibi conciliabis potentiorque ... fies*

³ This retirement had actually been interrupted in 1449 when the emperor sent Piccolomini on the third imperial mission to

Milan to persuade the Milanese to accept direct imperial rule after the death of the last Visconti duke, see the introduction to Piccolomini's oration "*Est mihi non parum*" [13]

No letters from Piccolomini mention this affair. In his *Historia Austriacalis* / 1st version (1453), Piccolomini wrote that the marriage contract was signed in the presence of King Alfonso, Cardinal LeJeune, the papal legate, the ambassadors from Venice, Florence, Milan, and other Italian states, the Duke of Cleve, and many other nobles, but he did not mention the oration itself.¹

In his *Commentarii* he did mention it, though:

*... in the Jubilee year [1450] the emperor recalled him and sent him together with Gregor Volckenstorf and Michael Pfullendorf on an embassy to King Alfonso of Aragon and Sicily. Their orders were to arrange the marriage between the emperor and the king of Portugal's sister, Leonora. The Portuguese ambassadors were already gathered at Naples, and after 40 days of negotiation, the matter was concluded. Aeneas then delivered an oration in the hall of the Castelnuovo at Naples in the presence of the king, the cardinal of Amiens (who was the apostolic legate), the dukes of Clèves, Calabria, Suessa and Silesia and a great number of prelates and noblemen. The speech treated the nobility and virtues of the contracting parties; afterwards many had copies made of it for themselves.*²

In his biography of the pope, Gianantonio Campano briefly wrote: *Soon he undertook another mission: he was sent to Naples where he concluded the royal marriage between Leonora, the sister of the King of Lusitania, niece of Alfonso, and Friedrich.*³

And in his biography, Bartolomeo Platina, just as briefly wrote: *So, Enea went to Naples where he negotiated, with Alfonso, the marriage between Leonora, the sister of the King of Lusitania and Alfonso's own niece through his sister, and the emperor.*⁴

Though the occasion was the emperor's betrothal to Leonora of Portugal and not the wedding itself, the oration given by Bishop Piccolomini was clearly an *epithalamium*, a literary genre of wedding orations developed in classical antiquity and revived by the Italian Renaissance humanists.⁵ This

¹ HA / 1. version (Knödler, I, p. 90)

² CO, I, 20 (Meserve, I, pp. 94-95): *In anno Iubilaei revocatus ad caesarem cum Gregorio de Populosa et Michaele de Plena Villa, Alfonso regem Aragonum et Siciliae iussus est petere, matrimonium caesaris nomine cum Leonora, regis Portugalliae sorore, ut ibi contraheret, nam legati Portugallenses eo convenerant. Quam rem diebus quadraginta*

tractatam denique conclusissent, coram rege, cardinali morinensi, apostolico legato, Clivensi, Calabriae, Suesse, Sclesieque ducibus et magna prelatorum comitumque multitudine in curia Noui Castris neapolitani de nobilitate virtuteque contrahentium orationem habuit, quae postmodum a multis con-scripta est

³ Zimolo, p. 18: *Mox legatione altera excipiente, Neapolim mis-*

sus, auctor fuit regiae affinitatis Leonora, Lusitanorum regis sorore, Alsonsi nepte, Federico desponsata

⁴ Zimolo, p. 102: *Aeneas itaque Neapolim profectus, cum Alfonso egit ut Leonora, Lusitaniae regis soror ac ipsius ex sorore neptis, Caesari in uxorem collocaretur*

⁵ One of the humanists who wrote a wedding oration is Poggio Bracciolini. His *Oratio in laudem*

genre has been studied by Anthony F. D'Elia who, in the introduction to his *The Renaissance of Marriage in Fifteenth-Century Italy*¹, writes:

In classical antiquity intellectuals debated about whether the philosopher should marry. Whereas Stoics argued that the philosopher should marry since this was living according to nature, the Cynics condemned marriage as a distraction from philosophy. Baptizing the philosopher, the early Christians argued that holiness and marriage were incompatible – celibacy was the best life. The positive reevaluation of marriage and condemnation of the celibate ideal is usually first associated with Martin Luther and the Reformation. In the fifteenth century, however, Italian humanists also promoted marriage as an ideal. They reversed the Cynic commonplace notion and claimed that wives could assist in the pursuit of wisdom. They also revived the ancient wedding oration and delivered these prose epithalamia at elite weddings. In addition to letters and dialogues, humanists used this revived medium to convey a more positive view of marriage and to reach a broader audience.

The oration shows that Piccolomini was quite familiar with the developments in humanist literature and that he knew of this new oratorical genre, which was cultivated by a number of Italian humanists, including Leonardo Bruni, whom he much admired, Francesco Filelfo, with whom he had some kind of amical relationship, and his Sieneese friend Agostino Dati.

The stay in Naples was quite important for Piccolomini since it gave him the opportunity to establish friendly relations with King Alfonso and his humanist court, something that was to become greatly useful to him later in his career.

During his voyage, Piccolomini received the news that Pope Nicolaus V, by a bull dated 23 September 1450, had transferred him from the See of Trieste to the See of Siena, where he made a triumphal entry on 12 January 1451.²

matrimonii of ca. 1458 (Poggio Bracciolini: *Opera*, II, pp. 907-915), written after Galeotto Manfredi had sent him a collection of wedding orations (p. 905), may to some extent have been inspired by Piccolomini's "*Quamvis grandes materias*" from eight years before. Poggio's oration is divided into sections on

the *vetustas*, *dignitas*, and *utilitas* of matrimony, all major themes of Piccolomini's oration. Moreover, Poggio – like Piccolomini had done – praises the authority of antiquity, has God as the author of the marriage institution, and he uses the same quote from Gellius on Metellus' conception of marriage. These themes may

have been commonplaces of humanist marriage oratory, but Poggio did consider Piccolomini to be a *vir eloquentia praeclarus* (op. cit., p. 792) and might conceivably have known and used his orations

¹ D'Elia: *The Renaissance*, p. 1

² Zimolo, p. 19, n. 1

2. Themes

The oration has three themes:

- Praise of the royal houses of the spouses
- Praise of women
- Praise of marriage

All three themes belong to the epithalamium genre as revived by the Italian Renaissance humanists.

To these may be added the subtheme of sexuality, which forms part of the theme of marriage.

2.1. Praise of the two royal houses

Piccolomini uses the rhetorical ploy of letting Leonora and Friedrich personally describe the glory of their respective houses. He had used a similar ploy in his oration "*Audivi*" [1] of 1436, where he let the Church speak,¹ and in his oration "*Si putarem*" [5] of 1444,² where he let God Himself speak, in a hearing before the imperial court where God naturally supported the cause defended by Piccolomini!

The praise of the two royal houses was quite conventional, not lacking in extravagance, though supported by historical fact.³

2.2. Women

Much more interesting was the praise of women, presented by Piccolomini as a compliment to the future empress and possibly also to Lucrezia d'Alagno, with whom King Alphonso was quite infatuated and who had almost queenly status at his court, while the queen herself resided in Spain.

Other Renaissance humanists had praised women, like Boccaccio, but in Boccaccio's case the praise went to extraordinary women whose virtue almost made them men.⁴ In the preface to his *De mulieribus claris* (*On Famous Women*), he wrote:

¹ Oration "*Audivi*" [1], sect. 18

² Oration "*Si putarem*" [5], sect. 21-2

³ D'Elia: *Renaissance*, p. 52:
Wedding orations functioned as

panegyrics for rulers and elites in Italian courts

⁴ Boccaccio, p. 9

*If we grant that men deserve praise whenever they perform great deeds with the strength bestowed upon them, how much more should women be extolled – almost all of whom are endowed by nature with soft, frail bodies and sluggish minds – when they take on a manly spirit, show remarkable intelligence and bravery, and dare to execute deeds that would be extremely difficult even for men.*¹

In other words, women are by nature inferior to men, and the best ones of them are those who have or develop masculine qualities. Boccaccio's editor/translator, Virginia Brown, has this comment:

*It should be remembered, however, that this condescending manner of praising with faint damns is characteristic of the cultural legacy inherited by Boccaccio from Antiquity and the Middle Ages. If such attitudes are Boccaccio's they are also attitudes common to the men of his time and education. In Boccaccio's defence it may be said that in certain respects he succeeds in escaping the prejudices of his sex and his sources. In general, he is much more expansive than his sources in praising women's intellectual powers or their literary accomplishments or their moral virtues or their artistic creations.*²

Piccolomini echoed this conception when, in his *De Europa* from 1458, he wrote about queen Margaret the I of Denmark and Norway and her conflict with King Albrecht of Sweden in 1389:

*Albert felt contempt for the government of his female neighbour and began to provoke war with Denmark and Norway. Margaret mustered her troops and came to meet him, and on a wide open plain they fought a battle which made it seem as if she had donned the spirit of a man and her enemy that of a woman*³. *Defeated, taken prisoner, and led in a triumphal procession, Albert lost his kingdom.*⁴

In general, Piccolomini undoubtedly shared a cultural conception of women as the weaker sex, dependent on men. In his first oration, the "Audivi" [1] from 1436, he quoted Homer, saying that *silence makes a woman beautiful, but this does not befit a man*.⁵ And in the moral dissertation/oration "Non est apud me dubium" [6], written in 1445 or 1446, some months before

¹ Boccaccio, p. 6

² Boccaccio, p. xix

³ *tamquam ipsa viri, hostis feminae animum induisset*, cf. Piccolomini: *De Europa*, 33 (Opera omnia, p. 406). This is probably an indirect quote from Cicero, e.g. *De officiis*, 1, 61: *vos enim juvenes geritis muliebrem, illa virgo viri*

⁴ Piccolomini: *De Europa*, 33 (Brown, pp. 168-169)

⁵ This is a direct quote from Leonardi Bruni: *De Militia*, 1422, p. 384: *Mulieri 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: *Gynaíksi kósmon è sigé phèrei*. St. Paul alludes to this passage in 1. Corinthians 14, 34. Also quoted by Aristotle, in *Politica*

Piccolomini became a priest, he said that men were the superiors of women, quoting the Bible in support:

It only remains to say something about women: they have their husbands as superiors. Therefore, listen, good women, for this part concerns you closely: be submissive to your husbands; do not oppose their demands; avoid disagreements, quarrels, and disputes. For thus writes Paul to the Colossians: Wives, be subject to your husbands, as it behoveth in the Lord. When he says 'in the Lord', he banishes all that is disgraceful. And again he says to the Corinthians: A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband dies, she is at liberty from the law of the husband. And again to Timothy: But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to use authority over the man: but to be in silence. [Sect. 119]

And later, in the same oration:

Concerning wives, my command to you is the same as Paul's to the Ephesians: Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church and delivered himself up for it. This is a very important saying, beloved, for although it is proper that your wives be subject to you, it is not right for you to rage and be violent against them, but, as Paul commands, you ought to love them as your own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

And if your wife is shrewish, garrulous, and headstrong, you should not drive her away, but rather imitate Socrates. When he was asked by his friends to drive his quarrelsome wife, Xantippe, from his home, he replied: No, at home I learn how to behave in public. For as I suffer and learn to tolerate such a woman at home, I practice how better to bear up with other people's boisterous aggressiveness and abuse in public. [Sect. 135]

And later again, with remarkable insistence upon the sexual equality (or mutual superiority) of the spouses:

Moreover, beloved, Paul says to the Corinthians: Because of fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render the debt to his wife, and the wife also in like manner to the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband. And in like manner the husband also hath not power of his own body, but the wife. [Sect. 137]

These passages reflect traditional cultural and religious conceptions of women's lower status in relation to men, but they are not misogynistic.

Indeed, in this oration from 1450 - inspired by other humanists - Piccolomini directly attacked the misogynistic view of women, handed down from philosophers of Antiquity and - mistakenly, he argues - from the Bible, and from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

His argument falls into three parts:

The philosophers of Antiquity simply spoke foolishly and hypocritically, for they did not themselves follow their own philosophical advice, men were generally worse than women, and the responsibility of marital failure was usually that of the man.

As for the Bible, the negative statements on women do not concern women in general, but certain evil women. Otherwise, the Bible contains many examples of excellent women.

As for the church fathers, their negative statements usually have the purpose of exhorting men who had promised to live in chastity, e.g., monks, to beware of seductive women, and - as was the case for the Bible - do not concern women in general. And the chastity problem works both ways: celibate women, too, should beware of the temptations of the opposite sex.

In this text, Piccolomini was the spokesman for a new view of women, in complete contrast to the traditional, misogynistic view, which he actually seems to have shared in his younger days, especially concerning their fickleness and infidelity.¹

2.3. Marriage

Marriage is treated under three headings: its dignity, its benefits, and its joys.

Its dignity is derived from its having been created and honoured by God. Its benefits consist in its being the institution that keeps society and families together and ensures the preservation and propagation of the human race. And its joys are the comforts and the love offered by one's wife, the delightful children, and the sexual pleasures.

¹ See, e.g., Piccolomini's letter to Johann Vrung of 20 November 1445 (EPI, 4: 191)

2.4. Sexuality

Before he became a priest, Piccolomini had a free and uninhibited conception of sexuality, strongly at variance with church doctrine, and indeed he himself had extensive sexual experiences with women, married and unmarried, as reflected in his numerous erotic writings from that period.

A summary of his views is given in a letter he wrote to his father in Siena in 1443, at the age of 38:

Certainly, you begot no son of stone or iron, being flesh yourself. You know what kind of rooster you were. I am neither a eunuch nor a frigid. Nor am I a hypocrite, wishing to seem, rather than to be, good. I will admit my error freely because I am neither more holy than David nor wiser than Solomon. This fault is ancient and entrenched, but I do not know anyone who lacks it. It is quite clear that this plague, if it is a plague to use nature's¹ gifts – although I do not see why sexual intercourse ought to be condemned so much – is broadly compatible with nature, which does nothing wrongly. In all lovers, it arouses this appetite so that the human race will be continued.^{2 3}

In his early 40's, Piccolomini experienced a gradual waning or rather failing of his sexual powers and desires, which was on the one hand quite painful to him, but on the other hand freed him of the happy, licentious ways of his youth, made it possible for him to sincerely embrace the deeper religious sentiments of his mature years, and opened the path to priesthood and a religious career. At that time his thoughts on sexuality were dark and bitter, as witnessed in a letter to his friend Johann Vrungt in 1446:

What is fornication other than death? ... How brief is the pleasure which is experienced with women? What momentary joy! Is he not a fool enough who, for the sake of temporary and momentary things, squanders things eternal? ... Dearest brother, I am full, stuffed. Venus makes me nauseous! It is also true that my powers have declined. I am sprinkled with gray hairs; the muscles are withered; the bones, rotten; the body is shrivelled with wrinkles. Neither am I able to bring pleasure to a woman; nor is a woman able to bring pleasure to me. ... To me, by Hercules, there is too little merit in chastity. For in truth, I might declare that Venus more has run away from me than I from her. But I carry, on, by God's grace, because there remains no more appetite than power to sate it.⁴

¹ In other contexts, Piccolomini equalled nature with God in the sense that nature was God's own creation, but he did not dare to do so in the present context, since that would be to directly negate

the Church's view of sexual morality

² Reject, p. 160

³ See D'Elia: *Renaissance*, p. 103: *The future pope thought sexual*

passion to be natural and good even outside marriage

⁴ Reject, pp. 236-237

This dark mood is completely absent from his oration in Naples: one might conjecture that he now fondly remembers his former lovers as partners in delights offered by nature for the propagation of humankind, and not as the repulsive seductresses of innocent young men: *It is a great, powerful pleasure and a great, exultant joy that unites two bodies in one flesh.* [Sect. 13]

As for the sexual pleasures in marriage, a similar development seems to have taken place. In the sermon written shortly before his becoming ordained, the “*Non est apud me dubium*” [6], Piccolomini told his future parishioners that

... when the spouse cannot be continent, then the debt must be rendered. Not without reason does he say ‘debt’, which means that it cannot be avoided. But if anybody uses marriage for pleasure and not for necessity, then he certainly does not avoid fornication but actually commits it. [Sect. 137]

Sex must not be enjoyable – even between married people.

Four years afterwards, in Naples, he had returned to his youthful conception of sexuality as legitimately pleasant – though now, bishop of Holy Church, he considered it as limited to marriage¹:

But why quote human witnesses, where divine authority has spoken. The oracle of Genesis says that therefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. It is a great and powerful pleasure and a great, exultant joy that unites two bodies in one flesh. Aristophanes even thought that there was one soul in the two bodies. [Sect. 13]

3. Date, place, audience, and format

The marriage negotiations in Naples ended on 10 December 1450, and Piccolomini delivered his oration on the same day.² The place was the great hall of Castelnuovo, and the audience was King Alfonso V, the royal court, and the ambassadors present. The format was an ambassadorial address to a princely audience.

¹ D’Elia: *Renaissance*, p. 108: *Humanists, however, differ from this literature [medieval chivalric*

romances] in that the passion that they praised was not adulterous,

but can and should be found within marriage

² Voigt, III, 1, p. 17

4. Text¹

The oration “*Quamvis grandes materias*” was not included in the Collected Orations of Pius II, compiled in 1462 under his own supervision. It is not known why not, since he would probably be quite proud of having delivered an oration in the presence of King Alfonso and of his mission to Naples in the name of the emperor, and he even mentions that afterwards it was copied by many. Maybe the conception of sexuality expressed in the oration was - at that time - too positive to fit an official collection of papal orations. Or the oration may simply not have been available at the time of the preparation of the anthology; maybe Piccolomini had lost his own copy while travelling.

4.1. Manuscripts ²

The text is presently known to be extant in the following three manuscripts:

- **Firenze / Biblioteca Riccardiana**
346, ff. 10r-20v **(R)**³
- **Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**
Pal. lat. 598, ff. 154v-158v **(P)**⁴
- **Trento / Biblioteca Capitolare**
86, ff. 146r-150v **(T)**⁵

4.2. Editions

The oration was edited by M. Freher in his *Rerum germanicarum scriptores varii*, first published in 1600, and reedited a couple of times later, including 1727:

- Freher, M. (ed.): *Germanicarum scriptores varii ...* Frankfurt: Typis Wecheliani, 1602 / II, pp. 18-21 **(FR)**

¹ Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II's orations, see COR, 1: ch. 5

² Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in

COR, 11, are marked with an asterisk

³ For a description of the manuscript, see Helmrath, p. 305

⁴ BAV Dig

⁵ Cf. description of ms. in: *I manoscritti medievali di Trento e provincia*. A cura di A. Paolini. Firenze, 2010

- Freher, M. & B.G. Struvius (eds.): *Rerum germanicarum scriptores varii ...* Argentorati: Dulssecker, 1727 / II, pp. 27-31

Freher did not indicate which manuscript he had used. The later edition has some divergences from the first edition, presumably due to typesetting errors.

Fifty years later, Mansi reedited Freher's text in his collection of Pius' orations:

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759 / I, pp. 128-139

4.3. Present edition

For principles of edition (incl. orthography) and translation, see COR, 1: ch. 9-10.

Text:

The present edition is based on both the manuscripts listed and the text published by Freher in the edition of 1602, with the Palatinus as the lead text.

Pagination:

Pagination is from the Trento manuscript.

5. Sources¹

In this oration, altogether 20 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified:

Biblical: 7

Classical: 12

¹ For an analysis of Piccolomini's use of sources, COR, 1: 8

Patristic and medieval : 1

Contemporary: 0

All: 20

The classical quotations dominate heavily, which would probably have been appreciated by the humanist oriented Neapolitan Court.

Biblical sources: 7

Old Testament: 6

- Genesis: 2
- Daniel: 1
- Ecclesiastes: 1
- Proverbs: 1
- Psalms: 1

New Testament: 1

- Matthew: 1

Classical sources: 12

- Aristotle: 1
- Gellius: 2
- Horatius: 1¹
- Juvenalis: 3
- Laërtius: 2
- Plato: 1
- Valerius Maximus: 1
- Vergilius: 1

¹ Ars poetica

Patristic and medieval sources: 1

- Jeronimus: 1¹

Contemporary sources: 0

It is quite probable that Piccolomini's wedding oration, including his praise of marriage and sexual pleasure in marriage,² was inspired by other humanist cultivating this oratory genre, but to determine which authors and which orations would be the subject for further study.

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¹ Epistolae: 1

² See the studies of D'Elia

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7. Sigla and abbreviations

P = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vatican / Pal. lat. 598

R = Firenze / Biblioteca Riccardiana / 346

T = Trento / Biblioteca Capitolare / 86

FR = Freher, M. (ed.): *Germanicarum scriptores varii ...* Frankfurt: Typis Wecheliani, 1602

Abbreviations

Works

AC = Acta Cusana

APD = Acta pontificum danica

CAR = Eneas Silvius Piccolomineus (postea Pius II): *Carmina*. Edid. Adrian van Heck. 1994.

CB = *Concilium Basiliense*.

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

COD = *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta*, ed. G. Alberigo. 1952.

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CRDM = Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Collected Reports of Diplomatic Missions, 1447-1455*. Edit. and transl. by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 2021.

DBI = Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani.

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KO = *Epistolae familiares. De duobus amantibus Euryalo et Lucretia. Descriptio urbis Viennensis*. Edit. Nicolaus de Wyle. Nürnberg: Antonius Koberger, 1481. [With later editions of 1486 and 1496].

ME = Enea Silvio Piccolomini: *Briefe. Dichtungen*. Übers. Max Mells. 1966.

MPL = Migne. Patrologia Latina.

RE = Reject Aeneas, Accept Pius. Selected Letters of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II). Edit. Th. M. Isbicki. Washington, 2006.

RTA = Deutsche Reichstagsakten.

SRD = Scriptores rerum danicarum.

ST = Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *Les misères des gens de cour. Le songe de Fortune*. Trad. Serge Stolf. 2015.

VO = Voigt, Georg: *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter*. 3 vols. 1856-1863.

WI = Widmer, Berthe (ed.): *Enea Sivio Piccolomini, Papst Pius II. Ausgewählte Texte aus seinen Schriften*. 1960.

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

Others

****** Lead manuscript.

BC = Christian Era

BCE = Before Christian Era

DV = digital version.

II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Aeneae Sylvii Ad Alfonsum, Sapientem Siciliae Regem, super connubio Friderici et Eleonorae oratio gratulatoria¹

[1] {146r} Quamvis *grandes materias* - ut inquit Jeronimus - *ingenia parva non sufferant*, conandum tamen est² mihi, serenissime princeps rexque victoriosissime, quae per hos dies tuae majestatis auctoritate sponsalia sunt conclusa, his, qui adsunt, exponere, cum de rebus ad imperatoriam sublimitatem pertinentibus loqui nulli magis incumbat³ quam legatis imperatoriis. Audiat⁴ igitur tua serenitas, oro, audiant et circumstantes, precor, etsi non mihi - neque enim mereor - rei saltem, de qua sermo fiet, aures accomodent, quae magna est, admirabilis, rara, honestissima. De nobilissimo namque matrimonio loquar, altissimo, potentissimo, incomparabili.

[2] Regia virgo Romano imperatori promissa, Leonora infans Portugalliae, excellentissima nobilium⁵ puellarum, neptis tua clarissima⁶, divo Caesari Friderico, Romanorum regi, Augusto, pio, felici atque triumphatori desponsata est. Ingens affinitas, potentissima parentela, generosissima conjunctio, ob quam causam divina res agitur, Deo nostro gratias reddimus, festam⁷ haud injuria ducimus diem, exultamus, hilares omnes sumus, nec tantam amicitiam sine magno Christianae⁸ religionis fructu conflata esse putamus, in qua non solum res ipsa⁹ matrimonii commendanda est, sed personae quoque¹⁰ contrahentes ingentibus extollendae laudibus sese offerunt. De his ergo duobus dicendum est mihi, etsi rerum dignitatem mea magis attenuabit, quam explicabit oratio.

¹ Aeneae ... gratulatoria : Oratio eiusdem oratoris ad sacram maiestatem Aragonum incipit R;
No title T

² tamen est : est tamen T

³ incumbit T

⁴ audiet T

⁵ nobilis T

⁶ charissima FR

⁷ festum P, T

⁸ Christianitatis R

⁹ res ipsa : ipsa res R

¹⁰ quam T

Enea Silvio's congratulatory oration to Alfonso, wise King of Sicily, on the marriage between Friedrich and Leonora

1. Introduction

[1] Most Serene Prince and Victorious King, *small wits cannot grasp great matters*, says Jerome.¹ Nonetheless - since it is primarily the responsibility of the imperial legates to speak on matters concerning His Imperial Highness - I shall attempt to address those present on the marriage contract concluded these days, on the authority of Your Majesty. So please listen, Serene Highness, and all you who are present lend ear to my speech, for though I do not myself deserve it, the matter on which I shall speak definitely merits it, as it is a great matter, wonderful, rare, and most honourable. For I shall be speaking about a most noble, most high, most powerful, and incomparable marriage.

[2] The royal maiden, betrothed to the Roman Emperor, Leonora, Infanta of Portugal, most excellent of noble maidens, your noble niece, has been engaged to Holy Caesar Friederich, august, pious, happy, and triumphant King of the Romans. This immensely important marriage bond, this most mighty kinship, and this most noble union are the reasons that we are celebrating this holy service, that we are giving thanks to Our God, and that we are justly having this festivity, that we are all rejoicing and being happy. And we think that this great [bond] of friendship has the greatest importance for the whole Christian religion, and that not only the marriage itself but also the persons contracting it should be extolled with immense praises.

So, these are the two subjects I shall be speaking on, though my oration may not be equal to the exalted subject matter.

¹ Jeronimus: *Epistola ad Heliodorus* (60), 1. MPL, XXII, col. 589

[3] Dicturus autem {146v} de bono conjugii necessarium arbitror eos prius refellere, qui genus omne feminarum maledictis compellationibusque probrosis insectari non desinunt. Namque cum matrimonium ex maris atque feminae conjugatione consistat, quae poterit laus illi competere, si una ex parte mancum claudumque fuerit? Non est haec¹ Danielis statua, cujus pedum pars quaedam² ferrea, pars fictilis³ erat, nec bestiam contuemur Horatii, quae *mulier formosa superne in atrum fingitur piscem desinere*, sed rem veluti sacram sic ex partibus suis integram ac perfectam prosequimur. Audiamus tamen, quid adversus feminas afferatur, postea judicemus.

¹ hic T

² quidem T

³ fidelis T

2. Against misogyny

2.1. Marriage is a perfect union of male and female

[3] As I am going to speak on the benefits of marriage, it is necessary – I think – first to refute those who consistently abuse the whole female gender with insults and disgraceful reproaches. For as marriage consists in the union of male and female, how could it be praiseworthy if one of its parts were defective and imperfect? Marriage is not like Daniel's¹ statue, whose feet were made partly of iron and partly of clay.² Nor do we see it as that creature of Horace³ *whose upper part was that of a lovely woman and its lower part that of a fish*.⁴ No, we consider marriage to be sacred, complete, and perfect in its [two] parts. But let us hear what is being said against women, and afterwards we shall judge the truth of the matter.

¹ Prophet Daniel: (Bibl.) Main person of the Book of David. Probably never existed

² Daniel, 2, 33: The statue is the statue that King Nabuchodonosor saw in a dream that Daniel interpreted

³ Horatius Flaccus, Quintus (65-8 BC): Roman poet

⁴ Horatius: *Ars poetica*, 3-4

[4] Ajunt equidem in sacris eloquiis complurima¹ esse testimonia, quae mulieribus adversantur, rugire contra feminas Augustinum, Ambrosium, Jeronimum, Gregorium ceterosque doctores ecclesiae duros² in eas³. Vergilius, Juvenalis, totusque poetarum cuneus⁴ asper, Cato saevissimus commemoratur: avaras⁵, instabiles, crudeles feminas esse affirmant. Adducunt exempla malarum, atque ab his clades exortas in medio proponunt. Post haec⁶ philosophos citant,⁷ ⁸ qui de uxore ducenda consulti aut⁹ dissuaserunt aut¹⁰ suadere non¹¹ praesumpserunt, cum huic¹² orbi tantas¹³ inde¹⁴ molestias formidarent. Metelli quoque Numidici mentionem efficiunt, qui - ut est apud Gellium¹⁵ *de noctibus Atticis* -

Si¹⁶ sine¹⁷, inquit uxoribus¹⁸ possemus, Quirites, esse, omnes ea molestia careremus¹⁹; sed quoniam ita natura tradidit, ut neque²⁰ cum illis satis commode, neque²¹ sine²² illis ullo modo vivi possit, saluti perpetuae potius, quam brevi voluptati consulendum.

Atque haec fere sunt, quae contra femineum sexum, contra²³ matrimonium, non justis aestimatores adducere consueverunt²⁴.

¹ cum plurima R

² durus R, T

³ ea R

⁴ Enneus R

⁵ auras R

⁶ *omit.* T

⁷ ostendant T

⁸ atque ab his ... citant *omit.* R

⁹ alit R; alii FR

¹⁰ alii ... aut *omit.* FR

¹¹ *omit.* T

¹² hinc R

¹³ orbi tantam : orbitatem T

¹⁴ huic ... inde : hinc orbitatem

mole R

¹⁵ Gellum R; Gelus T

¹⁶ sed T

¹⁷ si sine : sisene R

¹⁸ inquit uxoribus : uxoribus

inquit R, T

¹⁹ *omit.* P

²⁰ nec FR

²¹ nec FR

²² sinem R

²³ contraque T

²⁴ consueverunt P

2.2. Traditional negative views on women

[4] These people say that in the Holy Scriptures there are many negative statements on women and that Augustine,¹ Ambrose,² Jerome,³ and Gregory,⁴ as well as other Doctors of the Church revile women and are harsh against them. They also point to Virgil,⁵ Juvenal,⁶ and the whole fierce troop of poets, and especially to the relentless Cato,⁷ claiming that women are greedy, fickle, and cruel. They mention examples of bad women and describe disasters caused by them. Then they go on to quote the philosophers who, when they were consulted on marriage, dissuaded it or would not dare to recommend it since they feared the resulting calamities for the world. They also mention Metellus Numidicus,⁸ who - according to Gellius⁹ in his *De noctibus Atticis* - said that

*If we could get on without a wife, Romans, we would all avoid that trouble; but since nature has ordained that we can neither live very comfortably with them nor at all without them, we must take thought for our lasting well-being rather than for the pleasure of the moment.*¹⁰

And this is more or less what those mistaken censors usually have to say against the female gender and against marriage.

¹ Augustinus, Aurelius (354-430): Bishop of Hippo. Theologian. Doctor of the Church. Saint

² Ambrosius, Aurelius (ca. 340-397): Archbishop of Milan. Doctor of the Church. Saint

³ Jeronimus, Eusebius Sophronius (ca. 347-420): Cardinal. Doctor of the Church. Saint

⁴ Gregorius I (ca. 540-604): Pope 590 to his death in 604

⁵ Vergilius Maro, Publius (70-19 BCE): Roman poet

⁶ Juvenalis, Decimus Junius (late 1st and early 2nd cent.). Roman poet. Juvenal was one of Piccolomini's favourite classical authors

⁷ Cato, Marcus Porcius [Cato Cato the Elder] (234-149 BCE): Roman statesman and censor

⁸ Metellus Numidicus, Quintus Caecilius (ca. 160-91 BC): Roman

politician, enemy of Gaius Marius. Consul in 109 BCE. Later condemned to exile

⁹ Aulus Gellius (ca. 125 - after 180): Roman author and grammarian

¹⁰ Gellius: *Noctes Atticae*, 1.6.1-2. This same passage from Gellius was used by Poggio Bracciolini in his *Oratio in laudem matrimonii* (ca. 1458) Bracciolini: *Opera*, II, p. 911

[5] Sed sunt haec omnia - nisi fallor - confutatu facilia. In primis enim, quod in sacris litteris adversus feminas traditur, de quibusdam¹ perversis accipimus. Fatemur enim et² in sexu³ femineo malitiam reperiri, nihil⁴ universaliter recipimus, alioquin et viros omnes damnare oporteret⁵. Nam etsi⁶ de feminis scriptum est⁷: *Unam in millibus non inveniri*, de viris quoque in Psalmis legimus: *Non est, qui faciat bonum, non est usque ad unum*.

Et apud Satyricum⁸:

*Rari quippe boni, vix sunt numero totidem⁹, quot
Thebarum portae vel¹⁰ divitis ostia Nili.*

Et amplius sese cohaerens:

*Egregium - ait¹¹ - sanctumque virum, si cerno bimembri
Hoc¹² monstrum puero, et miranti jam¹³ sub aratro
Piscibus inventis, et¹⁴ foetae comparo mulae.*

¹ quibus P

² ut FR

³ sessu R

⁴ videlicet FR

⁵ oportet R

⁶ si R

⁷ omit. R

⁸ satirum P; satiarum R; sitirum
T

⁹ boni ... totidem : numero vix
totidem sunt R, T

¹⁰ aut R, T

¹¹ aut T

¹² aut R; ut T

¹³ omit. R, T

¹⁴ ac R

2.3. Arguments against the traditional view

[5] But unless I am mistaken, all these opinions can easily be refuted. Firstly, that which is written against women in Holy Scripture only concerns certain wicked women. We admit that evil may indeed also be found in the female sex, but we do not, therefore, hold that all women are evil. Otherwise we should also have to blame all men.¹ For though it is written about women that *you cannot find one among thousands*,² in the Psalms we also read about men that *there is none that doth good: no not one*.³

And in the Satyrical Poet:⁴

*For honest men are scarce; hardly so numerous
As the gates of Thebes, or the mouths of the enriching Nile.*⁵

And later he says, in the same vein:

*If I discover an upright and blameless man,
I liken him to a boy born half beast,
Or to fishes found by a marvelling rustic
Under the plough, or to a pregnant mule.*⁶

¹ Since some men are evil, too

² Ecclesiastes, 7, 29

³ Psalms, 13, 3

⁴ Juvenal

⁵ Juvenalis: *Saturae*, 13, 26-27

⁶ Juvenalis: *Saturae*, 13, 64-66

[6] Sancti vero doctores, dum feminas detestantur¹, aut malas quasdam jure condemnant, aut castitatis promissores alloquuntur, quos² fugere mulieres abhorrereque suadent. Idem virginibus sacris Deo dicatis atque nuptis de virili sexu et saepe dictum est et saepius esset³ dicendum. Continentiam namque professis viris feminae, et⁴ feminis viri formidandi sunt hostes. Poetas nihil mirum est in feminas⁵ debacchari⁶, nam viris quoque non⁷ parcunt. Catoni magno satis apud Livium respondit Lucius Valerius, qui Legem Oppiam⁸ iniquam⁹ mulieribus obtinuit abrogari¹⁰. De criminibus nihil attinet disputare, quando haec eadem et multo¹¹ pejora in nostro sexu reperiuntur¹². Nec malarum exempla me movent aut antiquae clades¹³ humano generi per mulieres illatae. Namque si mulierum virorumque¹⁴ turpia facta repetere, et a primo proditore Cain¹⁵ usque ad sceleratissimum Judam, et in¹⁶ hanc usque diem sceleratas¹⁷ utriusque sexus actiones comparare voluerimus, innocentes respectu virorum feminas ostendemus¹⁸. Sed obstant angustiae temporis, indulgeo brevitati.

¹ testantur T

² quo R

³ esse T

⁴ *omit.* R

⁵ feminis P

⁶ et *add.* R

⁷ *omit.* T

⁸ optimam T

⁹ in quam R

¹⁰ obrogari P; obrigari R

¹¹ multa T

¹² reperiantur FR

¹³ classes R

¹⁴ mulierum virorumque :
virorum mulierumque T

¹⁵ tam R

¹⁶ *omit.* R

¹⁷ sceleratus R

¹⁸ ostendimus R

[6] As for the holy doctors, when they express loathing of women or justly condemn some of them, they do so because they are addressing men who have promised to live in chastity,¹ urging them to flee and to abhor women. The same they say about men² to women consecrated to God and to married women. Indeed, it has been said often, and it must be said even more often! For men who have promised continence should fear women as enemies, and in the same way women [who have made the same promise] should fear men.

As for the poets, it is not strange that they attack women, for neither do they spare men. In Livy,³ Lucius Valerius⁴ answered the great Cato⁵ quite properly, when he obtained the annulment of the *Lex Oppia*,⁶ that it was very unfair to women. Concerning the crimes [of women], there is really nothing to discuss, for we men commit the same crimes, but much worse. Nor am I moved by the examples of wicked women or by the old disasters inflicted upon the human race by women. For if we should want to examine the evil deeds of women and men, from Cain, the first betrayer, to Judas, that heinous criminal, and compare the wicked acts of the two sexes done until this day, we would see that women are quite innocent compared with men. But as I am pressed for time, I shall be brief.

¹ E.g., monks

² I.e., that they should be avoided

³ Livius, Titus (59 BC - 17 BCE): Roman historian

⁴ Lucius Valerius Flaccus (d. 180 BC): Consul of the Roman Republic in 195 BC. Censor in 183 BC

⁵ Cato the Elder

⁶ The *Lex Oppia* was a law passed in ancient Rome in 215 BC, at the height of the Second Punic War during the days of national catastrophe after the Battle of Cannae. It forbade any woman to possess more than half an ounce of gold, to wear a multi-colored garment, or to ride in an animal-

drawn vehicle in the city or any town or within a mile thereof, except in the case of public religious festivals. It was repealed by the Senate in 195 BC after a debate that had Lucius Valerius and Cato the Elder as protagonists

[7] Ad philosophos venio, quorum nullus - teste Lactantio - sic vixit, ut scripsit. Quis fontem¹ eorum² ac verticem, ex³ Apollinis testimonio sapientissimum, Socratem conjugio detrahentem aequis auribus audiet⁴, cum is⁵ non contentus una, duabus sese uxoribus commiscuerit? Melius quippe - me iudice - silerent obtrectatores feminarum, quam sine fundamento loquerentur, qui, dum Metelli auctoritate se juvant, nesciunt illum doctorum virorum iudicio damnatum⁶, ut qui nec⁷ vere nec ad suadendum apte sit orsus. Existimaverunt enim prudentiores, *contra potius orationem debuisse sumi*⁸, *ut nullas plerumque esse in matrimoniis molestias*⁹ *asseveraret*¹⁰. *Et si quae*¹¹ *tamen accidere*¹² *nonnumquam*¹³ *viderentur*¹⁴, *parvas ac*¹⁵ *leves, facilesque esse toleratu diceret*¹⁶, *majoribusque eas emolumentis et*¹⁷ *voluptatibus obliterari, easque*¹⁸ *ipsas neque omnibus neque naturae*¹⁹ *vitio, sed quorundam maritorum culpa et injustitia evenire. Sed facio verbis modum*²⁰, quando res nota est, et viros bonos et mulieres²¹ {147v} inveniri probas, ex quibus esse justa, sancta et honestissima conjugia possunt²².

¹ frontes R; frontem P, T

² *omit.* T

³ et P, R, FR

⁴ audiat T

⁵ his T; Xantippe P, FR

⁶ reprehensum T

⁷ ne P

⁸ summi R

⁹ molestas R

¹⁰ asseverarent R

¹¹ *omit.* P, FR

¹² accedere FR

¹³ numquam T

¹⁴ videretur R

¹⁵ et R

¹⁶ dicerent R

¹⁷ ac FR

¹⁸ easdemque FR

¹⁹ animae R

²⁰ modo T

²¹ mulieribus P

²² possint FR

[7] I now come to the philosophers of whom, according to Lactantius,¹ no one lived as he wrote. Who can calmly hear that Socrates,² the source and summit of philosophers, and according to Apollo the wisest of them,³ failed in his marriage and had two wives, not being content with one?⁴ ⁵ In my opinion, the maligners of women should remain silent rather than speak foolishly. And those who rely on the authority of Metellus do not know that he himself was condemned by learned men⁶ as one whose advice was neither truthful nor appropriate. And wiser men have *thought his speech ought rather to have taken just the opposite tone, insisting that as a rule there were no annoyances in matrimony, and if after all they seemed sometimes to arise, they were slight, insignificant, and easily endured, and were completely forgotten in its greater pleasures and advantages; furthermore, that even these annoyances did not fall to the lot of all or from any fault natural to matrimony, but as the result of the misconduct and injustice of some husbands and wives.*⁷ But I shall say no more about this, since it is well known that there are decent men and good women who can have fair, holy, and honourable marriages.

¹ Lactantius (ca. 240-ca. 320): early Christian author

² Socrates (ca. 469-399 BC): Greek philosopher

³ Diogenes Laertius: *The lives of eminent philosophers / Socrates: These and the like were his words and deeds, to which the Pythian priestess bore testimony when she gave Chaerephon the famous response: Of all men living Socrates is most wise.* Piccolomini may not have known the text of Laertius directly

⁴ Diogenes Laertius: *The lives of eminent philosophers / Socrates: Aristotle says that he married two wives; his first wife was Xanthippe, by whom he had a son, Lamprocles; his second wife was Myrto, the daughter of Aristides the Just, whom he took without a dowry. By her he had Sophroniscus and Menexenus. Others make Myrto his first wife; while*

some writers, including Satyrus and Hieronymus of Rhodes, affirm that they were both his wives at the same time. For they say that the Athenians were short of men and, wishing to increase the population, passed a decree permitting a citizen to marry one Athenian woman and have children by another; and that Socrates accordingly did so

⁵ The theme of Socrates' marriage situation was frequently used in humanist wedding orations, cf. D'Elia: *Renaissance*, p. 83

⁶ Metellus was condemned to exile not for a crime but as an opponent of Marius

⁷ Gellius, 1.6.3. Here, Piccolomini might have remembered a case of wife beating leading to the breakdown of the marriage, that he came across early in his ecclesiastical career, occasioning

a letter to Heinrich Stotter in October 1446, in which he wrote: *some husbands are so hard, unkind, cruel and fierce that they do not consider their wife as their companion in the divine and human home, but keep her as a servant or even a vile slave. Now they hurt them in words, now in acts. They hit the poor little women, maul them, torment them and threaten them with death. Therefore, many women leave their husbands, and, with no living, they have commerce with men who take care of them. These women - gentle, fragile and timid - are not to be blamed as much as their husbands, who ought to be more constant and better in all ways.* (EPI. 4: 214)

[8] Nunc de bono matrimonii perpauca libanda sunt, in quo mihi tria¹ praecipue² commendanda videntur: honesta dignitas, grandis utilitas, dulcis jucunditas. Insunt enim haec omnia matrimonio: quaeramus haec tria.

[9] Illa³ meo iudicio digniora videntur, quae sunt antiquiora, quaeque praestantiores inveniuntur auctores habere. Matrimonium vero et⁴ antiquissimum est, quippe quod in primis parentibus coepit, et⁵ nobilissimum habet auctorem, Deum patrem omnipotentem totamque trinitatem, cum - teste Jeronimo - tunc matrimonium⁶ sit institutum, cum dominus ait⁷: *Crescite, et multiplicamini, et replete terram.*

[10] Neque enim, ut Athenienses arbitrati sunt, eorum vetustissimum regem inventorem nuptiarum dicimus esse Cecropem, quem propterea bimembrem figuravit antiquitas, quia primus omnium mare⁸ feminae legitime conjunxit. Longe ante conditas Athenas, in ipso mundi nascentis initio non homo, sed Deus, non creatura, sed creator, rector et conditor orbis⁹ matrimonium consecravit¹⁰, cuius tanta dignitas est, ut semel contractum¹¹ dirimi nequeat, dicente scriptura: *Quod Deus conjunxit, homo non separet.* Coniuncti namque divino nutu creduntur, quicumque matrimonium rite contraxerunt. Hinc mater ecclesia, dux morum, magistra vitae, nuntia¹² veritatis¹³, inter maxima sacramenta, quibus utitur veluti divinitus revelatis, matrimonium annumeravit¹⁴. Hinc dominus et¹⁵ salvator noster¹⁶, Deus homo, Christus¹⁷ Jesus¹⁸, et nasci ex nupta et interesse nuptiis¹⁹ voluit, ac primo, quod fertur patrasse, miraculo conjugium honorare.

¹ mihi tria : tria mihi P

² tria praecipue : precipue tria T

³ tria P; *omit.* R, T

⁴ *omit.* T

⁵ ac FR

⁶ tunc matrimonium :
matrimonium tunc FR

⁷ *omit.* R

⁸ mare R

⁹ *omit.* T

¹⁰ consecrat T

¹¹ conjunctum FR

¹² nuptia P, R

¹³ veritas R

¹⁴ revelavit FR

¹⁵ ac R

¹⁶ *omit.* P, FR

¹⁷ et *add.* T

¹⁸ *omit.* T

¹⁹ nupte R

3. Marriage

[8] Now we must say a little about the benefits of marriage. It seems to me that there are three things to recommend in marriage: the honourable dignity, the great benefits¹, and the sweet joy. All these are to be found in marriage. Let us now examine them individually.

3.1. Dignity of marriage

[9] It seems to me that the most valuable things are those that are found to be the oldest² and have the most eminent authors. Marriage is indeed a very old institution since it began with our first forefathers. It also has the noblest possible author, God, the Omnipotent Father, and the whole Trinity. For, according to Jerome, marriage was instituted when the Lord said:

*Increase and multiply, and fill the earth.*³

[10] For, contrary to the opinion of the Athenians, we do not say that Cecrops,⁴ their king in very old times, was the one who instituted marriage (which is why, in Antiquity, he was depicted as having two parts⁵), being the first who joined male to female in a legitimate union. Indeed, it was long before the foundation of Athens, in the very beginning of the world, that God himself and not a man, the creator and not someone created, the ruler and founder of the earth, consecrated marriage whose dignity is so great that once it has been made, it cannot be unmade, as Scripture says: *What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*⁶ Those who are legitimately joined in marriage are considered to be united with God's assent. Therefore, our Mother the Church, governor of morals, teacher of life, messenger of truth, considers marriage as one of the greatest of the divinely revealed sacraments that she dispenses. And therefore Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Saviour, Man and God, desired to be born of a married woman and to participate in weddings as well as to honour marriage with the first miracle he is said to have performed.

¹ "utilitas"

² The authority of antiquity is probably a central tenet of Italian Renaissance humanism. It is certainly shared with Poggio Bracciolini who in his *Oratio in laudem matrimonii* (ca. 1458) wrote: ... *quanta sit antiquitatis auctoritas, quantum illi ab omnibus tribuatur, nemo sanae mentis ignorat. Re-*

spicimus enim res antiquas et ditutina vetustate notas non mediocri veneratione, et in summam admirationem trahimur ob earum contemplationem. Multum honoris certe concedimus antiquitati. ... trahuntur omnes in laudem venerationemque rerum antiquarum et eas suspensis animis admirantur, praecipue quae maxime vetu-

statem representare videantur (Poggio Bracciolini: *Opera*, II, p. 908)

³ Genesis, 1, 28

⁴ Cecrops: mythical King of Athens

⁵ i.e., the upper part male and the lower part fish or snake

⁶ Matthew, 19, 6

[11] Dignitatem tenemus, investigemus utilitatem, sed haec intellectu quam dictu facilius. Nam quae res est, quae domos, quae civitates, quae provincias, quae regna, quae genus humanum conservat nisi matrimonium? Quid sunt aliud nuptiae¹ nisi seminarium reipublicae? Quid² familias jungit³? Quid⁴ gentes propagat⁵? Quid⁶ populis aeternitatem nisi matrimonia largiuntur? Quae pax, quae fides, quae caritas inter mortales esset, si more Platonis⁷ absque legitimis nuptiis viveremus passim feminis⁸ abutentes⁹? Omitto infinitas utilitates, quas privata domus ex matrimonio elicit.

[12] Ad jucunditatem festino. Numquid jucunditas in matrimonio reperitur¹⁰? Aristoteles, philosophorum acutissimus, non solum in *Politicis*, sed in¹¹ *Ethicis* quoque jucundam inter conjuges amicitiam {147r} esse testatur. *Ab urbe condita usque ad D*¹² sive – ut Tertullianus ait – usque ad DC¹³ fere¹⁴ annos *nullum* divortium *intercessit*, tanta conjugiorum jucunditas fuit. An suavius quidquid¹⁵, dulcius, jucundius esse potest illius vita, qui morigeram ac fecundam sortitus uxorem, si quando ex fori rumoribus, ex curiae taediis, ex reipublicae laboribus domum se confert, veram consolationem reperit, veram amatorem, divinae domus humanaeque sociam reperit, dulces liberos sibi matrique¹⁶ blandientes videt, quibus laborat, quibus congregat, quibus¹⁷ vivit, in quibus etiam post mortem victurus est¹⁸?

¹ quid sunt ... nuptiae *omit.* R

² quis P, R, FR

³ jungitur R

⁴ quis P, R, FR

⁵ propagatur R

⁶ *em.*; quis R, T, FR

⁷ Platonico T

⁸ feminas P

⁹ abeutes R

¹⁰ queritur P

¹¹ *omit.* R

¹² quingentos P, R, T

¹³ sexcentos P, R, T

¹⁴ vero T

¹⁵ quidquam P, R, FR

¹⁶ sibi matrique : sibi matri R

¹⁷ *omit.* R

¹⁸ sit P, R, FR

3.2. Benefits of marriage

[11] Having heard about the dignity of marriage, let us now examine its benefits, though these are easier to understand than to state. For what is it that sustains homes, cities, provinces, kingdoms, and even the human race itself, if not marriage? What is marriage other than the seedbed of human society? What unites families? What makes a people grow? What permanence will a people have if they do not have marriage? What peace, what faith, what love would there be among humans¹, if we lived without legitimate weddings - as Plato² wanted to - abusing women all the time?³ I shall not even mention the countless benefits that the private household gains from marriage.

3.3. Joys of marriage

[12] I pass quickly to the joys of marriage. May joy be found in marriage? [Indeed!] Both in his *Politics* and in his *Ethics*, Aristotle,⁴ the most brilliant of philosophers, writes that there is joyful friendship between spouses. *From the founding of Rome until 500 or - according to Tertullian⁵ - 600 years afterwards, no divorce occurred,*⁶ so great was the joy in marriages. Can there be anything sweeter, more delightful, and more joyous than the life of the man who has got an obliging and fertile wife? When he comes home, leaving the buzz of the marketplace, the wearisome business of the court and public affairs, he finds true comfort and a true lover in his companion in a divine and human household, and he sees sweet children, a delight to himself and their mother: is it not for them that he toils, gathers, and lives, and in whom he will live on after death?

¹ "mortals"

² Plato (428/427 or 424/423 BC-348/347 BCE): Greek philosopher. Student of Socrates

³ Plato on having women in common, see Plato: *Republic*, 5.449c ff., 457d ff., 461e ff., 464b ff. See also: Aristotle: *Politica*, 2.1. (1261a): *For example, it is possible for the citizens in Plato's communistic Republic to have child-*

ren, wives and possessions in common with each other, as in Plato's Republic, in which Socrates says that there must be community of children, women and possessions

⁴ Aristotle (384-322 BC): Greek philosopher

⁵ Tertullianus, Quintus Septimius Florens (ca. 160-ca. 225): early

Christian author from Carthage. Quotation not identified

⁶ Valerius Maximus, 2.1.4: *Repudium inter uxorem et virum a condita urbe usque ad vicesimum et quingentesimum annum nullum in tercessit (From the founding of the city down to its five hundred and twentieth year there was no case of divorce between man and wife)*

[13] Non citabo¹ testes humanos, ubi divina intonat² auctoritas: *Propter hoc*, inquit oraculum Genesis *relinquet vir patrem et matrem suam, et adhaerebit uxori suae, et erunt duo in³ carne una*. Magna vis delectationis⁴, magna jucunditas, quae duobus ex corporibus unam carnem facit. Aristophanes in duobus corporibus unam esse animam consensit⁵. Sed sint⁶ haec satis de bono matrimonii dicta.

[14] Jam postremo loco quales quantaque sint personae contrahentes intuendum⁷ est praesentique contioni brevissime referendum⁸. Neque enim de plebe sunt, neque de communi⁹ fortuna, sed de sublimi celsoque statu, quae contrahunt. Regius sanguis et imperatorius in conjugium venit. Attenuabitur rerum dignitas, si meis verbis personarum excellentiam conabor explicare. Longe melius eas ipsas audiemus de se suisque meritis disserentes. Fingamus igitur¹⁰ praesentes esse¹¹, qui nuptias celebraturi sunt: loquatur¹² de se regia virgo, loquatur et Caesar, suasque dignitates enumerent.

[15] Dic tu, Leonora, quae nubis, quid¹³ dotis¹⁴ affers, quid expetibile tuum narras, quo pacto divo Caesari placuisti¹⁵? Audire te cupimus. Non sine causa tantus te princeps adamavit¹⁶: audite, proceres, audite, omnes: jam virgo loquitur. “Ego” - inquit Leonora - “ex alta Portugalliae domo sum nata, ex antiquissima regum stirpe, patre rege, regina matre¹⁷. Clarissimum genus est meum, sive temporis vetustatem, sive majorum gesta requiris: infinitis jam saeculis sanguis meus regnat; invicti¹⁸ virtute progenitores fuere belli domique. Testis victoriarum est Hispania tota, in qua nullus est angulus, {148r} quem nostri¹⁹ majores²⁰ armis non penetraverunt²¹, sive dum barbaros insequuntur, sive dum Christianos domo propulsant injusta bella moventes.

¹ curabo FR

² intonuit FR

³ *omit.* T

⁴ dilectionis T

⁵ censuisset R, T

⁶ *omit.* P, T, FR

⁷ induendum T

⁸ referendum FR

⁹ *omit.* FR

¹⁰ enim P, FR

¹¹ *omit.* FR

¹² loquar R

¹³ qui R

¹⁴ taces T

¹⁵ complacuisti P, FR

¹⁶ amavit T

¹⁷ regina matre : matre regina FR

¹⁸ invicta FR

¹⁹ *omit.* T

²⁰ *omit.* T

²¹ penetraverint R, FR

[13] But why quote human witnesses, where divine authority has spoken? The oracle of Genesis says that therefore *a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh*.¹ It is a great, powerful pleasure and a great, exultant joy that unites two bodies in one flesh. Aristophanes² even thought that there was one soul in the two bodies.

I have now said enough about the benefits³ of marriage.

4. The royal spouses

[14] And now, in the last place, we shall see of what kind and how great are the personages contracting this marriage, as I shall briefly relate to the present assembly.

The two people who enter this marriage are neither of the common people nor of common destiny. No, they are born to a high and exalted state. Royal and imperial blood will become united in this marriage. If I attempt to describe in my own words the excellence of these two persons, I shall not be able to do justice to their lofty status. It will be far better to hear themselves speak about their own and their family's merits. So let us imagine that the two betrothed are present: the royal maid will speak about herself and describe her exalted status, and so will the emperor.

4.1. Leonora

[15] And first you, Leonora, now that you are getting married, tell us what gifts and desirable [qualities] you bring to this marriage and how you have pleased the emperor. We wish to hear you. Not without reason does this great prince love you. So listen, nobles, and hear, all of you, for now the maiden speaks.

"I," Leonora says, "am born to the exalted House of Portugal, an ancient line of kings. My father was a king⁴ and my mother a queen,⁵ and my family was illustrious both if you consider its age and the deeds of our forefathers. My family⁶ has ruled for countless centuries, and my forebears were never defeated abroad or at home. The whole of Spain⁷ is witness to our victories, for our forefathers have reached every corner with their armies, whether they pursued the barbarians or drove Christians waging unjust wars from their homes.

¹ Genesis 2, 24

² Aristophanes (446-ca. 386 BCE): Greek playwright from ancient Athens. Quotation not identified

³ "bono"

⁴ Duarte (1391-1438): King from 1433 until his death

⁵ Leonora of Aragon (1402-1445)

⁶ "sanguis"

⁷ By Spain is here meant the Iberian peninsula of which Portugal is part

[16] Recens est adhuc¹ memoria classis illius, cum qua meus avus in Africam transiens² felici magnoque proelio Saracenos exturbavit³, urbem Ceptam⁴ expugnavit⁵, ac nostris fidelibus coloniam deduxit, ubi adhuc invitis freudentibusque barbaris salutiferae crucis objecta sunt signa. Haec est paterna haereditas omni patrimonio praestantior, si *melius est*, ut inquit Sapiens, *nomen bonum, quam divitiae multae*. Fuerunt et genitori meo cum potentissimis Castellae atque Angliae regibus consanguinitatis strictissima vincula. Idem⁶, ut erat fama potens, virtute potentior, amitam meam cordatissimam et sapientissimam principi⁷ famosissimo, Burgundiorum duci, in matrimonium collocavit.

[17] Sed accipe nunc maternam gloriam. Duo mihi ex⁸ matre sunt⁹ avunculi, reges ambo. Sed qui reges? Alter Navarrae praesidet, virtute ac nomine clarus. Alterum archiregem melius appellaverim, cum non solum apud Hispanos, sed apud Italos, Siculos, Sardos, Majoricos, Minoricos¹⁰ regna possideat. Praetereo vetustos domus Aragonum¹¹ proceres in omne saeculum fama¹² colendos. Unus nobis ad gloriam satis Alfonsus erit, cujus invicta virtus, insuperabilis¹³ constantia, novercantem sibi fortunam non solum vicit, sed amicam blandientemque reddidit.

[18] Quos portus, quas insulas, quas terras¹⁴, quas maris oras hic non armatus, non victor adiit¹⁵? Quae regio in terris Alfonsi nomen ignorat? Quis belli, quis pacis artes melius novit? Quis civibus, quis peregrinis¹⁶ dilectior est¹⁷? Quis nostro saeculo praeter hunc unum¹⁸ favet ingeniis? Quis justior, quis liberalior, quis animo majori regnat? An solus hic ex principantibus est, qui neque secundis rebus intumescit, neque destituitur adversis? Verus fortunae domitor et nostri gloria saeculi¹⁹, qui non minori perseverantia Neapolim cepit, quam Graeci duces²⁰ Trojam²¹ expugnaverunt²². Ostendi tibi dotem²³ meam ex paterna maternaque domo non parvam gloriam.

¹ est adhuc : adhuc est FR

² tractens R

³ Saracenos exturbavit :
exturbavit Saracenos P, FR

⁴ captam FR

⁵ expugnant R

⁶ isdem R

⁷ *em.*; principem codd.

⁸ et R

⁹ mihi ex matre sunt : sunt ex
matre T

¹⁰ *omit.* R; Minoricosque T

¹¹ Arroganum P

¹² varie T

¹³ insuperabilisque T

¹⁴ *em.*; terrae codd.

¹⁵ adivit T

¹⁶ perregrinus R

¹⁷ *omit.* T

¹⁸ hunc unum : unum hunc R, T

¹⁹ gloria saeculi : seculi gloria T

²⁰ duce R

²¹ Troiani P, R

²² expugnaverint P, R

²³ domine FR

[16] Still the memory lives of the fleet with which my grandfather,¹ crossing the sea to Africa, destroyed the Saracens in a great and victorious battle, took the city of Ceuta, and gave it as a colony to the Christians, where still today the banners of the lifegiving crucifix stand in front of the hostile barbarians, gnashing their teeth. This is my paternal inheritance, a better one than all others, if, as the Wise One says, *a good name is better than great riches*.²

As for my father, he had the closest family ties with the mighty Kings of Castile³ and England.⁴ And as he was great in name and even greater in virtue, he gave my prudent and wise aunt⁵ in marriage to that famous prince, the Duke of Burgundy.⁶

[17] But hear now about the glory of my maternal line. I have two maternal uncles, both kings. But what kings? The one rules Navarra,⁷ famous for his virtue and name. The other I could better call an archking since he possesses kingdoms in Spain, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Majorca, and Minorca.⁸ I pass over the noble scions of the ancient House of Aragon, whose fame should be admired in every age. One man is enough for us to demonstrate the glory of this house: Alfonso, whose unvanquished courage and undefeatable steadfastness not only overcame fickle fortune but made it smile at him and favour him.⁹

[18] Which harbours, which islands, which countries, and which coasts has he not gone to in arms and victorious? Where in the world is the name of Alfonso unknown? Who has greater knowledge of the arts of war and peace? Who is more beloved by his own subjects as well as by foreigners? Who in this century has greater intellect? Who is more just and more generous, and who reigns more magnanimously? Isn't he the only prince who does not become arrogant in good times and depressed in bad times? Truly, he has tamed Fortune and is the glory of our time, he who conquered Naples with a tenacity that was just as great as that of the Greek leaders when they conquered Troy.

I have now shown you the bridal gifts I bring with me from my paternal House and the great glory of my maternal House.

¹ Joao I of Portugal (1358-1433). King from 1485 until his death. Conquered the African city of Ceuta in 1415

² Proverbs, 22, 1

³ Leonora's sister, princess Isabella, married Juan II of Castile in 1447

⁴ Joao I married Philippa of Lancaster in 1385

⁵ Infanta Isabella (1397-1441)

⁶ Philippe III le Bon (1396-1469): Duke of Burgundy from 1419 to his death

⁷ Juan II (1398-1479): King of Navarra from 1425 and of Aragon from 1458 until his death. Brother of Alfonso V of Aragon

⁸ Alfonso V the Magnanimous (1396-1458): King of Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, Sardinia and

Corsica, Sicily and Count of Barcelona from 1416, and King of Naples (as Alfonso I) from 1442 until his death

⁹ Piccolomini wrote about Fortune and King Alfonso in his *Somnium de Fortuna* (EPI, 4: 152, 22).

[19] Quod si meam formam meosque mores nosse cupis, malim¹ alios de me loqui. Qua sum² tamen³ facie, qua⁴ statura, quibus⁵ lineamentis⁶, oratores Caesarei, qui ante biennium me⁷ viderunt, non est putandum suo principi reticuisse⁸: nisi placuissem, non essem prorogata. Ego inter matronas⁹, modestia et auctoritate graves, sum nutrita, nec puto me {149r} ulla ex parte vel a majoribus degenerasse, vel magistris displicuisse. Quibus ex rebus¹⁰, sicut¹¹ mihi videtur, ad nuptias venio¹² minime contemnenda¹³, quae paternis maternisque titulis illustrata, pudicitiam, virginitatem¹⁴, formam egregiam, probos mores cum ingenti gloria mecum affero nobilitatissimae domus.”

[20] Audivimus regiam virginem - ut mea fert¹⁵ opinion - dotes egregias afferentem. Audiamus¹⁶, si placet, et¹⁷ sponsum. Dic tu, Friderice, quibus rebus has¹⁸ nuptias exornabis, unde tibi regiam virginem postulas, tam generosam, tam formosam, tot dotibus eminentem? Magnum esse oportet, quem tali matrimonio¹⁹ dignemur. Attendite, praesules, adhibete aures, viri praestantes. Jam, Caesar, respondet²⁰: “Fateor” – inquit - “vera esse, quae sponsa narravit, majoraque²¹ mihi de suo genere persuadeo, quam dicta sint²², formam ejus, quantum²³ relatu didici, complector et amo, mores ejus accepi regios esse dignosque sanguine suo. Ceterum nec ego inglorius uxorem ducam. De meis moribus aliorum esse, non²⁴ meum iudicium²⁵ volo. Vixisse tamen me²⁶ sic²⁷ hactenus arbitr²⁸, ut meis progenitoribus inferior videri non debeam²⁹, sed malo de illis quam de me verba facere.

¹ malle T

² sim R

³ tum FR

⁴ quae FR

⁵ quis P, R, FR

⁶ sim *add.* T

⁷ ante biennium me : me ante
biennium T

⁸ retinuisse FR

⁹ *omit.* R

¹⁰ sum *add.* P, FR

¹¹ *omit.* P, FR

¹² nemo P, FR

¹³ contemnenda P

¹⁴ virginis FR

¹⁵ fecit R

¹⁶ et *add.* T

¹⁷ *omit.* P, R, FR

¹⁸ *omit.* P, FR

¹⁹ tali matrimonio : matrimonio
tali T

²⁰ responde R; *omit.* FR

²¹ maiora quam T

²² sunt R

²³ quanto P

²⁴ *omit.* T

²⁵ ~~non~~ *add.* T

²⁶ tamen me : me tamen R

²⁷ me sic : sic me T

²⁸ hactenus arbitr^{or} : arbitr^{or}
hactenus R

²⁹ debear R

[19] If you wish to know about my appearance and my character, I prefer others to speak about me. Surely, the imperial ambassadors, who saw me two years ago, will have reported back to their prince about my face, stature, and features. If I had not pleased them, they would not have proposed me. I have grown up among women of great modesty and authority, and I do not think that I am in any way inferior to my ancestors or that I have displeased my teachers. Therefore, I believe that I come to this marriage as a highly suitable [bride], distinguished by my paternal and maternal titles, and with my maiden chastity, my exquisite beauty, my good character, and the immense glory of my illustrious House.”

4.2. Friedrich

[20] We have now heard how the royal maiden brings - as I believe - outstanding gifts [to the marriage]. So now, if you please, let us hear the bridegroom. Tell us, Friedrich, about the distinction you bring to this marriage and why you claim this royal maiden, so noble, so beautiful, and so eminently gifted. It must be something great to be worthy of such a marriage. Listen, prelates, and lend your ear, nobles!

Now, the emperor answers:

”I confirm the truth of what my bride has said, though I believe she has understated the exalted position of her family. I embrace and love her beauty that I have heard so much about, and I know that her manners are royal and worthy of her blood.

I, too, am not a spouse without glory. I will not judge my own character; I leave that to others. I believe that until now I have lived in such a way that I would not appear to be inferior to my ancestors, but I would rather speak about them than about myself.

[21] Stirps mea vetustior est quam repeti possit, ducalis, regia, imperatoria, ex qua viri fortes¹ quamplurimi, bellicosi duces, justissimi reges, magnanimi caesares prodierunt. His Austria paruit, florentissima regio, cujus principatus et² a Sabaudia in Pannoniam et ab Illyrico in Burgundiam protenduntur. His Bohemiae nobilissimum, ditissimum³ et aureum olim regnum oboedivit, et⁴ ab his ferox virosaque⁵ Polonia regnata est. Ab his septem illa populosa, latissima, et opulentissima Hungariae regna diutius gubernata⁶ fuerunt. Ab his Romanum imperium non sine magna {158r} nostrae familiae laude multis saeculis⁷ administratum est. Ab his Ottacarus, rex praedives⁸ ac potentissimus, qui ab Adriatico sinu usque in⁹ oceanum septentrionalem, quidquid medium¹⁰ fuerat, suae ditioni¹¹ contra¹² jus fasque subegerat, ac Romano imperio insultabat, Deo atque hominibus¹³ infestus, magno proelio victus¹⁴, profligatus, atque occisus est.

[22] Rudolfus nostrae domus princeps, qui primus in possessionem Austriae venit¹⁵, tantae moderationis famaefque fuit, ut Romanorum creatus imperator, solo suae virtutis nomine fregerit, quicumque per Germaniam¹⁶ adversus imperium res novas moliebatur¹⁷. Nec minor ei¹⁸ fuit Albertus prior, qui cum plerique {149v} Germaniae principes Adolfum ex domo de Nassau¹⁹ imperare vellent, nostramque domum calumniose praeterirent, non est passus extra familiam imperium esse, sed bello indicto ad²⁰ constitutam diem armatus venit, collatisque signis in aciem prodiit, et²¹ atroci²² pugna usurpatorem imperii vicit, fudit, occidit ac domum Austriae pristinae dignitati²³ restituit. Transeo Fridericum Caesarem et avum meum Leopoldum, *duo fulmina belli*. Ernestum, qui me genuit, non laudabo, quamvis subditis dilectissimus esset, inimicis formidatissimus. Patruus meus Albertus Caesar, qui Bohemiam Hungariamque²⁴ regnavit, non solum Hussitas afflixit²⁵ haereticos, sed Turcorum rabiem Christianis cervicibus imminentem magna virtute compescuit. Non est otium modo referre, quae mei majores nunc pro catholica fide, nunc pro Romano imperio tuendo propagandoque²⁶ terra marique gesserunt²⁷, nec narranti mihi dies sufficeret.

¹ de me verba ... fortes omit. T

² omit. T

³ dignissimum P, FR

⁴ omit. P, T, FR

⁵ ferosaque T

⁶ illa populosa ... gubernata : illae populosae, latissimae, et opulentissimae Hungariae ditiones gubernatae FR

⁷ multis saeculis : seculo P, FR

⁸ dives FR

⁹ ad P, FR

¹⁰ obvium FR

¹¹ ditioni R, T

¹² omit. P, FR

¹³ omnibus R

¹⁴ fictus P

¹⁵ novit R

¹⁶ Germanias R

¹⁷ moliebantur T

¹⁸ eo P

¹⁹ Nassano R

²⁰ omit. T

²¹ omit. T

²² atrocique T

²³ dignitate R

²⁴ Hungariam P, R, FR

²⁵ inflixit P, FR

²⁶ propagando FR

²⁷ gesserit R; gesserint P, FR

[21] My ducal, royal, and imperial lineage is so old that it defies description. From it have issued many strong men, warlike dukes, just kings, and magnanimous emperors. They ruled the flourishing region of Austria, a principality stretching from Savoy to Hungary and from Illyricum to Burgundy. They also, for a time, ruled Bohemia, once a noble, prosperous, and golden kingdom. Also savage and uncouth¹ Poland was for a time governed by them. And the seven populous, large, and wealthy regions² of Hungary were under their sway. Finally, they also governed for many centuries the Roman Empire, with great distinction to our family. And in a great battle they defeated,³ routed, and killed the enormously rich and mighty King Ottokar,⁴ hateful to God and men, who against law and justice had conquered all the lands from the Adriatic Bay to the Northern Sea and mocked the Roman Empire.

[22] Rudolf⁵ was the first prince of our House who came into possession of Austria. His leadership and fame were so great that he was elected Roman Emperor, and his reputation for strength and courage was sufficient to subdue anybody in Germany plotting rebellion against the empire. Just as great was Albrecht I.⁶ When many German princes wanted Adolf of the House of Nassau⁷ to rule and shamefully pass over our house, he did not suffer imperial rule to pass to another family but declared war. On the appointed day he arrived with his army, he had the standards brought forward, and in a ferocious battle he defeated, vanquished, and killed the usurper of the empire, and restored the House of Austria to its former dignity. I pass over Emperor Friedrich⁸ and my grandsire, Leopold,⁹ *two thunderbolts of war*.¹⁰ I shall not praise my own father, Ernest,¹¹ though he was greatly beloved by his subjects and greatly feared by his enemies. My uncle, Emperor Albrecht,¹² ruled Bohemia and Hungary. He not only defeated the Hussite heretics but also valiantly overcame the Turkish frenzy, threatening the necks of the Christians. I do not have time now to relate all that my forefathers have done for the protection and propagation of the Catholic Faith and the Roman Empire by land and sea; a day would not be enough.

¹ "virosa" = smelly

² "ditiones"

³ 1278

⁴ Ottokar II (c. 1233 – 1278): King of Bohemia from 1253 until his death

⁵ Rudolf I (1218-1291): Originally a Swabian count. King of the Romans (Germany) from 1273 until his death. Raised the Habsburg dynasty to a leading position. The first Habsburg to acquire the duchies of Austria and Styria

⁶ Albrecht I (1255-1308): Duke of Austria. King of the Romans (Germany) from 1298 until his death

⁷ Adolf of Nassau (ca. 1255-1298): King of the Romans (Germany) from 1292 until his death in battle 1298

⁸ Friedrich of Habsburg (ca. 1289-1330): Duke of Austria and Styria from 1308 as Friedrich I as well as King of Germany (King of the Romans) from 1314 (anti-king until 1325)

⁹ Leopold III (1351-1386): Duke of Austria from 1365 to 1379, and Duke of Styria and Carinthia (Inner Austria) in 1365–1386

¹⁰ Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 6.842

¹¹ Ernest (1377-1424): Duke of Styria, Carinthia and Carniola (collectively Inner Austria) from 1406 until his death

¹² Albrecht II (1397-1439): Duke of Austria. King of Hungary and Croatia from 1437. Uncrowned King of Bohemia. Elected King of the Romans

[23] Cum Romanae reipublicae curam ab annis jam trecentis nostra domus habuerit, forsitan degenerasse nos hodie, solisque titulis et imaginibus niti majorum quispiam¹ existimaverit. Scimus, quam miserum est

*alienae incumbere famae,
ne collapsa ruant subductis tecta columnis.*

Dabimus igitur et aliquid nostrum. Quattuor hodie sumus in Austriae domo: me natu majorem principes electores Romano imperio praefecerunt, cui annis jam undecim laetantibus subditis praefui: parco de me plura dicere. Ladislaum patrualem, Alberti filium, Sigismundique Caesaris ex filia nepotem, quem propter impuberem aetatem domi nostrae gubernamus, et Bohemorum et Hungarorum cum² plebs tum³ optimates suum regem esse fatentur. Albertus frater invictus⁴ armis Sueviam Alsatiamque gubernat, Suicensis⁵ populi frenum metusque. Sigismundus, alter patruelis, expectatae indolis adolescens, Enum atque Athesim regit, cujus aetatem quamvis facies prodit, tamen virtus ementitur. Nostra sunt haec sine majoribus laudanda. Quis consanguineos affinesque nostros enumeret⁶? Nulla Germaniae domus illustris est, quae nostram familiam sanguine non attingit⁷.

[24] Majores nostri ex Francia, ex Aragonia, ex Hungaria, ex Neapoli, ex Anglia, ex Polonia, ex omnibus Christiani populi celsis domibus uxores duxere⁸. Cum his ego praerogativis nuptiarum sacris initiandus prodeoque, qui cum domo Portugalliae atque Aragonum matrimonium contrahens non unum⁹ regnum aut unam provinciam, sed Alamaniam, ingenti populorum, principum, praelatorum multitudine redundantem, quin et Germaniam totam, regnis gravidam, quae Christianitatis¹⁰ plus media parte complectitur, dives¹¹ viris et armis, in affinitatem mecum adduco.”

¹ quis iam T

² dum T

³ dum T; cum P, FR

⁴ invictis R

⁵ Switensis P, T, FR

⁶ emineret P

⁷ attingat P, R, FR

⁸ ducere R

⁹ parvum P, R, FR

¹⁰ Christianitatem T

¹¹ divis R

[23] Since our House has now been in charge of the Roman state for more than 300 years, one might think that it might now have grown weak, only relying on the titles and images of our forefathers. We know that

*It is a poor thing to lean upon the fame of others,
Lest the pillars give way and the house fall down in ruin.¹*

So let us say something about our own [generation]. Today the House of Austria consists of four men: I myself am the oldest and was elected Roman Emperor by the Prince Electors, and I have ruled my contented subjects for eleven years. I shall say no more about myself. Ladislaus,² my cousin, is the son of Emperor Albrecht and the grandson of Emperor Sigismund³ through his daughter. Because he is still underage, he is brought up in our own home, and the Bohemians and the Hungarians (both the people and the nobles) have proclaimed him king. Albrecht,⁴ our unvanquished brother, rules Swabia and Alsatia and is the bridle and terror of the Swiss people. Sigismund,⁵ my other cousin, is a promising young man who rules Inn and Etsch⁶: his face reveals his age but belies his virtue. All this is praiseworthy in itself, without having recourse to our forefathers. Who can enumerate our relatives and family? No distinguished House of Germany is unrelated to ours by blood.

[24] Our forefathers married women from the exalted Houses of France, Aragon, Hungary, Naples, England, Poland, and all the other Christian nations. Following this marriage tradition, I am now contracting a marriage with the House of Portugal and Aragon. It is not just one realm or just one province that I am bringing with me into that relationship, but Germany, overflowing with an immense multitude of peoples, princes, and prelates. Indeed, the whole of Germany comprises more than half of the Christian world and is rich in dominions, men, and military power.”

¹ Juvenal: *Saturae*, 8.76-77

² Ladislaus the Posthumous of Habsburg (1440-1457): Archduke of Austria from 1440, King of Hungary from 1444 and King of Bohemia from 1453 to his death

³ Sigismund of Luxemburg (1368-1437): King of Hungary and Croa-

tia from 1387, King of Bohemia from 1419, and Holy Roman Emperor for four years from 1433 to his death

⁴ Albrecht VI of Habsburg (1418-1463): Archduke of Inner Austria (i.e., the duchies of Styria, Carin-

tia and Carniola) from 1424 and of Austria from 1457 to his death

⁵ Sigismund of Habsburg (1427-1496): Archduke of Austria, and Duke of Tirol from 1446 to 1490

⁶ Tyrol

[25] Accepisti, rex amplissime, quae sponsus et sponsa dixerunt. Intellexerunt - ut arbitror - omnes, qui adsunt praesentes, matromonii dignitatem, quo¹ certe neque nobilium neque potentius neque honorabilium² neque Christianitati utilius inter mortales ullum contrahi potest, quando et virtus virtuti et nobilitas nobilitati et³ potentia potentiae et magna magnis et summa summis adduntur. Hinc Germanis principibus, Hispanis inde proceribus in affinitatem, benevolentiam amicitiamque⁴ concurrentibus. Ob quas res nihil aliud modo restat agendum, nisi ut de tanto bono – sicut facimus – divinae pietati, quae omnia movet, et tuae majestati, quae hujus rei auctrix est, immortales gratias referamus, superos omnes orantes, ut hoc matrimonium et contrahentibus jucundum⁵ diuturnumque sit et Christianae reipublicae felix.⁶

[26]

*Vivere⁷ te cupimus longos, Alphonse, per annos,
Aurea quo nobis saecula rege patent.*

*Victus abest hostis, et facta miserrima secum
Omnia sunt⁸, pacis te duce tempus adest.*

*Vincere fortunam magis est quam monstra⁹ domare.
Herculeo majus nomine nomen habes.*

*Felix Parthenope, dum te domus alta tenebit
Aragonum: vis te laedere nulla potest.¹⁰*

¹ que R

² neque potentius . honorabilium
omit. FR

³ ac FR

⁴ amicitiam P, FR

⁵ fecundum P; secundum FR

⁶ Laus Deo Jesu Christo. Finis *add.*

P; Laus Deo Jesu Christo *add.* FR

⁷ In P, these verses are placed on
f. 161f, after the oration “*Moses
vir Dei*” [19]

⁸ In *add.* P

⁹ monstrum FR

¹⁰ Vivere ... potest *omit.* F, P

5. Conclusion

[25] Great King, you have now heard the words of the bridegroom and the bride. I believe that all those who are present understand the high dignity of this marriage: indeed, it is the most noble, the most powerful, the most honourable marriage, and the most beneficial to Christendom that can be arranged if you add virtue to virtue, nobility to nobility, power to power, greatness to greatness, and highness to highness. From one side the German princes and from the other side the Spanish nobles join each other in this bond of marriage, sympathy, and friendship.

It now only remains to give eternal thanks - as we are doing now - to Merciful God, the mover of all, and to Your Majesty, who is the author of this matter. We all pray to Heaven that this may be a happy and enduring marriage for the spouses and a blessing for the Christian Commonwealth. Praise be to Jesus Christ, our God.

Verses in praise of King Alphonso

[26]

*We wish you will live, Alfonso, for many years.
Under your kingship, a golden age lies open to us.*

*Far away is the conquered enemy and all his miserable deeds.
Under your governance, the time of peace has come.*

*To conquer fortune is greater than to tame a monster.
Your name surpasses Hercules'.*

*Happy are you, Parthenope;¹ as long as you are in the keep of
the exalted House of Aragon no power can hurt you.*

¹ Parthenope: Figure from Greek mythology and name of the early

Greek colony that later developed into Neapolis (Naples)