THE EXHORTATIONS OF GEORGE TRAPEZUNTIOS AND CARDINAL BESSARION AGAINST THE OTTOMANS: IDENTITIES AND REPRESENTATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The Exhortations of George Trapezuntios and Cardinal Bessarion Against the Ottomans: Identities and Representations

During the last years of the Byzantine Empire and after its collapse, some Greek intellectuals became deeply concerned with the international affairs and the fate of their nation, and assumed the task of writing crusading exhortations against the Ottomans to the leaders of Western Europe. This research focuses particularly on the crusading literature produced by George Trapezuntios and cardinal Bessarion. Whereas the latter was educated in Constantinople, the former was born and grew up on the island of Crete, which was under Venetian rule but maintained a firm Greek cultural identity. Thus, the initial education of Trapezuntios and Bessarion was in accordance with the traditional Byzantine curriculum. However, well before the fall of Constantinople, both of them migrated to Italy, where they engaged with the study of Latin culture. Their exhortations against the Ottomans, which were written in a learned Latin, exhibit a singular amalgamation of both traditions and are a valuable testimony of their life and thoughts. The first part of this study consists of the translation, contextualization and commentary of these orations. The second part is a comparative analysis of the texts focused on the matter of Byzantine identity, the representation of the Ottomans and the way in which the authors conceived the course of history.

ÖZET

Georgios Trapezuntios ve Kardinal Bessarion'un Osmanlılara Karşı Çağrıları: Kimlikler ve Tasvirler

Bizans İmparatorluğu'nun son yıllarında ve çöküşünden sonra, birçok Yunan entelektüel imparatorluğun kaderi ve uluslararası ilişkileri konusunda endişe duymaktaydı ve Batı Avrupa liderlerini Osmanlılara karşı çağrıyı görev bildiler. Bu araştırma özellikle Georgios Trapezuntios ve Kardinal Bessarion'un kaleme almış olduğu haçlı seferi çağrılarına odaklanmaktadır. Kardinal Bessarion eğitimini Konstantinopolis'te almıştır. Georgios Trapezuntios ise Venedik hakimiyetinde olan ancak Yunan kültürel kimliğinin hakim olduğu Girit'te doğmuş ve büyümüştür. Bu sebeple Trapezuntios ve Bessarion'un temel eğitimleri geleneksel Bizans müfredatıyla uyum gösterir. Konstantinopolis'in düşüşünden hayli önce her iki yazar da Latin kültürü üzerine çalışacakları İtalya'ya göç etmiştir. İyi düzeyde bir Latince ile Osmanlılara karşı yazdıkları çağrılar, yazarların hayatlarını ve fikirlerini yansıtan, her iki kültürün de izlerini taşıyan değerli delillerdir. Araştırmanın ilk kısmında, bu söylevlerin çevirilerine, bağlamlanmasına ve yorumlanmasına yer verilmiştir. İkinci kısımda ise Bizans kimliği, Osmanlıların tasviri ve yazarların tarihi nasıl algıladıkları üzerine karşılaştırmalı analiz yapılmıştır.

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A mis padres,

a Lau,

al turco,

a Kuzu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION…….1

CHAPTER 2: GEORGE TRAPEZUNTIOS.....7

2.1 Introduction…….....7

2.2 *Exhortatio ad Alfonsum*……...…13

2.3 *Exhortatio ad Nicolaum*……...…35

2.4 Discussion…….....59

CHAPTER 3: BESSARION…….……...…69

3.1 Introduction…….....69

3.2 *Oratio de periculis imminentibus*…….75

3.3 *Oratio de discordiis sedandis et bello in Turcum decernendo*.....….94

3.4 Discussion…….114

CHAPTER 4: IDENTITIES AND REPRESENTATIONS……...…122

4.1 George Trapezuntios and Bessarion: from patronage to rivalry……125

4.2 Byzantine identity in the exhortations…….……...…127

4.3 The Ottomans…….…….…….…….150

4.4 The conception of history….…….……159

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION……..165

APPENDIX A: FRANCESCO FILELFO'S LETTER TO TRAPEZUNTIOS……169

APPENDIX B: THE EXHORTATIONS OF GEORGE TRAPEZUNTIOS……171

APPENDIX C: THE EXHORTATIONS OF CARDINAL BESSARION……195

REFERENCES…….214

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Cartago es el ejemplo más evidente de una cultura calumniada,
nada podemos saber de ella, nada pudo saber Flaubert,
sino lo que refieren sus enemigos, que fueron implacables.
No es posible que algo parecido ocurra con Turquía.
J. L. Borges, "Estambul"

The reign of the sultan Mehmed II, which comprised decisive victories like the capture of Constantinople, Morea and Negroponte, was marked by the clear resolution of expanding the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire more into the European continent. Although the Ottomans had already penetrated into Thrace a century before and even engaged in war with some European powers during the 14th century, it was certainly because of Mehmed's achievements that they consolidated their supremacy in the region and appeared perhaps for the first time as a serious threat for the Western nations. In order to regain the fallen territories, to protect the Christian lands under attack or to extract some profit out of the circumstances, some of these powers started to consider –and sometimes succeeded in– assembling coalitions against the Ottomans, even with the support of the Papacy on occasion. But yet another battle was played in the intellectual field, for the second half of the 15th century witnessed the emergence of an untold bulk of literature against but also in favor of Mehmed II and the Ottomans. Among the works of the first group, the exhortations for crusading experienced a notable revival with several innovations as well. Not only had the target of the writings changed, since now it was almost exclusively the Ottomans, but also their addressees and their very writers. Indeed, we find that some Byzantine authors were resolutely involved in these affairs and, moved by the threat or the actual seizure of their fatherland and by the endangerment

of the Greek and European cultures, assumed the task of writing exhortations to the leaders of Western Europe. This study focuses on the orations against the Ottomans produced by two of the most eminent Byzantine émigrés in Italy, George Trapezuntios and cardinal Bessarion.

The exhortations against the Ottomans written during the 15th century were based on the well-consolidated medieval tradition of crusading propaganda. This genre included a quite variegated sort of texts: epistles, brief and lengthy sermons (read in liturgical context on campaign and also at home in support of the crusaders), histories and even more literary productions like epic poetry. But ultimately, the text that to a great extent defined the crusading ideals was the discourse pronounced by the pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont in 1095. Since the only records of his sermon are accounts written by historians that disagree in certain points, it is not entirely determined which were the themes originally addressed by the pope. However, from its later reproductions and effects on the population a few central notions can be acknowledged. On the one hand, it seems that one of the main lines of persuasion was the restoration and salvation of the Christian lands from the infidels. And, although some scholars have argued that Urban II, attempting to establish friendly relationships with the Byzantine emperor, had as objective the Eastern Christians in general, there was probably a strong emphasis on the recovering of the Holy Lands.[1] On the other hand, there was also the religious motivation, by which the pope attempted to replace the internecine wars in Europe for a holy mission, a warlike pilgrimage that would bring spiritual profit to its partakers, putting an end to the miseries and sins of their lives. These notions were grounded in an already consolidated anti-Islamic polemic, whose depiction of the Muslim as violent,

[1] Cowdrey, "Pope Urban II's Preaching of the First Crusade".

deceptive and unchaste –the reverse of the Christian virtues– fueled the notion of the crusade as a just war.[2]

During the following centuries, the conception of crusade came to be progressively associated with Latin Christianity that was loyal to the pope and, thus, was extended to campaigns against those whom the Papacy considered as heretics, schismatics and merely political enemies. In practice, however, the selection of these new targets resulted in a transformation of the strategic program that now involved the participation of non-Christian powers. This is how by the 15th century, when crusading started to be conceived mainly as a war against the Ottomans, a global alliance that included Muslim and Orthodox rulers was made possible.[3] The Quattrocento certainly represented a peak in the production of crusading exhortations. The humanist crusade literature, whose production increased considerably after the fall of Constantinople, displayed important differences with the medieval genre. To start with, the target was almost exclusively the Ottomans, while the destination of the crusade moved from the Holy Lands to Constantinople (in order to protect it or, later, recapture it) and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the exhortations were not anymore exclusively of papal or clerical industry, but the humanists had the primacy on the issue; and they furnished the genre with a new spirit, as they appealed to the Classical rather than the medieval forms and imagery. Consequently, these writings were directed to a much narrower audience, to the religious and lay elites which could press the European rulers to engage in military operations against the Ottomans.[4] The exhortations that are the subject of this study must be included in this group of productions.

[2] Daniel, "Crusade Propaganda", 40-55. Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 14-6.
[3] Weber, "Toward a Global Crusade?", 12-4; 30.
[4] Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders", 112-8.

The orations of George Trapezuntios were written in the years before the fall of Constantinople. The first in chronological order is the *Exhortatio ad recuperandam Hierusalem et occupandam Egyptum ac Syriam* (1442), originally addressed to King Alfonso. George would revise the text in the following years and send an adapted version to the Emperor Frederick III in 1452. That same year he composed a completely new oration to Pope Nicholas V, the *Exhortatio ad defendenda pro Europa Hellesponti claustra*. Whereas George's two orations are independent pieces that, despite their common traits, do not constitute a cohesive whole, cardinal Bessarion's were thought from the beginning as part of the same corpus. Thus, the *Oratio de periculis imminentibus* and the *Oratio de discordiis sedandis et bello in Turcum decernendo* form the central part of the author's corpus of *Epistolae et Orationes contra Turcos*, written after the fall of Negroponte, between 1470 and 1471. As we shall see below, the composition and circulation of these four texts present a complex history.

The orations stand out from other exhortative pieces of the period in great part because they are not the creation of Latin scholars, but of Byzantine émigrés settled in Italy. Thus, the writings present a hybrid background, for while they are in many respects products of Western tradition, they also include elements that are typically Byzantine. Therefore, one should expect to find in the texts of George Trapezuntios and Bessarion a peculiar representation of the Ottomans that might resemble or differ from those shaped both by the humanist scholars of Western Europe and by the Greeks that remained in Ottoman-ruled areas. Furthermore, I intend to examine if the authors in question by and large follow the patterns with which the Muslims were depicted in the Middle Ages or if, on the contrary, it is

possible to identify in their writings novel criteria to evaluate the Ottoman adversaries.

While the image of the Ottomans is one of the main objects of this study, the other is related to how the authors perceived their own identity. Indeed, a text whose major concern is otherness seems also appropriate for examining the question of the self. In this connection, I attempt to analyze how proper it is to denominate these authors "Byzantine" or to deem their productions as conveyors of a Byzantine mentality, especially when one considers their origins (Crete for Trapezuntios, Trebizond for Bessarion), their final destination (Italy) and, ultimately, the very collapse of the Byzantine Empire. Nevertheless, it seems certain *a priori* that both intellectuals had close relationships with Constantinople and the Byzantine world in general. Another aspect to be examined is George and Bessarion's positions towards Greek Orthodoxy, considering that they both converted to Catholicism once they settled down in Italy.

Lastly, a third matter to be addressed is the worldview that Trapezuntios and Bessarion developed during the critical days they happened to live in. The political and cultural decline of Byzantium contrasted heavily with the thriving societies of Renaissance Europe on the one hand and with the rising Ottoman Empire on the other. The imminence –and, later, the reality– of the fall of the Byzantine Empire undermined quite ingrained notions of how the world worked and why certain events happened in a given way. Consequently, I expect to assess the conceptions that both authors developed on the agents and causes of history.

Thus, my purpose for this research is two-fold: on the one hand, I intend to offer a contextualization of George Trapezuntios and Bessarion's exhortations against the Ottomans, along with a translation of the texts and a commentary. On the

other, I aim to carry out a comparative analysis centered on the question of Byzantine identity and its relations with European culture and Christianity, on the representations of the Ottomans and on the philosophy of history that permeate their writings. The assumption is made that these pieces show how the authors made use of their Byzantine learning and, at the same time, appropriated the Latin tradition to build their own representations and image of the Ottomans in their singular ways, according to their *Weltanschauung* and political position.

Finally, I would like to make some remarks about terminology. On the one hand, I use the word "Byzantine" when I refer specifically to persons, objects and affairs related to the Byzantine Empire as a state, while the word "Greek" must be understood in an ampler sense, as a term that denominates a continuity that goes from Classical Greece to Byzantium and beyond. Moreover, "Hellenic" refers to the whole cultural production from Ancient and Hellenistic Greece. On the other hand, I employ the word "Turks" to allude to the Ottomans when I am following the point of view of the authors, who perceived their rival as a rather homogeneous group. Lastly, I should note that all the translations from Greek, Latin and Turkish are mine, except where otherwise indicated.

CHAPTER 2

GEORGE TRAPEZUNTIOS

2.1 Introduction

George Trapezuntios belongs to the group of Byzantine intellectuals who, during the Palaiologan period, maintained close relationships with the Western world and with Italy in particular. In his case, the place where he was born and raised had certainly something to do, for the island of Crete, which was under Venetian dominion since the Fourth Crusade, was a center of cultural activity and exchange between Byzantium and the West.[5] In spite of its liminal situation, halfway between two cultures, the population of the island had a definitely Greek sense of belonging, a factor that often entailed difficulties to the Venetian administration, due to the many uprisings it provoked.[6]

George was born in 1395 in Candia into a family that had migrated from Trebizond some generations earlier.[7] It is very possible that he carried out his first years of education in that city as well. However, he would complete his studies later outside the island. When he was 21 years old he was summoned to Venice by Francesco Barbaro, a young patrician and humanist, to work as his Greek scribe. There he started his training in the Latin language under the guidance of different professors and soon achieved great proficiency, a fact that is remarkable considering that at his arrival to Venice he hardly knew a word of Latin or Italian.[8] He started a

[5] It seems that in this heterogeneous environment both Greek and Latin were instructed at schools. Pertusi presents a number of documents that give account of the presence of school teachers of both Greek and Latin in the island. See Pertusi, "Leonzio Pilato a Creta prima del 1358-1359", 370-81.
[6] Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice*, 41-2.
[7] As Monfasani points out, the name with which the scholar signed his works was always "Georgius Trapezuntios Cretensis", the last epithet being the one that actually revealed his place of birth. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 4-5.
[8] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 5-11.

career as teacher and translator and, during the two following decades, continued to serve different patrons and gained prestige in Latin eloquence and rhetoric.[9] Although he always showed pride of his Greek origin, in some respects he eventually experienced a noticeable Latinization. One of these aspects was, of course, religion, for in 1426 he converted to Roman Catholicism, even though his family was not content with the idea.[10]

Nevertheless, as we shall see in the course of this study, we cannot doubt that he maintained until his very last days a strong connection with his native culture. His affection and concern for all what Byzantium represented materialized most notoriously –but not exclusively– in his diverse calls for a crusade, which, to a greater or lesser extent, were always directed to the succor of the Byzantines and the opposition to the Ottomans and Islam.[11] In 1428 he wrote his first exhortation (in Latin, as would also be the subsequent ones) calling for the rescue of Constantinople.[12] The piece is not extant but Legrand identifies it with the discourse entitled *Georgii Trapezuntii pro religione christiana adversus Turcas* included in a manuscript of the library of canons regular of Saint Anthony of Venice, which was unfortunately lost in a fire.[13] However, Trapezuntios had sent a copy of the text to his friend Francesco Filelfo in Bologna, and thanks to the latter's surviving response letter we can get a general notion of its content:

> I have read myself the discourse that you sent me paying my full attention, and I have given it to the learned men here to read, for you seem to have sent it to us here above all things so that many others read the text. And I thought it would be useful, so that –if any of the deliberative discourses were a furtherance for these matters– the princes who are capable of doing what is due can take material from your

[9] Wilson, "George of Trebizond and Early Humanist Rhetoric", 372.
[10] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 21-2.
[11] However, his position on the matter underwent a significant rearrangement after the capture of Constantinople, a subject that will be discussed in chapter 4.
[12] Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 434.
[13] Legrand, *Cent-dix lettres grecques de François Filelfe*, 8.

> discourses. The citizens and orators from here have read the discourse and they approved your writings. For they also believe these things: that one must resist the enemies and neglect nothing. They all consider that you have made the work of a skillful rhetorician and also of a noble, loyal to his race and well-intended man; and that now especially you should recommend and write such things, before the Constantinopolitans are in danger and before the Christians take no heed at all and refuse to listen to those who send embassies for help. Or do we not know that, if the Turks become the masters of Constantinople, they will certainly be masters of the sea? And the Venetians themselves, and with them rapidly all the Italians, will be in danger against this power above all things. Therefore, now is certainly the proper time to prevent the enemy from becoming big, and it is easy. For, if that infidel becomes capable of having a cavalry, an infantry and a naval force, it will be very difficult to oppose him and most hopeless to win. Wherefore I fear that the Christians, being careless, suffer the same as those who, because of living in bad conditions, fall into an incurable dropsy or pleurisy. For, as it is easy for them at first to be healthy carrying out an hygienic way of living, later on this turns out to be impossible, because they are utterly conquered by the disease and in vain the doctor advices to administer a drug. Therefore, if the remedies do not benefit those who have such an illness and besides produce harm, also those who are now careless about the Constantinopolitans, if they allow the enemy to grow bigger, they will be in danger of incurable things. However, it is always good and just to give advice and to try to find succor for these affairs. And if this was not burdensome to the princes, many would be those who speak of it and from many the decision of the things needed would be concluded more easily...[14]

From this testimony we can infer a number of facts. Firstly, that by 1428 George had already acquired oratory skills and a decent proficiency in the Latin language (or an excellent one, if we are to take Filelfo's words at face value). Moreover, he surely had an acute insight of Byzantium's circumstances at such an early point, when the fall of Thessalonica and the defeat of Varna had not occurred yet. Indeed, the letter anticipates quite precisely the direction in which the events would move in the future: the advance of the Ottomans, the endangerment of Constantinople and the neglect of the Christian world. This prediction could well be the product of George's mind, replicated by Filelfo. The latter also indicates the intended audience for the

[14] The Greek text, edited by Legrand (*Cent-dix lettres grecques de François Filelfe*, 5-6), is reproduced in Appendix A.

discourse, which continued to be the same in the following decades: the leaders of Europe, whether secular or spiritual. The persistence of this attitude must be taken as evidence of George's true preoccupation and commitment to his fatherland. Finally, we can recognize some ideas to which the Cretan would resort and further develop in his later writings. It is manifest that a central argument contained in the oration was that, if Constantinople fell to the Ottomans, their empire would turn into a thalassocracy. As we shall see, this is one of the central ideas of George's exhortation to Pope Nicholas V in 1452. Furthermore, the Cretan uses the metaphor of disease and doctors in the exhortations to King Alfonso and to Emperor Frederick III (*cf.* paragraph 30), referring to the same subject as in Filelfo's letter: the approach of the Turks and the carelessness of the European princes. Thus, we can assume that the Italian scholar is actually reproducing a point of the original text. George, in his turn, would find better opportunities to make a stand, as his career brought him closer to the powerful.

Trapezuntios eventually entered the service of Pope Eugene IV and established himself in Bologna and later in Florence. When King Alfonso of Aragon captured the city of Naples in 1442, Trapezuntios saw in him a leader in whom he could deposit his hopes for the salvation of Constantinople. Consequently, in 1443 he composed the exhortation *Ad recuperandam Hierusalem et occupandam Egyptum ac Syriam* addressed to the king, which also has a manifest encomiastic intention. We have no evidence that this first composition was ever sent, but this doubtlessly happened with the second version written during the first years of Nicholas V's pontificate.[15] Finally, on the occasion of Frederick III's visit to Rome for his coronation in 1452, George produced a third redaction of the text addressed to the

[15] Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 422.

emperor. While none of these writings had the expected effect, they reveal much of George's thoughts and intentions, which will be discussed in due time.

With the death of Pope Eugene IV in 1447, the papal seat was occupied by Nicholas V, whose governance was marked by his humanistic spirit and his determination of developing the arts and literature in Rome. George was included in this policy, as we can observe from the translations he made for the pontiff between 1447 and 1452.[16] However, after years being one of the Pope's favorite translators, he started to lose his favor. According to Monfasani, this was somewhat related with the character of George, who got involved in several arguments with the personalities of the curia. At the end of 1451, George completed the translation and commentary of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, but the evaluation that Iacobus Cremoniensis made of his commentary by order of the pope was very negative. He then called for a public debate with the reviewer, but Nicholas did not consent, a fact that certainly maddened George to the point that he refused to make another translation for the Pope. This attitude, which displeased the pontiff and rescinded the patronage of cardinal Bessarion, was topped up with his fight with Poggio Bracciolini, which even went physical. In consequence, George was put in jail but was released soon after, when he formally asked Poggio's pardon. In any case, he was no longer counting on the Pope's favor.[17]

Thus, in June of 1452, Trapezuntios left Rome and arrived at Naples, where he started working for Alfonso V as translator –although he never acquired an

[16] Among the translated works we can count some of John Chrysostom's homilies, Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelica*, Cyril of Alexandria's *Super evangelium Iohannis*, Aristotle's zoological works, Plato's *Laws* and *Epinomis* and some orations of Gregory Nazianzenus. The prefaces of these translations are edited or consigned in Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*.
[17] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 104-11.

official post in his court.[18] It was in this context that he wrote the exhortation *Ad defendenda pro Europa Hellesponti claustra* addressed to Nicholas V. The relationship between them was not at its best and, as Monfasani points out, the Cretan believed that the oration was yet another reason for gaining the pontiff's hostility.[19] As George himself expresses in the exhortation, he had already sent a writing to Nicholas in the early years of his pontificate calling for the defense of Constantinople. This and the pope's possible reactions to the text will be discussed later on. But in truth, by 1452 the pontiff had already assumed a definitive position towards the question of the Byzantines: in response to the message sent by the anti-unionist sector of the clergy in which they expressed their firm opposition to the agreement reached at Florence, Nicholas communicated his decision of not giving any aid to Byzantium.[20] In a rather ironic twist, even though George was regarded as one of the greatest rhetoricians of his time and his writings on the matter influenced scholars of the following centuries, in the end all his efforts did not persuade any of his addressees to take the Cross against the Turks and save Byzantium.

I base the translation and study of both exhortations on the critical edition provided by Monfasani in *Collectanea Trapezuntiana: texts, documents and bibliographies of George of Trebizond*.[21] With the exception of two cases, which are otherwise indicated, I follow Monfasani in his edition of the text. As has been mentioned, since the exhortation to Alfonso V and Frederick III was written in three versions, the text presents some alternative forms, which are included in the critical apparatus of Monfasani's edition. I decided to translate and address those variations

[18] During his stay in Naples he translated Cyril of Alexandria's *Thesaurus* and pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium* and dedicated some of his old works to the Aragonese king.
[19] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 128.
[20] Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent*, 30.
[21] The original Latin text is reproduced in Appendix B.

that are particularly meaningful, leaving aside the changes in the titles and appellations to the rulers and other minor details. In order not to overload the text, from now on I will refer to the texts simply as *Ad Alfonsum* and *Ad Nicholaum.*

2.2 *Exhortatio ad Alfonsum*

Exhortation by George Trapezuntios to the Most Serene Prince and Most Excellent Lord Sir Alfonso, most illustrious King of Hispania Tarraconensis, Apulia and Sicily to recover Jerusalem and occupy Egypt and Syria[22]

(1) Reflecting much and often on our times, if they have produced or are likely to produce anything great and illustrious and comparable to the deeds of the old days, it usually comes to my mind, most humane prince, that the whole memory of Antiquity can be easily surpassed by you in the greatness of deeds and glory.[23] This matter, since it is great and magnificent, finally led me to write briefly to you, through whom I think that in our times Antiquity can be defeated with all praise. Not because this matter escapes you, who I do not doubt outdoes all men in prudence and who, after your virtue and good fortune led you to the government of the Italian[24] states, I

[22] Such is the title of the second version of the oration. The first has some differences in the epithets of both the King and George Trapezuntios, and an indication that it was written the year Alfonso captured Naples (1443). The title of the third redaction is: "Exhortation by George Trapezuntios, secretary of the Most Holy Lord Our Pope, to the Divine Frederick III, Emperor of the Romans, Semper Augustus, to recover the Holy Places".

[23] The comparison with Antiquity is a recurrent motif throughout this text. George frequently refers to the non-heroic character of his times but, rather than getting lost in mere critique, he manifests that the appropriate occasion to surpass the deeds of the old days has arrived. Accordingly, it is notable how the past kingdoms, rulers and history in general are used in the oration as criteria for assessing the present and are perceived even as a burden. This works naturally as a rhetorical device to ensure his addressees that the recapture of the Holy Land will grant them a place in History.

[24] In the version written to Frederick III, George simply writes "maiorum rerum", *i.e.* "the greastest affairs". Most of the differences between the three variants of the text are concerned with the direct appeals to the addressees and the sporadic allusions to their achievements, but, as will be seen, the oration presents a rather impersonal character, what certainly facilitated its later reutilization.

believe has applied all the spirit[25] to it; but in truth, to incite all your intentions to be directed now to that matter, for the life of man is short. But lest I delay any longer your ears with ambiguous words, if I will first refer to this matter as great and large as it is, then I will explain what can be done most easily on account of its greatness especially by you.

(2) The Christian faith, most illustrious prince,[26] the Christian faith, I say, you can enlarge and strengthen it with your weapons.[27] This affair, as great as it is, as grand, as magnificent, as worthy of a Christian prince, is so clear that does not need more words, since no one can acquire worthiness from its speech. For the things that are open because of their nature and worthiness do not tend more to be exalted than to be sunk down if someone adorns them with a long speech. And just as someone who wants to shine speaking of the sun seems to confirm he is insignificant; so too, in regard to someone who attempts to persuade the Christian princes that the greatest thing is to preserve, enlarge, defend our faith, and truly to destroy, diminish, break the power and resources of the infidels, he must be judged to have deviated at length, since he wants to assert with words a matter that is clearer than that light. [28] (3) On which account it is only left to me to confirm that in our times you can accomplish easily –if you directed your intentions towards it– such a great thing (for I dare to say

[25] The word *animus* is repeatedly used by the author. In general, I chose to translate it with the somewhat vague term "spirit", but it can adopt very precise meanings according to the context. Whereas in some instances it must be taken without doubt in a spiritual or moral sense (and, thus, it could be translated as "soul"), the great majority of occurrences refer to the "mind", the "intellect" or maybe more accurately the "will" or "disposition" (*cf. L&S s.v.* II; B).

[26] As one might expect, in the third version the text addresses the "imperator".

[27] I translate by "weapons" the term *armae*, which could also allude to the "implements of war", "means of protection" and even "troops" (*cf. L&S s.v.* I, B; II, b).

[28] These declarations seem to be in contradiction with what we might expect was the typical opinion of a rhetorician. However, it is clearly an example of false modesty, for this digression on the value of deeds and words is just a way to begin his own oration without seeming too arrogant or presumptuous. In fact, in the exhortation addressed to Pope Nicholas V (5) George attributes a great power to speech, capable of defining the glory or dishonor of its protagonists. Likewise, his *Rhetoricum libri V* opens with a reflection on the capital importance of oratory for all the liberal arts (See the first page of the edition of 1523).

it like this) as it was never done and not even imagined in the old times. But in truth, in order to accomplish that more easily, it seems that it has to be repeated a little higher.[29]

(4) Almost no one ignores that Judea and Egypt are and have always been of all the regions the most fertile, the most convenient and the best.[30] But Judea has also been already from the times of Abraham without interruption the most holy place and so much deserving of veneration by the Christians that men of all races and from all parts come together there to kiss the stones of those places, and this is not contrary to justice.[31] For the salvation and the glory of men has arisen from there, has been immolated there, has been consummated there. Therefore, most impurely for the

[29] After all this obscure introduction, the author will reveal the motive of his oration. The term *altius* ("higher") here could refer to the intensity of the action (therefore, he would say something that has been already said in a louder voice, more emphatically) or to its style (thus, the self-acclaimed orator would be the most capable of putting in proper words thoughts that had been already expressed).

[30] Indeed, the Nile valley and Mesopotamia, which probably George bears in mind when he mentions Syria, were disputed territories since Antiquity because of their agricultural potential. During the Early Byzantine period, the crop of the Egyptian province was the main source of sustenance for the inhabitants of the Empire and, especially, of the highly populated capital. The definitive loss of the region to the Arabs during the reign of Heraclius was one of the main factors that obliged the Byzantines to restructure their system of grain cultivation and supply. Teall, "The Grain Supply of the Byzantine Empire, 330-1025", 90. In regards to the Holy Land, we will see in the later discussion the role that it had in Alfonso's program and George's possible reasons to call for its recovery. Frederick III, for his part, had travelled to the Holy Land in 1436 and it is possible that George intended to exploit that interest in this oration. Koller, *Kaiser Friedrich III*, 50.

[31] Indeed, Abraham settles in Canaan by God's command (*Ge.* 13, 13-18). Mount Moriah is also where Abraham was supposed to sacrifice his own son (*Ge.* 22, 1-18) and where Solomon would later construct his temple (*2 Ch.* 3, 1). The site had an added value for Islam, since this was the place from where the tradition said that Mohammed had ascended to heaven (after the Muslim conquest, the Dome of the Rock was built to guard it). A more significant site for Christianity was naturally the Holy Sepulcher, which contained many monuments and relics of the Passion. Evidently, the holiness of the place was worthy of the behaviors described by Trapezuntios, and the reference to stones (*lapides*) can easily be associated with these locations. The holiness of the area can be assessed, for instance, from the depiction of its multi-religious flow of devotees made by the Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela in the 12th century: "In Jerusalem is the great church called the Sepulcher, and here is the burial place of Jesus, unto which the Christians make pilgrimages (…) And the Gate of Gushpat, which is the Gate of Jehoshaphat, facing our ancient Temple, now called Templum Domini. Upon the site of the sanctuary Omar ben al Khataab erected an edifice with a very large and magnificent cupola, into which the Gentiles do not bring any image or effigy, but they merely come there to pray. In front of this place is the western wall, which is one of the walls of the Holy of Holies (…) and thither come all the Jews to pray before the wall of the court of the Temple" (translation by Masa'ot shel Rabi Binyamin, 83). Besides Jerusalem, as George will mention afterwards, the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the city of Hebron was yet another important pilgrimage center.

shame of all Christians the domination of the infidels and the infamy hold these so sacred places. You can, if you turn your attention to it, easily deliver them.[32]

(5) Wherefore I affirm that nothing greater, nothing more divine, nothing more glorifying for you and your people, nothing more profitable or worthy for the Christian race, nothing –lastly– more illustrious ever existed and, as might be predicted, will never exist. For what would be more honorable than setting free the Most Holy Places from the enemies of Christ, subjecting them to the Christian princes? What more magnificent for a prince than overthrowing the servile domination, the impure tyranny, the filthy empire of the barbarians?[33] What more profitable than subduing for one's own regions abundant in all resources?[34] For besides the convenience and the fertility of the places, the riches of almost the whole world are accumulated there now for many years. And what must affect the Christian princes most sharply, arouse them most vehemently, urge them with a certain might to take revenge: the silver and the gold of the Christians themselves is given to them so that we get revenge for each and every injustice committed by them to us.

(6) For not only they slay the Christians, torturing them with jails, chains and rags, but even –what should seem much more grievous and shameful to any judicious man– mocking and despising us no more than our savior and Lord and his Cross,

[32] The version addressed to Frederick III reads: "You can, together with those whom you will summon to such a great affair with your sole authority, easily deliver them".

[33] The target of the exhortation is finally elucidated in paragraphs 4 and 5: the Egyptian Mamluks, with whom Alfonso maintained ambiguous relationships, as we shall see later. Whereas the terms *dominatus* and *imperium* do not have a negative connotation per se, the orator also denominates the Egyptian rule a *tyrannis* and makes definitely clear his opinion with the complements of the nouns. Most significantly, he refers to them as *barbari*, a word with a long tradition in Greco-Roman culture, and describes their rule as *servilis.* This association of the Mamluks with slavery will be amplified later on.

[34] Both this text and that addressed to Nicholas V highlight the material and practical benefits of a crusade against the Muslims, apart from the glory and divine grace that it could bring about. However, unlike the case of the oration to the Pope, here George insists heavily on the wealth (*opes, divitae*) that will be available to whoever conquers Egypt and Judea. Therefore, it seems that the Cretan, acknowledging his addressee, attempted to provide in a very realistic attitude more seductive reasons for the crusade, more suitable for the intentions of a king and more tangible than abstract notions like glory and salvation.

they spit in the face of the Christians, following the harsh insult of the Jews to Christ.[35] This might be for the Christian princes no more a matter of dishonor than of eternal condemnation. For if anyone neglects to succor –even though he is able to– a man oppressed by injustice because he prefers to look after his own business rather than another's, as much as he is reproached for being and betraying that man, so much is worthy of torment that one who, knowing that a non-small part of the world is indignantly oppressed and not ignoring that Christ is crucified daily (for those of us who believe in Him are His members), disdains it nevertheless and neglects it, especially because he cannot do another thing more profitable.

(7) But these things, someone might say, we all know; we do not ignore the dignity, the magnificence, the holiness of the matter; we ascertain that the riches for those victorious will be there almost infinite; we are not unaware that that is the highest and greatest realm; and this is what frightens us the most from that affair. There is no one who does not wish to surpass in wealth, glory and power all the kings that existed or will exist, especially because he does not doubt that this will serve him as much as possible for attaining also the heavenly glory, for which alone many of the greatest of us have met death. Would that such was our spirit, so that we preferred the eternal to these perishable matters! But with a certain deficiency of the spirit we embrace this life beyond measure. Wherefore it occurs that, since we are afraid and hopeless about victory, we do not dare to support such a great, steep and difficult affair. (8) If these and other things similar were said according to the truth, although I could object that the great and noble deeds cannot be accomplished without work and danger, nevertheless I acknowledge that I would not dare to write these things. But it has happened with this affair what never happened with another:

[35] *Ev.Matt* 26, 67.

that –because the highest glory and profit will be attained out of it– there is even an unheard willingness,[36] so much that none of these three, glory, profit, willingness, I can corroborate to have come together thus at once in such a great affair. And I dare say that there will not ever be such a high, such a noble and, lastly, such an admirable thing.

(9) But in truth, seeing that it is agreed upon the glory, whether of this life or heavenly, and upon the profit, let us consider how favorable, how easy and how great this thing is. Great is that empire, large are those regions, an enormous multitude of men inhabits that place. But from there, how many things can also be prepared! For if you undertake this affair with all your spirit, concern and resolution, who will not follow you? The Supreme Pontiff, who is said to have been inflamed of longing for this affair even before his pontificate and who desires this now more than ever,[37] will accompany you not only with military forces, but also –what I myself esteem very highly– with his blessing and continual prayer. The most illustrious prince of Liguria and the rest of Italy will not be absent;[38] the Hispania Tarraconensis will follow your

[36] Considering that in 1444 the efforts for a combined attack against the Muslims finally took form in the so-called Crusade of Varna, George's claim is not that far-fetched. Therefore, there was a certain willingness from the secular rulers and the clergy. Moreover, in both this oration and the following the Cretan depicts a multitude of common people quite enthusiastic about such a task (*cf.* for instance *Ad Nicolaum* 28).

[37] As Monfasani states, since the Pope was not yet in good relations with King Alfonso when George wrote this oration in 1442, this claim seems rather illogical. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 51. Apart from that, it is true that Eugene IV was a fierce defender of a crusade against Islam, and even was one of the principal agents in the organization of the failed Crusade of Varna of 1444 (*cf. Ad Nicolaum Quintum* 3)

[38] By referring to the *Liguriae princeps*, the author doubtlessly meant the Genoese doge, a dignity that was being monopolized at the time by the Fregoso family and that had assumed some symbolic and practical features of the figure of the prince under the reign of Tommaso. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 264, 284. Be that as it may, the truth is that George's suggestion seems also hardly realistic, for by the time he wrote the first version of the text the relationships between Alfonso and the Genoese were at the very least tense. Indeed, the latter, who had even captured Alfonso in a naval confrontation a decade earlier, supported his rival for the throne of Naples, René of Anjou, and did not sign peace until April of 1443. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 284. On the other hand, the version addressed to Frederick III reads: "The most illustrious prince of Aragon and Sicily will not be absent. The flourishing Republic of the Venetians, most serviceable, will offer itself the first for this affair. The Genoese and Florentines will not abandon you. The most glorious kings and dukes of Transalpine Gaul will follow you willingly." This affirmation is somewhat more reasonable, since by the time of

authority. (10) What else? So great is this affair, in such a way pleasing to all Christians, that if only some prince started to prepare with a firm spirit the things that are convenient for such a great and distinguished deed, all the Christian kings, all the princes, all the peoples, everyone, I say, from all parts, both in a private and public capacity, will attend together and ask, or rather, they will certainly beg to be admitted as fellows in this divine militia. It is evident from this that it will be in this manner, that all the Christians, with whomever anyone talked about this matter, many desire to approach the highest dangers, some even meet death on account of this affair, that they complain about our times (I will speak very boldly) and that even sometimes the princes of the Christians hold back because they are occupied with minor affairs or among them, they disregard the war that will grant the highest booty. Thus, any Christian ruler, any free nation and powerful man would join this transition and I think that he should not deliberate whether he can have allies for this more than to deliberate whom to choose.

(11) But I should have liked only for you to take hold of the honor of such a great affair, for you those riches, for you those enormous kingdoms. For you are capable of accomplishing even much greater and more arduous things.[39] For you surpass others in intelligence, you excel at military affairs, and you are by far superior because of the greatness of your spirit.[40] For –who doubts it?– if you alone, most humane prince, undertake this affair with all your spirit, you will have immediately by your side the most glorious prince of Liguria here, the doge of the

Frederick III the Holy Roman Empire was not at its peak and the ruler was occupied mainly with the Burgundian and Swiss frontiers and internal unrest. Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 352-60.

[39] In the version to Frederick III: "For you are capable of summoning both the other Christian nations and the whole Italy even to accomplish much greater and more arduous things".

[40] The second and third versions, addressed to Alfonso and Frederick III respectively, stress their role as unifier: "For he surpasses the other regions of the world, he excels at military affairs, and he is by far superior because of his greatness of spirit. In truth, it is in your power to lead the whole Italy into this".

Venetians[41] there, and –before and after all of them– so much blessing as assistance of the Supreme Pontiff. Only the commencement of such a thing needs to be done. For so I believe: if any of you three who I just mentioned starts to deliberate with the remaining two about this affair, provided that he acts from his heart and proves to be entirely willing to do that, he will be seen as encouraging to the others no more than being impelled himself by them. (12) Therefore would it not be easiest the preparation for that affair, for which you have at hand fellows, you have forces and you have, if you wanted, enough resources? For no one will judge that the King of Liguria together with you and with the blessing of the Supreme Pontiff do not suffice for this most divine work. And if the enemies of Christ hear that these have united (I will speak what I feel, and this is where the glory of the triumph is diminished), they will not await, but will be put to flight at the tidings of the mere preparation.

(13) For what reason will it be like this? It will come to their memory that Italy has always been unbeaten by arms; they will remember that those same regions have been subject often to the Italians; they will meditate that never has crossed towards them from Europe with an army a skillful leader that has not brought back with him the triumph.[42] But now, why do I remember these old things? How many times were they completely defeated by the Christians themselves? How many times by the Gauls? I would be lengthy if I explained the history extensively, but it is so clear that the matter does not need words. Therefore, those who remember that previously they have been often surpassed, defeated and slaughtered by us will

[41] The Venetians (and, for that matter, the Florentines also) were against Alfonso in his capture of Naples, and they did not come to terms with him until 1450. Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous*, 34.

[42] George probably has in mind the glorious centuries of the Roman Empire when Egypt and Judea were its annexed provinces and the Crusader States of the 12th and 13th centuries. However, his portrayal of an undefeated Italy is far from realistic. One should consider, for instance, that from the 7th century onwards Sicily was under the power of diverse Muslim rulers, not to mention other European and Asian invaders.

assuredly turn their backs before even seeing the gleam of the sword. “Sword” I said? With whips, with whips, immortal God! If they learn that troops of Italians armed solely with whips attack Egypt, the fugitive slaves tremble and search for holes where to hide or they offer their unarmed hands and place their necks under the yoke. For, on what grounds could they expect to have the victory from the Italians?[43]

(14) “Their army has more skilled leaders”.[44] But in this affair I would easily choose even the common soldiers from Italy rather than the best commanders of the Egyptians. “They use more solid weapons”. But just as Italy excels other nations at war implements, so the Egyptians –be it because they do not have the materials or because there was less need of weapons in this unwarlike region– are surpassed by almost all the others. “Their soldiers are better in body, spirit and skill.” But they are all slaves, not only those who carry out the military affair, but even those who rule the state. In truth, no one ignores that the men who are oppressed by servitude degenerate by themselves, so to speak, and these have all been enslaved; or rather, in truth, it is clear that they are slaves those who nevertheless attained great things through the office of that servitude. Since the dejected spirit has become insensible, it can hardly regain for itself the vigor in the former condition. Hence it follows that, because they leap from servitude to ruling and so much they rule being slaves as they are enslaved ruling, they do not grow in virtue but puff up with arrogance.

[43] Here and later the author will present an ignoble image of the Egyptians, exploiting their origins as a slave soldier caste. In effect, the recruitment of non-Muslim children to turn them into slave –the actual meaning of the term *mamluk*– began at a large scale in the 9th century under the Abbasid Caliphate. This warlike class eventually gained political power and managed to overthrow the Ayyubid and establish their own dynasty. Ayalon, “Mamlukiyyat”, 323-8.

[44] The following section is structured as a dialogue with an imaginary –and ideal– interlocutor (*adversarius fictivus*) who makes objections that are lastly convenient for the development of the arguments.

(15) “But great is their multitude, enormous their number, fortified their cities, and furnished both with nature and hand and also warlike engines”.[45] All these things are in such manner on our favor that, if the power was given to me by Divine Providence to inflict their empire to such condition and situation that they could be defeated more easily, I would not desire any other situation of their circumstances. I acknowledge that their regions are wide, I do not deny that their cities are great, I am not unaware that a great multitude of men inhabit those places. But in truth, the whole multitude of them is divided in two parts: one is made of slaves, which afflicts the peoples exceedingly with harsh servitude; the other, whose number is almost infinite, is made of enslaved peoples, which forthwith will expect to shake off the so unjust, so hard, so shameful yoke of servitude, and although with too little strength (for they are all effeminate in the inside because of the lasting servitude), nevertheless they will be favorable with their spirits and promises, particularly the big part of them who are Christians, disturbed by those barbarians not only with all the injuries but even with torments.[46] (16) Thus that multitude together with all the fugitive slaves is on our side, because from that place it is totally known that among them it is established by law, as everyone who arrived to those regions has related, that no one, except a slave, can take up arms for war. This law is observed with such attentiveness that, even when everything is disordered in an enormous commotion,

[45] *Natura* could refer here to the resources available in the cities or even its power (*cf. DMLBS s.v.* 8). The term *manus* clearly functions as metonymy of person and alludes here to the armed forces.
[46] The writer makes here an ethnographic excursus in the Herodotean fashion. Just as the Mamluks passed from enslavement to govern, so too their society is organized in the same manner, with servants that enslave their own and foreign peoples. Among them, Trapezuntios counts Christian subjects, whose integrity was, because of this, debased. Slavery is naturally one of the main themes of philosophy and literature from Classical Greece onwards. Although George does not seem to share the opinion that slavery is part of the natural order of society and that there are some who are destined to serve, he certainly acknowledges here, as Homer does, that “the wide-eyed Zeus takes away half of the excellence of a man when the day seizes him under servitude” (*Od.* 17, 322-3). Moreover, just as slaves were regarded as inferior beings in comparison to free men, so was the case with women in the tradition of Classical thought, particularly because they could not exercise rights and fulfill their own will, but had to abide the others’. This is the reason why the author calls them *effeminati.*

the people look inactively at the battles of the slaves between them. This is established by them in an inviolable way, because they do not ignore which attitude towards the slaves must have those who were born free and are oppressed by their slaves most shamefully. Thus all the force of the Egyptians, which oppresses the Holy Places for the dishonor of the Christians, is made of slaves, whose strength actually, as long as nobody opposes it, does not seem to be nothing. Truly, if an appropriate preparation against them is done, they will fall upon each other. For those who, after being seized from very diverse nations and sold, are forced under a single authority cannot be united. For which reason it occurs that often, when dissension rises, they fight even among each other.

(17) Add to this that it is well known that many of them have been Christians. It is necessary that those who in servitude have been brought to that condition and to infidelity are agitated by stimuli of the conscience.[47] For it, our inner judge, namely our conscience, has such a strength that no one, when acting badly, can release himself nor is as much disturbed as is detained by a greater guilt nor thinks –and would think correctly– that all the inconvenient things that befell him in life come forth to him because of his sins. However, the one that denies our Lord Christ, when the perils threaten, I believe that he is terrified even of his own shadow. Because of these things it will happen that as soon as a fleet of Christians who are against them moves towards those regions, some throw themselves to hiding holes with desperation, others, awaiting still the mercy of the savior, seize the weapons against

[47] George often appears as a vehement believer of conversion to Catholic Christianity (as we shall see, for instance, in *Ad Nicolaum* 12 in regard to the Orthodox Greeks). This was demonstrated not only in his unconditional support for the Union of Ferrara-Florence, but also –and most notably– in his later attempts to convince Mehmed II that Christianity was the true religion and that by embracing it he would become the ruler of the whole world (see for example *On the Divinity of Manuel* in Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 564-74. Very much connected to this is Trapezuntios' own experience (indeed, he himself converted in 1426 and has several writings defending his decision, like the treaty *Contra Graecos* sent to John Cuboclesios, *cf. PG* 161, 769-828) and his apocalyptic understanding of history, according to which in the end Christianity was destined to prevail.

their own kind to be saved, and some are found who believe they will have attained the indulgence from our Lord if they die shedding the blood of the infidels.

(18) But let them be unanimous, let them be concordant, let the whole multitude of them unite. Nevertheless, it will be the easiest thing for the Italians and the Tarragonese, who in stratagem, who in warlike virtue, who in their constant exercise of war surpass all men, to overthrow the Oriental nations,[48] particularly the Egyptians, who were very often defeated by them. For when did a skillful military leader, I do not say against the Egyptians but to the whole Asia, cross over together with forty thousand soldiers (for more than that number never crossed)[49] and did not achieve victory? To be sure, I do not see by which means those unwarlike and unarmed men could withstand the attack of the Italians and Spaniards. What did I say? To withstand? The brightness, by the God of truth, the brightness of the weapons they would not be able to look upon, those who might be called women rather than men, those who have always feared greatly when a corps crossed over from Europe towards them with a small amount, those who often were defeated, vanquished and slaughtered by very few, those who are conscious of their strengths but are frightened of everything. (19) Have not they prepared these days a fleet against the Rhodians with great madness?[50] They were threating even to transfer the island itself, uprooted from the middle of the sea, to Egypt. See, I pray, what

[48] In a rhetorical procedure that will be more evident in the following oration, the author calls the enemies with the general appellative "Orientales gentes", thus structuring the political field in a bipartite simplifying worldview.

[49] As Monfasani notes, this is more or less the number of forces with which Alexander the Great crossed through the Hellespont according to Plutarch (*Alex.* 17), Arrianus (*An.* 1, 11, 3) and Diodorus Siculus (17, 17, 3-4). Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 432. The reference would be easily understood by the learned and it would anticipate the introduction of Alexander as a model of ruler and conqueror in the following sections of the oration.

[50] According to Rossi, in 1440 eighteen Egyptian galleys sent by sultan Jakmak az-Zahir devastated Castellorizzo and then moved towards Rhodes, where it was fought back by the fleet of the order of the Hospitallers. Whereas in the end the latter were victorious, the defeat was not as overwhelming as the Cretan depicts it. Rossi, "The Hospitallers at Rhodes, 1421-1523", 319.

followed. After they comprehended that a corps strong enough had been gathered from the Rhodians for the defense, stricken by fear, arranging a truce they asked for peace. Therefore, those who are not ventured by any means to advance ready to wage war, but most especially to keep off it, will they withstand the gathered army of your soldiers? And those who feared that the Rhodian cohort stirred up against them attacked incessantly, will they await the unbeaten forces of your people? Oh, enormous dishonor of the Christians! Oh, engraved and inveterate infamy! Oh, greatest ignominy, in such a way branded in our faces that it would not be erased, unless you princes take up arms against the filthy enemies of Christ!

(20) Unwarlike enemies of the Cross hold the most fertile regions. We, on account of a minimal thing, contend fiercely with one another. Fugitive slaves, the filthiest slaves oppress Judea, where the Patriarchs were born and buried, where the prophets foretold our salvation; Judea, I say, second paternal incarnation of the Savior Himself, dwelling place of the Virgin. And we, just as if in nothing this matter concerned the Christians, will we not be affected? For such a long time with the most harsh and indignant domination the most slothful men maltreat Jerusalem, where the Lord had his passion, where our salvation was born, brought up and consummated. Will we sit and gape or rise up one against the other in opposition to justice and law? (21) And we, who should give up not only our properties, but also our children, wives, fatherland, blood and lastly our soul for the sake of the freedom and dignity of those places, now that eternal praise, perpetual fame, greatest honor, unheard riches, power, kingdoms, empires and at the same time everything that is or even is called good flow together from there, will we be indifferent? And if not by the reputation of the affair and the glory, will we not be affected yet by its profit, by the great power of gold, silver and precious stones?

(22) And who will judge that such a great sloth of the Christians should not be reproached? Once upon a time, for the sake of virtue and fame men used to endure dangers, disregard death itself too and despise this perishable life, while protecting their own people, their fatherland, their honor. But truly those golden times have already passed.[51] We are all captivated by the name of profit, we long for kingdoms, we dream about empires. And do we not sail these seas for the sake of these things? Do we not wander through these lands? Are these places inaccessible, these forests, these mounts untouched? We desire these things; in that place they are the greatest. They captivate us; in that place we spend days and nights with great abundancy of them. These we will easily acquire if we translated our mind from the internecine wars of Italy towards there; and to these fair things the supreme and perpetual glory will accompany us. (23) Everything is so enormous in this affair, the honor, the glory, the riches, the kingdoms, the empires, that, when I think how much more of these the princes will obtain, everything seems the greatest to me. Therefore, since some are inflamed by glory even to despise death, while others endure the greatest works for the desire of human things, that is, wealth and power, will we not embrace this affair, which offers both at their highest? And we, who, moved mostly by small things, undertake businesses bigger than what we can bear, will we account of small importance this very splendid deed? And we, who, led by a little hope, sometimes achieve difficult things, will we esteem little this passage having a certain hope of

[51] George appeals here to the *topos* of the Golden Age ("aurea tempora"), but instead of claiming that the reign of his addressees would lay the groundwork for the return of those heroic times –as was common in Classical literature, like Vergil's *Ecl.* 4–, he has a somewhat more realistic attitude. In effect, he acknowledges that the time of war for mere honor and fame is long gone, and there is no hint in the text that it might be restored. On the contrary, he brings up an element that is significantly absent in the representations of the Golden Age that have survived from Antiquity: the *utilitas* (profit). Thus, George manages to innovate and adapt a Classical element to what he feels is the mentality of his time and presents motives that are attractive for the rulers of Europe and their subjects.

victory?[52] Will the delightfulness of the places not inflame the hedonistic men? Will the gold of the whole world that has been accumulated there for many years now not inflame the greedy, the size and multitude of the regions those desirous of ruling, and the holiness of the places the religious? (24) The enemies, I say, the enemies themselves provoke us with injuries, irritate us with threats, augment their luxury and impel their arrogance spitting in the face of the Christians. How can you see this deed, oh sun? Or why do you not turn into darkness, into darkness, I say, that in which you turned into when you had seen in those same places the most beautiful face of the Creator confounded with spittle?[53] Or is it on this account that you stay open, so that we Christians are tortured with greater pains after the Last Judgement because we were not affected by these matters? For whatever occurs in us, since we are Christians, it occurs in Christ himself. Therefore, when spitting on the face of the Christians, or rather, of Christ himself, those impel us more vehemently to take revenge. Do we not feel it? Do we not comprehend it? Do we not see it? We have hardened, just like prostitutes, our faces, which, once modesty has been rejected, are no longer affected by any words, any shame, anything.

(25) But you, you, I say, most illustrious princes –for the oration must be directed already from me to all of you–,[54] expel this foulness from the Christian race. Suppress such a great dishonor. Remove a big infamy. Restrain the rage of the infidels. Recover the Holy Places for the Christians. Acquire for yourselves the

[52] Monfasani's text presents here a misprint: "aciemus" ought to be "faciemus", which can be confirmed when collated to the manuscripts (see for instance MS Vat. Lat. 3580, fol. 8r, accessible through the website of the Vatican Library). On the other hand, *transitum* could be interpreted in a literal way, referring to the Bosporus, or in a more abstract manner, alluding to the passage of the troops, the whole enterprise.

[53] Although the gospels do not explicitly attribute the darkening of the sun during the crucifixion to the shame experienced by the sun, which could not contemplate the way in which Christ was treated, this was a mainstream interpretation that can be found in Melito of Sardis, Cyprian, Ephraem and Jerome. Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 101.

[54] From now on the orator appeals mostly to a plural *vos*, not only Alfonso or Frederick, but all the princes.

greatest cities. Prepare the largest kingdoms. Oh, how happy will be that day in which you will be proclaimed not only king of Italy and Sicily, but also of Jerusalem and the whole of Judea by name no more than in fact![55] Oh, how happy will be that day in which the prince of Liguria receives the crown of the whole of Syria! Oh, how happy will be that day in which the Roman Church is yoke together entirely with the Church of Jacob and Marcus and the Christian faith flows back to its origins![56]

(26) For how much and how perpetual glory you can acquire from this place I use to infer sometimes on my own from the past things. Indeed, no one of the princes, kings and emperors who once existed in Europe ever obtained immortal and divine praise unless he took across an army into Egypt or into Asia; and no one did this without attaining immortal praise, the largest riches and more and greater kingdoms than what can be believed. I leave aside Hercules, Perses and Bacchus, whose deeds have become legends because of their antiquity,[57] nor should be reminded Cimon or Agesilaus,[58] and I also think fit to pass over Lucullus and

[55] Since the Neapolitan rulers of the House Anjou were claimants of the title *Rex Ierusalem*, after the capture of the city Alfonso started to use it as part of his royal denomination. Capilla Aledón, *El poder representado*, 96.

[56] George refers to Saint James the Just and Saint Mark, who were –according to the tradition– the founders of the Churches of Jerusalem and Alexandria respectively. Once again we can observe the Unionist sentiment of the author.

[57] The author gives a euhemeristic interpretation of these myths, considering that the gods and heroes were illustrious kings of the past whose story has been altered and filled with supernatural elements throughout the centuries. All of them had a relationship of war and conquest with the East. Heracles, son of Zeus and the mortal Alcmene, had subdued Troy one generation before the famous war and moved on to the East until India. It is likewise famous the representation of Dionysus in triumphal procession with wild animals, satyrs and Bacchae after having conquered India. The allusion to Perses is not completely clear. It could probably refer to the son of the Sun and king of Colchis who was the ancestor of the Persians. However, it is also possible that George meant here Perseus, another famous hero who had strong connections with Egypt and to whom, in addition to Heracles, Alexander the Great claimed to be related by ancestry (*cf.* Grimal *s.v.*).

[58] Cimon was an Athenian politician and *strategos*, while Agesilaus II was king of Sparta. Both of them were successful military leaders who conducted campaigns against the Persians during the 5th and 4th centuries BC.

Pompeius and all the Romans.[59] (27) Alexander the Great,[60] while yet almost a child, enkindled by mere glory, attacked with small troops the Empire of the Persians, which extended throughout all Asia in those times, and acquired for himself an immortal name, as he desired, and also kingdoms and greatest riches for all his friends. This action spread the Greek language, manners, eloquence and philosophical studies throughout the whole world.[61] In truth, for that of the aforementioned who snatches away Jerusalem, Egypt and Syria from these wicked plunderers, so much greater will be assuredly the glory as righteous his cause. He, Alexander, for the sole desire of praise, underwent such a great and dangerous action. Will you princes despise an affair so easy to do for the sake of glory together with riches and for the Christian faith? The largest troops of Darius and the kingdom of his father and grandfather, held with the best faculties, founded and enlarged, this was invaded by him with small resources, ruined and overthrown. Will you not invade the empire of these most indignant slaves, which was established in no other thing but the negligence of the Christians? He completely subjugated all Asia, the great power of the Persians and the infinite nations of Darius with barely six legions. Will you not attack the Egyptian slaves, assembling them under servitude from various nations, languages and manners into one? (28) And those who you would despise even if they were many, will you doubt that you can defeat them, being very

[59] Lucius Licinius Lucullus and Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus were the main military leaders in the Third Mithridiatic War. Even though these Greek and Roman personalities must have been well known for the addressees and the general audience, George probably disregarded them because they lacked popularity and the rhetorical strength that his next *exempla* certainly have.

[60] Trapezuntios finally dwells on the figure of Alexander, who works as a perfect model for King Alfonso and Emperor Frederick III. Indeed, the magnitude of his achievement and the glory and wealth acquired could stimulate the dreams of grandeur of Alfonso and Frederick. And while Alexander did all this just for fame, they will gain much more and –most importantly– they will be fulfilling the will of God. Moreover, for the European leaders this task should be easier, for they will count with greater forces and their enemies are not as powerful as Darius was. Thus, the *exemplum* of Alexander is chosen for its rhetorical convenience. However, it is possible that there is also a prophetic dimension in the use of this figure, a theme that is developed in *Ad Nicolaum.*

[61] The esteem and significance that George gives to Alexander will be discussed in comparison with Bessarion's point of view in chapter 4.

few? Let it come to your mind, I pray, what much is said until these times about that great Charles.[62] That, I say, Charles, who firstly translated the Empire of the Romans from Greece into Gaul,[63] who, after he was made the lord of almost the whole Europe, damaged even Africa more vehemently. Thereupon he became great everywhere. Was Jerusalem not freed and Egypt and Syria completely subjugated?[64] For, since the Arabs had occupied the Most Holy Places, this most prudent king immediately understood that not only the kingdoms and the empire of the Christians would come to him spontaneously, but also that he would have eternal praise both on earth and in heaven. Therefore, once the army was conducted over there, the enemies expelled and Jerusalem freed, crowned as king by the patriarch of the city of the Jerusalemites, he found all the things favorable and easiest after such a noble deed. (29) And thus he ascended so high that we can call him deservedly king of all the kings that ever existed and emperor of all the emperors. For, since all who existed until this day were below him in magnitude of power and glory, only by him will be

[62] The next *exemplum*, Charlemagne, was closer in time and situation to the 15th century. Indeed, he was a legendary Christian leader who came to represent the crusading spirit. Indeed, his campaigns against the Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean islands are an historical certainty –as is also his alliance with the Abbasid Caliphate– and, according to Pirenne, this confrontation played a capital role in his ascension as Emperor. Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 234. However, this perception of Charlemagne as champion of Christianity against Islam surpassed the historical facts: *La Chanson de Roland*, for instance, is a famous epic poem that portrays the Battle of Roncesvalles –a minor encounter between the Basques and the Franks in which the latter were defeated– as a heroic war between Charlemagne's forces and the Moors. Be it as it may, the figure worked as a perfect model of a monarch, to be imitated and surpassed by Alfonso and Frederick.

[63] On December 25th 800 Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as *Serenissimus Augustus, a Deo coronatus, magnus, pacificus, imperator* and *Romanorum gubernans imperium*. This procedure, against which the Byzantine emperors could not do much more than refuse to acknowledge, was understood as yet another *translatio imperii* (George actually uses this terminology) from Byzantium to the Franks. Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, 232-3. This statement is *a priori* quite surprising coming from a Greek. Should we understand that for George there was no continuity between the bygone Eastern Roman Empire and the contemporary reign of the Palaiologoi? The manner in which the writer talks about Manuel II and Constantine XI in *Ad Nicolaum* 8; 19-20 points in the opposite direction, as shall be discussed in section 4.2.1.

[64] Trapezuntios is following here a widespread legend of Charlemagne according to which he had travelled personally to the Holy Land –or even conducted a crusade to set it free– and brought back a number of relics. These narratives, which often include also the episode of a visit to the emperors in Constantinople, circulated as early as 968, and while many humanist historians were cautious in approaching them, George was not the only scholar of the period who subscribed to them. Raushen, *Die Legende Karls des Grossen*, 141-7; Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 36-7.

defeated the one who undertakes a similar action. For, firstly, as much longer those places are oppressed and as much more detestably are disturbed by the domination of the slaves, so much more illustrious than Charles will be the one that takes away this dishonor of servitude. Thereafter (for I will dare to speak according to reason), the too much detestable and harsh power of the Turks will be driven away from Europe more easily, their spirit at once broken and weakened because of such fame and glory of deeds.[65]

(30) For I think that this is the motive why from a certain divine permission the Turks distress, plunder and devastate Europe to such a degree that already they are not far away from Italy itself, and they will be nearer (would that what I predict be false) if the princes are not provident. But truly, they will not be able to be provident unless, as the good doctors, once extinguished the fire of the disease heavily, they heal afterwards the fever. Besides, who would not see that no other is the motive except that the fatherland of the fathers, the Promised Land and the sepulcher of the Lord is neglected? The one who disregards them (although it is hard to say, nevertheless I will not feel awe, compelled by truth itself) will seem to draw back from Christ our Lord. Wherefore, if you cut off the cause of all evils, you will also free Europe itself. (31) This will be done easily if you start then what is entirely clear, that also in the times of Charles the Great, when the enemies of Christ had captured all Hispania until Transalpine Gaul and many parts of Europe as well as Africa –it is evident–, by no strategy, no resources and no force could their impetus

[65] Without a previous hint, the writer suddenly introduces the matter of the Turks. According to him, the advance of the Turks was a punishment of God to the Christians for letting the Holy Lands in the hands of the infidels. This would be then the "cause of all evils", and by directing the efforts to recover Jerusalem Alfonso (or Frederick) would not only frighten the Ottomans, but also –and more importantly– appease God, who gives them the impetus. Thus, George manages to bring up a subject that concerned him greatly, and was going to acquire more relevance for the king in the following years (*cf.* section 4.4). Finally, it is noteworthy that the idea that the achievements of the Ottomans were prompted by God's will to punish the sins of the Christians was common in those times, and can be found for instance in Byzantine historians, like Doukas (*cf.* 6, 2; 42, 19).

be detained, before Jerusalem had been snatched away from impious hands.[66] Wherefore, all these deeds were produced then with such a celerity that it is made clear that the Africans[67] were sent against Europe by divine wrath, so that they incite the Christians to defend with the sword the Holy Places; and once they were recovered, by Divine Providence the Mohammedans were oppressed back again. In truth, we understood that Charles ascended to the summit of the empire in such a manner that, on the one hand, Gaul had for many centuries the empire after him too and kept the good fortune almost until these times; and, on the other, that one who in fact subjugated completely the enemies of Christ, defended our faith and lastly has obtained the empire of the world because of these most honorable causes is and is seen rightfully as the source of glory of all the kings and emperors.[68]

(32) These very things are now also at stake, most illustrious princes. You see with how many evils the Christian world is stricken. You understand that bigger things threaten unless it is succored as soon as possible. It does not escape your attention that such a great glory then, so much riches, such a great empire, well known far and wide, and the greatest kingdom will thus fall to the one that succored it, that easily he would surpass even Charles himself with the splendor of the deeds. Do not defer, oh princes, this most divine action any longer. No one who considers how much greatness there is in your spirit, how much prudence and how much desire

[66] George takes for granted that Charlemagne recovered the Holy Lands and that this event allowed him to stop the Muslim invasion.

[67] The selection of the denomination is prompted by apocalyptic literature and the legend of Charlemagne. According to Monfasani, George "foresaw that the destroyers of Christianity would come galloping out of the Ethiopian desert". Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 51. In any case, he establishes a clear parallelism with the Ottomans.

[68] In other words, Charlemagne's enterprise produced two things: firstly, it conferred imperial status and prestige to the Carolingian kingdom; secondly, it created a tradition of legitimization of imperial dignity closely connected with a Christian ideal. As Trapezuntios puts it, through this course of action a ruler would not only become fitting in fact –or, what is the same, in the eyes of God–, but also he would be seen as fitting by the people, the clerics and the other rulers, which was of course more important.

of true glory doubts that already a great while ago you have united your thoughts to this, but that you have been distracted, if you will, reluctantly to other point because of the necessity of the matters. Now it seems that the states of Italy either have been composed or can be composed easily, so that your purposes must be joined back together to this.[69] (33) It must be feared particularly the slowness, lest either another claims, after the resolutions are taken, as if he was the first, the praise for himself, or anyone seems to the other to drive different cases, being the affairs perhaps changed. For also the hopes of men are deceptive, fortune is fragile, the thoughts are vain. Halfway through they often break into pieces, fall down and are buried, in the course itself mostly before they can get the sight of the port. And the affair is such that it promises immortal glory only to those who are openly willing to support it and those who are already prepared for it. (34) For what reasons, most illustrious princes, if nothing of greater praise and glory can be imagined, if only this one is fitting for the Christians and beneficial, if it is easy and so much favorable that it seems that starting is the only necessity, if it does not bring kingdoms, riches and power in this

[69] The third version of the text presents a long insertion: "Now the Italian states, which can be joined together for this exceedingly noble deed, will be composed so much easier perhaps as much longer they have been shaken by war. For, as exhausted as they are and doubting of a future victory, with no difficulty they will all change their minds from the internecine war to the exterior because of the authority of the Supreme Pontiff and yours, most glorious Caesar Augustus. For they will see themselves in this manner not only escaping the things they fear, the dangers that threaten them, but even acquiring the largest glory and enormous riches. And since nothing else incites this civil wars (for these Italian matters, or rather of all the Christians, seem to be of a civil nature to me) than the strife of spirits, through which men always fall down to the worst, as long as one does not want to give in to the other, I do not doubt that both the virtue and the good fortune of yours and the Supreme Pontiff are capable of pacifying everything with the intention of an entire change, by which one gives in to the other in the smallest degree, but they will all be dominated by the foulest enemies of the Cross. For this reason, not only Italy, but the entire republic of the Christians, which is piously united with the single mark of baptism in revering Christ, must be lead together into one spirit of peace and transition against Egypt. I said against Egypt, because no recovery of the Holy Places will be durable and firm if the principality of the slaves is not overthrown by the roots and the entire Egypt yields to the Christian princes. Hither, therefore, hither may you bring all your thought, divine Augustus, with the bliss of the Supreme Pontiff. And also urge, inflame, impel the others". There is here an allusion to the Medieval concept of *res publica Christiana*, which in this case emphasizes a sort of pan-Christian-European sentiment that is absent in the version to King Alfonso, probably because he was engaged in more hostile relationships with his neighboring kingdoms. Moreover, since the *res publica* referred to all the European nations subordinated to the Holy Roman Empire, it is more suitable to this text rather than Alfonso's.

life only, but even prepares the way to the heavens, do you doubt on bringing together all your thoughts, all your attentions and, lastly, all your spirit for this affair, through which, once accomplished, you will easily surpass all the memory of Antiquity in our times, especially when those who are indifferent seem to be hardly able to run away from the opposite things? I do not believe so. For, since it is innate to the princes of great spirit to desire always the higher things, and since this affair is so much divine as it is beneficial to many, and since I am aware that you, most illustrious princes, by far excel the others in greatness of spirit, I do not doubt that you have already thought about this frequently. (35) You are taken by this very thing, as Italy has been composed by you all previously, the most convenient time has arrived, because it must not be let pass that the perishable nature of men, this feeble life and the unstable fortune of things do not change anything in the meanwhile. For which reason, embrace at once with your spirit, oh princes, the largest kingdoms of Jerusalem, Egypt and all Syria. Provide that honor to Italy. Grant it so great fortune that it celebrates the triumph in the remote times even after you. Concede those riches to your people. Acquire for your heads an immortal crown of glory. Do not bear that the holy Jerusalem be oppressed in servitude for a longer time, most particularly when because of this thing the infamy of the Christians, the empire of the Mohammedans and the devastation of Europe are enlarged every day.[70]

[70] In the version addressed to Frederick III, George significantly wrote "Turchorum" instead of "Machumeticarum imperium". In the ten years that passed between the first and the last redaction, the Ottoman threat had certainly become more real and unstoppable. Indeed, during this period Murad II and his son achieved various victories in the Balkans, among which should be counted the defeat of the so-called Crusade of Varna in 1444. The third version also adds a few lines: "But I have actually glanced over the things that are necessary with all might and others. Indeed, I remember I wrote these both to the illustrious king of Aragon and Apulia and I will not decline to write him in the future. But in truth, yours is to think, oh celebrated Augustus and you princes, whether you want at the same time the temporal and eternal glory and riches and kingdoms in like manner or –what is abominable to say– all the things contrary to those that, even though they hang over all of the princes, are nevertheless completely assigned to you, Augustus, to you, I say, both by God and men."

2.3 *Exhortatio ad Nicolaum*

Brief exhortation by George Trapezuntios to the Holy Father Pope Nicholas V for the defense of the Hellespont gates in favor of Europe

(1) My reverence[71] and devotion towards Your Holiness, most blessed Father, urge me to write briefly about these important and difficult affairs, because I myself and everyone believe that they pertain to you. For even though none of these things escapes you (what kept me from writing until this day), nevertheless I will never consider myself finally satisfied if I do not write to you. Therefore, if I seem to talk about things of truly great importance and not entirely suitable to me, I pray that Your Holiness will grant me forgiveness, particularly because –urged by the relation of race (indeed, I am Greek),[72] by the faith (for I am Christian)[73] and by my reverence towards you –as I said– I can no longer be silent.

[71] George Trapezuntios opens the oration with a word of great significance for the Classical Roman mentality. Although in the context of Christianity "pietas" ended up referring mainly to the compassion or mercy of God or any person towards their inferiors (*cf. DMLBS s.v.* 2; 3), in this case the use is clearly classical, namely the dutiful respect towards the divinity, fatherland and parents (*OCD s.v.*). In other words, the author emphasizes that what urges him to write this exhortation is his duty as a (spiritual) son of Nicholas V. It is a rhetorical artifice to imply that the orator cares more for the prestige of his addressee than for his own causes, *i. e.* the fate of Constantinople.

[72] The author recognizes that one of the reasons why he decided to write the oration to support the Greeks is the *coniunctio generis*, the bond of race. By using the word *genus*, which is cognate of the Greek γένος, George must have thought of himself as belonging to a specific ethnic group, even though he was born in the margins of the Empire, in a land ruled by alien powers, and did not profess the Orthodox faith anymore. *Graecus* is the non-marked Latin term for referring to the Greeks, while the transliteration *Hellenes* is scarcely documented. Even when writing in Greek George tends to use more the Latin derived Γραικοί (see, for instance, the work Περὶ τῆς θειότητος Μανουὴλ in Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 570) than Ἕλληνες, without the negative connotations that started to be associated with the word from the ninth century onwards. Page, *Being Byzantine*, 66-7. This could well be the result of the progressive Latinization of the writer, a topic that shall be discussed in section 4.2.

[73] As has been already pointed out, George was by these times a converted Catholic. However, there seems to be in this point a first hint to a matter that will be developed throughout the oration. To be specific, George seems to acknowledge here the Christianity of those believers outside of the Catholic Church, in this case of the Greek Orthodox. In consequence, he is able to feel sympathy for the Greeks not only because he was formerly a follower of the Eastern rite but because for him there is not an insurmountable difference between a Catholic and an Orthodox. Thus, in the oration he will emphasize the common features between the two creeds. Likewise, the Pope, as supreme representative of God on earth and head of all the Christians, has a responsibility towards this group as

(2) The city of Constantine, most blessed Father, very providently founded by him in the outermost Europe and in the throat of the Hellespont,[74] is renowned by these very things: to have driven away the Parthians from the whole European Empire even until this day.[75] Your Holiness does not ignore that very often the Chosroes (thus the emperors were called in the old times by the Persians, who are also called Parthians)[76] had even reached the city for besieging it and had fled from there most shamefully, driven away with little effort because of the nature of the places and the Pontic gates.[77] No one for whom the affairs and conditions of the Christians are, if you will, of minimal concern ignores that the Turks and the house

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well. Another possibility, also developed later in the text, is that George understands that Christendom itself is in danger and writes to Nicholas V concerned about the security of the institution.

[74] George deliberately confuses the Bosporus, actual setting of Constantinople, with the Hellespont for the purposes of the text: the tradition of apocalyptic literature which he exploits gave a high importance to the "Gates of Alexander", which in this case are to be identified with the Dardanelles Straits. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 128 n. 77. Despite that, throughout the *exhortatio* the author makes it clear that he is actually thinking of the Bosporus. George does not mention at all that the gates of the Hellespont properly speaking had been under Ottoman control for a long time by then, what effectively gave to the Ottomans a fluid passage from Asia to Europe and back (*cf.* note 79)

[75] The Parthian Empire collapsed before the foundation of Constantinople. George probably refers here to the Sasanians, their successors, who did in fact besiege the capital in 626 under the leadership of Chosroes II. It is also possible that in the author's conception these Asiatic peoples and states were one and the same with different names or at least that they were linked by lineage (*cf.* note 78). The reason why George chose precisely the Parthians in this case could be related with the fact that they were one of the most prominent enemies of Classical Rome to the East. These were remembered mostly due to the shameful defeat that the Romans suffered in the battle of Carrhae, where the triumvir Crassus was killed and the *aquilae*, the legionary standards that symbolized Rome's power, captured by the Parthians. On the other hand, George's choice of the expression "Europae imperium", which could be translated as "European power", "dominion" or "realm" is curious. One wonders if the author is somehow alluding to the Roman Empire. Because of the vocabulary that he uses, we can assume that he is thinking of an entity that lives on until the composition of the text. In that sense, it could well be a reference to the Byzantine Empire. But perhaps the phrase should not be understood in a strictly political sense, referring to a definite political unit. Instead, it could rather allude to a historical or cultural identity, the number of states that recognized themselves as heirs of the Roman Empire. Therefore, George Trapezuntios performs on one side and the other a procedure of conceptual amalgamation that results in a clear cut dichotomy between Oriental and Europeans, among whom he will decidedly locate the Greeks.

[76] As stated above, George confounds various Asiatic peoples: in this case, the Persians are associated with the Parthians. Less purposely, however, seems to be his mistake in claiming that the Persians called their emperors Chosroem, which were actually the names of two Sassanid rulers.

[77] Although the Sassanians only sieged the capital in one occasion, the orator uses here the word *saepius* ("very often"). In accordance with the above, the reader may understand here a reference to the many sieges to Constantinople carried out by Eastern forces, which were all unsuccessful. Nevertheless, George omits that the city did fall to European powers in the catastrophic events of the Fourth Crusade. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that in this instance the endurance of the city is attributed exclusively to its geographical features, that is to say, ordinary worldly motives rather than divine intervention, as the Byzantines were fond of relating.

of the Ottomans, who draw back their origin from the Persians,[78] having subdued for many years now immense and countless regions in Asia, have invaded Greece and, having subjugated Thessaly, Mysia, Epirus and Thrace for themselves, they have even spread their empire until Hungary.[79] Nobody ignores either that no other thing prevents them from the complete devastation of Europe than Constantinople.

(3) For she, founded in the very throat of the Hellespont, divides their power, and, by dividing it, throws it down and breaks it. Who in our memory ignores that, when Pope Eugenius had sent a small fleet to the Hellespont and when that excellent pontiff had incited the Hungarians against the enemies of the Cross, their state and power were driven to extreme disintegration? Or rather, that it would have been all over entirely with the power of the Turks already from that time, if –because of negligence or fear or corruption– that fleet had not been sent from the Christians almost to see the triumphs of the Turks.[80] It remained in Constantinople in such a

[78] Instead of "Hungary", the author uses the archaistic name *Pannonia*. As shall be discussed below, from the middle of the 15th century until the 16th century the question of the origins of the Turks was addressed by many humanist scholars. See Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders", 136. Whereas here the Turks are called by the proper ethnonym *Turchi* (no archaism like *Teucri* or *Troiani* is used), they are also significantly connected to the Persians. Thus George presents them as the latest embodiment of the Asiatic culture, invariably disposed to invade Europe. The writer also acknowledges the ruling lineage (*domus*), which is denominated *Atumani* or *Athumani* in the different witnesses of the text.

[79] After the capture of Bursa in 1326 and Gallipoli in 1354, the passage of the Turks to Europe became more fluid. Concerning the conquest of the former city, Chalkokondyles writes: "It was at this time that Prousa was besieged, starved out, and taken by Osman, and other cities in Asia were captured. Thus the Turks acquired great power in Asia and crossed over into Europe, where they caused trouble in Thrace" (1, 17-8); and regarding Gallipoli: "A major earthquake occurred and demolished the walls of the cities, so that in consequence the Turks captured most of those that they had under siege. Once they took these towns from the Greeks they were henceforth well established in Europe" (1, 37; both translations from Kaldellis, *Laonikos Chalkokondyles. The Histories*). Unlike Bessarion, Trapezuntios does not point at the Byzantines themselves as responsible for the incursion of the Turks into the European continent (see *De periculis* 7, note 194).

[80] The orator refers to the Crusade of Varna in 1444, which ended up in a major defeat for the Western forces. George's assessment of Pope Eugenius IV is rather ambiguous: on the one hand, he describes him as *optimus* and presents his crusading activity as desirable, thus turning him into an *exemplum* of behavior to be followed by Nicholas V; but on the other, his efforts turned out to be unsuccessful and there is an obvious hint of criticism in the selection of the adjective *parva* ("little" or "poor") to label the fleet sent to the Bosporus. It is evident that the author considered that much more could have been done and that Nicholas V would easily surpass his predecessor. The naval force had a capital role in the crusade, for it was to prevent the assembly of the sultan's European and Anatolian armies. Certainly, it was not a large number of vessels: whereas the Pope financed ten ships from the Venetians and these added more than eight on their own account, the Duke of Burgundy collaborated with ten units and even John VIII Palaiologos sent two. Gill, *The Council of Florence*, 329-30.

way that it was not willing to come out of it at the propitious moment. It is not necessary to make use of many argumentations with regard to these things. In fact, there is no one who ignores that Constantinople breaks the power of the Turks[81] in two big parts. She protects until today the state of the Hungarians and the upper areas of the Christians.

(4) For, even though the Turk frequently put them to flight, he never obtained a victory, as long as he feared that the Christians would occupy the entrance to the Hellespont with their fleet and cut his access to Asia, so that he would not lose Asia, being intercepted while being absent for a long period.[82] This very Constantinople guards many cities that the Catholics hold in Greece, many islands, or I rather say, Italy and the whole Europe itself, what everyone will understand if –may God avert it– the Turk captures her. For there is no more suitable site for preparing an enormous army than this Constantinople, nor there is a more appropriate place. The supplies sent to Pontus are carried by water in the harbor. Thus the Turks, who have

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Moreover, the fleet was proven to be ineffective, sent "almost to see the triumph of the Turks" indeed. While part of it remained in the Dardanelles, the other was guarding the passage of the Bosporus. The Burgundian chronicler Jehan de Wavrin relates how the crusaders could not prevent the enemies from being translated through the straits due to its current, the Ottoman artillery and an untimely tempest that seemed a supernatural intervention (divine or diabolic) to both sides. Imber, *The Crusade of Varna*, 127-9). George, however, attributes the failure of the enterprise solely to human agency, namely negligence, fear and corruption. The fleet could well have succeeded in its mission with a better strategy and a more substantial collaboration of the Greeks and King Alfonso of Aragón, who promised to send ships, but failed to do so. Gill, *The Council of Florence*, 330. Moreover, the mention of corruption could be a reference to the crucial role that the Genoese had in the translation of the armies, for they supplied the Ottomans with vessels and cannons. Imber, *The Crusade of Varna*, 30. Finally, the text highlights the affairs of the Hungarians. It is true that these had enough reasons to fight the Ottomans, but by July 1444 both parties were inclined to arrange a truce for ten years. It seems that George is right in attributing to Eugene IV the effective persuasion of the Hungarian powers, for in August the papal legate cardinal Cesarini made King Wladislaw I of Hungary swear an oath committing to the campaign and abjuring any past or future treaty with the sultan (*cf.* Imber, *The Crusade of Varna*, 201-2 for the text of the oath). Since the King died in the Battle of Varna, its aftermath was indeed a period of crisis and division for Hungary.

[81] *Imperium Turcorum* can also be translated as the "Empire" or "dominion of the Turks".

[82] In several Western languages the Ottoman was called "the Great Turk" or simply "the Turk", as in this instance. In this passage George practices an interesting geo-political analysis of the situation. According to him, Mehmed II and his predecessors fought and moved in European territory but never in a very purposive manner, for fear of having his forces and dominions cut in the middle. Consequently, once more, the role of Constantinople as strategic stronghold between the two continents is highlighted.

minimal power in naval affairs, will have it exceedingly if so many of them become the masters of the city.[83]

(5) These things, most blessed Father, I have said not only now but even before, and I did not omit to write about this matter wherever I could, what is shown briefly in the third treatise of my third book of *Rhetoric*.[84] But also Your Very Holiness is witness that in the second year of your pontificate I somewhat referred to the soundness of that city.[85] This is known by the cardinal of Fermo, with whom I talked about these affairs very often back then and who showed such greatness of spirit that he affirmed by swearing that he would bring to the fleet one ship from his own expenses if he was sent to such a cause as commander.[86] And what is the purpose of these things, most blessed Father? So that I myself can serve to the utmost of my power to the common benefit of the Christians and to the glory of Your

[83] This is one of the main arguments that George uses for persuading Nicholas V of calling for a crusade. As already indicated (*cf.* section 2.1), the author had exposed in another oration –now lost– the idea that the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire would enable the latter's transformation into a thalassocracy. One cannot fail to notice the Cretan's accurate insight of the circumstances by the middle of the 15th century. According to Hess, until the 11th century the Turks considered the sea an alien medium for warfare, but, after the battle of Manzikert in 1071, they reached the shorelines of Asia Minor and came in contact with a community that had long maritime experience. Thereafter, they began the construction of their own war fleets. With the rise of the Ottomans, the first conquests in European territory commenced, but these were hardly maintainable with the constant danger of the Christian galleys dominating the crossing between the continents. The capture of the city that controlled the Bosporus and land routes was finally accomplished in the middle of the 15th century, and as early as that point the Ottomans possessed a significant fleet that contributed notably in the enterprise. And in effect, while also preserving the old naval facilities in Gallipoli, Mehmed "collected carpenters, merchants, and sailors from the coastal regions of the Empire for the naval service of Istanbul, … ordered into production naval arsenals to supply galleys for a war fleet … [and] encouraged the settlement in Istanbul of Christian merchants who had engaged in sea trade". Hess, "The Evolution of the Ottoman Seaborne Empire", 1895-901. Thus, in the course of two centuries the Ottomans went from being an emirate with a modest fleet to an uncontested naval empire. However, if Trapezuntios was able to foresee how the Turks would exploit the material and geographical advantages of old Byzantium, he certainly did not expected the same would occur with the human resources. Admittedly, not only the common people engaged in maritime activity ended up acknowledging the new order, but even intellectuals made their collaboration, like George Amiroutzes, who confectioned for the sultan a world map based on the writings of Ptolomeus.

[84] Indeed, in the third book of his *Rhetoricum libri* George makes a brief reference to this subject, as he tries to explain a theoretical statement. Curiously, in this occasion he uses the word *Teucri* –one of the appellatives of the Trojans– for alluding to the Turks (*cf. Rhetoricum libri V*, f. 34v)

[85] This text is not preserved.

[86] The cardinal of Fermo was Domenico Capranica, who was a supporter of the crusade against the Ottomans even after the fall of Constantinople. Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 442.

Holiness writing with all my might.[87] (6) For if you succor that city –what you must, since you are the father of the Christians, and can do, because of the resources of the Church and because you alone will easily incite the Christian princes and peoples against the enemies of the Cross, to some with your authority and intercessions, to others with worldly and, particularly, spiritual threats and fear–,[88] all the Roman pontiffs who existed or will exist will be obfuscated by the glory of your name. With letters,[89] I say, with letters only you will accomplish this, most blessed Father, if you undertake this affair –as should be– with your great spirit.[90] I pray that you recall that, as much of glory both in heaven and in this world Your Holiness will obtain if this affair is not disdained, so much of dishonor –may God avert it– will have if Constantinople is lost.[91] Indeed, it is not about one or another city. But all these things will grow larger than what can be explained in a brief oration.

(7) Your Holiness does not ignore that Europe has always contended with Asia, that Europe has triumphed over Asia more often. I omit the fantastic things said

[87] This is the first of numerous references of the text to the fame and glory that Nicholas V can achieve if he supports the cause. Moreover, for this task George gives preeminence to the act of writing ("scribendo"). Thus, the orator fancies himself as the most appropriate person who will convey the glory to the Pope.

[88] The writer stresses the responsibility of the Pope in the task ("ut debes"), but also recalls that he has many resources that other leaders lack. These are not necessarily material, but rather the possibilities of Nicholas political influence and charisma. Indeed, he is the only European leader whose authority transcends the boundaries of kingdoms and states. Thus, some will be convinced by his authority and somehow gently request (*preces* can also be translated as "supplication" or "prayers"), but most notable is the acknowledgement of the pontiff's ability to threat individuals with their afterlife fortune. George uses the terms *minae* and *terror*, as if he was talking to an extortionist or a despot. It is curious the reflection on the Pope's authority over the souls of the believers and its implications in purely pragmatic terms, as if this was simply yet another exploitable war resource.

[89] Naturally, George does not request to the Pope his actual involvement in the crusade, not even –explicitly– his collaboration with an army or financial support, but merely spiritual patronage.

[90] The vocabulary used here ("magno animo aggredieris") reflects that one used to describe Capranica's disposition towards the crusade a few lines above. Thus, the cardinal becomes yet another model to be followed and surpassed by Nicholas V.

[91] Just as the promise of future glory for the Pope is reiterated throughout the oration, George also warns Nicholas of its counterpart, the dishonor with which he will be remembered if Constantinople falls. The writer thus establishes a dichotomy between *gloria* and *ignominia*, oversimplifying the options of the pontiff. By leading the argument to this point, the orator places himself in the center of the matter and surreptitiously assumes the role of a judge.

about Bacchus, about Perses and about Hercules.[92] Miltiades over the defeated multitudes of Darius, Themistocles over the beaten Xerxes and that enormous terminated army, both led a triumphal procession over them. Alexander the Great laid waste the whole Asia.[93] The Asians, on the other hand, have certainly tried many times to pass to Europe, but they were driven away in the Hellespont gates.[94] Having understood this correctly, the very cautious Emperor Constantine, since he saw that the military discipline had already dwindled, fearing that, once the gates were occupied, the Parthians, who were then thriving, would lay waste Europe, he transferred to Constantinople –founded by himself– the Roman Empire,[95] and this city repelled them all the way from here.

(8) Therefore, will we think that those who have tried many times to invade and snatch away these gates will hold themselves once they have them completely under their power, particularly since they were formerly separated from Europe, being disquieted by the sole division of the continent and the successive wars?[96]

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[92] Even though he says he is not going to count them at all, George opens the enumeration of the conflicts between Asia and Europe with a series of mythical examples, as he did in *Ad Alfonsum* 26. By doing this, he conveys to the whole narrative an idea of timelessness, as if the clash between the continents had remained always the same, but incarnated in different *personae* throughout history. For the selection of Bacchus, Perses and Hercules *cf.* note 57.

[93] These are all Greek characters from the Classical period. Miltiades and Themistocles were commanders and heroes of the Battles of Marathon and Salamis respectively. Alexander the Great appears once again as symbol of Europe's domination over Asia and, as has been referred, the Gates that bore his name have a special significance in apocalyptic literature and in this oration.

[94] The indefinite collective of *Asiatici* is depicted here with the ubiquitous desire of crossing the Hellespont and expanding to Europe. The gates, for their part, are the strategical point where these attempts were always prevented. Thus, the Bosporus and Constantinople lay in the middle of this perpetual confrontation of cultures and ultimately defines which of them will have the supremacy.

[95] Once again, George alludes to the *translatio imperii*, in this case the very first made by Constantine. Unlike the oration *Ad Alfonsum*, in the logic of this text the writer seems to imply that Byzantium was still at that time the Roman Empire, or, in other words, that there was a continuity between the reign of Constantine and that of the Palaiologoi (*cf.* chapter 4.2.1).

[96] The author states here that Constantinople is merely the beginning, not the culmination of their expansion but the point from which they will accelerate their conquests. The only reasons that kept them away from Europe were the geographical conditions and the internal wars. This could well refer to an event rather near to the time of the composition, the *interregnum* after Bayezid's defeat under Timur in 1402, when the Ottomans underwent a period of dynastic confrontation for the succession, from which Mehmed I, son of Bayezid and grandfather of the Conqueror, would come out victorious. However, George's following statement leads us to think that he is talking about the situation of the *Asiaticas gentes* before Islam.

Now, however, will also Mahomet inspire, ignite, inflame them with his laws against Europe?[97] Was it not in the time of our childhood that Timur, who is called Tamerlane by the people, since he did not have any hopes of being able to pass through the Hellespont, took even a more dangerous road to Tanais[98] through the ices of Scythia? And did not he come from there to the gates defeated by the colds and, having overcome the great grandfather of this Turk,[99] ask for the passage to Emperor Manuel, so he could devastate Europe? A letter of that very cautious emperor to Demetrios Kydones survives,[100] in which he writes that he was not willing to give up the gates to the Parthians, since he was the successor of Constantine, who had founded Constantinople for the protection of Europe.[101] Oh, man worthy of Constantine's seat! These things I have narrated briefly to show in a much bigger

[97] As we shall see later on, George presents Islam in paradoxical terms, as an rational and ordering principle (*leges*) that nevertheless aims to create chaos and destruction, which is illustrated with the metaphor of the fire that appears here (*animet, incendat, inflammet*) and throughout the exhortation.
[98] The text edited by Monfasani reads "Thanam", which could correspond to the name of various cities, but none of them seems to be fitting for this context neither for its location nor its importance. I believe instead that the readings "Tanam" from manuscript L or "Tanaym" from V could be more adequate, since it is very possible that the author alluded here to the city and the river Tanais, which is nowadays called Don. The emplacement fits in the description, for it is located in the northern coast of the Sea of Azov, an area that would be included in what the Ancient and Medieval authors called Scythia. This point somehow reflects Constantinople's position in the north, for it was close to its own Strait, the Cimmerian Bosporus. Moreover, Strabo (11, 1, 5) and Pliny the Elder (*Nat.* 4, 78) consider that the river Tanais marked the boundary between Europe and Asia.
[99] Mehmed II's great grandfather, *i.e.* Bayezid.
[100] Apart from Timur's victory over the sultan, the events related here are hardly true, starting with the letter of Manuel II to Kydones, which is most probably apocryphal and, sadly, non-extant. The only campaign that Timur undertook towards the West was that against Bayezid in 1402. However, it is possible that the former actually had the intention to invade Europe or, in any case, this was a common fear in the Western nations. Chalkokondyles, for instance, refers: "So Timur set out against Bayezid in order to conquer his lands in Asia and to cross over into Europe, and he did not intend to turn back before he had reached its farthest ends, going all the way to the Ocean by the Pillars of Herakles, where, he learned, the narrowest straits separates Europe and North Africa (…) These were the great ambitions of Timur, plans that fall rather under the jurisdiction of fortune that is granted by God" (2, 59; translation by Kaldellis, *Laonikos Chalkokondyles. The Histories*). In any case, Monfasani presumes that this was written as a propaganda piece to recall the value of Constantinople and to show the Greek emperors in a positive light, which is certainly what Trapezuntios intends to do at this point. Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 434.
[101] The author ostensibly presents Manuel II as an heir of Constantine's dignity and duty, in greater part apparently for his association to Constantinople. Besides, George claims that the city's origin and *raison d'etre* is the defense of Europe. The inference is that Constantine XI –who is not mentioned by name, but by his kinship with Manuel in paragraph 19– continued the legacy of his father and his city even at that time, that he is to be counted among the European and Christian powers and that he is to be paid now all the efforts made by his father and his predecessors throughout the centuries.

extent than before that the peoples of all Asia desire the passage to Europe for obliterating the Christians.[102] And certainly, I do not doubt that they will fall against Europe from all parts, if they find themselves holding the gates from where many times were repelled.

(9) And without doubt these are those gates that, when opened, Gog and Magog –as John the Evangelist writes–[103] will erase the name of Christ. And no others can be. Indeed, none were discovered in the world that separates the enemies of Christ from his true worshipers except these. Indeed, these are those that have defended Christianity, which exists merely in Europe,[104] for many centuries now. For once they are completely open and reduced to their power, the ruin of Christianity, alas, follows and the approach of the Antichrist with his criminal reign is prepared. For which reason, whoever rejects and disregards the defense of the gates delivers willingly the whole Europe and Christianity to the Mohammedans, enemies of the Cross.

[102] The *Asiaticas gentes* appear like an embodiment of destruction to fulfill the apocalyptic views of the author. They are agents of evil (the Antichrist) and their only purpose is the annihilation of Christianity. However, as we will see in chapter 4, George would adopt a more moderate position – although not less fatalistic– in the later years.

[103] The apocalyptic future for Europe and Christendom is shaped with the aid of the biblical-popular narrative of Gog and Magog. The biblical references are two (*Ez.* 38-9; *Apoc.* 20, 7-8) and rather obscure. Here George alludes to the book of *Revelations*, which according to the tradition was written by John, but there we simply read that "when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea". No door is mentioned in the Scriptures. This actually corresponds to another tradition, posterior to the writing of the New Testament, in which the Judeo-Christian elements were mixed with the legend of Alexander the Great and the construction of the Caspian Gates, apparently in the Pass of Dariel or in Derbent. But, as a matter of fact, the Syrian Christian legend, in which Alexander met the people living somewhere in the Caucasus and offers them to build a wall to protect them from Gog, Magog and other tribes, got to enter into the Quran (18, 86). Anderson, *Alexander's gate*, 20-8. In any case, it is noteworthy that in the oration Alexander is not mentioned in connection to the legend, but his role is fulfilled somehow by the figure of Constantine, as he also was the founder of a site designed to hold back the enemy. As has been already mentioned, the legend forced George to confuse the location of Constantinople: he needed some *claustra* near the city and the Hellespont was the best option.

[104] Even though George acknowledges that there are Christians out of Europe (for instance, under the rule of the Mamluks, *cf. Ad Alfonsum* 6), in this case he disregards their integration to the same Christian-European world in favor of his argumentation.

(10) Whence I cannot help but being affected by an enormous admiration, or rather, being certainly stunned at how several powerful men –as is said here[105] and also in Rome– have their spirit so alien to the Cross of Our Lord that they have openly proclaimed that the Constantinopolitans that perish have it deserved.[106] Just as if now it was discussed whether Greece should be defended, which has been already dislodged since long, and not about the gates, through which the passage to Europe is open to the Asians, enemies of the Christians.[107] Whether it must be held by the Christians or handed over to the Mohammedans. To be sure, the Greeks deserve the perdition. They have long since perished.[108] You, most blessed Father, protect Europe for yourself, for the Christian princes and for the Roman Church.

(11) Indeed, this is discussed. This is turned into deliberation. Oh, pain! Almost as if it was a concealed and secret affair, we are forced to unveil our cause with argumentations. In short, it is merely inquired, as I will say again, whether the gates of the Hellespont, through which the Asians can safely and freely, whenever they want, pass to Europe, should be delivered to the Mohammedans or if they should be defended for the Greeks. To be sure, these are heretic. And yet, lest I mention always about the whole Europe, they defend many cities of the Catholics, so

[105] In Naples.

[106] Certainly, the long-lasting hostility between Latins and Greeks did not disappeared completely even during the extreme circumstances of the 15th century, when the Byzantines –or part of them– attempted an approach to the West in order to get aid against the Ottomans. George felt, and most probably his impression was not unfounded, that there were those who simply desired to see the Greeks fall, and it is possible that by mentioning the powerful men in Rome he meant the Nicholas V himself. Indeed, in two occasions he expressed that the enmity that the Pope had against him was based in a general anti-Greek sentiment. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 130.

[107] The discussion is not whether to defend Greece or not, because, as the writer puts it, the empire is already finished. On the contrary, the Pope and the other European rulers must decide if the gates will be held by Christians (whoever of them is) or Muslims. In this passage, George seems to be supporting a procedure similar to that of Thessalonica almost three decades earlier, which he brings into debate in paragraph 17.

[108] George uses the verb *pereo*, which means literally "to pass away, come to nothing; to vanish, disappear" (*cf. L&S s.v.*). He might be alluding to the Orthodox Church, in which case we should understand that, as heretics, their souls are already lost; or to the Byzantine Empire as a political entity, which would appear to his eyes as already doomed.

that the latter cannot perish, nay, so that Pera, Kaffa, the island of Negroponte, Crete and many others cities and regions that the Catholics hold and inhabit would not fall at once in servitude of the enemies of the Cross.[109] Therefore, because of a few Greeks are we going to hand over many Catholics with them at the same time and open the gates of Europe to the Asians?

(12) If He whose duties Your Holiness manages in earth could perceive the very few who were different from the sodomites in Sodom and Gomorrah and spared everyone because of those few, will we hand over countless men provided with virtue and Catholics in account of the heresy of a few and will not fear the divine indignation, especially when the conversion of those Greeks is still not entirely hopeless?[110] But may it be completely hopeless. I, nevertheless, if anyone gave me the choice of preferring being Greek or Mohammedan and the condition was conveyed that it is necessary to die in the opinion of the Greeks, which I acknowledge is not correct, or to die in the impiety of Mohamed, how joyful I would give my last breath embraced to the Cross of Our Lord and having received the sacraments of the Church in the Greek manner![111]

[109] In this section, the author claims that, even though the Greek are heretics, they are useful for Europe and the European settlements in Byzantine lands and their vicinities. Kaffa and Pera were Genoese colonies, while the islands of Euboea and Crete passed to Venetian control in the years after the Fourth Crusade.

[110] Trapezuntios gives the impression that the number of the Catholics in those settlements was significantly bigger than the Greek Orthodox community. He reverses the logic of the biblical *exemplum* of Sodom and Gomorrah (*Ge.* 18-9) to make it more powerful: if God pardoned a lot of sinners because of the virtue of a few, the Pope should save a lot of virtuous men, even though the sins of a few. The original ratio would have worked certainly better if the intention of George was realism. But he is deliberately obscure, so that one doubts whether he meant that the Westerners living in those cities are more than the Greeks in number, or if the biggest part of these Greeks have already turned into Catholicism after the Union of the Churches, or, finally, if the Orthodox Christians should not be counted among the heretics at all, for their conversion is possible and imminent, as he will discuss *infra*. Therefore, the real heretics and sinners would just be a very limited group, as George wants to imagine it, of rabid opponents to the decree of Ferrara-Florence who are not even willing to consider the Union, perhaps those ἀνθενωτικοί led by Gennadios Scholarios that mentions Doukas in his *History* (36, 3).

[111] This is certainly a bold statement, particularly if we consider that the addressee was the head of the Roman Church himself. For a discussion see chapter 4.

(13) With what purpose I say these things? So that I can convey similarly this opinion to those among the Christians who dare to say that the Greeks should not be defended. For I will ask to them whether they prefer to die as Greeks or as Mohammedans. If they answer as Mohammedans, then it is evident the negation of the Trinity, it is evident the negation of the Cross, it is evident the contempt of all the sacraments of the Church, it is manifest their infidelity, the impiety is evinced.[112] On the contrary, if they answer as Greeks, why do they prefer to repel those Greeks who resist to the infidelity of Mohammed? For whoever forsakes and does not defend those he can defend certainly hands them over.[113] But if at the same time as with the Greeks even many more Catholics are handed over, would it not be a duty for the Christians to die rather than to hand over the Hellespont to the Mohammedans without blood, especially for those whom I have heard that for this cause are distinguished with a red hat in order to show themselves in the eyes of everyone prepared to shed their blood even for the Cross of the Lord?[114]

(14) Therefore, even though they –if it only concerns them– must be protected, since the Greeks are preferable to the Mohammedans, will they, at the

[112] The belief on the Passion of the Christ, the Trinity and the sacraments are all converging points between the Greek and the Catholic Church. To prefer Islam is to negate these essential dogmas.
[113] The sin of omission has a significant weight in the Christian faith (*cf.* for example *Ep. Jac.* 4, 17).
[114] Monfasani understands that in this passage George is speaking about the Crusaders and refers to Brundage, who informs that "the crusade vow was solemnized and externally attested by wearing the crusader's cross (…) The use of the insignia of the cross was coeval with the beginning of the crusade movement, for the accounts of Pope Urban II's speech at Clermont in 1095 agree that he there instructed those who vowed to participate in the crusade that they were to sew crosses to their clothing as a symbol of their commitment". Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, 18-9. However, the author explicitly mentions quite distinctive garments: the *rubea galera*. Although the term *galerum* can mean refer to a helmet, in this case the sense is in all likelihood the red hat (*galero rosso* in modern Italian) that typically appears in the heraldry of the cardinals and that were actually given to them by the Pope during the ordination. In fact, Trapezuntios uses a vocabulary that echoes the address that the Supreme Pontiff would give in the consistory for the nomination of new cardinals: "Ad laudem omnipotentis Dei, et Sanctae sedis Apostolicae ornamentum, accipe galerum rubrum, insigne singularis dignitatis Cardinalatus, per quod designator quod usque ad mortem et sanguinis effusionem, pro exaltatione Sanctae Fidei, pace, et quiete populi Christiani, augment et statu Sacrosanctae Romanae Ecclesiae, te intrepidum exhibere debeas" (*cf.* Woodward, *A Treatise on Ecclesiastical Heraldry*, 136). Thus, the passage is in agreement with the Cretan's general accusation of misbehavior to some sectors of the Roman Curia and high clergy that appear elsewhere in the text.

same time as with innumerable Catholics, be disregarded and handed over, and especially when hereupon a non-negligible danger looms over the entire Europe? And will that trite proverb among the rustics not remind us also that "they urge each other to try to extinguish the fire of the neighboring house not less than their own"?[115]

(15) What if the Greeks do not deserve to die like this? On the contrary, they deserve –I affirm– (for they disregard the sacred Florentine council already for ten years)[116] to be vituperated certainly and also punished, but not handed over to the infidelity. I do not want now to repeat the history of our parents any longer. There is no Christian a little learned who ignores that after the councils, to which the men were recalled from the heresies, all the heretics did not at once adhered to the truth; but many years later, when all those enrooted in heresy become extinguished, the Catholic opinion will be finally approved by everyone. It seems to me thus will be among the Greeks.[117]

(16) In effect, all the most learned of them fight in favor of the decree of the Florentine council, which is very great indeed, in addition to all the most noble and

[115] A famous version of this proverb appears in Horace *Ep.* 1, 18, 84-5: "nam tua res agitur, paries cum proximus ardet, et neglecta solent incendia sumere vires" ("for your own matters are at stake when the neighboring house is burning, and the neglected fires usually gain strengths"). The saying resumes quite successfully George's point in this oration: when an external force is threatening a contiguous region, one should help the other not by mere altruism, but to prevent that the danger continues on to affect one's own possessions or interests.

[116] The writer does not have problems in condemning the attitude of the Greeks towards the matter of the Union of the Churches at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438-1439. Indeed, the reception of the Florentine decree in Byzantium was far from warm and a great portion of the society did not deem it very promising. The popular rejection of the agreement went beyond the dogmatic matters. As Geanakoplos points out, the pro-Orthodox partisans feared also the loss of their national identity as a result of the Latinization of the institutions and life. This was already a reality in other aspects, like economy, for the Byzantine market during the Palaiologan times was to a great extent dominated by the Venetians and the Genoese. The anti-Latin sentiment was well-founded in the Byzantine population during centuries of tradition but it had certainly escalated after the Fourth Crusade. Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West*, 103-9.

[117] Trapezuntios was confident that the position of the Greeks would change after some years, when this stubborn sector of the Byzantine society passed away. A very negative picture of the Orthodox Christians is depicted here: they are not only heretics, but also associated to an antiquated, obsolete and undeveloped mindset (*patrum historiis*, *inveteratis in heresi*). Thus, he places his trust in the generational turnover.

rich,[118] as one has to expect that their true conversion would come about faster than many believe. Moreover, I am disposed to predict, whether because I truly desire it or because of any other certain cause, that in the times of Your Holiness the entire Greece shall assume wholly and zealously the precepts of the Roman Church, but in a different manner to how it was done in the times of Eugenius,[119] so that it can manifestly be accredited by the Divine Providence to grant the glory of such great matters to its zealous servants. But may this, almost an empty conjecture, be permitted in any way.

(17) May this be repeated over and over, that those should not be disregarded, lest at the same time as with them many of those who are Catholics perish, lest the resources of the Turks and particularly their naval multitudes grow, lest the fire is inflamed from there to the other regions of the Christians. But behold, behold what I will assert, most blessed Father. I dare to say that the Greeks are very worthy of being warded of the dangers caused by the Turks. Who does not remember that yesterday and the day before,[120] since they could not defend Thessalonica –noble city of Thessaly– from the Turks, in order to prevent the Christians that inhabited the city to be converted to infidelity, it was handed over to the Venetians by resolution of that

[118] This last claim seems to be more than a mere expression of vanity. Certainly, whereas his statement about the greater erudition of the pro-unionists is wholly dependent on his own point of view, the association of this group with the *nobiliores* and *ditiores* of the society is in agreement with the general tendencies reported by the sources, as can be read, for example, in Doukas: "The common and low-born populace, coming from the court-yard of the monastery and going into taverns, anathematized the Unionists while holding bottles of unwatered wine in their hands and drinking to the intercession of the icon of the Mother of God" (36, 4, translation by Magoulias, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks, by Doukas*; *cf.* also 36, 6). In the words of Necipoğlu, "although neither the numbers nor the relative proportion of the unionists and anti-unionists can be estimated from the sparse statistical evidence, in general the upper classes, especially people grouped around the imperial court, were favorably disposed towards the union, whereas opposition to it came primarily from the lower ranks of society, including monks and nuns, the lesser clergy, and lay folk". Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 209.

[119] Nicholas V would thus surpass his predecessor.

[120] *I.e.*, not long ago.

emperor Manuel and his sons?[121] (18) I was at Venice myself when these things were happening and I had accompanied the sentiment of both Greeks and Venetians with great admiration, for the Greeks because they preferred to submit themselves to the Italians rather than to the Turks,[122] and for the Venetians because although they saw clearly that the city could not be defended with naval forces, but that it was necessary a non-small campaign by land, which they could not do themselves, nevertheless with consideration of trust only and with zeal, to prevent such a large number of Christians to see themselves handed over to the infidelity, they supported that city gladly and defended as many as were in it.[123] Therefore, those who preferred to hand over themselves to the Catholics rather than to the Turks were justly snatched away by the Catholics themselves from the jaws of the Turks, so that it would not seem favored the impiety of the Turks more than the piety –howsoever it may be– of the Greeks.[124]

(19) And because of what I have mentioned a little before, is it not the whole Europe in debt with the Greeks by the fact that Emperor Manuel –not that of earlier times but the father of this who is emperor now– refused the passage to Tamerlane,

[121] The author produces an antecedent of collaboration between Greeks and Latins from the very recent past: the handing over of Thessalonica to the Venetians in 1423. The rather idealizing version of the events is interesting, however, because it allows a new positive assessment of the policies of Manuel II and his successors towards the West. According to George then, the Thessalonians or the Byzantines considered submission to the Ottomans, but in the end they opted for their Italian "coreligionists". This evinces not only a cultural but also a religious affinity, for the writer calls the inhabitants of the city simply "Christians". The Greeks, then, are worthy of receiving help, because they have shown a pro-Latin attitude in the past. On the other hand, the Venetians did help them, which also guarantees that the Byzantines deserve it and serves as example for the other Italian and Western powers.

[122] This expresses the famous dichotomy of Late Byzantium between the Papal tiara and the Turkish turban (*cf.* Doukas 37, 10).

[123] George offers a somewhat idealized image of the attitude of the Venetians, as if they did not have their own interests.

[124] The last phrase is somewhat ambiguous. In first place, we could understand that the action of the Greeks probed that they preferred to ally with the Catholics rather than with the Turks. However, one could also interpret that George is talking about the result of this election, which would involve divine agency. In effect, the salvation from the Turks is said to be deserved (*merito*), while the verb *approbo* in its Classical usage was frequently associated to the will of the gods. Thus, it appears like the development of the events depends ultimately on God's volition. The author passes over, however, that a few years later, in 1430, Thessalonica would fall definitively into Ottoman hands.

so he would not devastate the whole Europe? And yet, he could expect great things from that: the expulsion of the Turks from Greece and the non-small expansion of his empire. In effect, he had no doubt that Tamerlane, once the Turks were utterly destroyed and the entire Europe devastated, would return by the same passage to his own land. Whence a great and certain extension of his empire came after. However, he did not wished to obliterate the other Christians on account of his and his people's extension. And now his son, most blessed Father, asks succor from Your Holiness,[125] which is the head of all Europe, against the enemies of the Cross. And is he not worthy of receiving it? Will he be rejected emptyhanded? Oh, wretched man that I am! I am afraid that the indignity of the matter makes me say something unfit! I will speak nevertheless, for the affair not only requires but even demands it urgently.

(20) If the emperor, disdained, hands over the gates to the Turks sooner[126] and does not, as much as he can, resist, may Your Holiness believe me, believe me when I say that soon we will see the Adriatic and the Tuscan Sea, that is all that surrounds Italy, completely boiling with enormous fleets of Turks. Therefore, since by no means he wants to do that, Your Holiness will completely drive him, who is deprived of aid, to it, and will grant the Turks a magnificent triumph over Constantinople, so that they will invade from there more fiercely the other regions of the Christians. For

[125] George alludes directly to Constantine XI –although not by name– for the first time and claims that the debt of the Latins to the Byzantines now passes to him. As the author states, in 1451 the emperor had sent the ambassador Andronikos Bryennios Leontaris to the courts of the Pope Nicholas V and King Alfonso V looking for support. The latter was the only West European ruler that still showed interest in a crusade against the Turks, but it seems that he never attempted its realization. On the other hand, in Rome Andronikos tried to explain to the Pope the complex circumstances that the emperor was dealing with in the capital –the hub of Orthodoxy– and propose to hold a new council at Constantinople. Nicholas V, however, answered that they could not expect any kind of aid from Western Christendom until the acceptance of the Union of Florence was univocal. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor*, 51-2.

[126] This possibility is not a mere rhetorical device. On the contrary, Constantine XI inherited from his brother the pressure of those sectors of the population who advocated a pro-Ottoman policy. This position was not always based on anti-Latin feelings, but also on the idea that under the Turks the Greeks would attain prosperity and internal peace and be able to preserve their religious convictions and practices. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 288-9.

they will not give themselves to leisure. May I not be too much timid nor too much foolish! Certainly, I believe so: as soon as they have captured the entire Constantinople, at once they will attack Europe with all resolution; and, if they considered themselves weaker or if fortune did not answer to their petitions, straightaway they will summon all the Asiatic peoples to the open gates to march towards Europe.[127]

(21) Regarding all these things, I pray to recall that Your Holiness is not one among the princes and kings of the Christians, but the head of them all, and that Your Holiness does not have only secular power, but is the prince of the faith and religion of the Christians themselves and their defender, and that it did not get it by inheritance, but was appointed in elections by the Divine Providence for the government of the whole Christendom.[128] For which reason it happens that you have in debt from this pontificate to defend the Christians, to fight the infidels and to enlarge the Church of Christ as much as possible. For nobody is so meager of mind as not to see that to these three things all the spirit of the pontiff, all his thinking, care, effort, work and finally all his strengths must be devoted. May all these things be present to defend Constantinople! For, in addition to the Greeks, many cities of the Catholics are also guarded, the infidels are fought, the faith, if God grants the victory, is propagated and the Church expanded. Will you doubt that you were appointed to Peter's seat to yield assistance to the faithful, to protect the Christians

[127] The author attributes to the Turks a significant capacity of coalition: not only are they already numerous, but they can also summon many more to their cause, especially the *Asiaticas gentes*. If we interpret the statement within the oration's general apocalyptic tone, it is reminiscent of the image Satan in the book of *Revelations* (20, 7-8) gathering all those peoples living in the margins of the world for battle (see note 103). Ultimately, this cohesive force of the Turks and Muslims contrasts heavily with the extensive division that predominated across Europe and western Christendom.
[128] The Pope is not the ruler of a secular entity, but of a community that exceeds the political and cultural boundaries. Moreover, his seat is not hereditary, but was assigned to him by God. This remark acquires a special significance considering that Byzantium asked for the help of both the Vatican and the secular rulers of Europe. While the latter can neglect, the Church is bound to give assistance to its subjects.

and to establish the assistance of the Church for the Church? Or will Your Holiness await the exhortations of other princes, when he himself on his own accord should exhort everyone to such a holy task, no more with words than with actions?[129] (22) Or perhaps Your Beatitude is uncertain about which is the disposition of the secular princes on this affair? I myself consider them ready on account of their forces, so much that they seem to be expecting nothing else but the weight of your authority. And I think this can be comprehended from others very firmly both with assumptions and with certain argumentations. I see the spirit of Alfonso,[130] King of both Aragon and the Two Sicilies, most prepared to support every cause of the Christians. To support, I say? Rather, it has been supported already and it will be supported even more ardently, if Your Holiness, who is the first[131] on these things because of his office of apostleship, approved also the prince on the matter. Therefore, may Your Beatitude be cautious, lest it will be regarded as an unworthy action in the present and in the future the fact that the infidels were fought back by a secular prince rather than by the Supreme Pontiff –who is concerned the most– and that the Christendom

[129] The Pope must take the initiative and not wait the action of the secular leaders. This passage anticipates the introduction of King Alfonso in the oration a few lines later. Although the king's real intentions and interests on this subject are a matter of debate, a year before the composition of this text he had proposed to Nicholas to organize a campaign against the Turks, asking for Papal subsidies and the cooperation of other Christian rulers. The response from both sides was nevertheless halfhearted, as were also his later attempts for a crusade. Aloisio, "Alfonso V and the Anti-Turkish Crusade", 68-9.

[130] It is not a minor detail that George was residing in the court of King Alfonso in Naples by this time. Whereas the orator's sincere interest in Byzantium's salvation is beyond doubt, at his point he seems to be writing in the role of speaker and propagandist of his sovereign. Indeed, it is hard not to see in the following lines an allusion to Alfonso's aforementioned proposal. However, the Cretan is also acting in the same way as other humanists of the court, like Antonio Beccadelli or Bartolomeo Facio, who strived to project the image of Alfonso as the Christian leader destined to undertake the crusade against the Ottomans. Aloisio, "Alfonso V and the Anti-Turkish Crusade", 70. The mythic representation of Alfonso as the champion of the anti-Turkish crusade was an ideological program propelled doubtlessly by the king himself, and it was not limited to literary field. A notorious example is the theatrical ceremony carried out during the triumphal entrance of Alfonso to Naples on February 23rd, 1443. Among the many performances, there was the representation of a battle between young Catalans armed with Aragonese shields who represented the Virtue and a group of Turkish soldiers with monstrous heads. The piece, which naturally concluded with the victory of the Spaniards, was repeated every year in the commemorative procession of the capture of Naples. Figueras, "Contra Turcos", 101-4.

[131] Literally, *princeps*.

was defended by the former and disregarded by the Highest Pontiff. Therefore, most blessed Father, come then, do not delay and receive him in your heart, whom a Supreme Pontiff ought to have in such danger for the Christians.

(23) For if you support with all your resources his cause –I shall say what I expect and desire–, even the Christian princes and peoples will be compelled by the magnitude of this danger to let go for the nonce the intestine wars; and several will be encouraged by the magnitude of the glory –and they will not be devoid of it–; and several by the fear of eternal dishonor –if they were not to obey in such sacred purpose the commands of the Supreme Pontiff, that is, yours–; and many for the desire of enlarging their power; many to reach the indulgences of the sins,[132] which Your Holiness will distribute generously in such a great matter on account of the spiritual treasure acquired by the blood of Christ to all the soldiers fighting against the enemies of the Cross. Therefore, if no more honorable thing could ever be said or imagined, first on account of the Supreme Pontiff, then on account of the prince of the Christians, of which two roles you hold both the spiritual things and the riches and worldly power, if no deed could ever be more illustrious, nor more glorious –whether you consider the glory of this world or the celestial–, if there is nothing more profitable and convenient still than this transient profit, if, lastly, there is nothing holier, nothing more acceptable to God our creator, will Your Holiness doubt or seek for delays turning the back and will not embrace at once the cause of Christianity with all his actions, strengths, effort, attention and diligence?

(24) However, just as these elevated matters are all of true and eternal glory if Christianity will be defended, likewise the highest dishonor, the highest shame, the highest disgrace would follow if the gates of the Hellespont are handed over to the

[132] This spiritual reward was part of the fundamental assets behind the idea of crusade since Pope Urban II's sermon at Clermont.

Turks, gates through which all the Mohammedans[133] will be able to pass safe into Europe. Will you disdain and disregard such an important matter? And does not Your Holiness remember that the Persians always –from the times of Darius until even this day– wanted this passage? And does not the history testify that they never could, save only by bridges, like Xerxes?[134] And now in your own times will they yoke together Asia with the inaction of Europe through most illustrious cities, to fall fearlessly on Christendom with a single empire and an enormous army, through the constructed land and sea?[135] Out with this sin! Out with this crime! Out with this foulness! Out this shame from the times of Your Holiness!

(25) I myself believe, most blessed Father, that if the voices of the Catholic[136] Church could be heard now, at one time to all the princes and peoples of the Christians at another most particularly to you, her husband (for you are the substitute of her husband), she would cry out tearing her hairs and beating her breasts because of the pain in the manner of a woman:[137] "Oh me, wretched that I am! Oh,

[133] The text reads "omnes Machumetistae", now instead of *Asiatici*. Once again, Islam appears as an embodiment of the East.
[134] Reference to the construction of the pontoon bridges commanded by Xerxes on his invasion of Greece, as described by Herodotus 7, 36. The History and its agents seem to work here as models of what should be. At the same time, the events of the past would exert a significant pressure on Nicholas V and magnify his eventual failure.
[135] Here and again in paragraph 26 George uses the metaphor of the yoke (*iungere*, *coniungere*) to express the sultan's intentions regarding Asia and Europe. The choice of these verbs is quite impressive, since one of their primary senses is related to agriculture, more precisely, to the action of pairing two oxen or other beasts to plow one's land. Since Antiquity, the image would be also used to refer to slavery and oppression, and it is precisely with the expression Οθωμανικός ζυγός that the Greeks would later describe the period of Ottoman domination. In any case, this passage carries on with the idea of the unifying power of the sultan (*cf.* note 127): the one and only empire and army that the Ottomans could consolidate would represent an abominable counterpart of the Roman Empire.
[136] While the expression *universalis ecclesia* could simply mean here the whole church, the adjective is the Latin equivalent to the Greek καθολικός, thus alluding to the Western institution. The writer is purposely vague.
[137] The direct interpellation to Nicholas and the prophetic style reach their peaks with this *prosopopeia* of the Church (25-29), doubtlessly the dramatic climax of the exhortation. This rhetorical device was one of the three forms of the *ethopoeia,* or character construction, and consisted of a fictional discourse pronounced by a personified inanimate object or entity. George seems to be following here the famous example of Cicero *Catil.* 1, 11. As in Trapezuntios' exhortation, the Ciceronian text includes a personification of the *res publica* that addresses the orator and bids him to take action. The passage is located roughly at the same point of the oration, preparing its closure (for the importance of Cicero's work in George's writings see Classen, "The Rhetorical Works of George of Trebizond"). There is an antecedent of this resource in Trapezuntios' own corpus, in a letter addressed in 1441 to

unfortunate that I am! Pains press upon me now, bigger than ever, or rather, all the fatigues that I bore are nothing if they are compared with the current ones. Once the blood of my children was shed for my husband. And I was not losing[138] anyone, rather, I was growing more and more every day.[139] Now that the faith of even the Christians has diminished, destruction threatens me from all parts, the heretics invaded. Formerly they scoffed at me, but it was the friends of truth –few in fact, but who had been completely illuminated by the virtue of my husband– the men that freed me from the treacheries of all my enemies. (26) Now the faith totters weakened by the vices of men in such a manner that –may it not happen– if the Turks yoke together firmly Asia and Europe it will be all over with the Cross of my husband, all over with my sacraments, which were consecrated by the blood of my husband, all over with me myself. For everyone will embrace the faithlessness of Mohammed. What will I do? To whom will I turn for help? From where will I implore succor? From my husband? He is angry because of the carelessness of my children. He is angry because the bishops consume all my resources, not for my protection or embellishment, but for their own desires. He is angry because when many of them provide help previously for the worldly matters, in no case the weakest help the faith, but all of them in their life dissuade themselves from the faith. He is angry because they believe less than the lay people.[140] He is angry because in my main seat the

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the papal diplomat Johannes de Dominicis where we can also find a pathetic monologue of the Church personified. The text, entitled *De adventu legatorum ex Ethiopia et de Antichristi temporibus,* is an early expression of the Cretan's apocalyptic vision (*cf.* text LXXIV in Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 261-8).

[138] We should understand the lection "ammittebam" most certainly as the verb *amitto* rather than *admitto*.

[139] In the past the Church was also under attack, but the torment and execution of her faithful as martyrs only made her stronger. The orator want us to believe that the current situation is far worse, as the number of believers decreases.

[140] Under the guise of the Church, George launches a direct invective to the high clergy, with which he was so familiar after the years working in the Roman curia. The accusation concerns the enrichment of the bishops and their involvement in the secular affairs, as they become political rather than spiritual figures.

heretics are especially honored.[141] (27) To the substitute of my husband, therefore, I will address, a man adorned with all the sciences and all the sorts of letters.[142] I will beg to him. He –so I believe– will commiserate with me. I implore you for these tears, Nicholas V,[143] and beseech you firstly to depress the sacerdotal luxury –as you ought to–, to drive away the heretics and attempt in every way to appease my husband (for the commencement of every affair should be requested to him always) and afterwards to make use of my resources for protecting me and to incite the entire Christian people against the enemies of the Cross, raising the Cross of my husband. (28) I am as yet not so lost that the entire Europe does not follow the Cross of my husband. Because some for themselves, some for wealth, attacked the enemies of the Cross. I have seen, I have seen the whole Europe myself in the Jubilee year coming together to Rome because of the indulgencies.[144] Therefore, what things will not be

[141] As Monfasani notes, George is most probably talking about Lorenzo Valla. The Inquisition had put the scholar on trial the previous decade, for having argued that the *Symbolum Apostolorum* was not in fact the production of the twelve Apostles. As he was found guilty of heresy, King Alfonso managed to stop his execution and Valla was forced simply to declare that he believed in the tenets of the Church. When the Humanist Nicholas V was elected as Pope, the scholar was invited back to Rome and given a high position in the curia. Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, vol. 3, 566-7. Moreover, Valla's attack to some aspects of Aristotelian philosophy and support of Epicurus located him in George's opposite position. In this respect, the passage should be read within the frame of the controversy between Aristotelians and Platonists and George's ideas on the revival of Platonic philosophy by Gemistos Plethon and his disciples –among whom one should count, of course, cardinal Bessarion– and his understanding of Islam as a doctrine deriving from Platonism (*cf.* chapter 4.3). Finally, it is also possible that the Cretan's accusation of heresy was of a more informal sort, a simple insult to his enemies at Rome. These were many, and among them can be counted Poggio Bracciolini, Giovanni Aurispa, Iacobus Cremonensis and Theodore Gaza. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 104-5.

[142] Unlike his predecessor Eugene IV, Nicholas showed a deep enthusiasm for learning since his early years. Admired as a great Christian Humanist by the Renaissance scholars, his reign period as head of the Church was characterized by the promotion of arts and sciences. Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 2, 14-5; 24-6.

[143] The Pope is addressed here as the substitute or representative in earth of her husband (Christ), a closeness which Trapezuntios exploits to speak freely about his own concerns. The expression "ego te per has lacrimas" is a clear allusion to Dido's famous words in Vergil's *Aeneid* 4, 314. The context is absolutely fitting, for in this episode the queen of Carthage, after learning that Aeneas will abandon her and continue his travel to Italy, asks for his commiseration and implores him be mindful of their marital union and not to go.

[144] Three years after his election, Nicholas V proclaimed a Universal Jubilee, which would confer him reputation and grant the opportunity to make Rome the center of spirituality and culture. The pilgrims that visited the main churches of the city during 1450 and confessed their sins there would immediately gain plenary indulgence. The call for pilgrimage had a wide acceptance among the faithful and, according to various testimonies, the amount of people of all strata –including some of

made in defense of the Cross, wherewith major indulgences, highest glory and worldly wealth are offered to those who contribute with non-small succor? I just need a leader and a prince, which I would prefer –if I had to choose among all– to be no other than you. Now you, who I would choose, you are the prince given to me by fate. Rise up, then, to protect the gates of the Hellespont. (29) These are those gates, these and no others, through which, once completely opened –Oh faith! Oh piety!–, Gog and Magog will spread in order to crash me. Have mercy on the suffering! Have mercy on my sons! Guard the gates of Europe for me. Found there walls of eternal glory for yourself. Erect there a tower, one that will not be demolished on the spot after you yield it to the force of nature, [145] but one that will proclaim for perpetual times your name both in Greek and Latin and that will prepare the passage from these fallen realms to the celestial.[146] And finally, defend me, for I was entrusted to you by the Divine Providence, and do not let yourself to be wholly subdued by your times, lest you will be marked perpetually with shameful names either. Therefore, I will not doubt that that pontiff whose carelessness handed over the Hellespont gates to the enemies of the Cross will have the name of betrayer of Christendom and forerunner of the Antichrist."[147]

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the princes– who visited Rome during the year seems to have been prodigious, to the point that there occurred serious problems of provisions, lodging and security. Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 2, 74-103. The testimony of the success of the Jubilee given by the Church is actually George's, since he was already in Rome at the time. Considering the impact this decree had, the author did not doubt that a great portion of the Christians were so deeply concerned about the salvation of their souls that the same degree of adhesion could be achieved if the Pope announced and supported a new Crusade.

[145] The author is quite precise on the matter of the fortification of Constantinople.

[146] The action of the Pope would grant him glory both in West and East. There is a wordplay in the election of the word *transitum*, which has been used throughout the oration to refer to the Hellespont and the crossing of the Turks to Europe. By contrast, the aid of the Pope would prepare another kind of passage, from a fallen to the Heavenly Kingdom.

[147] The abandonment of Constantinople equals a betrayal, not only to the Greeks but to the whole Christendom; and, as the betrayal of Judas brought the death of Christ, this betrayal will bring the Antichrist and the end of the Church. In consequence, the Pope would become the inverted version of Saint John the Baptist.

(30) Imagine, most blessed Father, that the Church herself pours forth now all these things in such a way to you. Will you not have mercy on her? I, by the God of truth, prefer to see the death of all the freemen first and to throw my own self over their blood, rather than seeing the gates that protect Christendom in hands of the Turks. For I do not ignore that it is so much better to die than to live miserably. Indeed, if death was even nobler and was beneficial to the soul, death, I say, death I would choose rather than a miserable life. But I have been extended longer than I desired because of the strength of these affairs. That I would like: may Your Holiness give credit –being I witness– to my conscience that I could not be silent, in part because of the glory of your name, in part moved by the common utility and that I support the cause of your glory as vehemently as I am consumed by a major devotion to Your Holiness. (31) For just as those who are –not without prudence– the jealous type with their women, they are not tormented by the present faults, since they see none, but by the fear of a future dishonor; in the same manner I myself, since I always desire vehemently that the name of Your Holiness be elevated to the stars, fear that –and may God prevent it now and always– the foundations of the destruction of the Christians and the arrival of the Antichrist are established during your times.[148] Because of this disturbance in my spirit occurred that, while I was following the strength of these affairs, I had forgotten my smallness. Therefore, may Your Holiness –I pray– ignore my loquacity, especially because, if with the impetus of the oration this was said not properly enough, I would not want it to be said.[149]

[148] Just like in the guise of the Church George was able to appeal Nicholas as a wife, now –in a rather odd fashion– he defends the writing of this oration comparing his considerate and well-intended attitude to the behavior of a jealous husband. Thus, at the closure of the discourse, the author returns to the idea of *pietas*, duty, as primary motivation for writing.

[149] The direct interpellations to the Pope and the reminders of his eventual ignominy if Constantinople fell occurred throughout the whole exhortation and, despite George's repeated apologies for doing this, one wonders how Nicholas would have taken it.

2.4 Discussion

The exhortations are in the first place a valuable testimony of George Trapezuntios' mastery of both oratory and the Latin language. Indeed, from a very early point of his life he had resolved that he could make a place for himself in the intellectual environment of 15th-century Europe as an orator and an expert in eloquence.[150] And he certainly did so, for one of his main contributions to the Renaissance culture were his theoretical writings on rhetoric, which enjoyed a wide diffusion during the following centuries.[151]

Accordingly, it is not surprising to find his orations in agreement with the Classical conventions of oratory and filled with rhetorical devices. In the opening (*exordium*) of both discourses (*Ad Alfonsum* 1-3; *Ad Nicholaum* 1) the author salutes the addressees, vaguely explains the reasons why he is writing and reflects on his enterprise. Then follows the *narratio* (*Ad Alfonsum* 4-8; *Ad Nicholaum* 3-6), where the subject and its relevance to the rulers are presented with clarity. The display of the diverse proofs and argumentations, the *confirmatio*, occupies the largest part of

[150] See the letter to Niccolò Cornelius quoted by Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 21.

[151] From the very first moment, George sought to introduce the rhetorical tradition of the Greeks into the Latin world. Unlike the West, throughout the whole history of Byzantium the discipline had preserved its vitality and remained as one of the central constituents of high education. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 248-55. Byzantine rhetoric was based mostly on the work of Hermogenes of Tarsus (2nd century AD) and the diverse literature derived from it (commentaries, epitomes, etc.). Trapezuntios' first works on oratory were, in fact, a synopsis of Hermogenes' Περί ἰδεών, which he dedicated to his teacher Vittorino da Feltre, and the treatise *De suavitate dicendi*, dealing with the form of γλυκύτης of the speech as presented by the Antique author. His dearest piece, the *Rhetoricum libri V*, was more ambitious, for he intended to offer a new manual on the subject –something that, according to him, had not been attempted for centuries by the time– and combined in it the Greek and Roman traditions. Whereas the theoretical base stems mainly from Dionysus of Halicarnassus, Maximus the Philosopher and Hermogenes, George relied on the writings of Cicero and other authors of Classical Rome as authority. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 26; Classen, "The Rhetorical Works of George of Trebizond", 77-9. Certain passages of this piece prompted the attack of Andreas Agaso (a disciple of Guarino Veronese, or maybe Guarino himself) and in response the Cretan wrote another major piece, his commentary of Cicero's *Pro Ligario.* Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 291-2. It can be affirmed that in the end George attained a more than decent place among the Renaissance scholars because of these works. The *editio princeps* of his *Rhetoricum libri V* appeared in 1470 and it continued to be printed throughout Europe in the following centuries (by 1547 it counted with at least 18 editions). Moreover, the author continued to inspire many humanists of the 15th and 16th centuries. See Classen, "The Rhetorical Works of George of Trebizond", 82-4; Awianowicz, "Between Hermogenes, Cicero and Quintilian", 226.

the texts. In this section, the writer recalls the remote and recent past, analyzes the present situation, and makes several conjectures –sometimes realistic enough, sometimes dramatically apocalyptic– about the future results of the decisions taken by the protagonists of the events. In this connection, it is noteworthy how literary and historical elements of both Greek and Latin tradition are inserted into the argumentation, an amalgamation that may illustrate the writer's intermediary position between those two worlds and that was probably not common at all by the time. In effect, decisively Byzantine episodes, like the wars with the Persians or Emperor Manuel II's deeds, appear next to well-defined knowledge of the political situation in the contemporary Europe and references that are typical of Western European culture, as is the case of Charlemagne's legend. History, whatever the tradition to which it belongs, has a preeminent argumentative role in Trapezuntios' works. In accordance with his apocalyptic understanding of the coming times, it is clear that in his conception the Divine Providence is behind every event of human affairs. Moreover, the orations expose to a certain extent an idea of progressive decline, according to which the personalities of the past –be it Alexander the Great, Constantine I or even Manuel II and Eugene IV– appear always as more righteous, blessed and heroic. However, this decadence is not an irreversible fatality, but precisely an opportunity for Alfonso, Frederick and Nicholas to change the course of history. While the *narratio* and *confirmatio* constitute the rational line of the argumentation, the closure (*epilogus*) corresponds to the passionate section, where the orator intends to move the passions of the auditory (*animos impellere*), not holding himself back, but displaying all his resources. Consequently, this seemed the right place to locate the personification of the Church, in which George reproduces most of his earlier points with a redoubled emphasis.

Apart from the rhetorical aspects, the two exhortations present notable differences in content and style that respond mainly to the consideration of each addressee. Firstly, the oration to Nicholas has a more customized character than the text directed to Alfonso and Frederick. In the first case, George makes reference to the pontiff's duties, acquaintances and past life, showing a deeper understanding of the position and environment of the recipient. Moreover, *Ad Nicholaum* exhibits numerous allusions to its context of production, specific circumstances and events like the Council of Florence, the Crusade of Varna, the imminence of Constantinople's fall and the Jubilee of 1450. These extra-textual elements fix the text to a very precise spatiotemporal conjuncture and, naturally, to a definite addressee. By contrast, in *Ad Alfonsum* George is more vague and –whether purposely or not– disregards the king's conflicts or hostilities with the other princes and the pope. This could well be ascribed to the writer's familiarity with Nicholas and his sphere of activity. Closely related to this aspect is the candor and straightforwardness that distinguishes the exhortation to the pope in comparison to the other. Indeed, while Trapezuntios moves with perceptible care, discretion and elusiveness in the oration to the secular rulers and opts for developing an encomiastic vein, *Ad Nicholaum* stands out for the many licenses of decorum taken by the author. Once again, at the time he wrote the latter text, he had been under Nicholas' service for five years, while by 1443 George had no relationship at all with the Aragonese king, almost a newcomer to Italian affairs. The same can be said about Frederick III in 1452. Finally, although there are in fact some elements of prophetic style and apocalyptic literature in the earlier text, these are minimal when compared to the second. Their pronounced increase is surely connected with the pessimistic spirit after the Crusade of Varna and the failure of the Union, with the circumstances of

Constantinople by the time and with the conviction that Christendom was now in serious danger.

The orations share, nevertheless, various characteristics, which reveal peculiar aspects of George's mentality and positions towards the world. Whereas his ideas concerning Greek identity, the Ottomans and the Latins will be analyzed in chapter 4, it seems appropriate to discuss at this point the rather pragmatic and almost materialistic attitude that he shows in the texts when he intends to persuade his audience of preparing a crusade. On the one hand, in both pieces Trapezuntios reflects on the inconvenience of the perpetual wars between the European powers, to which –in his opinion– the advance of Islam owes much. He finds a typically Roman solution for the matter, as he advises to translate all the effort, energy and expenses wasted in the *intestina bella* to a campaign against the Muslims (*Ad Alfonsum* 22; *Ad Nicholaum* 23). Thus, a *Pax Christiana* should be established within the confines of Europe, among the nations that are heirs of the Roman Empire, now heterogeneous from a political perspective, but united by culture and, above all, by religion.

On the other hand, it has been already underlined the writer's opinion of the material profit that might be gained from the enterprise, namely, the booty, the amplification of political power and the territory and subjects at disposal. It is true that he deems all these factors inferior to the ideas of glory, justice and spiritual reward, which belong to a transcendental plane. For instance, in *Ad Alfonsum* 7 he states "Would that such was our spirit, so that we preferred the eternal to these perishable matters! But with a certain deficiency of the spirit we embrace this life beyond measure." Nevertheless, George does not despise the material profit at all and even considers it equally relevant (or persuasive) as the other motives. In the oration to Alfonso he writes: "We are all captivated by the name of profit (*utilitatis*),

we long for kingdoms, we dream about empires (…) We desire these things; in that place they are the greatest" (22); and a few lines later: "Will the delightfulness of the places not inflame the hedonistic men (*voluptuosos*)? Will the gold of the whole world that has been accumulated there for many years now not inflame the greedy, the size and multitude of the regions [will not inflame] those desirous of ruling (…)?" (23). Similar statements are repeated, perhaps less emphatically, in *Ad Nicholaum* 23 and 28. But this attitude is not limited merely to these two texts. On the contrary, the exhortations reflect quite accurately George's position in political theory. As Hankins points out, in the *Comparatio philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis* the Cretan attacks some of the notions that Plato exposes in his *Laws*, among which was the conviction that desire for wealth was foolish, while the pursuit of honor was sign of wisdom. Instead, George acknowledges that to be attracted by wealth is an intrinsically human quality:

> Men are driven by a kind of appetite to produce wealth for themselves and their children, and since man is an animal composed of body and soul, legislators will value bodily welfare (*corpori commoda*) too, if they are wise. Thus at nature's command the soul grows in newborn children and is made capable of handling affairs more effectively. But if we are not allowed to look after ourselves and our relations, if our labor brings us no private benefit, the soul is cast down and made effeminate, and ultimately is reduced to a mere counterfeit of its nature. It is not right nor possible to strip souls of considerations of private utility (*utilitatis*); nor is it in the least profitable.[152]

These thoughts are in line with Trapezuntios' philosophical tenets. Indeed, he rejected the Platonic theory of the ideas, according to which the soul was the true self of the human beings, while the body was a mere vehicle. By contrast, the Aristotelian position that George favored held that soul and body constituted an inseparable entity.[153] In sum, the human actions –in this case, undertaking the crusade against the

[152] Translation by Hankins, "George of Trebizond, Renaissance Libertarian?", 99.
[153] Hankins, "George of Trebizond, Renaissance Libertarian?", 99-101.

Muslims– must have a spiritual and metaphysical value or significance, but men are equally or primarily moved by their worldly interests. George does not censure this attitude, but rather recognizes it and even exploits it.

Finally, another point of debate is the contextual dimension of the writings, *i. e.*, the relations between the texts and their addressees, their reception and how they fitted in the political programs and intentions of the rulers, as well as George's incidental interests in writing the orations. In the case of King Alfonso, a first question would be how relevant was for the monarch the idea of carrying out a campaign to recover the Holy Lands. In the opinion of Monfasani, the proposition does not make much sense, since Alfonso considered the Mamluks as potential allies against the Ottomans and had plenty of reasons to remain in Naples and consolidate his power. The explanation that he finds is that, on the one hand, to Trapezuntios the king seemed to be the most capable of defeating the *Africani* –the destroyers of the Christians according to the apocalyptic literature, here identified with the Mamluks–; and, on the other, that the real objective were the Turks.[154] Whereas these two interpretations certainly justify in part George's action, I would like to argue that his exhortation to recover the Holy Lands was in fact a most reasonable maneuver. In this regard, Figliuolo demonstrated not only that the king frequently contemplated to undertake a campaign to release the Judea from Islamic dominion –and even claimed for him the title of King of Jerusalem–, but even that he was attentive to the fortune of the pilgrims, the Holy Places and the Christians that lived in Syria.[155] Therefore,

[154] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 51-2.

[155] Figliuolo, "La Terrasanta nel quadro della politica orientale di Alfonso V d'Aragona", 496-502. The evidence offered by this author corresponds to the years 1441, 1444 and 1445, so we can affirm that King Alfonso had a certain consideration for the cause of the Holy Lands by the time George wrote the first version of the oration. Moreover, although Cerone –whom Monfasani follows– argues that the monarch sought the association with the Mamluks to counteract the Ottoman expansion, it is clear from this that the relationship between the king and the sultan of Egypt was rather tense. Cerone, "La politica orientale di Alfonso d'Aragona".

George probably was aware of the king's activities and intentions, and decided to encourage this spirit. Lastly, the recovery of Jerusalem was the main objective of the Medieval crusades and traditional crusading literature, and the focus of attention was just starting to shift from there to Constantinople and the Balkans. And, as we observed, the Ottoman issue was also addressed in the discourse. Once again, this proved to be a central constituent of Alfonso's external policies in the following decades; and George probably understood that, at his arrival to the political field of central Europe, the king would have to deal with this battlefront sooner or later. From this it follows that Trapezuntios had at least three possible objectives in writing *Ad Alfonsum*. Firstly, a genuine interest in the Holy Lands, which was connected to his apocalyptic conception of the days to come. Indeed, his insistence on the subject throughout his life dissuades us from thinking that this was no other thing than a rhetorical device. Secondly, there is undoubtedly a patriotic sentiment involved, that is, a real concern for Constantinople and the Greek world. And finally, one cannot ignore the obvious encomiastic spirit of the oration. In this respect, the text articulates within the propagandistic program that was being carried out in Alfonso's court. As Figueras states, as early as the decade of 1430 men of letters, artists and apologists engaged in a campaign of legitimization that sought to design an almost mythical image of the monarch that portrayed him as the most capable leader for fighting Islam.[156] On account of this we can assume that there were further, individual motives for George to write the exhortation, namely, to introduce himself and his literary abilities to the king in search for patronage –what he effectively achieved years later.

[156] Figueras, "Contra Turcos", 98-9.

Not much can be said though about the Emperor Frederick III. Since the exhortation is the only preserved work that George dedicated to this ruler, we must assume that the relationship between them was limited to that and that there never developed a particular interest in any of them. In fact, the superficial modifications of the third redaction of the piece lead us to think that Trapezuntios decided to take advantage of his previous work now that the opportunity of Frederick's coronation in Rome came across him. Nevertheless, as has been stated above, it is possible that George was informed of Frederick's pilgrimage to the Holy Lands and, in any case, the title of Roman Emperor naturally bore rights and obligations over that site. On the other hand, both the time and the addressee, who was more involved in the affairs of the Balkans, seemed more than suitable for preaching the crusade against the Turks.[157]

Finally, considering George's personal relationship with the pope and the preeminent role that the latter had in the Church and in European politics, it is not surprising that George urged him to call for a campaign to fight the Ottomans and Islam. What is not easy to understand is the manner in which he carried out this enterprise, too straightforwardly and perhaps on more occasions than adequate. In fact, George believed that the pope's hostility derived largely from his frequent mentions to the necessity of succoring Constantinople.[158] In a writing against Theodore Gaza, the Cretan affirmed:

> Whence I believe that his spirit [Gaza's] raised so much that through Andreas Contrarius, a certain impure man, he sent letters (…) to the Pope Nicholas V, by whom particularly I am ruined with many misfortunes, because I used to preach both with words and with

[157] As noted above (*cf.* note 70), in the version of *Ad Alfonsum* sent to Frederick III George expands the text and, in the final appeal against the expansion of the enemy's empire, he changes the original "Mohammedans" to "Turks".
[158] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 128.

> writings that it was necessary that the city of Constantine was defended by the Supreme Pontiff.[159]

Concerning *Ad Nicholaum*, there is the possibility that the exhortation was also an attempt to win back the favor of the pontiff. I have already mentioned that George left the papal court at Rome after a number of altercations with other members of the curia. The various allusions to the corruption of the Church that we read in the oration could well be connected with an intention of doing away with the slanders against his person. Although Nicholas V eventually reconciled with Trapezuntios thanks to the intercession of Filelfo, he would return to the curia only after the election of the next pontiff, Calixtus III, in 1455.[160] And, as we know, in the end Nicholas did not undertake any action for the salvation of Constantinople until it had already fallen. On September 1453, he addressed a crusade bull, in which, ironically, he exploited apocalyptic imagery in a very similar manner as George had done before.[161]

The exhortations of George Trapezuntios, with their high rhetorical elaboration, outspoken style, prophetic character and diverse allusions to history, provide us with a detailed insight into his mentality and his position in the intellectual field of 15th-century Europe. They reflect his unusual ideas and his toilsome personality, which frequently brought him into problems, from the enmity of his peers to incarceration and accusations of betrayal. Nevertheless, it is evident that the apocalyptic tone of his texts was not at all a rhetorical ornament. As shall be discussed in chapter 4, his concerns about the future of his fatherland, his culture and

[159] "Unde credos animos ipsum adeo extulisse, ut per Andream Contrarium, quendam hominem impurum, ad pontificem Nicolaum quintum, a quo praecipue ipse, quia Constantini urbem a summo pontifice defendi tam verbis quam scriptis oportere praedicabam, multis incommodis afflictus sum, litteras miserit…" Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, vol. 3, 280.
[160] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 124-5.
[161] Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent*, 31.

his religion were without any doubt genuine and he certainly put all his skills in the service of their preservation, even at the expense of his own interests.

CHAPTER 3

BESSARION

3.1 Introduction

Among all the Byzantine scholars who migrated to the West in the 15th century, Bessarion was perhaps the one who managed to adapt to the new environment with more ease and who accomplished the most successful career, rising high in the offices of the Church and creating a net of contacts from all over Europe in the social, political and intellectual fields. Nevertheless, having spent most of his youth and training years in the capital of the Byzantine Empire, his connection and identification with the Greek culture firmly remained as one of the most distinctive features of his personality throughout his life.

Bessarion[162] was born in Trebizond in 1403[163] and at a young age he was sent to Constantinople for his education, always bounded to the religious sphere: at twenty he became a monk and some years later he was ordained as a priest.[164] A crucial moment of his formative life was doubtlessly the years that he resided in Mistra under the supervision of one of the most remarkable intellectuals of Late Byzantium, Gemistos Plethon.[165] Having attained already at an early age a certain

[162] He adopted the name Bessarion when he took the monastic vows. It is debated if his birth name was John or Basil. Labowsky, "Bessarione", 686-7; Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, vol. 1, 40-1.
[163] Bessarion's year of birth is matter of discussion, as the information offered by the sources has been interpreted by the scholars in different ways. While the years 1400 and 1408 are also supported by the scholarship, in selecting 1403 as the most plausible I follow Kennedy, "Bessarion's Date of Birth".
[164] Labowsky, "Bessarione", 686-7.
[165] Plethon is particularly known for his innovative ideas about politics and religion. Constantinopolitan by birth, in the final years of his life he opened a school in Mistra, the capital of the Despotate of Morea, where he also was assigned to a judicial office. Eminent personalities of the 15th century were trained with him, including, perhaps, members of the imperial family. His immense learning on Platonism and his reformative ideas were also appreciated in the Western world, which he visited during the Council of Ferrara-Florence. Shawcross, "A New Lykourgos for a New Sparta", 420-1; 446-52.

prestige in learning,[166] he entered the service of the Emperor John VIII and accompanied him to the West for the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438.[167] This event certainly marked his later life, for, before setting back to Constantinople, he received from the pope the offer to stay at the curia.[168] Thus, in 1440, after a brief period of time in the Byzantine capital,[169] Bessarion returned to Italy and settled there definitely. He was appointed as cardinal of the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome in late 1439 and Latin Patriarch of Constantinople in 1463, succeeding Isidore of Kiev in this post.[170]

Although Bessarion's learning was indisputably excellent it what concerned the Greek tradition, it was naturally necessary for him to immerse in the study of the Latin (and Italian) language as well, in order to carry out his responsibilities in the papal court and climb in the hierarchy of the Church. This he accomplished within his first years in the West.[171] However, the beginnings and character of his career as a Latin author is a very different matter. According to Monfasani, the Latin works of the cardinal can be grouped in two: those belonging to an earlier period, starting from 1464, during which he produced works in his own Latin; and those writings that were

[166] Bessarion himself claims in his *Epistola ad Graecos* that, even before he could grow a beard, his name was known to everyone who understood the Greek language ("Γνώριμον ἦν τοὐμὸν ὄνομα πᾶσι τοῖς ὁπηδήποτε φωνῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἐπαΐουσι", *PG* 161, col. 461D). After he took up definitive residence in Italy, he prepared a collection of his early Greek writings, which is preserved in the MS Marc. Gr. 533. Monfasani, "Bessarion Latinus", 165.

[167] Bessarion was one of the main spokesmen of the Byzantines, together with Mark Eugenikos. Whereas the latter exhibited a more aggressive attitude, Bessarion had a more conciliatory and urbane mode of expression. Convinced by some of the expositions of the Latin representatives, he presented his *Oratio Dogmatica* to the Byzantine party, in which he attempted to show that the *Filioque* clause was not heretical and that the Greek and Latin versions of the Creed had actually an identical meaning. Gill, *Personalities of the Council of Florence*, 48-9.

[168] Labowsky, "Bessarione", 687.

[169] According to some authors, Constantinople represented now a hostile environment for Bessarion because of his pro-Unionist position. However, Labowsky claims that it was mainly his desire to foment the Union of the Churches and the project of a crusade against the Turks that prompted him to migrate to Italy. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261*-1453, 377-8; Labowsky, "Bessarione", 688.

[170] Labowsky, "Bessarione", 692.

[171] Monfasani, "Bessarion Latinus", 166.

published after 1467-1468. Regarding this last group, as it seems, the involvement of the Italian scholar Niccolò Perotti was crucial, to the point that Monfasani identifies him as the ghost writer behind Bessarion's Latin texts. Whereas the motives for this sudden decision are not completely clear, it is very possible that

> Bessarion now wanted the Latin of his writings to read as elegantly as George of Trebizond's. In the great duel with the Cretan, Bessarion eventually decided that he would not even concede the advantage of superior Latinity to his rival.[172]

Bessarion's orations against the Turks, which were the last texts that the cardinal published in life, fall thus in this category.

The promotion of an anti-Ottoman crusade, however, was not a project that appeared abruptly at the end of Bessarion's life. On the contrary, he enthusiastically advocated for this enterprise before and after the fall of Constantinople and was considered a reference on the matter.[173] One of the first testimonies of this zeal can actually be read in the *Oratio Dogmatica* that he delivered at the Council of Florence (*cf.* note 167 above). In its epilogue, Bessarion highlights the connection between the disunity of Christendom and the advance of the Turks and urges his audience to ally and take arms against the enemy.[174] These writings, however, had not the crusade as the main objective, but touched upon the matter. Among the texts of exclusively exhortative nature, we preserve the instructions that he gave to crusade preachers when he was sent by the pope to Venice in 1463 in order to arrange with the Republic a campaign against the Turks.[175] In a succinct manner, he indicates which motives the preachers should address to convince the audience of taking the Cross:

> On the first cause, the preachers should recall the capture of Constantinople, and subsequently that of so many islands, cities and lands: the men viciously

[172] Monfasani, "Bessarion Latinus", 172-4. I shall elaborate on the complex relationship between the cardinal and Trapezuntios in chapter 4.
[173] See Irmscher, "Bessarion als griechischer Patriot", 175.
[174] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 109-10.
[175] Labowsky, "Bessarione", 692.

> slaughtered, the women ravished, the virgins raped, the nuns dishonoured, the young people savagely cut down, the breast-feeding infants affixed by the sword to their mothers' arms, the pregnant women run through with steel. Then, the holiest and most splendid churches polluted with disgusting filth, the altars profaned, the saints' statues mindlessly smashed … On the second cause, it should be recalled how many thousands of Christians are in captivity and most shameful slavery, and how they are to be pitied. We must be merciful … On the third cause, the necessity [of the war], it should be shown that the Turk, not content [with what he has], is making eager preparations to subjugate the entire world, starting with Italy. All delay is disastrous, because he acquires a new kingdom every day and gets stronger, while we lose a kingdom and get weaker. So if we are unmoved by love for religion and calamity [in the East], let us be moved by our country, our homes, our children, our family, and our wives.[176]

As we shall see, not all of these causes will be fully exploited in his later corpus of exhortative texts. Apart from this, Bessarion urges the preachers to inform their audience that Venice has taken arms against the Ottomans and to encourage them with hopes of success by bringing up the victories of the early battles of the Crusade of Varna (in particular, the example of King Wladyslaw III of Poland) and the more recent defense of Belgrade in 1456.[177] This last event and other triumphs in the Balkans will also be used later for showing the rulers of Europe that the enemy was not undefeatable. Finally, in the instructions the cardinal mentions popular and technical elements (like the grant of indulgences, the garments and prayers),[178] that – even though they were characteristic of the genre– are significantly absent in the *Epistolae et Orationes*, doubtlessly because these were directed to a more selected audience, which deemed the political aspects the most relevant.

This crusading attempt was thwarted with the sudden death of pope Pius II. Bessarion, who was very much committed to the enterprise, seems to have retired from public life because of the frustration.[179] However, the fall of Negroponte, the

[176] Translation by Housley, *Documents on the Later Crusades*, 148-9.
[177] Housley, *Documents on the Later Crusades*, 150.
[178] Housley, *Documents on the Later Crusades*, 151-3.
[179] Labowsky, "Bessarione", 692.

last significant Western enclave situated in the Aegean, in 1470 put him back into action. Soon after this event, he devoted himself to the composition of what would become his corpus of *Epistolae et Orationes contra Turcos*. In comparison to George Trapezuntios' texts, these present a somewhat more complicated transmission history. To start with, they belong to a very different period, not only in the geopolitical plane –indeed, nations and borders had changed notoriously in the decades after the fall of Constantinople– but also with respect to the publication, circulation and reception of written literature itself, for the modern press –having been invented in the years close to the capture of the city– was now in full expansion and was starting to take over the spaces held before by the manuscript practice. In consequence, as we shall see in section 3.4, the orations were distributed in manuscripts, printed copies and even some in hybrid copies.

A couple of months after the fall of Negroponte, Bessarion composed two exhortations addressed to pope Paul II and the ambassadors of the Italian states, stressing the necessity of peace among the European princes and of a combined operation against the Ottoman menace. These pieces were accompanied by an annotated translation of Demosthenes' *First Olynthiac Oration,* dedicated to the Pope Paul II, which enabled him to compare the present affairs with the situation of Athens vis-à-vis the threat of Philip of Macedon in the 4th century BC. Later on, the cardinal sent these texts to the Venetian doge Cristoforo Moro, completing the collection with a –revised– epistle that he had sent to an abbot of San Severino (also named Bessarion) and a personalized epistle and epilogue to the doge. Lastly, he revised once again the corpus and changed the epistle to Cristoforo Moro for a more general one addressing the Italian princes. The two orations were altered in favor of the princes as well. It was this final collection, in addition to another personalized

letter, the one that the cardinal sent by the end of 1470 to the humanist Guillaume Fichet with the confidence that he would be able to transmit it to the King Louis XI of France and other powerful leaders. Fichet, in his turn, would produce a small edition in the first Paris press, of which he was supervisor. After this point, the *corpus* underwent a significant circulation, considering that Fichet's press produced at least sixty printed books and some manuscript copies as well, which were sent to the various European kings, princes, dukes, cardinals, bishops, heads of monastic orders, etc.[180] Thus, this *editio princeps* was headed by (1) an epistle of Fichet to the correspondent recipient and included (2) Bessarion's letter to Fichet, (3) the letter to the princes and (4) to the abbot Bessarion, (5) the first oration, (6) the second oration, (7) a preface to Demosthenes, (8) the translation of the *First Olynthiac Oration* and (9) a postscript to Demosthenes, which works also as epilogue to all the collection. After the Parisian *editio princeps* came a second (1537) and third (1543) edition, both Roman, and a fourth (1593) made in Nuremberg. Moreover, it should be noted that a translation into Italian made by Ludovico Carbone was printed in late 1471.

This study is mostly focused on texts 5 and 6, namely, the long orations that constitute the core of the corpus. However, I will make eventual references to the epistles, the translation of Demosthenes and other para-texts. For the translation and study of the orations I use as basis the text of Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, which is the reproduction of the copy that Fichet sent to the Duke of Savoy.[181] However, since the text of the *PG* presents some defects and omissions, I collated it with the manuscript Vat. Lat. 3586, *i. e.*, the copy sent by the printer to Edward IV of

[180] Monfasani, "Bessarion Latinus", 180-1; Meserve, "Patronage and Propaganda at the First Paris Press", 523-5; Mureşan, "Bessarion's *Orations against the Turks*", 208. The matter of the intended audience for Bessarion and Fichet will be analyzed in section 3.4.
[181] Pappas, "The First Political Printed Book in Europe", 40 n. 6.

England.[182] I divided the text in paragraphs to ease the reference. From now on, I will refer to the first oration simply as *De periculis* and the second as *De discordiis*.

3.2 *Oratio de periculis imminentibus*

Oration of Bessarion, bishop of Sabina, cardinal of Nicaea, to the most illustrious and renowned princes of Italy concerning the imminent perils

(1) Many are, assuredly, oh most illustrious and renowned princes of Italy, the things that must be said in relation to the matter about which we are asked to reflect on, as well as those that must be done by you. If we wanted all these things to be recounted personally, neither we will be able to keep the due measure in speaking, nor you to be free of annoyance while listening. Therefore, as the remaining are kept for another time, we will discuss about just one very little part; and this one is certainly so necessary, that, if it can be explained by us satisfactorily, so that it clung to your spirits, and if you are able to reach the truth with your meditation, the way to the rest is going to be easy, so that nothing greater could seem difficult.

(2) But truly, we consider that we will attain it, if we are able to show with acceptable evidences and reasons[183] these greatest things, which we perceive to be hanging as dangers, and the very serious and severe misfortunes of neither one or the other, nor three, but the whole Christian Republic and in first place the community of Italy.[184] For even though such a great calamity hangs over some certainly earlier and

[182] The manuscript is digitalized and accessible through the website of the Vatican Library. I indicate in footnotes the passages on which I rely completely in the Vat. Lat. 3586 and quote the text in the original language. Migne's text is reproduced in Appendix C.
[183] The author uses characteristic rhetoric vocabulary.
[184] As happens in the version of Trapezuntios' oration dedicated to Frederick III (see note 69), here too Bessarion refers to the concept of *res publica Christiana*. This idea can be observed in the writings

over others later, in the end nevertheless it will be the same destruction for all, and such a great vastness of spirit of this enemy of ours (would that we were false foretellers!) will bring at last a miserable and ignominious final for all, if he is not strongly resisted by a great spirit with all might. Concerning this matter, if I am able to convince everyone of my judgement, that they also perceive it as I do, not differently, and as it truly is, I will consider to have done a really great thing and that I was released not from the half of the whole, but from the entire work.

(3) For who has such a weak and feeble spirit, so much ignorant of himself and forgetful of his own safety, that, if he saw that the temples of the immortal God, the houses, the dwellings, the altars, the hearths, the sepulchers of the elders, the laws, the freedom, the children and the fatherland are in danger, would not be aroused against the enemy and offer not only all his fortunes, those that he has or will have, but even his very life in the decisive moment, and prefer to fall with dignity than to be enslaved with dishonor? Thus, we must strive with a continuous oration not in order to persuade you, wisest princes, by whom these things are better examined than by us, of the matter, but to place the danger before the eyes of those who, while they think to be much far away from the danger, they are not able to see the future things.[185]

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of many Humanist scholars, like Poggio Bracciolini, who made use of it in a letter to King Alfonso in 1455. According to Bisaha, this was "one of the more important theoretical concepts the Papacy helped to develop and spread … Such rhetoric underscored cherished concepts of papal monarchy as well as a harmonious and militant Christendom capable of answering the formidable unanimity of the Ottoman Empire". Nevertheless, although it continued to be employed until the Protestant Reform, this idea could not lessen the divisions and confrontations among the European powers. Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 141; Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, 108. The idea of a homogeneous and integrated community defined by its religion is further reinforced here by geographic factors, namely, the notion of an *Italiae communia*.

[185] Those who do not see the imminent danger are, of course, the princes themselves, which Bessarion expects to persuade.

(4) Therefore, it is useful first of all to remember briefly something about the origin and race and forces of the Turks, so that everyone understands it plainly.[186] This house of the Ottomans, minimal faction of the Turks, from a very small and humble beginning and in a very short time, with their industry, diligence and attention it will have come to such a great peak that not only for the remaining nations now, but those of the provinces of the noblest and most powerful Italy, accustomed to rule, are caught now in stupor and fear.[187] The nation of the Turks, having held for some time Persia, Media, Babylon, Arabia, Syria and some other upper parts of Asia, expelled from there both by the inhabitants that had set themselves free and by other northern peoples, at last came together to the lower parts of Asia;[188] and there, waging many and various wars with the Empire of the Greeks[189] with an indecisive Mars,[190] they passed to the upper extreme, so that they reduced to their dominion Pamphylia, Cilicia, Lycia, Paphlagonia and all those remaining places. But once peace is accomplished outside, dissension rises at home. For they started to fight over the empire among themselves with the sword. There were among them seven noble houses, to which were brought the highest of all

[186] As George Trapezuntios did in his oration to Pope Nicholas V (see note 78), here too Bessarion addresses the subject of the origins of the Turks. However, Bessarion does not draw back in very ancient times nor establishes connections with other Asian enemies of the past. Moreover, he focuses his account mostly in the rise of the house of the Ottomans. In this narrative, the Turks do not represent a transcendental power destined to fight West and Christianity, but simply one more *natio* that had achieved political and military success thanks to the coniunctural conditions and their own management of the affairs. This shall be further discussed in chapter 4.

[187] In connection to the concepts of *Christiana respublica* and *Italiae communia*, throughout the orations Bessarion seems to utilize the term *provinciae* to refer to the various kingdoms existing in the Italian peninsula, as if they were part of the same political entity. On the other hand, sometimes *provincia* appears in opposition to *civitas* or *urbs*, thus pointing to the regions of the countryside.

[188] The author offers a simplified but otherwise relatively well-informed account of the rise of the Seljuqs, the fragmentation of their state into the Anatolian beyliks after the Mongol invasions and the subsequent expansion of the Ottomans.

[189] Bessarion refers to Byzantium with the term *Graecorum imperium.* As has been mentioned above, the word *Graecus* was the most used for the Greeks, while *imperium* and *imperator* seem to lack in these orations of any idea of continuity or connection with the Roman Empire.

[190] The text literally reads "with a two-headed Mars", an expression that denotes an unresolved contest (*cf.* L&S *s.v.* II, B). The writer must have had in mind the various conflicts of Byzantium with the Seljuq Sultanate, which, even though they are called indecisive, they certainly inflicted a great damage on Byzantine power over Anatolia.

orders and affairs. These, wearied by the long duration of the wars, resolved to divide those provinces that we mentioned by luck rather than weapons, and to distribute them among themselves. Thus, what used to be an insignificant and absolutely meagre empire, was divided in seven parts. To the house of the Ottomans, of which already the eighth prince of the Turks reigns in our time, fell Cilicia and the bordering places.[191] This is the case of the Turks, this is the beginning, from here the origin of so great terror.

(5) Then, after some time, the great-great-great-grandfather[192] of this Turk who now reigns, from whom this has received the sixth[193] in order the authority of the kingdom, crossed over to Europe not relying in the forces, nor in wealth, nor in the number of soldiers nor in the wideness of the empire, but invited by the Greeks because of civilian dissensions, almost one hundred and thirty years ago now, destructive and most noxious not so much to those against whom he had been called as to those who had invited him.[194] For spreading gradually and acquiring the empire for himself, not for his friends, he continuously increased in strengths so much that, when they wanted to drive him away, they could not, and they considered that they

[191] The beylik from which the Ottomans would eventually rise was actually more into the north, in the region of Bithynia (Cilicia was mostly under the control of the Karamanids). This location was doubtlessly favored their later successes *vis-à-vis* the other emirates. Emecen, "Ottoman Policy of Conquest", 36-7; Lindner, "Anatolia", 107-8. These events are mentioned also mentioned by Chalkokondyles, though in a more detailed account (1, 13-5).

[192] The term *atavus* denominates the forefather five generations before. Because of this and the following information, it is certain that the writer alludes here to Orhan.

[193] Therefore, according to Bessarion's reckoning, Mehmed II would be the eighth ruler starting with Osman and the sixth of those who came after Orhan. Since he evidently has a correct notion of the family lineage, it seems that within the actual Ottoman rulers he also includes some other of Bayezid's sons and rivals to Mehmed I.

[194] This is a clear allusion to the deliberate involvement of the Ottomans during the struggle for the throne between John VI Kantakouzenos and John V Palaiologos. Indeed, the historian Doukas was of the same opinion as Bessarion, for he expressly attributed the expansion of the Turks to the negligence of the Byzantine rulers. In particular, Kantakouzenos was held responsible for the matter, since the civil war initiated by him divided the Greek people and prompted alliances with the Turks within both factions (Doukas 6, 2). In fact, Kantakouzenos himself married his daughter to the Ottoman ruler Orhan and, according to Doukas, established a father-son relationship with the Turk (9, 1).

would make enough if they achieved to live with him with equal laws, after establishing an agreement.

(6) But yet, a different thing from what they had imagined occurred. For truly, the barbarous and destitute race, at the same time as it started to taste the sweetness of the fruits and the pleasure of the riches, it put no end to their desire.[195] And so, from a small and feeble beginning they have grown continuously so much in their strengths for one hundred and thirty years. Thus, as a non-small part of Europe has been occupied already, neither the very deep river Danube nor the adverse Illyrian mountains could detain their impetus –once the river was crossed and the difficulties of the places surmounted– from moving across all Hungary and penetrating in the middle of Germania, the Istrians and Forum Iulii,[196] laying waste and polluting everything, and devastating with iron[197] and fire those flowers of the provinces. Here I consider that this must be attended by us in the first place, that although they made all these things in that space of time that we said, they did more in the very last forty years than in the previous ninety. For thus is provided by nature, that the beginnings be greater in virtue certainly and in strength, but they are overcome by greatness and abundance. Likewise, from these forty years, they accomplished far more things in these seventeen years than in the former twenty three. This greatly monstrous[198] beast, yearning always for the blood of the

[195] The immoderation of the barbarian peoples and their desire for Roman wealth and luxury is a rather old idea. Doukas, for instance, also makes use of it to describe Orhan's character (9, 1).
[196] Forum Iulii was the Latin name for Cividale del Friuli, a town located in the limit of Italy and the Balkans, under the dominion of the Republic of Venice at the time.
[197] *Ferrum* refers by metonymy to the sword and the weapons in general.
[198] The Renaissance scholars frequently underlined the impossibility of finding a *modus vivendi* with the Turk by using the term *immanis*. According to Tateo, this was "una formula che accontentava insieme il bisogno di esorcizzare l'immagine tradizionale dell'infedele, identificandolo con la biblica bestia e caricandolo di segni escatologici, e de capovolgere il modello etico dell'Umanesimo per farne risaltare i caratteri, secondo un metodo invalso nella sistemazione ideological del classicismo. L'intenzione religiosa, che faceva del Turco principalmente il nemico della fede, e come tale terribile, e la considerazione etico-politica della sua estraneità al mondo civile sono ambedue presenti nell'uso di questo vocabolo di *immanis-immanitas*, che acquista un valore intensamente simbolico e viene

Christians, accomplished afterwards the Constantinopolitan destruction by himself, as his father and grandfather had done throughout the whole life, while ten –as we have often explained– kingdoms[199] were occupied, so that it is clear to everybody that, in proportion as his strengths are increased, with lesser effort then he can surpass whoever he wants to attack. For in this manner we see that occurs in the disciplines and arts and every kind of action, that the profit is greater in the last year also, than in all the previous. Whence also it is usually said by among the people that it is difficult for a man to get rich, but to increase the wealth to the utmost is easy. So it happens in the military affairs as well, that it is very difficult to win, afterwards to march to and fro through victories takes no effort. Wherefore, anyone can be easily convinced of what will do this defiled enemy, about whom nothing worse, nothing crueler can be said, in this next five years, with the great power prepared already in seventeen years, in addition to his previous power.

(7) Great and incomparable are his strengths, inexhaustible his desire, immense his hunger to domain, his science is of military matters, his age in bloom,[200] his body accustomed to the efforts. Therefore, since he wants and is able and knows how, can anyone doubt that he moves towards us with all his spirit and all his mind night and day? But truly, do we wait listless the soldier at home, so that then at length we believe, when we have him before our eyes breathing poison? It is

spesso adoperato a proposito dei Turchi e di gesta come quelle di Otranto". Tadeo, *Chierici e Feudatari del Mezzogiorno*, 32.

[199] These are mentioned in the letter to the abbot Bessarion and consist of the Empire of Trebizond, the Beylik of Sinop, Mytilene (formerly under the power of the Gattilusio family), the Despotate of the Morea, the Beylik of Aydin or Menteshe (or both, referred as *Caria*), the Beylik of Karaman (*Cilicia*), Bulgaria (*Mysia*), lower Hungary (*Pannonia*), the Despotate of Epiros and Bosnia (*Illyria*). See *PG* 161, col. 648C.

[200] Bessarion describes Mehmed's age as *florida*, *i.e.*, in the "bloom of youth" (*cf. L&S s.v.* II). The sultan, who was approximately 38 years old at the time when this oration was written, was no youngster anymore, but he assuredly was in an age in which his physical and intellectual attributes were at their peak. Moreover, the precocity in which he had achieved his first military successes and their uninterrupted continuation must have impressed the Westerners, conveying an image of an ever young ruler.

certainly not proper nor allowed for the power of the Italians to say "I will not think about it". The own prudence is part of the Italian blood, the own freedom, the own empire. Will it be borne that the noblest spirit be degenerated from its greatest things and that the one whom God wanted to rule the others serve a repulsive people? The Turk thinks that he could do nothing worthier, nothing more glorious than leading an army into Italy and joining to his own empire a province that is used to rule itself. The father of the great-great-great-grandfather, the one we said passed to Greece first, although he was a petty king of small towns, is revered with divine honors and celebrated with perpetual fame and everlasting glory. They call him saint and blessed and proclaim that he resides in celestial dwellings because he was the first who had waged war against the Christians and, having subjugated some few of them, he had confirmed them in the impious Mohammedan sect.[201] What does he considers that they will do against him in the end, if together with all the other Christian peoples, he subjugated –even to think this horrifies the spirit– also the Italians?

[201] The cardinal alludes here to Orhan's father and initiator of the Ottoman dynasty, Osman I. In this context the verb *dicare* conveys the idea of converting or confirming someone in sect or cult (*cf. DMLBS s.v* 1, d). For instance, two centuries later the Ottoman historian Aşıkpaşazade wrote about him the following poem: "In order to make everybody affirm the existence of God, / Osman bore on his waist the sword of religion. / In order to introduce Islam, / Osman will spread that light in the world. / Because the darkness of profanity covers the land of the Romans, / Osman wants to inundate all the world with the light. / The door for spreading Islam opened / and Osman became the key of its lock. / The leader of those who believe in Mohammed is Osman, the one who from now on is marked by miracles" ("Herkese Hakk'ın varlığını söyletmek için. / Osman, din kılıcını beline kuşsandı. / İslamiyet'i, göstermek için o nuru / Osman, dünyada yayacak. / Küfür karanlığı Rum ülkesini kapladığından, / Osman, bütün âlemi nura boğmak ister. / İslamiyet'i yaymak için fırsat kapısı açıldı / Ve onun kilidinin anahtarı Osman oldu. / Muhammed'e inananların önderi Osman / Mucizelerin gösterdiği kimsedir artık", *Tevârih-I Âl-i Osmân* 2). The theory of *ghaza* as developing factor for the rise of the Ottomans is nevertheless much disputed. In the words of Káldy-Nagy, "the relevant Turkish sources of a descriptive character, which use the words *ghaza* or *jihad* in connection with nearly every battle, reflect the attitude of a later period. The later chroniclers, mediating upon religion, often saw religiousness where there was none and referred to their ancestors' military activity as 'holy wars' for the faith. In contrast to the Turkic descriptive sources, the travelogue of Ibn Batuta, who visited Bursa and Iznik at the end of 1331 (in Iznik he spent forty days) does not mention the *medreses* founded by the Turks there, although the traveler generally remarked on anything related to Islam". Káldy-Nagy, "The Holy War", 470.

(8) But can we doubt that he is avid of glory, since this is in the nature for everyone, especially for the princes,[202] and he knows that no more ample field is open for him to immortality? For to debate about the utility seems certainly superfluous. For, since this reasoning is divided in two parts, on the one hand in which manner can be preserved the things that are acquired, on the other, by which means they can be augmented, it is examined by which reasoning at last will he preserve more easily and surely what he had, and how to augment the principality and extend the boundaries of the empire. In order to heal the bodies, the doctors apply those remedies that at any time are proved useful for the same type of diseases: this makes him emperor of the Turks and this certain quasi-medication is deemed the healthiest to preserve what he acquired; he always uses it, he sticks to it, he frequents it.[203] To change it, in order to experience another, he does not consider safe. He desires –as it is fit– and strives with all this effort to preserve the empire. And he perceives that there is no safer way to it than augmenting his own strengths with the damage of the others.

(9) But if he could not attain it, we would not have any reason to fear nor uncertainty about the matter. However –oh, wretched that I am! – I cannot lie in this part even if I want to. Nothing was ever easier than any other thing. In relation to these matters, his number of riches is immense, untold the multitude of soldiers, so

[202] The concepts of *gloria* and *immortalitas* are assessed in a rather negative manner by the author, as signs of immoderation. Men are equally prone to this vice, but power makes them even more susceptible. Thus, the advertence works both for the Italian princes and Mehmed, between whom there does not seem to be a qualitative difference.

[203] One of the main arguments of Bessarion's orations was that the expansionist policy was the only one possible for the Mehmed. According to Hankins, many of the European powers were waiting for the right moment to fight the sultan, namely, after his forces had been weakened by the wars with his other European enemies. "Against this policy, Bessarion brilliantly argued that the structure of Turkish society was nomadic and warlike; Mehmed had only utilized a small part of his nation's power, but each successive victory increased his authority and his ability to bring more troops into the line". Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders", 120. Otherwise, there is no demonizing portrait of the Turk because of following this strategy. In fact, the comparison of his behavior with the medical discipline –even though Bessarion calls his solution a "quasi medicamentum" – places him in the role of a somewhat learned and rational agent who attempts to do the best with his resources.

that over two hundred thousand men follow his army. He has a fleet, which you witnessed in the previous days in the capture of Chalcis not without astonishment, as great as the whole Italy together could hardly prepare.[204] He was, before that day, powerful merely regarding his land forces. Hitherto the dominion of the sea remained for our people. But now (oh, bitter thought of so much misfortune!) the sea is also taken away from the Christians and attached to him. It is allowed to him already to wander freely where he pleases, he has all the ports, all the maritime stations open: the Ambracian Gulf, that noblest port of Apollonia, places certainly very adjacent to Italy.[205] Once for the Romans into Greece, if it will be now likewise for that one the way into Italy, it is an extremely narrow strait and the navigation is the briefest. Moreover, the land way without interruption to Forum Iulii is accessible and open. He can encompass Italy by sea and land.

(10) What is it that should incite and impel him to accomplish those things that he intended in his spirit for so long a time or that could frighten him off and avert him? You have heard many who understood that he was very frequently desiring Italy, expecting Italy, shouting at Italy and Rome. If he desires it, he expects to be capable. Certainly, there is nothing that could detain him from his purpose,

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[204] The siege of Negroponte somehow confirmed what Trapezuntios had predicted two decades earlier about the immense maritime power that the Ottomans would attain if they conquered Constantinople. The size of Mehmed's fleet, which reached 300 ships or even 450, outnumbered the Venetian forces by far. Nevertheless, the capture of the city was no easy task for the Ottomans, and they only succeeded after various assaults. The negligence of the back-up fleet sent from Venice and alleged inside treacheries might have had their part in the outcome as well. Chalcis. For an account of the siege and capture see Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, 279-84. In *De discordiis* 10 the author gives a brief but dramatic description of the event. The fall of Negroponte provoked a great impact and fascination among the European and, particularly, Italian population, similar to what had meant the fall of Constantinople less than two decades earlier. It was one of the first major events whose record was spread by the print almost immediately after it occurred. These publications consisted both of accessible texts, like vernacular ballads, and of highly elaborated works in Latin composed by various humanists. Meserve, "News from Negroponte", 443-4.

[205] The Ambracian Gulf, in northern end of the Ionian Sea in Greece, had a strategic location for attacking Italy (the famous Battle of Actium was fought there). The Fall of Arta occurred in 1449. Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, 265. Apollonia in Illyria, although it was abandoned by this time, was a fortified city at the same latitude as Brindisi. Bessarion is probably employing an archaism to refer to the area.

especially while he has confidence that the Italians will never conspire against him unanimously, that they will never take up arms against him. With their fights he makes his expectations firm and whatever he desires is offered to him easily.

(11) I will relate, although it is known by the people, a little story, of which he is said to have made use of recently, because a certain man of his own tried to dissuade him from a war against the Christians. For when he was saying that it should be feared that the Christians, finally jaded of war, came together in one and waged war against him common consideration and resources; and laughing the tyrant said: “It is appropriate to remember that story. Once upon a time, since the wolves had learned by chance that a great multitude of dogs was advancing against them and for that cause an immense fear seized them, one of them, who was their senior, marched to a nearby mount to spy out the arrival of the dogs and climbed it. And truly, observing that they were many indeed, but of diverse colors, he went back happy and delighted to his mates and said: «Be in a good temper! For there is such a great diversity in the colors, manners and will of our enemies that they all could not agree unanimously and conspire together for anything. But if they come, we could devour them one by one without difficulty»”. This is the expectation of the tyrant, this is his thought, this is his will, if he is not prevented from his expectations.

(12) Nevertheless, he will be prevented, if you wanted. You will never be able to render that fierce spirit milder.[206] For he has in his forces an army imposed by decree and mercenaries with continuous stipends who, whether they remain at home or wage war outside, in any case receive stipend from the military treasury, with no expenditure of their chief, and are obliged by oath to present themselves to their emperor on their account every year and to offer him service and labor due. Besides,

[206] Bessarion here argues against the philoturks who supported the opinion of bringing the sultan into the diplomatic sphere or to have him as an eventual ally.

because of the long experience of these things, he has observed clearly and ascertained that such a great growth of glory, fortunes and power occurred to him because of no other cause than the fact that he employed his people with the continuous labors of the wars and conquered the enemies. And under no circumstances will he depart from this habit, unless he foolishly neglects what he comprehends that is useful, glorious, necessary for him.

(13) By which means, good Jesus, can we expect and imagine that he will not set in motion servitude, slaughter and the death of our faith? Does he not understand that it is thus established by nature that nothing remains in the same place, but all things are moved by a continuous, changing and new motion? But if he has an ample empire and this must change according to the law of all things, will it not be lessen, if not augmented?[207] Do not consider the Turk eager and desirous of augmenting his empire, but certainly he wants to preserve it. But he will not be able to preserve it, unless he augments it. Indeed, what does not advance will march back, what does not rise will sink down, what is not made bigger will go to ruin. And firm in this belief, he augments his army day by day and it is very immense. He invades the possessions of the others, lest he loses his own. Do you think that he assumed immense expenses, so many dangers and wounds of the soldiers, so many weighty expeditions and in a very unsuitable time for the sake of the poor empire of the Mysians, the rough mountains of the Triballi, the poverty of the Illyrians?[208]

[207] The cardinal offers an almost mechanistic interpretation of the life of the states, leaving aside any idea of divine agency. See section 4.4.
[208] Following a widespread custom, the author calls contemporary peoples with classicizing names. Accordingly, the Mysians would be the Bulgars, the Triballi the Serbians and the Illyrians the Slavs.

(14) But for the sake of the riches of Italy, the fecundity of its fields, the pleasure of its fruits and that very light in which he desires to be situated,[209] will he not do greater things? Here he plans to place a stronghold, here to locate fortifications to subjugate the rest of the world. And so he thinks, that he expects to attain it easily through the dissension of his enemies. He conceives in his spirit the same things that Pyrrhus meditated. For once the army of the Romans was overthrown, he promised for himself plainly the whole dominion of the circle of the world. In relation to this, Cineas the Thessalian, the highest orator and wisest man, trying to draw him off from invading Italy with his advice, he said: "The Romans are said to be extraordinary at war and to rule over a great number of strong men and soldiers. But if the gods have allowed us to overcome them, pray, how will we do it, Pyrrhus? What will there be, I say, for us? Besides, once the Romans are overcome, no walls, neither Greek nor Latin, will be strong to sustain the advance of our people. We will seize instantly the whole Italy, whose immensity and virtue you ignore at least. But once Italy is occupied, then what will we do, oh king?" And he answered: "The nearby island of Sicily, fruitful and crowded with a multitude of men, will surrender itself to us. However, it can be easily taken, for it is restless because of sedition, civil war and the great commotion of its affairs". Then Cineas: "Will it be, o king, Sicily for you the end of the wars?" He said: "Be the gods favorable, Cineas. For it will be very easy to assault Libya and the nearby provinces and to overpower Carthage, which Agathocles, setting out with a small fleet, was close to capture. Once defeated, no greater enemy will dare to provoke us with war, but they will all fall into our dominion." Cineas said: "So it is. For it is certain that you will have in

[209] In this context, the word *lux* implies the meaning of "public view" (*cf. L&S s.v.* II, a). In other words, the passage alludes to Mehmed's desire of ruling over the whole world or even of acquiring the dignity of Emperor of the Romans.

your power Macedonia and the whole Greece; but, once everything is accomplished, what will we do at last?" But, laughing, he answered: "We will enjoy leisure, banquets, pleasures and literary conversations." He said: "But what forbids to enjoy now also the pleasures, that leisure and the debates? Why do we look for with so great labors, troubles and dangers the things that, when we want, we can make?" With these words Cineas impacted the king more than he discouraged him from his expectation and determined will. I related them to you, so you become aware that those who are inflamed by the same desire that inflames the Turk are not absent.[210]

(15) But Pyrrhus could not be discouraged from Italy by the authority and words of Cineas –compared to whom he considered no one more precious–, nor by the scarcity of his soldiers, nor by the extraordinary fame of the Roman name. And will the Turk not dare, he, who is far more opulent than Pyrrhus in his vigor of soldiers and magnitude of lands, who does not ignore that Italy is disperse in strengths and interests, who used to laugh at Pyrrhus' deeds, equating his own virtue to Alexander's? For he has conceived that the king Alexander the Macedonian[211] has to be imitated for carrying out the things and for the emulation of his glory, that same Alexander who, when he heard that Anaxagoras argued that there were many worlds, was said to have groaned and let out tears, because had not been able to collect at least one wholly of them.[212] He read the deeds of that one, he completely depends on him, and he does not rationally consider himself inferior, because he uses to boast

[210] The cardinal thus insists on the fact that what experiences Mehmed is not something alien to Western civilization. Significantly, all the following *exempla* are characters belonging to the Latin or the Greek traditions.

[211] In accordance with the criticism of the search for grandeur some lines above, the figure of Alexander the Great assumes in this oration negative connotations. As we shall see in section 4.3, this decision might be related, among other things, with Mehmed's admiration for the Macedonian conqueror and with the fact that these texts are actually based in Demosthenes' orations against Alexander's father, Philip II.

[212] According to the version presented in Plutarch's *De tranquilitate animi* 466d, Alexander wept after he heard Anaxarchus's words, not Anaxagoras'.

often and to assume very frequently that saying, that with a the tenth part he is more superior than Alexander: for the latter had moved round his weapons through the circle of the world with no more than thirty thousand men and seventy talents, but how much more prepared, wealthier and abounding of all things he was! These thoughts, these efforts of emulation usually produce great things and reach what they intend, especially if there is capability. But truly this is not absent in the Turk, who considers himself more opulent than that who he imitates. So Theseus, led by the example of Hercules, so Themistocles, led by Miltiades, brought forth the greatest achievements.[213] The imitation of Alexander has truly I know not what fatal thing, since Julius Caesar, ignited by it, after very remarkable deeds, he turned the weapons towards the homeland and also the civil blood. But if his example moves someone who has subjugated Libya, Asia and the whole world firmly, if he follows the tracks of that one, if he is confident not only that he will equate his glory in expanding the boundaries of the empire, but also that he will surpass him so much more with so much greater amounts than thirty thousand men and larger wealth than seventy talents he has, to which ends do we consider that he looks and attempts? What does require to him that desire of arranging the peace with the most illustrious and pious king of Sicily? Why ambassadors were sent?

(16) For he who has the name of the Christians in hatred, pursues them with all kinds of cruelty and despises them desires the alliance of a Christian king not because of fear certainly, nor esteem, but in order to finally accomplish what he desires, once those who he understands that cannot be overturn completely in the same attack are oppressed. But truly, his expectation and belief disappointed him, unfortunate, because in the previous days that celebrated king, magnificently and

[213] Hercules and Theseus are two heroes from Greek mythology. Miltiades and Themistocles were two Athenian generals who fought together in the Battle of Marathon.

becomingly to a Christian king, sent forth the ambassador with the answer that it seemed without doubt not only that he had rejected this destructive association with all its goods, but also that he had declared the war to the enemy in favor of Christ's religion. And lest it be obscure at all in any part what he meditates, think for a moment what wants for itself that humanity, which, born as a monstrous barbarian and for the ferocity, employs agents towards our name within his own purposes. It indicates assuredly another thing, and it is entirely a portent that a savage monster becomes to us under those circumstances in the most tamed and that friendship is simulated by the cruelest enemy and piety by the most harsh.[214] What is forced by someone unwilling does not persist. It useful for the time, while he reaches the desired purpose. And do we ignore what he pursues hitherto? Since he particularly pursues so that he does not want to contend us.

(17) He will not enclose such a large army at home, he will not bear that the spirit of his soldiers, those he needs to have in the armies, becomes effeminate. For he has non few Asian peoples inimical and threating to destroy him.[215] And he understands clearly that they will attack him, if he laid down the weapons or permitted that the fame of his army were brought to scorn and derision. This army, as he restores it splendidly furnished with glories, as he makes it dreadful to his Asians enemies, where does he plan to send across finally? Where does he see richer crops to feed his will? Where can he undertake more things worthy of admiration? Their swords will not fall to the ground, their weapons will not drop from their hands.[216]

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[214] The term *humanitas*, which could be translated as "humane and gentle conduct", "mental cultivation", "liberal education" and "refinement" (*cf. L&S s. v.* II, A; B) and thus represented the ideals of the Renaissance, is at odds with Mehmed's earlier characterization as *immanis* and must be understood, therefore, ironically. Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders", 122.

[215] Although Mehmed campaigns were mostly directed to the West, during his reign he also fought some of his enemies in Anatolia, like the Isfendiyarids, whose beylik was annexed to the Empire in 1461, and the Akkoyunlu.

[216] The author paraphrases Cicero, *Phil.* 12, 3, 8.

For he is devoted to hold together in his favor and trust his associates and those with whom he lives daily. He is envied by all his people, his fellows hate him, his relatives do not love him, may them be driven to his overthrown and murder in a short time. Since he has ascertained and learned this, he determined to undertake, wage and consummate foreign wars, lest he experiences domestic and civil strife. And making use of Scipio's council, he believes that fighting outside is more profitable than being defeated at home.[217]

(18) Do you still doubt that his army will be led outside the boundaries? Do you not sense it, do you not discern it plainly? Have we not learned enough about his most impure nature, his repulsive life, his desecrated customs? Have we not learned what a great fire,[218] good God, what deeds, what arrogance? There is nothing that he does not suck dry in his spirit, nothing that he does not engulf in his imagination.[219] And we do not think that he rushes towards the calamity of our own people, in whose fortunes he let fall his most loyal fellows, his very ancient religion, his strength, torments and tortures with expectation, expense and labor. Do not throw at me, I beg, what some men furnished with no experience of matters and learned in no memory of Antiquity usually boast of, that the foreign nations have never captured Italy, that on many occasions they have tried to attack it with ill luck.[220]

(19) For truly, while I reflect upon the ancient memory, while I derive the series of events all the way to our times, I find out with certainty that the foreign peoples brought their weapons to Italy and introduced immense calamities earlier

[217] Probably refers to Scipio Africanus, the Roman general and statesman who was responsible of many victories in the Second Punic War.
[218] In its proper sense, *fax* designates a flaming torch, but it carries also the secondary meaning of someone or something "which inflames or incites", "cause of ruin" and "destruction" (*cf. L&S s. v.* II, B). Once again, Bessarion sought to stress the disproportional ambition of the ruler.
[219] Cicero, *Phil.* 11, 5, 10.
[220] As shall be argued in chapter 5, it is possible that the cardinal was answering to George Trapezuntios' orations in this passage.

than receiving them from Italy. Let me omit the Gauls,[221] who led an army into Italy in the time in which Clusium was attacked, as our Plutarch refers, or two hundred years earlier, as the Roman Livy wills. The small force of the Goths, bursting forth from Thrace and Hungary with a gathered army, came to Italy and, once the fields of Italy were devastated and the cities burnt, they seized the very walls, filling everything with conflagration, iron and slaughter. Those, furnished with a small force, joyful because of a certain obtuseness, were able to attain what the Turk, with the largest amounts and a defined and persevering purpose, would not dare to undertake and attempt? Those climbed across the most difficult ways of all; but will the Turk hesitate to transfer his legions by the maritime and unimpeded course? Those broke into Italy, which is said to be another world; the Turk attacked so the men of Italy, that he disdains them, and he will not dare? Why, if it is allowed to go after ancient issues, would I remember the sorrowful advance of Pyrrhus? What about Alexander Molossus?[222] What about Archidamus, the son of Agesialus?[223] What about the graves of Hannibal?[224] I repeat too great, too old names. Why would I revive in my oration the disasters brought in by Attila, Totila and the Saracens?[225] But Pyrrhus, I think, could do what the Turk cannot. He, although many leaders, many armies were unharmed –but the Second Punic War would consume them afterwards–,[226] he stretched near the walls of the City with a victorious army. Will the Turk, who has subdued Epirus, Macedonia, the whole Greece and so many

[221] Naturally, this is only a rhetoric device (*paralipsis*). Bessarion refers to Plu. *Cam.* 17 and Liv. 5, 34-40.
[222] Alexander I of Epirus.
[223] Archidamus III of Sparta.
[224] Hannibal, Carthaginian general.
[225] More recent examples: Attila, leader of the Huns; Totila, King of the Ostrogoths; and the Saracens.
[226] The meaning of the passage would be that even though Rome was at its full power, with its leaders and armies safe, sound and ready for the battle, Pyrrhus was able to put them in serious danger. This favorable conditions would somewhat lessen after the Second Punic War, which consumed a lot of manpower.

empires, fear an Italy that is dissenting and disperse in so many principalities and concerns? Will he not assault it? Will he not?[227] Oh wretched that I am! I do not know for which reason I am driven in the course of the oration by what the pain does not allow me to express.

(20) But lest I seem to dwell so much in ancient times, in which formed up armies, sworn soldiers, so much virtue of the emperors, so much endurance and discipline of the legions persisted, that our oration returns to the more recent, what about the disordered force of the Huns and the Vandals? Marked with fire, the everlasting memorials of their injury are marked with fire in the very walls. But if you are moved by examples later than the foundation of the city under Christian name, in the times of the Supreme Pontiff Leo, Attila, whom I mentioned a little before, once the whole Cisalpine Gaul had been subdued, conducted an army to overthrow the City. The eloquence of the pontiff detained his barbarian and wild furor.[228]

(21) But if after Hannibal and those old victories, after the name of Christ was divulgated, a scum of foreign men flowed together towards the ship of Italy,[229] why do we not fear in this time such a great gale? This will assuredly bring so many waves of calamities, if it breaks out, that it will come to nothing but to flow forth to the heads of the others. For, as we distinguish in the tempest that the gales, beating their fury against the rock to which they are driven, are brought back with such a motion that they strike down the ship they have caught not otherwise than when they

[227] This passage has an overall pessimistic tone, which will be balanced in the following oration. Bessarion's gloomy perspective of these affairs might be related to an intention to highlight that the only possible way to defeat the Turk was certainly the collaboration between the various European states.
[228] According to a widespread tradition, Pope Leo I convinced Attila to withdraw.
[229] Bessarion makes use of maritime metaphors for referring to the conditions of the state, a favorite resource among Classic writers. *Cf.* for instance Plato, *R.* 488a-489d.

were undiminished;[230] just so I believe that the flood of the barbarians must be feared by all of us. For the enemy does not want to contend for one city or the other. He has determined that the highest of the things must be assigned to himself. The one that desires to rule cannot bear someone superior, nor tolerate an equal, nor love the name of prince.[231] And lest I omit this, that it is hard to expect something from someone, pitiful to have one's safety depending on someone else's pleasure, very shameful and sorrowful to expect a special favor from an enemy common to all. What peace can exist for you with the one whose harshness goes on towards our men beyond death, who cannot be satiated by any appeasement, from whom, if the torments and torture were absent in the death of our men, you would receive death as share in benefit? Oh, extraordinary, unheard, wild, barbarian cruelty! Can there be peace with him? "If we want to enjoy peace we must wage war; if we avoid war, we will never enjoy peace".[232] Therefore, since from such a small beginning our enemy has grown to so much of height, since he knows, wants and can assail Italy, since you have heard that this has been done on many occasions, so that the danger reaches everyone, repulse and expel the onrush of the enemy, so that you preserve our security, the freedom of Italy and the soundness of all.

[230] Bessarion resorts at this point to the imagery of the sea tempest, a typical element of epic poetry since Homer (*Od.* 5, 291-332; 12, 405-25). The complex syntax of the passage may need further explanation: the gales hit the rocks in the first place and then return to the ship, but their violence has not decreased at all. Likewise, the Ottomans will hit with the same strength each of their targets, even if they had engaged in war with another power shortly before. Thus, the cardinal expects to dissuade the rulers of Italy from their attitude of delaying their attack until the enemy is exhausted by the war with others.

[231] *I. e.*, he cannot accept merely to be "the first among equals", but desires to have all the Italian rulers completely subjugated to his power.

[232] Cicero, Phil. 7, 6, 19.

3.3 *Oratio de discordiis sedandis et bello in Turcum decernendo*

Oration of Bessarion to the princes of Italy concerning the appeasement of the dissensions and the decision of the war against the Turk

(1) It has been sufficiently discussed about the dangers that threaten all of Italy in the previous oration, which, although it is plain and very serious, I see that it is left to say that, with all the effort and the common resolution and strength, we repel them and turn the head towards our enemies, while it is allowed, while it is still in our power. But truly, since this cannot be done properly unless –once all the dissensions, hostilities and hatreds are appeased and finally all of the suspicions are moved out of the way– we assail the enemy with willing consent, it must be attended in the first place, once the common alliance of Italy is settled, that we feel the same, we want and desire the same.

(2) But if I will occupy myself with the exposition of what seems to appertain to our affairs the most (how many advantages, how much profit, how much fruitfulness lastly brings upon the concord and the agreement of the spirits on the same thing both to the citizens and to the provinces), I understand that some will listen to me just as if I knew assuredly nothing, but they would believe that I tell all plainly known and divulgated matters, since nobody ignores how much strength has the concord in the preparation and maintenance of the affairs. To them I would justly answer: why, then, do you await my oration? Why do you not embrace it[233] voluntarily? You comprehend that this is so much useful and necessary that, if it is not present, nothing fair, nothing honorable, nothing sacred could be done. In

[233] *Sc.*, the concord.

concord the small things rise, in discord the greatest go to ruin. Whatever is the best in heaven and among mortals, it all originates and depends from concord. Not merely for the provinces, the cities, the associations, the communities and the house, but for private affairs it is necessary in the highest degree. For what is more repulsive than a man who is not consistent with himself and puts into motion diverse and opposed resolutions and contrary actions? Who does not despise him? Who does not laugh at him? We consider him a light, inconstant man, without rank.[234] Whatever he undertakes and pursues is full of calamity, ignominy and destruction. For as long as he is at variance with himself, he has nothing fit to his privileges or distinctions. On the other hand, in the domestic affairs, what authority[235] can there be if the wife, children and slaves fight each other with mutual hatred? The paterfamilias, overthrown by the domestic dissensions, bestows no labor for the enlargement of the domestic affair. He is consumed with tears, while he sees beforehand that the whole house will fall down due to the discord: unfortunate at home, he is laughable outside. From this is doubtlessly what, in the opinion of the wisest poet,[236] Ulysses, touched by the greatest favors from Nausicaa, the daughter of King Alcinous, had nothing that he considered that could be desired as happier than a concordant husband and children, in relation to which, he said, nothing can be sweeter, nothing more grievous can happen to the enemies or happier to the friends. But what is more unfortunate,

[234] Bessarion analyzes the importance of concord following a logic from the most private sphere to public life and, ultimately, in the universe. In other words, he argues from the particular to the general. Thus, the first instance in which we must find total agreement is within one's own thoughts, opinions and decisions. See Cic. *Rosc. Com.* 6, 19; *Pro Sulla* 10.

[235] The idea that the private and public spheres were intrinsically connected or, in other words, that the domestic life of a man affected his performance as a citizen was enrooted in Classical Roman mentality and it is understandable that the Renaissance scholars felt compelled to adopt it. This notion was synthesized in a famous verse of the epic poet Ennius quoted by Cicero in *Rep.* 5, 1: "moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque" ("The Roman state is settled over the customs of the Ancients and the men"). On the overlapping of the moral and political categories in Classical period see Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome,* 4.

[236] The *sapientissimus poeta* is, naturally, Homer. This passage corresponds to *Odyssey* 6, 180 *et seq*.

what is more dishonorable in human society than when the cities or provinces are consumed with domestic seditions and civil wars? For those who nature begets as related, brothers and parents, discord turns them into enemies and aliens, in which situation it is sorrowful to be victorious and vicious and nefarious to fall. The domestic war is harsher than the external, because the external brings upon some utility now and then, and it is often undertaken so that we live at peace. However, the civil war has never benefited anyone. About the external war we often consult if it must be waged; on the contrary, the civil war never enters into deliberation. For just as it is deliberated not about necessary matters, but dubious, so it is not about those which are certain for both sides. In this category is the sedition; the one who loves it seems to hold dear neither the private hearths nor the public rights of liberty.[237]

(3) We have plainly convinced everybody that tyranny is odious to all the good men and destructive for the states in the highest degree. But sometimes the tyrants enlarged their cities with riches and power and augmented their empire to the utmost. This is easily known and clear even in our enemy, who, although he is the cruelest of all the tyrants, nevertheless added every possible cities or provinces to his empire and made them more powerful. But through civil sedition, who will ever show me which walls are firmer, or rather, which are not overturn from the foundation? Thus, if tyranny must be avoided for the free man and the strongest citizen, should one not reflect on the discord?[238] And the one that will consider that tyranny must be repelled even at risk of his head, will he pursue voluntarily the civil war, which is harsher and more sorrowful?

[237] Cicero, Phil. 13, 1, 1.
[238] In other words, tyranny is certainly Mehmed's sin, but no less serious is the discord that exists among the princes. In this sense, the responsible of the present situation are to Bessarion's eyes both parties.

(4) We use to ask for peace and concord to God, the best and greatest, with private prayers and public supplications; and what we know that will be destructive for us, what we plead against, what we strive to turn away with the assistance of our God, this will we follow after purposely and freely? What is finally this other, if not to plead the case of our enemies and to cause in the highest degree what they strive zealously for with their profane prayers? For their first prayers of all are assuredly known by many –being ours perhaps the least of all–, so that peace, the agreement of the spirits and tranquility thrives among them, and hatred, sedition and civil wars among the Christians.[239] Do we want to satisfy their desires? But this is to be mindful of the enemy's profit and to prepare his advantage with our disadvantage. The precepts –if I am not mistaken–, as I often saw and read, that are dictated by us in the government of the cities and in the fortunate ending of the wars, establish otherwise, and they teach that, once the resolutions of the enemy are proven, you produce the opposite things, if you want to maintain the state in the republic, if you want to achieve victory in war.

(5) But must it be committed that the one who announces us sorrow, terror and slaughter be rejoiced because of us and exult? At this point, one must cite that Homeric Nestor, who, willing to reconcile Agamemnon with Achilles, employed these very wise words:

"Oh, gods above! Towards the Grecian cities a horrendous sorrow hurries, which Priam and the grandchildren of Priam buy at a high price, when they listen that you confront each other with so great agitation of furies. You two, who

[239] The cardinal seizes the opportunity to criticize the lack of piety that he notes among the Christians, in decline when compared to the religiosity of the Muslims.

throughout the encampment of the Pelasgians surpass the illustrious Achaeans in deliberation and weapons! But obey me both!"[240]

I will not say, as he did, that I am older than you and that I have seen more things, but that I have suffered more things and received more calamities from the enemy, who snatched away from me friends, relatives, my homeland and the things that are the most pleasant for a man in his life, in exchange for the greatest pains and tortures.[241] Even if your prudence and wisdom could comprehend these and you could ascertain them, nevertheless the sentiment causes more pain to the one who has endured the things that others merely heard. The things that we perceive with the ears or discern with the eyes do not cling to the spirit in the same way as are engraved those that the wounds of one's own and one's people, the deaths and the torments brought through the immense cruelty of the enemies. Give credit to the experienced, give credit to the one who suffered. No other thing extinguished wretched Greece, but discord. No other thing erased this part of the world, but the civil wars, and not only in our memory, but also in the ancient times.[242]

(6) For Phillip, the son of Amyntas and father of Alexander the Great, overthrew Greece on account of the mutual hatreds of the Athenians, Lacedaemonians, Thebans and others.[243] With the common resources and resolution,

[240] The passage translated corresponds to *Il.* 1, 252-77, the episode of the assembly of the Achaean kings. Bessarion's translation is quite free. This reference prompts a direct connection between the Greeks of Antiquity and those of the author's times.

[241] This is one of the few cases in which the *ego* of the author appears prominently in the text, and his *persona* is built, rather than as a cleric or a scholar, as a Greek and Constantinopolitan. He claims that his own experience as a Byzantine is superior to any possible account. In comparison to Nestor's, his judiciousness is not substantiated by his old age solely –although at that point he had reached the age of 70–, but by his emotional and somehow actual involvement in the affairs. Since Bessarion had been educated in the capital, he must have felt that a complete world, together with relatives and friends, was lost after 1453.

[242] The cardinal counts discord and civil war as the main causes of the fall of Byzantium. He himself lived in a period of relative stability as far as usurpation of the throne and dynastic or intra-dynastic struggle are concerned. However, the consequences that the conflicts of the previous century had left in political life must have been plain evident to the young Bessarion during his years of education in the capital.

[243] Philip II of Macedonia is named directly for the first time.

for how long they would wage war, put the enemy to flight, deprive him from his encampments and overcome him! But when some are determined not to trust the others and to invade the neighbor, the enemy, summoned to other parts, no less destructive to those by whom he had been invited than to those against whom he was called forth, gradually oppressed them all. In the Peloponnesian War, since they were defeated by the same conspiracy of spirits, the Athenians and their allies,[244] neither by land, where the Lacedaemonian forces were most immense, nor by sea, suffered any of inconvenience from the enemy. Or rather, they brought in the greatest destructions to the enemy and so they brought in what was never heard say, that more than four hundred Lacedaemonian soldiers, for whom it was a paternal custom and precept either to be victorious in war or to set oneself free from the hands of the enemies with the death, were driven as captives to Athens in triumphal procession. But when they began to find the enemy at home and to waste themselves with the civil wars, their very firm and immense fleet was reduced to the dominion of the Lacedaemonians, the custody of their harbor was lost and the walls of the city brought to the ground. But when Xerxes, the most powerful king of the Persians, invaded Greece with fifty hundred thousand men[245] and a fleet made of a thousand and two hundred ships, what freed them, rendered them victorious and adorned them with everlasting fame and glory, if not concord, peace and the same spirit against the enemy? But if they had not repelled the enemy with a common vigor and army, what would have prevented them in the end from not being destroyed all together in war?

[244] The *Patrologia Graeca* presents a defective text for this passage. Thus, I follow MS Vat. Lat. 3586, fol. 22r, which contains the words missing in Migne's edition. The text is the following: "Cum vero alii aliis non fidere, finitimumque invader instituerunt, hostis ad alteras partes accersitus, non minus a quibus vocabatur, quam adversus quos provocatus erat perniciosus, sensim cunctos oppressit. Athenienses, bello Peloponnesiaco, cum eadem animorum conspiratione devicti essent, neque terra, ubi Lacedemoniorum vires amplissimae erant, neque mari, quicquam ab hosti incommodi acceperunt".

[245] The numbers of Xerxes army and fleet, as are transmitted by the Classical sources, are naturally exaggerated.

(7) You discern that the same danger stands over us, the same disaster. And in the same manner you must constrain the advance of the enemy, because you cannot do any other thing. To the same disease the same medicament is fitly convenient, which is assuredly effective enough. For if the Greeks, even though they were by far inferior to the forces of Xerxes, nevertheless overcame the enemy once peace was arranged, what at last will you be able to do, being the divine grace favorable, united and with your common forces? You, who are not smaller in the number of men and who are superior to the enemies in virtue by far! Oh, if only I could see the light of that day when, abolished and deposed all the hatreds, we attacked the enemy with equal consent! I have no further doubt of victory: we won already.

(8) Grasp this, I beg, in your spirits for a moment, oh, excellent princes: just as the sedition that arises in the ship is most destructive, so it is in the citizenship. And, just as it is serious in the citizenship, so in the province is so much more pestilential. For the more they are, the more extensively spreads the infection of the disease, the more difficult is the healing. And just as obedience, without which everything perishes in destruction, relies on the order of the army and the soldiers, so in the province mutual consent and benevolence are necessary, particularly among those who are more powerful. Removed this thing, they are consumed by their own forces rather than the external. Discord lays traps, weakens the strengths and consumes the empires in a certain obscure illness. And because of this reason that one said[246] that discord was the poison given to the empires, lest they are immortal. And indeed, exactly as the phthisis consumes someone gradually, it does not desist before overthrowing the ruined body.

[246] Liv. 3, 67.

(9) It must not be disputed that we pursue in perpetual war men related to us and educated under the same sky.[247] For those who are wisely mindful about their safety always strive assuredly to defeat the enemies, but they have mercy sometimes upon their own people and occasionally prefer to be surpassed rather than to surpass the others. For not every victory is beneficial or obtained from God. One must avoid a Cadmean victory[248] and, as that tragedian said,[249] "you will rule over your friends, whether you defeat them or love them; you will rule over your friends, I say, when you are defeated by your friends". And Demosthenes said: "Then is the victory honorable, when the children yield to the parents or the citizens to the citizens with pleasure".[250] But do you consider it destructive in the sieges of the cities if the guards are at variance among themselves? On the other hand, do you think that sedition will be beneficial among the citizens or in the provinces? When we go to diverse sides, when we contend in a variety of opinions, when each one esteems of higher value his judgment than his safety.

(10) Two kinds of disputes refers Hesiod:[251] the first is excellent, when anybody acts rightly lead by the imitation of the other; the second is the seed-plot of enmities, discord and wars, which is called vicious and unfortunate, of which Homer says: "At first it is small, but immediately places the head between the clouds, while reaching the ground with its lowest feet".[252] The first must be followed, the second

[247] In a rather vague expression, the cardinal points out that there is something that binds together the Italian (or the Europeans) and that separates them from the Turks. This common feature determines that one conflict be considered civil war, while the other is a legitimate war.
[248] Bessarion alludes to the mythological conflict between Eteocles and Polynices, sons of Oedipus.
[249] The author is loosely quoting and translating Sophocles, *Aj.* 1353: κρατεῖς τοι τῶν φίλων νικώμενος, "You rule as you are defeated by your friends".
[250] Demosthenes, *Ep.* 3, 45. The idea that sometimes one must yield in order to win was very popular in Antiquity. We can find it condensed in the phrase "qui vincitur, vincit" in Petronius' *Satyricon* 59, uttered by one of the unsophisticated freedmen who wants to appease a too heated discussion for the convivial environment in which they were. Otto indicates other similar uses in Ov. *Ars* 2, 197 and Ambrosius, *De Officis* 1, 5, 20. For more, see Otto, *Die Sprichwörter*, 371.
[251] Hesiod *Op.* 11 *et seq.*
[252] *Il.* 4, 442-3.

utterly avoided. That one is beneficial in the highest degree, this one very much destructive. It is not proper that, on account of the genius, erudition and wisdom with which God adorned us, we actually disregard the better one and follow the worse. It must be thrown away, removed from the way. Peace and concord must be undertaken. But if there must be an argument, a very beautiful and glorious contest is set forth precisely for you in this: who of you defeats himself first, who reaches first towards concord, who bestows more and more distinguished deeds to the common safety. This one is a dispute full of praise, this one is given by God to men. What is that which holds together everything? Harmony. What is that which embellishes everything? Consonance. This sky that we perceive, the spheres of stars, the sidereal space, the elements and principles of all the things rest upon no other thing but concord. If the laws of the Divine Providence did not maintain these, they would not remain, but be thrown down and go to ruin. But the human affairs, which are fluid and perishable and are turned around by perpetual movement, do you think that they can be consistent if they are not guided by measure, weight and concord? By no means.[253]

(11) If indeed you apply even these remedies, those which do not dissolve and decay cannot be produced. Just as the most serious diseases are those which assault and injure the inner part of the body, so the sedition is harsher than the open war. For in the former we ourselves are our enemies and in the latter we protect ourselves. To no one was ever beneficial the slaughter of his own people. Once they have perished, a more serious danger is prepared. For as soon as they disregard the

[253] Bessarion seems to be limiting in this passage the agency of God in human affairs. Indeed, he clearly recognizes that the *divinae providentiae leges* sustain the perpetual cycle of the supra-lunar elements and the ideal forms. However, a strong adversative ("vero") may indicate that these do not have any influence in *res humanas*. The worldly entities and events are subject to change ("circumaguntur") and, in the face of this, men can only meditate on those eternal things and emulate them.

safety of their own people, they surrender theirs to the enemies. And they experience the same that usually happens to the man whose member is consumed by canker: he disregards it and expects that the body will remain safe and unharmed, and in the end he is gradually consumed.[254] Then at last he understands plainly that this would not have happened if he had cured the disease in the beginning.

(12) Why, pray, has nature granted us twin hands? Why twin eyes? Why two feet? Doubtlessly so that they be in accord with mutual assistance. The hand washes the hand, the foot supports the foot, the left hand is aided by the right and the right is aided by the left.[255] Thence the origin of movement, hence we receive burdens. These twin members accomplish more, for, being one busy, the other executes a common service. Why do we not follow nature, excellent guide and teacher?[256] And as he said: "Going two together, great is the advantage to one another".[257] For whatever one cannot perceive comes to the mind of the other, and they reach a settled purpose with mutual assistance. "How good, how pleasant is that brothers live together"[258] said the Prophet, who was very skilled in many things and different events, who, incited by divine inspiration, summoned men into concord. Because the precept was not seen fortuitously, he said: "The Lord has commanded the blessing and life to all eternity".[259] Moreover, his son, gifted with prudence, to prevent us

[254] Since Europe's situation *vis-à-vis* the Turkish advance was compared to an illness in Filelfo's response letter to Trapezuntios and in the Cretan's oration as well, it seems that this was a favorite analogy for warning against further delay to take action.
[255] Bessarion here makes use of widespread and popular proverbs. See Otto, *Die Sprichwörter*, 210. This contrasts and works as a balance with the learned allusions or complex thoughts and gives argumentations in a sentimental level.
[256] Also this was a popular saying, but Bessarion is probably thinking of Cicero *Off.* 1, 130.
[257] The text from the *Patrologia Graeca* does not include Greek characters. These were added by hand in the different printed copies made by Fichet. I am following again MS Vat. Lat. 3586, fol. 24v. The first part of the quotation corresponds to Homer, *Il.* 10, 224: "σύν τε δύ' ἐρχομένω". The passage belongs to the episode of Odysseus and Diomedes' night incursion into the Trojan encampment. The second part of the Greek text reads: "μέγα ἀλλήλοις ὄνειαρ". Although the vocabulary is certainly Homeric, the phrase is not taken from the *Iliad* nor the *Odyssey* nor any Classical work, so it must be Bessarion's own fabrication.
[258] The prophet is David. *Ps.* 133.
[259] *Ps.* 133.

from discord, said: “When one builds and the other demolishes, what other thing they do, if not taking pains in vain?”[260]

(13) Cyrus, the most powerful king of the Persians, when he departed from life, he sent for his sons and divided the empire among them. In a very long oration referred by Xenophon,[261] he exhorted them all to mutual trust, affection and concord and plainly demonstrated that being disperse and dissident they would not be useful to the republic nor be a safeguard for themselves. This was considered so much true and clearly perceived by that man, who was the wisest because of the long exercise of the state affairs, the greatest dangers and enormous variation of fortune, that, not satisfied with the very clear arguments, he even attempted to place beneath their eyes a certain example. Thus, he instructed to bring, as is related, a handful of wands and ordered each one of them to break it into pieces with a single attack, if they could. Since no one had strength to perform this, then he gave them to be broken one at the time, which each of them accomplished with no effort. He said: “But do you understand that this will happen among you, that no one would have strength to subdue you, if you are closely united with mutual peace, but if you are disjoined by hatreds, whoever wants it could overcome you?”[262]

(14) For which reason, whoever exhorts you, excellent princes, to concord, also exhorts you to your safety, to glory, to carry off the triumphs from the enemy. For what demands your benefit? Concord. What request your glory and dignity? Concord. Therefore, embrace concord and peace, support it, cultivate it, so that, stronger through it with mutual consent, we drive away from our necks the imminent

[260] David’s son is Solomon. Among the books of the Bible that were traditionally attributed to this character, only the *Proverbs* offer a relatively similar passage (14, 1). The idea might be taken from apocryphal texts as well. Moreover, the vocabulary is reminiscent of Paul *1 Ep. Cor.* 1, 3, 8-17, where the apostle discusses precisely the issue of discord within the early Christian community.
[261] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 8.
[262] There are similar words, although this is certainly not a quote, in *Cyr.* 8, 7, 15-6.

attack when the war against the enemy is ready, punish the horrid enemy for the blood of our people and enlarge the dignity of Italy.

(15) For nothing was ever more just than this war, or more necessary to be waged, or exhibited victory as easier and more open. For what fairer or what more pious than taking revenge on the blood shed by our people through infinite tears and torments?[263] What of ignominy, injury, torture and murder permitted these execrable men against our name? They corrupted the holiest temples through the greatest impiety and persecuted the statues of the saints, the blessed Virgin and our very God with contempt, laughter and every kind of insults.[264] Why would I remember those raped holy virgins, those pubescents snatched away from the embracing of their parents,[265] the name of the Christians defiled by every disgrace? The magnitude and the pain of this matter prevents me from following these things. For who could attain to speak or to listen without many tears about the very faithful partners of Christian name who were crushed by the hooves of the horses, flayed under the command and watch of the most impious enemy, raised in a cross, so that they received death instead of kindness?

(16) The savage Turk produced once all kinds of cruelties to the Constantinopolitans, whose memory is so renew, as it recently occurred the commotion of the Euboean Chalcis when, once the doors were broken, the walls

[263] In two occasions Bessarion urges the princes to avenge "nostrorum sanguinem", without really defining who exactly "our people" is. Since a few lines later he will directly refer to the fall of Constantinople, he must have had in mind the Greek population as well. Thus, his vagueness here seems to be deliberate, in order to avoid the problematic of who is Christian and who is worthy of salvation.
[264] By denouncing the corruption of the temples Bessarion probably meant the conversion of the churches into mosques. On the other hand, given that the term *statua* could also be translated simply as "image", one should not disregard the possibility that the author was thinking of Orthodox churches as well. Consider that the author uses the same vocabulary in his instructions for crusading preaching, where he is beyond doubt talking about the Orthodox churches of Constantinople. See Housley, *Documents on the Later Crusades*, 148 (passage quoted *supra*, in section 3.1).
[265] Reference to the practice of devşirme.

were thrown down by the onset of the missiles and the citadel was captured by force, everything was confused by the march of the soldiers, the iron and the flame. Whence those lamentations arrived near to our ears. He harshly slaughtered everyone of military age. The corpses of our people, when the walls were assaulted (but I will not say it, for it is unbelievable; nay, I will say it, because it happened so), the corpses, I say, of our people were introduced in vessels and thrown against us into the city with war machines.[266] Oh, cruelty, unheard before this day! Oh, hopeless ferocity! Oh, most ferocious kind of savagery! What is as common for the living as breath? But our captives live in such manner that they cannot bring breath from above.[267] What is as common for the dead as the ground? But our people died in such a manner that their bones are spread through the air. What is as common for the corpses as rest? But the bodies of our people are thrown in such a way that they do not find rest, not even deprived of life.

(17) The Romans, because their ambassadors had been addressed a little harsher, overthrew Corinth, most beautiful city.[268] But we, when our allies are viciously murdered, our land scorned and devastated, the land from where lessons of manners and virtuous life were sought by so remote nations, will we not raise up? Fabius Maximus, in order to buy back captives, sold his field,[269] and we will neglect the beloved bodies of so many allies? Theodosius, because the Thessalonians,

[266] Whereas these deeds could well be an exaggeration of the author or his sources, there are testimonies of this practice in earlier sieges. The most known instance is related with the entrance of the Black Death into the West, *i. e.*, Gabriel de Mussi's account of the Tartars attack to the city of Kaffa, which was in Genoese hands at the time. Accordingly, the former were forced to withdraw the siege after the plague hit their camp, but did not want to leave without inflicting as much damage as possible. Thus, they catapulted infected corpses over the walls of the city, hoping that the plague would spread among their enemies. Ziegler, *The Black Death,* 15.

[267] In a very literal sense, this phrase would make reference to the impossibility of taking air from the sky, as if they were living in all crammed and in inhuman conditions. However, the author uses the words *anima* and *caelum*, which are central concepts of Christian tradition. In this sense, it may be interpreted that the captives are not allowed to live a life in accordance to their Christian beliefs.

[268] Reference to the destruction of Corinth in 146 BC, after which Rome consolidated its dominion over Greek lands.

[269] Plutarch, *Fab.* 7.

displeased by the imposition of a new tax, had dragged the statues of Placidia throughout the city, ordered that the people who was assembled in the theater was slayed down.[270] As faith is attacked, Christian men slayed and the majesty of our God violated, will we not feel pain? Will we not prepare war? Will we not inflict punishment to the enemy? Indeed, never a reason of their public injury or private safety persuaded with greater justice to move arms against the enemy.

(18) I have said sufficiently about the genus of war how much just it is; I will say immediately how much necessary it is. Certainly, he will not leave any free reason to rest, powerful in land and sea, exerting war. For if he permitted this, there would not be anyone who sensibly preferred war to peace. But he has arranged his multitudes, he has powerful legions prepared over our head, he incites, urges and calls to battle. We must wage war or be submitted to a very harsh servitude. There is no place left for deliberation. A single hope of fortunes and safety is offered to us: that we preserve our freedom with our forces, being God, the best and the greatest, beneficial. On account of this, the good man and citizen must endeavor no less than for the security of one's servants and domestic estate. But there is no one who, when his slave is vexed or his cattle pillaged, is not grieved heavily, who does not contend with weapons to revenge the injury, who does not claim back what is his. And will we not care for the interest of the spouse, the children and the homeland? Why do we await unarmed the furor of the Turks? The weapons are driven away with weapons. War must be waged, so that we live in peace.

[270] Sozomen in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7, 23 relates a revolt against Theodosius prompted by the imposition of a new tax, but the conflict occurred in Antioch. The historian informs that in this occasion the statues of the emperor and empress were dragged through the city. The insurgency that ended up in the Massacre of Thessalonica (390) is said to have been produced by different reasons, and Sozomen does not refer to any damage of statues (7, 25). These events are recorded in the same manner in Theodoret's *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5, 17; 19. In any case, the point of Bessarion is clear: if such was the reaction of the emperor when he learned that secular statues had been harmed, so much greater should be the indignation of the Christians in view of the offense of sacred figures.

(19) But if, as we are inactive, the Turk grows with the greatest resources, if languid in leisure we sink in very serious damages, who will dare to expect at last that we manage the issue happily in leisure and rest? We must return to our senses. And, since we have thus fallen in so great dangers, we must turn back by the opposite way to safety and security. For, as Saint Paul said, "No one receives the crown but the one who contends legitimately",[271] and Aristotle, "Not those who wait, but those who descend to the contest are crowned, for they accomplish something worthy of glory".[272] The safety of the home must not be expected by us, but defended in the ground and the arena. There is no one of yours who, because of having a gift from nature, in order to preserve himself, his body and life, would want to expect the things that will be harmful. The enemy has his army hanging down over our freedom. Do you want to hold his advance? With war you can attain this, so that we keep back his strength with strength. For, although I pass over the uncertain conclusions of the war and common Mars, nevertheless one must fight for the sake of liberty, for the endangerment of life. One must battle for God himself. To fall retaining his greatness is to depart to everlasting eternity and immortal life. For life does not rest upon breathing, but duty, which consists most particularly of the preservation of the homeland, the temples and the divine condition.

(20) But what if we have a certain reason of victory? For already your temples and ears request that we say something about the capability of waging war, about the immense triumph that is offered to us. At this point, I plainly confess that I will not subtract anything about the multitudes and forces of the enemies from my oration, but will expose everything with great fidelity. And thence I begin. That army

[271] Paul, *2 Ep. Ti.* 2, 5. The passage makes use of athletic imagery.
[272] With these two quotations the author attempts to underline that it will be necessary that each and every one of the Christians seriously engages in the enterprise of the crusade, otherwise they will be defeated by the enemies.

is hostile, that multitude of men is infinite, not of so much strength as some believe or as it could not be surpassed by us easily. The major part of it consists of soldiers raised hastily and a crowd gathered together. They are not bound by oath to any religion, nor hired as mercenaries. Their bodies are very light, unable to bear toils. They go after the booty, not the army. If they were devoid of it for a little long time, they would return to home very rapidly. They give no effort in war, they keep no order. They are mercenaries, assassins, entirely lacking of military discipline, who can more easily be defeated than defeat.

(21) This we have gathered sensibly with precision,[273] that they are seventy thousand men, not more not less, who receive stipend from the public treasury. But listen to me, I beg, for a moment with even mind. Of that number of seventy thousand men, except for fifteen or twenty thousands, at most, who are guards of the flank of their emperor and take a daily payment, all the remaining are maintained in war by the tributes of the provincial allies.[274] These tributes are naturally so small and provided so meagerly, that in the whole year they receive the payment only four months. From this fact you see that he can sustain no expedition for longer than four months, but he dismiss them all, because the provinces do not supply larger wealth. We saw frequently in Constantinople that those forced by this scarcity of means sold their horses, weapons and clothes when they were dismissed, to be able to return home. This is the strength of the hostile army, this is the size, this amazing is that infantry and cavalry.

[273] During the 15th and 16th century with start to hear about intelligence operations against the Ottoman Empire and vice versa. A remarkable case close in time to Bessarion would be that of Janus Lascaris, who was sent by Lorenzo de Medici to Constantinople in 1489 and 1492 allegedly to collect Greek manuscripts, but he was in fact recompiling information about the Ottomans, in particular, about the strength of their fleet and navy and the possibility of their subdued population revolting against the power. We do not know exactly which Lorenzo's aims were, but part of Janus' recompiled data was published in his treaty *Informatione ad impressa contro a'Turchi*. Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 116; 243 n. 120. Bessarion refers again to these espionage practices a few lines later.
[274] It is noteworthy that here and in paragraph 25 Bessarion calls the sultan *imperator*.

(22) But if the Christian army, ravaging his boundaries, forces him to have his army in campaign the whole year, destitute of his own people and with small force, he will be forced into battle, where he can be easily overcome, or he will have to feed the whole army from that very wealth that is collected in his private treasury, what he certainly will not be able to maintain for long. For he has not, as some thoughtlessly boast, an immense wealth. If indeed it is plainly known from those who are concerned with the management of his businesses that no more than twenty hundred thousand golden coins are conferred from the whole sum of revenues to it, hence those twenty thousand sustain generously the infantry, on account of his personal custody, and satisfies his domestic expenses, which are very great. If any beyond this remains, he directs it all entirely to weapons, machinery and war engines, so that neither the possibility of raising treasure nor of hiring soldiers is granted to him. However, the fact that he had subjugated so many empires with so effeminate multitude and so scanty forces must not be admired, but grieved. For he had no enemy: it was completely easy to defeat those who did not resist.[275]

(23) Give the signal of war: now you easily perceive their worthlessness.[276] They pursue those who yield as vehemently as rapidly they run away from the persecutors. They do not dare to encamp near. And, may I repeat it, victory is at hand, provided that you want it. For you do not miss any capability in waging war. There is virtue in the emperors, number of soldiers and power. You have, princes of Italy, you have wealth that at this time must be of use to the public affairs not less than anyone esteems precious the private safety, the laws and the homeland. Each one must, as they have diligent account of their goods, expend as much as they can. I

[275] The cardinal seems to imply that those fallen under the sultan, including the Byzantines, did not strive so hard to resist him.
[276] Unlike the previous oration, the end of *De discordiis* presents a more optimistic (and perhaps unrealistic) character.

hear that the Constantinopolitans are accused by some, because, being stingy of their own wealth for the common safety, they surrendered all their possessions to the enemy.[277] In this they are assuredly worthy of a very serious guilt and are deservedly reprehended. It must be warned, lest we ourselves also commit this, lest we recklessly follow what we know and perceive that has been disgraceful and useless for others.[278] Once we prepare an army, what is there that would not predict and promise victory and all the joyful things? God, the best and greatest, for the sake of the amplification of whose piety, glory and faith we will fight, whose injuries[279] we will revenge, will assist us. He is enraged with the enemy, propitious to us, the one who not only accepts our effort and labor in this matter, but demands, but reclaims, but orders that what is due is returned to him. He said: "Do not fear of their sight, because I am by your side to release you. Do no fear of their sight, lest I make you fear their face. They will fight in war against you and they will not prevail, because I am by your side to free you".[280] And the Lord said to Joshua: "Lo! I give you Jericho in your hands, and its king and all its strong men".[281] As the Apostle said, "If God is with us, who will be against us?"[282] He will bring to pass that one persecutes a thousand and that two can put ten thousand to flight.[283]

(24) But we can lead into war an army far more numerous than the one the enemy has. But what if he has even more men? Perhaps the course of victory will be

[277] Indeed, from the account of Western eyewitnesses we learn about a certain reluctance of the wealthiest sector of Constantinople's population to collaborate financially with the defense of the city during the final siege of 1453. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 225-7.
[278] Byzantium is mentioned by Bessarion merely as counterexample of behavior for the Western nations. The cardinal claims that they have received their due punishment but does not add anything else. On the other hand, he delimits the guilt of the Greeks to their civil wars and their self-interest attitude in the last moments, but throughout the oration he does not introduce the religious issue, namely, the reject to the Union of Ferrara-Florence and the persistence in their Orthodoxy. See chapter 4.
[279] *I. e.*, the injuries inflicted on Him.
[280] *Je.* 1, 8; 17; 19.
[281] *Jo.* 6, 2.
[282] The apostle is Paul. *Ep. Rom.* 8, 31.
[283] *De.* 32, 30.

delayed? But just as not many armies are infinite in their multitude, on many occasions with a very small force they were vanquished, put to flight and obliterated. Xerxes' army, led by Mardonius, with three hundred thousand men was ravaged and slaughtered by eighty thousand Greek soldiers. Marius obliterated two hundred thousand Cimbrians with eighty thousand men. And again, together with Catulus, he killed one hundred and four thousand.[284] In Thessaly Pompey, with forty thousand foot soldiers and sixty mounted, with all the support of the East, with all his nobility, was put to flight and driven away from his camp by Caesar, who had thirty thousand foot soldiers and a thousand mounted.[285] Why do I remember that the infinite numbers of Tigranes were overcome by Lucullus, with a small army?[286]

(25) These excessively old deeds seem closer probably to fable than to history. What about our memory? Were our enemies not defeated, put to flight and slayed more often by the virtue of a few? I omit from these the remarkable victory of Ladislaus,[287] king of Hungary, who –as we have said once– with fourteen thousand men (those who refer actually more do not exceed eighteen thousand) in open fight and with a proper battle-array contended with the enemy, engaging in close combat, and he stroke his army to the ground and vanquished him far and wide. Injured the emperor, and if he had not pursued victory more eagerly and deliver himself to death, assuredly the Christian world would preserve the whole Europe. These I omit. Our oration hastens to more recent deeds. What will I say about the remarkable triumph of that Christian multitude that, without any leader, but still armed with the sign of the Cross, expelled the army of Turks that had seized the well-fortified town of

[284] Reference to the Cimbrian War (113-101 BC).
[285] This *exemplum* is especially meaningful, for Mehmed also has the support of at least some parts of the East.
[286] King Tigranes II of Armenia, who was defeated by the Roman general Lucullus in 69 BC.
[287] Reference to the King Ladislaus I of Hungary, who by the time had become a legendary figure that embodied the fight against Islam.

Belgrade and was running to and fro with unsheathed sword inside the walls and defeated it in a great slaughter, once the emperor himself was seriously injured, and reducing beneath their dominion all the baggage of the army?[288] However, this does not seem to have happened just once, because the impious and defiled enemy had occupied the whole inferior Hungary and filled everything with weapons; and the king of the upper Hungary, of royal and distinguished spirit, renowned by his protection, as the town of Jajce, well-fortified by nature and art, had been captured, he vanquished with a small force the very great numbers of the Turks and added part of the province to his empire.[289]

(26) You easily see, princes of Italy, with which enemy we are dealing. "With which?" you will say. One who has an undisciplined and unwarlike multitude, one who certainly does not surpass us in number of men and is truly defeated in virtue, one over whom small armies of ours triumphed on many occasions. However, we should not be amazed by this in the smallest degree. For those who struggle to drive away death and slavery fight far stronger and firmer than those who go after booty and spoils. For those lose too little, if they do not obtain the victory; but for these everything perishes, if they manage the affair more slothfully. The Lacedaemonian said: "May they fight as someone who will die, and they shall not die". Thus, since concord is so much necessary for us, most superior princes, not only at other occasions, but especially at this time, both to protect the private fortunes and to defend the common safety, let us embrace concord with all our zeal and consent. Let us assume the war, which is fairest, exceedingly glorious and useful for keeping the ornaments of peace, for avenging the injuries of God, the best and greatest, and for

[288] The author alludes the siege of Belgrade (1456).
[289] Battle of Jajce, 1463-4. John Hunyadi and Matthias Corvinus' victories were used to show the European rulers that resistance to the advance of the Turks was possible. See Mureşan, "Bessarion's *Orations against the Turks*", 224.

spreading piety. Let us adorn Italy with an immense victory and the spoils of the enemies, which are at hand, so that we free ourselves and all our things from fear and danger in perpetuity.

3.4 Discussion

Bessarion's orations are a testimony of his active role in European and, above all, Italian politics. This was particularly the case for the issue of the crusade against the Turks, concerning which he was perceived as the main reference and advocate in the West. Indicative of this are the private and public letters of consolation that the cardinal received almost immediately after the fall of Negroponte by prominent personalities of the time, like the doge of Venice, the abbot Bessarion –on account of the King Ferdinand of Naples– and the bishop Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo.[290] The argument that reiteratively appears throughout both discourses is that of the necessity of the crusade (*cf. De periculis* 1; *De discordiis* 15; 18) for safeguarding the peninsula, Western Europe and Christianity. Although there are some references to the fall of Constantinople and Negroponte and appeals to revenge the slaughter of the Christians, the truth is that Bessarion seems to have understood in the end that only the last of the three causes that he had described in his instructions for the preachers in 1463, *i. e.* the necessity of self-protection, could have a significant effect in Western European population.

The two orations are certainly of a very different tone and each of them addresses a different problem. Nevertheless, they constitute the core of the corpus and, as such, are intimately connected and thought to be read as a whole. I have already mentioned the contrast between the pessimistic tone of *De periculiis* and the

[290] Monfasani, "Bessarion Latinus", 180 n. 3.

more optimistic of *De discordiis.* Certainly, these characters are such that in occasions one can even find contradictory positions. For instance, in *De periculis* 9 Bessarion writes about the sultan's conquest of Italy that

> if he could not attain it, we would not have any reason to fear nor uncertainty about the matter. However … I cannot lie in this part even if I want to. Nothing was ever easier than any other thing. In relation to these matters, his number of riches is immense, untold the multitude of soldiers, so that over two hundred thousand men follow his army.

On the contrary, in *De discordiis* he argues that "nothing was ever more just than this war, or more necessary to be waged, or exhibited victory as easier and more open" (15) and, later on, that they face an enemy "who has an undisciplined and unwarlike multitude, one who certainly does not surpass us in number of men and is truly defeated in virtue, one over whom small armies of ours triumphed on many occasions" (26). We can assume that the author was attempting to generate a specific effect on his audience. Thus, the gloomy perspective that the reader develops at the end of the first oration, after having received a detailed account of the growth of the Ottoman power and Mehmed's future intentions –which are deemed as absolutely achievable, in consideration of historical antecedents–, somehow prepares the ground for the main argument of the second exhortation, emphasizing that only in unity the Italians will be capable of overcoming the Ottomans easily. Therefore, we can recognize in the first discourse the predominance of evidential elements, while in the second the argumentative and exhortative are the prevalent. Each character affects the content of the texts, and this explains the otherwise contradictory affirmations that we find in them.

As was the case with George Trapezuntios, Bessarion also exhibits mastery in the display of his rhetorical skills. In order to call for the union against the sultan, the cardinal seems to be following for the structure of his orations the model of

Demosthenes' *Olynthiacs* and *Philippics*, a series of discourses that intended to warn the Greeks of the danger that Philip II of Macedonia represented. In fact, as was already mentioned, Bessarion's own corpus was closed with a translation of Demosthenes' *First Olynthiac,* accompanied by a brief introduction, an epilogue and marginal notes.[291] And Demosthenes exhortation, as Bessarion's *De periculis* and *De discordiis* taken as a whole, also present the advantages of the enemy at the beginning, to emphasize the strength and virtue of the Athenians later and show that victory is possible. Other arguments of Demosthenes are recurrent in the cardinal's oration. For instance, the Athenian insists that Philip has raised because of the inaction and procrastination of his rivals (*Ol.* 9), a logic that Bessarion follows in *De discordiis* 22.[292] Demosthenes also underlines Philip's restless character (*Ol.* 1, 14) and his inability to be satisfied with what he has already conquered (*Phil.* 1, 9). Moreover, the Athenian indicates that, since the Macedonian king has grown by signing alliances and peace treaties which he would subsequently break, there is no possibility of diplomacy with him (*Ol.* 2, 6-7). Demosthenes even calls him a barbarian in *Ol.* 3, 16, even though the Macedonian spoke a variant of the Greek language. It is evident how all these elements served to Bessarion to build his own arguments and his own portrait of the sultan.[293]

In regard to the intertextual aspect, the texts do not limit to Demosthenes. On the contrary, they present a significant number of allusions and quotations, from

[291] A particularly interesting note glosses a passage where it is related that the citizens of Amphipolis asked aid from the Athenians, but the latter put no much interest on the matter. Demosthenes argues that if they had seriously involved in the defense of the city, this would not have been taken and it would be free of all its sufferings (*Ol.* 1, 8). To this Bessarion comments: "if we had succored Constantinople at that time" ("si olim opitulati essemus Bizantio", MS Vat. Lat. 3586, fol. 34r. The marginal notes are not reproduced in Migne's edition, but can be read in Fichet's editions.
[292] The same argument is used in Demosthenes *First Philippic*: "Even if something happens to him, you will son raise up a second Philip, if that is the way you attend to your affairs; for even this Philip has not grown great through his own unaided strength so much as through our carelessness" (11, translation by Vince, *Demosthenes*, 75).
[293] I will address again this subject in section 4.3.

Homer to the Holy Scriptures, which are used as *auctoritates* for supporting the different arguments cases. These erudite references are balanced with more popular and well-known phrases. Moreover, there are also several allusions to the past history and the contemporary context. There is also a difference in which these elements are exploited in one oration and the other. In this respect, it is evident that in *De periculis* the author is more concerned with the task of presenting a full picture of the conditions in which Europe is immerse, relating how they came to happen and what might happen in the future. In accordance to this, he introduces quotations coming primarily from historiography. The piece is, in short, more concrete, a detailed and severe analysis of the situation that continually refers to the contextual reality. By contrast, *De discordiis* addresses the matter in a more abstract and general manner. The section that deals with factual information the most is that where Bessarion describes Mehmed's forces and his *modus operandi* (20-1). Apart from this, the oration is a succession of arguments in favor of concord and exterior war, supported by a considerable number of quotations to the Bible and authors from Classical Greece and Rome. These references include the name of the work and author on occasions, but most of the time are merely allusive. Moreover, whether they are direct or indirect citations or even translations, the text frequently diverges significantly from the original, what might be an indication that Bessarion is quoting by memory.

Finally, we must examine the contextual dimension of the matter, the conditions in which the text was produced and, perhaps more importantly, distributed. Moreover, while is quite clear that the general purpose of the texts was the exhortation to the crusade, Bessarion's objectives were more specific and they varied over time, in the different stages of the production of the corpus. As I already

said at the beginning of this chapter, its circulation had a rather complicated history, which is a testimony of the changing times of the Quattrocento. The earlier member of the collection, the epistle to the abbot Bessarion, was certainly an exercise of private correspondence, what can be inferred from the severe comments on pope Paul II that survive in the first version of the text.[294] But later on, he decided to engage in a crusading propaganda campaign. At this point, there is some disagreement among scholars. According to Meserve, "the texts read more like private memoranda, meant to be distributed discreetly among men of influence and power … with whom Bessarion could claim a personal connection".[295] Thus, even though the hasty printing of the work seems to hint at an organized campaign, Meserve argues that Bessarion never asked Fichet to publish his texts and was not expecting Fichet's proceeding at all.[296]

Whereas Meserve's study helps us very much to understand the dynamics between author, publisher and readers, her conclusions are not convincing enough. To start with, in order to argue about Bessarion's surprise in learning that his writings had been published, she presents a text –a letter that the cardinal sent to Fichet in August 1471– that does not really support her position.[297] Furthermore, she

[294] Edited by Monfasani, "Bessarion Latinus", 196-201.
[295] Meserve, "Patronage and Propaganda at the First Paris Press", 525.
[296] The scholar highlights Fichet's initiative and autonomy in the editing process and the zeal with which he took charge of the decoration and the distribution of the copies. Thus, although she does not disregard that the printer could be sincerely supporting the cause of the cardinal, Meserve concludes that "Fichet seems to have viewed the publication of Bessarion's texts as an opportunity to advance not only the cause of the crusade but also his own reputation and career – to advertise his friendship with the cardinal to his friends and associates in Paris, to capture the attention of potential patrons in northern Europe, and, perhaps most of all, to court the favor of the cardinal himself". Meserve, "Patronage and Propaganda at the First Paris Press", 528.
[297] The text in question reads: "Lately, when I was sincerely desirous to know whether you had received the orations which I wrote … together with the refutations of the attack against my work in praise of Plato (for I sent both of those to you a long time ago), by chance one of the secretaries of the [French] King came here and said that he had seen the orations in your hands, and that they had, thanks to your efforts, been printed and distributed to many people … I was hoping very much that you would read them; and for this reason I rejoiced at this news and gave thanks for your kindness, since you thought so highly of my trifles that you decided they deserved a wide audience" (translation by Meserve, "Patronage and Propaganda at the First Paris Press", 536; the original Latin text is edited

somewhat underestimates the cardinal's own words in the epistle addressed to the French that accompanied the writings *Contra Turcos*. Bessarion wrote:

> I decided to send [you] certain orations that I have produced in this time on account of the very serious dangers that threaten Italy and all the Christians, not so much so that you admire the purity of the language or the strength and excellence of the oration, but so that you understand how a great storm of evils hangs upon the head and the fortunes of the Christian republic, and so that you expose the whole matter to the most serene King and to others who most particularly must and can bear this task and so that you convince them.[298]

The cardinal, modestly dismissing the possibility of Fichet finding a high quality of Latin or skillful rhetorical composition, states that his intentions are, on the one hand, to inform the French humanist of the situation in Italy and, on the other, to spread the word among the powerful. Mureşan has recently called the attention over other aspects that argue in favor of a thought propaganda campaign. After stressing that Bessarion was appointed by the pope himself to a special commission in charge of the crusade, he showed that it was the cardinal who initiated the correspondence with Fichet and that he must have been aware of the latter's involvement with the printing office –and of the advantages of this new technology as well. At the same time, the scholar argues that the edition in Italian was made by Carbone roughly at the same time as Fichet edition and, therefore, the translator must have used a manuscript sent by Bessarion himself. From this it seems quite certain that the cardinal intended to put his works in a wide circulation both in Latin and –to reach even more readers– in

by Legrand, *Cent-dix lettres grecques de François Filelfe*, 236-7). The fact that the secretary of the king casually ("forte fortuna") informed the cardinal about the printing of the orations does not necessary imply that the latter was not expecting such thing to happen. Rather, Bessarion seems to indicate that precisely when he was wondering about the matter, news arrived. The confession of rejoice when he learned about the publication also sounds more like an expression of modesty than astonishment.

[298] "… mittere statuimus orationes quasdam hoc tempore a nobis editas pro gravissimis periculis quae Italiae Christianisque omnibus imminent: non magis quidem ut vel sermonis puritatem vel orationis vim ac praestantiam desideretis, quam ut intelligatis quanta malorum procella in Christianae reipublicae capita et fortunas impendet, remque et apud serenissimum regem et apud alios qui opem ita maxime ferre debent, ut possunt, explicetis totam ac persuadeatis" (*PG* 161, col. 641A-642A).

vernacular.[299] Furthermore, Mureşan frames Bessarion's interest on giving his text a wider circulation in the context of one of the major European events for the discussion of the crusade against the Ottomans: the great diet of Christendom, the *Große Christentag* convoked by Frederick III in 1471. Although Fichet copies were not finished on time, because of the estimated number of printed copies it seems that the target was an influential elite, which could perfectly correspond to those present in the diet of Regensburg.[300]

Thus, we can observe that Bessarion's texts had different stages of circulation and, therefore, that his audience changed accordingly, a factor that also made him alter the text itself. At a very first moment, regarding his letter to Bessarion the abbot, we can talk about a case of intimate correspondence, in which the cardinal felt allowed to include his immediate emotions and thoughts. Then he composed more elaborated texts that were deliberately of public character, addressed to –as far as we know– the pope Paul II, the European ambassadors at Rome and the doge of Venice. Later on, very possibly with the intention of turning to the printing press, he thought of reaching an even wider –although still elitist– audience, not only the princes of Italy that he explicitly mentions in the last version of the corpus, but also other rulers and any "others who most particularly must and can bear this task". Regarding the fulfillment of Bessarion's intentions for his text and the means that he thought for achieving them, it is somehow ironic –as Mureşan points out– that the orations had a greater effect while they circulated as manuscript than as printed copies.[301] Certainly, whereas in its earlier stage the text had probably much to do with the renewal of the *lega generale* against the Turk among the Italian powers in late 1470, no receiver of

[299] Mureşan, "Bessarion's *Orations against the Turks*", 211-2; 216-7.
[300] Mureşan, "Bessarion's *Orations against the Turks*", 219-25.
[301] Mureşan, "Bessarion's *Orations against the Turks*", 226.

Fichet copies is known to have seriously engaged in the crusade against the Ottomans in the short term.

CHAPTER 4

IDENTITIES AND REPRESENTATIONS

The exhortations of George Trapezuntios and Bessarion deal with subjects that had had a preeminent place in Byzantine literature throughout the last centuries of the Empire, but certainly these intellectuals addressed them at a critical stage. Admittedly, various authors had touched upon the decline of Byzantium and its culture and the continuous conflicts with the Ottomans, but the scholars of mid-15th century and onwards faced a very different reality: their state had fallen –or was about to– to the Turk. As other relatively lesser crises before, these circumstances ultimately prompted changes in the way in which the Byzantines perceived the others and themselves.

In modern scholarship, Byzantine identity has proven to be a much recurrent matter, as it is problematic. A great deal of these difficulties is due to linguistic aspects, to the name with which we denominate the Byzantines and to the way in which they referred to themselves in different periods and contexts (Ῥωμαῖοι, Γραικοί, Ἕλληνες). In the last two decades particularly, this subject has experienced a revived interest, as it was revisited by a number of scholars who proposed some innovative perspectives. The traditional conception of Byzantium as a multi-ethnic empire of subjects united by Orthodoxy and by loyalty to the emperor was recently challenged by Kaldellis, who revised the role of the Roman and Hellenic element in Byzantine identity. The author asserts that the Empire's ethno-cultural diversity was dissolved in a Roman identity, "a social consensus that all belonged to a single historical political community defined by laws, institutions, religion, language, and customs, in other words to a nation".[302] In this logic, the Roman and Greek traditions had come to terms and crystallized by

[302] Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 43.

the beginning of the 4th century in a symbiotic relationship where the former would define the civilian, social and institutional orders, while the latter became the reference for culture and learning. With the later advent and penetration of Christianity in all aspects of life, the Hellenic element assumed a subsidiary position, but would also undergo eventual revivals when the conditions were appropriate.[303] As persuasive as this approach may be, one should not overlook the fact that, in regards to the greater portion –if not all– of Byzantine literature, direct evidence of what the illiterate and unprivileged masses felt and thought can hardly be recuperated. On the contrary, even if the authors did not come originally from the higher strata of society, they tended to reflect their mentality, values and ideology in the texts. It is precisely in this sense that Stouraitis criticizes Kaldellis' thesis. According to him, the politico-social discourse of Roman self-identification was restricted to the members of the upper levels of the society, who in effect had access to the literate culture and participated actively in the political system. These individuals did not attempt to include the Greek ethno-linguistic group in this Roman identity. Nevertheless, the provincial populations did experience as subjects a sort of "regnal identity", a normative collective identity defined by a centripetal and homogenizing discourse promoted by the Constantinopolitan ruling elite.[304] Finally, Page also acknowledges the significance of class and geo-politics in the configuration of a Roman identity. Thus, a Roman is defined primarily as s subject of the Roman emperor, but the inhabitants of Constantinople would participate in that identity in a higher degree than the provincials.[305] Moreover, the author argues that identity was not an immutable entity, but it was subject to change in response to the political context. In particular, the

[303] Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 54-5; 166-7.
[304] Stouraitis, "Roman Identity in Byzantium", 202-4.
[305] Page, *Being Byzantine*, 50-1.

encounter with the Franks and the Catholic Church in the years after the Fourth Crusade challenged the traditional political identity and encouraged the search for alternative identities. The development of a Hellenic and an Orthodox Christian identity, which will be strengthened during the Ottoman conquests, finds its inception in this period.[306]

With respect to the Ottomans, because of recent studies like Necipoğlu, Meserve and Bisaha's, we have now a better idea of the representations and attitudes that the Byzantines and Westerners developed towards this group and state.[307] However, the focus of this work is the mental and discursive representations of those Greeks who migrated to Italy and could, therefore, internalize both perspectives. Indeed, one can look into the exhortations of George Trapezuntios and Bessarion to identify which elements of the representation of the Other they adopted and how novel or singular were the positions that they reached. Moreover, their thoughts on identity and alterity are also indicative of how they conceived history or, in other words, the agents and motives behind the collapse of Byzantium and the rise of the Ottomans.

Finally, I should remark that the following study is not an attempt to present a general picture of how the whole of the Byzantine population felt about its identity and the Ottomans. Rather, I expect to offer the peculiar views that two prominent Byzantine intellectuals had. Nevertheless, one should not dismiss the possibility that these attitudes reflected in part a sentiment shared by larger portions of the Greek population. Moreover, there is also the possibility that these opinions shaped the way in which subsequent learned generations of learned –and perhaps also illiterate– Byzantine descendants thought of themselves and of the Ottomans.

[306] Page, *Being Byzantine*, 278-80.
[307] Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*; Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*; Bisaha, *Creating East and West*.

4.1 George Trapezuntios and Bessarion: from patronage to rivalry

The Council of Ferrara-Florence was one of the major events of the first half of the 15th century, and, among other things, it represented the culmination of Byzantium's intentions of approaching to the West. It was also for many of the Latins an opportunity to directly see and interact with the Byzantines: although it is true that not all of the Westerners had the best opinions about them, many were impressed in a good way and admired their learning. In addition to enabling this cultural encounter, the Council probably was the first occasion in which George Trapezuntios and Bessarion met or, at least, learned about each other's existence. By 1438 Bessarion had already arrived to Italy and, although Trapezuntios had not yet settled in Florence, he was living in the nearby town Bagno di Romagna. According to Monfasani, the Cretan must have wanted to visit the seat of the Council in order to see his fellow countrymen and it is in this context where we can assume that he had the exchange with Gemistos Plethon that he refers to in his *Comparatio*.[308] By the year 1440, both George and Bessarion had taken residence in Florence and worked together in the papal curia.

The relationship between these two Greek émigrés seems to have been quite amicable in the beginning. Bessarion, who was already appointed as cardinal, entrusted Trapezuntios with the task of translating various Greek texts into Latin.[309] Thus, George had Bessarion as one of his patrons at the papal court until the relationship deteriorated in the following decade.[310] Their enmity became intellectual rivalry, firstly in regard to a passage of John's gospel (*Ev. Jo.* 21, 22) and later –and most famously– when both of them engaged in the famous 15th century controversy

[308] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 39-40.
[309] The first of them was Basil's *Adversus Eunomium*. George's preface to Bessarion is edited by Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 160-1.
[310] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 48-9.

between Platonists and Aristotelians.[311] However, George does not seem to have behaved in a very aggressive manner towards Bessarion, keeping a certain respect for the dignity of the cardinal –for instance, the Cretan never referred to Bessarion by name. As late as 1469, before the publication of Bessarion's *In calumniatorem Platonis*, Trapezuntios suggested to the cardinal to arrange a dialogue, a proposal that the latter rejected with contempt.[312] As can be seen, Bessarion's composition of the corpus *Contra Turcos* was made while the philosophical controversy –and hostility– between the two Greeks was at its height.

Although Trapezuntios and Bessarion had very different philosophical visions and attitudes towards history –an aspect that I shall continue delineating in short–, I would like to stress at this point that they actually shared not only a cultural background but also intellectual inquisitiveness. Indeed, both scholars received a similar education, in accordance with the Byzantine curriculum. In this regard, an important element of their training certainly was their expertise in the art of rhetoric. But apart from their knowledge of the Byzantine tradition, another central feature is their interest in Latin learning.[313] Eventually, as can be deduced from their handling of the sources, they also became acquainted with the earlier stages of Latin literature.

Their orations against the Turks are a testimony of these two characteristics. On the one hand, their traditional Byzantine training becomes quite evident in specific instances, like their accounts of conflicts between Byzantium and the Ottomans or their ample knowledge of Greek sources, among which we can count

[311] Monfasani, "A Tale of Two Books", 3; Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 201-29.
[312] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 221-2.
[313] Concerning Bessarion, as Monfasani has shown, his Latin library is indicative of his intellectual interests. Whereas 74 books of a total of 514 belong to the Classical period, 49 to patristic and only 21 to contemporary humanistic works, 204 correspond to scholastic texts. Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*, 22-4. At the same time, it seems that it was the influence of Latin scholasticism what drew Trapezuntios closer to Aristotelianism. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 19.

George's reference to the letter of Manuel II and Bessarion's lengthy display of Greek *auctoritates* (and even perhaps his narration of Mehmed II's story). On the other hand, both scholars became fascinated with the Western world and culture and engaged with the philosophy of scholasticism, Latin scholarship and, most importantly, the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, they came up with their own peculiar answers –sometimes slightly different, sometimes plainly opposed– to the questions of the Byzantine identity, its relation to the West and the representation of the Ottomans and the course of History.

4.2 Byzantine identity in the exhortations

4.2.1 The Empire and Constantinople

Throughout the orations both authors denominate the Byzantines with the ethnonym *Graecus* and at the same time they identify themselves with this term, George Trapezuntios very explicitly, while Bessarion by more subtle means. However, rather than simplifying the issue, this designation raises up a number of questions. Thus, one wonders what it means for the authors to be *Graecus*. Do they have an idea of race or nation to which they feel they belong? Is (or was) that nation the empire of the Palaiologoi? Is there a continuity between the Classical Hellenes and the Byzantines? And finally, is there a connection between the Eastern Roman Empire and the realm ruled by the Palaiologoi? A starting point for answering these questions could well be the views and attitudes that Trapezuntios and Bessarion had towards the imperial family and what they thought about the Byzantine Empire as a political and geographical entity and their relation to it.

Bessarion certainly cultivated solid relationships with various Palaiologoi throughout his life. As I have pointed out already, he entered the service of John VIII and accompanied him to the Council of Ferrara-Florence. He also wrote epistles and occasional poetry for members of the dynasty.[314] In fact, we even have evidence that the cardinal considered the Palaiologoi descendants of a Roman dynasty.[315] The cardinal does not only recognize their legitimacy, but even appears on various occasions offering his collaboration in the state affairs.[316] After the fall of Constantinople, Bessarion continued to show support to the house, seeking aid for the last Despot of the Morea, Thomas Palaiologos, in his fight against the Turks and acting as tutor of his children in Italy once the family was forced to abandon the Peloponnese.[317] In short, it seems that from his early years in Constantinople until his maturity in Italy Bessarion felt that he had certain obligations towards the imperial family, as if he considered himself a regular subject of the Byzantine emperor. However, one of the most striking characteristics of the corpus *Contra Turcos* is precisely its absence of direct references to this figure. When the cardinal relates that John V Palaiologos or John VI Kantakouzenos allied with the Turks during the civil

[314] Among these occasional pieces were the funeral oration for Manuel II, an epitaph for Constantine XI's wife, a descriptive iambic poem concerning Manuel II and his wife and three *Consolationes* for John VIII on the death of his wife. Labowsky, "Bessarione", 694-5.
[315] In the MS Marc. gr. 407 there is an autograph list which runs from Romulus and Remus until Michael IX Palaiologos. However, it should not be interpreted from this that Bessarion claimed that the ancestry of the Byzantines had to be sought primarily in the Romans. Rather, the former had preserved their Greek identity even under Roman dominion. According to Lamers, who bases his arguments in Bessarion's *Encomium to Trebizond*, the cardinal believed that the Greeks were not completely subjugated by the Romans. In fact, the Latins themselves admired and absorbed the Hellenic culture, the Greeks assured the authority of the Roman Empire in the East and, therefore, the two nations were linked together and mutually complementary. Lamers, *Greece Reinvented*, 101-5; Maltezou, "Still More on the Political Views of Bessarion", 102.
[316] A remarkable example is that of the letter that Bessarion sent to Constantine XI when he was Despot in the Morea, near the year 1444. In this epistle, he congratulates the future emperor for the restoration of the Hexamilion wall and advises him to train a number of young subjects on letters and arts in Italy, for the sake of the development of the Morea. Among other things, he writes to Constantine: "I am greatly in debt to you, since I am unable to be by your side … and be your minister" (translation by Keller, "A Byzantine Admirer of 'Western' Progress", 344).
[317] Labowsky, "Bessarione", 691.

wars, he simply states that the latter were invited by the *Graeci* (*De periculis* 5). And referring to an earlier period –the time of the Seljuk Empire– he indicates that "[The Turks] at last came together to the lower parts of Asia; and there, waging many and various wars with the Empire of the Greeks…" (*De periculis* 4). It seems, therefore, that Bessarion recognizes a continuity of imperial rule that goes back until, at least, the Middle Byzantine period. Nevertheless, we cannot affirm if he understands that this rule is the same as the Roman Empire of Antiquity. The word *imperator* clearly does not have this connotation in these orations, for it is applied indifferently to the sultan ("Turcorum imperator", *De periculis* 8; 12), Ladislaus I of Hungary (*De discordiis* 25) and, apparently, to the princes of Italy themselves (*De discordiis* 23). Likewise, the word *imperium* should be interpreted as "rule", "power" or "dominion", as a political entity, no matter how great or worthy.

Another aspect of the orations that is noteworthy is Bessarion's conception of *Graecia* as a geographical region. In some cases, *Graecia* seems to designate the various regions that were ruled by the Byzantine emperor at the time. That is the case of *De periculis* 7 ("[Orhan], the one we said passed to Greece first") and 19 ("will the Turk, who has subdued Epirus, Macedonia, the whole Greece and so many empires, fear an Italy that is dissenting and disperse in so many principalities and concerns?"). However, in some instances the cardinal uses the same name to denote the Greece of the Classical period. In relation to the passage through the Adriatic Sea, he claims that it "once [served] for the Romans into Greece" (*De periculis* 9). The same happens in *De discordiis* 6 in connection with the invasions of Greece done by Alexander the Great and Xerxes. Although the implications of this cannot be ascertained, one can infer from these passages that *Graecia* does not refer primarily to the areas that were under Byzantine rule in the last centuries of the empire –for

Bessarion mentions parts of the Balkan Peninsula that had been in hands of the Slavs since long. Thus, the name *Graecia* includes the areas of actual Byzantine rule, but refers more strictly to those where the Greeks had traditionally dwelled and governed from Antiquity onwards.

Furthermore, these Greeks from Antiquity were, for Bessarion, somehow connected to the Byzantines. This can be observed with clarity in *De discordiis* 5:

> At this point, one must cite that Homeric Nestor, who, willing to reconcile Agamemnon with Achilles, employed these very wise words:
> "Oh, gods above! Towards the Grecian cities a horrendous sorrow hurries, which Priam and the grandchildren of Priam buy at a high price, when they listen that you confront each other with so great agitation of furies …"
> I will not say, as he did, that I am older than you and that I have seen more things, but that I have suffered more things and received more calamities from the enemy … Give credit to the experienced, give credit to the one who suffered. No other thing extinguished wretched Greece, but discord. No other thing erased this part of the world, but the civil wars, and not only in our memory, but also in the ancient times.

In the translation of the Homeric text Bessarion writes "Graias urbes", *Graius* being a poetic form of *Graecus*. A few lines below, *Graecia* evidently refers to Byzantium, which had collapsed in more recent times. However, the use of these terms and the similarity of the conditions alluded –division among Greek rulers– seems to indicate that Bessarion understood that there was an unbroken link between the Hellenes who lived "priscis temporibus" (including the Homeric heroes, as it appears) and the Byzantines of the Palaiologan times. In addition to this, the cardinal acknowledges that the latter had not learned from their antecessors. In consequence, this long tradition of Greek sovereignty that goes from the Classical city-states to the Byzantine Empire has finally found its end in the previous decades. And, judging by the choice of verbs like *exstinguere* and *delere*, for Bessarion this conclusion was rather definitive. Although after 1453 he continuously attempted to convince the

European nations to support the restoration of Greek power, in his final publication, the corpus *Contra Turcos*, there is no reference of the sort.[318]

A similar thing happens with the place that Constantinople is given in the orations. As the capital of the Byzantine Empire and the place where he was educated, the city had certainly a symbolic and emotional significance for Bessarion and, thus, one would expect to find in the text numerous mentions to the city. However, these are not only few, but somehow disappointing *prima facie.* Indeed, it is remarkable that throughout the texts the cardinal does not exhort the princes to recapture Constantinople or the former Byzantine lands. It seems, on the contrary, that he is more concerned about the future of Italy and the rest of Europe, as if he had given up on the Greek cause. The author himself presents himself as Greek and puts forward his own feelings and experience in *De discordiis* 5. He makes, however, a quite long reference to Constantinople in the epistle to the abbot Bessarion that accompanies the orations *Contra Turcos*. There he writes:

> Some time ago Constantinople was in crisis. No part of Italy sent support forces, they all considered it an alien matter. They believed wrongly that the danger would not extend towards them. But certainly, they observed how many calamities they experienced, how many fortunes, wealth and empires of the Christians were reduced to Turkish domination … Why was it so? Because they did not want to aid Constantinople in time with the expense of fifty thousand golden coins nor to reject the common enemy from it.[319]

Although there is a hint of reproach for the Italians, who did not do everything they could for saving the city, the passage focuses more on the consequences of this

[318] Bessarion expressed his desire of seeing the Greeks independent again in 1462, in the discourse that he delivered for the transferal of the relics of Saint Andrew that the Despot Thomas Palaiologos had brought to Rome. The following year, he became involved in the project of a crusade against the Ottomans that was finally aborted by the death of pope Pius II. In the last years of his life, the cardinal contributed to the project of establishing a semi-autonomous Greek community in Siena. Lamers, *Greece Reinvented*, 112-3; Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 111-2; Labowsky, "Bessarione", 691-2.

[319] "Versabatur olim in discrimine Byzantium. Nulla Italiae pars misit subsidia, rem alienam putabant omnes; periculum ad se non pertinere falso credebant. Atqui postea senserunt quot mala experti sunt, quot Christianorum fortunae, opes, imperia in Turcorum dominationem redacta … Quid ita? Quia noluerunt quinquaginta millium aureorum sumptu in tempore opitulari Byzantio et ab ea communem hostem propulsare", *PG* 161, col. 648B-648C.

action (the fall of other Christian kingdoms and, especially, of Negroponte) and the necessity of learning from this in order to survive the Ottoman threat. As has been said in the previous chapter, Bessarion does not exploit much the emotional aspect of the fall of the capital –nor of the Venetian holding in Euboea– and does not call for the recapture of the territories that the Ottomans had conquered (although he does make an appeal in two occasions to avenge the blood of the Christians and the offenses made to God). But Constantinople appears in the text mainly as a rhetorical devise, an *exemplum* of what can perfectly happen to the European nations.[320] This operation is quite clear in the closure of the corpus, in the epilogue of the translation of Demosthenes' *First Olynthiac*. By the end Bessarion announces that he will close the text with a disjunctive that he used in the papal curia:

> Whether all Italy, once all its affairs are appeased and all the rivalries deposed, uniting together with all the strengths, being God, the best and greatest, its guide, will destroy and break the strengths of the Turks; or if, because we have undergone eighteen years now after the ruin of Constantinople, we will be otiose with so much empty words and vane promises, in a short time the whole Italy – But I restrain my lips, lest I express what it is also terrible and horrible to hear.[321]

In this connection, Mureşan argues that in various points of the orations Bessarion presents himself as the Patriarch of Constantinople and, therefore, that he talks with special authority, in the voice of the Greeks under Ottoman rule and as a "well-informed insider".[322] However, the title of Patriarch is only employed once and not even in the main text, but in the title of the epistle to Fichet that opens the corpus. Therefore, it is evident that in this precise corpus of texts Bessarion did not have the

[320] Lamers, *Greece Reinvented*, 124.
[321] "Omnis Italia, compositis ac pacatis rebus, et omni simultate deposita, ómnium viribus in unum collatis, Deo Opt. Max. duce, Turcorum vires conteret atque infringet; aut si quod duodeviginti iam annis post Byzantii excidium experti sumus, inanibus duntaxat verbis ac vanis pollicitationibus vacabimus, brevi tempore universa Italia… sed compesco labellum, nec id exprimam, quod auditu quoque dirum atque horribile est", *PG* 161, col. 676A-676B.
[322] Mureşan, "Bessarion's *Orations against the Turks*", 209.

intention of portraying himself neither in a Greek *persona*, nor as the representative or spokesman of any Greek community. Nonetheless, we should not understand necessarily that this decision reflected a resignation on the potential re-establishment of Byzantine suzerainty. Lamers interprets Bessarion's placement of Greece at the same level with all the other Christian nations and the absence of direct identification with his *patria* as deliberate operations, through which he intended to appear "as a committed leader of the Roman Church, and secondly, as an unbiased observer of history".[323]

George Trapezuntios' conceptions and relationship with the Byzantine Empire and its ruler are somewhat more ambiguous and harder to define. This might be related with the fact that George was born and educated in a peripheral area of Byzantine world and had not much contact with the milieu of the capital, which in fact he only visited after it had been taken by the Ottomans. To begin with, we must acknowledge that he had not developed strong connections with the different members of the Palaiologan dynasty. He wrote in one occasion a letter to the emperor John VIII and, although he did so in quality of representative of the pope Eugene IV, he nevertheless inserted his personal views.[324] More relevant would be the epistle of private character that he sent to Constantine XI –non extant– warning him against the advices of Gemistos Plethon.[325]

[323] Although his Greek origin was an advantage in many aspects, it could have a negative effect sometimes as well, especially in the papal curia. By the time when the corpus *Contra Turcos* was being published, Bessarion still had chances of being elected as pope. Considering that his failure on being elected as pontiff after the death of Nicholas V might have been related to his origins, his procedure in these texts is understandable. Lamers, *Greece Reinvented*, 125-7.
[324] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 34-5.
[325] We learn about this lost epistle from a letter that Trapezuntios sent to Bessarion in 1469. At a certain point, the Cretan states that he sent the letter to dissuade the emperor from listening to Plethon. Following the guidelines of the Platonist was, according to George, what brought Constantine his ruin. See the corresponding section in Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 171.

Even though the personal relationship with the Palaiologoi was limited, the Byzantine emperors are mentioned in several passages of the exhortations, what can give us an idea of George's opinion on them. In particular, the figure of Manuel II Palaiologos occupies a significant place in the oration *Ad Nicolaum*. Here Trapezuntios writes:

> is it not the whole Europe in debt with the Greeks by the fact that Emperor Manuel –not that of earlier times but the father of this who is emperor now– refused the passage to Tamerlane, so he would not devastate the whole Europe? (19)

Firstly, it is noteworthy that George has a clear understanding of the succession of Byzantine emperors and pretends that his reader do so as well. Moreover, we can observe that *Graeci* here refers doubtlessly to the Byzantines as subjects of the emperor –but we will see that this is not always the case. Manuel II, in his turn, is portrayed as protector of Europe. Trapezuntios had delineated his line of succession backwards some paragraphs before the former passage: "[Manuel II] writes that he was not willing to give up the gates to the Parthians, since he was the successor of Constantine, who had founded Constantinople for the protection of Europe. Oh, man worthy of Constantine's seat!" (*Ad Nicolaum* 8). Thus, there is a continuity between Constantine I and the Palaiologoi that conveys also a duty in regard to the West. Finally, about Constantine I we are told that "he transferred to Constantinople –founded by himself– the Roman Empire, and this city repelled them [the Parthians] all the way from here" (*Ad Nicolaum* 7). From these passages we can assume that, just as there is a line that goes from Constantine to Manuel II, the last Byzantine emperors are also for George still the heads of the *Romanum imperium*. Although *imperium* is sometimes used as "power" or "rule", throughout Trapezuntios' two orations the word *imperator* has a more specific sense than in Bessarion's text. Except for one occurrence where he –wrongly– states that the Persians called

"Chosroes" to their emperors (*Ad Nicolaum* 2), the term is always used in connection to the Roman Empire.[326] It is already manifest that George gives much significance to the concept of the Roman Empire when it comes to define the Byzantine state, although not necessarily regarding other Greek identities. This operation has two outcomes. On the one hand, when he represents Manuel II as putting his greed aside and carrying on the millenary (and imperial) task of defending Europe, he illustrates the well disposition of the Greeks towards the West, which becomes therefore indebted (*Ad Nicolaum* 19: "an tota Europa Grecis non debet?"). This debt is automatically transferred to the son of Manuel, Constantine XI, who is now asking for succor against the enemies of the Cross (*Ad Nicolaum* 19). On the other hand, the self-recognition as descendants from the same Empire and, thus, as continuators and, up to some point, participants of the same culture, draws the Byzantine and Latin worlds near. In words of Bisaha, Trapezuntios "does away with the notion of Greece as a foreign, Eastern land and places it firmly within Europe, stressing its identity as Western, Christian culture"[327] (2006: 115). We shall see that the religious element has also its share in this operation.

In addition to this, it is noticeable that in the aforementioned passages there is an ostensible identification between the Byzantine Empire and its capital, Constantinople. In *Ad Nicolaum* 7 he had explicitly stated that Constantine transferred the *imperium* to Constantinople, and then again, in paragraph 2 he had written:

> The city of Constantine, most blessed Father, very providently founded by him in the outermost Europe and in the throat of the Hellespont, is renowned by these very things: to have driven away the Parthians from the whole European Empire even until this day.

[326] And even in the exceptional case mentioned, one can suppose that the author employed the term *imperator* in order to make an analogy with the counterpart of the Persians, the Romans or Westerners.
[327] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 115.

One of the main arguments of the exhortation *Ad Nicolaum* is Constantinople's geo-political importance. Indeed, the city prevents the free and easy passage of the Eastern peoples (here George means, naturally, the Turks) from Asia to Europe. Conversely, if Constantinople fell, the advantages that (Classical) Romans and Byzantines have exploited for centuries against the Asians will be turn against them. The conquest of the capital would unite both parts of the Ottoman Empire and make the Turks significantly stronger. However, Constantinople has in the orations also a symbolic significance, which resides in that the city is conceived by the author as a middle point where and over which both Europe and Asia have been perpetually fighting to each other. Moreover, the way in which Trapezuntios choses to refer to the capital is very meaningful. Whereas Bessarion preferred the name *Byzantium*, George clearly inclines for using *Constantinopolis* and even *Constantini urbs*. Thus, the continuity of the state and the line of emperors is reflected in, or rather, defined by the permanence of the capital in its defensive role. In order words, George emphasizes the centrality of the capital for affirming Byzantium as political entity and legitimizing its ruler.

In spite of this, it is not evident how important is for Trapezuntios the Byzantine Empire for defining a Greek identity nor how attached he considers to this entity. As seen, the examples quoted above are all taken from the oration *Ad Nicolaum*. However, examining some sections of *Ad Alfonsum* might shed some light on this matter. While trying to persuade King Alfonso to organize a crusade, George brings up the figure of Charlemagne. In paragraph 28 he writes: "that, I say, Charles, who firstly translated the Empire of the Romans from Greece into the Gaul, who, after he was made the lord of almost the whole Europe, damaged even Africa more vehemently". The vocabulary employed is the same that the author uses when he

adverts to Constantine I in *Ad Nicolaum*. In this case, George writes that the emperor "Romanum imperium transtulit", while about Charlemagne he states that "Romanorum imperium transtulit". One cannot doubt that in these instances the author is deliberately using the terminology of the *translatio imperii*. This dignity, then, passed from Greece to France through Charles. In consequence, the word *Graecia* in *Ad Alfonsum* means something different than the Roman Empire. It might be used in geographical or ethnographical sense, or even in both of them, but I understand that it can also refer to a political entity that continues living but not anymore with that Roman dignity. Indeed, this title conveys a kind of superiority, as George makes clear in the following paragraph:

> And thus he [Charles] ascended to such high that we can call him deservedly king of all the kings that ever existed and of the emperors of all the emperors. For, since all who existed until this day were below him in magnitude of power and glory, only by him will be defeated the one who undertakes a similar action. (*Ad Alfonsum* 29)

However, the Roman Empire is not merely a secular political entity that has preeminence over all the other powers, but even a transcendental –and metahistorical–[328] concept, which always exists (although in different embodiments), serves as reference to the identity of the European nations and conveys a definite interpretation of History. With these words, George plainly distinguishes the Roman Empire from Byzantium. At times they could have coincided, but it did not have to be always like this. And if the Roman Empire could be translated and the universal Roman emperor had been in the past a non-Roman *stricto sensu*, namely, a Greek or a Frank, then the same could happen in the future. And indeed, this is the position that the Cretan would assume right after the fall of Constantinople.

[328] In words of Pocock, "the discourse of *translatio imperii* and the Donation of Constantine was metahistorical; that is to say, both church and empire were conceived as sacred entities transcending time and circumstance, models of divine action upon, rather than in, secular history". Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 3, 128.

In truth, George underwent a significant change in his opinion towards Mehmed II in respect to how he had portrayed him and the Ottomans in *Ad Nicolaum.* Consequently, he addressed more than one work to the sultan, written in Greek. These contained praises to the sultan that, not surprisingly, were not to be taken very pleasantly by his colleagues in the curia, including Bessarion.[329] For instance, in *On the Eternal Glory of the Autocrator,* he writes that

> in my opinion there has never been a man nor will there ever be one to whom God has granted a greater opportunity for sole dominion of the world than He has granted to your mightiness (…) I arrived at this opinion immediately after I heard how God bestowed Constantinople on you. For, as the wondrous Aristotle teaches us, God does nothing in vain … All the Westerners agree that in Constantine's time the universal kingdom passed to that city which as a grace from God now you rule (hence no one can doubt that in accordance with the laws handed down to us by our forefathers you are the king of the world).[330]

Of course, this does not mean that George accepts the Muslim God, but rather, that he conceived possible to convert Mehmed into Christianity, as is evinced in other writings, like his *On the Divinity of Manuel*.[331] George's apocalyptic vision still persists in these texts, but he feels that the scripts can be changed somehow.[332] Although not completely consistent, there is no unsurmountable contradiction between his attitude before and after the fall of Constantinople. As Ravegnani says,

> esiste un filo conduttore con la tesi dell'*Exhortatio*. L'aver affermato che, se fosse caduta Bisanzio, l'Europa e con lei il cristianesimo sarebbero stati travolti dall'Islam, non era, infatti, un semplice espediente letterario, ma rispecchiava la profonda convizione dell'umanista. Di fronte al crolli dell'impero e all'impotenza dell'occidente, incapace di organizzarsi per vincere i turchi, il Trebisonda, senza dubbio, si convinse che la sottomissione dell'Europa non era solo certa, ma anche imminente. Sentì quindi il dovere,

[329] In 1466, while returning to Rome after his visit to Constantinople, George composed the treatise *On the eternal glory of the Autocrat*, which was addressed to Mehmed II and attempted –among other things– to convert him into Christianity. Pope Paul II eventually learned about it and decided to assemble a commission headed by Bessarion himself to examine the text and investigate if Trapezuntios had committed treason. When the letters that he had written to the sultan were also discovered, the Cretan was jailed for a certain period, but four months later he was freed. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 189-93.
[330] The translation is that of Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 493-4.
[331] See, for instance, Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 565.
[332] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 133.

> come Cristiano, di evitare anche la fine della sua religione, cercando un espediente per attutire l'urto fra cristianesimo ed islamismo.[333]

Certainly, there are loosen ends in his the way he writes down his thoughts, even between the exhortations that he wrote to Nicholas V and King Alfonso. However, I think they can be explained if we consider the contextual aspect of the orations, especially, the importance of the addressees. In his first exhortation, George was trying to convince a secular ruler, a Western king, and offer some kind of legitimation. In the second text, he seeks to convince the pope to rescue what is left of the Byzantine Empire, not because he feels particularly attached to it, but because of its people, its culture and its religion. But nevertheless, I believe that this is indicative of George attitude towards the Byzantine state. For, even though he refers to the Palaiologoi and seems to support them, it seems that he does so mainly as part of his arguments that Europe is indebted to Byzantium or that Byzantium is part of Europe. In fact, at a point of his oration *Ad Nicolaum*, he writes: "They have openly proclaimed that the Constantinopolitans that perish have it deserved. Just as if now it was discussed whether Greece should be defended, which has been already dislodged since long…" (10). In spite of the affirmations that he had done about the Byzantine emperors, here we are told that for some time now *Graecia* has been "deiecta", which can also be translated as "thrown down", "driven out" and "dispossessed". A few lines below, the author writes: "To be sure, the Greeks deserve the perdition. They have long since perished" (*Ad Nicolaum* 10). I believe that in this case the terms *Graecia* and *Graecus* must be understood in a political sense. In other words, George here is making allusion to the dying Byzantine Empire and its subjects. Thus, by lending support to Constantinople, he would not be saving the empire of the

[333] Ravegnani, "Nota sul pensiero politico di Giorgio da Trebisonda", 319.

Palaiologoi more than saving Europe. The empire seems to be condemned already, but that is not necessarily the case with the Greeks. As a matter of fact, in order to offer a model of Western support to Byzantium, George cites nothing less than the transfer of Thessalonica to Venice. This is not experienced as a traumatic or sad outcome; quite the contrary, Trapezuntios states that: “I was at Venice myself when these things were happening and I had accompanied the sentiment of both Greeks and Venetians with great admiration” (*Ad Nicolaum* 17).

Therefore, George does not seem to care much about the continuity of an autonomous Greek rule and does not seem to believe that Greece could only survive under the Empire of the Palaiologoi. It is true that his change of opinion regarding the Ottomans is at least unexpected, but we can see already in these writings a certain detachment from the idea of the Byzantine Empire as reference point for a Greek identity. As we will see, there are things in whose survival he is more concerned, namely, the Christian religion and the Greek culture, both of which are not at all alien to Europe. As an individual who was auto-perceived as Greek even though he had not been born nor grown in Greek ruled territory, such conception of Greek identity is not surprising.

4.2.2 The Orthodox Church

From the policies of Constantine I and his successors and through multiple economic, military and political crises, the Christian religion was and remained to be a central element of the identity of the Byzantines. For many centuries, it conferred them a cohesive, integrative principle, when they saw themselves facing Muslims, pagans and even Latin enemies. However, after the Fourth Crusade Byzantium underwent a considerable approach to the West, which was also reflected in the

religious sphere. Thus, in the last centuries of the Byzantine Empire we begin to notice some sectors of the population who advocated for the union of the Orthodox and Latin churches. Although there had been cases of conversion to Catholicism in the previous centuries (among whom the cases of the emperor John V and the statesman and intellectual Demetrios Kydones stand out), the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438-1439 was certainly a decisive event. Or it was at least for Bessarion, who was then persuaded by the points of the Latins and, later on, converted to Catholicism. The same had done George Trapezuntios more than a decade before, when he was already settled in Italy. Whereas it must have been true that Greek émigrés felt a significant pressure to convert to the Catholic Church in order to adapt to the new environment,[334] judging for the enthusiasm that they maintained in their writings until the end, it seems that they had firm convictions. Nevertheless, the exhortations that they wrote reveal interesting aspects of how they felt towards Greek Orthodoxy and Catholicism.

The issue of the Union of the Churches and the lukewarm reception it had among ample sectors of the Byzantines is one of the main subjects of George Trapezuntios' exhortation *Ad Nicolaum*. Certainly, although several years had passed since the Council of Florence, it was a quite recent event that continued to have effect. In the case of George, this meant a serious conviction that the pro-Unionist party would eventually succeed. Such expectations he intended to transmit to Nicholas V, in order to persuade him that, as head of the Church and protector of all the Christians, it was his duty to call for and support a crusade against the Ottomans. Using the biblical *exemplum* of Sodom and Gomorrah and how God abstained from destroying it because of the few pious who dwelled there, he claims that

[334] Glaser, "The Remnants of the Hellenes", 202.

Constantinople should be saved by the pope, not only because of the Catholics who inhabit Greek lands, but also because "the conversion of those Greeks is not entirely hopeless" (*Ad Nicolaum* 12). George reiterates his optimism about a future massive conversion of the Greeks and trusts that it will happen during the pontificate of Nicholas (16). Concerning this point, it is necessary to point out that, although George makes a *mea culpa* on behalf of the Greeks for the outcome of the Union, he also does as much as he can as to defend them in this question:

> However, if anyone gave me the option, that I preferred to be Greek or Muslim, and that brought the condition, that it is necessary to die in the opinion of the Greeks, which I acknowledge is not correct, or to die in the impiety of Mahomet, how joyful I would give my last breath just as a Greek, embracing the Cross of our Lord and having received the sacraments of the Church in the Greek manner (*Ad Nicolaum* 12)

As a converted Catholic, George carefully condemns the deviation from the doctrine that the Greek Church is guilty of. Nonetheless, at this point he seems to minimize the differences and admits in a very passionate manner that Orthodox Christianity is, in the end, also Christianity. Because of the adoration of the Cross and the practice of valid sacraments, the gap between Catholicism and Orthodoxy is not represented as insurmountable, after all the writer uses the word *opinio* to describe both creeds (*opinio Graecorum* in paragraph 12 and *Catholica opinio* in 15), a term that can be translated as "belief" or "established practice" (*cf. DMLBS s.v.* 1a; 2). In consequence, the superiority of one over the other is not reflected in the lexical plane. Thus, Greek Orthodoxy is preferable to the infidelity of Islam, the complete Other. This might be taken as an indication that the oration was not at all a vain rhetoric exercise and that Trapezuntios had a real commitment with the Byzantine cause. Moreover, although he himself had converted to Catholicism, he clearly identified himself with the Orthodox Greeks up to some point, or at least felt sympathy for them. As a matter of fact, in numerous passages of the text, the word

Graecus signifies without any doubt "Orthodox Greek" (*Ad Nicolaum* 11; 12; 13; 15). Therefore, it seems that –regardless of his own creed– being Greek meant also being Orthodox.

By contrast, in his orations cardinal Bessarion never uses the word *Graecus* to refer to the Orthodox Christians. And, actually, there are really no direct allusions to them in the text and we must draw conclusions from what is implicit on it. In fact, although Bessarion's rank in the ecclesiastical hierarchy would make us believe that he would address the subject at some point, in general we can observe that the religious aspect is not central in the corpus *Contra Turcos*. As has been argued *supra*, the cardinal was not particularly interested in portraying himself as representative, defender nor critic of the Orthodox Christians, but we can find hints of a rather benevolent sentiment towards them. Indeed, there are some indications in the text of how he thought about this matter. In *De periculis* 6 he writes that

> This greatly monstrous beast [Mehmed II], yearning always for the blood of the Christians, accomplished afterwards the Constantinopolitan destruction by himself, as his father and grandfather had done throughout the whole life, while ten –as we have often explained– kingdoms were occupied…

These ten kingdoms are mentioned in the letter to the abbot Bessarion and are explicitly called Christians.[335] And likewise, in the passage we can read that the sultan's fixation was against the Christians, which clearly included the Orthodox of from Constantinople. The same can be inferred from Bessarion's affirmation that Osman had been the first to wage war against the Christians (*De periculis* 7). Therefore, it does not seem like he is making a distinction between Western and Eastern Christians: they are all worthy of pity and equally menaced by the Ottoman advance. This is perhaps more evident in a passage of the second exhortation:

[335] See *PG* 161, col. 648C.

> For what fairer or what more pious than taking revenge on the blood shed by our people through infinite tears and torments? What of ignominy, injury, torture and murder permitted these execrable men against our name? They corrupted the holiest temples through the greatest impiety and persecuted the statues of the saints, the blessed Virgin and our very God with contempt, laughter and every kind of insults … For who could attain to speak or to listen without many tears about the very faithful partners of Christian name who were crushed by the hooves of the horses, flayed under the command and watch of the most impious enemy, raised in a cross, so that they received death instead of kindness? The savage Turk produced once all kinds of cruelties to the Constantinopolitans, whose memory is so renew, as it recently occurred the commotion of the Euboean Chalcis (*De discordiis* 15-6)

Although the passage is quite vague and we cannot ascertain well of whom the cardinal is speaking, he refers certainly to those who had been overthrown by the Ottomans, among whom the Byzantines had doubtlessly a greater symbolic weight. And, since right after enumerating the misfortunes of the Christians he states that Constantinopolitans suffered all kinds of cruelties from the sultan, one is inclined to identify the latter with the former. Consequently, the expression "Christiani nominis socios fidelissimos" could perfectly allude to the non-Catholic Christians, who are nevertheless recognized as *socii*, "allied", "fellows" or "comrades". Bessarion does not acknowledge a discrimination among Christians, nor makes any clear critique to Orthodoxy. In this respect, Bisaha claims that the text illustrates the cardinal's positioning towards the reason of the fall of the Empire. Accordingly, in the passage of *De discordiis* 5 that follows the Homeric *exemplum*, Bessarion, while asserting that it had been civil strife the cause of Byzantium's end, he was also answering to those who had declared that it was God's punishment for the rejection of the Union of Florence.[336] In sum, like Trapezuntios, Bessarion did not identify himself as Orthodox and, as we will see in the following section, his notion of Greek identity

[336] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 113.

was based mostly in cultural, secular factors.[337] However –or precisely because of this–, he was capable of feeling mercy and sympathy for the Greek Orthodox Christians.

4.2.3 Byzantine culture

When Trapezuntios, Bessarion and many other Byzantine intellectuals settled down in Italy, they understood that their most valuable possession in this new environment was their learning of the millenary Greek tradition, which they attempted –and, in many respects, succeeded– to promote among their Renaissance colleagues, praising its fundamental character for the European civilization. Hence, we might expect that their linguistic and literary heritage and their shared history and traditions, that is, the cultural aspects, played a significant role in defining their identity. To be sure, this feature is treated with a notable pride in the exhortations of Trapezuntios and Bessarion.

Indeed, the Cretan explicitly proclaims the superiority of the Greek letters in a remarkable passage of *Ad Alfonsum*. While presenting Alexander the Great as a model for King Alfonso, he adds:

> Alexander the Great, while yet almost a child, enkindled by mere glory, attacked with small troops the Empire of the Persians, which extended throughout all Asia in those times, and acquired for himself an immortal name, as he desired, and also kingdoms and greatest riches for all his friends. This action spread the Greek language, manners, eloquence and philosophical studies throughout the whole world. (27)

The Macedonian king, who is also praised in *Ad Nicolaum* and occupies a central place in the apocalyptic imagery of the Caspian Gates,[338] is a recurring figure in

[337] However, leaving aside the dogmatic issues, Bessarion maintained certain aspects of the Orthodox faith, like the veneration for icons and an Eastern outward appearance, with his long beard. Harris, "Being a Byzantine after Byzantium", 40.
[338] *Cf.* section 4.3.

Trapezuntios' writings. In this regard, it is meaningful that, during a public debate with Lorenzo Valla –one of his most hated rivals– concerning the issue of who had the supremacy in military command, George supported the cause of Alexander.[339] But apart from being a mere symbol of his Greek patriotism, Alexander often appears strongly associated to the diffusion of Hellenic culture, as is the case of the passage quoted above. In a context where it is being described Alexander's symbolic and material accomplishments, this remark on what the counterpart (Asia) gained, namely the divulgation of Greek language and culture, is noteworthy. From all the diverse aspects of the Hellenic heritage, Trapezuntios mentions the *mores* –a term that is generally used in a positive sense–, the *eloquentia* and *philosophia.* In this respect, we should recall that at the moment the Cretan was devoted not only to the translation and epitomes of Greek texts (like Hermogenes of Tarsus' *On Stylistic Forms,* Aristotle's *Rhetorica* and St. Basil's *Adversus Eunomium* and *De Spiritu Sancto*), but also to the composition of original productions that were meant to introduce into the Latin West the Hellenic-Byzantine rhetorical and philosophical tradition (among these should be counted, on the one hand, his *De suavitate dicendi* and the masterpiece *Rhetoricum libri V*; and on the other, the *Isagoge dialectica* and the later *Comparatio Aristotelis et Platonis* of the 1450s). Furthermore, in the text the author states that Greek culture was spread to all the world, which evidently includes those places that were occupied by "barbarians" before Alexander and after the Roman Empire, *i.e.* Asia and Africa. Thus, the sense of the comment seems to be twofold: as it implicitly associates George's culture with the idea of civilization, there could be a propagandistic intention of his own mission. But also, it would be inserted in the dichotomic scheme Europe-Asia, civilization-barbarism, inside which

[339] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 80.

Greece would belong to the first component of each pair. And since Hellenic culture was preserved in those regions during the period in which they were still Byzantine provinces, there is a continuity between the feats of Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire and contemporary Europe, of which the Greeks were part.

However, the process started by the Macedonian king transcended the sphere of secular affairs. Lamers has recently underlined the importance that the figure of Alexander had for Trapezuntios in the divine plan and his own role within it. In Lamers' words,

> in one of the essays of the *Comparatio* (the eighth of the third book), Trapezuntius defended Alexander against his detractors just as he defended Aristotle in the rest of the volume. The most important point in his argument was that together Aristotle and Alexander had prepared the way for the dissemination of Christian truth and the word of God. The former offered the philosophical concepts to understand nature, while the latter's empire had spread the Greek language all over the world and so enabled all people to read and understand Scripture…[340]

Thus, master and discipline had been part of the *praeparatio evangelica*, an unfinished process that continued up to his days and, in fact, included him as well. And, always convinced of his prophetic mission on the earth, Trapezuntios saw the centrality of Greek culture before and now and considered that he had the task of denouncing its corruption –that is, Platonism, *Plethonism* and Islam–[341] and spreading its genuine and unadulterated vein.

Bessarion, on the other hand, does not directly discuss in his exhortations about Hellenic erudition, but actually puts it into practice –in fact, more than Trapezuntios in a sense. For, although the latter was renowned by his superior mastery of rhetoric, Bessarion himself did not fall behind in this respect and, besides, he exploited a resource that evinced his Greek learning more immediately, namely,

[340] Lamers, *Greece Reinvented*, 152.
[341] See Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 158-9.

the erudite references to authors of Classical Antiquity. Throughout the orations he quotes Homer (both the original Greek and a Latin translation), Hesiod, Sophocles, Xenophon, Demosthenes and Plutarch; and he also displays knowledge of later sources when he cites Byzantine historians (whether Sozomen or Theodoret). Thus, to be fully understood the exhortations required a specialized reader who could grasp the allusions and understand how the texts of Classical and Medieval authors fitted in Bessarion's own production. By doing so, the cardinal generates an ideal of erudition that includes many Latin elements, but also has Hellenism as key factor.

The greater glimpse to the riches of Greek culture is to be found in the translation of Demosthenes' *First Olynthiac*, text that Bessarion chose to present to his Latin audience not only for revealing the eloquence of the Athenian orator, but also for "advertising the heritage of ancient Greece as the home of democracy, liberty, and especially learning–learning that Western scholars were increasingly coming to appreciate and claim as their own".[342] The cardinal had clear positions regarding the meaning of Hellenic learning for defining an identity and how valuable it was for both the Greeks and the Westerners. The culture of the Hellenes had led the Latin powers to the summit of development and had still much to offer. However, Bessarion also perceived that this learning was in danger, and he had identified this decline among the Byzantines well before 1453. For instance, in a well-known letter that he wrote to Constantine XI when he was still Despot of Morea, he recommended to take concrete actions to reverse the situation, specifically, to send youngsters to be educated by the Latins:

> The pursuit of this good should not be abandoned because of shame, for, if also the Latins had been ashamed by the Hellenes to take what they did not possess, they would not have been lead to this much of wisdom. And we will

[342] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 113.

> not receive something foreign, but we will regain what is ours from those who owe us.[343]

The concern for the disappearance of the Greek letters –and, thus, of the Greeks–[344] certainly augmented after the fall of Constantinople, which remained for Bessarion the main center of Hellenic learning. Right after he learned about the capture of the capital, the cardinal wrote to the Venetian doge Francesco Foscari, exhorting him to the crusade. Among the arguments that he brought up, Constantinople had a preeminent place:

> A city which only recently was blessed with such and emperor, so many distinguished men, so many famous and ancient families, and such an abundance of resources–the capital of all Greece, the splendor and glory of the East, the nursery of the most noble learning, the repository of all that is good–has been captured, stripped, plundered, and pillaged by the most inhuman barbarians, the most savage enemies of the Christian faith, the most ferocious wild beasts.[345]

This sentiment explains the various enterprises that he undertook after the city fell to support and safeguard the Greek heritage. The most urgent –and, perhaps, fruitful– of these actions was the assembly of a library that contained the whole of Greek literature, both pagan and Christian. This collection would be kept in a safe place, waiting for the time in which the Greeks would have again their own nation. Bessarion put considerable effort and expenses in this task, in which he was assisted by the scholars Michael Apostolis and the bishop Theophanes of Athens.[346] The zeal with which labor was carried out indicates that Bessarion was not merely concerned

[343] "Οὐ δεῖ δ' αἰσχύνῃ τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ τούτου θήραν ἀπολιπεῖν, ἐπεί, εἰ καὶ Λατῖνοι ᾐσχύνθησαν παρ' Ἑλλήνων ἃ μὴ αὐτοὶ εἶχον παραλαβεῖν, οὐκ ἂν εἰς τόδε σοφίας προήχθησαν. Ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐδὲ ἀλλότριόν τι ληψόμεθα, ἀλλὰ τὰ αὐτῶν παρὰ τῶν ὀφειλόντων ἀπολεψόμεθα", Lampros, Παλαιολόγεια και Πελοποννησιακά (Τόμος Δ'), 42, 29-33.
[344] Steiris, "Byzantine Philosophers of the 15th Century on Identity and Otherness", 191.
[345] Translation by Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, 67. Original Greek text edited by Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, vol. 3, 475.
[346] Labowsky, *Bessarion's Library*, 13-4; Harris, "Being a Byzantine after Byzantium", 35.

by the drawback that the loss of this heritage could mean for Western culture, but rather, by the possibility of losing his own identity.[347]

In sum, we can observe that both George Trapezuntios and Bessarion use exclusively the word *Graecus* for referring to the Greeks in a broad sense –although in their Greek writings they choose different options. Moreover, it is this term the one with which, explicitly or implicitly, they identify themselves. In the case of Trapezuntios, it is mainly the common language, culture and shared history what defines being a Greek. Orthodoxy is not a constitutive part of it, but the Orthodox population happens to partake in that heritage. Lastly, an autonomous Byzantine state is not condition *sine qua non* for the survival of the Greeks. Bessarion, in his turn, agrees with George in the first two aspects, but, unlike him, he seemed to support throughout his life that the existence of a Greek ruled nation was a necessity and, also, a possibility, even if he does not express it directly to his Latin audience in the exhortations.

4.3 The Ottomans

In the last decades of existence of the Byzantine Empire, the political, economic and cultural life of its subjects was to a great extent shaped by the fluctuating relationships with the Ottomans. This was particularly true for Constantinople, whose capture had been in the plans of the sultans for various generations now. Personal contacts with Ottoman subjects and the proximity to the growing state –while their own Byzantium waned and support from the West failed to materialize– permitted positive attitudes towards them to develop among the inhabitants of the capital, along with the more conventional rejection and hostility.[348] However, the

[347] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 114.
[348] Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 208-9.

conditions were quite different for those Byzantines who had migrated to Western Europe and whose experience with the Ottomans was rather traumatic or, most of the times, indirect. Indeed, we do not find Byzantines émigrés who, before the fall of Constantinople, had advocated for coming to terms with the sultan. On the contrary, the most decisive writings in favor of a crusade against the Ottomans came precisely from this group of intellectuals, who managed to incorporate into their native Byzantine notions the distinctive Western elements that were present in the exhortative writings of their fellow European humanists.

As we have seen already, in a first period Trapezuntios, inspired by his apocalyptic Weltanschauung, presented the panorama that Byzantium (and the whole Europe, he argued) was facing as a conflict between two transcendental entities that had had different agents throughout the course of history. This is particularly notable in the sections where he discusses the ancestry of the Ottomans, as the case of *Ad Nicolaum* 2:

> No one for whom the affairs and the condition of the Christians are, if you will, of minimal concern ignores that the Turks and the house of the Ottomans, who draw back their origin from the Persians, having subdued for many years now immense and countless regions in Asia have now invaded Greece and subjugated Thessaly, Mysia, Epiro, Thrace for themselves, they even expanded their empire until Hungary, and [no one ignores] that no other thing prevents them of the complete devastation of Europe than Constantinople.

It is evident that the allusion to the Persians here is not merely an archaistic resort, so widespread among Byzantine writers, to cleanse every non-Attic element from the work.[349] On the contrary, Trapezuntios explicitly draws a connection between the Ottomans and the Persians, an ethnographic operation that was very common in the

[349] Hunger, "On the Imitation (ΜΙΜΗΣΙΣ) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature", 31-2.

crusading literature of the times and was closely related with the political objectives of each author. As Hankins puts it,

> Humanist scholars debated ethnographical questions in a highly politicized atmosphere. Their beliefs regarding the character of the Turks and the Turkish regime directly affected the assumptions they made about future Ottoman behavior, and hence, ultimately, their policy recommendations for dealing with the Turkish threat.[350]

Elsewhere (*Ad Nicolaum* 2; 7) he also identifies the Persians (and, therefore, the Turks) with the Parthians, what makes us believe that he considered that successive Asian empires were linked by an interrupted lineage and, more importantly, participated of the same transcendental entity. Thus, just as the Ancient Greeks fought the Persians and the Romans faced the Parthians, so now the "European empire" (*Ad Nicolaum* 2) had to deal with the Turks. By relating the three of them, George configures the Ottomans as the latest embodiment of the Asiatic culture, invariably disposed to invade Europe. In other words, the logic of the *translatio imperii* applies also to the subsequent rivals of the West, which are thus interpreted as different stages of the same succession line. This perspective was common among humanist scholars in the West. In particular, Flavio Biondo developed this notion in his *Decades* (1444), arguing that, just as once the Persians had been succeeded by the Arabs, now the Turks were to take their place. Moreover, in this perpetual conflict, it was not Byzantium the one that embodied the Ancient Roman Empire anymore, but Latin Christendom, and therefore, as its ruler, it was the pope now the responsible to direct the fight.[351] Evidently, this last idea was not alien to George, who frequently refers in his exhortation to Nicholas V to Europe as an integral whole and to the pope himself as its major protector.

[350] Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders", 135-6.
[351] Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, 186-9.

On the other hand, throughout exhortation to pope Nicholas V, George employs repeatedly to the generic terms *Asiatici* and *Machumetisti*, which could work both as a hypernym for *Turci* (as might be the case for 10 and 11) or as a reference to a conglomerate of peoples, where no distinction is possible –or necessary– for the Western eye (which is clearly the case for *Ad Nicolaum* 20: "convocabunt iam adapertis claustris omnes Asiaticas gentes in Europam"). The central narrative that George makes use of at this point –and that was also exploited by other 15th-century humanists– is that of the Caucasian gates built by Alexander in order to lock away from the inhabited and civilized world a number of Scythian tribes. In the 7th century, this legend incorporated biblical elements, as the tribes were identified with the Gog and Magog from the book of *Revelations*.[352] Thus, resorting to these prophetic literature (particularly pseudo-Methodius),[353] he placed the Ottomans and Islam within his apocalyptic representation of History. In this logic, the gates of Alexander that held the tribes came to be, naturally, Constantinople and its Bosporus.

While depicting the Turks as the complete Other, Trapezuntios cuts off any possible relation with the Western culture, an operation that was actually practiced by some philoturk humanists. Hankins also notes that this alienation from the Western world was oriented to turn the Ottomans into "the very antitype of civilization", characterized by their violent, wild and nomadic nature and their incapability to live in peace with their neighbors, a detail that would dissuade the Western rulers from making treaties with them.[354] However, in George's writings this procedure is complemented by the inclusion of the religious element. In this

[352] Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, 77-9.
[353] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 87-8.
[354] Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders", 141.

connection, it is worth noting that the author asks in *Ad Nicolaum* 8 "Now, however, will Mahomet too inspire, ignite, inflame them with his laws against Europe?" Once again, Trapezuntios does not seem interested in establishing a clear distinction between the Asiatic peoples. But what is more remarkable is that he recognizes a civilizing element (*legibus*) whose effect on the individuals is not represented as civilizing at all, but is rather directed to rudimentary passions (*animet, incendat, inflammet*) and having for purpose not the order and progression of the own culture, but the destruction of the alien. This ambivalent status of Islam, considered as an organized corpus of doctrines that only appeared to be good and in accordance to the divine, but which in reality was an abhorrent corruption of the truth, should be framed in the Cretan's conception of Platonism. A strong objector to Plato from the decade of 1430,[355] his repudiation to this philosophy would accumulate throughout his life and take shape principally in his *Comparatio philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis* (1457). In regard to Islam, in book III he wrote that Plato's corrupted teachings were behind the ruin of the Roman Empire and the heresies of the early Church. Moreover, a second Plato had risen eventually, Mohammed, who had learned the ideas and morals of the philosopher through an Alexandrian monk in exile. Mohammed had purged the Platonic doctrine from its perversions and incorporated rules of behavior. Thus, this second Plato had destroyed from without an already corrupted Byzantine Empire. And now a third Plato had risen, Plethon, whose followers were in the very core of the Church.[356] Therefore, now once again from within and from without the Platonists threaten to take over the whole world.[357]

[355] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 18-9.
[356] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 158-9. The denunciation of heresy at the papal curia that Trapezuntios produces in the voice of the Church in *Ad Nicolaum* 26 could be interpreted in this manner.
[357] George's later attempts to drive Mehmed II away from these Platonic doctrines, *i.e.*, Islam, can be explained also in the light of these thoughts.

In the writings of Bessarion, the image of the Ottomans is completely devoid from the apocalyptic connotations that pervade George's representations. Considering Bessarion's association to the church, one would expect the religious element to be a strong component of his exhortations, or in other words, that the cardinal based much of his arguments for the crusade in the Ottoman's adherence to Islam. But, in truth, in the corpus *Contra Turcos* he does not attempt to warn against the danger of the Turkish advance through the demonization of their religion. In fact, he only makes a direct reference to it when he describes how Osman forced many Christians to convert to "the impious Mohammedan sect" (*De periculis* 7). All in all, it seems that Bessarion chose not to resort to the religious sphere. It is true that in two passages (*De periculis* 3; *De discordiis* 15) he lingers in the description of their animosity towards the Christian religion, its symbols, shrines and devotees. However, this behavior is usually accompanied by reports of other kinds of abuses, what makes us interpret that the author's interest is to underline their cruelty and lack of civilization. Nevertheless, in order to persuade his readers, Bessarion does appeal to the values and beliefs of Christianity on occasions. The lengthier of these sections is the harangue at the end of *De discordiis*, where he writes:

> God, the best and greatest, for the sake of the amplification of whose piety, glory and faith we will fight, whose injuries we will revenge, will assist us. He is enraged with the enemy, propitious to us, the one who not only accepts our effort and labor in this matter, but demands, but reclaims, but orders that what is due is returned to him. (23)

This is followed by a series of Old Testament quotations that are all related to war. As it seems, there are no theological debates nor profound reproaches to the Muslim faith, nor is the enemy described emphatically as evil. Since the passage is located towards the end of the oration –which is not the most convenient place to display the main arguments–, the intention might be rather to move the audience, appealing to

their Christian sentiment and to the conviction that God supports their cause. On the other hand, in a more central section of *De discordiis*, he writes:

> One must battle for God himself. To fall retaining his greatness is to depart to everlasting eternity and immortal life. For life does not rest upon breathing, but duty, which consists most particularly of the preservation of the homeland, the temples and the divine condition. (19)

Whereas in this case Bessarion explicitly mentions that faith is the cause of the crusade, he also includes in the subsequent enumeration the concern for the homeland (*patria*) as part of the duties of the princes. However, these two instances are the strongest appellations that Bessarion does to religion throughout the texts. The depiction of the crusade as a sacred enterprise and the Ottomans as godless or infidels –reminiscences of the medieval crusade tradition–[358] is certainly not the main intention of the cardinal.

In this sense, the Ottomans are not presented as the embodiment of evil or the bearers of the end of times, nor are they taken as a punishment from God. Their negative signification is assessed with a quite different parameter most of the times. Indeed, one of the recurrent points of the cardinal is the cruelty, savagery and lack of civilization of the sultan and his subjects, implying the impossibility of finding a *modus vivendi* with them.[359] In *De periculis* 12 he warns the princes: "You will never be able to render that fierce spirit milder". Thus, the Ottomans' complete lack of *humanitas* should restrain the Western rulers from trying to establish peace treaties or alliances with them. In this sense, Bessarion exhibits what has been recognized as a typical development of the period. According to Bisaha, one can find in the productions of the humanist scholars a more secular approach to the question of the Turks and Islam, inspired by Classical models. Thus, the Ottomans could be now

[358] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 14-5.
[359] Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, 65.

looked upon not primarily as enemies of the faith, but rather in cultural and political terms.[360] Even when Bessarion designates them as barbarians, we see that their purpose is not mere destruction:

> ...just so I believe that the flood of the barbarians must be feared by all of us. For the enemy does not want to contend for one city or the other. He has determined that the highest of the things must be assigned to himself. The one that desires to rule cannot bear someone superior, nor tolerate an equal, nor love the name of prince. (*De periculis* 21)

The potential invasion of the sultan does not have as objective the expansion of infidelity and not even the pursuit of booty and destruction. On the contrary, he is described as someone who is desirous of having dominion or reigning (*dominari*). Hence, for Bessarion the problem was precisely the Turk's ambition, for he was evidently planning to attach Italy to his own empire and have its kings as vassals. By adverting to concepts such as *princeps*, superiority and parity, Bessarion poses the problem of the Ottomans chiefly in political terms.

The main critique that the cardinal directs to Mehmed II is related, in fact, with his eagerness to acquire the "highest of things". In *De periculis* 7, he writes about the sultan that:

> Great and incomparable are his strengths, inexhaustible his desire, immense his hunger to domain, his science is of military matters, his age in bloom, his body accustomed to the efforts. Therefore, since he wants and is able and knows how, can anyone doubt that he moves towards us with all his spirit and all his mind night and day?

Indeed, Mehmed is represented as ambitious and megalomaniac, and the main exemplary figure that Bessarion uses to conjure this feature is Alexander the Great. Whether he actually knew about Mehmed's fascination for the Macedonian conqueror or not,[361] the truth is that this character served well for Bessarion's purposes. To start with, there was the connection to Alexander's father, whose

[360] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 8-9.
[361] Raby, "Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium", 18-9.

invasion of Greece had provoked not only similar conditions to those now experienced by the Italians, but also exquisite literary expressions that denounced it and addressed values that the humanists had in great esteem. But the boundless growth and hubris of Philip's son also served well to Bessarion's ends. The cardinal relates Mehmed's veneration for Alexander in the following manner:

> For he has conceived that the king Alexander the Macedonian has to be imitated for carrying out the things and for the emulation of his glory, that same Alexander who, when he heard that Anaxagoras argued that there were many worlds, was said to have groaned and let out tears, because he had not been able to collect at least one wholly of them. (*De periculis* 15)

The author makes clear that the sultan pursues the same glory that the Macedonian achieved in the past, while he introduces an anecdote of the latter's disproportionate ambitions and dissatisfaction. A few lines later, he evaluates the afterlife of Alexander's model: "The imitation of Alexander has truly I know not what fatal thing, since Julius Caesar, ignited by it, after very remarkable deeds, he turned the weapons towards the homeland and also the civil blood" (*De periculis* 15). It seems clear that for Bessarion the figure of the Macedonian is not a model to follow, that it had fascinated men in the past and risen them into glory, only for sinking them later in tyranny. And the glory, so much praised by others, appears once and again throughout the exhortations of Bessarion as a rather negative value, because it leads to greed and immoderation, and means the complete subjugation to the sultan. The Ottomans themselves, in fact, established a cult of glory in worshiping the initiator of the dynasty, Osman, who "is revered with divine honors and celebrated with perpetual fame and everlasting glory", called "saint and blessed" and said to reside "in celestial dwellings" (*De periculis* 7). By contrast to this grandeur and immoderation, Bessarion states that "the own prudence is part of the Italian blood, the own freedom, the own empire" (*De periculis* 7). Thus, he urges the European

rulers to cultivate the virtue of *prudentia*, the "good sense" and "discretion", and *concordia*. After all, it has been the lust for power that had submerged them into civil wars until those days. Therefore, the author apparently recognizes at this point that there is a difference in the present times between the sultan and the princes. Nevertheless, the constant demands for concord that permeate the second oration evinces that prudence was not always followed by the Italians. At the same time, it is significant that in several occasions Bessarion employs examples of Greek or Roman campaigns to illustrate the advance of the Turks. Indeed, while George Trapezuntios evaluated the Ottomans by comparison to Eastern and Muslim powers –in fact, as I argued, it is not mere comparison–, Bessarion chooses to bring up the model of Philip II and his son Alexander, Western rulers that in other contexts could be seen in a positive light.[362] In this sense, Mehmed does not seem to be much afar from his European counterparts, for they are also military leaders, they had waged war to their neighbors and they have their own ambitions of ruling over the rest. The difference is, or so would Bessarion want to believe, that unlike the savage Turk, the humane leaders would be capable of deposing their greed of power and finding peace among themselves.

4.4 The conception of history

Finally, I believe that these exhortations shed light over the notions of History that both Trapezuntios and Bessarion had. Meserve recognizes in the Renaissance scholars a tension between a theological interpretation of the events, according to which the Divine Providence was behind every act, and a classicizing perspective that attempted

[362] See for instance the aforementioned letter to Constantine XI in Lampros, Παλαιολόγεια και Πελοποννησιακά (Τόμος Δ'), 37, 5-6.

to analyze the present situation in mundane political terms.[363] In this sense, the way in which the authors represent the history of Byzantium and the rise of the Ottoman tells them apart from each other.

Bessarion addressed the problem of the Ottomans focusing on how their state came to existence out of the decline of the Seljuk Empire. When he describes the origins of Osman's dynasty, he is evidently simplifying the matter and adding his own views, but he is roughly accurate. Moreover, he understands that the Ottomans attained such greatness through a combination of resoluteness, strategy, fortune and the negligence of the enemies. He never suggests that Mehmed's expansionist policy is based on the spread of Islam or is supported by God as a means to punish Christendom. On the contrary, he asserts that the sultan realizes that it is "thus established by nature that nothing remains in the same place, but all things are moved by a continuous, changing and new motion" and, therefore, if he does not augment his empire, it can only shrink (*De periculis* 13). It has been argued that, even though the cardinal acknowledges that this approach will appeal better to the princes, he also conferred great importance to the role of Divine Providence in the development of the events and judged that the united Christendom would be the instrument of God to defeat the enemy.[364] But in truth, the most remarkable instances in which divine agency is alluded are the religious harangue of *De discordiis* 23 and a passage of *De periculis* 7, where he writes: "Will it be borne that the noblest spirit be degenerated from its greatest things and that the one whom God wanted to rule the others serve a repulsive people?" When compared to the overall character of the exhortations, these references are read more as conventional assertions that God will grant victory. Thus, there seems to be no transcendental motive for the advance of the Ottomans and the peril of Europe.

[363] Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, 4-6.
[364] Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent*, 159-60.

Neither is the fall of Byzantium considered a providential occurrence, but the result of purely human affairs, the civil war, which could also condemn Italy in the future. We observe, therefore, that Bessarion limits his analysis to political, military, cultural and economic aspects.

This view contrasts greatly with the way in which George Trapezuntios evaluates history. As has been already discussed, the Cretan saw in the Ottoman threat the actual development of a perpetual encounter between two transcendental entities (West and East, the Roman Empire and the Persians, Christianity and Islam). Both had had renovations throughout history and both had a role in the final act of the end of times. Moreover, his insistence on the fact that the deeds and actors of past times could and have to be surpassed in the present (*Ad Alfonsum* 1; 4; *Ad Nicolaum* 6) might be related with a typological conception of history. In any case, even though he came to think later that the prophecies could be altered,[365] he never doubted that history advanced according to God's plan. In fact, in a specific section of *Ad Alfonsum* he explicitly states that the Ottomans had risen by God's command:

> [A]s much longer those places [the Holy Land] are oppressed and as much more detestably are disturbed by the domination of the slaves, so much more illustrious than Charles will be the one that takes away this dishonor of servitude. Thereafter (for I will dare to speak according to reason), the too much detestable and harsh power of the Turks will be driven away from Europe more easily, at once broken and weakened their spirit because of such fame and glory of deeds … For I think that this is the motive why from a certain divine permission the Turks distress, plunder and devastate Europe to such a degree that already they are not far away from Italy itself… (29-30)

Thus, the success of the Ottomans is interpreted by George as a punishment for the fact that the Holy Lands are in impious hands. Likewise, the misfortunes and potential fall of Constantinople may well be the result of the Byzantines' impiety, as he claims in *Ad Nicolaum* 15:

[365] Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 132-5.

> What if the Greeks do not deserve to die like this? On the contrary, they deserve –I affirm– (for they disregard the sacred Florentine council already for ten years) to be vituperated certainly and also punished, but not handed over to the infidelity.

Since the greater part of the Byzantine population had rejected the Union of Florence after it was accorded, George explicitly identifies them as heretics and deserving chastisement (*cf. Ad Nicolaum* 15). Nonetheless, his emphasis is always on the possibility of reformation, in which not only the Greeks had their part (in repenting and finally adhering to the Union), but also the Catholics and the pope, who were responsible of helping their fellow Christians from extinction and bringing them into the true creed. Therefore, it was necessary for all the Christians to interpret the will of God –a task that George believed he himself could fulfill– and act accordingly.

Certainly, both George and Bessarion acknowledge the superiority of the West throughout the centuries and recognize that the Roman Empire and its heirs were the people chosen by God. However, their views on how the mundane events developed differed significantly. Where George sees renovation of the same transcendental entities in a scenario dictated by God's will, Bessarion sees the collapse and disintegration of the empires, their progressive growth from the most little until the great and successions of power which are understood exclusively in political, cultural or ethnical terms. In this sense, both writers show traits that were also present in the Late Byzantine authors, the historians of the fall and other contemporary intellectuals of Greek tradition. Accordingly, it has been pointed out that in this period the way in which these writers thought about history tended to two somewhat opposite extremes. On the one hand, a typically Byzantine philosophy of history that was an amalgamation of Roman and Christian traditions survived through the 15th century and beyond; on the other, the awareness of the progressive decline of the Empire that some individuals developed prompted them to adopt alternative views on the matter, searching the

motives of history in the learning of the Ancients. The first tradition conceived history in teleological terms, as a progression towards a definite end with a definite purpose, which was naturally decreed by God. The constant blows that Byzantium and Christendom had suffered were interpreted, therefore, as chastisements for specific misbehaviors or deviations of the people or their leaders. Hence a direct correlation between political and spiritual decline. Among these, perhaps the most distinct figure was Doukas, who, for instance, considered that Byzantium's damnation was due to the adherence of its people to the dynasty of the Palaiologoi, who had taken power after Michael VIII blinded the young emperor John IV Laskaris (6, 2), and the rejection of the Union (39, 19). In this "monastic" philosophy of history –as Turner calls it– one should also include the anti-Unionist scholar and first patriarch of Constantinople under Ottoman rule Gennadios Scholarios, although in his understanding of the affairs the abandonment of Orthodoxy for the Union was one of the major sins the Byzantines were now paying for. In the other extreme, we find the historians Laonikos Chalkokondyles and Michael Kritoboulos, both of them heirs of the revival of the interest in the Hellenic past that had arisen in the Palaiologan period. The two authors disregarded a connection between the spiritual and political spheres and, thus, the agency of Divine Providence in history. Instead, they asserted that Byzantium, as any other state, was liable to fall and be replaced in the ever-changing succession dictated by fortune (τύχη).[366] With some considerations, I believe that George and Bessarion are good representatives of these two lines of philosophy of history. The former carries on to a great extent the Christian historiographic tradition that had been established during the Middle Ages. In certain occasions (*Ad Alfonsum* 1; 31; *Ad Nicolaum* 20) Trapezuntios mentions *fortuna* as decisive, but this does not seem to mean the

[366] Turner, "Pages from Late Byzantine Philosophy of History"; Philippides, "Early Post-Byzantine Historiography".

impersonal and arbitrary Hellenistic concept of τύχη. On the contrary, it is the will of God, who decides whom is going to favor in accordance to His plan. However, George acknowledges that men count with free will and must learn from the past in order to achieve redemption. Even though the Divine Providence seems to rule it all, there is a space for human agency and for the prophecies to be read in an alternative way. Thus, a figure like Mehmed II who was considered something close to the antichrist in the writings before the fall could well become –since God had granted him the throne of Constantinople– in the ruler of the last godly kingdom in earth, if converted to Christianity. By contrast, Bessarion follows a more humanist vein, displacing the role of Divine Providence from the center. Although we could not affirm that he resorts completely to the Hellenistic notion of τύχη, he seemingly understands that there is a number of natural laws of change that guide human affairs (*De periculis* 13; *De discordiis* 10).[367] The necessity of change, however, is complemented with a deterministic view of history, according to which the present circumstances have their causes in political, economic and cultural qualities of a nation. This rupture with the traditional Byzantine conception brings him near Chalkokondyles, what is otherwise reasonable considering that both were greatly influenced by their mentor Gemistos Plethon.[368]

[367] See note 253.
[368] Turner, "Pages from Late Byzantine Philosophy of History", 348; Kaldellis, *Laonikos Chalkokondyles. The Histories*, vol. 1, viii.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

George Trapezuntios and cardinal Bessarion composed texts that in many respects are similar to each other, after all they share their main objectives and were meant to be read by individuals of the same social stratum: the European ruling elite, whether clerical or secular. But most importantly, these orations were written by intellectuals who had a common background of Greek learning and, as they spent the greater part of their lives in a foreign environment, they also became acquainted with the cultural developments of the West. Despite all this, we have ascertained that they also show significant differences. From the examination of these and other writings, it is clear that on occasions Bessarion and Trapezuntios stood in opposite sides. This is particularly evident in the way they experienced their commitment with the Byzantine state, the perception of the Ottomans, the representation of history itself and, most significantly, the solution that they propose to the problem. But then, could we also talk about an actual dialogue between the texts? In other words, is there a possibility that Bessarion in effect read the earlier exhortations of Trapezuntios?

There are, indeed, some elements of the texts written by the cardinal that seem to set a polemic with his rival's. The most notorious is perhaps the diverse manner in which they treat the figure of Alexander the Great. As mentioned above, George uses the Macedonian king as model of Western ruler who conquered Asia, in order to inspire King Alfonso and Frederick III with a crusading spirit. In this sense, Alexander comes to represent the triumph of civilization –*i. e.* Greek culture– over barbarism, and of God's truth over the deceit of Islam. On the hand, even though in other texts he represent Alexander under a positive light, in the particular case of

these orations Bessarion sees in him the same impulse of ambition, hubris and tyranny that moves Mehmed II to expand his territory. Moreover, the two authors are evidently at odds in how they present European and Italian military history. In particular, George attempts to convey the image of an ever-victorious West and even affirms that "it will come to their memory [the Egyptian's] that Italy has always been unbeaten by arms" (*Ad Alfonsum* 13). This perspective contrasts heavily with the realism of Bessarion's orations, particularly the first one. In fact, in *De periculis* 18 the cardinal deflates those hopes of easy victory and grandeur (although he will somehow recover them in *De discordiis*):

> Do not throw at me, I beg, what some men furnished with no experience of matters and learned in no memory of Antiquity usually boast of, that the foreign nations have never captured Italy, that on many occasions they have tried to attack it with ill luck.

From this statement we could assume that the kind of naive promises of victory that Trapezuntios made to King Alfonso and Emperor Frederick were rather usual in the crusading exhortations of the time, but it is also plausible that Bessarion was here personally attacking his rival's views. As a matter of fact, three of the five known manuscripts that contain the exhortation *Ad Alfonsum* are preserved in the Vatican library: one is George's first version, which perhaps was never sent (in MS Vat. Lat. 2926), and the other is a deluxe manuscript (Vat. Lat. 3580), which is entirely dedicated to the exhortation, it is richly decorated and carries the papal arms of Nicholas V.[369] Therefore, Bessarion, who also worked with Trapezuntios in the papal curia, could well have access to this exemplar. This kind of dialogue between authors is not surprising, especially when one considers the polemic of Platonism and Aristotelianism. In fact, Bessarion wrote the corpus *Contra Turcos* when this

[369] Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 422. The manuscript is accessible through the website of the Vatican Library.

controversy –and, thus, the rivalry between the scholars– was in full swing, a year after the publication of his *In calumniatorem Platonis*. Given the determination with which the cardinal decided to defeat Trapezuntios in that topic, it would not be far-fetched to assume that he also attempted to surpass him in other fronts. Thus, when the time of writing his own exhortations arrived, Bessarion seized the opportunity to correct the gaps in the historiographical notes of his rival and to show his own learning on the matter.

However, apart from evincing the peculiar erudition and thoughts of the scholars, the different tone of the orations can be explained from the circumstances of production and divulgation as well. Indeed, George's promises of immense success and riches and the employment of Alexander the Great as model is suitable to his purposes, for he is addressing one single ruler at time, Alfonso and Frederick. Bessarion, on the contrary, is writing to the Italian rulers on the whole and, besides, expects them to keep a balance of power and concord and to incite them to joint action. To these ends, he finds absolutely necessary for each of them to be capable of restrain themselves and, unlike the sultan, avoid the extremes, appealing to moderation and civility. But also, the dissension between the authors can be indicative of the times in which their texts were written. Before the fall of Constantinople, it probably seemed that the best way to deal with the Ottoman question was to depart from Europe and wage war abroad, that is to say, to take an offensive strategy. However, by the time in which Bessarion writes the circumstances have changed so significantly, that the most convenient thing to do is to join forces in order to ensure a proper defense of Western Europe.

Finally, it should be considered the perlocutionary dimension of these orations. Raised and educated in the first half of the 15th century, George

Trapezuntios and cardinal Bessarion experienced the fall of Constantinople and the collapse of the Byzantine Empire in full capacity of understanding. Before and after this, they tried from their respective situations to do as much as was possible for the preservation of their fatherland and culture. Nevertheless, another aspect that brings these works together is their ineffectiveness, at least in the short term. Indeed, the dream of uniting the different European leaders against the sultan in order to free the Greek territories never went beyond the stage of projects and discussions while they were alive. The only Christian coalition that succeeded in defeating the Ottomans was the one that liberated Otranto in 1481, almost a decade after the death of the two authors. However, one might inquire how significant were their writings for the construction of the image of the Turks in Renaissance Europe. Eventually, a new generation of Greek scholars would resume the work of Trapezuntios and Bessarion in the 16th century, advocating with alike enthusiasm for the liberation of Greece. They would inherit from their seniors not only a language to speak the Ottomans but also a sense of where they had come from and who they were.

APPENDIX A

FRANCESCO FILELFO'S LETTER TO TRAPEZUNTIOS

Filelfo's letter is found in Legrand, *Cent-dix lettres grecques de François Filelfe,* 5-6.

3.

FRANÇOIS FILELFE A GEORGES DE TRÉBIZONDE

Bologne, 30 juillet 1428.

Φραγκίσκος ὁ Φιλέλφος Γεωργίῳ Τραπεζουντίῳ χαίρειν.

Ὃν ἐμοὶ λόγον ἀπέστειλας ἀνέγνων τε [3] αὐτὸς κατὰ πᾶσαν προσέχων ἐπιμέλειαν, καὶ τοῖς ἐνταῦθα λογίοις [4] ἀνδράσιν ἔδωκα ἀναγνῶναι· σύ τε γὰρ ἐδόκεις ἡμῖν τούτου καὶ χάριν [5] μάλιστα [6] δεῦρο ἀποστεῖλαι ἵνα καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ ἰδῶσι [7] τὰ γεγραμμένα· κἀγὼ τοῦτ' εἶναι προὔργου ᾠήθην ὅπως, εἴ τι ἐκ τῶν συμβουλευτικῶν λόγων ὄφελος εἴη τοῖς πράγμασιν, ἔχωσιν οἱ ἄρχοντες δυνάμενοι ποιεῖν τὸ καθῆκον, καὶ παρὰ τῶν σῶν λόγων ὕλην λαβεῖν. Ἀνεγνώκασι μὲν οὖν τὸν λόγον ἐνθάδε πολιτευόμενοι καὶ δημηγοροῦντες [8] καὶ ἐπήνεσαν τά σοι [9] γεγραμμένα. Ταὐτὰ [10] γὰρ καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν ἀντιτακτέον εἶναι τοῖς πολεμίοις καὶ ἀμελητέον μηθέν· ἔργον τε [11] ποιεῖν ῥήτορος δεινοῦ τε καὶ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ὁμοφύλου καὶ εὔνου ἡγοῦνταί σε πάντες, καὶ ὀφείλειν

1. γενήσεως.

2. Publiée pour la première fois par Ange-Théodore Villa dans la *Raccolta Milanese* de l'année 1756, f. 19.

3. ἀνέγνων τε. 4. λαγίοις. 5. χαίριν. 6. μαλίστα. 7. εἰδῶσι. 8. δημηγορῦντες. 9. τὰ σοὶ. 10. ταυτὰ. 11. ἔργόν τε.

σε τοιαῦτ' ἄττα νῦν μάλιστα συμβουλεύειν καὶ γράφειν πρὶν Βυζαντίους μὲν κινδυνεύειν, τοὺς δὲ χριστιανοὺς πάμπαν ὀλιγωρεῖν, καὶ οὐδὲ ἀκούειν ἀνεχομένους τῶν διαπρεσβευομένων ἐκείνων ὑπὲρ βοηθείας · ἢ οὐκ οἴδαμεν εἰ γένονται Τοῦρκοι Κωνσταντινουπόλεως [1] ἐγκρατεῖς, θαλασσοκρατήσουσι [2] ὁήπουθεν, καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ Οὐενετοὶ καὶ σὺν αὐτοῖς μετὰ τάχους Ἰταλοὶ πάντες κατὰ κράτος κινδυνεύσουσι περὶ τῶν ὅλων · νῦν ἄρα καιρός ἐστι μάλιστα τὸ κωλύειν μὴ γενέσθαι [3] τὸν ἐχθρὸν μέγαν, καὶ ῥᾴδιόν ἐστιν [4]. Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὁ ἀσεβὴς πρὸς τῷ ἱππικῷ τε καὶ πεζῷ στρατῷ δυνατὸς γενήσεται καὶ τῷ ναυτικῷ, χαλεπώτατον μὲν ἔσται τὸ ἀντιτάξασθαι, δυσελπίστατον [5] δὲ τὸ νικῆσαι. Διὸ δέδοικα μὴ οἱ χριστιανοὶ ἀμελήσαντες ταὐτὸν [6] πάθωσι τοῖς διὰ μοχθηρὰν δίαιταν εἰς ὕδερον ἢ πλευρῖτιν [7] ἀνήκεστον ἐμπεπτωκόσιν · ἐκείνοις γὰρ πρότερον εὐμαρὲς ὂν ὑγιαίνειν διαίτῃ χρωμένοις ὑγιεινῇ, ὕστερον ἀδύνατον [8] δὴ [9] συμβαίνει διὰ τὸ παντελῶς ὑπὸ τοῦ νοσήματος κεκρατεῖσθαι, καὶ μάτην φαρμακεύεσθαι συμβουλεύει ὁ ἰατρός. Εἴ γε τοὺς οὕτω κακῶς ἔχοντας οὐχ ὅπως ὀνίνησιν [10], ἀλλὰ καὶ βλάπτει τὰ φάρμακα · καὶ οὗτοι δὲ ἀμελοῦντες νῦν Βυζαντίων, εἰ τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἐπὶ μέγα [11] ἐῶσιν αὐξῆναι, κινδυνεύσουσιν ἀνίατα [12]. Συμβουλεύειν μέντοι γε καὶ πειρᾶσθαι βοήθημα εὑρίσκειν ἀεὶ τοῖς πράγμασι καλόν τε καὶ δίκαιόν ἐστι · καὶ εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν ἐπαχθὲς ἦν, κἂν πολλοὶ ἦσαν οἱ λέγοντες κἀκ τῶν πολλῶν ῥᾷον συνήγετο τῶν δεόντων ἡ γνῶσις. Νῦν δὲ γνώμη ἑνὸς ἁπάντων οἰκονομεῖται, καὶ μηδὲ [13] ὅτι πράττει [14] τοὺς ἄλλους [15] εἰδέναι ἀξιοῖ. Σιωπᾶν ἀνάγκη ἡμᾶς [16]. Ἔρρωσο.

Βονωνίαθεν, τῇ γ΄ πρὸ αὐγούστου καλενδῶν, ἔτει φυκή.

1. Κωνσταντινοπόλεως. Cette forme, qui se retrouvera encore ailleurs, aurait pu, à la rigueur, être conservée. 2. θαλασσασοκρατησοῦσι *(sic)*. 3. γενεσθαι, sans accent. 4. ῥάδιόν ἔστιν. 5. δισελπιστατον. 6. ταυτὸν. 7. πλευρίτιν. — 8. ἀδίνατον. 9. δη, sans accent. 10. ὄνησιν. 11. μεγα, sans accent. 12. ἄνιατα. 13. μηδε, sans accent. 14. πράττοι. 15. ἄλλος. 16. ἡμὰς.

APPENDIX B

THE EXHORTATIONS OF GEORGE TRAPEZUNTIOS

Trapezuntios' exhortations *Ad Alfonsum* and *Ad Nicolaum* are found in Monfasani, *Collectanea Trapezuntiana*, 422-44.

CXXIX, CXXX

Exhortations to King Alfonso of Aragon and Emperor Frederick III to recover the Holy Lands.

REF: *George of Trebizond*, 50–53, 89, 129; and the *Addenda- Corrigenda* below.
MSS: 1. Sevilla, Colomb. 5–2–10, ff. 13r–19r (= C).
2. Vatican, Vat. lat. 2926, ff. 211r–224v (= N).
3. ———, Vat. lat. 3580 (= O).
4. ———, Vat. lat. 4248, ff. 245v–248v, fragmentary, sects.(*1*)- (*9*)4 (= P).
5. Wien, BN, lat. 592 (= W).

We have three different versions of this oration. The first is that contained in N, addressed to King Alfonso and with an autograph rubric which states that George wrote the oration the year Alfonso captured Naples, i.e., 1443 (see the apparatus). The second version addressed to Alfonso is preserved in O and P. I give this version the common siglum b*. I suspect that b* was made in the early part of the pontificate of Nicholas V (1447–52) since, apart from the fragment in P, it is only preserved in a deluxe manuscript carrying Nicholas' papal arms. The third redaction (= f*), which carried over many of the revisions of b*, was addressed to Frederick III on the occasion of his visit to Rome in 1452. We have the text of f* in C and in what seems to be the dedication copy, W.

Although we cannot be sure George ever sent off the first redaction, I have used it as my main text because this makes it easier to see the different stages of the revision and also because I think it preferable to read George's original conception of the oration whole. I have italicized the passages revised in b* and have placed between vertical bars passages revised in f*. In order not to overburden the apparatus, I have not taken note of George's corrections of obvious scribal errors in N. Where variants are merely scribal and do not reflect the different redactions, I have resorted to the individual sigla to identify the manuscripts. However, in some cases, it has not been easy to decide whether a variant is scribal or redactional (e.g., cf. (*13*)11 and (*18*)8). Lastly, note that the rubric in the main text is that of O rather than of N. I made the switch because the rubric of N is clearly a note George wrote to himself, while that in O, with its awkward listing of territories instead of the commodious reference to "Utraque Sicilia" (cf. Texts I–VII), seems to be the original heading planned in 1442.

|Ad serenissimum principem et excellentissimum d. dominum Alfonsum, Ter⟨r⟩aconensis Ispanie, Apulie, ac Sicilie illustrissimum regem, G⟨eorgii⟩ Trapezuntii ad recuperandam ⟨H⟩ierusalem et occupandam Egyptum ac Syriam exhortatio.|[1]

(*1*) Cogitanti mihi multum ac sepe de temporibus nostris siquid magnum atque preclarum[1] priscisque rebus conferendum produxerint[2] aut productura videantur, in mentem venire solet, humanissime princeps, omnem[3] antiquitatis memoriam magnitudine rerum gestarum ac gloria posse abste |*facillime*|[4] superari. Que res, cum maxima atque amplissima sit, induxit me tandem ut ad te scriberem breviter, per quem video posse temporibus nostris vetustatem omni laude vinci, non quod ea[5] res te fugiat, quem ego prudentia cunctis hominibus prestare non dubito, quemque

arbitror, posteaquam virtus atque felicitas tua ad Italicarum[6] rerum gubernacula te perduxit,[7] totum animum eo |*contulisse*|,[8] verum ut horter, |*quoniam*[9] vita hominis brevis sit, ad eam iam rem|[9] omnia tua consilia esse conferenda. Sed ne ambiguis aures tuas verbis longius detineam, si primum que res, quanta quamque amplissima sit tetigero, tum quod facillime pro magnitudine sua presertim abste fieri |potest|[10] aperiam.

(*2*) Christianam fidem, |*illustrissime*[1] princeps|,[2] Christianam, inquam, fidem augere[3] armis ac stabilire potes. Que res quanta sit, quam maxima, quam magnifica, quam Christiano principe digna ita patet ut, cum nullus dignitatem eius oratione assequi possit, pluribus non[4] indigeat verbis. Solent enim que natura sui ac dignitate apertissima sunt non magis efferri siquis ea longiore illustret oratione quam deprimi; ac ut levior videretur qui lucere solem[5] dicendo vellet comprobare, ita qui maximam |*rem*|[6] esse fidem nostram conservare, augere, munire, infidelium vero |*inimicorumque crucis*|[7] imperium atque opes labefactare, minuere, infringere |principibus Christianis|[8] persuadere conetur, cum rem hac luce clariorem verbis affirmare velit, |longius|[9] aberrare iudicandus[10] est. (*3*) Quamobrem illud solum mihi[1] comprobandum relinquitur, posse abste facillime, si eo consilia conferas,[2] tantam rem temporibus nostris confici quanta nunquam (audeo enim ita dicere) non modo facta est, sed |*ne*|[3] excogitata quidem priscis temporibus. Verum, ut id facilius efficiam, paulo altius repetendum videtur.

(*4*) Iudeam[1] ac Egyptum regionum omnium |*felicissimas*|,[2] commodissimas, optimas esse semperque fuisse nemo fere ignorat. Verum Iudea sanctissima quoque iam usque ab Abrae[3] temporibus semper fuit Christianisque adeo veneranda ut undique omnis generis homines eo ad osculandos illorum locorum lapides confluant, nec id iniuria. Nam salus et gloria hominum inde orta,[4] ibi adulta, ibi consumata est. Hec igitur loca tam sancta spurcissimus[5] infidelium dominatus in obprobrium[6] Christianorum omnium atque dedecus detinet. Ea tu, |si[7] eo te convertas, liberare facile|[7] potes. (*5*) Quare nihil ego assero maius, nihil divinius, nihil tibi et tuis gloriosius, nihil Christiano generi utilius aut dignius, nihil denique illustrius unquam fuisse et, ut[1] vaticinari libet, nunquam futurum. Quid enim honestius quam sanctissima loca Christi hostibus eripere, Christianis principibus subdere? Quid magnificentius principi quam servilem[2] dominatum, spurcissimam tyrannidem, sordidum imperium barbarorum evertere? Quid utilius quam regiones omnium rerum abundantissimas[3] sibi subiugare? Nam preter[4] locorum[3] commoditatem atque fertilitatem totius pene terrarum orbis divitie multis iam annis illo congeruntur. Et quod magis Christianos principes commovere acriter, vehementius excitare, ac vi quadam ad ulciscendum impellere debet: ipsorum Christianorum argentum ac aurum ita illis datur ut omnis reddatur ab illis iniuria nobis. (*6*) Non enim solum carceribus, vinculis, tormentis cruciatos occidunt Christianos, verum etiam, quod multo molestius |*et*|[1] indignius prudenti homini videri debet, deridentes ac contemnentes non magis nos quam salvatorem ac dominum nostrum |*et*[2] *crucem eius*|[2] spuunt in Christianorum

faciem, sequentes acerbam Iudaeorum in Christum contumeliam. Que res principibus Christianis non[3] magis dedecori quam eterne damnationi futura est. Nam siqui[4] succurrere, cum possit, oppresso iniuria homini negligit quod suum malit negotium quam alienum procurare, tanquam iniquus[5] ac |*hominis*|[6] proditor vituperatur, quanto cruciatu ille dignus qui, cum non parvam orbis terrarum partem indigne premi sciat et Christum quottidie cruciari non ignoret (sumus |*enim*|[7] membra eius qui in ipsum credimus), contemnit tamen ac negligit, presertim cum nihil aliud agere possit utilius. (*7*) Sed hec, dicet forte quispiam, omnes scimus; dignitatem, magnificentiam, sanctitatem rei non ignoramus; divitias victoribus pene infinitas inde fore perspicimus; imperium summum atque amplissimum illud esse non sumus nescii; et id est quod ab ea re |*nos maxime*|[1] deterret. Nemo est qui nolit opibus, gloria, imperio reges omnes qui fuerunt quique futuri sunt superare, presertim cum non dubitet ad celestem quoque gloriam consequendam id sibi summopere collaturum,[2] pro qua sola multi e maioribus nostris mortem obierunt. Utinamque |*ille nobis*|[3] animus esset ut eterna his caducis preponeremus! Sed imbeccilitate quadam animi nimis hanc |*vitam*|[4] amplectimur. Quare fit ut, cum formidemus victoriamque desperemus, tantam rem, tam arduam tam difficilem suscipere non audeamus. (*8*) Hec et que his similia sunt si vere dicerentur, quamvis obiicere possem magna preclaraque facinora sine labore atque periculo geri non posse, tamen fateor, non auderem hec scribere. Sed contigit huic rei quod nunquam aliis: ut, cum summa[1] gloria et utilitas ex ea consequantur,[2] inaudita etiam[3] insit[4] facilitas adeo ut nulla unquam in re |*tanta*|[5] tria hec, gloriam, utilitatem, facilitatem, sic una convenisse confirmare possim; nec futura unquam ita summa, ita illustria, ita denique mirabilia dicere audeam.

(*9*) Verum quoniam de gloria, et ea |sive huius vite sive|[1] celestis, ac de utilitate convenit, quam prona, quam facilis tanta res sit consideremus. Magnum illud imperium est, ample sunt ille regiones, ingens multitudo illic hominum habitat. Sed hinc[2] quoque quanta preparari potest! Nam si tu toto animo, cura, cogitatione hanc rem susceperis, quis non sequetur? Summus pontifex,[3] qui huius rei desiderio vel ante pontificatum arsisse fertur et nunc magis[4] quam nunquam cupere, non viribus solum sed, quod plurimi ego facio, benedictione ac iugi oratione prosequetur. |Illustrissimus[5] Ligurie princeps, reliqua Italia non deerit; Hispania Terraconensis[6] *tuam sequetur auctoritatem.*[7]|[5] (*10*) Quid plura? Tanta hec res est, ita Christianis omnibus grata ut, si modo confirmato animo |princeps[1] quispiam|[1] que ad tantum tamque magnificum facinus oportuna sunt preparare incipiat, omnes Christianorum reges, omnes principes, omnes populi, omnes, inquam, undique, tam privatim, quam publice concurrent, petent, imo, certe orabunt socios se ad divinam hanc militiam suscipi. Id ita futurum inde patet quod omnes Christiani, quibuscumque hac de re verba quis faciat, plerique summa subire pericula, non nulli vel mortem ob hanc rem obire optant temporaque nostra incusant (dicam audatius), principes etiam non nunquam Christianorum reprehendunt quod minoribus ac inter se occupati, maxima collaturum

premia bellum negligunt. Ita quicumque Christianorum princeps, quicunque populus liber ac potens caput se ad transitum[2] hunc prebuerit, ei ego[3] non magis arbitror cogitandum an socios ad eum habere potuerit quam deliberandum quos eligat.

(*11*) Verum *tibi*[1] |soli[2] tante rei dignitatem, tibi opes illas,|[2] tibi[1] ingentia illa regna vellem contingere. *Sufficis*[3] |enim[4] vel multo maiora et ardua magis conficere.|[4] Nam et prudentia |*ceteros*[5] superas et re militari excellis et animi magnitudine longe prestas|.[5] Quis enim dubitat, si tu solus, humanissime princeps, toto hanc rem animo susceperis, |*statim*|[6] hinc gloriosissimum |Ligurie[7] principem, illinc *Venetiarum*[8] *ducem*[8]|,[7] et ante omnes et post omnes tam benedictionem quam auxilia summi pontificis tecum habebis. Initium solum huiuscemodi |*rei*|[9] fieri necesse est. Sic enim arbitror, siquis e |tribus|[10] vobis, quos modo nominavi, cum reliquis hanc rem |duobus|[11] agere coeperit, modo agat ex animo seque ita omnino velle re ipsa ostendat, non magis ceteros hortari quam ipse impelli ab illis videbitur. (*12*) Nonne igitur facillimum est apparatum ad eam rem facere ad quam adsunt[1] socii, adsunt[1] copie, adsunt[1] sufficientes, dum volueris, opes? Nemo enim |*Ligurie*[2] principem tecum simul|[2] cum benedictione summi pontificis haud sufficere ad divinissimum id opus iudicabit. *Quos si convenisse*[3] hostes Christi audient (dicam quod[4] sentio, et id est in quo triumphi gloria diminuitur), non expectabunt, sed in fugam solo apparatu audito vertentur.

(*13*) Cur ita? Veniet in mentem sibi semper Italiam invictam armis fuisse; recordabuntur eas ipsas regiones sepius Italis subiectas fuisse; volvent[1] animo nunquam ex Europa ductorem peritum cum exercitu ad eos transisse quin triumphum reportarit.[2] Nam quid vetusta memorem? |*A*|[3] Christianis ipsis quotiens deviciti sunt? A |*Gallis*|[4] quotiens? Longior essem si latius historiam explicarem, sed ita[5] patet ut res verbis non egeat. Qui ergo sepe alias[6] a nostris se superatos, victos, trucidatos meminerunt, dabunt profecto terga vel antequam fulgentem gladium videant. Gladium dixi? Flagellis, flagellis, deus immortalis, flagellis armatas[7] solis |Italorum|[8] copias Egyptum petere si perceperint, contremiscent servi fugitivi et querent latebras vel dabunt manus inermes et colla iugo subiicient9. Nam qua ratione victoriam se |ab Italis|[10] habituros poterunt[11] sperare?

(*14*) "Ductores exercitus habent peritiores." At in ea re vel gregarios |ex Italia|[1] milites optimis Egyptiorum ductoribus facile pretulerim. "Armis utuntur solidioribus." At sicut ceteras gentes instrumentis |Italia|[2] bellicis excedit, sic Egyptii,[3] vel quoniam deest sibi materia vel quod minus in[4] imbelli regione armis opus sit, a ceteris pene omnibus superantur. "Milites eis sunt corpore, animo, usu meliores." At servi omnes sunt, non solum qui rem militarem gerunt, verum etiam qui reipublice presunt. Nemo vero ignorat a se ipsis, ut ita dicam, degenerare homines qui servitute premuntur, et illos servisse omnes; imo vero servire perspicuum est qui tametsi |eius|[5] servitutis munere ad res |*grandes*|[6] pervenerunt. Cum tamen semel deiectus animus obtorpuerit, vix in pristinum se potest robur recipere. Ita fit ut, cum e servitute ad gubernandum insiliant |atque adeo|[7] serviendo gubernent et gubernando serviant,

non virtute crescant, sed temeritate tumescant.

(*15*) "At magna ipsorum est multitudo, ingens[1] numerus, munite urbes, et tam natura quam manu atque machinis instructe." Que omnia ita pro nobis sunt ut, si mihi potestas detur divinitus |quod|[2] ea conditione atque statu imperium illorum afficiam ut facilius vinci possint, nullum suarum rerum alium statum exoptem. Amplas illis esse regiones fateor; urbes magnas non nego; magnam hominum multitudinem ea loca incolere non sum nescius. Verum multitudo illorum universa in duas |*est divisa*|[3] partis; una servorum est, que populos acerba nimium servitute vexat, altera, cuius pene infinitus numerus est, servientium populorum, qui quamprimum sperabunt posse tam iniquum[4] illud, tam durum, tam turpe serviendi iugum excutere, quamvis parum viribus (sunt enim omnes servitute diuturna penitus effeminati), animis tamen ac votis favebunt, presertim cum magna eorum pars Christiani sint, agitati a barbaris illis non incommodis solum omnibus, verum etiam cruciatibus. (*16*) Ita multitudo illa omnis preter fugitivos servos pro nobis est, quod inde maxime patet quod lege sancitum est apud eos, ut omnes qui eas partes tetigerunt predicant, nequis, nisi servus, ad bellum arma capere possit. Que lex tanta diligentia observatur ut, etiam cum ingenti tumultu omnia conturbantur, quietus servorum inter se prelia populus spectet. Quod ita eis sancitum est quia non ignorant quem animum adversus servos habere debeant ii qui nati liberi a servis suis turpissime oppressi sunt. Ita universa Egyptiorum vis, que in Christianorum obprobrium[1] |sanctissimos locos|[2] premit, servorum est, quorum quidem robur, dum nemo resistit, non nihil videtur. Si vero dignus in eos apparatus fiet, inter se ipsos corruent.[3] Non enim possunt convenire qui e diversissimis gentibus capti atque venditi unam in ditionem rerum compulsi sunt. Quare fit ut sepius etiam inter se, orta seditione, concertent.

(17) Accedit quod plurimos eorum Christianos fuisse constat. Qui servitute ad illum statum rerum atque infidelitatem traducti, conscientie stimulis vexentur necesse est. Nam is interior iudex nostra, scilicet, conscientia, tantam vim habet ut nemo, cum male agat, se ipsum possit absolvere tantoque magis exagitetur quanto maiore culpa detinetur omniaque incommoda que sibi in vita accidunt putet—et recte putet—propter peccata sibi evenire. Qui vero Christum dominum nostrum denegarit, eum ego arbitror, cum pericula immineant, vel umbram suam expavescere. His rebus fiet ut, quamprimum in eas partes Christianorum |adversum|[1] illos classis appulerit, alii desperatione ad latebras se iniiciant, alii sperantes misericordiam[2] salvatoris adhuc se posse salvari contra suos arma rapiant, invenianturque non nulli qui, si |*in*[3] *fundendo*|[3] infidelium sanguinem[4] occumbant, veniam se a domino consecutos credant.

(*18*) Sed sint unamines; sint concordes; conspiret omnis eorum multitudo. Facillimum tamen erit |Italis atque Terraconensibus|,[1] qui consilio, qui virtute bellica, qui usu bellandi assiduo cunctis hominibus prestant, Orientales gentes, presertim Egyptios sepius ab eis devictos, prosternere. Quando enim peritus militie ductor, non dico adversum Egyptios, sed in universam Asiam simul cum XL[2] milibus militum

traiecit[3] (nunquam enim |*plures*|[4] transierunt), qui victoriam consecutus non sit? Equidem non video quo pacto imbelles illi homines atque |*inermes*|[5] |Italorum[6] atque[7] Hispanorum|[6] poterunt[8] impetum sustinere. Quid dixi? Sustinere? Splendorem, medius fidius, splendorem armorum non[9] poterunt inspicere ii, qui femine potius quam viri appellandi sunt, qui semper, cum parva manus ex Europa in eos traiecit, extimuerunt, qui a paucissimis sepe victi, fusi, trucidatique[10] sunt, qui suarum[11] virium conscii cuncta formidant. (*19*) Nonne |his diebus|[1] magno in Rhodienses furore classem prepararunt?[2] Minabantur vel insulam ipsam e medio mari evulsam se in Egyptum translaturos. Vide, queso, quid secutum est. Posteaquam e Rhodiis satis firmam ad defensionem manum[3] esse collectam perceperunt, timore perculsi, pacem factis indutiis petierunt. Qui ergo[4] in pauciores |*ad*|[5] propulsandum, non ad inferendum bellum paratos nequaquam progredi ausi sunt, ii exercitum |tuis[6] militibus|[6] constructum sustinebunt? Et qui ne[7] concitata in eos usque Rhodia cohors irrumperet dubitarunt, invicta |tuorum|[8] arma expectabunt? O dedecus ingens Christianorum! O impressam atque inveteratam infamiam! O ignominiam maximam, sic in faciebus inustam nostris ut deleri non possit nisi vos principes in turpissimos Christi[9] hostes arma ceperitis[10]!

(*20*) Imbelles inimici crucis fertilissimas regiones tenent. Nos pro re minima inter nos digladiamur. Fugituri servi Iudeam, ubi patriarche nati ac sepulti, ubi prophete salutem nostram predixerunt, Iudeam, inquam, salvatoris ipsius secundum carnem patriam, virginis habitaculum, servi turpissimi premunt. Nos, tanquam si nihil ea res ad Christianos |*pertineret*|,[1] non commovebimur? Ignavissimi homines Hierusalem, ubi dominus passus est, ubi salus nostra nata, educta, consumataque est, acerbissimo |*atque*|[2] indignissimo dominatu tam diu vexant. Nos sedebimus atque oscitabimus aut alter in alterum contra ius fasque insurgemus? (*21*) Et qui non res nostras familiares solum, sed liberos, uxores, patriam, sanguinem,[1] denique atque animam nostram pro libertate ac dignitate illorum locorum effundere deberemus, nunc cum inde laus eterna, fama perpetua, decus summum, opes inaudite, potentia, regna, imperia, omnia simul que bona re ipsa sunt vel etiam appellantur, confluant, |neglegemus|?[2] Et si non honestate rei ac gloria, at utilitate, at magna vi auri, argenti, lapidum non commovebimur?

(*22*) Et quis tantam |*ignaviam Christianorum*|[1] non accusandam iudicabit? Solebant pro virtute et fama homines olim subire pericula, mortem quoque ipsam contemnere, caducamque hanc vitam spernere, dum suos, dum patriam, dum honestatem tutarentur. Verum aurea illa tempora iam transierunt. Utilitatis nomine omnes rapimur; aurum sitimus; regna concupiscimus; imperia somniamus. Ac pro his rebus que maria non navigamus? Quas terras non peragramus?[2] Que loca invia, que silve, qui montes intentati sunt? Hec optamus; hec ibi maxima sunt. Hec nos rapiunt, horum ibi magna copia Hec dies et noctes volvimus. Hec facillime consequemur si mentem ab intestinis Italie[3] bellis eo traduxerimus; et ad hec vera nos summa perpetuaque gloria prosequetur. (*23*) Omnia ita ingentia sunt in hac re, decus, gloria,

opes, regna, imperia, ut, cum cogitem quid horum inde maius huius rei principes assequentur, omnia mihi maxima videantur. Cum igitur alii gloria[1] vel ad contemnendam mortem incendantur, alii cupiditate humanarum rerum, idest, divitiarum atque potentie, summos labores perpetiantur, nos hanc rem que utrunque maximum prebet non amplectemur? Et qui parva plerunque re commoti, maiora quam ferre possumus aggrediamur negotia, preclarissimum id facinus floccipendemus? Et qui spe parva inducti, non nunquam |difficilia|[2] suscipimus, hunc transitum cum certa victorie spe parvi aciemus? Non inflammabit voluptuosos locorum am⟨o⟩enitas, avaros quod illo congeritur iam multos annos orbis totius aurum, regnandi cupidos regionum magnitudo et multitudo, religiosos locorum sanctitas?[3] (*24*) Ipsi, ipsi, inquam, hostes nos iniuriis provocant; minis irritant; luxuria sua incitant; superbia impellunt in Christianorum faciem spuendo. Quod facinus quomodo vides, o sol? Aut, cur in tenebras non converteris, in tenebras, dico, illas in quas conversus fuisti cum in eisdem locis speciosissimam creatoris faciem sputis confusam vidisses? An ideo[1] pateris ut maiore poena post extremum iudicium Christiani cruciemur quia his rebus non commovemur? Nam quod in nos fit quia Christiani sumus, in Christum ipsum fit. In faciem ergo Christianorum, imo ipsius Christi, spuendo illi ad ultionem nos vehementius impellunt. Nos non sentimus? Non percipimus? Non videmus? Obduravimus, sicut meretrices, facies nostras, que pudicitia semel spreta nullis verbis, nulla ignominia, nulla re amplius commoventur.

(*25*) Sed vos, vos, inquam, illustrissimi principes—ad omnes |enim|[1] iam mihi oratio vertenda est—hanc e Christiano genere turpitudinem depellite. Deprimite tantum dedecus. Grandem amovete infamiam. Infidelium furorem compescite. Recuperate Christianis loca sancta. Vobis maximas urbes acquirite. Amplissima regna preparate. O quam felix erit ille dies in quo[2] |*non*[3] *solum Italie atque Sicilie,*|[3] sed Hierusalem ac totius Iudee rex non magis nomine quam re predicaberis! O quam felix erit ille dies in quo |Ligurie[4] princeps Syrie totius coronam accipiet!|[4] O quam felicissimus erit ille dies in quo Romana ecclesia Iacobi ac Marci ecclesiis integre coniungetur et Christiana[5] fides ad primordia sua redundabit!

(*26*) Nam quantam gloriam quamque perpetuam consequi hinc potestis, ex rebus preteritis mecum non nunquam colligere soleo. Nemo enim unquam principum,[1] regum, imperatorum qui olim in Europa[2] fuerunt immortalem atque divinam adeptus est laudem nisi qui aut in Egyptum aut[3] in[3] Asiam traiecit exercitum; et nemo traiecit qui laudem immortalem, opes amplissimas, regna plura maioraque quam credi possit consecutus[4] non sit. Relinquo Herculem, Perseum, Bacchum, quorum res geste propter vetustatem fabularum locum obtinent;[5] nec Cimonem aut[6] Agesilaum commemorare libet; Lucullum quoque |ac|[7] Pompeium Romanosque omnes pretermittendos censeo. (*27*) Alexander Magnus, adhuc fere puer, sola gloria incensus, Persarum imperium, quod illis temporibus per universam Asiam patebat, parvis copiis aggressus, immortale sibi nomen, ut optabat, amicis vero omnibus regna et opes maximas acquisivit. Que res linguam Grecam, mores, eloquentiam, philosophie studia

per universum terrarum orbem pervulgavit. Eorum vero qui Hierusalem, Egyptum, ac Syriam a scelestissimis predonibus eripient tanto maior profecto gloria erit, quanto iustior causa. Ille sola cupiditate laudis tantam rem tamque periculosam suscepit. Vos pro gloria simul ac opibus proque Christiana fide facillimam rem factu spernetis? Ille Darii regis amplissimas copias regnumque paternum eius atque avitum, optimis rationibus habitum, fundatum, auctum, parvis opibus invasit, labefactavit, evertit. Vos indignissimum servorum imperium nulla re alia stabilitum nisi Christianorum negligentia non invadetis? Ille totam Asiam, tantam Persarum potentiam, infinitas Darii gentes vix sex legionibus perdomuit. Vos Egyptios servos e variis gentibus, linguis, moribus in unum[1] servitute contractos non aggrediemini? (*28*) Et quos etiam si plures essent contemneretis, eos pauciores an possitis vincere dubitabitis? Veniat, queso, in mentem qua ex re Carolus ille magnus ad hec usque tempora tantus fertur. Ille, inquam, Carolus, qui primus Romanorum imperium ex Grecia in Gallias transtulit, qui totius fere Europe dominus factus, Africam[1] etiam vehementius vexavit.[2] Undique[3] igitur ille magnus factus est. Nonne Hierusalem liberata et Egypto ac Syria perdomita? Nam cum Arabes sanctissima illa *loca*[4] occupassent, intellexit illico prudentissimus rex inde sibi non |*solum regna*|[5] Christianorumque[6] imperium sponte sua venturum, sed laudem quoque eternam, tam in[7] terris quam etiam in celis, affuturam. Traiecto igitur exercitu, expulsis hostibus, liberata Hierusalem, a patriarcha eius urbis Hierosolimorum rex coronatus,[8] prona facillimaque post tam clarissimum facinus cuncta invenit. (*29*) Itaque ad id culmen ascendit ut merito regem omnium regum qui unquam fuerunt imperatorumque omnium imperatorum appellare possimus. Nam cum omnes qui ad hunc usque diem fuerunt imperii magnitudine ac gloria post se reliquerit, ab eo solo vincetur qui similem rem aggreditur. Primum[1] enim[2] quanto diutius premuntur loca illa quantoque fediore servorum dominatu exagitantur, tanto illustrior Carolo futurus est qui hanc servitutis turpitudinem auferet. Deinde (audebo enim consequens dicere) feda nimis atque acerba Turcorum[3] potentia faciliu[4] ex Europis exterminabitur, fractis iam atque[5] debilitatis eorum animis tanta gestarum rerum fama et gloria.

(*30*) Nam ego hanc ipsam esse causam puto cur permissione quadam divina Europam usque adeo Turci vexent, rapiant, vastent ut iam ab Italia ipsa non longe[1] absunt, aderuntque[2] propius (quod utinam falso presagiam!) nisi principes providerint. Providere vero non poterunt nisi, ut boni medici, |*prius morbi*|[3] extincto incendio impresse deinde febri medeantur. Nullam porro aliam esse causam quis non viderit nisi quod negligatur patrum patria, repromissionis locus, domini sepulchrum? Qui contemptus (etsi durum est dicere non tamen verebor, veritate ipsa compulsus), in Christum dominum nostrum *redundare*[4] videtur. Quamobrem, si causam hanc |*omnium*[5] *malorum*|[6] abscideritis, Europam quoque ipsam liberabitis. (*31*) Quod facile futurum si inde inceperitis, ea re perspicuum est, quod Caroli etiam Magni temporibus, cum totam Hispaniam usque in Transalpinam Galliam multasque Europe partes Africani[1] idem, videlicet, Christi hostes, rapuissent, nullo consilio, nullis opibus,

nulla vi eorum impetus potuit retardari anteaquam Hierusalem ex impiorum manibus fuerit erepta. Quare gesta tanta celeritate omnia deinde confecta sunt ut planum factum sit Africanos[2] divina in Europam[3] ira immissos[4] ut ad defensionem sanctorum[5] locorum Christianos gladio excitarent; quibus recuperatis, Machumetistas[6] rursum divinitus oppressos fuisse.[7] Carolum vero in fastigium imperii sic ascendisse accepimus ut et Gallia per multa secula imperium post ipsum quoque[8] habuerit felicitatemque fere ad hec usque tempora retinuerit, et ipse iure regum omnium atque imperatorum decus et sit et videatur, quippe qui Christi hostes perdomuit, fidem nostram defendit, atque his denique honestissimis causis orbis est adeptus imperium.

(*32*) Ea ipsa res nunc quoque agitur, illustrissimi principes. Videtis quantis malis Christianus orbis concutitur. Intelligitis maiora imminere nisi quam primum succurratur. Non vos latet tantam inde gloriam, tantas opes, tam latissime patens imperium, atque amplissimum regnum ei sic[1] perventurum qui succurrerit ut facile rerum gestarum splendore vel Carolum ipsum |antecedat|.[2] Nolite divinissimum id facinus in longius differre. Nemo dubitat, qui animo[3] volvat quanta insit vobis animi magnitudo, quanta prudentia, quanta solide glorie cupiditas, huc iam diu cogitationes vestras conduxisse, sed necessitate rerum alio vel invitos[4] distractos fuisse.[5] Nunc res |Italie[6] sic aut composite sunt aut facile componi posse videntur ut huc rursus consilia vestra conferenda sint.|[6] (*33*) Timenda est summopere tarditas ne aut alius preceptis consiliis, tamquam primus, laudem sibi vendicet, aut rebus forte mutatis alio impellere casus aliquis videatur. Nam et hominum spes fallaces sunt, fragilis fortuna, inanes cogitationes; in medio spatio sepe franguntur et corruunt obruunturque, in ipso cursu plerumque antequam[1] portum conspicere potuerint. Et ea res est[2] ut solummodo volenti aperte suscipere seque iam ad eam apparanti[3] gloriam immortalem[4] polliceatur. (*34*) Quasobres, illustrissmi |principes|,[1] si nulla[2] res maioris laudis atque glorie possit excogitari, si |Christianis|[3] sola est |decora|,[4] utilis, si facilis atque adeo prona ut incipere solum opus esse videatur, si non in hac vita modo regna, opes, imperium afferat, sed ad celos etiam viam preparet, dubitatis omnes cogitationes, omnes curas, animum denique totum ad eam rem conferre, qua gesta omnem antiquitatis memoriam temporibus nostris facillime |superare poteritis|,[5] presertim cum vix posse opposita fugere negligentes videantur? Non opinor. Nam cum innatum sit magni animi principibus maiora semper cupere quantoque divinior |hec|[6] res sit, tanto pluribus utilior, et[7] vos videam, illustrissimi principes, magnitudine animi longe ceteris excellere, non dubito quin[8] iam sepius hec excogitaveritis. (*35*) Que re[1] ipsa suscipere, Italia |*prius*[2-3] a vobis composita,|[3] tempus adest oportunissimum,[4] quod pretermittendum non est ne caduca hominum natura, infirma vita, instabilisque |*rerum eventus*|[5] non nihil interea commutet. Quare Hierusalem,[6] Egypti, totiusque Syrie amplissima regna iam animo complectimini. Prestate illud decus |Italie|.[7] Prebete |ipsi|[8] tantam felicitatem ut longis etiam post vos temporibus triumphet. Illas opes vestris concedite. Redimite capita vestra glorie[9]

immortalis[10] corona. Nolite pati sanctam Hierusalem servitute diutius opprimi, maxime cum ea re Christianorum dedecus, |Machumeticarum|[11] imperium, Europe vastitas in dies augeatur.[12]

(Tit.) 1. Ad . . . exhortatio O; Ad Alfonsum regem Aragonum et utriusque Sicilie de recuperandis locis sanctis Georgii Trapesunde Cretensis oratio, scripta eo anno quo habuit Neapolim *Trap. in N scrip.*; *tit. P deest*; Ad divum Fredericum Tertium Romanorum imperatorem semper Augustum ad sancta loca recuperanda Georgii Trapezuntii, sanctissimi domini nostri pape secretarii, exhortatio *f* (W om.* sanctissimi*)*.

(*1*) 1. preclari *P*. 2. produxerunt *O*. 3. gravem *C*. 4. facile *b*, f**. 5. ea *C om*. 6. maiorum *C*. 7. produxit *C*. 8. conduxisse *b*, f**. 9. ad eam rem, quoniam vita hominis brevis sit *b*, f**. 10. *ex* possit *Trap. in N mut.*; possit *f**.

(*2*) 1. serenissime *b*, f**. 2. imperator *f**. 3. augere *C om*. 4. non: cum *C*. 5. solo *C*. 6. atque amplissimam *ante* rem *b* add.*; principibus Christianis atque amplissimam *ante* rem *f* add*. 7. inimicorum crucis *b*, f* om*. 8. principibus Christianis *f* transpos. ad (2)6 supra*. 9. longe *f**. 10. iudicandas *C*.

(*3*) 1. mihi *W om*. 2. conferas *ex* confe . . . (conferres?) *Trap. in N corr.*; conferes *alii codd*. 3. nec *b*, f**.

(*4*) 1. Iudeam *P om*. 2. fertilissimas *b*, f**. 3. Habrae *N*. 4. horta *O*. 5. spurcissimis *O*. 6. opprobium *C*. 7. simul cum illis quos ad tantam rem sola excitabis auctoritate facile liberare potes *f**.

(*5*) 1. aut *C*. 2. servi levi *C*. 3. habundatissimas *OP*; ⟨abundantis⟩simas sibi subiu⟨gare. Nam propte⟩r locorum *in marg. C add., sed partim excisum a rilegatore*. 4. propter *N*.

(*6*) 1. atque *b*, f**. 2. e crucem eius *b*, f* om*. 3. ne *C*. 4. siquis *W*. 5. iniqus *N*. 6. hominis *b*, f* om*. 7. omnes *post* enim *b*, f* add. (cf. (7)4)*.

(*7*) 1. maxime nos *b*, f**. 2. collaturam *P*. 3. nobis ille *b*, f**. 4. omnes *post* vitam *b*, f* add. (cf. (6)7)*.

(*8*) 1. suma *N*. 2. consequatur *C*. 3. et *C*. 4. iussit *P*. 5. tanta *b*, f* om*.

(*9*) 1. ea duplici tum huius vite tum *f**. 2. hic *N*, huic *C*. 3. Eugenius IV, 1431–47; Nicholas V, 1447–55. 4. magis = *finis P*. 5. illustrissimus Aragonum atque Sicilie princeps non deerit. Venetiarum florentissima respublica hanc ad rem commodissima [commodissima *W om.*] prima se offeret. Ienuenses [*sic*] ac Florentini te non relinquerent [relinquerit *C*] Gloriosissimi Transapline Gallie [Galee *C*] reges ac duces te [te *C om.*] libenter sequenter *f**. 6. Yspania Facconensis *O*. 7. tota tibi obtemperat *b**.

(*10*) 1. serenitas tua dato signo que *f**. 2. trasitum *N*. 3. ei ego *C om*.

(*11*) 1. tibi . . . tibi: Italie soli hoc decus, Italie soli opes illas, Italie soli hanc gloriam, Italie tante rei dignitatem, Italie *b**. 2. soli . . . illas: precipue hoc decus tibi hanc gloriam, tibi opes illas, tibi tante rei dignitatem *f**. 3. sufficit *b**. 4. sola auctoritate vel ad multo maiora et ardua magis conficienda tum alias Christianorum gentes, tum universam Italiam convocare *f**. 5. ceteros . . . prestas: ceteras orbis partes superat et re militari excellit et animi magnitudine longe prestat. Italiam vero totam ad id inducere in te est *b*, f**. 6. quod statim *b*, f**. 7. regem Aragonum, illinc Venetiarum rempublicam *f**. 8. ceteros Italie principes ac populos, quos aut prudentia tibi coniunxit aut virtute domuisti *b**. 9. verborum *b*, f**. 10. quatuor *f**. 11. tribus *f**.

(*12*) 1. assunt *N*. 2. Ligurie . . . simul: te *b**; Aragonum et Sicilie principem tecum simul ac Venetorum senatu *f**. 3. quem si prepari *b**. 4. quid *C*.

(*13*) 1. volverit *C*. 2. reportaverit *CO*. 3. quid res ante Christianorum temporum [tempore *C*] gestas evolvam? *ante* a *b*, f* add*. 4. ac Venetis *post* Gallis *b*, f* add.*

5. id *ante* ita *C add.* 6. aliis *C.* 7. armatus *N.* 8. Christianorum *f*.* 9. subiciant *N.* 10. Christianis *f*.* 11. poterint *CW (cf. (18)8).*

(*14*) 1. Christianorum *f*.* 2. una Christianorum regio *post* Italia *f* add.* 3. Egypto *C.* 4. in *N om.* 5. ipsius *post* eius *f*.* 6. grandis *b*, f*.* 7. cumque *f*.*

(*15*) 1. ignens *W.* 2. quo *f*.* 3. divisa est *b*, f*.* 4. iniqum *N.*

(*16*) 1. opprobium *C.* 2. sanctissima loca *f*.* 3. *ex* concurrent *Trap. in N mut.*

(*17*) 1. adversus *f*.* 2. misericordia *[sic] bis O.* 3. efundere *b* (bis O), f*.* 4. sanguinem *W om.*

(*18*) 1. Christianis *f*.* 2. quadraginta *O*; XXXX *W.* 3. See Plut. *Alex.* 15; Arr. *Anab.* 1.11.3; Diod. 17.17.3–4. 4. pene *ante* plures *b*, f* add.* 5. enerves *b*, f*.* 6. Christianorum *f*.* 7. atque Italorum *O.* 8. poterint *CW (cf. (13)*11). 9. non *bis N.* 10. fugatique *O.* 11. suorum *C.*

(*19*) 1. nostra memoria *f*.* 2. A Moslem fleet threatened Rhodes in 1440, two years before George first wrote to King Alfonso; see E. Rossi, "The Hospitallers at Rhodes, 1421–1523," in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K.M. Setton, vol. 3, Madison, Wisc., 1975, 319. 3. manuum *C.* 4. ego *W.* 5. et *ante* ad *b*, f* add.* 6. Italis militibus ceterarumque Christianarum gentium *f*.* 7. nec *N.* 8. Italorum *f*.* 9. Christra *N.* 10. reperitis *N.*

(*20*) 1. pertineat *b*.* 2. ac *f*.*

(*21*) 1. sanguinem *N.* 2. negligemus *f*.*

(*22*) 1. Christianorum ignaviam *b*, f*.* 2. peregranus *O.* 3. Italie: internos *N.*

(*23*) 1. gloriam *N.* 2. difficillima *f*.* 3. sanctitas *O.*

(*24*) 1. ideo: ymo *O.*

(*25*) 1. namque *f*.* 2. qua *N.* 3. tu non solum Sicilie ac Apulie *O.* 4. Christianus aliquis princeps Syrie totius coronam abste accipiet! O quam felix erit ille dies in quo evangeliste Marci divini leonis illius terribilis facies Alexandriam suam recipiet ac non minus Egyptum quam Venetias illustrabit! *f*.* 5. Christiane *C.*

(*26*) 1. principium *C.* 2. Europia *W.* 3. aut in: et *f*.* 4. onsecutus *N.* 5. optinent *N.* 6. aut *W om.* 7. aut *f*.*

(*27*) 1. unus *N.*

(*28*) 1. Aphricam *N.* 2. On the legend of Charlemagne's crusade to the East, see G. Raushen, ed., *Die Legende Karls des Grossen im 11 and 12 Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1890, 52 sq., 103 sq., 142 sq. 3. unde *CO.* 4. per multa tempora *post* loca *b* add.*; per multa secula *post* loca *f* add.* 5. regna solum *b*, f*.* 6. que *in* Christianorumque *N om.* 7. in *N om.* 8. See (*28*)2 above.

(*29*) 1. primus *N.* 2. cum *C.* 3. Turchorum *f* (et similiter postea).* 4. faciulius *N.* 5. iamque *C.*

(*30*) 1. loge *N.* 2. aderint *codd.* 3. morbi prius *b*, f*.* 4. resilire *b*.* 5. hominum *N.* 6. malorum omnium *b*, f*.*

(*31*) 1. Affricani *C.* 2. Aphricanos *N.* 3. Europa *N.* 4. immisso *N.* 5. sactorum *N.* 6. Macumetistas *N.* 7. fuisses *C.* 8. queque *N.*

(*32*) 1. sit *COW.* 2. antecellat *f*.* 3. animi *C.* 4. invictos *C.* 5. fusse *N.* 6. Itale [Italie *C*], que plurimum ad preclarum hoc facinus conferre possunt, tanto facilius forsan componentur quanto diuturniore bello vexate sunt. Fessi enim iam omnes et de futura victoria dubitantes auctoritate summi pontificis et tua, glorisissime Cesar Auguste, ab intestinis bellis ad externa non difficile animos convertent. Videbunt enim sic se non solum evasuros, que formidant, eminentia sibi pericula, verum etiam amplissimam gloriam opesque ingentes consecuturos. Cumque nihil aliud hec civilia concitet bella (civilia enim hec Itala, imo autem Christianorum omnium, inter se mihi videntur [invidentur *W*]) quam animorum contentio, qua semper in peiora homines ruunt, dum alter alteri cedere [credere *C*] nolit, non dubito quin tua et summi pon-

tificis tum virtus, tum felicitas omnia queat pacare proposito universis transitu, per quem alter alteri minime cedet, sed omnes spurcissimis hostibus crucis dominabuntur. Hac ratione non modo Italia, sed universa Christianorum respublica, que pie Christum colendo [collendo *C*] uno baptismi caractere unitur, ad unum animum pacis et transitus in Egyptum conducenda est. In Egyptum, dixi quoniam nulla sanctorum recuperatio locorum diuturna stabilisque futura est nisi principatus servorum radicitus evertatur et universa Egyptus Christianis principibus cedat. Huc, huc igitur omnes cogitationes tuas, dive Auguste, cum benedictione summi pontificis conferas et alios hortare, inflamma, impelle *f**.

(*33*) 1. anteaquam *f**. 2. est *C om.* 3. apparati *N*. 4. immortale *N*.

(*34*) 1. (omnes enim iam alloquor) *post* principes *f** *add.* 2. nullas *N*. 3. omnibus *post* Christianis *f add.* 4. grata *ante* decora *f**. 5. superabitis *f**. 6. hec *f** *om.* 7. et *ac deinde* et qum *Trap. in N del.* 8. quim *C*.

(*35*) 1. res *N*. 2. prius: iam fere *b**. 3. prius . . . composita: ceterisque regionibus compositis *f**. 4. oportunissimus *N*. 5. fortuna *b**, *f**. 6. Herusalem *N*. 7. temporibus vestris *f**. 8. ipsis *f**. 9. gloria *C*. 10. immortalis glorie *O*. 11. Machumetistatus *O*; Turchorum *f**. 12. Sed ego quidem que necessaria sunt pro viribus et alias perstrinxi. Hec enim ad illustrissimum quoque Aragonum atque Apulie regem scripsisse memini et in futurum scribere non recusabo. Vestrum vero est, inclite Auguste vosque principes, cogitare utrum temporalem eternamque gloriam simul et opes ac regna similiter velitis an, quod nefas dictu est, omnia istis contraria, que, quamvis principibus universis impendeant, tibi tamen, Auguste, tibi, inquam, et a deo et ab hominibus cuncta tribuentur *post* augeatur *f** *add.*

CXXXI

Exhortation to Pope Nicholas V *ad defendenda pro Europa Hellesponti claustra*.

MSS: 1. W. Berlin, SB, lat. oct. 177 (= B).
2. Lucca, BC, 341, ff. 176r–181r (= L).
3. Vatican, Ottob. lat. 1170, ff. 357r–365r (= V).

This is one of the two pieces addressed to Pope Nicholas V which George mentions in a letter of 13 October 1452, sent from Naples to his son Andreas (Text XII). George wrote the *exhortatio* at Naples (see sect. (*10*): "ut hic fertur, et quidem Rome"), and presumably only a short time before his letter to Andreas.

The central theme of the oration is the warning that the capture of Constantinople by the Turks will open the gates ("claustra") that have hitherto restrained the unclean people of apocalyptic literature, Gog and Magog. See *George of Trebizond*, 128–30, 134–35. It was because apocalyptic tradition demanded that Gog and Magog be restrained specifically by Alexander's gates (see A. R. Anderson *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations*, Cambridge, Mass., 1932) that George deliberately confused the geography of Constantinople by calling for the defense of the "Hellesponti claustra," which were already in Turkish hands, rather than more accurately for a defense of the Bosporus, where Constantinople was located.

George makes reference to a letter of Manuel II to Demetrius Cydones, in which the Greek Emperor explained how he refused Timur the Conqueror's request to cross the straits from Asia Minor to Europe (sect. (*8*)). The letter is obviously apocryphal. Timur came west only during the campaign which led to his great victory at Ankara in 1402, while Demetrius Cydones, the addressee of the supposed letter, had already died in the winter of 1397–98. No such letter is reported by E. Legrand, *Lettres de l'Empereur Manuel Paléologue publiées d'après trois manuscrits*, Paris, 1893; or R.J. Loenertz, ed. *Démétrius Cydonès. Correspondance*, 2 vols., Vatican City, 1956–60 (ST, 186, 208); or Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus*. However, both Barker, 507, and M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne de Timur en Anatolie (1402)*, Bucarest, 1942, 86, note the reports of Chalcocondyles (159.22 sq. in the Bonn ed.) and Giovanni Cornaro (Alexandrescu-Dersca, 128), asserting that Timur wanted to cross into Europe. I do not doubt that George read such a letter. It apparently was a propaganda piece written to show the value of Constantinople to Europe and to demonstrate the good intentions of the Greek Emperors towards the West.

The two main arguments of the exhortation, that Constantinople is the first defense of Latin Christendom, and that its capture will transform the Turk into a thalassocracy, are ones George had already used in at least one earlier work, his lost exhortation of 1428 (see apparatus (*5*)2). The reference George makes to an earlier appeal for a Crusade in his *Rhetoricorum libri V* at (*5*)3 is a bit forced. One should also consult his *exhortationes* to King Alfonso of Aragon and to Emperor Frederick III (Texts CXXIX, CXXX).

Of the manuscripts, B and L are related, but not mutually dependent. B, V, and, occasionally L read "Helesponti", which I have regularly and silently altered to "Hellesponti". I have also preferred "Turcus" to all other variants of the name.

G. Ravegnani, "Nota sul pensiero politico," discusses this oration.

Ad sanctissimum patrem[1] papam[2] Nicolaum Quintum[1] ad[3] defendenda pro Europa[3] Hellesponti claustra brevis Georgii Trapezuntii exhortatio.[4]

(*1*) Pietas et devotio mea erga sanctitatem tuam, beatissime pater, me cogit de magnis atque arduis rebus, quas ad te pertinere et ipse putem et omnes fateantur, breviter scribere. Nam etsi nihil earum te fugiat[1] (quod me a scribendo ad hunc diem retraxit), mihi tamen ipsi visus[2] tandem[2] sum, nisi scripsero, nunquam satisfacturus. Quare, si de rebus certe maximis parumque ad me pertinentibus dicere videbor, veniam mihi oro sanctitas tua prebeat, maxime quia et generis coniunctione (Grecus enim sum) et fide (quia Christianus) et pietate in te mea, ut dixi, compulsus diutius tacere non potui.

(*2*) Constantini urbs, beatissime pater, in extrema Europa Hellespontique faucibus prudentissime ab illo condita, rebus ipsis cognoscitur Parthos a totius Europe imperio ad hunc usque diem repulisse. Non ignorat sanctitas tua sepius Chosroem[1] (sic enim priscis temporibus Persarum, quos et Parthos dicunt, imperatores vocabantur) usque ad obsidendam urbem illam devenisse et loci natura Pontique claustris parva manu repulsum turpiter inde[2] fugisse. Nemo preterea nescit cui res statusque Christianorum[2] vel minime cure sit Turchos Atumanorumque[3] domum, que a Persis originem trahit, multis iam[4] annis ingentibus[5] in Asia regionibus innumerisque perdomitis[6] Greciam invasisse, subiectisque sibi Thessalia, Mysia,[7] Epiro,[8] Thracia,[9] ad Pannonias usque imperium propagasse, nec aliud magis eos a vastatione totius Europe retinere quam Constantinopolin.[10] (*3*) Ea enim in ipsis Hellesponti faucibus condita potentiam ipsorum dividit, dividendoque deiicit[1] atque infringit. Quis nescit memoria nostra, cum Eugenius papa parvam classem in Hellespontum misisset ac Pannones in crucis inimicos optimus ille pontifex concitasset,[2] in summum discrimen rem ipsorum atque imperium adductum fuisse, imo actum omnino iam ex illo tempore de Turcorum potentia esset nisi aut[3] negligentia aut[4] timore[4] aut corruptione classis illa quasi[5] ad spectandos Turcorum de Christianis triumphos missa fuerit? In Constantinopoli sic resederit ut in opportuno exire tempore nullo pacto voluerit. Non est opus multis ad[6] hec[6] uti rationibus. Nemo enim est qui nesciat Constantinopolin in duas maximas partes imperium Turcorum dividendo infringere. Que res Pannonias et[7] superiores Christianorum partes ad hunc diem servavit.[8] (*4*) Nam quamvis eos sepe Turcus[1] studerit[2] fugaritque, nullam tamen, dum timet ne parata classe Hellesponti fauces Christiani occupent ac transitum suum ad Asiam intercludant, victoriam[3] prosecutus est ne, dum longius absit, Asiam interceptus amittat. Hec ipsa Constantinopolis multas urbes quas in Grecia tenent Catholici, multas insulas, imo Italiam quoque Europamque ipsam universam tutatur, quod[4] re[4] omnes intelligent si (quod deus avertat) Turcus eam expugnaverit. Nullus enim locus aptior est ad parandam ingentem[5] classem ipsa Constantinopoli, nullus commodior. Immissa in[6] Ponto materia[7] defertur aquis in portum. Ita Turci,[8] qui re navali minimum[9] possint, maxime poterunt, si tantum illius urbis potientur.

(*5*) Hec, beatissime pater, non nunc solum, sed olim[1] etiam ipse[2] predicavi,[3] nec

pretermisi ubicumque potui hac de re scribere quod tertius tractatus tertii libri meorum Rhetoricorum breviter ostendit.[4] Sed ipsa quoque tua sanctitas testis est secundo statim anno pontificatus tui non nihil me de salute illius urbis retulisse. Scit hoc Firmanus Cardinalis quocum sepissime tunc[5] hac de re contuli quique magnitudnem animi tantam ostendit ut impendio suo triremem unam ad classem afferre si legatus ad tantam rem mitteretur, iure iurando affirmarit.[6] Quorsum hec, beatissime pater? Ut ipse quoque pro virili parte communi Christianorum utilitati et[7] sanctitatis tue glorie scribendo pro viribus conferam. (*6*) Nam si urbi succurres illi, quod et[1] debes, quia Christianorum pater, et potes tum propter opes ecclesie, tum quia solus Christianos principes ac populos alios auctoritate ac precibus, alios minis atque terrore partim seculari, partim et maxime spirituali adversus inimicos crucis facile concitabis, omnes Romanos pontifices qui fuerunt quique futuri sunt gloria nominis tui offuscabit. Litteris, litteris, inquam, solum id[2] facies,[3] beatissime pater, si magno rem, ut decet, animo aggredieris.[2] Illud tibi veniat in mentem, supplico, quantum glorie tam in celo quam in hoc seculo hac[4] re non neglecta tua sanctitas consecutura sit, tantum ignominie (quod deus avertat) amissa Constantinopoli habituram esse. Non enim de una vel altera urbe agitur. Sed latius hec omnia nascabuntur[5] quam possit brevi oratione explicari.

(*7*) Non ignorat sanctitas tua semper Europam cum Asia universa contendisse, Europam de Asia universa sepius triumphasse. Omitto fabulosa que de Baccho, de Persa, de Hercule dicuntur. Miltiades[1] devictis Darii copiis, Themistocles[2] pulso Xerse ingentique illo exercitu deleto triumphum de ipsis duxerunt. Alexander Magnus universam vastavit Asiam. Asiatici autem[3] conati quidem[4] sunt in Europam sepius transire, sed Hellesponti claustris repulsi fuerunt. Id prudentissimus imperator Constantinus recte intelligens, quoniam labi iam militarem disciplinam videbat, timens ne occupatis claustris. Europam[5] Parthi, qui tunc vigebant, vastarent, in Constantinopolin[6] ab eo conditam Romanum imperium transtulit, que urbs eos huc usque repulit. (*8*) Qui ergo hec claustra sepius invadere ac eripere conati sunt, eos sibi temperaturos claustris omnino habitis credemus, presertim cum olim sola divisione continentis et alternis bellis[1] exagitati ab Europa dissiderent?[2] Nunc autem et Machumet illos legibus suis contra Europam animet, incendat, inflammet? Nonne temporibus infancie nostre Thamyris,[3] quem Taberlam vulgo dicunt, quoniam desperabat posse per Hellespontum transire, periculosum iter per glacies Scythie ad Thanam[4] usque fecit; deinde victus frigoribus ad claustra tandem venit, proavoque istius Turci[5] superato, transitum a Manuele imperatore ad vastandam Europam[6] postulavit? Extat epistula illius prudentissimi imperatoris ad Demetrium Cydonem[7] ubi scribit noluisse tradere claustra Parthis[8] cum esset successor Constantini, qui ad tutelam Europe Constantinopolin[9] condidit.[10] O virum sede Constantini dignissimum! Hec perstrinxi ut multo magis modo quam olim transitum in Europam ad delendos Christianos cupere gentes totius Asie ostendam, quippe[11] qui non dubito undique illos adversus Europam ruituros si a suis teneri[12] claustra resciverint, unde sepe repulsi sunt.

(*9*) Et nimirum[1] hec sunt[2] illa claustra, quibus apertis Gog et Magog, ut evangelista scribit Iohannes,[3] nomen Christi delebunt. Nec alia esse possunt. Nulla enim inveniuntur in orbe terrarum que hostes Christi a veris cultoribus eius separent[4] preter hec. Hec enim sunt que Christianismum, qui in Europa solummodo est, iam multis defendunt[5] seculis. His ergo sibi penitus apertis et in potestatem suorum redactis, Christianismi (proh nephas![6]) sequitur interitus et Antichristi scelestissimis regnis[7] aditus preparatur. Quare qui horum defensionem spernit[8] ac negligit, is universam Europam et Christianismum sponte sua Machumetistis,[9] hostibus crucis, tradit.[10] (*10*) Unde non possum ingenti admiratione non affici, imo certe stupere quomodo[1] non nulli (ut hic fertur, et quidem Rome) potentes sic alienum a cruce domini nostri animum habeant ut aperte predicaverint dignos esse Constantinopolitanos qui pereant, quasi nunc ageretur utrum Grecia defendenda sit, que iam olim deiecta est, et non de claustris, qua transitus Asiaticis, Christianorum hostibus,[2] patet in Europam, utrum retinenda sint Christianis an Machumetistis tradenda. Sint sane digni perditione Greci. Iam diu perierunt. Tu, beatissime pater, Europam tibi, principibus Christianis, ac Romane ecclesie defende.[3]

(*11*) Hoc enim agitur. Id[1] in deliberatione vertitur. Proh dolor! Quasi recondita res sit atque occulta,[2] rationibus causam aperire cogimur. Id igitur modo, ut iterum dicam, queritur utrum Hellesponti claustra, qua possint tuto ac libere, quandocunque voluerint, in Europam Asiatici transire, Machumetistis tradenda an Grecis defendenda. Sint sane ipsi heretici. Attamen, ne de universa semper dicam Europa, multas[3] Catholicorum urbes sic tutantur[4] ut non possint ipsi perire quin[5] simul Pera, Capha, Nigripontana[6] insula, Creta, multeque alie urbes ac regiones quas Catholici et tenent et incolunt in servitutem inimicorum concidant crucis. Propter ergo pauciores Grecos, plures Catholicos una cum illis trademus et portas in Europam[7] Asiaticis aperiemus? (*12*) Ille cuius tua sanctitas[1] vices gerit in terris, si paucissimos in Sodomis et Gomorris[2] sodomitarum dissimiles[3] reperisset, omnibus propter illos paucos pepercisset, nos innumeros virtute preditos et Catholicos homines[4] propter paucorum trademus heresin[5] nec divinam indignationem formidabimus, presertim cum etiam[6] ipsorum Grecorum conversio desperanda[7] omnino non sit? Sed sit desperata[8] penitus. Ego[9] tamen, siquis[10] mihi optionem daret[11] Grecusne esse malim an Machumetista eaque[12] conditio afferretur[13] ut necesse esset vel in opinione Grecorum, quam rectam non esse fateor, vel in Machumet impietate mori, crucem domini nostri amplexus acceptisque sacramentis ecclesie more Greco quam libentissime quasi Grecus spiritum emitterem. (*13*) Quorsum hec? Ut similiter ipse optionem eis afferam qui non esse defendendos Grecos inter Christianos audeant[1] dicere. Interrogabo enim ipsos utrum ut Greci an ut Machumetiste nature vellent[2] concedere. Si ut Machumetiste respondebunt, patet negatio trinitatis; patet negatio crucis; patet contemptus omnium sacramentorum ecclesie; aperta est infidelitas eorum; patefacta impietas. Sin ut Greci, cur malunt[3] eos Grecos qui restant ad infidelitatem Machumet impellere? Nam qui deserit nec defendit quos potest, is certe tradit. Quodsi una cum Grecis multo plures etiam Catholici[4] traduntur, nonne potius erit moriendum Christianis quam Hellespon-

tus Machumetistis sine sanguine tradendus, presertim illis quos ego audivi ea de causa rubeis insigniri galeris ut ostendatur omnibus pro cruce domini vel suum effundere sanguinem paratos?[5] (*14*) Qui ergo,[1] si de ipsis solum ageretur, servandi essent ut Greci potius sint quam Machumetiste,[2] ii[3] una cum innumeris Catholicis negligentur atque tradentur, et maxime cum hinc[4] toti Europe non parvum immineat periculum? Nec[5] tritum apud agrestes quoque proverbium nos monebit,[6] quod illi alteros alteri hortantur, ut vicine domus incendium non minus quam sue curent extinguere?[7]

(*15*) Quid si Greci non sunt digni ut sic pereant, imo digni sunt, inquam,[1] (decreta enim sacrosancti Florentini[2] concilii[2] iam decennio negligunt) vituperandi certe aliterque castigandi, sed non infidelitati tradendi. Nolo nunc longior esse in repetendis patrum[3] historiis. Nemo est Christianus paulo doctior qui nesciat non statim post concilia, quibus ab heresibus revocati sunt homines, omnes hereticos veritati adhesisse, sed multis post annis extinctis omnibus inveteratis in heresi, Catholica opinio tandem ab omnibus approbata, quod itidem futurum mihi de Grecis videtur. (*16*) Omnes enim iam doctiores eorum pro decreto Florentini concilii pugnant, quod permaximum est, preterea nobiliores omnes ac ditiores, ut sperandum sit citius veram ipsorum fore conversionem quam multi opinentur. Mihi autem, sive quoniam nimirum[1] id[2] desidero sive alia quadam de causa, temporibus sanctitatis tue universam Greciam integre atque sedulo Romane ecclesie precepta suscepturam libet predicare, sed modo diverso[3] quam in temporibus Eugenii factum fuit, ut manifeste divina providentia credatur tante rei gloriam studiosis eius concedere. Sed id, quasi coniectura inanis,[4] modo pretermittatur.

(*17*) Illud etiam atque etiam repetatur, non esse ipsos negligendos ne una cum eis plures quam ipsi sint Catholici pereant, ne opes Turcorum et[1] precipue navales copie crescant, ne incendium inde ad alias Christianorum partes[2] confletur. Sed vide, vide quid[3] modo afferam, beatissime pater. Audeo dicere dignissimos esse Grecos, a quibus pericula per Turcos illata repellantur. Quis non recordatur heri ac nudius tertius, cum Thessalonicen,[4] nobilem[5] Thessalie urbem, non possent ipsi a Turcis defendere, ne Christiani qui eam urbem incolebant ad infidelitatem verterentur, consilio[6] Manuelis illius imperatoris ac filiorum Venetis traditam fuisse.[7] (*18*) Venetiis ipse fui quando de hac re agebatur et tam Grecorum quam Venetorum animum magna fui admiratione prosecutus, Grecorum quia Italis se subiicere potius quam Turcis maluerunt, Venetos[1] quia, etsi aperte videbant non potuisse illam urbem navalibus defendi copiis, sed opus fuisse terrestri expeditione non parva, quod in illis ipsi facere partibus[2] non poterant, fidei tamen ratione solum ac[3] zelo, ne tantus Christianorum numerus infidelitati tradi a se videretur, urbem illam libenter susceperunt et quantum in ipsis fuerat defenderunt. Merito igitur qui se Catholicis tradere malunt quam Turcis, ab ipsis Catholicis a faucibus Turcorum eripientur ne[4] Turcorum impietas magis approbari videatur quam Grecorum, qualiscunque sit, pietas.

(*19*) Quid illud, quod paulo antea tetigimus, an tota Europa Grecis non debet

quod Manuel imperator, non priscus aliquis, sed pater istius qui modo est, Taberlano[1] negavit transitum ne totam devastaret Europam? Atqui poterat magna inde sperare: Turcorum a Grecia expulsionem et imperii sui non parvam amplitudinem.[2] Non erat[3] enim[3] illi dubium quin Taberlanus[4] Turcis occidione occisis[5] et universa Europa vastata per eundem transitum in propria remearet.[6] Unde magna quedam certaque amplitudo imperii[7] sui sequebatur. Noluit tamen ceteros Christianos propter amplitudinem suam[8] et suorum ille delere. Eius modo filius, beatissime pater, opem a sanctitate tua, que totius Europe caput est, adversus[9] inimicos crucis petit. Et non est dignus qui impetret,[10] sed repelletur inanis?[11] O me miserum! Vereor ne indignitas rei indignum me aliquid dicere faciat! Dicam tamen quoniam res non petit solum, sed etiam flagitat. (*20*) Si ipse quoque dedignatus tradet claustra Turcis[1] citius nec, quousque possit, resistat, credat mihi sanctitas tua, credat, inquam, cito videbimus mare superum atque[2] inferum, idest, totum quo Italia cingitur classibus ingentibus Turcorum perfervere. Quod ergo illum facere nullo pacto vellet,[3] sanctitas[3] tua[3] ad id omnia[4] auxilio destitutum[5] impellet, et Turcis de Constantinopoli preclarum largietur triumphum ut inde ferociores alias Christianorum partes invadant. Non enim dabunt se otio. Utinam aut[6] nimium timidus aut nimium stultus sim! Ego enim sic existimo, quam primum Constantinopolin[7] habuerint universam, statim Europam animo aggressuros; et, si putabunt se impares[8] aut si votis suis fortuna non respondebit, convocabunt iam adapertis claustris omnes Asiaticas gentes in Europam.[9]

(*21*) Ad hec omnia veniat, oro, in mentem, non esse sanctitatem tuam unum ex principibus atque regibus Christianorum, sed caput omnium, nec secularem solum habere potestatem, sed ipsius Christianorum fidei atque religionis principem ac[1] defensorem esse, neque id hereditate habuisse, sed electione divinitus ad gubernacula[2] totius Christianismi constitutum esse. Quasobres fit ut ex ipsius pontificatus debito Christianos defendere, infideles oppugnare, ac ecclesiam Christi amplificare quantum fieri potest tenearis. Nemo enim est adeo mentis inops ut non videat ad hec tria totum pontificis animum, omnes cogitationes, curam, studium, operam, vires denique omnes esse conferendas.[3] Que omnia utinam[4] in defendenda Constantinopoli adsint! Nam preter Grecos Catholicorum etiam urbes multe defenduntur, infideles oppugnantur, fides, si deus[5] victoriam concesserit, propagatur ecclesiaque amplificatur.[6] Dubitabis in sede Petri[7] constitutus fidelibus opem ferre, Christianos tutari, et opes ecclesie pro[8] ecclesia fundere?[9] Aut expectabit tua sanctitas aliorum principum exhortationes cum ultro non magis verbis quam rebus omnes ad tam sanctum opus ipsa hortari[10] debeat? (*22*) An forte ambigit beatitudo tua qualis secularium animus principum[1] ad hanc rem, quos ipse paratos esse arbitror pro viribus ita ut nihil aliud nisi pondus auctoritatis tue videantur expectare? Idque tum coniectura de ceteris assequi videor firmiore, tum certis rationibus. Video Alfonsi[2] Aragonum et Utriusque Sicilie regis animum ad omnem causam Christianorum suscipiendam paratissimum.[3] Suscipiendam dixi? Imo iam suscepisse suscepturumque ardentius si sanctitas tua,

que huius rei princeps[4] ex apostolatus officio est, re quoque[5] principem se prebuerit. Consideret ergo beatitudo tua ne indignum et presentibus et posteris facinus videatur, infideles magis a seculari principe quam a summo pontifice, cuius maxime interest,[6] oppugnari et ab illo Christianismum[7] defendi, a maximo pontifice negligi. Quare,[8] beatissime pater, eia age, rumpe moras, eumque animum accipe quem in tanto Christianorum periculo habere summus pontifex debet. (*23*) Nam si omnibus hanc rem viribus suscipies (dicam quod et spero et opto), cogentur etiam Christiani principes[1] et populi magnitudine huius periculi intestina interim bella pretermittere, incitabunturque non nulli glorie[2] magnitudine,[2] cuius expertes se fore non patientur, non nulli timore sempiterne ignominie si in tam sancto proposito preceptis summi pontificis, hoc est, tuis, non obtemperaverint, multi cupiditate amplificande potentie,[3] multi ut indulgentias peccatorum consequantur, quas in tanta re sanctitas tua de sprituali ecclesie thesauro[4] per sanguinem Christi acquisito omnibus contra hostes crucis militantibus liberaliter[5] largietur. Quasobres si nulla unquam[6] dici fingique honestior summo pontifici primum,[7] deinde Christianorum principi causa,[8] quorum utrumque alterum propter spiritualia, alterum[9] propter opes et imperium seculare[10] tenet sanctitas tua, si nulla unquam preclarior res gesta, nulla gloriosior, sive celestem sive huius seculi gloriam consideres, si nihil utilius commodiusque hac etiam utilitate caduca, si denique[11] nihil sanctius,[9] nihil acceptius deo creatori nostro, dubitabit sanctitas tua vel moras tergiversando queret, nec statim omni opera, ope, studio, cura, diligentiaque Christianismi[13] causam amplectetur? (*24*) Cumque sicut[1] hec summa[2] omnia sunt vereque atque eterne glorie si Christianismus[3] defendetur, ita si claustra Hellesponti Turcis tradentur, qua securi possint in Europam Machumetiste omnes transire, summa infamia, summum dedecus, summa ignominia sequatur, hanc tantam rem contemnes ac negliges? Nec veniet sanctitati tue[4] in mentem a temporibus Darii ad hunc usque diem[5] hunc[5] transitum Persas[6] semper cupiisse, nec unquam habuisse nisi per pontes, ut Xersis, testatur historia?[7] Et nunc temporibus tuis per[8] clarissimas urbes Asiam Europe quieti sic coniungent ut unico imperio suo classeque ingenti constructa terra marique secure Christianismum[9] aggrediantur? Absit hec macula! Absit hoc nefas! Absit hec turpitudo! Absit hoc dedecus a[10] temporibus sanctitatis tue![11]

(*25*) Credo ipse, beatissime pater, si universalis ecclesie voces audiri nunc possent, sic tum ad omnes Christianorum principes atque populos, tum maxime ad te, sponsum suum quia vicarium sponsi sui, capillis scissis pectoribusque percussis, pre dolore muliebriter[1] vociferare: "O me, me[2] miseram! O me infelicem! Maiores me modo premunt dolores quam unquam,[3] imo nulli omnes labores quos tuli sunt, si presentibus comparentur.[4] Fundebatur olim sanguis filiorum meorum pro sponso meo. Nec ego quiquam ammittebam, imo magis magisque in dies crescebam. Nunc ipsorum quoque Christianorum diminuta fide, interitus mihi undique imminet, invadebant heretici. Olim me mihique[5] illudebant, sed fuerunt homines,[6] veritatis amici, pauci quidem, sed qui virtute sponsi mei perilluminati, ab omnibus

me insidiis inimicorum[7] liberarunt. (*26*) Nunc ita fides vitiis hominum debilitata labat ut si (quod[1] absit!) Asiam Europe Turci firmiter iunxerint,[2] actum sit de cruce sponsi mei, actum de sacramentis meis, que sanguine[3] sponsi mei consecrata sunt, actum de me[4] ipsa. Omnes enim Machumet perfidiam amplectentur. Quid faciam? Quo me vertam? Unde auxilium implorabo? A sponsone meo? Iratus[5] est[6] propter negligentiam filiorum meorum. Iratus est quoniam presules universas opes meas non in tutanda decorandaque me, sed[7] in voluptatibus suis consumunt.[5] Iratus est quia cum multi ipsorum prius secularibus iuvant, nullo exemplo imbecilliores iuvant ad fidem, sed omni vita sua ipsos[8] dehortantur a fide. Iratus est quia minus ipsi quam seculares credunt. Iratus est quia in principali sede mea heretici maxime honorantur.[9] (*27*) Sponsi ergo mei[1] vicarium adibo, virum omni scientia et omni litterarum genere decoratum. Ipsum rogabo. Ipse, ut credo, miserebitur mei. Ego te per has lacrimas, Nicolae Quinte, obsecro atque[2] obtestor primum ut sacerdotalem luxuriam deprimas, ut debes, ut hereticos abigas[3] omnique modo coneris sponsum meum placare (semper enim ab ipso rei omnis initium petendum est), deinde ut opibus meis in me tutanda utaris et cruce sponsi mei sublata in hostes crucis omnem Christianum populum concites. (*28*) Non sum adhuc ita perdita ut crucem sponsi mei universa Europa non consequatur.[1] Nam alii per se ipsos, alii pecunia hostes[2] crucis aggredientur. Vidi, vidi ego ipsa iubilei anno universam Europam propter indulgentias Romam confluxisse.[3] Quid ergo facturi sunt pro defensione crucis, ubi et indulgentie maiores et gloria maxima et opes seculares non parve auxilium conferentibus proponuntur? Duce mihi solummodo atque principe opus est, quem, si eligere deberem ex omnibus, non alium quam te mallem. Nunc tu mihi, quem optarem, sorte datus es princeps. Ex⟨s⟩urge igitur, tutare claustra Hellesponti.[4] (*29*) Hec sunt illa claustra, hec non alia quibus omnino apertis (O fides! O pietas!) totus, ut audis, Gog et Magog in me opprimendam effundetur. Miserere dolentis. Miserere filiorum meorum. Europe claustra mihi serva. Ibi muros sempiterne glorie tibi conde.[1] Ibi turrim erige que non illico, postea quam[2] nature vi concesseris, diruetur, sed perpetuis temporibus nomen tuum tam Grece quam Latine[3] predicabit et transitum a caducis his regnis ad celestia preparabit. Me deinque tibi divinitus commissam defende nec patiaris penitus[4] tuis temporibus opprimi ne tu quoque ignominiosis[5] perpetuo noteris nominibus.[5] Noli enim dubitare illum pontificem cuius negligentia Hellesponti claustra hostibus crucis tradentur proditoris Christianismi et precursoris Antichristi[6] nomen habiturum."

(*30*) Hec huiusmodi[1] complura ecclesiam nunc ipsam ad te, sanctissime pater, effundere[2] puta. Non[3] misereberis eius? Ego medius fidius[4] liberorum omnium[5] mortem prius videre et super sanguinem ipsorum me ipsum mallem proicere quam tutantia Christianismum[6] claustra in manibus Turcorum videre. Non enim ignoro multo melius esse mori quam misere vivere. Quodsi mors etiam preclara futura sit animoque[7] profutura, illam, illam,[8] inquam,[9] potius quam miseram vitam optarem.[10] Sed longius vi rerum, quam vellem, productus sum. Illud velim: conscientiam meam

mihi testanti credat sanctitas tua, me partim gloria nominis tui, partim communi utilitate[11] commotum tacere non potuisse, sed tanto vehementius causam[12] glorie tue suscepisse quanto maiore in sanctitatem tuam[13] devotione ardeo. (*31*) Nam sicut qui zelotypi non absque prudentia in uxores sunt, non presentes lapsus,[1] cum nullum videant, sed futuri dedecoris timore agitantur, sic ipse, cum desiderem[2] ad astra semper[3] tue[4] sanctitatis nomen efferri vehementer, formido[2] ne (quod deus et nunc et semper avertat) fundamentum eversionis Christianorum et Antichristi adventus in tuis temporibus (proh nephas!) iaciatur. Qua turbatione animi factum est ut, dum vim rerum sequar,[5] parvitatis mee oblitus sim. Quare loquacitati mee tua sanctitas, oro, ignoscat, presertim quoniam siquid impetu orationis parum commode dictum sit, ipse non dictum esse velim.

(Tit) 1. patrem . . . Quintum *partim amputatum in B ad marg. superiorem.* 2. papam *B om.* 3. pro defendenda Europa (*mutatum ex* ad defendenda pro Europa) *L.* 4. *tit. in V*: Per Georgium Trapesuntium ad d. Nicolaum papam V^{m}.

(*1*) 1. fugit *L.* 2. tandem fugit *V.*

(*2*) 1. Crosoem *L.* George has confused the title with the personal name of two famous kings of the neo-Persian Sassanid dynasty, Chosroes I (531–79) and Chosroes II (590–628). 2. inde fugisse . . . Christianorum *partim amputatum in B ad marg. superiorem.* 3. Otumanorumque (*mutatum ex* Atumanorumque) *L*; Athumanorumque *V.* 4. iam *V om.* 5. vigentibus *L.* 6. predomitis *L.* 7. Missia *L*; Mylia *V.* 8. Ephrho *L.* 9. Trhatia *B*; Tracia *LV.* 10. Constantopolim *LV.*

(*3*) 1. deicit *L.* 2. George is referring to the Crusade to save Constantinople which Pope Eugenius IV promised and then promoted after the successful union with the Greeks at the Council of Ferrara-Florence. The Crusade cumulated in the terrible defeat of Varna on 10 Nov. 1444, when most of the Christian forces, along with their leaders, King Ladislas of Hungary and Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, perished. On that occasion, the Venetian fleet, in large part subsidized by the pope, had failed to keep its rendezvous on the coast of the Black Sea with the Christian army and had failed to prevent the Turkish army from crossing the Bosporus. See Gill, *Council*, 328–53. 3. autem *B.* 4. aut timore *B om.* 5. que si *V.* 6. ad hanc rem *L.* 7. ac *L.* 8. servavit diem *L*; servavit: servant *V.*

(*4*) 1. Thurcos *L.* 2. fuderit *LV.* 3. victoria *B.* 4. qua de re *L*; re: res *V.* 5. urgentem *V.* 6. in *L om.* 7. materia: via *V.* 8. Thurci *L, et semper similiter postea (cf. (4)1.).* 9. nimium *V.*

(*5*) 1. olim *L om.* 2. ipse *V om.* 3. This was the theme of a lost oration he wrote in 1428, which we know of from a letter of Francesco Filelfo (see Text LVII; and *George of Trebizond*, 22 and 129). 4. Cf. *RLV*, Aldine Press, Venice, 1523, f. 34v, "locus a minore": ". . . ut si dicas timendum esse ne Teucri mare occupent quoniam fabricatores navium optimos habeant, nisi constet lignorum quoque ac ferri, quibus tanquam materia naves conficiuntur, copiam eos possidere, nisi maritima loca portusque habeant in quibus tum instruere, tum conservare naves possint, nisi peritos nautas ac navigationis expertos Teucros esse intelligamus, nisi denique utilitas aliqua quasi finis appareat, qui eos ad occupandum mare induere possit, nihil illa ratione efficies." 5. tum *L.* 6. affirmavit *L.* George is the only source for this piece of information concerning Cardinal Domenico Capranica, whose support of a crusade is otherwise well known; see M. Morpurgo–Castelnuovo, "Il cardinal Domenico Capranica," *Archivio della R. Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 52:(1929):1–146, 56. 7. ac *L.*

(*6*) 1. et *L om.* 2. id facies . . . aggredieris: *sic in (2)*2 *supra*. 3. facis *V*. 4. hoc *V om*. 5. vascabuntur *L*; vastabuntur *V*.

(*7*) 1. Milciades *L*. 2. Temistocles *B*; *ex* Themistodes *V corr.* 3. etiam *L*. 4. quot *L*. 5. Europem *V*. 6. *vide (2)*9. supra.

(*8*) 1. belli *V*. 2. dissident *V*. 3. Thamiris *ex* Thamaris *V corr.*; Thamiris *L*. 4. Tanam *L*; Tanaym *V*. 5. Turchi *BL*. 6. Asiam *BV (forte lapsus auctoris)*. 7. Cidonem *L*. 8. Partis *B*. 9. Constantopolim *V*. 10. See the introduction. 11. qui *V*. 12. Turci *V*.

(*9*) 1. nimirum: meminerim *V*. 2. sint *V*. 3. Apoc. 20:7. 4. seperent *B*. 5. defendit *V*. 6. proh dolor *L*. 7. egregius *V*. 8. sprenit *B*. 9. Machumetis *L*; Machometistis *V*. 10. tradidit *V*.

(*10*) 1. quum *L*; qn̄s (?) *V*. 2. Christianorum partibus hostibus *L*. 3. degendenda *L*.

(*11*) 1. et *ante* id *V add*. 2. oculta *B*. 3. multis *2L*. 4. tueantur *B*. 5. qui *V*. 6. Nigropontina *L*. 7. in Europam *L om*.

(*12*) 1. sanctitas tua *L*. 2. Gomoris *L*. 3. *ex* similes *L. corr.* 4. homines *V om*.. 5. heresim *LV*. 6. etiam *B om*. 7. deseperanda *B*. 8. deseperata *B*. 9. ergo *L*. 10. quis *B*. 11. daret: et *V*. 12. eaque: ea *B*. 13. afferetur *BL*.

(*13*) 1. auderet *B*; audent *V*. 2. velint *V*. 3. malint *V*. 4. catholicos *L*. 5. On wearing the cross see J.A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, Madison, Wisconsin, 1969, 118–19.

(*14*) 1. igitur *L*. 2. Mechumetiste *B*. 3. ii *L om*. 4. huic *V*. 5. hoc *B*. 6. movebit *L*; *ex* movebit *V corr.* 7. extingere *B*.

(*15*) 1. inquit *codd. correxi.* 2. consilii Florentini *L*, consilii *BL*. 3. patruum *B*.

(*16*) 1. nimium *L*. 2. id *L om*. 3. converso *codd. correxi.* 4. inani *V*.

(*17*) 1. Turcorum et *V om*. 2. regiones *LV*. *Cf. sect. (20) ad med.*: Christinaorum partes. 3. quo *L*. 4. Thessalonicem *LV*. 5. mobilem *B*. 6. concilio *V*. 7. George is referring to the cession of Thessalonica to Venice by the Greeks in the summer of 1423; see *George of Trebizond*, 17, and 413, addendum to p. 17, n. 70. For a useful calender of many of the relevant documents, see Thiriet, *Régestes*, 2:204–11, 215–17. C. Martzios, *Mnemeia Makedonike historias*, Thessalonica, 1947, 30–99, fully discusses the cession, but gives the documents only in Greek translation. 7. concilio *V*.

(*18*) 1. Venetorum *V*. 2. partibus *V om*. 3. a *V*. 4. nec *V*.

(*19*) 1. Tamberlano *L*. 2. See (*8*)10. above. 3. enim erat *V*. 4. Taberlano *L*. 5. occisus *V*. 6. remaneret *B*. 7. imperii *B om*. 8. suam *L om*. 9. adversos *B*. 10. impetretur *B*. 11. inanes *L*.

(*20*) 1. Teucris *V*. 2. et *V*. 3. S. tua vellet *V*. 4. omni *B om*.. 5. destiturum *B*. 6. autem *V*. 7. Constantinopolim *codd.* 8. impares *L om*. 9. Auropam *B*.

(*21*) 1. et *B*. 2. nec *V*. 3. gubernaculi *L*. 4. considerandas *L*. 5. cum *codd. correxi.* 6. si deus *B bis*. 7. ecclesia multiplicatur *L*. 8. Petri sede *V*. 9. pro *B bis*. 10. fundare *B*. 11. hortari *L om*.

(*22*) 1. sit *post* principum *L add*. 2. Alphonsi *L*. 3. Alfonso was very active diplomatically before the fall of Constantinople in an attempt to stave off the advance of the Turk, even negotiating with Moslem princes in North Africa and Egypt, but he does not seem to have seriously contemplated a military expedition against the Turk until after the city fell; see F. Cerone, "La politica orientale di Alfonso di Aragona," *Archivio Storico per le provincie napoletane*, 27(1902):3–93; 28(1903):154–212. 4. princips *B*. 5. quam *B*. 6. est *V*. 7. Christianismium *L*. 8. Quare *B om*.

(*23*) 1. principes Christiani *L*. 2. glorie magnitudine *V om*. 3. glorie, aliter

potentie *L*. 4. tesauro *B*. 5. spiritualiter *L*. 6. nunquam *B*. 7. primo *L*. 8. causam *V*. 9. alium *V*. 10. secularem quod *L*. 11. deinde *L om.* 12. nihil sanctius *B om.* 13. Christianissimi *L*.

(*24*) 1. sicut *B om.* 2. summa *B om.* 3. Christianissimus *L*. 4. tu *B*. 5. diem hunc *L*. 6. Persias *B*. 7. Herod. 3.33 sq. 8. pre *L*. 9. Christianissimum *L*. 10. a *L om.* 11. tue sanctitatis *V*.

(*25*) 1. muliebri *B (forte* -ter *ad marg. excisum*). 2. *secundum* me *L om.* 3. quam unquam *V om.* 4. comperentur *B*. 5. que *in* mihique *L om.* 6. homine *L om.* 7. inimicorum *V om.*; ab insidiis me inimicorum omnibus *L*.

(*26*) 1. quid *B*. 2. iunxerint firmiter *L*. 3. sanguinem *L*. 4. me *B om.* 5. iratus propter . . . consummunt *L om.* 6. est *B om.* 7. sed *B om.* 8. ipsos *B om.* 9. If George intends his personal enemies here, he would mean, at this point in his life, Lorenzo Valla rather than Cardinal Bessarion.

(*27*) 1. mei *V superscrip. sed deinde del.* 2. et *L*. 3. alligas *L*.

(*28*) 1. sequatur *V*. 2. hostis *L*. 3. I.e., in 1450. 4. Helesponti claustra *L*.

(*29*) 1. concedi *L*. 2. quod *B*. 3. nomen tuum *post* Latine *L add.* 4. penitus *V om.* 5. ignominie scis perpetua noteris nobilibus *L (sed* nobilibus *del.)*; perpetuo noteris: perpetue voceris *V*. 6. anticristi *B*.

(*30*) 1. cuiusque *B*; huiusmodi que *V*. 2. effundere *L om.* 3. num *L*. 4. medius fidius quidem *L*. 5. meorum *ante* omnium *L add.* 6. Chistianisimi *L*. 7. animeque *L*. 8. illam *secundum L om.* 9. inquam *B om.* 10. aptarem *B*. 11. ultilitate communi *V* 12. causam *ex* tamen *V corr.* 13. tua *V* .

(*31*) 1. presenti lapsu *L*. 2. desiderem . . . formido *L om.* 3. perpetuo *V*. 4. tui *B*. 5. sequor *V*.

APPENDIX C

THE EXHORTATIONS OF CARDINAL BESSARION

Bessarion's corpus of *Epistolae et Orationes contra Turcos* is found in Migne, *PG* 161, 641-76. The oration *De periculis* corresponds to text III in the edition (651-9), while *De discordiis* is text IV (659-69).

CARDINALIS BESSARIONIS

AD PRINCIPES ITALIÆ
DE CHRISTIANORUM CLADE IN CHALCIDE EUBŒÆ,
DE PERICULIS ITALIÆ IMMINENTIBUS EXPUGNATO HYDRUNTO,
DE SEDANDIS DISCORDIIS
ET DECERNENDO BELLO IN TURCAS,

ORATIONES

Quibus subjicitur persuasio ex Demosthenis *Olynthiaca*.

Notatu (1) et lectu dignissimæ sunt epistolæ duæ, quæ Orationibus præmissæ leguntur in codice Regio Taurinensi num. 1165, membran. sæc. xv. Cum enim Bessario orationes has Latine a se compositas misisset ad Guilielmum Fichetum, Sabaudum, rectorem Universitatis Parisiensis, sacræ theologiæ doctorem, ac virum, ut habet Rossottus in *Syllabo Scriptorum Sabaudorum*, pag. 250, *magnum doctrina, eruditione et prudentia*, ut res iis contentas Galliarum regi aliisque principibus explicaret, eas Fichetus, in hoc volumen collectas, obtulit Sabaudiæ Ducibus, scripta ad eosdem epistola, qua eos hortatur, ut bellum fortiter capessant, atque aviti splendoris memores pro religione atque Italiæ salute defendenda vires suas operamque præstent. Porro autem Bessarionis epistola est hujusmodi :

Bessario, episcopus Sabinensis, cardinalis Nicænus, patriarcha Constantinopolitanus, reverendo et doctissimo patri magistro Guillermo Fichero, sacræ theologiæ professori in collegio Sorbonæ Parisii, amico nostro charissimo.

Reverende et doctissime Pater, amice noster charissime, audimus non solum in philosophia et sacrarum litterarum cognitione vos elaborare, sed etiam in eloquentiæ studiis dicendique ratione diu versatos, eaque mirifice delectatos. Quo in genere etsi nihil habemus quod magnopere cupere debeatis, tamen mittere statuimus orationes quasdam hoc tempore a nobis editas pro gravissimis periculis quæ Italiæ Christianisque omnibus imminent : non magis quidem ut vel sermonis puritatem vel A orationis vim ac præstantiam desideretis, quam ut intelligatis quanta malorum procella in Christianæ reipublicæ capita et fortunas impendet, remque et apud serenissimum regem et apud alios qui opem ita maxime ferre debent, ut possunt, explicetis totam ac persuadeatis : quod potius acerbum est, quam obscurum, non exarsuram Italiam tantis malorum incendiis, quin flammarum globos longius evomat. Id ne accidat, cum regnorum omnium causa optare debent, quorum salus in discrimen adducitur, tum propter immortalem Deum cujus religio sanctissima vexatur ac trahitur ad interitum, magna Christianorum omnium clade. Valete.

Ex Urbe die decima tertia Decembris 1470.

Sequitur Ficheti epistola ad Sabaudiæ duces :

Illustrissimis principibus Amadeo Sabaudiæ duci ejusque fratribus, Guillermus Fichetus, Parisiensis theologus doctor, patria vero Sabaudus, salutem plurimam plurimo cum honore mittit.

Si serenissimi principes vestræ desideratis excelsæ familiæ nomen in dies altius extollere, profecto vestram Christianæque reipublicæ causam, quam hujus opusculi suavissima lectio vos docebit, alacres accingemini cognoscere cognitamque tueri. Bessario, Sabinensis episcopus, Constantinopolitanus patriarcha, quem vulgo Nicænum cardinalem appellant, operis sui, quod ipse nunc ad vos mitto, mihi jam pridem exemplar reddi jussit, simulque præcepit ut apud Christianissimum regem et prin- B cipes alios Christianæ defensionem religionis adversus immanissimum Turcum suaderem, quemadmodum illius ad me litteris cognoscetis. Interea, tametsi tantum illius fascem humeri fragiles mei initio recusabant, tamen vicit in primis Christianæ religionis amor et dignitas, in qua non tantum initiatus sum ut cæteri, verum hanc etiam in doctoralis meæ professionis susceptione docturum me defensurumque morte posthabita spopondi. Vicit etiam gravissima Bessarionis patris auctoritas, cui pro singulari sua dignitate sanctissimoque desiderio defore labores meos non patiar, sed ne vitæ quidem in tam opportuno negotio subire recusabo discrimen. Vicit præterea quam inde futuram multo

(1) Pasini, *Codd. mss. Taurin. Lat.*, p. 290.

majorem ecclesiæ domus vestræ gloriam spero certissimeque conjecto. Tantisper tamen exsequi quæ jubebantur intermisi, dum hic et istic domestici belli rumores compositas certo cognoscerem. Nunc vero in tempore non committam, ut aut parumper defuisse professioni meæ jure coar̃uar, aut Nicæno Patri pro virili mea parte non paruisse, aut quod opus cæteris Galliarum Germaniarumque principibus, et aliis viris præstantibus alias ipse coram exhibui dedique compluribus, alias meis cum litteris misi, aliasve brevi missurus sum, Vestris videar Serenitatibus occuluisse ; præsertim cum bellum quod ab omnibus Christianis monet Bessario perfidis hostibus inferri, nullius quam vestra magis intersit, quippe quibus domestica jactura et illata familiæ contumelia stimulus ad hoc bellum esse debebit. Enimvero non recuperandi solum Cyprici regni, sed Armenici quoque et Hierosolymitani vobis debiti, vobis erepti, reliqua nimirum ista certissima spes est. Quin copiis vestris simulque Christianorum omnium quas Bessario vestros in hostes ciet et armat, haud sane difficile fuerit opulentissima vestra regna perfidis illis prædonibus eripi vobisque restitui. Neque vincendi facultas antehac fuit major aut posthac vobis adfutura est, utpote tot una domo lectissimis fratribus sanguine natis præcelso, ætate florentissima, magnanimis bellatoribus, domi forisque pace fruentibus, summis ducibus, summis regibus, summis imperatoribus fœdere, beneficio stirpeque conjunctis, Ecclesiæ sanctæ Romanæ amicissimis, Pontifice maximo non solum optimo et sanctissimo, sed et conterraneo et vestri generis amantissimo, et in hoc conficiendo bello duce socioque vobiscum adfuturo. Quin si pergitis arma capessere, mox omnem Germaniam, Galliam, Hesperiam, Italiam, omnem denique animum Christianum vestros in hostes incendetis, vestrum in amorem tutelamque rapietis. Optimus bellator quisque signa vestra subibit, tuebitur atque extollet. Crux ista candida per omnem Græciam, unde quondam domum vestram se victricem extulerat, hostes fidei effulminabit, e servitute, situ, squalore, luctu, carceribus Christianos dissolvet quamplurimos. Denuo Macedones Amadeique vestri tropæa imponent sua Græcis limitibus. Vobis siquidem non modo genus antiquissimum a Macedonibus est, verum quoque gentilibus vestris fatale fuit Græciæ dominari. Etenim proavus ille vester Philippus armis sibi suæque familiæ subjecit Græciam omnem. Alexander, ejus filius, qui imperii jus a patre percepit, tum latissimum terrarum orbem Macedonibus bello quæsivit, cujus splendidissima prosapia quoquo postea se contulit semper dominata est. Nam in omni terrarum parte, nedum in Græcia, stirps Macedonica regna pulcherrime gessit. Quin etiam a Græcis posteaquam nomen imperii ad Germanos trajecit Pontifex maximus, Othonibus in Saxonum avita vestra domo longa quippe successione sedem accepit. Et quod præcellentiori Pontifex merito postea voluit electionis jure mandari, tanquam hæreditaria Saxonibus præcellentia fuisset, multis sæculis assidua imperii electio Saxonicis ædibus hospitata est, imo propemodum hæreditaria potius facta. Quandoquidem non tam a proavis Macedonibus a quibus coeperat eo se recepit, sed ob egregia quoque militiæ facinora splendorem alibi parem postea non invenit. Nam Saxo principibus aliis ad tuendam rempublicam Christianam, nedum privatam se semper exemplo proposuit. Quod etiam postea fuit ad hoc tempus a Sabaudis principibus successionis jure possessum, hoc est, ut imperium justo bello sibi suisque pararent, publica continenter justeque regerent, aliena tuendo domesticas opes augerent, factis famam extenderent longe lateque.

Hæc, Serenissimi Principes, cum legetis vel intente legentem quemplam audieritis, tum primorem quidem illum Sabaudæ caput familiæ Beroldum Saxonem coram oculis ponite, quæso. Iste, quem summis digitis ut aiunt tantum attingam, dum Arelatensibus regibus, ut erat bellator egregius, semel et sæpius suppetias tulit, sedes interea futuræ tam amplæ suæ familiæ mucrone clypeoque invenit, inventasque hostili cruore iterum iterumque respersit. Illa Maurianna tantæ fundamentum domus vestræ (quam terrom ferro toties penetravit), illi Secusani Saluciani marchiones comitesque Pedemontani (quos toties fudit), quid præter Beroldinum ensem acre unquam senserunt ? Nimirum hæc me tacente loquantur illi. Neque silebunt qua gloria militari Beroldi filius Humbertus postea fuerit, aut Amadeus alter, aut pronepotes quos longa serie prætereo : qui bellica quippe laude magnis regibus etiamsi maximis conferantur impares nequaquam fuerunt. Atque nisi tales tantique fuissent, neutiquam istas opes domi haberetis, neutiquam istas urbes opulentissimas, neutiquam ad Helvetios, Allobroges, Ararim, transque Padum ad Insubres et Nicianum æquoris portum vestrum tenderetur imperium ; perpetuam imperii vicariam Sabauda domus non obtineret ; ex comitibus duces, ex ducibus reginas regesque non fudissent. Haudquaquam enim oscitantes (ut plerisque principibus vitio datur), aut domesticis litibus impliciti vitam vixerunt; at vero partim industria, labore, consilio, viribus, opera, diligentia, beneficio, justo imperio, publicæ libertatis custodia, partim dimicationibus, pugnis acerrimis, castra castris, urbibus urbes, imperium imperio brevi conjunxerunt, utpote quibus artibus amori subjectis iisdem hosti terrori semper fuissent. Equidem si Sabauda tellus ista (quam ipsi quotidie conculcatis) imbutum sanguinem exsudare posset, profecto prædonum cruore tota rubesceret totaque redundaret, quos illi cruentos istinc ejecerunt, quosque repugnantes istic ceciderunt. Quin etiam isti si loqui daretur, Ego (diceret), principes Sa-

baudi, vestris ab istis majoribus opes, libertatem, quietem, splendorem, famam gloriamque accepi, quæ nunc vos præter meum morem principes una septem alo. Vereor ab armis ne desuescatis. Sæpe dum unicum caput habui, victricia longe lateque vexilla tuli. Vereor ne fortassis, dum ipsi domesticum otium pacemque (ne dicam mollitiem) nimium amatis, effeminati, timidi segnesque videamini. Ne si diutius quæ turpiter sunt amissa, repetitum ire cunctamini, quæ tenetis hostibus detis auferendi audaciam. Majoribus vestris sive illis Æacidibus, sive istis Saxonibus, sive mei Beroldi successoribus ne sitis tandem pudori non parum quidem ipsa vereor. Quas quidem ob res aut aliquando dispudeat tam clara sidera vestros majores meminisse, aut quod illi vobis iter ostendunt, in Cyprum, in Armeniam, in Salomonis et Christi regnum ocius præripite. Ensem vestrum Græcia moratur, prædonum hostiumque thesauri opima vobis spolia futura sunt. De vestris hostibus triumphus ducendus ; vos posterique vestri ditissima regna perenni tempore possessuri estis. Jamjam a sedibus Græcis tandiu extorres Philippi Alexandrique fato suo reverti domum suam concupiscant, quibus nimirum (si quis modo gentilium suorum sensus est post mortem) regnum Græcorum sibi restitutum iri videbitur, quando vos decus sui generis gloriam reliquam sui nominis eo sentient adventuros. Atque utinam jam nunc alteruter illuc alicunde posset emergere ! Haudquaquam illic profecto stirpis suæ nomen, auctoritatem, oblitterari silerive pateretur : quin ad istas vestras usque Alpes iter a Græcia ferro vobis aperiret. Neque vos Philippi aut Alexandri deterreat magnitudo, tanquam nequidquam conari debeatis, quod illi confecerint. Imo vero cum illis longe vobis commodior honestiorque belli gerendi ratio est. Unus Philippus unusque Alexander : alter Græciæ, alter orbis civitates omnes armaque constravit ; vos septem, unum aut alterum, aut tres ad summum prædones non exstinguetis ? Ab uno Philippo unoque Alexandro regna quidem aliena, imo ab illo per Græciam, nunc ab hoc longe per orbem quæsita sunt. A vobis vestra sine sanguine, sine sudore, sine reclamatione detrahentur ? Uni Philippo unique Alexandro, milite Macedonico quidem pauco parvaque sæpe manu, utri Græcia (quæ tunc armis libertatem maxime tuebatur), utri vel externus patuit orbis : vestris et omnium Christianorum armis illa propemodum inermis non parebit ? Deprecantibus ac repugnantibus grave servitutis jugum imposuit Philippus, imposuit Alexander. Expetentibus et implorantibus suam Sabaudamque libertatem negabunt Sabaudi ? Usque nempe adeo nobilis illa Græca natio (quæ nunc delitescit) servitutem semper exhorruit (præsertim abhorrentem a Christo), ut cum mox suis perfidis tyrannis bellum a vobis aliisque Christianissimis principibus parari conjectura capiet, ad se venturis pristinæ libertatis restauratoribus iter vel ferro vobis recludet, alimenta, naves, portus, impedimenta, stipendia, præsidia sponte sua ministrabit, sese sua sponte quoquoversus signa verteritis, vestrum sub imperium missura parituraque veris piisque dominis. Et eo quidem libentius quo tyrannis invitius diutiusque servivit. Ecquid ego privatus pro vestræ præstantis prosapiæ commoditatibus, pro terreno requirendo imperio, pro repetendis proavorum sedibus vos longius pluribusve cohorter, quandoquidem, vel istis quidem omnibus posthabitis, ipsa quippe Christianæ religionis salus eo vos quo princeps Bessario monet optimo jure traducere debet. Hac nempe in parte nihil opus fore cohortatione mea duxi, ne fortassis aut supervacuo labore rem quæ se vobis abunde persuaserit, nunc ipse intendam, aut quam sibi divinus Bessario provinciam delegerit, optimeque gesserit, inermis ego post hunc gerere tuerique pergam. Nam (ad vos causamque quod attinet) militaria quidem insignia quibus enses, clypei, vexillaque vestra multo magis refulgent, spolia sunt, quæ Christianam causam vobis persuadere verbis facilius omnibus possunt, quippe quæ quartus a Beroldo vestræ domus princeps Amadeus Christi victis ab hostibus domum reportavit. Unde reportavit ? Utique reportavit e Græcia. Quod si nunc ore rotundo magnaque Græco more sonaturum Bessarionem attente placet audire, ibitis alacres, victores iterum reversuri. Sed quas huic homunculo vestro suoque mancipiolo litteras ille reddi jusserit, quid et negotii mandarit, jamjam animo propitio benevoloque percipite.

REVERENDISSIMI CARDINALIS NICÆNI

BESSARIONIS

AD ILLUSTRISSIMOS INCLYTOSQUE ITALIÆ PRINCIPES

CONTRA TURCAS EXHORTATIO.

(Romæ ap. Antonium Bladum MDXXXVII in-4. Bibliotb. Mazarin. n. 12,560. Insunt etiam orationes aliæ anti-turcicæ eodem tempore habitæ.)

I.

BESSARIO, *episcopus Sabinus, cardinalis Nicænus illustrissimis atque inclytis Italiæ principibus.*

Cum Nonis Sextilibus, illustrissimi principes, infelicissimum illud novum Euboicæ eversionis ad nos primum allatum fuisset (1), essemque, supra quam dici potest, animo anxius atque sollicitus, ut vix respirandi causam viderer habiturus, accidit forte fortuna ut eo ipso die, dum essem ita affectus, abbatis cujusdam viri optimi Bessarionis litteras a Neapoli, ubi nunc monasterio Sancti Severini, ex consortio beatæ Justinæ, præfectus, acceperim, quibus ad me scribebat majestatem regiam miro quodam animi studio ad propugnationem Christianæ fidei et immanissimi hostis nostri interitum ardentem atque inflammatum esse. Illis mox respondi, et ut litteras meas Celsitudini regiæ ostenderet, monui. Duas præterea orationes pro tantæ rei magnitudine ac periculis Christianæ reipublicæ imminentibus edidi : altera demonstratum est fortunam periculaque ista ad omnes pertinere; altera vos, Italiæ principes, ad concordiam bellumque in hostes decernendum adhortatus sum. Id enim meo convenire officio putavi. At cum facilius auditores persuaderi soleant quo gravior auctoritas et fides dicenti tribuitur, Demosthenis, philosophi nobilissimi summique oratoris, orationem quam in ejus generis causa habuit e Græca lingua in Latinam converti, plane ut omnes intelligant me neque inutilia, neque amplissimorum virorum opinionibus aliena consulere. Ea omnia vobis mittenda censui, ut aut ipsi legatis, cum per publica negotia, quæ multa quidem et gravia sunt, licuerit, aut aliis legenda atque referenda tradatis. Sunt enim cunctis vobis principibus communia, qui, ut feliciter huic nobilissimæ provinciæ præsetis, ita in posterum felicius eam regatis, et nos optamus, et vos conari debetis.

II.

BESSARIO *cardinalis* BESSARIONI *monacho atque abbati salutem.*

Deploranti nuper mihi Christianorum hominum calamitates et acerbissimam Chalcidis Euboicæ eversionem, litteræ abs te redditæ sunt in quibus cum ea legissem quæ de regiæ majestatis animo studioque non mediocri ad sedem Christi tutandam perscripsisti, collegi paululum mentem et respiravi, cœpique optare vehementer ut re præstet quod verbis ipsum promisisse affirmas. Sed, nos infelices! vereor ne criminibus nostris ab immortali Deo deserti, crudeliora præterea et graviora patiamur; demum, percunctando, alter alterum exspectando, culpam in alios rejiciendo, ad ultimam labamur perniciem. O miseros Christianos! o cæcos Italos! Accelerandum, Bessario, ut vel ex hoc sæculo Deo volente migremus in ævum illud sempiternum, vel in aliam aliquam regionem advolemus. Non exspectemus certe Turcum Italiam invadentem. Huc spectat, crede mihi, hoc agit, ad hoc se comparat, hoc conatu omni et studio contendit. Et dicam, dicam plane, proh dolor! assequitur quod cupit, nisi a somno capitali, quo paulatim exstinguitur, expergiscatur [sc. Italia], nisi concors atque uno consensu fortiter totisque viribus tanto furori resistat, nisi omissis figmentis, causis quas jactare solet, ut justæ videantur, inani verborum fuco, re ipsa, opera, armis, crucis hostes adoriatur. Versabatur olim in discrimine Byzantium. Nulla Italiæ pars misit subsidia, rem alienam putabant omnes; periculum ad se non pertinere falso credebant. Atqui postea senserunt quot mala experti sunt, quot Christianorum fortunæ, opes, imperia in Turcorum dominationem redacta; Trapezuntiorum, Sinopensium, Mitylenorum, Peloponnesiorum, Cariæ, Ciliciæ, Mysiæ, Pannoniæ inferioris, Epirotarum, Illyricorum magna ex parte, postremo Euboicorum. Quid ita? Quia noluerunt quinquaginta millium aureorum sumptu in tempore opitulari Byzantio et ab ea communem hostem propulsare. Inde nimirum hæc omnia ivere perditum, et, tanquam ovilis foribus confractis, lupus in oves impetum fecit; intra earum latera versatur, insultat, cædibus furit, et tum eorum quæ amisimus unumquodque centies millenis millibus non imprudenter emeretur, imo vero numero infinito quinquaginta millia superat. Quid nobis cum Græ-

(1) Anno a mundo condito 6978 (Chr. 1470) sultanus bellum Venetis fecit, terra marique aggressus. Expugnavit Chalcidem Eubœæ, ubi quidquid masculini sexus duodecimum ætatis annum excedens erat, interfecit propter deditionem recusatam. *Turco-Græcia*, p. 25.

cis, quid cum Mysiis, Illyricis, Pannonibus? Pereant, inquiunt, quid nobis? Nobis bene sit, intereant alii. Huc ades, bone vir, ita siquidem libertas tua servari poterit. At non intelligis tuis viribus (tuæ enim Christianorum vires sunt), tuis, inquam, exhaustis viribus tanto te imbecilliorem et inferiorem fore, quanto hostis tuus superior ac potentior evadet, cum quo tandem tibi dimicandum est. Satis enim videberis ab hoste impetrasse, si quod Polyphemus Ulyssi, ut in fabulis dederit, ut ultimus conficiare. Tibi vel invito cedendum erit et servitus subeunda, quæ cum per se turpis sit, tum conditione domini turpissima. Obsessa Chalcis in Eubœa, urbs quondam florentissima, unde Cumas in Campania deducta est colonia, unde homines manarunt qui Neapolim incoluerunt, vi capta, eversa, ferro ignique consumpta. Classis Turcorum amplissima per totum Hellespontum vagatur; fugatus navalis Venetorum exercitus aufugit, celit loco, latitat. Turci victoriæ furorem superbissimum in omnes insulas illas debacchantur, avertunt omnem ordinem, ætatem, sexum in prædam; vastant agros, depopulantur. Quid ad nos? Venetis curæ sit. Recte cum iis actum. Utile enim esset, si gravioribus incommodis conflictarentur: quietius cæteri et securius viveremus. Tantum otio nostro accedit quantum illis imperii demitur; si quis qui malis istis ingemiscat, is Venetus, Venetorum partibus favet, non audiendus, contemnendus. O turpem hominum ignorantiam, o vecordiam, o insanabile odium, o inimicitias stultas et inauditas quæ in auctorum viscera sæviunt, quamvis in alios susceptæ videantur! Veni, Bessario, fugiamus simul. Proximus tu es periculo: ego proximus. Paulo enim post præsto erit Brundusii navalis Turcorum exercitus, præsto Neapoli, præsto Romæ. Jam ita mari dominatur, Venetis cedentibus, quemadmodum terra. Ita istis consultantibus, trajicient in Apuliam multa militum millia, quibus abundant; ab iis quotidie fient incursiones in agrum Neapolitanum, in Romanum. Cedamus, inquam, tanto turbini, ne nos pariter hic opprimat; infensi illi quidem sunt nomini meo, et tibi propter me, tametsi nullo eos unquam affeci incommodo aut lacessivi, non sane quia noluerim, sed quod non potui. Locutus sum multa, cum alibi, tum in senatu. Nunquam destiti suadere, monere, prædicere, rogare. Non defuit voluntas, quæ inimicissima illis; hanc acriter ulciscentur. Veni, demus locum iræ.

Delirat Bessario, insanit, senex, frigidus, timidus. Profecto, mi Bessario, non insanit Bessario. Tu es mihi testis, cum Bononiæ essemus, et adhuc Paschalis nuncupareris, atque allatus esset infelicissimus ille de urbis Byzantinæ excidio nuntius, ea omnia, quæ postea consecuta sunt, me futura prædixisse, non ea sane de causa, quod vel prudentia excellenti, vel divinationis furore aliquo despicerem quæ alii non cernerent; sed quod omnibus qui privatis studiis et affectibus vacui essent, ea omnia palam erant et in promptu. Tum sibilis vulgi, honestorum moribus explodebar. Judicabant dementem, somniis deditum. Risus de me non parvus, ut scis, excitatus. Sed tamen, proh dolor! evenerunt omnia, ut prædixi. Caveant, qui hæc audiunt, ne idem accidat in posterum. Non timidus Bessario in subeundis periculis: timidus in prospiciendis. Posset adhuc inermis, monachus senex, majorem animum et præ se ferre et præstare, quam isti persuasum habeant, modo Christiani principes vellent facere quod possunt, quod debent. Iret ipse in hostem cum militibus, cum cohortibus armatis, cum propugnatoribus crucis ita quidem instructis, ut vires et copiæ, ut legiones hostiles postulant. Quid! agitamusne ista animo cunctis ad hoc dormientibus, dissidentibus inter sese, altero alterius perniciem optantibus et molientibus? Undene Bessario cum altero, senes ambo, incerta valetudine, viribus fracti, arcebunt tantum Turci impetum potentissimi, sanguinem Christianum anhelantis? Ineptum, stultum, inutile. Veni, migremus alio. Relinquamus principibus Italiæ curam istam. Nam et illi nos reliquerunt, atque obaudiunt jamdiu, tanquam e speculo clamantes, prædicentes, proponentes ante oculos eorum pericula. Optemus tamen adhuc ab immortali Deo Salvatore nostro, ut criminibus nostris ignoscat; et fidem, cujus et lator fuit et auctor, quam ad sæculorum finem nunquam occasuram pollicitus in tantis malis, quæ nobis impendent, tum urgent, tueatur. Non intermittamus hortari et rogare principes nostros, ut ad sacrorum, cæremoniarum, totius principatus ecclesiastici salutem, consilia omnia conferant, laborem, industriam, cogitationem, totum animum atque ingenium. Appellemus Siciliæ regem florentissimum, rogemus ut, imperii sui finibus tutandis, neque cura, neque opibus desit. Res ipsi erit cum hoste vicino et potentissimo. Consulant rebus suis Tusci, Ligures, Insubres, Veneti: cogitent quo pacto ab hostili sævitia tuti sint. Nulla inter oves et lupos gratia. Nullum inter profanos homines et Christianos jus amicitiæ. Non donis, non muneribus pacatur hostis immanis, barbarus. Nulla fœderis religione tenetur perfidus, non movetur misericordia crudelissimus. Dominari, præesse, imperare cupit; cruore et flamma cuncta delere vult. Subjugare sibi cunctos studet. Quis illum a tanto victoriæ cursu retardabit? Peragrabit totum Siciliæ regnum. Romam usque perveniet. Quis erit impedimento? Hyperboreine populi, et gentes remotissimæ? At illis tam nullus harum rerum sensus, quam officio alienum putant pro aliena salute sese in discrimen offerre. Galline, Britanni, Germani, exteræ nationes? At procul sunt a periculo: non putant Italiam in medio periculo, magna rerum perturbatione versantem cessare, aut sopitam esse, quam infinitis pene triumphis et hostium spe-

liis decoratam esse sciunt. Italine, quibus hostis imminet, quibus cædem, ferrum, servitutem, exsilia denuntiat et ostentat? At nolunt, negligunt, non possunt adduci ut credant sese adeo propinquos esse periculo; suis viribus confidunt nimium, ut plane verendum sit, ne in suis potius, quam in hostis finibus castrametari atque exercitum alere cogantur. Veni jam, Bessarie; petamus solitudinem et deserta loca. Satis ex rerum civilium statu percepimus. Parum nobis vitæ superest, et mihi qui senior sum, et tibi qui imbecillior. Si aliqua in re consiliorum nostrorum, vocis, corporis, reipublicæ Christianæ usus esset, manendum sane adhuc censerem, adhuc laborandum. Ego vero jam tot annis conatus quoad potui, nihil professione mea, nihil hac dignitate profeci. Tu, quamvis tui ordinis hominibus prosis, plus tamen proficies mecum in rebus contemplandis, ubi, si in desidia ista persistant Christiani, soli Deo vivamus, et nobis ipsis. Alat nos, qui cœli volatilia et bestias agri sua clementia satiat. Neque grave aut difficile fore arbitror divinæ liberalitati duos homunciones, perquam brevi tempore, quod nobis reliquum est, suis opibus sustentare.

III.

Bessarionis, *episcopi, Sabini, cardinalis Nicæni, ad illustrissimos inclytosque Italiæ principes, de periculis imminentibus oratio.*

Multa sunt profecto, illustrissimi inclytique Italiæ principes, quæ ad rem, de qua consulimur cogitando, dicenda, ut facienda a nobis sunt. Ea omnia si persequi in præsentia velimus, nec nos servare modum in dicendo, nec vos in audiendo molestia carere poteritis. Reliquis igitur in aliud tempus reservatis, de una tantum particula disseremus, et ea quidem pernecessaria, quæ si satis a nobis explicari possit, ita ut in animis vestris inhæreat, ac veritatem cogitatione attingere valeatis, facilis ad reliqua futura est via, ut nihil amplius arduum videri queat. Id vero facile nos consecuturos arbitramur, si probabilibus documentis et rationibus ostendere poterimus maxima hæc, quæ impendere cernimus pericula, et gravissimos atque acerbissimos casus, non unius aut alterius, non trium esse, sed totius Christianæ reipublicæ, et in primis Italiæ communia. Etsi enim aliis quidem prius, aliis vero posterius tanta calamitas imminet, ad extremum tamen una omnium futura est pernicies, ac hujus hostis nostri tanta animi vastitas (utinam falsi vates simus!) omnibus tandem miserum atque ignominiosum exitum allatura, nisi fortiter magno animo totis viribus resistatur. Qua in re, si omnes in meam sententiam persuadere potuero, ut non aliter atque ego sentio et verum est, ipsi quoque sentiant, magnam profecto rem fecisse, nec dimidium totius, ut ille inquit, sed opus integrum me absolvisse arbitrabor. Quis enim adeo infirmi atque imbecilli animi est, adeo sui negligens et propriæ salutis oblitus, qui, si viderit A Dei immortalis templa, domos, sedes, aras, focos, sepulcra majorum, leges, libertatem, liberos, patriam in periculo versari, non excitetur adversus hostem, et non modo fortunas omnes, quas aut habet aut habiturus est, sed vitam ipsam in discrimen offerat, et cum dignitate cadere malit, quam cum ignominia servire? Itaque perpetua oratione nobis enitendum est, non ut vobis principibus sapientissimis, quibus hæc sunt magis explorata, quam nobis, ista persuadeamus, sed ut ante oculos iis periculum proponamus, qui, dum procul admodum a periculo se abesse putant, futura prospicere nequeunt. Juvat igitur primum omnium de origine et genere ac viribus Turcorum breviter aliquid commemorare, plane ut omnes intelligant. Hæc B Athumanorum familia, minima Turcorum pars, a quam parvo humilique principio, quam brevi tempore, solertia, diligentia ac vigilantia sua in tantum fastigium venerit, ut jam non modo reliquis nationibus, sed ipsi provinciarum nobilissimæ potentissimæque Italiæ, et imperare assuetæ, stupori ac formidini sit. Turcorum natio, cum aliquandiu Persiam, Mediam, Babyloniam, Arabiam, Syriam et nonnullas alias superioris Asiæ partes tenuisset, tandem cum ab incolis sese in libertatem vindicantibus, tum ab aliis hyperboreis populis inde expulsa, ad inferiores Asiæ partes confluxit; atque ibi multis variisque bellis cum Græcorum imperio Marte ancipiti gestis, ita ad C extremum superior evasit, ut Pamphyliam, Ciliciam, Lyciam, Paphlagoniam reliquaque omnia illa loca in ditionem redegerit. Sed pace foris parta, seditio domi orta est. Nam de imperio inter se ferro dimicare cœperunt. Erant inter eos septem nobiliores familiæ, ad quas factionum rerumque omnium summa deferebatur. Hæ, bellorum diuturnitate fessæ, eas, quas diximus, provincias sorte potius quam armis dividere, ac partiri inter se statuerunt. Ita quod perexiguum et tenue admodum erat imperium, in septem partes divisum. Athumanorum familiæ, ex qua octavus jam regnat nostro tempore Turcorum princeps, Cilicia locaque finitima obvenerunt. Hæc Turcorum res, hoc initium, inde tanti terroris origo. Interjecto deinde D tempore hujus, qui nunc regnat, Turci atavus, a quo hic sextus ordine regni sceptrum accepit, non viribus, non divitiis, non militum numero, non imperii magnitudine fretus, sed ob civiles discordias accersitus a Græcis in Europam trajecit, annus nunc ferme agitur centesimus et tricesimus, non tam iis adversus quos provocatus fuerat, quam iis qui accersiverant perniciosus et pestilentissimus. Paulatim enim serpens, ac sibi, non amicis imperium comparans, usque adeo auxit vires, ut volentes postea eum ejicere non potuerint, satis se effecisse arbitrati, si fœdere icto æquis cum eo legibus vivere impetrarent. Atqui res aliter, quam opinati fuerant, evenit. Etenim gens barbara atque inops, simul ac dulcedinem frugum et suavitatem

divitiarum gustare cœpit, nullum cupiditatis terminum statuit. Ex parvo itaque ac debili initio usque adeo eorum vires centum et triginta annorum spatio creverunt, ut jam non parva Europæ parte occupata, nec Danubii profundissimus amnis, nec Illyrici asperrimi montes eorum impetum retardare possint quin, flumine transmisso, et locorum difficultatibus superatis, illinc per omnem Pannoniam grassentur, hinc in mediam usque Germaniam, et Istros, et Forum Julii penetrent, depopulantes ac fœdantes omnia, ac flores illos provinciarum ferro igneque vastantes. Quo loco illud in primis a nobis animadvertendum censeo, quamvis hæc omnia eo, quo diximus, temporis spatio fecerint, plura tum postremis quadraginta annis, quam nonaginta illis superioribus fecisse. Ita enim natura comparatum est, ut principia virtute quidem ac viribus majora sint, magnitudine vero copiaque vincantur. Ex his item quadraginta annis longe plura his decem et septem patrasse, quam tribus et viginti prioribus. Plura immanis ista bellua Christianorum sanguinem semper anhelans, post Byzantinum excidium solus gessit, quam pater ejus atque avus per omnem vitam fecere, decem, ut sæpe a nobis explicatum est, interea regnis occupatis, ut palam omnibus sit quo magis ejus vires augentur, eo deinde minore negotio, quoscunque aggredi voluerit, posse superare. Quemadmodum enim in disciplinis atque artibus et omni actionis genere fieri videmus, ut major sit postremo quoque anno, quam omnibus superioribus profectus. Unde illud quoque vulgo dici solet, ditescere homini difficile esse, in immensum vero divitias augere facillimum. Ita in rebus quoque militaribus accidit, ut vincere difficile admodum sit, evagari postea per victorias nullius laboris. Quare persuadere sibi quisque facile potest, quid sceleratus hostis, quo nihil dici deterius, nihil crudelius potest, proximo hoc quinquennio facturus sit, tanta jam decem et septem annis potentia comparata, et priori ejus potentiæ addita. Magnæ incomparabilesque sunt ejus vires, inexhausta cupiditas, immensa dominandi libido, scientia rei militaris, ætas florida, corpus laboribus assuetum. An igitur cum velit, et possit, et sciat, dubitare aliquis potest quin toto animo ac tota mente in nos dies noctesque feratur? An vero armatum præstolamur domi oscitantes, ut tum demum credamus, cum eum ante oculos nostros virus exhalantem videbimus? Non decet profecto, nec Italorum potentiæ fas est dicere : Non putaram. Propria Itali sanguinis est prudentia, propria libertas, proprium imperium. An degenerare nobilissimus animus a majoribus suis, et, quem Deus voluit cæteris imperare, servire genti fœdissimæ sustinebitur? Nihil putat Turcus se facere dignius posse, nihil nomini suo gloriosius, quam si in Italiam exercitum ducat, et imperare solitam provinciam suo addat imperio. Atavi ejus parentem, quem primum trajecisse in Græciam diximus, quamvis paucorum oppidorum regulum, divinis colunt honoribus, et perpetua fama ac sempiterna gloria celebrant. Sanctum eum ac beatum nominant, cœlestibus prædicant locatum sedibus, cum princeps bellum adversus Christianos gesserit, et paucis quibusdam subjugatis, eos impiæ Mahumetanæ sectæ dicaverit. Quid eos tandem erga se facturos existimet, si cum tot aliis Christianis populis, Italos quoque (quod etiam cogitare horret animus) subjugarit? An vero gloriæ avidum dubitare poterimus, cum hoc natura omnibus insit, præsertim principibus, et hic sciat nullum sibi ad immortalitatem ampliorem patere campum? Nam de utilitate ambigere, supervacuum certe videtur. Cum enim ratio hæc bifariam dividatur, et hinc quomodo servari quæ parta sunt, illinc quo pacto augeri queant, consideretur, qua tandem ratione quæ habet facilius ac certius servare poterit, quam augendo principatum, et fines imperii propagando? Solent medici in corporibus curandis ea remedia adhibere, quæ aliquando iisdem morborum generibus utilia experti sunt : hoc idem Turcorum imperator facit, et hoc quasi medicamentum quoddam ad ea, quæ parta sunt, conservanda saluberrimum ratus; eo semper utitur, huic hæret, hoc frequentat. Mutare hoc, ut aliud experiatur, non putat tutum. Cupit (ut par est) omnique conatu nititur conservare imperium. Nullam ad id tutiorem esse viam intelligit, quam cum aliena jactura vires suas augere. Quod si assequi non posset, nulla nobis timoris ratio esset, nulla de rebus nostris dubitatio : sed, me miserum! mentiri in hac parte etiam volens non possum. Nihil unquam alicujus facilius fuit. Ad hæc pecuniæ numerus immensus, multitudo militum inaudita, ut cujus exercitum supra ducenta hominum millia sequuntur. Classem habet, quam superioribus diebus in expugnatione Chalcidis non sine stupore audistis quantam instruere vix omnis simul Italia posset. Erat ante hunc diem duntaxat terrestri exercitu potens. Maris imperium adhuc nostris supererat. Nunc vero (o cogitationem quoque tantæ cladis acerbam!) mare quoque Christianis ablatum illis additum est. Licet ei jam libere vagari quo libet, omnes portus, omnes maritimas stationes liberas habet : Ambracium sinum, portum illum nobilissimum Apolloniam, loca quidem Italiæ finitima; quæ olim Romanis in Græciam, si eadem nunc illi via in Italiam erit, perquam breve fretum, brevissima navigatio est. Terrestre præterea iter usque ad Forum Julii patens atque apertum. Mari terraque cingere Italiam potest. Quid est, quod eum vel non hortari atque impellere debeat ad ea, quæ tandiu animo proposuit, perficienda, vel ab iis deterrere possit atque avertere? Audistis multos, qui illum sæpius Italiam optantem, Italiam sperantem, Italiam ac Romam vociferantem intellexerunt; si et cupit, et posse se sperat. Nihil certe est, quod eum possit ab hoc proposito remorari, præsertim

dum Italos confidit nunquam uno consensu in se conspiraturos, nunquam adversus se arma sumpturos. His ille contentionibus spem suam confirmat, et quæcunque optat sibi facile pollicetur. Referam, quamvis nota sit vulgo, fabellam, qua nuper usus dicitur, cum ex suis quidam dissuadere ei bellum adversus Christianos conaretur. Nam cum ille formidandum esse diceret ne Christiani bello irritati tandem in unum convenirent, bellumque adversus eum communi consilio et ope gererent; at ridens, Meminisse, tyrannus inquit, illius fabulæ convenit. Cum lupi aliquando magnam canum multitudinem adventare adversus se forte intellexissent, ingensque propterea terror eos occupasset, unus ex iis, qui inter eos senior erat, in propinquum montem profectus, cacumen ejus, ut canum B specularetur adventum, conscendit. Verum cum eos multos quidem, sed diversorum colorum esse conspexisset, lætus gestiensque ad suos reversus, « Bono, » inquit, « este animo. Tanta enim est in hostibus nostris colorum, morum studiorumque diversitas, ut consentire una ac conspirare in aliquod simul omnes non possint; singulos vero, si venerint, absorbere sine difficultate poterimus. » Hæc est tyranni spes, hæc cogitatio, hoc consilium, nisi spe sua frustretur. Frustrabitur autem si volueritis. Nunquam ferocem illum animum mitiorem reddere poteritis. Habet enim in armis militem decretis perpetuisque stipendiis conductum, qui, sive domi quiescat, sive foris bella gerat, idem C accipit ab ærario militare stipendium, nullo principis sui sumptu, atque eo nomine singulis annis ad imperatorem suum accedere jurejurando adactus, et ei operam et laborem polliceri. Habet præterea longo rerum usu plane perspectum et exploratum non alia de causa tantam gloriæ, fortunarum, imperii accessionem sibi factam esse, quam quod perpetuis bellorum laboribus suos exercuit, hostes profligavit: a quo instituto nusquam discedet, nisi quod utile, quod gloriosum, quod necessarium sibi esse intelligit, stulte omittat. Quo pacto, bone Jesu! sperare possumus aut suspicari illum non moliturum servitutem, cædem, fidei nostræ interitum? Nonne ita natura comparatum esse intelligit, ut nihil eodem situ permaneat, D sed cuncta jugi, vario, novo motu agantur? Quod si amplum habet imperium, idque rerum omnium lege moveri oportet, nonne imminuetur, nisi augeatur? Ne putaveris Turcum augendi imperii studiosum et cupidum; at certe est conservandi. Conservare vero non poterit, nisi augeat: siquidem regressurum est quod non progrediatur, lapsurum quod non surgat, ruiturum quod non majus efficiatur. Qua confirmatus opinione exercitum suum auget in dies, quem habet amplissimum. Aliena invadit, ne sua amittat. An vero sumptus ingentes, tot militum pericula et vulnera, tot expeditiones gravissimas atque alienissimo tempore pro Mysiorum exiguo imperio, pro Triballorum A montibus asperrimis, pro Illyrium penuria eum suscepisse putatis? pro Italiæ autem opibus, pro agrorum feracitate, pro suavitate frugum, pro hac ipsa luce in qua versari cupit, non majora facturum? Hic arcem ponere, hic præsidia collocare ad reliquum orbem subjugandum cogitat; atque ita cogitat, ut per hostium suorum dissensionem id se facile consecuturum speret. Eadem animo concipit, quæ Pyrrhus meditabatur. Ille enim, fuso Romanorum exercitu, totum sibi terrarum orbis imperium plane pollicebatur, quem cum Cineas Thessalus, orator summus, virque sapientissimus, ab Italiæ invadendæ consilio abducere conaretur, Egregii, inquit, bello Romani esse dicuntur, magnoque virorum fortium et militum numero imperare. Quod si eos superare nobis dii dederint, quidnam agemus, Pyrrhe? Quid erit, inquam, nobis? Nulla præterea mœnia, neque Græca, neque Latina, Romanis superatis, nostrorum impetum sustinere valebunt. Totam e vestigio Italiam occupabimus: cujus cum amplitudinem, tum virtutem minime ignoras. Occupata vero Italia, quid tum, inquit, rex, faciemus? Proxima, inquit, Sicilia, insula felix et hominum multitudine frequentissima, sese nobis dedet. Ea autem facile capi potest, nam seditionibus, bellis civilibus, magno rerum tumultu fluctuat. Tum Cineas: An tibi erit, rex, bellorum finis Sicilia? Dii, inquit, faveant, Cinea. Nam Libyam proximasque provincias adoriri, et Carthaginem superare facillimum erit, quam Agathocles, exigua classe profectus, parum abfuit quin caperet. Quibus victis, nullus nos amplius bello hostis lacessere audebit; sed cuncti in ditionem venient. Ita est, inquit Cineas. Constat enim te Macedoniam totamque Græciam in potestate habiturum; sed, partis omnibus, quid tandem agemus? At ille ridens, Otio utemur, inquit, conviviis, voluptatibus, litterariis confabulationibus. At quid prohibet, inquit, nunc quoque voluptatibus, otio isto uti et disputationibus? Quid tantis laboribus, molestiis, periculis quærimus, quæ, cum volumus, efficere possumus? His verbis Cineas regem potius offendit, quam a spe et consilio instituto deterruit. Hæc vobis recensui, ut non defuisse cognoscatis qui eadem cupiditate incenderentur qua Turcus inflammatus est. At Pyrrhus non Cineæ auctoritate et verbis, quo chariorem habebat neminem, non paucitate militum, non Romani nominis fama eximia ab Italia deterreri potuit; et Turcus non audebit, qui Pyrrho militum robore, finium magnitudine longe locupletior est; qui Italiam viribus et studiis dissipatam non ignorat; qui Pyrrhi gesta irridere solet, Alexandro suam æquare virtutem? Nam Alexandrum Macedonum regem ad res gerendas, ad æmulationem gloriæ sibi imitandum proposuit, illum ipsum Alexandrum qui, cum Anaxagoram plures mundos esse disputantem audiisset, ingemuisse dicitur, et lacrymas emisisse, quod unum saltem ex iis totum in ditionem redigere nequi-

visset. Illius gesta legit; in illo totus versatur; neque sane se inferiorem putat, cum jactare plerumque soleat et vocem illam frequentissime usurpare, se decima amplius parte Alexandro superiorem esse : illum enim cum triginta hominum millibus duntaxat et septuaginta talentis arma per terrarum orbem circumtulisse; se vero quanto paratiorem, ditiorem, rebus omnibus abundantiorem! Solent hæ cogitationes, hæc æmulationis studia, solent plerumque res magnas parere, et eo pervenire quo intendunt, præsertim si facultas adsit. At ea profecto Turco non deest, qui se eo quem imitatur locupletiorem existimat. Sic Theseus Herculis, sic Themistocles Miltiadis exemplo ducti, maxima facinora ediderunt. Habet profecto nescio quid fatale Alexandri imitatio, cum ea Julius Cæsar incensus, post res præclarissime gestas, in patriam etiam civilem sanguinem, arma converterit. Quod si illius exemplo agit qui Libyam, Asiam, totum ferme orbem subjugavit; si illius persequitur vestigia; si propagandis imperii finibus laudem non modo æquaturum, sed tanto magis superaturum confidit, quanto majores copias triginta hominum millibus, grandiorem pecuniam septuaginta talentis habet, quo tandem eum spectare et conari existimamus? Quid sibi postulat cupiditas illa pacis cum illustrissimo piissimoque Siciliæ rege componendæ? Quid missi legati? Nam qui nomen Christianum odio habet, omnique crudelitatis genere insectatur et despicit, nullo quidem Christianorum metu, nulla gratia Christiani regis fœdus desiderat, sed ut, oppressis quos universos eodem impetu non everti posse intelligit, tandem quod cupit assequatur. At vero infelicem illum sua fallit spes et opinio, cum superioribus diebus magnifice regeque Christiano digne inclytus rex legatum dimiserit eo responso, ut non solum perniciosam bonis omnibus societatem aspernatus esse, sed et bellum hosti indixisse pro Christi religione facile videatur. Et ne ulla omnino ex parte quid meditetur obscurum sit, cogitate parumper quid illa humanitas sibi vult, quæ immanis barbarus, et ad sævitiam natus, erga nominis nostri negotiatores intra suos fines utitur. Portendit profecto aliud, et omnino prodigium est efferum monstrum in nostros, potissimum mansuetum illic fieri, a crudelissimo hoste amicitiam, a truculentissimo pietatem simulari. Non diu perseverat, quod ab invito exprimitur. Servit temporibus, dum ad optatum finem perveniat. Et quid agat adhuc ignoramus? cum præsertim ita agat, ut nos ambigere nolit. Non continebit domi tantum exercitum; non patietur suorum militum animos effeminari, quos in armis habere ipsi necesse est. Habet enim non paucos Asianos populos infensos et in suam perniciem imminentes; quos in se impetum facturos aperte intelligit, si aut arma deposuerit, aut exercitus famam in contemptum ludibriumque adduci permiserit : quem ut laudibus ornatissimum reddat, ut Asianis hostibus formidolosum efficiat, quo tandem transmittere cogitat? Ubi sui consilii alendi segetem uberiorem videt? ubi magis admiranda conari potest? Non excident gladii; non fluent arma de manibus. Nam socios in officio ac fide continere studet, et eos ipsos quicum quotidie vivit. Maxime est suis omnibus invisus; oderunt socii; non amant familiares; parvo momento ad ipsius excidium ac necem omnes impellerentur. Id quoniam exploratum habet et compertum, bella peregrina suscipere, gerere, conficere statuit, ne domesticam civilemque dissensionem experiatur. Ususque Scipionis consilio foris pugnare utilius arbitratur, quam domo vinci. An extra fines ducturus sit exercitum adhuc dubitas? Non sentis, non plane perspicis? Nonne satis novimus impurissimam illius naturam, turpissimam vitam, sceleratam consuetudinem? Quam facem, bone Deus! quod facinus, quam superbiam? Nihil est quod animo non sorbeat, nihil quod non hauriat cogitatione. Et non putamus illum in nostram calamitatem incumbere, in quorum fortunas fidelissimos socios, antiquissimam religionem, vim, tormenta, cruces, spe, sumptu, labore defixit. Ne illud, quæso, mihi objicias, quod nonnulli nullo rerum usu præditi, nulla vetustatis memoria eruditi jactare solent, peregrinas nationes nunquam Italiam tenuisse, eam sæpenumero tentasse infeliciter. Etenim dum antiqua memoria reputo, dum rerum gestarum seriem ad nostra usque tempora deduco, exteras gentes in Italiam prius arma intulisse, ingentesque invexisse calamitates quam ab Italia accepisse, plane comperio. Nam, ut Gallos omittam, qui vel eo tempore, quo ad Clusium pugnatum est, ut Plutarchus noster tradit, vel ducentis ante annis, ut Livio Romano placet, in Italiam duxerunt exercitum, parva manus Gothorum, ex Thracia Pannoniaque erumpens exercitu collectitio, in Italiam venit, vastatisque Italiæ agris, incensis urbibus, hæc ipsa mœnia ceperunt, incendio, ferro, cæde omnia complentes. Illi parva manu instructi, stoliditate quadam gestientes, assequi potuerunt quod Turcus maximis copiis, certo pertinacique consilio, suscipere ac tentare non audeat? Illi per itinera omnium difficillima transgressi sunt : at Turcus maritimo et expedito cursu legiones suas trajicere dubitabit? Illi in Italiam, quæ alter orbis dicitur, irruperunt : Turcus ita Italiæ vires tentavit, ut contemnat, et non audebit? Quid, si antiqua consectari libet, Pyrrhi luctuosum adventum commemorem? Quid Alexandri Molossi? quid Archidami Agesilai filii? quid Annibalis busta? Nimis magna, nimis vetera nomina repeto. Quid ab Attila, Totila, Saracenis illatas clades oratione mea refricem? At Pyrrhus, credo, potuit quod Turcus nequeat. Ille, salvis tot ducibus, tot exercitibus, quos secundum postea Punicum bellum absumpsit, ad Urbis prope mœnia victore exercitu contendit; Turcus, qui Epirum, Macedoniam to-

tamque Græciam, tot imperia subegit, Italiam in tot principatus et studia dissipatam ac dissentientem timebit? non adorietur? non?... Heu me miserum! Nescio quo orationis cursu eo deducor, quod dolor exprimere non sinit. At ne in veteribus tantum versari videar, in quibus quadrata agmina, jurati milites, tanta imperatorum virtus, tanta legionum patientia ac disciplina constabat, ut ad recentiora nostra revertatur oratio, quid Hunnorum ac Vandalorum manus incondita? Inusta sunt, inusta sunt ipsis mœnibus sempiterna illorum injuriæ monumenta. At si post urbem Christiano nomine conditam exempla te movent, Leonis Pontificis Maximi temporibus, Attilas, de quo paulo ante verba feci, subacta tota Gallia Cisalpina, ad Urbem evertendam exercitum admovit. Cujus furorem barbarum et agrestem Pontificis eloquentia retardavit. Quod si post Annibalem et veteres illas victorias, si post nomen Christi pervulgatum, exterorum hominum sentina ad Italiæ gubernacula confluxit, quid tandem tantam hoc tempore procellam non timemus? quæ profecto tantos calamitatum fluctus allatura est, si eruperit, ut ad nullum ita sit perventura, quin in cæterorum capita redundet. Nam ut in tempestate cernimus procellas, cum in scopulum in quem ferebantur sævitiam illiserint, tanto motu referri, ut quam occupaverint, navem, non aliter obruant, quam cum integræ erant; ita nobis omnibus Barbarorum inundationem timendam censeo. Non enim hostis de una aut altera urbe certare vult; de rerum summa sibi decernendum statuit. Qui dominari cupit, neque superiorem ferre potest, neque parem patitur, neque principis nomen amat. Atque ut illud omittam, grave esse ab aliquo aliquid sperare, miserum ex aliena libidine salutem suspensam habere, turpissimum et luctuosum a communi omnium hoste privatam exspectare veniam, quæ pax tibi cum eo esse potest cujus acerbitas in nostros homines ultra mortem progreditur; qui nullo supplicio satiari potest; a quo si tormenta et cruciatus absint in nostrorum morte, mortem in beneficii partem accipias? O crudelitatem inusitatam, inauditam, feram, barbaram! Cum eo pax esse potest? Pace si frui volumus, bellum gerendum est: si bellum omittimus, pace nunquam fruemur. Quare cum a tam parvo initio in tantum creverit fastigii hostis noster, cum sciat, velit et possit adoriri Italiam, cum id sæpenumero factum fuisse audieritis, ita ut ad omnes periculum attineat, propulsate ac propellite hostis impetum, ut incolumitatem nobis, libertatem Italiæ, salutem omnibus conservetis.

IV

Ejusdem ad eosdem de discordiis sedandis, et bello in Turcum decernendo.

Satis, ut arbitror, de periculis toti Italiæ imminentibus hesterna oratione disputatum est, quæ cum et aperta sint et gravissima, reliquum esse video, ut omni conatu communique consilio et ope ea propulsemus, atque in hostium nostrorum capita, dum licet, dum integrum est, retorqueamus. Cum vero id recte fieri non possit, nisi omnibus sedatis discordiis, simultatibus, odiis, denique cunctis suspicionibus de medio sublatis, libere consensu hostem adoriamur, danda in primis opera est, ut Italiæ communi percusso fœdere, idem sentiamus omnes, idem velimus atque optemus. Quod si in eo exponendo versari voluero, quod ad rem nostram maxime attinere videtur, quot commoda, quam utilitatem, quam denique felicitatem concordia et animorum in idem conspiratio cum civitatibus, tum provinciis afferat, scio nonnullos ita me audituros, ut nihil quidem novi, sed plane cognita et pervulgata omnia me narrare arbitrentur, cum nemo illud ignoret, quantam vim in rebus vel parandis vel tuendis concordia habeat. Iis ego non immerito responderim: Cur meam igitur exspectatis orationem? Quin sponte eam amplectimini? quam adeo utilem esse atque necessariam intelligitis, ut, nisi adsit, nihil æquum, nihil honestum, nihil sanctum fieri possit. Concordia parvæ res crescunt, discordia maximæ dilabuntur. Quidquid in cœlo atque inter mortales optimum est, id omne a concordia proficiscitur et pendet. Non provinciis duntaxat, urbibus, conventiculis, domui, sed privato homini maxime necessaria est. Quid enim homine turpius, qui sibi ipse non constet, et variis repugnantibusque consiliis et contrariis actionibus agitetur? Quis non despicit? quis non deridet? Levem, inconstantem, nullius ordinis hominem censemus. Quidquid conatus et assequitur, calamitate, ignominia, pernicie refertum est. Nam dum sibi ipse dissidet, nihil cum suis commodis aut ornamentis consentaneum habet. In re autem familiari, quod officium esse potest, si uxor, liberi, servi, mutuis odiis conflictentur? Paterfamilias, domesticis dissensionibus labefactatus, nullam ponit in re familiari augenda operam. Lacrymis conficitur, dum per discordiam totam domum ruituram facile prospicit; miser domi, foris ridiculus. Inde nimirum illud est, quod apud poetam sapientissimum Ulysses a Nausicaa, Alcinoi regis filia, maximis affectus beneficiis, nil habuit quod felicius optari posse arbitraretur, quam virum liberosque concordes, quo nihil suavius ait, nihil aut inimicis molestius, aut amicis jucundius accidere posse. At quid miserius, quid humana indignius societate, quam cum civitates aut provinciæ domesticis seditionibus bellisque civilibus conficiuntur? Nam quos necessarios, fratres, parentes natura genuit, hostes et alienos discordia efficit, ubi et vincere luctuosum est, et cadere sceleratum atque nefarium. Bellum domesticum eo gravius externo est, quod externum nonnullam aliquando affert utilitatem, sæpeque ita suscipitur, ut in pace vivamus: civile vero profuit nunquam nemini. De bello externo sæpe consultamus an gerendum sit;

civile autem nunquam in deliberationem cadit. Nam quemadmodum non de rebus necessariis, sed de dubiis consilium initur, ita neque de iis, quæ ad utramvis partem exploratæ sunt. Quo in genere seditio est, quam qui amat, nec privatos focos, nec publica libertatis jura chara habere videtur. Tyrannidem invisam bonis omnibus, maximeque perniciosam civitatibus esse, plane omnes persuasum habemus. At tyranni urbes nonnunquam opibus potentiaque amplificarunt, et in magnum auxere imperium. Quod vel in hoste nostro facile cognitum perspicuumque est, qui, cum tyrannorum omnium crudelissimus sit, tamen quascunque vel urbes vel provincias suo adjecit imperio, potentiores effecit. Per seditionem vero civilem, quis mihi unquam demonstraverit, quænam mœnia firmiora sint, vel quæ potius non funditus eversa? Itaque si tyrannis homini libero civique fortissimo fugienda est, an de discordia est cogitandum? et qui tyrannidem vel capitis periculo propulsandam putabit, civile bellum, quod acerbius est et luctuosius, sponte consectabitur? Solemus cum privatis precibus, tum publicis supplicationibus a Deo optimo maximo pacem concordiamque petere, et, quod scimus nobis perniciosum fore, quod deprecamur, quod Dei nostri ope declinare nitimur, id dedita opera libenterque persequemur? Quid tandem hoc aliud est, nisi hostium nostrorum rem agere, et quod illi suis profanis precibus contendunt maxime efficere? Illis enim primæ omnium preces sunt multis quidem notæ, nobis fortasse minime, ut inter suos pax, animorum consensus, quies, inter Christianos odium vigeat, seditio, bella civilia. Volumusne illorum libidini satisfacere? At hoc est hostis utilitati consulere, et illius commodum nostro incommodo parare. Præcepta (ni fallor), ut sæpe vidi et legi, quæ in urbibus regendis bellisque feliciter conficiendis nobis præscripta sunt, aliter statuunt, et docent, ut scilicet exploratis hostium consiliis, contraria efficiatis, si in republica statum retinere, si in bello victoriam consequi velitis. An vero committendum est, ut qui nobis luctum, terrorem, tormenta, cædem denuntiat, nostra lætetur culpa, et exsultet? Excitandus est hoc loco Nestor ille Homericus, qui Agamemnonem Achilli conciliare cupiens, his verbis sapientissimis usus est :

Proh Superi! horrendus Graias festinat in urbes
Luctus, quem magno Priamus, Priamique nepotes
Mercentur, cum vos tanto concurrere motu
Irarum audierint, duo, qui per castra Pelasgum
Consilio atque armis claros superatis Achivos.
At nobis pares amba.

Non dicam, ut ille, quoniam senior vobis sum et plura vidi, sed quod plura sum passus, plures ab hoste calamitates accepi, qui amicos, parentes, patriam, quæ homini in vita jucundissima sunt, per maximos dolores et cruciatus mihi eripuit. Quæ etsi prudentia vestra ac sapientia animo complecti et perspicere potestis, tamen sensus dolorem pluris facit, qui ea, quæ cæteri audiunt, perpessus est. Non ita animo inhærent, quæ aut auribus percipimus, aut cernimus oculis, ut ea imprimuntur, quæ vel sua, vel suorum vulnera, neces, tormenta per summam hostium crudelitatem intulerunt. Credite experto, credite passo. Nihil aliud miseram exstinxit Græciam, nisi discordia : nihil aliud eam orbis partem delevit, nisi bella civilia, neque solum nostra memoria, sed et priscis temporibus. Nam Philippus, Amyntæ filius, Alexandri Magni pater, per Atheniensium, Lacedæmoniorum, Thebanorum aliorumque mutua odia, Græciam evertit. Quandiu communi ope et consilio bella gerebant, fugabant hostem, exuebant castris, superabant! Cum vero alii aliis non fidere, finitimumque invadere instituerunt, hostis ad alteras partes accersitus, non minus a quibus vocabatur, quam adversus quos provocatus erat perniciosus, bello Peloponnesiaco, cum eadem animorum conspiratione devincti essent, neque terra, ubi Lacedæmoniorum vires amplissimæ erant, neque mari quicquam ab hoste incommodi acceperunt; imo vero maximas strages hosti intulerunt, atque ita intulerunt, ut, quod nunquam fando auditum esset, quadringenti amplius Lacedæmoniorum milites, quibus patrius mos et præceptum erat, aut vincere in bello, aut morte hostium manibus sese eripere, captivi Athenas in triumphum ducti sint. Cum vero hostem domi invenire, bellisque civilibus sese conterere cœperunt, eorum classis firmissima atque amplissima in Lacedæmoniorum ditionem redacta est, portus eorum custodia amissa, urbis mœnia solo æquata. Quid vero, cum Xerxes, Persarum rex potentissimus, quinquagies centenis hominum millibus, classe mille ducentisque navibus instructa, Græciam invaderet, eos servavit, victores reddidit, sempiterna fama et laude ornavit, nisi concordia, pax, idem in hostem animus? Quod si communi robore atque exercitu hostem non propulsassent, quid tandem prohibuisset quominus ad unum omnes bello absumpti fuissent? Idem nobis imminere cernitis periculum, idem exitium, eodem modo arcere hostis impetum debetis, cum nullo alio possitis. Eidem morbo idem medicamentum apposite convenit, quod satis quidem validum est. Nam si Græci, quamvis Xerxis viribus longe inferiores essent, tamen, concordia duce, hostem superarunt; quid tandem vos agere, divina favente gratia, poteritis concordes, et communibus viribus, qui hominum numero non pauciores, virtute longe cetis præstantiores hostibus? O si dies ille mihi illucescat, quo, abolctis sepultisque odiis omnibus, pari consensu hostem aggrediamini! Nulla mihi præterea dubitatio relicta est de victoria : jam vicimus. Illud, quæso, animis vestris parumper concipite, principes optimi : quemadmodum in navi seditio orta, perniciosissima est, ita esse in civitate; et, ut in civitate gravis est, ita in provincia multo pe

stilentiorem. Nam quo plures sunt, eo latius morbi contagio serpit, eo difficilior est curatio. Ac quemadmodum exercitus ordine militumque obedientia continetur, quæ nisi adsint, ad internecionem omnia pereunt; ita in provincia mutuus consensus et benevolentia necessaria est inter eos præsertim qui potentiores sunt : qua re sublata, prius suis viribus conficiuntur, quam externis. Insidiatur discordia, vires extenuat, et occulta quadam ægritudine imperia absumit; atque ob eam causam discordiam inquit ille venenum esse datum imperiis, ne immortalia forent. Etenim perinde ac phthisis sensim conficit, neque prius desistit quam profligatum corpus everterit. Non est contendendum ut necessarios et eodem cœlo educatos homines perpetuo bello insectemur. Nam qui sapienter suæ saluti consulunt, hostes quidem semper vincere nituntur, suis vero nonnunquam parcunt, maluntque interdum superari quam superare. Neque enim omnis victoria utilis est, aut a Deo profecta. Fugienda est Cadmea victoria, et, ut tragicus ille inquit, Amicis dominabere, si tantum non viceris quantum volueris; amicis, inquam, imperabis, quam ab amicis vinceris. Ac Demosthenes, Tunc, inquit, præclara victoria, cum aut filii parentibus, aut cives civibus libenter cedunt. An vero in urbium obsidionibus perniciosum judicatis, si custodes inter se dissideant? inter cives autem, vel in provinciis seditionem utilem fore putatis? cum in diversas partes itur, cum opinionum varietate contenditur, cum unusquisque suam sententiam pluris facit quam salutem. Contentionis duo genera tradit Hesiodus, alterum optimum cum quispiam alterius imitatione adductus recte agit; alterum inimicitiarum, discordiæ, bellorum seminarium, quam pravam infelicemque appellat, de qua Homerus :

Principio parva est; terram sed protinus imis
Contingens pedibus, caput inter nubila condit.

Prior sequenda est, altera penitus fugienda : illa maxime utilis, hæc admodum perniciosa. Non decet nos profecto pro ingenio, eruditione, sapientia, qua nos Deus ornavit, omissa meliore, sequi pejorem. Abjicienda est, tollenda de medio; pax et concordia publice ineunda. Quod si est contendendum, in eo vobis demum certamen pulcherrimum et gloriosum propositum est, quis vestrum primus se ipsum vincat; quis primus ad concordiam perveniat; quis plura et magis egregia facinora in communem salutem conferat. Hæc est plena laudis contentio; hæc a Deo hominibus data. Quid est, quod cuncta contineat? Harmonia. Quid est, quod cuncta exornet? Concinnitas. Cœlum hoc quodcunque cernimus, sphæræ stellarum, spatia siderum, rerum omnium elementa et initia, nulla alia re nisi concordia constant. Nisi divinæ providentiæ leges ea tuerentur, non consisterent, sed labefactarentur ac ruerent. Res vero humanas, quæ fluxæ caducæque sunt, et motu perpetuo circumaguntur, putas cohærere posse, nisi mensura, pondere, concordia regerentur? Minime : siquidem his etiam remediis adhibitis, effici non potest quin solvantur et interéant. Quemadmodum graviores morbi sunt quæ interiorem corporis partem grassantur et vexant, ita seditio aperto bello acerbior est. Nam in altero hostes nobis ipsi sumus; in altero nos tuemur. Nulli unquam suorum cædes profuit, quibus pereuntibus, ei gravius comparatur periculum. Nam simul ac illorum negligunt salutem, suam hostibus produnt; idemque iis accidit, quod homini evenire solet, cujus membrum dum phagæna conficit, id negligit, speratque reliquum corpus totum fore atque incolume; tandemque sensim totus absumitur : tum demum plane intelligit id non futurum fuisse, si initio morbum curasset. Quid, te obsecro, manus geminas natura nobis tribuit? quid geminos oculos? quid duos pedes? Nimirum ut mutuo constent auxilio. Manus manum lavat; pes pedem sustentat; sinistra dextris levantur, et dextra levantur sinistris : illinc motus principium, hinc onera suscipimus. Plus gemina hæc membra efficiunt; nam altero occupato, ab altero commune præstatur officium. Cur non sequimur naturam, ducem optimam et magistram? ut ille inquit. Nam quod alter perspicere non potest, alteri in mentem veniet, ac mutuo auxilio propositum finem attingent. « Quam bonum et quam jucundum est habitare fratres in unum; » ut Propheta inquit, qui multarum rerum variique eventus peritissimus fuit, qui furore divino concitus, homines ad concordiam provocat. Quod ne temere præceptum videretur, illicuit : « Mandavit Dominus benedictionem et vitam usque in sæculum. » Porro ejus filius prudentia præditus, ut nos a discordia deterreat, Cum unus, inquit, ædificat, et alter demolitur. quid aliud agunt, nisi frustra laborent? Cyrus, Persarum rex potentissimus, cum e vita excederet, filiis accersitis, et imperio eis diviso, longiore oratione apud Xenophontem, cunctos ad fidem mutuam, ad charitatem, ad concordiam hortatus est, planeque demonstravit eos dispersos ac dissidentes neque reipublicæ profuturos, neque sibi præsidio esse posse. Id autem usque adeo verum facileque perspectum arbitrabatur vir longo rerum usu, maximis periculis, ingenti fortunæ varietate sapientissimus, ut rationibus apertissimis non contentus, oculis etiam exemplo quodam subjicere tentaverit. Itaque virgarum, ut ferunt, manipulum afferri jussit, ac singulis imperavit ut eum uno impetu confringerent, si possent. Id cum præstare valeret nemo, tum singulas perfringendas dedit; quas cum singuli nullo labore conficeren : An vero cernitis, inquit, idem in vobis futurum, ut mutua pace devinctos nullus expugnare valeat, odiis vero sejunctos superare possit qui velit? Quare qui vos ad concordiam, optimi Italiæ principes, hortatur, vos ad vestram hortatur salutem, ad gloriam, ad triumphos de hostes reportandos. Nam quid vestra exposcit utilitas? Concor-

diam. Quid vestra laus ac dignitas postulat? Concordiam. Concordiam igitur et pacem amplectimini, suscipite, colite, ut per eam mutuo consensu fortiores, belloque in hostem comparato cervicibus nostris imminentem impetum propulsemus, hostem teterrimum nostrorum sanguine cruentatum ulciscamur, Italiæ amplificemus dignitatem. Hoc enim bello nullum unquam justius, aut magis necessario gestum est, aut faciliorem apertioremque ostendit victoriam. Nam quid æquius, quidve magis pium, quam nostrorum sanguinem per infinitas lacrymas et tormenta effusum ulcisci? Quid nefandi homines in nomen nostrum prætermiserunt ignominiæ, injuriæ, cruciatus, necis? Templa sanctissima per summam impietatem polluerunt : sanctorum, beatæ Virginis, ipsius nostri Dei statuas contemptu, risu, omni contumeliarum genere persecuti sunt. Quid sacras virgines violatas memorem? parentum complexu ereptos impuberes? omni dedecore fœdatum Christianum nomen? Hæc ne persequar, et rei magnitudine et dolore impedior. Quis enim vel dicendo consequi posset, vel sine multis lacrymis audire Christiani nominis socios fidelissimos, equorum ungulis obtritos, ita imperante hoste sceleratissimo atque inspiciente; excoriatos, sublatos in crucem, ut mortem beneficii loco acceperint? Edidit olim sævissimus Turcus omnia crudelitatis exempla in Byzantinos, quorum memoria ut refricaretur, qualis nuper Chalcidis Euboicæ tumultus fuit, cum, effractis portis ac muris, tormentorum impetu dejectis, arce vi capta armatorum cursu, ferro flammaque omnia miscuerunt; unde gemitus illi ad nostras prope aures pervenere. Cunctos militaris ætatis acerbissime trucidat. Nostrorum cadavera, cum mœnia oppugnarentur (at non dicam; incredibile enim est; imo vero dicam, quoniam ita se habet); nostrorum, inquam, cadavera in vasa imposita machinis bellicis intra urbem adversus nostros immittebantur. O crudelitatem ante hunc diem inauditam, o perditam feritatem, o truculentissimum sævitiæ genus! Quid tam commune vivis quam spiritus? At nostri captivi ita vivunt, ut ducere animam de cœlo non queant. Quid tam commune mortuis quam terra? At nostri ita moriuntur, ut eorum ossa per aerem spargantur. Quid tam commune cadaveri quam quies? At nostrorum corpora ita jactantur, ut ne exanimata quidem conquiescant. Romani, quod eorum legati paulo acerbius appellati essent, Corinthum, urbem pulcherrimam, everterunt. Nos vero, sociis crudelissime necatis, contempta et devastata regione nostra, unde morum rectæque vitæ documenta a tam remotis nationibus petuntur, non excitabimur? Fabius Maximus, ut captivos redimeret, agrum vendidit, et nos tot sociorum corpora desiderata negligemus? Theodosius, quod Thessalonicenses, novi vectigalis impositione indignati, Placidiæ statuas per urbem traxissent, frequentem in theatro populum cædi jussit. Nos, oppugnata fide, cæsis Christianis hominibus, Dei nostri majestate violata, non dolebimus? non comparabimus bellum? non sumemus de hoste supplicium? Nunquam profecto, aut publicæ suorum injuriæ, aut privatæ salutis ratio majore æquitate suasit arma in hostem movenda.

Satis dixi de genere belli quam justum sit : dicam statim quam sit necessarium. Neque enim ille liberam quietis rationem relinquet, ingens terra marique bellum molitus. Nam si id permitteret, nemo sane esset qui bellum paci anteponeret. Sed copias instruxit, legiones firmissimas habet in capita nostra comparatas, lacessit, urget, ad certamen provocat. Aut bellum gerendum est, aut acerbissima servitus subeunda. Nullum deliberationi locum reliquit : una nobis fortunarum salutisque spes proposita est, ut viribus nostris, Deo Opt. Max. juvante, libertatem nostram servemus: pro qua bono viro et civi non minus laborandum est, quam pro servorum reique domesticæ incolumitate tutanda. At nemo est qui, vel servo lacessito, vel expilato grege, non graviter ferat, armis ad injuriam ulciscendam non contendat, non repetat sua. Et conjugum, liberorum, patriæ rationem nullam ducemus? Quid inermes exspectamus Turcorum furorem? Arma armis propulsantur. Bellum gerendum est, ut in pace vivamus. Si bellum omittimus, pacem habemus nullam. Quod si Turcus, nobis quiescentibus, maximis opibus auctus est; si languentes otio in gravissima damna prolapsi sumus, quis tandem sperare audebit nos in otio et umbra rem feliciter gesturos? Resipiscendum est, et cum eo pacto in tanta pericula decideremus, contrario itinere ad salutem et securitatem redeundum. Omittenda segnities : bellum suscipiendum. Nam, ut beatus Paulus inquit, « Non coronatur nisi qui legitime certaverit, » et Aristoteles, « Non coronantur qui spectant, sed qui in certamen descendunt, ii enim laude aliquid dignum efficiunt. » Salus domi nobis non exspectanda est, sed in sole et pulvere defendenda. Nemo est vestrum qui, cum a natura tributum habeat ut se, corpus vitamque tueatur, præstolari velit ea quæ nocitura sint. Hostis exercitum habet libertati nostræ imminentem. Vis impetum arcere? Bello id assequi poteris, ut vim vi reprimamus. Nam ut concedam incertos exitus esse belli, Martemque communem, tamen pro libertate, pro vitæ periculo decertandum est; pro Deo ipso pugnandum, pro cujus amplitudine retinenda cadere, in ævum sempiternum vitamque immortalem migrare est. Non enim spiritu vita constat, sed pietate, quæ patriæ, templorum, status divini conservatione maxime continetur. Quid vero, si exploratam victoriæ rationem habemus? Jam enim tempus et aures vestræ postulant ut de facultate gerendi belli, de amplissimo triumpho qui nobis propositus est, aliquid dicamus. Quo in loco illud plane profiteor me de hostium copiis et viribus

nihil oratione mea detracturum, sed omnia exposituram magna cum fide. Atque inde exordior. Exercitus ille hostilis, illa hominum multitudo infinita, non tanti roboris est quanti vel nonnulli putant, vel a nobis superari facillime non possit. Magna ejus pars milite tumultuario constat et turba collectitia. Nulla jurisjurandi religione adacti sunt, nulla mercede conducti. Levissima corpora, laboris impatientissima : prædam, non exercitum sequuntur, qua si paulo diutius caruerint, domum velocissime redeunt. Nullam præstant in bello operam, nullum servant ordinem : latrones, sicarii, militaris disciplinæ penitus expertes, et qui facilius vinci possint, quam vincere sciant. Illud sane prorsus comparatum habemus, septuaginta duntaxat esse hominum millia, qui stipendia ex publico ærario faciant. Sed audite me, quæso, parumper æquo animo. Ex eo septuaginta millium hominum numero, præter quindecim viginive millia, ad summum, qui imperatoris sui latus custodientes, quotidianam mercedem capiunt, reliqui omnes sociorum provincialium tributis in bello sustentantur; quæ sane tributa adeo exigua sunt, adeo suppeditantur tenuiter, ut toto anno vix quatuor mensibus mercedem accipiant. Ex re factum videtis ut nullam expeditionem quadrimestri diuturniorem sustineat, sed eos omnes dimittat, quoniam provinciæ pecuniam amplius non subministrant. Qua rerum penuria coactos Byzantii sæpe vidimus, cum dimitterentur, et equos, et arma, et vestes vendidisse, ut domum pervenire possent. Hoc robur hostilis exercitus, hæc magnitudo, hic mirandus ille peditatus et equitatus. Quod si Christianus exercitus, illius fines populando, eum toto anno exercitum in armis habere coegerit, aut a suis destitutus cum exigua manu ad pugnam impelletur, ubi facillime superari queat, aut illis ipsis pecuniis quæ in ejus privatum ærarium conferuntur, totum exercitum alat necesse erit : quod quidem præstare diu non poterit. Neque enim, ut temere nonnulli jactant, immensa est illi pecunia. Siquidem ex iis qui in illius negotiis gerendis versati sunt, plane cognitum est non amplius quam viesies centena aureorum millia ex omni reddituum summa ad eum deferri : unde et viginti illa millia peditum liberaliter sustentat, pro corporis sui custodia, et sumptibus domesticis, qui maximi sunt, satisfacit. Si quid præterea superest, id omne ad arma, machinas, tormenta bellica penitus convertit, ut neque conflandi thesauri, neque conducendi militis ei facultas præbeatur. Quod autem tam effeminata multitudine, tam exiguis viribus, tot imperia subjugaverit, non mirandum magis quam dolendum est. Nullum enim habuit hostem : facile admodum fuit vincere non resistentes. Date signum belli : jam facile perspicietis eorum ignaviam. Ut enim cedentes vehementer insequuntur, ita insequentes celeriter fugiunt. Castra castris conferre non audent ; et, ut illud repetam, victoria est in manibus, modo velitis. Nulla enim belli gerendi facultas vobis deest. Adest imperatorum virtus, militum numerus et potentia. Sunt pecuniæ vobis, sunt, Italiæ principes, quas non minus hoc tempore in publicum conferre debetis, quam privatam quisque salutem, leges, patriam charam habet. Debet unusquisque, diligenti rerum suarum ratione habita, tantum erogare quantum potest. Audio Byzantinos a nonnullis accusari, quod in salute communi privatæ pecuniæ parcentes, sua omnia hosti prodiderunt : in quo profecto gravissima culpa digni sunt, meritoque reprehendantur. Id ne ipsi quoque committamus, cavendum est; ne quod in aliis turpe inutileque fuisse cognovimus et sentimus, imprudentissime sequamur. Comparato a nobis exercitu, quid est, quod victoriam lætaque omnia non portendat ac polliceatur? Aderit Deus Opt. Maximus, pro cujus pietate, gloria, fide amplificanda pugnabimus, cujus injurias ulciscemur. Iratus hosti est, nobis prosper, qui nostram hac in re operam et laborem non solum accipit, sed exigit, sed repetit, sed debitum sibi reddi jubet. « Ne timeas, inquit, a facie eorum, quia ego tecum sum ut eruam te. Ne timeas a facie eorum ; nec enim te faciam timere vultum eorum. Bellabunt adversus te, et non prævalebunt, quia ego tecum sum, ait Dominus, ut liberem te. » Et ad Josue : « Ecce ego dedi in manus tuas Jericho, et regem ejus, omnesque fortes viros. »—« Si Deus pro nobis, ut inquit Apostolus, quis contra nos? » Ipse efficiet ut unus persequatur mille, et duo fugare possint decem millia. At nos longe numerosiorem exercitum in bellum ducere possumus, quam hostis habeat. Quid, si ille plures etiam homines habeat? an victoriæ cursus retardabitur? quasi vero non plerique exercitus multitudine infiniti, parva admodum manu sæpenumero fusi fugatique fuerint et deleti. Xerxis exercitus, Mardonio duce, cum ter centum hominum millibus ab octoginta Græcorum millibus direptus ac trucidatus est. Ducenta Cimbrorum millia Marius delevit octoginta millibus hominum. Rursus cum Catulo centum et quatuor millia necavit. In Thessalia Pompeius cum quadraginta millibus peditum, equitum sexaginta, cum totius Orientis auxiliis, cum omni nobilitate, a Cæsare fugatus est, et exutus castris, qui triginta peditum millia, mille equites habebat. Quid infinitas Tigranis copias commemorem a Lucullo, parvo exercitu, superatas? Hæc nimis vetera, et fabulæ fortasse quam historiæ propiora videntur. Quid nostra memoria? Nonne hostes nostri paucorum virtute sæpius victi, fugati, cæsi fuerunt? Omitto de iis victoriam insignem Laodislai, Pannoniæ regis, qui, ut olim a nobis dictum est, cum quatuordecim hominum millibus (qui enim plus tradunt, decem et octo millia non excedunt) aperto Marte.

justa acie signis collatis cum hoste dimicavit, exercitum profligavit, ac longe lateque fudit, imperatore vulnerato : ac nisi victoriam avidius persecutus esset, mortique sese objecisset, profecto Christianus orbis Europam omnem retineret. Hæc omitto. Ad recentiora nostra festinat oratio. Quid dicam de insigni triumpho illius Christianæ multitudinis quæ, nullo duce, crucis tantum signo armata, Turcorum exercitum omnem munitissimo Amderalba oppido potitum, intra mœnia stricto ense discurrentem, magna cæde victum ejecit, ipso isto imperatore graviter vulnerato, ac impedimentis omnibus in potestatem redactis? Id autem ne semel accidisse videretur, cum impius sceleratusque hostis Pannoniam omnem inferiorem occupasset, omniaque armis complexisset, et, præsidiis inclytus, regiique animi et excelsi, Pannoniæ superioris rex, parva admodum manu expugnato Javicia oppido et natura et arte munitissimo, maximas Turcorum copias fudit, partemque provinciæ suo adjecit imperio.

Cum quo hoste nobis res sit, facile videtis, Italiæ principes. Cum quo? inquies. Qui multitudinem inconditam habet atque imbellem, qui hominum numero nos quidem non superat, virtute vero vincitur; de quo parvi nostrorum exercitus sæpenumero triumpharunt. Id autem minime mirandum est. Longe enim fortius et constantius pugnant, qui pro morte servituteque propulsanda dimicant, quam qui prædam spoliaque sectantur. Nam illi parum amittunt, si victoria non potiuntur: his vero cuncta pereunt, si segnius rem gerant. « Pugnent, inquit Lacedæmonius, ut morituri, et non morientur. » Itaque cum adeo necessaria nobis concordia sit, præstantissimi principes, cum alias, tum hoc tempore in primis, et ad privatas fortunas tutandas, et ad communem defendendam salutem, concordiam amplectamur omni studio et consensu. Bellum justissimum, maxime gloriosum, atque utile ad pacis ornamenta retinenda, et ad Dei Opt. Max. injurias ulciscendas, pietatemque propugnandam, suscipiamus. Ornemus Italiam victoria amplissima et hostium spoliis, quæ in manibus sunt, ut nos nostraque omnia metu in perpetuum ac periculo liberemus.

V.

Ejusdem ad eosdem persuasio ex auctoritate Demosthenis.

Hæc a nobis pro communi omnium salute disputata, utinam eo studio a vobis suscipiantur, illustrissimi Italiæ principes, quo a nobis dicta sunt, et inhæreant animis vestris, atque persuadeant, ut nullis amplius adhortationibus nullisque rationibus opus sit, sed re ipsa et opera ad defensionem nostram et hostium propulsationem excitemini. Quod nunc facilius fieri posse cogitavi, si consiliis meis vires aliquas adhiberem, et auctoritate alicujus viri excellentis ea plane confirmarem, atque aliquem ex veteribus, et sapientia ornatissimum, et amplissimum auctoritate in medium adducerem, qui plane testaretur sese olim in tali causa qualis nostra est, eadem cum sensisse, tum monuisse suos cives, quæ a nobis, et apud Pontificem Maximum in senatu sæpenumero disputata sunt, et nunc litteris mandata. Venit autem in mentem Demosthenem, philosophum excellentissimum, et oratorem adeo omni laude cumulatum per tot sæcula, ut quem cum eo conferas exstiterit nemo, in eadem incidisse tempora, eamdem perorasse causam, denique nihil habuisse, quod rei nostræ non conveniat, præter nomina hominum sui temporis. Itaque cum hujus et auctoritatem graviorem, et orationem magis appositam ad persuadendum existimarem quam verba mea, constitui ut ipse dicat sententiam. Olynthus Thraciæ urbs opulentissima erat. Philippus, Alexandri Magni Macedonum regis pater, cum in Græciam universam impetum facere decrevisset, statuit ad eam rem attinere ut Olynthum primo in ditionem redigeret. Movet arma in eam; depopulatur agrum. Olynthii legatos mittunt opem imploratum ab Atheniensibus. Demosthenes suadet opitulandum esse, ne Philippus, ad Græciam occupandam animi infiniti et vasti, Olyntho capta, Athenienses ac reliquam Græciam opprimat. Ita enim tunc Græciæ Philippus imminebat, ut nunc Turcus Italiæ. Sustineat igitur Philippus Turci personam, Itali Atheniensium, nos Demosthenis. Jam facile intelliges totam orationem causæ nostræ convenire.

Demosthenis oratio pro ferenda ope Olynthiis adversus Philippum, regem Macedonum.

Grandi pecuniæ vos profecto anteposituros arbitror, Athenienses, si planum fiat, quidnam reipublicæ utile futurum sit; qua de re nunc a vobis deliberatur. Quod cum ita se habeat, vestrum est eos attente audire velle, qui sententiam dicere statuunt. Non solum enim si quis utile aliquid excogitatum in medium attulerit, id, cum audieritis, accipietis; verum etiam quod vestra fortuna accidere existimo, multa opportuna nonnullis ex tempore in mentem venient dicenda, ut ex omnibus optio nobis detur eligendi quod vobis sit usui futurum. Enimvero præsens temporis occasio, voce propemodum emissa, rebus illis opitulandum esse inquit, si quidem earum salus nobis curæ est. Nos vero, nescio quo pacto, ad hæc videmur affecti. Quæ autem ego agenda censeo, hæc sunt : auxilia statim decernenda ac instruenda quam celerrime, ut hinc opem feratis, ne idem quod olim patiamini; legatos mittendos, qui hæc renuntient, et rebus gerendis intersint. Etenim illud maxime verendum est ne, cum Philippus vafer et ad negotia obeunda callidus sit, modo cedendo cum res postulabit, modo interminando (dignus sane fide merito haberetur), modo vos vestramque absentiam calumniis insectando, aliquid de summa rerum pervertat atque convellat. Atqui quod in rebus Philippi

permunitum videtur, vix ut oppugnari possit, idem et vobis percommodum est. Nam quod ille rerum omnium, nulla excepta, solus dominus sit, imperator, quæstor, ubique suis copiis præsit, ad res quidem bellicas mature conficiendas, et omnia in tempore gerenda longe superior est. Ad conditiones vero cum Olynthiis ineundas, cui rei mirifice studet, longe aliter se habet. Neque enim Olynthiis obscurum est sese hoc tempore non de gloria aut agri parte certare, sed pro excidio, pro servitute a patriæ cervicibus depellenda; neque ignorant quid in eos Amphipolitas egerit, qui ei patriam prodiderunt, quid in Pydnæos, qui eum terra receperunt. Demum tyrannidem rem infidam et suspectam liberis civitatibus esse existimo; præsertim si agros finitimos habeant. Itaque et hæc non ignorantes, et cuncta alia considerantes, diligenter dico nos oportere incitari velle, belloque gerendo, si unquam, nunc certe maxime incumbere, pecunias haud segniter conferendo, per nosmet exeundo, nihil prorsus omittendo. Neque enim aut ratio, aut excusatio ulla vobis amplius relicta est, quin quæ agenda sunt peragatis. Num quod cuncti fremebatis quondam Olynthiorum animos Philippo infestos reddendos esse, ultro evenit, et sua se sponte obtulit; atque id eo maxime modo quo vobis conducit. Si enim, vobis suadentibus, bellum suscepissent, fidei sane dubiæ habendi essent socii, et ad aliquod usque tempus, non semper, id decrevisse fortasse viderentur. Cum vero injuriis ab illo lacessiti, odio hominem persequantur, constantes eos inimicitias gesturos cum propter metum, tum propter offensas verisimillimum est. Non est igitur oblata occasio prætermittenda, Athenienses, neque patiendum quod superiori tempore sæpenumero passi estis. Num si cum olim rebus Euboicis auxiliati reversi sumus, et ad hæc ipsa subsellia Hierax et Stratocles Amphipolitæ aderant, hortantes ut maritimo apparatu profecti, urbem suam acciperemus, idem pro nobis ipsis studium præstitissemus, quod pro Euboicorum salute, et tunc nimirum Amphipolis in ditionem nostram venisset, et nunc molestia omni careretis, quæ inde consecuta est. Rursus si cum Pydnam, Methonem, Potidæam, Pagasas, reliqua, ne in singulis diutius immorer, obsideri afferebatur, alicui ex iis cito, et, ut res postulabat, opem ferre aggressi essemus, faciliore profecto Philippo et humiliore uteremur. At vero, dum præsentes rerum occasiones abjicimus, dum futura prospere sua sponte eventura putamus, auximus Philippum nos ipsi Athenienses, tantumque ipsum reddidimus, quantus unquam rex Macedonum exstitit nemo. Nunc autem sese exhibet occasio. Quænam? inquies. A rebus Olynthiacis sua sponte vestræ civitati, quæ nulla in re primis illis inferior est. Equidem, si quis res, quæ nobis divinitus datæ sunt; æquitate adhibita, supputare voluerit, quanquam pleraque non satis commode accidisse videntur, tamen eum magnas diis gratias merito habiturum existimo. Quod enim multa bello, jure optimo desidiæ nostræ ascripse- A ris: quod autem et jampridem id nos passi fuerimus, et nuper societas nobis exstiterit, quæ superiora omnia resarcire valeat, modo ea uti velimus, deorum immortalium benevolentiæ erga nos acceptum referendum plane affirmaverim. Verum hoc perinde esse arbitror, atque in pecuniarum possessione contingere solet. Si enim quascunque quis acquisierit, eas servat incolumes, ingentes habet fortunæ gratias. In rebus idem. Qui occasione non recte usi sunt, ne commodi quidem, si quid deorum beneficio sunt consecuti, recordantur. Ex ultimo enim rerum eventu ante acta omnia plerumque pensitari solent. Quamobrem in reliquis valde prospiciendum est, ut eorum emendatione superiorum fastorum labem deleamus. At si hos etiam homines perdiderimus, Athenienses, et Olynthum B præterea Philippus occupaverit, demonstret mihi quispiam, quid sit amplius impedimento futurum, quominus quo libido animi tulerit, contendat. Anne vestrum aliquis animadvertit, et rationem videt, qua Philippus cum initio pertenui in statu, repente magnus evasit? Amphipolim primo cepit, deinde Pydnam, iterum Potidæam, rursum Methonem, demum in Thessaliam invasit; deinceps Pheras, Pagasas, Magnesiam. Cunctis vero, ut libuit, constitutis, in Thraciam se contulit. Ibi, aliis ejectis regibus, aliis restitutis, adversa valetudine laboravit. Qua cum paululum levatus esset, non in segnitiem sese dedidit, sed Olynthios statim adortus est. Non dico nunc de illius expeditionibus adversus Illyrios, Paonas, Arymbam, et in quamcunque volueris provinciam. C At, quispiam inquiet, quid nobis ista commemoras? Ut et cognoscatis, Athenienses, quantum detrimenti afferat rem semper aliquam singulatim sinere præterlabi. Et plane advertatis Philippi in rebus agendis studium acerrimum, et curam assiduam cum qua pariter vitam ducit, ob quam rebus a se gestis minime contentus, deinceps fieri non poterit, ut in quiete permaneat. Quod si ille majus aliquid semper moliendum decreverit, vos contra nullam rem fortiter obeundam judicaveritis, quem tandem rerum exitum sperare debemus? Prok Deum fidem! quis vestrum adeo tardi ingenii est et inconsulti, qui, si neglexerimus, bellum huc conversum iri nesciat? Quod si evenerit, equidem vehementer timeo ne, veluti fenerati, qui facile ex magnis fœnoribus brevi tempore in D rerum copia versati, postremo bona omnia funditus amiserunt; ita nos ignaviæ dediti, et ad libidinem cuncta quærentes, tandem vel inviti multa et gravia subire cogamur, et de iis, quæ nostro in agro sunt, periclitari. Atqui reprehendere, inquies fortasse, et facile, et cujusvis est, sed de præsenti negotio quidnam agendum sit edocere, senatoris. Ego vero, etsi compertum habeo vos, cum præter sententiam et spem aliquid evenerit, non mali auctoribus, sed iis qui sententiam ultimo loco dixerint, irasci solere, non tamen propter privatæ securitatis rationem mihi silentio prætereunda arbitror, quæ vobis profutura existimo. Dico igitur vos bifariam rebus opitulari oportere, partim oppida agrumque Olynthiorum tu-

tando, emissis militibus qui id præstent, partim fines Philippi cum terrestri exercitu, tum classe maritima incursionibus depopulando. Nam si alterum utrum neglexeritis, vereor ne tota expeditio frustra temereque a nobis suscepta sit. Sive enim vos illius agrum vastetis, idque interea sustineat, et Olynthum vi capiat, victor in patriam reversus, facile injurias ulciscetur : sive subsidia duntaxat Olyntho mittatis, ille fines suos periculo carere animadvertens, acrius rem urgebit, temporisque diuturnitate obsessos in potestatem rediget. Itaque et firma et bipartita auxilia mittenda sunt. Hæc in ope ferenda fieri oportere statuo.

De facultate vero pecuniæ inveniendæ sunt nobis pecuniæ militares, sunt nobis pecuniæ, Athenienses, et quidem tot, quot mortalium nemini. Fas autem vos, ut libet, accipiatis. Eas certe si militibus reddetis, nullæ vobis desunt præterea : sin minus, præterea desunt ; imo vero omnes penitus inveniendæ sunt. Quid, inquies, refersne tu ad senatum eas pecunias militares esse debere? Minime, mehercule ! Ego vero milites instruendos esse censeo, et pecunias quæ iis subministrandæ sunt, militares esse ; mutuumque esse oportere præstare operam, et pecuniam accipere. Vos autem, nescio quo pacto, eas per otium ad dies festos accipitis. Quare video reliquum esse ut cuncti pecunias in publicum conferatis, si multis opus est, multas, sin paucis, paucas. Enimvero pecuniis opus est : opus, inquam, est pecuniis, sine quibus nihil opportunum effici potest. Commemorant alii etiam alias comparandæ pecuniæ rationes ; ex quibus eam diligite quam vobis conducere existimetis, atque dum commodum est rem aggredimini. Sed est æquum considerare rationeque colligere, quo in statu res Philippi hoc tempore versentur. Nam neque ut vel videntur, vel quispiam æstimaret, qui eas parum diligenter inspexisset, satis belle se habent, neque eo pacto quo se haberent si optimo in statu essent. Nunquam sane arma movisset Philippus, si manum sibi conserendam putasset. Sed ut initio, ita deinceps facile omnes, prosperosque rerum eventus speravit. At ea deceptus est opinione. Quod cum præter exspectationem primum acciderit, valde ipsum perturbat, non mediocremque ejus animo sollicitudinem affert. Accedunt res Thessalorum, quæ cum semper infidæ omnibus natura fuerint, maxime veluti erant, nunc etiam isti sunt. Nam Pagasas ab eo repetere decrevisse dicuntur, et Magnesiam mœnibus cingi prohibuerunt. Equidem ex quibusdam audivi eos non amplius permissuros ut vel portorii vel fori redditus percipiat ; cum scilicet ex iis rempublicam Thessalorum administrari oporteat, non Philippo aliquid provenire. Quibus pecuniis si privatus fuerit, in maximam profecto alendi exercitus difficultatem adducetur. Denique Pæones et Illyrici, ac omnes alii hujuscemodi homines suis legibus uti, in libertate vivere libentius quam servire velle existimandi sunt, quippe qui nunquam alteri parere consueverunt. Ac ille quidem, ut aiunt, valde contumeliosus est, quod sane minime mirandum videtur : nam feliciter agere præter meritum, insaniendi causam dementibus præbet. Quamobrem partas opes tueri, quam initio eas quærere plerumque difficilius judicatur. Vestræ igitur partes sunt, Athenienses, has temporum illius difficultates, vestram ducere occasionem, statimque rem suscipere, et legatos mittendo quo mittendi sunt, et in militiam exeundo, et alios omnes hortando. Illud, quæso, animis vestris parumper concipite. Si Philippus talem adversus nos occasionem arripiat, juxtaque fines vestros bellum geratur, qua tandem cum alacritate eum huc impetum facturum putatis ? At nos non pudet ; et quæ pateremini si ille posset eadem, cum facultas sit, inferre non audebitis ! Neque vos lateat, Athenienses, vobis hodie statuendum esse, utrum illic vos, an ille hic bellum gesturus sit. Si enim res Olynthiorum resistent, vos illic belligerabitis, et illius agrum damno afficietis, simul agri vestri fructus secure percipietis. At si Philippus regionem illam occupaverit, quis eum tandem, quominus huc perveniat, arcebit ? Thebani ? At quod nobis nimis acerbe dictum videri, una etiam ipsi paratissime irruperint. Phocenses ? scilicet qui se domi tueri nequeunt, nisi vos, aliusve opituletur. At, inquies, nolet fortasse. Absurdissimum sane fuerit, si quæ, quamvis amentiæ arguatur, tamen jactare non desistit, ea ipsa cum demum possit, efficere nolit. Porro quantum intersit bellumne hic an illic geratur, equidem nec verbis opus esse arbitror. Nam si triginta duntaxat diebus vos in castris morari necesse fuerit, et quæcunque ad usum exercitus necessaria sunt ex agro vestro percipere, nullo, inquam, prorsus hoste in agro versante, plus sane detrimenti agrorum dominos inde capturos existimo, quam omnia illa essent, quæ in superioris belli apparatum consumpta fuissent. Quod si bellum aliquod huc ingruerit, quanta, vos obsecro, jactura res vestras affectum iri putatis ? Accedet contumelia et rei turpitudo, quam nemo sapiens ullo damno leviorem duxerit. Itaque, his omnibus consideratis, cuncti opitulari et totam belli molem illuc convertere debent : locupletiores ut pro multis, quæ recte possident, paucis erogatis, reliquis libere et securius fruantur ; juvenes vero, ut rei militaris disciplina in Philippi agro eruditi, ad rem suam familiarem incolumem tutandam formidolosi custodes efficiantur ; denique oratores, ut rerum a se gestarum rationes facilius reddere possint. Qualis etenim fuerit rerum vestrarum conditio, tales in eos judices futuri estis. Omnium vero gratiam vobis bene et feliciter evenire opto.

Hoc est, inclyti Italiæ principes, summi illius ac sapientissimi viri Demosthenis consilium, non alienum a nostro ; hæc illius sententia quam simillima nostræ ; hæc Atheniensibus solum adversus Philippum Macedonem, sed omnibus Italiæ populis, sed universis Christianis adversus Turcorum tyrannum, nostræ religionis truculentissimum hostem, prædicere hæc proponereque videtur. Conditioni præsentis temporis, quæ loquitur, accom-

modata sunt omnia, et ad hunc quem cernimus rerum statum mirifice quadrant. Sequamur igitur tanti viri consilium, qui cum in omni doctrinæ genere, tum vel maxime in civilis disciplinæ scientia fuit exercitatus, et in communis hostis excidium insurgamus. Commune existimemus imminere periculum; commune bellum aggrediamur non ignave, non lente, non parce, non ut fieri, cum de re aliena certatur, consuevit, quemadmodum hactenus factum est; sed fortiter, sed celeriter, sed liberaliter, sed ut fieri in proprio discrimine mos est. Tantum quisque in hac re conferat, principes Christiani, quantum pro salute imperii sui, quoticns res exegit, non dubitavit effundere, et quantum diligenti ratione habita, uniuscujusque vires et facultates patiuntur. Non unius alteriusve hic opus est. Hostem habemus fortissimum, potentissimum, acerrimum, cervicibus vestris imminentem. Satis superque negotii omnibus simul erit. Sed nec exteræ Christianorum gentes nobis deerunt, dum nos viderint nobis ipsis non deesse. Aderunt, favebunt, suppetias ferent. Neque nos deseret Salvator noster Christus Jesus, sed audiet nos atque exaudiet, modo nos viderit digne ea, quæ decent, facientes, opem suam implorare. Nam, ut præclare alibi Demosthenes inquit, non modo Deus, sed ne amicus quidem rogandus est, ut dormitanti cuiquam aut desidi præsidio sit. Enimvero si hæc, quæ diximus, faciemus, non modo tutari quæ supersunt, sed etiam quæ perdita sunt recuperare cœlesti præsidio poterimus. Alioquin magno discrimini res Italicas exponemus. Et ut cum ea disjunctiva orationem terminem, qua superioribus diebus, audita tum primum Chalcidis obsidione in pontificio senatu usus fui, ut omnis Italia, compositis ac pacatis rebus, et omni simultate deposita, omnium viribus in unum collatis, Deo Opt. Max. duce, Turcorum vires conteret atque infringet; aut si quod duodeviginti jam annis post Byzantii excidium experti sumus, inanibus duntaxat verbis ac vanis pollicitationibus vacabimus, brevi temporeuniversa Italia..... sed compesco labellum, nec id exprimam, quod auditu quoque dirum atque horribile est.

Quare ut gravissima declinemus periçula, atque optatam victoriam consequamur, vos omnes, principes populique Christiani, ut omni ad id studio incumbatis, quantis maximis possum precibus, oro atque obtestor (1).

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