

Eneas Silvius Piccolomini. *Germania*.

Ministero per i beni e le Attività Culturali 4. Edizione nazionale dei testi della storiografia umanistica 5. Florence: SISMEL, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2009. xxiv + 328 pp. index. append. bibl. €58. ISBN: 978-88-8450-354-1.

The *Germania* by Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–64) is arguably the author's most important work. He composed the treatise in late 1457 and early 1458 shortly after he had been raised to the purple and had moved to Rome. In part a reaffirmation of his support for papal authority and thus a further renunciation of the conciliarism he had advocated during the Council of Basel (1431–49), the *Germania* has been credited with furthering his aspirations to the papacy, to which the conclave of August 1458 elected him. If the quantity of written pages produced in response to it since its first printing in Leipzig in 1496 may be taken as a measure of its influence, then the *Germania* certainly qualifies as one of Renaissance humanism's most significant compositions. Encouraging some, provoking others, the work helped inspire humanists in Germany to the task of preparing a *Germania illustrata*, that great patriotic literary endeavor planned and promoted most famously by Conrad Celtis (1459–1508), and likewise set up a model of Roman overbearance for Church reformers through the sixteenth century to denounce. The *Germania* has remained a touchstone for historians of humanism and the Reformation in Germany ever since.

The *Germania*'s contents and reception make the new critical edition by Maria Giovanna Fadiga a welcome contribution to the recent burgeoning of critical editions of humanist texts. Enea Silvio has been a beneficiary of this trend already: within the last decade alone new editions of his *Historia Austriacalis* and the *Pentalogus* appeared in 2009, the *Epistolarium seculare* in 2007, the *Historia Bohemica* along with its fifteenth-century German and Czech translations in 2005, the autobiographical *Commentarii* in 2003, and his *Epistola ad Mahumetem* and *De Europa* in 2001.

While the earlier authoritative edition of the *Germania*, which appeared in 1962 under the direction of Adolph Schmidt, was dependable, we have decidedly gained from Fadiga's edition. Fadiga prepared her text with direct reference to the extant manuscripts. The critical apparatus, references, and footnotes are more thorough and accurate in content and meet higher standards of formatting. Fadiga's volume includes the letter from the chancellor of the archdiocese of Mainz, Martin Mayer, to Enea, his longtime friend, that ostensibly inspired the cardinal to write the treatise in the first place and, in contrast to the Schmidt edition, excludes the *Responsa* of Jakob Wimpfeling (1450–1528), an addendum to the imperial *gravamina* of 1510. These two elements of the new edition represent a tendency throughout the volume to foreground the immediate historical context in which Enea composed the *Germania* rather than the text's use by later generations. How calculated this tendency was on Fadiga's part, I cannot say, but it is certainly refreshing. In his own day, Piccolomini was an enterprising, if not always successful, shaper of public opinion. An appreciation of *Germania*'s immediate goals and impact has, however, often been sacrificed in favor of highlighting its importance for subsequent readers. One can find evidence of this subtle shortchanging in early printings and even more recent reprints and translations that sharply, even tendentiously abbreviate the text; one notes it as well in Schmidt's juxtaposing of the *Germania* with Wimpfeling's *Responsa* in a single volume.

Fadiga turns to the broader issues of context, reception, and legacy and addresses the technical matters of textual criticism in 131 pages of introduction that are a scholarly work worthy of consideration and praise in their own right. She reflects on the crucial issues of humanist historiography and Church reform that were indeed the two areas in which the text had its most long-lasting influence. Although she raises the names of Celtis and Wimpfeling, she focuses all the more on the issues of humanist historiography and chorography that were already current in the mid-fifteenth century and that Enea was so active in shaping, especially for humanists in the empire. Fadiga is likewise attentive to the specific theological and ecclesiastical issues that Enea addressed as he wrote. She makes thoughtful reference to such contemporaries as the Spanish cardinal Juan de Torquemada (1388–1468), the fierce defender of papal infallibility who nearly succeeded Enea as pope in 1464, and she sketches the lingering ecclesiastical problems framed at the councils of Constance and Basel, the latter of which Piccolomini had attended and whose legacy had much occupied him while resident in the empire. The introduction also offers a helpful analysis of *gravamina* as a genre and considers problems such as the treatise's title and the *Germania*'s relation to Enea's other writings.

In short, Fadiga's critical edition of Enea's *Germania* is a work of the highest quality and an accomplishment worthy of a text so important to Renaissance humanism on both sides of the Alps as well as to the literary and ecclesiastical cultures of Western Europe in the fifteenth century and beyond.

DAVID J. COLLINS, S.J.
Georgetown University