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CONSTANTINOPLE IN *DE EUROPA* BY AENEAS SYLVIUS PICCOLOMINI – POPE PIUS II¹

Abstract: The paper explores Constantinople's image in *De Europa*, a geographical-historical work authored by the humanist and pope Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini – Pius II (1458–1464). The text is analyzed in the context of contemporary interpretations, which perceive Piccolomini's writing as a component of his crusading agenda. The construction of the city and its brief political and ecclesiastical history before the Ottoman conquest are covered in the first section of the research. Although largely overlooked in historiography due to its relative lack of independent original value, this chapter, seen in the aforementioned context, sheds light on the role that Constantinople had in Pius' political thought. In the second section of the paper, the chapter on the Ottoman conquest of the city is discussed. The crusading-propaganda use of the representation of Constantinople's suffering is highlighted, and an overview of the previous research on this chapter of *De Europa* is provided.

Key words: Constantinople, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, *De Europa*, Crusades, Constantine XI

According to his own claims, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini wrote the work that is now known as *De Europa* during the Lenten season in 1458.² The title *De Europa* has been in use since the last decade of the 15th century. The name of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III (1452–1493) appears in earlier manuscripts and editions under the headings *De gestis sub Friderico III*,³ *Rerum sub Imperatore Friderico III*,⁴ or variations on these titles. The depiction of historical events in the period of Frederick's reign was indeed Piccolomini's

¹ This study was supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovations of the Republic of Serbia (Contract No. 451-03-47/2023-01/ 200165). igor.stamenovic@filfak.ni.ac.rs

² The work was mostly done by that period, but certain parts were written later during the year, such as the one considering Bohemia. A. S. Piccolomini, *Europe (c. 1400–1458)*, trans. R. D. Brown, ed. N. Bisaha, Washington, D.C. 2013, 16–17, 50.

³ *Ibidem*, 16.

⁴ Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Latin 6224, 1r, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10721228q> (Acc. 21.8.2023).

initial motive for writing.⁵ Nevertheless, the final work went beyond this intention and effectively applied geographical, historical, theological, and political arguments to frame Piccolomini's ideological concept of Europe. In his speech *Constantinopolitana Clades* (1454), Aeneas defined Europe as a cultural and political space shaped by the Christian faith and the Greek and Roman cultural legacies.⁶ This concept developed from the medieval notion of *Christianitas*. However, Piccolomini's Europe also included the Orthodox East, whereas *Christianitas* was only associated with Western Christianity. The geostrategic center of this space was the city of Constantinople.⁷

Piccolomini's work and his concept of Europe have been the subject of several studies.⁸ In addition to the historical, geographical, and ideological aspects, modern historiography has highlighted the relationship between Pius' work and the idea of launching a crusade against the Ottomans.⁹ Since the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Piccolomini has placed the crusade at the forefront of his political philosophy, especially during his pontificate (1458–1464).¹⁰ The place of Constantinople in *De Europa* has so far been analyzed within the broader research on the concept of Europe and Piccolomini's report on the Ottoman occupation of the city. Studies were mostly focused on the chapter that narrates the fall of Constantinople.¹¹ With a focus on the areas that have received the least attention thus far, the purpose of this paper is to provide a thorough examination of Constantinople's representation in *De Europa*.

Piccolomini's understanding of Europe in the work analyzed follows his previously developed matrix. Europe is portrayed as being under ut-

⁵ Piccolomini, *Europe*, 50–51.

⁶ Oration *Constantinopolitana clades* of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (15 October 1454, Frankfurt), ed. M. von Cotta-Schönberg, Lyon 2019, 26–135.

⁷ F. Fischer, *Das Europabild Des Humanisten Und Papstes Enea Silvio Piccolomini/Pius II*, Magisterarbeit, Fakultät für Geschichte und Kunstwissenschaft der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München 2007, 85–88; S. Stolf, *De Europa et Asia d'Enea Silvio Piccolomini: migrations, invasions, ancrages, un état des lieux de l'Europe au XVe siècle*, ILCEA 28 (2017), <http://journals.openedition.org/ilcea/4071> (Acc. 9.9.2023); Idem, *L'Europe et ses 'Européens' vus par Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1458)*, Cahiers d'Études Italiennes 27 (2018), <https://journals.openedition.org/cei/5225> (Acc. 9.9.2023).

⁸ A. G. Fernández, *Eneas Silvio (Pío II) y su concepción de Europa*, Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía 28 (2011), 71–100; Fischer, *Das Europabild*; Stolf, *De Europa et Asia*; Idem, *E. S. Piccolomini et les Turcs: l'Europe face à son ennemi*, Cahiers d'études italiennes 21 (2015), 105–117; Idem, *L'Europe et Ses 'Européens'*.

⁹ I. Tóth, *The Fall of Constantinople in De Europa: Source Research and Historiographical Contributions to Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini's Historical Account*, Chronica 17 (2017), 126–147; N. Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat, 1453–1505*, Oxford 2012, 26–27; Stolf, *L'Europe et ses 'Européens'*; V. Capdepuy, *Grands espaces et territorialité: le regard d'un pape géographe sur l'Europe, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pie II)*, Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes 21 (2011), 119–135.

¹⁰ On Pius and his crusading idea, see N. Bisaha, *Pope Pius II and the Crusade, Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Housley, (London 2004), 39–52.

¹¹ M. Philippides – W. K. Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography, and Military Studies*, London 2011, 24, 104–107; Tóth, *The Fall of Constantinople in De Europa*.

ter Islamic threat from without. That is why another, also religious-territorial concept of Turkey, created by the territorialization of the ethnic designation “Turks,” is partly opposed to Europe. Piccolomini’s Turkey does not only refer to the Turkish people; rather, it symbolizes the entire Islamic world.¹² The conflict between two peoples, the Turks and the Europeans, is portrayed as the clash of two worlds.¹³ The realm that Christians were tasked with defending against the Ottomans was marked by Piccolomini’s definition of Europe.¹⁴ Setting a dividing line between Turkey and Europe, Constantinople was presented as a key frontier point. The author highlights the Bosphorus as a unique space that “separates Europe from Asia.”¹⁵ In a chronological perspective, Pius divides the conflict between the two worlds into the time before and after the fall of Constantinople.¹⁶

Constantinople is the subject of the third and seventh chapters of *De Europa*. In the introductory part of the third chapter, the regions of Thrace and Romania are briefly described, followed by a more detailed account of Constantine’s city.¹⁷ The crusading narrative can be found already in the introduction, within the description of Romania.¹⁸ Piccolomini mentions that Romania is inhabited by the “Greek nation [natio Greca]”, although that area was once “barbarian, and it is returning to barbarism in our own time, now that the empire of the Greeks has been destroyed and the Turks hold sway.”¹⁹ Byzantium is listed as the capital of “this country,” i.e., Romania.²⁰

The narration about the city opens with the legend from Strabo’s *Geography*, which states that Byzantium was founded by the Spartans and that the location had been chosen by Apollo himself.²¹ The main focus of the nar-

¹² Capdepuy, *Grands espaces et territorialité*, 125–127.

¹³ The neologism “Europei,” derived from Greek, as a collective term for the inhabitants of Europe, was introduced for the first time by Piccolomini in *De Europa*. Fischer, *Das Europabild*, 92; K. Oschema, *Der Europa-Begriff im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter: Zwischen geographischem Weltbild und kultureller Konnotation*, *Jahrbuch für europäische Geschichte* 2 (2001), 227.

¹⁴ N. Housley, *Crusading*, 27.

¹⁵ Pius PP. II, *Enee Silvii Piccolominei postea Pii PP. II De Europa* (*De Europa* in further text), ed. Adrianus van Heck, Città del Vaticano 2001, 71; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 84; E. S. Piccolomini, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini: De Europa*, trans. Günter Stölzl, Berlin–Boston 2024, 40; Stolf, *E. S. Piccolomini et les Turcs*, 106.

¹⁶ Stolf, *E. S. Piccolomini et les Turcs*, 106.

¹⁷ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 59–62; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 69–72.

¹⁸ For the use of the term *Romania* for the Byzantine, and, later, Latin empire, see D. Jacoby – D. Abulafia, *The Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Frankish States in Greece*, *The New Cambridge Medieval History V*, Cambridge 1999, 523–542; R. L. Wolff, *Romania: The Latin Empire of Constantinople*, *Speculum* 23/1 (1948), 1–34.

¹⁹ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 59; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 69.

²⁰ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 59. In Piccolomini, *Europe*, 69 and Piccolomini, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini: De Europa*, 31 translation suggests Thrace as a region whose capital city was Byzantium. However, since Piccolomini mentions Byzantium after the exposition about Romania, and given the mentioned meaning of that term in the context of Byzantine territory, it seems more plausible that “this country [huius prouincie]”

²¹ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 59; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 70.

native, however, is the legend attributed to the unnamed “ecclesiastical authors [ecclesiastici auctores]”.²² According to this tradition, Emperor Constantine (306–337) originally intended to erect a new city in the Troad on the site “where Agamemnon and the other Greek chieftains had once pitched their tents against King Priam.” Upon receiving God’s message in a dream, Constantine changed the location and decided on Byzantium.²³ Pius notes that Constantine “enlarged the city, erected the new walls, raised lofty towers and built the most magnificent (...) buildings.”²⁴ Owing to its primal beauty and glory, it earned the title of the “Second Rome [Altera Roma].”²⁵ The theme selection in the description above indicates that Piccolomini primarily relied on notions from Sozomen’s *Church History*.²⁶ Other “ecclesiastical authors” he references as sources could be Zosimus of Constantinople²⁷ and John Zonaras, author of *Extracts of History*.²⁸

The humanists of the fifteenth century were prone to equating Constantinople with Troy.²⁹ The Byzantine Greeks were perceived as the descendants of the ancient Greeks and hence destined to battle the Turks, who were considered to be of Trojan descent.³⁰ Although Aeneas accepted the parallel between Troy and Constantinople, he opposed the belief that the Turks were descendants of the Trojans. In order to avoid granting them the status of an ancient people, he introduced the theory of their barbarian, or more precisely, Scythian, origin.³¹

Pius briefly mentions that during “episcopal councils” held in Constantinople, many heresies were reprobated but also created, “among which the most durable was that concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit.”³² The claim certainly refers to the Fourth Council of Constantinople (879–880), which

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 59–60; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 70.

²⁴ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 60; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 70.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ For Sozomen’s account see Sozomen, *A History of the Church in Nine Books, from A.D. 324 to A.D. 440*, trans. E. Walford, London 1846, 48.

²⁷ Pius could rely on Zosimus’ account of Constantine’s original idea to build the city in Troad, near Ilium, which was traditionally associated with the location of Troy. Zosimus, *Zosimus: New History*, trans. R. T. Ridley, Canberra 1982, 37; M. Balzer, *Constantine’s Constantinople: A Christian Emperor, A Pagan City*, *Ezra’s Archives* 3/1 (2013), 57–58.

²⁸ Zonaras emphasizes the divine vision in Constantine’s selection of Byzantium as the final location of the new city. Zonaras, *The History of Zonaras: From Alexander Severus to the Death of Theodosius the Great*, trans. T. Banchich, E. N. Lane, London 2009, 153–154; M. Balzer, *op. cit.*, 57.

²⁹ For the examples of Italian humanists see Philippides – Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople*, 200–201. For the Iberian examples, see D. Reher, *Constantinople in the Iberian Imagination: 1400–1650*, Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Chicago, Chicago 2020, 174–200.

³⁰ Philippides – Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople*, 201; Nathan Ron, *Erasmus and the „Other“ : on Turks, Jews, and indigenous peoples*, Cham 2019, 49.

³¹ A. B. Denton, *The Medieval Canon and the Renaissance Image of the Turk: A Brief Historiography of Pre-Modern European Conceptions of the Muslim World*, *Madison Historical Review* 12 (2015), 49.

³² Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 61; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 70.

condemned the *filioque* and confirmed the election of Patriarch Photius I of Constantinople (858–867; 877–886).³³ Aeneas states that the Eastern teaching on the Holy Spirit was rejected at several councils, of which only the Florentine (1438–1439) was mentioned by name.³⁴ Thus, Piccolomini introduced the issue of Church union into the text, which remarkably composes a significant part of *De Europa*'s chapter on Constantinople.

Pius pointed to the Byzantine emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos (1449–1453) as the principal culprit for the failure of the Florentine union. The non-acceptance of the union by the last Roman emperor was described as “the result of other’s deception or his own madness [siue deceptus, siue sponte sua insaniens].”³⁵ The emperor was blamed for the expulsion of the Uniate Patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory III Mammas (1443–1459), and the confiscation of church property.³⁶ Pius does not mention the election of a new patriarch, which is consistent with the thesis that upon Gregory’s departure from Constantinople in 1450, there was no election of a new patriarch.³⁷ The chapter ends with the papal mission of Cardinal Isidore of Kiev (1437–1463) to Constantinople with the aim of restoring the union.³⁸ It is possible to interpret *De Europa*'s emphasis on the notion of union as a result of its crusading-propaganda aspect. The papal politics of the union were closely tied to the issue of initiating the crusade against the Ottomans, both before and after the fall of Constantinople. Prominent ecclesial figures, such as Cardinal Bessarion (1439–1472), considered the failure of the union to be one of the main causes of the fall of Constantinople.³⁹ Therefore, the restoration of the union was considered *sine qua non* for the restoration of the Byzantine Empire.⁴⁰

The seventh chapter of *De Europa* concerns the fall of Constantinople in 1453. This chapter was later printed as a separate treatise called *De captione urbis Constantinopolitanae*.⁴¹ The chapter could be valued as a historical

³³ For this issue, see A. E. Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, New York 2013, 100–104.

³⁴ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 61; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 71. The rest of the councils Piccolomini implies were that of Bari (1098) and the Second Council of Lyon (1272–1274). For the brief notions on the mentioned councils, see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 117–118, 133–150.

³⁵ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 61; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 71.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ Since there are no reliable sources that mention the patriarch Athanasius II (1450–1453), his existence is disputed by modern scholarship. See J. Harris, *The Patriarch of Constantinople and the Last Days of Byzantium*, The Patriarchate of Constantinople in Context and Comparison, ed. C. Gastgeber et al., (Vienna 2017), 10; V. Laurent – E. Dalleggio, *Les études byzantines en Grèce (1940-1948)*, *Revue des études byzantines* 7 (1949), 109–114.

³⁸ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 61; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 72.

³⁹ N. Housley, *Ending and Starting Crusades at the Council of Basel*, *Crusades* 16 (2017), 115–146; Idem, *Crusading*, 29–30. For Bessarion’s *Epistle to the Greeks*, see Bessarion, *Encyclica ad Graecos*, *Patrologia Graeca* CLXI, Paris 1866, 449–480.

⁴⁰ D. I. Mureşan, *Ghirolamo Lando, titolare du Patriarcat de Constantinople (1474-1497), et son rôle dans la politique orientale du Saint-Siège*, *Annuario dell’Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica* 8 (2006), 161; N. Housley, *Crusading*, 30.

⁴¹ For this work, see Philippides – Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople*, 104–107.

source in the domain of the Western impression of the city's fall. Bearing in mind the aforementioned propaganda context of the work, Piccolomini's report should be treated with caution. Pius does not name his sources of the conquest narrative. Previous studies have revealed that he relied on the report of Archbishop Leonard of Chios,⁴² as well as the verbal and written reports of Niccolò Sagundino.⁴³ Moreover, in Piccolomini's letters written after the fall of Constantinople, there is a note that the news regarding the event came to him via Serbia, Venice, and unnamed "eyewitnesses."⁴⁴

Two subsections of the description are to be found in the seventh chapter of *De Europa*. A historical narrative of the conquest is presented in the first subsection. The second features a rather clear-cut ideological storyline and is centered on the portrayal of Ottoman atrocities following the Byzantine defeat. The historical subsection is characterized by a relatively detailed presentation of Mehmed's military strategy. It includes descriptions of tunneling, fortification, and simultaneous land and sea assaults.⁴⁵ According to Piccolomini, the Greek defense strategy relied on the strength of the Theodosian Walls. The Byzantine army was concentrated in the space between the inner and outer walls.⁴⁶

The account of the decisive battle that took place on May 29 describes an Ottoman general attack in which each group of soldiers on land and sea was tasked with attacking specific parts of Constantinople's walls. The entire battle is presented as utterly chaotic, where "every manner of dying could be seen."⁴⁷ A part of the text narrates the wounding of Giovanni Giustiniani Longo, a Genoese who participated in the defense of the city. His withdrawal from the battle caused unease among the defenders, who thought the battle was coming to an end.⁴⁸ Shortly after the fall of the city, there was a widespread impression that the retreat of Giustiniani Longo had a decisive effect on the final Ottoman

⁴² Leonard was a Dominican from the island of Chios and an eyewitness of the fall. He was a part of the papal delegation sent to Constantinople in 1452 to restore the Church union. M. McCormick, *Leonard of Chios*, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* II, ed. A. Kazhdan, (New York–Oxford 1991), 1212. For his account as Piccolomini's source see Philippides – Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople*, 104–106; Tóth, *The Fall of Constantinople in De Europa*, 127–132.

⁴³ Sagundino was a native Greek from the island of Euboea. He was sent to Constantinople after the Ottoman conquest as an ambassador of Venice. Piccolomini was personally acquainted with Sagundino. Niccolò's work *De familia otomanorum* was created at Aeneas' request and served as a draft for *De Europa*. A. M. Talbot, *Sekoundinos, Nicholas*, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* III, ed. A. Kazhdan, (New York–Oxford 1991), 1865; M. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance*, Princeton 1986, 427–429. For Sagundino as Piccolomini's source, see Tóth, *The Fall of Constantinople in De Europa*, 132–136.

⁴⁴ R. Wolkan, *Der Briefwechsel Des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*, III, 1, Wien 1918, 229–232, no. 126, 127; 259–261, no. 139; 281, no. 153; Philippides – Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople*, 104–105; Tóth, *The Fall of Constantinople in De Europa*, 137–138.

⁴⁵ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 78–79; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 94–95.

⁴⁶ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 79; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 95.

⁴⁷ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 79; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 96.

⁴⁸ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 80; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 95–97.

victory.⁴⁹ This could be evidenced in a note from the letter of Isidore of Kiev to Cardinal Bessarion (July 6, 1453)⁵⁰ and the report on the fall of the city by Filippo da Rimini (1453/54), a Venetian humanist and chancellor.⁵¹ This general attitude towards Giustiniani Longo presumably motivated Piccolomini to include the mentioned episode in the text. Aeneas reports that the Ottomans noticed the weakening of the defense, attacked more forcefully, and, with the help of artillery, managed to demolish certain parts of the ramparts. A mass of people then fled through the gate that was open for Longo.⁵²

In that “wilder stampede [fugam profusiozem]”, according to Piccolomini, emperor Constantine XI “died, not fighting in a manner befitting a king but taking flight [non, ut regem decuit, pugnando, sed fugiens], when he was overwhelmed and trampled after falling in the gate’s narrow passageway.”⁵³ Previous studies have already noted that Piccolomini’s version differs from his sources, which speak of the emperor’s honorable death.⁵⁴ Despite providing different versions of the event, Western sources (Nicolò Barbaro, Isidore of Kiev, Sagundino), as well as Greek sources (Michael Critobulus, George Sphrantzes), generally portray the emperor’s death as honorable or heroic.⁵⁵ Constantine’s death during the escape, although somewhat different from Pius’ account, is mentioned by Tursun Beg and Ibn Kemal, Ottoman authors who wrote after *De Europa*, in the second half of the 15th and first half of the 16th centuries.⁵⁶ Aşıkpaşazade and Mehmed Neşri, who were contemporaneous with the aforementioned writers, highlight that the emperor was slain and provide no account of the escape; hence, this does not represent the sole account of the emperor’s death among Ottoman writers.⁵⁷

In his account, Piccolomini certainly tried to portray Constantine’s death as dishonorable, depriving him of the martyr’s dignity. According to some authors, Pius did this due to his prejudices about the Greeks being unreliable and

⁴⁹ Philippides – Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople*, 533–542.

⁵⁰ A. Pertusi, *La caduta di Costantinopoli: Le testimonianze dei contemporanei*, I, Roma 1976, 74; Philippides – Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople*, 534.

⁵¹ King, *Venetian Humanism*, 407; Philippides – Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople*, 538.

⁵² Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 80; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 96. Piccolomini does not specify the exact location of the gate. Following the description of the events, it could be either the Gate of St. Romanus, around which the troops of Emperor Constantine XI were concentrated, or the Fifth Military Gate defended by Longo with his men. Philippides – Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople*, 327, 329, n. 145.

⁵³ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 80; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 97.

⁵⁴ Tóth, *The Fall of Constantinople in De Europa*, 138–141.

⁵⁵ D. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor: The Life and Legend of Constantine Palaiologos, Last Emperor of the Romans*, Cambridge 1992, 70–77, 80–82.

⁵⁶ Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor*, 79–80; Pertusi, *La caduta di Costantinopoli*, 325, 464–465, n. 59. The general image of the emperor’s death in the mentioned sources is that Constantine fled before the Ottoman invasion and ran into one of the Turkish soldiers who decapitated him, not knowing who he was.

⁵⁷ Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor*, 80.

stubborn.⁵⁸ Even though this might be one of the reasons, it should be noted that Pius' political philosophy in general, as well as in *De Europa*, differs in how the Greeks are portrayed.⁵⁹ After the description of the emperor's death, Aeneas offers illustrations of Greek and Latin bravery in the final minutes of Constantinople's defense.⁶⁰ It seems more likely that either the emperor himself or the title he symbolized is the target of the disrepute of Constantine's bravery. In the previously analyzed chapter, Constantine was portrayed as a predominantly negative character. He was the one who expelled the legitimate patriarch, rejected the union, and thus had to be persuaded to re-establish it.⁶¹ By presenting his death as disgraceful, the writer remained consistent with the negative image of Constantine. Furthermore, the insistence on the emperor's shameful death left no room for the possible creation of a cult of the last Roman emperor. The degradation of his personality served as a means for his desacralization. The root cause of this intervention may be the above-mentioned Western political-theological notion that Greek disloyalty to the Church of Rome caused the fall of Constantinople and, in this case, more crucially, the loss of the legitimacy of the imperial title.⁶²

The second part of the seventh chapter of *De Europa* consists of Ottoman acts of brutality. In the Western accounts of the fall of Constantinople, the emphasis on the atrocities served to portray the Ottomans as vicious barbarians, inspiring Christians to join the crusade.⁶³ By portraying Muslims in that context, *De Europa*, as well as other accounts of the fall, shows continuity with the earlier crusader literature.⁶⁴ The standard list of Ottoman savageries in the Western accounts included the fall and looting of the city, destruction and desecration of relics, desecration of churches, massacre of the citizens, rape and forced prostitution of young men and women, abduction of children, enslavement, and forced Islamization.⁶⁵ Piccolomini's narration almost completely follows the said pattern. The motif of Islamization was the only one that failed to be included. However, others were added, such as the drinking of Christian blood mixed

⁵⁸ Tóth, *The Fall of Constantinople in De Europa*, 142.

⁵⁹ B. Weber, *Lutter contre les Turcs. Les formes nouvelles de la croisade pontificale au XVe siècle*, Rome 2013, 487; Fernández, *Eneas Silvio (Pío II)*, 79–83.

⁶⁰ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 80.

⁶¹ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 61.

⁶² This idea is present in Bishop Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo's comment on the Pius' crusade bull *Ezechielis prophetae* (1463). N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des Croisades au XVe siècle*, IV, Bucarest 1915, 198–199, no. 133. For further notions about his life and political thought, see J. Á. Solórzano Telechea, *Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo. Tratado sobre la división del reino y cuándo es lícita la primogenitura*, Logroño 2011, 17–71.

⁶³ Stolf, E. S. *Piccolomini et les Turcs*, 111; Tóth, *The Fall of Constantinople in De Europa*, 143.

⁶⁴ A. Blake Denton, *The Medieval Canon and the Renaissance Image of the Turk: A Brief Historiography of Pre-Modern European Conceptions of the Muslim World*, Madison Historical Review 12 (2015), <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/mhr/vol12/iss1/5> (Acc. 12.9.2023).

⁶⁵ L. F. Smith, *Pope Pius II's Use of Turkish Atrocities*, The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly 46/4 (1966), 409–410.

with wine by the sultan himself.⁶⁶ *De Europa*'s barbaric portrayal of Turks is largely consistent with Piccolomini's prior writings and speeches.⁶⁷ Regarding Mehmed II, Piccolomini changes his approach from earlier portrayals of the young sultan, where the *puer-senex* topos predominates.⁶⁸ *De Europa*'s crusading agenda led to a completely unfavorable portrayal of Mehmed as a ruthless and murderous barbarous ruler.⁶⁹

Pius dedicated special attention to the Ottoman desecration of the holy places in his account. The Church of Hagia Sophia is presented as completely devastated. Pius uses images of the desecrated relics of martyrs, the destruction of altars and icons, and the turning of city churches into stables and brothels.⁷⁰ It may be noted that Pius does not mention converting churches into mosques, which is consistent with the report's avoidance of the Islamization theme. Islamization of both people and holy places could provide the impression that a city has been preserved, albeit in a different religious sense. By omitting it, the reader was presented with a scene of a completely destroyed Constantinople and an annihilated Christian heritage.

One scene is singled out by Piccolomini, exemplifying and describing the desecration of the holy places: "the image of the Crucified One (...) was seized by the enemy and carried in procession from the city to their tents with trumpets and drums leading the way. They defiled it with spittle and mud and nailed it again to the cross (...) Then they placed on its head the cap (...) formed a ring around him and proclaimed 'This is the God of the Christians'."⁷¹ The scene presented alludes to the mockery of Christ depicted in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 20:19; Mark 10:34; Luke 18:32). The Turks were, by analogy, presented as the New Jews who mocked and crucified Christ. The purpose of the referred passage was to motivate readers' religious sentiments in order to join the crusade. This is made clear in the preface of the quoted text, when Pius expresses the hope that during his lifetime Christians "will avenge the ignominy inflicted on our Savior."⁷² Given the pervasive anti-Semitism in medieval Europe and the formative role that the accusation of deicide had in it, the similarities between the Ottomans and the Jews seem particularly significant.⁷³

⁶⁶ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 81.

⁶⁷ Stolf, E. S. *Piccolomini et les Turcs*, 109–110; Tóth, *The Fall of Constantinople in De Europa*, 146.

⁶⁸ J. Helmraath, *Pius II. und die Türken*, Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance, ed. B. Guthmüller – W. Kühmann, (Berlin-Boston 2000), 112–113; Tóth, *The Fall of Constantinople in De Europa*, 46.

⁶⁹ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 79, 81.

⁷⁰ Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 81; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 98–99.

⁷¹ "Simulachrum Crucifixi (...) tubis ac tympanis preeuntibus raptum ex urbe hostes ad tentoria deferunt, sputo lutoque fedant et (...) iterum cruci affigunt. exin pileo (...) capiti eius imposito corona undique facta 'Hic est' inquiunt 'christianorum Deus'." Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 81; Piccolomini, *Europe*, 99.

⁷² Pius PP. II, *De Europa*, 81.

⁷³ For further analysis of medieval anti-Semitism, see R. Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life in Medieval Europe*, Cambridge 2010, 38–51; S. Rohrbacher, *The charge of deicide. An anti-Jewish motif in medieval Christian art*, Journal of Medieval History 17/4 (1991),

When compared to the previously depicted image of the city in its original splendor, in which the themes of ancient heroism, divine providence, and beauty prevail, the nearly apocalyptic image of the ruined city at the close of the seventh chapter stands in stark contrast. Therefore, both chapters should be read as a unified whole when considering the crusading aspect of *De Europa*. The representation of Constantinople extends beyond the geographic and historical framework. The City of Constantine becomes the place of the death of antiquity, the suffering of Christians, as well as the repetition of Christ's sufferings. The last motive cannot be perceived as separate from the crusading context given that it associates Constantinople with Jerusalem, thus making it the New Jerusalem and, consequently, the new target of the crusades. Partly under the patronage of pro-crusader church prelates, these associations arise in the second half of the 15th and the first half of the 16th centuries in the works of Renaissance artists.⁷⁴ Pius II did not manage to see the realization of his idea. In the midst of preparations for the Crusade, wishing to lead it himself, he died in Ancona in 1464.⁷⁵

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КОНСТАНТИНОПОЉ У ДЕЈУ DE EUROPA

ЕНЕЈЕ СИЛВИЈА ПИКОЛОМИНИЈА – ПАПЕ ПИЈА II

Спис *De Europa* Енеје Силвија Пиколоминија – папе Пија II састављен је 1458. године као географско-историјско дело са крсташко-пропагандним карактером. Дефинишући простор Европе, Пиколомини је оцртавао границе, од ислама угроженог, хришћанског света чији је Константинопољ, поред Рима, био формативни део. Град је описан у трећем и седмом поглављу списка. У трећем поглављу Пиколомини најпре излаже историју настанка Константинопоља, наглашавајући његову изузетну првобитну лепоту. На основу следа излагања и избора мотива, као извори за Пијев опис могу се препознати Созомен, Зосим из Константинопоља и Јован Зонара. Извештај нема нарочиту самосталну изворну вредност. Његов значај уочљив је тек при анализи крсташког контекста дела. Поменути контекст омогућава разјашњење приметно опширније заступљености питања прихватања, а затим одбацивања, Фирентинске уније (1439) у трећем поглављу. Унија цркава била је саставни чинилац папске крсташке политике према хришћанском Истоку, а њен неуспех сматран је једним од узрока пада Константинопоља.

Седмо поглавље, које описује османско освајање града, састоји се од две целине. Прву чини релативно детаљан историјски приказ догађаја са описом османског напредовања, војне тактике и ромејске одбране. Пиколомини се при састављању текста углавном ослањао на извештаје Леонарда са Хиоса и Николе Сагундина, као и

297–321.

⁷⁴ C. Ginzburg, *The Enigma of Piero*, London–New York 2000, 48–101; E. N. Boeck, *The Bronze Horseman of Justinian in Constantinople: The Cross-Cultural Biography of a Mediterranean Monument*, Cambridge 2021, 348–365; M. Vickers, *Mantegna and Constantinople*, *The Burlington Magazine* 118 (1976), 680–687.

⁷⁵ Bisaha, *Pope Pius II and the Crusade*, 48–52.

на вести које су му раније долазиле из Венеције, Србије и од неименованих очевидаца. Одступање од извора приметно је у опису наводне *кужавичке* смрти византијског цара Константина XI. Последњи ромејски цар је, према Пију, погинуо бежећи, прегажен у метежу који је настао након османског продора. Пиколомини је, по својој прилици, наведену епизоду конструисао како би се унизила и десакрализовала личност цара, али и звање које је персонификовао. Доследност у негативном приказу Константина XI кроз спис, те политичко-теолошка идеја да су Грци одбацивањем уније изгубили царски легитимитет, чине се узроком Пиколоминијевог спречавања ширења Константинове мученичке ауре. Друга целина у поглављу сачињена је од навођења османских злочина након освајања Константинопоља. Крсташко-пропагандни карактер дела је у овом сегменту најочљивији. Пиколомини следи устаљени образац приказивања османских злодела у западним извештајима. Међутим, са листе типичних злочина изостављени су нешто блажи, попут исламизације и претварања цркава у џамије. На тај начин стварала се слика потпуно девастираног Константинопоља, а Османлије приказиване као немилосрдни варвари, са циљем да се хришћани мотивишу за учешће у крсташком рату. Приликом описа османског скрнављења светиња, Пиколомини кроз алузије на сцене ругања Христу успоставља паралеле између Константинопоља и Јерусалима. Служећи се снажним контрастима између приказа пређашње славе града и завршне слике његовог потпуног уништења, Пиколомини је Константинопољ у свом делу представио као место смрти антике, хришћанског страдања, те као Нови Јерусалим који је хришћанство било позвано да поврати.

