“Nationis Teutonicæ”

the German Nation and the Holy Roman Empire through the eyes of an Italian humanist

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Europa 1000-1800

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Chapter 1

Introduction

De tijden zijn zwart.
wij zijn eeuwen en eeuwen te laat
geboren.

Hendrik Marsman, 'Heimwee'

On 15 October 1454 some hundred German princes and bishops were gathered in Frankfurt's town hall. Before them stood one of Europe's most celebrated humanists, Enea Silvio Piccolomini. He urged the princes to go to war: 'Remember your forefathers, Nobles, and consider their glorious achievements; you, Germans, should imitate [those] who always endeavoured to fight far from home.'[1] And: 'Great is your power, great is your courage, your experience, and your glory,' Piccolomini exclaimed: 'go to meet the enemies of Christ!'[2] Roughly a year earlier, the city of Constantinople had fallen. All of Europe was now threatened by the invaders from the East. A way to counter them was desperately sought; all eyes were on the German noblemen, who had the military might to stop the invaders.[3]

Piccolomini's oration was one of the best he ever delivered. It nevertheless fell on deaf ears. Despite the breathless attention of Piccolomini's public, no action was ever taken. The German princes did not have the will to fight for the Emperor and Pope, both of whom they mistrusted deeply. It was a sign of the times that neither were present in Frankfurt (the Emperor had sent Piccolomini; the Pope had sent a bishop). The German princes complained about the Emperor's negligence, and about the greedy Pope, who would only show up in a meeting on indulgences.[4]

In the middle of the fifteenth century, Europe was in an identity crisis. The Great Western Schism (commonly dated 1378-1417) had been ended with difficulty through a series of councils, all of which also spawned new problems for the Church. Criticism of corruption and luxury in the Church grew ever louder. The Holy Roman Empire, the supposed leader of Christendom, was basically a head without limbs.[5] In 1453, Constantinople was conquered by the marauding Turks; in that very same year, the battle-axe was finally buried

[1] Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *Constantinopolitana clades* (3rd edition; edited and translated by Michael Cotta-Schönberg, published online on HAL Archives-ouvertes 2016) 63, 115. Citation condensed from: 'Et vos ergo, Theutones, si – quemadmodum spero – sapientes eritis, majores vestros imitiabimini, qui remota semper a domo bella gerere (...),' and: 'Mementote patrum vestrorum, generosi proceres!'

[2] Ibidem, 87, 117.

[3] Why did the Western powers not immediately oppose the Turks? American historian Kelly Devries names three reasons: firstly, they were busy fighting each other; secondly, they were afraid of their seemingly invincible foe; thirdly, 'The Hungarians were simply too successful in their wars against the Turks.' Kelly Devries, 'The Lack of a Western European Military Response to the Ottoman Invasions of Eastern Europe from Nicopolis (1396) to Mohács (1526),' in: K. Devries (ed.) *Medieval Warfare 1300-1450* (Farnham 2010) 417-437: 423.

[4] Georg Voigt, *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini, als Papst Pius der Zweite, und sein Zeitalter* (second volume, Berlin 1863) 120.

[5] Emperor Frederick III was notoriously poor and occupied with his Habsburg heartlands. This was a

by France and England, who had fought over control of parts of *l'Hexagone* for more than a century (1337-1453). The Hundred Years' War had utterly exhausted two of the greatest powers of the West. On the other hand, there were signs of a new time. Around the middle of the century, word was spread of a remarkable invention from the city of Mainz. In the Italian cities, a new form of learning (partially triggered by the advent of fleeing Byzantine scholars) seemed to supplant the old scholastic method. It would not be long before a New World was discovered in the West.

The fall of Constantinople was one of the most singular events in European history. The last stronghold against the Turks fell, and with it fell a centre of learning and culture. The capture of this bulwark by the eastern hordes, a fate its illustrious forefather Rome had suffered a thousand years before, instilled fear in all European hearts.[6] A gloomy, apocalyptic mood took hold of the continent. Many people believed the "*Untergang des Abendlandes*" to be imminent. Fear for the Turks was mixed with schadenfreude and a bad conscience for not having saved the Greeks. The sense of loss, felt by many, was accompanied by a stark loss of identity at one hand, and a surge of nationalism-like outbursts on the other hand. After all, contact with "the Other" coerced Europe to redefine its own identity. This meant not just its identity *vis-a-vis* the Oriental culture. There was also a reassessment of inter-European relationships, shaped by the conflicts of this era. 'War made nations, and thus it was soon nations, decked out in a new, cheap and gaudy, rhetorical finery, that were making war,' writes British historian Len Scales.[7]

Some problems of medieval man are remarkably similar to those of modern Europeans; not necessarily the daily sorrows, but rather some metaphysical, existential problems. In the fifteenth century, there was the question who could lead Europe, be it in a secular or spiritual sense. The public image of both Pope and Emperor had taken heavy damage. The old imperial idea of a united Europe under an Emperor seemed an unattainable ideal. There was pressure on the edge of the continent, as well as inner strife.[8]

When we think of the Middle Ages as a time perhaps not so distant from our own, and of medieval man as not so distant from ourselves, we can construct interesting parallels.[9]

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stark contrast with the comparatively powerful state of the Empire in the tenth and twelfth century. Peter H. Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire: A Thousand Years of Europe's History* (London 2016) 400-401.

[6] Andrea Moudarres, 'Crusade and Conversion: Islam as Schism in Pius II and Nicholas of Cusa', *MLN* 128:1 (2013) 40-52: 40.

[7] Len Scales, 'Germen Militiae: War and German Identity in the Later Middle Ages', *Past & Present* 180 (2003) 41-82: 42.

[8] The middle of the fifteenth century is also traditionally seen as the start of a modern time. Indeed, all the symptoms of the time can feed this statement. One is inclined to see the new phenomena of the fifteenth century as *avant garde*-introductions to a "New Time". It is very tempting to perceive these phenomena as directly influencing and transforming the "Medieval" European Mind. Many historians saw them ushering in an era of ratio and progress. We should, however, be wary of these stigmata. It was Johan Huizinga who wrote: 'De verhouding van het opbloeiende humanisme en de afstervende geest der middeleeuwen is veel minder eenvoudig, dan wij geneigd zijn ons haar voor te stellen.' Johan Huizinga, *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen: Studie over levens- en gedachtenvormen der veertiende en vijftiende eeuw in Frankrijk en de Nederlanden* (32nd edition; Amsterdam 2011) 416. The idea of a sharp caesura between Middle Ages and a Modern Time is just the same mistake as thinking of the Middle Ages as thousand years of darkness, war, and hunger. 'Elke tijd is overgangstijd,' we could say: a more gradual and appreciative historiography could supplant the still dominant one. 'What our forefathers lived could better be called the "long morning" of our world,' as Michael Pye writes. Michael Pye, *The Edge of the World: A Cultural History of the North Sea and the Transformation of Europe* (New York 2015) 12. The Middle Ages are, in many senses, the foundation of modern society, but they still suffer from bad PR. Especially in the Netherlands, the Middle Ages are long forgotten, and Dutch historiography traditionally starts with the Eighty Years' War and the Golden Age. A telling anecdote is the saying of the Dutch King William III about the Rijksmuseum. The King declared he would 'never set foot in this monastery.' This quote reflected a broader sentiment of Protestant Holland about the neo-gothic Rijksmuseum, which was deemed by many to be "too Medieval." Peter Raedts, *De ontdekking van de Middeleeuwen: Geschiedenis van een illusie* (Amsterdam 2011) 227.

[9] "*Historia magistra*", some may say. Many historians will say that history is simply useless. Compare the view of Maarten van Rossem on this subject, in: *Heeft geschiedenis nut?* (Utrecht 2003). Most historians, however, will agree that each time writes its own history: our view of history is shaped in part by the present time. Each generation has also reflected on historical parallels to contemporary events. This

In the middle of the fifteenth century there was a well-marked enemy, and its name was "Turk". In the simplified worldview of medieval man, East was East and West was West. The fall of Constantinople gave way to the nightmarish image of the Eastern hordes, which had ravaged Europe repeatedly since the fall of Rome, and would come back this time to finish the job. This in turn strengthened the call for a strong leader in Europe. Many people looked to the Holy Roman Empire, the heart of Christendom, to take up the shepherd's role. The Empire, however, suffered from long-term weaknesses, and it seemed unable to restore order on the continent. Although a conclusive theory of power had not yet been formed in the fifteenth century (this would only happen through Machiavelli's hands in the sixteenth century) there was discussion about the functions of Empire in Europe in humanist circles. These were practical in nature: the humanists (and other thinkers) had to come up with a pragmatic answer to the power-struggles of their time.

The following research will shed some light on a particular case: the "views on Empire" of an Italian humanist, phrased otherwise: the ideas of the Italian humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini on the Holy Roman Empire in the middle of the fifteenth century. In order to do this, we have to take a closer look at two of Piccolomini's writings, the *Pentalogus* and the *Germania*. What makes these works so interesting is that they are written by an Italian meditating on the German lands. It is highly beneficial to our research that Piccolomini was both insider and outsider in the heart of Europe: he lived and worked in the German part of the Holy Roman Empire for more than half of his adult life. This provided him with excellent knowledge of the late medieval "German" mind, as well as a deep understanding of the intricate workings of the Empire. On the other hand, Piccolomini never learnt to speak the language, and he never felt at home in the cold, wet and "barbaric" lands north of the Alps. This duality in Piccolomini will be a recurrent theme in our research. Another interesting aspect offered to us by the comparative study of both works is a radical change half-way Piccolomini's life. We will see how this change influenced his views on Empire. Herein we have to manoeuvre between what we know about Piccolomini and what he has written down, and attempt to steer clear from a full-blown "psycho-analysis".

We will try to find out how much weight Piccolomini attributes to the German part of the Holy Roman Empire as *hegemon* over Europe. In our research we hope to find an answer not just to this main question, but also to those questions that spring up after introducing our subject. We are obligated to delve deeper into the Holy Roman Empire and the theories of power that were current in the fifteenth century. In so doing, we will try to answer the question if Piccolomini sees a universal destiny for the Empire, or rather a particular one. Another question that begs our attention is the status of the German people in Piccolomini's eyes. Did Piccolomini perceive the German people as a monolithic bloc, or rather as a patchwork of different peoples? We will also discuss how far predominant views on Germany in Piccolomini's surroundings influenced the humanist himself.[10]

Both the *Pentalogus* and the *Germania* remain little studied. Even though there has been a modest rise in attention recently for Piccolomini's life and works (including those we are going to examine), a lot still remains unclear. This holds true above all for Piccolomini's views on Empire. In the course of time a few articles have appeared on this subject, but these focused on other writings. Explicit comparisons between the *Pentalogus* and the *Germania* have, to my knowledge, never been made. This will be the merit of our research: to check if Piccolomini's "views on Empire" changed over time, and to account for these changes.

We will start our research by sketching the background of the fifteenth century. In order to do this we will have a look at three thematically sorted aspects of Piccolomini's life, starting with the Holy Roman Empire and continuing with the intertwined phenomena

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is, at least as a thought-experiment, a satisfying enterprise. The reader will note that the story below will also contain some parallels.

[10]When we talk about "Germany", we mean the totality of German-speaking lands inside the Empire's borders. It goes without saying that this is, by no means, a definitive, indubitable label.

of humanism and "proto-nationalism", then turning our attention towards the Council of Basel. Chapter two ends with a description of Piccolomini's life up until his pontificate. In chapter three the *Pentalogus* and the *Germania* will be introduced in chronological order. Their history and their status in the scholarly world will be examined, before we turn to the works' content in chapter four. We will start by displaying those remarks by Piccolomini that are of interest to us. In the end of the chapter, the reader will find a synthesis of Piccolomini's remarks in both works, as well as an attempt to answer the questions laid out above. We will end our research with a general conclusion.

Chapter 2

Background

2.1 The Holy Roman Empire

Defining the Holy Roman Empire has always been an impossible task for medieval scholars. For lack of better means, many scholars have written on the subject in terms of "*Defizitgeschichte*" (what is the Empire not?).[1] One immediately thinks of that famous phrase by Voltaire, who described the Holy Roman Empire as being 'nor holy, nor roman, nor empire.'[2] As we will see, the Empire may simply be an "invented tradition", clad with rituals and ceremonies to hold it together. The traditional starting point for the Empire is the first day of Christmas, 800 AD. It was at this moment that Pope Leo III, who had survived an assassination attempt and had sought refuge with Charlemagne, crowned the Frankish King "*Imperator Romanorum*" in Saint Peter's Basilica.[3]

In the Early Middle Ages – following Charlemagne's coronation – the Empire only had the adjective "Roman". This epithet signified the continuation of the Roman Empire of Antiquity. Then, in the twelfth century, we find the first mention of the "Holiness" of the Empire.[4] This came into use around 1160. During the heyday of the Investiture Controversy, when both pope and princes challenged the authority of the German king, he had to find new ways to legitimise his power.[5] We find a similar search for legitimacy in the Kingdom of France. In the Empire, however, problems were exacerbated by its sheer size and complexity. The Holy Roman Empire was, in fact, triply handicapped: it had to ward off both the pope, the challenges of foreign princes and the ever-greater power of

[1] Duncan Hardy, *An interconnected Reich: rethinking 'state formation' and political culture in the Holy Roman Empire and the Burgundian Low Countries, c.1350-1550.* Lecture held at Leiden University on the 8th of April, 2016. The Empire was not, for example, a monarchy such as France or England: its king or emperor was elected ("*Wahlmonarchie*") instead of predestined. It was also not a centralised "state" with centralised power: its elites had near complete autonomy over their territories.

[2] Voltaire, Furne (ed.), *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire* III (*Essai sur les moeurs - annales de l'empire*) (Paris 1835) 248: 'Ce corps qui s'appelait et qui s'appelle encore le saint empire romain, n'était en aucune manière ni saint, ni romain, ni empire.'

[3] Accounts differ on the exact title that was bestowed upon Charlemagne. His biographer, Einhard, writes as follows (as if it is a mere detail of history): 'Quo tempore [Charlemagne] imperatoris et augusti nomen accepit.' *Einhardi vita Karoli Magni* (G.H. Pertz, G. Waitz and O. Holder-Egger eds., Hannover 1927) 32. According to British historian James Bryce, the following words were spoken: 'Karolo Augusto a Deo coronato magno et pacifico imperatori vita et victoria.' James Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire* (3rd edition, London 1871) 49.

[4] In the charters of Frederick I (no. 163), collected in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica.* Referenced in: Stefan Weinfurter, 'Vorstellungen und Wirklichkeiten vom Reich des Mittelalters', in: Bernd Schneidmüller and Stefan Weinfurter (eds.), *Heilig, Römisch, Deutsch : das Reich im mittelalterlichen Europa* (Dresden 2006) 451-474: 457.

[5] Gottfried Koch, *Auf dem Wege zum Sacrum Imperium: Studien zur ideologischen Herrschaftsbegründung der deutschen Zentralgewalt im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert* (Berlin 1972) 1: 'In Deutschland wurde das Problem der ideologischen Herrschaftsbegründung besonders zu einer Zeit relevant, als die Grundlagen des Königtums aufs tiefste erschüttert werden.'

the electors, weakening it from the inside.[6], This problem became most prominent under the Hohenstaufen dynasty and it climaxed with the so-called "*staufische Staatsauffassung*": an ideological attempt to centralise power in the person of the German King. Frederick I Barbarossa and his son, Henry VI, were ambitious enough to succeed in centralising power over the Empire. Charlemagne was proclaimed holy by Frederick I Barbarossa. It was a sly political act by Barbarossa: 'Die Sakralität des Herrschers wurde auf das Reich verlagert.'[7] Edward Gibbon describes the tradition on which the Holy Roman Empire rests: 'The names of Caesar and Augustus, the laws of Constantine and Justinian, the example of Charlemagne and Otho [sic], established the supreme dominion of the emperors.'[8] However, decentralising powers proved too strong for the Staufen monarchs.[9] In theory, the Empire was the most powerful entity on the continent. In practice, however, it was the "Weak Man of Europe", and its condition worsened over time. Amidst increasingly centralised regimes, there was this colossus that only seemed to decentralise. Many scholars have pointed this out and, indeed, have found this to be explanation of the so-called *Sonderweg*-thesis: the crooked road to democracy and a centralised state that Germany has taken in the modern era. Still the question remains, in the words of American sociologist Charles Tilly, 'why (...) the fragmented Holy Roman Empire lasted so long in the midst of consolidating, bellicose monarchies.'[10] Why did this form of government last, while others (such as the city-state) perished?

In the fifteenth century, its name was prolonged with the suffix: "Deutscher Nation" (lat. "Nationis Germanicae"). The addendum, like the other epiteths, is a little besides the point: the Holy Roman Empire was certainly not only inhabited by German peoples. Countless numbers of French-, Italian-, and Slavic-speaking peoples were still living inside the Empire's borders in the Late Middle Ages. We can surmise that the peoples of the fifteenth century saw the Empire's title as a purely formal one, bearing little resemblance to reality. The theoretical foundation of the Empire was the doctrine of "*translatio imperii*": the continuation of the ancient Roman imperial title in the Occident (for although the Byzantine Empire was named "the second Rome", its legitimacy was contested in the West).[11] The theory of "*translatio imperii*" was the basis of medieval historical philosophy. It was based on the Old Testament Book of Daniel, who prophesied the meaning of a dream that the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezar II had:

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[6]Joachim Bumke, *Höfische Kultur: Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter* vol. I (3rd edition; Munich 1986) 45. 'Je schwächer das Königtum wurde und je mehr sich sein Schwerpunkt im 12. Jahrhundert nach Italien verlagerte, um so entschiedener wurden die Geschicke in Deutschland von den Großen des Reichs bestimmt.'

[7]Ibidem: 'Die Heiligkeit des Begründers aller Herrschaft im Mittelalter [Charlemagne] sollte auch das Reich selbst heiligen und auf diese Weise verstetigen und unangreifbar machen.' See for further reference: Jürgen Petersohn, 'Saint Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder', *Deutsches Archiv* 31 (1975) 420-454. Petersohn compares Charlemagne's canonisation with those happening in Europe at the same time (Edward of England, 1161; Duke Knud of Denmark 1169). (Petersohn 421.)

[8]Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* vol. XII (J.B. Bury and W.E.H. Lecky eds., New York 1906) 68.

[9]Koch, *Auf dem Wege*, 3: '1197 wurde mit dem Tode Heinrichs VI. schlagartig klar, daß es der deutschen Zentralgewalt nicht wie der französischen und englischen gelungen war, sich tragfähige Grundlagen zu schaffen und so den Kristallisationspunkt einer sich herausbildenden Nation abzugeben.'

[10]Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992* (Revised paperback edition, Malden, MA 1992) 65.

[11]Koch, *Auf dem Wege*, 223. The differences between the two empires were insurmountable. Koch shines some light on the differences. The Byzantine Emperor had, for example, a godly status, higher than the patriarch: 'War der Kaiser in der heidnischen Antike selbst zum Gott erklärt worden, so behielt er auch in Byzanz seinen übermenschlichen Charakter.' (Koch, 219.). In the West this was the imperial wish, not reality. Koch also humorously describes the search for an apt imperial title, of which "*imperator Theutonicus*", "*Romanorum rex et semper augustus*" or simply "*rex Romanorum*" are just a few, in negating the Byzantine Emperor (Koch 219-230.). We find the search for a meaningful monarchical title in every European kingdom in the Middle Ages; the Holy Roman Empire is not an exception (on the contrary). So Le Goff: 'Otton II (973-983) remplace le titre d'Imperator Augustus porté habituellement par son père par celui d' "empereur des Romains", *Imperator Romanorum*.' Jacques le Goff, *La civilisation de l'Occident Médiéval* (Paris 1984) 69.

> 'Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.
> This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,
> His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.'[12]

Now this dream was a willing prey for the medieval exegetes. We find the first "explanations of Daniel's explanation" among the Church Fathers. Saint Jerome wrote a commentary on the Book of Daniel, and outlines his theory of four empires.[13] In the earliest times – "*aurea prima sata est*" – the golden Babylonian Empire was the centre of the world; then came the subsequent empires, each "less perfect" than the previous one. The fourth empire was the Roman Empire, 'strong in the beginning, weak in the end.' Orosius, one of the early theologians of the middle ages and a student of Saint Augustine, espoused similar views in his widely read historiographical work *historia adversus paganos*. The succession of empires fitted perfectly in the linear worldview of medieval man. So writes Jacques le Goff: 'Fondée sur l'exégèse orosienne du songe de Daniel, la succession des empires, des Babyloniens aux Mèdes et aux Perses, puis aux Macédoniens et après eux aus Grecs et aux Romains, est le fil conducteur de la philosophie médiévale de l'histoire.'[14] Not all theologians had the exact same idea of the practical implications of this theory. The early fourteenth-century English bibliophile Richard de Bury saw the line of succession of empires conveniently end in his own Britain.[15] Chrétien de Troyes perceived the movement of centres of thought and learning ("*translatio studii*") , and concludes that the terminus was Paris. For the German lands we find Otto of Freising, writer of Barbarossa's *gesta*, willing to explain that the Holy Roman Empire was the terminus of the sequence "Romans-Greeks-Franks-Lombards-Germans".[16]

The Empire has been described as an "enormous and fractioned political entity", a "monstrosity in the heart of Europe", and a "multi-ethnic complex of territories," but perhaps the most wise thing to do is to simply accept the Empire at face value.[17] It has been said that all categories we invent for the Empire are misleading, and I agree. Trying to define the Empire may be a futile enterprise.

The Empire, which had never had a strong uniform leadership or the will to cooperate from many of its constituents, saw its disintegration start at the middle of the thirteenth century, with the demise of the powerful Emperor Frederick II (r. 1220-1250). With the energetic and cultured Emperor dead, the Hohenstaufen line ended, and a century-long period of political decay began for the Empire. There was strife between the papacy and

[12] Daniel 2:31-33 (KJV).

[13] Jerome describes the following four empires: 'per quod ostenditur regnum primum, Babylonium, auro pretiosissimo comparatum' ('it is clear that the first empire, the Babylonian, is compared to the most precious metal, gold.') 'Medorum uidelicet atque Persarum, quod argenti habet similitudinem' ('The empire of the Medes and Persians, which bears a resemblance to silver.') 'regnum Alexandrum (...) et regnum Macedonum successorumque Alexandri' ('The Alexandrian empire, and that of the Macedonians, and of Alexander's successors.') And the fourth, 'quod perspicue pertinet ad Romanos' ('which clearly refers to the Romans.') For the original in Latin, see: *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera* I (Opera Exegetica) 5: Commentariorum in Danielem Libri III-IV (Turnhout 1964) 784-795. For the English version used here: St. Jerome, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel* (transl. and introd. by Gleason L. Archer, Eugene 2009) 31-32.

[14] Jacques le Goff, *La civilisation de l'Occident Médiéval* (Paris 1984) 197.

[15] Le Goff, *Civilisation*, 198.

[16] Ibidem. Throughout one of Otto's main works, the *Chronica*, we find traces of this thought. Cf. the following sentence: '(...) iste est Alexander, qui Persarum nobile ac superbum imperium destruxit et ad Macedonas transtulit.' Otto of Freising, *Chronica, sive historia de duabus civitatibus* (ed. by Adolf Hofmeister, Hannover 1912) 98. Otto's work is characterised by this linear typological thought. As one scholar concludes: 'Any historical event can be interpreted as a typological sign, and through the visible signs of historical events Otto can explain the invisible plan of God.' Marek Thue Kretschmer, "'Drinking of the Golden Cup of Babylon": Biblical Typology and Imagery in the Chronicle of Otto of Freising', *Viator* 47:1 (2015) 67-84: 68.

[17] The citations stem from Hardy (see n.1), Bernd Schneidmüller and Stefan Weinfurter, 'Vorwort', in: Schneidmüller and Weinfurter (eds.), *Heilig, Römisch, Deutsch : das Reich im mittelalterlichen Europa* (Dresden 2006) 7-9: 7 (based on a quote by seventeenth-century philosopher Samuel Pufendorf), and the English Wikipedia, respectively.

the Empire. The Kingdom of France was considered already at that time the natural enemy of the German kingdoms. French Kings would try multiple times to be crowned German King, and even German Emperor, at the expense of German candidates. In the early days of Frederick III, who was considered a weak king and later emperor, the French king Charles VII tried to 'snatch the imperial crown.'[18] Was the Holy Roman Empire not, so reasoned French court-theologians and theoreticians, a pan-European project, encompassing the whole of Christendom? Was therefore "*Le roi très chrétien*" (a superlative – from Latin "*christianissimus*" – for the French kings starting from Charles V "*le sage*", late fourteenth century) not in the position to occupy this position? The legal counsellors of the Empire found a way to bar candidates from any other nationality than the German to be crowned, by basing themselves on the papal document *Decretale Venerabilem*, issued in 1202 by Innocent III. This decree contained one sentence which described the *translatio imperii*.[19] Not only were there many opponents to the Holy Roman Empire, there was also interior strife in the Empire. This was the ultimate consequence of its political structure. The Empire around the year 1400 was a fractal-like structure, with dominions that all had a different relationship to the Emperor. When travelling, one could find himself under a different lord (a duke, grave, or bishop, for example) every two, three hours. The mechanisms for electing a new king c.q. emperor were clouded and hidden from the public. Although much remains unclear about the precise process of electing and crowning the German King[20], it was the prerogative of a few noblemen to elect the Emperor.[21]

Let us shortly have a look at these nobleman's ranks, to see where the centres of personal-imperial power lay: there were the Archbishops of Cologne, Mainz, and Trier, the Margrave of Brandenburg, the Duke of Saxony, the Count Palatine of the Rhine and the King of Bohemia. These seven so-called "*Kurfürsten*" ("choice-lords") had the divine right (installed by the pope "from time immemorial") to elect the Emperor.[22] The dominions of the prince-electors were scattered over the Empire, but did not cover its surface equally: the bulk of power was still concentrated in the West.[23] This is not to say that we can pinpoint a capital city. In comparison with the Kingdom of France – where the political capital and the religious capital (Paris and Saint-Denis) almost collided – the Empire had a multitude of centres, many of them far apart.[24] There were at least three important religious capitals (the aforementioned archbishoprics of Mainz, Cologne, and Trier), and there was an ever-expanding constellation of political capitals: Aachen, Frankfurt, Nuremberg and Prague, to name a few. The reader should bear in mind that travelling in the late middle ages was a time-consuming business: a journey through all of Germany, from the North Sea to the Alps, would take a quick traveller forty days in the early fourteenth century.[25] For most of the Empire's inhabitants, the own town, city, or region comprised the farthest political horizon.

[18]Emily O'Brien, 'Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini and the Histories of the Council of Basel', in: Christopher Bellito, Thomas Izbicki and Gerald Christianson (eds.), *The Church, the Councils, & Reform : The Legacy of the Fifteenth Century* (Washington 2008) 60-81: 74.

[19]Caspar Hirschi, *The origins of nationalism: an alternative history from ancient Rome to early modern Germany* (Cambridge 2012) 183. The sentence reads: Romanum Imperium in personam magnifici Caroli a Graeci transtulit in Germanos. Hirschi writes humorously: 'The list of exclusion criteria contained "excommunicated", "tyrants", "idiots", "heretics" and "pagans" – but not foreigners!' It was introduced during the council of Basel, and was especially important in the beginning of the sixteenth century, where there were three foreigners who had better chances than a German prince: Charles I of Spain, Francis I of France, and Henry VIII of England.

[20]dr. Anne Huijbers, personal correspondence with HB, 15 February 2015.

[21]The priority for these select few was only codified in the fourteenth century, in the Golden Bull of Emperor Charles IV. It had grown historically over time, but was in fact nothing more than *mos maiorum*. Bumke, *Höfische Kultur* vol. I, 43.

[22] The German "Fürst" stems from Proto-Germanic *furista*, meaning "first" (compare Latin "princeps").

[23]This is, at least, Scales' conclusion: 'The densest concentration of legitimising sites still lay in the ancient, urbanised west.' Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, 129.

[24]Len Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity: authority and crisis, 1245-1414* (Cambridge 2012) 133.

[25]As a Dominican friar from Colmar noted. Peter Moraw, *Von offener Verfassung zu gestalteter Verdichtung: das Reich im späten Mittelalter 1250 bis 1490* (Berlin 1985) 47.

2.2 Humanism and proto-nationalism

'As a general rule', writes Richard Southern, 'medieval historians do well to avoid words which end in "ism".'[26] Southern reluctantly makes an exception for some "isms", among which we find humanism, only because they are too omnipresent to go without. Southern's criticism can be summed up as follows: the word "humanism" belongs to recent history, and is filled with modern projections on bygone times.[27] It is true that the name "humanism" for a broad political and literary movement was only conceived in the nineteenth century.[28] In the German-speaking scholarly world, a jubilant adoration of humanist and renaissance miracles took hold, famously articulated by Jakob Burckhardt and Georg Voigt.[29] In this time 'the modern addiction to reifying ideologies and social trends using nouns formed from *-ismos*, the Greek suffix indicating nouns of action or process, began to take hold.'[30] We find the ancestor of the term "humanism" in the later middle ages, where learned men engaged in the *studia humanitatis*, the study of ancient Latin (and some Greek) texts, and called themselves *umanisti*. This was a 'purely functional term that conferred no particular prestige.'[31] Perhaps the first fault is to see "humanism" as a uniform movement: the only common ground for all humanists was that they engaged in the study of the humanities.

The relatively recent name of humanism has countless meanings in our time, but let us reduce this number to two for the sake of curtness. The first meaning of "Humanism" is that of classical education: 'the study of ancient literature in the original languages.'[32] The second meaning stood for 'a certain philosophical outlook [which] (...) reduced the divine to the human [and] was opposed to any sort of religious dogma or revelation.'[33] Many modern people will explain the term in this sense, mixing it up with Enlightenment thought. The grounded conception nowadays is that man became the "centre of the universe", that there was a strong undercurrent of philosophical optimism, and that humanism was vehemently anti-clerical. For medievalists, this is almost worse than saying that medieval man thought the earth was flat. It is no surprise that this conception of humanism has been criticised by medievalists since its inception: for them it is utterly useless.[34] It has been rebuked most harshly by famous historian Paul Kristeller. He emphasized in many of his works that humanism was a literary movement, built upon the study of classical authors and the *studia humanitatis*.[35]

Swiss historian Caspar Hirschi defines "humanism" as a 'literary and pedagogical movement that started in Italy in the fourteenth century, and spread out over Italy and Europe

[26] Richard W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and other studies* (paperback edition; Oxford 1984) 29.

[27] To put it another way: humanism is at risk of being injected with 'ideas of a later age.' (Ibidem.) Humanism becomes (in Dutch), 'een vergaarbak van allerlei zaken die we naar individuele willekeur goed of juist slecht vinden.' Peter Derkx, 'Humanisme als moderne levensbeschouwing', in: Hans Alma and Adri Smaling (reds.), *Waarvoor je leeft. Studies naar humanistische bronnen van zin* (Amsterdam 2009) 43-57: 43.

[28] James Hankins, 'Humanism, scholasticism, and Renaissance philosophy', in: James Hankins (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge 2007) 30-48: 30.

[29] cf. Georg Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums oder das erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus* (Berlin 1859) and Jakob Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Basel 1860).

[30] Hankins, 'Humanism, scholasticism, and Renaissance philosophy', 30.

[31] Tony Davies, *Humanism* (second edition, London 2008) 95.

[32] Hankins, 'Humanism, scholasticism, and Renaissance philosophy', 30.

[33] Ibidem.

[34] This kind of "Enlightenment-humanism", equated with a belief in progress, has been fiercely attacked by English philosopher John Gray. See: *Straw dogs: thoughts on humans and other animals* (first A. paperback edition; New York 2007). On his definition of humanism, see for example page 4: 'Humanism can mean many things, but for us it means belief in progress.'

[35] Paul O. Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and the Arts: Collected Essays* (expanded edition; Princeton 1990) 3-4. Kristeller also rejects the supposed dichotomy between humanism and scholasticism. Note that both definitions of humanism as sketched above were inimical to the Middle Ages. The humanists of the fifteenth century were dismissive of the middle ages because medieval man had neglected to honour the style and message of Antiquity; the modern humanists because the middle ages were seen as a time of superstition and dogma. Excellent analysis by Southern. *Medieval Humanism*, 30.

in the fifteenth and sixteenth century.'[36] Hirschi stresses that he does not take into account the political tenets of humanism, nor the philosophical implications. *Grosso modo*, Hirschi describes what Southern calls "literary humanism", its essential feature being 'the study of ancient Latin and Greek literature.'[37] I want to end the common symbiosis of these two definitions. Let us stick with the definition of humanism as a literary movement, based on the study of the Ancients. Piccolomini himself defined "humanism" in this way.[38] We have to keep in mind that when we say "movement" we assume a collectiveness that was not present in the later middle ages.[39] For this reason, the term "network" has also been suggested to describe the early movement. So Tony Davies: 'The itinerant *umanisti* (...) created an informal peripatetic network of personal discussion, correspondence and conviviality.'[40] The earliest humanists, if organised at all, were organised along linguistic and ethnic lines; there was no agenda, nor a common plan. Early humanism was leaderless: only in the sixteenth century we encounter those influential men that could be called "chieftains" or princes of humanism (in hindsight).[41]

The core of humanism was, so we have established, the study of ancient authors. In Italy, the birthplace of humanism, the *umanisti* indulged in the reading of the few authors that were known at the time. Petrarca particularly rejoiced in the reading of Cicero, Seneca, and Horace.[42] Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) was the undisputed champion of the early humanists. Many of them were of the opinion that one could only learn to read and write Latin well by imitating the vocabulary and style of this famous pre-Christian lawyer.[43] Cicero soon became subject of an all-out cultural war about the heritage of the ancients.

One of the centres of early humanism was the Republic of Florence. The city's patricians were all educated by humanistic standards, laid out by Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444). He convinced the city council that a humanistic education was imperative for the patrician youth. For the politically ambitious humanists, the study of classical texts was a means to an end: to acquire political and societal status.[44] This may well be the most fundamental difference between the existing ("medieval") outlook and the newer humanist outlook: the Florentine humanists praised the *vita activa* instead of the *vita contemplativa*. In spite of many classical authors strongly endorsing the latter, the Italian humanists had made their own choice and argued (with Aristotle in hand) that man was a social being – a *zoon politikon* – and that civic life was life's fulfilment.[45] Around the year 1400, two other cities emerged that vied for the status of humanistic city: Venice and Milan. In Venice, we find what has been called "patrician humanism" by Margaret King.[46]

The Italian humanists, influential in the archipelago of city-states but devoid of political might on a higher level, sought to assert Italian superiority in the cultural realm. Petrarca, with a circle of admirers in his wake (of whom Coluccio Salutati was the most outspoken), built the Italian superiority on the Roman-republican norms he found in his beloved Ci-

[36]Caspar Hirschi, *Wettkampf der Nationen: Konstruktionen einer deutschen Ehrgemeinschaft an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit* (Göttingen 2005) 64 (original wording in German).

[37]Southern, *Medieval Humanism*, 30.

[38]Patrick L. Baker, *Illustrious Men: Italian Renaissance Humanists on Humanism* (Cambridge, MA 2009) 29.

[39]It was not a movement, 'but it was certainly *in* movement,' (Tony Davies, referring to the travelling state of many early humanists. Davies, *Humanism*, 70. And: 'it is an [intellectual program] characterised by a notable absence of coherence and a remarkable degree of discord.' (95).

[40]Davies, *Humanism* 70.

[41]One thinks of such figures as Erasmus (1466-1536) and Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592).

[42]Hanna H. Gray, 'Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24:4 (1963) 497-514: 501.

[43]Maarten van der Poel, 'De verjonging van het Latijn door de Renaissance-humanisten', in: N. van der Sijs (ed.), *Taaltrots. Taalpurisme in een veertigtal talen* (Amsterdam 1999) 173-180: 175.

[44]Ronald G. Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden 2000) 447.

[45]Hanan Yoran, 'Florentine Civic Humanism and the Emergence of Modern Ideology', *History and Theory* 46:3 (2007) 326-344: 327.

[46]See: Margaret L. King, *Venetian humanism in an age of patrician dominance* (Princeton 1986).

cero.[47] The Italian humanists viewed themselves as successors to the Romans, as cultured Republicans. Now, when defining themselves, Italians humanists also had to establish what they were not (as is one of the defining features of nationalism).[48] They swiftly found their victims in the people of the north. The Germans (and, to a lesser extent, the French) were branded with the stigma of "*barbari*". The word "*barbaros*", having had negative as well as positive connotations in ancient times, turned into a decidedly negative stereotype.[49] Of all European peoples, the French were seen as the biggest threat to Italian cultural dominance; as a consequence, they were most vehemently attacked by Petrarch and his followers. The Germans on the other hand were certainly not a threat in the cultural realm. They were hated instead for their might in the political realm and derided for their lack of culture.[50]

This was mainly a recycling of a concept that had always been present in Italy. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Germans were seen as an uncivilised an unruly people.[51] The Germans were characterised by the Italians as gluttons, drunkards (although this was a stereotype pasted on the English, too) and idiots. Tellingly, the only reference made to the Germans in Dante's *divina commedia* is that of 'Tedeschi lurchi' ("guzzling Germans").[52] The most enduring characterisation of the Germans, however, was that of wild and unruly fighters, spawning the phrase "*furor teutonicus*". This phrase was fostered most markedly in Italy, which had experienced the *furor teutonicus* firsthandedly: German armies, marching through the Italian countryside, were a common sight for centuries. Following the incursions of the Ostrogoths and the Longobards, the Italians were scourged by the German emperor.[53] Although it was the "German" Charlemagne who succeeded in uniting Europe around 800 AD and establishing a "*pax Romana*" inside his empire's borders, the stigma of the *furor teutonicus* was there to stay.[54]

Perhaps it is exactly because Charlemagne had united Europe and was crowned emperor that negative stereotypes were perpetuated. They were aroused as the Italians had to submit to an overlord that hailed from another soil. As Gibbon writes: 'Every Roman prejudice was awakened by the name, the language, and the manners of a Barbarian lord.'[55] Heightened by the sharp division of the Investiture Controversy, the negative image of the

[47] Caspar Hirschi, 'Das Humanistische Nationskonstrukt vor dem Hintergrund modernistischer Nationalismustheorien', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 122 (2002) 355-396: 383.

[48] "Otherness" is a defining feature of nationalism. Cf. the Joker in Batman: 'What would I do without you? (...) You complete me.' (*The Dark Knight*).

[49] Hirschi, 'Das Humanistische Nationskonstrukt', 369. 'Vom semantisch vielschichtigen Barbarenkonzept der griechischen und römischen Antike rezipiert [der Italienische Humanismus] die betont pejorativen Inhalte.'

[50] Cf. the famous "Rime sparse" no. 128 by Petrarch (from the *Canzoniere*), quoted in the last chapter of Machiavelli's *Principe*. Petrarch speaks of the Germans as a "popol senza legge" and "vertù contra furore".

[51] Peter Amelung, *Das Bild der Deutschen in der Literatur der italienischen Renaissance (1400-1559)* (Munich 1964) 29: 'Während man im übrigen Europa den Deutschen im Mittelalter lange Zeit wenn nicht wohlwollend, so doch neutral gegenüberstand, was das Verhältnis der Italiener zu den Deutschen seit dem frühesten Mittelalter durch Mißtrauen und Abneigung bestimmt.' We find the image of the wild German also in other early medieval countries, such as in Isidore of Seville, who writes in his *Etymologies*: '[Germani] mores ex ipso caeli rigore traxerunt, ferocis animi et semper indomiti, raptu venatuque viventes.' Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi, *Etymologiarum sive Originum* Liber IX, chapter 2; 97. 'They took their mores from this cold sky, with fierce minds and always indomitable, living by stealing and hunting.'

[52] Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata* (ed. Giorgio Petrocchi, Milan 1966) 69. In the seventeenth canto of Inferno, we read: 'Come talvolta stanno a riva i burchi, che parte sono in acqua e parte in terra, e come là tra li Tedeschi lurchi.'

[53] Amelung, *Das Bild der Deutschen*, 29: 'Der Ostgoten- und Langobarden-Herrschaft folgte schließlich die Unterwerfung unter das deutsche Kaisertum, das nun für Jahrhunderte den Lauf der italienischen Geschichte bestimmte.' The terror of the "*lanzichenecci*" would continue in early modern times, with the "*sacco di Roma*" in 1527 being one of the worst instances. Later, the Spaniards would have the dubious honour of being the most ridiculed nation.

[54] See for an excellent study of the Roman origin of this term: Christine Trzaska-Richter, *Furor teutonicus: das römische Germanenbild in Politik und Propaganda von den Anfängen bis zum 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Trier 1991).

[55] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* vol. XII, 69. Gibbon suggests that the German kings, 'chiefs of a feudal aristocracy', were unwelcome in Italy, and that they were oftentimes forced to leave Rome with their tail between their legs after their coronation.

Germans was monopolised by the Italians. They had been unwillingly incorporated into the Empire by Otto I, who had treated the *Regnum Italicum* in similar fashion to his illustrious predecessor, Charlemagne. Otto had entered Rome with an army of Teutonic vassals to be crowned emperor and to defend the Papal State under pope John XII against usurpers.[56] It quickly became clear, however, that Otto himself was the usurper. After a growing conflict with the pope, the emperor took over. Roughly half of the Italian peninsula – excluding the *mezzogiorno*, at that time mainly ruled by the Byzantine Emperor – was added to the Holy Roman Empire. 'Die Kaiserwürde [bot] Otto eine Handhabe (...) Teile des römischen Gebiets (...) mehr oder weniger legal zu regieren.'[57] Peter Wilson argues against the notion of Otto as an alien invader: according to Wilson, the Emperors were mainly supported when they could provide peace and stability.[58]

As public opinion was influenced by the opinion of the European elites, and the opinion of the elites was influenced by the opinion of the Romans, we can trace this strong stereotype of a fierce and barbaric German back to ancient times. The stereotype emerged time and again throughout the middle ages, slightly altering its form depending on the circumstances. It came to fruition in the "long" twelfth century, in what Claire Weeda calls a 'previously unrecorded outburst of ethnic stereotyping.'[59]

I want to highlight two factors of the negative stereotype about Germans, to show that it was not just an atavistic matter. The first is the German tongue. Throughout the Middle Ages and well into modern times we find complaints about the harshness and the incomprehensibility of the German language.[60] The German language has given rise to some remarkable properties in European relations. Consider the word for "Germany" in Polish, which is "*Niemcy*". "*Niemi*" means "the mutes" in Polish, and refers to the incomprehensibility of German to Slavic-speaking peoples.[61] This also worked the other way around, with German peoples having their own name for non-German speaking peoples, especially those on their southern and western borders. The reconstructed Proto-Indo-European word **walhaz* (in elder runes this would be spelled: ᚹᚨᛚᚺᚨᛉ) to all probability meant "stranger", and was used for all those who spoke either Latin or Celtic.[62] So there

[56]Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* vol. XII, 69. Gibbon's statement refers to all German emperors coming to Italy.

[57]Hagen Keller, 'Der Blick von Italien auf das "Römische" Imperium und seine "deutschen" Kaiser', in: Bernd Schneidmüller and Stefan Weinfurter (eds.), *Heilig, Römisch, Deutsch : das Reich im mittelalterlichen Europa* (Dresden 2006) 286-307: 292.

[58]Peter H. Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire: A Thousand Years of Europe's History* (London 2016) 282. Wilson argues that it was actually the Emperor's absence that heightened tensions in Italy.

[59]Claire Weeda, *Images of Ethnicity in Later Medieval Europe* (Amsterdam 2013) 40. Ethnic stereotypes also influenced etymology, and vice versa. In this manner, people from Galilea, Galicia, and Gaul were named after their milky-white bodies, 'because "γάλα" is Greek for "milk".' Thuringians were said to be "hard" ("*durus*" in Latin); Saxons were rock-like ("*saxa*"); and the Franks were fierce by nature ("*feroces*"). Weeda, 61.

[60]Weeda, *Images*, 232. In the sixteenth century, Emperor Charles V (1500-1558) reportedly once said: 'I speak Spanish to God, Italian to women, French to men, and German to my horse.' Quotation condensed from: Lord Chesterfield, Eugenia Stanhope (ed.), *Letters to his son: on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman* I (1746-1747) (London 1774) Letter ciii.

[61]Hans Kohn, *The idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origin and Background* (3rd edition; New York 1946) 7, with "*Nie*" meaning "not", and "*m*" being the root of "to speak". Literally: "not-speaking". This is the case for other West-Slavic languages, as well. *Grosso modo*, we can condense four names for Germany on the European stage: the West-Slavic name mentioned above, found in Poland and the Czech Republic; variations of the endonym "Deutschland", in all Germanic languages except English; variations on the collective name of the German tribes (i.e. "Germania"), in English, Italian, and most Slavic languages; and variations on the tribal federation of the Alamanni, in French and Spanish. The exact provenance of "Germany" remains unclear. Isidore of Seville (wrongly) connected the term to Latin "*germinare*" ("to sprout"). Isidore, *Etymologiae* Liber XIV cap. 4; 4.

[62]Gottfried Schramm, 'Venedi, Antes, Sclaveni, Sclavi: Frühe Sammelbezeichnungen für Slawische Stämme und ihr geschichtlicher Hintergrund', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 43:2 (1995) 161-200, there 162. Cf. Wallonia, Wales, the island of Walcheren in the Dutch province of Zeeland, and the Walnut (a nut that came to Northern Europe from the South). The German word was said to be a continuation of Latin "*Volcae*", a Celtic tribe that perhaps found its origins in southern Gaul. The *Volcae* were described by Caesar in his *De Bello Gallico*: 'Itaque ea quae fertilissima Germaniae sunt loca circum Hercyniam

was *ab initio* a clear watershed between Germanic-speaking peoples and Romance-speaking peoples (when we leave out of consideration the Slavic-speaking peoples). It was clear to many of the Romance-speaking peoples that the Germanic-speaking peoples could not achieve any form of civilisation whatsoever. As has been emphasised before: the image of the backwards German was disguised slightly differently every time it reappeared. In the Early Middle Ages, the ancient image of the *furor teutonicus* persisted; in the High Middle Ages, it was replaced by the 'ideals of the *preudhomme* [that] were being shaped in courtly milieus.'[63] The undisputed champion of courtly culture was France. This was readily accepted in all European countries. The elites wore French clothes, dined "French" and sang French music. As Joachim Bumke writes in his famous study of courtly culture: 'Die [deutsche] Dichter haben gewiß den Erwartungen ihres adligen Publikums entsprochen, wenn sie die höfischen Formen aus Frankreich überall als Vorbildlich hinstellten.'[64] With the ascent of the courtly culture and the success of the Parisian university, the French were seen as infinitely more civilised than the Germans.[65] Another contrast was born: the courtly "Frenchman" versus the backwards German villager. France could also boast, at least from the eleventh century onwards, of being a religious powerhouse: it was home to the influential Abbey of Cluny, and it was the "Cradle of the Crusades", when in 1095 Pope Urban II preached the liberation of Jerusalem in Clermont.[66]

A third pillar on which French authority was built, was its reputation of learning. Around the year 1100, the French cathedral-schools were among the most prestigious of Europe. They attracted students from all over the continent. The university of Paris, quickly growing in the twelfth century, became a beacon of learning. Students from all over Europe visited the Sorbonne to study law or theology. Here we already glimpse patterns of differentiation. Consider the four so-called *Nationes* in Paris, which sharply divided the students along ethnic and linguistic lines. Revealingly, German students were the first to be acknowledged as constituting an independent *natio*. This was not because of their exquisite manners. They had a reputation of being wild and aggressive. The English chronicler Roger of Hoveden tells us of an incident where a servant of the German bishop of Liège was mocked in a Parisian tavern. Subsequently a group of German clerics entered the tavern and beat up the innkeeper. In the end, the provost of Paris had to raid the house of the German students to restore order, killing the future bishop of Liège and a few of his men.[67]

Let us look at one more example of the perceived German barbarity to the Italian mind: the Gothic architectural tradition. This was the predominant architectural tradition in the High and Late Middle Ages. The name of this medieval style *sui generis* was only introduced in the beginning of the sixteenth century by the famous "first art historian" Giorgio Vasari. He writes in his *magnum opus*:

> 'ècci un'altra specie di lavori, che si chiamano tedeschi, i quali sono di ornamenti e di proporzione molto differenti da gli antichi e da' moderni (...). Questa maniera fu trovato da i Goti.'[68]

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silvam, quam Eratostheni et quibusdam Graecis fama notam esse video, quam illi Orcyniam appellant, Volcae Tectosages occupaverunt atque ibi consederunt; quae gens ad hoc tempus his sedibus sese continet summamque habet iustitiae et bellicae laudis opinionem.' (Liber VI, caput 24).

[63] Weeda, *Images of ethnicity*, 232.

[64] Joachim Bumke, *Höfische Kultur: Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter* vol. I (3rd edition; Munich 1986) 110.

[65] Weeda, *Images of Ethnicity*, 232. 'France now claimed to be the heart of learning and chivalry, showing restraint and martial prowess, in contrast to the German's violent nature.'

[66] Bumke, *Höfische Kultur* vol. I, 92.

[67] Roger of Hoveden, *Chronica* (quoted in: Bumke, *Höfische Kultur* vol. I, 94: 'Quo audito, factus est concursus clericorum teutonicorum; et intrantes tabernam vulneraverunt hospitem domus.' This was the last drop for the French king Philips II Augustus, who from then on (the incident took place in the year 1200) placed all students under royal protection.

[68] Giorgio Vasari (Luciano Bellosi and Aldo Rossi eds.), *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architetti* 38. 'See here another type of work, that which is called German, in which the ornaments and proportions are very different from the ancient and modern styles (...). This way of building was developed

Vasari used the pejorative "Gothic" for the architectural style that was until then known under the name "*arte tedesco*" ("German art"). It is perhaps ironic that the style was associated with the Germans, because in the North it was called "*opus francigenum*" (litt. "French work").[69]

As Caspar Hirschi argues, nationalism was rooted in late medieval humanism.[70] Scholarly elites in all European countries built their narrative of contemporary greatness upon the recently discovered classical authors. This was most evident in Italy and Germany, where the clash of civilisations between "*Romanitas*" and "*Germanitas*" was bitterly fought out. The first generation of German humanists (entering the stage in the middle of the fifteenth century) accepted the Italian verdict of backwardness, but the second generation, the "high-tide of German humanism" that manifested itself in the second half of the fifteenth century, no longer complied. Starting with the Dutch humanist, Rudolf Agricola, the northern humanists countered the Italian narrative. They developed an "anti-Roman" narrative themselves. Konrad Celtis and Heinrich Bebel were among the most famous advocates of this counter-narrative, in which both past and present were used. Past greatness was exemplified by Charlemagne, above all, and by the fearsome German tribes that were described by Tacitus. A heroic past was constructed by the humanists wherein the German people, forever bound by ethnic purity, had always fought foreign oppression. Present greatness was to be achieved through fostering the humanist studies. A good education for young men all over the Empire could reinvigorate the ideals of learning that had flourished at Charlemagne's court. German humanists ought to rival with, and equal their Italian counterparts.[71] All was aimed at increasing the prestige of the German nation and German national honour. A ready antagonist for the German humanists was found in the Italian nation. Later, the Kingdom of France and the Roman Curia were included in a narrative of "anti-Romanitas".[72] How widespread these ideas of German superiority were in the Empire of the later middle ages, is hard to say. We should keep in mind that humanism, in its very essence, was an elitist phenomenon. The extent to which humanist ideas dribbled through to the lower echelons of society, is the stuff for another debate. I hope to have shown that clear ideas about the own group versus those about another group were voiced in the Late Middle Ages. In Hirschi's footsteps, I think we can draw the following conclusion: that an idea of nation existed in the German parts of the Holy Roman Empire.[73]

With remarks about the origin of a sense of group identity, we enter a risky territory, in which many a battle has been fought, and in which gallons of ink have been shed. The question about the validity of such a question has been asked time and again, with as of yet an unclear and indecisive answer. When was Europe born? Famous French historian Marc Bloch answered this question as follows: 'L'Europe a surgi très exactement quand l'Empire romain a croulé.'[74] If we accept this medieval-centric outlook, the next step is to decide at what moment we can speak of a German nation (and related to that: a French

by the Goths.' He forged an explicit link to the Germanic tribe that sacked Rome in 410 AD. Vasari was not the first to use the term. Vasari's *Vite* were published in 1550. In 1518, the famous painter Raphael already linked the name to medieval architecture in a letter to Pope Leo X. Raphael sums up three kinds of constructs found in Rome: the antique, the modern, and those of 'Gotti, e altri Barbari (...) tanto che Roma fu dominata da'Gotti.' Quoted in: Esmond S. de Beer, 'Gothic: Origin and Diffusion of the Term: The Idea of Style in Architecture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948) 143-162, there 146.

[69]The Gothic architectural tradition was said to emerge during the later twelfth century, more specifically in the choir of the Basilica of Saint-Denis (finished 1144).

[70]This being the central thesis of Hirschi's work *Wettkampf der Nationen*.

[71]Hirschi, 'Zum Nationenkonstrukt', 371-372.

[72]Ibidem, 373: 'Während sich die Antibarbaries durch die Verfahren der "imitatio" und "aemulatio" dem Kulturimperialismus italienischer Humanisten entgegenstemmt, wird die Front der Antiromanitas weiter gezogen und umfaßt neben Italien auch Frankreich und die Papstkirche.'

[73]Hirschi, 'Das Humanistische Nationskonstrukt', 391. In his conclusion, Hirschi notes: 'Mit diesen Ausführungen wollte ich deutlich machen, daß im deutschen Humanismus, sofern man meinem Definitionsvorschlag von Nation und Nationalismus zustimmt, von der erstmaligen Konstruktion einer nationalistischen Ideologie Deutschlands und der Deutschen zu sprechen ist.'

[74]Quoted in: Lucien Febvre, *L'Europe: Genèse d'une civilisation* (Paris 1999) 87.

nation, an Italian nation). The answer has been variously placed in the Late Middle Ages, in the Early Modern Times, and some have even argued for an "invented" nationalism in the nineteenth century (although interpretations of this vary widely). However, if one supposes that national consciousness only emerged in the nineteenth century, one has to write off everything that has happened before that time. Many scholars of medieval history protest this assumption: they see traces of a national consciousness – sometimes called proto-nationalism – in the source material they work with.

Not without reason, historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have argued for an early "nationalism" in the medieval peoples. This trend was especially strong in Germany, where it was part of a highly politicised narrative to serve the state.[75] One of the examples in the German-speaking world to speak of an emerging national consciousness is the German historian Paul Kirn. During the Great War, he was stationed at the Western Front, and during the last years of the war he was in France as a prisoner of war. At this time, his fascination for proto-nationalism – especially the differences between the "French" and the "German" nation – was awakened. Once back "*in der Heimat*" he began work on his study on this subject, which resulted in one of his best-known works: *Aus der Frühzeit des Nationalgefühls* (1943). In this, Kirn establishes a connection between the ancient Germans and his contemporary compatriots (see following note). Kirn is, as a scientist, absolutely not impeccable: already in 1933, he signed the declaration of support for Hitler and he dedicates *Aus der Frühzeit* to '[die] jungen Freunden, die für Deutschland kämpfen.'[76] After the war, the subject was off-limits: it was contaminated by the "*Blut und Boden*"-ideology of the Nazis. Only at the closing of the century, the subject became "*salonfähig*" again in Germany. But the study of nationalism had taken a radical turn. In the famous year of 1983, three works were published that all questioned the traditional outlook on nationalism.[77]

In spite of all this, Kirn is seen as an exemplary scholar who conducted his study of sources very thoroughly. In the work of one of his disciples, we find echoes of Kirn's work. Carlrichard Brühl's *Die Geburt zweier Völker* studies the wedge that developed between the proto-French and the proto-German peoples in the wake of the dissolution of the Carolingian Empire.[78] Brühl also provides an excellent overview of the historiography in the nineteenth and twentieth century. He begins his work with the *communis opinio* (according to him) that 'we can speak of Germany and France as autonomous states at the latest from the middle of the eleventh century.'[79] The more contentious question, so Brühl, is: 'since when exactly we can speak of France as Germany as two independent political entities,' and – in close connection –: 'when was the end of the Frankish c.q. Carolingian Empire?'[80] Attemps to pin down this date have been centred around the Treaty of Verdun (843), the start of the Ottonian dynasty with the coronation of Henry the Fowler as German King (919) and the ascension of the French throne by Hugo Capet (987).[81]

[75] An excellent overview of German historical scholarship up until the Second World War gives Scales (*The Shaping of German Identity*, 19-40.

[76] Paul Kirn, *Aus der Frühzeit des Nationalgefühls: Studien zur deutschen und französischen Geschichte sowie zu den Nationalitätenkämpfen auf den Britischen Inseln* (Leipzig 1943) 7. When looking at the title of the seventh chapter ("*Die Mittelalterliche Strecke des Weges zur deutschen Einheit*"), we see that Kirn does not lack a finalistic spirit. See: *Aus der Frühzeit des Nationalgefühls*, 112-126. Kirn sees a constant factor in German history: the attempt by German rulers and by the Holy Roman Emperor to merge all German tribes (and later: peoples) into one people. Kirn discerns a '(...) politische Tätigkeit der deutschen Könige und Kaiser, die aus der Vielheit der Stämme ein Volk gemacht hat.' (*Aus der Frühzeit des Nationalgefühls*, 119.).

[77] These works cannot go unnamed: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London 1983); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford 1983); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge 1983).

[78] Carlrichard Brühl, *Die Geburt zweier Völker. Deutsche und Franzosen (9.-11. Jahrhundert)* (Cologne 2001).

[79] Brühl, *Die Geburt zweier Völker*, 7.

[80] Ibidem. We will not consider here the question of the "Frenchness" and "Germanness" of the Franks, which is another highly controversial feat of the discussion.

[81] Ibidem, 7-10; 12-13; 14. The latter date is mostly adhered to by French historians, such as Augustin

Many historians have tried to localise the genesis of a national consciousness in the European peoples. As we have seen above, different dates have been suggested. Accounts have come down to us from the well-documented crusades that decidedly divide the crusading armies along ethnic (and linguistic) lines. The eyewitness-chronicler Fulcher of Chartres despairingly asks in his history on the crusade: 'sed quis unquam audivit tot tribus linguae in uno exercitu?' ('who has ever heard such a linguistic diversity in one army?') and laments that he isn't able to converse with his fellow travelers.[82] Note that the Saracens perceived all crusaders as "Franks". The crusaders themselves would never admit to such a label, although the French were the largest ethnic group among them. During the first crusade, "pilgrims" from different nations came together, and so the differences between the European proto-nations were highlighted.

The earliest awakening of a proto-national consciousness in Germany has, as we have seen above, been located in the aftermath of the Carolingian Empire. Other dates have also been suggested. Len Scales has written extensively on the subject of German national feeling, and places its origins decidedly in the thirteenth century.[83] Scales' work *The Shaping of German Identity* offers an interesting study of the development of a German identity. It argues that German identity was to a large extent shaped by what other peoples had to say about their neighbour.[84] Interestingly, Scales also describes the German notions of imperialism. He writes: 'But imperialism was itself, in the eyes of many late medieval Germans, a German pattern of rule – indeed, *the* defining German form.'[85] More aggressively than Scales, Swiss historian Caspar Hirschi professes to carry a crusade against the "modernist paradigm" that places the genesis of the "natio" and nationalism in early modern or even modern times. According to Hirschi, the Late Middle Ages were the designated period of these phenomena. Hirschi portrays himself as a David, fighting against the Goliath of the modernist view. This inferiority complex is made verbal in one of Hirschi's works on nationalism: 'Wer heute ein Buch über Nationen an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit schreibt, steht unter der Verdacht, den Zug der Forschung verpasst zu haben und aus trüben Gewässern Ewiggestriges zu fischen.'[86] Analogous to the story laid out above, Hirschi concludes in his work that our modern understanding of nationalism was made possible by the German humanists of the Late Middle Ages. This is where Hirschi sees the fault in the modern thinkers on nationalism. He writes in the conclusion of his work: 'Der Humanismus macht es möglich, dass die modernen Intellektuellen Nationen überhaupt für natürlich gegebene Kollektive halten können.'[87]

Thierry, who writes: 'c'est, à proprement parler, la fin du règne des Franks et la substitution d'une royauté nationale au gouvernement fondé par la conquête.' (From Thierry's letters, quoted in Brühl (14). Various other dates have been propounded by German and French historians. Many of these find non-congruential years. Some more years that are attested: 887 (deposition of Charles III "The Fat" in East and West), 911 (the death of Louis IV "The Child" in the East), 921 (the Treaty of Bonn, where the German and the French kings recognised each other's authority), and 962 (the coronation of Otto I "The Great" to Roman Emperor by Pope John XII). (Brühl 7-14). Brühl fears that the overwhelming majority of German historians finds 919 to be the superior date (12). In the epilogue to his work, he declares many dates relevant for the decomposition process of the Frankish Empire, but not 911: 'Es bedeutet nichts weiter als das Aussterben der Karolinger in Ostfranken und die Wahl eines neuen Fränkischen Königs, wie dies im Westen schon 888 geschehen war.' (Brühl 707n.).

[82]Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana (1095-1127)* (ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer; Heidelberg 1913) 202. Fulcher describes the following groups among the crusaders: 'Franci, Flandri, Frisi, Galli, Allobroges, Lotharingi, Alemanni, Baioarii, Normanni, Angli, Scoti, Aquitani, Itali, Daci, Apuli, Iberi, Britones, Graeci, Armeni.' (203) Despite this meticulous description, Fulcher writes: 'sed qui linguis diversi eramus, tamquam fratres sub dilectione Dei et proximi unanimes esse videbamur.'

[83]Len Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, 538.

[84]Ibidem, 530.

[85]Ibidem, 535. Italics by Scales.

[86]Caspar Hirschi, *Wettkampf der Nationen*, 19.

[87]Ibidem, 501.

2.3 The Church and the councils

The first half of the fifteenth century is known as "the conciliar period" in church history. In a period of less than half a century, the Church was witness to as many as five general councils.[88] The Church had been in disarray for quite some time; a long period of political unrest and calls for reformation preceded the conciliar period. The Investiture Controversy had resulted in small concessions on the part of the Pope to temporal rulers. One by one, all kings of western Christendom tried to diminish the Curia's role in local matters.[89] In the beginning of the fourteenth century, papal authority had especially been damaged when Pope Clement V (p. 1305-1314) had taken up residence in Avignon. He had been in dire straits in Rome, where a battle between fractions raged, and a French pope was looked upon with suspicion. Through the troubled fourteenth century and until the beginning of the fifteenth century, however, the idea that the pope was the Church's sole authority remained unscathed. That was to change in the fifteenth century. Essentially, this point of discussion entered the stage: 'that another body in the church claimed a power that transcended papal authority.'[90]

The Council of Constance (1414-1418), in a small German town on the Bodensee, had set a dangerous precedent for the following councils. Among the sea of decrees issued from this Council, two were of particular importance for the Council of Basel. The first, a thorn in the side of the pope, was the decree *Haec sancta* of 1415. This decree stated that every authority was subject to the council, with the added warning 'including the Supreme Pontiff.'[91] The council-members during Basel interpreted the decree in a way that best served their interests, and argued (justifiably) that a council overruled the Pope in every situation, notwithstanding its composition, and for eternity. The council of Basel would operate *mutatis mutandis* the same way the council of Constance had: like driving in a one-way street. The second important decree sprouting from the Council of Constance was *Frequens* (issued in 1417). This decree stipulated that, after Constance, a new council had to convene firstly after five years, then after seven years, and then every ten years. Unsurprisingly, this decree also bothered the pope: he would be regularly scrutinised and even obstructed by his supposed servants. The Council of Constance is most infamous for the burning at the stake of Jan Hus († the 6th of July, 1415), and most famous for ending the Great Schism. This last feat was mainly accomplished by German King Sigismund (1368-1437).

A somewhat older but decent overview of literature on the Council of Basel is a booklet by German historian Erich Meuthen.[92] Scholarly literature on the council of Basel has

[88] Pisa (1408), Constance (1414-1418), Pavia-Siena (1423-1424), Basel (1431-1449) and Ferrara-Florence (1438-1445).

[89] The kings of France and England were particularly stubborn in their attempts at securing more power for their "national" church. In France, the first telltale sign was the row between King Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII. Boniface VIII had, in his row with the French king, declared in 1302 in a famous bull that every human creature was subject to the pope. Needless to say, this included the French king (and the Roman emperor). The " temporal sword" (the power over worldly matters) was held only 'at nutum et patientiam sacerdotis' ("by the assenting nod and forbearance of the Pontiff"). William Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius (Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini - Pius II.) Orator, Man of Letters, Statesman, and Pope* (London 1908) 25. The situation in England had been difficult for a long time, but violently burst out in 1534, when Henry VIII declared the separation of the Church of England from the Curia. In the German lands, the situation was influenced by developments in France (especially by the pragmatic sanction of Bourges).

[90] Michiel Decaluwe, *A Successful Defeat: Eugene IV's Struggle with the Council of Basel for Ultimate Authority in the Church, 1431-1449* (Brussels and Rome, 2009) 35.

[91] Sebastián Provvidente, 'The Haec sancta synodus Decree: Between Theology, Canon Law and History. Judicial Practices and Plenitudo Potestatis', *Temas medievales* 20:1 (2012) 197-244: 200. The decree's main intention was to suppress the Western Schism, with its most telling passage: 'Et primo (declarat), quod ipsa in spiritu sancto legitime congregata concilium generale faciens, et ecclesiam catholicam repraesentans, potestatem a Christo immediate habet, cui quilibet cuiuscumque status vel dignitatis, etiam si papalis existat, obedire tenetur (...).' (Ibidem).

[92] Erich Meuthen, *Das Basler Konzil als Forschungsproblem der europäischen Geschichte* (Vortrag G274 of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften; published Opladen 1985).

grown to gigantic proportions. Meuthen estimates that the output (the acts) of the Basileian Council possibly surpasses that of all previous medieval councils combined.[93] It is no wonder, then, that a plethora of words generates another plethora of words. Although studies on the Council of Basel (and all late medieval councils, for that matter) continue to be published in large quantities, in recent times the interest in the subject seems to wane.[94] A quick overview will suffice for our research.

Pope Martin V, elected by the Council of Constance in 1417 (ending the pontificate of no less than three rivalling popes), had ordained a next council to take place in 1431.[95] One council was held in between, i.e. prior to the council of Basel (in 1423 in Siena and Pavia) but it was quickly disbanded. The seventeenth council finally started in July 1431. The city of Basel had been chosen for multiple reasons: first and foremost, it was a relatively independent city, far from Pope, Emperor and the French king.[96] Almost nobody attended the first meetings. Pope Martin V had died in February 1431, and the new pope, Eugene IV (p. 1431-1447) never attended the Council. He instead sent a delegate with full powers to act in his name: cardinal Giuliano Cesarini (1398-1444). Eugene would soon clash with the convened cardinals (often called: "council fathers"); the earliest clashes occurred when he tried to influence the proceedings of the council. In so doing he violated the self-proclaimed *auctoritas* and *superioritas* of the council.[97] This was of no importance to Eugene, who opposed the council from the very start. Citing the sparse attendance, the Pope ordered the dissolution of the council already during the last months of 1431.[98] This move from the Pope only provoked more anger in the council fathers, who had the support from almost all of Europe. Roman King Sigismund, as well as the kings of France, Castile and England supported the council and sent their representatives. The dukes of Burgundy and Milan were also on the conciliarist side. The pope could only count on the city-states of Venice and Florence. Milanese and Neapolitan forces surrounded Rome in 1432, and Eugene had to flee Rome in the disguise of a Benedictine monk. He took up residence in Florence, and was forced to recognise the council's authority.

Although Eugene had sent multiple ambassadors to Basel to negotiate in his name, he made sure they did not have full powers. 'There can be no doubt,' writes American historian Joachim Stieber, 'that [Eugene] was utterly hostile to the council and directed all his efforts against it.'[99] The Pope waited for the moment to transfer the council to a location in Italy, where he could better control it. On the 18$^{\text{th}}$ of September, 1437, Eugene announced the move of the council to Ferrara (a city inside of the Papal States) with the bull "*doctoris gentium*". Officially, the move was motivated by the will to better accommodate the legates from Byzantium, who had agreed to reconciliation talks of the two Churches. The majority of the council did not agree to a move. King Charles VII of

[93] Meuthen, *Das Basler Konzil*, 16-17.

[94] Werner Maleczek, 'Zusammenfassung', in: Heribert Müller and Johannes Helmrath (eds.), *Die Konzilien von Pisa (1409), Konstanz (1414-1418) und Basel (1431-1449). Personen und Institutionen* (Ostfildern 2007) 371-392: 371.

[95] American historian Joachim Stieber, who wrote a good overview of the council, lists the following objectives that were ordained by Martin V: '(1) the reform of the clergy and of the entire ecclesiastical estate, (2) the leading back of the eastern church (...), (3) the preservation of ecclesiastical freedom, (4) the preservation of the peace and quiet of the kingdoms of Latin Christendom, and (5) the taking of measures concerning the heresies and errors in Bohemia and elsewhere.' Joachim W. Stieber, *Pope Eugenius IV, the Council of Basel and the Secular and Ecclesiastical Authorities in the Empire: The Conflict over Supreme Authority and Power in the Church* (Leiden 1978) 10-11.

[96] 'Keine Zweifel kann daran bestehen, daß der Oberrhein eigentlich eine knigsferne Region war.' Helmut G. Walther, 'Basel: Reichsbewußtsein und Reichsferne am Oberrhein in der 2. Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts', in: Ferdinand Seibt and Winfried Eberhard (eds.), *Europa 1500: Integrationsprozesse im Widerstreit: Staaten, Regionen, Personenverbände, Christenheit* (Stuttgart 1987) 227-246: 229.

[97] Stefan Sudmann, *Das Basler Konzil: Synodale Praxis zwischen Routine und Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main 2005) 421.

[98] This he did with the bull *Quoniam alto*. Morimichi Watanabe, 'Eugenius IV, the Conciliar Movement, and the Primacy of Rome', in: Christopher Bellito, Thomas Izbicki and Gerald Christianson (eds.), *The Church, the Councils, & Reform : The Legacy of the Fifteenth Century* (Washington 2008) 177-193: 179.

[99] Stieber, *Pope Eugenius IV*, 21.

France forbade "his" clergy to attend the council at Ferrara, and so did almost all of Latin Christendom. But England and Burgundy, still being wound up in the devastating war with France, decided to withdraw their support for the Council in Basel and support Eugene instead.[100] The new council took an active stance, and declared in 1438 that all those still in Basel were excommunicated. In 1439, it reported that it had succeeded in unifying the Latin and Greek Churches. Meanwhile, the Council in Basel had started the procedure for the Pope's deposition. Emperor Sigismund died on the 9th of December, 1437; the best possible mediator between Council and Pope was no more. After repeated warnings, the Council declared on the 25th of June, 1439 that Pope Eugene IV was formally deposed.[101] On the 5th of November, 1439, the Council elected a Pope for itself: Amadeus VIII, Duke of Savoy, took the name Felix V. He was crowned on the 24th of July, 1440. In 1449 he would lay down the anti-tiara, after pressure from multiple parties. Felix V. would go down in history as the last anti-pope until today.

The new pope did not have many supporters. England and most of Italy pledged allegiance to Eugene; France remained "neutral", and the Empire was divided. Although the influence of the council fathers continued to be felt throughout the fifteenth century, the end of conciliarism as a driving force is traditionally set in 1449.[102]

Who were the delegates that attended the council? According to Meuthen, they comprised for the most part highly educated churchmen.[103] The princes of Europe were also invited by the pope. Most of them, however, chose to stay at home, and sent high churchmen as representatives. These high churchmen were expected to serve not only the Church, but also their masters. Operating on behalf of their superior, they were keen on securing his interests *in causis de pace*, as well.[104] A good example of this opportunism is Alfonso V. of Aragón. He supported either party who affirmed his claim to the Kingdom of Naples, without ever mingling in theological discussion for which the council had convened in the first place.

Some of the most famous Italian humanists were present at both the council of Constance and that of Basel. Where they had previously not shown any interest in the transalpine territories, they went north 'for purely egoistic and materialist reasons.'[105] After it became known that many presumed-lost manuscripts of ancient texts could be hidden in German monasteries all over the Empire, Leonardo Bruni and Poggio Bracciolini (among others) suddenly felt the urge to roam the German lands. The council of Basel thus provoked new taunts aimed at Germany.

The council of Basel can be summarised in three words: Pope versus Council. This conflict came to dominate all matters. It should be noted that a wide range of topics was discussed, ranging from the optimal way to curb the warmongering Hussites to the declaration of the Immaculate Conception as dogma (1439).[106] Some of the most interesting and learned men of that time attended the council throughout its proceeding, among whom we find the Spanish Dominican friar Juan de Torquemada, the Italian Giuliano Cesarini (president of the council), and the German polymath Nicholas of Kues ("Cusanus" in Latin).[107] The latter two left the Council in 1437/1438 to support Eugene. Among the

[100]Ibidem, 40-41. The bull turned out in retrospect to be a turning point for Eugene's fortunes.

[101]Ibidem, 55. This was during the Council's XXXIVth session. In the official declaration, the Pope was named (among other things) 'a simoniac, a perjurer, an incorrigible man, a schismatic, an apostate from the faith, [and] an obstinate heretic.'

[102]Stefan Sudmann, *Das Basler Konzil: Synodale Praxis zwischen Routine und Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main 2005) 421: 'der Konzilarismus als Verfassungsentwurf für die Kirche [muß] – trotz gewisser Nachwirkungen in der frühen Neuzeit – nach 1449 für gescheitert erklärt werden.'

[103]Meuthen, *Das Basler Konzil*, 27.

[104]Ibidem, 29-31': 'Den Fürsten ging es, da sie die strukturelle Schwäche der Basler Synode erkannten, vor allem darum, sie zumindestens zu nutzen, um vom Papste Kompensationen nicht nur in landeskirchlichen, sondern auch in rein politischen Fragen zu erpressen.'

[105]Amelung, *Das Bild des Deutschen*, 45.

[106]Meuthen, *Das Basler Konzil*, 42.

[107]The latter would become a good friend of Piccolomini's. Nicolas would develop the same attitude towards the conciliar movement as our subject, eventually turning away from the council and embracing

famous men to attend the Council was also our hero, Enea Silvio Piccolomini. It would have a profound influence on his life, in good and in bad. Piccolomini would later whine about all the time he lost there, and about the mistake he had made by adhering to the conciliar movement for so long. On the other hand, Piccolomini befriended some of the most interesting and intelligent people of his time, some of which we have named above.

The council of Constance had been the first ecumenical council where votes were cast not by individuals, but by "*nationes*". This habit was also taken up at the council of Basel. Of course, discussions were not confined to just religious matters. At the council of Basel, national identities were delimited and magnified. As German historian Arno Borst notes:

> 'Mit dem Ausbruch des großen abendländischen Schismas traten die bisher halbverborgen wirkenden neuen Mächte offen zutage: die Nation und das Individuum. Im Für und Wieder der Päpste, im Tagen und Versagen der Konzilien konsolidierten sich die handelnden Nationen als Individuen. Sie steckten ihre Grenzen gegeneinander ab und zogen die universalen und lokalen Kräfte in ihren Bann; sie bildeten Nationalcharaktere aus.'[108]

In the backrooms, little skirmishes were fought out on secular matters. A classic *topos* is the arrangement of chairs. In just one of many examples, the English and Spanish delegates quarreled about who was to sit immediately behind the French delegates, the most eminent of all.[109] The fact that all matters were open to discussion harmed the Council's clout: all matters were actually discussed.[110]

2.4 Piccolomini

During his lifetime Piccolomini was a man of high reputation. He was, according to American historian Thomas Mauro, renowned for climbing the social ladder by means of his quill, from relative obscurity to the Papal Office.[111] A very productive writer of a broad range of works (highly erotic poems, among other things), an active and shrewd politician, and a man of adventures abroad, Piccolomini had enough means to write a lengthy autobiography (he was, in fact, the first and last pope ever to have written his own "papal" biography). These *commentaries* were unknown in Piccolomini's own time; they only received a sudden spark of attention in the nineteenth century, when a manuscript was discovered that was partially written by Piccolomini himself.[112] For Jakob Burckhardt, Enea Silvio Piccolomini epitomised the Early Renaissance Man. In his public writings as well as in his private correspondence, Burckhardt shows an admiration for the Italian humanist that is equalled by few others. Burckhardt even called Piccolomini 'meinen Liebling' in a letter to a friend.[113]

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papal authority. The Castilian delegation was reputedly strong. From among the Castilian delegates, Piccolomini made another good friend: Juan de Segovia (1395-1458). 'En Basilea conoció Juan de Segovia a Eneas Silvio, y se entabló entre ambos amistad tan estrecha, que perduró, sin entibiarse, hasta la muerte del maestro salmantino [Juan de Segovia].' Darío Cabanelas Rodríguez, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islámico* (Madrid 1952) 228.

[108]Arno Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel: Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker* 3.1 (Stuttgart 1960) 958.

[109]Ramón Fernández Pousa, 'La preeminencia de España sobre Inglaterra en Basilea', *Anuario de historia del derecho español* 13 (1936) 406-408: 406: '(...) se suscitó una enconada disputa "sobre la preheminencia [sic] que el Rey nuestro señor ha sobre el Rey de Ynglaterra" en lo referente al orden de colocación en el asentamiento de los embajadores españoles e ingleses inmediatamente después del representante francés.' See also: Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, 'La embajada de Castilla en el Concilio de Basilea y su discusión con los Ingleses acerca de la precedencia', *Hispania Sacra* 10:19 (1957) 5-31.

[110]Meuthen, *Das Basler Konzil*, 37: 'Machtkämpfe mannigfacher Art bestimmten das Bild. Ein für die Politiker dieses Jahrhunderts kennzeichnender Zug kam zur vollen Entfaltung: der sich im Detail verlierende Aktionismus.'

[111]Thomas J. Mauro III, *Præceptor Austriae. Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pius II) and the transalpine diffusion of Italian humanism before Erasmus* (Ann Arbor 2003) 2.

[112]Mauro, *Præceptor Austriae*, 2.

[113]Ludwig von Pastor, *Tagebücher, Briefe, Erinnerungen* (Heidelberg 1950) 273.

The attractiveness of Piccolomini's character continues to this day. More recent historians have lauded his engaging prose and his candidness.[114]

A high-profiled man like Piccolomini is bound to attract negative attention, as well. There are scholars who have criticised the rigid orthodoxy in Piccolomini, and the mentality of the ivory tower. English historian Geoffrey Barraclough calls Piccolomini as pope 'tepid and half-hearted, too much the cultured scholar to be the religious zealot.'[115] In fact, Barraclough places Piccolomini at the beginning of a period of decline of papal power. Most scholars, however, paint a more grey picture. Let us have a look at three biographies of Piccolomini I have used for this research.[116]

We also find historiographical conceptions in the work which the modern historian will find archaic. Following in Burckhardt's footsteps, Voigt sees a clear caesura between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance that emerged during Piccolomini's lifetime: 'In seine letzten Zeiten fällt das Leben, das hier erzählt werden soll.'[117] A quality of Voigt's work is that he spends considerable attention on Piccolomini's life prior to his pontificate. Almost all biographies heavily lean towards Piccolomini's pontifical life. Although Voigt has been accused by later historians of too much bias towards his subject, his biography remains highly influential and it is unsurpassed on many levels. After Voigt, we have to wait half a century for the next serious biography on Piccolomini. In 1908, British historian William Boulting published his sketch of Piccolomini's life. This biography is in many ways the most accessible of all. It is written in a clear language, never too roundabout, never too verbose. For the dry facts of Piccolomini's early life, I have mostly consulted Boulting's work.[118]

A third biography of Piccolomini I have used is the one by German historian Berthe Widmer, published in 1963. It is not a biography *sensu stricto* (it does not contain a factual chronology of Piccolomini's life), but it describes his development as a politician-cleric. The best label for Widmer's work would perhaps be that of an intellectual biography. Widmer's work is divided into three chapters, with each of those describing an aspect of Piccolomini's being. Thematically ordered, the three chapters concern Piccolomini's humanistic spirit, his morality, and the radical turn in ecclesiastical matters, respectively. Although barely numbering hundred and fifty pages, it greatly helps in understanding Piccolomini's character.[119]

Let us have a look now at our subject. What follows is a sketch of Piccolomini's life up

[114]Roger Collins, *Keepers of the Keys of Heaven: A History of the Papacy* (London 2009) 324-325.

[115]Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy* (reprint; London 1975) 193.

[116]A recent biography which I didn't use for reasons of accuracy and accessibility, is: Volker Reinhardt, *Pius II. Piccolomini: Der Papst, mit dem die Renaissance begann* (Munich 2013). Although this is the most recent biography, it is even more popularly written than Boulting's, and I deemed it not not very useful for a summary introduction to Piccolomini's life. A few years after Boulting, a study of Piccolomini's life was written by English historian Cecilia M. Ady: *Pius II (Æneas Silvius Piccolomini) the Humanist Pope* (London 1913). This study has a broader and more ambitious scope than Boulting's work, although it shares the obvious defect: that its tenets have been ageing for more than a century. Another aspect of Ady's biography that hinders us is the disproportional attention for Piccolomini's pontificate (see our "*status quaestionis*"). For further reading on Piccolomini's ideas and their influence on Germany, see: Anton Weiss, *Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini als Papst Pius II. Sein Leben und Einfluss auf die literarische Cultur* [sic] *Deutschlands* (Graz 1897). On the difference between Piccolomini and the German humanists: Gustav Pfizer, *Der Welsche und der Deutsche: Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pabst Pius II) und Gregor von Heimburg : historisch-poetische Bilder aus dem fünfzehnten Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart 1844). A more recent study of Piccolomini's thought is: Zweder von Martels and Arie Johan Vanderjagt (eds.), *Pius 2nd, "el Più Expeditivo Pontefice"* (Leiden 2003).

[117]Voigt, *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini* I, vi. And Voigt continues: 'Von jenem Mittelalter im strengeren Sinne finden wir in demselben nur noch die faulenden Reste, dagegen keimen bereits, mit üppigem Unkraut vermischt, neue Bildungen empor, die ersten Boten einer neuen Völkerentwicklung.' In a way, Voigt's comment is remarkably similar to that of Huizinga's, three quarters of a century later: not the beginning of a new time, but the dying out of an old one.

[118]William Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius (Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini - Pius II.) Orator, Man of Letters, Statesman, and Pope* (London 1908).

[119]Berthe Widmer, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini in der sittlichen und politischen Entscheidung* (Basel 1963).

until his pontificate (which is of no use for our research). Enea Silvio Bartholomeo Piccolomini was born the 18th of October, 1405, to Enea Piccolomini and Vittoria Forteguerra.[120] His family was originally from the city of Siena, but it was expelled in 1385 during a period of social unrest. The Sienese branch of the larger Piccolomini family thus settled down in Corsignano, weakened and impoverished. It was there that Enea Silvio (or Aeneas Sylvius) Bartolomeo Piccolomini was born. The boy was named after his grandfather (with the added name Bartolomeo, but this name was later dropped). "Enea", as is evidenced by its Latin form, probably refers to the Trojan hero Aeneas, who escaped the Greeks' rage and who was the mythical patriarch of the Romans. "Sylvius" (lit. "of the wood") was a common name in Italy at that time, as it continues to be today (albeit worldwide more in the feminine form). It is perhaps ultimately derived from Silvius, Aeneas's son (or grandson) and second mythical king of Alba Longa. Conveniently, the son of Silvius and third king of Alba Longa was named Aeneas Silvius.[121] The first evidence of the surname Piccolomini we find in 1098, when a certain Martino di Piccolomo signed a contract of sale under Longobardic rule in Siena. The exact origins of the surname Piccolomini (meaning "small man") are unknown. The most plausible theory states that it started out as a nickname (cf. the Roman *cognomen*) and gradually developed into an accepted surname.

The young Enea was sent to study in Siena, because he proved to be a promising pupil. Accounts differ about the intellectual "*Bildung*" of Enea: Boulting describes him as mainly self-taught, while others describe his education as thorough compared to that of others of his generation.[122] In the years from 1429 to 1431, Piccolomini also visited universities in Northern Italy, most notably Florence. He did, however, not finish his studies, obtaining a degree neither in jurisprudence nor in the arts. At this time, he was at a loss. An ecclesiastical career was out of the question (he had not really cared for such things up until this time, living a rather licentious life).[123] Then came a welcome opportunity. As a young man of twenty-six years old, Piccolomini entered the service of Domenico Pantagale (better known as "Capranica", named after a fortress town in Lazio) to accompany him on his travel northward: Capranica was on his way to the Council of Basel. He sought reconciliation with the new Pope.[124] It turned out to be a perilous journey. The party was ambushed by a hurricane in the Tyrrhenian Sea, constantly under threat of brigands, and it had to cross the Gotthard Pass in the coldest time of year (just before spring 1432).[125]

When arriving in Basel in April 1432, Piccolomini was unshakably pro-Council. The glory of the Council of Constance, which had ended the Great Schism, still had a massive

[120]Piccolomini himself possibly revised his date of birth later in life. Many sources contend that he was born the 24th of August. 'Vervuld van zijn eigen betekenis kon [Piccolomini] zich er zelfs niet van weerhouden de sterren naar zijn hand te zetten.' Zweder von Martels and Michel Goldsteen (eds.), *Enea Silvio Piccolomini – Pius II (1405-1464): een humanistisch paus op de bres voor Europa* (Hilversum 2011) 94. The 24th of August had an unfortunate conjunction of the stars, and was known in Roman times as a day of bad luck (cf. Saint Bartholomew's Night).

[121]So we read in Livy (*Ab urbe condita* (ed. Benjamin Foster, 1919) 1,3: 'Silvius deinde regnat, Ascanii filius, casu quodam in silvis natus. Is Aeneam Silvium creat (...).' And in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Antiquitates Romanae*, 1:71 (ed. Karl Jacoby 1885) we read: '*Σιλουϊου δ' ἐνὸς δέοντα τιάκοντα ἐτη κατασχόντος τὴν ἀρχὴν ινείας υιὸς αὐτοῦ διαδεξάμενος τὴν δυναστείαν ἑνί πλείω τριάκοντα ἐτῶν ἐβασίλευσεν.*'

[122]For example Nederman, who describes Piccolomini as having had 'a fine humanist education.' Cary J. Nederman, 'Humanism and Empire: Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, Cicero and the Imperial Ideal', *The Historical Journal* 36:3 (1993) 499-515: 499.

[123]Rolando Montecalvo, *Between Empire and Papacy: Aeneas Silvius and German Regional Historiography* (Ann Arbor 2000) 8.

[124]Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius*, 16-18. Capranica had poignant personal reasons to set foot in Basel. These were the result of a bitter feudal rivalry taking place in Rome. Incidentally, Capranica was an ally of the notorious Colonna family. Now, Pope Martin V (p. 1417-1431), a scion of the Colonna family, had endowed him with the diocese of Fermo. After the Pope had gone "*ad patres*" (20 February 1431), skirmishes ensued in Rome between the Colonna and the Orsini. The latter would succeed in providing the next pope: Eugene IV (p. 1431-1447). In his feud with the Colonna family, Eugene also hit Capranica: 'his palace was sacked, his benefices declared forfeit, and he had to seek safety (...).' (18). Capranica sought compensation for his losses, and full reinstatement as bishop, at the Council of Basel.

[125]Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius*, 20.

influence on public opinion. Piccolomini had witnessed the Council of Siena when studying in that city. He was convinced that a general Council could effectively reform the Church.[126] In later correspondence, Piccolomini further explained his stance. He describes that he was critical of the Church, like so many of his generation (sprouting the superficial argument that it was "*en vogue*"). The fact that he was unschooled in theology made him follow the opinions of authorities from the conciliarist side, who were omnipresent in his new environment.[127]

In 1433, Capranica seemed to have made peace with Eugene, and he thereafter quickly returned to Italy. Enea entered the service of a new master: Nicodemus, bishop of Freising. After participating in a plot to kidnap Pope Eugene from the city of Florence (unbeknownst to himself), Enea sought refuge with Cardinal Niccol d'Albergati, Bishop of Bologna.[128]

In this new occupation, the young man was to see 'glimpses into the policy of one of the most accomplished diplomatists of his age.'[129] Under Albergati, Enea travelled to Basel again, via the Duchy of Milan and the St. Bernard Pass. Albergati, a Carthusian monk, was known as an able negotiator. He was of major importance to the Council of Basel, where he succeeded in rallying faithful bishops to Eugene IV, and in exhorting the Pope to moderate his tone.[130] Shorty thereafter, the party went further north to Arras, where Albergati would mediate at the eponymous congress.[131] Albergati could also claim some little victories there, being highly respected by all parties.

Piccolomini could not rest on his laurels. He was sent on a secret mission to Scotland, probably to urge its king James I to attack England. This would force England to sign a favourable treaty with France.[132] He sailed to London, but had to return to the Continent, because he was not allowed to continue travelling north. Thereupon he tried to sail to Scotland directly from the Netherlands: he departed from the town of Sluis. Once again, Enea found himself drifting at open sea: his ship was caught by a storm, and driven to the Norwegian coast; 'even the skipper gave up praying, and all awaited the end.'[133] Once more, however, Enea escaped. He had made a vow to undertake a barefooted pilgrimage to the nearest shrine of Our Lady: a feat that left him nearly frozen to death. Later in life, he would suffer from gout, contracted by this journey. The encounter with the North Sea ('the sea of perpetual gloom') instilled in Enea a dislike for all things cold and northerly.[134] Regarding Enea's enterprise, we learn from his later friend and fellow humanist Giovanni Campano (1429-1477) that, although James I received Enea with all honours, James declined to attack England, and so Enea was dismissed from his task. He spent some time in Scotland, and sired a child with an unknown woman. It died in infancy, and Eneas travelled to London over land, after witnessing the ship that brought him thence sink, in sight of the harbour.

Piccolomini returned to the Council of Basel. He was master of ceremonies in 1439; he had the honour of announcing the election of Felix V.[135] During the following two years, Piccolomini gradually grew disenchanted with the conciliar movement. In November 1442, Piccolomini entered the service of Emperor Frederick III. Frederick was at that time King of

[126] Widmer, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini*, 103.

[127] We should take Piccolomini's statements about himself "*cum grano salis*", because he wrote them during his cardinalate, with his eye on an ecclesiastical career. Widmer, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini*, 105.

[128] Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius*, 52. In Albergati's household we also find Tommaso Parentucelli, the later Pope Nicholas V (p. 1447-1455).

[129] Ibidem, 53.

[130] Decaluwe, *A Successful Defeat*, 350.

[131] After the burning at the stake of Jeanne d'Arc in 1431 – the arrival of *la pucelle* on the battlefield is traditionally seen as a turning point in the Hundred Years' War –, the Congress of Arras was organised to arrange peace between Burgundy, France, and England. Although the resulting treaty did not immediately end the war, it dealt England a hard blow, paving the way for French success and resolution in the long term.

[132] Ibidem, 56.

[133] Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius*, 60.

[134] The quotation is from the Arab geographer al-Idrisi, quoted in Pye, *The Edge of the World*, 14.

[135] Watanabe, 'Eugenius IV', 190.

the Romans. He would be crowned Emperor in 1452. In contemporary and older scholarly literature, Frederick is mocked as "Arch-night cap" ("*Erzschlafmütze*") for his slow and hesitant way of ruling. He was portrayed as a timid, absent-minded monarch, severely lacking in energy. This portrayal was also due to incomplete source material: at present, through study of Frederick's more than 30.000 charters, he is seen in a more positive light. Piccolomini at least was happy to serve the King. Life at the Council of Basel had been dull and unrewarding for Piccolomini; even though he did not like his new position as imperial secretary, he was relieved to escape the 'bickerings of priests' at the council.[136] In service, Aeneas saw 'not only how feeble the Caesar really was, but how weak was the bond that united the self-seeking Emperors.'[137]

We read in Emperor Fredrick's *Regesta* that the emperor wanted to reinstate the ancient custom of crowning a poet laureate (*poeta laureatus*) on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. Frederic was to crown Piccolomini in person ('ihn eigenhändig und feierlich mit diesen immergrünen Lorbeerzweigen und -blättern zu schmücken') and hoped that he would further enrich the Empire with his works of art ('daß er durch sein Schaffen eine Zierde des Reiches bleiben werde').[138] Piccolomini was crowned poet laureate in Frankfurt in 1442. This is considered one of the most important coronations of a poet laureate on German soil.[139] The principle of the poet laureate was that of "*do ut des*": in exchange for the unmeasurable prestige that came with the laurel wreath, the poet was expected to sing panegyric praise to the Emperor.

In imperial service, Enea first-handedly saw the development of the German culture and economy. The ascent of the German nation always inspired in him a dual feeling: on the one hand, he 'found the scholars of that country pursuing dull scholastic learning and dreary subtleties of civil and canon law.'[140] On the other hand, however, Piccolomini saw a bright future for Germany, if it continued to pursue "the new learning" (i.e. the humanist tradition). He confided to a friend: 'Even as Italy raised herself after the incursion of the barbarians, so Germany may achieve art and learning.'[141] If Germany were to develop into a prosperous humanistic nation, it would be an enormous boost for Piccolomini's ego. He was, after all, seen as one of the apostles of humanism in the German lands.[142]

During his years at the chancellery, Piccolomini made step-by-step preparations to enter an ecclesiastical career. What exactly were the motivations for this "career-switch" is hard to tell. It was, to all probability, a mix between machiavellistic, idealistic and pragmatic reflexes. As Boulting comments: 'An ecclesiastic career would furnish scope for his powers, release him from pecuniary embarrassment, and satisfy the deeper yearnings of his soul.'[143]

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[136]From a letter to Johannes Campisium (1445), quoted in Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius*, 155. The position of secretary did not meet his expectations: Piccolomini did not receive good payment, nor a great influence on Imperial matters.

[137]Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius*, 154.

[138]Heinrich Koller and Thomas R. Kraus (eds.), *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III. (1440-1493)* 7 (1990) 60-61 (R. 23). The original declaration is found in the appendix to Chmel. See: Joseph Chmel, *Regesten des Römischen Königs Friedrich IV. 1440-1452* (Vienna 1838) (app. xxix, R. 801.). 'Nos vero cupientes ipsorum antecessorum nostrorum gloriosa imitari vestigia qui poetas egregios in morem triumphantium ut accepimus solebant in capitolio coronare animadvertentes etiam quod in disuetudinem iam abiit illa ipsa solemnitas, convertimus aciem mentis nostre in poetam eximium et preclarum Eneam Silvium de Picolominibus Senensem, nobis et imperio sacro devotum de cuius profunda sciencia morum gravitate clarissimisque nature sue dotibus experimentum verax habuimus quique talium studiorum a teneris suis annis scrutator fuit ardentissimus.'

[139]The coronation took place in Frankfurt – and not in Italy – because the emperor wanted to foster the "German" arts.

[140]Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius.* 214.

[141]Ibidem, 215.

[142]Christoph Schingnitz, 'Eneas Silvio Piccolomini - Pentalogus', *Monumenta Germaniae Historica - Staatsschriften des späteren Mittelalters* VIII (Hannover 2009) 1. According to Schingnitz, Piccolomini had an undisputed role in diffusing humanism ('Eine unbestrittene Vorreiter- und Vermittlerrolle bei der Ausbreitung humanistischen Gedankenguts.'). And: '[Piccolomini propagierte] die Kultur des italienischen Humanismus wirkungsvoll nördlich der Alpen.'

[143]Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius*, 146.

Piccolomini himself did not know if he could resist the way of all flesh, but in 1445 he begun the trajectory which would ultimately make him Pope in 1458, informing his friend Campisio that he was to be ordained. At this time, Piccolomini had completely turned away from the conciliar movement. 'He repented of his conciliarist past at the feet of Eugenius IV and pledged himself to defend the absolute monarchy of the papacy,' writes Canadian historian Emily O'Brien.[144] And so it happened in 1446 that he became sub-deacon. A year later, so it is mentioned in the *Liber Officiorum* of Pope Eugenius IV, Enea became priest (February 1447, the very same month in which the Pope died). Only two months after his ordination, he was promoted to the bishopric of Trieste by Tommaso Parentucelli, the new Pope Nicholas V (p. 1447-1455) and old friend. He continued travelling through Europe, notably in 1449, going to Naples to arrange the marriage of Frederick to Leonora, princess of Portugal. He learnt underway that the Pope had made him bishop of Siena.[145] Some time later, he was sent on a mission to Bohemia to try and talk sense into the still warmongering Hussites (the more aggressive faction of Taborites, to be precise).

During the years of 1454 and 1455, Piccolomini acted as the Emperor's representative. He travelled through the Empire (mainly the German lands) to communicate with high-standing subjects, who were convened occasionally during a "*Reichstag*" or Imperial Diet. He held three so-called "*Türkenreden*" in Regensburg, Frankfurt and Wiener Neustadt to urge the German princes to take up arms against the pan-European foe. Piccolomini's qualities as humanist orator blossomed during these speeches; he became the prototype of the "humanist crusader".[146] The most famous of the three is the one held in Frankfurt on 15 October 1454, called "*Constantinopolitana clades*" ("the disaster of Constantinople") for its *incipit*. We have seen parts of this oration in our introduction.[147]

Piccolomini was appointed cardinal by Calixt III (successor of Nicholas V) on the 17$^{\text{th}}$ of December, 1456. Some say Piccolomini had already been created cardinal in secrecy by Pope Nicholas V (at first without the approval of the college of cardinals), a feat that had also made Nicholas of Kues cardinal.[148] Piccolomini thanked the Emperor, and promised

[144]Emily O'Brien, 'Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini and the Histories of the Council of Basel', 73.

[145]Ibidem, 185.

[146]See: James Hankins, 'Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995) 111-207.

[147]Piccolomini was as traumatised by the fall of Constantinople as anyone. Two of its aspects worried him most: firstly, he lamented that the guardian of Greek culture was destroyed. The fall of Constantinople was seen as the 'fatal blow to the classical legacy of ancient Greece.' Moudarres, 'Crusade and Conversion', 40. The second aspect was a more practical concern: Piccolomini saw Christendom being driven into a corner by the Islamic faith ('fidem Christianam comminui et in angulum coartari videmus'). Rudolf Wolkan (ed.), *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini 2. Abt.: Briefe als Priester und als Bischof von Triest (1447-1450)* (Vienna 1912) 211 (quoted by Moudarres). All his life, Piccolomini was determined to wage war against the "*inimicos crucis*". The Islamic faith at that time was seen to be a perversion of Christianity, its prophet Muhammad being a 'cunning pseudo-prophet who had been educated by a renegade monk named Sergius and who eventually founded a powerful sect.' Moudarres, 'Crusade and Conversion', 43. Being Pope, Piccolomini ultimately saw Muhammad as a Christian heretic; his biggest crime was not accepting the teachings of the Trinity. In his *Commentaries*, Pius notes (n. 11): 'Haec gens inimica trinitatis [the Turks, HB] Mahumetam quendam pseudoprophetam sequitur, qui fuit Arabs gentili errore et Iudaica imbutus perfidia audivitque Christianos, qui Nestoriana et Ariana labe infecti errant.' Piccolomini would counter the Turks with all means at his disposal. The oration "*Constantinopolitana clades*", however, completely fell on deaf ears. Piccolomini later wrote bitterly in a letter: 'Puto tamen etiam si Cicero aut Demostenes hanc causam agerent, dura haec pectora movere non possent.' Quoted in: Mauro, *Præceptor Austriae*, 129.

[148]Nicholas of Kues' "promotion" to cardinal was done *in pectore* ("in secret", compare the Dutch expression "in petto") by Eugen, and it was only published officially by Nicholas V. According to Nicholas of Kues, the same honour was bestowed upon Piccolomini, whose promotion must have occurred somewhere between 5 March 1453 and 29 May – probably at the end of April – of the same year; it was approved by Nicholas of Kues and the Spanish cardinal Juan de Carvajal (1400-1469). Such secret appointments were common practice in the fifteenth century. The aforementioned Capranica was created cardinal in the same vein. Duane Henderson, 'Die geheime Kardinalskreation Enea Silvio Piccolominis durch Nikolaus V. im Jahr 1453. Zur Praxis der Geheimkreationen im 15. Jahrhundert', *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 91 (2011) 396-415: 405.

to serve German interests.[149] He received a congratulatory letter from the German lands which was the incentive for writing the *Germania*. We will discuss this later on.

Pope Calixt IV died on the 6th of August, 1458. Despite fears that electing such a "Germanophile" cardinal would elicit a new Babylonian captivity (this time in Germany), Piccolomini was elected Pope on the 19th of August, 1458.[150] As name he chose Pius II. This was, according to Voigt, inspired by the Virgilian Aenaeas. The hero is called "pius" on multiple occasions.[151] But we will stop our narrative here, as I have promised. Piccolomini's pontificate is not related to our story.

Already in his youth Enea was a proliferate writer: he wrote a good many poems, copying the style of Horace, Ovid, and Petrarch, and not shunning the more controversial themes, with 'most of [his poems] being such sensuous stuff as one under the vernal impulse of manhood (...) would write.'[152] In later times, Piccolomini would be embarrassed by his erotic writings: unlike his other sins of youth, this one was too widely-known to be forgotten; he tried to subtly alter them in his later correspondence.[153] Piccolomini has left us an enormous oeuvre. His works were spread over continental Europe *in extenso*, especially after he became pope. Most of the codices from the late medieval period are stored today in Germany and Italy. In '*La Botta*' alone, there lay dormant more than three hundred codices, and possibly a hundred more which remain unstudied.[154] Here lays a rewarding task for the Renaissance historian.

[149]Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius*, 225.
[150]Mauro, *Præceptor Austriae*, 134.
[151]Amelung, *Das Bild des Deutschen*, 53 (n.); Voigt, *Piccolomini* (third volume, Berlin 1863) 11; Virgil, *Aeneis* I, 220 ff.
[152]Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius*, 8.
[153]Rudolf Wolkan (ed.), *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini. 1. Abt.: Briefe aus der Laienzeit (1431-1445)* (Vienna 1909) xxii: 'zu gut war er sich dessen bewußt, daß seine früheren Ansichten allen bekannt waren, daß sie sich mit aller Mühe nicht wegleugnen ließen; so sollte nur gelegentlich ein Federstrich einzelnes ändern.'
[154]Paul Weinig, *Aeneam suscipite, Pium recipite: Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini; Studien zur Rezeption eines humanistischen Schriftstellers im Deutschland des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden 1998) 79.

Chapter 3

Status quaestionis

If the reader were to be told that Enea Silvio Piccolomini – unquestionably one of the most interesting figures of the fifteenth century – remains to this very day an undervalued subject in the scholarly world, he or she would surely shake his head in disbelief. However unlikely it may be, Piccolomini remains part mystery. This is not due to a lack of information: Piccolomini himself wrote profusely on a wide variety of subjects, not in the least about himself. In fact, he is the only pope to have written an autobiography during his pontificate. Yet in spite of all this, research on Piccolomini remains an *ad hoc* adventure. American historian David Collins summarises the present state of affairs:

> 'A search for scholarly literature on their subject [Piccolomini] – the scion of impoverished Sienese nobility, the author of a bawdy story of adulterous love, an avid antipapal conciliarist turned papal-imperial loyalist, a trusted advisor at the imperial court of Frederick III, the recognized apostle of humanism to the Holy Roman Empire, the failed preacher of a crusade against the Turks, and pope – yields numerous but scattered specialist articles and chapters in English, one recent edition of selected letters, and a popular biography more than four decades old.'[1]

While Collins writes with specifically the English literature in mind, the same thing can be said about all the world's tongues. Indeed, we find similar remarks in quite a few publications on Piccolomini.[2] How can we explain this chaotic interest in Piccolomini? Explanations have been found, although none too satisfying. One reason could be that Piccolomini's life is made up of such different "monads" that every scholar takes a small bite and dares not to venture any further. Another explanation could be that the linguistic diversity of publications on the subject is enormous: my estimation is that German publications on Piccolomini are most numerous, followed by English, French, and Italian (not necessarily in that order). Traditionally, Piccolomini's pontificate has received most attention.[3] But this is only true for Italian, French, and Anglo-Saxon scholars; in the German historiographical world there is another focus. We can describe this clear divide as follows: whereas German scholars predominantly zoom in on Piccolomini's "humanistic" German phase, Italian and

[1] David J. Collins, 'Review:*Enea Silvio Piccolomini nördlich der Alpen* by Franz Fuchs; *Die Schrift des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini* by Martin Wagendorfer', *Renaissance Quarterly* 63:1 (2010) 183-185: 183.

[2] cf. Martin Wagendorfer, 'Von olanischen Bädern, humanistischen Kursiven und tiefem Rausch: Anmerkungen zu Veröffentlichungen anlässlich des 600. Geburtstags des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini', *MIÖG* 114 (2006): 404-417, 404: '[noch immer besteht] eine Reihe von Desiderata, die eine fundierte Beurteilung dieses ,,Apostels des Humanismus" wenn nicht unmöglich machen, so doch zumindestens erheblich beschweren.'

[3] Gisela Naegle, 'Review of Christoph Schingnitz (ed.), Eneas Silvius Piccolomini Pentalogus (Hannover 2009)', *Francia-Recensio* 3 (2010) (w.p.) 1: 'Während sich die italienische und die internationale Forschung vor allem der späteren Lebensphase Piccolominis als Papst Pius II. zuwenden, beschäftigt sich die deutschsprachige Forschung traditionell stark mit seinem über zwanzig Jahre dauernden, nördlich der Alpen verbrachte Lebensabschnitt und seiner Rolle für die Vermittlung des Humanismus.'

Anglo-Saxon scholars are preoccupied instead by Piccolomini's pontificate. The works we are going to study both fall in the former, "German" phase. This is most certainly true for the *Pentalogus*, written at the court of Frederick III. The *Germania* is a more complex case altogether: it was written in Italy, just months before Piccolomini's ascension to the Holy See. Before we continue with a close examination of both texts, we have to consider their "*Umfeld*". In the following paragraphs we will examine the background of the *Pentalogus* and the *Germania*. The scholarly attention paid to both works will also be considered. We will start with the *Pentalogus*, considering this is the first work to have been written.

3.1 The *Pentalogus*

Judging by the name – although one should never judge a work by its title – the *Pentalogus* describes a conversation between five people. This suggestion sprang forth from the medieval misunderstanding that "dialogue" meant "conversation between two people," where the prefix "dia" was mistakenly derived from "*δύο*" instead of the correct "*διά*" ("through"). Thus works were written with titles such as *Trialogus* or *Tetralogus*. Indeed, it is only logical for Piccolomini to give his work this title. One work which bears the same title has come down to us from late antiquity: the *Pentalogus* of Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus (393-c. 460 AD). The title of this work, however, refers to the number of books of which it consists. There is no proven connection between this early work and Piccolomini's work, written roughly a millennium later.[4]

The *Pentalogus* was – the historiography is unanimous here – written in 1443.[5] Piccolomini had just entered imperial service. It was a hard time for the young secretary, as he found himself among a crude people in a dark, cold place.[6] He had to walk on eggshells in this new environment, lest he offend somebody with his thoughts on the proceedings of the chancellery. He found a patron in the then-chancellor of the Empire, Caspar Schlick (1396-1449), the first civil-layman to occupy this position (although the archbishop of Mainz was nominally in charge). The chancellor had some power over the Empire. It is difficult to determine the degree to which the emperor personally mingled in the chancellery's affairs.[7] It was under Schlicks protection that Eneas could write freely – at least with a fair amount of criticism – about Imperial affairs. The *Pentalogus* was the first work he wrote while in Frederick's service. It is a fictional discussion between five people, as has been remarked above.

The five people in the *Pentalogus* are: Frederick III, Holy Roman King; Piccolomini himself (in the role of *poeta doctissimus*; character name "Eneas"); Caspar Schlick (introduced as 'a good knight and a man of singular virtue'); Nicodemus della Scala (d. 14 August 1443), prince-bishop of Freising; and Silvester Pflieger (d. 1453), bishop of Chiemsee.[8] The men introduced by Piccolomini are exactly those who have 'furthered his career steps at court.'[9] The *Pentalogus* was written by Piccolomini as a letter-treatise-play, intended for

[4]Christoph Schingnitz (ed.), 'Eneas Silvio Piccolomini - Pentalogus', *Monumenta Germaniae Historica - Staatsschriften des späteren Mittelalters* VIII (Hannover 2009) 3.

[5]This date has been accepted almost unanismously, as we learn in Schingnitz (see under for source). The *terminus post quem* has been proposed by German historian Hermann Hallauer as the 8th of January. The *terminus ante quem* has been proposed by Austrian historian Joseph Chmel at July. Other attemps at periodisation are all in this range. Christoph Schingnitz (ed.), 'Eneas Silvio Piccolomini - Pentalogus', *Monumenta Germaniae Historica - Staatsschriften des späteren Mittelalters* VIII (Hannover 2009) 16.

[6]William Boulting, *Aeneas Silvius (Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini - Pius II.) Orator, Man of Letters, Statesman, and Pope* (London 1908) 114, 116-118. 'It was a miserable life,' writes Boulting.

[7]Joachim Bumke, *Höfische Kultur: Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter* vol. II (3rd edition; Munich 1968) 631. It has been established that the emperor did not sign charters personally from Merovingian times onwards. It was, coincidentally, Frederick III who revived this habit. Most charters were considered valid through the Imperial seal.

[8]Schingnitz (ed.), *Pentalogus* 52: 'Nicodemum Frisingensem et Silvestrum Chiemensem episcopos, viros omni veneratione dignos, tum vero Casparem Slik cancellarium tuum.'

[9]Ibidem, 2.

a small public.[10] It is made up of three parts. The first part – a confidential discussion by Frederick and Eneas – serves as introduction. Eneas writes here of his preoccupations as a poet, and about the benefits of a humanistic education. The second part concerns 'Missstände und Fehlentwicklungen in [der] Kirche.'[11] Here, all actors are on stage. As regards the third part, *idem, sed aliter*: here the problems of the Empire are examined.[12] The whole work is larded with quotations of the classical authors.

3.1.1 Sources and editions

Overviews of the available sources and editions are to be found in works by German historian Hermann Hallauer and Austrian historian Margaretha Nejedly.[13] However, as both dissertations have never been published and are really hard to come by, I have decided to use the edition of German historian Christoph Schingnitz, part of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.[14] This is also the most recent edition. It is an edited version of Schingnitz's dissertation, conducted at Munich's Ludwig Maximilians-Universität and finished in 2006. The bigger part of the work is taken up by the Latin text and its German translation, printed on opposing page-sides, so that they are mirrored. Added to the text is a short introduction, and at the end is an index, in which all (possible) references to the Bible, to classical authors, and to Piccolomini's own works are listed. The chief irritation I found in the otherwise crystal-clear work is Schingnitz's habit to place footnote numbering before a period. Apart from this, I believe Schingnitz's work to be the most extensive and accurate work to this day. It made the choice a lot easier. To be honest, there aren't any alternatives, and most reviews of Schingnitz's work are praiseful.[15]

There are, according to Schingnitz, two manuscripts of the *Pentalogus*. These are colloquially entitled "M" (formerly called "Em. B 42", now called "clm 14434"; "M" stands for Munich) and ''L" (London). The former was kept for some three hundred years at the famous Benedictine monastery St. Emmeram in Regensburg, until it was moved to Munich during the secularisation in Bavaria (1802-1803). It is part of a codex; two-thirds of its contents is made up of letters by famous Italian humanists such as Leonardo Bruni, Gasparino Barzizza, and Coluccio Salutati. A few letters by Piccolomini are to be found in it, as well. Periodisation mainly focuses on the letters. It has been proposed that the part of the codex in which we find the *Pentalogus* must have been compiled after september 1454, and almost certainly before 1458 (as there are no mentions whatsoever of Piccolomini's pontificate). The *Pentalogus* reaches from fol. 239r until 268r, and is followed and succeeded by blank folia. Two different hands have worked on it. The first hand has only written a few lines: his handwriting stops halfway fol. 240r.[16] A second hand has completed the work. Sching-

[10] This public consisted of a grand total of two. These are Enea's "*broodheren*", namely: 'Silvestrum episcopum Chiemensem et Casparem Slick militem, imperialis aule cancallarium.' Schingnitz, *Pentalogus* 46.

[11] Ibidem, 3.

[12] In Schingnitz, the introduction (including a short note to the addressees) ranges from page 46 to 103; the second part from 104 to 158; and the third part from 158 to 309.

[13] Hermann Hallauer (ed.), *Der Pentalogus des Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini* (Cologne 1951). A year later, Nejedly's dissertation was published in Vienna. Margaretha Nejedly, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini: "Pentalogus de rebus ecclesiae et imperii"* (Vienna 1952). One wonders whether the two scholars knew about each other's work. Both dissertations remain unpublished. It is neigh impossible to acquire access to them. According to German historian Gisela Naegle, this is one of the reasons for the scant attention the *Pentalogus* has received until today. '(...) Eine kritische wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit dem *Pentalogus* [war] (...) aufgrund der bisherigen Editionen nicht möglich.' Gisela Naegle, 'Review of Christoph Schingnitz (ed.), Eneas Silvius Piccolomini Pentalogus (Hannover 2009)', *Francia-Recensio* 3 (2010) w.p.

[14] See footnotes above.

[15] See for example: Jörg Schwarz, 'Review of Christoph Schingnitz (ed.), Eneas Silvius Piccolomini, Pentalogus', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 121:1 (2013) 143-144. And: Thomas Izbicki, 'Review of: Schingnitz, Christoph. Eneas Silvius Piccolomini Pentalogus', *The Medieval Review* (2nd of February 2010) w.p. Izbicki is generally positive: his only small criticism is that a 'discussion of the relationship of the *Pentalogus* to Aeneas' other dialogues.' is missing.

[16] Schingnitz, *Pentalogus*, 29.

nitz suspects that the codex was compiled and preserved out of a 'collector's interest on stilistical grounds' ('einem primär an stilistischen Kriterien orientieren Sammelinteresse').[17]

The manuscript dubbed "L" by Schingnitz is of younger date. We know next to nothing about the provenience of this manuscript. It was written at the end of the fifteenth century. It is a codex that only contains the *Pentalogus*. We only know that it was rebound in leather in the Harleian library (part of the British Library) at the end of the eighteenth century.[18] A provenience from the library of Nicholas of Kues is ruled out by Hallauer, who is specialised in the life and works of his compatriot.[19] Schingnitz argues – in the footsteps of Hallauer – that manuscript M is very close to the original text by Piccolomini's hand. L would be an edited version, based on a copy of either the original or on a copy of the original.[20] A characteristic spelling of some words occurs in both manuscripts (e.g. 'absoletam' instead of 'obsoletam'). The edits – in other words: the differences between M and L – include grammatical faults ('Teucros' instead of 'Turcos'), substantical faults ('tumque illud sequitur quod Oracius ad Augustum scribit', lit.: 'then it follows what Horace wrote to Augustus' is altered so that Horace wrote to Julius Florus) and slight alternations in the sequence of words.[21] Also, the header naming Aeneas '*poeta doctissimus*' is removed. L shows many small gaps in the text. It also has a fair amount of copying errors (showing 'metum' instead of 'mecum') and a characteristic spelling of some words, showing for example 'canselarii' instead of 'cancellarii'.[22]

The *editio princeps* of the *Pentalogus* was published by the Benedictine monk Hieronymus Pez, in 1723. It was based on manuscript M. The original text was only slightly altered. Most edits by Pez are stylistical in nature. More than one hundred years later, it was Joseph Chmel who published translated parts of the *Pentalogus* in his history of Emperor Frederick III.[23] More recently, in 2001, Lorenz Weinrich has also published parts of the *Pentalogus* – in German translation – in his *Quellen zur Reichsreform im Spätmittelalter*.[24] Weinrich has compared manuscript M with the edition by Pez, and has corrected multiple errors in Pez's edition. Just like Chmel, however, Weinrich has only published parts of the *Pentalogus*.[25]

This short *historia editionum* leads us to draw the following conclusions: firstly, the *Pentalogus* has a thin lifeline, as only two manuscripts have come down to us from the late fifteenth century; secondly, up until very recent times, a complete scholarly edition has not been published. With Schingnitz's edition, this void is finally filled. A possible explanation for the small number of manuscripts of the *Pentalogus* is twofold: on the one hand, it was a letter-treatise, perhaps never intended to be read by the public; on the other hand, it was a time-bound document, old-fashioned already a couple of years after it was written. There is no satisfactory explanation for the absence of a scholarly edition up until Schingnitz; perhaps the best we can do is refer to the scattered research on Piccolomini as a whole. It is a blessing to finally have a complete edition. Our research will be an indirect research of manuscript M, as Schingnitz has based his edition mainly on this manuscript. Wherever necessary, his edition has been supported by manuscript L. The works of Chmel

[17] Ibidem.

[18] Ibidem, 32.

[19] As mentioned by Schingnitz (33).

[20] Ibidem.

[21] Ibidem, 35. Ironically, the fault of "Teucros" could have been a deliberate spelling by many of Piccolomini's contemporaries. The Turks were said to be the descendants of Teucrus, the mythical first king of Troy. Schingnitz sees an error here, while it is perhaps a deliberate spelling. Piccolomini himself thought the Turks were the descendants of the Scythians as described by Herodotus.

[22] Ibidem, 36.

[23] Joseph Chmel, *Geschichte Kaiser Friedrichs IV. und seines Sohnes Maximilian I.*, Second Volume (*Geschichte K. Friedrichs IV. als König (1440-1452)* (Hamburg 1843) 768-792. Chmel includes parts of the *Pentalogus* as 'Einige kleine Schriften des Aneas im Auszuge (...) über Politik und Bildung.'

[24] Lorenz Weinrich, *Quellen zur Reichsreform im Spätmittelalter* (Darmstadt 2001) 250-291.

[25] More specifically, Weinrich has published and translated the second discussion in the second part of the *Pentalogus*, including the speech written by Piccolomini for Frederick ('oracionem (...) huiusmodi.'). Weinrich, *Quellen* 256. We see here the characteristic spelling that occurs in both manuscripts.

and Weinrich serve only as illustration.[26]

3.1.2 Literature on the *Pentalogus*

A good introduction to the *Pentalogus* and its historical background is a short paper by Italian historian Barbara Baldi, entitled: "Un umanista alla corte di Federico III", published in a French periodical on Italian studies.[27]

In the same year as Schingnitz's dissertation, an article on the role of education in the *Pentalogus* was published. However, due to the strict copyright regulations in France and the obscurity that engulfs the Italian historical world, I have not yet found a way to come by this article. I do want to mention it here, anyway.[28] The article is written by Serge Stolf, an Italian historian currently employed in Grenoble, France. He has published a number of articles on Piccolomini and a translation of one of his most famous works (*Historia de duobus amantibus* or "Tale of Two Lovers") into French. Undoubtedly there will be more publications from Stolf's hand in the future.

An article that touches sideways on the *Pentalogus* is a 1993 article by American historian Cary Nederman.[29] Although the article touches upon another treatise by Piccolomini (*De ortu et auctoritate imperii Romani*, "on the rise and authority of the Roman Empire", published roughly three years later than the *Pentalogus*, it also shines some light on Piccolomini's view of Empire in general. Nederman's article also gives a valuable overview of the debate on Piccolomini's imperial ideas. Most scholars, according to Nederman, have always turned a blind eye to Piccolomini's political writings because of his supposed retarded views on Empire. It was postulated that Piccolomini's political thought was fully 'medieval', that is to say: '[it is] almost exclusively concerned with defending and promoting a universalist, imperial and even absolutist ideal of government under the banner of the Holy Roman Empire.'[30] Nederman nuances this point of view and argues that Piccolomini may be closer to the "Ciceronian" ideal of Empire that was postulated by famous humanists such as Leonardo Bruni. He argues that Piccolomini could be seen as the founder of a *quattrocento* humanistic school of thought on Empire that is different from the Florentine-civic-ciceronian school of thought. The distinction that has been made by many scholars between Piccolomini's so-to-say "medieval" and "humanistic" thought is a *faux-pas* to Nederman. He concludes with some remarks about the categories in which Piccolomini has traditionally been placed, pondering about the consequences for the study of Piccolomini in times to come.[31]

When looking at Piccolomini's thought on Empire in general, an article by American scholar John Toews can be really helpful (although it is already some fifty years old).[32] Toews criticises the image of Piccolomini that was developed in the nineteenth century, wherein Piccolomini emerges as a 'slightly tarnished dilettante who only partially exemplified the typical Renaissance man.'[33] Another general introduction to Piccolomini's thought

[26] Schingnitz, *Pentalogus*, 42.

[27] Barbara Baldi, 'Un umanista alla corte di Federico III. Il *Pentalogus* di Enea Silvio Piccolomini', in: *Cahiers d'études italiennes* 13 (2011) 161-171.

[28] Serge Stolf, 'Le letter e le armi : educazione politica nel Pentalogus di Enea Silvio Piccolomini', *Rassegna Europea di Letteratura Italiana* 34:2 (2009) 71-84.

[29] Cary J. Nederman, 'Humanism and Empire: Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, Cicero and the Imperial Ideal', *The Historical Journal* 36:3 (1993) 499-515.

[30] Nederman, 'Humanism and Empire', 500.

[31] A wise statement: 'Perhaps the imposition of fixed conceptual and historical categories upon the fifteenth century is primarily responsible for the enigma which presently characterizes the thought and career of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini.' (Nederman, 515.).

[32] John B. Toews, 'The View of Empire in Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II)', *Traditio* 24 (1968) 471-487.

[33] Toews, 'The View of Empire', 471. Toews also reflects on Piccolomini's bad image in the early historiography. Special credit go out to Georg Voigt, who 'raised grave suspicions as to Aeneas' integrity in both his private and public life.' The famous Swiss historian Jakob Burckhardt also contributed to the negative image of Piccolomini, as we have already seen above. Burckhardt ultimately 'failed to find the "whole man"

is provided by Italian historian Camille Battaglia.[34] I will, however, not consider Battaglia's article here, for two reasons. Firstly, it is a very old article; its tenants were old-fashioned already in Toews' time. Secondly, as with the other Italian publications, it is intraceable, even with the help of the internet.

There is only one recent monograph dealing with the *Pentalogus*. This is a dissertation published in 2013 by the German historian Kristina Wengorz.[35] Wengorz intends to fill the gap that exists in regard to the *Pentalogus*. She researches the functions of the *Pentalogus* at the court of Frederick, especially in the light of the humanist tradition.[36] Wengorz spends considerable time defining the terms she uses in her research question: "functions", "court", and "humanism". She holds this truth to be self-evident: that the *Pentalogus* is a humanistic text to its core. This means in practice that Wengorz places the *Pentalogus* in the tradition of the humanist "*Fürstenspiegel*". The medieval genre of the prince's mirror was reformed by the humanists into a mirror where the *bonae litterae* were more actively propagated. Also, the prince in this genre was a man just like any other, lacking a sacrosanct power discourse like his earlier counterpart. The humanist *Fürstenspiegel* also committed to fostering the common good.[37]

3.2 The *Germania*

Remarkably few publications have appeared on the *Germania*. Ironically, almost all of these scarce publications add the epitheton "famous" to it, as if the scarcity of publications is an aberration.[38] We can unreservedly call Piccolomini's *Germania* a small brother (or even nephew) to its Big Brother: the *Germania* by the Roman writer Tacitus. It was born in the tradition of "Tacitism", or more precisely: it gave birth to the tradition of "Tacitism". In the following chapter, we will first study this tradition. Thereafter we will discuss what we know about the genesis of the *Germania* and its *status quaestionis*.

We will come to the content of the *Germania* later, but let us say a few introductory words here. The *Germania* was finished in 1458, shortly before Piccolomini became Pope. It is composed as a letter to the German humanist Martin Meyer, chancellor of the Archbishop of Mainz. Meyer had written a short letter to his Italian counterpart in 1457, in which he summed up the complaints of the German princes about the Church (which had, as it turned out, not been addressed properly by the Council of Basel). Piccolomini countered these complaints (the so-called "*Gravamina*") with this long letter. We will see later on if the real function of the *Germania* was the response to German criticism, or if it served another purpose.

3.2.1 "Tacitism"

It remains unclear whether Piccolomini has based his work on Tacitus' *Germania* without detour. Let us first try to understand why this is important for our discussion. We will start by investigating the man who started it all. He was born Publius Cornelius Tacitus

in the versatile Italian,' according to Toews.

[34]Camille Battaglia, 'Il pensiero politico di Enea Silvio Piccolomini', in: C. Battaglia (ed), *Enea Silvio Piccolomini e Francesco Patrizi: due politici senesi del Quattrocento* (Siena 1936) 3-71.

[35]Kristina Wengorz, *Schreiben für den Hof als Weg in den Hof : der Pentalogus des Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1443)* (Frankfurt am Main 2013).

[36]Wengorz, *Schreiben für den Hof*, 3: 'Mit der These "Schreiben für den Hof als Weg in den Hof" stellt sich also konkret die Frage nach den Funktionen des *Pentalogus*, wobei Enea Silvio Piccolomini als Verfasser des Dialogs und die von ihm intendierten Leser ("der Hof") als konstitutive Bezugspunkte für das Textverständnis betrachtet worden.'

[37]Wengorz, *Schreiben für den Hof*, 317: 'In diesen Fürstenspiegeln ist der Fürst ein Mensch wie jede andere, die sakralen Herrschervorstellungen des Mittelalters oder gar eine Herrschertheologie gibt es in ihnen nicht mehr.'

[38]cf. Hirschi, *Wettkampf der Nationen*, 145. According to Hirschi, the Piccolominian *Germania* was of enormous importance for the worldview of the German humanists.

around the year 55 AD in the Roman province of Gaul. He advanced through the *Cursus honorum* under the Flavian Emperors (in 88AD, he was *Praetor*, in 97, Consul, and in 112 Proconsul in the Province of *Asia*.[39] The work's genesis is said to be plus-minus 100 AD: a convenient date. The *Germania* had, according to the Pauly, the effect of belying the propaganda of Emperor Domitianus (r. 81-91 AD), which stated that the German lands were effectively captured ("*Germania capta*"). This seems to have been the mayor function of the *Germania*, as the Pauly is otherwise dismissive of the work's content. It reads: 'Das Ethnographische (...) ist ungenau; T. bleibt in röm. Denkmustern und Begriffen befangen und ordnet die ansteigende Wildheit der Stämme proportional zur Entfernung vom röm. Reich an (...).'[40] The "Paulyan" lemma on the *Germania* further emphasises Tacitus's stance on the German ("Teutonic") peoples as the ongoing enemies of the Empire. It quotes capital 33 of the booklet, in which Tacitus proclaims that continuous warfare among the various tribes is the optimal guarantee for a prosperous Empire.[41]

The *Nachleben* of Tacitus's work is named "Tacitism". This term was popularised by the Italian thinkers Giuseppe Toffanin (1891-1980) and Benedetto Croce (1866-1952). They used it to describe a phenomenon that took place in Italy at the turn of the 16^{th} century, where scholars would hide their machiavellian literature – placed on the *Index librorum prohibitorum* – in a church, behind a statue of Tacitus.[42] Today, the term is significantly broadened, and it describes the reception of Tacitus as a whole since 1600.[43] This means that the humanist reception of Tacitus before that date does not have a name, although the humanists were among the first to spur the search for lost Tacitean works. This is why I will also use the term for our research. Without exception, the works of Tacitus were discovered by Italian humanists in the fifteenth century. To name just a few: (parts of) the *Annales* and *Historiae* by Giovanni Boccaccio, the *Agricola*, *Germania* and *Dialogus* by Poggio Bracciolini, and further parts of the *Annales* by Francesco Soderini.[44] It seems to be the case that the Italian humanists – proud speakers and writers of the "purest" Latin of Cicero and Livius – were not too keen on the prozaic Tacitean Latin. There was, too, an aversion against Tacitus's political ideas, which where deemed too "un-republican" by the (mainly Florentine) Italian humanists. In the end, German humanists rekindled the fire of the study of Tacitus ('Eine eigentliche Karriere begann Tacitus erst um 1500 im dt. Human., und zwar als Autor der german. Frühzeit (...)'.'[45] We read here that it was Piccolomini who was the forerunner of Tacitism in the German lands: the "German Spring" began 'zunächst mit der *Germania*, die Enea Silvio Piccolomini in seiner gleichbetitelten Schrift von 1457/58 (...) nach Deutschland vermittelte(...).'[46] The most important observation, I suppose, is the following: 'Autoren wie Konrad Celtis, Heinrich Bebel, Ulrich von Hutten und Johannes Aventin gewannen wesentlich aus diesen Texten ihre normative Vorstellung von dt. Nation, auf die sie wiederum ihr ganzes kulturelles, polit. und rel. Selbstverständnis fixierten.'[47] We have to understand that the Taciteian *Germania* had far more political and cultural

[39]Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider (eds.), "*Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopadie der Antike"* (Stuttgart and Weimar 2001) 1210.

[40]Ibidem.

[41]Ibidem.

[42]Manfred Landfester (ed.), *Der neue Pauly: Rezeptions- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 15:3 (Stuttgart and Weimar 2003) 354.

[43]Landfester (ed.), *Der neue Pauly*, 354.

[44]Ronald Donenfeld, 'Aureus Libellus: Tacitus' *Germania* en het Duitse humanisme 1457-1544', *Utrechtse Historische Cahiers* 18:2 (1997) 1-82, there 11. Boccaccio, one of the most famous treasure hunters, was urged to conduct his research by the deplorable state in which he found many manuscripts. When he asked a monk in the monastery of Monte Cassino if he could access the library, the monk pointed to the attic and said: 'Go on up. It's open.' Boccaccio, astounded by the ease with which he could freely roam around, cried upon seeing almost all precious manuscripts in a deplorable state. Many parts had been lost already: '[v]olgens de aanwezige monnik hadden sommige broeders het perkament voor enkele stuivers doorverkocht om er psalters en brevieren van te maken.'

[45]Landfester (ed.), *Der neue Pauly*, 354.

[46]Ibidem.

[47]Ibidem.

influence on the early German "*Nationalbewußtsein*" than any other work from classical antiquity. Its reception took place almost in its entirety (after the inital "Italian" phase) in the German-speaking lands. German humanists lovingly called it '*aureus libellus*' ('golden booklet').[48] In the Netherlands, the rediscovery of fragments of Tacitus sparked the *Batavic myth*. In other parts of Christian Europe, the ancient past of mythical "national heroes" was told and retold to stimulate a growing sense of uniqueness. The ancient past was also used to account for this proto-national consciousness. For example on the Iberian peninsula, where Spanish humanists vied with their Italian counterparts on who could claim the most glorious past:

> 'Si los italianos afirmaban que sus antepasados habían creado un imperio cuna de Julio César, Octavio y de personajes ilustres como Cicerón y Tácito, los españoles les recordaban que ellos habían dado también grandes imperadores como Trajano y Adriano, y sabios como Séneca, Lucano o Quintiliano.'[49]

Another unique feature of the Tacitean *Germania* is that it has been used since its rediscovery not so much for philological, but for political purposes.[50] This was not only the case with overtly political actors: even "uncontaminated" scholarly attention focused on the support of a strong national consciousness through the work. The Tacitean *Germania* was predominantly used and later even 'monopolised by the Germans' ('in den exklusiven Besitz der Deutschen übergegangen').[51]

The booklet was preserved during the Middle Ages in a single manuscript: the so-called *Codex Hersfeldensis*, which was written between 830 and 850 AD. It probably lay stored in either one of two Hessian monasteries: Fulda or Hersfeld. We know for a fact that monk-historian Rudolf of Fulda († 8 March 865) cites two sections from Tacitus (one on the marital practices of the German tribes, and one on their religion) in one of his major works, the *De miraculis sancti Alexandri*.[52] From the early fourteenth century, treasure-hunters started looking for the manuscript. The famous Italian humanist Coluccio Salutati vehemently declared his will to find the manuscript, placing Tacitus on his most-wanted list ("*Ubi Tacitus?*").[53] The famous scholar Petrus Diaconus also mentions phrases out of Tacitus's minor works, although there is still some discussion about whether or not he actually read the ancient author: Diaconus is quite a colourful person, who was not always inclined to tell the truth about everything. The manuscript was also sought after by the Italian humanist annex treasure-hunter Poggio Bracciolini, whose quest it was to 'free the captured Ancients from the dungeon of the barbarians.'[54] Bracciolini was onto something

[48] Donenfeld, 'Aureus Libellus', 7.

[49] Josué Villa Prieto, 'Europa y los humanistas peninsulares del siglo XV', in: Ana Isabel González Gonzáles and Patricia Herrero de la Escosura (eds.), *Europa?* (Oviedo 2011) 87-98, there 89: 'When Italian humanists asserted that their forebears created an empire that produced Caesar, Octavian, and other illustrious men such as Cicero and Tacitus, the Spanish reminded them that they, too, had produced great emperors such as Trajan and Adrian, and wise men such as Seneca, Lucan, or Quintillian.'

[50] Christina Walde (ed.), *Der Neue Pauly: Die Rezeption der antiken Literatur* (Stuttgart 2010) 978: '(...) sie [die *Germania*, HB] weist im engeren Sinne philologisch-wissenschaftlicher Beschäftigung in auffälliger Weise die Merkmale einer das fachwiss. Interesse weit überschreitenden Rez. auf, d.h. der Aneignung und Transformation im Hinblick auf zeitgebundene (v.a. politische) Bedürfnisse und Vorstellungen.'

[51] Ibidem, 980.

[52] Dieter Mertens, 'Die Instrumentalisierung der „Germania" des Tacitus durch die deutschen Humanisten', in: Heinrich Beck et al. (eds), *Zur Geschichte der Gleichung „germanisch-deutsch"* (Berlin 2004) 37-102: 58. Rudolf cites Tacitus to present the reader with a comparison between the ancient Germans and the Saxons from his day. He has perhaps more right to this comparison than the humanists who are nearly twice as far away from the source as he is. The Saxons probably arrived in western Germany at the turn of the first century. From there they spread out to other parts of Europe, most famously to Great Britain, where traces of their role can still be found in many places. Compare the names Essex and Wessex, which have the famous Saxon sword on their emblem. Traces of the mythical king Widukind can be found on the flags of Twente en Northrine-Westphalia: they both display a white horse, which alludes to the myth of the Saxon king Widukind, who rode a black horse before, and a white horse after his conversion to Christianity.

[53] Dieter Mertens, 'Die Instrumentalisierung', 58.

[54] Walde (ed.), *Der Neue Pauly*, 979. Quote by Bracciolini quoted here.

as early as 1428. He had contact with a monk from the Hersfeld monastery (identified as Heinrich von Grebenstein), who said he could provide him with antique texts in exchange for some canonical works by Johannes Andreae. However, the "monachus hersfeldensis" never crossed the bridge, and Bracciolini had to accept defeat for the time being: 'Cornelius Tacitus silet inter Germanos.'[55]

According to French historian Jacques Perret, it was the Italian humanist Pietro Decembrio (1399-1477) who had access to the Hersfeld manuscript as early as 1455, et 'il en manifeste une connaissance infinitement plus précise [que Piccolomini].'[56] In Perret's time, the discussion was about the survival of the *Hersfeldensis*: was this most important manuscript of the *Germania* accessible to the humanists, or did they use a copy of it? It makes for great reading: the treasure hunter Enoch of Ascoli (c. 1400- c. 1457) who travelled through Europe in search of long-lost manuscripts, commissioned by Pope Nicholas V. He parted for northern Europe in the spring of 1451, and carried a papal legate that ordered anyone who owned an ancient manuscript show it to him. Those who refused to show their manuscripts were threatened with excommunication, or so an apocryphal story goes.[57] Enoch's voyage was to take four years. We have no direct knowledge about how the "Hf" (the abbreviation of Perret's classification of manuscripts) ended up in the Vatican Library in Rome. We only know this history of the manuscript by hand of Pontanus (Giovanni Pontano, 1426-1503), who wrote an account of Enoch's discovery. Some scholars have had their doubts about this account, but Ferret believes Enoch's story to be true: 'Nous croyons donc qu'il convient de restituer à Enoch le mérite d'avoir pu acquérir pour le compte de Nicolas V le précieux manuscrit de Hersfeld.'[58] Thus was the expanding Vatican Library enriched by the very precious manuscript of the *Germania* – the sole surviving manuscript in Europe – somewhere between 1452 and the 24th of March, 1455 (the *terminus ante quem* determined by Nicholas's death).[59] This leaves to Perret the discussion of Piccolomini's role. Some scholars believe Piccolomini was in possession of the *Germania* on the 1st of February, 1458: the date that stands firmly above Piccolomini's own *Germania*.[60] Perret is sceptical about the assumption that Piccolomini knew the Tacitean *Germania* when writing his own work, because his words only very remotely resemble Tacitus's words. There is just one sentence of which it could be said that it 'looks like the echo of one of Tacitus's sentences.'[61] Perhaps Piccolomini had access to a (partial) copy of the famous Hersfeld manuscript, concludes Perret.

Ironically, the Hersfeld manuscript (the one life-line) was lost soon after. It passed through many hands and it was split up into tiny fractals. Under slight pressure, Bracciolini transferred it to Piccolomini, who kept it in his own private library for some time. According to the Pauly, Piccolomini used the Tacitean *Germania* to emphasise that the German lands now were a lot more civilised than before. That was all, according to Piccolomini, due to the Catholic Church. The historiography has acknowledged the church-historical function of the Piccolominian *Germania*.[62] Backing up the Roman Curia, Piccolomini refers to the Tacitean *Germania* and especially the excerpts about the barbarous state in which the German tribes found themselves in the first century of our calendar. The argument that Piccolomini tries to convey could be translated as follows: 'Tacitus describes the German tribes as poor, uncivilised and unruly. But lo and behold! The just faith presented itself to the Germans, and now they are rich, civilized, and powerful. The Germans should be

[55] 'Tacitus remains silent(ly) amongst the Germans.' Donenfeld, 'Aureus Libellus', 15.

[56] Jacques Perret, *Recherches sur le texte de "la Germanie"* (Paris 1950) 151.

[57] Perret, *Recherches*, 136 (n.) Excommunication was a regular practice among the popes of the later fifteenth century. There exists one apocryphal story about Pope Callixtus III - Nicholas V's successor and Pius II's predecessor - excommunicating Halley's Comet, because it was seen as an ill omen for the Christian armies fending off the Turks during the siege of Belgrade in 1456.

[58] Ibidem, 142.

[59] Ibidem, 143.

[60] Ibidem, 142-160. For further discussion see n.1 on page 143.

[61] Ibidem, 149.

[62] Ibidem.

thankful for everything Rome has given them!'[63] Such a grotesque statement could not have been made in modern times (although it could be yet again possible in the era of postmodernism). Not a single word is said about the possible political aims of Tacitus, or the totally incomparable state in which the Germans lived in the first century AD. Perhaps it is an anachronism to expect such a clause from Piccolomini; perhaps it was in his eyes completely valid to compare the Holy Roman Empire of the fifteenth century with the loosely connected and inherently different German tribes of the first century. A possible explanation for the aura of validity of this comparison is the high *auctoritas* in which Tacitus – and all Roman writers of the *aurea latinitas*, for that matter – were held. For whichever public the Piccolominian *Germania* was written, it was sure to be acknowledged as bowing upon great authority. The German humanists who read Piccolomini's manuscript – only part of the intended public, as we will see – were sure to bow to this authority.

3.2.2 The *Germania* by Piccolomini

Although the Piccolominian *Germania* was, just as its illustrious forefather, a "small" work, it was to have a profound influence on German nation-building. It should be seen as a catalyst for the nationalism that sprang up everywhere in the German lands in later ages, as a first stepping stone in a row of similar pamphlets. We shall discover how this scenario developed, after having a look at the scholarly discussion of the Piccolominian work.

In 1962, Piccolomini's work was published in translation as well as in its original Latin. This is the first time an edition was published in German in the twentieth century. It was originally not published under the name "Germania": this is a posthumous name 'der Kürze halber.' Just like the Tacitean *Germania*, of which the full title reads *De origine et situ Germanorum*, the newer *Germania* had a long title: *De ritu, situ, moribus et conditione Germanie*. It has been proposed that these longer sentences service as subtitles, describing the work's content.

Adolf Schmidt, the German translator and editor of the work, has based his translation on a manuscript that is kept in the library of the Vatican: the *Codex Vaticanus Latinus 3886*.[64] Schmidt also used another manuscript, a copy of the work mentioned above (*Codex Vaticanus Latinus 3885*). Schmidt supposes that *CVL 3886* is written by Piccolomini himself. He does not seem to have any doubts about the authorship. It is perhaps best to follow his judgement, for he has seen the codex and we have not. Schmidt has used other versions of the *Germania* to add and alter his final version: most notably an early sixteenth-century print (Strasburg 1515) and two later prints (Basel 1551 and 1571), although he concedes that these early prints are 'außerordentlich fehlerhaft.'[65] A first modern scholarly edition of the booklet was, not surprisingly, published in Italy in 1949 (*La Germania*, edition Gioacchino Paparelli, Florence).[66] This reflects a broader trend in which there is scant evidence of scholarly interest from countries other than Germany and Italy. Especially surprising is the lack of interest from the Anglo-Saxon world. There does not seem to be a single edition of the *Germania* in the English language, at least not at first glance. Merely by accident I came across an English translation in Thomas J. Mauro's dissertation (see below). Mauro, however, has only translated the second book of the *Germania*.[67] To

[63] Ibidem. In the Pauly it reads: 'Die gesammelten Negativhinweise auf einen barbarischen Kulturzustand, von denen sich in der G. nicht wenige finden, bilden dabei den dunklen Hintergrund, vor dem sich das im Zuge der Christianisierung zivilisierte "Germanien" der Gegenwart vorteilhaft abhebt, sodass Anforderungen der röm. Kurie an den dt. Klerus legitim erscheinen.' This is accompanied by the warning that there could be still some atavisms of barbarity left in the German people, as we will see. Only the "transmontanic church" can pastorly lead the Empire to moral high ground. Walde, *Der Neue Pauly*, 981.

[64] Adolf Schmidt, *Deutschland, der Brieftraktat an Martin Mayer / Jakob Wimpfelings ,,Antworten und Einwendungen gegen Enea Silvio"* (Cologne 1962) vii.

[65] Ibidem.

[66] The newest Italian translation of the *Germania* was published in 2009: *Germania* (ed. Maria Giovanna Fadiga, Florence 2009).

[67] Mauro, *Præceptor Austriae*. The *Germania* has been added to Volume III of the dissertation as

conclude, a full standalone translated edition of the *Germania* in English does not exist. Perhaps this is due to the language barrier, which is not necessarily demolished by the advent of modern technology. A more compelling logic would ascribe the lack of scholarly interest coming from the Anglo-Saxon world to the leaflet's subject and writer (respectively Germany and an Italian humanist). This German-Italian axis makes the *Germania*, *ab initio*, a continental enterprise.

There are two major exceptions to this rule. A number of publications outside of this limited area has been devoted to the study of the *Germania*. It should be noted, however, that both works are not monographs on the *Germania*, but rather works of cultural history that touch upon the the Piccolominian work as a document that is representative for its time. Let us quickly consider the two works at hand. The oldest of the two is a French dissertation, presented on the 24$^{\text{th}}$ of January 1976 to the philosophical faculty of the Parisian *Université IV* by the French historian Jacques Ridé. The subject of Ridé's enormous dissertation (three volumes totaling 1274 pages) is the imagology of "the German" in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Time.[68] Ridé, specialised in the *histoire des mentalités* of the German nation in the Early Modern period, begins his study with the rediscovery of Tacitus. He discusses *in extenso* two of Piccolomini's works that have contributed to the continuing legacy of Tacitus, and to the image that the German humanists had of themselves and of their "country". The first one is *Constantinopolitana clades*, the famous oration Piccolomini held in Frankfurt. Ridé touches upon this oration to show Piccolomini's perspective on the German princes as brave fighters. The other influential writing of Piccolomini's was, according to Ridé, the *Germania*. He takes part in the debate about the author-question: did Piccolomini have direct access to the Tacitean *Germania* when writing his own work? Ridé effectively leaves all options open.[69] The most interesting contribution he makes to the study of the *Germania* is that he challenges his reader with seven propositions, which we will discuss in detail below. Consider Ridé's first proposition: 'L'humaniste italien a été en Europe le premier à mentionner publiquement le témoignage de Tacite et à manifester quelque connaissance de sa *Germanie*.'[70] This first proposition is dependable on the notion of "knowledge". As we have seen, multiple writers before Piccolomini have shown some knowledge (albeit a minimum) of the existence of Tacitus's works. Ridé's statement can be debunked (and it has been) depending on the interpretation of "knowledge". It is not the most fundamental proposition, and it is the prime example of Ridé's more neutral ones. Although Ridé's dissertation is some forty years old now – which could have rendered many of it redundant – most of his propositions still stand. Let us have a look at one of Ridé's "verified" propositions, before turning to a general assessment of his work.

Ridé's sixth proposition reads: 'Les Allemands se sentiront d'autant plus justifiés à poser, contre la lettre-traité de Piccolomini, l'existence d'une continuité entre les Germains de l'Antiquité et eux-mêmes, que, dans son discours de Francfort, l'Italien avait semblé admettre une telle continuité, tout au moins en ce qui concernait la valeur militaire.'[71]

Ridé was, as an expert on German cultural history, one of the first scholars to actively engage himself with the Piccolominian *Germania*. During the time immediately following the Second World War, it was a scholarly *faux-pas* to discuss the *Germania* in any form. It was only until 1962, with Schmidt's translation, that the Piccolominian *Germania* resurfaced. It was Ridés merit to incorporate Piccolominis work into the tradition of *Negotiatio Germaniae* that was to be described in the next millennium by Christopher Krebs: the

appendix C. Mauro has based his translation on the Vatican autograph 3886, combined with two printed editions (Strasburg 1515 and Rome 1584). The Latin text is on pages 531-571; the translation is on pages 572-604.

[68]Full: Jacques Ridé, *L'image du Germain dans la pensée et la littérature allemandes de la redécouverte de Tacite a la fin du XVIème siècle (contribution a la genèse d'un mythe)*, Paris 1977.

[69]Ridé, *L'image du Germain*, 173.

[70]Ibidem, 178.

[71]Ibidem, 180.

image of the Germans and the German Nation as viewed by themselves and as viewed by others.[72] Ridé places the *Germania* at the beginning of this tradition, stating: '(...) la *Germania* de 1458 aura un résultat double. Elle conduira les Allemands à s'interesser à leurs vrais ancêtres, mais aussi, en même temps, à contester l'image qu'il en donne. Au procès en barbarie qu'il leur intente, ils vont réagir par une defense et illustration des Germains. A sa naissance, le sentiment national prendra donc chez eux la coloration d'un pattriotisme réactionnel.'[73] Although not many scholars have reacted on Ridé's statement, it can be seen as a first spark. Krebs can be seen as Ridé's successor.

The other influential publication comes from overseas. Just like *L'image du Germain*, it is a dissertation, and it is almost as huge (1082 pages) as Ridé's work. It is the dissertation of American historian Thomas Mauro, already introduced above. Mauro was inspired to write his dissertation when – in his own words – it 'began to dawn on [him] that Piccolomini was a much more significant figure than [he] had expected.'[74] Mauro's dissertation covers the *Germania* extensively.

[72]See: Christopher B. Krebs, *Negotiatio Germaniae: Tacitus' Germania und Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Giannantonio Campano, Conrad Celtis und Heinrich Bebel* (Göttingen 2005). Krebs' section on Piccolomini does not provide us with new insights. The three statements he makes on p. 120 have all been brought to the fore already in the historiography. Let us name them here for reflection: '(i) In der Frankfurter Rede [*Constantinopolitana clades*, HB] (...) stehen die beiden positiven Bilder der Vergangenheit und Gegenwart im Zeichen der Kontinuität unbezwingbaren Kriegertums.' ; '(ii) In der *Germania* hingegen (...) konstruiert Enea Silvio mit Hilfe der taciteischen *Germania* ein negatives Bild germanischer Vergangenheit.' ; '(iii) Enea Silvios Beitrag zur *negotiatio Germaniae* besteht in der Stigmatisierung der taciteischen Germania als eines Barbarendokuments und in der uneingeschränkten Barbarisierung der germanischen Vergangenheit.'

[73]Ridé, *L'image du Germain*, 182.

[74]Mauro, *Præceptor Austriae*, iii.

Chapter 4

Two tracts on Empire

Even though the *Pentalogus* and the *Germania* are written some fifteen years apart, they are remarkably similar in a way. In both works, we find as a basic tenet the question of German dominance in Europe. As has been said before, Piccolomini's "views on Empire" will be considered. Our main question will be the following: how much weight does Piccolomini attribute to the German part of the Empire as "*hegemon*" over Europe. We will also try to find an answer to the question if Piccolomini sees a universal destiny, or rather a particular, destiny for the Empire. A third question that will be answered concerns Piccolomini's ideas about the German people. When addressing these questions, we will shed some light on the differences between both works. We may find large discrepancies between the view of empire laid out in the *Pentalogus*, with that laid out in the *Germania*. If so, we will account for these differences.

4.1 The *Pentalogus*: writing for the court

What follows is a display of the relevant parts of the *Pentalogus*. In our analysis we will not occupy ourselves with postmodern textual analyses. I wholeheartedly agree with Wengorz in questioning the use of postmodern analytical theories for early modern texts.[1] Literary theories have only a limited function for the historian, although it is of course useful to consider the connection between author and work. Beneath is a display of the text in light of our interest, in which the character of Eneas receives most of our attention. We should believe that it is the character Eneas who stands most closely to the real Enea, the writer of the play. Most weight will therefore be given to his utterances. His name will be spelt "Eneas" here, as is done in the *Pentalogus* itself.

After an introductory discussion the character Eneas starts speaking about the Empire. Eneas, whether out of honest concern or out of self-service, detests the state in which the Empire finds itself. Rhetorically, he asks: 'What is more painful to see than an Empire which is so torn and tattered?'[2] Eneas urges Frederick to rise up ("*Assurge, rex gloriose*"), and to heighten the Empire's prestige. Added to this exhortation is the honour of the Austrian people: the kings of other royal houses have already in the past secured the prestige of their house by travelling to Italy.[3] Eneas espouses a hierarchical worldview: he says he is convinced of the superiority of one ruler over that of many rulers. A wise ruler should, so Eneas, guard against becoming a tyrant, estranged from his people, "as was the emperor Galba". In order to avoid such a situation, it is imperative that Frederick take advice from his people, most notably the higher German nobility. Eneas urges Frederick to

[1] Wengorz, *Schreiben für den Hof*, 2.

[2] Piccolomini, *Pentalogus*, 198: 'Nam quid (...) miserius est quam imperium sic lacerum et mutilatum intueri?'

[3] Ibidem.

employ advisers from all corners of the empire, in ever greater numbers.[4] Frederick should do justice to every rank in the Empire. Eneas could say this, one could suppose, not for equality's sake, but in the Emperor's own interest: the princes' complaints about centralised power should be quelled. These complaints were already fairly loud when Piccolomini wrote his *Pentalogus*; the medicine he offers is that of a better representation.

Frederick has a power base in Germany and Austria for a military expedition into Italy, so Eneas, as 'all Germany recognises your rule (...) and the sceptre over the Austrian dominions is all yours.'[5] When preparing an Italian campaign, it is an absolute necessity to rally all German princes and kings behind Frederick. The golden opportunity to admonish the German cities and princes to go to war, is of course the 'famous council.'[6] Especially the prince-electors should be invited to the council, but in equal measure other German princes who have proven to be loyal to the Empire. This was something done excellently by Emperor Sigismund, so writes Eneas: to have collected at the court not just German men, but also men from Italy, Hungary and Bohemia.[7]

But Frederick can also count on a divine power base. Eneas professes that it may well be possible that God himself had chosen Frederick to be German king, so that Frederick could unite and manage the Empire with all his hard work and power. Frederick is placed in a millennial context, where he may be the Chosen One to lead the Empire to glory.[8] The importance of Frederick on the world-historical stage is greatly magnified by Eneas. The flattery is not entirely convincing, and Eneas the writer may have recognised this, as he builds a counter-argument to the character Eneas by letting Frederick speak. Frederick manifests his disbelief in his answer to Eneas – he never believes that the foreign princes will recognise his authority – and he is never fully persuaded by Eneas.

Eneas becomes defensive when he is countered by chancellor Caspar (Schlick) about the nature of the Italians. Caspar asks out loud how the Germans could ever reign over Italy, when the Italians are such an insidious people. They will poison their overlord, when they see no other way, so Caspar.[9] Enea immediately throws in a "*tu quoque*": the Germans are the masters of cunning nowadays, and indeed they should not be trusted. Besides, the Germans are known to have a contempt for death, so they should not worry about a drop of poison (it is implied by Eneas that the Germans intoxicate themselves daily in drinking games).[10] Enea indignantly describes the rule over Italy by German kings, most notably the Ottonians, 'none of whom was ever threatened by poison.'[11] The *Pentalogus* sometimes reads as an ode to Eneas' homeland. The character praises the Italian soil, which is 'more fertile and well-cultured than any other country.'[12]

It is absolutely clear to Eneas that Frederick should reign over Italy. The argument is based on tradition. Eneas expressly links the Imperial title to the possession of Italy, as he says to Frederick: 'this is where you get your name from, Emperor: you are called "King of the Romans".'[13] The difficulty for Frederick would be to subdue the unruly Italians. Relating the troubles Emperor Sigismund had in securing his interests in Italy (especially as regards the Duke of Milan, and the ongoing war between Florence and Siena), Enea advises

[4]Ibidem, 246: 'Nunc tamen, quoniam rex factus es et iam cogitare de imperiali corona debes, augere numerum te oportet et omnibus illis ex partibus viros insignes accire, in quibus vis dominari.'

[5]Ibidem, 200: 'Alamania tota in regem te recognoscit (...) regimen dominiorum Austrie a te universum dependet.'

[6]Ibidem, 244: '(...) cum inter alias utilitates, quas ex celebratione concilii diximus provenire (...).'

[7]Ibidem, 246: 'Vocandi sunt electores imperii, vocandi et alii Germanie principes fideles imperio, communitates quoque.'

[8]Ibidem.

[9]Piccolomini, *Pentalogus*, 190: 'Nimium enim versipelles Itali sunt. Tum cum alia desunt, venenis utuntur.'

[10]Ibidem, 192.

[11]Ibidem, 194: '(...) nec unquam veneno petiti fuerunt.' The poisonous plant *monkshood* (*aconitum*) is named specifically by Eneas.

[12]Ibidem, 236: 'nulla est feracior terra nullaque cultior.'

[13]Piccolomini, *Pentalogus*, 160: 'Hinc tibi inditum nomen est, cesar, rex enim Romanorum diceris.'

Frederick to clean the Augean stables by force.[14] He then gives a remarkably accurate description of the hornet's nest.[15] Ten years after writing the *Pentalogus*, Piccolomini would describe the Italian situation again in his *Historia austrialis*, with special attention to the Duchy of Milan. He warns for a division of Italy between Alfonso of Aragón and Francesco Sforza, the Duke of Milan, using a Virgilian phrase: 'Omnia rex Aragonum et dux Mediolani ad se trahent servitioque prement.'[16] The loss of Italy is represented as the loss of the royal crown; the loss of the royal crown means a loss of legitimacy.

The character Nicodemus (the bishop of Freising) is fairly positive about the German people and society. He describes the Germans as a 'rich, pious and friendly' people, and contrasts this with the Catalan, who is 'poor, cruel, and full of pride,' (in the sinful sense of the word).[17] German soldiers would not be able to endure a long military campaign, 'because peace has flourished with them,' they are simply not used to waging war anymore, and 'they are not people who can endure hunger and thirst for long.'[18] This damning with faint praise can be seen as an insult, but it seems to be a rhetorical device to flatter the Germans. Another one of these immediately follows, when Eneas describes the prerequisite for knighthood. Knights are appointed, 'not for the amount of gold they wear,' but 'for the amount of pain they can endure.'[19] The former of these is the case in the German lands, according to Eneas, and so he gives another backhanded compliment: the German knights are too rich and spoilt to fight. These remarks bear a strong similarity to those in the *Germania*, as we will see.

In the *Pentalogus*, we see an early prefiguration of Machiavelli's thought. Eneas wonders out loud about the predominance of utility in politics ("*utilitatis ratio*"). 'Every treaty that is being made today is the result of utility, not friendship,' so Eneas.[20] Other scholars have pointed out this similarity between Piccolomini and Machiavelli. German historian Gerhard Kallen characterises this similarity as a watershed between politics and morality.[21] We can conclude that the *Pentalogus* is a practical document that anticipates Machiavelli's theses. As a matter of fact, Piccolomini's work was conceived some seventy years before Machiavelli's famous work. Therefore, it is not only surprising in the sense that we have already seen – as a notation of common stereotypes in the fifteenth century – but also a precursor to *Il Principe*. He gives detailed instructions on how to feed and lead an army. He reasons about which party best to support in a multilateral war. He gives careful advice and provides arguments almost free from tradition. In this he proves to be also a military adviser. As he wrote all of his advice from an ivory tower, the question is whether the military tactics sprouting from his quill would have any influence on the German King. It is pure theory.

Eneas has a very strong opinion on the Swiss, as well. They are 'a most ferocious people, and because they possess the passes of the Alps, they can exercise great power.'[22] He advises the King to give the Swiss parts of Northern Italy over which they have been fighting for so long, including the city of Como, 'and everything north of it.' The "*Eidgenossenschaft*" had a right to take revenge on Milan, after the loss of territory in numerous skirmishes with

[14] With a 'magno exercitu' (Piccolomini, *Pentalogus*, 166.).

[15] Piccolomini describes the arrival of Alfonso of Aragón in Naples, the Count of Urbino and the "detestable" Malatesta family, and the minor powers of Mantua, Ferrara and Genua. Enea absolutely despised the notorious *condottiere* from Rimini, Sigismondo Malatesta, and called him 'the worst scoundrel [of all men who have ever lived or will ever live], the disgrace of Italy and the infamy of our times.' In the *Pentalogus*, however, Malatesta is still one of many "scoundrels". Arthur White, *Plague and Pleasure: The Renaissance World of Pius II* (Washington 2014) 172.

[16] Ibidem, 170. 'The King of Aragón and the Duke of Milan will pull everything towards them and try to push it into servitude.'

[17] Piccolomini, *Pentalogus*, 206.

[18] Ibidem, 220.

[19] Ibidem.

[20] Ibidem, 208: 'federa omnia, que hodie fiunt, non amore, sed utilitate pensari.'

[21] Quoted by Schingnitz (p. 13). Machiavelli 'trennte Politik und Moral und [erklärte] Machtkalkül und Staatsräson für autonom.'

[22] Ibidem 214.

that city, so was Eneas' reasoning.

The reader is reminded of the tenets of the Investiture Controversy by the character Silvester (bishop of Chiemsee). He has read an unnamed work by Otto of Freising (revealed by Schingnitz as being the *Chronica*), where it is explained that the Concordat of Worms has effectively ended the Controversy. A short dialogue ensues between Nicodemus and Silvester; both seem to agree that Emperor Henry V (r. 1106-1125) seemed to have lost somehow the dispute with the Pope.[23]

A seminal part in the *Pentalogus* is the speech that Eneas has prepared for Frederick. It concerns the King's question on how to handle the Imperial princes and cities. Enea lets Frederick start by saying that he was, *ab initio*, not really sure if assuming the throne was the right thing to do. After all, the Empire was broken, usurped, and almost annihilated, and it seemed to be a heavy burden to take the government on ones shoulders.[24] He says he is worried about the implications of governing the Empire, 'because there are many people in Italy and in Germany who are in need of the Empire's help.'[25] It would constitute a formidable task to help all subjects. Kingship does not seem a desirable task. No wonder Frederick confesses to prefer a 'good and peaceful life in my place of birth.'[26] Piccolomini hits the nail on the head with Frederick's statement. This is exactly the picture of Frederick as we know it from the recent historiography.

Then, however, Frederick is advised by sages (not from the East, but from the German lands) to take the crown anyway. The argumentation is of a *Blut und Boden*-like nature: the German honour should be fostered, and the Empire should stay in German hands (and not be transferred to another nation).[27] Frederick is reassured that the German people will support him unanimously. The character Frederick tells the story of how he is persuaded himself. He accepts in the end, so he says, to help the *patria*.[28] The Romans have lost the Empire, to their detriment. Nobody obeys the Emperor in Italy anymore. Frederick is determined to avoid such a fate for the German nation. When the Germans were subjects of the Roman Empire, they obeyed the Emperor. Now, when the "Romans" are subjects of the Holy Roman Empire, they do not obey the Emperor. 'To what purpose do we have the Empire?' asks Frederick rhetorically. Is the only function of the Empire to govern the Germans themselves? This rather philosophical question is answered in the negative. Frederick is convinced that the Empire has a wider reach than just the *natio*. It is very important that the Italians stay under German rule, so the King. 'Still in our father's time, all Italians were subject to the Germans.'[29] He foresees an untimely end for the Empire.

Considering the rule of law, the bravery and the large population Frederick sees in the Empire, he is convinced he can make the Empire great again. To restore order in Europe, Frederick has to raise an army of some twenty thousand. 'All Germans will see you as a second Alexander the Great,' so the character Nicodemus.[30] One of the central messages in Frederick's speech is that Austria cannot support an army on its own. The Empire needs to operate as it if were one body. Frederick defends the imperial ideal by pointing out that German merchants would be lost to petty tyrants when there would no emperor. They would be sheep without a shepherd, he says literally.[31]

The German princes are also encouraged to contribute to this operation, because 'it is also in their own interest.'[32] A united Empire is in a better position to ward off enemy

[23]Pages 248-250.

[24]Ibidem, 250: 'Videns namque imperium ipsum lacerum, usurpatum et fere adnihilatum, magni ponderis esse censebam gubernationem eius subire.' Frederick had been crowned king on the 2nd of February, 1440 in Frankfurt.

[25]Ibidem, 250-252.

[26]Ibidem, 252.

[27]Ibidem. 'Ut honori Germanico exponerent, ne me recusante nationem Germanicam exiret imperium.'

[28]Ibidem.

[29]Ibidem. 'Parentum namque nostrorum memoria Itali omnes obedientes erant nostris imperatoribus.'

[30]Ibidem, 262: 'Teque Germani omnes Alexandrum alium extimabunt.'

[31]Ibidem, 258: 'oves sine pastore.'

[32]Ibidem, 260.

powers, thus providing security for all its inhabitants, princes and all. Another prospect that is offered in Frederick's speech is that of free travel. One of the reasons for having a strong imperial army is to be able to protect travellers in all corners of the Empire. Trade will only prosper when merchants are able to travel without constraints. A sense of regionalism is expected by Silvester. He foresees the reaction of many princes and *Bürger*: 'What do I care about the Empire?'[33] Most inhabitants only care about their direct surroundings: they do not care who occupies the throne, and they do not care about their compatriots several hundreds of kilometres away. They do not care about the honour of the German nation, and they will not defend it against defamation. A strong powerbase for the Emperor can only be provided by the Church, so Eneas. He advises Frederick to strive for unity in ecclesiastical matters. Not schism or division, but unity and peace are required to restore the Empire's glory. The character Eneas persuades the Emperor to conduct a campaign against all those who threaten his power. Especially Italy has to be brought back under Austrian sway. Eneas does not have mercy on those subjects that disturb the peace: Frederick should 'annihilate', 'restrain' and 'slaughter' them.[34] Frederick should not fear losing a few good men in battle, because they will have a good afterlife. 'All those who help the fatherland, all those who defend and contribute to it, for them a good spot is reserved in Heaven.'[35] Eneas urges the emperor to leave the imperial court and follow the call of the wild. A campaign to punish dissenters will in the end be essential for the betterment of the Empire. The character Frederick has the same eremitic qualities as the Frederick we know from biographies. He admits that he prefers staying home over going out any day. He tries everything to prevent his having to travel and lead and army. Such adventures mean too much hardship and fast decisions for the Emperor, so it appears. He would rather sit alone in his study than go out on an unexpected journey. When Austria has to pay for a military campaign, *Cui bono*? Looking into the future, Frederick sketches the days to come: when he dies, another king from another house will take the throne, who will take the situation for granted. If Frederick invests in the Empire, the danger is he only helps his successors. He can better serve his own, i.e. his Austrian subjects. Eneas counters this with the assertion that a successful campaign will yield a sweet harvest on the long run. The northern cities of Italy will, once they are incorporated into the Empire, generate a steady flow of cash into the Imperial treasure. Such a conquest would also set a perfect example. When other subjects of the Empire see such powerful conduct by the Emperor, they will 'submit like meek sheep.'[36] 'Germany does what it wants, and it does not follow the Emperor's lead,' so Eneas.[37] A lot of Imperial law is simply disregarded; would the Emperor try to reinstate it, then scorn would be his part. Only when he makes a firm statement, the Empire will turn back to the herd.

The "House of Austria" (in other words, the Habsburgs) will be greatly benefited when the Emperor bares his teeth. 'Those who say money can't buy prestige are wrong,' says the character Eneas. He elucidates this with a historical argument: in the past, there have been numerous German houses with an enormous fortune, none of which remains today. What remains, however, is the prestige these houses have built up over time. This is something Frederick should strive for, too. It is worth it to spend money at this opportunity, for it will pay itself back later in life, so Eneas.[38] Just like in ancient Roman times, where the Emperor was chosen "*senatus populique romani*", the Emperor today is chosen by his people. There is not a trace of irony in Eneas' statement. He hints, however, at a way to make the Emperorship heritable (just as it was *de facto* in Antiquity). Frederick should

[33]Ibidem, 264.
[34]Ibidem.
[35]Ibidem, 278: 'Clarum est enim omnibus, qui patriam iuverint, defenderint, auxerint, certum esse in cello diffinitum locum.' Schingnitz translates "*patria*" as "*Heimat*". The quote is Cicero's.
[36]Ibidem, 286. 'Omnes tamquam agni mansueti se submittent.'
[37]Ibidem.
[38]Ibidem, 292: 'A good name lasts longer than a heap of all your winnings,' ('diuturnior est boni nominis fama quam thesaurus congregatus.').

either nominate a family member as his successor, or he should wait a few years until he has gotten a son. When the latter has become reality, Frederick could just do like the Ottonians and the Roman emperors Valentinian and Decius: he should appoint an (infant) successor and so secure the bloodline.[39] Another important Machiavellian lesson surfaces when Eneas talks about the succession of Duke Filippo Maria Visconti of Milan. Eneas advises that Frederick immediately subdues the city when the Duke dies, seeing that he has no apparent heirs. Foreshadowing Machiavelli, Eneas says that a monarch should be kind and fearsome at the same time.[40] Eneas: the Empire was grounded by God's will, with Roman virtues and justice as fundament. The Emperor should not fear the bloodshed that will occur when trying to get all subjects back on track, because they deserve everything that's coming for them. They are people who deserve 'a thousand deaths' for withdrawing themselves from the Empire's reach and for wreaking havoc on loyal subjects.[41] To kill disloyal subjects is the same as to execute a murderer (by means of the *furca*, that is to say the gallows), so Eneas. Besides, the loyal subjects falling in battle are likely to go to heaven, so the Emperor should not worry about them, either. The prince-electors should be kept in the dark about Frederick's plan for a campaign, so Eneas. They want their rights and their territories back. Frederick should pretend to help them, when his power has increased as a result of his campaign. From his position of newly acquired power, he can turn their wants on the prince-electors themselves: he wants his lands and rights back. Eneas paints an optimistic picture of the future once a successful war against disobedient subjects has been waged. The prince-electors will be impressed by such a *tour de force*, and they will present themselves at court whenever they are asked to do so (this is apparently a good measure of hard power). Not only the princes inside the Empire's borders, but also those outside its borders will restart paying homage to what should be the temporal ruler of Europe. They will make the Roman emperor a 'referee of all conflicts.'[42] The speech held by Eneas near the end of his dialogue with Frederick ends with the wish that neither the German people nor the Emperor lose the will to fight, 'because it is highly necessary to fight.'[43] After all, the Germans have always been such a war-like people.[44] If the Emperor does not want to work for himself, he should at least work for the 'German nation as a whole.'[45] Here, in the end, another two important factors for Eneas surface. He emphasises that when Frederick fosters the whole German nation, he will also foster 'the Christian faith and the well-being of many other peoples.'[46]

In the time of writing the *Pentalogus*, the case of Burgundy was already on the political agenda. Philip the Good, the Burgundian duke, came into conflict with Frederick numerous times. He meddled in French as well as Imperial affairs. His son Charles the Bold would try to get Frederick to crown him German King, thus wanting to secure for himself the title of Emperor in the long run. His succession was highly problematical, as he had only one daughter. After Charles' tragic death in 1477, Burgundy was incorporated in the Empire, directly under Habsburg rule. The Burgundian heartland was absorbed by France.[47]

'The Empire was transferred from the Romans, to the Greeks, to the Franks, to the

[39]Ibidem, 294. 'So I have sufficiently made clear how you can keep the Empire in your family's possession,' ('Satis est tibi modum ostendere, per quem imperium in tua familia possis continuare.').
[40]Ibidem, 300.
[41]Ibidem, 276.
[42]Ibidem, 288.
[43]Ibidem, 304: 'nec tibi aut tuis Germanis animus ad bellum desit.'
[44]Ibidem: 'cum omnium gentium bellicosissima semper consueverit esse Germania.'
[45]Ibidem.
[46]Ibidem. 'cum et fidei christiane augmentum et salus multarum gentium procurator.'
[47]See for a recent overview of thousand years of imperial history: Peter Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire: A Thousand Years of Europe's History* (London 2016). Wilson is generally positive of the Empire. He believes that historians studying the Empire have been far too dismissive of its efficiency. According to Wilson, the Empire was relatively mild in international politics: it sought to find peaceful solutions through compromise. The "nation states" of the Middle Ages were in general more direct and uncompromising. They did not have to deal with multiple parties with certain "inalienable rights."

Germans,' says Eneas.[48] After the *virtù* of the Romans had dissipated, the Empire had to find a new home. It was transferred to the Germans because of their 'piety and sense of justness.' Eneas proves himself to be a hard-lined "imperialist": the decision to donate the Empire to the Germans is justified, as they prove to be worthy candidates. It would be interesting to see predictions in whose hands the empire would fall next, but those are hard to find.

Even though all of the above has sprouted from Piccolomini's quill, not all that is written represents his "views on Empire". He also had to pen down counter-arguments to his own position. These are mainly voiced by Frederick. The other characters seem to each represent their own points of view, too (for example Caspar Schlick with his negative comments on the Italian spirit). The *Pentalogus* is in this way a very realistic document, and I agree with Wengorz in characterising it as a "*Fürstenspiegel*". The "*Fürst*" is especially human in the *Pentalogus*: Frederick is endowed with those personality traits that we also find in the scholarly literature.

4.2 The *Germania*: geography of Germany

The first part of the *Germania* is written to counter the so-called "*Gravamina*" of the German nation. These *Gravamina* (full name: "*Gravamina Nationis Germanicae et Sacri Romani Imperii Decem*") were a list of complaints about corruption and prodigality in the Church. They were written by a variety of high-placed persons, religious and lay alike, of the Empire. Officially, they were a reaction to the Concordat on the German Nation that was signed between Frederick and Pope Nicholas V in 1448. However, they reflected broader criticism on the perceived greed of the Church and the "private party" of Emperor and Pope.[49] The intended reader of Piccolomini's *Germania* is Martin Mayer (also: Mair), German humanist and chancellor of the Archbishop of Mainz.[50] Mayer had written a letter to Piccolomini dated 31 August 1457, in which the "*Gravamina*" are addressed. Mayer laments in this short letter – written also to congratulate Piccolomini with his promotion to Cardinal – that his once great nation, the heir of Empire, has been reduced to beggary.[51] Piccolomini wanted to write a short angry answer, but it became a rather long one. He sent the finished letter first to Antonio de la Cerda, cardinal, bishop of Llerida and famous in his time (1390-1459). In this occasion, Piccolomini named Cerda 'prince of all philosophers and theologians.'[52] The cardinal is asked to correct faults or burn parts after reading.[53] We do not know if Cerda changed anything.

At first sight, the primary goal of Piccolomini's *Germania*, functioning as reply, is to refute Mayer's statements on the injustice done to Germany.The *Gravamina* are indeed countered systematically by Piccolomini in the first part of the *Germania*, but are not of special interest to us. They go into detail about the councils – especially those of Konstanz and Basel – and clerical details. A funny and painful detail in this part of the *Germania*

[48]Ibidem, 274-276: 'Idque postmodum Romanorum (...) tum ad Grecos, tum ad Francos, tum denique ad Germanos (...) translatum est.'

[49]See: Wilhelm Rossmann, *Betrachtungen über das Zeitalter der Reformation: Mit archivalischen Beilagen* (Jena 1858) 403 ff. The "*Gravamina*" were a hot item since at least the Council of Constance. The German elites looked to the Churches in France and England, which had already secured a more independent position (the former through the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges (1438).

[50]That is, at the time of reading the *Germania* (1458). Mayer, although a good many years younger than Piccolomini (he was born 1420 and died 1481), was a good friend of the Italian humanist.

[51]Schmidt, *Germania*, 10: '(...) natio nostra (...) que sua virtute suoque sanguine Romanum imperium coemit fuitque mundi domina ac regina, nunc ad inopiam redacta ancilla et tributaria facta est.'

[52]Saverio Lampillas, *Ensayo historico-apologetico de la literatura Española contra las opiniones preocupadas de algunos escritores modernes italianos* I (Zaragoza 1783) 106-107: 'Entre tantos cèlebres Teologos como conoci [Piccolomini], particularmente en el Concilio de Florencia, llama à este [Antonio de la Cerda] Principe entre ellos: esta es una prueba muy concluyente de la singular ciencia del gran Cardenal Antonio Cerdà (...).' Lampillas has actually condensed his quotation from the *Germania*.

[53]Schmidt, *Germania*, 12. Piccolomini writes: 'Mittimus igitur ad tuum examen, ut videas corrigarsque vel, si melius putes, igne consumas.'

is the characterisation Piccolomini gives of the council of Basel. 'We have seen,' he writes, 'that the representatives at the council did not care about Christian matters, but that they were more preoccupied by their own business.'[54] The most important matter by far, so Piccolomini, was the seating order. Piccolomini writes he does not want to mock the council, but he immediately after negates the use of a council for the Church. It would be better if Christianity stopped convening councils, so Piccolomini. All faithful Christians should abide by this order. 'Your nation should be silent above all,' he retorts Meyer, 'because it has already been endowed with two councils in our time.'[55]It is also not in the interest of the Germans to insist on convening another Council, so Piccolomini. Such a council would perhaps hurt the Germans more by instating a higher tax on them.

One of the most important aspects of the *Germania* is the staunch defence of the Pope by Piccolomini. The Germans should be thankful to Pope Calixt for abolishing the Tenth (although, he says, it would be perfectly reasonable to exact such a tax 'pro tuenda religione christiana' against the threat of the Turks.[56] These lines may have been written from an instinct of self-preservation. Piccolomini, knowing that he would have a high office in the Church in the near future, was of course served by high church taxes in any part of the Empire.

Piccolomini uses a lot of foundation myths when describing the different places of worship in the Empire. He lauds the city of Trier, for example, because its inhabitants had converted to Christianity even before the martyrs Rusticus and Eleutherius (companions of Saint Denis) arrived in the Mosel area to preach. Even more incredible is the statement that the city of Trier was founded by one Atreba, son of Ninus und Semiramis, some 1300 years before the foundation of Rome.[57]

In the second book of the *Germania* we find more of our concern. The *portée* of this chapter can be summarised quickly. According to Meyer, Germany was a powerful and rich nation prior to the advent of the Church (whenever that may be). At the hands of the rapacious Curia, Germany was plunged into misery. That is the way things are now in the middle of the fifteenth century; this is how Meyer presents his theory. Piccolomini's countertheory is equally easy to explain. He proposes the exact opposite of what Meyer states. Piccolomini finds that the "old" Germany was weak and poor, and that the modern Germany is in a better condition than ever.[58] He goes on to show this by means of a comparison. For the situation in the old days, Piccolomini uses the classical authors, knowing his reader is familiar with them.

Piccolomini starts with Caesar's *De bello gallico*. Although he concedes that Caesar lauds the Germans as being bellicose (in the positive sense of the word) and well-trained in the arms, he sums up what more Caesar had to say about the German tribes he came into contact with. Thus follows a set of negative characterisations: the Germans were 'clad in animal hides,' 'did not care about keeping out the cold and warmth when building,' and 'did not care much about agriculture, let alone viticulture.'[59] Then follows the account of the geographer Strabo. He writes, so Piccolomini, that the Germans (Strabo talks about the Suebi here) 'travel like nomads because their food is scarce, they do not want to cultivate fields, and they do not have money.'[60] The third name that Piccolomini introduces in his argument is that of Tacitus. Nowhere does he cite anything literally from Tacitus' *Germania*: there are only some vague resemblances. However, Piccolomini has a lot to say about what Tacitus' vision. The Roman historian remarked, according to Piccolomini, that

[54]Schmidt, *Deutschland*, 48.
[55]Schmidt, *Germania*, 12.
[56]Ibidem, 21.
[57]Ibidem, 27.
[58]Ibidem, 46: 'Quo facto liquebit nunquam Germanici nominis eas fuisse vires aut opes, quales sunt hodie.'
[59]Ibidem. 'pellibus animalius pro vestibus,' ;'Ad frigora atque estus evitandos non edificasse accuratius,' and 'Agriculture non studuisse.' This is just part of all characterisations. Compare *De bello gallico* book 6. Caesar describes about what he encounters on the Eastern banks of the Rhine.
[60]Ibidem, 47: 'et propter agrorum ignaviam (...) et propter pecuniarum inopiam.'

'the life of [the German] was barely distinguishable from that of a wild animal.' Moreover, the Germans are said not to have had cities nor walled fortifications, stone temples, gardens, villas, baths, jewellery or gold.[61] For the lack of writing, law, art and science there was a barbarous religion, built upon idolatry and human sacrifice.[62] Piccolomini concludes the treatment of the ancients with a hyperbolic summary: 'omnia feda, omnia tetra, aspera, barbara et (...) ferina ac brutalia.'[63] Although the Romans tried to force the Germans into submission for some two hundred years, this civilisation offensive only proved partially successful. Piccolomini writes that Germany was at the time way smaller than it is today. He seems to see some kind of unity in the German nation. The borders have significantly changed over time, so Piccolomini: 'Rhine and Donau, once constituting the German border, now flow through Germany; the Belgian region, once a third of all Gaul, is now part of Germany, and it is German in language and culture.'[64] The same expansion can be seen in north, east and south. Not just geographical, but also demographical expansion has characterised the German nation in recent times, so Piccolomini. Using the old-fashioned ethymology of "*germinare*" for the German name, Piccolomini states that the German nation is now the biggest of all. He explains that God favours the Germans.[65]

In the seventh chapter, then, Piccolomini starts treating the situation of the new Germany. As part of his theory, he writes one of the more exuberant eulogies of the whole *Germania*. He describes the situation in the Germany of his time as follows:

> 'All around us we see cultivated fields, new farmland, vineyards, gardens, flowerberds, orchards in the countryside as well as in the suburbs, buildings full of luxury, playful villas, citadels on hills, towns surrounded by walls, wonderful cities on the banks of great rivers or split by crystal-clear streams, which one can cross by stone or wooden bridges.'[66]

Piccolomini goes on to describe the state of the Empire's cities. He starts with Cologne, where all that glitters is gold: beautiful churches and houses, a large population, decorated palaces and a leasure-friendly environment. Similar things are written about Ghent, and especially about Bruges, 'the most important trade hub of all the West.'[67] Quickly mentioned and quickly forgotten is the fact that both cities are part of the Kingdom of France (Piccolomini does not seem to distinguish between France and Burgundy). Here his regularly-used expression comes around again: the aforementioned cities are German in speech and custom. Piccolomini further mentiones four Brabantine cities (Brussels, Malines, Antwerp and Louvain). Piccolomini then turns his attention eastward again, mentioning a list of cities that he must have seen multiple times during his visits there on behalf of the Emperor. It may well be true that Piccolomini has visited all the cities he mentions Almost all of the are still of importance today. Mainz, Worms and Aachen are all described with a keen eye for detail. Strasbourg is favourably compared with Venice, because the salty water in the latter city is said to smell.[68] So Piccolomini meanders through the Empire, turning south to "Helvetia", then northeast to Bavaria, then south again to Austria. He continues to what he calls "Germany itself" ("*Germania ipsa*"), describing numerous cities in what is today East-Germany or Poland, then Prussia and Bohemia. 'Although a Slavic language is

[61] Ibidem.
[62] Ibidem, 48.
[63] Ibidem. 'All was awful, all was crude, rough, barbarous and beastly and brutal.'
[64] Ibidem. 'Danubius ac Rhenus, qui quondam Germanie limites clausere, nunc per medios Germanorum dilabuntur agros. Belgica regio, que Gallie prius portio tertia fuit, nunc maiori ex parte Germanie cessit, lingua et moribus Theutonica.'
[65] Ibidem, 49. 'Sicut adest Germanico populo dominus deus noster.'
[66] Ibidem, 49: 'Nam agros ubique cultos videmus, novalia, vineta, viridaria, violaria, pomaria rustica et suburbana, edificia plena delitiis, villas amenissimas, arces in montibus sitas, oppida muris cincta, splendidissimas urbes, quas plerumque maxima preterlabuntur flumina aut amnes ambiunt limpidissimi lapideis aut ligneis pontibus permeabiles.'
[67] Ibidem, 50. 'Totius occidentis in Bruggensi oppido frequentissimum emporium.'
[68] Ibidem, 51.

being spoken there, it still belongs to the Empire, and its culture is a German one.'[69] The same thing is said earlier on about the city of Basel. Piccolomini writes of this city that it is 'geographically French, but culturally and linguistically German.'[70] Piccolomini writes that Prague may well be larger and more beautiful than Florence. Via the Hanseatic cities of the north, he turns west again. In the Low Countries, he names two cities. The city of Utrecht ('*potentem et splendidam urbem*') is considered by many to be the most important Frisian city. In the same vein, 'The Hollanders call Dordrecht their most important city.'[71] And so Piccolomini returns to the heart of Germany. He names Frankfurt, lauds its stone palaces and ends at the foot of the Alps.

After this extensive list, one can honestly draw just one conclusion: 'There is not one nation in Europe which has such clean-looking cities as the German.'[72] Germany just has a youthful flair, so Piccolomini. Proposing the theory that poor people cannot build great buildings, Piccolomini seeks to prove that the German nation is not at all poor. Moreover, Germany is very rich in precious metals and minerals (especially gold and silver).[73] Piccolomini writes that in all inns one can drink from silver cups, that all women are clad in golden jewellery, and that all churches are equally lavishly decorated.[74] It would be unfair of the Germans to complain of poverty.

Piccolomini then turns to the political situation in the Empire. He describes a sort of *trias politica*, where all parties have the same chief. In many matters, however, they have a remarkable autonomy. He names the "castes" as follows: '*prelati et principes et civitates*'.[75] Aside from the three archbishops-electors he mentions the archbishops of Salzburg and Magdeburg as having the most power. Also many monasteries have a great power, those of Fulda and Hersfeld above all. Piccolomini does not reveal his judgement about this fact. We can only speculate that he probably did not like the autonomy of the German clergy.

The second caste is populated by the "lay princes". Piccolomini names some of the noble houses of Germany, conceding that no other nation can rival its numbers. He paints the plethora of noble houses as a positive characteristic of the Empire. A notable name among the summed-up princes is Duke Philip of Burgundy. The paragraph ends with the hope that all German princes unite. What formidable power they would yield![76]

Thirdly, there are the Imperial Free Cities. Piccolomini states hyperbolically that the Free Cities' inhabitants are freer than those of Venice, Florence or Siena, 'most of whom are basically serfs.'[77] In contrast, the Free Cities are temples of freedom where the inhabitants' property is safeguarded. The cities (numbering over one hundred, so Piccolomini) do not fight amongst eachother: they fight together against the princes. The arms are in good hands in Germany, as well: young men are trained in horse-riding even before they can speak. German knights never travel unarmed, and all German citizens seem to have armories in their homes. German commanders have shown their prowess on the battlefield, first and foremost the "German Achilles" Albrecht III of Brandenburg (1414-1486). He has

[69]Ibidem, 53: 'Bohemia, quamvis Sclavonico sermone utitur, sub imperio tamen Germanico sese continet et moribus utitur Theutonicis.'

[70]Ibidem, 22: 'Situ Gallicam, more ac sermone Germanicam.' In the time of the council, Basel was situated in Burgundy.

[71]Ibidem, 54. 'Dodracum excellens oppidum Olandini suum dicunt.'

[72]Ibidem, 56.

[73]The mass production of raw materials would increase rapidly from 1470 onwards. For example, the total production of iron ore per year is estimated at 40.000 tonnes at the end of the middle ages. Roughly half of that was produced in the Empire. Other mass-produced raw materials were salt (cf. Halle an der Saale, Salins in Burgundy, Schwäbisch Hall), copper and silver. Peter Moraw, *Von offener Verfassung*, 395-397.

[74]Ibidem, 57: 'Nam quod diversorium apud vos est, in quo non ex argento bibitur?' 'Que mulier (...) plebea non auro nitet?' 'Quanta in ecclesiis pretiosa supellex, quot reliquie margaritis et auro vestite.'

[75]Ibidem, 57.

[76]Ibidem, 62: 'Quam igitur et qualem esse horum potentiam principum, quam formidabilem, quam terribilem putas, si unum in locum se ostenderit!'

[77]Ibidem.

led his armies into every corner of Germany, so Piccolomini.[78]

German culture, science and literature are also on a much higher level than in ancient Germany. Then, the Germans offered their children to demons; now, they follow the one true Christ.[79] Law and order are commonplace in Germany, except for the incidental robbery, which is punished severely. Universities spread learning "*qua patet orbis*"; hospitality is practised everyhwere. There is no good reason to rank ancient Germany above modern Germany, concludes Piccolomini. If only we could bring one of the "old" Germans to life and show him how Germany has evolved! When he is showed the modern Germany, he will deny that what he is shown is his fatherland.[80] Among others, Piccolomini names Julius Civilis as example of the incredulous German.[81]

A picture emerges of a paradise on earth. In Piccolomini's story, the Empire (equated with the German nation) is a prosperous, powerful and free part of Europe. The German people of the fifteenth century still seem to enjoy some atavistic characteristics: a will to fight, a longing for freedom and a large population. Alongside these, they have newly acquired strenghts: Germany now is a rich, powerful and cultured nation. Here we see the admixture that Piccolomini applies: the positive characteristics of the ancient Germans are named (the negative characteristics are discarded) and are added to the positive characteristics of today's Germans. When Mayer complains about the situation in Germany, Piccolomini retorts: 'What you see is not true.'[82]

Piccolomini concedes that the Empire does not have the same reach as it had under Charlemagne (and indeed under any subsequent dynasty). He finds it unfair to blame this regression on the Roman Curia. Although the German taxpayer sends a lot of money to the Curia, large sums are also transferred back by German Curial members. Money is not the ultimate source of power, writes Piccolomini. Otherwise the mythically rich kings of the past would have never lost their power. They did, however, and the conclusion should be that 'a people's virtue, not money, ennobles a country.'[83] Too much money will only corrupt a people, and rob it from its virtuousness. Piccolomini boldly asserts that this is the explanation for the demise of the Empire: a loss of virtue, caused by wealth and smugness. This decadence is diametrically opposed to the courage of your ancestors, so Piccolomini.

A far better explanation for the Empire's static situation is the poor state of domestic politics. The Emperor has almost no status, let alone power. Between the Empire's political factions, there is perennial discord, leading to all sorts of chaos. He who wants to subjugate others, should first submit to an overlord himself (in Piccolomini's words).[84] The Germans of today should take as an example their ancestors who submitted to Charlemagne. After all, the preconditions for great power are already there. Another problem, detrimental to Piccolomini's personal situation, is the lack of support for the Holy See in the Empire. But the Curia is not to be blamed for the decline of the Empire, so Piccolomini. Why would the institute that was responsible for transferring the Empire from the Greeks to the Germans want to destroy it? That makes no sense. The only solution, Piccolomini repeats, is to return to the honoured virtues of the past. Unity should be more important than division, and the authority of both Emperor and Pope should be respected.[85] Here ends the second book. Let us reflect on what Piccolomini says about Charlemagne. He refers to the Frankish king as a good example. His thinking indicates not a habit of looking

[78]Ibidem, 63: 'In omni ferme Germania nullus est angulus, quem non calcavit armatus.' According to Schmidt, the *Germania* is the first instance where the nickname "Achilles" occurs. This is confirmed by multiple sources.

[79]Ibidem, 64. Piccolomini refers to Tacitus when talking about the child offerings. Tacitus, however, never mentions such practices.

[80]Ibidem, 66.

[81]Ibidem. 'Civilis ille, qui sub Vitellio ac Vespasiano res Germanicas conturbavit.'

[82]Ibidem, 66. 'Non est pauper Germania (...) non impotens, non contemptibilis.'

[83]Ibidem, 67: 'Virtus hominum, non pecunia provinciam nobilitat.'

[84]Ibidem, 69.

[85]Ibidem. '(...) quod est imprimis necessarium, unitatem divisione preferte et capiti vestro tam spirituali quam temporali suos honores, suam obedientiam reddite!'

forward to try to reform the Empire, but rather a looking backwards, a searching for lost time. Piccolomini does not refer to the ancient Romans, but to the supposed "German" emperor, thereby honouring the Germans as the successor of previous empires.

In the third book, Piccolomini counters the "*Gravamina*" more systematically. He finds no fault in the nobles and the "*optimates*" of the Empire, but rather in the common folk.[86] They suffer from the deadly vice of pride; they think they have a right to wield power over religious matters. They want to negotiate over clerical matters such as the election of prelates, the issuance of indulgences, and the institution of the tithe. Piccolomini does not want to hear such lamentations. Germany should be thankful for all that has been done by the Curia. The Germans should be thankful of the Curia for two reasons: it has given them both Christ – through whom they have escaped their barbarity – and the Empire, transferred from the Greeks. It remains a mystery how the Curia is responsible for the "*translatio imperii*". This is only mentioned as a self-evident fact.

The third book continues with a recap of the Gospels. Piccolomini shows himself a true believer here, in that he seems sincere in his plea to unite in Christ. In case Mayer does not want to believe that the Curia has converted the Germans to Christianity, Piccolomini advises him to read the history books. He names the preacher Boniface as the one who converted the German people.[87] To make things clear, Piccolomini arguest that there should be a shepherd, a tribunal, a pontifex over all Christendom. For historical reasons, that position can only be claimed by the Roman bishop. The Pragmatic Sanction is criticised harshly by Piccolomini: it is a threat and a limit to Papal authority.[88] An age-old discussion is being brought up. Should the Church be poor? This discussion raged most heavily in the Franciscan Order, but also affected the Church as a whole. It was one of the tenets of the German pragmatic sanction. Later, Luther would utter the same criticism. Piccolomini argues that the Church should be rich, because it reigns over people, and it has to command authority. A primitive Church cannot help the poor.

The remainder of the third book is filled with examples of the Church's good deeds, quotes from the Bible, the Church Fathers and the Classical authors, and thinly veiled attacks on both the conciliar movement and the Pragmatic Sanction.

Piccolomini ends his letter with a plea. If Mayer were to visit congregations of German princes, he should encourage them not to 'try and destroy the spire of the Church, the defender of all the earth, and the safe haven for all oppressed peoples.'[89] The German people should take Charlemagne as shining example. The great Frankish king had once declared that he would humbly support the Holy See, 'even if its yoke becomes unbearable.'[90] Piccolomini declares that there simply is no other option than to support the Church.

Here ends the *Germania*. The reader is left asking what the writer exactly wanted to convey. On a surface level, Piccolomini wants to debunk the veracity of the "*Gravamina*". This indeed he does throughout his letter-treatise. This is, however, just the tip of the iceberg. Under the surface loomed a far greater purpose. Piccolomini was determined to become Pope at the time of writing. He had to come to terms with his past, and he had to convince others to do the same. As Schmidt writes: 'Der Makel des Renegatentums blieb ein Stachel in seiner Seele.'[91] In order to prove his loyalty to the Curia, Piccolomini had to do two things: he had to defend Papal absolutism, and he had to show his knowledge of the organisation of the Church. This is why he spends considerable time describing the higher Churchmen of the Empire and the mechanisms by which they rule. The *Germania*

[86]Ibidem, 73: 'Pugna nobis cum paucis est.'

[87]Ibidem, 89: 'Bonifatius martyr evangelium vobis predicavit.'

[88]Ibidem, 99. Schmidt has made a spelling error in his translation. 'Inter sese' becomes 'untereinder' (Schmidt, *Deutschland*, 163.).

[89]Schmidt, *Germania*, 123. '(...) ne culmen ecclesie convellere, ne patrocinium orbis terre delere, ne portum oppressorum hominum destruere (...).' Of course, presented this way, nobody would name himself the enemy of the Church.

[90]Ibidem. '(...) et licet vix ferendum ab illa sede sancta imponatur iugum (...).'

[91]Schmidt, *Deutschland*, 9.

also provided Piccolomini the opportunity to display his intimate knowledge of the Bible. These two things could have been used against him when vying for the tiara. Piccolomini made sure to send the *Germania* to all cardinals that would decide on a new pope, many of whom he flattered with sycophantic remarks.[92]

In defining the *Germania* I strongly disagree with scholars who have characterised it as a mere political pamphlet.[93] (London 1913) 140. It is much more than that. Piccolomini did not write it on behalf of the Curia. First and foremost, he wrote it to further his own interests. It is, if you will, an "ego-document". According to Christopher Krebs, the dedication of the work is also in line with Piccolomini's hidden agenda.[94]

4.3 Fifteen years in between: break or continuity?

To start off with our main question – the question of the German part of the Holy Roman Empire on the European theatre – we can say the following: Piccolomini saw an important destiny for the German lands, if of course they would follow the instructions he gave. Even though his own stature was not even as high as his addressees, Piccolomini acts as an adviser on continental matters. The Empire was, in Piccolomini's eyes, the only rightful heir to the Roman Empire. It had a strong military (not only Frederick's Austrian forces that Piccolomini talks about in the *Pentalogus*, but also the armour-clad German knights from the *Germania*. It had a robust economy: from the Italian city-states mentioned in the *Pentalogus* to the sprawling German cities in the *Germania*: all indicate an excess wealth for the Empire.[95] The German princes know their real power: that is why they are to be feared and that is why they should be paid due respect (*Pentalogus*), and that is why they can complain about the ecclesiastical politics that affect them (*Germania*). In Piccolomini's eyes, the Germans may be the chosen people to inherit the Empire. It is not a mere coincidence that the imperial eagle has landed on German soil.

Concerning the layout and form of the works, we notice the obvious similarities: both works are written as a tripartite letter. Both works are aimed at a small public. The intended readers of the *Pentalogus* are countable on one hand; the *Germania* was intended for a larger public (although it had officially one addressee). However, there are also numerous differences. The most important one, I reckon, is in the form of the works. The *Pentalogus* is set as a play, where the different characters represent different points of view; the *Germania* on the other hand, is a traditional letter representing just Piccolomini's point of view. It has a more serious aura, and it does not contain any jokes which we find occasionally in the *Pentalogus*. This may be due to the fact that Piccolomini was fifteen years older when he wrote the *Germania*. It can also be explained by Piccolomini's annoyance (he hated replying to German complaints). Overall, the *Germania* has a more serious and self-assured tone, which is underlined by the language Piccolomini uses. The *Germania* is written in a far more elaborate and difficult Latin than the *Pentalogus*. As its reader was a fellow humanist, so Piccolomini pulls out all the stops. The *Pentalogus* was aimed at men whose literary capabilities were not esteemed too highly by Piccolomini.

As concerns the content, we can discern a number of striking differences between both texts. Piccolomini had turned hundred and eighty degrees in his opinion of the Church. This

[92] According to Schmidt, Piccolomini had already answered Mayer with a short letter that directly addressed the "*Gravamina*". In this letter we already find the argumentation that would later fill the *Germania*.

[93] One of Piccolomini's biographers, Ady, writes: 'Thus [the *Germania*] is frankly a political pamphlet, a forcible statement of one side of the question, containing much that is open to argument, and much that is exaggerated and over-coloured.' Cecilia M. Ady, *Pius II (Æneas Silvius Piccolomini* the Humanist Pope

[94] Christopher B. Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich* (New York and London 2011) 87: '[Piccolomini] pretended that his epistolary treatise had been composed in immediate reaction to Mayer's written complaint.'

[95] The urbanisation in the German parts of the Empire stands in stark contrast with the situation of the German tribes in antiquity, of whom Tacitus writes: 'Nullas Germanorum populis urbes habitari satis notum est.' (Chapter 16 of Book 1, *Cornelii Taciti Opera Minora* (ed. J.G.C. Anderson, Oxford 1952).

was one of the main reasons for the critical picture painted by Burckhardt and Voigt, the former of whom accused Piccolomini of betraying the German church during the Basilean Council.[96] The consequences of Piccolomini's "mid-life crisis" can also be seen in two histories he wrote on the council of Basel.[97] The two texts we have studied are very much in line with these two histories, written ten years apart. The later text is Piccolomini's stained past was, indeed, one of the largest obstacles for him to become pope. On the one hand, there was his staunch defence of the conciliarist movement during the Council of Basel. On the other hand, there was his former life of humanist free spirit, and a list of amoral writings.[98] His sudden "conversion" was observed with suspicion by his peers. Even today among historians there is heavy doubt on the veracity of Piccolomini's radical turn. Schmidt writes: 'in allen seinen Schriften [findet sich] nicht ein einziges Wort, das auf ein echtes religiöses Gefühl schließen läßt.'[99]

What does Piccolomini say about the propensities of the Germans? In the *Pentalogus*, he talks about different kinds of Germans (when the subject of representation is brought up). But even then, all of the Empire's inhabitants north of the Alps are labelled "Germans". Piccolomini paints with a broad brush and nowhere mentions, for example the Flemish or the Slavs that undeniably lived inside the Empire's borders. Only the Italians are given due consideration. In the *Germania*, the situation is not much different. Piccolomini must have know better, but he seems to write this way for argument's sake.

If we have to believe Piccolomini, one of the reasons for writing the *Pentalogus* is to reflect on the 'possibilities to sedate the Church, and to bring Italy under the sway of the Empire.'[100] We could ask ourselves why Piccolomini write a treatise on imperial politics when he was part of the chancellery. Did he not have political influence at the imperial court? Barbara Baldi answers this question with a firm "no". She writes: 'Il *Pentalogus* (...) corrisponde piuttosto al desiderio, alla volontà del Piccolomini di costruirsi, di rivendicare concretamente un proprio spazio di partecipazione, di azione personale.'[101] Baldi concludes that the *Pentalogus* was a text for Piccolomini to prove himself. When reading the *Pentalogus* closely, a Europe looms up that is scattered with peoples rivalling, squabbling and fighting in the struggle for life. The Europe that is sketched by Piccolomini is recognisable for the modern reader in its sprawling diversity of "national characters". Although these "national characters" were observed more than five centuries ago, some of Piccolomini's sketches could have been written down yesterday and still appeal to the modern mind. Also a Europe emerges that is desperately searching for a strong power to lead the continent and defend it against the approaching barbarians. Frederick seems unsure about his role as king and emperor. He is at a a loss. Who else but himself should take on the resistance against the Turkish onslaught? This, by the way, seems strangely reminiscent of the role that has been placed upon the shoulders of Germany in our own time. Many analysts suggest that Germany has been placed *nolens volens* at the steering

[96] Widmer, *Piccolomini*, 39.

[97] In 1440, he wrote *De gestis concilii Basiliensis commentarium libri II*; in 1450 he wrote the shorter *De rebus Basiliae gestis commentarius*; and also in his papal *Commentarii*, he reflected on the council. O'Brien notes the enormous difference between those two works. In the *De gestis*, Piccolomini describes Eugene IV as "*devastator ecclesiae*", and he lauds the council fathers. The *De rebus* 'condemns [the council fathers] as greedy, self-interested and dangerously negligent to the needs of the Christian community.' O'Brien, *Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini*, 76.

[98] In the penultimate year of his pontificate, Piccolomini wrote a bull in which he 'repudiated certain elements of his earlier writings.' (Mauro, *Præceptor Austriae*, 3.) Here, he coined the now-famous phrase "Aeneam reicite, Pium recipite," ("Reject Aeneas, accept Pius"). The Pope declared that he had done more harm through his writings than through his worldly life ('Plus scripto quam facto nocuimus.'). Mauro, *Præceptor Austriae*, 4.

[99] Schmidt, *Germania*, 4.

[100] Piccolomini, *Pentalogus*, 50: 'quas super modo pacandi ecclesiam et Italiam ad imperii redigendi (...).'

[101] Baldi, 'Un umanista alla corte', 168. Later on, she writes: 'Il dialogo è costruito ad arte, e permette al Piccolomini di superare, di rispondere alle varie obiezioni che gli sono poste, e di dimostrare così la sua competenza, la sua capacità oratoria, la sua conoscenza di problemi e di situazioni diverse.' (Ibidem, 169-170).

wheel in Europe, because no other European state can yield the same (economic) power. The ordinary German citizen may be unhappy about financing the South, in our time just as in the fifteenth century. We should remember, however, that the German lands were not the most prosperous of Europe. That honour goes to the Italian city-states and the highly urbanised region of Flanders.

In both works, Piccolomini seems to want a unification of the Empire of some sort. Remember that in the *Germania*, he dreams of a unification of all lay princes. This includes the famously stubborn Duke of Burgundy (Charles even more than Philip). How this envisioned unification was to happen is left in the middle. And that is the crux. Piccolomini's dream is just a dream. Even when writing the *Germania*, Piccolomini did not have enough real experience in power-politics. His thinking is based not so much on current theories of power, but rather on his own point of view. This makes the texts we studied a good display of Piccolomini's mind (if we negate the influence others may have had on him).

As to the influence of the *Germania*, we find that it received most attention North of the Alps. In the years immediately after its inception, however, it went mostly unnoticed. Around the turn of the century, however, it started to receive more attention. The second and third generations of German humanists, marred by the ever-lasting negative stereotype of their "*Natio*", welcomed Piccolomini's positive remarks. They could proudly read the letter, admire the flattering parts, and show others that these words were said by one of the most famous Italian humanists. That this flattery was part of a "*pro domo*" oration, was quickly forgiven (or overlooked). Jakob Wimpfeling, a German humanist living two generations later than Piccolomini, warned his compatriots not to trust Piccolomini's words.[102] Schmidt's own conclusion is as follows: 'um recht [sic] zu behalten, scheut sich Enea nicht, Scheinargumente und Finten anzuwenden und zu verschweigen, was seinen jeweiligen Zwecken schaden könnte.[103] In spite of these warnings, the *Germania* found a happy (but small) public in the German humanists. They came to know the importance of Germany on the European theatre, so Schmidt. Many contemporary German historians and geographers were influenced by Piccolomini.[104] What was more important, however, was the attention for the original *Germania*, which spiked thanks to Piccolomini. As Ridé writes: 'C'est grace à l'autorité d'E.S. Piccolomini que les Allemands liront Tacite; cependant ils le liront avec d'autres yeux que lui.'[105] Piccolomini started using the Tacitean *Germania* for political gain, and he lead by example. The German humanists started using the "old" *Germania* for their cause. The *Pentalogus* did not have so much impact. Frederick has probably never read it. Its importance lies in its status as a historical document.

Piccolomini does not bother defining the Empire. His two "essays" we discussed do not contain a precise paragraph on the essence of the Empire. Even for someone so closely bound to it, the Empire seemed to defy definition. Perhaps Piccolomini judged that the Empire did not need further explanation: was it not simply a continuation of the ancient Roman Empire, transferred to the Germans via the Greeks? I believe Piccolomini would have answered this question in the affirmative. He seems to have been convinced that the doctrine of "*translatio imperii*" must be true. This aspect of Piccolomini's "views on Empire" was thus fully medieval. A clear divide in political thinking between the medieval and modern epoch has been introduced by scholar John Pocock. He perceived a clear divide between the (backwards-looking medieval) "translatio imperii" and the (republican-humanist) "decline and fall" modes of thinking. The first one implies also a universal destiny for the Empire. Cary Nederman questions Pocock's appliance of this divide.[106]

[102]Wimpfeling's *Responsa et replicae ad Eneam Silviam* are also printed in Schmidt's edition (*Germania* p. 127-146).

[103]Schmidt, *Deutschland*, 13.

[104]Ibidem. Also, Ridé writes: 'En Allemagne, où sa diffusion précéda celle du discours de Francfort, le livre d'E.S. Piccolomini aura une resonance profonde, de beaucoup plus profonde que l'*Oratio de Constantinopolitana Clade*. Ridé, *L'image du Germain*, 177.

[105]Ridé, *L'image du Germain*, 179.

[106]Cary J. Nederman, 'Empire and the Historiography of European Political Thought: Marsiglio of Padua,

He agrees, however, with Pocock that Piccolomini is a stereotypical "imperialist", hence a medieval thinker when it comes to political philosophy.[107]

Nicholas of Cusa, and the Medieval/Modern Divide', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 66:1 (2005) 1-15.

[107]Nederman, 'Empire and the Historiography', 8: 'Although Pocock makes no reference to the *De concordantia catholica* of Nicholas of Cusa (composed in 1433-34) in the first *Decline and Fall*, he would seem to be precisely the sort of author who fits the mold, along with Flavio Biondo and Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, who are examined (179-202), of an imperialist after this time.'

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Piccolomini's thoughts on Empire, and indeed on Europe as a whole, resurface in modern treatises on the ideal of a united Europe. He is often named an "impulse", sometimes even a father of the European ideal.[1] Piccolomini's answers to the question of a European identity resurface in many of his works, especially those on history and geography. His "orations against the Turks" strongly resemble arguments against the accession of Turkey in the European Union we find today. Although Piccolomini uses the concept of nation whenever it suits him well (beginning many speeches with "*Vos Germani*" and appealing to mythical heroes of the German people) he primarily sees Europe as a Christian bulwark against the Eastern hordes.[2] The Empire so becomes a tool to mobilise Christendom. As Spanish historian Arsenio Ginzo Fernández writes:

> 'Eneas Silvio Piccolomini constata con desagrado la fragmentación política de Europa, con la emergencia de las distintas nacionalidades. Frente a esta dinámica predominante en su tiempo, el autor no va a dudar en seguir mostrándose como valedor de las instancias universalistas medievales.'[3]

We should note that, although the Empire had universal aspirations, it was used by Piccolomini to discern between believers and non-believers. The other "universalist" authority was, of course, the Church. It was harder for Piccolomini to argue for more influence of the Church in imperial matters, while other European nations bargained for a stricter adherence of the clergy to their own "national" matters. This is why Piccolomini has to go far back in time in his *Germania*.

Piccolomini's ulterior motive in advancing German interests was perhaps furthering all of Europe. Piccolomini had very clear ideas about unity in Europe, although the unity Piccolomini strove after had an outspoken militaristic ("anti-Turkish") undercurrent. Piccolomini's conception of Europe is in a way similar to the conception of Europe we have today. When we read sketches of Piccolomini's life and when we study his historiographical-political works, it becomes clear that he was a European "*pur sang*" (more so than most of his contemporaries).[4]

Concerning the role of Germany on the European theatre, I argue that Piccolomini's views are also very similar to those found today. Piccolomini, as so many other intellectuals of his time – we have named them in our research – hated the weakness of the Empire. The

[1] Johannes Helmrath, 'Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Pius II.) – Ein Humanist als Vater des Europagedankens?', in: Rüdiger Hohls, Iris Schröder and Hannes Siegrist (eds.), *Europa und die Europäer: Quellen und Essays zur modernen Europäischen Geschichte* (Stuttgart 2005) 361-369: 361.

[2] Ibidem, 366.

[3] Arsenio Ginzo Fernández, 'Eneas Silvio Piccolomini (Pío II) y su concepción de Europa', *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía* 28 (2011) 71-100: 94.

[4] Fabian Fischer, *Das Europabild des Humanisten und Papstes Enea Silvio Piccolomini/Pius II.* (Munich 2007) 118.

most viable candidate for the leadership over the Empire, indeed over all of Europe, was the German people, according to Piccolomini. He had multiple motivations for saying such things, but one of them was that he was genuinely worried about the future. The problem was that the Germans were, as inhabitants of the Empire, not in the position to join forces. They were scattered in a political sense, and their search for a common identity was only beginning. This search for identity happened in a time of political turmoil. Scales writes: 'Explaining the proliferation of references invoking the Germans and their lands, despite (and perhaps even partly as a result of) the frailty of German political structures, promises to illuminate – and invite reassessment of – the dynamics of European nation-making more broadly.'[5]

Some concluding remarks. A recent trend in historiography on the Holy Roman Empire is to compare it to the European Union. Comparisons between these particular two empires may well be possible.[6] In a review of *The Holy Roman Empire* (Peter Wilson's impressive work), historian Jonathan Steinberg writes that there is one quality they share: 'Both institutions defy definition.'[7] This is what virtually all scholars of the Empire have emphasised. Steinberg reminds the reader of the long historiographical tradition trying to define the Holy Roman Empire, with the eighteenth-century scholar and "connoisseur" of the Empire, Johann Jakob Moser, as apex.[8] Moser has described in vivid detail the quagmire of institutions that was the Holy Roman Empire. Steinberg writes of the EU that politicians cannot decide 'if the EU is a union of states or a superstate.'[9] Just like the Empire, the EU 'rests on treaties on treaties among the members but also on several hundred thousand pages of the *acquis communautaire*: decisions, resolutions, directives and judgments by various bodies in the EU itself.'[10]

'All Empires must come to an end,' is the old adage. For the Holy Roman Empire, the end was predicted almost as often as the end of the world.[11] Many called it a wonder that the colossus in the heart of Europe had survived for so long. As we have seen, it was already in deep trouble in the fifteenth century, and some say that is was doomed from the start. As a political commentator noted, the Holy Roman Empire was in a centuries-long glacial decline, 'before Napoleon put it out of its misery in 1806.'[12]

In the conclusion of his work on late medieval German national identity, Len Scales describes an international exhibition held in Magdeburg in 2006. The exhibition, dealing with the Holy Roman Empire (two centuries after its demise), was an outstanding success. In Scales' opinion, however, the exhibition grossly undervalued the specifically German role in shaping the Empire. The dominating narrative was that of a "European" one: the Empire was presented as a 'union of many European peoples with a polycentric constitutional structure and no single *Staatsvolk* at its heart.'[13] Scales was told that this was the new

[5] Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, 528.

[6] Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 680-686.

[7] Jonathan Steinberg, 'The Holy Roman Empire has been much maligned', (review of: Peter Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire: A Thousand Years of Europe's History* (London 2016).) In: *The Spectator* online (23 January 2016). Accessed 1 June 2016.

[8] Moser held multiple high offices in the Empire, thus experiencing the workings of the Empire himself.

[9] Steinberg, 'The Holy Roman Empire'.

[10] Ibidem.

[11] Medieval man came into contact with predictions of the apocalypse multiple times during his life. Norman Cohn writes in his famous work on millenarianism: '(...) again and again, in situations of mass disorientation and anxiety, traditional beliefs about a future golden age or messianic kingdom came to serve as vehicles for social aspirations and animosities.' Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (4th edition; London 1984) 15.

[12] Steinberg, 'The Holy Roman Empire has been much maligned'. In our times, the "Decline and Fall"-theory that was introduced by the humanists prevails over other theories. According to the Belgian classical scholar David Engels, the end of the Roman Republic and the start of the Roman empire was caused by the call for a strong man to solve the problems that the Republic could not solve. See: David Engels, *Auf dem Weg ins Imperium* (Berlin 2014). Engels compares the decline of the Roman Republic with our times. He foresees the return of a "strong man" on the European theatre, that will turn away from democracy and towards autocracy.

[13] Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, 527.

path that historiography had taken, away from "nationalist" histories towards a "European" outlook. This gesture of effectively leaving out the "*Germanitas*" of the Empire seemed to have political foundations. Presenting the Empire as an 'early prototype for contemporary regional and federal political structures,' the exhibition sketched a finalistic picture.[14] In conclusion, we can say that such debates about "nationalism" will not end in the near future. The same is true for debates about the Empire, and of course for those about the European Union.

Even if Piccolomini had his own interest in writing about the Empire and the German nation, he still offers a remarkably detailed picture of those subjects. Piccolomini is an excellent eyewitness-chronicler of the fifteenth century, because he was present at some of the moments that defined the century. In addition, he had a sharp and busy pen. Reading Piccolomini is a pleasant occupation. It will also be a rewarding occupation for all those that try, because we still lack a complete assessment of his oeuvre (not to mention his persona). The *Pentalogus* and *Germania* are only a small part of this. Piccolomini is worthy of further attention. Or, to end with his own words: "*Aeneam recipite*"!

[14] Ibidem.

Chapter 6

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