

**Susan J May, 'Christian Neoplatonism and early reform thought in the manuscripts and narrative murals of the Piccolomini Library', *The Book Collector*, Vol 57, No 3, 2008, pp371-399**

The Piccolomini library, entered from the left aisle of Siena cathedral, was the culmination of the patronage of Cardinal Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini (1437-1503) (Fig 1). Its frescoed interior (1502-8) was commissioned from Bernardino Pinturicchio and painted in the fashionable *all'antica* manner. The mural decoration, dominated by ten large, narrative images with inscriptions, commemorates, in colourful and animated detail, the life of the patron's uncle, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, Pope Pius II (1458-64). Intellectually gifted – poet, historian, biographer, educational theorist and topographer – his nephew followed him in the *studium humanitatis*. The library, with its antique marble group of the *Three Graces*, a stucco relief of the *Expulsion from Paradise*, fitted wooden bookcases and impressive manuscript books as well, epitomised the spirit of humanism.

Christian Neoplatonism, in particular the theology of Saint Augustine, and Cardinal Francesco's own concern for the reform of the Church are at the heart of the decorative programme. Both are apt to go unnoticed by visitors to the library since the room is now bereft of its original contents. Today the empty cupboards support instead a display of antiphoners brought here in the seventeenth century, when the remaining Piccolomini codices were sold and the library ceded by the family to the Opera del Duomo.<sup>1</sup>

In the murals, Pius II is presented as the ideal pontiff who, through his wisdom, humility and eloquence, initiated the return of a golden age of Ecclesia. Steeped in the ecclesiology of Nicholas of Cusa, Bessarion and Pius himself, Cardinal Francesco was acutely aware of the need for urgent reform: this determined his selection of events to be depicted from his uncle's life. Of the ten *istorie*, the final five narrate his elevation to the Sacred College of Cardinals and the important events of his pontifical career. The most oft-reproduced of the series is the fifth, *The Presentation of Leonora of Portugal to Emperor Frederick III*, celebrating the meeting of the emperor with his future bride on the *prato* outside the Porta Camollia at Siena, presided over by Aeneas Piccolomini as Archbishop, with the recognisable landmarks of the city in the

background. Representing this historic event in the library was essential: it had brought fame to the city in 1452 and the scene would be familiar to its local audience. What principles, though, governed the choice of the first four episodes depicted on the east wall: *The Departure of Aeneas Piccolomini for the Council of Basle*; *the Embassy of Aeneas Piccolomini to James I of Scotland*; *Emperor Frederick III crowns Aeneas Piccolomini Poet Laureate* and *The Reconciliation of Aeneas Piccolomini with Pope Eugenius IV*? The common thread connecting them is Aeneas Piccolomini's early involvement in the conciliar movement, his growing conviction of the fallacy of the Council of Basle and ultimate recognition of the superiority of papal authority. The manuscripts collected and commissioned by Francesco Piccolomini and his marginalia reveal the extent of his own Christian Neoplatonism and moreover his dedication to a *renovatio ecclesiae*. The painted programme charts his uncle's ideological journey and final commitment to the papacy for the future welfare of the Church.

No contemporary inventory of Francesco's manuscripts and printed books survives, but the size of his collection before its dispersal has been estimated at around 700 volumes.<sup>2</sup> By spring 1503 the majority had been moved from his *palazzo* in Rome to Siena cathedral.<sup>3</sup> The extant codices reflect the typical humanist taste for the Latin classics of history, poetry and rhetoric, as well as patristic literature, church chronicles, papal history, other ecclesiological works and various texts by contemporary authors. There were many works written by his uncle, for Francesco went to great lengths to collect together as much of his entire oeuvre as possible.<sup>4</sup>

All medieval and Renaissance libraries contained the writings of Saint Augustine. In the early Middle Ages they had represented the most substantial body of philosophical literature available in Latin.<sup>5</sup> The fifteenth-century humanists, reacting against the dialectical *quaestiones* and disputations of scholasticism, sought to return to the primitive piety of the early Church Fathers. They first sought out Augustine's works, then attempted textual criticism (even 'discovering' additional works), and finally saw them into print.<sup>6</sup> At least two richly illuminated copies of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*<sup>7</sup> and one of his commentary on the gospel of Saint John, *Expositio in Ioannem*,<sup>8</sup> show that Cardinal Francesco shared this preoccupation.

The fusion of Christian doctrine and Neoplatonism in Augustinian theology was profoundly influential on the circle around Aeneas Piccolomini. He had described Plato as the ‘greatest of philosophers’,<sup>9</sup> and his closest friends Cardinals Nicholas of Cusa and Bessarion were equally well versed in Neoplatonic theory.<sup>10</sup> It was into this ambience that Francesco Piccolomini was introduced when he was made cardinal by his uncle in 1460, Francesco thereafter remaining friends with Cusa and Bessarion until their deaths in 1463 and 1472 respectively.<sup>11</sup> The writings of both men were represented in his library.<sup>12</sup> A correspondent also of several Florentine Neoplatonists,<sup>13</sup> Francesco Piccolomini was the dedicatee of Marsilio Ficino’s treatise *In convivium Platonis de amore*. The manuscript of this work was among those despatched to Siena for the new library.<sup>14</sup> Indeed the sculptural group of the *Three Graces*, standing at the heart of the library, allegorises the Neoplatonic spiritual cycle of love (*‘circuitus spiritualis’*) as described by Ficino in *De amore*, and is the linchpin of the entire iconographical programme.<sup>15</sup>

The importance of Augustine in it is also evident: he appears alone among the grisaille vignettes in the central pendentive on the eastern side of the vault (Fig 2). Separated here from the other three Latin Doctors of the Church, with whom he commonly appears, Augustine is depicted wearing his bishop’s mitre and poring over books poised on lecterns.<sup>16</sup> The painted presence of the saint notwithstanding, the scenes of classical mythology and historic events with the ubiquitous Piccolomini crescent moons have caused the library to be described as pagan and profane.<sup>17</sup> On the contrary, the entire decorative scheme was devised in Christian allegorical terms with Augustinian theology at its core.<sup>18</sup>

This is nowhere more apparent than in the often-ignored stucco relief of the *Expulsion from Paradise* (Fig 3).<sup>19</sup> The scriptural account of the first sin of Adam and Eve occurs in Genesis 3:1-7, their punishment in Genesis 3:8-24. Augustine returned time and time again to these chapters, in particular to the *cause* of the Original Sin and of its *consequences* for human history. In the fourteenth book of *De civitate Dei*, he defines Adam and Eve’s transgression in terms of pride, the ‘fountainhead of all evils’.<sup>20</sup> Pride, self-love, a perverse exaltation, is the root of every kind of sin and leads to a desertion of God by an act of free will. Humility, conversely, exalts the mind by making it subject to God instead of self. ‘That is why’, Augustine tells us,

‘humility is highly prized in the City of God .... In one city love of God has been given first place, in the other, love of self’.<sup>21</sup> Augustine censures Adam for his pride in over-ruling God’s command and in seeking an excuse for his sin by placing the blame for eating the apple on the woman, and Eve for blaming the serpent. ‘There is not a whisper anywhere here of a plea for pardon’, he laments.<sup>22</sup>

Despite Aeneas Piccolomini’s sometimes pompous tone in his celebrated memoirs, the historical narratives adorning the library walls show him repeatedly striking a posture of humility (see for example Figs 7 and 8).<sup>23</sup> The contrite inscription above the relief of the *Expulsion from Paradise* (Fig 4), ‘I have offended God and posterity. To both I am in debt though neither are to me’, is paraphrased from Pius II’s dying words, alluding to his failed attempt to lead a crusade against the Turks.<sup>24</sup> Its location above the sculpted representation of the Fall was intended to emphasise the humility of this ideal pontiff.

The consequence of the Fall was the beginning of terrestrial time, and the distinction between atemporality and human history was a crucial and profound one for Augustine.<sup>25</sup> Initially, man lived in Paradise fully in accordance with God’s will in a timeless age of perfection.<sup>26</sup> History on the other hand, ‘*hoc saeculum*’ (‘our time’), was for Augustine the period between the act of disobedience and the Last Judgment. The First Parents’ exercise of free-will set the clock of human history ticking and led to its inevitably woeful course.

So, while the painted compartments of the vault allegorise abstract principles,<sup>27</sup> the *Expulsion* marks that defining moment when the sinless existence of Adam and Eve in eternal Paradise was replaced by a finite lifetime, the very beginning of human history. A specific history, the span of Pope Pius II’s life, is played out on the library walls, where the practical ramifications of Original Sin are made manifest. With the first sin, humankind forfeited God’s perfect order in the Garden of Eden; it could only be approached, according to Augustine, by attempting to establish on earth the equilibrium that subsisted before that transgression. In the ten main murals, Pope Pius II is seen striving for the Augustinian principles of *ordo* and *pax*, the nearest earthly approach to paradisaical harmony. This was the aim of the crusade that he planned, to restore Constantinople to the Christian faith and to effect peaceful union

between east and west. It ended with his solitary departure from Rome, his health already failing.<sup>28</sup> Pius got as far as the port of Ancona but died there (1464) while awaiting the arrival of the Venetian fleet. The crusade never took place.

Augustine's philosophy of history underlies the sequence of pictures on the library walls, and explains the ever-encroaching 'infidel' threat. Book V of *De civitate Dei* deals with the temporal effect of Divine Providence:

Without the slightest doubt, the kingdoms of men are established by Divine Providence. If anyone ascribes this to destiny, because he uses the word 'destiny' to refer to the will or power of God, then he ... should express himself more accurately<sup>29</sup>

and

We need not engage in a laborious controversy with them about the use of a word. For in fact they ascribe this orderly series, this chain of causes, to the will and power of the supreme God, who is believed, most rightly and truly, to know all things before they happen and who leaves nothing unordered.<sup>30</sup>

Few of those who sought an explanation for the catastrophe of Constantinople put it down to the military might of the Ottoman Turks. The leaders of the Church traced God's hand in the event, His manipulation of temporal states as instruments of His justice. The ultimate cause of the fall of Constantinople was seen as the rod of divine wrath on the sins of Christians, on the moral laxity and corruption of the western Church.

Aeneas Piccolomini accepted this view of predestination by Divine Will, as set forth in his dialogue known simply as *Tractatus*,<sup>31</sup> in which the 'shade' of Constantine the Great asks God the reason for the fall of Constantinople. God replies that in no manner can this be thought of as something that happened by chance:

All things exist foreseen and preordained by us. Whatever the human race does comes from on high from the beginning: before the earth was created, before the scattered chaos came together into elements, we commanded once

and for all what happened from this time and what would exist in the future, and our view will not change nor will one iota of our words perish ...<sup>32</sup>

Two of the protagonists in the dialogue fail to understand how free will can subsist in a preordained universe. Their guide, 'Bernardino of Siena', explains that unexpected events, wrongly attributed to Fortune, are in fact part of the divine plan:

If God foresees that Constantinople will be won back, even though the emperor and the pope might be neglectful or are asleep, it will happen as has been foreseen; if not [foreseen], all their watchfulness and efforts will be in vain.<sup>33</sup>

Augustine himself wrote:

It is ... incredible that He should have willed the kingdoms of men, their dominations and their servitudes, to be *outside* the range of the laws of His providence.<sup>34</sup>

The question of predestination and free will was a crucial philosophical issue for humanists and theologians of the Renaissance, addressed by Dante, Petrarch, Salutati and innumerable others. Francesco Piccolomini shared this interest, visible in his ownership of Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae*,<sup>35</sup> Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae*<sup>36</sup> and a dialogue after the model of Boethius that was dedicated to him right at the end of his life.<sup>37</sup>

The threat of the Turks focused attention on what was seen as its Providential cause – the errant ways of the clergy and the need for a renovation of the Church, inspired by a return to primitive Christianity. Pius II, Sixtus IV and Alexander VI had initiated reform commissions, in each of which Cardinal Francesco had personally participated.<sup>38</sup> His learning, amiability, plain living, tact and integrity, aloof from strife and political intrigues, ensured his reputation as an impartial and dedicated reformer.<sup>39</sup> Curial humanists, concerned with matters of concubinage, prostitution, luxury, religious indifference, the sale of offices, simony and nepotism, composed treatises calling for moral regeneration, which were often dedicated to members of the

Sacred College, Francesco among them.<sup>40</sup> As cardinal protector of the Camaldolese Benedictines, he successfully helped the reformists within the order obtain control of its monasteries.<sup>41</sup> When himself elected pope, taking the name of Pius III, Francesco announced at his first assembly of cardinals on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1503 that his chief aim was to be the reform of the Church, to include the *curia romana*, the Sacred College of Cardinals and the papacy itself: to this end a Council was to be summoned to meet as soon as possible.<sup>42</sup>

The notes that he wrote in his manuscripts and the titles of works that he acquired and commissioned show his desire to apply the lessons of recent ecclesiastical history. Pius II had taken part in the Council of Basle from 1431, as recorded in his *Commentarii de gestis Basiliensis concilii* (1440) and *De rebus Basileae gestis commentarius* (1450).<sup>43</sup> His nephew's interest in the conciliar movement is clear: in 1480 he commissioned his secretary Agostino Patrizi to write for him a history of the Council of Basle,<sup>44</sup> and in 1491 his friend Marco Barbo left him two volumes of John of Segovia's commentaries from the Council, which Francesco liberally annotated and bequeathed in his will of 1493 to the *duomo* library of Siena, though they were probably diverted instead to the Piccolomini library.<sup>45</sup> Other records from the councils of Constance and Basle, including the ratified decretals on Church reform, were later inherited by the cardinal on Patrizi's death in 1496.<sup>46</sup> Nicholas of Cusa's *De concordantia catholica*, a vast programme for reform of the church and the empire,<sup>47</sup> and his reform recommendations to Pius II, *Reformatio generalis*, also carry Francesco's marginalia.<sup>48</sup> All these bear on the scenes pictured on the Piccolomini library walls.

The Council of Basle had been opened on 23 July 1431 by the newly elected Pope Eugenius IV but, distrusting its motives, he issued a Bull of Dissolution in December 1431. This provoked the Council to revolt, affirming its own authority over that of the pope, which brought about years of dissension.<sup>49</sup> It was at the Council of Basle in 1432 that Aeneas had first met his lifelong friend Nicholas of Cusa, when they both supported a general Church Council with legislative superiority over the pontiff. First Nicholas then Aeneas became disenchanted with the cause, both returning to assert papal authority.<sup>50</sup>

Considering the pride in Aeneas's achievements evident in the fresco cycle, his early involvement in the conciliar movement and subsequent change of heart might have seemed an embarrassment for the programme devisers. But this was not so, since the first depicted episode is *The departure of Aeneas Piccolomini for the Council of Basle* (Fig 5). This event and its participants are recorded in the memoirs, with the young Aeneas (seen here astride his white horse) setting out in the company of his new employer Domenico Capranica, Bishop of Fermo, who was to protest to the Council that Eugenius IV refused to confirm his earlier nomination to the cardinalate by Martin V.<sup>51</sup> None of this, even Capranica's identity, is mentioned in the accompanying inscription:

AENEAS SILVIUS PICCOLOMINI WAS BORN OF HIS FATHER  
SILVIUS AND MOTHER VICTORIA ON 18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 1405 IN THEIR  
ANCESTRAL HOME CORSIGNANO: TRYING TO REACH BASLE FOR  
THE COUNCIL, HE IS DRIVEN BY THE FORCE OF A STORM TO  
LYBIA<sup>52</sup>

The tempest, prominent in both image and inscription, was a historical fact, described in the memoirs: once at sea, the ship was plagued by violent storms which blew them between the islands of Elba and Corsica to within sight of Africa and then, 'marvellous and almost incredible as it sounds', back between Corsica and Sardinia. A rousing, dramatic overture to the fresco cycle, the bark buffeted by mighty gales and engulfing waves is also heavily laden with symbolism.

It connects Aeneas Piccolomini with his namesake 'pious Aeneas', legendary founder of the Roman race. Pius II probably had this parallel in mind when he described the storm in his memoirs, in which he later pays homage to the 'divine' Virgil.<sup>53</sup> The etymology was not lost on his contemporaries, and the reference in the inscription to Libya, where Virgil's Aeneas was shipwrecked, reinforces the link.<sup>54</sup> If Virgil's 'pious Aeneas' had founded historic Rome, Pope Pius II was to set up a new Christian Rome. Cardinal Francesco's copy of the *Aeneid* was listed as one of his most treasured possessions in his will of 1493, wherein he bequeathed his 'very beloved Virgil' to one of his nephews.<sup>55</sup> For the intellectual circle around Cardinal Francesco, Virgil was one of the authentic Latin interpreters of Plato, and thus a key, *avant la*



*lettere*, to divine truth. The boat tossed on a stormy sea introduces a theme which endures throughout the entire narrative cycle, the troubled times of the Church and the need for unity and reform.

The Virgilian reference and the image of the Church as a storm-tossed bark were widespread at the time, and come together in the writings of the reformist theologian Egidio da Viterbo (1469-1532), a young admirer of the Cardinal and member of his coterie. Francesco already had connections with the friars of Sant'Agostino at Rome by the time Egidio's presence is recorded there in 1499 and 1501, the priory just a few steps away from Francesco's *palazzo* and titular church of Sant'Eustachio.<sup>56</sup> Following Cardinal Francesco's election to the papacy and his coronation (22nd September and 8th October 1503), Egidio's respect for him is recorded in his correspondence and in his official public sermon celebrating those events delivered in the Piazza del Campo at Siena.<sup>57</sup>

Like Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, Egidio considered that the writings of pre-Christian authors could conceal, as under a poetic veil, sublime truths, in the same manner as the metaphors and parables of the Gospels.<sup>58</sup> In Egidio's writings, lines from Virgil's 'Fourth Eclogue' and the *Aeneid* recur again and again as predictions of the coming of Christ and the mission of the Church.<sup>59</sup>

The common metaphor of *Fortuna* as a ship in a storm and as the fulfilment of Divine Providence is found in Boethius.<sup>60</sup> In a speech to Pius II and the consistory of cardinals at Mantua in 1459, Ippolita Sforza, then only fourteen years old, spoke of the 'bark of St Peter' as nearly submerged by the fall of Constantinople.<sup>61</sup> Bishop Domenico Domenichi in his funeral oration for the Pope likened the leader-less cardinals to the apostles during the storm on the lake (Matt 8:26).<sup>62</sup> The 'bark of Saint Peter' was in danger of imminent shipwreck, observed preacher after preacher at the papal court, Egidio da Viterbo among them.<sup>63</sup> On the occasion of the appointment of Cardinal Francesco to Alexander VI's reform commission, Pietro Delphino, master general of the Camaldolese, was jubilant: 'Filled with pity for those who languish in error and in ignorance, he [the pope] no longer lets Saint Peter's ship float rudderless'.<sup>64</sup> Pius II had himself echoed this in a letter to the Sieneese government in 1439, using Giotto's *Navicella* in Rome as a simile for the Council of Basle.<sup>65</sup> In the

fresco, the rainbow arching towards the next narrative image promises that the troubled waters would be calmed as Ecclesia was restored to its former pristine state.<sup>66</sup>

The *Embassy of Aeneas Piccolomini to James I of Scotland* (Fig 6), with its enchanting, distant landscape, rich interior and assembly in rapt concentration, celebrates Aeneas Piccolomini's famous talent as a powerful orator.<sup>67</sup> Left of centre and wearing a red Roman-style tunic and a voluminous plum-coloured cloak, a *pallio*, wrapped around him in the classical manner, Aeneas enumerates his arguments on graceful fingers. His skill as a public speaker is essentially the *only* fact that this image communicates: the place and purpose of his oratory are explained only in the inscription:

AENEAS SILVIUS IS SENT BY THE COUNCIL OF BASLE [VIA]  
CALAIS TO FURTHER BRITAIN AND SCOTLAND AS ENVOY TO THE  
KING; IS DRIVEN TO NORWAY BY A STORM AND RETURNS TO  
BASLE THROUGH BRITAIN ELUDING THE ROYAL SPIES<sup>68</sup>

Pius's memoirs add nothing to this,<sup>69</sup> though the interested scholar could learn more from other books in the library, from Campano's *Vita Pii II*<sup>70</sup> or Bracciolini's poem addressed to him, *Dell'origine della guerra tra franciosi e inghilesi*.<sup>71</sup> Aeneas's Ciceronian skill is always picked out as the significant feature of this image: that he was a trusted ambassador for the Council of Basle or that he spent six years in its service chairing committees, composing communiqués and writing up synodical records consistently goes unmentioned.<sup>72</sup>

In the third *istoria*, *Emperor Frederick III crowns Aeneas Piccolomini poet laureate* (Fig 7), the emperor, richly clad in gold brocade, bends to place the laurel crown on the bowed head of Aeneas, who kneels below him, hands crossed on his chest in humility. Two studded and clasped volumes on the step to his left betoken his literary as well as oratorical skill.<sup>73</sup> The inscription reveals a second meaning:

HERE AENEAS, SENT BY ANTIPOPE FELIX V AS LEGATE TO  
FREDERICK III, IS PRESENTED WITH THE LAUREL CROWN AND

NUMBERED AND PREFERRED AMONG HIS [FREDERICK'S]  
FRIENDS AS HIS SECRETARY<sup>74</sup>

The Council of Basle, refusing to recognise Eugenius IV, had implemented an electoral system to appoint a new, alternative pontiff. Aeneas was the clerk of ceremonies when Amadeo, Duke of Savoy, was thus installed, taking the name of Pope Felix V. In June 1442 he sent Aeneas as ambassador to the Diet of Frankfurt, convened by the newly crowned Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III. Appearing there as a defender of the conciliar position, Aeneas's high hopes for Felix were dashed, however, when he found many of his respected friends, Nicholas of Cusa amongst them, were disenchanted with Basle. In the ensuing weeks, Aeneas came round to the neutral policy of the empire, with less and less enthusiasm for the conciliar cause. He made friends at court with Sylvester, Bishop of Chiemsee and Jacob, Archbishop of Trier, and was soon invited to enter the emperor's service. By 17th November 1442 he had extricated himself from the employment of Felix V and was bound for Vienna as a member of the imperial chancery.<sup>75</sup>

The scene of his crowning with laurel in Frankfurt on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1442 thus marks a turning point in the ecclesiastical leanings and subsequent career of Aeneas Piccolomini. Previous writers have concentrated on the image's literary, rather than political implications, but the underlying narrative transforms what might seem an embarrassing mistake into a virtue, emphasizing Aeneas Piccolomini's selfless commitment to finding the right path for reform of the Church.

His circuitous route to a fully pro-papal position culminates in the fourth *istoria*, *The Reconciliation of Aeneas Piccolomini with Pope Eugenius IV* (Fig 8):

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AENEAS, SENT BY EMPEROR FREDERICK III AS LEGATE TO  
EUGENIUS IV, IS NOT ONLY RECONCILED TO HIM [EUGENIUS] BUT  
MADE SUBDEACON AND SECRETARY, AND SHORTLY APPOINTED  
BISHOP OF TRIESTE AND THEN OF SIENA<sup>76</sup>

In his memoirs, Aeneas recounts how, having been in the emperor's service for three years, he was sent to confer with Eugenius IV. He was allowed to kiss the foot, hand and cheek of the pontiff and, before delivering Frederick's official business, to address him with a few words of his own:

At Basle, I said, wrote and did many things against you. I deny none of them. But my intention was not so much to hurt you as to help the Church of God. For in attacking you I thought I was offering service to God. I was wrong (who can deny it?) but I was not alone. . . . I aligned myself with those who were considered neutral, so as not to switch from one extreme to the other without time for reflection. Therefore I stayed three years with the emperor, where I heard more and more of the dispute between the Council and your legates, till finally there remained not a shadow of doubt that the truth was on your side.<sup>77</sup>

In response, the cardinals invoked 'apostolic authority' to absolve him of any blame and Eugenius officially forgave Aeneas, saying:

You are now in that place where you can defend the truth and be of service to the Church.<sup>78</sup>

This fourth *istoria* is the one that has attracted least attention, but it expresses in visual form the ideas of Pius II and his nephew for reform. Aeneas Piccolomini was to be elected to the papacy in August 1458, nine years after the collapse of the Council of Basle. But its influence is evident: before the conclave that elected him, each of the cardinals swore an oath that if made pontiff he would observe certain 'capitulations', tempering papal monarchy with the oligarchic counter-balance of the Sacred College. The future pope had to pledge that he would not prosecute a crusade or reform the Church without the prior advice of the cardinals.<sup>79</sup> Upon his election Pius II, intent on reform, charged Nicholas of Cusa with drafting a plan, resulting in his *Reformatio generalis* (1459), which stressed the need for consultation in ecclesiastical government.<sup>80</sup>

As already noted, Cardinal Francesco had a copy of the *Reformatio generalis* and frequently consulted it during his own reform efforts. A more democratic church government as the route to restored harmony in the Church was at the heart of the proposals that he made to Alexander VI: the pope must seek the cardinals' advice in all things; he must have the consent of the majority of cardinals before declaring war; the wording and issuing of papal bulls must be agreed by the consistorial court; he must keep to the decrees of the Councils of Constance and Basle in the appointment of new cardinals and the conclave procedure should be purged of malpractice and subject to a binding constitution.<sup>81</sup> The source of these recommendations can be seen in the conciliar records and other documents in his library.

In this fourth fresco, the seated cardinals are not merely passive observers: they are shown in animated discussion, invoking 'apostolic authority' for the forgiveness of Aeneas. As Cardinal Francesco proposed the devolution of papal power, so in the mural the pope pardons Aeneas in full consultation with the Sacred College. The *istoria* concentrates on the '*osculum pedum*', the kissing of the papal foot, the gesture of humility on the part of Aeneas preceding his personal apology to the pope, whose response set Aeneas on the way to high office as subdeacon, secretary, Bishop of Trieste and Bishop of Siena.<sup>82</sup> His episcopal investiture in the background left of the image anticipates his receiving the cardinal's hat.

The common thread uniting the four frescoes on the east wall is Aeneas's selfless determination to reform the Church. He does not make Adam's mistake, lamented so bitterly by Saint Augustine, of refusing to admit the error of his ways and apologise. Humbled, he has at last recognised the divinely ordained nature of the papal office. It is but a short step to the cardinals' recognition that it is Aeneas who has the divinely endowed gifts to fill that office and to lead the Church back to righteousness.

The final *istoria*, *The death of Pius II at Ancona* (Fig 9) manifests the spiritual and political harmony that he has initiated. The portraits of the sovereigns deposed by the Turks, grouped below the pope, indicate the restitution of their territories.<sup>83</sup> The inclusion of the exotic figure of Djem Sultan (extreme right) foretells peaceful co-existence with the Turks, implying their conversion to Christianity.<sup>84</sup> The balance and stability of the new order is conveyed by the pyramidal composition, while Pius,

pointing towards Djem, reiterates that in committing his life to defending the unity of the Church, he, Aeneas Piccolomini, loved God more than he loved himself. His final words on his deathbed, paraphrased in the inscription above the *Expulsion from Paradise* relief, respond to Saint Augustine: humility, as the antidote to Original Sin, is found in the City of God.

The decoration of the Piccolomini library is, altogether, universal in scope. The stucco relief of the *Expulsion from Paradise* is the gateway between the infinite, timeless landscape of abstract ideas revealed in the vault, and the episodes from temporal, human history on the walls. The ten narrative murals show Aeneas Piccolomini operating within, and attempting, in the historical circumstances of his own time, to rectify the condition of humankind brought about by Adam and Eve. The library decoration shows Cardinal Francesco's concern, inherited from Nicholas of Cusa, Bessarion and his uncle, for unity within the Church. Francesco agreed with them and his younger friend Egidio da Viterbo that the further in time the Church was distanced from Christ and the Apostles, the weaker and more corrupt it had become. The Turkish menace was a wholly religious problem, only to be solved by ecclesiastical reform. If the narrative cycle shows Francesco's support for papal authority, the emphasis given to the Sacred College reveals his reformist zeal. The Piccolomini library is a commemoration of the life of Pope Pius II, a monument to humanism, but also a reminder of a pre-Reformation movement towards reform.

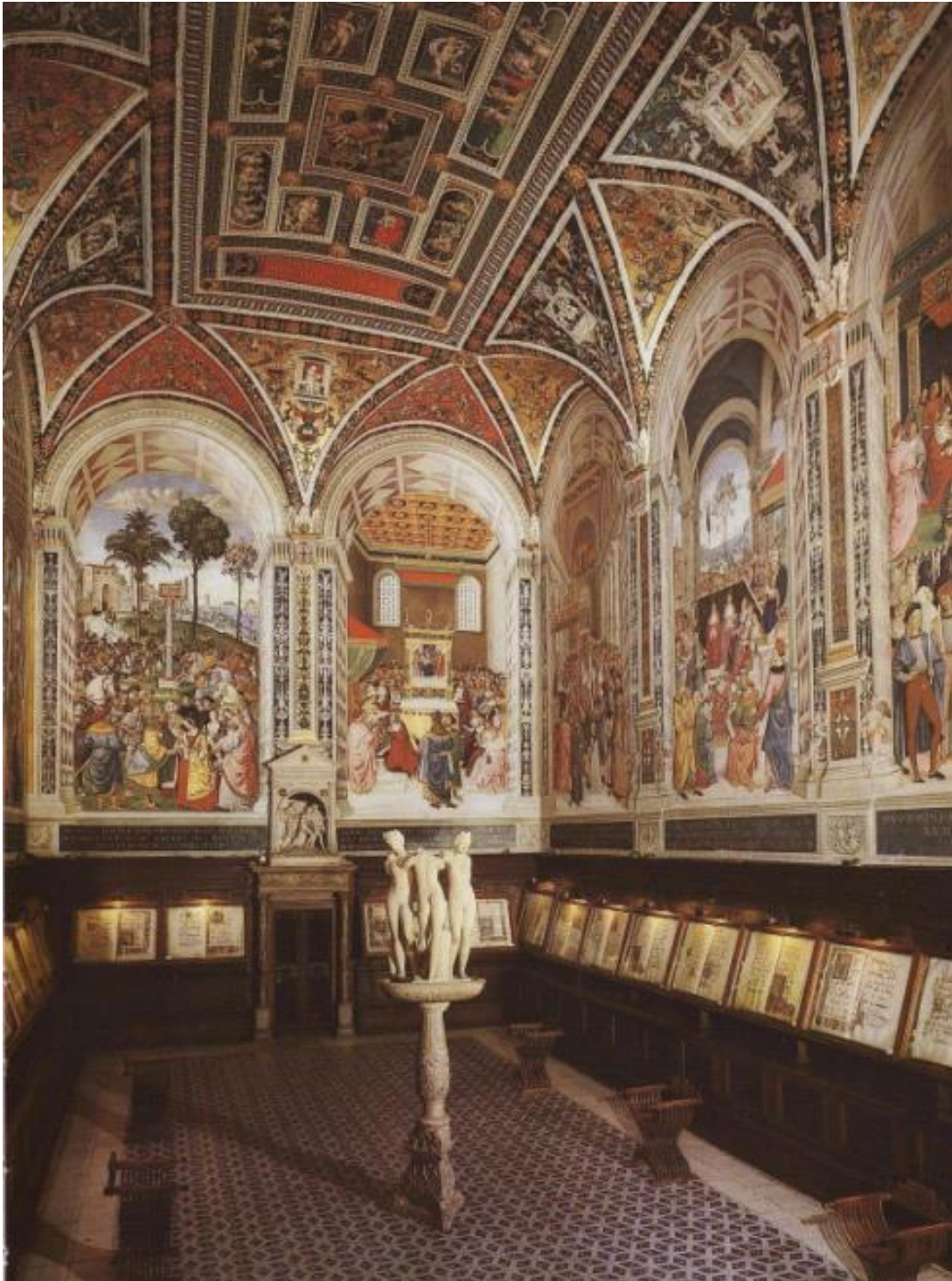


Fig 1 Interior of the Piccolomini library, Siena cathedral, decorated in fresco by Pinturicchio, 1502-8, looking towards the entrance



Fig 2 *Saint Augustine*, central pendentive, east wall, Piccolomini library vault





Fig 3 The *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise*, Opera del Duomo workshop, stucco relief after Jacopo della Quercia, c1502, Piccolomini library



Fig 4 The inscription above the *Expulsion from Paradise* relief (Fig 3), Opera del Duomo workshop, c1502, Piccolomini library



Fig 5 The first istoria: *The Departure of Aeneas Piccolomini for the Council of Basle*, Piccolomini library



Fig 6 The second *istoria*: *The Embassy of Aeneas Piccolomini to James I of Scotland*, Piccolomini library



Fig 7 The third istoria: *Emperor Frederick III crowns Aeneas Piccolomini poet laureate*, Piccolomini library



Fig 8 The fourth *istoria*: *The Reconciliation of Aeneas Piccolomini with Pope Eugenius IV*, Piccolomini library



Fig 9 The tenth *istoria*: *The Death of Pius II at Ancona*, Piccolomini library

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## Notes

This article arose out of my doctoral thesis, 'The Piccolomini Library: The Iconographical Programme in the Light of Cardinal Francesco's Humanism and Theology', presented at the University of Central England in Birmingham in December 2005. The research was supported by awards from the British School at Rome and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. For helpful suggestions on this article, my very warm thanks go to George T Noszlopy. Whilst the present article focuses on the murals, aspects of the vault iconography are discussed in S J May, 'The Piccolomini library in Siena cathedral: a new reading with particular reference to two compartments of the vault decoration', *Renaissance Studies*, Vol 19, No 3, 2005, pp287-324.

<sup>1</sup> The 213 Piccolomini codices remaining in the library in around 1655 were purchased by Fabio Chigi during his pontificate as Alexander VII (1655-1667); V Lusini, *Il Duomo di Siena*, Siena, 1939, Vol II, p230. A magisterial study of the book collections of Pius II and Cardinal Francesco was made by A A Strnad, 'Studia piccolomineana', in D Maffei (ed), *Enea Silvio Piccolomini: Papa Pio II. Atti del Convegno per il quinto Centenario della Morte e altri scritti raccolti da Domenico Maffei*, Siena, 1968, pp295-390. Titles, descriptions and locations of Francesco's manuscripts commence *ibid* p348.

<sup>2</sup> Strnad, 'Studia piccolomineana', *op cit*, p348f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p370.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p344.

<sup>5</sup> P O Kristeller, 'Augustine and the early Renaissance', in *idem, Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, Rome, 1969, Vol I, pp355-372, here p365f.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p365f.

<sup>7</sup> The first is now in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), cod Reg lat 1882; Strnad, 'Studia piccolomineana', *op cit*, p316 and n83. The second is BAV, cod Vat Burgh 366; *ibid*, p348; J Ruyschaert, 'Miniaturistes 'romains' sous Pie II', in Maffei (ed), *op cit*, pp245-294, here pp263 n116, 282.

<sup>8</sup> BAV, cod Chig A VIII 241; Strnad, 'Studia piccolomineana', *op cit*, p316.

<sup>9</sup> Aeneas Piccolomini, *Somnium de Fortuna*, in *Opera omnia*, Basle, 1551, Epist CVIII, pp611-616.

<sup>10</sup> M Watanabe, *The Political Ideas of Nicholas of Cusa with Special Reference to his De concordantia catholica*, Geneva, 1963, pp12, 31; Kristeller, *op cit*, p367.

<sup>11</sup> A A Strnad, 'Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini; Politik und Mäzenatentum im Quattrocento', *Römische historische Mitteilungen*, Vols 8-9, 1964-6, pp101-425, here pp181ff and n119.

<sup>12</sup> Cusa's works owned by Francesco are listed *ibid*, p181 n115; those by Bessarion, *ibid*, p182 n119.

<sup>13</sup> These are listed by M Sanfilippo, 'Pio III', in Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, Rome, 2000, Vol 3, pp22-30, here p30.

<sup>14</sup> BAV, cod Chig E IV 122.

<sup>15</sup> Individually the three figures are interpreted in Ficinian terms as embodiments of 'emanatio-raptio-remeatio': 'emanatio', the overflowing of bounty bestowed on lower creatures by God; 'raptio', the enraptured acceptance of that love; and 'remeatio', the yearning for spiritual re-union with God; Marsilio Ficino, *In Plotinum* I, iii. See May, 'The Piccolomini Library', *op cit*, pp85-91.

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<sup>16</sup> Saint Jerome is also sometimes depicted amongst books in his study, though he is almost invariably accompanied by his traditional attribute of the lion. See R Stapleford, 'Intellect and Intuition in Botticelli's Saint Augustine', *Art Bulletin*, Vol 76, 1994, pp69-80.

<sup>17</sup> See for example P Misciattelli, *The Piccolomini Library in the Cathedral of Siena*, trans L E Hunter, Siena, 1924, p9; G V Shepherd, *A Monument to Pope Pius II: Pintoricchio and Raphael in the Piccolomini Library in Siena 1494-1508*, PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1993, pp217, 219, 227; N Dacos, 'De Pintoricchio à Michelangelo di Pietro da Lucca. Les premiers grotesques à Sienne', in E Cioni and D Fausti (eds), *Umanesimo a Siena: Letturata, Arti Figurative, Musica*, Siena, 1994, pp311-344, here p312f; S Settis and D Toracca (eds), *The Piccolomini Library in Siena Cathedral*, Modena, 1998, p261.

<sup>18</sup> My allegorical reading of part of the vault can be found in May, 'The Piccolomini library in Siena cathedral: a new reading', op cit. The other compartments of the vault are interpreted in Chapter 5 of my thesis; May, 'The Piccolomini Library', op cit, pp104-167.

<sup>19</sup> The stucco relief is a copy by an anonymous hand after the marble relief (1414-19) by Jacopo della Quercia, which until the nineteenth century adorned the inner right side of the Fonte Gaia in Siena's Piazza del Campo. The damaged original is now housed in a permanent exhibition of the Fonte Gaia marbles in the Museo di Santa Maria della Scala, Siena.

<sup>20</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Book XIV, Chapter 3; Pat lat 41:406.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, Book XIV, Chapter 13; Pat lat 41:421.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, Book XIV, Chapter 14; Pat lat 41:423.

<sup>23</sup> Aeneas Piccolomini's *Commentarii* is most readily available in L C Gabel's abridged edition, *Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope, the Commentaries of Pius II: an Abridgement*, trans F A Gragg, London, 1960. A parallel translation of the full text is in course of preparation: Books 1 and 2 are available as *Pius II, Commentaries*, M Meserve and M Simonetta (eds), Cambridge, MA and London, 2003, Vol 1. On the virtue of humility, I suggest that *Humility* is one of the personifications in the library vault; May, 'The Piccolomini Library', op cit, p160-2.

<sup>24</sup> Pius II's words on his deathbed at Ancona on the eve of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1464 were reported to Cardinal Francesco in a letter written in late August or early September 1464, published in Iacopo Ammannati Piccolomini, *Lettere (1444-1479)*, P Cherubini (ed), Rome, 1997, Vol 2, pp501-524, here p518.

<sup>25</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Book XI, Chapter 2; Pat lat 41:347-8. See W A Christian, 'The Creation of the World', in R W Battenhouse (ed), *A Companion to the Study of Saint Augustine*, New York, 1955, pp315-341, here pp317, 326; R Bittner, 'Augustine's Philosophy of History', in G B Matthews (ed), *The Augustinian Tradition*, London, 1999, p345-360.

<sup>26</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Book XII, Chapter 22; Book XIV, Chapter 11; Pat lat 41:372-3 and 41:418-20. See H Levin, *The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance*, New York, 1969, pp168ff.

<sup>27</sup> For example, the Creation of the world, the six Ages of Man and eternal life after death, the Four Seasons, the Four Temperaments and Four Virtues. See n18 above.

<sup>28</sup> A Piccolomini, *I commentarii*, Book 12; Gabel (ed), op cit, pp356ff. The apparent paradox of rallying a war whilst preaching peace could be defended with reference to Saint Augustine: some wars



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are unjustified, others are absolutely obligatory, but ultimately ‘Every man is in quest of peace, even in waging war’; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Book XV, Chapter 4; Book XIX, Chapter 12; Pat lat 41:440-1 and 41:637-8.

<sup>29</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Book V, Chapter 1; Pat lat 41:141-2.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, Book V, Chapter 8; Pat lat 41:148.

<sup>31</sup> The first printed edition of the *Tractatus* is A S Piccolomini, *Dialogus incipit foeliciter*, Rome (Johann Schurener), 1475. Its content is analysed by S Colonna, ‘Variazioni sul tema della fortuna da Enea Silvio Piccolomini a Francesco Colonna’, *Storia dell’Arte*, No 66, 1989, pp127-142.

<sup>32</sup> A S Piccolomini, *Dialogus incipit foeliciter*, cited by Colonna, op cit, p134.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p134. Aeneas Piccolomini had been impressed by San Bernardino’s preaching in Siena in 1425; Watanabe, ‘Authority and consent in Church government’, op cit, p219.

<sup>34</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Book V, Chapter 11; Pat lat 41:153-4.

<sup>35</sup> BAV, cod Chig H VI 186, with many notes in his hand; Strnad, ‘Studia piccolomineana’, op cit, p366.

<sup>36</sup> Listed in the inventory of books purchased by Fabio Chigi in c1655 (see n1 above). The list was published by J Cugnoni, *Aeneae Sylvii Piccolomini Senensis qui postea fuit Pius II. pont. max. opera inedita descripsit ex codicibus Chisianis vulgavit notisque illustravit*, Rome, 1882-3, pp333-335 and 336-338; see here Appendix 2, p334.

<sup>37</sup> Siena Biblioteca Comunale (Siena Bib Com), cod U VI 10, fols 11-124v, *Prosopoya Fratris Simonis Angeli Senensis OP ...ad ... Franciscum Pyccolhominem de Senis tum Pyum tertium ... Utraque de seculi fortuna et religionum quiete incipit feliciter tam prosa quam dispari metro*. The topicality of issues concerning predestination is reinforced by the fact that, whilst the Piccolomini library decoration was underway, Pinturicchio designed the *Allegory of Fortune* (c1504) for the pavement of Siena *duomo*.

<sup>38</sup> On Francesco’s part in these initiatives, see D Hay, *The Church in Italy in the Fifteenth Century*, Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne, 1977, p86f; Strnad, ‘Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini’, op cit, pp180-3; L Celier, ‘Alexandre VI et la réforme de l’église’, *Mélanges d’Archéologie et d’Histoire, École Française de Rome*, Vol 27, 1907, pp65-124; L von Pastor, *History of the Popes from the close of the Middle Age*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, ed and trans F I Antrobus, London, 1923, Vol VI, pp185-200.

<sup>39</sup> See for example Pastor, who cites amongst other primary sources the Mantuan envoy, Giustiniano of Venice, Sigismondo dei’ Conti and Egidio da Viterbo; Pastor, op cit, Vol VI, p198-200. Strnad quotes from Pietro Delphino and Jacopo Gherardi da Volterra; ‘Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini’, op cit, p382, and idem, ‘Studia piccolomineana’, op cit, p390, respectively.

<sup>40</sup> One such was Adriano Castellesi, who dedicated to Cardinal Francesco his *De romanae ecclesiae potestate* (c1492), BAV, cod Vat lat 2934.

<sup>41</sup> W E Wilkie, *The Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and the Tudors before the Reformation*, London, 1974, p20.

<sup>42</sup> Pastor, op cit, Vol VI, p201.

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<sup>43</sup> In 1450, Aeneas rejected his earlier *Commentarii de gestis Basiliensis concilii* (BAV, cod Vat lat 3887) of 1440 as unacceptable, and wrote another account of the Council of Basle from a more papal point of view - the *De rebus Basileae gestis commentarius*, an attempt to whitewash his sorry experiences at Basle, which are described below. On Aeneas and the Council of Basle, see Pastor, op cit, Vol III, p100; M Watanabe, 'Authority and consent in Church government: Panormitanus, Aeneas Silvius, Cusanus', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol 33, 1972, pp217-236, here p233.

<sup>44</sup> BAV, cod Vat lat 4193 (also containing other related material), inscribed *Finit Summarium Concilii Basiliensis editum per me Augustinum Patritium canonicum Senensem iussu Fr(ancisci) Piccolominei Cardinalis Senensis anno salutis M CCCC LXXX*; Strnad, 'Studia piccolomineana', op cit, p364.

<sup>45</sup> BAV, cod Vat lat 4180 and 4181; Strnad, 'Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini', op cit, p356. The wording of Cardinal Francesco's testament of 1493 is transcribed by C M Richardson, 'The lost will and testament of Cardinal Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini (1439-1503)', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, Vol LXVI, 1998, pp193-214: his bequest of these two volumes to the sacristy is mentioned ibid p206. As Strnad explains, Francesco must have revoked this bequest in a later will following the realisation of his plan to construct a dedicated library; Strnad, 'Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini', op cit, p356 n27.

<sup>46</sup> To be found in BAV, cod Vat lat 4178 and 4193 (bound in with other works); Strnad, 'Studia piccolomineana', op cit, p363f.

<sup>47</sup> This is also bound into BAV, cod Vat lat 4193, fols 204r-294v; Strnad, 'Studia piccolomineana', op cit, p364.

<sup>48</sup> BAV, cod Vat lat 8090, fols 109r-122v; Strnad, 'Studia piccolomineana', op cit, p364 and n240; idem, 'Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini', op cit, p381.

<sup>49</sup> D Hay, 'Eugenio IV', in Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, op cit, Vol II, pp634-9.

<sup>50</sup> Watanabe, *The Political Ideas of Nicholas of Cusa*, op cit; idem, 'Authority and consent in Church government', op cit; J E Biechler, 'Nicholas of Cusa and the End of the Conciliar Movement: A Humanist Crisis of Identity', *Church History*, Vol 44, 1975, pp5-21.

<sup>51</sup> A Piccolomini, *I commentarii*, Book I, Chapter 3; Gabel (ed), op cit, p30f; Meserve and Simonetta (eds), op cit, Vol I, pp11-13.

<sup>52</sup> The translation is that provided by Shepherd; op cit, p125. Schmarsow was the first to observe that, whilst Giovannantonio Campano's biography of Pope Pius II was the source of the epitaphs, *I commentarii* provided the visual material; A Schmarsow, *Rafael und Pintoricchio in Siena*, Stuttgart, 1880, pp10ff.

<sup>53</sup> In Virgil's *Aeneid*, the goddess Juno persuaded Aeolus, the god who controlled the winds, to beleaguer Aeneas' and the Trojans' ships with a great storm, following which Aeneas was delivered upon the shores of Libya; *Aeneid* I:125-143. For Pius's reference to the 'divine Virgil', see Gabel (ed), op cit, p116.

<sup>54</sup> Both Giannantonio Campano and Bishop Domenico Dominichi compared Pius II to his namesake of the *Aeneid*, the latter claiming that Pius eclipsed Virgil's Aeneas in the virtue of '*pietas*'; Giovanni

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Antonio Campano, *In exequiis divi Pii II pontificis maximi oratio*, in *Omnia Campani opera*, Venice (Bernardinus Verzellensis), 1502, fols XCVr-Cr (BAV, shelf number: Aldine A I 26), here fol XCVv; Domenico Domenichi, *Oratorio de eligendo pontifice*, BAV, cod Ottob lat 1035, fols 10r-18v, here fol 12v.

<sup>55</sup> Richardson, 'The lost will', op cit, p206 and n62.

<sup>56</sup> Egidio was to become prior general of the Augustinian order in 1507: his presence at Sant'Agostino in these years have been established respectively by M Hirst, 'Michelangelo in Rome: an altar-piece and the "Bacchus"', *Burlington Magazine*, Vol CXXIII, No 943, 1981, pp581-592, here p583 n31 and A Nagel, 'Michelangelo's London "Entombment" and the church of S. Agostino in Rome', *Burlington Magazine*, Vol CXXXVI, 1994, pp164-7, here p166, n22. On Francesco Piccolomini's *palazzo*, see C M Richardson, 'The housing opportunities of a Renaissance cardinal', *Renaissance Studies*, Vol 17, No 4, 2003, pp607-627, here p609; H Hibbard, 'The Early History of Sant'Andrea della Valle', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol 43, 1961, p289-318. Other connections between Francesco and the Augustinian order are detailed in my doctoral thesis, 'The Piccolomini Library', op cit, p70.

<sup>57</sup> On the extant correspondence and the sermon, see J W O'Malley, *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform: A Study in Renaissance Thought*, Leiden, 1968, p173 and n4. Egidio's registers as prior general of Sant'Agostino include an entry recording Francesco's succession to the pontifical throne, followed by a poignant note of his death twenty-six days later. This entry is amplified in the margin, where Egidio has added a brief biographical note; Egidio da Viterbo, *Annales seu Chronicon ord. Eremit. S.P. Augustini*, 1256-1633, Bib Ang, cod lat 1118, fol 140v. Cardinal Francesco is remembered favourably by Egidio in his *Historia viginti saeculorum* (1507), Bib Ang, cod lat C 8.19, fol 312, cited by Pastor, op cit, Vol VI, p199.

<sup>58</sup> O'Malley, *Giles of Viterbo*, op cit, p8, 38ff, 50ff.

<sup>59</sup> For example BAV, cod Vat lat 6325, fols 5r, 96r; Bib Ang, cod lat 502, fols 36v, 210r, cited by O'Malley, *Giles of Viterbo*, op cit, p55.

<sup>60</sup> Philosophy tells Boethius: 'Commit your boat to the winds and you must sail whichever way they blow, not just where you want'; Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans V E Watts, Harmondsworth, 1969, p55. On Cardinal Francesco's copy of Boethius, see n36 above.

<sup>61</sup> I Sforza, 'Oration to Pope Pius II in the consistory of cardinals, Mantua 1459', in trans in M L King and A Rabil Jr (eds), *Her Immaculate Hand: Selected Works by and about the Women Humanists of Quattrocento Italy*, Binghamton, NY, 1983, pp46-48, here p47.

<sup>62</sup> Domenichi, BAV, cod Ottob lat 1035, fol 10r.

<sup>63</sup>: '... qua tempestate, quibus fluctibus, qua scelerum procella, non demersam Petri naviculam quis non miretur, ...'; Egidio da Viterbo, *Historia viginti saeculorum*; Bib Ang, cod lat 502, fol 61r. Other references to this metaphor are specified by J M McManamon in 'The ideal Renaissance Pope: funeral oratory from the papal court', *Archivum Historiae Pontificae*, Vol XIV, 1976, pp9-70, here p43.

<sup>64</sup> Strnad, 'Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini', op cit, p390.

<sup>65</sup> A Piccolomini, *Der Briefwechsel* (Fontes Rerum Austriacarum) in *Österreichische Geschichts-Quellen*, R Wolkan (ed), Vienna, 1909-18, Vol I, pp21-24.

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<sup>66</sup> In the book of Genesis, God showed Noah the rainbow as a sign of the covenant between Himself and humankind; Genesis 8:20-22, 9: 1-17. It is to be remembered that the great flood of Genesis, and that in the ‘pagan bible’ Ovid, occurred because man had become depraved and required serious punishment.

<sup>67</sup> In his funeral oration, Campano declared that Pius was a poet in his oratory and an outstanding orator as a poet (a theme deriving from Cicero). His speeches and sermons revealed the true power of oratory and his letters exhorted all to peace and concord and to good and holy living; Campano, ‘In exequiis divi Pii II’, op cit, fol XCIXr. Bishop Domenichi likened Pius II to Cicero, Isocrates, Lysias and Demosthenes; BAV, Ottob lat 1035, fols 11v, 12r.

<sup>68</sup> Shepherd’s translation; op cit, p149.

<sup>69</sup> In his account, Aeneas cryptically announces that ‘the cardinal [Albergati] sent Aeneas to Scotland to restore a certain prelate to the king’s favour’; A Piccolomini, *I commentarii*, Book 1; Chapters 4-5; Meserve and Simonetta (eds), op cit, pp17-21; Gabel (ed), op cit, pp31-35. By now, Aeneas is employed as private secretary to Niccolò Albergati, Cardinal of Santa Croce, Archbishop of Bologna. Albergati had been appointed ambassador to France by the Council of Basle and charged with orchestrating peace at the Congress of Arras (1435) between Charles VII of France and Henry VI of England, in an attempt to bring about an end to the Hundred Years’ War.

<sup>70</sup> Campano is less secretive in his account of Aeneas’s mission: the real objective was to agitate the Scots against England, following the withdrawal of the English from the Congress of Arras, with a view to engaging Henry VI of England’s attention to the north, thus deflecting him from interfering with the reconciliation of Charles VII of France and Duke Philip of Burgundy. In the event, Aeneas failed, though he successfully persuaded James I to put diplomatic pressure on Henry to keep the peace; Meserve and Simonetta (eds), op cit, p389 nn 15, 16.

<sup>71</sup> Jacopo Bracciolini, *Dell’origine della Guerra tra franciosi e inghilesi*, Siena Bib Com, cod J VIII 40 misc. Neither the poem’s dedication to Pius II nor its presence in Siena guarantees that this manuscript was housed in the Piccolomini library: this is probable though not proven.

<sup>72</sup> G C Zimolo, ‘Il Campano e il Platina come biografi di Pio II’, in Maffei (ed), op cit, pp401-412, here pp403ff.

<sup>73</sup> A poem entitled ‘Ad Aeneam Poetarum Excellentissum’ written by Francesco Patrizi was amongst the holdings of the Piccolomini library: it eulogises the oratorical and poetical skills of Aeneas, inviting the Muses and Apollo to abandon their leisure and accompany with the lyre their faithful laurel-crowned ‘alumnus’; BAV, cod Chig F VIII 195, Book II, third poem.

<sup>74</sup> Shepherd’s translation; op cit, p163.

<sup>75</sup> A Piccolomini, *I commentarii*, Book I, Chapters 10 and 11; Meserve and Simonetta (eds), op cit, pp43-51; Gabel (ed), op cit, pp39-40. Aeneas was in fact unsure about the integrity of Felix V but accepted employment with him in any case; R J Michell, *The Laurels and the Tiara: Pope Pius II (1458-1464)*, London, 1962, p82.

<sup>76</sup> Shepherd’s translation; op cit, p180.

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<sup>77</sup> A Piccolomini, *I commentarii*, Book 1, Chapter 13; Meserve and Simonetta (eds), op cit, p55; Gabel (ed), op cit, p43. This took place in spring 1445.

<sup>78</sup> A Piccolomini, *I commentarii*, Book 1, Chapter 13; Meserve and Simonetta (eds), op cit, p56; Gabel (ed), op cit, p43f. Having acquitted himself to the pontiff for his early allegiance to the Council of Basle, the artful author of *I commentarii* gives no explanation about the true reason for the imperial embassy to Eugenius IV, saying only that he and the pope, ‘proceeded to speak of ecclesiastical matters’. In fact, Aeneas was sent to Rome by the emperor to confer with the pope regarding reconvening the General Council at a fresh location; Watanabe, ‘Authority and consent in Church government’, op cit, p220.

<sup>79</sup> J B Morrall, ‘Pius II: humanist and crusader’, *History Today*, Vol VIII, 1958, pp27-37, here p27f.

<sup>80</sup> Watanabe, *The Political Ideas of Nicholas of Cusa*, op cit, pp110ff.

<sup>81</sup> Francesco’s reform proposals to Alexander VI are transcribed in their entirety by Celier, op cit, pp100-103.

<sup>82</sup> The appointment of Aeneas as subdeacon by Eugenius took place two years after their reconciliation, just before the pope died on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1447. This appointment, along with the bishopric of Trieste, was confirmed by Eugenius’ successor Tommaso Parentucelli, friend of Aeneas, who was elected as Nicholas V on 6<sup>th</sup> March. Yet another three years elapsed before Aeneas was made Bishop of Siena on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1450. See A Piccolomini, *I commentarii*, Book 1, Chapters 17-20; Meserve and Simonetta (eds), op cit, pp75-98; Gabel (ed), op cit, pp49-55.

<sup>83</sup> In the centre of the composition, held aloft in the *sedia gestatoria*, Pope Pius II gravely looks down to the group on the left while pointing to two resplendent, exotic figures on the right. Of these, the turbaned, standing male seen in full frontal view, hands on hips, is identified as Djem Sultan, Ottoman pretender and erstwhile hostage of the pontiff: Sultan Bayazid II paid 40,000 *scudi* annually to the pope to retain Djem, his brother. Belonging to a period after the lifetime of Pius, the tall, striking figure of Djem was familiar to those of Cardinal Francesco’s generation, having become a fashionable personality at court, living more like a guest than a prisoner. Djem had died in February 1495. See K M Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, Philadelphia, 1978, Vol 2, p511. Beside him is a kneeling, bearded figure in equally opulent, oriental dress, identified as Asan Zaccaria, deposed prince of Samo; Shepherd, op cit, p143 n62. To the left of the pope is another fallen potentate: wearing a high crowned, wide brimmed blue hat, blue robe and a broad gold chain is the person of Thomas Paleologus, deposed despot of Morea; *ibid*, p143 n62. Kneeling before the pope to the left, in golden, minever trimmed, brocaded damask, is the Venetian Doge Cristoforo Moro, his hat held by the young page behind him; *ibid*, p143 n62. Other characterful faces in the crowd are likely to be portraits.

<sup>84</sup> Savonarola was amongst those who believed that the Turks would imminently convert to Christianity. See R Hatfield, ‘Botticelli’s *Mystic Nativity*, Savonarola and the Millenium’, *JWCI*, Vol 58, 1995, pp88-114. Cardinal Francesco would certainly have been aware that Virgil’s *Aeneid* (8:102-124) ends when Aeneas made peace with the Latins and founded the city of Lavinium, ruling over a union of Latins and Trojans.

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