

## Isocrates, Hieronymus Wolf and Juan Luis Vives

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**ABSTRACT:** This contribution starts with a detailed presentation of the German humanist Hieronymus Wolf (1516-1580) and his life-long involvement with the Athenian rhetorician Isocrates (436-338 BCE). It focuses further on the relation between Wolf and Juan Luis Vives, and especially on the tactful way in which Wolf dealt with a puzzling error by Vives in his Latin letter to Cardinal Wolsey introducing his Latin translations of Isocrates's *Areopagiticus* and *Nicocles* Vives had indeed affirmed that Nicocles was king of Salamis, an island of the Aegean Sea, whereas, in reality, he was king of Salamis, a city of Cyprus and lived in the fourth century BCE.

**KEYWORDS:** Vives — Nicocles — Isocrates — Hieronymus Wolf

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### 1. Hieronymus Wolf and Isocrates

The German humanist Hieronymus Wolf (1516-1580), is generally recognized as an excellent Greek scholar and as the founder of Byzantine studies. Since his youth he was fascinated in particular by the works of the Greek orator Isocrates (436-338 BCE), publishing in March 1546 in Basel a new and much better edition of Isocrates's orations and letters, followed in 1548 by a Latin translation.

This Latin translation is preceded by a dedicatory letter to the City council of Nuremberg, written in the house of his friend Sebaldus Hauenreuter<sup>1</sup> at Strasbourg on 13 January 1548. Here Wolf gives a first account of his growing involvement in translating and editing his works<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> On Sebald Hauenreuter (1508-1589), professor of medicine and town physician at Strasbourg from 1540 onward, see the entry by Franck (1880:44).

<sup>2</sup> *Isocratis Orationes omnes, quae quidem ad nostram aetatem pervenerunt, una et viginti numero, una cum novem eiusdem epistolis e Graeco in Latinum conversae, per Hieronymum VVolfium Oetingensem ...* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1548), fols. α 2<sup>r</sup> – α 6<sup>r</sup>, especially fol. α 2<sup>v</sup> - α 3<sup>r</sup>. A complete description of this

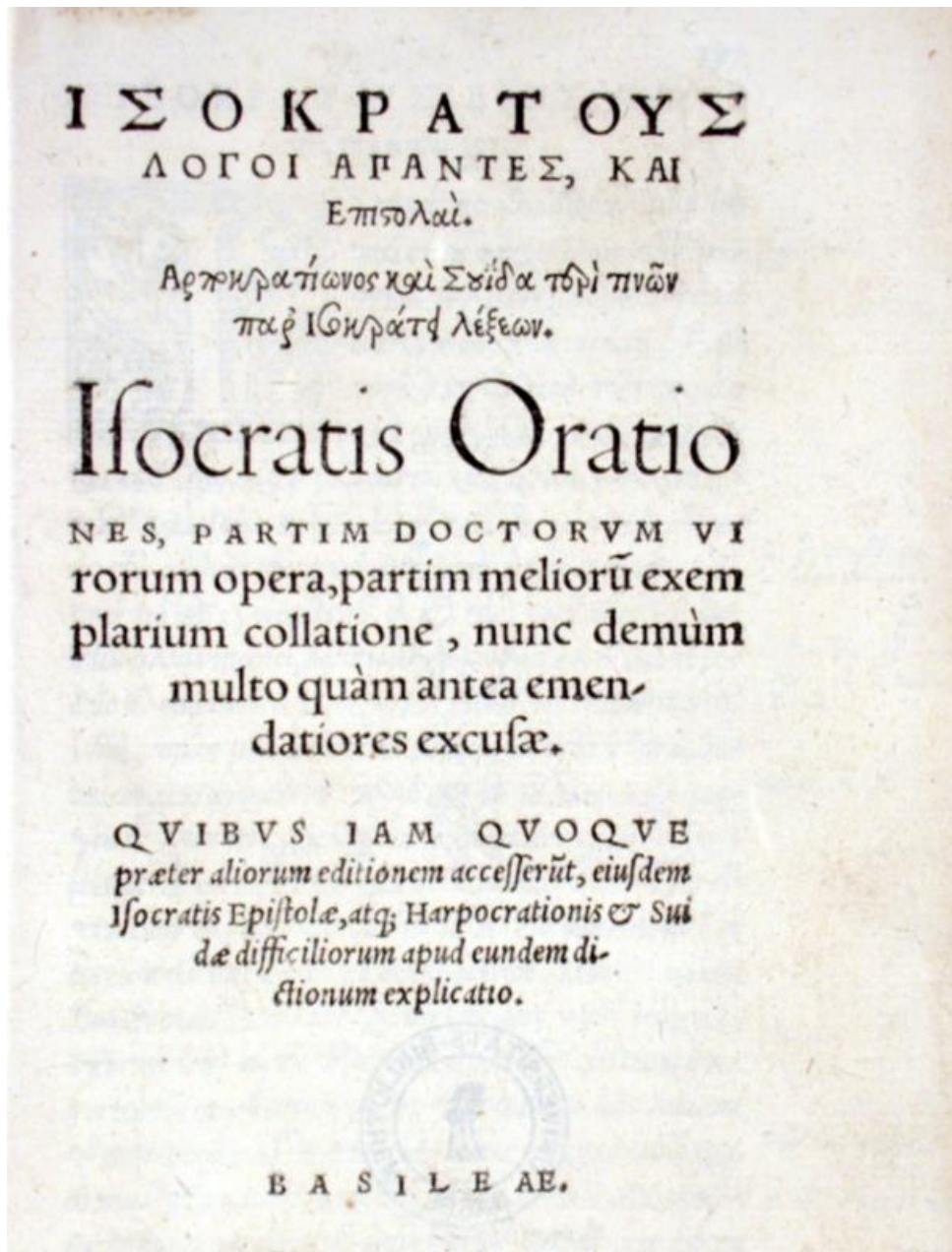


Figure 1: First edition of the Greek text of Isocrates by Hieronymus Wolf (Basel, 1546)  
(copy Basel, Universitätsbibliothek).

Ut autem verum fatear, peculiaris quaedam admiratio et amor insignis, quo Isocratem (iudicione an propter arcanas aliquas causas nescio) prosequor, alacritatem meam non parum excitavit. Deinde, quum tres eius orationes absolvissem easque in lucem prolaturus D. Iacobo Schegkio et Sebaldo Hauenreutero, philosophis et medicis excellentibus, atque Ioanni Oporino et aliis eruditis amicis ostendissem, cohortati me illi sunt, ne mutilas quasdam particulas, sed (si modo vel gratificari lectoribus vel existimationi meae consultum vellem) ut integrum opus exhiberem. Ego vero, quum mea sponte, ut dixi, mediocri (ut videbar) successu in tribus orationibus usus, ab eo

and other Basel editions of Isocrates is given by Frank Hieronymus (1992) in the catalogue *Ἐν Βασιλείᾳ πόλει τῆς Γερμανίας - Griechischer Geist aus Basler Pressen*, Basel, nos. 215-224.

labore non abhorreret, facile quod illi cupiebant persuaderi mihi / passus sum. Scrupulus tamen iniiciebatur cogitanti non tantum quasdam huius auctoris orationes conversas a doctis, sed integrum opus etiam a Ioanne Lonicero latinitate donatum passim circumferri.

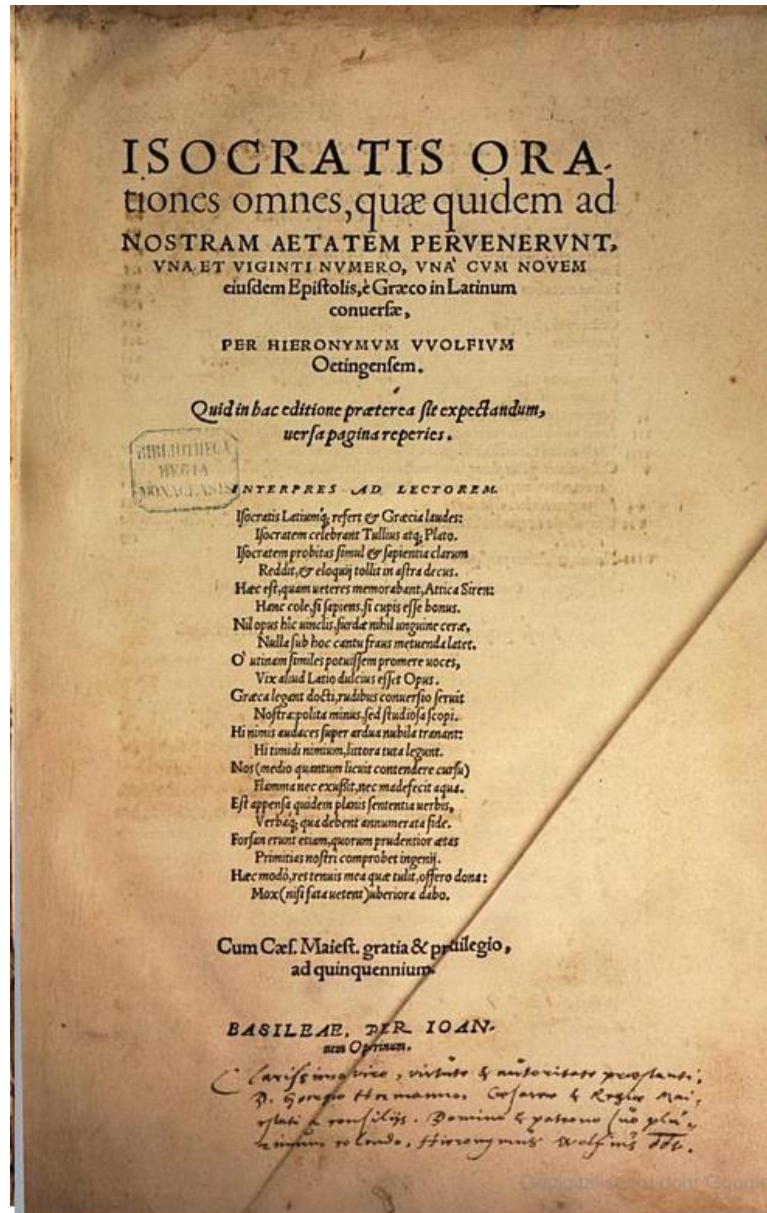


Figure 2: Title-page of *Isocratis Orationes omnes* (Basel: J. Oporinus, 1548), with autograph dedication by H. Wolf (copy Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2 A.gr.b. 775).

Wolfius's autobiography, written ten years before he died<sup>3</sup>, provides in some respects a more detailed insight into his continuing work on Isocrates (p. 832):

<sup>3</sup> It was begun in the year 1564 and addressed to Johannes Oporinus; it was finished on 23 November 1570; see Reiske (1773: 772): 'Hieronymi Wolfii Oettingensis Rhaeti ad clarissimum virum optimeque et de se et de republica literarum meritum Io. Oporinum, Basileensem, commentariolus, coeptus quidem scribi anno 1564 sed aliquot annis postmodum absolutus, de vitae suae ratione ac potius fortuna'; and p. 875: 'Scripta

Itaque sub Idus Aprilis 1547 ... Tubingense, Argentinense et Basileense iter sum ingressus, cum ut veteres praeceptores atque amicos inviserem, tum ut quatuor Isocratis orationes et duas Demosthenis quas converteram, Oporino excudendas darem. Destinaram autem Archidamum, Philippicam et Symmachicum Christophoro Iulio, cuius fere per annum hospitio liberali usus fueram, Areopagiticum, orationem Demosthenis *de immunitatibus* et eiusdem alteram *de militibus Chersonesitanis* Friderico, Electori Heidelbergensi, cui me Andreas Osiander maioribus etiam in rebus mihi gratificatus, commendarat, Academiam, ut ferebatur, instauraturo. Sed cum literae illae nescio a quo per fraudem interceptae minimeque principi redditae essent, eo fortasse consilio, ut desperatis rebus in ergastulo manere cogerer, mutavi consilium, te inprimis, Oporine, auctore, qui negabas, te velle ἀκεφάλους μύθους excudere. Sed si totum autorem transtulissem, et gratificaturum mihi et labores meos, quantum res tuae ac temporum difficultates ferrent, remuneraturum. ... Putabam enim, tunc me eo labore defunctum, tolerabili conditione suffragiis doctorum amicorum oblata, pristinum studiorum meorum cursum persecuturum. Id vero tantum abest factum ut sit, ut iam ultra / (p. 833) vigesimum annum in eodem pistrino molam, ac propemodum verear, ne illi prorsus sit immoriendum. ... Tum autem hac spe Argentinam reversus id quod tu iusseras exsecutus sum, in aedibus medici celeberrimi et veteris amici, Sebaldi Hauenreuteri, qui mihi domum victumque communem iam ante liberalissime obtulerat, neque in hunc usque diem omnibus officiis ornare me destitit. Qua in re tanta animi alacritate perrexi, ut interdum uno die duodecim Graecas pagellas absolverem; reliquas certe septemdecim orationes cum novem epistolis et vita Isocratis, a tribus descripta autoribus, intra mensis unius spatium confeci. Deinde semestre circiter datum est emendationi et annotationum conscriptioni, statimque prelo subiectus Latinus Isocrates anno 1548 publicatus est, temerario prorsus (ut Fabii verbis utar) editionis honore, eventu tamen feliciore quam prudentiore consilio. ... Nam et patroni (ut initio significavi) primum / (p. 834) id meum et minime elaboratum opus approbarunt, et hac occasione commissi mihi fuerunt Augustani discipuli, quos biennium apud vos, unum annum Lutetiae Parisiorum institui. Unde in Fuggeram familiam primum adscitus, post a senatu Augustano ad Graecas Latinasque literas docendas sum vocatus, quo in munere versor adhuc....

Only a part of this information had already appeared in Wolfius's editions of Isocrates from 1566 onwards. These, on the other hand, offered a few more details concerning his earliest acquaintance with Isocrates<sup>4</sup>:

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haec sunt nono Calendas Decembris anno 1570.' A German translation, with some accompanying elucidation, has been published by Beck (1984).

<sup>4</sup> *Isocratis philosophi et oratoris Atheniensis: Orationes XXI et epistolae IX saluberrimis, cum degendae vitae, tum Reipublicae administrandae praeceptis refertae. Ab Hieronymo VVolfio Oetingensi, utriusque linguae in Augustana schola professore publico, de integro conversae, et quartum nunc editae. Addita est, et vita auctoris, et index accuratus.* Augustae Vindellicorum sumptibus Georgii Vvilleri, Bibliopolae, apud Mattheum Francum ... Anno M.D.LXVI (= Augsburg, 1566), pp. 850-855. The same text, slightly corrected, is to be found, amongst others, in the edition of Basel 1567, pp. 1354-1358 and Basel 1571, pp. 1108-1110.

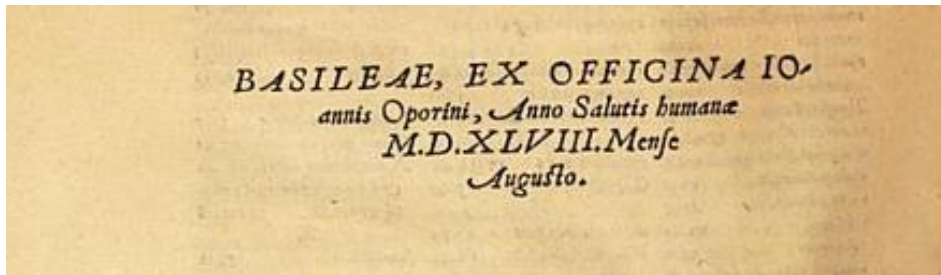


Figure 3: Colophon of the edition of Basel: J. Oporinus, 1548  
(copy Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek).

Transeamus igitur ad conversionem nostram, deque ea lectorem paucis moneamus. Ad huius eloquentissimi et sapientissimi scriptoris lectionem assiduam Tybingae exci- / (p. 851) tatus sum studio et industria Iacobi Scheggii, anno salutis restitutae M.D.XXXV, aetatis meae XIX, qui, ut vir est non excellenti tantum ingenio et omnium disciplinarum capaci praeditus, omnique liberali doctrina, philosophiae inprimis et artis medicae scientia exquisite (*correxi ex exquisita*) perpolitus, sed singulari etiam humanitate ornatus, Ioanni Scheubelio, Euclidi nostrae aetatis, et mihi, Euagorae laudationem interpretari non est gravatus. Quae mihi tantam Isocratis admirationem movit, ut ex eo tempore vix ullum sive Latinum sive Graecum scriptorem illi anteponam. Post, cum anno M.D.XLV in celebri quadam urbe selectos adolescentes docerem, industria et vitae modestia mihi laudem et gratiam peperit, quas e vestigio insecuta invidia et ate nescio quae, pessimis artibus et capitalibus insidiis persequi me non prius destitit, quam invitis et diu repugnantibus iis, quorum erat autoritas (putabant enim viri optimi, nihil mihi periculi esse, ignari scilicet illorum scelerum, sed melancholicis me turbari cogitationibus, ex assi- / (p. 852) duitate studiorum natis) et doctissimis quibusque frustra me retinere cupientibus, fuga salutem quaerere coegisset. Quae fuga mea in belli Germanici initia incidit, ut privata mea calamitas cum publicis coniuncta summam mihi desperationem rerum omnium afferret. Sustentatus igitur ad tempus patroni cuiusdam et paterni amici, clarissimi optimique viri liberalitate 4 converti orationes: Archidamum, Philippicam, de Pace, Areopagiticam, partim levandi mei doloris causa, partim spe innotescendi eruditus, et remedium aliquod afflictatae fortunae meae inveniendi. Quibus Basileam allatis, autor mihi fuit Oporinus totius Isocratis convertendi, idque factum Argentinae anno 1547 in aedibus medici celeberrimi et veteris amici, Sebaldi Hauenreuteri, qui mihi domum victumque communem iam ante liberalissime obtulerat, neque in hunc usque diem omnibus officiis ornare destitit. Quae in re tanta animi alacritate perrexi, ut interdum uno die duodecim Graecas pagellas absolverem. Reliquas / (p. 853) certe 17 orationes, cum 9 epistolis et vita Isocratis, a tribus descripta autoribus, intra mensis unius spacium confeci. Deinde semestre circiter datum est emendationi et annotationum conscriptioni, statimque praelo subiectus Latinus Isocrates, anno 1548 editus est, temerario prorsus (ut Fabii verbis utar) editionis honore, eventu tamen feliciore quam prudentiore consilio. ... (p. 854) et hac occasione commissi mihi fuerunt Augustani discipuli, quos biennium Basileae, unum annum Luteciae Parisiorum institui. Unde in Fuggeranam familiam primum ascitus, post a senatu Augustano ad Graecas Latinasque literas docendas sum vocatus. Quo in munere versor adhuc eo studio quod fides mea postulat, eo successu, quem sive loci genius sive

fortuna mea sive tempora nostra patiuntur. Sed ut ad institutum redeam, Castalio, cum Isocratem meum statim a praelo percurrisset, crassissima quaeque vitia dictionis in suo codice, Oporini opinor impulsu, notavit, ut sunt: clausulae in carmen desinentes, paraphrases non necessariae, proverbia affectata, Graeci casus, traiectiones verborum obscuriores, Germanismi nonnulli, et id genus alia. Quae ego omnia in meum transcripta codicem Luteciam attuli, et diligentius expendi omnia, triploque plura delevi et mutavi quam a Castalione confixa fuerunt, et codicem non Threiciis, sed Allobrogicis et Wolfianis notis compunctum Basileam anno 1551 / (p. 855) rediens, una cum Demosthene (de quo alias dicendi locus dabitur) Vascosano reliqui, a quo is biennio post, cum eum contempsisse lucubrationem meam putarem, est elegantibus typis editus. Quo tempore illius editionis aequae ignarus, severiore etiam a me lima, dum Fuggeranae bibliothecae praessem, adhibita, eundem Graece Latinque recudit. ...

Piecing all these elements together, one can reconstruct Wolf's life-long involvement with Isocrates in the following way. After having been impressed by the quality of Isocrates's oration for Euagoras as set forth by the Tübingen professor Jakob Schegk (1511-1587), he translated ten years later, when he was tutoring some young students, four other orations and took them with him to Basel. There the printer Johannes Oporinus persuaded him to undertake a Latin translation of the complete oeuvre of Isocrates. And so he did, working very fast and without worries while living in the house of an old friend of his, the Strasbourg town physician Sebald Hauenreuter (1508-1589). After having completed the task within one month, he spent half a year correcting and annotating his draft, before it was printed by Froben in August 1548.

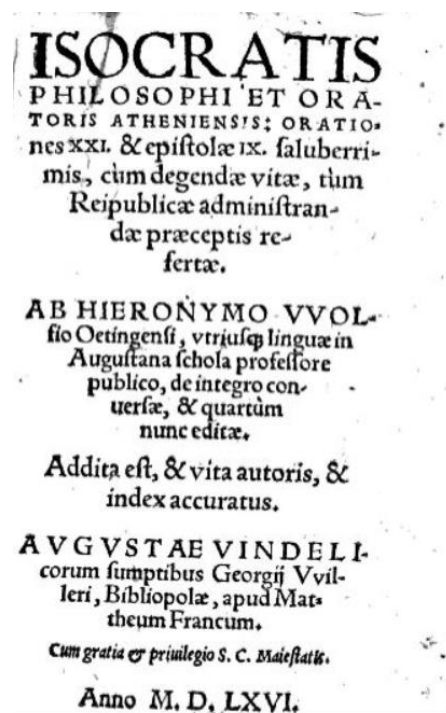


Figure 3: Edition of *Isocratis philosophi et oratoris Atheniensis orationes* ... (Augsburg: M. Francus, 1566)

(copy National Library of Czech Republic)

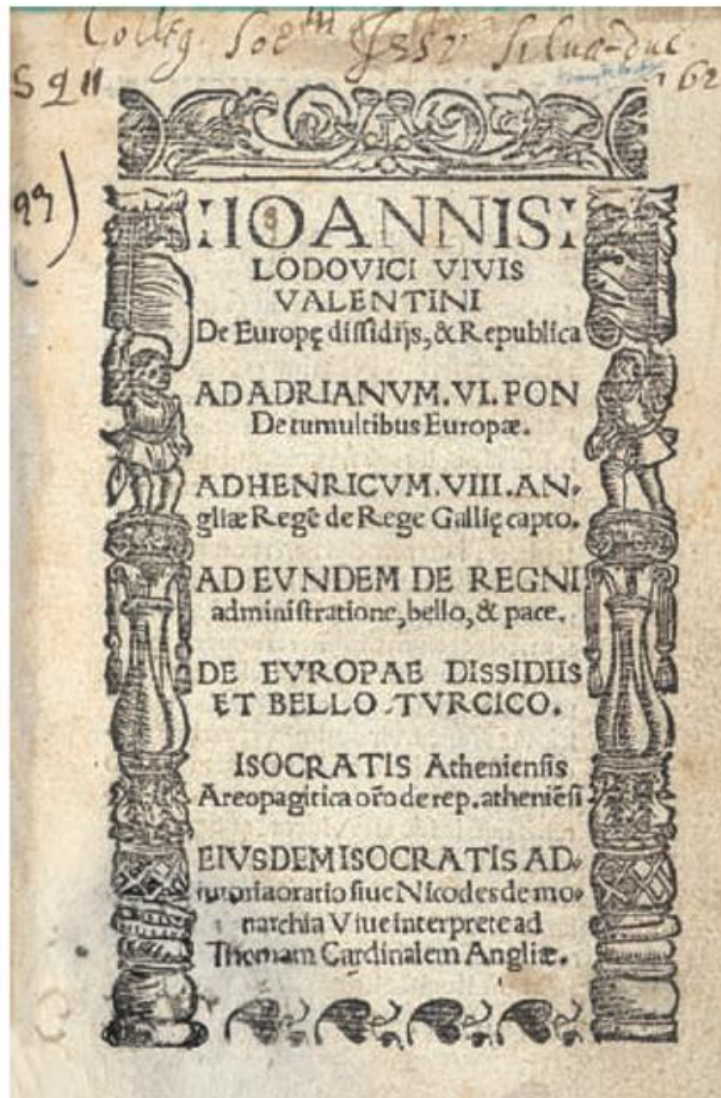
Together with a few Augsburg pupils he lived for two years at Basel, moving then to Paris for another year. In the meantime he had been notified that his translation was far from flawless; in his master copy he noted all the remarks made by the French theologian Sebastian Castellio (1515-1563), who at that time was earning a livelihood by proof-reading for Oporinus. He thoroughly revised his own translation and annotations and before returning to Basel in 1551 handed it over to the Paris printer Michel Vascosan, together with a new dedicatory letter, dated 1 January 1551 and addressed again to the burgomaster and City council of Nuremberg. But more than two years passed before this new edition came out. At Basel Oporinus remained unaware of this 1553 Paris edition in which Wolf, who was meanwhile preparing for Oporinus the first bilingual edition of Isocrates, had again introduced a few minor changes in his translation and in the paratexts. This new bilingual edition came off the press in August 1553. Wolf continued to revise his text, which was reprinted several times, for instance, at Augsburg in 1566 and in the officina Frobeniana in 1558, 1567 and again in 1570 and 1571.

## 2. Hieronymus Wolf and Juan Luis Vives

In the first edition of 1548 Wolf had already introduced on pp. <283 – 285> a few testimonies and eulogies praising Isocrates, all but one by classical authors: Plato, Cicero, Quintilian, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Plutarch. The only modern author mentioned was the Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540). Wolf started with a short quotation: ‘Isocrate simplicius ac purius cogitari nihil potest’, which he took over from the third book of Vives's *De Tradendis Disciplinis*. He may have read this masterpiece of Vives in its first edition (Antwerp, 1531) or in a subsequent Cologne edition (1531, 1532 or 1536).<sup>5</sup> After quoting these words Wolf added an excerpt (“Fuit Isocrates Atheniensis rhetor .... grandis admodum natu”) taken from the only surviving letter sent by Vives to Cardinal Thomas Wolsey on 15 December 1523 from Oxford. In this letter Vives had dedicated his Latin translation of two speeches of Isocrates, the *Areopagitica oratio* and the *Nicocles*, to the Cardinal. At that time a printed version of that letter and of the two Latin translations was available only in the edition of Vives's *De Europae dissidiis et Republica* (Bruges 1526), fols. F IV<sup>v</sup> – F VII<sup>r</sup> and that of his *Declamationes sex...* (Basel, 1538), pp. 273-276.<sup>6</sup> No doubt Wolf had taken an interest in the translations of Isocrates which Vives had composed twenty-five years earlier, and when visiting Basel in 1547 he may even have acquired a copy of the then most easily available edition, that of 1538. Of course he must have been curious about his predecessor's performance, but even a superficial comparison between Vives's Isocratean translations and those by Wolf makes it immediately clear that Wolf was not at all influenced by Vives's example.

<sup>5</sup> The precise text reads: 'Authores linguae evolvet Isocratem, quo simplicius ac purius cogitari nihil potest.' See now the recent critical edition of Vigliano (2013: 376-377).

<sup>6</sup> See now the critical edition in George – Tournoy (2019: 161-173). The excerpt is here on pp. 164-166.



J.L. Vives, *De Europae dissidiis* ... (Bruges: H. de Croock, 1526)  
(copy KULeuven, Libraries, Rés. Vives CaaA 1932)

### 3. Vives's misconception concerning Nicocles, king of Salamis and its origin

At the very end of the letter to Wolsey Vives remarked concerning Nicocles (ed. Basel 1538, p. 276): 'Porro Nicocles rex fuit Salaminae, insulae Graeci maris, nobilis pugna illa, qua Themistocles Atheniensis opes maritimas contudit Xerxis regis Persarum' (= 'Furthermore, Nicocles was the King of Salamis, an island in the Greek sea, well-known because of the battle in which the Athenian Themistocles destroyed the fleet of the Persian King Xerxes') (George – Tournoy, 2019: 170).

This remarkable statement must have caught Wolf's attention as it did ours. For, the Nicocles to whom Isocrates dedicated his oration was king of the city of Salamis in Cyprus and lived in the fourth century BC, whereas Themistocles, who commanded the Athenian forces against Xerxes, lived from ca. 524 to 459 BC and won the battle at



Salamis, an island of the Aegean Sea close to the Greek mainland, in 480 BC. But where does Vives's error stem from?

An unambiguous answer to the question of what can have given rise to this misconception on Vives's part is not obvious. A distinct possibility is that he simply looked up Salamis in the *Suda* (*Suidas*), in which the only Salamis mentioned is the one where the naval battle took place (*Suidae Lexicon* s.v. Σαλαμῖνος) (Adler, 1971: 314). It is not clear whether Vives had access to a manuscript of the *Suda* or could make use of a copy of the *editio princeps* (Milan, 1499) or indeed the Aldine of 1513. But it is clear that the text circulated amongst his friends: the only known autograph letter written by John Clement, December 1521, reveals that Frans Cranevelt had lent his *Suda* to him (Ijsewijn, 1995: 23-24). John Clement (d. 1572) was the 'puer' mentioned in the *Utopia*, who accompanied Thomas More during his diplomatic missions to the Netherlands in 1515 and again in 1521. When More went back to England in October 1521, Clement stayed behind to study medicine, first at the University of Louvain, where he lived in the circle of Vives, later on at Padua and Siena.<sup>7</sup> A few months later, in March 1522, Vives himself asked to borrow a copy of the *Suda* from Cranevelt's library (Ijsewijn, 1995: 40-41).

Still more convincing is the fact that Vives, in this same letter to Wolsey, followed rather closely the *Suda* in his description of the Areopagus<sup>8</sup>:

Sed tempore hoc Solon, unus ex septem illis celebratissimis Graeciae sapientibus, novas alias dedit correctis illis Draconis, et Areopagum summum consilium instituit, exstructa eo loci curia, quo de Martis capite iudicium fuerat latum, cum is apud veteres illos esset Athenienses accusatus, quod Halirrhothium Neptuni filium obtruncasset; ideo Areopagus dictus est, ceu Martis collis - est enim Athenis clivus quidam. Erat hic perpetuus senatus, non constitutus ad tempus, ut consilium illud, quod vel quingentorum senum dicebatur vel Thesmothetarum novem; cognoscebant de caedibus, incendiis, veneficiis, eamque ob causam sunt qui Areopagum nominatum esse autement quod caedibus Mars praeesse credebatur.

#### 4. Vives silently corrected by Wolf

In any case, the statement by Vives presenting Nicocles as being king of the island of Salamis must have startled Wolf. In the Basel edition of 1548 there is no obvious indication of this astonishment: in the 'Argumentum' preceding the translation of the *Oratio ad Nicoclem, De Regno* Wolf offers a one-word elucidation in passing (p. 7): '... Suadet autem haec quae iam dicetur, Nicocli *Cyprio*, qui tum regnabat, quomodo civibus

<sup>7</sup> On him, see the entries by Gunderson (1985: 311-312) and Wallis (2004: 20-21); also the introduction to the *Novum Testamentum ab Erasmo recognitum IV* by Brown (2013: 54-58).

<sup>8</sup> Vives, *Declamationes sex...* (Basel, 1538), p. 275 (George – Tournoy, 2019: 168-170). *Suidae Lexicon* s.v. Ἄρειος πάγος (Adler, 1967: 348): ... ἐκλήθη δὲ Ἄρειος πάγος, ἦτοι ὅτι ἐν τῷ πάγῳ ἐστὶ καὶ ἐν ὕψει τὸ δικαστήριον· Ἄρειος δὲ, ἐπει τὰ φονικὰ δικάζει· ὁ δὲ Ἄρης ἐπὶ τῶν φόνων· ἢ ὅτι ἐπηξεν τὸ δόρυ ἐκεῖ ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ποσειδῶνα ὑπὲρ Ἀλirroθίου δίκη, ὅτε ἀπέκτεινεν αὐτὸν Βιασάμενον Ἀλκίπτην τὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ Ἀγραύλου τῆς Κέκροπος θυγατρὸς ...

sit imperandum' (my italics), which indicates that he was well aware that Nicocles was king of Cyprus. But in the 1553 Paris edition Wolf deliberately changes this 'Argumentum' introducing that same oration. In the very first lines he explicitly draws the attention of the reader to the fact that Salamis is not the island situated near Attica, but the city of Cyprus<sup>9</sup>:

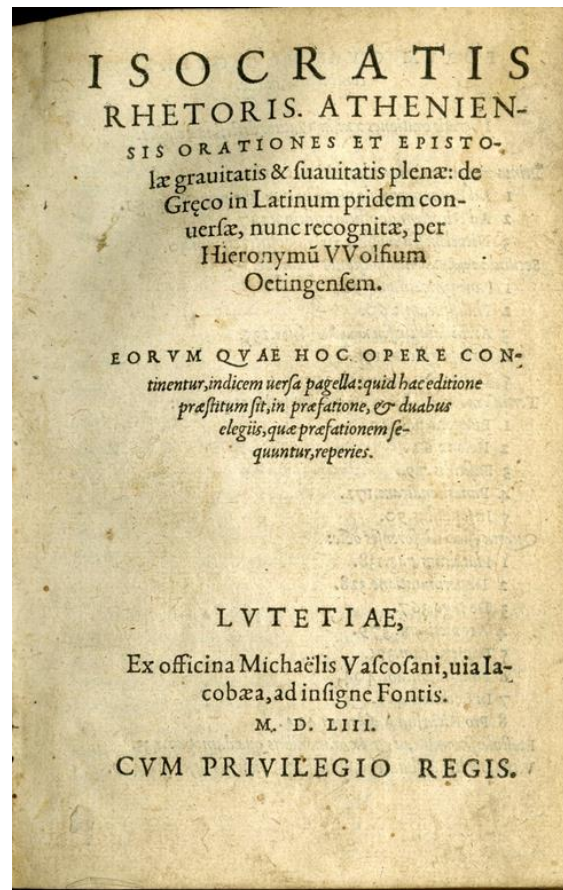


Figure 6: Edition of *Isocratis rhetoris Atheniensis orationes et epistolae* ... (Paris: M. Vascosan, 1553).

Nicoclem Euagorae Salaminii regis (*est autem hic Salamis non insula vicina Atticae, sed urbs Cypri intelligenda*) filium scribit Plutarchus pro hac una oratione talenta viginti, hoc est aureos Gallicos, qui tricenosquinos solidos aliquando valuerunt, duodecies mille donasse Isocrati.' (my italics).

A few months later, in the bilingual 1553 Basel edition<sup>10</sup> as well as in later editions. Wolf continues to point out, but less emphatically, that Salamis was a city of Cyprus, writing simply: 'Nicoclem enim Euagorae filium, Salaminis *Cypriae* regem hortatur ...'.

<sup>9</sup> *Isocratis rhetoris Atheniensis orationes et epistolae gravitatis et suavitatis plenae, de Graeco in Latinum pridem conversae, nunc recognitae*, per Hieronymum Volfium Oetingensem ... (Lutetiae, ex officina Michaelis Vascosani ... M.D. LIII), p. 15: 'In Isocratis orationem de Regno administrando Hieronymi Volfii argumentum'.

<sup>10</sup> *Ἰσοκράτους Ἀπαντα, διὰ Ἱερωνόμου Βολφίου ἐπανορθωτέντα τὲ, καὶ ἐξ ὑπαρχῆς ἐρμηνευθέντα: τῶν λατίνων τοῖς ἑλληνικοῖς ἐξ ἐναντίας κειμένων – Isocratis scripta, quae nunc extant, omnia, per Hieronymum*

He obviously did not want to criticize too openly this relatively small slip of the famous humanist Juan Luis Vives.

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*VVolffium Oetingensem, summo labore et diligentia correcta, et de integro conversa: utque studiosorum usui magis accommodata essent* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, August 1553), p. 27; see also the Augsburg edition of 1566, p. 23, the bilingual editions of Basel 1567, pp. 37-39; Basel 1570, col. 18 and the 'Annotationes', col. 226, etc.